

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Resolution authorizing the execution of a general services contract regarding fabrication and installation of a landmark artwork as part of the NE Corner Gateway of the Downtown Park with artists THEVERYMANY, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$810,000 plus all applicable taxes to build and install artwork celebrating this key location of the Grand Connection and Downtown, and support the growth of tourism in Downtown Bellevue.

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Community Development Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff requests action from Council on a General Services Contract with artists THEVERYMANY, LLC to fabricate and install an iconic landmark artwork designed in collaboration with the NE Corner Gateway of the Downtown Park. An update on the artwork design was presented to Council on February 3, 2020 at which time Council instructed staff to return on a future Consent Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution 9815

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On February 3, 2020, staff presented to Council on the final design of the new signature artwork for the Grand Connection and the new Northeast entrance to Downtown Park. At that time Councilmembers voiced their support for the project, requested that the artwork remain unique to Bellevue, and to return on a future agenda for approval of the fabrication and installation contract.

Over the last six months, Bellevue staff worked with the THEVERYMANY, LLC (Artist) to finalize the contract details and ensure that contract language stipulates that the artwork's design is solely unique to Bellevue. The final, signed contract is attached for Council action.

History and Background

In 2015, Council approved the *Grand Connection Framework Plan*, establishing a vision for a non-motorized corridor connecting Meydenbauer Bay through downtown Bellevue and Downtown Park to the Eastside Rail Corridor (now Eastrail). The Council also adopted the companion *Arts and Cultural Plan* for the Grand Connection, which recommended key actions and strategies to support art and cultural development along the route. In adopting these documents, City Council expressed support for bold, visionary public spaces and art elements in the core of downtown Bellevue.

In particular, the *Grand Connection Framework Plan* and its companion *Arts and Cultural Plan* identify the northeast corner of Downtown Park as a "key gateway for Bellevue and the Grand Connection route...[and] an important transition from Downtown Bellevue into a more intimate environment of the park and ultimately Old Bellevue." The Plan identifies this location as an opportunity to create a

gateway between the bustling intersection and Downtown Park, suggesting that along with a new corner plaza and water feature to help activate the corner, a major public art element could further enliven the gateway. Additional policy support for new, iconic public art in the downtown core was expressed by Council in 2017 and 2018 through work on the *Destination Development Plan* and *Downtown Livability* planning and code adoption process.

The iconic piece was designed by the Artist specifically for the site and to reflect the important physical and aesthetic role of the intersection of Bellevue Way and NE 4th Street, which is one of the busiest in the City for pedestrians and cars. On an average weekday, thousands of pedestrians and more than 35,000 vehicles pass through the intersection as residents, visitors, and workers make their way to and from Bellevue Square, Downtown Park, and other downtown destinations. Counts are significantly higher during major events like the Bellevue Family 4th celebration, Snowflake Lane, and the Bellevue ArtsFair. This will have long-term benefits for the City's tourism development, economic development efforts, and resident's quality of life.

According to Americans for the Arts, "49 percent of people with a college degree (52 percent of millennials and 54 percent of Gen X) say they would strongly consider whether a community is rich in the arts when deciding to relocate for a job." This indicates that public art provides a significant talent attraction and talent retention benefit for cities with otherwise strong economies. The piece will also provide an additional venue for visitor-generating activities like the annual Bellwether Arts Week, which in 2019 attracted more than 2,000 visitors over its 10-day run. The Center for Creative Community Development estimates that for every \$1 spent by arts and culture-related visitors, \$3 to \$7 is invested in the local community, through ancillary spending on overnight lodging, food and beverage, and other steps in the arts production chain.

The City's investment in the artwork's fabrication and installation will help position Bellevue for a stronger recovery as the region exits the COVID-related economic disruption.

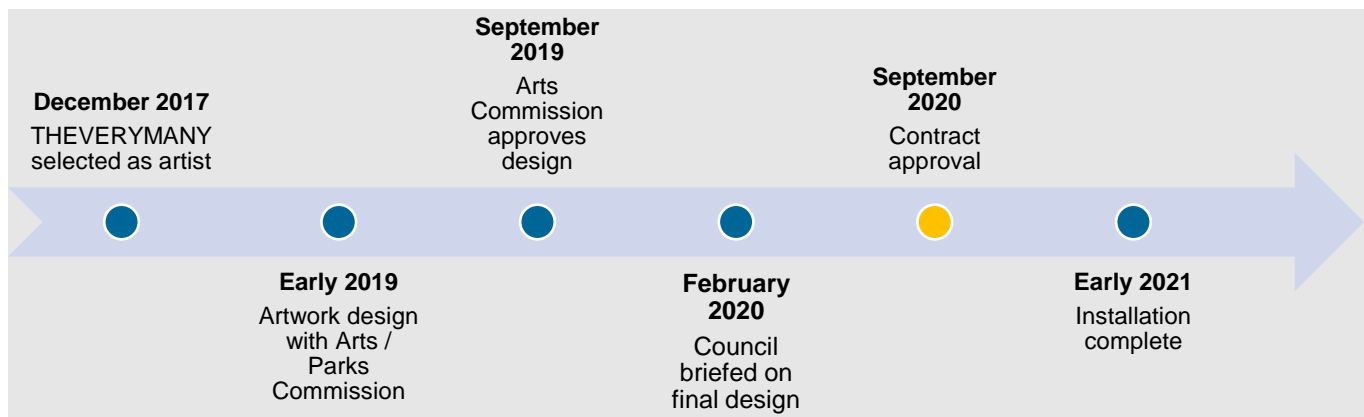
Delivery Timeline

In December 2017, Marc Fornes/THEVERYMANY was selected from a pool of 98 applicants by a panel of community members, professional artists, and a member of the Bellevue Arts Commission.

