



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman
Council Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 253-5851

Staff Report

File #: 23-201, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-1.

CAC - 1) Consideration of a Concept by Charles Gaines for a Permanent Art Installation at Washington and National Blvds.; and, 2) Make a Recommendation to the City Council

Meeting Date: September 20, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: Christine Byers / City Manager - Cultural Affairs

Phone Number: (310) 253-6003

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing:

Action Item:

Attachments: Yes No

Public Notification: Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs Commission (09/15/22); Project Art Panel (09/15/22) and Art Committee (09/15/22)

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (09/15/22)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Cultural Affairs Commission consider the information provided, including a recommendation from the Cultural Affairs Commission's Public Art Subcommittee, and make a recommendation to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2016, the City Council approved a streetscape plan for the Washington/National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District. The staff report included information on a potential collaborative art feature that could serve both as a gateway and a means of visually unifying the four corners of the Washington/National intersection (Project Site). The Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) has received several updates on this proposed project since February 2016 and expressed support. During the entitlement process, both the Developer at Ivy Station (Lowe) and the Developer at 8777 Washington (Lincoln Property Company or CLPF) agreed to contribute toward costs of such a project by paying all or a portion of their required Art in Public Places Program (APPP) allocation to the Cultural Trust Fund in conjunction with issuance of Building Permits for their respective projects at the Washington/National intersection. Lowe contributed \$300,000 from their 1% APPP allocation in the spring of 2018; CLPF contributed their entire 1% APPP allocation (a total of \$580,000 in

conjunction with three permits; the original estimated amount from CLPF was \$441,343). The City has appropriated \$300,000 from the Cultural Trust Fund toward the project, bringing the revised total to \$1,180,000 (Project Budget).

With input from Lowe and CLPF, an RFP for an art consultant was developed and released in September 2018. On February 25, 2019, the City Council considered an item pertaining to development and implementation of an art installation at the Project Site with a recommendation by the CAC Public Art Subcommittee (Vice Chair Brenda Williams and former Commissioner Zoltan Pali) to hire Dyson & Womack (Art Consultant). The City Council passed a motion approving an agreement with Dyson & Womack and approving development of an art concept with the requirement that the mature and healthy ficus tree be retained in the triangular City-owned open space (Green Open Space).

DISCUSSION

With input from staff, Dyson & Womack assembled a voting Art Panel and a non-voting Art Committee. The Art Committee comprised various stakeholders - including adjacent property owners and representatives from the Culver City Arts District -- who provided advice and guidance to the Art Panel and Art Consultant throughout development of the Public Art Plan and the selection of artist(s) and artwork concept(s). The Art Panel provided leadership, guidance, and recommendations on all aspects of development and selection of artist(s) and artwork concept(s).

Art Panel members:

- Yassi Mazandi, Artist
- Aurora Tang, the Center for Land Use Interpretation
- Marla Koosed, Art Consultant and Culver City Resident (replacing Eui-Sung Yi, NOW Institute)

Art Committee members:

- Mayen Alcantara, Senior Manager, LAMTA (replacing Susan Gray)
- Joseph Miller, Runyon Group, Platform (represented by Jack Nathan)
- Gil Gonzalez, Greystar, Access Culver City
- Tom Wulf, Lowe, Ivy Station
- Rob Kane, Lincoln Property Company, 8777 Washington Blvd.
- Wally Marks, Walter N. Marks Realty, Helms Bakery District, Culver City Arts District
- Josetta Sbeglia, Fresh Paint Art Advisors, Culver City Arts District
- Hope Parrish, President, Culver City Historical Society
- Elaine Gerety-Warner, Economic Development Project Manager, City of Culver City
- Christine Byers, Cultural Affairs Manager, City of Culver City
- Zoltan Pali, Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission Public Art Subcommittee
- Brenda Williams, Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission Public Art Subcommittee

Through a lengthy process that formally began in December 2019, Dyson & Womack, the Art Panel

and Art Committee worked together to develop a Public Art Plan, an RFQual and RFP for artist and concept selection. A summary of the process and key dates is included in Attachment No. 1 - Historical Report. This project, like many others, was substantially delayed for most of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic; a Request for Qualifications (RFQual) was released in December 2020. A total of 147 submission were received by the deadline from which 16 artists and artist teams were selected to present to the Art Panel and Art Committee in April 2021. Six artists/artist teams were selected to progress to the Request for Proposals (RFP) stage. They were:

