



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0015, **Version:** 1

TO:

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:

Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:

Mark Leyman, Parks and Recreation Director
Eilen Stewart, Cultural Arts Manager

SUBJECT:

Consideration of the Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan Items:
Manhattan Beach Art Center Frieze, Digital Wall, Rainbow Crosswalk, and Polliwog Pavilion (Parks and Recreation Director Leyman).

A) DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

B) ALLOCATE FUNDS FROM PUBLIC ART TRUST FUND

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that City Council discuss and provide direction on Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan Items: Manhattan Beach Art Center Frieze, Digital Wall, Rainbow Crosswalk, and Polliwog Pavilion.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

If approved, funds will be allocated from the Public Art Trust Fund (PATF) for each project. The Public Art Trust Fund Ordinance became effective December 18, 2002. It set aside a 1% development fee on residential developments of four or more units, and every commercial and industrial building project with building valuation exceeding \$500,000. The funds are restricted to public art projects. The PATF unallocated fund balance is \$1,210.048 (PATF report attached). The anticipated cost breakdown for each work plan item is below:

1. John Van Hamersveld Frieze Mural

The estimated cost to repair the damage and permanently reinstall the John Van Hamersveld frieze mural at the Manhattan Beach Art Center is \$40,000.

2. City Hall Lobby Digital Wall

The estimated cost to install a digital screen with computer hardware and cosmetic wall enhancements is up to \$300,000. This includes plywood backing for mounting, digital wall installation, decorative treatment of surrounding wall space, and necessary computer hardware and software.

3. Permanent Stage and Pavilion in Polliwog Park

Currently up to \$100,000 is budgeted in the CIP to fund the artist stipends and design construction documents for a permanent stage and pavilion in Polliwog Park. If Council approves moving forward with this project, a request for construction funding of the pavilion will return to Council upon selection of a final design.

4. Rainbow Crosswalk

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction on a request to allocate up to an estimated \$80,000. Further direction is needed from City Council to establish the project budget.

BACKGROUND:

Each year, the City Council approves the Cultural Arts Commission work plan items for the Commission to discuss and develop options, ultimately returning to Council for direction. The four work plan items below include Commission and staff recommendations for Council consideration:

1. Manhattan Beach Art Center Frieze Mural

Originally designed and built as a library to service the east side of Manhattan Beach, the Manhattan Beach Art Center (MBAC) occupies the iconic 1964 round brick building at 1560 Manhattan Beach Boulevard. Established as a center for the arts in 1998 by City Council, MBAC had its first exhibition in 2001, presented by Homeira Goldstein, titled *Art in the Circle*, to pay homage to the building's unusual shape.

In 2016, MBAC presented a retrospective exhibition of renowned South Bay artist John Van Hamersveld, titled *Contemporary Post Future: the Dichotomy of Design and Art*. The City Council had approved a budget of \$24,000 for the exhibition as well as an additional budget of \$10,000 to create and install an artwork on the frieze of the Art Center. Inspired by the 1960s architecture of the building, Van Hamersveld designed a black and off-white colored design, modeled after his *Corbu* artwork, and wrapping around the perimeter of the building.

Van Hamersveld's recognition as an artist and designer rocketed to near stardom after the runaway success of his poster for the 1963 film *The Endless Summer*. Van Hamersveld went on to serve as Capitol Records' Head of Design, created hundreds of artworks for music albums, including the cover of the *Magical Mystery Tour* by the Beatles, *Exile on Main Street* by the Rolling Stones, and *Hotter Than Hell* by Kiss. During his long career, Van Hamersveld designed the official poster and 360-foot-long mural for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, illustrated for *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Billboard* magazines, created branding and logos for *Fatburger*, *Contempo Casuals*, and *Broadway Deli*, and created countless iconic images and designs such as the *Crazy World Ain't It* Johnny Face replicated on clothing and consumer products worldwide. More recently, Van Hamersveld created the monumental mural on the El Segundo water tower, *Signs of Life* Fremont Experience in Las Vegas, and countless murals in Los Angeles and the South Bay. His work is recognized and collected by institutions such as Los Angeles County Museum of Art and is firmly rooted in the 1960s Southern California experience.

