



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Review and Recommendation of Public Art for Lakewood Library and Learning Center

REPORT IN BRIEF

Subject to Council Policy 6.4.4 (Art in Public Places), the project budget for the Lakewood Library and Learning Center (project #830600) includes a 1% provision for public art (\$188,761). This report provides information on the five conceptual design proposals for the interior wall and five conceptual design proposals for the exterior areas. The Arts Commission will review and rank each set of proposals (5 interior proposals and 5 exterior). The Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on July 23, 2024, for consideration and final approval. There is no staff recommendation for this project.

BACKGROUND

The Lakewood Library and Learning Center is a cooperative project with Sunnyvale School District. It will be constructed in the heart of the Lakewood neighborhood, next to Lakewood Park and Lakewood School. It will include a mix of services including new book and media collections; meeting, classroom, technology and non-technology spaces; indoor and outdoor activities; a children's zone and a maker space.

The library's design relies heavily on biophilic design, which is based on three primary concepts: (1) nature can act as a portal, (2) it can be transformative, and (3) it provides connectivity.

Subject to Council Policy 6.4.4 (Art in Public Places), the project will incorporate 1% of construction costs for public art, totaling \$188,761. The City formed a 12-member Public Art Review Committee of art professionals, Lakewood residents and project staff to advise on the public art. This committee considered four locations deemed appropriate for public art. After review and discussion, the committee selected the following two locations for separate art pieces. Each location is expected to have high visitor traffic and provide opportunities for various art types:

- Interior location at the primary wall of the library's main entrance; and
- Exterior location(s) at the entry, forecourt and/or parking lot walkways.

In August 2023, a request for qualifications (RFQ) was distributed through public art websites, artist networks and the City's website inviting artists residing in California to apply for the commission (Attachment 2). A total of 44 artists applied for the interior location and 30 artists applied for the exterior location(s). The review committee juried the applications and selected 10 artists to develop detailed conceptual designs (five artists for the interior location and five artists for the exterior location (s)).

This report provides information on the five conceptual design proposals for the interior wall and five conceptual design proposals for the exterior areas. The Arts Commission is being asked to review

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

and rank the proposals. The Commission's recommendation will be forwarded to City Council on July 23 for consideration and final approval.

Following City Council's approval, staff will work with the selected artists to finalize the design, engineering, fabrication/execution, placement and lighting of the art, as well as the development of a community workshop to engage residents. Any substantial changes to either of the approved conceptual designs will require additional Arts Commission review and City Council approval before proceeding.

EXISTING POLICY

Sunnyvale Municipal Code 19.52 - Art in Private Development

Sunnyvale Council Policy 6.4.4 - Art in Public Places

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A mitigated negative declaration (MND) for the underlying project, Lakewood Library and Learning Center, was prepared, circulated, and approved by the City Council on May 21, 2024. Public Art was a required condition of the project and considered in the environmental review, and the artwork proposed will not create any new environmental impacts.

DISCUSSION

Selected Locations

The project team, which included the Superintendent of Libraries, architects, Department of Public Works staff and public art staff, identified four potential art locations. These were interior and exterior areas with high visibility and large spaces to accommodate public art, without inhibiting planned programming or anticipated traffic flow.

The Public Art Review Committee considered the four locations (one interior wall and three exterior sites) and voted to appropriate the public art budget as follows:

- Interior Primary Wall (Attachment 3): This wall is in the main entry area of the building, and it offers an opportunity for all types of two-dimensional media. The available wall space is approximately 39-feet wide by 6-feet tall. The budget for the interior artwork is \$30,000.
- Exterior Entry, Forecourt and Parking Lot Walkways (Attachment 4): These areas of the project offer opportunities for three-dimensional media, including hardscaping, sculpture, functional or interactive art and paving applications. Artists can propose their art for one of the three sites or a combination of the three sites. The budget for the exterior artwork is \$135,000.

Proposal Considerations

The RFQ outlined that the selected artists will be expected to align with the City's vision of inclusion and diversity, and to represent the City's brand essence: Bold, Sustainable Innovation. Artists were also asked to consider the library's biophilic design and neighborhood characteristics while developing their proposals.

Community Workshops

The selected artists will be required to provide a community workshop to allow residents an opportunity to either contribute to the final design or to create their own smaller works of art based on the completed art installation. Details of the workshops will be finalized as part of the contract process.

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

Maintenance Requirements

Each of the designs proposed will be easy to maintain/clean and straightforward to repair if needed. Graffiti prevention has also been considered.

Lighting Requirements

Details for lighting for the selected artwork will be determined, with staff input, as a part of the contract process.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROPOSALS - Interior Location

Proposal #1 - Robert Delgado (Attachment 5). This design is a hand-painted, acrylic polymer mural highlighting people from the Lakewood Neighborhood and objects that are representative of Sunnyvale's industry and history. The artist will photograph people from the neighborhood, turn the photographs into a line drawing and layer the line drawing upon itself to abstract the figures. Color will be added to establish tone and depth.

