



ARTS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Item (3)
April 17, 2024
Regular Business

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

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| TITLE: | 2024 Public Art Restorations | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |
| RECOMMENDED ACTION: | Recommend the City Council appropriate \$20,000 from the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund to support restoration of <i>Totem</i> by Bernard Hosey and the Luther Burbank Park Mosaic Murals by Sandy Glass and José Orantes. | |

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| STAFF: | Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager |
| COUNCIL LIAISON: | Ted Weinberg |
| EXHIBITS: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> MICC 04.40.200 1% for art in public places fund Condition Assessment for <i>Totem</i> provided by Alloy Arts Restoration proposal for LBP Mosaic Murals provided by Sandy Glass |

SUMMARY

The purpose of this staff report is to seek a recommendation to appropriate \$20,000 from the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund to restore two works in the Mercer Island public art collection: *Totem* by Bernard Hosey and the Luther Burbank Park Mosaic Murals by Sandy Glass and José Orantes.

BACKGROUND

The Mercer Island public art collection includes nearly 70 works of two- and three-dimensional art installed in City parks, buildings, and other public locations around the Island. Much of the collection was partially or fully acquired using the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund (1% Fund). The 1% Fund is funded by 1% of total project costs for qualifying capital improvement projects, which include City-funded construction and remodel of public buildings and parks as well as construction, renovation, or repair of public streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities. MICC 4.40.200 (Exhibit 1) stipulates the thresholds for calculating the 1% contribution and other parameters for using these dollars.

Finance calculates the annual contribution amount after closing accounts payable. Staff plan for contributions of \$20,000 each year, but the amount fluctuates based on the qualifying capital projects completed each year. (For example, the total 2023 contribution was \$30,914 from eight qualifying capital projects.)

Maintenance of the public art collection is supported using an annual public art maintenance budget from the 1% Fund. This routine maintenance typically focuses on outdoor sculptures and includes cleaning, waxing, sealing, repainting, and other activities to maintain the life and longevity of the collection. The City also mounts major restorations of individual pieces as those needs arise. Recent public art restoration projects include *Handsome Bollards* by Tom Jay (2019), *Fire Flower* by Gizel Berman (2022), *Now We Are One* by Philip Levine (2023), and *Island Poles* by Steve Jensen (2023).

RESTORATION OF TOTEM

Bernard Hosey's *Totem* is a 17' painted steel sculpture installed at Roanoke Park. The abstract sculpture features one central steel piece intersected by three thinner, sword-like pieces. These blades extend approximately three feet out horizontally from the right side of the center piece. Another tall, narrow blade extends vertically on the left side of the center piece, balancing the composition. *Totem* was commissioned by the Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) and donated to the City in 1984. The sculpture was originally installed at the Community Center but was re-sited at Roanoke Park in 2005 when the new Community Center facility opened.

In 2023, the City began the process to replace aging play equipment at Roanoke Park. Based on the scope of this capital project, staff estimate it will contribute \$3,000 to \$4,000 to the 1% Fund upon completion. The new play area will be constructed later this year, and staff anticipate visits to the park will increase. (More information about this project is available at www.mercerisland.gov/roanokeplayground.) To prepare for an increase in use of Roanoke Park, the City contracted with Alloy Arts, LLC, to conduct a condition assessment of and prepare a restoration estimate for *Totem* (Exhibit 2).

Alloy Arts completed the assessment in July 2023 and found the sculpture shows corrosion and paint loss as well as rust in visible spots. The conservator proposes cleaning, sanding, treating/sealing rust spots, and repainting *Totem* as well as cleaning the concrete base. The updated 2024 cost estimate for this work is \$8,018, and staff aim to complete the restoration before the new play area opens to the public (tentative summer 2024). Staff will install a new public art sign and add *Totem* to STQRY, the City's digital public art engagement platform, before the play area opens.

RESTORATION OF LUTHER BURBANK PARK MOSAIC MURALS

The Mosaic Murals installation at Luther Burbank Park is an Art in Public Places (AIPP) project completed in 2016 as part of the Luther Burbank Park playground replacement. The installation includes four individual mosaics:

- *Birds in Flight* – 38'x5' glass tile mosaic installed on the concrete wall adjacent to the Luther Burbank play area, sport courts, and restrooms
- *Soaring* – 25'x14" glass tile border installed in the play area on the low concrete wall between the slides and climbing platform
- *Flight of the Butterflies* – Two 6'x3' glass tile mosaics installed on the concrete corner wall at the far end of the play area (under the picnic table area)

The mosaics were created by local artists Sandy Glass and José Orantes in collaboration with Mercer Island students and community volunteers.

Staff and Glass have been tracking maintenance needs for the mosaics since 2019, but operational impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the City's plans to complete repairs. Glass submitted an updated restoration plan in March 2024 (Exhibit 3), which includes repairing the expansion joints and a damaged section of *Birds in Flight* as well as damage caused by potential vandalism to *Soaring* and *Flight of the Butterflies*. The estimated cost for these repairs, which will be completed by Glass and Orantes, is \$9,859.

The proposal suggests other area improvements, including new signage for the play area pieces and plaza surface improvements near *Birds in Flight*. Staff from the City's Recreation, Capital, and Parks Operations divisions evaluated these suggestions and are scheduling associated work to be completed before/during the mosaic repairs.

APPROPRIATION REQUEST

The total estimated cost to complete the proposed restorations of *Totem* and the Mosaic Murals is \$17,877. Typically, these types of projects could be funded using the annual public art maintenance budget from the 1% Fund. However, that line item is already committed to several projects in 2024, including annual public art maintenance needs; storage of *Fire Flower* and *Now We Are One*, which are awaiting reinstallation; and minor restoration of *Four Seasons* by Maria Frank Abrams. The costs for *Totem* and the Mosaic Murals exceed the remaining available balance from the public art maintenance line item and require an additional appropriation to be completed.

The current 1% Fund balance is \$195,936. The following expenditures have been appropriated or are expected to be appropriated in 2024:

- Annual Public Art Maintenance: \$15,000 (committed to other projects as noted above)
- Luther Burbank Park Waterfront Improvements AIPP (*Mercer Island Medallions*): \$89,390 (includes remaining contract with Anchor QEA to integrate the project into the waterfront design and the fabrication/installation scope recommended by the Arts Council in October 2023; that recommendation will be transmitted to the City Council at bid award in late 2024 or early 2025)

After these committed expenditures, the available 1% Fund balance is \$91,546. Staff recommend appropriating \$20,000 from the 1% Fund to restore *Totem* and the Mosaic Murals. The appropriation will cover the cost estimates as well as a small contingency if needs arise during the restoration process. Any dollars leftover at the end of these projects will be returned to the 1% Fund balance for future use.

NEXT STEPS

The Arts Council's recommendation will be transmitted to the City Council during their regular meeting scheduled for May 7, 2024. Once the City Council approves the request, staff will move forward with contracting with Alloy Arts to complete the *Totem* restoration and Sandy Glass to complete the Mosaic Murals project. Updates on progress will be provided to the Arts Council during the Department Report at the July Arts Council meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommend the City Council appropriate \$20,000 from the 1% for Art in Public Places Fund to support restoration of *Totem* by Bernard Hosey and the Luther Burbank Park Mosaic Murals by Sandy Glass and José Orantes.