



City of Austin

Recommendation for Action

File #: 26-1641, **Agenda Item #:** 2.

5/7/2026

Posting Language

Authorize the negotiation and execution of an agreement with artist team Ion Art, for artwork for the Ross Road Substandard Streets Art in Public Places Project, in an amount not to exceed \$330,000. Funding: \$330,000 is available in the Capital Budget of Austin Transportation and Public Works.

Lead Department

Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment.

Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$330,000 is available in the Capital Budget of Austin Transportation and Public Works.

For More Information:

Angela Means, Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment, 512-974-1624; Morgan Messick, Assistant Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment, 512-974-7873; Jaime Castillo, Art in Public Places Manager, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment, 512-974-7852.

Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

May 5, 2025 - The Art in Public Places (AIPP) Panel unanimously approved the direct selection recommendation for the Ross Road Project, naming Ion Art for the \$330,000 commission. (Motion by Liaison Maldonado; Kristi-Anne Shaer seconded. Motion passed on a 5-0-0 vote).

May 19, 2025 - The Austin Arts Commission unanimously approved the AIPP Panel selection recommendation for the Ross Road Project, naming Ion Art for the \$330,000 commission. The item passed on consent. (Motion by Commissioner Gray's, Commissioner Maldonado's second on an 8-0 vote with Commissioner Keys Abstaining and Commissioners Zisman and Hussaini absent).

Additional Backup Information:

Developed by Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment (ACME), AIPP and Austin Capital Delivery Services, sought to commission local, professional, visual artists to design, fabricate, and install artwork for the Ross Road Substandard Streets Art in Public Places Project. The goal of the project is to commission Texas-based artists and/or artist teams who, in collaboration with City staff and community stakeholders, design artwork that integrates with the physical site.

The artwork should be relevant to the Ross Road Substandard Streets Project and how it serves the community, and conceptually accessible to staff and the local community. The artist will work in collaboration with the project team, stakeholders, and City staff to design and create artwork that adds additional value to the site. Capital Delivery Services reviewed and provided input on the public art project outline prior to its approval by the AIPP Panel and the Arts Commission.

On September 24, 2024, a Request for Qualifications was released to Texas-based artists aged 18 years or

older who live and work in the State of Texas. Artist outreach efforts included a virtual artist information meeting held via Zoom on September 29, 2024; information posted on the AIPP website, multiple notices in AIPP and Cultural Arts Division newsletters and social media, Imagine Austin, Nextdoor, and assistance from Austin Capital Delivery Services.

The total budget available for the project is \$330,000, inclusive of embedded artist time, design, insurance, and all fabrication and installation-related costs.

Due to the Council resolution directing staff to update the AIPP Ordinances, this contract authorization was put on hold while the review process took place. Staff are now seeking authorization for the contract

Artist Selection:

February 21, 2025 - The selection panel reviewed 18 applications and recommended six semi-finalists to submit conceptual proposals for the project. On April 11, 2025, Ion Art was named as the selected artist team and Dharmesh Patel as alternate artist for the \$330,000 commission, respectively. The AIPP Panel and the Arts Commission approved the selection process recommendation at their May 2025 meetings.

Selection Panel Voting Panelists

- Courtney Arte Jimenez - Austin Artist and Ross Road area Resident
- Lesley Chantal - Austin Artist
- Liza Fishbone - Austin Artist

Selection Panel Non-Voting Advisors

- Micheal Singleton- Sponsor Project Manager, Austin Capital Delivery Services
- Shivani Kesar- Sponsor Project Manager, Austin Capital Delivery Services

Selection Meeting Facilitators

- Rebecca Rende - AIPP Sr Project Coordinator
- Jaime Castillo- AIPP Program Manager

About the Artist:

Founded in 1986 and based in Austin, Texas, Ion Art is a multidisciplinary art studio and fabrication company known for its innovative integration of light, sculpture, and architectural elements. With over three decades of experience creating custom public artworks, signage, and installations, Ion Art has built a reputation for artistic excellence, technical precision, and community engagement.

The team's collaborative approach combines creative vision with skilled craftsmanship, resulting in durable, impactful works that enhance public spaces and reflect the unique character of their surroundings. Ion Art has successfully completed commissions for the City of Austin and other civic clients, making them a trusted partner in the creation of meaningful public art.