



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 10/02/2025

REQUESTER: Karla Sitton, Administrative Tech IV

PRESENTER: Leslie Nottingham, Executive Director, Norman Arts Council

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF ALLOCATION OF PUBLIC ART FUNDS FOR GRAY STREET PARKING LOT MURAL PROJECT

DISCUSSION:

The Public Arts Committee of the Norman Arts Council respectfully submits this proposal requesting approval to utilize \$50,000 of already allocated public art funds for a new mural initiative. The project aims to commission six permanent murals to be installed on the alley-facing barrier walls of the Gray Street parking lot, located in the heart of downtown Norman.

- **Project Description**

The Gray Street Mural Project is intended to beautify a currently underutilized and highly visible space, enhance the pedestrian experience, and reinforce Norman's identity as a city that celebrates creativity and public art. The selected mural sites, located on the alley-facing walls of the Gray Street barrier walls, offer a unique canvas for impactful visual storytelling and community engagement.

- **Artist Selection**

An open call for artists will be released as soon as possible. The focus will be on inclusive outreach, particularly to underrepresented artists and communities. To ensure a balance of local relevance and external perspective, we propose the following structure for artist selection:

- ❖ **3 Local Artists:** Residents of Norman or surrounding communities in Oklahoma
- ❖ **3 Non-Local Artists:** Artists from outside the region with proven mural experience

- **Budget**

Each artist will receive an equitable stipend, with funding allocated to support high-quality, durable work and fair compensation. The total project budget is \$50,000, which will be used to cover:

- ❖ Artist fees and materials
- ❖ Equipment rental (e.g., scaffolding, lifts)
- ❖ Site preparation and sealing
- ❖ Coordination, insurance, and contingency costs

- **Timeline**

This timeline allows for sufficient lead time to coordinate with the Norman Music Festival, potentially aligning the mural unveiling with the event for increased visibility and public engagement.

- ❖ **Call for Artists Released:** Summer 2025
- ❖ **Artist Selection Finalized:** Fall 2025
- ❖ **Site Preparation and Planning:** Winter 2025–26
- ❖ **Mural Execution:** Spring 2026
- ❖ **Target Completion: Weekend of Norman Music Festival 2026** (pending approval from the NMF Board)

- **Goals and Impact**

- ❖ Enhance public space through permanent, professionally produced artwork
- ❖ Celebrate diverse artistic voices from Norman and beyond
- ❖ Strengthen the visual and cultural identity of downtown Norman
- ❖ Attract foot traffic and cultural tourism to the area
- ❖ Provide a lasting creative legacy in alignment with the City's strategic public art goals

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Park Commission recommend to Council to allow the Public Arts Committee of the Norman Arts Council to proceed and utilize \$50,000 of already allocated public art funds for the Gray Street Parking Lot Mural Project.