



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: November 30, 2021

Council District: 7 and Citywide

SUBJECT: Concept and schematic design proposal by artist Johanna Poethig for public art for the exterior of the City's new joint Office of Emergency Management and Fire Department Training Center facility.

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: June 23, 2021

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$300,000

LOCATION: 1591 Senter Road, across the street from Kelly Park.

RECOMMENDATION: Review and take action on the recommendation to approve the concept and schematic design proposal by Johanna Poethig for a public art project on the exterior of the City's new joint facility for the Office of Emergency Management and Fire Department Training Center.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project is for artwork that will be on the exterior façade of the new joint facility for the City's Fire Department Training Center and Office of Emergency Management. The artwork design must fit the scale of the four-story façade and be of durable materials. As the facility is already under construction, the artwork design will need to align well with the facility architecture.

The passage of the Measure T Public Safety Bond in the November 2018 election provided funding for the relocation of the City's Fire Department Training Center and of the Office of Emergency Management, which houses the regional Emergency Operations Center; sale of property by the City provided additional funding.

Artist Johanna Poethig was selected by a panel of stakeholders in a competitive process as described in detail to the Public Art Committee at its meeting on October 5, 2021. Johanna Poethig is an acclaimed Bay Area artist with more than 40 years of public art experience. She creates work in a range of media that includes large scale murals as well as sculptural elements and other works in metal and other materials. Her work is in a number of collections across the region. She recently completed a major project for Alameda County Transit Authority as the lead artist of a team that designed and fabricated more than 32 bus transit stops and shelters along a 9-mile stretch of urban roadway through many varied cultural neighborhoods in east Oakland. Ms. Poethig designed, fabricated and installed the public art at the Starbird Teen Center in San José. She also served as a professor of art and design at California State

University Monterey Bay for more than 20 years. The Selection Panel was very impressed by her body of work and how she represented her approach to research and design for this project.

This project for exterior public art on the façade of the new OEM/FDTC facility is Phase 1 of a two-phase project. Phase 2 will focus on artwork for the facility's interior and will have its own artist selection process.

ARTWORK CONCEPT AND SCHEMATIC DESIGN PROPOSAL

There were a number of important considerations in the design of artwork for the exterior of this facility:

- The areas where artwork can be placed is very limited due to architectural features and the artwork needed to be appropriate scale for the building façade.
- This site is on the busy Senter Road thoroughfare in a light industrial corridor adjacent to Kelly Park so most people will view this driving by in their vehicles; there is very little community pedestrian or bike traffic. Because of this, the artwork needs to be of a scale to view well from the street.
- This facility is not open to the public due to the nature of the work and services engaged in at this site by both departments.
- The two departments, OEM and SJFD, do very different work. While there are many visual images associated with firefighting and related work the services provided by the OEM are not associated with particular icons or imagery.

The project's core stakeholders provided much input to the artist from the inception of her work on this project. As both the OEM and the FDTC provide essential, critical services across the community, and the public does not directly interact with their facilities, a very key goal for the project is for the artwork to serve as a visual connection between the two departments and the public. Core stakeholders explored ideas about words, symbols and imagery that capture the nature of their work. The idea of "Resilience" was a key concept.

Poethig's concept proposal, with the working title "Resilient City" is the result of multiple meetings with the core stakeholders in which they explored what ideas would read well and how to best use the building as a canvas. The result is an artwork installation of cut metal that extends more than two stories on the front façade wall of the three story "tower" building in the complex. It suggests a vertical "narrative," showing the idea of the chaotic sense of emergency and emergency responders in the lower portion of the artwork that resolves upwards into a radiant city at the top, suggesting resilience. The cut metal artwork will be installed in relief on the building, adding greater dimension to the largely 2-dimensional work; it will be feature natural silver metal with painted elements. As this design is a concept, changes are expected to it as it proceeds through further design development and engineering.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The City's Department of Public Works (DPW) has begun construction of the OEM/FDTC facility with anticipated completion at the end of 2022. The facility was already completely designed when the Public Art Program was able to join the process. The facility is located in a light industrial neighborhood and neither of the two occupant departments are open to the public due to the type of work they do. There is

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no residential neighborhood in this area and no community meetings were held in conjunction with the design process for the facility. Public Art staff and the artist have worked closely with the project's key stakeholders to develop approaches to the vision, design and content of the project.

A Public Art Core Team comprised of key stakeholders, community members and public art professionals was formed to help shape the vision for the project, function as the Artist Selection panel, help inform the artist about the community context for the project, and review the artist's concept and design proposal for the artwork. The team includes:

Asst. Chief Aaron Freyler	Assistant Chief of the San Jose Fire Department and its lead staff person for the development of this and other SJFD capital projects.
Ray Riordan	Director of the City's Office of Emergency Management and its important Emergency Operations Center.
Jay McAmis	Assistant Director of the City's Office of Emergency Management and its important Emergency Operations Center.
Tamiko Rast	Artist/community leader, Japantown Business Association Executive Director, Japantown legacy business owner, 3 rd generation Japantown resident.
Elise deMarzo	Public Art Director, City of Palo Alto
Trami Cron	District 7 resident, Public Art Committee liaison.

Meetings held in conjunction with this project:

Date	What	Purpose	Location	Convener
6/11/21	Public Art Core Team meeting	Project visioning and selection of finalist artists to be interviewed.	Online via Zoom	SJPA
6/23/21	Public Art Core Team meeting	Interviews and selection of an artist for the project.	Online via Zoom	SJPA
10/5/21	PAC meeting	PAC review of recommended artist selection for the project	Online via Zoom	SJPA
12/7/21	PAC meeting	PAC review of artist's concept and schematic design proposal	Online via Zoom	SJPA

/s/

MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director