



City of Morgan Hill

Legislation Text

File #: 15-363, Version: 1

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: JUNE 17, 2015

PREPARED BY: Edith Ramirez, Economic Development Manager/Community Development
APPROVED BY: City Manager

GATEWAY ART PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Receive verbal update on Placemaking Activities.
2. Select Blessing Hancock's bicycle wheels sculpture for the Gateway Public Art Project.
3. Adopt a resolution approving a contract with Skyrim Studios Inc. for the design, fabrication and installation of a Gateway Art Project not to exceed \$75,000 and authorizing the City Manager to further negotiate, execute and administer the contract.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES, GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Ongoing Priorities

Enhancing public safety
Protecting the environment
Maintaining fiscal responsibility
Supporting youth
Preserving and cultivating public trust

2015 Focus Areas

Stimulate Economic Development
Impacts of Drought Conditions
Advance Downtown Revitalization
Community Engagement Effectiveness

REPORT NARRATIVE:

In 2014 the City Council approved the Downtown Placemaking Investment Strategy, which provides direction regarding the investment of former Redevelopment Agency bond proceeds in the Downtown area with the goal of making Morgan Hill's Downtown the most walkable, bike-friendly, urban, family-oriented, and transit oriented neighborhood in Morgan Hill. The Strategy identifies a number of public works improvements intended to transform Downtown into an interesting, vital, prosperous, and sustainable destination. These improvements include the redevelopment of the Downtown Opportunity Sites, the creation of two parks, a trail to the Nob Hill water tank, the construction of a parking structure with a robust art component and other streetscape improvements.

The Downtown Morgan Hill Placemaking Investment Strategy allocated funds toward art, lights, features and way finding for various features and amenities that enhance public spaces. The City of Morgan Hill, the El Toro Culture and Arts Committee (ETCAC), the Morgan Hill Library, and the Library, Culture and Arts Commission (LCAC) are collaborating with the City on the Gateway Public Art Project, which would provide permanent public art at highly visible gateway locations to enliven the landscape and enrich the fabric and culture of this community. The City has a budget of \$75,000 for one or multiple gateway art projects to be installed by December 31, 2015. In addition, the City is seeking a grant award for an additional \$75,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) "Our Town." If awarded, the total available budget for gateway art projects will be up to \$150,000. The LCAC on March 17, 2015 and the City Council on March 18, 2015 approved the Call for Artists, inviting professional artists, designers, and landscape architects, to submit qualifications. The Request for Qualifications was widely distributed amongst local and regional art organizations and placed on a "call for entry" website, a web-based service site designed for public art projects that allows posting and responding to RFQ/Ps. The Call for Artists was also widely publicized in the City's email blasts and on the City's website.

Ninety-six (96) applications were received by April 17, 2015. On April 24th, a Community Panel made up of representatives from LCAC, ETCAC, the Downtown Association, the Chamber of Commerce and City staff met to review all of the applications. Fourteen artists were selected and forwarded to the Selection Jury. On April 27th, a Selection Jury made up of representatives from LCAC, ETCAC, four art professionals and City staff selected eight artists to be invited to an interview on May 8th. The Selection Jury identified the following four artists to invite them to complete Concept Designs supported by \$1,000 Conceptual Design Agreements on June 8th.

Saori Ide	Sculpture	Berkeley	www.rideartstudio.com < http://www.rideartstudio.com/ >
Shan Shan Sheng	Sculpture	San Francisco	< http://www.shanshansheng.com >
Blessing Hancock	Light	Tucson, AZ	www.blessinghancock.com < http://www.blessinghancock.com/ >
Lisa Levine and Peter Tonningsen	Mural	Oakland	www.counterpointphoto.com < http://www.counterpointphoto.com/ >

On June 8, the Selection Jury interviewed the four finalists and based on the Selection Criteria identified in the RFQ, which included: artistic excellence, such as quality of artist(s) and materials; artistic merit, such as ability to catalyze a persuasive vision for enhancing the livability of the community; and ability to deliver the project on time and on budget, the Selection Jury selected Blessing Hancock from Tucson, Arizona to develop a Gateway Art Project.

