

CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: November 13, 2025

PREPARED BY: Erica Powell, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: STUDY SESSION: DIRECTION ON A POTENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT
WITH GOLDENVOICE FOR INSTALLATION OF TAFFY BY ARTIST
STEPHANIE LIN

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Provide direction on a potential ten-year lease with Goldenvoice for the installation of *Taffy* by Stephanie Lin at Civic Center Park.
2. Should the City Council determine the proposed artwork or location is not suitable, provide direction, if at all, on alternative artworks or locations for consideration.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Goldenvoice's Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival is internationally recognized for commissioning large-scale interactive installations that celebrate desert aesthetics and create opportunities for community gathering. Following each festival, select works are deinstalled and made available for public exhibition throughout the Coachella Valley.

Staff initiated discussions with Goldenvoice and the Public Art Company to explore the feasibility of presenting large-scale Coachella Festival artwork for future consideration. The intent of this effort is to evaluate opportunities that enhance Palm Desert's cultural offerings and contribute to the City's economic vitality. As part of these discussions, staff identified the open area south of the Skate Park, previously planned as the site for the visitor's center, as a potential location. The location provides high visibility from San Pablo Avenue, convenient access from public parking, and integration within the City's civic and cultural corridor, supporting accessibility and ongoing community engagement.

Project Description

Taffy is an immersive sculptural installation composed of five vertical towers (25–50 feet tall) constructed of lightweight framing wrapped in translucent, scalloped mesh fabric. The towers shimmer with color and movement as sunlight filters through, evoking Palm Desert's midcentury design palette. Integrated circular benches provide shaded seating and a gathering space.

Goldenvoice is the commissioning and ownership entity for *Taffy*, originally created for the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. The Public Art Company serves as Goldenvoice's authorized representative and project manager for post-festival installations. Acting on Goldenvoice's behalf, The Public Art Company coordinates artist engagement, transportation, installation, and ongoing maintenance for artworks displayed throughout the Coachella Valley.

Under the proposed lease, Goldenvoice would retain ownership of *Taffy* and, through The Public Art Company, oversee all transport, installation, and long-term maintenance for the duration of the ten-year term. The Public Art Company would coordinate directly with the artist to ensure installation meets the original design specifications. The City would prepare the site, providing lighting, landscaping, foundation work, and replacement benches, and would also provide routine site upkeep in coordination with Goldenvoice and The Public Art Company.

Economic and Community Benefits

1. Tourism and Visitor Activity
 - The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival generates significant international media coverage and visitor interest. Cities that have installed former Coachella Festival artworks have reported consistent tourism activity supported by regional arts and culture promotions through Palm Springs Life and Visit Greater Palm Springs.
 - Installation of *Taffy* could expand Palm Desert's presence in these regional marketing efforts and encourage additional visitation and local spending. The Civic Center Park site's proximity to El Paseo, the Library, and other civic amenities may further support visitor activity and local commerce.
2. Cultural Identity
 - Hosting a Coachella Festival artwork would reinforce Palm Desert's commitment to the arts and complement its Public Art collection, McCallum Theatre programming, and San Pablo cultural corridor initiatives. The installation would contribute to strengthening the City's cultural identity within the Coachella Valley.
3. Public–Private Partnership
 - The proposed collaboration with Goldenvoice and The Public Art Company would bring a recognized artwork to Palm Desert while relying on private-sector expertise for installation and logistics, which could reduce City resource requirements.
4. Long-Term Economic and Community Value
 - A ten-year lease would provide opportunities for community engagement through public events and gatherings, potentially supporting Civic Center Park activation and local economic activity over time.

Alternate Site of Artwork Selection

If the City Council determines that the proposed location or artwork is not suitable, staff recommends maintaining the partnership with Goldenvoice and The Public Art Company to:

- Evaluate alternative City-owned sites meeting criteria for visibility, accessibility, and public engagement, or
- Identify another Coachella Festival artwork that aligns with Palm Desert's aesthetic and spatial considerations.

Committee Recommendation

At its regular meeting of July 9, 2025, the Cultural Arts Committee voted 6–1 to recommend approval of the ten-year lease for *Taffy* at Civic Center Park, including related City-funded site enhancements. The Parks and Recreation Committee reviewed the proposal on August 5, 2025, and expressed favorable feedback.

Legal Review:

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney’s Office.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total project cost is not expected to exceed \$300,000 and will be funded entirely through the FY 2025/26 Public Art Capital Projects Account No. 4364650-4400100.

Artwork and Installation Costs	
Artist/PAC Fee	\$68,500
Estimated transportation and installation costs	\$95,200
10% contingency	\$16,370
SubTotal	\$180,070

Estimated City Site Enhancement Costs	
Landscaping, lighting, benches, foundations, etc.	\$119,930
Total	\$300,000

No General Fund dollars would be used for this project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. PowerPoint Presentation – *Taffy* by Stephanie Lin (*to be distributed prior to the meeting*)