



**November 17, 2022**

**RE: Agenda Item 2**

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Public Art Commission (PAC) approve one of three options for the site of the existing Midtown Poetry Wall and allocate funding for the temporary recreation of the Poetry Wall mural or the commission of a new temporary mural.

Option A: Repaint the poetry wall as a temporary project with a lifespan of 7-10 years - \$29,000

Option B: Reproduce the poetry wall as a temporary project with a lifespan of 2-3 years - \$ 23,000

Option C: Commission a new mural at the site as a long-term temporary project \$40,000 - \$60,000

**Summary:**

The Poetry Wall mural initially painted on the south-facing exterior wall of Walgreens located at 2605 Middlefield Rd in 2003 was deaccessioned from the City's permanent collection at the PAC regular meeting on October 20, 2022, based on the process and conditions outlined in the City's Deaccession of Artwork Policy 1-59/CSD adopted in December 2016. (See the Staff Report with Deaccessioning of Artwork Policy and condition assessment report [here](#)).

As a separate agenda item at the October 20, 2022 PAC meeting, staff recommended that the Public Art Commission approve a reproduction of the Poetry Wall mural as temporary artwork and requested funding up to \$29,000 from the CIP fund to remove the existing mural, prepare the wall, and re-paint the mural. The cost to removal the existing mural and stabilize/prime the wall is estimated at \$10,580. Staff provided two options for the reproduction of the mural with specified budgets.

Option 1: Re-paint the mural. Cost estimate range is \$14,957 - \$17,950 and expected life cycle is 7-10 years.

Option 2: Reproduce the mural on adhesive aluminum. Cost estimate is \$12,540 and expected life cycle is 2-3 years.

The PAC moved not to approve staff's recommendation to recreate the mural as temporary artwork and instead moved to create a new mural. Since that option was not on the agenda and community members did not have an opportunity to provide public input on a new mural, staff is returning to the PAC with the current report. Staff is providing the PAC and public with additional information about options to proceed in relation to site of the former Poetry Wall mural, timeline, staff capacity and budgetary considerations, as well as new letters gathered since the October meeting.

### **Discussion: PAC review and discussion history**

In summer 2021, Public Art staff and representatives from Ventana Property Services who oversee the building on behalf of the property owner had several conversations about the deteriorating condition of the poetry wall and potential repair options. Since August 2021, staff has taken the following actions and the Poetry Wall mural item has been discussed at the following PAC meetings:

**August 2021** – Staff reported to PAC about the ongoing condition of the mural, presenting the Commission with the project history, previous repair and condition reporting, and images of the existing mural. Staff sought feedback from the Commission to either proceed with the repair and repainting of the mural, or for staff to return with a full report to request the deaccession process prior to commissioning a new mural at that site. The Commission recommended that staff investigate the condition of the site further to determine feasibility of any further repairs to the mural. Minutes for the meeting are available [here](#).

**Between August and October 2021** - Public Art staff hired Preservation Arts, a Bay Area-based fine art conservation specialist, to conduct a condition assessment and provide a detailed condition report and treatment proposal.

**November 2021** – At the [November Special PAC meeting](#) staff recommended that the PAC initiate the deaccessioning process of the mural from the City’s permanent collection. PAC discussed the following options: 1) de-accession the mural from the City’s permanent collection, remove the mural and instead commission new temporary work on ongoing basis; 2) de-accession the mural from the permanent collection, while making repairs to the wall and recreating the existing mural in a different media as a temporary artwork; 3) repair the wall and stabilize the existing mural. Commissioners studied the Preservation Arts condition report and reviewed funds committed to the maintenance of the Poetry Wall murals between 2003 and 2021. Staff provided [public letters](#) in relation to the Poetry Wall mural received prior to the November 2021 meeting. In addition, community members attended the PAC Special Meeting and addressed the Commissioners to express their support for the repair of the existing mural or reproducing it as a long-term temporary artwork. PAC recommended to hold on the deaccession decision until staff obtains more information about the condition of the wall.

**June 2022** - Staff provided an [updated report](#) on the condition of the Poetry Wall murals, including additional information per earlier PAC request regarding the needs and costs associated with the repair of the existing mural. Staff provided clarification on condition of the wall, stating that the property manager had called for inspection of the roof and interior and exterior portions of the walls to check for any leaks or flaws. It was determined that the type of paint and sealant used on the previous poetry wall was trapping moisture and blistering and bubbling, but that was due to the type of paint and the constant sun exposure on that south facing wall and not the wall structure itself. Staff also provided a recommendation to the PAC to initiate deaccession proceedings as outlined in the City’s Deaccession of Artwork Policy for the six painted murals prior to restoring the murals as a temporary artwork. [Public letters](#) were supplied to the Commission. Members of the public attended the meeting and addressed the Commissioners expressing their strong support for preserving the poetry wall or recreating the

existing mural as a long-term temporary artwork. PAC moved to initiate the deaccession process of the Poetry Wall mural from the City's Permanent Public Art Collection and explore the following options: A) Reproduce the mural as temporary artwork by repainting the mural with an expected lifespan of 7-10 years; B) Reproduce the mural as temporary artwork by digitally printing it on adhesive aluminum with an expected lifespan of 2-3 years. C) research if commissioning a new temporary mural after the deaccessioning of the Poetry Wall mural can be an option.

