

**CULTURAL ARTS COMMITTEE
CITY OF PALM DESERT
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: June 11, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: RECOMMEND THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE DEACCESSION OF TWO
EL PASEO ENTRY SIGNS BY WATER STUDIO

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the City Council approve deaccession of two El Paseo entry signs by Water Studio.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

In September 2003, Palm Desert's Art in Public Places Commission commissioned two entry signs for the El Paseo business district. Designed by Orr Studio (now operating as Water Studio), the signs were installed in the following locations:

1. El Paseo at CA-74 (West Entry)
2. El Paseo at Portola (East Entry)

Constructed of ridged copper with bronzed patina, each sign measured approximately 4 feet 6 inches wide by 6 feet tall and featured an integrated water element designed to operate year-round. Over time, the combination of water and metal led to repeated deterioration of the fountain components, requiring ongoing and costly maintenance.

On November 20, 2023, the entry sign located at El Paseo and Portola Avenue was struck by a vehicle and sustained irreparable damage, necessitating its immediate removal. At its meeting on January 17, 2024, the Cultural Arts Committee recommended that the City Council approve the deaccession of both entry signs. However, the Committee advised that the sign at CA-74 remain in place until a replacement design was identified. Due to continued structural deterioration, the remaining sign was removed by the City's Public Works Department on May 29, 2025. The artist has been notified and is scheduled to retrieve the removed sign in late June 2025.

The Public Works Department will lead the planning, design, and installation of new entry signage for the El Paseo business district as part of their wayfinding sign project. Staff recommends approval of the complete deaccession of the two El Paseo entry signs by Water Studio.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost of the artwork was \$50,000 in January 2004. Staff has no record of current fair market value.

ATTACHMENTS:

Cultural Arts Committee
City of Palm Desert
(Deaccession of Two El Paseo Entry Signs by Water Studio)

1. Deaccession Worksheet
2. Entry sign photographs