



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Monday, September 19, 2022

TO: PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: ADRIANA FLORES, SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

SUBJECT: MOTION APPROVING IMAGE FOR MOSAIC MEDALLION ON
HIGHWAY 152 (MAIN ST) AS PART OF THE CLEAN CALIFORNIA
PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

Approval of image as part of the Mosaic Medallion art project included in the median improvements projects on Highway 152 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 the new image as proposed by Artist Kathleen Crocetti or approve the image originally proposed during the meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission on August 15, 2022.

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, various utility boxes where murals could be placed and five (5) locations where mosaic medallions could be added to existing sidewalk.

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

Respondents of the survey favored the following for the mosaic medallions:

- Images to represent Filipino or Japanese people
- Images with more representation of indigenous people, and
- Diversity of and in our community

The artist for the mosaic medallions is Kathleen Crocetti, a well-known and established artist in the community. Kathleen has worked on various projects in the City including the "Celebrating the Dignity in Labor" project that celebrates the diverse people and cultures which helped shape agriculture in the Watsonville area. Five images were presented to the Parks & Recreation Commission at the meeting on August 15, 2022. Four of the five images were approved by the Commission. The image not approved represented the Japanese people and the struggle they endured during times of internment. The image was not approved as the Commission preferred that a more uplifting or positive image be proposed.

The new image, “White Sky, Falling Dragon”, is an adaptation from the playbill for **White Sky, Falling Dragon**, a play written by Steve “Spike” Wong, used with his permission. Mr. Wong is an English Teacher at Watsonville High School and the play is written about his father who served in the US Army Air Force during World War II. The play focuses on Chinese American culture, immigration, and military service during wartime.

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 either image and that project would not move forward and the City would forgo the funding from the State.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

- Attachment A – Memorial Park Mosaic Medallion image and location for Clean CA Program by Artist Kathleen Crocetti