

REPORT TO ARTS COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Recommend that Council Approve the Deaccession of the Untitled Ceramic Mural by Artists Danny Sheu and Jeff Bordona (1998) from the City's Permanent Art Collection

BACKGROUND

Council Policy 6.4.4 - Art in Public Places (Attachment 2) sets forth uniform guidelines for including public art in the City's Permanent Art Collection. It also assigns responsibility for the oversight and maintenance of the collection to the Department of Library and Recreation Services (LRS), which includes deaccessioning individual pieces of the collection when necessary. Deaccessioning is the act of formally removing a piece of art from the collection and is a standard practice for museums, galleries, universities, and government organizations that maintain art collections.

The Deaccessioning Plan in the City's *Art in Public Places* policy defines circumstances appropriate for permanently removing works of art from the City's collection. The policy sets forth a process that includes the Arts Commission review and recommendation to Council of the staff recommendation for a proposed deaccession.

The purpose of this report is to seek input from the Arts Commission regarding staff's recommendation to deaccession an item from the City's Permanent Art Collection. The Commission's recommendation will be reviewed by Council at their Sept. 13, 2022, meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The deaccession of artwork from the Permanent Art Collection does not constitute a "project" with the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) in that it is a governmental organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

EXISTING POLICY

Council Policy 6.4.4: *Art in Public Places*

DISCUSSION

While the intent of the City's Permanent Art Collection is to maintain and display each piece of art indefinitely, there are circumstances that warrant the removal of artwork from the City's collection. As outlined in the Art in Public Places policy, these circumstances include:

- 1) the inability to reasonably guarantee the safety of the artwork;
- 2) artwork that may pose a danger to the public or that may invite vandalism;
- 3) artwork considered to be fraudulent in some way;
- 4) art discovered to have been stolen;
- 5) theft;

- 6) damage beyond repair and/or cost to repair is prohibitive;
- 7) the mission of the City's collection changes and the piece is no longer consistent with that mission;
- 8) the site where the artwork is displayed is no longer accessible to the City;
- 9) the artwork was intended for temporary inclusion only;
- 10) the artwork is deemed duplicative; and
- 11) the artwork has been determined to lack aesthetic value to justify its continued upkeep.

The policy specifically prohibits the deaccession of a piece of artwork solely on the basis of content or personal preference of any staff, commission, or councilmembers, or a member of the public.

The work of art proposed for deaccessioning is an untitled mural by Danny Sheu and Jeff Bordona (Attachment 3 - Photograph of Untitled Mural). The ceramic tile mural was funded through the Parks Division (\$2,000) and developed during the 1998 State of the City event at Washington Park. The artists worked with neighborhood children to develop the imagery for the mural and the completed design was installed on the façade of the restroom building at Washington Park.

As part of the 2022 Washington Park restroom remodeling project, crews attempted to remove the mural from the building. However, the cement backer-board used during the original installation crumbled, breaking several of the hand-colored tiles. In addition, the piece has been on display on an exterior wall for 24 years, causing color fading in spots. Staff has determined that matching colors to try to repair the broken pieces would be labor intensive and costs for the repairs would exceed the original purchase price of \$2,000, at an estimated cost of \$3,000 to \$4,000. Additionally, the backer-board behind the undamaged parts of the mural is brittle and could result in additional damage if repair and reinstallation is attempted.

The mural is now considered damaged beyond repair by Arts Staff, with no monetary value (Attachment 4 - Photographs of Damaged Mural) and meets deaccession circumstance #6 "damage beyond repair and/or cost to repair is prohibitive."

Staff has contacted the artists regarding the damage and informed them that staff is requesting the mural be removed from the City's Permanent Art Collection.

If approved for deaccession, Staff will research the possibility of recycling the materials. If recycling is not feasible, the mural will be sent to the landfill.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no significant fiscal impact associated with the removal and disposal of the mural. There is no monetary value assigned to the mural any longer because the damages are considered irreparable.

There is a minimal staff cost associated with the deaccessioning process, however, this cost is included in the Art in Public Places budget. There is also a nominal annual savings in staff time associated with cleaning and maintaining the artwork.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend that Council approve the deaccession of the untitled ceramic mural by artists Danny Sheu and Jeff Bordona (1998) from the City's Permanent Art Collection consistent with criteria allowing deaccession when an artwork is damaged and repair is cost prohibitive.
2. Do not recommend that Council approve the deaccession of the untitled ceramic mural by artists Danny Shue and Jeff Bordona (1998) from the City's Permanent Art Collection and provide further recommendations to Council regarding the mural.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Recommend that Council approve the deaccession of the untitled ceramic mural by artists Danny Sheu and Jeff Bordona (1998) from the City's Permanent Art Collection consistent with criteria allowing deaccession when an artwork is damaged and repair is cost prohibitive.

Prepared by: Kristin Dance, Recreation Services Coordinator

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: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Reserved for Report to Council
2. Council Policy 6.4.4 - Art in Public Places
3. Photograph of Untitled Mural
4. Photographs of Damaged Mural