

Public Art Maintenance Needs Update for Arts Council – 12.09.20

Background:

In 2020, the following works of public art have sustained damage beyond the normal “wear and tear” inherent in existing in the public realm:

Now We Are One by Philip Levine – Located in First Hill Park

On September 16, 2020, Parks staff noticed that the base of this sculpture was completely detaching from the ground and removed the piece to ensure both safety of the public and the work of art. The piece is currently stored at the City Shop.



Gateway Figures by Garth Edwards – Located at Mercer Island Gateway (77th Ave SE and Sunset Hwy)

On October 9, 2020, Community Planning & Development staff were notified that one of the Gateway figures had been damaged during a traffic accident. This art installation is often the site of traffic accidents; for example, the Gateway sign has been in storage since 2018 due to an accident, and another incident occurred in 2019 (although no damage was sustained). Parks staff removed the damaged figure to ensure safety of the public and the artwork as well as to stay clear of the Sound Transit construction site. The damaged piece is currently stored at the City Shop.



Fire Flower by Gisel Berman – Located at Mercer Park (former Farmers World Insurance Building)

On November 24, 2020, Marc Gearhart from Ryan Companies (the developer that purchased Mercer Park) informed staff that *Fire Flower* had been vandalized and/or a target of attempted theft. Staff contacted Artsite, the City's contract art conservator. Artsite assessed the site on November 30 and provided an estimate to safely deinstall the piece and securely store it at the City Shop; they can also complete repairs if/when the City authorizes that action. Note that staff and Ryan Companies planned to bring a discussion about re-siting *Fire Flower* to the Arts Council in early 2021, as Mercer Park is currently under renovation.



Conservation & Maintenance Plan:

Staff have not researched options for repairing/reinstalling *Now We Are One* or *Gateway Figures* but are in the process of contracting with Artsite to safely remove and store *Fire Flower*. These sculptures are insured by the City; a claim has already been filed for *Fire Flower*, and staff are exploring whether costs to repair and reinstall the other pieces can be covered by insurance. Any costs not paid by insurance could be covered by the 1% for Art in Public Places fund, which currently holds a balance of \$153,949.

Before scheduling repairs, staff seek the Arts Council's direction on an appropriate re-siting plan for each sculpture as well as board assistance in pursuing next steps (site research, artist/donor contact, deaccession research, etc.).

Recommended Actions:

- Discuss repair and re-siting plans for *Now We Are One*, *Gateway Figures*, and *Fire Flower*.
- Identify one-two Arts Council members to assist staff with next steps for re-siting plans.

Staff and appointed Arts Council members will return with additional information at a future board meeting and ask for a vote to approve repair/re-siting plans.