



**PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** April 9, 2025

**TO:** ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION

**FROM:** JENNIFER PAIGE, AICP, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** 2915 E. COLORADO BLVD – RUSNAK PORSCHE  
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ARTIST AND CONCEPT ART PLAN

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Application for Preliminary Consultation: April 9, 2022  
Design Commission Comments: May 24, 2022  
Concept Design Approved: October 8, 2024

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

- 1) Approve the proposed artist Jason Pilarski;
- 2) Find that the proposed art concept—featuring an aluminum sculptural trellis—and the proposed artist comply with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the City's Private Development Public Art Guidelines as follows:
  - a) The proposed artist currently works in the public realm, has demonstrated past experience and proven technical and aesthetic ability to successfully create an artwork responsive to the site and community;
  - b) The proposed artist is sensitive to the City's aesthetic diversity and can contribute to the characteristics, contribution, aspirations and unique expressions of Pasadena's values;
  - c) The proposed artwork encourages public dialogue and interaction with art in public places;
  - d) The proposed artwork supports the inclusion of a broad range of works of art, reflective of the overall diversity of current works in the field of public art; and
  - e) The proposed artwork supports a public art collection composed of artworks of varied genres, styles, scales, media, form and intent, and reflects trends and disciplines in art on a local, regional, national and international arts level.

- 3) Approve the proposed art concept of a site-responsive artwork, featuring a large-scale sculptural trellis, with the following considerations:
- a) The artwork shall be appropriately lighted, and the applicant shall submit a Final Lighting Plan, including Lighting Field Test results to be reviewed and approved by Cultural Affairs Staff for Final Signoff;
  - b) The artwork shall remain publicly accessible during normal business hours without enclosure;
  - c) The artwork shall be sited without interference from commercial signage;
  - d) The developer shall submit structural plans for review by the City's Building and Safety Division to determine if a Building Permit is required;
  - e) The construction budget (materials and labor) for required elements that will be replaced by approved public artworks must be integrated within the public art budget;
  - f) The Arts and Culture Commission shall conduct a Final Art Plan review that will contain a detailed public art budget, Final Art Plan narrative with the selected artist's fully developed concepts, refined visual materials with dimensions and true to scale renderings of the artworks as they would appear in situ (via a maquette or digital simulation), and maintenance plan;
  - g) The final artwork shall be consistent with all aspects of the approved Final Art Plan. Any proposed alterations to the Final Art Plan must be submitted for advance staff review and approval. Those proposed changes to the Final Art Plan that are not approved at the staff level must be presented to the Arts and Culture Commission for review and approval;
  - h) Staff shall conduct a final site inspection after project installation for review and approval prior to issuance of any Certificate of Occupancy/Final Sign Off.
  - i) Staff shall review for compliance and approve all final documentation materials including a detailed budget showing all actual expenses for design, fabrication and installation; a detailed maintenance plan including product and application methods; a project documentation summary and photographs; and
  - j) The developer shall record the artwork maintenance stipulations in the OPA or DDA under covenants affecting real property at the time of installation to ensure ongoing, permanent maintenance of the artworks and provide documentation of such to Cultural Affairs Staff within a period of one year from the Final Sign Off date.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On October 8, 2024, the Design Commission approved the Concept Design for the 2915 East Colorado Boulevard development (Rusnak Porsche). In satisfaction of the project's Public Art Requirement, the development team wishes to commission an onsite public artwork by proposed artist Jason Pilarski.

The artwork concept is the result of a collaboration between the development team and ArtCenter College of Design, a prominent Pasadena-based arts institution. In June 2023, ArtCenter facilitated a three-day design workshop, engaging students to create designs for public artwork in response to the development site and Porsche's automotive design language. Following selection of the student's design, ArtCenter alum and faculty-member Jason Pilarski was selected as the project's Lead Artist.

The artist has proposed a site-responsive artwork featuring a large-scale sculptural trellis located at the northeast corner of the development, along East Colorado Blvd. Measuring 118 feet wide and 14 feet tall, the structure consists of an organic, open framework of arches and pillars clad in laser-cut aluminum panels. The artist's design aims to complement the commercial development by serving as a landmark that reflects Porsche's architectural and automotive design style while creating an engaging public space.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### Site

The 2915 East Colorado Boulevard development comprises eight parcels totaling 4.4 acres at the northeast corner of Colorado Blvd. and Sunnyslope Ave., extending north to Walnut Street. Surrounding properties include primarily commercial and industrial buildings ranging from one to two stories in height, with sporadic residential structures along Nina St. west of Sunnyslope Ave.

### Development Description

The project involves construction of a two-story, 61,370 square-foot auto dealership to house sales, parts storage, and vehicle service facilities for Rusnak Porsche. The new two-story building is proposed to be sited with frontage along all three streets adjoined by the site. The development includes retaining and reusing the existing 12,728-square-foot Swanson and Peterson Furniture Manufacturing building, with all other existing structures on the site slated for demolition.

The new two-story building will have frontage along Colorado Blvd., Sunnyslope Ave., and Walnut St. The building is substantially set back from both Colorado Blvd. and Sunnyslope Ave. to account for the site's west-to-east slope. To compensate for the large setback, the project incorporates a landscaped front lot featuring a designed grasscrete hardscape. This area will be used to showcase display cars and serve as a gathering space for customers and pedestrians.

### Artist Selection Process

To fulfill the development's Public Art Requirement, Rusnak chose to partner with ArtCenter College of Design because of institution's prominence in the field of automotive design and community connection as a Pasadena-based design school. Faculty-member James Meraz was

hired as the project's Public Art Consultant to guide the artwork commissioning process. The development team determined that a large-scale, landmark artwork within the front lot along E. Colorado Blvd. would be a visually striking and publicly engaging enhancement for the development.

