



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 20, 2024

Council Districts: 8

SUBJECT: Approval and recommendation to VTA of design development proposal by artists Laura Haddad and Tom Dragan for the VTA Light Rail at Eastridge Station.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: August 15, 2022

DATE OF CONCEPT DESIGN PROPOSAL: October 3, 2023

ARTWORK BUDGET PER CONTRACT: \$450,000 (Project funding provided by VTA)

LOCATION: Eastridge to BART Regional Connector Light Rail Station at Eastridge Station

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Background:

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) has engaged the San José Public Art Program to manage artists/artist-led teams for the design, fabrication, delivery, and installation of two signature enhancement opportunities associated with a new 2.4-mile light rail extension in East San José.

Eastridge to BART Regional Connector (EBRC) is the last phase of the larger Capitol Expressway Transit Improvement Project that transforms San José's Capitol Expressway into a multi-modal boulevard offering Bus Rapid Transit, light rail transit, and safe connections to the regional transit system. The new light rail line will extend from the Alum Rock Station (on Capitol Avenue) to the Eastridge Transit Center (on Capitol Expressway). When complete, VTA riders will be able to board light rail at the Eastridge Station, and connect directly with BART at Milpitas Station, the northernmost BART station in Santa Clara County.

Public Art will be an important feature of the EBRC Project distinguishing VTA as a visible and significant part of the city landscape. Public Art will also contribute to the vibrancy of the cityscape, promote neighborhood pride by strengthening the unique character of the individual stations as landmarks, create engaging experiences for pedestrians and transit users, and reinforce intuitive wayfinding.

In July 2021, artists Laura Haddad and Tom Drugan were selected for the Eastridge Station public art commission. In January 2023, at two on-line community meetings (one in English and the other in Spanish) hosted by VTA, the artists met stakeholders to introduce themselves and learn about stakeholder priorities, values, and inspirations. Prior to that the artists visited San José to meet with the base project team, investigate the project site, and spend time at many of the landmarks discussed at the community meeting.

Artwork Concept

The artists' concept proposed for the site is an abstract sculpture inspired by East San Jose's community celebrations, car culture, agricultural history, natural environment, and quality of light. Titled *Radiance* the sculpture is a metaphoric graft of aspects of Eastridge's surrounding community in which its diverse cultures and landscapes come together to form a radiant whole.

Radiance is centrally located at the nexus of the train station, bus terminal, park-and-ride, staircase leading to the light rail platform, and other pedestrian trails. The sculpture is composed of the following elements:

- **Lower Arbor:** Sixteen 2"-diameter curving stainless steel pipes rise out of the ground to form a welcoming portal shaped to suggest a soft heart and/or moon. The sculptural detail of the pipes that form the arbor has associations with contemporary images like circuitry and conduits as well as classic car grills and hot rod mufflers. The bead blasted finish on the portal will glisten in sunlight. Because the lower arbor pipes are angled as they emerge from the paving, caning rails are required on the two outside edges of the sculpture.
- **Upper Branches:** Crowning the arbor is an organic composition of shining branch-like rods, refractive prisms, and luminous colored fins suggesting leaves and sun rays which create a halo of color and light over the arbor. The branches are made from 1"-diameter stainless steel pipe welded into branching forms and finished with a reflective polish that will sparkle in sunlight. Many of the branches terminate with clear acrylic triangular prisms that will reflect sunlight into color spectrums. Polycarbonate fins, arranged in a color fade through five shades of orange and gold, are attached to the branches with small bolts.
- **Pinstripe Paving:** A paving element west of the sculpture creates a welcome carpet for those approaching from the west. From the platform, the sculpture frames the view of the paving, causing their curvilinear forms to coalesce. The pattern, created with stainless steel and bronze inlays, set flush with the plaza paving, is an ornate pinstriping pattern inspired by the creative designs made popular by the lowrider car customization. Its long arcing forms also tie into the crescent-shaped planters existing at the plaza.

The sculpture changes in appearance as people move around and through it. When viewed from the front, its lower arbor pipes form a subtle heart shape. Viewed diagonally, they form a moon-like ellipse. Viewed from the side, the vertical arbor pipes with the matrix on top suggest a grove of trees. Standing beneath the sculpture will be like looking up into a tree canopy of fruit and flowers. Walking through the sculpture is intended to be a small moment of magic.

As this is a VTA project, long term maintenance, and any costs associated with repair or conservation of these artworks will be the responsibility of VTA.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

On April 26, 2021, an RFQ was released locally and nationally via Western States Arts Federation Call for Entry platform, CaFÉ™. In addition, Public Art staff through national and regional public art organizations announced the RFQ, and nominations were solicited from arts professionals nationally. To further activate attention, staff contacted over 400 individual artists regarding the opportunity.

In addition to artist outreach, the Artist Selection Panel was a diverse group of stakeholders representing the respected arts professionals, local artists, and community representatives as follows:

Mayen Alcantara	Senior Manager at Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority https://www.linkedin.com/in/mayen-alcantara-98463a1b/
Claudia Guadagne	Principal Architect and Strategic Advisor, FMG Architects https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudia-guadagne-5140327/
Walter Hood	Artist, landscape designer, and founder and creative director of Hood Design Studio, Oakland. http://www.hooddesignstudio.com/
Rachel Lui	Representing District 8, Visual Artist, San José https://www.rachelliu.com/index/G0000mCzwzyqu8Wk
Edgar Ochoa	Representing District 5, Community Engagement Program Manager, School of Arts and Culture at The Mexican Heritage Plaza, San José. https://www.linkedin.com/in/edgarxchoa/
Amy Trachtenberg	Artist, San Francisco https://amytrachtenberg.com/

Joining the panel for the shortlist process

Hassan Basma	Transportation Engineering Manager, Valley Transportation Authority
Kathleen Podrasky	Supervisor, Community Outreach and Public Engagement, Valley Transportation Authority
Ken Ronsse	Deputy Director, Engineering and Construction, Valley Transportation Authority
Mary Rubin	Senior Public Art Project Manager, San José Public Art Program
Michael Ogilvie	Director of Public Art, San José Public Art Program

Public meetings held in conjunction with this project:

<u>Date</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Convener</u>
7/2/21	Artist Short List meeting	Artist Selection	Virtual Meeting	SJPA
8/11/21	Artist Interviews	Artist Selection	Virtual Meeting	SJPA
8/25/21	Stakeholder Working Group	Public Art Overview Briefing.	Virtual Meeting	VTA
1/9/23	Community Meeting (English)	Introduce the artist and visioning input	Virtual Meeting	VTA
1/11/23	Community Meeting (Spanish)	Introduce the artist and visioning input	Virtual Meeting	VTA
4/27/23	Core team review	Selection panel concept review	Virtual Meeting	SJPA
8/31/23	Community Concept Review (English)	Stakeholders review of artist proposal	Virtual Meeting	VTA
8/31/23	Community Concept Review (Spanish)	Stakeholders review of artist proposal	Virtual Meeting	VTA
10/3/23	PAC meeting	PAC review of Concept Proposal	Hybrid meeting online via zoom and 200 E. Santa Clara, San José	SJPA

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director