



STAFF REPORT
12/9/2020

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Gabriel Martin, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: Desert X 2021 – Sponsorship Request for \$30,000 to Install Public Art Exhibition in the City of Coachella

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider awarding a sponsorship to the 2021 Desert X Biennial Event for \$30,000 to install a public art exhibition in the City of Coachella.

BACKGROUND:

Desert Biennial is a non-profit 501(c)(3) founded in 2015 to bring the finest international artists to the Coachella Valley to create art, engage viewers and raise awareness of the valley's environment, its natural wonders as well as the socio-economic issues that make it vibrant, curious and exciting.

Desert X is a site-specific biennial exhibition that first took place in the spring of 2017. Artists from different parts of the world were invited to make work in response to the unique conditions of the Coachella Valley. The Coachella Valley desert is the blank canvas upon which contemporary artists to project their vision and to create from the extraordinary natural and social history around the objects and experiences that reflect upon the matchless spectacle of the geologic epic, the radical abstraction of the surroundings and the singular incursions of man into the seemingly barren landscape. Desert X takes the landscape itself as its exhibition space, and offers the opportunity to explore both the familiar and the unknown through the eyes of others.

The City provided sponsorship for 2017 Desert X with the "La Fiesta en el Desierto" art mural installation by Armando Lerma, located at 85963 Grapefruit Blvd, please see below.



The City provided a sponsorship for 2019 Desert X with the “Visit us in the Shape of Clouds” art mural installation by Armando Lerma, located on Landfill Road to Polk Street – 33.714416, -116.147828, please see below.



DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The 2021 Desert X event will be held from February 6 to April 11, 2021 with site-specific installations across the Coachella Valley. Desert Biennial will also develop educational and public programs that will bring vibrant contemporary art to the diverse communities of the Coachella Valley. Each site-specific project begins with artist-led research in the Coachella Valley and artists will be invited to submit proposals for the 2021 Desert X event. The \$30,000 sponsorship supports activities, such as underwrites the costs for artists to visit the Coachella Valley, supports research and development of artists' proposals in Coachella Valley, and supports the production costs of one site-specific art installation in the City of Coachella. Desert Biennial has also requested the temporary use of the undeveloped, City-owned 0.35-acre parcels, located at 1609 4th Street (APN: 778-042-009 & 778-042-010), for the location of the art exhibition during the Desert X 2019 event. The parcels are diagonally across the street from Veteran's Memorial Park, between Fourth Street and Sixth Street. The parcels were purchased from the City's Successor Agency on December 11, 2019 for \$80,000 and is current zoned as R-S (Single Family Residential). Once the 2021 Desert X event is concluded, the City will have the option to relocate the art installation to another permanent location.

2019 Desert X brought over 200,000 people to the Coachella Valley in 9 weeks, along with 2 billion print, broadcast and online impressions and over 400 media articles. According to *the Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 Report* conducted by the Americans for the Arts organization, the average person spends \$31.47 attending public art and cultural events. With an estimate, 200,000 or more people expected to attend each of the art installation sites in 2021, the City of Coachella can see over \$6.29 million dollars in economic activity from its specific site.

This sponsorship will diversify our existing public arts program and bring additional national/international recognition to our City, while supporting jobs, generating tax revenue and increasing tourism into the Eastern portion of the Coachella Valley. Due to its significant return on investment, Staff recommends the sponsorship amount of \$30,000 and the use of the undeveloped, 0.35-acre parcels, located at 1609 4th Street (APN: 778-042-009 & 778-042-010), for the location of the art exhibition. Below is a conceptual design of the proposed art installation.



ALTERNATIVES:

1. Award Desert Biennial a sponsorship for \$30,000 and allow the use of the undeveloped, City-owned 0.35-acre parcels for the location of the art exhibition.
2. Not award Desert Biennial a sponsorship and not allow the use of the undeveloped, City-owned 0.35-acre parcels for the location of the art exhibition.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If the City Council approves the staff recommendation, the \$30,000 will be appropriated from the Special Revenue Funds (131) – Development Impact Fees for Public Art for the FY 2020-2021.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Exhibit “A” - 2012 Desert X Art Proposal