



Department Source: Cultural Affairs
To: City Council
From: City Manager & Staff
Council Meeting Date: October 1, 2018
Re: Resident Arts mural project

Executive Summary

The Office of Cultural Affairs and other city departments (Office of Sustainability, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works) are coordinating with Resident Arts to complete a mural project. An updated location of the tunnel wall along the MTK Trail, which passes beneath Elm Street has been selected.

The original proposal for the project was for the retaining wall on Old 63 South, and due to the additional planning time that would be needed for an appropriate special events operations agreement to be put together for that location, the alternate location has been selected in order for the mural to be completed within the proposed timeline.

The design proposal that has garnered much public input is still relevant to the tunnel location, as the design highlights the importance of science throughout our daily lives. In addition, the proposed mural design fits in with the Parks & Recreation plan for this tunnel, a theme that focuses on the environment and climate change.

Resident Arts has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Union of Concerned Scientists, a national nonprofit organization, which will completely fund this project. Initial planning for the mural started in the summer.

Discussion

Overview of Project

Local nonprofit organization Resident Arts plans to complete a mural on the tunnel wall along the MKT Trail, which passes beneath Elm Street. This alternate location from the originally proposed retaining wall on Old 63 South was selected due to additional planning time that would be needed for necessary operations agreement for initial site. Partners to complete this project are the city's Office of Cultural Affairs, Office of Sustainability, Parks & Recreation, and Public Works as well as the Hinkson Creek Watershed Restoration project. Resident Arts will be funding the completion of this project through grant funding from the Union of Concerned Scientists, a national nonprofit organization that chose six different public projects from across the country to award funds.

Resident Arts has successfully led other mural projects in Columbia with Parks & Recreation's MKT trail projects. The standard mural process they have utilized includes the following: information gathering from partners, hosting a community feedback session where community members can give feedback on the proposed design, design approval from stakeholders where stakeholders/partners can make final changes and approve the design,



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design transfer to wall using a gridding and scaling process, a community painting day where anyone at any skill level can assist in painting the mural with guidance from the mural team, mural painting and completion, and a public unveiling event where the public is invited to view the completed mural and partners are invited to share their thoughts on the process with the community at large.



[Past mural projects by Resident Arts on the MKT trail tunnels: Top image – “You Are the Seed, Columbia is the Soil, 2016; Bottom images – “Make a Brighter Future” 2017]

Initial planning for this project’s mural design began in the summer with discussions with the Office of Sustainability to gather information about the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan as well as connect with the Hinkson Creek Watershed Restoration Project. Based on information about our local initiatives, a preliminary design was created by Resident Arts.

Summary of Public Input

Multiple opportunities for public input have occurred for this mural. Resident Arts held a Community Feedback Session on August 8th, attended by over 30 members of the public. The first draft of the design was presented and those in attendance left comments about the design and asked questions. Based on that feedback, updates were made to the design.

An Interested Parties meeting was also held on August 22nd, attended by approximately 40 community members. The lead artist in the project, Madeleine LeMieux, answered questions about the mural design process and more feedback was received. Overwhelmingly, feedback was positive about the proposed design as well as the possibility of more murals being installed in Columbia. There were some concerns about potential distracted driving along the Old 63 corridor with the proposed design.



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A third public input session is scheduled for September 26th, so that community members residing in the area of the MKT trail tunnel will also have a chance to view the design and have questions answered about the project.

Design Proposal

The proposed design for the mural highlights the importance of science throughout our daily lives in ways we do not often think about. The City of Columbia's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan helped to identify several areas where our city is most vulnerable to changes in our climate. The design exists within the type of a quote by Marshall McLuhan, "There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth, we are all crew." (used with permission from the Estate of Marshall McLuhan). Inside the block letters of the quote, daily Columbia scenes are depicted, starting and ending with Columbia creeks system. As the design moves through each scene – in neighborhoods, parks, office buildings, city streets, community gardens, and farms – there are different touch points that highlight specific facts about how individuals in Columbia can reduce their carbon footprint.

The draft design proposal presented features photographs to represent the different types of scenes that will be depicted. These scenes will become painted illustrations on the final mural.

In addition, the proposed mural design fits in with the Parks & Recreation plan for this tunnel, a theme that focuses on the environment and climate change.



The proposal tunnel wall beneath Elm Street is approximately 109 feet long and 7 feet tall.



Agreement

Staff has prepared for Council consideration a public art cooperative agreement for the project. The Office of Cultural Affairs and Organizer (Resident Arts), have worked closely to develop plans and negotiate terms for an agreement to address the logistics for the overall mural project as well as the city's role in future maintenance.

Schedule of Project

If Council approves the project, Resident Arts will begin work on the mural project. A Community Painting Day is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 6, 2018 from 9:00am to 4:00pm. Members of the public can participate, as with past Community Painting Days on previously completed tunnel murals. The mural is planned to be completed by the end of November.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None.

Long-Term Impact: None.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Social Equity, Secondary Impact: Public Safety, Tertiary Impact: Economy

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Economic Development, Tertiary Impact: Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Legislative History

Date	Action
May 2, 2016	Report: C.A.R.E. Art Gallery Program—MKT Trail Mural Corridor https://www.como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=21313
August 6, 2018	Report: Old 63 Mural

Suggested Council Action

If Council agrees, city staff recommends approval of the resolution as proposed.