**Between June and September 2022** – Staff reached out to authors of the featured poems as well as the property owner to notify them about the Commission's June 16, 2022 decision to move forward with a deaccession process for the mural as a permanent artwork from the City's collection. The authors were also notified about the three options the Commissioners are exploring: A) Restore the mural as temporary artwork by repainting the mural with an expected lifespan of 7-10 years; B) Restore the mural as temporary artwork by reproducing it on adhesive aluminum with an expected lifespan of 2-3 years. C) Commission a new temporary community mural on that wall. During this period staff did not receive any feedback in support of creating a new mural in lieu of recreating the existing Poetry Wall mural.

**October 2022** – Following the PAC recommendations from the June 16, 2022 meeting, staff returned to the PAC in October 2022 to report that staff did not receive any public feedback in support of commissioning a new temporary mural after the deaccessioning of the Poetry Wall mural and wall repair. Staff recommended that PAC approved deaccession of the *Poetry Wall* mural located at 2605 Middlefield Rd, and that agenda item passed. As a separate agenda item, staff recommended implementing repairs to the wall and requested PAC approval to reproduce the mural as temporary artwork either by painting it with a life expectancy of 7-10 years, or printing it on adhesive aluminum with a life span of 2-3 years, and requested funds for the project from the CIP Art in Public Places to recreate the mural as a temporary artwork. The PAC voted to create a new mural and not to refabricate the existing mural in a different substrate. There was an alternate motion with no second to approve recreating the poetry wall as temporary artwork by the means of digitally printing the image onto adhesive aluminum material with an expected lifespan of 2-3 years while engaging the community in conversation about a new mural commission in the future. The motion did not include a funding allocation.

In light of the economic challenges posed to commercial corridors such as the Midtown Shopping Center, the City is making efforts to do what it can to improve the aesthetic environments under its control. Given that the Midtown Shopping Center is privately owned, the former poetry wall is one of the only walls that a City program may be able to improve quickly. The wall has continued to deteriorate in the sixteen months that this item has been discussed with the PAC.

**Timeline, Staff and Budget Impacts:**

Should the Public Art Commission choose one of the two options for the reproduction of the Poetry Wall mural as a temporary artwork, staff will work with the property manager to coordinate the removal of the current paint, and prime and repair the wall prior to recreating the mural as a long-term temporary

artwork by either A) repainting it onto the wall with an expected lifespan of 7-10 years; or B) Digitally printing the mural on adhesive aluminum with expected lifecycle of 2-3 years. Staff will be able to start the removal of the existing mural and reproduction of the new one in Fall -Winter 2022-23. After installing the Poetry Wall mural as a long-term temporary artwork, staff plans to install signage about the temporary project and invite the community to engage in conversation about a new mural commission in the future.

Should the PAC choose to commission a new mural on that site, staff will need to coordinate the removal of the current mural, identify an artist, launch community outreach, and complete a design development process. An estimated cost to commission an artist to create a new mural would range between \$30,000 – 50,000. Considering the timeline for creating a new project and extensive community outreach and engagement with Midtown residents, staff estimates that a new mural would not be in place for at least ten months to one year. Additionally, should the PAC choose the option to commission a new mural, this will take priority as an urgent project that will significantly impact staff capacity to carry out the City’s murals festival in spring 2023, likely pushing it back to Spring 2024.

**TOTAL FUNDING (Including Wall Preparation)**

Option A: Repaint the poetry wall as a temporary project with a lifespan of 7-10 years = \$29,000

Option B: Reproduce the poetry wall as a temporary project with a lifespan of 2-3 years = \$23,000

Option C: Commission a new mural at the site as a long-term temporary project = \$40,000 - \$60,000

Staff received a number of public letters in relation to the item after the October 2022 PAC meeting (ATTACHMENT A. – Public Letters received between October 20 and November 17, 2022 PAC Meeting).

