

Ortega Murals Working Group Meeting Recap and Murals Plan
Chase Palm Park House
June 24, 2021

Working Group Members Present: Manuel Unzueta (Muralist), Carlos Cuellar (Muralist), Kai Tepper (Arts Advisory Committee), Alejandra Cortes (Bienestar Latinx), Mike Imwalle (SB Trust for Historic Preservation), Lisa Valencia Sherratt (La Casa de la Raza), Kathy McGill (Parks and Rec Commission), Ken Rivas (SOPAC)

Members unable to attend with follow-up prior to and/or post meeting: Marcus Lopez (Barbareno Chumash Tribal Council) and Freddy Janka (Arts Advisory)

City and County Staff: Dan Hentschke, Julia Pujo, Jill Zachary, Justin Van Mullem, Ricardo Venegas, Jazmin LeBlanc, Sarah York Rubin (County Arts and Culture)

Community members in audience: Rosalina Palacios, Arnoldo Gonzalez, Claudia Bratton

Welcome and Introductions

Roundtable introductions with sharing of backgrounds and roles: including: promoting, supporting and producing public art and murals, Eastside community activism and neighborhood improvement, youth art and education, Santa Barbara history – archeological, cultural, geographic, community outreach and education, arts advisory, parks and recreation advisory

Goals and Objectives

- ❖ Develop consensus around vision for Ortega Park to enhance cultural tradition of muralism
- ❖ Build trust and comradery/work collaboratively
- ❖ Work together for long-term advocacy
- ❖ Everyone contributes
- ❖ Decision-making is clear
- ❖ Establish framework for integration of murals, art, history in park renovation
- ❖ Recommend treatment for murals
- ❖ Achieve Murals Plan
- ❖ We can gain from this process to work collaboratively to inform future discussions about public/community art

Areas of Agreement/Vision

- ❖ Ortega Park can be a premier California destination to celebrate the past, present and future of Chicano art. Students to learn and practice with artists on public canvases, ensuring that the next generations become the stewards of the Park and its art.
- ❖ Murals tell a story of Mexican-American and Chicano culture and heritage.
- ❖ Chicano heritage vital to the community identity of Ortega Park
- ❖ Preservation and re-creation/re-visioning of murals is important
- ❖ Park renovation provides opportunity to create new murals and expand art forms, such as mosaics, as well as honor natural history, including Chumash, and provide for future
- ❖ Park improvements to serve the local Eastside community
- ❖ Artist mentors and youth engagement vital to continue and expand with park improvements
- ❖ Opportunities for youth at the forefront of all park plans

- ❖ Original, existing, and new artists as well as youth to be included in the planning, creation, maintenance and preservation of Ortega Park murals

Review of Park Conceptual Plan Mural and Art Opportunities

Presentation of the park conceptual plan showing 26 mural and art opportunities, in addition to existing restroom building. Areas within park design provide locations that surround:

- ❖ Central area for family gathering and children's play
- ❖ Sports field
- ❖ Basketball/handball courts
- ❖ Skate park
- ❖ Community and children's pool area
- ❖ Park entrances on Cota, Ortega and Salsipuedes Streets

Working Group Discussion and Recommendations

- ❖ Since 1940s Ortega Park a symbol of the community
- ❖ Sense of community is the overall theme, murals are very meaningful and beautiful
- ❖ Retain existing themes and legacy, cultural connection and style of the park
- ❖ Murals central to the park identity and located to center in the park
- ❖ Frame park spaces similar to how they are now
- ❖ Locations should map to existing art, retained or recreated as collectives
- ❖ Recognize and honor mural artist recommendations – See matrix
- ❖ Artists should have the opportunity to re-create murals and create new murals
- ❖ New artists and collaborations with more arts, youth and community organizations.
- ❖ Continue the mural painting tradition of having mentor artist oversee community youth artist to develop the next generation of stewards for art in the park.
- ❖ Integrate mosaics in murals and/or as individual installations
- ❖ Provide location for revolving mural that could be removed or replaced
- ❖ For murals located on Restroom walls:
 - Opportunity to honor. Preserve in place and review whether needs to be a restroom
 - Or relocate in the park in a location that keeps them connected and also provides an opportunity for passive enjoyment with the potential for a sitting bench
 - If relocated, consider re-create one of the murals as a mosaic
- ❖ Park renovation provides at least 26 locations to keep/re-create what is there and to create new
- ❖ Youth of the community become stewards of the park and the art
- ❖ Opportunity to show case land use and archaeology of the area
- ❖ Murals in the renovated park need to be culturally inclusive and recognize the history of Santa Barbara as a significant Chumash settlement and its historical geography and land uses of the former Estero.
- ❖ The park renovation provides the opportunity to expand muralism to convey Chumash history under the guidance of Chumash artists. Important to achieve the correct symbolism.
- ❖ Murals to provide science and environmental education opportunities

