



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: See below

DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Council District: 5

SUBJECT: Artist Carlos Rodriguez's Concept & Design Proposal for the mural project at Plata Arroyo Park.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and take action on artist Carlos Rodriguez's Concept & Design Proposal for the mural project at Plata Arroyo Park.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: March 22, 2023

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$35,000

LOCATION: Plata Arroyo Park, King Road and McKee Road, San José, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project is a mural that is to be painted on an exterior of an existing restroom building at Plata Arroyo Park. The restroom is centrally located within the park, and a mural in this location would enhance the experiences of park visitors, especially the youth who frequent the adjacent skate park, and may help to remediate/reduce tagging in the area.

Plata Arroyo Park is a 10.6 acre triangular-shaped park at the corner of King Road and McKee Road with a skate park, playground, exercise machines, basketball courts, BBQ area and picnic tables, and a large grass field. Lower Silver Creek runs along the North-East border of the park. The restroom building was reconstructed in 2022 and repairs to the interior were completed in early 2023. It has approximately 706 square feet of paintable surface on the four sides of the building including the privacy fences.

San José artist Carlos Rodriguez was the Public Art Core Team's recommendation for this project. Rodriguez was chosen for his style of painting, which is colorful, vibrant, playful, and highly detailed. The panel felt his range of style and approach were an excellent choice for this location. As an artist who grew up in the Plata Arroyo neighborhood, his connection to the community was of particular interest as was his ability to paint compositions with realistic figures and meaningful symbology.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN PROPOSAL

Carlos Rodriguez's complex and layered mural design features four distinct murals on each side of the building, unified by design elements and lettering inspired by vintage cannery labels. "Plata Arroyo" and "San Jose" will be painted in bold lettering on the west side of the building that faces King Road. Decorative borders composed of leaves and roses will surround the words, serving as a place marker for visitors to the park. On the north side of the building, Rodriguez's composition features scenes rendered in black and white that depict the history of past generations and honor the work of Cesar Chavez. Conceptually, it represents the hard labor endured by workers to

provide new paths of empowerment. These vignettes are surrounded by colorful borders and images of fruit, another reference to the neighborhood’s agricultural past. On the east side of the building, Rodriguez depicts the past and present Plata Arroyo neighborhood, inspired by Lower Silver Creek that runs along the northside of the park. A young boy stands holding an Ohlone basket, surrounded by a coyote, hawk, owl, turtles, hummingbird, and a woodpecker—all these animals are part of the Ohlone creation story. About this composition, the artist states “this is the heart of Plata Arroyo.” In one of the circular elements, young children are playing and catching crawdads in the river, a memory shared by many community members who attended the visioning meeting with the artist. On the south side of the building, Rodriguez shifts from warm to cool tones in his dynamic composition of the youth that hang out at the skatepark that they call “Plata.” The artist met with community members who provided inspiration for the design. Rodriguez’s design encapsulates the intergenerational histories of the Plata Arroyo neighborhood and transforms the humble restroom building to a place with dignity.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A Public Art Core Team comprised of community members, artists, and arts professionals. The Team includes:

Andrew Espino	Arts Professional, 1Culture Gallery and City of San José resident
Danny Garza	D-5 Community Member
Jeffrey Gomez	Parks Manager - Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS)
Rojana Ibarra	Art Education Program Manager, School of Arts & Culture; Artist; and D-5 Community member
Arturo Munoz	Artist and Poet
Joe Nieto	D-5 Community Member
Ruthie K. Yamada	Artist and City of San José resident

Staff from the District 5 Council Office and Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS) have been engaged in the project development since its inception. These include Angel Madero, Chief of Staff, and Olympia Williams, MPA I Division Manager, PRNS.

Meetings held in conjunction with this project:

Date	What	Purpose	Location	Convener
03/22/23	Public Art Core Team meeting	Selection of an artist for the project.	Online via Zoom	SJPA
08/30/23	Key stakeholder meeting	“Meet the Artist” meeting visioning and ideas	On site at Mayfair CC	SJPA
09/22/23	Key stakeholder meeting	Artist’s presentation to PACT of concept design proposal	Hybrid – on site at Mayfair CC and online via Zoom	SJPA
09/22/23	Key stakeholder meeting	Artist’s presentation to General Public for community feedback	Hybrid – on site at Mayfair CC and online via Zoom	SJPA

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director