**Attachments:**

- A. Public Letters received between October 20 and November 17, 2022 PAC Meeting

**From:** [Linda Henigin](mailto:linda@brail.org)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Artist Call for Code:ART 2023 - deadline November 15!  
**Date:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 2:12:34 PM

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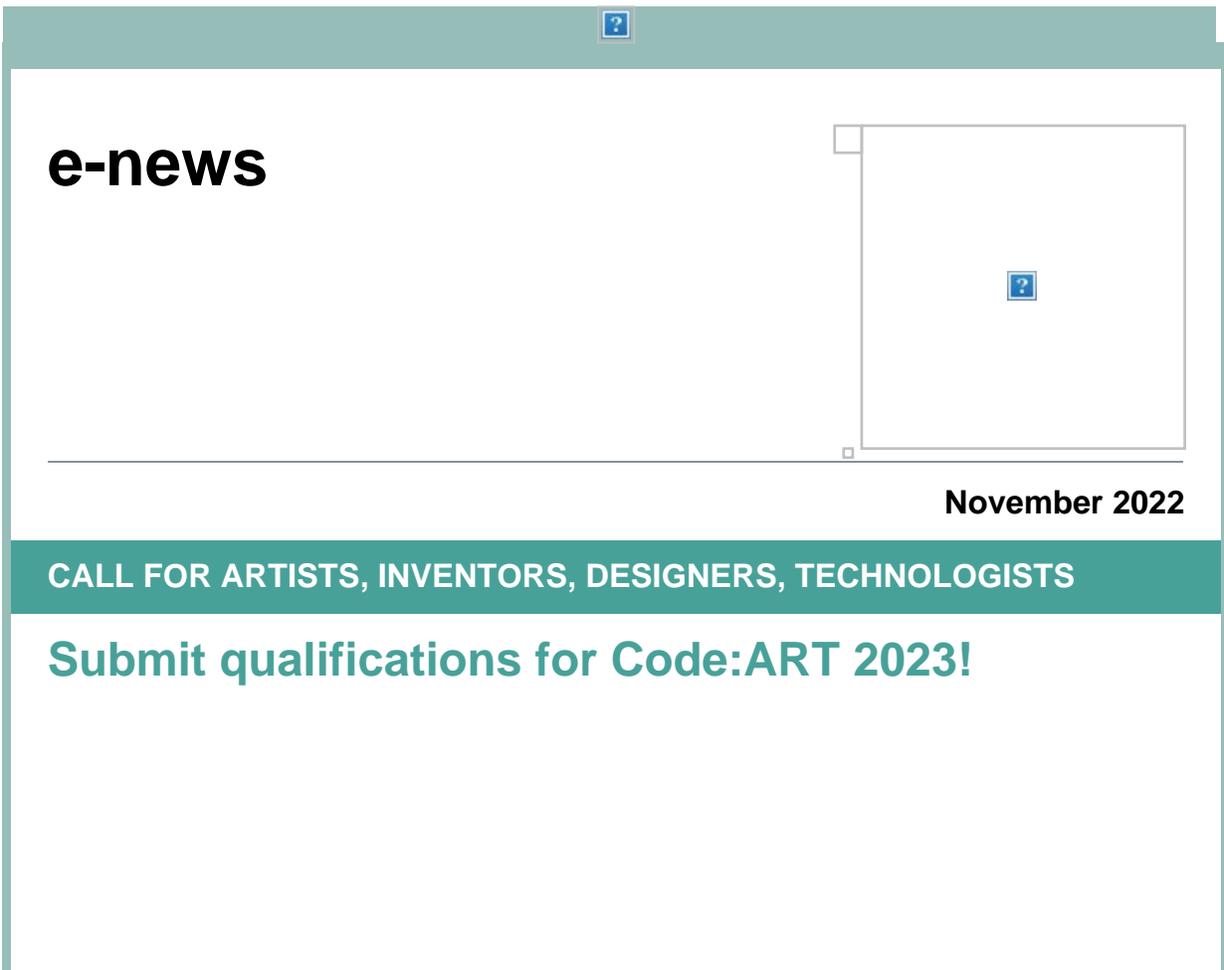
Hello Public Art Commission,

I vote to commission a new mural now. I think the poetry wall is too dense - I tune it out now. Too many words to read on too big a space, and I want drivers paying attention to pedestrians, bikers and other cars, and not to the artwork :)

cheers,  
Linda  
Edgewood Drive

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Palo Alto Public Art Program <[denise.laxendizazzo@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:denise.laxendizazzo@cityofpaloalto.org)>  
**Date:** Thu, Nov 3, 2022 at 12:30 PM  
**Subject:** Artist Call for Code:ART 2023 - deadline November 15!  
**To:** <[linda@brail.org](mailto:linda@brail.org)>



The banner features a teal header with a question mark icon. The main content area is white with the text "e-news" on the left and a large rectangular placeholder with a question mark icon on the right. Below the placeholder, the date "November 2022" is displayed. A teal bar at the bottom contains the text "CALL FOR ARTISTS, INVENTORS, DESIGNERS, TECHNOLOGISTS" and "Submit qualifications for Code:ART 2023!" in white.

