



ARTS COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

AC 25-07
October 15, 2025
Regular Business

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AC 25-07: Public Art Donation Proposal – <i>Hokusai 20</i> by Jeffrey Laudenslager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	Provide direction to staff for next steps to confirm the feasibility of the proposed donation.	

STAFF:	Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager
EXHIBITS:	1. 6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places 2. Public Art Donation Proposal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to provide information about a public art donation proposal received by the City of Mercer Island and to seek direction from the Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) for next steps.

- On August 31, 2025, staff received a proposal from Mercer Island residents Robert and Laura Ellen Muglia to donate the sculpture *Hokusai 20* by Jeffery Laudenslager to the City.
- The donors propose installing the 21ft kinetic sculpture in the North Mercer Way roundabout in Town Center. Installing artwork in this location was identified by the Arts Council as a high priority project opportunity in the 6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places, which was approved by the City Council on September 16, 2025.
- Before staff initiate the Arts Council process to evaluate the proposal, additional research is required. If the Arts Council wishes to move forward with formally reviewing the donation proposal, staff will return at a future meeting with more information and a recommendation for next steps.

BACKGROUND

The City of Mercer Island [public art collection](#) features more than 60 works of 2D and 3D art installed in public facilities and parks around Mercer Island. Artwork has been acquired through City commissions and purchases as well as through donations by private entities. The most recent public art donation acceptance was of *Raven* by Ron Reeder, which was donated to the City by the Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) in 2023 ([AB 6204](#)).

To steward the future of the public art collection and program, City staff and the Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) drafted the 6-Year Work Plan for Art in Public Places (6-Year Work Plan) from May 2024 to March 2025. This internal planning document includes goals for the City's public art program; public art project opportunities to consider over the 6-year planning horizon; guidance for community engagement and collection management; and other information to support the Mercer Island public art program (Exhibit 1).

In September 2024, a representative for Mercer Island residents Robert and Laura Ellen Muglia contacted City staff requesting to donate a sculpture to the public art collection. Staff informed the representative that the City was in the process of developing the 6-Year Work Plan and would not consider new donation requests until the planning process concluded.

Staff stayed in contact with the potential donors throughout the process and notified them in July 2025 that the 6-Year Work Plan would be transmitted to the City Council in September 2025. At that time, staff also

provided directions for submitting a public art donation proposal should the potential donors still be interested in doing so. On September 16, 2025, the City Council approved the 6-Year Work Plan ([AB 6770](#)), and the City is now able to begin reviewing public art donation proposals using the updated Guidelines for Administering the Public Art Program approved with the 6-Year Work Plan.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

PUBLIC ART DONATION PROPOSAL: *HOKUSAI 20*

On August 31, 2025, staff received a proposal from the Muglias to donate *Hokusai 20* by Jeffery Laudenslager to the City (Exhibit 2). Details for the sculpture are provided below.

- Title: *Hokusai 20*
- Artist: Jeffery Laudenslager
- Medium: Kinetic sculpture
- Material: Titanium
- Dimensions: The artwork stands approximately 21ft tall and weighs approximately 314lbs. The base is approximately 37in tall and weighs 91lbs.

During the Arts Council meeting, staff will display a 3D-printed model of the proposed sculpture as well as share images and videos of the artist's other works.

The donors propose siting the sculpture in the roundabout at North Mercer Way and 77th Avenue SE in Town Center to "transform a functionally effective but otherwise non-descript intersection into a major feature of the City." Installing artwork in the roundabout was previously identified as a project opportunity by the Arts Council; this project opportunity was included as a high-priority opportunity in the Project Opportunities List in the 6-Year Work Plan. Installation costs would be covered by the donors.

PROCESS FOR EVALUATION + ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

Per the Guidelines for Administering the Public Art Program, which were updated and approved with the 6-Year Work Plan, the Arts Council shall use the procedure for evaluating submittals for artist/artwork selection to determine whether to recommend acceptance of the public art proposal to the City Council. Staff preliminarily reviewed the proposal and met with the donors to discuss the process on September 30, 2025. Prior to initiating the proposal evaluation process, additional research is required to determine the feasibility of the proposed donation. Staff recommend completing the following tasks before starting the formal proposal review process.

Review Installation Needs with the Artist and Structural Engineer

The public art collection features three kinetic sculptures, but *Hokusai 20* would represent the first fully movable sculpture accessioned into the collection. To understand more about the sculpture's mechanics, installation needs, and maintenance, staff would meet with the artist and a structural engineer to ensure the City is capable of the long-term care of this type of public artwork.

Discuss Proposed Location with Other City Divisions

Installing artwork in the right-of-way may pose visibility and other roadway challenges for vehicle operators, pedestrians, and cyclists. To make a recommendation about the proposal to the Arts Council, staff must review the request with the City's ROW and Engineering teams to properly vet the proposed location for installation.

Coordinate with Other Agencies

Sound Transit constructed the North Mercer Way roundabout to mitigate traffic impacts associated with the forthcoming East Link Light Rail extension. As a condition of the right-of-way use permit approval for this project, Sound Transit transferred two land parcels and their associated

improvements to the City following final approval and acceptance of the construction project in November 2024 ([AB 6566](#)). The roundabout and associated improvements such as landscaping are still owned by Sound Transit but will be transferred to the City in the future per the City Engineer. Additionally, a small portion of the roundabout is located on Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) right-of-way and any installation plan must be reviewed and approved by WSDOT. Staff recommend starting the proposal review process after the roundabout transfer has been completed with Sound Transit and preliminary discussions have been held with WSDOT.

NEXT STEPS

Tonight, staff seek Arts Council direction on whether to move forward with additional research to confirm the feasibility of the proposed public art donation. If the Arts Council wishes to move forward, staff would return at a future meeting to review findings and provide a staff recommendation about initiating the procedure to evaluate the public art donation proposal. Upon review, if the proposal is recommended for acceptance, the recommendation would be transmitted to the City Council for approval. A project timeline to install the work of art would be developed and updates would be communicated to the Arts Council and community as appropriate.

If it is determined that the proposed location is not feasible for installation, staff would discuss additional opportunities with the donor and determine whether to return to the Arts Council with an updated proposal.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Provide direction to staff for next steps to confirm the feasibility of the proposed donation.