



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

City of Palo Alto Staff Report to Public Art Commission

Meeting Date: March 21, 2024

RE: Agenda Item 4 - Approval of project artist for a new temporary mural to be painted at the Cubberley Campus at the intersection of the U and H wings facing Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Public Art Commission (PAC) approve the artist to create a conceptual design and paint a temporary mural onsite of the Cubberley Community Center, at the intersection of the U and H wings, located at 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA.

Analysis:

In February 2024 the Public Art Commission approved finding in the amount of \$12,000 from the Art in Public Places Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Fund to commission a temporary mural to be painted at the Cubberley campus, guided by the PAC 2024/25 working priorities to expand the temporary murals program to Palo Alto neighborhoods and commercial corridors. The mural will be painted at the intersection of the U and H wings facing Middlefield Road will have high visibility and be experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and drivers entering the campus. See PAC Staff Report #2402-2628¹ for more information.

Staff utilized the pre-approved Muralist Roster² of 218 artists to initiate an artist selection process and reached out to 62 artists appropriate for the commission who may be interested in creating a site-specific mural for Cubberley. Given the variety of dynamic programming and community partners based at Cubberley campus, including numerous non-profit organizations and groups that provide services to the community in areas of education, health, childcare, dance, and music instruction, as well as the Cubberley Artists Studio Program with twenty-four artists, when identifying a short list of artists for the Cubberley mural commission opportunity, the staff gave priority to those artists on the muralist roster who reside in the larger San Francisco Bay Area and have demonstrated experience in community engagement. It is anticipated that the selected artist will engage with the Cubberley stakeholders and local community members to help inform the conceptual design for the Cubberley mural.

Staff assembled a selection panel of community stakeholders to evaluate and rank applicants according to their qualifications. The selection panel included Chris Beszylko, Head of Imagination Lab School;

1. PAC Staff Report for Cubberley Mural Funding; February 15, 2024

<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/Meeting?meetingTemplateId=14711>

² PAP Muralist Roster: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/files/assets/public/v/5/community-services/public-art-program/palo-alto-mural-artist-roster.pdf>

Neha Billing, Program Assistant at Cubberley Community Center, City of Palo Alto; Daphne Chao, Acme Education Group; Richard Hoffman, Artist; Hsinya Shen, Public Art Commission Chair; Jennifer Lee, Palo Alto resident & cultural worker; and Tracy McCloud, Center Director, Avenidas.

After the initial round of online evaluation process by the panel, 23 artist applications advanced to the second panel review meeting to select a finalist based on their demonstrated artistic excellence and skillset provided in the samples of previously completed murals. The selected artist will be provided with the Palo Alto Master Plan and input from the community stakeholders as part of their design brief to inform their design development. A finalized conceptual design will be presented to the Public Art Commission for approval before the painting onsite may begin.

Timeline, Resource Impact, and Policy Implications:

The selected artist will enter a professional services agreement with the City to create an original site-specific conceptual design and paint the mural in Spring 2024. The mural is anticipated to be painted in early Summer 2024. The mural will be temporary in nature due to the aging nature of the campus and any potential need for maintenance or upgrades done on the premises. Staff has a muralist consultant to advise them as to the best surface preparation and types of paint appropriate for the project. The mural will be funded through the City's Art in Public Places CIP fund.

The City of Palo Alto Public Art Program operates in accordance with Chapter 2.26 Visual Art in Public Places Policy of Palo Alto Municipal Code. The [Municipal Percent for Art Policy](#) specifies that the City will budget one percent (1%) of its construction costs to include public art for City capital improvement projects that have a visual impact on the surrounding environment by altering a site through new construction or reconstruction, at the initial stages of design, thereby ensuring that art elements become an integral part of the overall design. In 2015, in order to strengthen its ongoing commitment to the City's municipal public art program, the Palo Alto Council amended the Palo Alto Municipal Code to add Section 2.26.070 "[Public Art for Municipal Projects](#)" to Chapter 2.26 (Visual Art in Public Places). The Ordinance enhanced the funds available for public art and increased flexibility to provide art experiences that are timely and relevant throughout the community. According to the Ordinance, one percent (1%) of the City's annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget devoted to public art is deposited into the Public Art Fund. Funds may be used at any appropriate site within Palo Alto for permanent or temporary public art projects. Additionally, funds from two or more CIP projects may be pooled to fund a single work of art.