



**Civic Arts Commission Meeting
Wednesday, September 17, 2025
6:00 PM**

**Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library
1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703**

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Jonathan Bachrach, District 1
Dana Blecher (Vice Chair), District 6
Lisa Bullwinkel, District 4
Devi Dutta-Choudhury, Mayor
Peter Montgomery, District 8
Eduardo Pineda, District 5
Sean Vaughn Scott, District 3
Cameron Woo (Chair), District 2
Vacancy, District 7

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of Huchiun (*Hooch-yoon*), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (*Cho-chen-yo*) speaking Ohlone (*Oh-low-nee*) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona (*Vuh-roh-nuh*) Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Tribe and create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this Land Acknowledgement

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (for items not on the agenda)

5. COMMUNICATION (received from the public for items not on the agenda)

- a) Letter regarding South Berkeley Senior Center Ceramics Studio (Attachment 1)

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a) Welcome back from summer and looking forward to reconnecting with the slate of Civic Arts Commission initiatives (Attachment 2)

7. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS (All items for presentation, discussion, and possible action)

- a) **Discussion Item:** Scott Parsons discussion on development of an alternate project idea for the four bronze turtles and eight stone medallions (30 minutes)

Introduced by Jennifer Lovvorn, Chief Cultural Affairs Officer/Commission Secretary

Public Comment

- b) **Discussion Item:** Questions from New Commissioners and Orientation Discussion (45 minutes)

Introduced by Cameron Woo, Chair

Public Comment

8. STAFF REPORT

- a) Civic Arts Program Updates, Jen Lovvorn (5 minutes)
- b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah (5 minutes)
- c) Public Art Program Updates, Mark Salinas (5 minutes)

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Grants

- Dana Blecher, Chair
- Lisa Bullwinkel
- Cameron Woo

b) Public Art

- Eduardo Pineda, Chair
- Jonathan Bachrach
- Devi Dutta-Choudhury

c) Policy Subcommittee

- Lisa Bullwinkel, Chair

- Dana Blecher
- Cameron Woo

- d) Representative on Design Review Committee
- Cameron Woo

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Draft Minutes of August 13, 2025 Meeting (Attachment 3)
From: Commission Secretary
Recommendation: Approval of August 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Public Comment

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. ADJOURNMENT

Attachments:

1. Letter regarding South Berkeley Senior Center Ceramics Studio
2. Approved FY26 Civic Arts Commission Work Plan
3. Draft Minutes of August 13, 2025 Meeting

Staff Contact:

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ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the ADA Program Coordinator by phone (510) 981-6418 or by TTY/TDD (510) 981-6347 at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

August 26, 2025

Dear Berkeley Civic Arts Commissioners,

The purpose of this letter is to reach out to you on behalf of 100+ elder ceramic artists of the South Berkeley Senior Center with a matter of great concern and heartfelt urgency.

We were deeply shaken to recently learn that the South Berkeley Senior Center will soon close for renovations, with no plan to relocate what is, to our knowledge, the only equitable, ongoing, and entirely free art program for seniors in Berkeley.

In just two short years, volunteers have breathed new life into what was an essentially abandoned, desolate ceramics studio, turning it into a vibrant sanctuary where both lifelong artists and first-time creators come together to learn, grow, and belong. The response has been overwhelming: the studio is at full capacity, and the waiting list for our free classes continues to grow. This demand speaks volumes about the essential needs our program fulfills.

Though the City has never provided funding, we've sustained the program through the generosity of our members, who are so grateful for all it provides. The Berkeley Senior Center contributes the studio—the room, kiln, and electricity—while we ensure that the instruction, experience and supplies remain completely free and accessible to all.

Creative expression is a powerful tool for healthy aging. For seniors, participating in art offers far-reaching cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits. It can sharpen memory and mental agility, boost mood and emotional resilience, and support fine motor skills and dexterity. Just as importantly, it creates opportunities for social connection, fosters a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and helps ease stress and anxiety.

What makes this studio truly remarkable is not only the creativity it inspires, but the deep human connections it cultivates. At a time when seniors are facing an unprecedented crisis of loneliness, our members—who reflect a wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds—have built a vibrant, tightly woven community. With nearly 20% of Berkeley's residents over the age of 65, the impact of such a program is both profound and far-reaching.

Yet this is the only arts program of its kind for seniors in Berkeley, and possibly across the Bay Area—fully inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all. Losing this program would be a painful and unnecessary setback for our senior community, to equitable programming, and to the Arts. We ask for your support to urge the City to honor and protect what has been built by helping us find a temporary home during the renovation.

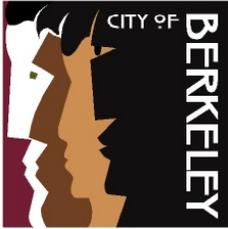
In case there is any question, squeezing into the North Berkeley Senior Center is not a viable option. The facility lacks adequate space for our sizable program, has declined to make modifications to accommodate us, offers insufficient parking, and is located too far from most of our members. With the West Berkeley Senior Center permanently closed, our city's large and growing senior population is in urgent need of thoughtful, creative solutions and your

recommendation to the City of Berkeley that they provide a temporary or permanent location for our studio.

If any program embodies the mission of the Berkeley Civic Arts Commission—to advocate, nurture, and sustain arts and culture across our city while upholding equity, diversity, and inclusion—it is this one. Supporting our studio directly advances that purpose.

