



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2025
TO: LaTanya Bellow, City Manager
FROM: Chadrick Smalley, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: **Public Art Committee Annual Report On Committee Goals, Principles And Accomplishments For Calendar Year 2024; And Proposed Committee Priorities For Calendar Year 2025**

RECCOMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council accept this report on the Public Art Committee's accomplishments in 2024 and proposed priorities for 2025.

COMMITTEE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

Provide input and recommendations regarding City policies, priorities and feedback related to the City's Percent for Art Ordinance (Ordinance 90-20), and related matters.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024

One of the two major goals identified for 2024 was successfully met. The restoration of Neighborhood Convergence could not proceed in 2024 due to an adjacent transportation project's timeline, as described below.

Accomplishment 1 – Priority 1:

The top priority for 2024 was initiating the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Public Art for the 40th Street Streetscape. The public art project includes:

1. Design of an icon for wayfinding signage that aligns with the theme used for sculpted, painted, and/or attached art works. This icon may incorporate a bicycle and then offer natural elements within or on the bicycle –fabrication and installation is expected to be carried out by the City as a Pilot for wayfinding Citywide.
2. Creation of a plaza installation series or reproducible sculptures with the aim of providing functional elements to the plazas.
3. Creation of an attachable element for street furniture that incorporates the theme as developed in components 1 and 2 above in no less than 12 locations along the public right of way.

The RFQ was released, qualifications reviewed, contracts for Conceptual Design proposals approved, a site tour conducted, proposals solicited from five finalists, technical review of finalist proposals completed, a Selection Panel convened, finalists

interviewed, surveys administered and analyzed, and recommendations for selection made to the PAC and the City Council.

Sijia Chen Studio was awarded the contract for all project components. Outreach and development of the icon is expected to begin in early 2025, with the other two components awaiting the full funding of the 40th Street Streetscape project so that installation can be completed concurrently.

Priority 2 – Implementation Delayed – Neighborhood Convergence

The restoration of the 11 sculptures originally installed 20 years ago under the Interstate 80 overpass at Powell Street will also include relocating the sculptures outside of the fences that currently enclose 10 of the 11 works, to increase visibility of the artwork. This work is to be commissioned concurrent with work proposed to be completed by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to improve pathways and safety features under Interstate 80. This work was delayed to at least 2025.

Additional Accomplishments:

Purchase Award

- Celebrated "Chroma #1, 2, and 4" by Erin Fong, one of two artworks purchased through the 2023 Annual Purchase Award. These pieces were installed at the Senior Center in early 2024
- Selected and purchased the 2024 Purchase Award- "Lanzón de Chavin Totem" By Roberto Gastelumendi. Installation is anticipated in early 2025 with a celebration expected in March of 2025

Bus Shelter Art

- Implemented Phase VII of the *Sharon Wilchar Bus Shelter Art Program*. The City commissioned six local artists for this phase in 2023 and installed works by Lisa Rock, Gregoire Vion, and Jess Cook in 2024
- Secured a vendor to replace bus shelter glass after Clear Channel discontinued providing this service.
- Initiated a Request for Proposals for Phase VIII, to be implemented in 2025.

"Sign of the Times" Maintenance and Restoration:

The Public Works Department repainted 30 utility boxes that were previously graffitied and damaged by wildfire smoke and ash in the signature yellow color of the "Sign of the Times" collection, and the PAC selected 30 of 45 images to be installed in 2024. This restoration was completed just in time for the 20th anniversary of the original installation, which included just seven utility boxes.

Public Works staff also added new utility boxes with the addition of traffic signals and pre-painted them for the "Sign of the Times" installation - the PAC recommended six images for the new boxes, these will be installed in 2025.

Visual Art Grants

These grants celebrate the creative contributions of local artists and highlight the City's commitment to promoting visual excellence within our community.