The artist proposes an illuminated sculpture made up of bicycle wheels that will serve as an icon for the City and highlight the community's interest in sports, recreation and cycling. The sculpture will be approximately 20 feet long by 12 feet high and 3 feet in width. The frame will be made of painted stainless steel tubing while the infill will be made of painted, recycled or new bicycle wheels. The artwork will be illuminated with LED lighting. A more detailed description of the proposed project is detailed in Attachment A.

Staff recommends placing this artwork in the front lawn of the Community and Cultural Center (CCC) as this building is located at the entrance of the Downtown, functioning as a gateway location. Furthermore, staff is already planning on replacing the grass with other more drought tolerant materials, which could offer a perfect location for a large concrete pad for the structure.

Given the extremely tight schedule to select the artist, enter into contract, fabricate and install the project before the end of the 2015 calendar year, this recommendation is being presented to LCAC at a special meeting on June 16th and to the City Council meeting on June 17th.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Consult

Community engagement proposed for this project envisioned an active process that would involve the community and invite feedback early in the process. Staff issued a survey to help us better understand the type of art and desired location for the gateway art project. 325 responses were received in and information was shared with the Gateway Art Finalists. Attachment B includes the Gateway Art Community Survey results. Below are a few highlights from the survey:

- 73% rated art in Morgan Hill as Fair or Good.
- 77% percent felt art in Morgan Hill should be timeless.
- Most people identified Parks and Center Median as a place where they would like to see public art.
- People felt that the key roles of public art were to: beautify the community, celebrate history and character of the community, create neighborhood identity and inspire creativity.
- People's preference for art types were: murals, sculptures, street furniture, themed gardens, and fountains.
- Most people want to be involved with public art by attending a performance or a public art unveiling.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:

City Council may choose to accept the Selection Jury and staff's recommendation or may choose any of the following actions. An example of each is attached.

Artwork Selection:

1. Select Concept 1 by Blessing Hancock: Orchard-inspired sculpture that combines historic references, with community engagement and technology.
2. Select Concept 3 by Blessing Hancock: Peaches-inspired sculpture that encourages interactive play, and creative lounging.
3. Select Shan Shan Sheng's concept of lanterns made of steel and Venetian glass.
4. Select Saori Ide and Jonathan Russell's proposal of a "harmony" tree sculpture that represent's Morgan Hill's history, present and future. The sculpture has lighting and moves with the wind.
5. Select Lisa Levine and Peter Tonningsen's photographic panels in glass or tile that showcase Morgan Hill's beautiful landscape.

Location Alternatives:

1. Place artwork at 3rd and Monterey Rd.
2. Place artwork on Median Island along Monterey Road.
3. Place artwork on one of two future Downtown Parks along with other *bike hub* components.
4. Place artwork on Median Island along Butterfield Road.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSION ACTIONS:

On May 21, 2014, the City Council approved the Downtown Creative Placemaking Investment Strategy which identified Placemaking as a key component of the Downtown. On March 4, 2015 LCAC subcommittee members provided a verbal update on the Gateway Art Project to the Commission and scheduled a special meeting to receive a full report on March 17, 2015. On March 18, 2015, the City Council approved the Call for Artist and RFQ for the Gateway Art Project. On June 16, LCAC scheduled a special hearing to review Selection Jury recommendations for Gateway Art Project artist and artwork.

FISCAL AND RESOURCE IMPACT:

The Downtown Morgan Hill Placemaking Investment Strategy allocated \$500,000 to Art, lights, features and wayfinding from former RDA Downtown bond monies. The cost to proceed with the recommended Gateway Art Project is \$75,000 to be funded by Successor Agency Bond funds. Additionally, staff applied for a NEA grant of \$75,000, which if awarded, will grow the project budget to \$150,000 and provide the opportunity for two projects.

CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act):

Categorical Exemption

This proposed installation of an artwork piece would be categorically exempt under the provisions of CEQA, specifically pursuant to Section 15303 relating to and exempting new construction of one small structure.

LINKS/ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Attachment A-Blessing Hancock Artwork Proposal

Attachment B-Gateway Art Community Survey Results

Attachment C-Skyrim Studios Inc. Gateway Art Project Contract

Attachment D-Examples of other proposed artworks