



March 8, 2018

RE: Agenda Item 1, Downtown Parking Garage

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Public Art Commission approve the conceptual design of artwork created by artist Amy Landesberg associated with the downtown parking garage.

Background:

Artist Amy Landesberg was selected as the project artist for the Downtown parking garage to create a well-integrated public art that would increase visual wayfinding for pedestrians and vehicles and reflect character of the downtown area. The new parking structure will be contracted on an existing City-owned surface Parking Lot D located at 375 Hamilton Avenue on the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Waverley Street in the Downtown Business District. The project is part of the 2014 Council Infrastructure Plan, and is intended to supplement parking inventory as part of the City's multi-pronged approach to addressing parking and traffic congestion.

To select an artist for this project, staff put together a roster of 35 qualified artists who had submitted applications to the Prequalified Artist Pool. Staff assembled a selection panel of key stakeholders and arts professionals for the project. Representatives on the selection panel were:

Ken Hayes-Project Architect

Ben Miyaji – Vice-Chair, Public Art Commission

Jon Graves – Pacific Art League Director

Justine Chaussen – Pace Gallery Director

Holly Boyd – Public Works Project Manager

Christopher Jette – Stanford Sound Artist

Mila Zelkha – Palo Alto Downtown Board Member and Public Art Commissioner

As a result of the selection process, artist Amy Landesberg was selected as the primary project artist to recommend to the Public Art Commission. In November, 2017, the PAC approved Landesberg as the project artist, and the artist entered into a design development contract with the City. The artist visited Palo Alto in December and staff held intake meetings with the design

team, key stakeholders and community members to inform the artwork design development. Amy Landesberg was immediately attracted to the large perforated metal panels over the stairwell and main entrance as opportunities to stretch the art budget and have high visibility. Landesberg explored several design directions with staff before settling on the current concept.

The garage project was presented to the Architectural Review Board February 15, 2018 for feedback. Aside from their comments regarding setbacks and pedestrian access, the ARB questioned the uniformity of the flat perforated metal panels on the exterior of the garage and whether the team could come up with a more creative treatment for those panels. The ARB was told that the artist for the project planned to utilize these panels for public art.

Inspired by the topography of Palo Alto, and with a nod to the stained glass in the church across the street, Landesberg has developed a concept she currently refers to as *Tapestry*.

“The stunningly dramatic topography of the Palo Alto Hills has always been essential to a sense of the place, but there’s hardly a trace of it in the heart of historic downtown. Representing topography has always been a challenge, with many modes of mark making – from sampler stitched maps, thru pen and ink and lithography to GPS data - striving to capture the lavish line curvature, which has become a rich visual language of its own. *Tapestry* extends that language to the Downtown Parking Garage.

The project harvests sections of topographic data and maps it in line and color onto the perforated panels planned for prominent surfaces on the deck’s main entrances. This will be done in 2 and 3 dimensions: a customized perforation pattern will inscribe topography lines, and stainless steel ‘stitches’ mounted to the surface will react to them. The stiches – arcing shapes that increase in size and depth – emerge as suggestions of contour from the faces of the panels. Then, growing higher and large enough as the topography metaphorically climbs, they host brilliantly colored cathedral glass to bring color into the composition throughout the morning when sunlight hits the glass. A sense of our place on this planet is what’s cued by the wonders of topographic geography as is a heightened sense of our most important star by light cascading through glass.”

The design team is supportive of the conceptual design and is eager to move into the detailed design phase.

About the Artist:

Amy Landesberg is an Atlanta based artist and architect (see Attachment A). Landesberg studied art at Georgia State University and architecture at Yale. She has taught design in art and architecture schools throughout the US including Princeton, Columbia, Tulane and Georgia State. She is actively creating artworks on two extremes: small, intimate gallery based artworks,

and very large public artworks. Her most recently completed public project at this scale is *AUTOPLAST*, a 2-part installation for the San Diego Airport rental car facility.

Landesberg has participated in the design of a wide array of projects: galleries and art complexes; civic and educational buildings; rapid rail; historic preservation; residences; theater environments; retail spaces; café's. Landesberg approached architecture from a career in the arts with 20 solo exhibitions to her credit as well as numerous group shows in gallery and museum settings. Her efforts have been recognized with awards and grants in both art and architecture including Fellowships in painting and sculpture from the Southern Arts Federation, the Young Architects Award from the Architectural League of New York, several Merit Awards from the Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, an Honor Award from the Southern Atlantic Region of the American Institute of Architects, an Award of Excellence from the Atlanta Urban Design Commission, and a Year-In-Review award from the Americans for the Arts Public Art Program.

Budget and Timeline:

The estimated construction budget is \$19.0 Million, with construction forecasted for fiscal years FY 2019- FY 2020, creating an estimated public art budget of \$190,000. Once construction at the site commences, it is anticipated to take 12 months to complete the construction. Upon approval of the conceptual design, the artist and design team will begin the detailed design process to ensure the artwork is well integrated with the garage construction.