The artist has inserted some everyday objects in his design proposal as placeholders (an abacus, the Mayan symbol for zero, a basic chip structure and a bike crank with pedals), until the final design elements/objects can be identified through a community workshop.

Proposal #2 - Lordy Rodriguez (Attachment 6). This design is an abstract mural/map of Sunnyvale that incorporates the agricultural history, current economic environment and increasing diversity of the area. The coastline and five main roads or freeways (I-280, US 101, SR 82, SR 85, and SR 237) are clearly represented, but the areas between the freeways are filled with a repetitive series of "blocks":

- Residential Blocks which contain multiple layers of varying colors, resembling contour lines in topographical maps. These "blocks" illustrate the density of multi-storied buildings and the diversity of Sunnyvale's residents.
- Tech Blocks consisting of a dark blue background with repeated horizontal white lines reminiscent of solar panels. These "blocks" symbolize clean energy and forward thinking.
- Orchard Blocks consisting of a light orange/yellow background with lines of green dots. These "blocks" reference Sunnyvale's orchards and agricultural history.

The mural will be created by drawing the design at a 1/5th scale and digitizing it, then resizing it to fit the wall and printing it as wallpaper.

Proposal #3 - Rough Edge Collective (Maria-Jose "MJ" Lindo-Lawyer and Joshua Lawyer)

(Attachment 7). This design is a hand-painted mural tentatively titled *Lost in Thought*. The imagery is a fanciful depiction of a teen intently reading a book that is coming to life with each turn of the page; a large sea monster, a boat on its return voyage after an action-packed adventure and a large sea dragon listening to every word and asking, "Then What?"

There are two inspirations behind this design: Homer's *The Odyssey* and late 80's movies where a grandparent would read to a child and the story would play out onscreen. The two opposite elements tackle an epic tale, while incorporating levity from fantasy adventure comedy films.

Proposal #4 - Harumo Sato (Attachment 8). Titled *Nature's Tapestry*, and building off of the biophilic

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

design principle, this design celebrates cultural diversity. It will include stylized fish, fruits, plants, birds and flowers symbolic of the various cultures residing in Sunnyvale. Fruits will be especially prevalent to memorialize the agricultural history of the city and to connect with current residents by showcasing local and imported fruits available in Sunnyvale. The mural will be hand-painted using a bold, vibrant palette of acrylic colors.

Proposal #5 - Ryan 'Yanoe' Sarfati and Eric 'Zoueh' Skotnes (Yanoe x Zoueh) (Attachment 9). Titled *Lost in Literature*, this design is a hand-painted mural depicting a child getting lost in a book amidst candlelight (far right) and a portrait of Amanda Gorman (far left), who inspired a generation with her inaugural poem (*The Hill we Climb*). The center imagery is characters from well-known fictional books (*Lord of the Flies*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Through the Looking Glass*) familiar to all generations. It is the artists' hope that their design will be a portal to literacy and inspire viewers to read, explore genres and embrace creativity.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROPOSALS - Exterior Location(s)

Proposal #6 - Eric Powell (Attachment 10). This design consists of three painted, metal archways that create a corridor and visual connection into the library. Titled *Taking Flight*, the work "is a metaphor of how the exterior (literature and knowledge) transforms the interior (the mind and the soul), just as the experience of reading changes one's life."

Each archway will stand 14 to 15 feet tall by 4 feet wide allowing visitors to walk through and will integrate a book in flight as its centerpiece:

- The honeybee embodies focus, hard work, generosity and prosperity. For this design the wings of the honeybee grow out of the central book, which features the Yin Yang symbol at the center; a symbol of heaven and earth integrated as one, while the four leaves represent the diversity of the Lakewood neighborhood.
- The dragonfly is symbolic of self-realization and maturity, a creature that sees in 360 degrees, representing the uninhibited vision of the mind. The central female figure emerging from the book represents creation and women authors, while the lotus flower emerging from the top embodies beauty and rebirth.
- The butterfly represents transformation, rebirth and metamorphosis, emerging from a mandala encircled by four figures holding a lotus flower, symbolic of inspiration and cultivating curiosity.

Proposal #7 - Ride Art Studio (Saori Ide and Jonathan Russel) (Attachment 11). Titled, *Roots of Knowledge*, this design celebrates the importance of the written word and consists of three, oversized quill pens fabricated from stainless steel and polished to a satin finish. The artists interpret the quill pen as a universal symbol of writing that is connected to creativity and freedom of expression. Each sculpture will stand approximately 14 feet tall and rise from a stand resembling an inkwell.

