



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 11/16/2021

ITEM NO: 19

DATE: November 16, 2021
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Consider the Recommendation of the Arts and Culture Commission to Commission Artist Matt Babcock for the Second Gateway Sculpture to be Placed at Hwy 17 and Lark, and to Use the Same Artist and Same Design for Future Gateway Sites

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider the recommendation of the Arts and Culture Commission to commission artist Matt Babcock for the second gateway sculpture to be placed at Hwy 17 and Lark, and to use the same artist and same design for future gateway sites.

BACKGROUND:

On January 31, 2017, at a Council Priority Setting Session, Council approved allocating \$25,000 to the Arts and Culture Commission (ACC) for use in a project supporting public arts. The ACC returned to Council on April 10, 2017, proposing to use the funds to install gateway monuments or markers at various ingress and egress points in Town. The long-term vision of the project as defined by the ACC was to create distinctive and artistic gateways which would eventually be installed at five different high-traffic locations in Town.

The ACC created a competitive selection process that involved a Call for Artists/Request for Qualifications (RFQ) which was released on September 26, 2018, and closed after an extended deadline of December 28, 2018. It was advertised on State and national call for artist outlets as well as promoted to residents through direct communication and outreach with local art organizations and galleries, postings on Nextdoor, Town social media, and Chamber of Commerce social media. At the close of the extended deadline, a total of 14 portfolio applications received met the professional background and experience criteria defined in the RFQ.

PREPARED BY: Ryan Baker
Library Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

BACKGROUND (continued):

The ACC used a standardized rubric working within the Town's Public Art Selection Policy to assess the portfolio applications and past art installation experience of the qualified artists. The three highest-scoring finalists were invited to design and propose a site-specific gateway monument. These proposals were presented by the artists at a special meeting of the ACC on September 18, 2019. To gather public input on the submitted designs, the ACC arranged to create a display in the Library from September 19 to October 16, 2019, showcasing the three proposed designs. The designs were also posted on the ACC's page of the Town's website with an invitation to submit comments.

At its October 16, 2019, meeting, the ACC voted unanimously in favor to recommend the concept proposal by Seattle-based artist Matt Babcock titled "El Gato" to be produced as the first gateway marker with an installation site of Los Gatos Saratoga Rd and Alberto Way near the eastbound offramp of Hwy 17 north. At the December 3, 2019, meeting of the Town Council, the Council voted 4 in favor and 1 opposed to approve the recommendation of the ACC to commission artist Matt Babcock with his proposed design to be installed at the location recommended by the ACC.

On June 7, 2021, the first gateway sculpture was delivered to the site by the artist and installed by the Parks and Public Works Department (PPW).

At the August 17, 2021, Town Council meeting, the ACC requested funding as part of the FY2021/22 -- 2025/26 Capital Improvement Program Budget discussion to commission and install the second gateway sculpture. At that meeting, the Town Council allocated \$32,000 to the project with the understanding that the ACC would return to a future Council meeting with a proposal for the next phase of the project.

DISCUSSION:

