



# City of Emeryville

CALIFORNIA

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 17, 2025  
**TO:** LaTanya Bellow, City Manager  
**FROM:** Chadrick Smalley, Community Development Director  
**SUBJECT:** **Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Emeryville Approving The Installation Of The Rotten City Cultural District Marquee Sculpture In Peladeau Park At The Intersection Of Powell And Hollis Streets**

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving the installation of a proposed sculpture for the Rotten City Cultural District (RCCD) in Peladeau Park, replacing an existing nonfunctional wind turbine and re-using an existing planter, in view at the intersection of Powell and Hollis streets, with ongoing consultation with the Public Art Committee (PAC).

### BACKGROUND

On December 19, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 23-167, authorizing the execution of a contract with ABG Art Group to implement the following scope, among other activities, with State grant funding:

“Procure, design, fabricate and install a major district installation of one of the following

- A. Art installations that identify the District (e.g. mural of District) and/or other materials
- B. Consider use of new technology or installation that offer links to other program elements, for example AI visualizations of works on various locations in the District
- C. Projectors with local art work included (installation site and projection site must be secured)
- D. QR code signage program for maker spaces that allow tours and/or additional information –installations of codes could include stencils, 3D printing and/ or virtual links to Tour”

On October 24, 2024, ABG Art group provided a schematic design for a sculpture to be installed at 4060-4062 Hollis (i.e., the Art Center site) as part of a proposal for other district branding and identification elements along Hollis Street. ABG Art Group’s proposal was shared with an interdepartmental team of staff on December 11, 2024, including Planning, City Attorney, and Public Works. No issues were raised with the proposed placemaking and art elements. On January 10, 2025, the PAC recommended to the City Council approval of the development of a final design for a sculpture to be installed at 4060-4062 Hollis (i.e., the Art Center site).

Subsequently the Art Center Advisory Group (ACAG) unanimously voted against locating the proposed sculpture at 4060-4062 Hollis and expressed strong opposition to the project. The ACAG expressed multiple reasons for its opposition including the need to focus efforts on fundraising for the site's development and to brand the site strategically for these fundraising efforts.

In response to the ACAG's objection to the RCCD sculpture at the Art Center Site, ABG and staff considered additional locations for the sculpture including City Hall, Doyle Hollis Park and Peladeau Park and further evaluated two locations in Peladeau Park. Evaluation of existing conditions and proposed enhancements at the intersection of Powell and Hollis Streets abutting Peladeau Park indicated reuse of the planter in Peladeau Park was highly desirable given a proposed redesign of the sculpture.

On March 13, 2025, the PAC recommended this site in Peladeau Park be further developed and that a conceptual design abstractly representing RCCD as fertile ground be developed into a final design for City Council approval. On May 15, 2025, the PAC recommended the final design as shown in Attachment 1 for approval by the City Council for installation in Peladeau Park, with removal of the existing windmill incorporated into the project and with the PAC consulted for future review of the sculpture's details. On May 21, 2025, staff presented the proposal to the Parks and Recreation Committee (PRC) as an information item and members were informed of the City Council future consideration of the proposal.

## **DISCUSSION**

Art in Public Places funds is not proposed for the sculpture, rather, the California Art Council's grant funding for RCCD will be used for the sculpture's commission. Because the sculpture is proposed to be located on City-owned property, the PAC is to advise the City Council on the proposed sculpture's installation.

### Location

The work is proposed for installation on an existing foundation among existing plants installed with funding from Proposition 84, a grant for development of Peladeau Park. The proposed site for the sculpture is at the far north east end of the park, visible from the Powell Hollis intersection. The location is in the southwest quadrant of the intersection where an existing slip lane from Powell Street to Hollis Street is being removed as part of the Sustainable Streets Project. The work will be located in front of Honor Kitchen and Cocktails' recently improved façade and will remove a nonfunctional wind turbine.

The wind turbine was part of a suite of environmental improvements in the park that was funded by the Proposition 84 grant. Unfortunately, the wind turbine failed to function, no warranty is available, and the manufacturer has been non-responsive to the City's requests to address the issue. Notably, the City of Alameda also removed similar wind turbines from the same manufacturer due to non-performance. Staff contacted the California Department of Parks, who administers the Proposition 84 grant program, and received confirmation that if the rest of the suite of improvements remained operational, the non-operational wind turbine may be removed and replaced with public art, enhancing

the park's use and attractiveness. The site is preferable to others evaluated for this installation due to its visibility, its central location in the District, the existing foundation, planting and irrigation, and surrounding seating and defined view corridor.

### Revised Design

In addition to the revised location, ABG Art Group received feedback from the PAC that the sculpture need not represent RCCD literally with the letters "RCCD" incorporated but may more metaphorically represent the evolution of rising from the city, with the apt moniker of Rotten City to represent a city with rich fertile ground for art and innovation. A plaque explaining the RCCD is proposed for inclusion.

As noted above, this final proposal is shown in Attachment 1. The work is rectangular at its base, five feet along its longest dimension and approximately one to two feet in depth, and 12 feet tall; with a visible seam in the middle of the sculpture. Materials are primarily concrete, with mosaic pebbles, integrated redwood and glass and steel elements as well as planter boxes on the top of the work. The mosaic will feature natural and built elements reflective of Emeryville. The inclusion of a fabricated metal tree rising from the concrete is intended to evoke growth and restoration, as are the integrated redwood elements and glass representing water. The plants are intended to literally convey growth. The sculpture embodies the RCCD tag line "rotten city to fertile ground."

ABG Art Group will further develop the design of the finishes and plantings, which are illustrated conceptually. The final finishes will be shared with the PAC prior to commission of the installation while allowing ABG Art Group the ability to proceed with fabrication and installation of the structural elements. The PAC has indicated strong satisfaction with the sculpture's design and appreciated the multimedia elements included in the sculpture to reduce the amount of concrete finished area.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed sculpture has no fiscal impact on the City; all costs will be covered by the California Art Council's funding for RCCD through the existing contract with ABG Art Group.

### **STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC**

Three committees have reviewed one or both versions of the proposed sculpture, as outlined above. The ACAG reviewed the prior proposal for the Art Center site on January 13, 2025. The PAC requested final review of the finishes and enthusiastically endorsed approval by the City Council for the Peladeau Park location on May 15, 2025, after previously endorsing the conceptual design on March 13, 2025. On May 21, 2025, the PRC raised a concern regarding potential damage to existing plants during installation and expressed a desire for the design to anticipate the coverage from existing plants and a more definite planting plan. The RCCD Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee reviewed the revised proposal on March 19, 2025, and the prior proposal from January 15, 2025.

## **CONCLUSION**

The PAC recommends the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving the installation of the RCCD sculpture in the location of the existing nonfunctional wind turbine in Peladeau Park with the PAC reviewing the final finish treatments prior to completion.

**PREPARED BY:** Chadrick Smalley, Community Development Director

## **APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE:**



---

LaTanya Bellow, City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft Resolution
  - Attachment 1 – ABG Art Group Final Proposal for the RCCD Sculpture