

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 23, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: 2027-2028 EL PASEO SCULPTURE EXHIBITION CALL FOR ENTRIES

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Authorize staff to release the 2027-2028 El Paseo Sculpture Exhibition Call for Entries.
2. Approve an increase in the artist honorarium from \$5,000 to \$6,000 per sculpture for the El Paseo Sculpture Exhibition.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The City of Palm Desert organizes the El Paseo Sculpture Exhibition every two years, presenting 18 sculptures by regional and national artists along the El Paseo median, from Highway 74 to Portola Avenue. The Exhibition runs for two years, with sculptures installed in November prior to the display period and removed in October of the second year.

At its meeting of February 14, 2024, the Cultural Arts Committee (CAC) requested that staff evaluate extending the exhibition term from two years to three years. In response, staff surveyed current and past El Paseo Sculpture Exhibition artists. Key findings included:

- General satisfaction with the current two-year structure and \$5,000 honorarium.
- Support for a three-year term, contingent upon an increased stipend.
- Interest in additional assistance, including shipping reimbursement, per diem for travel, hotel accommodations, and enhanced promotional opportunities.

At its September 10, 2025, meeting, the CAC voted against extending the exhibition term from two to three years and recommended increasing the artist honorarium from \$5,000 to \$6,000 per sculpture, noting both the rising cost of sculpture materials. While this increase contradicts feedback from the artist survey indicating that current honorarium levels are adequate for a two-year term, the CAC's recommendation reflects an interest in providing additional support for transportation costs, travel per diem (based on distance), hotel accommodations, and enhanced promotional opportunities. The committee also requested the introduction of a "Best in Show" competition to expand community engagement.

If approved, these changes will be reflected in the 2027–2028 Call for Entries, which is scheduled for release in November 2025.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

City of Palm Desert
(2027-2028 EL PASEO SCULPTURE EXHIBITION CALL FOR ENTRIES)

Funding for the El Paseo Sculpture Exhibition will be requested as part of the Fiscal Year 2026/27 budget for contracting, artist honorariums (increasing from \$90,000 to \$108,000), deinstallation, and installations costs during FY 2026/27. Funding in the amount of \$1,000 is currently available in Public Art Account No. 4364650-4321701 to support the release of the Call for Entries, which includes the posting fee on CallForEntry.org and an eBlast announcement to artists nationwide.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Call for Entries
2. Cultural Arts Committee Meeting Minutes – September 10, 2025