



Recommendation for Action

File #: 20-3483, **Agenda Item #:** 22.

12/10/2020

Posting Language

Approve the recommendation of the Arts Commission to deaccession “LAB” by NextProject (Leah Davis, Robert Gay, and Jack Sanders) along the Lance Armstrong Bikeway from MOPAC to Airport Blvd., a public artwork commissioned by the Art in Public Places program.

Lead Department

Economic Development Department.

Fiscal Note

Funding of the costs associated with deaccessioning is available in the FY2021 Operating Budget of the Public Works Department.

For More Information:

Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, Acting Director, Economic Development Department, 512-974-3131 and Susan Lambe, Art in Public Places Program Manager, 512-974-7852.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

On August 3, 2020, the Art in Public Places Panel appointed members to serve on a Special Jury required to make recommendations for deaccession of Art in Public Places collection artwork, per the Art in Public Places Program’s Acquisitions and Deaccessioning Policy, adopted by the Arts Commission on December 15, 2008.

On August 26, 2020, the Arts Commission initiated the deaccession process for this artwork, one of five under consideration.

On September 28, 2020, the Arts Commission appointed a Special Jury member.

On November 16, 2020, the Arts Commission approved the deaccession of “LAB” on consent on Vice Chair Polgar’s motion, Commissioner Fonte’s second on a 7-0 vote. Absent: Commissioner Mok, Commissioner Van Dyke, Commissioner Garza (one vacancy).

Additional Backup Information:

The Art in Public Places Program’s Acquisitions and Deaccessioning Policy recommends regular assessments of the public art collection, and establishes criteria, policies and procedures regarding removing an artwork from the collection, or deaccessioning.

The Arts Commission received requests for the deaccession of five (5) artworks at their regular monthly meeting on August 26, 2020, and approved initiation of the deaccession process for these five artworks, including “Moments” by Carl Trominski, 2003, at the Lamar Underpass; “Republic Square Fountain” by James Turner, 1988, at Republic Square Park; “LAB” by NextProject, 2009, along the bikeway from MOPAC to Airport Blvd.; “Bicentennial Fountain” by Ken Fowler, 1976, at Auditorium Shores; and “Karst Circle” by W. Gary Smith, 2004, at Austin Fire Station 43/EMS Station 31.

Per the Deaccession policy, the Arts Commission and the Art in Public Places Panel appointed a Special Jury of qualified members to assess the question of deaccessioning and make recommendations to the Arts Commission (jury membership listed below). The Deaccession Special Jury met on November 12, 2020, to review and make the recommendations for each of the five artworks. The Special Jury recommended to deaccession “LAB”, recommending that the existing components of the artwork be sold through City of Austin surplus property procedures.

Commissioned in 2009, *LAB* was funded by 2% of the estimated construction budget from the Lance Armstrong Bikeway and resulting in a \$60,000 budget for the artwork. “LAB” has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair. Multiple portions of the artwork have been stolen and most have been vandalized. After being reviewed by experts, this artwork was proposed for deaccession. This problem is specifically noted in the deaccession policy as a reason to remove the artwork. This is a normal part of the public art process and helps maintain a high quality art collection. The Special Jury recommended unanimously that “LAB” be deaccessioned.

The Arts Commission voted unanimously at their November 16, 2020, meeting to approve the deaccession of “LAB”. In addition, the Public Works Department has stated their support of the deaccession. To finalize the deaccession of “LAB”, in accordance with Deaccessions Policy, City Council must now vote on the item.

If City Council votes to accept the recommendation of the Arts Commission to deaccession “LAB”, the artwork will be removed from the city’s public art collection listing. The existing components of the artwork will be sold through City of Austin surplus property procedures.

MEMBERS OF SPECIAL JURY

Elaine Shen, appointed by the Art in Public Places Panel
Jade Walker, appointed by the Arts Commission
Tammie Rubin, Chair, Art in Public Places Panel
Sarah Carr, Art in Public Places Panel member
J Muzacz, Art in Public Places Panel member
Brett Barnes, Arts Commissioner and liaison to the Art in Public Places Panel.

CLL 3 - Strengthen our portfolio of culture and lifelong learning programs, events and facilities by engaging and building trust with the community to ensure equitable access and participation, and that services are aligned with community expectations.

CLL 4 - Maintain a mapped inventory of City and non-City cultural and historical assets to identify and address service gaps while accurately recognizing, preserving and, elevating the profile of place-based and underrepresented histories, narratives, and gathering spaces.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Culture and Lifelong Learning