**e-news**

November 2022

**CALL FOR ARTISTS, INVENTORS, DESIGNERS, TECHNOLOGISTS**

**Submit qualifications for Code:ART 2023!**

**From:** [Louise Yeung Furutsuki](mailto:Louise_Yeung_Furutsuki)  
**To:** [PAC; loufurut@yahoo.com](mailto:loufurut@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Letter for Nov 12: Appeal to fix and retain Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 4:06:35 PM

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Dear PAC,

I am writing to voice my concern regarding potential treatment options of the blistering of the Midtown poetry wall outside Walgreens/Como Esta facing Baskin Robbins.

As a liaison between Midtown residents and businesses, I and the business owners do view the poetry wall as a long time symbolic art woven into the appeal of Midtown Business Shopping Center. It gives a little "literary flair" to this old shopping district.

All of us in Midtown do not see a reason to replace it with some other art form. There is already a mural outside CVS with drawings of diversity. Any new drawing may disrupt the history of Midtown Shopping district.

So our preference is for the blistering to be repaired and the poetry wall to stand as is for good. If there is any help from Midtown Residents Association to fulfill this wish, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Louise Y Furutsuki  
Midtown Business Liaison  
Midtown Residents Association  
[loufurut@yahoo.com](mailto:loufurut@yahoo.com)

**From:** [Alex Comsa](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 5:21:57 PM

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To the Palo Alto Public Art Commissioners:

As a candidate for Palo Alto City Council, I hear many issues that are important to the neighborhoods.

One issue that I am concerned about is the debate about the future of the Midtown Poetry Wall - an issue that I personally care about. I visit Midtown frequently, especially enjoying ice cream at Baskins Robin's with my youngest son.

My entire family enjoys the Midtown mural, and I ask that you fund the restoration of the art.

During the campaign, I have talked to many Midtown residents and other Palo Altans who are attached to the wall and feel strongly the poetry wall should be preserved.

I would love to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,  
Alex Comsa

**From:** [annecribbs](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Anne Warner Cribbs](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 8, 2022 5:20:18 PM

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To Palo Alto Art Commissioners,

I am a long time resident of Midtown, and I so appreciate the Poetry Wall and its history. I understand that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and potentially remove the art. For me, the Poetry Wall was and is an important part of Midtown and a reflection of the Midtown community.

I love to see it as I run into the UPS store and enjoy an ice cream at Baskin and Robbins. I urge you to fix the structural issues which caused the problem and repair the wall to its original beauty.

Please work with the resources in our great community to repair and restore the wall for the future. Thank you.

Anne W. Cribbs, OLY  
2450 Agnes Way  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
650.323.9400

**From:** [Annette Glanckopf](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Kou, Lydia](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Saturday, October 29, 2022 9:29:14 AM

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To the PAC Commissioners

The future of the Midtown Poetry wall is of great interest to Midtown and our residents. Listening to the video, I feel that there is not a complete understanding of the past history of this work of art. or the Midtown involvement.

I was the Chair of Midtown Residents Association, when we requested public art from the commission and received funding. I was an integral part of the process and team to select the art.

There has little to no outreach to the Midtown community. To this end, I offer to meet any of the PAC commissioner at the wall to respond to questions and to provide its history.

Please contact me directly,  
Annette Glanckopf  
650-321-8933  
Vice Chair Midtown Resident Association

**From:** [Arthur Keller](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Saturday, October 29, 2022 2:58:48 PM

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Keep the Midtown poetry wall or restore it, if necessary.

Best regards,  
Arthur Keller  
on behalf of the board of the Adobe Meadow Neighborhood Association

**From:** [Dena Hill](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 10:09:14 AM

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It has come to my attention that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and possibly remove the art. I feel strongly that the Poetry wall is an important part of Midtown, and I want to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for the foreseeable future for 8-10 year. Thank you in advance.

My own notes: I live in midtown and see this wall almost every day when I go for coffee at Palo Alto Cafe, pick up prescriptions for my parents at CVS, a new lipstick for myself at Walgreens, ship packages at the UPS store or just as I'm driving by. It would be great if we could keep it.

Thank you!

dena hill

**From:** [E Nigenda](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Monday, November 7, 2022 3:16:25 PM

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Dear Public Art Commissioners,

I am sad to learn that you have decommissioned the poetry wall in Midtown. I hope you will reconsider this decision as the poems are delightfully whimsical and never fail to bring a smile to my face. I realize the wall has some blisters and needs to be restored. I hope this can be done while saving this beloved piece of art in Midtown so that it continues to bring joy to residents for many years to come.

