



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: See below

DATE: January 20, 2024

Council District: 3

SUBJECT: Artist Desi Mundo's Concept & Design Proposal for the mural project at Washington Community Center

RECOMMENDATION: Review and take action on artist Desi Mundo's Concept & Design Proposal for the mural project at Washington Community Center.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: February 28, 2023

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$60,000

LOCATION: Washington Community Center, 921 S. 1st St., San José, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project is a mural that is to be painted on an exterior wall at Washington Community Center. Initially, the mural location was planned for the exterior wall that faces Brenda Lopez Memorial Plaza and a tree-lined pedestrian walkway between Oak Street and Edwards Avenue, however, the mural location was changed to the North side of the building (facing Oak Street) due to requests from community members at outreach meetings. The community center is adjacent to Biblioteca Latinoamericana and Washington Elementary School. The mural is intended to move the community forward after the loss of a highly-valued mural across the street on private property that a developer plans to remove and that the City made numerous attempts to convince the developer to retain. This area has also had a history of tagging, and the goal is for this mural to help remediate/reduce tagging and to help beautify the neighborhood.

The Washington Community Center is in the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood of central San José, located just south of Downtown San José. It is one of San José's most historic Chicano/Mexican-American districts. The portion of Willow Street that passes through the district makes up the Calle Willow business district, made up primarily of Spanish-speaking businesses. It is designated by the city as a historic conservation area, owing to the high number of historic of buildings exemplifying 19th and early 20th century architecture.

Bay Area artist Desi Mundo was the Public Art Core Team's recommendation for this project. Mundo was chosen for his style of painting which employs a rich use of colors and skillful representation of figures and images in a range of settings. The panel felt his style and approach to work were an excellent choice for this location. His skill at portraiture was of particular interest as was his ability to suggest ideas of narratives in his works.

CONCEPT AND DESIGN PROPOSAL

Desi Mundo’s vibrant and colorful mural design on the North side of the community center features several figures unified by the word “Flor” written in his distinct lettering style. The title of the mural is “Flor de Barrio” or *Neighborhood Flower*. The main themes in this mural are honoring history, community healing, and showcasing different pathways to success. The background features a serape in sunset colors with images of marigolds and roses. A single hummingbird flies above the rose, an important animal in the Ohlone creation myth.

On the left side of the mural, a man reaches toward apricots and grapes, a nod to cannery workers and the agricultural industry that shaped the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood. Next to this farmworker are two food vendors with carts, and a woman holding a broom in the air - a reference to the Justice for Janitors campaign in the 1990s. These figures represent the past and present members of the Guadalupe-Washington community. In the center of the mural, a sepia-toned male figure has an Ohlone girl tattoo on his arm. She is positioned above the Mission Santa Clara de Asís and rows of barb wire refer to the Spanish colonization of the indigenous Thamien (Ohlone) communities. An Ohlone girl in colorful regalia contrasts with the tattooed arm, representing past and present conversations with history. Behind this male figure, a Pachuco man in a zoot suit stands next to his car, a symbol of self-made success. A folklorico dancer twirls her bright green dress on the right side of the mural, above an older woman and a young girl cooking together. These figures are examples of education outside of the classroom.

The artist met with community members who provided inspiration for the design. Mundo’s design encapsulates the intergenerational histories of the Guadalupe-Washington neighborhood.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

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

Rosalinda Aguilar	Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood Association
Carlos Barba Iniguez	Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood Association
The late Dr. Dan Coleman	Director, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County at Washington Youth Community Center
Samantha Hull	Arts Professional, DeSaisset Museum, and D-3 Resident
Elizabeth Jiménez-Montelongo	Artist and Poet
Steven Martinez	Artist and D-3 Resident

Staff from the District 3 Council Office have been engaged in the project development since its inception. These include Kiara Kassandra, Chief of Staff; Daniela Velazquez, Council Policy and Legislative Analyst; and Diego Martinez, (former) Community Relations Coordinator.

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Meetings held in conjunction with this project:

Date	What	Purpose	Location	Convener
02/28/23	Public Art Core Team meeting	Selection of an artist for the project	Online via Zoom	SJPA
05/19/23	Neighborhood Tour	Walking Tour of Calle Willow with members of Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood Association (GWNA)	On site in Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood	SJPA
06/15/23	Key stakeholder meeting	“Meet the Artist” visioning meeting	On site at Biblioteca Latinoamericana	SJPA
06/20/23	1-on-1 Interviews	Interviews with Councilmember Omar Torres and residents of Guadalupe-Washington Neighborhood	Online via Zoom	SJPA
11/16/23	Youth Workshop	“Meet the Artist” meeting, input on mural concept design	On site at Washington Community Center	SJPA
12/4/23	Public Art Core Team meeting	Input on mural concept design	Online via Zoom	SJPA
12/12/23	Key stakeholder meeting	Community input on mural concept design	On site at Biblioteca Latinoamericana	SJPA

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director