

## **Community Mural Project Idea Presented by MIHS Student Groups on Race Relations (SGORR)**

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MIHS students from Student Groups on Race Relations (SGORR) recently approached City staff with an idea for a community mural project. Sarah Bluvas met with the students on February 2 and shared high-level information about the public art process as well as provided some ideas for how to approach their project. Additional details about the project from the students:

*The mural would be focused on representing historically oppressed peoples, and helping to make Mercer Island a more welcoming place for people of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. In the future it could even become a location for related events, as it would be in a public space already, and it would signify Mercer Island's commitment to racial and ethnic inclusion in a very permanent way.*

*We are thinking of involving art clubs throughout Mercer Island School District to contribute to the mural. With the four elementary schools, middle school, and high school, we hope to have six "panels" of artwork that each club can draft individually and, of course, get approved. We also want to provide opportunities for people in the general arts community to contribute, with possible partnerships with local artists in the Mercer Island Visual Arts League, and regular people interested in art who have ideas for the project. These contributions could also be in a panel format, so that each group could represent a different facet of the diversity of the Island and the US.*

*As for locations, we are still debating between a few. We loved your suggestion of the wall behind the basketball court at Aubrey Davis Park, though we were concerned this may involve ladders/be a larger project than we and other students can handle. You are welcome to offer your thoughts on this, too. We also still are contemplating the original idea of putting the murals in the concrete at Luther Burbank Park, although there would obviously be some challenges that we discussed at the previous meeting, including pre-existing graffiti, uneven surfacing, and possible opposition to a change in the park.*

*We had issues brainstorming other large/visible walls that we could use. There is a large, blank wall at the high school, which would obviously require involving the school district, but could allow us to use senior funds as a gift from the Class of 2021.*

*We researched prices of mural paints and found that they are relatively inexpensive per square foot, especially if all the art is made by volunteers. The graffiti-proof coating, from our findings, ranges from \$100 to \$200, depending on the size of the installation. If we were to spend about \$800 (high estimate here for paint and coating), would that fit within the city budget? If not, we could always have a fundraiser to raise the rest of the cost.*