Thank you for considering my request,  
Esther Nigenda

**From:** [Faith Brigel](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Sunday, November 6, 2022 4:33:05 PM

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Dear Public Art Commission,

I only recently heard that you are considering removing the Midtown Poetry Wall. Why? Why would you do that? I pride myself on knowing a little bit about art.

My father was an art collector and knew a lot about art. Most Sunday afternoons, he would take me to the art galleries

in Montreal and Toronto where I lived as a child. And he would talk to me about the art.

I have noticed that in general, there is much more art in Palo Alto North than there is in Midtown.

We need to save and cherish the few pieces of art that we have here in Midtown.

If the Poetry Wall needs a little maintenance then let's do that. Let's just improve it.

It actually is less expensive to just maintain it rather than removing the whole thing and possibly at some point in the future adding a new mural.

I believe that none of the members of the Public Art Commission live in Midtown.

And so I can understand that none of you have the same feeling of pride that we who live here do.

I request that you do not remove the Midtown Poetry Wall, but just maintain it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Faith W. Brigel

**From:** [Fern Geschwind](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** MIDTOWN POETRY WALL  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 8:57:55 PM

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To: Palo Alto Art Commissioners  
From: Fern Geschwind

I understand that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry Wall and remove the art.

I have been a Palo Alto mid-town resident for 41 years.

The Poetry wall is a historical and integral part of the Midtown community.

Please reconsider and have the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for a minimum 10 years.

Thank you.  
Fern Geschwind  
700 Ames Avenue  
Palo Alto,CA 94303

**From:** [Gerry Gras](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 6:49:22 PM

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Dear Sirs,

I have heard that you are planning to remove the Midtown Poetry Art. I think that would be unfortunate. i hope you reconsider and leave it as is.

Thank you,

Gerald Gras  
278 Campesino Avenue  
Palo Alto

**From:** [John Edwards](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 8:59:19 AM

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To Palo Alto Art Commissioners

It has come to my attention that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and possibly remove the art. I feel strongly that the Poetry wall is an important part of Midtown, and I want to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for the foreseeable future for 8-10 year. Thank you in advance.

John Edwards  
Long time Palo Alto Resident  
Midtown Palo Alto

**From:** [Judith Wasserman](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Saturday, October 29, 2022 4:54:31 PM

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Dear Palo Alto City Council -

I am writing in defense of the Midtown Poetry Wall, a piece in the permanent collection. I was on the Public Art Commission when this piece was commissioned; it is one of the few artworks south of Oregon Expressway and the only one created with citizen participation - truly "public" art.

I was our understanding as commissioners that the collection was assumed to be maintained. It is poor public policy to de-commission work because the city has not maintained it properly. Please defend and maintain our public art!

Thank you!  
Judith Wasserman

751 Southampton Drive  
Palo Alto CA 94303  
650 321-1987

**From:** [lchiapella@juno.com](mailto:lchiapella@juno.com)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#); [mimi.wolf@gmail.com](mailto:mimi.wolf@gmail.com); [midtownresidentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:midtownresidentsassociation@gmail.com); [Council, City](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown POETRY WALL  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 10:51:20 PM

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Dear Palo Alto Art Commissioners;

Apparently deaccession of the Poetry Wall in Midtown has already occurred. When was this item noticed in the newspaper? Although I am a long time member of Midtown Residents Association (MRA), I do not recall any notice concerning time and date of this item on your agenda.

Midtown is a neglected commercial area in Palo Alto. The Poetry Wall is a bright, colorful and cheery respite from the blank walls and neglected streetscape. Now it appears that we will lose the poems and add another blank wall to Midtown.

Until the Art Commission comes up with a plan to enliven our South Palo Alto commercial areas with art, I believe that the poetry wall should be redone for the relatively small amount of money mentioned, rather than installing temporary art pieces that are gone in a couple of months. A poem should grace the blank first panel of the wall nearest to Middlefield Road.

It is noticeable that there is little to no outreach by the Art Commission to MRA or Midtown businesses in terms of using art to refresh and enhance our 1950's commercial areas. Are any commissioners from or familiar with South Palo Alto commercial areas?

Please consider the staff recommendation to redo the wall.

Lynn Chiapella

**From:** [Parissa Mohamadi](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 8:05:18 PM

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To Palo Alto Art Commissioners:

It has come to my attention that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and possibly remove the art. I feel strongly that the Poetry wall is an important part of Midtown, and I want to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for the foreseeable future for 8-10 year.

Thank you in advance.

Parissa Mohamadi  
Palo Alto (Midtown) Resident

**From:** [R W](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Friday, October 28, 2022 7:07:54 PM

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To members of the Public Art Commission,

I understand from Annette Glanckopf of the Midtown neighborhood association that you have decided to destroy a cherished part of our neighborhood, our poetry wall. My favorite piece is "A Tree Calls Out," which always moves me as I walk by.

