



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

22-0706

Agenda Date: 8/17/2022

### REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION

#### SUBJECT

Review and Recommendation of Public Art for Civic Center Lobbies

#### BACKGROUND

Phase I of the Civic Center project is currently underway and includes:

- New 119,874 square foot, four story, Net Zero Energy and Certified LEED Platinum City Hall
- Renovated Public Safety Headquarters (i.e., lobby, entry and tenant improvements)
- New two story, 15,002 square foot Emergency Operations Center
- Approximately 6 acres of open space
- Pedestrian improvements along Olive Avenue
- Frontage improvements along Mathilda Avenue from W. Olive Avenue to El Camino Real including a new multiuse pathway and walkways for public use
- Civic plaza
- Outdoor amphitheater

Subject to Council Policy 6.4.4 (Art in Public Places), the project will incorporate 1% of construction costs for public art, totaling \$508,966 for Phase I. Three locations have been identified for the public art:

- Amphitheater: a large-scale sculpture for \$338,966
- City Hall: interior lobby niches on each floor (four total) for \$100,000
- All America Way at Mathilda Avenue: temporary, rotating sculpture program for \$70,000

This report addresses the lobby niches where \$100,000 (\$20,000 per niche plus artist design stipends, installation and project contingencies) has been allotted for the artwork (Attachment 2 - Rendering of Lobby Niches). Art for the Amphitheater has already been approved and is in fabrication, and art for the rotating sculpture program will be brought to the Arts Commission and City Council for review in the future.

In May 2022 a Request for Qualifications was distributed through public art websites, artist networks and City website inviting artists residing in California to apply for the City Hall niches (Attachment 3 - Call for Artists). A total of 45 artists applied and a 9-member community selection panel, including art professionals, residents and project staff, reviewed the artist qualifications. The community panel selected ten artists to develop detailed conceptual designs for possible inclusion in the project.

This report provides information on the 10 conceptual design proposals under consideration for four lobby niches. The Arts Commission is being asked to review and rank the proposals. The Commission's recommendation and rankings will be forwarded to City Council on September 13,

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2022, for consideration and final approval of artwork to fill the four niches.

Following Council approval, staff will work with the four artists to finalize their designs with installation and lighting plans. Any substantial changes to the approved conceptual designs will require additional Arts Commission review and Council approval prior to fabrication.

Staff will also work with each artist to develop a community workshop centered around the artist/artistic team design. The community workshop is meant to provide more information on each artist's design and the City's public art programs.

### **EXISTING POLICY**

Sunnyvale Municipal Code 19.52 - Art in Private Development  
Sunnyvale Council Policy 6.4.4 - Art in Public Places

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

On September 25, 2018, the City Council adopted a resolution (1) making findings and certifying a program Environmental Impact Report for the Civic Center Modernization Master Plan, (2) adopting a Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Plan; and (3) adopting the Civic Center Modernization Master Plan. Public art consistent with the City's Public Art Policy was a component of the Master Plan, and the niches in the lobby of building were designed to be filled by artwork.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Selected Locations**

Potential art locations for the Civic Center project were identified by the selection committee (Attachment 4 - Civic Center Site Plan with Phase I Art Locations). In total, there are three locations for public art selected for Phase 1:

1. Amphitheater (site-specific art)
2. City Hall Building (interior niches on each floor lobby, four total)
3. All America Way at Mathilda Avenue (temporary, rotating sculpture program)

This report is addressing artwork for the interior lobby niches in City Hall. Each floor of the building has a landing and lobby area near the centrally located stairway, with a recessed wall niche measuring 8-feet tall by 11-feet wide by 14-inches deep. The niches are lined with misterio quartz walls and terrazzo flooring, except for the ground floor which is granite. Each of the four approved artists or artist teams will be assigned a niche by City staff.

The wall niches include an art hanging support system secured to the wall framing, which can support up to 175 lbs. Artists are encouraged to utilize the installed hanging system so the City has the option of moving the artworks between the floors every two to three years. Each niche will also include recessed liners and spotlights to illuminate the niche wall surface and artwork.

#### **Art Proposals**

The 10 semi-finalists have been encouraged to develop proposals that (1) consider and align with the City's vision of equity, access and inclusion, and represent the City's brand essence: ***Bold,***

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*Sustainable Innovation*; (2) are appropriate for all ages of the Community; and (3) are designed to remain vibrant and functional for 25 years or more. The proposals are not limited to a single piece, nor any style or media.

