



# Memorandum

**TO:** PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

**FROM:** MICHAEL OGILVIE

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** June 1, 2023

---

**Council District: 4**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Review and take action on the recommendation to approve the concept design proposal by artist Michael Amescua for an artwork in the perimeter fence system of the new River Oaks Stormwater Capture Facility.

**DATE OF ARTIST SELECTION:** October 2022

**ARTWORK BUDGET:** \$185,000

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

**BACKGROUND:**

The River Oaks Regional Stormwater Capture Facility (ROSCF) is a public project designed to upgrade the existing flood control basin to provide stormwater treatment via bioretention prior to discharge to the nearby Guadalupe River. It will also treat 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 collaborated closely with the ROSCF design team in determining public art opportunities for this facility, and there was mutual agreement that the optimal public art opportunity is for an artist to create artwork panels to be integrated into the site's extensive perimeter fence system. To best integrate into the project's fence system and ensure durability, security and optimal two-way visibility, there was also agreement that the artwork fence element should be cut metal, with structural design consideration for integration into a defined fence system. Consistent with the vision for the site and its environmental character, it was a priority for the artwork to reflect site-specific environmental themes.

As reported to the PAC at its February 7 meeting, artist Michael Amescua, a highly accomplished metal artist with an emphasis in two-dimensional cut metal and imagery rich fence work, was selected from cut metal artists in the City Public Artist Roster. Amescua's work is thematically site specific and reflects a strong interest in environmental 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.

**CONCEPT**

Michael Amescua is proposing a series of up to seven cut metal panels, each measuring 5' tall by 24' long, to be integrated into the approximately 627-foot section of the ROSCF fence along Riverview Parkway. The artist worked closely with the base project landscape team in researching and identifying what natural elements will best

connect the public to the environmental aspects of the site. Each panel will reflect a different aspect of the wildlife and fauna that can be associated with ROSCF as habitat. This includes fish, reptiles, mammals, and birds as well as varied foliage elements.

This long section of perimeter fence will give the public the greatest exposure to the artwork: it will engage those walking the trail inside the facility and also can be viewed by those driving, walking and cycling along Riverview Parkway. The panels will be spaced along the full length of the Riverview Parkway section of the perimeter fence.

The ROSCF’s base fence is a black commercial fence system comprised of vertical 5’ tall spear-like “pickets”. The artwork panels with their rich visual content will provide a visual counterpoint to the fence system. The artist has proposed an iron oxide coloring for the panels, providing a contrast that will amplify the artwork elements along the length of the fence; this point is still under discussion with the base project design team.

**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 in this project 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, an 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:

<b>Date</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Convener</b>
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
2/7/2023	Public Art Committee meeting	Report to PAC on artist selection of Michael Amescua	Online via Zoom	SJPA

/s/  
 MICHAEL OGILVIE  
 Public Art Director