




July 3, 2025

TO: MEMBERS, PORT COMMISSION
Hon. Gail Gilman, President
Hon. Stephen Engblom, Vice President
Hon. Willie Adams
Hon. Steven Lee
Hon. Ken McNeely

FROM: Elaine Forbes
Executive Director 

SUBJECT: Informational presentation on an unsolicited and artist sponsored proposal by the Sijbrandij Foundation in partnership with Building 180 to place temporary public art along the Port of San Francisco's waterfront as part of the Port's Public Art Program.

DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION: Information Only – No Action Required

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, Port Planning staff completed the Port's first-ever [Public Art Program](#) that describes the process for the selection of artists and public art and guides its placement along the Port of San Francisco waterfront. As outlined in the program, unsolicited and artist sponsored proposals are reviewed by staff and presented informationally to the applicable Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Port Commission, with final approval by the Port's Executive Director. In Spring of 2025, the Port received an unsolicited and artist sponsored proposal by the Sijbrandij Foundation in partnership with Building 180 ("project sponsor") to place up to 20 temporary public art sculpture installations along the Port's waterfront through multiple phases.

The project sponsor's interest is in placing large-scale works by emerging local and national artists for a period of 6 months to one year, with an option to extend the duration. In response to this interest, Port staff identified potential sites from Heron's Head Park to Fisherman's Wharf, with a cluster in the Central and Northern Waterfront areas in the first phase (see Exhibit A for proposed sites and phasing).

The project sponsor has presented the Port with proposed artwork based on a number of considerations outlined further in the report below. Staff have reviewed the proposed sculpture installations and have found the artwork consistent with the criteria outlined in the Port's Public Art Program. On July 8th, Port staff will present the top selections to the Port Commission. Final selections will be dependent on sculpture installation availability, donor budget availability, and permitting for each piece. The project sponsor's goal is to install Phase 1 in Fall 2025, and Phase 2 is anticipated in Summer 2026.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Activation of the Port's waterfront through temporary public art supports the Port's Strategic Plan goals:

Economic Recovery:

Public art helps the waterfront recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by drawing new visitors and encouraging existing visitors to explore more of the waterfront, remain longer, and patronize Port tenant businesses while doing so. It can also help drive future investment in adjacent areas.

Equity:

Public art can help the Port achieve its equity goals by providing economic opportunities for a diverse range of local and national artists and by bringing art into parts of the waterfront that have received less economic investment and/or are home to low-income and BIPOC populations. Of the first 12 sculptures/ installations currently proposed for Phase 1, 4 are from women/BIPOC artists and 7 are local.

Engagement and Public Awareness:

Public art and an associated "waterfront walk" between installations can function as platforms for community engagement. Not only will this project engage the public in new activities along the waterfront, but it will create opportunities for partnerships with Port tenants, community-based organizations, artist organizations, cultural institutions, and others who would like to help program and promote the new art.

BACKGROUND/ PROJECT PROPOSAL

As part of the Port's economic recovery strategy, the Port has been planning ways to bring more daily activity to the waterfront. Included in these plans are goals to place temporary sculptures/ installations along the waterfront through the Port's new Public Art Program, and to create a "waterfront walk" that allows people to explore art, other amenities, and businesses via a guided and activated path, rather than just visit a single destination. As planning for that work began, the Port was approached by an arts production group, Building 180, in partnership with a donor, the Sijbrandij Foundation, seeking to place up to 100 temporary sculptures throughout San Francisco by 2028. The foundation will pay to secure, install, maintain, retain liability, and remove the art.

The Sijbrandij Foundation was formed by Sid and Karen Sijbrandij and is proposing the artwork in partnership with Building 180. Building 180 is a woman-led art production agency that produces complex art installations and, through their nonprofit arm Paint the

Void, facilitated over 250 murals on boarded-up storefronts in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Their team is actively pursuing sites in locations across the city, and with multiple city departments and private owners to reach their ambitious goal. They have recently installed R-Evolution at Embarcadero Plaza and multiple sculptures at Sunset Dunes, Mid-Market, and Golden Gate Park.

A Port staff team from Planning and Real Estate presented the project sponsor with approximately 20 possible waterfront locations and has agreed on most sites. The project sponsor's preference is for high foot traffic locations, and they support the idea of clustering them into a walkable experience and art trail. The project sponsor has now provided Port staff with sculpture installation options for up to 12 sites comprising the first phase (Exhibit A). Separately, the project sponsor is in discussions with the Giants about the potential placement of sculptures in China Basin Park.

Top Artwork Selections

For each site, a preferred choice and an alternative sculpture installation (see Table 1 below) have been vetted and selected from a pool of initial options based on the following considerations:

- The Port's Public Art Program criteria for temporary art;
- Additional guidance, including the Port's interest in water-oriented themes, opportunities for interactive pieces, the creation of a "waterfront walk", and diverse representation of artists; and
- Preliminary review of engineering feasibility, appropriateness, and safety

It is important to note that the top selection or alternative sculpture installation may be substituted pending issues with engineering, site feasibility, sculpture availability, and/or budget constraints.