Murals Plan for the Ortega Park Renovation Project – Developed from Working Group Discussion

The murals center Ortega Park in the community. Murals tell a story; foster community identity and pride; honor heritage; educate youth about history, culture, science and the environment; provide youth mentorship for art and muralism; bring community together; and, enhance park aesthetics. As outlined in the attached matrix with the artist recommendations and Murals Working Group recommendations, the Murals Plan includes a number of treatments including professional documentation, preservation in place or relocation, re-creation, re-envision (paint new mural with similar theme) and de-accession (removal). Professional documentation will preserve the history of the murals and provide guidance for murals that are re-created. The Murals Plan includes the preservation in place or relocation for four murals, re-creation of two murals, re-envision of six murals, and de-accession of two murals

Professional Documentation of Murals

In order to preserve the history and cultural heritage of the murals in Ortega Park today, all murals shall be professionally documented during final project design development. Close-range photogrammetry shall be used to capture high-resolution digital photograph (orthomosaics) to provide archival .TIF images true to color and without distortion. Digital images of the existing murals, as well as the existing documentation of murals no longer in existence, shall support the development of a book, documentary film and other methods to preserve and share Ortega Park's art and cultural history as well as honor the muralists and their importance to the community. The City will work with County Arts and Culture, as well as other arts, culture and community organizations. Professional documentation will also guide the re-creation of murals in the renovated park. Through re-creation, original and youth mentor artists will continue the tradition of bringing a fresh creative perspective to the art.

Murals Treatments by Location

Stage and Basketball Court: There are four murals in this location, including the Aztec Symbols (Miguel Rodriguez, 2012), Green Serpent (Danny Meza, 2016), Coatalicue (Carlos Cuellar, 2007/2016), and Rainbow Quetzal (Lena Zerlav, 2015). As recommended by the muralists and Murals Working Group, treatment for these murals includes:

- ❖ Coatalicue: Relocate within the park to a location that includes additional space for the original artist to enhance and expand the mural theme.
- ❖ Rainbow Quetzal: Re-envision (in a new location with same theme guided by a female mentor artist
- ❖ Aztec Symbols and Green Serpent: De-access and provide original artists with dedicated space in the park for new mural art.

Park Restroom: There are three murals on the walls of the park restroom, including Campesinos (Manuel Unzueta (1986/2008), Niños del Maiz (Manuel Unzueta, 2008/2011) and Deportes (2008). As recommended by the muralists and the Ortega Park Murals Working Group, treatment for these murals includes:

- Preserve in place with the retention of the restroom building or conversion of building OR
- Remove each mural from the walls using fine art conservation techniques completed by a qualified conservator. This will preserve the integrity of the art for reinstallation on a new

building or wall in the park. If this treatment is pursued, the three murals will be relocated as a group. The original artist would have first right of refusal to work on any needed touch-up work.

Pool Enclosure Walls: There are seven murals on the four walls and pool building enclosure, including:

- ❖ Cosmic Unity (Armando Rascon 1979/renovation 2005) – Re-envision with same theme and painted by local artist
- ❖ Blue Whale (Carlos Cuellar/Vanesa Teran 2005) - Recreate
- ❖ Codex Cospi (John Russell 1979/ renovation 2005) – Re-envision with new theme and same educational message
- ❖ Dolphins (Carlos Cuellar/Vanesa Teran 2005) - Recreate
- ❖ Aztec Chumash Solstice (Armando Rascon 1979/renovation 2005) – Re-envision with same Meso-American and solstice theme
- ❖ Underwater Atlantes (Miguel Salazar 1979) – Re-envision with the same theme
- ❖ La Playa (Carlos Cuellar 2005) – Re-envision with the same theme

As recommended by the muralists and the Ortega Park Murals Working Group, treatment for these murals includes re-creation or re-envision of these murals on new mural space in the park, with a focus on grouping together and maintaining their specific themes as well as the educational intent and cultural history.