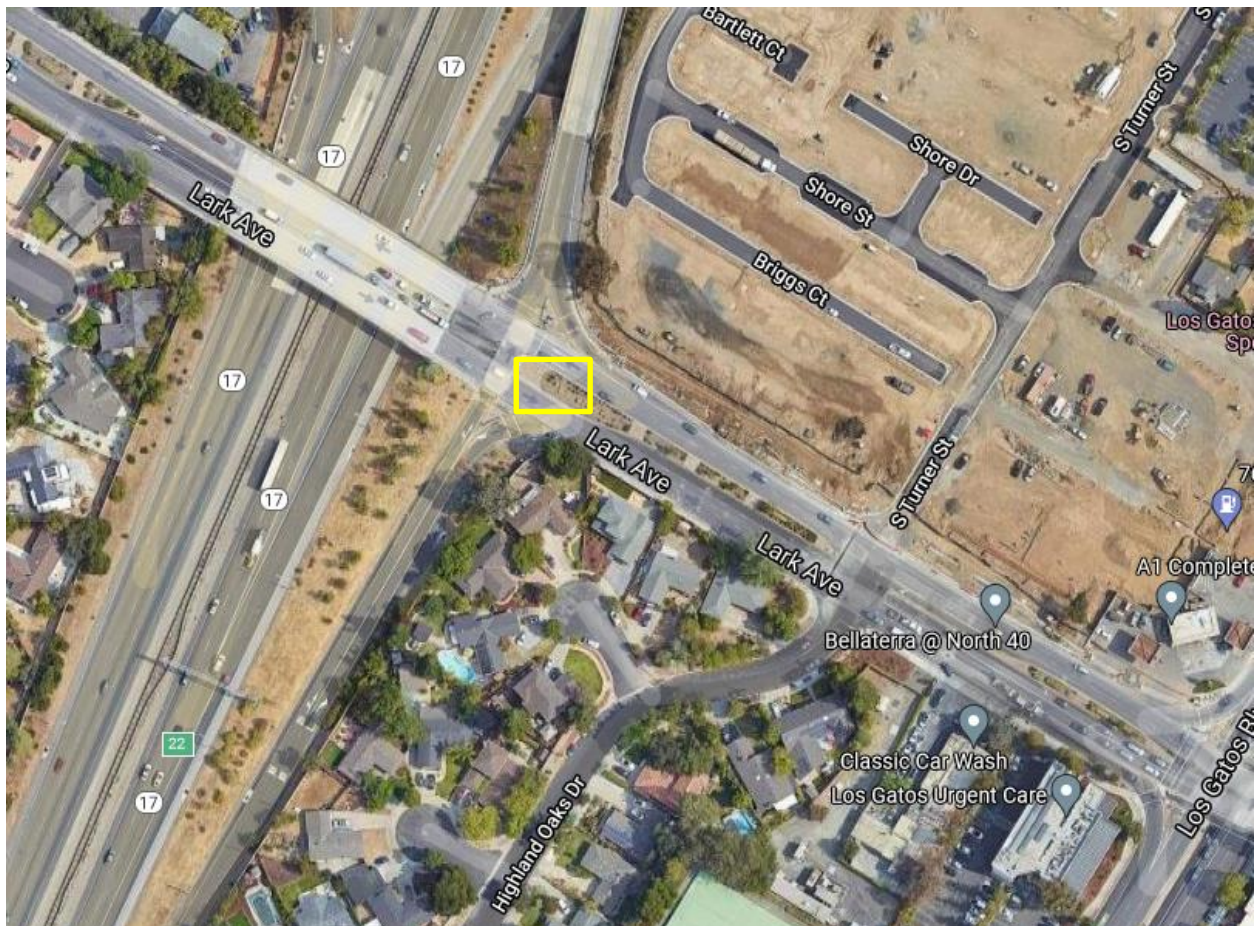
The ACC is pleased by the results of the installation of the first gateway sculpture at Los Gatos Saratoga Road and Alberto Way and feels that the public reaction has been enthusiastic and favorable. At the ACC regular and special meetings between August and October 2021, discussions solidifying the overall vision of the project and vetting future locations were discussed.

Location

The ACC recommends the location for the second gateway sculpture to be at Lark Ave near the northbound offramp and onramp of Hwy 17. The gateway would be placed in the central

DISCUSSION (continued):

median that divides east and west bound traffic on Lark Ave. Currently, this median is still undergoing construction by Summerhill Homes under the purview of PPW as part of the North 40 development. Summerhill Homes has agreed to install a flat concrete base for the sculpture at no cost to the Town, per specifications provided by PPW, as construction nears completion on the median. Should the site not be approved for this recommendation of the ACC, the concrete base will still be constructed and will remain for a future project to be determined by the Town at a later date. Should it not be utilized at this time, it will not be immediately visible to a general passer-by. The map insert below shows the general location marked in yellow; exact location to be determined by PPW and Summerhill Homes.



In addition to the location at Lark Ave and Hwy 17, the ACC has considered potential locations at entry and exit points to the Town on Blossom Hill Road near the Town's eastern border with San Jose, Hwy 9 near the Town's western border with Saratoga, and Winchester Blvd near the Town's northern border with Campbell. PPW has identified varying degrees of issue with these preliminary sites that will need further research or alternative locations if and when Council wishes to pursue subsequent gateways.

DISCUSSION (continued):

Sculpture Selection

The ACC has considered several different approaches to the overall vision of the gateway project which will include the second and all subsequent gateway sculptures. Discussions pertaining to this vision have included whether the sculpture at all locations should be identical, similar with variation, or completely different; conform to a theme or style; or be designed by the same artist or different artist/s.

The ACC is recommending the overall vision for the project be identical sculptures by the same artist at each location with a possible variation only in color scheme. The photo insert below shows the design that the ACC is recommending.



The ACC considers the following to be the advantages of this approach:

1. Branding and Uniformity

The ACC feels that identical sculptures will add to the branding of the Town and can be used for marketing. The uniformity of the gateways will help to create a shared sense of place.

DISCUSSION (continued):

