

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: October 9, 2006		Item Number: <u>A-2</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of a Public Art Concept for Washington Boulevard			
Contact Person/Dept.: B. Christine Byers/ Cultural Affairs		Phone Number: (310) 253-5776	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: West Washington Blvd. Advisory Panel (Notified (10/03/06); Cultural Affairs Master Notification List (10/05/06); Peter Richards/Richard Johnson; Kyungmi Shin; and, Jody Zellen (01/03/06) Master Notification List (10/4/06)			
Department Approval: Susan Evans (09/28/06)		City Manager Approval: Jerry Fulwood (10/2/06)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (10/2/06)			
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council consider the attached design concepts together with the recommendation from the Selection Panel and the Cultural Affairs Commission and approve Kyungmi Shin's concept for a public art installation on Washington Boulevard between the 405 Fwy. and Walnut Ave. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> Per the Cultural Affairs Commission's recommendation and the City Council's approval, \$100,000 was allocated for public art along Washington Boulevard between the 405 Fwy. and Walnut Ave. The impetus for this was to help activate and beautify this important east-west thoroughfare which extends from the Pacific Ocean through Culver City to downtown Los Angeles. Staff convened an Advisory Panel that met on January 24, 2006 comprised of eight residents of the proposed project area, plus one representative of the Culver City Rotary Club. Included among the nine panelists were representatives of the three area neighborhood associations (Culver West, Herbert Street, and Culver Triangle). The CAC Public Art sub-committee (at that time comprised of Susan Deen and Gayle Smashey) and one of the City Council's sub-committee members (Alan Corlin) for this project area were present at the meeting as observers and as an additional resource for questions. Staff opened the meeting by presenting some possible concepts for the project area and then facilitating a discussion intended to identify criteria for a public art concept. The primary criteria identified during the meeting by the Advisory Panel were:			

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

- Art work should be along Washington Boulevard (between 405 Fwy. and Walnut Ave.);
- Art work should help unify the project area;
- The cultural/ethnic diversity of the project area should be considered;
- Regional artists should be targeted;
- This installation could be part of a multi-phase, temporary installation;
- Culver City's unique identity (or history) within the larger context of Los Angeles should be considered;
- After de-installation, art work could be sold at auction to raise money for future art work in the project area; and,
- Other areas to consider for future installations (possibly using light) are Washington Blvd. at Wade St.; Washington Blvd. at Inglewood Ave.; and, Washington Blvd. at Lincoln Blvd. (as a "gateway" into Culver City feature).

In March 2006, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was distributed electronically to several thousand California-based visual artists. The scope of the project as summarized in the RFQ specified that the venue should be the approximately 176 light poles along the specified 2.5 mile stretch of Washington Blvd., that an art installation should be designed to last up to three years, and that the project budget cannot exceed \$85,000.

44 submissions, which included images of the artist's past work, a resume or biographical statement and a list of references, were received by the deadline of April 7, 2006. Staff convened a Selection Panel that met on June 14, 2006 to review the submissions and recommend up to three artists or artist teams to develop proposals. The CAC Public Art sub-committee (Susan Deen and Gayle Smashey) were also present at the June 2006 Selection Panel meeting but did not participate in scoring the entries.

The Selection Panel was comprised of:

- **Aandrea Stang**, Senior Education Program Coordinator,
The Museum of Contemporary Art and Resident of the project area;
- **May Sun**, Public Artist; and,

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

- **Kathleen Weaver**, Visual Artist and Resident of the project area.

(Both Ms. Stang and Ms. Weaver were present at the January 2006 Advisory Panel meeting.)

The Selection Panel concluded their review of all 44 submissions by recommending that the following artists be short-listed for proposal development:

Peter Richards/Richard Johnson (an artist team) and **Jody Zellen Kyungmi Shin**

These artists were short-listed by the Selection Panel based on artistic merit as evidenced by the quality of past work (weighted at 80%) and their professional experience and demonstrated ability to successfully complete public art projects of similar scale and scope (weighted at 20%).

Each of the short-listed artists was then forwarded a set of specific proposal guidelines (copy attached) and asked to make a presentation before the same Selection Panel and the CAC Public Art sub-committee (Ronnie Jayne and Gayle Smashey) on Wednesday, September 6, 2006.