With gratitude,

The volunteers and members of the Ceramics Studio



Civic Arts Commission

Civic Arts Commission FY26 Work Plan (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

Approval at 6/23/2025 Civic Arts Commission meeting

Policy Subcommittee

1. Continue participation with staff and in consultation with the Housing Advisory Commission to advise on the development of policies and initiatives to create affordable housing for Artists and Cultural Workers in the City of Berkeley culminating in a report to Council with recommendations related to affordable housing for the arts and culture sector.
2. In response to Council Referral, develop and send to Council a cohesive policy for the establishment of any new Cultural Arts Districts and revision to the existing Cultural Arts Districts to bring them into alignment with the new policy.
3. Advocate for the designation of a Cultural Arts District in West Berkeley.
4. Advise on application to the California Arts Council for a State-designated Cultural Arts District in the City of Berkeley.

Grants Subcommittee

1. Advocate to Council for the restoration of the Community Festivals grant funding level back up to \$200,000.
2. Review and develop Civic Arts guidelines for Arts Programs, Community Festivals, General Operating Support, and Individual Artist Projects grant categories for the FY27 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.

Public Art Subcommittee

1. Participate with Civic Arts staff and a consultant in the development of a *Public Art Strategic Plan* for the City of Berkeley. The Plan will outline the steps, strategies, and actions required to shape, reinforce, or transform the Civic Arts Program culture. 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. The Plan will build on the Background of previous policy achievements and planning efforts adopted by City Council.
2. Review and approve completion of *List of Public Art Projects Included in Previous Fiscal Years (FY19 – FY25) Work Plans and Council Referrals (Attachment 1)* and the *Public Art Strategic Plan* before recommending new public art projects for implementation by Civic Arts staff.
3. Review and approve public art projects at required development milestones.

Attachment 1: List of Public Art Projects Included in Previous Fiscal Years (FY19 – FY25) Work Plans and Council Referrals

Active (Listed Alphabetically):

1. Aquatic Park tile wall COMPLETION IN 2026
2. BART Plaza Sound Installation (Ongoing programming and equipment repair)
3. Framed Art Purchases for City Buildings COMPLETION IN 2025
4. Home sculpture de-installation COMPLETION IN 2026
5. Jean LaMarr sculptural seating and grinding rock at Ohlone Park COMPLETION IN 2026
6. Lara Kaur artwork at West Service Center COMPLETION IN 2025
7. Measure T-1: MLK Youth Service Center COMPLETION IN 2027
8. Measure T-1: Willard Clubhouse COMPLETION IN 2026
9. Peace Wall Conservation COMPLETION IN 2025
10. Po Shu Wang Signage and Bell COMPLETION IN 2025
11. Re-installation of Romare Bearden artwork COMPLETION IN 2026
12. Turtle Island Monument
13. Utility Box Mural Program (Assessment and Implementation of Recommendations)
14. William Wareham sculpture conservation and reinstallation COMPLETION IN 2026

Not Started (Listed in Prioritized Order):

1. Eric Powell Gates Conservation COMPLETION IN 2026
2. Santa Fe Right of Way Park COMPLETION IN 2027
3. Dona Spring Memorial (Council Referral)
4. Measure T-1: South Berkeley Senior Center COMPLETION IN 2028
5. Measure T-1: African American Health Resource Center COMPLETION IN 2028
6. Aquatic Park sculpture
7. City Flag, Song, and Motto (Council Referral)
8. Hidden Gems: Berkeley Hills Stairways
9. Mural Commemorating Black Lives Matter Movement
10. Telegraph Avenue Public Art Project
11. Telegraph Crosswalk Murals (Council Referral)
12. Harrison Street Corridor Project
13. Replacement Mural for Center for Independent Living (Council Referral)
14. Family Friendly Art (Council Referral)
15. Upcoming: Transfer Station Replacement
16. Upcoming Dreamland Park
17. Upcoming Waterfront Ferry Terminal



**Draft Minutes
Civic Arts Commission
Wednesday, August 13, 2025
6:00 PM**

**Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library
1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703**

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER: 6:03 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Montgomery, Pineda, Woo

Commissioners Absent: Scott

Staff Present: Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead; Jennifer Lovvorn, Commission Secretary/Chief Cultural Affairs Officer; Mark Salinas, Public Art Program Lead

Members of the public present: 4

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (for items not on the agenda): None

5. COMMUNICATIONS: None

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a) California Arts Council Cultural District application submitted

7. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

- a) **Presentation:** Jaslene Sanchez presentation on Civic Arts internship project updating Artwork Archive database

Public Comment: None

- b) **Action Item:** Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Services Center/Young Adult Project
Public Art Commission: Panel-Selected Artist and Proposal

M/S/C (Blecher/Pineda) to approve Sorrel Raino-Tsui for the Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Services Center/Young Adult Project Public Art Commission.

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

Public Comment: None

- c) **Action Item:** Referral Request to Council to Rescind Incorrect Information Related to Turtle Island Monument

M/S/C (Montgomery/Bullwinkel) to approve Referral Request to Council to Rescind Incorrect Information Related to Turtle Island Monument.

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

Public Comment: 2

- d) **Presentation:** “Keeping Creativity Local: A Strategic Response to Affordable Housing for Artists” Final Report by the Housing Advisory Commission and the Civic Arts Commission, July 2025.

Public Comment: 1

8. STAFF REPORT

- a) Civic Arts Program Updates, Jen Lovvorn
- b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah
- c) Public Art Program Updates, Mark Salinas

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Grants – Next meeting is September 5.
- b) Public Art – No additional update.
- c) Policy Subcommittee – No meeting.
- d) Joint Subcommittee with Housing Advisory Commission – Subcommittee now dissolved.
- e) Representative on Design Review Committee – No update.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) **Action Item:** Draft July 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

M/S/C (Bullwinkel/Blecher) to approve final July 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

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

Public Comment: None

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. ADJOURNMENT: 7:59 PM

M/S/C (Blecher / Pineda) to adjourn.

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

Staff Contact:



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