



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 21, 2022

TO: ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION

FROM: ROCHELLE BRANCH, CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION MANAGER
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: REVIEW & APPROVAL OF ARTIST DEBORAH ASCHHEIM FOR THE
ROBINSON PARK RECREATION CENTER CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PUBLIC
ART PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Arts & Culture Commission:

1. Approve the Selection Panel's recommendation of Deborah Aschheim as the selected artist for the Robinson Park Recreation Center Capital Improvement Public Art Project, with the following conditions:
 - a) The artist will participate in up to three public meetings, including at least one community meeting;
 - b) Collaborate with City staff to ensure that the proposed artwork meets safety standards and can be easily maintained;
 - c) The artist will complete a Concept Art Plan for approval by the Commission in response to community engagement;
 - d) Approve an alternate artist based on the second highest Panel scores should the recommended artist be unable to proceed with the project or complete an agreement with the City.
2. Find that the recommended artist complies with the goals, objectives and eligible criteria outlined in the project Request for Qualifications and Capital Public Art Program Guidelines, including:

- a) Currently works in the public realm, has demonstrated past experience and proven technical and aesthetic ability in similar media, scale and budget to successfully create artwork responsive to the site and community;
- b) Creates work of high artistic merit, sensitive to the City's aesthetic diversity and can contribute to the characteristics, contribution, aspirations and unique expressions of Pasadena's values;
- c) Has the capacity to work collaboratively with the City of Pasadena and its stakeholders to successfully implement the proposed artwork and;
- d) Currently lives or works in California and is eligible to legally work in the United States.

BACKGROUND:

The renovation of the Robinson Park Recreation Center, located in Northwest Pasadena, was the second and final phase of the Robinson Park Master Plan adopted by City Council in 2002 and designated as an eligible Capital Improvement Public Art project in 2015. With guidance from the Robinson Park Stakeholder Group and community members, the public art project for the Robinson Park Recreation Center was designed to prioritize community input and collaboration during the first phase of the artwork development process.

The City's Capital Public Art Program Guidelines outline the following artist selection process:

- A Stakeholder Group creates a Vision Statement for the project, which provides the framework for project development.
- A Request for Qualifications is issued to seek qualified artists or artist/design teams
- A public community meeting and artist workshop is organized.
- The Selection Panel — assembled by Cultural Affairs Staff and including representation from the Stakeholder Group — reviews and scores respondents to the Request for Qualifications based on the published criteria and recommends a finalist to the Arts & Culture Commission.

The panel's scores identify a prospective alternate should one be needed.

Upon approval by the Arts & Culture Commission, the selected artist will be contracted to begin the development phase of the project including extensive community and stakeholder engagement and completion of a Concept Art Plan. The selected artist will be required to participate in at least three public meetings (including at least one community meeting) and to collaborate with City staff and community members prior to the formation of the Concept Art Plan. Per the unique requirements of this project, the artist will also be responsible for initiating numerous opportunities for engaging with the diverse Northwest Pasadena community, ranging from large public events to small intimate conversations.

PROJECT BUDGET:

The Request for Qualifications was issued with \$200,000 as the total project budget, to be divided between a Development Phase of \$40,000 and an Implementation Phase of \$160,000. An artist contract will be issued for each phase of the project, with the Implementation Phase contract requiring City Council approval.

- The Development Phase budget of \$40,000 will include, among other requirements, extensive community and stakeholder engagement, consultation with City Staff, and completion of the Concept Art Plan.

The Implementation Phase budget of \$160,000 will include, among other requirements, refinement of the conceptual design, completion of the Final Art Plan, oversight of fabrication and installation of artwork(s), and a complete maintenance plan. A total of \$160,000 has been allocated for the project Implementation Phase — to be awarded to the artist upon City Council approval.

ROBINSON PARK RECREATION CENTER:

The Robinson Park Recreation Center is located on the north side of Robinson Park in Northwest Pasadena and is bounded by Hammond Street to the north, Fair Oaks Avenue to the east, W Mountain Street to the south, and Morton Avenue to the west. In 2002, after extensive community input and City Commission review, the City Council adopted the Robinson Park Master Plan with Phase II of the Plan to include a substantial rehabilitation of the existing recreation center. In February of 2015, the City Council approved the preliminary design of the Center and authorized the Department of Public Works to proceed with the proposed project. The Robinson Park Recreation Center Renovation Project Steering Committee provided oversight of the project.