In June 2023, ArtCenter organized a three-day design workshop in which students developed designs that responded to the project site and Porsche's automotive design language and brand. The development team selected a student concept for further development, subsequently hiring Jason Pilarski, an ArtCenter alum and faculty member, as the project's Lead Artist. Pilarski's was selected for the project based on his understanding of Rusnak Porsche's goals, expertise in automotive design, engineering and fabrication capabilities, and his understanding of architectural integration of public art.

## **ARTWORK CONCEPT:**

Jason Pilarski's proposed artwork, titled *In Motion*, is a large-scale sculptural trellis installed at the north-east corner of the development, along E. Colorado Blvd.

Measuring approximately 118 feet wide, 14 feet tall, and 24 feet wide, the proposed artwork will be constructed from laser-cut aluminum panels riveted to an aluminum frame and anchored to concrete pads throughout the surrounding hardscape. The artwork's exterior will feature an anodized matte aluminum finish, creating a sleek, contemporary appearance that compliments the Porsche building.

The proposed artwork comprises an open framework trellis design, with sweeping arches and streamlined pillars that frame the surrounding hardscape along the site's street edge. The artist was inspired by Porsche's distinct automotive design style, characterized by organic curved edges and innovative engineering, as well as biomimicry—design principals derived from strategies found in nature.

The artist has articulated the artwork concept as follows:

"The art is based on the principles of biomimicry, a practice that learns from strategies found in nature to solve design challenges. This premise arose from a study of the iconic Porsche 911 which features organic curves rather than angular edges -- a unique perspective on performance sports car design. Yet while the 911 and other Porsches highlight organic design, they marry it with state-of-the-art technology and ultra-high performance. From this marriage of nature and technology grew the idea for a sculpture both organic in shape and exemplifying motion and technology.

"At the intersection of form, flow, movement and the innate wisdom of nature, *In Motion* seeks to evoke the quiet yet powerful dialogue between living systems—from the smallest cellular processes to the grand, sweeping patterns of the natural world. Inspired by the fluid intelligence and dynamic behaviors found in nature, and performative movement and speed, this sculpture is an exploration of the interconnectedness that binds all living things, and the intricate rhythms through a kinesthetic, tactility and visual experience. This sculpture will invite the viewer to experience the intersection of performance, intelligence and behavioral systems found in nature."

*Materials and construction:* The artwork structure will be composed of an aluminum framework anchored to concrete pads installed throughout the surrounding hardscape. Thin gauge anodized aluminum panels will be laser cut and riveted to support collars along the main structure. This unique construction method utilizes the material advantages and flexibility of aluminum to achieve an organic form.

*Dimensions:* 118' x 24' x 14' (width x depth x height)

#### Preliminary Budget

As a new construction, commercial development greater than 25,000 square feet, located outside of the Downtown and Old Pasadena Redevelopment areas, 2915 E. Colorado Blvd. project meets the Public Art Requirement thresholds, as outlined in the City's Private Development Public Art Guidelines.

Current Building Permit Valuation:	\$25,000,000
Public Art Obligation (1%):	\$250,000
Required Public Art Fee (20%):	\$50,000
Remaining On-Site Art Budget:	\$200,000

#### Site Integration

The proposed artwork will be installed at ground level in a publicly accessible area located within the large setback between the primary Porsche building and Colorado Boulevard.

The development was granted a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for the significant setback from Colorado Boulevard. To compensate for this large setback, the project incorporates a front lot featuring a mix of landscaped and hardscape elements, which offer space for display vehicles, as well as accommodating pedestrian and vehicular access. During the CUP process, the free-standing artwork structure was identified as a key feature that ensures compliance with the setback requirement along Colorado Boulevard.

The proposed artwork is designed to serve as a visually striking focal point, visible to both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The development team aims to utilize the display area beneath the artwork structure as a multifunctional space, accommodating vehicle displays and hosting community events or gatherings. Additionally, the artwork will feature a dynamic lighting system that adjusts based on the time of day, enhancing the site's visual appeal during both daytime and nighttime.

#### Artists Background

Jason Pilarski is a Los Angeles-based artist, designer, and fabricator. Pilarski is a faculty member in the Spatial Experience Design department at ArtCenter College of Design and the owner of Machine Histories, a design fabrication studio specializing in commercial and public spaces.

Pilarski's work has been exhibited extensively across the United States, including at Shoshana Wayne Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, the Santa Barbara

Museum of Art, and ArtCenter College of Design. Additionally, he has collaborated with numerous artists, architecture firms, and design studios on a variety of projects.

#### Maintenance and Conservation

The artist will be required to submit a Maintenance Plan to Cultural Affairs Staff for Final Sign Off of the project, outlining specific instructions for the care of the artwork. If the artist is not available to complete unforeseen conservation work, a professional art conservator will be consulted to execute any necessary repairs.

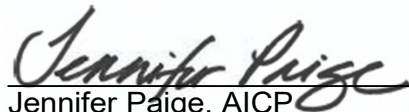
#### **CONCLUSION:**

Staff finds that the proposed artist—Jason Pilarski—has demonstrated the ability to implement a site-responsive artwork that would create a meaningful sense of place at the development site. The public art project has the capacity to provide an engaging experience for residents and visitors, with a visually striking aesthetic that would complement the building's design, function, and surrounding landscape. In addition, the artwork is in alignment with the Public Art Master Plan which supports the incorporation and integration of civic art into private development to enhance community character, reinforce local identity, highlight qualities of place and assist visitor orientation.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action.

Respectfully Submitted:



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Development Department

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



Rochelle Branch  
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Attachments:

Attachment A – 2915 E Colorado Blvd Concept Art Plan