

# Action

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

1E-109 or Zoom Meeting

Bellevue Arts Commission

City of Bellevue, WA

## JILL ANHOLT ARTWORK CONCEPT DESIGN

At today's meeting, the Arts Commission will be presented the concept design for an artwork, titled *Rooted* by Jill Anholt, planned for the intersection of NE 12<sup>th</sup> and Spring Boulevard. This artwork was formerly planned for the intersection of 121<sup>st</sup> and Spring Boulevard but was moved to a new site. At this meeting staff will seek the recommendation of the concept design from the commission.

**Motion:** A motion to recommend the concept design as presented by artist Jill Anholt.

**Bylaw support:** This item is supported by the Arts Commission Code (Chapter 3.56) of Bellevue City Code, specifically section 3.56.070 Powers and duties, Item F – “Develop recommendations for acquiring public artwork consistent with guidelines and priorities approved by city council.”



Artwork visualization looking east



Artwork visualization from below A



Artwork visualization from below B

## BACKGROUND

Artist Jill Anholt was selected to consult as the planning artist for the BelRed Streetscape Plan in 2017. A part of her scope was to develop two artwork pre-concepts for BelRed for early adoption of the public art component of the streetscape plan. The artist developed a concept for a series of mobile artworks and one fixed artwork at the intersection of 121<sup>st</sup> and Spring Boulevard. The Arts Commission recommended to proceed with the fixed artwork, at that time entitled *Cut and Fill*. The artwork's form was an exaggerated representation of the topography that was cut and filled to build the original BNSF alignment just to the west of the site.

The artist has met with both Isan Bellevue, the organization working to commemorate the impact and presence of the Japanese American community in Bellevue, and the Snoqualmie Tribe as part of their community outreach. Isan Bellevue saw the original concept and approved of the direction of the artwork. After an initial meeting with the Snoqualmie Tribe, it was clear that the original artwork

concept needed to evolve to address their concerns. Artist Jill Anholt then developed an evolved concept, called *Rooted*, that received extremely positive feedback from the tribe representatives and Isan Bellevue.

Challenges with the original planned location at 121<sup>st</sup> and Spring Boulevard necessitated exploring alternatives. The planned location for the artwork is now at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Spring Boulevard. This location is being redeveloped by Bellevue's Transportation Department into a key entrance to EasTrail and marks a key entry into the Spring District and BelRed.

The Transportation Department is planning to reach 90% design of their project, including integration of the artwork's foundations into their project, toward the end of February. The artwork's structural design will need to be largely complete by this time. Construction of the trail connection to EasTrail and artwork installation is expected in 2024.

## ARTWORK LOCATION



The planned location for the artwork at 121<sup>st</sup> and Spring Boulevard was changed to a new location at NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Spring Boulevard following a more exhaustive review of site lines and below-grade conflicts with utilities. The new location is the site of an upcoming project to build a trail connection from NE 12<sup>th</sup> to EasTrail, which runs below Spring Boulevard just to the east of the new location. It is a prominent location with great views available of both the artwork and the Spring District to the east.



## CONCEPT DESIGN



From the artist:

*Rooted* is an inhabitable, interactive sculpture located along NE 12th Street and NE Spring Boulevard at the junction to the EasTrail connector. The artwork is inspired by the organic natural forms of tree roots recalling very specific natural and cultural histories of displacement for communities in Bellevue, due to colonization and industrial development. The artwork, like tree roots themselves, also speaks to ideas of connection and resiliency within nature and people, as well as their capacity to endure and to sometimes even to prosper despite extremely challenging conditions.

The work is created from Corten steel I-beams shapes, the base materials of industry which have been altered, shaped and seamlessly joined together to create an organic sculptural form composed of two towering shapes. The pair of art elements reach towards each other, their roots intermingling, as well as reach upwards to the sky where their wide bases coalesce into two circular voids: one expressing the memory of a tree trunk reaching infinitely up into the sky, the other filled with reflective metal, bringing a viewer into an intimate and participatory relationship with the sculpture below.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the commission's recommendation to approve the concept design for the artwork, *Rooted*, by artist Jill Anholt.

**OPTIONS**

**Option 1:** Commission motions to approve the recommendation as presented, triggering the artist to move onto Final Design of the artwork.

**Option 2:** Commission elects not to approve the recommendation as presented, triggering a delay or termination of the project and loss of ability to integrate with current planned location.

**NEXT STEPS**

If recommended for approval, the artist will complete the structural design of the artwork. Once that is complete, staff will seek approval from City Council of their fabrication contract for the artwork.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Concept Illustration, Site Plan and Materials Palette

**PRESENTER CONTACT**

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