



## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: INFORMATION REPORTS**

**Lead Department: Community Services**

**Meeting Date: June 17, 2024**

Report #:2405-3036

### **TITLE**

Informational Report on the Public Art Commission Presentation to Policy & Services Committee May 14, 2024

### **RECOMMENDATION**

This is an informational report, and no action is being requested.

### **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

The City Council discussed and approved the restoration of the Public Art Commission from five to seven members at the December 4, 2023 City Council meeting. As part of the motion, the Council also referred to Policy and Services Committee to review with the Public Art Commission the respective role of the Public Art Commission staff, stakeholders, and the Council in public art decisions in relation to placement and themes of art.

Public Art Manager, Elise DeMarzo, along with Public Art Commission Vice-Chair, Hsinya Shen, attended the Policy and Services Committee Meeting on May 14, 2024. Together they presented an overview of the Public Art commissioning process for three main categories: Municipal Percent for Art Projects, Private Percent for Art Projects, and Temporary Public Art Projects. Staff also outlined the comprehensive stakeholder involvement in project and artist selection and discussed the respective roles of the Public Art Commission, staff, stakeholders, and the Council in public art decisions in relation to placement and themes of art in Palo Alto. The discussion was the first item on the May 14, 2024 meeting agenda, and the Staff Report<sup>1</sup> is available online and included as Attachment A.

The presentation highlighted the opportunities for City Council involvement and reviewed the Municipal Code which assigns decision-making on matters related to Public Art to staff and the Public Art Commission. This ensures that decisions, including artist selections of artists, art works,

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<sup>1</sup> Policy and Services Committee, May 14, 2024; Item 1:

<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=2f649ec3-541e-4935-8ee4-7d3565b63ba7>

and locations are made by professionals with expertise in public art. Staff shared that Section 2.26.060<sup>2</sup> of the Municipal Code outlines the role of the City Council in the review of artistic matters in the visual art in public places program and implicitly states that the City Council can agendaize an artistic matter for discussion should it determine necessary.

No changes were recommended by the Committee, however further discussion items included clarification about the stakeholder and neighborhood outreach in the deaccession process, the criteria selection panelists are given to score artist applications for a given project, the importance of considering the past and the future of a given site when considering public art, and the inclusion of neighborhood association and youth representatives in selection panels. There was additional discussion regarding the diversity of selection panelists to ensure that a more diverse group of artists are selected for commissions.

### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

There are no fiscal impacts associated with this informational report.

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Extensive stakeholder engagement went into the development of the Public Art Master Plan, the California Avenue District Plan, and the Baylands Art Overlay. Each public art installation begins with community engagement to determine potential locations and types of artwork to be considered and influences the design development process for each artwork.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This report is for informational purposes only with no action required by the Council and therefore not a project subject to CEQA review.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: P&S Committee May 14, 2024 Staff Report (Item 1)

### **APPROVED BY:**

Kristen O'Kane, Community Services Director

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<sup>2</sup> Municipal Code outlining City Council Review of Artistic Matters:  
[https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/paloalto/latest/paloalto\\_ca/0-0-0-61497#JD\\_2.26.070](https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/paloalto/latest/paloalto_ca/0-0-0-61497#JD_2.26.070)