



701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

## Council Memo

Department Source: Cultural Affairs

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: May 18, 2026

Re: Artist agreement with Matt Moyer for public art project in Flat Branch Park

Impacted Ward: Ward 1

### Executive Summary

The City's Parks and Recreation department is overseeing the expansion project for Flat Branch Park, which will connect the intersection of Providence Road and Broadway to the park via a bridge over the Flat Branch Creek. As part of the expansion project, funding has been set aside for a permanent public artwork, and the Office of Cultural Affairs is working with Parks and Recreation on the artwork component. The Standing Committee on Public Art chose local artist Matt Moyer to create a heart-themed public art for the park. The artist selection was approved by the Commission on Cultural Affairs at its April 13, 2026 meeting. The Committee and Commission are now seeking City Council approval on the contract agreement so the artist can begin work on the design proposal.

### Discussion

Parks and Recreation is overseeing the expansion project for Flat Branch Park, which will connect the intersection of Providence Road and Broadway to the park via a pedestrian bridge over the Flat Branch Creek. The project continues the City's efforts to revitalize this area of downtown Columbia and clean up the creek. There is an opportunity for permanent public art in the park, in a location that has been designated just to the east of the new pedestrian bridge. The art project will be focused on a positive heart-related theme such as "strong heart," "brave heart," "kind at heart," "heart health," or "heart forward." The location of the art will also include a 18' x 24' plaque (or smaller) in remembrance of Justin Gay. Justin was a long-time Emery Sapp & Sons employee that tragically passed away in 2021 due to cardiac arrest. A large portion of the Flat Branch Park expansion project was funded by Emery Sapp & Sons in honor of Justin. The City's desire to have a positive heart-related theme coincides with honoring Justin and promotion of good heart health.

A request for qualifications was issued in January 2026, and Missouri artists submitted applications to be considered for the public art project. The Commission on Cultural Affairs unanimously approved the Standing Committee on Public Art's recommendation of Matt Moyer as the chosen artist for the Flat Branch Park expansion project. Mr. Moyer was selected from two Missouri-based artists finalists who were interviewed by the Standing Committee on Public Art in March 2026.

Mr. Moyer is a professional artist from Columbia who earned an MFA in ceramics with a minor in sculpture from the University of Missouri. As a sculptor, his work is firmly rooted within

traditional craft and all facets of his creative work have a decidedly industrial sensibility. He has extensively exhibited his public sculptures across the Midwest as well as other areas of the United States.

For this selection process, the Standing Committee on Public Art reviewed applications received from Missouri artists. Two finalists were selected for interviews with the committee, with Matt Moyer recommended as the artist to move forward with the project. The Commission on Cultural Affairs approved this recommendation at its April 13, 2026 meeting.

To advance the project forward, Council approval is needed to authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with the artist. Once the contract is signed, Mr. Moyer will start work on a design proposal. His design will go through the same approval process as the artist selection has: from Standing Committee on Public Art to the Commission on Cultural Affairs to City Council. There will also be a public comment period on the design ahead of those public meetings, which provides additional opportunities for public engagement.

**Fiscal Impact**

Short-Term Impact: \$20,000 – total artist commission for the project. This amount includes all services rendered by the artist to design, execute, fabricate, deliver and install the work. Funding is incorporated into the Parks & Recreation Department's project budget for the Flat Branch Park expansion.  
 Long-Term Impact: N/A

**Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact**

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Resilient Economy, Secondary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Tertiary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Economic Development, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

**Legislative History**

Date	Action
11/18/24	<a href="#">R208-24</a> : Authorizing a contract with Emery Sapp & Sons, Inc. for construction and installation of a pedestrian bridge in Flat Branch Park.
2/6/23	<a href="#">B19-23</a> : Authorizing the fabrication and installation of a bridge across Flat Branch Creek as part of the Flat Branch Park

Date	Action
9/19/22	<p>expansion park; providing for the fabrication and installation of the improvement using a design/build contract.</p> <p><a href="#">B263-22</a>: Amending the FY 2022 Annual Budget by appropriating donated funds to offset costs associated with the purchase of a bridge as part of the Flat Branch Park expansion project.</p>
3/15/21	<p><a href="#">B95-21</a>: Authorizing construction of the Flat Branch Park expansion project to include site reclamation, building demolition, installation of sidewalks, stairs, retaining walls, lighting and landscaping, and restoration of the creek bank; calling for bids for a portion of the project through the Purchasing Division; amending the FY 2021 Annual Budget by appropriating funds.</p>
12/7/20	<p><a href="#">B332-20</a>: Authorizing a Lease Agreement with Downtown Community Improvement District (CID) for Development of the Gateway Plaza and Approving Flat Branch Park Master Plan.</p>
10/21/19	<p><a href="#">B316-19</a>: Construction of a right turn lane and sidewalk on SE Corner of Providence and Broadway.</p>
6/3/19	<p><a href="#">REP54-19</a>: Flat Branch Park Expansion Compromise Plan.</p>
5/6/19	<p><a href="#">PH19-19</a>: Public Hearing: Consider proposed options for Flat Branch Park Expansion and Master Plan.</p>
10/17/16	<p><a href="#">B273-16</a>: Acquisition of property at 32 S. Providence Rd from Roth Properties, LLP.</p>

**Suggested Council Action**

Approve the legislation authorizing the City Manager to sign a contract with Matt Moyer for the Flat Branch Park Public Art Project.