Eight visual artists were provided grant awards in 2024, and seven awardees' works were installed (either completely or partially) in 2024, including:

- Salma Arastu's metal sculpture in the main ballroom at the Emeryville Senior Center
- Juan Lopez' mosaic depicting a heron in a marsh with butterflies in the Senior Center Lobby
- Chris Granillo began installation of an over 200 linear foot mural across the rear façade of the EmeryTech building along the railroad tracks
- Rachel Wolfe Goldsmith's exterior mural at Fire Station 34 honoring African American Firefighters and the profession as a whole
- John Patrick Thomas' interior mural on two walls at the Emeryville Center of Community Life lobby of the aquatic and gym centers celebrating health habits in the schools
- Sean Griffin's exterior mural at San Pablo Avenue celebrating Rising Sun's mission to train people in the building trades
- Joey Rose's Green Egret exterior mural for BaySide Pyrotec on the same building as a prior work (on the opposite side) also by Joey Rose, bringing his total murals in Emeryville to at least six

The last grantee's work, with installation pending, is Packard Jennings' three functional birdhouse sculptures; expected to be installed by March 2025.

Rotten City Cultural District.

ABG Art Group was contracted for the implementation of the grant-funded Rotten City Cultural District (RCCD) programs in 2024. A member of the PAC was appointed to the RCCD Ad Hoc Committee, which is made up of the RCCD Partners. ABG Art Group presented to the PAC on two occasions. Two murals were installed at Bay Street through RCCD programs in 2024, and ABG Art Group commissioned three rotating column sculptures designed by artists that were also installed at Bay Street.

The funding for the RCCD and evaluation of the program resulted in the first ever comprehensive mapping of the entire Art in Public Places collection and other publicly accessible works of art. This collection was posted on the City's website at [Public Art Collection and Maps](#) in late 2024, with marketing to be launched in 2025 concurrent with a redesign of the City's website.

PAC Retreat/Social Media

In early 2024, the PAC met for a full day retreat. The retreat identified priorities including establishing a social media presence, which resulted in the City's first Public

Art Facebook page, with 95 followers to date, and Instagram page, with over 175 followers to date.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025

The PAC met in January 2025 to endorse the following priorities for 2025:

First Highlighted Priority - 40th Streetscape Public Art Icon

As noted above, Sijia Chen Studio was awarded the contract for all components of the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project, and outreach and development of the icon is expected to be in early 2025. The PAC will participate in paper cutting workshops for the preliminary design of iconographic imagery for the 40th Streetscape Public Art and review final designs for Council consideration for inclusion in wayfinding and other sculptural elements of the project.

Second Highlighted Priority - Neighborhood Convergence Restoration

The restoration of this work, as described above, remains a top priority for 2025.

Efforts will be undertaken for a comprehensive restoration of the sculptures, addressing both artistic elements and associated lighting, and special attention to the back side of the works, ensuring a presentation under Interstate 80 that is visible from not only the vehicle lanes but also the improved pathways, including the new north pathway, that will create new perspectives of the works for pedestrians and cyclists.

Other 2025 Identified Priorities

- Bus Shelter Phase VIII – The PAC will review the submittals for the call for artists' proposals in March or April to recommend contracts with six new artists by Summer 2025.
- Visual Arts Grants – Packard Jennings' works are to be installed, Rachel Wolfe Goldsmith's mural at FireStation 34 will be celebrated, and preparation of the call for the 2026 Visual Art Grants will commence.
- Purchase Award - In 2025, the reception for the 2024 Purchase Award and the selection of the 2025 Purchase Award will occur.
- RCCD – In 2025, the RCCD grant funds will result in streetlight banners, sculpture, art projection, and signage along Hollis Street to provide visual identity to the district, as well as many events.

CONCLUSION

The PAC has had a robust year maintaining existing programs like the Purchase Award and Bus Shelter Programs, while vastly expanding the Visual Arts Grant program and launching a major new capital project that may potentially result in as many as 35 new works being installed in a single project. Momentously, the entire public art collection was mapped, with a searchable database to find works by specific artists, media, sites

or programs. Finally, the year included the first PAC retreat and the launch of the public art program's first social media campaigns.

PREPARED BY: Amber Evans, Community and Economic Development Coordinator

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



LaTanya Bellow, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- Presentation of PAC Accomplishments in 2024 and Goals for 2025