



# City of Emeryville

CALIFORNIA

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** November 19, 2024

**TO:** Adam Politzer, Interim City Manager

**FROM:** Chadrick Smalley, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** **Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Emeryville Selecting The Proposal From Sijia Chen Of Sijia Chen Studio For The 40th Streetscape Public Art Project; Authorizing The City Manager To Execute An Agreement With Artist Sijia Chen For The Design, Fabrication And Installation Of The 40th Streetscape Public Art Project In An Amount Not To Exceed \$500,000; And Appropriating \$25,000 From The Public Art Fund (Fund 243) To The Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget For CIP Project No. COF-03**

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff, based on the recommendations of the Public Art Committee (PAC) and the Selection Panel for the 40<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Public Art Project, recommend that the City Council adopt the attached resolution selecting Sijia Chen as the artist for the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project and authorizing the City Manager to execute the Artist Agreement for Design, Fabrication, Transportation and Installation Of Art Work for the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project in an amount not to exceed \$500,000. Further, staff recommends that the City Council appropriate an additional \$25,000 from the Public Art Fund (Fund 243) to the Capital Improvement Program Budget for Project No. COF-03 to provide sufficient funding for the proposed Artist Agreement.

## BACKGROUND

The Emeryville Municipal Code establishes the Contributions for the Art in Public Places Program and the Emeryville Public Art Fund to implement the program. In 2016, the City Council approved the Emeryville Public Art Master Plan, which identifies the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project as part of several Conceptual Projects. Additionally, the City Council allocated \$500,000 in Art in Public Places funds for new public art investments, including the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project, in the 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Project Number COF-03.

Between February 1, 2024, and March 15, 2024, the City accepted submittals of qualifications via a Call for Entry for the 40th Streetscape Public Art Project. Forty-five responses were received. A Selection Panel made up of Chandra Cerrito and Sorrell Tsui (Outside Arts Professionals) Donna Briskin (Community Member), Michael Roberts (City Of Emeryville) and Vickie Jo Sowell (Public Art Committee Representative) met on March 28, 2024, to select finalists. Prior to meeting, each panelist ranked each of the 45

applications which represented geographic distribution across the western United States, a variety of media types, and racial and gender diversity of applicants.

The Selection Panel recommended the following finalists for Conceptual Design Proposal Contracts:

1. Jeanine Centuori and Russell Rock of UrbanRock Design
2. Sijia Chen of Sijia Chen Studio
3. Scott Donahue, Lesley Gasparetti, and John Roberts
4. Addie Boswell and Matt Cartwright
5. Pete Goldlust, Melanie Germond, “The Germlusts,” and Joey Enos

On April 25, 2024, the Public Art Committee (PAC) subsequently recommended the City Council award Conceptual Design Contracts to these finalists. On May 21, 2024, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 24-56, adopting the PAC’s recommendation and authorizing the execution of Conceptual Design Contracts for a total amount of \$25,000.

## **DISCUSSION**

On August 1, 2024, each finalist team submitted a draft conceptual proposal design for technical review. These were reviewed and comments provided by Public Works and Community Development staff and the landscape architect for the 40th Street Multimodal Improvement Project. Finalist teams then submitted final proposals and display boards highlighting the proposals’ features on August 22, 2024. On August 27, 2024, the Selection Panel interviewed each team, asked standardized questions and follow-ups, and then made recommendations for the PAC’s consideration

An online and print survey to solicit public opinion on the finalist’s proposals was opened on August 26, 2024, and closed September 11, 2024, with a total of 73 surveys received. About 30 responses were completed in print format and received at the Rotten City Cultural District (RCCD) Block Party held at Bay Street on August 24 and 25, 2024, and approximately 40 responses were received online. At the close of the survey 60% of respondents supported the proposal by Pete Goldlust’s team, and 24% supported Sijia Chen’s proposal. The remaining three artists received 8% or less, each.

On August 27, 2024, and following interviews and review of the submitted proposals, the Selection Panel voted to recommend Sijia Chen for the project, with two other artists being nominated for selection but failing to capture a second vote (the Scott Donahue team and Pete Goldlust team). On September 12, 2024, after receiving an overview of the five proposals by staff, the Selection Panel’s recommendation, a summary of survey results, and four public comments submitted in support of Pete Goldlust’s team’s proposal, the PAC voted six members for, one against, and one abstaining to recommend the City Council select Sijia Chen for the 40<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Public Art Project, after robust deliberation. The motion approved by the PAC also stipulated that all finalist proposals be shared with the City Council, to inform its consideration of contracting with Sijia Chen

or a competing artist. Consistent with the PAC's motion, a compilation of the finalist's proposals is attached to this report as Attachment 1.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed Artist Agreement is for \$500,000. The existing CIP budget allocation for the 40<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Public Art Project is \$500,000, from which \$25,000 has been expended for Conceptual Design Proposals. An appropriation of \$25,000 from the Public Art Fund (Fund 243), which has sufficient reserves for this appropriation, is required to fully fund the Artist Agreement for the Project.

## **STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC**

The PAC discussed prospective awardees on April 25, 2024, and September 12, 2024, at public meetings and made the recommendations as described above. The finalists' proposals were displayed on boards at City Hall from August 22, 2024, to October 31, 2024, and the public invited to respond to surveys on preferences for the concept designs from August 24, 2024 to September 11, 2024. The boards were also displayed at the RCCD Block Party and the public engaged in conversation and were asked to complete surveys. The public will also be afforded opportunities to comment on the project through the selected artist's engagement process.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the PAC and Selection Panel's recommendation of Sijia Chen of Sijia Chen Studio for the design, outreach, fabrication and installation of the 40<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Public Art Project.

**PREPARED BY:** Amber Evans, Community and Economic Development Coordinator II

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



---

Adam Politzer Interim City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Attachment 1 - Finalist Artist Proposals
- Draft Resolution, including Exhibit A: Artist Agreement for Design, Fabrication, Transportation and Installation for the 40<sup>th</sup> Streetscape Public Art Project