Each artist selected will also be required to do some type of a community workshop (or lecture) and the ten semifinalists were asked to include their ideas for a workshop or lecture as part of their proposal. Staff will work with the approved artists to develop their proposed community workshop.

As required and outlined in the artist contract, detailed maintenance plans will be required for each of the selected artworks prior to final payment.

**Proposal #1:** *The Unity of the Opposites*, is a mixed media, abstract, two-dimensional mural submitted by Truckee artists Arteclettica; Daniela Garofalo and Dominic Panziera (Attachment 5 - Arteclettica Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artwork will be 5 feet tall by 9 feet wide and will be placed to allow for a 1-foot gap on the top and sides, with a 2-foot gap on the bottom.

The imagery is based on the idea that the existence or identity of a thing or situation depends on the co-existence of an opposing object. Therefore, the design is divided into opposing sections, with half of the sections consisting of straight lines, smooth surfaces and only colored in black and white. This represents form and order. The remaining sections, in contrast, symbolize matter, which has curved elements, textured surfaces and a variety of colors.

The materials of the design will consist of reclaimed medias, including, but not limited to, wood, stone, metal, fabric and painted surfaces. The mixture of these varied materials will result in a contemporary artwork with intense colors and rich textures.

The mixed media mural will be treated with a clear water-based product to protect the surfaces. An occasional dusting with a soft cloth is all that will be required for annual maintenance.

For more information on Arteclettica and to see examples of their work, visit [arteclettica.com](http://arteclettica.com).

**Proposal #2:** *Message in a Bottle: We are Our Dreams*, was submitted by the artist team of Michael Endicott and Ellen Brook based in San Carlos (Attachment 6 - Endicott & Brook Design Proposal, Resumes and Past Work). This artistic team is proposing a “paintography” artwork measuring 7 feet tall by 10 feet wide, consisting of paintings with mixed media that are digitally photographed and printed on metal.

The imagery begins with six painted bottles that hold aspirational messages for Sunnyvale. The Message in a Bottle theme is a well-known, poetic metaphor that generates instant, emotional response; launching our dreams in a bottle in hopes it will be retrieved upon the shores of our community. The metaphor stands for multiple ideas, including the way in which we carry forward values of the past adapted to the needs of the future, the importance of multi-directional communication, and how collective innovation bubbles up from the creativity of individuals.

The bottles will be arranged in a grid form to recognize how a city arranges itself through the public planning process. As viewers approach the work, they will see details, intricacies, and “messages” in

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written or graphic form that tie directly to the city of Sunnyvale, its history and envisioned future.

Colors for the artwork will be varied, from bold pops of orange, green, red and blues, to more muted earth tones and browns and black.

Through an embedded QR code, the artists envision possible ongoing public engagement with the art and use for announcing upcoming art, community and City Hall events.

The printed metal is durable, relatively lightweight and will only require occasional dusting. Fingerprints can be easily removed with a damp cloth.

For more information on Endicott and Brook and to see examples of their work, visit [michaelbendicott.com](http://michaelbendicott.com) and [ellen-brook.com](http://ellen-brook.com).

**Proposal #3:** *The Metamorphosis and Memory of Flowers*, was submitted by artist Liz Hickok of San Francisco (Attachment 7 - Hickok Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artist is proposing to collaborate with creative technology artist Phil Spitler to create a pigment print measuring 5 feet tall by 9 feet wide.

The imagery is a slightly abstracted, realistic bouquet of flowers, bristling with energy using bold and vibrant magenta, orange, yellow, violet, pink and green tones against a pale blue background. Specific flowers are still being determined, but could include the California Poppy, apricot blossom (in reference to Sunnyvale's farming history) and blossoms from the varying cultures that make Sunnyvale diverse and unique.

The process for creating the artwork consists of photographing a floral bouquet and digitizing additional flowers into the composition. The image will be altered to create the energetic, abstracted image. The image is then printed onto archival photographic paper, mounted onto a backing and UV laminated to protect the surface of the print.

An added component to the artwork will be the augmented reality experience via the viewer's smart device. Viewers can activate the artwork to make the flowers grow, distort and come to life, venturing off of the print's two-dimensional surface. The augmented reality interface can also potentially incorporate educational content about the flowers and allow viewers to learn historical and cultural references associated with each flower.

