



Office of the City Manager

05

CONSENT CALENDAR  
October 28, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager  
Submitted by: Eleanor Hollander, Economic Development Manager  
Subject: Contract: Dyson & Womack for a Public Art Program Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract and any necessary amendments with Dyson & Womack Art Consulting for an amount not to exceed \$110,000 for the development of a comprehensive *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* for the City of Berkeley. The contract term will be 18 months.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The \$110,000 contract will be funded by the Cultural Trust Fund (Fund Code 148-21-208-252-0000-000-446-612990) in Fiscal Year 2026.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Dyson & Womack Art Consulting was selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process (Specification No. 25-11674-C) to lead the development of a *Public Art Program Strategic Plan*. The consultant will outline steps, strategies, and actions to shape, reinforce, and transform the Civic Arts Program's public art implementation practice. The *Public Art Strategic Plan* will serve as a guiding tool to implement creative projects, assess current values and gaps in the existing public art program, and ensure that Berkeley's future installed public art reflects community needs and values. It will provide strategies to stabilize and sustain the existing public art program, and include recommendations on best practices, policy updates, and project prioritization including a three-year action plan with operational projections including recommendations of appropriate metrics and deliverables.

The selected consultant brings extensive experience in public art planning and will lead a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process. Dyson & Womack supports clients that includes many cities and counties in the development of cultural and master plans, public art commissioning, collections analysis and acquisition, and is composed of a team of creative professionals which includes specialists in public art consulting, cultural planning, project management, curation and programming, marketing, and design. Dyson & Womack is known as a leading consulting firm that develops public art opportunities centered on equity and accessibility in public art management.

The *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* will build upon previous policy achievements and planning efforts adopted by the Civic Arts Commission and City Council, and guide future public art programming and investment. The *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* contract scope includes the following five key deliverables:

1. *Stakeholder Engagement*: Facilitate engagement opportunities such as public input sessions and interviews with the arts community, city staff, and the Civic Arts Commission.
2. *Benchmarking and Analysis*: Analyze other municipal public art policies and funding models to develop a benchmarking framework for Berkeley. Assess local current policies, practices, resources, capacities, and gaps to inform practical and sustainable program improvements.
3. *Policy and Process Development*: Recommend and develop updated Public Art policies and procedures, including potential revisions to the existing program guidelines, to enhance efficiency, equity, and excellence.
4. *Final Strategic Plan*: Deliver a comprehensive *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* for the City of Berkeley based on research and stakeholder input. The Plan will include:
  - An inventory and analysis of existing resources for public art in Berkeley and recommendations for expansion (if warranted).
  - A cost-benefit analysis of the current public art program structure and identification of misaligned projects on the Civic Arts work plan.
  - A three-year action plan for the efficient deployment of public art with operational projections, metrics, and key deliverables.

## BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley's Public Art Program strengthens the community's sense of belonging and connection by engaging artists to create public art works that bolster community, enhance the built environment, and reflect the unique character of our city. Since 1967, the City of Berkeley has acquired over 50 permanent and 150 portable artworks through voluntary City contributions, philanthropic donations, and grant support. Together, these works form the City of Berkeley Public Art Collection. Among the most significant pieces is *The City and Its People* (1973), a mixed-media photo collage by Romare Bearden, which served as the inspiration for the City's official logo.

Established in 1980, the City's Civic Arts Commission (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3.12) holds responsibilities related to the review and approval of public art within Berkeley. In 1985, the City adopted the Visual Art Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.14), which established a formal process for the selection and approval of public art. In 2001, the City developed *Guidelines for Public Art* to further define the administration and approval procedures for public artworks. These guidelines were updated in 2019, alongside the adoption of the *Arts and Culture Plan 2018–2027*, the existing guiding document for the City's Public Art Program.

In 1999, the City of Berkeley approved a “percent for art” program establishing the *Public Art Funding on City Capital Improvement Projects* process to fund public art commissions in Berkeley. In 2016, the City adopted a corresponding *Public Art on Private Development Ordinance* (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 23.316), requiring that a percent of the construction cost of new commercial, industrial, and multi-unit residential buildings be allocated to publicly accessible artwork. In 2017, this ordinance was amended to increase the contribution requirement to 1.75% of the total project cost. In 2022, the City adopted amendments to Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 6.13, which updated the 1999 program and established a policy to set aside a matching amount (1.75% of the construction cost) of City-funded capital improvements for public art as well. This \$110,000 strategic planning effort, which will yield an updated guiding document for deploying public art in Berkeley, is funded through this mechanism.

Going forward, the *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* will outline the steps, strategies, and actions required for the public art program to efficiently and effectively reflect community values and needs. The Plan will include strategies to stabilize and sustain the Public Art Program to better serve the community and will recommend best practices, policy updates, and project prioritization that will guide future public art programming and investment. The Plan will build on the foundation of previous policy achievements and planning efforts and will culminate in the Civic Arts Commission’s approval of the new *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* by the first quarter of 2027.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects, climate impacts, or sustainability opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Dyson & Womack Art Consulting possesses demonstrated expertise in cultural planning, public art planning, and strategic planning to lead a stakeholder engagement and a planning process resulting in a *Public Art Program Strategic Plan*. The City received and evaluated ten proposals in response to RFP Specification No. 25-11674-C which was posted on April 9, 2025 and due on May 27, 2005. After proposal review, interviews were conducted with the three highest scoring proposals, and following the interviews, the Dyson & Womack Art Consulting proposal received the highest score.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Mark Salinas, Civic Arts, Office of Economic Development, (510) 981-7538

Attachment:

1: Resolution

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

CONTRACT: DYSON & WOMACK ART CONSULTING FOR A PUBLIC ART  
PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has long recognized the importance of the arts and culture to the economic health, vitality, and diversity of Berkeley's local economy and its commercial districts; and

WHEREAS, the City's public art program supports the local arts ecosystem through commissions, acquisitions, exhibitions, programming, and collections management of art in public places throughout Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley seeks to engage a consultant to develop a *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* which will guide future public art programming and investment building on the foundation of previous policy achievements and planning efforts; and

WHEREAS, the funds for this contract are budgeted in Cultural Trust Fund (Fund Code 148-21-208-252-0000-000-446-612990); and

WHEREAS, the City posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process (Specification No. 25-11674-C) for which ten proposals were received, evaluated and scored, resulting in the selection of Dyson & Womack Art Consulting to develop a Public Art Program Strategic Plan for the City of Berkeley.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager, or designee, is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments thereto with Dyson & Womack Art Consulting for the development of a *Public Art Program Strategic Plan* for the City of Berkeley, in an amount not to exceed \$110,000, for a term of 18 months. A record signature copy of said contract and any amendments are to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk.