



Cultural Arts & Marketing
Department of Economic and Workforce Development

TO: Public Art Advisory Committee
ATTN: Judy Moran and Kevin Chen, Co-chairs
FROM: Kristen Zarembo, Senior Public Art Project Manager
DATE: March 2, 2015
RE: MacArthur Gateway Arches – Public Art Project (Phase Two) Artist Recommendation

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) accept the selection panel's recommendation of Vickie Jo Sowell as the selected artist for the MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project.

SELECTION PROCESS

In 2011, the Public Art Program issued a Request for Qualifications for a pre-qualified artist pool. Practicing, professional artists or artist teams living or working in the Northern California Bay Area region, defined as the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma, were eligible to submit their qualifications for the opportunity to be considered for possible commission for various projects.

The City received a total of 152 applications to the artist pool. Staff reviewed all applications and forwarded the 129 eligible applications to the selection panel. The panel met to review applications on September 30, 2011, in Hearing Room 3 of Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza. Criteria for the selection of artists are found in the Oakland 2011 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The panel recommended 72 finalists.

For the MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project, a short list of fourteen eligible artists with experience working in suitable materials (architectural metal) was developed to be reviewed and interviewed by a panel of City and community representatives.

The panel selected the following finalists to be interviewed prior to making a final recommendation:

- 1) Eric Powell (Berkeley)
- 2) Vickie Jo Sowell (Emeryville)
- 3) Jill Turman (Oakland)

Prior to being interviewed, the finalists attended a site visit meeting on December 17, 2014 to become familiar with aspects of the project and meet City representatives. The selection panel met a second time on February 18, 2015 to interview the three finalists before reaching their final recommendation to award the commission to Vickie Jo Sowell.



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FISCAL IMPACT

The MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project is funded through City of Oakland percent for art funds (per Ordinance Number 11066 C.M.S). Once approved by the PAAC, the selected artist will be contracted for design development, fabrication and installation of the final artwork in an amount up to one hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$185,000).

BACKGROUND

Artist Opportunity

The Oakland Public Art Program agreed to commission an artist to enhance two gateway arches planned for the MacArthur Streetscape improvements implemented at multiple commercial nodes along MacArthur Avenue in East Oakland. The selected artist is required to have demonstrated experience working with architectural metal and with a large-scale budget.

The project locations are on MacArthur Boulevard at 73rd Avenue, adjacent to the Eastmont Mall (District 6), and at Durant Street (Oakland / San Leandro border), three blocks from the newly renovated Foothill Square shopping center (District 7).

Artists were asked to develop preliminary concepts and to consider how they would approach working with the communities in the two districts to develop their final designs. Opportunities for the integration of public art on the archways include:

- 1) Metal, and/or metal and integrated tile, applied to the metal archway structures;
- 2) Metal, tile, mosaic or painted treatments to the pedestal bases;
- 3) Optional integrated or enhanced lighting elements to complement the archways.

PROCESS REVIEW

For the MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project, the Public Art Program pre-selected a short list of qualified artist candidates from the 2011 Oakland Pre-Qualified Artist Pool.

For the 2011 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool, the City released a Request for Qualifications seeking local qualified artists. The selection panel met on September 30, 2011. They recommended 72 finalists from the eligible pool of 129 applicants for inclusion in the pre-qualified pool.

Voting members of the pre-qualified artist pool selection panel were local arts and community representatives Kevin Chen, Program Director, Intersection for the Arts and Public Art Advisory Committee member; Joyce Gordon, Joyce Gordon Gallery owner and Cultural Affairs Commission representative; Amana Johnson, Oakland-based public artist; and Amy Stimmel, Alameda County Public Art Coordinator. The panel was facilitated by Public Art Program staffers Steven Huss and Kristen Zarembo.

For the MacArthur Gateway Arches Phase One artist selection, a community-based selection panel met on December 2, 2014 in Hearing Room 4 of City Hall to review artists' credentials from the eligible pool of fourteen applicants and recommended four finalists for interviews. The recommended finalists include Eric Powell, Vickie Jo Sowell and Jill Turman. The fourth finalist



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team, Amy Trachtenberg and Jeffrey Miller, elected not to be considered for the project due to prior commitments. The selection panel met again on February 18, 2015 to interview the three finalists and to review their preliminary concept proposals. They reached a unanimous recommendation after careful consideration and discussion of the merits of each presentation.

Voting members of the MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project selection panel were community representatives Tamala Barnes (District 8), Jean Blackshear (District 8), Gloria Jeffery (District 8), Matthew Kowalski (District 6), Kheven LaGrone (Public Works staff and previous resident of District 6), Pat Mossburg (District 8 Councilmember’s representative), Cottrell Smith (District 6) and Chiquita Tuttle (District 6). The panel was facilitated by Senior Public Art Project Manager Kristen Zaremba.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) accept the selection panel’s recommendation of Vickie Jo Sowell as the selected artist for the MacArthur Gateway Arches Public Art Project.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Zaremba, Senior Public Art Project Manager