It seems that not only have you decided to destroy something that means a lot to us, but also that you have done so without consulting the residents of this neighborhood. Ms Glanckopf has indicated that her attempts to communicate with you on our behalf were rebuffed. Neither were the artists who created the graphics consulted or even notified.

This strikes me as high handed and disrespectful to our neighborhood. It is a most inappropriate exercise of your authority in my view. I ask that you please reverse this decision on November 17.

Sincerely,

Rega Wood  
3310 Thomas Dr.  
Palo Alto

**From:** [Robin Jeffries](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 9:47:09 AM

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I live in Midtown, very near the Walgreens, and see the poetry wall all the time. I understand you are in the midst of making a plan for repairing that wall. I would like to see the wall surface replaced with new poems by children in Palo Alto (presumably by some sort of competition or other open process). And I'd like to see this done on a regular basis -- maybe every 10 to 15 years. Having more children have an opportunity to contribute their ideas of what makes Palo Alto special would be a wonderful thing.

The children who wrote the current poems are all grown by now, probably don't even live in the area, and their families have had lots of time to take photos of the wall, which would be much more meaningful in the long term than the wall itself. In fact, having the wall professionally photographed, if it wasn't done when the art was new, is important for historical purposes.

I recognise that mine is only one opinion out of many (and I have very vocal neighbors who disagree with this idea), but I hope you will take my thoughts into consideration as you plan to update this mural.

Robin Jeffries

**From:** [RONALD OWES](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** : Midtown Poetry wall  
**Date:** Monday, November 7, 2022 9:57:15 AM

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**Subject: Midtown Poetry Wall**  
**To Palo Alto Art Commissioners**

It has come to my attention that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and possibly remove the art. I feel strongly that the Poetry wall is an important part of Midtown, and I want to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for the foreseeable future. Thank you in advance.

Ron Owes, Midtown resident

**From:** [chartrand](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 5:23:29 PM

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Hello Palo Alto Art Commissioners,

This is the second time I've written to you about the poetry wall at the Midtown shopping center. Meanwhile, you have voted to decommission the poetry wall and possibly remove the art. As I said in my first email, I feel strongly that the poetry wall is an important part of Midtown and a long-standing community landmark. I want to see the wall repaired and the poetry murals restored in a way that extends the life of the artwork for 8-10 years.

There is no other public art in this part of Midtown. The poetry wall has history here. Many people view it every day, including lots of teenagers who frequent the shopping center after school. This artwork should remain and be cared for.

Thank you,  
Sabra Chartrand  
Rosewood Dr.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

**From:** [Sue Thiemann](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 9:37:42 AM

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To Palo Alto Art Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that you have voted to decommission the Midtown Poetry wall and possibly remove the art. I feel strongly that the Poetry wall is an important part of Midtown, and I want to see the wall repaired and the Midtown Poetry Wall restored for the foreseeable future for 8-10 year.

Thank you in advance.  
Sue Thiemann

**From:** [Oliver Miao](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown Pottery wall  
**Date:** Friday, October 28, 2022 5:36:17 PM

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Dear art commission,

The Northern part of Midtown has very few pieces of art and the Midtown poetry wall adds a creative flair that is often lacking in this part of Palo Alto. Please consider repairing and keeping the mural.

Sincerely,

Oliver Miao

**From:** [V.H. Stinger](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Midtown's Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 3:06:51 PM

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Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your deliberation on the Poetry Wall and for this opportunity to comment on the Wall. I have quite enjoyed having the Poetry Wall on the Walgreens building. When it was first installed, it was colorful and engaging. The Wall gave identity to Midtown. Sadly, however, the Wall is showing its age. The paint is peeling and the poetry has run its course.

Commissioning a new mural for Walgreens would be a sound and an exciting option for the neighborhood. It would be a prudent investment of funds; it would give contemporary artists a venue; it would be a boost for Midtown morale.

I hope the Commission agrees and an RFP can go out to artists and neighborhood groups promptly.

Regards,

Valerie

Valerie Hunt Stinger  
721 Christine Drive  
Palo Alto, California 94303  
U.S.A

vhs101@yahoo.com

**From:** [victor.garcia](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Palo Alto Public Art  
**Date:** Friday, November 4, 2022 4:10:18 PM

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Commission a new mural now :)

Monocrew



[monocrew 97.pdf](#)

**From:** [M. S.](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Please save our poetry wall  
**Date:** Monday, October 31, 2022 12:03:42 AM

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Dear Art Commission,

I am writing to ask that you please restore the Midtown Palo Alto poetry wall, after the wall has been repaired. The poetry is beautiful and has been enjoyed by local families for many years as we visit the ice cream shop, Como Está Taqueria, and other local businesses. My children and I enjoyed the poems over ice cream and had fun picking our favorite ones. I remembering feeling grateful to our city for including poetry in our public spaces. Downtown Palo Alto and California Avenue each have lovely public art. Our midtown shopping area does not have much public art, which makes our poetry wall even more cherished. I especially love that the poems teach our children to pause and think about the beauty of the nature, community, gratitude, family, bicycling and gardens - well chosen topics for our children and families. My favorite poem was written by Palo Alto's late poet and librarian, Sharon Olson:

Camino del Medio

From here the road winds down to Mayfield slough.

