



505 S. Garey Ave
Pomona, CA 91766

City of Pomona

Cultural Arts Commission

Draft Action Minutes

Chairperson Christian Ornelas
Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soseith
Commissioner Jovani Esparza
Commissioner Dianna Batts
Commissioner Nancy A. Tessier
Commissioner Joshua Swodeck
Seat Vacant

October 27 , 2025

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth called the Cultural Arts Commission meeting to order at 5:32p.m. in the Council Chambers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Christian Ornelas (late arrival at 5:42 p.m.)
Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth
Commissioner Jovani Esparza
Commissioner Dianna Batts
Commissioner Nancy A. Tessier
Commissioner Joshua Swodeck

Absent: None

Staff Present: Ata Khan, Office & Economic of Business Affairs Deputy Director
Jocelyn Ayala, Art in Public Places Program Manager
June Ku, Art in Public Places Program Coordinator

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Commissioner Swodeck invited fellow commissioners to apply and join the Christmas Parade.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Action Minutes from the Cultural Arts Commission meeting of September 22, 2025.

A motion by Commissioner Swodeck, seconded by Commissioner Esparza, carried by a unanimous vote of the members present (5-0-0-1) to approve the Action Minutes from the Cultural Arts Commission meeting of September 22, 2025.

Chairperson Christian Ornelas – absent; Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth – yes; Commissioner Jovani Esparza – yes; Commissioner Dianna Batts – yes; Commissioner Nancy Tessier – yes; Commissioner Joshua Swodeck – yes.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 1 minute (5:36 p.m. to 5:37 p.m.)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. 2026 Calendar

Program Manager Ayala presented the 2026 Cultural Arts Commission Meeting Schedule.

A motion by Commissioner Esparza, seconded by Vice Chairperson Soiseth, carried by a unanimous vote of the members present (5-0-0-1) to approve the 2026 Calendar.

Chairperson Christian Ornelas – absent; Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth – yes; Commissioner Jovani Esparza – yes; Commissioner Dianna Batts – yes; Commissioner Nancy Tessier – yes; Commissioner Joshua Swodeck – yes.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 1 minute (5:37 pm to 5:38 pm)

2. 2022 Call for Art – Mosaic Mural by Gary Lett Project Update and Request for New

Location

Program Manager Ayala presented current storage location and condition of mosaic pieces accounted for by staff upon acceptance of the artwork in its current state. The artwork will be stored in the library until project installation begins. Installation is recommended to occur at Civic Center despite its original planned installation at Martin Luther King Jr. Park, due to the necessity of building a separate wall to account for the mosaic's projected weight. Other locations for installation were discussed with the artist, and Civic Center was the most agreeable replacement site, specifically the north-facing wall of the library. A wall will be constructed in front of the north-facing wall for mosaic installation.

Staff also sought approval for the addition of \$5000 to the artist Gary Lett's agreement to allow for supervision during mosaic installation. A bid will be sought to build the wall for the mosaic to be installed upon. Deputy Director Khan added that though it would be ideal to have the mosaic in MLK Park, the change in location is being requested due to structural concerns with the wall's capacity to support the mosaic's weight, and the lack of activation, walking path, or lighting in the Southeast corner of MLK Park where the mosaic was proposed to go.

Commissioner Tessier expressed that she liked the change in location as more people might see the piece at Civic, and that the piece would be more secure. Commissioner Tessier then asked the artist Gary Lett for his opinion on the new location.

The artist Garey Lett expressed that although initially disappointed that the artwork cannot serve its original meaning at MLK Park, he has no objections with the new location and trusts more people will see it at Civic Center. Lett shared that the freestanding wall to be built will take into consideration the architecture of the library wall so that the unified look is cohesive.

Vice Chairperson Soiseth asked if the piece will still be accessible for all to approach if at the new location and Lett affirmed that it will, and that more people will be able to safely engage the mural at Civic Center. Lett added that at the library, the piece gains the added purpose of being a learning tool which furthers engagement.

Vice Chairperson Soiseth asked Staff if there are plans to build an area around the mural for engagement such as a park. Deputy Director Khan pointed out the foreground in front of where the mural is to be placed and noted that it can be landscaped to be an engagement space, and that the gate in front may be considered for removal. Deputy Director Khan noted that the killing of any existing trees there should be avoided as much as possible, but it should be possible to build a mini courtyard.

