

City of Oakland
Public Art Advisory Committee
(PAAC)
Minutes
August 4, 2014

Members Present: Judy Moran (co-chair), Bryan Cain, Kevin Chen (co-chair), Allison Cummings, Nick Dong, Joyce Hsu, Evelyn Orantes
Excused: Cece Carpio, Joyce Gordon
Absent:
Staff Present: Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager; Kristen Zaremba, Senior Public Art Project Manager
Guests: Ain Bailey, Savlan Hauser, Casey Farmer, Rachel Flynn, Nick Gomez, Mitchell Halberstadt, Dylan Hamilton, Amana Harris / Attitudinal Healing Connection Artist Team Representatives, Steve Jones, Steve Lowe, Joe Sorquist

*Indicates partial meeting attendance

Meeting Chair: K. Chen

1. Meeting called to order at 5:36 p.m.
2. **Open Forum.**
3. **Minutes: J. Moran moved to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2014 PAAC Meeting. J. Hsu seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
4. **Action Item: M. Robinson Baker YMCA Mural Proposal by Attitudinal Healing Connection and Neighborhood Services (City Council Anti-Graffiti Murals and Green Walls Program).** Cultural Arts Manager Steven Huss introduced the project, a joint initiative between The Neighborhood Services Division, Attitudinal Healing Connection (AHC) and the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program. Anti-Graffiti Murals and Green Walls Program funding for the project was approved at the July 29, 2014 City Council meeting. The proposed 18' by 24' long mural will be painted on plywood and mounted on the exterior of the YMCA located on Market Street in West Oakland. Amana Harris (AHC) described the project scope and clarified budget details. Art project team leaders provided background on the mural design and youth engagement process conducted during a series of Friday night community events, to develop the composition visually reflecting community growth and healthy lifestyles. The project is scheduled for completion in late August. **Motion: J. Moran moved to approve the M. Robinson Baker YMCA Mural Proposal by Attitudinal Healing Connection and Neighborhood Services. E. Orantes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**
5. **Informational Item: Status of Active and Pending Community Mural Projects Supported with Cultural Funding Program Grants and City Council Anti-Graffiti Grants:** S. Huss reported on the status of other ongoing and upcoming mural proposals. Senior Public Art Project Manager Kristen Zaremba presented images of the Alice Street mural project in progress and noted that the three wall designs reviewed and approved by PAAC in July would be completed shortly.
6. **Informational Item: Project Updates: Staff updates on pending and completed projects.**
 - A. **Measure DD: 12th Street Bridge Underpass Public Art Project:** K. Zaremba shared images of the sculpture installation in progress and reported that installation of Phase One - the light sculptures - is nearing completion. The artist team will continue to fabricate and install the

Phase Two sculptural elements through August in preparation for the Love Our Lake Day event on September 14. More details will follow at the next PAAC meeting.

7. **Action Item: Public Hearing, Discussion and Vote On Status and Conditions of the I-880/Broadway Underpass Public Art Project and Committee's Position with Regard to Potential Alterations, Modifications or Development of the Project.** S. Huss provided contextual background from the staff report for the I-880/Broadway Underpass Public Art Project by the Team of Five, and reintroduced lead artist Nick Gomez and artist team member Steve Jones. Program staff request that PAAC discuss and provide direction on next steps to address the project's current conditions. Artist team members Nick Gomez and Steve Jones summarized the original project challenges and proposal design goals to address the space in the underpass as a 'room' with augmented dynamic lighting and light-reflective 'walls' made from the guardrail material and undulating sidewalks, and reiterated that some specific components of the original design were ultimately eliminated from the project due to City and Caltrans regulations, as well as budget limitations.

Casey Farmer, staff representative for District 3 City Councilmember McElhaney, provided additional background on City Council efforts to address the current conditions in the underpass and feedback collected at the April 30 Town Hall meeting previously discussed. Farmer noted ongoing safety and blight concerns due to lack of City resources to make changes or improvements, and expressed support for de-accessioning the existing artwork from the Civic Art Collection.

Savlan Hauser, Jack London Improvement District (JLID) Executive Director, reported efforts made to-date by their organization to monitor the site via their ambassador program and asserted their community group's desire to explore ways to treat the artwork as an 'existing condition' as part of a redesign of the area prior to considering removal of the artwork. Hauser noted that in an on-line survey conducted by the organization to solicit input from the community, of 35 respondents, only two indicated they felt the artwork was the cause of problems there. She highlighted ongoing maintenance, signage, lighting and pedestrian and bicyclists' safety as respondents' priority concerns.

