



## North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council

May 15, 2024

To the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners,

We applaud the efforts of the Board and Facility Repair And Maintenance Commission Task Force to solve a long-standing problem of the maintenance and restoration of public art on Recreation and Parks land throughout Los Angeles. Reviewing your proposed RAP Public Art Policy for temporary art as put forth in the May 2 meeting, the North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council urges the **Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners** and **Facility Repair and Maintenance Commission Task Force** to reconsider the Drafted Policy in favor of a more equitable one.

Our concerns lie mainly on four points:

- 1) **Section VIII., Procedures for Temporary Installations, Number 1:** Any Applicant proposing a Temporary Installation must complete and submit a Public Art Application form (Application), along with an application fee of \$500.
- 2) **Section VIII., Procedures for Temporary Installations, Number 4:** The Application must include a signed Artist Waiver, which is included in the Application,(Exhibit B) in order to be considered complete.
- 3) **Section IV., General Public Art Guidelines, Number 2:** RAP shall bear no financial responsibility for the installation, maintenance or removal of any Public Art without exception. If any piece or portion of Public Art is vandalized or stolen, RAP shall be under no obligation to repair or replace the artwork. The Applicant shall treat Public Art with an anti-graffiti coating unless RAP determines that such treatment is unnecessary or infeasible for a particular installation.
- 4) **Section III., RAP and Public Art, Number 2b:** Public Art should create opportunities for community engagement and building for the park and its surrounding community. The creation and/or installation of any Temporary Installation on RAP property shall involve (1) community input via survey, community meeting, Neighborhood Council and/or Park Advisory Board; and (2) a community event commemorating the creation and/or installation of the artwork.

On the first point:

\$500 to simply submit an application that may, by your own admission, be rejected, is exorbitant. If the Department of Recreation and Parks is interested in reaching a varied set of artists and community



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groups, then you must understand how this will diminish artists' and groups' abilities to participate. If the review of the applications and approval by the staff are truly that far outside of the RAP staff's purview, then this is a conversation worth having about what department's responsibility public art is; however, charging artists \$500 per application simply to pay your staff to review these applications seems outlandish, and arbitrary.

On the second point:

Asking artists to waive their Federal and State of California rights so the RAP can manage their land is not the root of the problem. Based on the summary included from the Task Force meeting, the root of the problem is a lack of appropriate record-keeping for the public art installations across the RAP land. Working to build and maintain a database for the Department, in addition to working together with the DCA and CAC to maintain any joint ventures, will allow the RAP with the information it needs to communicate with artists as needed when determining an artworks' needs, whether it be maintenance or removal. We suggest that you modify the following language in the waiver from "In accordance with the waiver set forth above, Artist agrees that the City has the absolute right to change, modify, destroy, remove, relocate, move, replace, transport, repair or restore the [describe the artwork/project: mural, sculpture, etc. and medium] ("Artwork")" to include a requirement that RAP will attempt to contact said artist for a set time period and with proof of such due diligence, and that after than time period has passed with no response from the artist, then they will have the absolute right to do all that is stated to the installation in that section.

On the third point:

It is impossible to understand the financial responsibility of maintaining a public piece of artwork, and to put that burden on an artist is unrealistic, both financially and logistically. As the RAP staff is regularly in the parks and public spaces, it's practical to assign this responsibility of oversight to the RAP. Again, if this is outside the bounds of the abilities of the staff, then other solutions that don't involve pushing costs to local artists need to be explored. This additional cost is an additional deterrent for installations to go through proper channels given that the RAP staff already are removing art that has been installed without RAP approval at their own cost.

On the fourth point:



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The additional focus to utilize Public Art in community engagement and building is one we fully support. We appreciate the proposal that Neighborhood Councils and/or Park Advisory Boards (PABs) might be involved in the creation and/or installation of the temporary art. However, there was no input asked for from these community groups for the creation of this policy. Our recommendation is that the PABs and Neighborhood Councils be sent a survey now asking for input.

Again, the NHNENC firmly believes in the mission of the Department of Recreation and Parks, while equally valuing the importance of public art. We know that many of the city's departments are underfunded (simply look to the unpaid labor of the 99 neighborhood councils as an example). But we urge you to find a solution that does not add multiple layers of burden to any artist simply wanting to enrich their community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council

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**Zaid Díaz-Arias**

*President*

*North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council*

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**Date of Board Vote:** May 15, 2024

**Board Vote Count:** Aye: 7 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1

**Motion Status:** Passed X Failed \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_