With renovation completed in 2019, the Center serves as a community hub to residents, offering recreational programming to people of all ages, interests, and abilities. The facility includes a large multipurpose room for events and private reservations; a commercial kitchen; a fitness center with cardio and strength training equipment, free weights, and mirrored walls; a spacious dance room with wall mounted ballet bars and mirrored walls; a large gymnasium; and a cutting-edge audiovisual system. Seasonal activities and classes include arts and crafts, dance, fitness, yoga, summer day camp, aquatics, and youth enrichment classes such as guitar, drawing, and much more. The adjacent park features a children's play area, outdoor basketball courts and a newly resurfaced artificial turf multipurpose field.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP:

The Capital Public Art Program Guidelines provide for the assembly of a group of project stakeholders to create a vision for the associated public art project. This group is to include various individuals with a stake or perceived stake in the upcoming public art project including, but not limited to, active community participants that live or work in close proximity to the site, members of neighborhood associations, arts & culture organizations, surrounding businesses, institutions, or other segments of the community, as appropriate.

Community Representation: In alignment with the City's Capital Public Art Guidelines, the Robinson Park Stakeholder Group is composed of community members representing a broad

constituency in a variety of areas including, but not limited to, education, design, government, community affairs and Northwest Pasadena residents. The Stakeholder Group also includes several members from the Robinson Park Recreation Center Renovation Project Steering Committee.

Stakeholder Group Role: The task of the Stakeholder Group is to reach consensus about values and goals for public art at the site, and to provide Staff with a Vision Statement from which to develop the project's Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The Stakeholder Group convened several times in 2020 and 2021 to engage in dialogue about the project and developed a Vision Statement for the project with a focus on the commissioned public art to have positive impact that benefits the community.

VISION STATEMENT:

“Public art at Robinson Park Recreation Center will reflect the community’s history and the legacies of Jackie and Mack Robinson. The artwork will be rooted in the stories of Northwest Pasadena, providing a dynamic narrative that inspires the community to reflect, embrace, and bridge connections across generations. In addition, the artist/team will consider the concept of sustainability and its impact on the individuals, surrounding community and natural resources of Pasadena.”

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):

Application Requirements: In accordance with the City’s Capital Public Art Program Guidelines, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was developed to include guidance for applicants as to the articulated goals and community-focus of the project for consideration. The RFQ sought qualified California-based artists/teams to design, fabricate, and install a permanent public art project at the Robinson Park Recreation Center. Applicants were required to submit examples of relevant past work with an emphasis on successful community engagement, a resume or CV, professional references from past clients, and short answers to a series of questions regarding their relevant experience and interest in the opportunity. While applicants working in any medium were welcome to apply, the RFQ emphasized the need for the selected artist/team to be culturally-sensitive and eager to engage with community members while developing their artwork concept. Resources about the Robinson Park Recreation Center and the Northwest Pasadena neighborhood were also included in the RFQ.

Distribution and Outreach: The RFQ was published in on February 22, 2022, closed on April 7, 2022 and was administered through Call for Entries (CaFE), which is one of the most active resources for professional public art opportunities in the U.S. The RFQ was advertised through a variety of public outlets including the required City’s PlanetBids page, and circulated by the Cultural Affairs Division through the City Manager’s Newsletter, City Council offices, email lists, local news outlets, as well as by the project’s Public Art Consultant. The opportunity was also distributed widely among artist resource sites including the Public Art Network of Southern California, Arts for LA, the California Arts Council, relevant social media groups, and was sent directly to local arts agencies and cultural institutions. The RFQ was posted on the Cultural Affairs website and the City’s social media channels, Planet Bids and on the CallforEntry.Org (CaFE) website. A public Community Meeting & Artist Workshop was held virtually on March 9, 2022 to review the RFQ. Answers to questions that had been posed during this meeting were posted on March 10, 2022.

ARTIST EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Per the Request for Qualifications, the Selection Panel utilized the following Artist Evaluation Criteria:

- Demonstrates artistic excellence, innovation, and originality based on artist(s) body of work and supporting materials. (40%);
- Demonstrates capability in creating community-engaged artworks in collaboration with stakeholders and project partners. (30%);
- Demonstrates experience in successfully completing artworks of similar scope, scale, budget, and complexity. Demonstrates capacity for working in media and with concepts that are appropriate to the project goals. (20%);

The City's standard procurement procedures provide for an additional 5% each to be awarded to those applicants that meet the City's criteria for Local Pasadena Business and Small/Micro – Businesses (10%).

