



Administrative Report

N.2., File # 23-7154

Meeting Date: 3/19/2024

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: CAMERON HARDING, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF A PUBLIC ART MURAL ON TWO EXTERIOR WALLS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE FACILITY AT 545 N GERTRUDA AVE

APPROVE THE MURAL CONCEPT PROPOSED BY ERNESTO MARANJE FOR THE SITE AND DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE A CONTRACT WITH THE ARTIST TO COMPLETE THE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION OF THE MURAL AND TO RETURN WITH A BUDGET MODIFICATION RESOLUTION TO APPROPRIATE THE FUNDS NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The walls bordering the Public Works Yard at 545 N. Gertruda Avenue were identified as a “priority area” for public art in the City’s Public Art Master Plan. As part of the FY 2023-24 Budget, the City Council appropriated \$60,000 from the John Parsons Public Art Fund for a mural at this location. To initiate execution of the project, staff and the Public Art Commission solicited interest from thirteen artists and, after vetting the artists, requested site specific submissions from three of the thirteen. The Commission evaluated the submissions and have unanimously recommended artist Ernesto Maranje, and his design “Sea Chatter,” for the project. The cost of the proposed mural is \$90,000.

Funding will also be needed to cover traffic control services required during certain periods of mural installation. The cost of these services will be identified and included as part of the final artist installation agreement, but are currently estimated to be roughly \$35,000. If the concept is approved, staff will prepare an agreement with the artist and return with a budget modification to appropriate the John Parsons Public Art funds needed to complete the project.

BACKGROUND

The Public Art Master Plan, approved by City Council on April 19, 2016, identified the walls bordering the Public Works Yard as a “priority area” for public art.

On September 21, 2022, the Public Art Commission asked staff to prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a Pre-Qualified Mural-Artist Roster. The purpose of the roster is to identify artists to invite for future Calls for Proposals (CFP). The RFQ is a standard first step in an artist selection process. The goal of the RFQ is to receive resumes, letters of recommendation, and images of similar completed works from artists to aid in identifying finalists for various projects. It does not ask the artist to create original designs. Having a pre-qualified roster of artists eliminates the

need to identify a new pool of qualified artists every time the City commissions a mural.

Staff prepared an RFQ, and on January 25, 2023, the Public Art Commission unanimously approved the RFQ, which was subsequently published on the Call for Entry (CaFÉ™) website on March 1, 2023. The first review of applications took place at the March 22, 2023 Public Art Commission meeting. CaFÉ is an online application and adjudication management system used by over 600 public art programs, galleries, museums, and educational institutions. Nearly 160,000 artists use CaFÉ to find and apply for art opportunities throughout the year.

Commissioners used the CaFÉ website to review and score thirteen applications submitted online, plus one additional artist recommended by the Commission's Murals Committee. At their March 22, 2023 meeting, the Commission unanimously selected three artists (Ernesto Maranje, John Pugh and Sei Shimura) to invite to participate in a CFP, which was published on the CaFÉ website on May 16, 2023. Artists were asked to submit their original designs with descriptions, project budgets, materials list, maintenance/anti-graffiti plan, etc. for the specific project at 545 N. Gertruda Avenue with a not-to-exceed budget of \$100,000. Each artist was paid a stipend equal to 1% of the total budget for their design (up to a maximum of \$1,000). All three artists submitted proposals by the CFP closing date of July 7, 2023.

Public Works Department staff were invited to provide input on the three proposals prior to the Public Art Commission's July 26, 2023 meeting. Public Works Director Ted Semaan provided written support for the proposal provided by Ernesto Maranje.

On July 26, 2023, the Public Art Commission unanimously selected artist Ernesto Maranje and his design titled "Sea Chatter," but before recommending the design to City Council, the Commissioners asked the artist if he would change certain elements of the design. These revisions included brightening the sky, swapping out the sea otter for an animal more native to Redondo Beach waters (the artist selected a humpback whale), and removing a shark and a whale swimming alongside a seal because the size of the shark and the whale were not depicted as proportionately accurate with respect to the size of a seal. The artist explained that occasional suspensions of realism when it comes to the relative sizes of objects in his artwork is a hallmark of his style, and that viewers of his artwork enjoy looking for these "mistakes." Nevertheless, the artist submitted two revisions, and, on October 25, 2023, the Commission unanimously approved a merger of the two revised designs.

At this time, it is recommended the City Council:

1. Direct staff to prepare an agreement with Artist Ernesto Maranje for the final design and installation of the mural.
2. Direct staff to prepare a Budget Modification Resolution to formally appropriate the additional funds needed for the project.
3. Approve the design recommended by the Public Art Commission or provide direction for modifications, which the artist will begin once he is under contract.

COORDINATION

The Community Services Department coordinated the preparation of this report with input from the Public Works Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

As part of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget, the City Council appropriated \$60,000 from the John Parsons Public Art Fund for the Public Works Yard Mural. The total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$125,000 (\$90,000 for mural installation and roughly \$35,000 for associated traffic control services). If the proposed mural is approved, staff will return with a budget modification to appropriate the additional John Parsons Public Art Funds needed to cover the final project expense.

APPROVED BY:

Mike Witzansky, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- Mural Proposal - "Sea Chatter," from Ernesto Maranje
- Mural Proposal - John Pugh
- Mural Proposal - Sei Shimura