



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: May 2, 2016

Re: Council Report: C.A.R.E. Art Gallery Program—MKT Trail Mural Corridor

Executive Summary

The Columbia Parks & Recreation Department and the Career Awareness Related Experience (C.A.R.E.) Art Gallery are proposing to create a MKT Trail Mural Corridor made up of various themed wall murals on the MKT Trail underpass tunnels at Flat Branch Park and along Flat Branch Creek. These collaborative community-based murals will involve numerous partners. Phase I will be supervised by the 2016 C.A.R.E. Visiting Artist, Madeleine LeMieux, who has extensive experience in urban murals. The complete project will be phased over several years with up to eight potential mural sites along Flat Branch. Each wall and related mural will be a stand-alone work of public art addressing independent issues that will relate to each other through two veins of imagery: culture and nature. Work is expected to begin on Phase I this summer and is funded out of the FY-2016 C.A.R.E. Art Gallery operating budget.

Discussion

C.A.R.E. Program

The City of Columbia's Career Awareness Related Experience (C.A.R.E.) program's goal is for Columbia's youth to be ready to enter the workforce and become productive, self-sufficient citizens. Since 1982, the C.A.R.E. program has provided comprehensive services for Columbia's at-risk youth that include:

- job readiness training
- paid real-world, hands-on work experience
- mentoring

The C.A.R.E. program hires at-risk 14- to 20-year-olds who live in the city of Columbia, MO and/or attend a Columbia, MO school and places them at local businesses where they gain much needed real-world, hands-on work experience while getting paid. One hundred percent of the trainees' wages are paid by C.A.R.E., which is administered through the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department.

High-risk teenagers face many barriers to joining the labor force, especially in Columbia, MO because of substantial competition from thousands of college students for the available entry-level jobs. Lack of job readiness skills, employment experience, positive adult role



models, career exposure, and life skills training can lead to adolescents being unemployed and/or underemployed, which can lead to increased:

- truancy and high school dropout rates
- emotional problems
- crime
- adolescent pregnancy
- alcoholism/drug addiction
- dependence upon government assistance

The following are highlights of the program from FY 2015:

- C.A.R.E. Summer Work Program
 - 460 applicants
 - 169 hired
 - 160 successfully completed the program (95%)
 - 99 partnering local businesses and work sites
- School Year Work Program
 - 227 applicants
 - 56 hired
- Boone County Family Resource Collaboration (funded by BCFR)
 - 10 trainees

C.A.R.E. Art Gallery

The C.A.R.E. Art Gallery, which began in 2000, serves as a visual arts work site for the C.A.R.E. program. During the summer, approximately 15 creative youth are employed as artists and gain paid real-world, hands-on work experience. Each summer, Art Gallery trainees work 20 hours per week for eight weeks training with professional visiting artists, creating art, and developing their own professional skills.

Art Gallery trainees learn artistic techniques in a variety of media and create their own artwork. In this program, a strong emphasis is placed on mentoring the teens and helping them build the skills they need to be successful in life, in the workplace, and in the arts.

Each summer, teens work with six different professional artists, each of whom teach them an art medium that gives them the opportunity to develop their unique artistic skills. The teens then plan and prepare an end of the summer art gallery show where they exhibit their work.

In addition, each summer, Art Gallery trainees participate in many community outreach events. This summer, most notably will be the Flat Branch Park Underpass Wall Murals Project.

The following are highlights of the Art Gallery program for FY 2015:

- 36 applicants
- 18 hired



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Visiting Artist, Madeleine LeMieux

Madeleine LeMieux is a nationally exhibited artist and decorated arts administrator. She received her BFA with an emphasis in Art History, Theory, and Criticism from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007 and her MA in Visual Arts Administration from New York University in 2011.

In 2014, LeMieux founded Resident Arts (1023 East Walnut #3, Columbia, MO 65201), an organization that aims to help artists of all ages reach their professional goals. She currently serves on the Columbia Visioning Commission and as board Treasurer of the North Village Arts District. LeMieux was recently honored as The Columbia Business Times "Class of 2016 - 20 Under 40" and is the Office of Cultural Affairs 2016 Traffic Box artist.

LeMieux has been working with communities to create murals since 2003, including her work in New York City with Groundswell, an internationally acclaimed organization that works with local groups to create public murals. This summer, she will be the visiting artist in charge of the Flat Branch Park Underpass Wall Murals Project.

Flat Branch Park Underpass Wall Murals Project

Bridge and underpass tunnel walls, unfortunately, are often targets for graffiti and vandalism, and Flat Branch Park is a prime target. Research on graffiti prevention techniques indicate that murals act as a deterrent to graffiti and create a more hospitable environment for park and trail users.