Round up the cows you want to save  
and leave them standing in this middle field.

I remember reading that poem over chocolate ice cream with my children and telling them about the old town of Mayfield that used to be here, as well as the fields, cows and then the orchards that came later. I told them about Sharon, who was a great librarian for our town for many years. How many other parents have stopped with their children to read those poems together all because the city was generous and wise enough to leave us lovely, accessible poems right next to our ice cream shop? Our poetry wall enriches the lives of local families - please don't take that away.

Sincerely,  
Maureen Roddy  
Midtown, Palo Alto

**From:** [Joan Plastiras](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Poetry on Midtown wall  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 9:53:30 AM

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Hi Public Art Commission,

I have always enjoyed seeing the poetry on the Midtown wall as it is something special and thought provoking for Palo Alto residents to consider.

I like it for the same reasons I like the Palo Alto Roasting Coffee Shop and other establishments: it is local and different from what is offered by other cities.

Please consider preserving it!

Thanks,  
Joan  
Resident at 967 Dennis Drive, Palo Alto

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Joan Plastiras, Real Estate Broker, Realtor, CCIM, DRE #01743057  
Prospect Properties  
t: 650.494.1807  
c: 650.269.8797

**From:** [Mary Jo Levy](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** poetry on Midtown Wall  
**Date:** Friday, October 28, 2022 4:48:50 PM

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Hello Public Art Commission,

It is my understanding that the mural with poetry in Midtown needs repair. The poetic sentiments are so wonderful and perfect for this area of town, which has very little, if any other, art work. My hope is that the commission will restore the poetry after the wall is repaired.

Sincerely,  
Mary Jo Levy  
Midtown resident

**From:** [Brigid Barton](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Cc:** [Glanckopf, Annette](#)  
**Subject:** Poetry wall at Midtown  
**Date:** Thursday, November 10, 2022 12:31:58 PM

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Dear Commissioners,

This is the second time I have written to you as a former two term commissioner about the poetry wall at Midtown. Our commission sponsored the project and it was NEVER intended to be “temporary”. Do at least try to raise local funds to restore this much beloved neighborhood landmark!

Sincerely,

Brigid Barton, professor emerita at Santa Clara University

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Stacey Ashlund](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Poetry wall  
**Date:** Saturday, November 5, 2022 5:30:11 PM

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I like option #1 - reproduce the poetry onto aluminum panels. When the life span is up, you can replace individual panels with new poetry.

Stacey  
Barron park

Re:

The *Poetry Wall* on the Walgreens building at [2605 Middlefield Road in Midtown](#) is in need of repair. Anyone interested in weighing in on the three options going forward is encouraged to email their input to the [Public Art Commission](#):

1. Reproduce the mural as temporary artwork by digitally printing it on adhesive aluminum material with an expected life span of 2-3 years, before considering a new mural.
2. Reproduce the mural as a temporary artwork by repainting it on the wall with an expected life span of 7-10 years, before considering a new mural.
3. Commission a new mural now.

Email your preferred opinion to [pac@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:pac@cityofpaloalto.org) by **November 17!**

**From:** [Annette Glanckopf](#)  
**To:** [Kou, Lydia](#)  
**Cc:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Saturday, October 29, 2022 11:21:28 AM

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Thank you Vice Mayor.  
Election day works for me.  
Would 11:15AM work?  
Annette

On Saturday, October 29, 2022 at 10:06:22 AM PDT, Kou, Lydia <[lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:lydia.kou@cityofpaloalto.org)> wrote:

Thank you Annette for your email and offer.

It is important to learn local history and pride, I would love to take you up on your offer to meet at the Poetry Wall.

Does 11/8 in the morning work for you?

Thank you,

Lydia Kou  
Vice Mayor, City of Palo Alto  
Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 29, 2022, at 9:29 AM, Annette Glanckopf <[annette\\_g@att.net](mailto:annette_g@att.net)> wrote:

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To the PAC Commissioners

The future of the Midtown Poetry wall is of great interest to Midtown and our residents. Listening to the video, I feel that there is not a complete understanding of the past history of this work of art. or the Midtown involvement.

I was the Chair of Midtown Residents Association, when we requested public art from the commission and received funding. I was an integral part of the process and team to select the art.

