Board of Directors Executive Summary

On November 3, 2020, Deschutes County voters approved a $195 million bond measure to construct a new Central Library, double the size of the Redmond Library, and update the existing libraries in Downtown Bend, East Bend, La Pine, Sisters and Sunriver. One of the components of the Bond Program and each project is Artwork.

DPL created an Art Committee (committee) comprised of DPL staff, art consultants, Miller Hull, and various members of the art community. The committee was tasked with evaluating DPL’s existing art in the current libraries, engage with the art community, and develop plans for new art as a part of the Bond Program. The committee issued a request for interested artists, collected proposal submissions, and evaluated them. The art criteria and needs vary for each library branch.

The committee selected John Grade to create a conceptual design and proposal for a wood sculpture for the Central Library at Stevens Ranch. The conceptual proposal was reviewed by the committee, DPL, and approved. John Grade’s sculpture proposal included options with varying degrees of detail and complexity. This allowed the team to consider the Central budget in determining the approved option. The Art Committee selected the sculpture option best suited for the location, which is further described in the attached proposal in the amount of $900,000.00.

This summary is submitted to the DPL Board for their approval to authorize the Library Director to execute contract with John Grade LLC. The Board authorization provides the Library Director with signing authority up to $950,000.00 for the Central Library’s Artwork contract and change orders.
Deschutes Public Library

Bend Central Branch Sculpture Proposal

John Grade Studio

May 2024

Concept and context

The proposed sculpture for the new Bend Central Branch Library is inspired by the expansion of western juniper (Juniperus occidentalis) trees and the contraction of glaciers within Deschutes County. The sculpture will take the form of the surface of an alpine valley conflated with concentric growth rings of the interior of a western juniper. At the top of this undulating form there will be an additional layer of forms inspired by a retreating glacier. The inspiration for these forms will be old-growth western junipers growing within Deschutes County and the alpine topography around the summit of South Sister Mountain where glaciers are currently retreating.

The sculpture will filter natural and artificial light between its concentric forms, creating dynamic shadows on the walls and floors of the central hall of the library. Rows of thin cables will suspend the sculpture from the ceiling so that the wood and translucent polymer shapes will appear to float. Occasionally, the parts will gently sway with air moving through the space. The intricacies of the sculpture’s forms will reward repeated viewing as changing light conditions and various vantages open different associations and interpretations.

Materials

The materials for the sculpture match the materials used for the Redmond Branch sculpture. Alaskan yellow cedar is old-growth wood salvaged from the Tongas National Forest on Mitkof Island in Alaska. It has been kiln-dried to an internal humidity below 6%. The wood will be surface treated with clear Flamestop II flame and smoke retardant for a class A rating (it creates no visual change to the wood). The polymer is clear polycarbonate and is UV stable. The 1/8 rivets, pins, Grip-locks, and 1/32” cables are all stainless steel.

Community participation

There will be an open call for residents of Deschutes County to directly participate in helping to build the sculpture. Depending upon the level of interest the community has in engaging with the project, we will schedule periodic sessions guided by members of our studio team. If there is a great deal of interest in
participating, we can hire a local artist or artists to help manage these sessions. Volunteers will form and connect the faceted polymer elements inspired by the glaciers on South Sister. Ideally a large portion of this community participation will happen under the sculpture at the new Redmond branch, but we can also offer additional sessions at other library branches for easier access to the wider community.

**Engineering/fabrication**

The sculpture will be made with wood in radiating rings that are generally 1” wide and 2” high (the height will follow the horizontal contour of the sculpture so individual heights may reach up to 4”). In areas where there is greater density of rings, the width will decrease to ¾”. Around the outer perimeter ring of the sculpture the thickness will increase to 2 – 6” in width.

The radiating rings of wood will appear to be continuous, but they will have flush joints with inset magnets. The joints will be in rows, creating aligned seams so they can be disengaged from their magnetic connections simultaneously to allow maintenance access through the sculpture to the ceiling above.

The faceted polymer cells will have flanges between their top and bottom horizontal faces. These flanges will be riveted together to create larger forms as wide as three feet, as long as eight feet and as deep as one foot. The scale of individual forms is adjustable so that we can conform to need for sprinkler coverage through the sculpture by creating gaps between forms.

All wood and polymer elements will be suspended by 1/32” stainless steel cables to the ceiling with adjustable grip-lock mechanisms.

**Installation**

The many sections of the sculpture will each be hung independently using adjustable griplocks on 1/32” stainless steel cables. Sections will be jointed together with inset magnetic connections. We will use 3 or 4 scissor lifts and portable scaffold to access the ceiling. After the ceiling is finished and prior to installing the sculpture, we will need to scan the space with Lidar so that we can map and align our ceiling support points relative to acoustic seams in the ceiling to our suspended parts. If schedule permits, we can attach ceiling connections prior to the installation of the building’s central staircase.
Schedule

Fabrication will require sixteen months. Soft packing and transport will require ten days. Installation will require fifteen days with a studio team of seven people (this can be divided into two sessions: One to install ceiling attachment points prior to stair installation, and the second session when the building is substantially complete. We should add a contingency of three additional days. One day for photography and video of the installation immediately following install would be ideal.

Budget, scale and weight

The total budget for the sculpture is 900K. This includes all materials, fabrication, engineering, packing, transportation, installation and guidance for community participation. It is possible to reduce the budget by reducing the scale and complexity of the sculpture.

The sculpture will be 48 feet wide by 32 feet deep by 26 feet high. It will weigh approximately 1800 pounds including all wood, polymer, and magnetic components. The 1/32” stainless steel cable and adjustable grip-locks will add an additional load of 240 pounds. The total load on the ceiling will be 2,040 pounds spread over approximately 1200 points on the ceiling.

Maintenance

The sculpture should ideally be dusted with compressed air once every year or two. This could be done with a lift and by using a long wand from the stairs and landings. There are no surface treatments that need future maintenance.

Connection between sculptures for the new Redmond Branch and the new Steven’s Ranch Branch

Western junipers are most successful at establishing themselves under shrubs, especially sagebrush, because sagebrush foliage provides shelter, and its root network releases additional moisture into the ground. A mature juniper will eventually overshadow the sagebrush with its canopy and the sagebrush will be unable to continue to grow. The Juniper will better withstand periodic brush fires without an understory of sagebrush that acts as a fuel ladder connecting flame to the juniper’s canopy. Warming climate, increasing CO2, and more intense wildfires are changing where and how both sagebrush and juniper grow and interact.
Both sculptures address the role of water within landscape and how our water sources are changing within the hydrology and wider ecosystem and of Deschutes County and Central Oregon.