Ain Bailey, City staff representative for Project Implementation, provided background on her research to date regarding City Public Works department efforts to improve the site conditions, including scheduled but intermittent cleaning and additional lighting. Bailey noted that Public Works has identified the site as a high priority and encouraged members of the public to identify problems using the City's "See-Click-Fix" reporting mechanism to elevate the project to a 'Hot Spot' status for ongoing maintenance. She also confirmed ongoing challenges in communications with Caltrans regarding cleaning of the adjacent lots and pigeon roosting on the support columns behind the artwork, reasserting that the pigeon droppings are considered a health hazard that must be addressed by specially trained hazardous material mitigation staff. Bailey stated that she will continue to research possible pigeon mitigation options and non-functioning lighting replacement.

Community members in attendance, Steve Lowe, Mitchell Halberstadt, and Joe Sorquist provided public comment to express their concerns about the ongoing conditions in the space, frustration with the lack of broad visioning and planning efforts for the area, the minimal involvement of Caltrans and the limited City resources and political will to address the problems, stating that the Broadway underpass is only one of many equally neglected highway underpasses leading to Jack London Square and throughout the city. They provided additional suggestions for creative lighting improvements which might enhance or replace the non-functioning art lighting and suggested that

the artist team should be re-engaged to research and provide alternative design modifications.

Rachel Flynn, Acting Director of Economic and Workforce Development and Cultural Arts and Marketing, expressed appreciation for the efforts of City staff, the PAAC and community representatives to address the existing problems at the site. Flynn asserted that the goals moving forward for this area are to create a safe, beautiful and clean environment with enhanced lighting. She stated that the City, PAAC and community should work toward a vision for the site first, and identify funding once a workable proposal is available, noting financial resources could come from the City, Caltrans, community and local developers investing in the area. This visioning process should include consideration for all proposed options for the current artwork installation, including conservation, modification or deaccessioning.

PAAC members discussed the current challenges for the existing artwork, noting the ongoing lack of maintenance has clearly exacerbated conditions in the space, regardless of the artwork's presence. They expressed concern with their charge to produce solutions for a long-term problem which requires engaged involvement from multiple City departments and public agencies and stated that their role is only to consider how the artwork should be treated and to review any proposals for modifications to the existing work or for new installations. PAAC members, including some who are residents in the Jack London area and regular visitors to the site, stated that the public's perception of the artwork is unjustly influenced by its current condition, and expressed reluctance to consider deaccessioning the work and expending funds to remove it without first addressing the lack of maintenance and attempting to improve those conditions. Of greatest concern is the health hazard caused by the pigeons, which are a fixture at many underpasses that are on Caltrans property but maintained by the City. They further stressed that the artist team should be involved in any potential redesign or modification to the project, and should be compensated for the design services. S. Huss confirmed that the artist team is not currently under contract, that Nick Gomez, as the lead artist, was the only one of the team who signed the original design contract, and there are no public art funds currently dedicated to this project. Program staff and committee members concurred that it was difficult to provide direction or determine next steps without any confirmed funding or commitments from other departments for future maintenance and requested that the City provide leadership to aid in addressing the site problems.

Motion: J. Moran moved to extend the meeting 15 minutes. B. Cain seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee members further discussed the challenges for the project and expressed their appreciation again for the artist's attendance and continued engagement in the discussions, and requested staff to explore how much mitigation work could be accomplished prior to considering a suggestion to significantly modify or deaccession the artwork.

Motion: J. Moran moved to support City staff efforts to work with the appropriate City and State agencies to explore short-term solutions to address health and safety concerns, including pigeon mitigation and improved lighting at the location of the I-880 / Broadway Underpass Public Art Project, pending identification of funding for these measures, and to explore long-term maintenance plans and possible design revisions, which are amenable to and with input from the artist team, prior to taking final action to substantially modify or remove the I-880 / Broadway Underpass Public Art Project. E. Orantes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- 8. Announcements:** None.
- 9. Agenda Building:** Private Percent for Art Ordinance.
- 10. Adjournment:** J. Moran moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. E. Orantes seconded. Motion passed unanimously.