2. Timeline

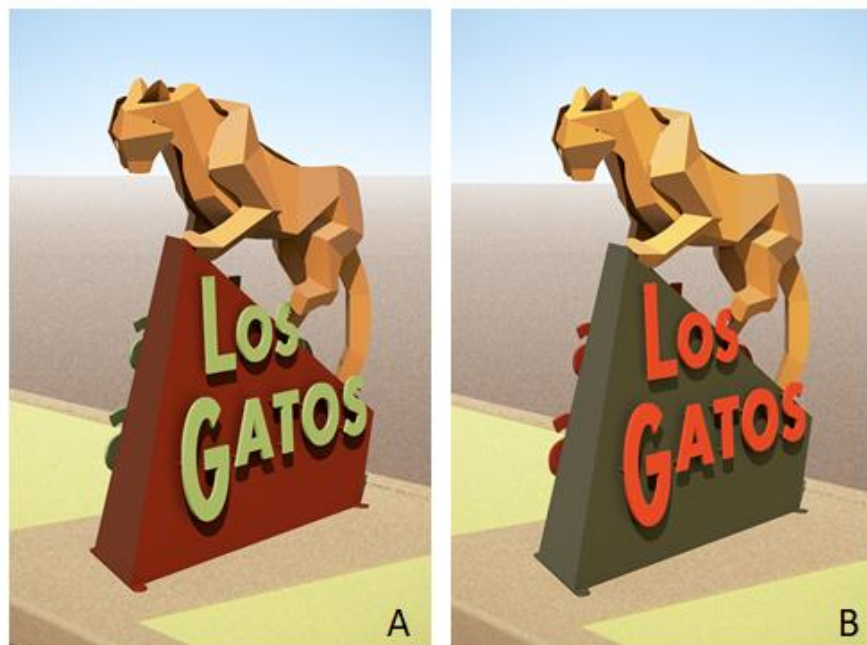
The ACC feels that working with the same artist using the same design will significantly reduce the amount of time necessary for selection, approval, and production, as well as the time spent by the Town Council, Staff and Commissioners. As a comparison, a call for artist process, including vetting portfolios requesting and evaluating project submissions, finalizing contracts, and commissioning a new piece by a different artist could take upwards of 18 months; while utilizing the same artist with an already established design will move straight to production which could be as short as six to eight months before delivery.

3. Cost

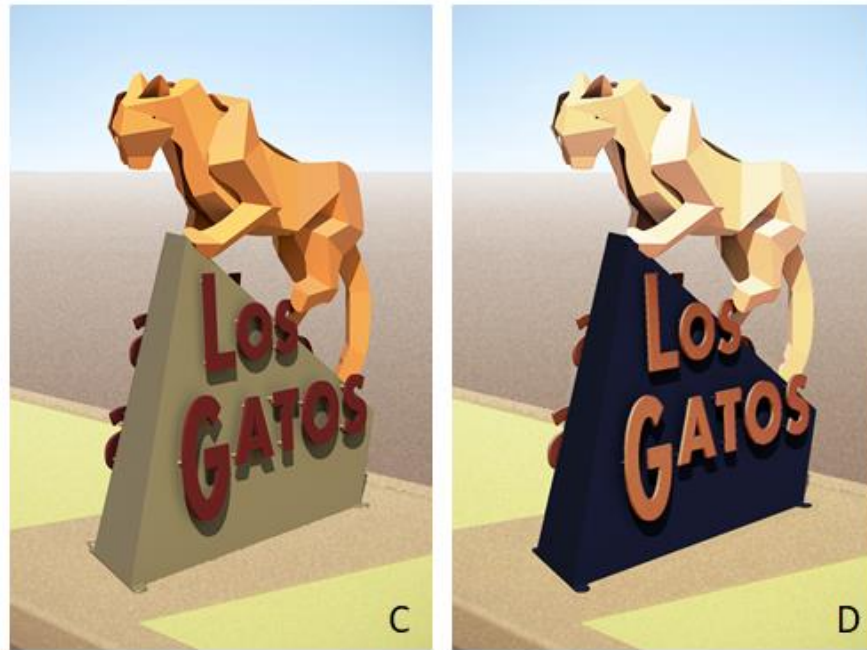
The ACC expects to spend \$25,000 for the commission of an identical artwork by the same artist. In contrast, the ACC anticipates that a new design using the same artist would cost \$30,000 while a call for artist process for a new artist with a new design would cost possibly more.

4. Color Alternatives

The only variation the ACC is recommending for the second, and subsequent, gateway sculptures is using a different color palette. The ACC would welcome Council input on color selection based on the palettes presented here:



DISCUSSION (continued):



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS:

Under the Town's Public Art Selection Policy, final approval for the commission of any public artwork does not rest with the ACC. Council must make a final approval.

If Council approves the ACC's recommendation, the Town would enter into an agreement with the artist regarding the production of the piece, which is within the financial authority of the Town Manager. PPW, including the Town's Traffic Engineer, would work with the artist to refine any logistical and safety details, timeline, and delivery. PPW would undertake the on-site installation once the artwork is received and the Town would be responsible for the long-term maintenance of the piece.

Should the Council not be in favor of the ACC's recommendation, Council may wish to direct the ACC to reconsider the parameters of the project and return to Council at a later date with an alternative plan for moving forward. In such a case, the ACC would welcome any additional direction Council may have regarding the parameters or scope of the project.

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SUBJECT: Art and Culture Commission's Gateway Recommendation

DATE: November 16, 2021

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Council may choose to support the ACC's recommendation as presented in this staff report to commission artist Matt Babcock for the second gateway sculpture to be placed at Hwy 17 and Lark, and to use the same artist and same design for future gateway sites.
2. The Council may choose to deny the ACC's recommendation in whole or in part and provide additional direction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Costs associated with the second gateway are already included in the FY21-22 Capital Improvement budget. \$25,000 of the \$32,000 allocated to the ACC for this project is anticipated to be spent if the Council proceeds with the recommendation as presented here. Additional funds would be necessary for additional gateway locations in the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.