Maintenance of the artwork requires dusting with a dry cloth and, if needed, cleaning with a gentle cleanser. The augmented reality technology may require updating in the future.

For more information on Liz Hickok and to see examples of her work, visit [lizhickok.com](http://lizhickok.com).

**Proposal #4:** *Legacies*, was submitted by San Francisco based artist Phillip Hua (Attachment 8 - Hua Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artist is proposing a sculptural wall piece that blends the history of Sunnyvale's apricot orchards with the mother of pearl inlay work of Asian cultures and a nod to Silicon Valley's impact on modern technology.

The artwork will consist of 70 12-inch by 12-inch salvaged wood panels of varying depths. Placed side by side in a rectangle, the squares will create a single piece measuring 7 feet tall by 10 feet

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wide. The artwork will have 6 inches of space at the top, bottom and sides of the artwork once it's installed in the niche.

The image for the design will be an apricot tree, laser engraved into the uneven wood surfaces. The grid pattern of the wood squares when placed together reference the smallest unit of a digital image (pixel) and the uneven surfaces represent growth and progress of Sunnyvale's economic and cultural landscape. The tree is made up of painted circles and dots arranged in an abstract, representational formation, almost as if the tree is made of different, but coordinated square puzzle pieces. The design will include mother of pearl inlays in the engraved areas (a nod to the artist's native country of Vietnam), 22k gold leaf application and iridescent acrylic ink.

The artwork will be protected by a UV acrylic coating, preventing the wood and artwork from fading. The artwork will need periodic dusting with a soft towel or compressed air.

For more information on Phillip Hua and to see examples of his work, visit [philliphua.com](http://philliphua.com).

**Proposal #5:** *The Sunnyside of My Abstracted Garden*, was submitted by Oakland artist Carrie Lederer (Attachment 9 - Lederer Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artist is proposing a tapestry measuring 7 feet tall by 10 feet wide with imagery inspired by our connection to nature and features ornate, pattern-based compositions that portray ideas about sustainability and our natural world. The tapestry will be abstract, with bold, vibrant colors, with recognizable landscape elements such as plants, flowers and animals will be interspersed.

Woven with a mix of cotton, wool and synthetic threads, the tapestry will be abundant in detail, warm in color and energetic. Magnolia Editions, an Oakland-based fine art print studio, will produce the tapestry, which will be woven in Brussels, Belgium using advanced Jacquard weaving techniques. Once completed, the artist will embellish the surface with neon pigments, metallic threads and other mixed media to add texture and depth to the tapestry.

The art of tapestry is an age-old and sturdy medium, and one that we know has survived through the centuries. Maintenance will consist of periodic, light dusting or vacuuming with a standard vacuum wand.

For more information on Carrie Lederer and to see more of her work, visit [CarrieLederer.com](http://CarrieLederer.com).

**Proposal #6:** *Fish Food*, was submitted by Los Gatos sculptor David Middlebrook (Attachment 10 - Middlebrook Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artist is proposing an existing three-dimensional sculpture measuring 81.5 inches tall by 22.5 inches wide by 10 inches deep.

The sculpture is a black epoxy, life-sized replica of a water sport innertube, inlaid with colorful pieces of plastic. The innertube is being stretched down with the weight of a silver spoon, symbolizing the privileged who have contributed to the abuse of our planet by discarding plastic debris and the need to address the issue of our planet's health.

The only maintenance requirement will be occasional dusting with a soft cloth.

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For more information on David Middlebrook and to see more of his work, visit [davidmiddlebrook.com](http://davidmiddlebrook.com).

**Proposal # 7:** *Branches of Illumination*, was submitted by Long Beach artist Ben Phipps (Attachment 11 - Phipps Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). Mr. Phipps is proposing an abstract sculpture installation incorporating recycled waste material. Using Redwood tree branches, ideally branches that were removed from the Civic Center site, the artist will create transparent molds and fill them with colored bits of recycled plastic and/or glass. The transparency of the branches will allow light to filter through, causing the recycled materials inside to reflect and refract the light, casting colored specs and shadows within the sculptures and onto the surrounding surfaces.

The branches will be 6 to 8 inches in diameter and stand 6 to 7 feet tall. They will be arranged in a single row, standing vertically within the niche.

The materials used in the artwork will be impact resistant and UV stabilized. Maintenance will only require dusting and Windex when needed.

For more information on Ben Phipps and to see more of his work, visit [benphippsstudio.com](http://benphippsstudio.com).

