



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6643
March 18, 2025
Consent Agenda**

AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

TITLE:	AB 6643: Deaccession/Removal of “Downtown Streetscapes: Street Name Inlays” Public Art Installation	<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:	Accept the Arts Council’s recommendation for deaccession/removal of the “Downtown Streetscapes: Street Name Inlays” public art installation in Town Center.	

DEPARTMENT:	Public Works
STAFF:	Jason Kintner, Chief of Operations Kellye Hilde, Deputy Director Shelby Perrault, Capital Parks Manager Sarah Bluvas, CIP Project Manager
COUNCIL LIAISON:	Salim Nice
EXHIBITS:	1. Locations of “Downtown Streetscapes: Street Name Inlays” 2. Guidelines for Deaccessioning Public Art
CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:	n/a

AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE	\$ n/a
AMOUNT BUDGETED	\$ n/a
APPROPRIATION REQUIRED	\$ n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda bill is to accept the Mercer Island Arts Council’s recommendation for deaccession of the “Downtown Streetscapes: Street Name Inlays,” a series of bronze works installed at street corners throughout Mercer Island Town Center. Deaccession is the process of removing artwork from the public art collection.

- The “Street Name Inlays” are one of ten unique art elements designed by artist Ellen Sollod and installed on 77th and 78th Avenues SE during the Town Center street reconstruction in 1994.
- Two bronze names were inlaid at the base of 22 street corners to denote the original downtown street names, which were named after early settlers of Mercer Island.
- In June 2023, City staff began evaluating options for the “Street Name Inlays”, which are impacted by City plans to renovate all curb ramps in the Town Center to comply with federal accessibility standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- At its regular hybrid meeting on July 17, 2024, the Mercer Island Arts Council (Arts Council) voted to recommend that the “Street Name Inlays” be deaccessioned from the public art collection and removed during construction as curb ramps are renovated.
- Bronze inlays at eight street corners were removed in October 2024 during construction of Town Center curb ramp improvements (SP0118). The remaining inlays will be removed during future construction of curb ramps in Town Center.
- The bronze inlays are not salvageable.

BACKGROUND

ABOUT THE STREET NAME INLAYS

The “Street Name Inlays” are one of ten unique art elements designed by artist Ellen Sollod and installed at street corners along 77th and 78th Avenues SE during the Town Center street reconstruction in 1994. Two bronze names were inlaid at the base of 22 street corners to denote the original names of seven Town Center streets (Exhibit 1):

- Helen: 77th Avenue SE
- Gilpin: 78th Avenue SE
- Cable: SE 27th Street
- Tallman: SE 28th Street
- Summit: SE 29th Street
- Treen: SE 30th Street
- Proctor: SE 32nd Street

ADA TRANSITION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In May 2022, the City Council adopted the [ADA Transition Plan](#), which identifies and guides the implementation of necessary accessibility improvements across the Island. Project, SP0118 ADA Transition Plan Implementation (SP0118), which was approved in the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget and Capital Improvement Program (CIP), focused on pedestrian facilities in Town Center. These upgrades included replacing curb ramps, adjacent curbs/gutters, and sidewalks at eleven corners across four intersections in 2024. Eight of the affected street corners featured *Street Name Inlays*, so staff began evaluating options for mitigating impacts to the public art project in 2023.

Staff met with artist Ellen Sollod to discuss options for re-siting the impacted inlays. She noted that, because the bronze pieces are place-specific, reinstalling them outside of the original context would diminish the artwork’s intent. Sollod proposed new project ideas that required salvaging the existing bronze pieces, which staff explored with the City’s Transportation Engineer and the design consultants for the project. Ultimately, staff determined that reusing the impacted bronze pieces was not feasible given the costs and challenges associated with removing them.

ISSUE/DISCUSSION

ARTS COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

On July 17, 2024, staff presented to the Arts Council and sought direction for the remaining inlays in the series ([Staff Report](#) | [Video Recording](#)). The Arts Council received two public comments from members of the Mercer Island Historical Society, and staff provided three potential recommendations for consideration:

1. Recommend the “Street Name Inlays” series be deaccessioned.

2. Recommend further exploration for salvaging bronze pieces during future capital project construction in Town Center.
3. Recommend that a new project highlighting historic street names be developed.

The Arts Council voted to recommend the deaccession of the “Street Name Inlays”. Per the current guidelines for deaccessioning works of art (Exhibit 2), the City Council must approve the recommendation to formally remove the series from the public art collection.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHLIGHTING MERCER ISLAND HISTORY

In addition, the Arts Council requested that staff research options for commemorating street names and/or other Mercer Island history at a future meeting. Staff presented their findings at the October 16, 2024 Arts Council regular meeting ([Agenda Item #3](#)), and recommended that the Arts Council consider a future project as part of the 6-Year Workplan for Public Art, a planning document that will guide internal discussions for future public art projects. The Arts Council is wrapping up this planning process now, and their recommended plan will be transmitted to the City Council for approval at a future meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Upon the City Council’s approval for deaccession of the “Street Name Inlays,” City staff will move forward with removing the series from the public art collection, including updating the public art record, [STORY](#), and other documentation of the series. Remaining inlays will be removed and disposed of during construction of future ADA upgrade projects in Town Center. Other elements of the “Downtown Streetscapes” project will remain in the public art collection.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve deaccession/removal of the “Downtown Streetscapes: Street Name Inlays” public art installation in Town Center.