

SLC's west side to get its own 9th and 9th whale-size art

Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall aims to install two new large-scale pieces of public art on the west side.

By JOSE DAVILA IV
The Salt Lake Tribune

A pair of 9th and 9th whale-size public art pieces is slated to surface on the city's west side.

The towering whale, titled "Out of the Blue," has drawn criticism and a legion of loyal fans since its 2022 installation, inspiring T-shirts, an ultramarathon, even an entire spoof religion.

Now, west-side neighborhoods are teed up for their own major art pieces.

In a May 7 speech to the City Council, Mendenhall announced two new large-scale public art installations — one in Glendale and another in Poplar Grove. The mayor's plans for new art on the west side follow announcements

of a new, smaller sculpture in Fairpark and a multiuse trail along 400 South that will incorporate public art.

In her speech to the City Council, Mendenhall said she wants to act on community feedback the Salt Lake City Arts Council received from a recent public engagement process.

"They (the Arts Council) concluded that either the new Glendale Regional Park or the west end of the 9 Line should be the place for large-scale, new public art," the mayor said. "I want to do both."

Council members earmarked \$150,000 for the Glendale installation in the latest round of the city's capital improvement program in August. Another



A ceremony at Caffe Espresso unveiled the 900 South roundabout whale sculpture called "Out of the Blue" in Salt Lake City on April 11, 2022.

\$350,000 for the project will come from the \$85 million parks bond voters approved in 2022.

The city's Redevelopment

Agency will kick in \$150,000 for public art to be installed at the opposite end of the 9 Line from the east side's whale.

No additional council votes are required to fund the installations.

City arts officials already have started gathering feedback on what west-siders would like to see in new public art. So far, they've heard residents favor work that creates a gathering place, reflects community values like cultural diversity, and involves them in its creation, according to the city's engagement report. The survey also captured concerns over unintended consequences the art might bring, such as vandalism and gentrification.

In Glendale, the art would be part of the second phase of park construction at the former home of the Raging Waters water park. The first phase, due for completion in the coming year, will feature an all-abilities playground, basketball court, pavilion and promenade for community events. Renderings for the first-phase playground show a multicolored climbing structure, slides and a large bird sculpture

with shaded play areas beneath its wings.

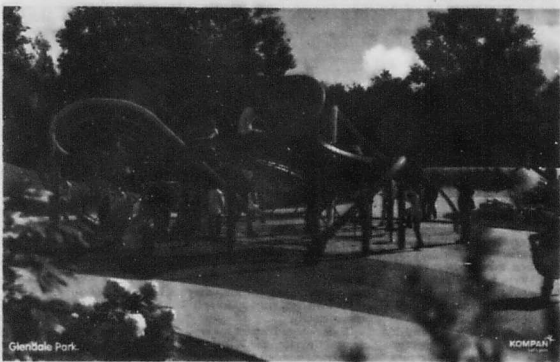
An outdoor pool, skating ribbon and improved Jordan River access are already planned for the second phase.

Fewer details are available for the 9 Line project, but the new installation would sit on the path's western end at Redwood Road. If installed, it would be the seventh public art piece along the trail, following works such as the murals at the 9 Line Bike Park, Greg Ragland's veggie-themed sculptures at the 9 Line Community Garden, and Troy Pillow's Nine Muses installation at 9th and 9th.

The pieces would add to the growing number of public art projects on the west side.

Last month, city arts officials announced a final design for a new sculpture within a traffic circle at 500 North and 1300 West in Fairpark. The city also plans to build a multiuse path along 400 South complete with new art.

City officials expect to put out a formal request for artists to apply to design the new installation in Glendale later this year.



A rendering of the playground envisioned for Glendale Regional Park in Salt Lake City.

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