



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 8830)

Report Type: Consent Calendar

Meeting Date: 1/29/2018

Summary Title: Resolution for a Contribution to the Art in Public Spaces Fund for \$17,100

Title: Adoption of a Resolution to Establish a One-time Contribution of \$17,100 to the Art in Public Spaces Fund and Approve Budget Amendments in the Capital Improvement Funds for the Art in Public Spaces Capital Improvement Program Project (AC-86017) to Purchase Already Installed Creative Seating Elements on University Avenue

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Utilities

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt the resolution to approve a one-time contribution of \$17,100 to the Art in Public Spaces Capital Improvement Project (AC-86017); and
2. Amend the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Appropriation for:
 - a. The Capital Improvement Fund by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer from the Gas Fund by \$5,700;
 - ii. Increasing the transfer from the Fiber Optics Fund by \$5,700;
 - iii. Increasing the transfer from the Water Fund by \$5,700; and
 - iv. Increasing the Art in Public Spaces capital improvement project (AC-86017) in the amount of \$17,100.
 - b. The Water Fund by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer to the Capital Improvement Fund in the amount of \$5,700; and
 - ii. Decreasing the Water Main Replacement–Project 26 (WS-12001) capital improvement project in the amount of \$5,700;
 - c. The Fiber Optics Fund by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer to the Capital Improvement Fund in the amount of \$5,700; and
 - ii. Decreasing the Fiber System Improvements (FO-10001) capital improvement project in the amount of \$5,700;

- d. The Gas Fund by:
 - i. Increasing the transfer to the Capital Improvement Fund in the amount of \$5,700; and
 - ii. Decreasing the Gas Main Replacement–Project 22 (GS-12001) capital improvement project in the amount of \$5,700.

Background

The temporary exhibition of the Colin Selig artworks came about after several discussions between the City’s Public Works Department, Public Art, and Palo Alto Downtown regarding the desire to bring more creative seating to University Avenue at a time when all of the standard benches needed replacing. The Public Art Commission approved the temporary installation in April 2016, with a budget of \$6,665 for the delivery, installation, loan, and removal of the artworks. The City of Palo Alto entered into an agreement with artist Colin Selig for the loan of five creative seating elements to be on display on University Avenue from May 2016 through May 2017, with the option to extend the contract for six months. The City is currently past the extension period. The artist agreed to give the City a discount on the acquisition of any artworks at the end of the loan period, and apply the costs associated with his removal of the artworks (\$2,500) in the contract to the purchase.

About the Artist

Committed to a sustainable lifestyle, Colin Selig resides and works within an intentional community in the San Francisco Bay Area. While studying metal sculpting at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston he earned a degree in Philosophy from Tufts University in 1987. His education included apprenticeships with a machinist, race car fabricator, and public art sculptor. In the next couple of decades, he continued to master his craft, restoring a variety of antique vehicles before focusing on sculpting. Colin has been granted a series of patents for his designs, which have won national and international awards for their aesthetic, technical, and innovative qualities, including in 2012 the Exhibitor’s Choice Gold Award at the Smithsonian Craft Show and the Most Interesting Products Award at the American Society of Landscape Architects national expo.

Discussion

All of the standard benches along University Avenue have been replaced with updated standard benches except for the 5 places currently occupied by Colin Selig’s works at the corners of Emerson, Bryant, and Waverley at University Avenue in downtown Palo Alto. Benches for those locations are currently in storage with Public Works and ready to install downtown upon the removal of the Selig pieces.

The Public Art Program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the benches from downtown stakeholders and the public through online comments, emails and phone calls. There have been a few inquiries regarding private sponsorship to keep the benches, and a group of Leadership Palo Alto Fellows launched a Gofundme page for the benches that raised \$1,200. For full disclosure, it should be noted that there have been very few complaints about

the pieces largely based on the inability for someone to sleep on them and difficulty balancing a coffee cup on the seats.

The ongoing electrical, water and gas main replacement projects on University Avenue may cause an extended impact to the ease and convenience of pedestrian circulation in the downtown area, including requiring pedestrians as well as vehicles to use alternate routes in and around downtown. These impacts will extend throughout calendar year 2018 into 2019. Given this, the City is asking the Council to approve a one-time contribution from the replacement projects for the Public Art Fund with the intention that the funds will be used for the purchase of the public art benches. They will provide a tangible and substantive enhancement to pedestrians' experiences and the urban environment and help mitigate the impact to stakeholders along University Avenue. The art benches would otherwise be removed according to the existing agreement with the artist. The immediate availability of the art benches provides a unique and timely action the City can take to address project impacts.

Resource Impact

Should Council approve the one-time contribution for art allocation, the additional funds in the amount of \$17,100 would be transferred into the Art in Public Places CIP fund for the purchase and long-term maintenance of the Selig artworks. The Public Art staff has determined with the artist that the benches would likely need to be powder-coated every ten years at an average cost of \$500 per object, or up to \$2,500 per cycle. This will be funded through the public art maintenance budget and managed by the Community Services Department.

Environmental Review

This allocation of funds does not meet the definition of a project under Public Resources Code Section 21065, thus, no environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act is required.

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Resolution to Establish a One-Time Contribution of \$17,100 from the Upgrade Downtown Capital Improvement Projects to the Art in Public Places Fund

Resolution No. _____
Resolution of the Council of the City of Palo Alto to Establish a One-Time Contribution of \$17,100 from the Upgrade Downtown Capital Improvement Projects to the Art in Public Places Fund.

R E C I T A L S

A. The City’s Upgrade Downtown Project in the University Avenue area will repair and replace underground infrastructure and will create impacts to pedestrians in the next two years. As part of the Upgrade Downtown Project, the City has approved fiber, gas, and water infrastructure upgrades as part of its current Capital Improvement Projects.

B. To help mitigate these impacts, the City seeks to add public art to its collection for the University Avenue area.

C. The City’s public art program has already installed five creative seating elements by Colin Selig (the “Selig benches”) and has received positive feedback from downtown stakeholders. The Selig benches are on a short-term lease and are due to be returned to the artist unless the City purchases them.

D. On August 17, 2017, the Public Art Commission approved adding these benches to the City’s public art collection, and this contribution will allow the City to purchase and maintain the benches.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council of the City of Palo Alto RESOLVES as follows:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to Municipal Code section 2.26.070(b), the City Council establishes a one-time public art contribution of seventeen-thousand, one-hundred dollars (\$17,100) for deposit into the Art in Public Spaces Capital Improvement Project (AC-86017) from the following sources:

- A. \$5,700 from the Water Main Replacement – Project 26 (WS 12001);
- B. \$5,700 from Fiber System Improvements (FO-10001); and
- C. \$5,700 from the Gas Main Replacement – Project 22 (GS-12001).

SECTION 2. The Council finds that the adoption of this resolution does not meet the definition of a project under CEQA, and thus no environmental

//

//

//

//

//

//

assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act is required.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Deputy City Attorney

Mayor

APPROVED:

City Manager

Director of Utilities

Director of Administrative Services