**Proposal #8:** *Tree of Life - Abundance*, was submitted by Los Altos artist Ragini Prasad (Attachment 12 - Prasad Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The design is influenced by the Madhubani technique, a technique of geometric patterns practiced in the Mithila region of the Indian subcontinent. Madhubani paintings are traditionally done with a variety of tools, including fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens and matchsticks, while using natural dyes and pigments. Madhubani paintings mostly depict people and their association with nature and scenes from the ancient times.

The proposed piece is inspired by the Oak trees of Sunnyvale, in particular the tree at the Sunnyvale Library. The artwork will be created on a single canvas measuring 7 feet tall by 10 feet wide. The artist describes her design as “a symbol of the universe in itself that makes us conducive to birth and sustenance...a symbol of wisdom and knowledge, standing firm through time and memory beyond human mankind history.”

For more information on Ragini Prasad and to see more of her work, visit [raginiart.com](http://raginiart.com).

**Proposal #9:** *Bay Mornings*, was submitted by Emeryville artist Vickie Jo Sowell (Attachment 13 - Sowell Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). The artist has designed a largescale, low-relief, steel and glass sculpture. The piece will be an assemblage of painted steel surfaces and safety glass elements that will be reflective and “atmospheric” similar to a sunrise.

The artwork will measure 6 feet tall by 9 feet wide by 8 inches deep. The artist was inspired by the sunrises at Sunnyvale’s Bay Trail, where the embankments and waterways blend access for recreation with sustainability of the bay’s natural wildlife and vegetation. The artist hopes her design will remind visitors that “each dawn speaks to us of the hope and possibilities of the coming day, while still evoking the memories of days past and the promise of many more to follow.”

Maintenance for this artwork will consist of periodic dusting and, if needed, glass cleaner with a soft cloth.

For more information or to see more of Vickie Jo Sowell’s work, visit [unrulyimages.com](http://unrulyimages.com).

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**Proposal #10:** *Sun, Sunny, Sunny Vale, Sunnyvale, Mostly Sunny*, was submitted by Berkeley artist Peter Wegner (Attachment 14 - Wegner Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work). Mr. Wegner has designed an abstract canvas on panel painting measuring 6 feet tall by 9 feet wide by 2 inches deep. Each yellow will be painted on a separate canvas panel and combined into a larger painting, reminiscent of a paint swatch. The artist sees his painting as taking “these colors and names as a point of departure...starting where life starts: the sun. Five panels later the artwork has passed through ‘Sunnyvale’ and arrived at ‘Mostly Sunny’.”

The painting will be treated to protect against touching and UV exposure. Maintenance for this artwork will consist of a periodic dusting with a soft bristle brush or compressed air.

For more information and to see more of Peter Wegner’s work, visit [Peterwegner.com](http://Peterwegner.com).

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The project budget for Phase 1 of the Civic Center Modernization (#831340) includes a 1% provision for public art (\$508,966). The lobby sites have been allocated \$100,000 for four artworks (\$20,000 per space, \$10,000 for artist stipends to develop conceptual proposals and \$10,000 for contingency funds).

On-going maintenance for this project will require an estimated \$100-\$500 per year, depending on the art selected. Interior artworks are maintained by the Arts staff and generally only require cleaning and dusting annually. This will be included in the FY 2023/24 Recommended Budget.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made through posting of the Arts Commission agenda on the City’s official-notice bulletin board, on the City’s website, and the availability of the agenda and report in the Office of the City Clerk.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

There is no staff recommendation for this project. Pursuant to the Art in Public Places procedures, staff does not participate in the selection of the artwork; however, staff can confirm that the ten proposals are appropriate for this project and will fit within the designated spaces. The Arts Commission will rank the proposals and develop a recommendation to City Council for consideration and final approval. The selected conceptual designs 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  
Reviewed by: Trenton Hill, Recreation Services Manager  
Reviewed by: Damon Sparacino, Superintendent of Recreation Services  
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: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager  
Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Reserve for Report to Council
2. Rendering of Lobby Niches
3. Call for Artists
4. Civic Center Site Plan with Phase I Art Locations
5. Arteclettica Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
6. Endicott & Brook Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
7. Hickok Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
8. Hua Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
9. Lederer Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
10. Middlebrook Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
11. Phipps Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
12. Prasad Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
13. Sowell Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work
14. Wegner Design Proposal, Resume and Past Work