

**DATE:** November 28, 2023

**TO:** Council Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Joy Houghton, Senior Civil Engineer  
Robert Gonzales, Principal Civil Engineer  
John Lang, Economic Vitality Manager

**VIA:** Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

**SUBJECT:** **Transit Center (Castro Street) Grade Separation and Access Project, Project 21-35—Public Art**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Receive an update on the public art for the Transit Center (Castro Street) Grade Separation and Access Project, Project 21-35.

**BACKGROUND**

The Transit Center (Castro Street) Grade Separation and Access Project, Project 21-35 (Project) is a partnership project between Caltrain as lead agency for designing and constructing the Project, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority as a funding partner providing Measure B Grade Separation Program funds, and the City as the project sponsor responsible for coordination with Caltrain and ensuring a minimum of 10% match in non-Measure B funds is provided toward the full project costs.

Typically, Council Policy K-5 (Public Art and CIP Projects) applies to capital projects that the City designs and constructs. Although this Project is being designed and constructed by Caltrain, it will serve as a gateway into the City's downtown and the City is helping to fund the project. Therefore, Council Policy K-5 and the City's usual artist and art selection process are being applied to the Project. Council Policy K-5 sets the public art budget at 2% of a project's construction budget, with a cap of \$400,000. With the Project's original estimated construction cost of \$90 million, the Project's public art budget is \$400,000. While most of the Project's construction costs are expected to be grant-funded, public art is not an eligible use of grant funds, and the public art budget must be exclusively City-funded.

The final design phase for the Project kicked-off in July 2022 and on February 9, 2023, Public Works held an in-person, open-house style community meeting at the Adobe Building to provide

a project update and seek input on the architectural and public art elements for the Project. Staff provided numerous examples of architectural elements that could be incorporated into the Project, including potential public art locations. Examples presented included treatments for walkways, walls, ceilings, stairways, railings, fixtures, accent lighting, landscaping, and wayfinding. The presentation and materials are available on the [project website](#).

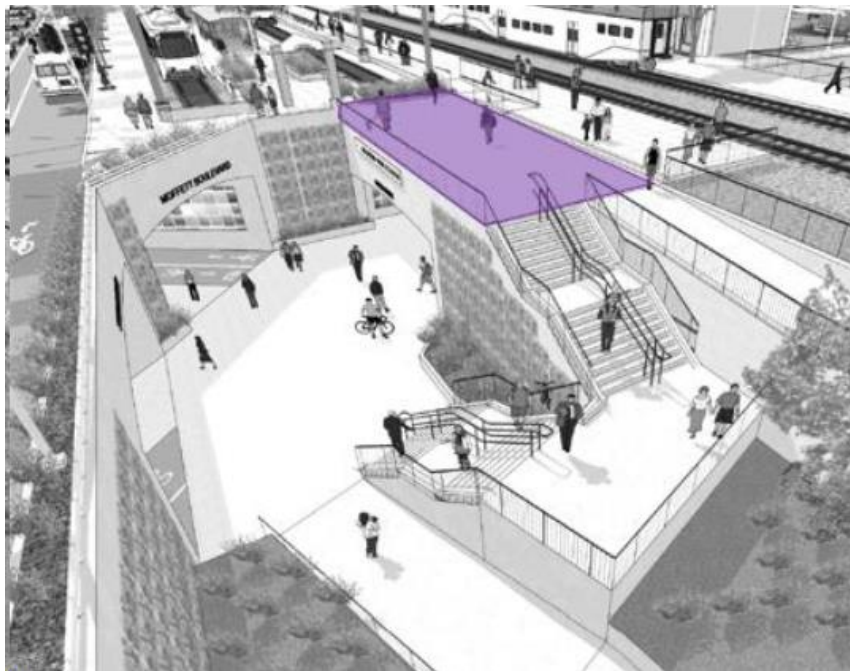
## **DISCUSSION**

Following the February 9, 2023 community meeting, staff engaged with the Visual Arts Committee (VAC) on [March 8, 2023](#) to provide input on the potential location or locations for public art installation and to discuss requirements for and authorize a Call for Artists for the Project.