Commissioner Swodeck added that the larger trees can be worked around but one of the smaller trees might have to be relocated, and that while happy about Civic Center as the new location of the mural, expressed disappointment that the mural can no longer be used to activate MLK Park.

Commissioner Swodeck added that he liked that the placemaking the mural would allow aligns with previous conversations about activating the space around the library, then

asked if the bid will be for parties handling art or wall construction.

Deputy Director Khan clarified that the bid would go out to metal/steel fabricators with qualifications doing so for art pieces.

Deputy Director Khan added that it would be the first time the art fund was used for a capital improvement project, and that the additional \$5000 would be for the artist Gary Lett to supervise the installation of the project.

The artist Gary Lett added that he will do the installation and that there have already been communications with three builders who have submitted proposals for MLK Park and that the additional \$5000 is also meant to cover this previous labor of communicating with the builders.

Commissioner Swodeck expressed concern regarding what is required to support the structural integrity of the piece and whether engineers would have to be involved.

Project Manager Ayala clarified that the project would have to undergo full city approval which involves going to public works engineers.

Chairperson Ornelas asked if there would be concrete involved in wall construction or if it would be metal.

Project Manager Ayala clarified that the metal would be the wall holding the mural, but any structural posts and its materials would be up to those submitting the bid.

The artist Gary Lett added that in a previous project, cinderblock and cement were used.

Commissioner Swodeck expressed desire for the discussion item to be brought to commission again in the future to discuss other aspects of the project such as accessibility and visibility.

Deputy Director Khan assured that the project will be brought to the commission again when considering the bids.

Vice Chairperson Soiseth asked if the mural would be framed by a metal structure.

The artist Gary Lett answered that the design would be up to the engineers and that he has previous experience ensuring engineering elements are not aesthetically unpleasant.

Commissioner Esparza asked if commissioners would be able to see what designs are submitted during the bidding process.

Deputy Director Khan responded that usually bids are not presented to commission, but a commission review process can be added if desired.

A motion by Commissioner Swodeck, seconded by Chairperson Ornelas, carried by a unanimous vote of the members present (6-0-0-0) to approve the change in mural

location from MLK Park to Civic Center and the amendment of the artist Gary Lett's contract to include an additional \$5000 on the condition of commission review of pre-bid language.

Chairperson Christian Ornelas – yes; Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth – yes; Commissioner Jovani Esparza – yes; Commissioner Dianna Batts – yes; Commissioner Nancy Tessier – yes; Commissioner Joshua Swodeck – yes.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 43 minutes (5:38 p.m. to 6:26 p.m.)

3. Approval of Metro A Line Pomona North Station Temporary Public Art Pilot Program

Deputy Director Khan shared that for purposes of more ridership and safety, Staff is seeking approval for the use of \$50,000 to activate the Metro A Line Pomona North Station with temporary public art.

Commissioner Esparza asked if Metro will be matching funds to which Deputy Director Khan responded no.

Vice Chairperson Soiseth expressed that this pilot program could be a good opportunity and asked if it is possible that Metro will financially contribute if the program is a success.

Deputy Director Khan responded that it remains to be seen and that the benefit for the city would be the Metro A Line driving more visitors to Pomona's art scene and added that it could be a collaboration with Art Walk.

Commissioner Esparza asked if in lieu of a financial contribution, Metro would allow advertising on their trains for Pomona Art Walk.

Deputy Director Khan stated it could be a possibility and there are other existing programs for potential collaboration such as custom Pomona TAP cards and wraps outside the train that could feature art from Pomona artists.

Chairperson Ornelas added that based on his experience riding the trains, many stations have their unique look and art and that this could be a good opportunity to showcase Pomona.

Commissioner Tessier asked what state the unused depot being proposed to house the pilot art program is in.

Deputy Director Khan responded that it is unclear what state the interior is in but the space is intended to be leased out and the intention is to visit with the building official.

Commissioner Tessier added that this could be a great opportunity to host a gallery and

advertise Second Saturdays and Downtown Pomona, and asked if Metro would be open to having a mural on the outside of the building.

Deputy Director Khan added that the mural and other ideas can be shared with Metro.