Table 1 - Proposed Artwork and Artist by Location (subject to change)
(see Exhibit B - Artwork Details)

Location	Artwork Title	Artist/ Artist Team
1. Pier 45	<i>Desert Shark</i>	Peter Hazel
2. Pier 27 - Cruise Terminal	<i>Atabey</i>	El Nino*
3. Pier 7	<i>Got Framed</i>	El Nino*
4. Pier ½	<i>Coralee</i>	Dana Albany*
5. Harry Bridges Plaza	<i>Echoes</i>	Mathias Gmachi
6. WETA Plaza	<i>Dristi</i>	Kristen Berg
7. Pier 14	<i>Pulse Portal</i>	Davis McCarty
8. Brannan Street Wharf	<i>Corpus</i>	Michael Christian
9. Pier 52 Boat Launch	<i>Steelhead</i>	Bryan Tedrick*
10. Bayfront Park	<i>Louis</i>	Dewitt Godfrey
11. Crane Cove Park	<i>Dr. Fisherian's Runaway Machine</i>	Chris Wollard
12. Heron's Head Park	<i>Bloom</i>	Michael Christian
*Local/ BIPOC Artist(s)		

Waterfront Art Walk

The project sponsor's interest in placing temporary art on Port property aligns with the Port's recovery work plan goal regarding the creation of a "waterfront walk". To take advantage of this opportunity, Port staff intend to develop a waterfront art walk program to promote visitation of the new temporary art as well as existing public art on the waterfront. Components of this program may include plaques, a QR code, social media, a website, and marketing. With already-approved funding for the waterfront walk, the Port will partner with a team that can provide branding, design, and production of this marketing. The team will also provide dedicated daily monitors for the temporary art installations and will support community-driven programming at individual locations along the waterfront walk, as well as a launch event and other waterfront-wide activations.

STAFF REVIEW & APPROVAL PROCESS

Per the Port's [Public Art Program](#), artist sponsored or unsolicited proposals occur when artists or arts organizations approach the Port requesting permission to temporarily display artwork on Port property. Artist sponsored proposals are approved by the Port's Executive Director and are at the sponsor's expense. Artist sponsored or unsolicited proposals are evaluated by Port staff up to three (3) times a year (February, June, and October) or as directed by the Port's Executive Director.

For temporary artwork proposals, the Public Art Program outlines the following review and selection process for Port staff:

- Proposals will be reviewed by Port staff for consistency with the Criteria for Artist sponsored Art (Section V) of the Public Art Program.
- The selection process may include a review by the Port's Advisory Committees and/or BCDC if required by the scope of each group of committees.
- Port staff may present final proposals as an informational item to the Port Commission for review and comment prior to consideration of approval by the Port's Executive Director.

Upon completion of the project, ownership and maintenance for artist sponsored public art shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring artist or arts organization (per Section VI of the Public Art Program).

The below describes the tentative schedule for next steps, including public and tenant outreach, and review and permitting.

Task	Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engineering, ADA, & Safety Preliminary Review:• CAC Informational Presentations<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ FWAC: July 9○ NAC: July 16○ SAC: August 27• Port Commission Informational Presentation:• Key Stakeholder Outreach (tenants/neighbors):• BCDC Review:	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 8</p> <p>July-August</p> <p>July-August</p>

- License & Encroachment Permits: July-August
- Phase 1 Installation of Sculptures: October

Community Engagement

In addition to the presentations to the Port Commission and Port Advisory Committees (PAC), Port staff intend to undertake independent outreach to the adjacent Port tenants of each proposed artwork. Stakeholder feedback can inform the specific siting of each piece, and it is hoped that neighboring businesses (and residents, in some cases) can help be the eyes and ears for adjacent art works and will become partners in engaging new people and groups in the waterfront walk.

License, Encroachment Permits, & Fee Waivers

Port intends to execute a single license with the project sponsor that allows for up to 20 art works at an established list of Port locations.

- *License:*
Premises: Approx. 15,000 square feet in total across multiple sites of Port-wide sidewalk, open space, and improved land.

Term: The License shall commence in August 2025*, expiring September 30, 2027, with a mutually agreed upon month-to-month holdover.

*Commencement date subject to change.

- *Encroachment Permits:*
An Encroachment Permit for each piece will be required by the applicant for review and approval by Port staff to install artwork on Port property.
- *Fee Waivers:*
Resolution No. 19-24 authorizes the Executive Director to waive license and encroachment permit fees for Public Art. Port staff will seek fee waivers for both the license and the encroachment permits for Executive Director consideration and approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Staff anticipate that the proposed temporary art installations will not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or will qualify for a categorical exemption from CEQA.

NEXT STEPS

Port staff will continue to work with the project sponsor by evaluating the temporary artwork for the proposed waterfront locations. In parallel, Port staff will draft and finalize the License, continue community outreach, and seek approval from the Port's Executive Director. Once the License and approval are secured, the project sponsor will submit Encroachment Permits for review and approval by Port staff to install the temporary artwork. Installation for Phase 1 is anticipated in October of this year, followed by Phase 2

in Summer 2026. Any artwork proposed for Phase 2 will follow the same review process and be presented to the Port Commission and ultimately approved by the Port's Executive Director.

Prepared by: Ryan Wassum, Senior Planner
Planning & Environment

Amy Cohen, Business Generation Manager
Real Estate & Development

Cathy Hickey, Park Services and Open Space Manager
Real Estate & Development

For: David Beaupre, Deputy Director
Planning & Environment Division

Exhibits:

- A. Proposed Waterfront Art Sites
- B. Proposed Artwork - Top Selections & Alternatives