Parks and Recreation staff is proposing to create a MKT Trail Mural Corridor starting with a mural on one wall of the Locust Street tunnel at Flat Branch Park. If the program is successful in preventing graffiti, it may be expanded to other walls along the underpasses of the MKT Trail at Locust, Elm, Providence, and Stewart Streets. Each mural will serve to create a conversation among partnering agencies and their constituents about shared needs, interests, and concerns of the surrounding community. Collaborative murals build community investment in the locations where they are created, and deter vandalism by engaging the public in the stewardship of the walls.

The project will begin this summer and will be supervised by C.A.R.E. staff, including visiting artist Madeleine LeMieux. Each mural will have a stand-alone theme that will be determined through a collaboration of community partners and stakeholders. Potential partners and participants include the C.A.R.E. program, Resident Arts, Islamic Center of Central Missouri, Lutheran Child and Family Services, OCA, CVB, Lucky's Market, Parks & Recreation, Cultural Arts, The District, and others.

The first phase of the MKT Trail Mural Corridor will be funded by the C.A.R.E. Art Gallery operating budget and is scheduled to begin this summer.



Phase 1: Funded by FY 2016 C.A.R.E. Art Gallery Operating Budget

Locust Street - wall facing west and end supporting wall



Scheduling and funding of future phases is undetermined at this time. The cost of each phase is about \$6,000, which includes the cost of the visiting artist, C.A.R.E. artists' salaries, and materials. Possible future funding sources include the C.A.R.E. Art Gallery operating budget, sponsorships, partnerships, donations, grants, or other types of funding.

Phase 2: Unfunded

Entrance to mural corridor: wall facing west, north of Locust underpass



Phase 3 and 4: Unfunded

Elm Street underpass - east and west walls





Phase 5 and 6: Unfunded

Providence Road underpass - east and west walls



Phase 7 and 8: Unfunded

Stewart Road underpass - east and west walls



Mural Themes: Each mural will reflect a theme as established by the stakeholders, visiting artist and C.A.R.E. Art Gallery trainees. Although the themes have not yet been selected, listed below are potential themes with possible imagery, as proposed by the C.A.R.E. Art Gallery:

1. *"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."* Mahatma Gandhi. Personal empowerment to change one's environment.
Potential Imagery: vignettes of close up portraits of local community heroes, their faces made up of nature imagery and surrounded by imagery related to their work in the community.
2. *"Nature is our shared identity."* Celebrating a shared interest in nature and it's stewardship
Potential imagery: various types of people farming, working in various environmental stewardship jobs: caring for plants, animals, waterways and parks; kids and families enjoying the fruits of shared work food from farmers; fresh water from water works; playing in parks; etc.



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4. *"Plant the seeds."* The planting of cultural and natural seeds.
Potential imagery: workers planting and sowing seeds, theme text, cultural seeds, i.e., various philosophical/archetypical imagery, plants, and flowers blooming into conceptual "seeds" like knowledge, kindness, responsibility, community, etc.
5. *"We are all one family."* Cultural awareness, diversity, cross-cultural understanding
Potential imagery: families of various cultures, colors, and abilities bound together through interests and activities and through their love of the earth.
6. *"Nature is everyone's home."* Growth and nature, community investment, environmental stewardship.
Potential imagery: portraits of people who have influenced environmental history: potential examples: Richard Nixon (founded EPA), Woodrow Wilson (founded National Park Service), George Washington Carver (developed crop rotation), Vandana Shiva (seed freedom activist)
7. *"Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged"* – Rumi. Culture is what makes us unique, celebrating cultural diversity.
Potential imagery: vignettes of characters of various cultural identities displaying their cultural differences in clothing, lifestyles, and iconographic materials, flowering vines weaving in and out of vignettes.
8. *"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend"* Martin Luther King, Jr. History of Stewart Rd. and James T. Scott combatting racial intolerance.
Potential imagery: chain of nonracial figures (bright colors/patterns) lifting one another from the ground, and above their heads to float to the sky, all hands bound together in flowers.

All completed murals will include brief description of project, stakeholder recognition, sponsor recognition, and lead/teen artist recognition. Following the completion of each mural, a press conference/public unveiling event will be held and will include city officials, members of partnering organizations, sponsors, C.A.R.E. trainees, family and friends, and community residents.

Phase I is scheduled for summer 2016. Future phases of the project are unfunded.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None

Long-Term Impact: None

Vision & Strategic Plan Impact

Vision Impacts:

Primary Impact: Parks, Recreation & Greenways, Secondary Impact: Arts & Culture, Tertiary Impact: Community Character



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Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Social Equity, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

No council action is required. If there is no objection, staff will proceed with Phase I of the MKT Trail Mural Corridor project.