



DATE: August 28, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 6

TO: Public Arts Commission
FROM: Jon Maginot, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Public Art Project Site and Selection criteria

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss criteria for selecting and locating public art

BACKGROUND

The Public Arts Commission (PAC) 2014/15 Work Plan includes an assignment to “develop and recommend selection and site criteria for public art.”

DISCUSSION

Commissioners Chapman and Ellickson have been assigned to a subcommittee to begin working on developing such criteria. Attached are drafts for Site and Selection Criteria.

Attachments: Draft Site and Selection Criteria for Public Art

Artwork and Artist Selection Policy

A. Public Art Aesthetics

1. In selecting a piece of art, the PAC will consider its mission and always aim to achieve the highest aesthetic quality in enhancing and/or enlivening a public space or downtown street environment.
2. The PAC will determine the appropriateness of the proposed artwork in regard to scale, form, innovation and design with respect to its immediate and general, social, and physical environment.
3. Due consideration will be given to the materials, maintenance and installation of an artwork. The following will be key factors in the selection process:
 - a. Pedestrian scale;
 - b. Public access;
 - c. Safety and security;
 - d. Technical feasibility
 - e. Durability in regard to the elements;
 - f. Theft, and vandalism;
 - g. Ease of installation;
 - h. Short and long-term maintenance.

The above are the minimum criteria on which the PAC shall base its selection of artwork. Other criteria may be established by the PAC as dictated by the particular requirements of the art piece; this will be outlined in the selection panel's written instructions.

B. Artist Requirements

1. Any professional artist who meets the guidelines set forth in the Call for Art requirements may submit their art for consideration. Members of the PAC or employees of the City of Los Altos are excluded from participation.
2. Artists shall be selected on the basis of the appropriateness of their submission.

C. Artwork Selection Criteria

Criteria to be used when considering acquisition of artwork by either purchase or loan shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. **Artistic quality** - Due consideration will be given to the artist's concept, vision, and craftsmanship.
2. **Context** - Consideration will be given to the architectural, historical, geographical, and socio-cultural context of the piece.
3. **Media** - All art forms will be considered, including:
 - Sculpture: Free-standing, wall supported or suspended; kinetic, electronic; in any appropriate material or combination of materials.

- Murals or portable paintings: In any appropriate material or variety of materials, with or without collage or the addition of non-traditional materials or means.
 - Photography, original works of graphic art, limited edition prints, works on/of paper, original paintings
 - Earthworks, fiberworks, waterworks, neon, glass, mosaics, or any combination of forms of media including sound, literary elements, holographic images, or hybrids of media and new genre
 - Furnishings or fixtures, including but not limited to gates, railings, streetlights or seating, if created by artists as unique elements
 - Artistic or aesthetic elements of the overall architecture or landscape design if created by a professional artist or a design team that includes a professional visual artist.
4. **Permanence** - Due consideration shall be given to **structural** and surface soundness, and to inherent resistance to theft, vandalism, weathering, and excessive maintenance or repair costs.
 5. **Public Safety** - Each work shall be evaluated to ensure that it does not present a hazard to public safety.

D. Site Criteria

1. Ideally Public Art should be located throughout the Los Altos downtown, Public Parks and locations where the greatest number of people gather.
2. The gateways to Los Altos should be aesthetically pleasing, welcoming, and similar in design and style.
3. Criteria for constraints on the placed artwork and the location of such art shall be determined in order to create the Call for Art.
4. All proposed Public Art submissions must respect the primary function of the street and sidewalk, which exist to enable the safe and orderly passage of pedestrians and vehicles. Streets also function as utility corridors, so access must be maintained for present and future services above and below ground.
5. The City of Los Altos Public Works Director is responsible for making decisions regarding the placement of Public Art on public streets and rights-of-way.
6. Final site approval is made by the City Council upon recommendation by the Public Art Commission.
7. These guidelines outline general considerations for determining the acceptability of Public Art installations on City streets and sidewalks.

E. Sites for Public Art

1. Traffic Considerations

- Motorist distraction
- Interference with driver-to-driver, or driver-to pedestrian sightings, or corner clearance areas
- Sighting obstruction of signal/pedestrian heads, or any traffic control device
- Interference with the entrance or egress areas for transit buses

- Disruption of curb use activities, i.e., loading zones, passenger zones or curb sight obstruction
- Interference with the opening of car doors

2. Pedestrian Considerations (specific to sidewalk art)

- The leading vertical edge should not exceed 1/8" (to avoid trip hazards)
- Interior vertical edges should not exceed 1/4"
- Skid-resistance properties should be equivalent to concrete sidewalks
- Depressions in the surface should not catch the spike heels of women's shoes
- Depressions in the surface should not cause water to pool
- Art must be damage resistant to pedestrian or vehicle (e.g., bicycles or skateboards) traffic
- Maintenance of adjacent elements of the streetscape, including the sidewalk itself, should not be compromised.

3. In general, Public Art should:

- Maintain a minimum sidewalk width that supports pedestrian traffic
- Minimize the potential for concealment and anti-social activities
- Maintain clearance from above and below ground utilities.
- Be installed in secure, theft-resistant locations

4. Public Art should avoid:

- Sharp edges, points, projections, or pinch-points which may cut, puncture or cause injury by impact, or catch passing pedestrians
- Obstructing the function of benches, bus shelters and crosswalk ramps
- Utility access points or valves
- Obstructing pedestrian access to traffic signal push buttons
- Unsafe climbing opportunities for children/adults

5. Electrical and Mechanical Considerations:

- All electrical, mechanical and engineering components must be approved by the Public Works Director.
- Any connections to a City street lighting circuit must be approved by the Public Works Director.
- No connection will be permitted to City traffic signal circuits
- The junctions of components moving relative to one another must not create such hazards to people as pinch, crush or shear points