- Blane de St. Croix
- Charles Gaines
- Iris Hu
- Susan Narduli
- Matthew Mazzota
- Paul Cocksedge Studio

The above six artists/artist teams presented their proposals to the Art Consultants, Art Panel and Committee on August 18, 2021. The voting Art Panel selected Charles Gaines and his concept for the site because, among others, the concept strongly relates to the art plan and the artwork creates a captivating frame for the tree and brings new meaning to the site's history. The Art Panel's decision was supported by CAC Public Art Subcommittee. As further outlined in the attached Historical Report, subsequent to the August 2021 meeting, there were several meetings and site visits with various parties, including Charles Gaines Studio, TOLO Architecture, arborists, geotechnical firms and LAMTA to obtain additional input and further refine the concept prior to presenting to the CAC for consideration. One of those meetings was on June 13, 2022 with the CAC Public Art Subcommittee. It was the subcommittee who recommended having an arborist and geotechnical firm visit the site and provide initial reports prior to CAC consideration. The subcommittee also made the recommendation that design costs include both 100% Design Development and 100% Construction Development.

Charles Gaines and Artwork Concept

LA based artist Charles Gaines is proposing a concept for an artwork titled, *A Frame for a Tree*. The proposal includes an approximately 78' x 100' rectangular metal structure that will frame the mature ficus tree at the site, expanding on the artist's critically acclaimed system-based works, his use of trees as the subject and the tension created between the organic outline of the tree and the numeric logic that manifests their image.

Lighting is an essential component of the artwork which the artist intends to be subtle and elegant; the development of the lighting is included in the budget (Attachment No. 5). Charles Gaines has selected TERREMOTO for the landscape design, the same firm hired by Runyon Group to improve the adjacent open space now referred to as Platform Park. The scope of the work will include either repurposing or reimagining the existing site marker which reads, "SITE OF THE HAL ROACH STUDIOS, LAUGH FACTORY TO THE WORLD, 1919 - 1963" and incorporating that into the new landscape design. Design, installation and future maintenance of the metal frame to allow for continued growth and health of the ficus tree is of utmost concern and an arborist will be engaged throughout all phases of the project.

With regard to visually unifying the four corners of the intersection, after reviewing several options

with the Art Consultant, one viable option is solar-powered up lighting in the tree wells lining the corners of the intersection. Since the original concept for a streetscape plan was proposed in 2016, the area has undergone many changes and the other three corners of the intersection are visually very busy. If implemented, this element would be completed as a separate project by the City but designed to complement Charles Gaines's art installation in the Green Open Space.

Project Phases and Costs

The project is currently divided into three phases:

Phase 1 - Begun in 2019 and includes development of the Project Art Plan, RFQual, and RFP for artist and concept section. Total cost of Phase 1 is \$87,000 which includes:

- Dyson & Womack (includes reimbursement of initial arborist report, artist proposal honorarium to Paul Cocksedge Studio in the amount of \$2,000, and presentations to CAC and City Council) - \$75,000
- Art Panel Honoraria (3 panelists) - \$2,000
- Finalist Artist Honoraria for Proposals (5 artists) - \$10,000

Phase 2 total is \$355,000. This includes 100% design and construction development as well as Artist Fee for the entire project.

Phase 3 total will be determined as part of Phase 2. This last phase includes fabrication and installation of the artwork at the site.

This item is currently scheduled for City Council consideration on October 24, 2022.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

\$300,000 was initially appropriated as part of the FY 2018-19 budget in account 41322400.730100 PO005 (Cultural Trust Fund). The \$87,000 for Phase 1 of the project comes from that original \$300,000. The balance of the funds required to complete the project will be appropriated as a budget amendment at the time an art concept is approved by the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 22-09-20_ATT No. 1_Historical Report
2. 22-09-20_ATT No. 2_A Frame for a Tree/Charles Gaines Proposal
3. 22-09-20_ATT No. 3_July 27, 2022 Ficus Inspection
4. 22-09-20_ATT No. 4_Letter from D&W re Geotechnical Review

5. 22-09-20_ATT No. 5_Design Phase 2 Cost Proposal

MOTIONS

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Recommend the City Council Approve an art concept by Charles Gaines titled, *A Frame for A Tree*, authorize a budget amendment, and the preparation and execution of necessary documents to commence Phase 2 of the project.