



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Monday, July 18, 2022

TO: PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: ADRIANA FLORES, SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

SUBJECT: MOTION APPROVING PUBLIC ART ON HIGHWAY 152 (MAIN ST) AND
STATE ROUTE 129 AS PART OF THE CLEAN CALIFORNIA
PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

Two public art projects are included in the median improvements projects on Highways 152 and 129 in the CalTrans right of way, funded by the City of Watsonville and CalTrans through the Clean California program.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Parks & Recreation Commission approve:

1. The design for Public Art by artist Taylor Reinhold to be placed on the retaining wall on the north side of Highway 152/Main Street between Clifford Avenue and Pennsylvania Drive, and
2. The designs for Public Art on Utility Boxes submitted by Priscilla Martinez (two designs), Carrasco Concepts (two designs), Monterey Bay Murals (two designs), Nessa Ledesma (two designs) and Bruce Harman (one design).

DISCUSSION:

Background

Launched by Governor Newsom as part of his California Comeback Plan, Clean California is investing \$1.1 billion for State and local governments to clean up trash and debris statewide, beautify community gateways and public areas along highways, streets and roads, and to provide good jobs to thousands of Californians.

The State's Clean California program provides opportunities for local agencies to partner with Caltrans on improvements within State road right of way. State representatives have been working with City staff to identify ways to beautify portions of State Route 129 and 152 by improving existing median landscaping and irrigation facilities and installing art work.

This project will rejuvenate existing landscaping and hardscape in the highway medians in the City of Watsonville to create a more aesthetically pleasing downtown boulevard, enhance driver experience, improve neighborhood livability, and support local economic vitality.

Improvements include:

- New tree plantings along medians and side landscapes on Routes 152 and 129.
- Augment existing drought tolerant plant species already established and adapted to their current microclimate by reshaping/enhancing site conditions, removing dead and declining plants and adding colorful ground cover. New plant installations will be drought tolerant (Plant Factor of 0.3 and below).
- Installation of decomposed granite along border areas to give color contrast and aid in maintenance practices.
- Installations of new low water use irrigation conforming to Stage 2 water restrictions from the City of Watsonville. (Less than 40% of Reference Evapotranspiration).
- Installing multiple artistic features including mosaic medallions, a mural on the retaining wall between Progress Ave. and Clifford Ave. and painted utility boxes along SR129 and Hwy 152.

The project is scheduled to go out to bid late 2022 with construction due to begin early 2023.

Per the proposed Cooperative Agreement, Caltrans is the sponsor and implementing agency for the project, while the City is contributing a not to exceed amount of \$230,000 to be used to augment this project. Caltrans will design and construct the project that is estimated to cost \$1,256,745. Maintenance of the improvements and will continue to be performed by the City.

Public Art Component

As part of this project, the City of Watsonville received the opportunity to include public art on State Highways and Roads in our City. The City worked with Department of Transportation officials to identify locations where public art could be placed to add beauty to the City's most transited roads, Highway 152 - Main Street and State Route 129.

City Staff from Parks and Community Services and Public Works identified locations throughout these two routes and in the Caltrans right of way and identified a retaining wall on Highway 152 (Main St.) between Clifford Avenue and Pennsylvania Drive, as well as various utility boxes where murals could be placed.

To engage the local community, the City distributed a community input survey in June 2022.

Respondents of the survey favored the following for the retaining wall:

- Realistic representation style in the artwork
- The depiction of the natural world and the environment and the representation of the communities and cultures
- Bright and vibrant colors were found more appealing than cool tones or earth tones.

Respondents of the survey favored the following for the Utility Boxes:

- Both realistic representation and whimsical styles in the artwork
- Depiction of the natural world and the environment and art for art's sake
- Bright and vibrant colors were found more appealing than cool tones or earth tones.

On June 16, 2022, two Request for Proposals (RFP's) were released by the City putting out a call for artists to submit their proposals for both projects with a deadline of July 8, 2022. Five (5) proposals were received for the retaining wall project and six (6) proposals were received for the Utility Box Projects, many with various images proposed. On July 12, 2022, a committee comprised of one local artist, two Parks & Community Services Staff members, one member of a local arts organization and one Department of Transportation official met to review the proposals and select the images for the project.

The committee made the following recommendations:

- Retaining Wall Project: Taylor Reinhold's "Pajaro Pollination" Design. (Attachment A)
- Utility Boxes Project: Various Designs from Priscilla Martinez, Carrasco Concepts, Monterey Bay Murals, Nessa Ledesma and Bruce Harman. (Attachment B)

All of the artists received high ratings from the committee and were deemed to be capable of carrying the project forward successfully. All of the proposals included timelines, budgets and materials lists that were deemed appropriate for the project proposed and each of the proposals included adding a clear coat of protectant to the artwork.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total Project Cost Estimate is \$1,256,745.22. The City's share of this Cooperative Agreement is \$230,000, with CalTrans paying for the remainder. The art elements are included in the overall budget. Artists will be paid by the contractor for the overall project who will be hired by CalTrans.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The Commission could elect to:

1. Not to approve the images and that project would not move forward and the City would forgo the funding from the State.
2. Approve some, but not all images and the City would forgo the funding for associated those elements from the State.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

- Attachment A – Retaining Wall Project: Taylor Reinhold's "Pajaro Pollination" Design
- Attachment B – Utility Boxes Project: Various Designs from Priscilla Martinez, Carrasco Concepts, Monterey Bay Murals, Nessa Ledesma and Bruce Harman.