



# Agenda Report

**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, April 16, 2026

**TO:** PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** PROJECT MANAGER PERALTA

**SUBJECT:** APPROVE PUBLIC ART APPLICATION FOR MOSAIC STAGE DESIGN  
AT THE WATSONVILLE CITY PLAZA

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## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the public art application for the mosaic stage design at the Watsonville City Plaza.

## DISCUSSION:

In May 2024, the contract with Community Arts & Empowerment for the creation of artwork, as part of the City Plaza Revitalization Project, was amended to include the creation and installation of art on the skirt of the new stage. The contract included, as part of this process, a release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to recruit artists for the development of the stage art design (see Attachment A). Three artists would be awarded \$500 stipends for creating preliminary designs and one artist would be selected and awarded an additional \$3,000 stipend to design the final stage art design. The final design would be fabricated at the Muzzio Mosaic Arts Center.

An RFQ was published on October 31, 2025, with a closing date of November 16, 2025. This call for artists was advertised on social media, the City's website, and email distribution lists. The requirements included a letter of interest and seven to ten images of previous work. The themes for this project were outlined as:

- Watsonville is a diverse community
- The Plaza is a central Gathering Place
- Promote public education and awareness about the City's downtown designation as a Cultural Arts District

A total of forty-seven (47) submissions were received and reviewed by the selection committee. Each submittal was scored individually by each member of the selection committee with local artists receiving an additional point. The selection committee included the following individuals:

Celeste DeWald: City of Watsonville Parks and Recreation Commissioner  
Emiko Stewart: City of Watsonville Parks and Recreation Commissioner  
Hilda Peralta: Project Manager, City of Watsonville  
Elizabeth Shea: Impact and Engagement Coordinator, City of Watsonville  
Kathleen Crocetti: Artistic and Executive Director Community Arts & Empowerment  
Dayanara Saucedo: Youth Intern, Community Arts & Empowerment

A total of four finalists (Three individuals and one team) were awarded a \$500 stipend to create preliminary designs as follows:

Team 1: Nessa Ledesma, Priscilla Martinez, Paul DeWorken, Mateo Gonzalez, Jessica Carrasco  
Artist 2: Jasmine Rocha-Ortiz  
Artist 3: Josefina Rocha  
Artist 4: Jessica Soriano

Artists were given one month to develop a preliminary design. A community outreach campaign was kicked off from February 14<sup>th</sup> to March 6<sup>th</sup> and included a survey with all the semi-finalist designs (Attachment B) to solicit community input. Community outreach strategies to promote the survey included social media posts, newsletter announcements, newspaper, email distribution lists, and weekly farmer's market outreach. A community meeting was held on February 24<sup>th</sup>, and each artist gave a presentation on their design.

A total of 796 community responses were received and tabulated. The selection committee convened to discuss the responses and evaluate the final designs based on the following criteria:

- Project theme
- Color & Vibrancy
- Mosaic Translatability
- Cultural Representation & Diversity
- Design Cohesion & Visual Flow
- Community Responses (positive, negative, strengths, concerns)

After careful review and discussion, the committee unanimously agreed to recommend the design "The Path We're On" from artist Jessica "Jess" Soriano for the selection of this project. The committee suggests a legend be installed near the final artwork to engage and educate the community about the symbols used in the design. Fabrication for this project is scheduled to take place from April to September 2026 with installation earmarked for Summer 2027 during Phase 2 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project.

Phase 1 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project is scheduled to begin in May 2026. During this time, the historic gazebo (bandstand) and fountain will be fully renovated.

Phase 2 of the City Plaza Revitalization Project will include the remaining scope of work such as the concrete stage, pavers, benches, picnic tables, new electrical system, and four art features. In early Fall 2026, this phase will go out to bid, and work is scheduled to begin in early 2027 for the duration of nine months.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

03-Infrastructure & Environment  
05-Community Engagement & Well-Being

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Funding is encumbered in Contract No. 2895 with Community Arts & Empowerment as follows:

PCS Admin Account Number 150-690-7361-00000.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

The Parks & Recreation Commission may choose to:

1. Approve the design (with changes)
2. Not approve the design

**ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

Attachment A: Stage Rendering

Attachment B: Submissions from Semi-Finalists