Having designed the mural for the Manhattan Beach Art Center, Van Hamersveld elected to install the design using a heat treated vinyl coating. He recommended Erik Bond of Spin Imaging to install this artwork. Bond had used this material for similar applications on many occasions, including other Van Hamersveld installations, and guaranteed the artwork to survive a minimum of 12 months, up to 10 years.

Sometime after installation, the artwork began to deteriorate and by 2020, many panels of the piece began to show large surface cracks and peel away from the building.

2. Digital Wall

After decommissioning the mural in the City Hall Lobby in November of 2018, City Council allocated \$317,000 (\$298,000 remaining) from the Public Arts Trust Fund for replacement artwork in its place.

City Council directed staff to explore the option of installing a large digital screen in the City Hall Lobby in lieu of an art installation. The Digital Wall would allow for artists and artworks to be featured on a rotating basis. The Cultural Arts Commission has also been asked to prepare a plan to award grants to artists and community members who would create the artwork featured for the Digital Wall. The allocated sum of \$298,000 (including contingency) will cover the design, installation, and maintenance of the digital wall as well as the necessary cosmetic enhancements of the affected area. As the LED screen would only cover a portion of the currently exposed wall and needs a plywood substrate for secure installation, the remainder of the unfinished wall previously covered by the artwork will also need to be addressed in terms of visual consistency.

3. Polliwog Stage and Pavilion

Polliwog Park is Manhattan Beach's largest outdoor gathering venue, home to Concerts in the Park, Shakespeare in the Park and many other arts and public events. While the current amphitheater grading of the park allows ample seating for an audience, there is not a permanent stage, lighting, nor sound infrastructure to allow efficient performance operations. A mobile or temporary stage is erected for each event and is removed after. This process is costly, time consuming, labor intensive, and inefficient. Additionally, this process carries a high degree of liability including accidents, injury, and litigation.

By constructing a permanent stage and pavilion, the issues of liability, ongoing costs, prohibitive staffing needs, and lengthy set up and take down would be eliminated, allowing for smoother operation and ultimately more public events.

4. Rainbow Crosswalk

At the January 4, 2021, joint Council Commission meeting, City Council approved a work plan item for the Cultural Arts Commission to explore the possibility of installing a rainbow crosswalk in the City. The Commission has conducted its research and recommends approving the project. The rainbow flag was first created in 1978 by artist Gilbert Baker to celebrate the "spectrum" of human sexuality and gender. While the LGBT+ flag consists of several colors (Red - Life, Orange - Healing, Yellow - Sunlight, Green - Nature, Turquoise - Magic/Art, Indigo - Serenity, Violet - Spirit), many other iterations of the flag have been used to represent a variety of inclusive ideals. These additional flag versions have included additional colors such as lavender to recognize diversity, white to represent all colors of human diversity in terms of religion, gender sexual preference, ethnicities and more as well as black and brown to represent all racial and ethnic backgrounds. In recognition of the role that this symbol plays in recognizing and celebrating diversity, many cities have installed rainbow crosswalks at significant intersections.

DISCUSSION:

1. Manhattan Beach Art Center Frieze Mural

One of the Commission work plan items is the beautification of MBAC. In the process of assessing the exterior of the building, Commissioners and staff noticed deterioration of the frieze mural. Staff

conducted a consultation with Erik Bond (who installed the artwork) to assess if and how the artwork could be repaired. Upon assessing the condition of the piece, Bond deemed the damage to be catastrophic and irreparable using the same or similar materials.

Due to the textured surface of the Art Center frieze, the vinyl coating is not able to adhere fully to the substrate, leaving small pockets of air under the vinyl surface. As the ambient temperature changes, these air pockets expand and contract and pull away larger and larger sections of the vinyl coating. This phenomenon is particularly detrimental on the south side of the building, where in addition to the constant fluctuation in the size of the air pockets, the sun heats up and softens the vinyl material in the black areas, causing it to shrink as the heat dissipates at the end of each day. As the black areas of the vinyl shrink, cracks are appearing in the design.