### **Potential Public Art Installation Locations and Examples**

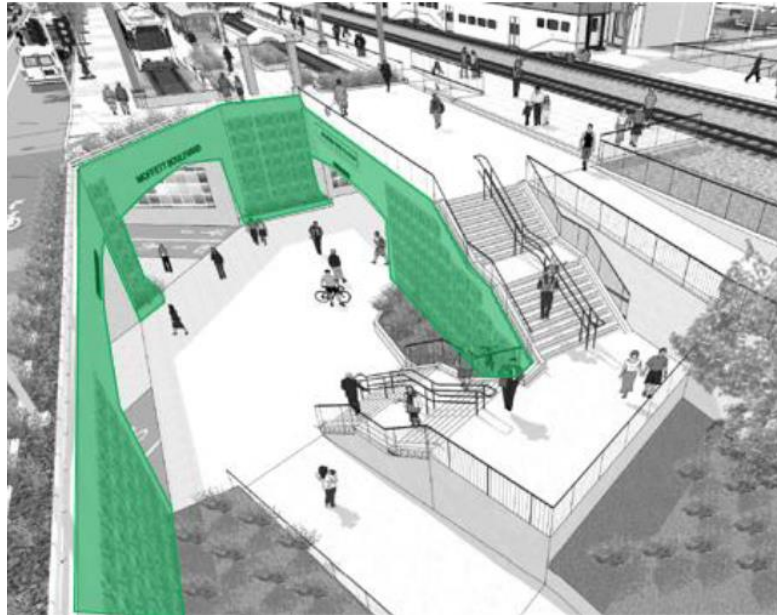
Staff identified four potential locations within the Project area for public art installation. The locations of public art installations are illustrated in Figures 1-4 below:

- Upper Concourse Area (Figure 1)—This area presents an opportunity for the public art installation to be visible from Central Expressway, the Caltrain tracks, and Evelyn Avenue.



**Figure 1: Upper Concourse Area**

- Lower Concourse Area Wall Area (Figure 2)—This location presents an opportunity for the public art installation to be visible to all tunnel users as all three tunnels meet at this location.



**Figure 2: Lower Concourse Area**

- Castro Main Undercrossing (Figure 3)—This location provides an opportunity to enhance user experience in the main tunnel for those entering and existing the City’s Downtown area.



**Figure 3: Castro Main Undercrossing**

- The Castro Street Stairway (Figure 4)—This location presents an opportunity for the public art installation to serve as a gateway to the City’s Downtown area.



**Figure 4: Castro Street Stairway**

The VAC selected two locations for possible art installations:

1. The upper concourse area between the Caltrain tracks and Central Expressway (Figure 1).
2. The main undercrossing underneath the Caltrain tracks (Figure 3) combined with the main stairway leading to Castro Street (Figure 4).

#### Call for Artists and Selection Process

The VAC supported a two-step jurying process and a call for artists in California. The first round of jurying on April 6, 2023 evaluated and scored artists based on prior public art projects or portfolios of work shared by the artist, as well as experience with commissioned art. The six highest-scoring artists were identified from the first round of jurying and were asked to submit a rendering/concept/mock-up of the proposed art for the Project by July 21, 2023. The selected artists moving into the second round received a \$1,500 stipend for their time in developing a rendering/model/concept piece.

Upon receipt of the submissions, staff reviewed and evaluated the submissions and found there were no immediate engineering constraints or issues. The second round of jurying evaluated the proposed vision of the art for the Project and rendering/model/concept integration into the Project. On [August 9, 2023](#), the VAC conducted the second round of jurying by deliberating and

