



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 27, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Contract: Adrien Segal Public Artwork Commission for Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract and any necessary amendments with Adrien Segal for an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for a public art commission of two unique vertical structures that will serve as habitat boxes for both birds and insects at the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets).

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The \$150,000 contract will be funded through the Cultural Trust Fund 148-21-211-000-0000-000-446-612990- in Fiscal Year 2027. Funds will be requested to be appropriated during the Annual Appropriations Ordinance process.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Artist Adrien Segal was selected through a competitive process to create two distinct artworks—one artwork installed at each site -- Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets). Each structure must stand vertically for high visibility to park visitors and function effectively as both a bird and insect habitat. Artworks will be installed permanently and must be structurally sound, highly durable, and easy to maintain. The goals of the project are:

1. Create permanent structures that effectively offer shelter and nesting opportunities for native and migratory birds, as well as non-stinging insects. Structures will be made of highly durable materials, and their design considers safety, maintenance, weatherization, and vandalism.
2. Integrate strong design aesthetics with a focus on environmental awareness and park integration. Artworks will be appropriate for the site in terms of scale, medium, design, and imagery, and will complement the context of the surrounding area.

3. Develop bold, visually striking installations at both ends of the park corridor to serve as key points of interest.

Adrien Segal's proposal *Murmur Nest* is inspired by the motion and flight of birds and insects as they skillfully navigate the sky. These visually striking 9' tall 3D printed wood adobe sculptures will serve as bold visual landmarks at each end of the park. Integrating layered textures, swooping curvature, and micro-alcoves, they will offer cavity nesting habitat and sheltered perches for birds and non-stinging insects as they seek rest and shelter on their pollination and migratory journey across Berkeley. (Figure 1.)



Figure 1: Artwork proposal by Adrian Segal, *Murmur Nest*, 3D printed adobe for Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion (2027).

Staff anticipate that the two artworks will be installed by late September 2027.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Fe ¹ to Park Conversion project will transform four blocks of former railroad property between Blake and Ward Streets, crossing Acton Street, into new neighborhood parkland. The City acquired the railroad property in 1980 and subsequently converted portions of the corridor into parks, pathways, housing, and

¹ <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/santa-fe-trackbed-park-conversion>

community gardens. This project continues that effort by developing some of the remaining undeveloped parcels in South Berkeley.

In 2021, the City received a \$5 million Proposition 68 Statewide Parks Program grant to support the conversion. Additional funding from Measure T1 and Parks Tax funds supports completion of the project. Informed by community input, the park design includes a community garden, dog park, outdoor exercise stations, a playground with a tot cycle track, and an outdoor classroom with a teaching garden and orchard. The project includes soil remediation followed by park construction, expanding access to green space and outdoor recreation.

The public art commission will complement these recreational and educational amenities by integrating sculptural habitat structures into two park sites. The artworks are intended to create distinctive focal points, provide shelter and nesting opportunities for birds and insects, and encourage visitors to engage with the surrounding environment.

On February 26, 2025, the Civic Arts Commission approved the *Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion Public Art Project Plan*, which called for the commission of two unique vertical structures that will serve as habitat boxes for both birds and insects at the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets) as follows: M/S/C (Woo/Pineda) to approve *Public Art Project Plan for the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion* Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Covarrubias, Pineda, Scott, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None.

A Request for Qualifications for this public art commission was released on November 13, 2025, and was open through January 12, 2026 (Specification No. 25-11729-C). A selection panel comprised of 8 arts professionals and subject matter experts reviewed the qualifications of the 72 applicants and recommended 14 applications to be presented to the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion selection panel. The selection panel was comprised of three Bay Area arts professionals, a Civic Arts Commissioner, a Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commissioner, a member of the building's architecture team, an entomologist, and an ornithologist. This panel reviewed the qualifications of the 14 recommended artists and advanced 3 finalists to develop detailed conceptual site-specific proposals.

Once the 3 finalist proposals were received, staff conducted extensive community outreach to collect public input on the proposals. A "Berkeley Considers" survey was hosted on the City's website from August 6 to August 24, 2026, inviting public for input on each proposal and at the close of the survey, 695 responses were collected and reviewed by the panel equaling 34.75 hours of public comment.