SELECTION PANEL:

Per the Capital Public Art Program Guidelines, a Selection Panel of local community members and stakeholders, arts professionals and City staff was assembled to review submittals in response to the Request for Qualifications. These Panel members served on a volunteer-basis and were not compensated for their time.

Voting members of the Selection Panel included four members from the Robinson Park Stakeholder Group and two public art professionals. The composition of this group included:

- Two members of the Robinson Park Recreation Center Renovation Project Steering Committee
- A professional public artist and arts administrator
- A civic public art program director
- Longtime Northwest Pasadena residents
- Individuals representing education, design, and business sectors

The Selection Panel also included several non-voting members to serve in an advisory capacity throughout the artist selection process and was comprised of staff from the Parks, Recreation & Community Services department and one Arts & Culture Commissioner.

APPLICATION REVIEW:

Initial Review: All applicants were required to submit their materials through the online CaFE portal. After the April 7, 2022 RFQ deadline, Selection Panel members provided a preliminary review and scoring of all 29 completed applications. This initial review helped to identify the top 12 applicants which were then further reviewed by the Panel at a group meeting on May 10, 2022. A careful review of submitted materials and a thoughtful discussion of the attributes of each—as articulated in their applications and related to the outlined goals for the project—produced a short list of four Artist/Team Project Finalists.

Secondary Review: The Finalists were invited to the June 21, 2022 Selection Panel meeting and were asked to prepare a brief presentation on their work and answer a series of prepared interview questions.

Final Selection: Following the Finalist interviews, the Selection Panel engaged in thoughtful discussion and provided updated scores in alignment with the published evaluation criteria for each of the Finalists. The Panel was asked to select a Primary and Alternate Artist for the opportunity. The Alternate Artist is identified as a replacement in the event the Primary Artist is not able to complete the project or their agreement with the City.

Based on the Panel's scores, the Selection Panel unanimously selected artist Deborah Aschheim as the Primary Artist for the Robinson Park Recreation Center Capital Public Art Project. The Selection Panel also selected the second-highest scoring applicant as the Alternate Artist for the project in the event a replacement of the Primary Artist is necessary.

RECOMMENDED ARTIST:

Deborah Aschheim: A Pasadena resident since 2002, and a Northwest Pasadena resident since 2018, Deborah Aschheim holds a B.A. from Brown University and a M.F.A. from the University of Washington. She has exhibited widely in major museums and galleries throughout North America and Europe over the past twenty-five years. Her work has been commissioned for various public art collections including: City of Glendale; City of Santa Monica; City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Civic Arts Commission; and the San Francisco Arts Commission, among others. She is the recipient of multiple City of Pasadena Annual Grants Program Individual Artist Awards. Her public commissions are diverse and include works for municipal buildings, fire stations, hospitals, public universities, as well as for corporate clients. Many of these pieces exemplify her exploration of community engagement and history through dynamic and collaborative projects that incorporate drawing, sculpture, installation and video.

APPROVAL PROCESS, IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE:

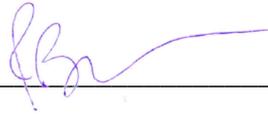
Per the Capital Public Art Program Guidelines, the Arts & Culture Commission's role is to confirm that the process for artist selection was properly implemented. The Arts & Culture Commission will ratify and confirm the Panel's recommendation by taking a formal vote.

With approval from the Arts & Culture Commission, Cultural Affairs staff will complete an artist contract with Deborah Aschheim for the Development Phase of the project. Ms. Aschheim will then conduct extensive research and community engagement, collaborate with City staff and project stakeholders to develop specific content and artistic themes which will serve as the basis for the public art concept. Ms. Aschheim's Concept Art Plan will then be presented to the Arts Commission for review and recommendation to the City Council. Following approval from City Council, Ms. Aschheim will complete an artist contract for the Implementation Phase of the project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funds for the Development Phase of the Robinson Park Recreation Center Capital Public Art Project will be appropriated to the Robinson Park Capital Public Art Fund (31021002-811400-98224).

Respectfully Submitted,



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Prepared by,



 for
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