A copy of each artist's or artist team's proposal is attached. Below is a brief summary of their concepts and of the panel's comments:

1. Peter Richards/Richard Johnson:

Project Overview: This artist team proposed a three-phased project using nearly all of the available light poles within the project area. The working title for this concept is "Post Your Verse" which includes an opportunity for public input via a web site and a designated phone number for receiving voice and text messages. The concept is designed to engage the Culver City community in a conversation about how the automobile has shaped their lifestyles and "how external changes could affect the way people live and work in the future." Phase I of the project proposes using a third of the light poles in the project area (on both east and west bound sides of Washington Blvd.) and installing banners (approximately 3 x 8') inspired by and referencing historical highway advertising. Phase II will include an additional third of the light poles and will feature verses selected from submissions provided by the Culver City (and possibly Culver City adjacent) community. Phase III will highlight a select number of verses submitted by Culver City school children. In Phases II and III, the author of each selected verse will receive credit and a stipend of \$150. In addition to the banners featuring

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

verses, there will be banners installed intermittently throughout the project area that will direct the public to the web site (www.postyourverse.com) or the phone number for detailed information about the project. The artists propose that a virtual selection panel be created for review and selection of verses submitted for Phases II and III. The selection panel would be representative of Culver City's diverse community but also include a local poet. All banners included in this project are designed to be read on one side of the street (depending on whether you are east or west bound) so as to minimize the visual distraction to motorists. The project budget includes costs associated with a web designer and marketing consultant to ensure maximum outreach and interaction with the public.

Panel Comments: The panel felt that this concept was conceptually very sophisticated and liked the community involvement in Phases II and III. However, they expressed reservations about the complexity of implementing the latter two phases and the potential burden this may place on staff. There were some reservations about the aesthetics of the concept with regard to beautification of the streetscape as well as the public's continued enthusiasm for the concept over the proposed project time period. The concept was definitely site-specific with regard to the inclusion of verses from the Culver City community. However, the car culture theme could apply to any community in Southern California or in the United States. The panel also had some reservations about whether or not the vehicles for community input (web site, telephone, text messaging) might present an age bias with regard to access and participation.

2. Kyungmi Shin

Project Overview: This proposal includes 176 unique banners (3' x 8') that incorporate Culver City specific historical themes, serve as location markers (e.g., noting the site of the 1984 Olympic headquarters), and display words that are intended to evoke a sense of amusement or pleasant thoughts. The background color of the banners – seven altogether – are derived from the lantana flower, the official flower of Culver City. This project will be implemented in two or more phases.

Panel Comments: Although the panel felt that some of the proposed historical references had been incorporated several times in Culver City's public art program, there was potential to expand upon these themes and include a wider historical reference that reflects the diversity of the Culver City community. Also, as noted by the artist in the proposal narrative, this project provides an opportunity to link the project area to the remainder of Culver City

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

and also reach a wider audience. The panel favorably described the concept as “poetic” and potentially provocative. They also felt this concept was the most site-specific of the three presented and that the artist’s sense of humor would add to keeping the concept fresh over the proposed installation period of three years.

3. Jody Zellen

Project Overview: This artist proposes using approximately one half of the light poles in the project area and installing a series of silhouetted figures that are frozen in motion. The departure point for this concept was the history of cinema, the zoetrope design and Eadweard Muybridge’s motion studies. The proposal features ten different designs that would be replicated several times throughout the project area; each design would be assigned a unique color. The artist is proposing using either 1/8” powder coated aluminum or a metal mesh to reduce wind resistance. Each figure would be approximately six feet high and three feet wide.

Panel Comments: The panel noted their appreciation of a concept that departed from the use of banners. The cut-out concept and the reference to motion appealed to the panel in that it had a playful element. However, the panel felt that the concept’s association with the history of cinema was not immediately apparent. Some of the panelists expressed reservations about the longevity of the concept as a point of interest during the proposed three year installation period. One panelist stated that she would like to see this concept installed in a smaller area such as a park.

* * *

The panel scored the three proposals based on the following criteria:

- Artistic Merit (weighted at 80%)
- Responsiveness to the Site (weighted at 10%)
- Durability of artists’ design (materials used, etc.) (weighted at 10%)

All three artists stated that they would be ready to install art work by January 2007 provided they could begin work by the end of October 2006. The artists all expressed flexibility to possible de-installation of their artwork in less than three years if future City projects or programs required this. All the artists were supportive of the possibility of auctioning or donating their artwork after de-installation as suggested by the January 2006 Advisory Panel.

The three artists were ranked as follows, based on the panelists’ average scores:

**City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Kyungmi Shin | (Total 92.8 points) |
| ▪ Jody Zellen | (Total 85.1 points) |
| ▪ Peter Richards/Richard Johnson | (Total 79.7 points) |

The CAC Public Art sub-committee concurred with the Selection Panel's recommendation and recommend, together with staff, that Kyungmi Shin's concept be implemented in the project area. The Cultural Affairs Commission at their meeting on September 12, 2006 unanimously approved a recommendation to the City Council to approve Kyungmi Shin's concept.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The funds for this project are allocated in the Art Fund (41300861). All three proposals are within the \$85,000 limit for this project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. August 2006 Proposal Guidelines;
2. Resume/Biographical statement for Peter Richards/Richard Johnson, Kyungmi Shin, and Jody Zellen; and,
3. Artist Proposals

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve Kyungmi Shin's design for a public art project on Washington Boulevard between the 405 Fwy. and Walnut Avenue and authorize a contract with Kyungmi Shin for this work.
2. Authorize the City Attorney to prepare the necessary documents; and,
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute the document on behalf of the City.