On August 31, 2026, the selection panel was reconvened to consider finalists' presentations in an interview format. At the end of three rounds of competitive scoring, the selection panel recommended Adrien Segal's proposal *Murmur Nest* to the Public Art Subcommittee for approval.

On September 3, 2026, the Public Art Subcommittee unanimously recommended Adrien Segal's proposal *Murmur Nest* to the Civic Arts Commission for approval.

On September 22, 2026, the Civic Arts Commission unanimously approved Adrien Segal's proposal *Murmur Nest* with the following vote: M/S/C (Dutta-Choudhury /Pineda) to approve Public Art Project Plan for the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Dutta-Choudhury, Montgomery, Pineda, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Bullwinkel (LoA), Kramer (LoA), Scott

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

The proposed artworks, including their foundations and installation, are within the scope of the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion project covered by the City's July 2021 Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Installation will involve localized foundation work, material deliveries, and temporary use of construction equipment. Associated noise, dust, vehicle emissions, and soil disturbance are within the scope of the park project's environmental determination, and no additional CEQA review is required. Installation will be coordinated with park construction.

The artworks are designed to provide shelter and nesting opportunities for birds and non-stinging insects. The proposed wood adobe combines salvaged redwood fiber, water, clay, and a cellulose binder, incorporating reclaimed material into the sculptures. They will also encourage public awareness of local wildlife and urban habitat.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Adrien Segal's proposal, *Murmur Nest*, was selected through a competitive process using the criteria published in the RFQ: creativity, experience, project goals, site specificity, feasibility and maintenance, and project management. These criteria align with the City's public art approval considerations concerning originality, artist qualifications, relevance to the site, feasibility, and long-term maintenance, and complies with the process outlined with BMC 6.14.010 "Visual Art in Public Places."

The proposed sculptures respond to the park's natural environment and educational purpose by combining public art with habitat for birds and non-stinging insects. Their distinctive design will enhance the two park sites-- the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets)-- and provide opportunities for community engagement with art and local ecology. Public input informed the selection panel's review, and the proposal received unanimous recommendations from the Public Art Subcommittee and approval by the Civic Arts Commission

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None. The City Council could defer or decline authorization of the contract. Deferral could delay fabrication and installation of the artworks. Declining authorization would require staff to reassess the public art commission and return with an alternative approach. Staff recommends proceeding with the selected proposal based on the competitive selection process and its alignment with the project's goals.

CONTACT PERSON

Mark Salinas, Public Art Program Lead, (510) 981-7538

Attachment:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT WITH ADRIEN SEGAL TO CREATE TWO PUBLIC ARTWORKS FOR
THE SANTA FE TRACKBED TO PARK CONVERSION

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley's Arts and Culture Plan calls for the enhancement of Berkeley's environment by placing temporary and permanent public art in public spaces throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, the Civic Arts Commission approved the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion Public Art Project Plan on February 26, 2025, which called for two unique vertical structures that will serve as habitat boxes for both birds and insects at the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets).

WHEREAS, funding for the artist contract for the two unique vertical structures is included in the budget of Fund 148 for Fiscal Year 2027; and

WHEREAS, a Request for Qualifications from professional practicing artists was released on November 13, 2025 and 72 applications were received; and

WHEREAS, a selection panel comprised of three Bay Area arts professionals reviewed the qualifications of the 72 applicants and recommended 14 applications to be presented to the Santa Fe Trackbed to Park Conversion Public Art selection panel comprised of eight people including the three Bay Area arts professionals, a Civic Arts Commissioner, a Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commissioner, a member of the project's architect team, an entomologist, and an ornithologist; and

WHEREAS, three finalists were selected by the panel and invited to develop site-specific public art project proposals; and

WHEREAS, the selection panel reconvened to evaluate the three proposals and selected the proposal by Adrien Segal entitled *Murmur Nest* for recommendation to the Civic Arts Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Civic Arts Commission approved Adrien Segal for two unique vertical structures that will serve as habitat boxes for both birds and insects at the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets) at a special commission meeting on September 22, 2026.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments thereto with Adrien Segal for two unique vertical structures that will serve as habitat boxes for both

birds and insects at the Community Garden Park (between Blake and Parker Streets) and the Urban Farm and Education Park (between Derby and Ward Streets) for an amount not to exceed \$150,000. A record signature copy of said contract and any amendments are to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