Following contracting in 2018, in early 2019, artwork concept design began, with close collaboration with the park design team, resulting in an integrated art and park design. On June 11, 2019, the artist presented concepts for discussion to a joint meeting of the Parks & Community Services Board and the Arts Commission.

On September 10, 2019, the Arts Commission voted to approve the final artwork design.

Once the contract is approved by the City Council, engineering and fabrication will begin. Construction of the NE Gateway site elements by the Parks Department is targeted for completion by early 2021, at which point the artwork will be installed. All construction and installation activities are currently projected for completion by the end Q2 2021. Upon completion, the new park entrance will open with a celebration event, including a presentation by the artist.



POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

This action does not modify policy, but aligns with implementation of several existing policies:

- *Grand Connection Framework Plan.* The Grand Connection Framework Plan identifies the NE Gateway to Downtown Park as a major public art opportunity site. Further, the plan develops a vision to connect Meydenbauer Bay through Downtown Park, across I-405 to the Wilburton area. This public art site plays a major role in this connection, and this contract implements that vision.
- *Grand Connection Arts & Cultural Plan.* The Grand Connection Arts & Cultural Plan identifies the NE Gateway to Downtown Park as a major public art opportunity site.
- *Destination Development Plan.* Bellevue's 2018 Destination Development Plan identifies two major strategic priorities: 1.) "Branding Bellevue," which focuses on increasing the visibility and uniqueness of Bellevue as a destination; and 2.) "Enhancing the Bellevue visitor experience," which focuses on tactics like increased downtown events, public space, and public art.
- *Downtown Livability.* Downtown Livability, Bellevue's most recent update to the downtown subarea plan and land use code, was adopted by Council in 2017. The plan highlights a vision of downtown as the "heart of the Eastside," and a hub for "cultural, entertainment, residential, and regional uses." Further, several policy statements identify an importance on public art and cultural uses:
 - **S-DT-56.** Differentiate Downtown Districts through streetscape improvements such as wayfinding elements, gateways, mid-block pedestrian crossings, public art, landscaping and street trees, lighting, and street furniture.
 - **S-DT-112.** Complete the phased development of Downtown Park and enhance its visual and functional presence on Bellevue Way.
- *Bellevue Comprehensive Plan.* This project aligns with the Urban Design & The Arts, and the Economic Development elements of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan. It directly aligns with the following policies:
 - **ED-14.** Recognize arts and cultural investments are an explicit component of the City's economic development strategy.

- **UD-17.** Support and encourage a variety of artwork in public places, such as parks, public buildings, and plazas.
- **UD-18.** Expand the City's public art collection and involve the community through City programs and private partnerships.
- **UD-21.** Support and encourage the development of the Grand Connection as a cultural corridor by designing and creating spaces for performance, installation, and temporary-based art and cultural installations.
- *Bellevue Economic Development Plan.* The update currently underway and scheduled for adoption in late 2020 includes strategies to:
 - Promote tourism and expand festivals, events and activities to grow the creative economy sector and promote a strong creative brand for Bellevue.
 - Facilitate development of expanded visitor-related facilities to increase the number of conventions, performances, and special events the City can host.
- *Cultural Compass.* The City's cultural plan envisions an active role for downtown and Downtown Park in the development of Bellevue's artistic and cultural communities. The Compass also states that arts and cultural events and programs from festivals to public art have the potential to expand perceptions about Downtown and increase levels of usage by all sectors of the community. Among the eight goals, are specific strategies that support this project:
 - Strategy 2.2. Develop distinct and differentiated "arts, culture, and entertainment (ACE) areas" in Bellevue's Downtown, Crossroads, the Factoria-Eastgate corridor, and other areas of the City.
 - Strategy 7.1. Confirm and build the City's leadership role in supporting arts and culture.

Fiscal Impact

This General Services Contract includes total expenditures of \$810,000 plus applicable taxes. Full funding for this project comes from the approved 2019-2020 CIP budget allocations for the Public Art Program (CD-11), Grand Connection Implementation CIP (CD-44) and Downtown Park NE Entry/Gateway Development (P-AD-100). Costs for this contract are allocated to CIP projects in the following manner:

- CD-11: \$409,050
- CD-44: \$400,950
- P-AD-100: all applicable taxes

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Resolution authorizing the execution of a general services contract regarding fabrication and installation of a landmark artwork as part of the NE Corner Gateway of the Downtown Park with artists THEVERYMANY, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$810,000 plus all applicable taxes to build and install artwork celebrating this key location of the Grand Connection and Downtown, and support the growth of tourism in Downtown Bellevue.
2. Do not adopt the Resolution and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

A. CIP Detail

Proposed Resolution No. 9815

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

General Services Contract between the City of Bellevue and THEVERYMANY, LLC
Grand Connection Framework Plan, Sequence One (adopted 2017)