



# Cultural Arts Programs

## *Cultural Arts & Marketing Division*

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TO: Public Art Advisory Committee  
ATTN: Judy Moran and Andrew Woodd, Co-chairs  
FROM: Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager  
DATE: December 3, 2012  
RE: Approve Finalist List for Cesar Chavez Park Improvements Public Art Project and Authorize Community Selection Panel to Make Final Selection of Project Artist At Phase II Panel (Interviews)

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### **SUMMARY**

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) accept the community-based selection panel's unanimous recommendation of Lynne-Rachel Altman, the Mural Music & Arts Project, and Colette Crutcher as the artist finalists eligible to receive the commission to create exterior artworks in conjunction with the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements project. With PAAC pre-approval, the panel will select one artist or team from the finalist group to receive the project commission at the Phase II (artist interview) panel meeting scheduled for December 4. The panel further recommends that EastSide Mosaics (team of Susanne Takehara and Xochitl Guerrero) serve as the alternate for the project.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

In 2011, the Public Art Program issued a Request for Qualifications for a pre-qualified artist pool, inviting practicing professional artists and artist teams living or working in the Bay Area (defined as the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma) to submit their qualifications to be considered for various projects. The City received 152 applications to the artist pool. Staff reviewed all applications and forwarded the 129 eligible applications to the selection panel. The panel reviewed the eligible applications on September 30, 2011, and recommended 72 artists for the pre-qualified pool.

For the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements Public Art Project, staff culled from the pre-qualified pool a short list of 11 eligible artists to be reviewed and interviewed by a selection panel of community representatives. A community-based selection panel met on November 1, 2012, in the offices of The Unity Council, 1900 Fruitvale Avenue, Oakland, to review credentials of the 11 artists on the short list, and recommended three finalists to be interviewed, as well as two alternates.

The panelist's finalist recommendations are:

1. Lynne-Rachel Altman (Oakland)
2. Sonya Clark-Herrera and the Mural Music & Arts Project (East Palo Alto)
3. Colette Crutcher (San Francisco)

As the alternates, the panel recommended:

1. Susanne Takehara and Xochitl Guerrero / EastSide Mosaics (Oakland)
2. Emmanuel Montoya (Berkeley)



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City staff and the project landscape architects provided an on-site orientation to the three finalists and the first alternate on November 19. Pending authority granted from the PAAC, the selection panel will reconvene in early December to interview the finalists before reaching a final decision on the artist/team to receive the project commission.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds reserved for the public art project in conjunction with the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements project are in an amount not to exceed \$60,000. The budget is derived from the 1.5% allocation for public art from State of California Proposition 84 Grant Funds. The Prop. 84 grant funding agreement with the City of Oakland stipulates that the project must include public art, and specifically requires youth involvement in the selection of the public artist and artwork.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **The Project and the Artist Opportunity**

Cesar Chavez Park, located at Foothill Boulevard and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Oakland's Fruitvale District, will be improved with a newly emphasized secondary entrance to be located on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and other improvements to landscaping, play areas, a sport court, seating, and community gardens. The public art project will include a treatment to the park's new entry plaza at 38<sup>th</sup>, and possibly other locations, including a raised platform that will serve as a stage and performance area, and the entrance to the community gardens.

A Bay Area artist or artist team selected from the panel's list of finalists will engage youth from the surrounding community in the development of a concept for public art for the improved park. The qualified applicant will have demonstrated experience with, or a working knowledge of, ceramic tile, metalwork, or other medium appropriate for permanent exterior applications, and will have demonstrated experience engaging youth in the development of public art projects.

At this time, renovation of Cesar Chavez Park is scheduled to be completed in early 2013. The public art project must be completed toward the end of the park's renovation construction schedule. Staff notes that this schedule is extremely challenging, and will require that the selected artist/team be available to commence work immediately upon execution of the public art contract with the City, and be available to work on the project continuously through completion. This information has been conveyed to all artists under consideration.

#### **Process Review**

For the 2011 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool, the Public Art Program released a Request for Qualifications seeking qualified local artists. The selection panel met in September 2011 and selected 72 artists from the eligible pool of 129 for inclusion in the pre-qualified pool. Voting members of the pool selection panel were local arts and community representatives Kevin Chen, Program Director, Intersection for the Arts, and PAAC member; Amana Johnson, Oakland-based public artist; and Amy Stimmel, Public Art Coordinator, Alameda County Arts Commission. The panel was facilitated by Public Art Program staffers Steven Huss and Kristen Zarembo.



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For the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements Project, Public Art staff developed a short list of 11 qualified artist candidates from the 2011 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool. On November 1, 2012, a community-based selection panel chose up to four finalists from the short list, based on a review of the artists' qualifications and their appropriateness for the project. Pending PAAC approval of the panelists' list of finalists as eligible to receive the commission, the community-based panel will meet again in early December to interview the finalists and will select one artist or team to receive the commission.

Voting members of the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements public art project community-based selection panel are community representatives Ricardo Fuentes, a youth representative, college student in the arts, and member of the AmeriCorps team with The Unity Council, and Mirian Obermeyer, park steward and neighbor of Cesar Chavez Park; as well as Hai-Ping Mo, landscape architect with the firm Dillingham Associates, the landscape architects on the park improvements project. The selection panel was advised by construction project manager Denise Louie and facilitated by Cultural Arts Manager Steven Huss. The project team has requested empanelling an additional youth representative, in the middle- to high-school age range, from the Fruitvale neighborhood, to join the panel for the interview phase; recruitment of this second youth representative is proceeding with assistance from The Unity Council.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) accept the selection panel's recommendation of Lynne-Rachel Altman, the Mural Music & Arts Project, and Colette Crutcher as eligible to receive the commission for the Cesar Chavez Park Improvements Public Art Project, and further recommends that the PAAC grant the panel authority to determine, with Public Art staff guidance, which artist or team from this preapproved list of finalists will receive the project commission. The selection panel further recommends EastSide Mosaics (team of Susanne Takehara and Xochitl Guerrero) as the alternate(s) for the project.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Huss, Cultural Arts Manager