



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

FROM: MICHAEL OGILVIE

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 1, 2023

Council District: 4

SUBJECT: Selection of artist Michael Amescua for design, fabrication, and installation of public art for the new River Oaks Regional Stormwater Capture Facility

DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION: October 2022

ARTWORK BUDGET: \$185,000

LOCATION: The project site is the 5.2 acre River Oaks Regional Stormwater Capture Facility that will be located between the Guadalupe River and River View Parkway in North San José.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The passage of the Measure T Public Safety, Infrastructure Bond in the November 2018 election supported plans for the City to upgrade and build a range of important facilities that encompass community centers, Police and Fire facilities and infrastructure including systems for stormwater management. The River Oaks Regional Stormwater Capture Facility (RORSCF) is a public project to convert the existing flood control basin to provide stormwater treatment via bioretention prior to discharge to the nearby Guadalupe River as well as treatment of dry weather runoff and low flows from the upstream watershed; water then flows through the bioretention basin to receive bio-treatment and then into the river and from there into the Bay. The area surrounding the detention basin will be planted with new trees, native grasses, and a pollinator garden. Adjacent to the City's Riverview Park, the project will also include the installation of park-like enhancements, such as a boardwalk viewing platform, interpretive signage, a perimeter trail, and public art, to provide recreational, aesthetic, and educational benefits for the community.

Public Art staff worked in close collaboration with the RORSCF design team, and it was mutually agreed that the optimal opportunity for public art is for the artist to create artwork panels to be integrated into the extensive metal perimeter fence system that is planned for the site. In order to best integrate into the project's fence system and ensure both durability and security as well as optimal two-way visibility, it was also mutually agreed upon that the artwork fence element should be cut metal, with appropriate structural design for integration into a very specific fence system. Further, consistent with the vision for the site and its environmental character, it was a priority for the artwork to reflect site-specific environmental themes. In context of these considerations, the Public Art Team therefore focused review of artists in the program's Public Artists Roster who demonstrated experience and skill in developing integrated metal fence treatments as part of their public art portfolio.

The RORSCF public art option is high impact but limits the possible artistic approaches to 2-dimensional work. Given the physical and structural characteristics of this site and its proximity to the riparian corridor and walkway along one side of the perimeter fence and a sidewalk along the streetside corridor of the fence, great consideration was given to artwork that could address both features. It was therefore necessary to bring a skilled, experienced public artist on board as soon as possible so use of the existing Public Artists roster was employed; artist; Michael Amescua was selected from the roster which is in alignment with the Public Art Masterplan.

Artist Michael Amescua is a highly accomplished metal artist with an emphasis in flatscape cut metal fence work with imagery that is thematically very site specific and a special interest in environmental themes as well as reflecting Latinx/Mexica cultural themes. With a body of work that extends over decades, public art by Amescua can be found in a wide range of locations across California that include fences, gates, memorials other types of street elements and more.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The City’s Department of Public Works (DPW) held one or more community meetings at the start of its design process for this project and, while considerable outreach was done for these efforts, public interest was very limited. This is due in part because project site is largely not neighborhood based as it is bordered by the Guadalupe River levee on one long side, and industrial facility to the north, a City park to the south and a limited number of apartment dwellings in one short area of the streetside of the project site. The nearest neighborhood association is some distance away.

Public Art Committee Liaison: None assigned.

Public meetings held in conjunction with this project:

Date	What	Purpose	Location	Convener
3/4/2020	Community meeting	Public Works introduction of project for community input including mention of public art as an element	Online via Zoom	Public Works Dept.
5/28/2020	Community meeting	Public Works introduction of project for community input including mention of public art as an element	Online via Zoom	Public Works Dept.
8/25/2020	City Council meeting	Public Works introduction presented facility plan to Council for approval and appropriation of funding	Online via Zoom	Public Works Dept. with City Council
5/11/2022	Public Art Roster Review Panel	Panel convened for selection of Roster Artists	Online	SJPA
8/2/2022	Public Art Committee meeting	Report to PAC on 2022-2027 Public Artists Roster	Online via Zoom	SJPA

/s/
MICHAEL OGILVIE
Public Art Director