

CULTURAL ARTS COMMITTEE

CITY OF PALM DESERT

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: July 9, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR THE SAN PABLO PHASE 2 ROUNDABOUT SCULPTURE

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file informational report on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the San Pablo Phase 2 Roundabout Sculpture.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

At its meeting on April 9, 2025, the Cultural Arts Committee (CAC) approved the release of a new **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)** instead of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the San Pablo Phase 2 Roundabout Sculpture. After researching best practices, staff is adopting the RFQ-first model in accordance with guidance from leading public art agencies.

Members of Americans for the Arts have endorsed RFQs over RFPs as a more efficient and equitable method for commissioning public art. As stated on americansforthearts.org, “RFQs have been more effective in producing high-quality public artworks and are generally seen as being more fair to artists.”

Update on the RFQ Process

Rather than requesting full proposals during the initial round, the City is inviting artists to submit qualifications only. This revised approach includes:

- **Current artist resume** (maximum 3 pages)
- **Letter of interest** describing how the artist’s past work and experience align with the project’s goals in design, fabrication, and project management.
- **Images of 6–10 completed works**, including title, location, year, budget, medium, and dimensions.
- **Three professional references**

Submissions will be reviewed by staff and the Cultural Arts Committee. Up to five artists will be shortlisted and invited to submit **a conceptual design proposal, maquette, and presentation**. Presentations may be in person or virtual, and each finalist will receive a **\$1,000 honorarium**. This two-step process is designed to encourage broader participation for high-caliber artists, provide a fair process, and reduce upfront demands on applicants while maintaining a rigorous and competitive process that ensures high-quality public art outcomes.

Next Steps

- The RFQ was released on July 1, 2025, through CallForEntry.org

- Applications are due by **Thursday, September 4, 2025**
- Shortlisted finalists will be notified in **November 2025**
- Final presentations are scheduled for **January 14, 2026**

Staff will continue to update the Committee throughout the artist selection process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this request.

ATTACHMENT:

2025 Request for Qualifications – San Pablo Phase 2 Roundabout Sculpture