



Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FROM: Kerry Adams Hapner
SUBJECT: Status Report on City Hall Exhibits Program Development
DATE: April 10, 2009

Approved

Paul Krutz

Date

4/13/09

RECOMMENDATION:

Acceptance of the status report on the City Hall Exhibits Program and plans for continuing the City Hall Exhibits Program in FY 2009-10.

OUTCOME

Per the request of the Community and Economic Development Committee at the time of the development of the City Hall Exhibits Policy, this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the accomplishments of the City Hall Exhibits Program as well as the plans for exhibits in FY 2009-10.

BACKGROUND

In September 2004, the San Jose Arts Commission established a committee, the New City Hall Task Force, to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on how to activate the public spaces in City Hall. The Task Force envisioned San Jose's City Hall as a place where residents and visitors could come together and where the City could foster a sense of community. It recommended that the City adopt a pilot City Hall exhibits program to extend and deepen the relationship between the people who work in City Hall and members of the broader community. The stated goals of the pilot program were to:

1. Ensure that the center of civic governance also serves a center of community-building;
2. Share the cultural richness of San Jose's diverse communities and their relationship to the world;
3. Demonstrate the creativity of the people who live and work in San Jose;
4. Express the aspirations and activities of an active and engaged citizenry; and
5. Document the continuing evolution of the democratic experience in a great American city.

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Three initial exhibits were mounted in City Hall for the opening of the building in October 2005. These exhibits, located in the Council Wing, the Second Floor "Mayor's Walk" and the Santa Clara Street Lobby, were created by History San Jose under the direction of the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA). They focused on San Jose's culture and history. A second exhibit on San Jose's Sister Cities was installed in the Santa Clara Street Lobby in April 2007.

The Task Force also recommended that the Arts Commission convene a City Hall Exhibits Committee to develop and recommend formal exhibit policies and procedures in conjunction with staff and the City Attorney's Office. The Exhibits Committee was also charged with the ongoing review and processing of exhibit applications. The Exhibits Committee includes representatives from the Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, General Services Department, Arts Commissioner, professional art and exhibitions sector. The OCA's Public Art Program staffs the Exhibits Committee.

The City Hall Exhibits Policy was approved by City Council on August 21, 2007. In addition, on January 29, 2008, City Council expanded the exhibit areas to include the Fourth Street retail space. The Exhibits Policy was not intended to create a public forum in the exhibit areas of City Hall. It defines the types of exhibits that the City will display, while encouraging a variety of interesting and dynamic exhibits as follows:

- Designate public spaces on the First Floor and Second Floor of City Hall for curated exhibits of citywide or regional significance on the topics of: Our Community, Our History, Our Creativity and that otherwise meet the City's published display criteria;
- Designate space in the Customer Service Area to continue to provide information regarding City departments and City business, programs and activities funded by the City, Sister City activities, and other displays related to Integral Government Functions;
- Continue to limit the City Hall video monitors for displays regarding Integral Government Functions. However, the City will encourage displays that highlight the City's involvement in community; and
- Initiate and support the purchase of a San Jose art and cultural collection for display in City Hall office lobbies and conference rooms.

Funding for the implementation of the Exhibits Policy, in a total amount of \$100,000 (\$60,000 from Arts Venture Fund Appropriation 2602 and \$40,000 from Transient Occupancy Tax Appropriation 0096), was appropriated to a new City Hall Exhibits Program Appropriation 3593.

ANALYSIS

Since April 2007, six exhibits have been installed in City Hall:

- *Speed City* in the Council Wing Niches;
- *Postcards from Lake Cunningham* in the Mayor Council Lobby;
- *Panoramic Photos* in the Mayor's Walk;
- Three exhibits in City Windows Gallery (Fourth Street Retail Space): *Look Again*, an exploration of art using recycled materials, *Out of the Fire*, a survey of Bay Area glass art; and *The Bike Show*, an exhibit of bicycle art and design;
- *Shifting Perspectives, Public Art in San Jose* in the Santa Clara Lobby, and

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- *Hidden Heritages of San Jose's Founding African American Families*, which will be installed in the Santa Clara Lobby in May 2009.

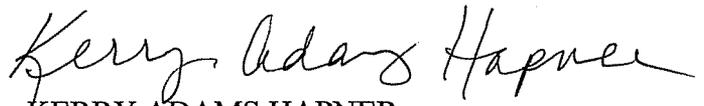
All of these exhibits, as well as the retrofitting of the Fourth Street retail space to create City Windows Gallery, were accomplished within the \$100,000, of which there is approximately \$4,000 remaining. These exhibits will remain in place through the end of this fiscal year. Thus, the original \$100,000 exhibit budget supported two years of exhibits.

Key outcomes of these exhibits include increased public awareness of San Jose's cultural history, an aesthetic enhancement of the public areas of City Hall, and an activation of the public realm – particularly on Fourth Street. The program has garnered recognition in the media and amongst the general public. On August 19, 2008, a public reception celebrated the opening of four exhibits. Attended by several hundred people, the reception included a commendation presented by Councilmember Forrest Williams to *Speed City* curator Urla Hill.

On March 26, 2009, the Exhibits Committee reviewed the exhibit proposals from a pool of pre-qualified curators and community groups and recommended commissioning seven new exhibits in City Hall. Each proposal identifies potential partners and represents an approach to celebrating San Jose's uniquely authentic assets. Amongst these proposals are themes that embrace artistic creativity as well as important contemporary issues:

- *All that Glitters*, an exhibit of Bay Area artist-designed, sculptural jewelry;
- *Student Art Collection*, highlights from the Santa Clara County Board of Education permanent collection;
- *Invention*, an invitation to inventors, artists and design students to imagine and create an invention that speaks to the future;
- *Miguel Covarrubias' Murals*, created for the 1939 World's Fair Golden Gate International Exposition;
- *San Jose's Green Vision*, a showcase of green architecture, design, and practices;
- *Bay Area Ceramic Sculpture*, an exploration of ceramic work in the sculptural tradition, with emphasis on artists associated with San Jose; and
- *Becoming American in San Jose*, an exhibit of student photography creating a portrait of how immigrants assimilate into American Society.

Staff has identified an additional \$30,000 from the Arts Venture Fund Appropriation 2602 to sustain exhibits during the next fiscal year, but this amount may not be adequate. Partnerships with nonprofits as well as the business sector will be sought to leverage public dollars with the goal of mounting the seven exhibits. If sufficient resources are not identified, exhibit plans will be scaled accordingly.


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Director of Cultural Affairs

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