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Title: Actions pertaining to the Mariposa Plaza to commission artists to create and install new artwork - File No. 033117LP (Council District 3)
1. Adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption per staff determination, pursuant to Section 153002/Class 2 and Section 15332/ Class 32 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines
2. Award an art services agreement for \$200,000 to Gordon Huether Studio of Napa, California, to create and install new artwork for Mariposa Plaza

Sponsors: Planning and Development Department

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. A - Vicinity Map, 2. B - Agreement for Artist Services

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

May 25, 2017

FROM: JENNIFER K. CLARK, Director
Development and Resource Management Department

THROUGH: DANIEL ZACK, Assistant Director
Development and Resource Management Department

BY: LUPE PEREZ, Project Manager
Development and Resource Management Department

SUBJECT

Actions pertaining to the Mariposa Plaza to commission artists to create and install new artwork - File No. 033117LP (Council District 3)
1. Adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption per staff determination, pursuant to Section 153002/Class 2 and Section 15332/ Class 32 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines
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RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 153002/Class 2 and Section 15332/Class 32 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, award art services agreement with Gordon Huether, Studio for \$200,000 as the most qualified artist team, and authorize the Development and Resource Management Director or designee to sign the contract agreement for art services on behalf of the City of Fresno.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 30, 2017, the City issued a Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQ/P) for art services for Mariposa Plaza, and posted the RFQ/P on the City website, the State of California Arts Council website, Americans for Art website, social media, and delivered to the Fresno Arts Council and Fresno Art Museum for distribution. On April 5, 2017, it was published in the Fresno Business Journal. Five sealed proposals were received. The submissions were evaluated, and interviews were held to select the most qualified artist team for the Mariposa Plaza Activation Project. The evaluations and interviews were conducted by staff and project partners: the Fresno Arts Council; Fresno Art Museum; the Downtown Fresno Partnership; Univision; Central Valley Community Foundation; WRT Landscape Architecture; Urban Diversity Design; Design Lab 252; and Darden Architecture.

BACKGROUND

In December 2016, Council authorized the project funding and acceptance of the \$150,000 grant award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town Program for the Mariposa Plaza Activation Project (Project) pursuant to the NEA Guidelines. The total Project amount is \$332,000, which includes matching funds appropriated from the City of \$75,000, and \$107,000 in financial and in-kind contributions from community partners.

The Project consists of enhancing open space at the Mariposa Plaza (Plaza) located at the corner of Mariposa and Fulton Streets by commissioning artists to create and install one or more unique world-class works of interactive artwork in the Plaza. The Plaza is the most active public space in Downtown Fresno. Multiple events are staged throughout the year attracting very large crowds. In conjunction with the commissioned art piece, the Plaza will undergo a future renovation that will make the site easier to use for gatherings and performances, and improves the use of the existing open space and community asset. The Plaza will serve as the premier public space anchor in downtown, hosting major events as well as attracting residents, shoppers, tourists, and the downtown workforce on a daily basis. The renovation goal is a seamless combination of features and elements to create a comfortable, engaging, and safe environment for users. The Plaza is a key factor in a series of catalytic projects including Fulton Street, the high speed rail station, BRT, and numerous private developments.

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Fresno Art Museum; the Downtown Fresno Partnership; Univision; Central Valley Community Foundation; WRT Landscape Architecture; Urban Diversity Design; Design Lab 252; and Darden Architecture.

The Evaluation committee selected Artist Gordon Huether based on his extensive years of experience in creating large scale site specific art installations. The work sample Mr. Huether presented during the oral interview exhibited a high level of artistic excellence and he has the ability to design and fabricate artwork in house. If awarded, the City in conjunction with WRT, the artist team, and community partners will finalize the redesign of the Plaza.

Staff will return to the Council with a recommendation when the proposed Plaza redesign has been completed, and when funds for construction have been identified. Today's proposed Council action does not commit the City to rebuilding the Plaza beyond the installation of the artwork commissioned under this contract. Because of the requirements of the NEA grant, this installation is anticipated to occur on an expedited timeline, absent any other activity at the site. Staff is actively pursuing potential funding sources for the eventual reconstruction of the overall Plaza.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Staff has performed a preliminary environmental assessment of this project and has determined that it falls within the Categorical Exemption set forth in CEQA guidelines, Section 15302 Class 2 which exempts the replacement of an existing structure where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity. The Mariposa Plaza Activation Project is a redesign of an existing public space that will not substantially change the purpose or the capacity of the site. Additionally, staff has determined that that the project falls within the Categorical Exemption set forth in CEQA guidelines, Section 15332, Class 32, which exempts certain in-fill development projects in urban areas. The project meets the criteria for this exemption because it is an in-fill development that is consistent with the general plan, located within the city and less than five acres, has no value as a habitat for wildlife, would not have significant effects relating to traffic, noise air or water quality, and is adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Furthermore, Staff has determined that none of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, section 15300.2 apply to this project.

The National Endowment for the Arts is the lead agency for NEPA purposes and at this time the NEA has not prepared a NEPA document for this action. Staff has concluded that NEPA review is not required at this time. If the NEA determines that review under NEPA becomes necessary, it will not be triggered until construction of the new landscape and is likely to be carried out in the preconstruction engineering phase. Staff is coordinating with the NEA to ensure compliance with NEPA and will incorporate any analysis conducted under NEPA by the NEA into future phases, if the NEA determines that analysis under NEPA is required in a future phase. However, at this time, NEPA analysis is not required.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not used based on conditions of federal grant funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

The \$75,000 in City matching funds for this project is appropriated in the FY 2017 Budget.

Attachments:

A: Vicinity Map

B: Agreement for Artist Services