



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 6, 2024

**TO:** Chair Brad Richardson, Culture, Arts and Heritage Commission

**FROM:** Amy Zoltie, Real Estate Project Manager, Economic Prosperity & Housing Department

**RE:** **Heights District Bike Garden and Murals**

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Culture, Arts and Heritage Commission (the “Commission”) an update on the recent Heights District Bike Garden and murals and outline a future public art opportunity on the site. This will be discussed further at the Culture, Arts and Heritage Commission board meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Background**

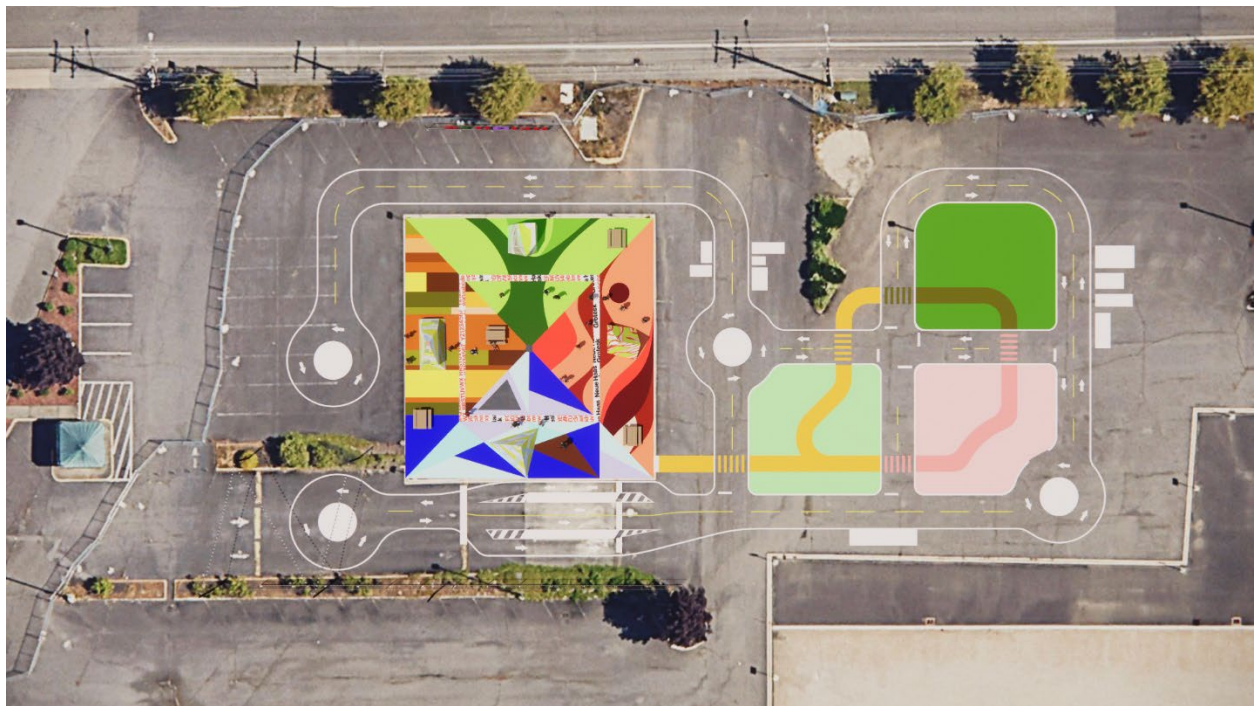
The Heights District is a 205-acre area in Central Vancouver bounded by E. Mill Plain Boulevard, MacArthur Boulevard and Andresen Road. The City of Vancouver is leading the redevelopment of the district to create a mixed-use 15-minute walkable neighborhood that is climate friendly and intentionally inclusive. The development will include mixed-income housing, retail, engaging public spaces and multi-modal travel options. The plan consists of a 63-acre area that encompasses the former Tower Mall site, known as the Tower Mall Redevelopment Area (TMRA). The City owns more than half of the land within the TMRA and recently issued a request for proposals to the development community for the first three development sites along E. Mill Plain Boulevard and N. Devine Road.

The TMRA is mostly vacant land following demolition of the Tower Mall in 2022, and City Council requested the site be activated ahead of construction of the three development sites slated for Q3 2026. In response to Council’s request City staff analyzed various temporary use options and public art in the form of mural boards (which later became reimaged as multi-faceted mural structures) emerged as the most viable choice to temporarily utilize the site as well as having the potential for significant community impact. The idea of a bike garden (more commonly referred to as a “traffic garden”) was also proposed as it serves to engage the community in a meaningful way.

This scaled-down streetscape with traffic features is painted on the ground to foster a safe and interactive environment free from motor vehicles where children can have fun while developing cycling skills and learn about pedestrian road safety.

### **Mural Design**

The mural structures and bike garden were designed by First Forty Feet, the city's urban design firm leading the Heights District infrastructure design work. Colorful murals are painted on the ground as well as 4 large free-standing three-dimensional mural structures. The murals emulate the "Ologies" design concept of the future linear park, known as the Grand Loop. The Grand Loop is a part street, part linear park that will loop around the TMRA knitting together the amenities of the new neighborhood and connecting the district to the surrounding neighborhoods. There are four distinctive segments of the Grand Loop based off Vancouver's natural environment – volcanoes (Volcanology), waterways (Hydrology), trees and plants (Ecology), and rocks and land formations (Geology). The Loop will feature public art and educational play amenities that represent each "Ology" or natural environment element for all ages and abilities to enjoy. The murals represent the intersection of art, culture, science, and nature. Through vibrant imagery and creative expression, we aim to evoke a sense of wonder and appreciation for our surroundings. Below is a graphic of the bike garden and murals.



This temporary recreation space is located at 5411 E. Mill Plain Boulevard. The space is open and free for the community to use throughout the day as of June 8<sup>th</sup> for the next couple of years until development occurs.

**Future Public Art Opportunities**

There is opportunity for a future phase of public art should the Commission choose to do so. The eastern side of the bike garden adjacent to Devine Road has been identified as an area for further public art. This would be a separate project that the Commission would lead through a call to artists process.

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