



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: Michael Ogilvie

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: August 29, 2018

Council District: Citywide

**SUBJECT: AMENDED MINETA SAN JOSE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ART
ACTIVATION STRATEGY BY GORBET DESIGN INC.**

RECOMMENDATION

Review and take action to approve the Amended Art Activation Strategy for Mineta San Jose International Airport's Public Art + Technology Program by Gorbet Design. The proposal addresses funding approved as part of the Capital Improvement Projects Art in Public Places workplan for 2019-2023.

BACKGROUND

The Public Art Program for the San Jose Airport was conceived as a "unified program of Art + Technology" giving travelers an immediate sense that they had landed in Silicon Valley, a global center for innovation. The Art + Technology program is fully integrated into the architecture and design of the airport's Terminal B, influencing the terminal's structural, interior and IT design, and has transformed the exterior of the ConRAC garage, the front door to the airport.

The foundation of the Art & Technology program is an Arts Activation Plan that was developed from 2005 – 2008, by Gorbet+Banerjee, a multi-disciplinary team that works at the leading edge of technology research, computer science, architecture, mechanical engineering, product design, and media arts and science. Over the 3 years, Gorbet+Banerjee undertook extensive research to create an Arts Activation proposal. They met with Airport staff, toured the airport facilities, interviewed airport users in San Jose and other airports, and conducted one artist focus group and four community meetings. Based on that process the Airport Art + Technology Program took a landmark approach to public art implementing an "Art Activation Strategy" that operationalized the Master Plan's vision. The \$8.4 million program was designed to be a platform for ongoing creative innovation. It called for integrating flexible technological and networked "platforms" throughout the new terminal to accommodate long-term, permanent anchor artworks, and two-year short-term rotating art installations.

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Flexible Platforms were strategically sited throughout Terminal B both in the pre-security areas and in the secure area of the concourse.

When Terminal B opened in 2010, three permanently-sited artworks were installed. Also included in the opening commissions were nine temporary technology-based artworks that worked with the pre-established Flexible Platforms. These temporary commissions were to be rotated out and replaced by other artworks in two years. Several of the projects involved partnerships with Silicon Valley-based technology and cultural institutions.

Pursuant to the rotating program, a \$3 million budget was set aside as seed funding to stimulate strategic partnerships to support the ongoing commissioning of a rotating program of artworks responding to current technologies developed in Silicon Valley. In May 2010, to address the financial situation at the Airport from the impacts of the recession and the debt from the Terminal Area Improvement Area Program, City Council approved an ordinance deferring expenditures and/or appropriations for public art projects at the airport until the passenger activity at the Airport reaches a level of 12.2 million passengers per year or, unless otherwise provided by Ordinance adopted by the City Council. The 12.2 million annual passenger number had been previously established in the Airline Lease agreement as the activity level that could “trigger” the start of Terminal B Phase II. After eight years, with limited funding for maintenance, and no funding for replacement, the majority of the temporary public art projects have been removed; what remains are the permanent projects.

In 2018, the 12.2 million annual passenger number was reached and funds are once again available to support public art at the airport. With eight years of experience as a reference, as the program evolves, Gorbet Design Inc. (formerly Gorbet + Banerjee) worked with Public Art staff to develop an Addendum to the Art Activation Strategy, to direct future commissioning.

ANALYSIS

With the benefit of 8 years of operation, Gorbet Design worked with Public Art staff on a retrospective analysis of the Art Activation Strategy and initial Phase I commissions. The three permanent artworks (*Space Observer*, *eCloud*, and *Hands*) have been highly popular and successful. Guided by the Art & Technology Master Plan, the designs are reflective of innovation. The initial commission budgets were sufficient to accomplish robust installations of significant scale. Artists deliberately considered proven materials and used them in innovative ways resulting in limited maintenance.

In keeping with the intent of Art + Technology Master Plan and the Art Activation Strategy, the artists commissioned for temporary artworks took risks and created innovative pieces with limited budgets. While these temporary artworks were designed for only 2 years, without funding to replace them they remained between 4 – 8 years. Over time they became increasingly costly to maintain and some began to look dated or malfunctioned.

The July 2006 Art Activation Strategy proposed that when the flexible platforms are not displaying artworks, they are by design be invisible to the public, ensuring that the program’s

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flexibility in the face of uncertain technologies, artistic practices, and funding. As temporary artworks have been decommissioned, the platform opportunities in the concourse remain but are invisible, and therefore not in need of urgent attention.

Conversely, the three landside activations of Terminal B (Reactive Wall, Art Windows, and Showcases) are highly visible, requiring consistent, ongoing attention to avoid the appearance of artwork that is dated, in disrepair or absent. For this reason, the Amended Art Activation Strategy focuses on the sustainability of these three platforms.

Reactive Wall: The proposal for the Reactive Wall is to convert this platform from a 2-year term to a long-term (“permanent”) piece by taking advantage of the site’s visible, high-traffic location to add a new highly memorable and popular ‘signature’ piece. The site opportunity calls for a low-relief sculptural approach that can be mechanical or static.

Art Windows: The Amended Art Activation Strategy proposes to acquire archival prints of significant and emerging generative artists creating 2D work (e.g.: Scott Draves Aaron Koblin, Liu Chang, John Maeda, Casey Reas, Shirley Shor, Jared Tarbell, Marina Zurkow,). Aesthetically, work is to be bold, visible from a distance and/or by an audience that is walking by vs. dwelling in a queue. It may also be possible to include as part of the platform 4 monitors to display video clips of dynamic generative source material. With the intention of curating a 10-year pipeline of exhibitions, the proposal is to initiate curatorial with a pilot program directly soliciting work from a select group of seminal artists. The pilot curatorial process will inform the curatorial process going forward to identify available artwork.

The approach to the large Showcases proposes purchase or commission of new long-term artworks by accomplished artists, with the goal of impactful, permanent, robust work. Lightweight, low-density environmental interventions will be sought with curatorial parameters to preserve the transparency of the showcase volumes. Budget considerations recommends a “Quality Control Allowance” to address maintenance and/or retrofit issues that may have fallen short of expectations. Planned cycles of retrofit will support path to long-term robustness and longevity of the installations.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Since July 2005 the following public meetings concerning the Airport Arts Activation Plan have taken place:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
9/9/05	San Jose Museum of Art	Community Artist Workshop
9/13/05	New Langton Arts SF	Community Artist Workshop
9/16/05	Works Gallery	Community Artist Workshop
9/21/05	City Hall	Meet the Artist Meeting
9/27/05	City Hall	AAPOC/PAC Schematic Review
6/12/06	Airport Offices	AAPOC Design Devel. Review
<u>(continued)</u>		

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
10/29/07	City Hall	AAPOC Design Devel. Review
10/29/07	City Hall	Aviation Community Visioning
11/16/07	City Hall	PAC Design Devel. Review
3/20/08	Airport Offices	AAPOC Work Plan Visioning
4/22/07	Airport Offices	AAPOC Design Devel. Review
5/20/07	City Hall	PAC Non-Architectural DD Review
6/11/18	Airport	Airport Director review of Amendment
6/12/18	Airport	Airport Senior Staff review of Amendment

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE, Public Art Director
Office of Cultural Affairs