



City of Grass Valley
City Council
Agenda Action Sheet

Title: Highway 49 Overpass Transportation Art Project

CEQA: Not a project

Recommendation: That Council 1) direct staff to proceed with the process of a transportation art project application at the proposed site; 2) give feedback on the proposed renders as submitted; 3) solicit public comment on this item as required by the Caltrans Transportation Art process; 4) direct staff to put the renderings and application through the City's mural process.

Prepared by: Lieutenant Brian Blakemore, Police Department

Council Meeting Date: 11/12/2024

Date Prepared: 10/16/2024

Agenda: Administrative

Background Information:

In mid-2021, the City was in the process of assuming care and control from Caltrans, of Colfax Ave. coming into downtown Grass Valley. The termination point of Colfax Ave. at South Auburn Street is a center point of downtown, where numerous artery-streets meet at a 4-way intersection. Arguably, it is the point where residents and visitors first *feel* as though they are in "downtown" Grass Valley.

The downtown landscape in this location is visually appealing from multiple directions; however, the industrial appearance of the Hwy. 49 overpass in that area isn't consistent with downtown's charm. Staff examined how this could be addressed and identified that the overpass and its abutments are an ideal location for a "Transportation Art" project. This art project seeks to have murals painted on the overpass abutments and, in some areas, the underside of the Hwy 49 overpass.

Caltrans maintains care and control of the overpass and its abutments and has an identified process for transforming industrial bridge and overpass structures into canvases for visually appealing art; Transportation Art. Transportation Art projects are approved by Caltrans on an individual basis and must conform to numerous standards, which ensure safety and maintenance needs are not affected. The approval process includes a multi-step permit process. For Council consideration, one requirement in the permit process is that the submitting entity must be the government jurisdiction in which the artwork will stand. If a Transportation Art project is an attractive concept, the Council is asked to provide direction to staff to proceed with developing this project and completing applications. Additional Transportation Art requirements are attached for reference.

Considering the fact that the City does not employ professional artists, staff have met with Brian Chambers, owner of a local art studio and someone who has an extensive network of local artists he works with. Mr. Chambers immediately committed his support for this project and worked with staff to distribute a "call to action" for local artists to submit renderings of proposed artwork consistent with the parameters of the Caltrans Transportation Art requirements. Renderings have been returned, including a submission from local Nisenan

artists. Each rendering was completed by a local artist who resides and works in western Nevada County and calls the Grass Valley area home. Council is asked to provide feedback on the renderings that have been submitted.

Funding for this project is expected to come from grant and donation sources. Currently, an experienced grant writer who works with the Nisenan Tribe, and the art studio owned by Mr. Chambers, is working to identify potential funding.

Consistent with 17.38.080 (F) of the Grass Valley Municipal Code, the Council is asked to solicit public comment on this proposal and give direction to staff to put the renderings and application through the City's mural process.

Council Goals/Objectives: This action executes portions of Strategic Plan (2018) Core Goal-Community & Sense of Place.

Fiscal Impact: Zero up-front cost with grant funding and donations. Upkeep/maintenance costs would be the responsibility of the city. This cost would/could vary depending on weather, vandalism, and other factors.

Funds Available: N/A

Account #: TBD

Reviewed by: Tim Kiser, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Caltrans "Transportation Art" guidelines from dot.ca.gov
2. Photos of abutments in current condition
3. Renderings from Artists