



Civic Arts Commission

INFORMATION CALENDAR
July 28, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Civic Arts Commission
Submitted by: Peter Montgomery, Chairperson, Civic Arts Commission
Subject: Civic Arts Commission FY27 Work Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Civic Arts Commission has updated their work plan, which outlines Commission objectives for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) based upon goals articulated in the *City of Berkeley Arts & Culture Plan (2018 - 2027 Update)*¹ and reflective of previously initiated projects that are under way. This work plan includes a variety of objectives in three civic arts areas: Grants, Policy, and Public Art.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

At its regular meeting on June 24, 2026, the Civic Arts Commission approved the final FY27 Civic Arts Commission Work Plan, which is used to guide the Commission's work throughout the year.

Action Item: Civic Arts Commission FY27 Work Plan

M/S/C (Montgomery/ Woo) to approve the Civic Arts Commission FY27 Work Plan

Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Kramer, Montgomery, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Pineda (LoA), Scott.

Public Comment: 0

BACKGROUND

See attached work plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no environmental sustainability or climate impacts identified as a result of this plan.

¹ <https://dev.berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/OED%20Arts%20and%20Culture%20Plan%20Update.pdf>

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Based on Commission research, public meetings, new initiatives, other additional recommendations to City Council may be submitted to City Council at such time deemed necessary.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

No fiscal impacts determined at this time.

CONTACT PERSON

Carianna Arredondo, Commission Secretary, Civic Arts Commission, (510) 981-7007

Attachment: 1: FY27 Civic Arts Commission Work Plan



Civic Arts Commission

Civic Arts Commission FY27 Work Plan (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)

Approved at 6/24/2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting

Grants Subcommittee

1. Advocate to Council for the sustaining and growth of the Civic Arts grant funding allocation.
2. Review and develop Civic Arts guidelines for Arts Programs, Community Festivals, General Operating Support, and Individual Artist Projects grant categories for the FY28 grant cycle with Civic Arts staff; make final guidelines recommendations to Civic Arts Commission.
3. Review funding scenarios for grant awards based on scores, number of applicants, and available funding; make final grant funding recommendations to Civic Arts Commission.
4. Prepare for and monitor the proposed Berkeley arts ballot measure that will impact Civic Arts grants funding and staff operations.

Policy Subcommittee

1. Event Producer Policy Recommendations

Ensure that the Event Producer Policy Recommendations are appropriately presented to City Council, reviewed, and acted upon following their anticipated Council consideration in June 2026. The Subcommittee may continue to monitor implementation, identify any follow-up policy needs, and support staff and the Commission in advancing recommendations that strengthen Berkeley's event production landscape.

2. Civic Arts Grant Funding and General Fund Support

Advocate for the preservation and restoration of full Civic Arts grant funding levels in the General Fund budget. The Subcommittee should continue to emphasize that any future arts revenue measure or dedicated arts funding source should supplement, rather than replace or reduce, existing General Fund support for Civic Arts grants, programs, and core operations.

3. Civic Arts Staffing and Program Capacity

Advocate for the reinstatement of the Economic Development Project Coordinator position, or an equivalent Civic Arts staffing resource, in future budgets. The Subcommittee should continue to advocate for a sustainable staffing model that reflects the ongoing Civic Arts workload within the City Manager's Office, including grants administration, policy development, Commission support, public art coordination, cultural planning, and arts sector engagement.

4. Cultural Arts District Policy and West Berkeley Cultural Arts District

Continue supporting the development of a Cultural Arts District in West Berkeley while also advancing a broader policy framework for the establishment, recognition, and support of Cultural Arts Districts in Berkeley. Building on the FY 2026 work plan and the City's experience with the African American Arts and Culture District of South & West Berkeley / Lorin District, the Subcommittee shall work to articulate policy guidelines for future Cultural Arts Districts. This may include criteria for district formation, community leadership, cultural significance, geographic boundaries, governance, sustainability, and alignment with potential state designation opportunities.

5. Arts Activation in Vacant Commercial Spaces

Explore and develop policy recommendations for utilizing vacant or underused commercial spaces in Berkeley for arts and cultural uses, with a particular focus on retail frontage, storefront activation, and corridors such as San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue. This work may include reviewing existing Economic Development efforts, inviting staff presentations, researching models from other cities, and identifying feasible policy tools or pilot opportunities to support temporary or longer-term arts activation in vacant spaces including live/work opportunities.

6. Berkeley Cultural Trust

Support the development, advocacy, and long-term sustainability of the newly revived Berkeley Cultural Trust. The Subcommittee should help ensure ongoing Civic Arts Commission representation at Berkeley Cultural Trust meetings and identify opportunities for alignment between the Trust, the Commission, City staff, and the broader arts and culture sector.

7. Poet Laureate Program

Continue advocating for the establishment of a permanent Berkeley Poet Laureate Program. The Subcommittee may support the development of program guidelines, funding recommendations, selection processes, roles and expectations, and potential partnerships to ensure the program is sustainable and aligned with the City's cultural goals.

8. Turtle Island Monument Project

Monitor and support resolution of the Turtle Island Monument project, including identifying any outstanding policy, process, funding, or interdepartmental coordination issues that require Commission attention. The Subcommittee should work with staff to clarify the project's current status and determine whether further Commission or Council action is needed.

9. Tracking System for Commission Referrals and Council Actions

Develop or recommend a tracking system for Civic Arts Commission referrals, recommendations, and items transmitted to City Council. The purpose of this system would be to support continuity of operations, improve transparency, track Council action and follow-up needs, and help future Commissioners and staff understand the status of prior Commission work.

Public Art Subcommittee

1. Strategic Planning and Program Direction

- Collaborate with Civic Arts staff and Dyson/Womack to develop a Public Art Strategic Plan for the City of Berkeley. The Plan will identify the steps, strategies, and actions needed to shape, strengthen, and evolve the Civic Arts Program. It will include recommendations to stabilize and sustain the Public Art Program in service of the community, including best practices, policy updates, and guidance on project prioritization and discontinuation. The Plan will build upon previous policy achievements and planning efforts adopted by the City Council.
- Review and approve the FY27 Work Plan for projects funded through Funds 148 and 150.

2. Project Prioritization and Backlog Management

- Continue the pause on new public art projects until the existing backlog of projects is addressed and the Public Art Strategic Plan is completed, consistent with prior Civic Arts Commission direction from April 26, 2023.
- Permit Civic Arts staff to honor the mission, spirit, and community intent of “not started” projects through projects currently in progress, ongoing initiatives, and staff-proposed solutions until the Public Art Strategic Plan is completed and approved.

3. Public Art Project Review and Artist Selection

- Review and approve public art projects at key development milestones presented by staff.
- Actively promote and distribute public art RFQs through professional networks, artist communities, and relevant community channels.
- Represent the Public Art Subcommittee on RFQ selection panels when possible.

4. Public Engagement and Civic Arts Programming

- Support the development, visibility, and public engagement of Civic Arts programming and public art platforms, including Cube Space, the Downtown Berkeley BART Plaza Sound Art Program, and other current or emerging initiatives that support artists, inspire collaboration, and connect audiences with Berkeley’s public art ecosystem.