On the ground will be a paving design to connect the three quill pen sculptures. This design will mimic pen strokes and resemble a tree. Embedded brass leaves, representing new life and renewal, will be incorporated and contain etched words, in a variety of languages, relevant to learning, community and life. These words and languages will be identified through a community workshop.

Proposal #8 - Studiofolia (James Dinh) (Attachment 12). This design was inspired by the artist's belief that "libraries are literal and metaphorical portals that open onto vast works of information,

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

knowledge and resources. They are democratic spaces that “open” one’s mind...”

Expanding on the concept of portals, this design represents a sun- or moon-shaped steel gateway about 11 feet tall leading to the library and its’ resources. The top of the arch will stand 7.5 feet high to allow for viewer interaction. The framework will consist of powder-coated, 1/8-inch-thick ribbons of steel that will be interlaced like a loosely woven basket. Some of these ‘woven’ ribbons will have cut-out text representing the titles of classic literary works written in their native language. The color of the sculpture and the literary texts will be determined through a community workshop.

Proposal #9 - Urban Rock Design (Jeanine Centuori and Russell Rock) (Attachment 13). This design is comprised of six, 5 to 9-foot tall, powder-coated aluminum sculptures of different colors that focus on visual perception. Each element alters, distorts or is highly focused on what the viewer is seeing:

- *View from Above*: A periscope that offers a view into a nearby tree to see leaves close up.
- *Change Your Perspective*: A camera obscura that will be focused on the building entrance and will turn the view upside-down.
- *See the Local Color*: Macro photographs of nature printed onto glass. Each print represents a color on the color wheel and will cast shadows onto the ground.
- *Interrupt a Pattern*: A simple dot pattern, layered to create a moire effect that shimmers and shifts as the viewer moves around it and the patterns interrupt each other.
- *Stand Back and Look*: An image of an apricot tree, created from small dots cut into a metal plate. The image comes into focus at a distance and appears abstract up close.
- *See the Light*: An open book sculpture inscribed with an upside-down quote “Were it not for shadows there would be no beauty.” The text will appear when the sun is strong.

Proposal #10 - WOWHAUS (Ene Osteraas-Constable and Scott Constable) (Attachment 14).

This design will incorporate two sculptural elements within the building’s forecourt:

- A graceful solid, green granite sculpture inspired by the symmetrical seed structure of the Samara seed pod of the Big Leaf Maple, a California native. The sculpture will be inviting and create seating for visitors to sit, read and come together.
- A suspended aluminum sculpture evoking the spiral trajectory of a Big Leaf maple seed in flight. The sculpture creates an animated, everchanging composition as one walks through the space and the surface shifts color, echoing the organic gradations of green and gold found in each maple seed. The design can also be installed as a second standing sculpture, rather than suspended.

“The wing-like maple seed is symbolic of the role of flight in natural ecosystems. Flight is also an apt metaphor for learning and the role of libraries in lifting curious minds to new heights. This theme also echoes Sunnyvale’s historic contributions to aviation, in particular Moffett Field.”

FISCAL IMPACT

The project budget for the Lakewood Library and Learning Center (project #830600) includes a 1% provision for public art (\$188,761). Ongoing maintenance for this project will require an estimated \$1,000-\$5,000 per year, depending on which design is chosen. This will be included in the FY 2024/25 Recommended Budget.

PUBLIC CONTACT

24-0695

Agenda Date: 6/19/2024

Public contact was made by posting the Council meeting agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board at City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Public Library and in the Department of Public Safety Lobby. In addition, the agenda and this report are available at the NOVA Workforce Services reception desk located on the first floor of City Hall at 456 W. Olive Avenue (during normal business hours), and on the City's website.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no staff recommendation for this project.

Pursuant to the Art in Public Places procedures, the Arts Commission should rank the proposals and develop a recommendation to City Council for consideration and final approval. The selected conceptual design will be further developed with oversight from staff to meet the Art in Public Places guidelines within the allocated budget.

Prepared by: Kristin Dance, Recreation Services Coordinator II
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Reviewed by: Michelle Perera, Director of Library and Recreation Services
Reviewed by: Tim Kirby, Director of Finance
Reviewed by: Chip Taylor, Director of Public Works
Reviewed by: Jaqui Guzmán, Deputy City Manager
Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Reserved for Report to Council
2. Call for Artists
3. Site Plan and Elevation Rendering for Interior Wall
4. Site Plan and Elevation Rendering for Exterior Location
5. Delgado Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
6. Rodriguez Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
7. Rough Edge Collective Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
8. Sato Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
9. Yanoë x Zoueh Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
10. Powell Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
11. Ride Art Studio Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
12. Studiofolia Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
13. Urban Rock Design Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal
14. WOWHAUS Resume, Past Work and Design Proposal