



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-527, **Version:** 1

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Staff Report for a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Consulting Services Agreement for \$80,000 Between the City of San Leandro and Athen B. Gallery for the Curation, Installation and Maintenance of Four Murals within the City of San Leandro

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution to approve a Consulting Services Agreement in the amount of \$80,000 with Athen B. Gallery for the curation, installation and maintenance of murals (three on private property, and one on public property) located in San Leandro (1605 Abram Court, 15000 Farnsworth Avenue, 1800 Merced Street, Downtown San Leandro BART Station).

### **BACKGROUND**

With the loss of Redevelopment Agency funding to acquire parcels and provide funding assistance to catalyst projects, the City began investing in art as an alternative method of placemaking. In 2014, two murals were installed: Rigo 23's *The Great Migration of the Monarch Butterfly* at W. Estudillo Avenue and San Leandro Boulevard, and Preferred Freezer's *Pulse of Nature*, adjacent to the BART tracks near San Leandro Boulevard and Polar Way. In 2015, the City launched a pilot utility box art program. Building upon these successes, in 2015, the utility box art initiative was expanded, new street banners were designed and installed on Davis and East 14<sup>th</sup> Street and the City partnered with the Exploratorium in the development and installation of the interactive musical exhibit *Chime Way* in Joaquin Plaza. The public's response to the City's art initiatives has been positive.

The City recently became aware of the opportunity to build the City's mural arts program and continue our efforts to increase vibrancy and City culture. The goals of the mural arts program are to beautify and revitalize areas throughout the City, create a sense of place, deter graffiti, and provide opportunities for cultural and artistic expression.

Public art can be a catalyst for economic development, showing that a community is thriving economically and encouraging additional investment. Due to its size, mural art is a very impactful medium for public art, garnering significant visibility and attention. Many mural programs, such as the Philadelphia Mural Art Program, have found that murals increase leasing, visibility, foot traffic, and publicity.

Many mural arts programs have been built on the principle that, in addition to beautification and economic revitalization, murals deter the nuisance of graffiti vandalism. Mural art replaces large, blank spaces with art, eliminating space for graffiti vandals to leave their marks. Furthermore, numerous mural artists are well-respected in graffiti art communities, and discourage vandalism based on their reputation alone.

Impactful mural art also fosters a unique identity for its host city. Many cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, have amassed enough interest in their public art to establish their public art collection as a viable tourist attraction. Mural art is able to accomplish something very challenging: it celebrates community, history, and heritage in a tangible, lasting fashion that is available to all and contributes to the well-being of the community it represents.

## **Analysis**

In January, 2016, Business Development staff began a conversation with Sorell Tsui, Director of Athen B. Gallery, regarding the possibility of partnering for a mural art program in the City of San Leandro. Mr. Tsui generated a list of international, regional, and local artists from his impressive network of high caliber well reputed artists in the mural arts community.

The proposed mural arts program consists of two components. The first component involves the installation of three murals in impactful, highly visible, privately owned locations. From a pool of 17 locations, the following appear to staff to meet the standards:

- 1605 Abram Court (visible from I-880 Marina Exit)

Artist selected: Pastel (Francisco Diaz)

- 15000 Farnsworth Avenue (88 Market in the Washington Manor Neighborhood)

Artist selected: Kelly Ording

- 1800 Merced Street (wall adjacent to Williams Street)

Artist selected: Troy Lovegates

Staff met with the property owners to discuss and negotiate the terms of the project. The owners selected an artist for their location from the pool of accomplished artists created by staff and Athen B. Gallery. Funding was allotted via the existing budget for the Façade Improvement Program in the amount of \$55,000 for the three murals.

A fourth mural is proposed for installation on the sub-station building at the Downtown San Leandro BART station. The selection of an artist for this mural will be established via public process, beginning with a call for artists issued by Athen B. Gallery. Upon completion of the call for artists, City staff will work with BART staff and the consultant to select several finalists. The Arts Commission will be asked to comment on the select finalists. The selected finalist will be invited to a public meeting, along with City and BART staff, the consultant, members of the Arts Commission and the public. The purpose of this meeting is to facilitate a dialogue between the artist and members of the community, and to help establish a unified vision for the artwork that will represent the identity of the community. Further Façade Improvement funding in the amount of \$25,000 is earmarked for this mural.

Athen B. Gallery's services under the Consulting Services Agreement will include the coordination and installation of the murals at the four locations, as well as maintenance and repair of the murals for a period of five years. As part of its coordination of the project, Athen B. Gallery will execute

independent agreements with each of the four property owners, as well as each of the artists for the installation and maintenance of the murals in keeping with the terms outlined in the consulting services agreement. The agreements include various measures to protect the City's investment, including procedures for repair, change of tenants and sale of property.

### **Applicable General Plan Policies**

- 44.06 PUBLIC ART. Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should reflect and express the diversity of the City.

### **Board/Commission Review and Actions**

- The mural arts program was presented to the Arts Commission on July 13, 2016 at which point it received the Commission's unanimous support.

### **Summary of Public Outreach Efforts**

- Staff will host a meeting with the selected artist, BART staff, members of the Arts Commission, and members of the public prior to final design process for the BART location

### **Legal Analysis**

The agreement was reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and approved as to form.

### **Fiscal Impacts and Budget Authority**

This Mural Art Program will utilize \$80,000 of existing appropriation from the Façade Improvement Program (Account 010-41-003-5890), with no fiscal impact. The Resolution also authorizes change orders up to no more than \$20,000 above the original contract amount.

### **ATTACHMENT**

#### **Attachment to Related Legislative File**

- Consulting Services Agreement with Athen B. Gallery for the Curation, Installation, and Maintenance of Four Murals in San Leandro

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