There has little to no outreach to the Midtown community. To this end, I offer to meet any of the PAC commissioner at the wall to respond to questions and to provide its history.

Please contact me directly,

Annette Glanckopf  
650-321-8933  
Vice Chair Midtown Resident Association

**From:** [Sylvia Gartner](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Save Midtown's Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Sunday, November 6, 2022 5:42:15 PM

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Midtown residents have told those of us in the neighborhood association many times how much they enjoy the two murals we have in our shopping district. The poetry wall is especially loved because of the "haiku" quality of the short poems and how well they reflect our feelings about where we live. It would be SO sad to lose something that's meant so much to us over the years. In these times of constant change, it would be wonderful to have the mural saved for 8 to 10 years, as a symbol of neighborhood solidarity.

Annette Glanckopf and I have known each other a long time. We both serve on the Midtown Residents Association board and have worked in that capacity for many years. Annette and I were both part of the selection committee when more public art was being authorized for Midtown. We have been SO pleased to have a significant and eye-pleasing work of art on the walls of each of our drug stores in Midtown. Both Walgreens and CVS have a mural.

The poetry wall selection on the Walgreens drug store is particularly dear to my heart. A contest was held to choose the poems that are now on that wall. One of them was written by a child. I especially enjoy taking a long look at the poetry wall when I visit the UPS store and Baskin-Robbins in the Midtown Shopping District.

The Palo Alto Weekly did an article about our poetry wall not long after it was finished. A reporter from the Palo Alto Weekly interviewed me about my pride in our public art in Midtown. The photographer took a picture of me in front of the first poem; and a friend had the article framed for me. I look at it often during my days working from home (as so many of us are now doing).

I would really like to appeal to the Palo Alto Art Commission and to Walgreens to make the necessary repairs to our much-loved poetry wall.

Sylvia Gartner

**From:** [DVB](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Save the Midtown Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Monday, November 7, 2022 11:52:49 AM

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Hi all,

I often look at this wall when I am in the small Midtown area. After so many years of changes, can we just keep this wall and its local poetry? I understand it needs fixing and would like to see the long term option taken to repair it so it can stand for another decade or so in Midtown.

Thank you,  
Deborah Buck

**From:** [Andie Reed](#)  
**To:** [PAC; DeMarzo, Elise](#)  
**Subject:** Save the Poetry Wall  
**Date:** Sunday, November 6, 2022 1:39:13 PM

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Dear Art Commissioners:

Thanks for your consideration of the options for the Poetry Mural project at 2605 Middlefield Rd in Palo Alto. I live in another part of town, but I walk all over Palo Alto and was struck by these wonderful poems the first time I saw them unexpectedly on the wall of the Walgreens. It's such a stunning presentation of beautiful, poignant poetry, it made me smile and I stopped and read them all. I was impressed that the Public Art Commission made it happen.

I became concerned when I heard that it might go away, so I've listened to your Oct 20 PAC meeting. I agree with the staff recommendation; the artwork is in disrepair and needs to be repaired and replaced, deaccessioned and repainted in an appropriate medium, which should last 7 - 10 years, as described in Option 1.

One of the commissioners made the important point that the "deaccessioning" of the artwork merely removes it from Palo Alto's permanent collection, which step is required because it will be completely removed in any case. When the members of Midtown have spoken up in favor of deaccessioning and repainting, they are expressing that they want to keep this particular artwork; they don't want to lose the Poetry Wall! It's a part of Midtown's history. In reading the letters, it appears all the poets want it replaced, too.

Although the three choices presented to the Art Commission included C), create a new mural, I don't believe any community members intended that by deaccessioning this piece they were choosing to open up a process to a completely different work of art.

One complaint of the commissioners was that the price to repaint the work was too high. Ms. Demarzo explained that of the almost \$30,000 price tag, the first 1/3 is for the scraping, cleaning, and prepping the wall, which would be incurred no matter which option was chosen. Therefore, the less than \$20,000 that would be required to repaint the much-beloved mural with the appropriate paint would be the least expensive in terms of dollars per expected life, which would translate to:

Option 1) \$18,000 over 7 years (or \$2,600 per year)

Option 2) \$12,500 over 2 years (or \$6,250 per year).

Option 3) The cost in dollars and staff resources to start a whole new open competition for a new piece of art would dramatically exceed either of these, not to mention the vastly extended timeline. It's a very large wall, and a new artwork would be significantly costly.

Please note the community doesn't want new art. They want their Poetry Wall.

Thank you,  
Andie Reed  
530-401-3809

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**From:** [Robin Mullery](#)  
**To:** [PAC](#)  
**Subject:** Walgreens mural input  
**Date:** Thursday, November 3, 2022 1:07:56 PM

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Commission a new mural now!

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