Commissioner Swodeck asked which parties would be involved in overseeing and approving the content of the pilot program.

Deputy Director Khan responded that since it is temporary in nature, Metro would not be reviewing the content.

Commissioner Swodeck added that it would be beneficial if this could involve an MOU through the Olympics and have the activation lead up to 2028.

Deputy Director Khan assured that the intention is to engage long term in a 5-to-10-year span and that the depot activation is just one example, but Metro is open minded as to what form the activation takes.

Commissioner Swodeck expressed interest in the activation expanding beyond visual art and cited live music as an example.

LA Metro Deputy Executive Officer Lily O'Brien made public comment in support of station activation through art.

A motion by Commissioner Swodeck, seconded by Chairperson Ornelas, carried by a unanimous vote of the members present (6-0-0-0) to approve \$50,000 for the Metro A Line Pomona North Station Temporary Public Art Pilot Program.

Chairperson Christian Ornelas – yes; Vice-Chairperson Lisa P. Soiseth – yes; Commissioner Jovani Esparza – yes; Commissioner Dianna Batts – yes; Commissioner Nancy Tessier – yes; Commissioner Joshua Swodeck – yes.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: Lily O'Brien

DISCUSSION TIME: 22 minutes (6:26 p.m. to 6:48 p.m.)

4. Action Plan – Discuss Draft Outline of Plan

Project Manager Ayala presented the action plan outline which is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Purpose & Intention Statement
3. Goals
 - a. People & Creative Placemaking
 - i. Community Based Organizations
 - ii. Artist and Arts Organization Registry

- iii. Cultural Arts Commission
- iv. Advisory Committee
- b. Programs & Creative Placekeeping
 - i. Cultural Arts District
 - ii. Development Projects
 - iii. Arts Education
 - iv. City Events
 - v. Artist in Residency
 - vi. Micro-Galleries
 - vii. Public Art Collection
- c. Program Administration
- d. Acknowledgments

Commissioner Swodeck suggested the addition of Neighborhood Services under Development Projects to include art and housing, and more emphasis on the cultural aspects of AIPP.

Commissioner Esparza added that he'd be interested in an art compound in vacant properties.

Chairperson Ornelas mentioned a free paint space such as a wall at MLK Park.

Commissioner Swodeck suggested a wall on First Street and Hamilton.

Chairperson Ornelas also suggested the CalTrans walls on Merchanson.

Commissioner Tessier inquired if there are plans to paint murals on more underpasses, to which Deputy Director Khan responded yes.

Commissioner Swodeck asked if the temporary wall concept is written into the action plan, to which Project Manager Ayala responded yes, under Arts and Development Services.

Chairperson Ornelas mentioned he would like to see the inclusion of a rotating sculpture program.

Deputy Director Khan added that the center of roundabouts could be sculpture locations.

Commissioner Swodeck emphasized the importance of making the language extremely clear to uphold the legacy of AIPP and to prevent the use of art as a gentrifying force.

Deputy Director Khan added that it could be a good use of the AIPP fund to assist with the rent of galleries to combat escalating costs.

Vice Chairperson Soiseth suggested the incubation of art-type businesses.

Commissioner Tessier mentioned the benefit of having a Cultural Arts Commission storefront downtown.

Discussion only, no action taken.

IN OPPOSITION: None

IN SUPPORT: None

DISCUSSION TIME: 17 minutes (6:50 p.m. to 7:07 p.m.)

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Deputy Director Khan updated that an Open Streets Metro LA grant was submitted to request \$1,000,000 for a 3-mile slow street on Park Avenue. He also extended an invitation to the commissioners to join a meeting with Nora Halpern of the Cultural Olympiad team.

Program Coordinator Ku introduced themselves as the new addition to the Art in Public Places team.

Program Manager Ayala presented updates on the following items:

1. Mural on 1321 East Holt at the Cesar Chavez Foundation has been completed.
2. 17th Annual Chalk Art Festival is two weeks away.

PUBLIC HEARING

None

ADJOURNMENT

The Cultural Arts Commission meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Ornelas at 7:15 p.m. to the next regular meeting of November 24, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Prepared by,

Ata Khan
Deputy Director

June Ku
Program Coordinator