

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: September 25, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: CONSIDER RELOCATION OF LILY PAD BENCH BY MICHAEL TODD

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the relocation of Lily Pad Bench by Michael Todd from its current location, at the corner of El Paseo and Sage Lane, to the Civic Center Park.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

In 2004, the City solicited artist-designed benches for El Paseo. From 168 submissions, the *Lily Pad Bench* by Michael Todd was selected and installed in 2005 at El Paseo and Sage Lane. Made of five circular aluminum “lily pad” forms, the bench functions as both seating and public art.

Its current location has become less suitable due to changing commercial activity – currently in front of Shake Shack. On April 6, 2025, the City received a report of a pedestrian injury involving the bench, raising concerns that it reduces sidewalk space in an area where outdoor dining now narrows the walkway.

On May 14, 2025, the Cultural Arts Committee reviewed the matter and with a 6-0 vote, recommended relocating the bench to Civic Center Park. City Staff has prepared coordination with the Public Works Department to remove the *Lily Pad Bench* from its current location and repair the sidewalk, transport, and install at Civic Center Park.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The artwork was purchased in 2004 for \$10,000. Relocation costs, including removal, transport, reinstallation, and new signage, are estimated not to exceed \$2,500. Funds are available in the approved FY 2025-26 Financial Plan in Public Art Account No. 4364650-4337200. The PW team will allocate approximately 4-8 hours of staff time to this project. There is no other direct impact to the General Fund with this action.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Photographs of Lily Pad Bench and map of proposed location
2. Cultural Arts Committee Staff Report dated May 14, 2025
3. Deaccession Worksheet
4. Public Art Deaccession Policy