



Date: November 20, 2023

To: Wanda S. Page, City Manager
Through: Bertha T. Winbush, Deputy City Manager
From: Jina B. Propst, Director, General Services Department
Subject: Agreement to Create Public Art at the Former Wheels Skating Center

Executive Summary

The General Services Department proposes to execute an agreement totaling \$145,000 with Dare Coulter Company to design, fabricate and install public art at the Former Wheels Skating Center. In collaboration with Durham Parks and Recreation (DPR), the Cultural and Public Art Program issued a Request for Qualifications seeking an artist or artist team with experience in community-based engagement and storytelling to design and fabricate a site-specific exterior public art installation at the Former Wheels Skating Center located at 715 N Hoover Rd, Durham, NC, 27703.

An artist selection panel reviewed and evaluated 34 proposals and conducted finalist interviews. The selection panel recommended Dare Coulter Company as the preferred artist to design and install the public art project. Funding for the Former Wheels Skating Center Public Art project ("Wheels Public Art") has been allocated by City Council utilizing Equitable and Green Infrastructure (EGI) funding. If authorized, the preferred artist agrees to complete the Wheels Public Art by late summer 2024 to align with the completion schedule for the overall Former Wheels Skating Center renovation project.

Motion

To authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement to Create Public Art at Former Wheels Skating Center with Dare Coulter Company in an amount not to exceed \$145,000.

Background

Wheels Fun Park was a family owned and operated facility in Durham, NC from 1980 to 2020. On December 22, 2020, the City of Durham purchased the facility along with 8 acres of surrounding land for a community aquatics center. Throughout engagement for the aquatics center project, the public emphasized a desire to retain and reopen the roller-skating rink as part of the overall site development. Responding to engagement feedback, the City incorporated renovation and operation of the former Wheels Skating Center into the project. As a part of the Equitable and Green Infrastructure funding allocation process in spring 2023, the City appropriated funding for the Wheels Public Art. The goal of the Wheels Public Art project is to celebrate the history of Wheels as a community institution providing family fun and recreational activities in Durham since 1980, and to enhance the sense of place experienced by all future visitors to the renovated facility.

On August 30, 2023, the City of Durham issued a Request for Qualifications in English and in Spanish seeking qualified artists, and received 34 artist proposals prior to the September 29, 2023 deadline. A diverse artist selection panel comprised of community members, arts advocates, local

curators, members of the Public Art Committee and Durham Cultural Advisory Board, and City staff evaluated each proposal received. The panel selected four finalists for interviews.

Following individual panelist evaluations, combined panel sessions, and finalist interviews, the panel recommended Dare Coulter Company as the preferred artist based upon their strong qualifications, connections to the Durham community, and strategy for engaging Durham residents as a key step in the Wheels Public Art design process.

The selection panel evaluated candidate proposals based upon criteria identified by the Public Art Committee (a Durham Cultural Advisory Board subcommittee). Proposals were scored based upon the extent to which each proposal demonstrated successful prior experience:

- Creating community connections and engaging residents to inform the design;
- Designing artwork with strong aesthetic qualities and compatibility with the project site;
- Demonstrating knowledge of diversity and inclusion through the artist's ability to establish diverse community connections, reflect diversity, and/or showcase diverse and inclusive narratives; and
- Evidencing a skilled approach to technical considerations including budget, successful record of project management and delivery, and ability to create quality opportunities for mentees or partnerships.

As a part of the design development and approval process the preferred artist will present their final design proposal for the Wheels Public Art to the Public Art Committee for review and feedback. The preferred artist will be responsible for collaborating with the community to design, fabricate and install a community-informed public artwork that visually connects to the site and/or its historical or cultural context, and beautifies the building facade. The preferred artist will be responsible for timely completion of all project elements, to align fully with the overall construction schedule for the Former Wheels Skating Center renovation and reopening in 2024.

Issues and Analysis

The proposed agreement with Dare Coulter Company is consistent with the City Council's commitment to supporting and expanding public art and culture in Durham.

Coulter's prior work experience, background and qualifications includes community-centered engagement, and design and installation of small and large-scale public art projects. Coulter's proposal and interview showcased their connection to Durham's history and volunteerism with Feed Durham. Coulter was commissioned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to paint a depiction of Nina Simone. Coulter successfully conducted inclusive community engagement as the City of Raleigh's first ever artist-in-residence for their Bus Rapid Transit's corridor development plan. Coulter has public artwork installations located across North Carolina including a large exterior sculptural work, as well as published illustrations of nine children's books including "My NC from A to Z" by Michelle Lanier, "You Are My Sunshine," and "An American Story" by Kwame Alexander.

The City has allocated a total public art project budget of \$145,000; which is inclusive of all costs associated with the Wheels Public Art project including, but not limited to, artist fees, subcontractors' fees, insurance, engineering, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, community engagement, supporting an artist mentee, and associated documentation of the artwork once installed. Up to \$3,000 of the total project budget may be utilized by the artist to conduct public engagement sessions, including all associated materials, event supplies, and/or third-party services to facilitate robust community engagement. Up to \$2,000 of the total project

budget is available to support an artist mentee. Inclusion of a mentee opportunity in a major City public art project serves to expand the pool of Durham artists with hands-on project experience and knowledge of the unique characteristics of creating publically funded art.

Alternatives

City Council could choose not to authorize the City Manager to execute the Wheels Public Art agreement with Dare Coulter Company. Without City Council authorization, there will be no exterior public art component included in the Former Wheels Skating Center renovation project.

Financial Impact

If authorized, the proposed \$145,000 agreement will be funded utilizing FY24 appropriations from the City’s EGI fund (Org:3000H000/Obj:732301/Pro:EG12).

Equal Business Opportunity Summary

The Underutilized Business Compliance Division reviewed the specifications submitted for the above-referenced effort to determine appropriate UBE participation goals.

MUBE Participation Goal

Based on the specifications outlined for this project, the MUBE participation goal should be 0%.

WUBE Participation Goal

Based on the specifications outlined for this project, the WUBE participation goal should be 0%.

Contractor Workforce Diversity & Hiring Practices

According to the contractor’s responses to the “Contractor Workforce Diversity Questionnaire,” the contractor is a small employer (less than 50 employees) consisting of 1 mostly professional/skilled worker. The contractor believes it has a diverse workforce, however, notes that “I am a minority and fall into a number of minority groups, but it is also not possible to have diversity with a single operator.” The contractor did list a few examples of efforts it makes to have a more diverse workforce.

Part A – Employee Diversity Breakdown Table for Primary Location

Employment Category	Total Employees	Total Males	Total Females	M-----a-----l-----e-----s					F-----e-----m-----a-----l-----e-----s				
				White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Indian or Alaskan Native	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian or Pacific Islander	Indian or Alaskan Native
Project Manager	0	0	0										
Professional	1	0	1						1				
Labor	0	0	0										
Clerical	0	0	0										
TOTALS	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Attachments

Agreement to Create Public Art at the Former Wheels Skating Center

Dare Coulter Qualifications and Work Samples