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City of Palo Alto Staff Report to Public Art Commission

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**November 4, 2021**

**RE: Agenda Item 2: Charleston-Arastradero Corridor**

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Public Art Commission approve additional funding in the amount up to \$35,000 to amend the contract C17166591 with artist Susan Zoccola to complete the fabrication and installation of the artwork associated with the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor Project.

**Executive Summary:**

Due to delays in the overall Charleston-Arastradero Corridor project and the escalation of material, fabrication, and shipping costs since the last amendment to Zoccola's contract in 2019, additional funds are necessary to complete the sculptures for the project.

**Background:**

The City of Palo Alto's Public Art Program manages the public art in municipal project funds transferred annually as part of the budget cycle in accordance with Ordinance Number 5301, Municipal Code 2.26.070 (Public Art for Municipal Projects). The Charleston-Arastradero Corridor is a high volume, 2.3-mile roadway serving 11 schools, several parks, shopping centers, commercial uses, a library, day care centers, non-profit organizations, and two community centers. The corridor extends from East Charleston Road at Fabian Way to Arastradero Road at Gunn High School.

Due to the high visibility of the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor Project, the opportunity to commission more art in south Palo Alto, and multiple opportunities to incorporate artwork if the process was initiated during the project design phase, staff initiated the artist selection process in March of 2016. Artist Susan Zoccola was selected as the artist for the project and was approved by the Public Art Commission in September 15, 2016. The contract with a budget of \$100,000 (including \$10,000 in contingency) was approved by City Council December 12, 2016. Zoccola traveled to Palo Alto in January 2017 to meet with the design team and initiate her design development. The conceptual design was reviewed and approved by the PAC in October 2017.

Inspired by the water filtration systems in the landscaping and the heavily used bike corridor, the artist developed a series of five sculptures inspired by bike wheels and diatoms. Diatoms are single-celled algae that form a silica-based cell wall. Diatoms exist in all saltwater and freshwater environments, including moist soils, and they happen to be shaped like bike wheels.

Informed by the intent of the project – a heavily trafficked corridor in which the streetscape project is intended to enhance bike and pedestrian safety, Zoccola set out to create colorful wheel based compositions marking entrances and key places along the corridor that would be dynamic for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists alike while marking a few places along the corridor for drivers to pay extra attention looking for cyclists.

### **Discussion:**

The initial contract was approved in 2016 with an expiration date of December 31, 2018. Due to construction delays, the original contract was amended twice. The contract was amended in December 2018 to extend the expiration date to June 30, 2019. The construction of the corridor was been delayed further, thus requiring a second amendment to extend the term to November 2021. During the now completed phases of the corridor construction, three of the five concrete footings for the sculptures were poured by the general contractor. The construction of the final phase of the corridor project was delayed with various changes to the original Phase 3 project plans. Currently, the estimated timeline for completing the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor project is in July 2022. To avoid any damage from heavy equipment and construction activities, the artworks must be installed at the end of the construction project.

Due to overall delays in the project, Zoccola has been waiting two years longer than expected to initiate fabrication. In this time, the cost of steel, like many building materials, and labor have risen. Shipping costs have risen as well, and moving Zoccola's sculptures from Washington State to Palo Alto will cost nearly twice as much as originally estimated. The artist would like to have her fabricator purchase the materials as soon as possible to protect against future inflation of steel prices but cannot create and install the sculptures as designed with the original budget.

Therefore, staff requests that the Public Art Commission increase Susan Zoccola's budget for the Charleston-Arastradero Corridor project by \$35,000 for a total contract amount up to \$135,000 including contingency for any further possible cost increases for materials and fabrication.

### **Timeline, Resource Impact, and Policy Implications**

The funds in the amount of \$35,000 for the contract will come from the pooled art funds in the Art in Public Spaces CIP (AC-86017). The Public Art for Municipal Projects Ordinance (Ordinance Number 5301, Municipal Code 2.26.070) requires that 1% of the CIP budget for municipal projects is allocated for the commission of public art. The Charleston-Arastradero Corridor Project CIP (PE-13011) contributed 1% of the project's funding in the amount of \$120,800 to the Art in Public Spaces (AIPP) CIP in order to fund the public art component of this project

recommended in this memorandum. Additional contingency funds may come from funds derived from bike/pedestrian plan funds previously transferred to the AIPP CIP.