

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

MEETING DATE: October 8, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: DEACCESSIONING OF SWIM DIVE PLAY BY PAUL HOBSON

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the City Council approve the permanent removal of *SWIM DIVE PLAY* by Paul Hobson at the Palm Desert Aquatic Center.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Installed in June 2011 at the Palm Desert Aquatic Center, *SWIM DIVE PLAY* by Paul Hobson features images of swimmers and divers integrated into the pool deck. Originally sandblasted into concrete, the design was later altered to a painted epoxy finish due to early failure of the stain under routine cleaning and foot traffic.

Ongoing Maintenance Requirements:

- Repainting annually at an average cost of \$1,270 (2011–2017)
- Monthly cleaning at \$80 per hour
- In 2023, locker room renovations required removal and repainting of four figures at a cost of \$4,627
- All maintenance is subject to prevailing wage requirements

The artwork's location in high-traffic areas has led to continual deterioration. It remains the only piece in the City's permanent collection requiring this level of ongoing care.

The Palm Desert Aquatic Center is scheduled for temporary closure from November 17, 2025, through early January 2026 for major facility improvements, including pool filter replacements and locker room renovations. The closure presents a cost-effective opportunity to remove the mural without additional impact.

In consultation with vendors, staff explored a restoration effort that would involve recreating the original design using stencils. However, the restoration approach has proven intensive:

- Inability to replicate imagery precisely without "shadowing" effects
- Labor-intensive hand-cutting of stencils on-site
- Continued need for repainting every one to two years
- Estimated restoration cost exceeds \$50,000

Public Art Deaccession Policy Criteria Met:

- Excessive Maintenance: Maintenance exceeds \$2,200 annually (\$1,200/average painting + \$90/hr monthly cleaning)
- Deterioration Beyond Original Design: Repeated repainting has altered the appearance of the work.
- Restoration Impracticality: A full restoration would exceed the original \$45,800 value and will not achieve long-term preservation.

Removal can occur in coordination with the scheduled pool deck replacement by Public Works, avoiding additional project costs or disruptions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no cost to the Public Art Fund or General Fund. Removal will occur as part of an already funded Public Works project. Restoration would require a new investment estimated at \$50,000, exceeding the original artwork value.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Public Art Deaccession Policy
2. Deaccession Worksheet
3. Images of *SWIM DIVE PLAY*