New Murals, Additional Art and Interpretive Signage

The renovation of Ortega Park provides a number of opportunities for new murals, additional art forms and interpretive signage. The Working Group discussion included expanding the mural themes to recognize to be culturally inclusive of the Chumash people, illustrate the areas historical geography and land uses of the former Estero, provide science and environmental education, and give youth the opportunity to express themselves through new mural art. Working group discussion also included the opportunity to feature other art forms, including mosaics and interpretive signage documenting the evolution of the public space.

Murals Advisory Group

A Murals Advisory Group of local artists and youth, arts and culture organization representatives will advise the Parks and Recreation Department in the location for murals in the renovated park, as well as the methods and process to engage local artists and youth in the creation of the murals and other art when the park renovation is underway. The Murals Advisory Group will begin during project final design development.

ORTEGA PARK MURALS MATRIX - JUNE 24, 2021 WORKING GROUP MEETING

	Mural Name	Artist	Date Created/Restored	Location	Site and Studio	Artist Recommendations	Professional Documentation	Working Group Recommendations
1	Aztec Symbols ~2 x 30 ft	Miguel Rodriguez	2012	Stage/Bball Court	Not rated	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and de-access
2	Coatalicue 8.4 x 6.2 ft	Carlos Cuellar Miguel Rodriguez	2007/2016	Stage/Bball Court	Not rated	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and relocate to prominent location in park with new mural behind Coatalicue
3	Green Serpent ~2 x 25 ft	Danny Meza	2016	Stage/Bball Court	Not rated	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and de-access
4	Rainbow Quetzal ~20 x 20 ft	Lena Zerlav	2015	Stage/Bball Court	Not rated	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with same theme guided by a female mentor artist
5	Campeños 11.6 x 20.7 ft	Manuel Unzueta	1986/2008	Restroom	A	Preserve in place (Retain building) or Remove and relocate	Yes	Document and preserve in place <u>OR</u> Remove mural from wall using fine art conservation techniques and relocate to prominent location in park
6	Ninos del Maiz 8.4 x 27.7 ft.	Manuel Unzueta Annette Unzueta	2008/2011	Restroom	B	Preserve in place (Retain building) or Remove and relocate	Yes	Document and preserve in place <u>OR</u> Remove mural from wall using fine art conservation techniques and relocate to prominent location in park
7	Deportes 11.6 x 20.7 ft	Manuel Unzueta Annette Unzueta	2008	Restroom	C	Preserve in place (Retain building) or Remove and relocate	Yes	Document and preserve in place <u>OR</u> Remove mural from wall using fine art conservation techniques and relocate to prominent location in park
8	Cosmic Unity 5.2 x 13.6 ft	Armando Rascon	1979/2005	Pool	A	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with same theme, to be painted by local artist
9	Blue Whale 5.1 x 13.6 ft	Carlos Cuellar Vanesa Teran	2005	Pool	D	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-create
10	Codex Cospi 4.5 x 53.8 ft	John Russell	1979/2005	Pool	B	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with new theme and same educational message
11	Dolphins 4.2 x 86.5 ft	Carlos Cuellar Vanesa Teran	2005	Pool	C	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-create
12	Aztec Chumash Solstice 5.3 x 70.5 ft	Armando Rascon	1979/2005	Pool	A	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with same Meso-American and solstice theme
13	Underwater Atlantes/Tolteca 5.3 x 37.8 ft	Miguel Salazar	1979/2005	Pool	B	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with same theme
14	La Playa 18.2 x 4 x 12.8 ft	Carlos Cuellar	2008	Pool	B	Document and either re-create, re-envision, or de-access	Yes	Document and re-envision with same theme