Staff further inquired if there was another way to adhere a vinyl product to the frieze and what could be done to better prepare the surface of the building for installation. Bond explained that the only way to assure that similar damage does not occur in the future is to add an additional coating of cement to the building, then waterproof the cement and finally to install the vinyl. Any other application of a vinyl product would result in similar failure. After researching the issue further, staff has determined that it would be cost prohibitive and structurally problematic to create the necessary concrete coating as the area in question is not designed to bear the additional weight of the concrete.

Staff further determined that it is possible to use the existing (damaged) vinyl image as a stencil and use outdoor building paint to replicate the same design directly onto the surface of the building. By doing this, the design would be preserved and future repairs could be done with paint if necessary. As John Van Hamersveld's artworks are frequently projected out, traced, and painted in by artisans from his original digital designs, this technique is congruent with his artistic practice. Staff reached out to Van Hamersveld and obtained written permission to repair the artwork using this method.

A reputable mural restoration company would need to be contracted to complete this work in order to preserve the integrity of the artwork and guarantee longevity of the work. Due to the difficult topography surrounding the building, the cost of this repair is estimated to be up to \$40,000, including necessary scaffolding, lifting equipment, and specialized personnel. The use of PATF dollars for the sculpture is consistent with the purpose and restrictions set forth in the guidelines.

2. City Hall Digital Wall

Staff recommends using funds already committed to the City Hall mural artwork to refurbish the exposed wall and install a digital wall capable of displaying rotating images of artwork. The displayed artwork could consist of free and existing artwork sourced by staff, purchased artwork, commissioned artwork specifically for the space, art grant recipient artwork, as well as images of artwork on display at the Cultural Arts Center and created by the students and artists working in Parks and Rec Cultural Arts Classes.

3. Polliwog Stage and Pavilion

Staff recommends that the City Council direct the Cultural Arts Commission to develop an RFP to solicit designs. More research needs to be done to assess the final cost of the project pending City Council's direction as to the size, scope, and utility of the stage and pavilion. Points of discussion can include the physical size and footprint of the stage; the audiovisual and electrical components incorporated into the structure; the transparency of the vertical elements and impact on the view; as well as any other considerations as directed by Council for staff to address. Currently, there is

\$100,000 in the CIP for the design.

4. Rainbow Crosswalk

The Cultural Arts Commission recommends installing a rainbow crosswalk at the intersection of Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Peck Avenue. This intersection is in the process of being renovated by the Public Works and Community Development departments and will be completed in FY 2022-23. The installation of the rainbow crosswalk would provide efficiencies, combining these two initiatives.

Alternate locations proposed by the Cultural Arts Commission were:

- Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Redondo Avenue - this location was the first choice for the Commission, however City Council had previously expressed concerns as to the safety of the many pedestrians using that location.
- Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Morningside Avenue - this location would yield high visibility but may overwhelm downtown with too many artistic and decorative initiatives in a small area.

Several methods of installing the artwork have been identified ranging in scope from least expensive and durable such as paint, to most costly and permanent such as tile or colored brick.

Due to the relative simplicity of the project, cost savings can be achieved by having staff design variations of the artwork to be installed. Alternatively, a request for proposals can be issued to solicit an external artist.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that Council provide direction on the following Cultural Arts Commission Work Plan item:

1. Manhattan Beach Art Center Frieze Mural

Staff recommends that the City Council allocate \$40,000 for the repair and replacement of the frieze mural.

2. Digital Wall

Staff recommends that City Council discuss and provide direction. If approved, \$298,000 will be used from the already committed Public Art Trust Funds.

3. Polliwog Pavilion

Staff recommends that City Council approve moving forward with a request for proposal to develop designs for the Polliwog Pavilion. If approved, staff will return to Council for RFP approval, design selection and final fund allocation.

4. Rainbow Crosswalk

Staff recommends that the City Council approve up to \$80,000 for the installation of a rainbow crosswalk at Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Peck Avenue.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

These items were discussed at Cultural Arts Commission meetings from January 2021 through

October 2021.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Art Trust Fund Report
2. PowerPoint Presentation