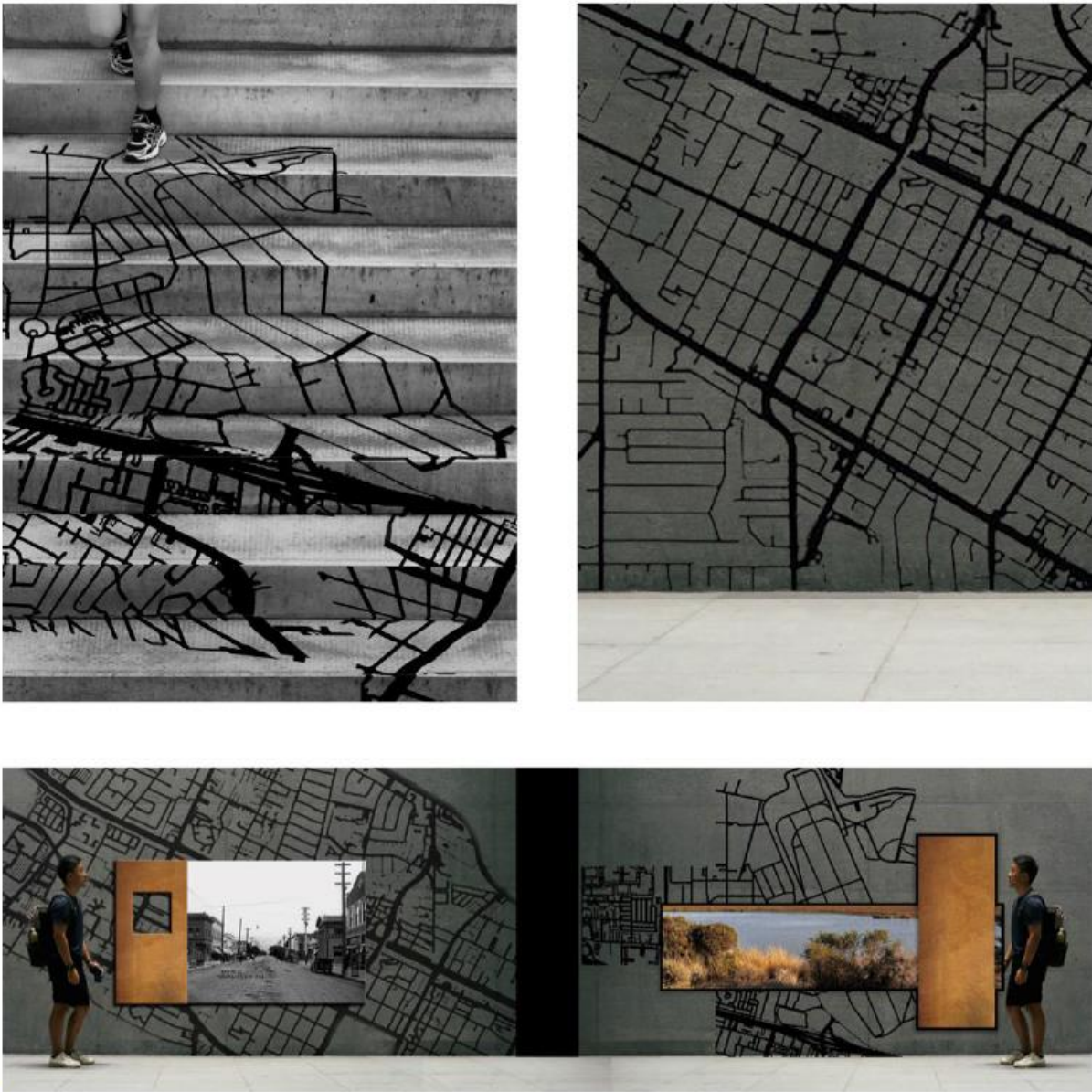
discussing which artist or artists will be recommended to Council. The VAC selected one artist, Martha Sakellariou, for her proposed art installations at the two locations previously selected by the VAC: (1) the upper concourse area, and (2) the Castro main undercrossing and Castro Street stairway.

The artist's proposed artwork for the upper concourse area is a 12' high, three-dimensional house structure, with approximately a 5' width and a 3' depth, that works both as landmark and a wayfinding sculpture (Figure 5). The house structure will be constructed as a steel frame that is clad with a total of nine panels. The panels are made from exterior architectural-grade materials, including polished stainless steel, construction timber and panel, powder-coated aluminum digital print, 3-D printed relief wood, Corten steel panel, and laser cut steel.



**Figure 5: Proposed Art for the Upper Concourse Area**

The artist's proposed artwork for the main undercrossing and Castro Street stairway are 10 collage-like mural compositions featuring various locations and elements, and includes an outline of the City's map in the background of each wall that continues to the staircase area (Figure 6). The mural compositions consist of various sized panels mounted with concealed hardware on steel frame fixed on the wall. The proposed materials are a combination of powder-coated digital photography on aluminum, varnish sealed wood panels, and polished aluminum.



**Figure 6: Proposed Art for Castro Main Undercrossing and Castro Street Stairway**

The information on the public art pieces above were presented by the artist in the proposal. The Project design team, including the Lead Architect, will be coordinating and collaborating with the City Council-approved artist to ensure that the public art installation or installations are supported and complemented by the architectural treatments and in compliance with design codes and regulations. The Project team is currently evaluating the proposed art installation on the stairs to determine if art can be applied to both the horizontal and vertical elements of the stairs.

### **NEXT STEPS**

As the Project continues to progress towards the 95% design, staff will return to the CTC in spring 2024 to provide architectural design concepts to illustrate cohesiveness and harmony of the proposed architectural treatments with the public art installations.

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cc: PWD, APWD—Arango, APWD—Skinner, PCE—Gonzales, SCE—Houghton, EVM—Lang