

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)  
and Office of Councilmember Kevin de León  
**Request For Proposals (RFP), Round 1**

# Little Tokyo Public Art Project

**Extended Deadline: September 10, 2021  
at 11:59 p.m.**

## Project Background

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the Office of Councilmember Kevin de León of the 14th District are seeking a qualified artist or artist team to create a public artwork that will be installed at the heart of Little Tokyo on Alameda and 2nd Street in Downtown Los Angeles. Today more than ever, it is vital to lift up the voices of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community and their contributions to the City of Los Angeles. The City would like to commission an artist or artist team to install an artwork that celebrates Little Tokyo values, its unique culture, and its rich history.

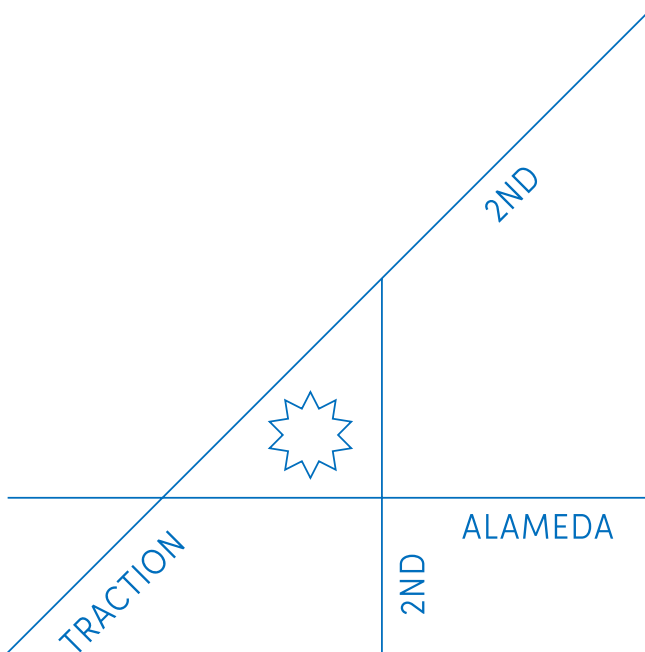
Little Tokyo is a 137-year historic Japantown, that is the center of the Southern California Japanese American community and a cultural hub for broader AAPI communities. Little Tokyo is home to more than 50 public artworks and 15 major Japanese American and AAPI arts and cultural institutions, celebrating arts and culture as essential

to its cultural and economic sustainability. The corner of Alameda and 2nd Street is heavily transited and sits on the main thoroughfare that connects neighborhoods to the south of Downtown, to the center of Downtown, and to the north of Union Station. The area surrounding 2nd Street and Alameda is seen as the gateway to the Little Tokyo neighborhood, and it is used as a major access point within Little Tokyo.

The neighborhood recently improved its sidewalks and streets to make the community safer and support all modes of transportation and pedestrian flow. The commissioned artwork will enhance the unique aesthetics of the local area and aim to increase pedestrian activity, while acting as a visual marker for the neighborhood. The artwork will celebrate the rich history and culture of the vibrant Little Tokyo community.

## Project Location

The project is located in the heart of the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, along Alameda Street and 2nd Street. The location is considered a major gateway into the historic Japantown and is a highly trafficked pathway. Directly adjacent to the project location to its south west is longtime Japanese American-owned Honda Plaza, which houses a number of legacy Japanese American businesses; across the street to the north west sits a parking lot that serves businesses along 2nd Street and Central, such as Shin-Sen-Gumi Ramen; the north east corner sits a large residential building; to the catty corner sits the Department of Water and Power (DWP) and the building's parking lot; south of the DWP building is Angel City Brewery, which is a major attraction in the Arts District. Currently, as described, the project location offers a unique opportunity to beautify the neighborhood and draw pedestrian traffic to Little Tokyo's many small businesses and cultural institutions.



## Criteria

The Little Tokyo community would like the public art installation to be a site-specific, large-scale, bold sculptural artwork that celebrates the Little Tokyo neighborhood. Proposals should have a positive and celebratory message, making a connection to Little Tokyo's history and the contemporary landscape, while avoiding controversial topics. The artwork should be vibrant and colorful, creating an inviting pathway between Little Tokyo and the Arts District. Educational or innovative cultural and historical representations of the past, present, and future of the neighborhood and the Little Tokyo community are welcomed. Artists interested in submitting a proposal inspired by Japanese or Japanese American culture should be mindful that the proposed artwork incorporates culturally-relevant representations of Little Tokyo's historic Japanese American community, which acknowledge and reflect the community's historically multiethnic, multigenerational, neighborhood community. *The art proposal should be culturally sensitive and avoid stereotypical imagery.* Incorporation of natural, sustainable, and/or recycled materials is encouraged.

As part of the community engagement component, the artist selected for this project **MUST** identify a Little Tokyo community entity, organization, or stakeholder as a local subject matter expert to partner with on this project. Strong consideration will be given to those applicants that provide examples during Round 1 of the RFP on how the community collaboration will take place. The artist's community partner should be involved, in an advisory capacity, during the planning, design, and implementation of the artwork during Round 2 of the RFP. The artist's community partner will be essential to the artwork's integration into the community.

Artist/artist teams must demonstrate the professional capacity to oversee the design, fabrication and installation of a public artwork in a public space. Artist/artist teams must also demonstrate the ability to work in consultation with project teams, including architects, landscape architects, engineers, fabricators, and general contractors. The selected artist/artist team must be available for meetings with the principals of the project, City advisory committees, and the public.

Artists may apply individually or as a team. Artists' teams may not change over the life of the project. Up to five (5) artists/artist teams will be selected to further refine their proposal for the project and present to the panel.

## Eligibility

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is open to professional artists/artist teams who live and work in the County of Los Angeles. Artists working in any media that have experience working in the public realm are encouraged to apply. Employees of the City of Los Angeles are ineligible to apply.

Applicants are encouraged to register on the City of Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network (BAVN). If your organization has previously received commissions, grants or contracts from the City of Los Angeles, then you have already registered on BAVN. If you are a new applicant, go to <https://www.labavn.org> to register to bid for a City of Los Angeles business commission, grant or contract. Technical support for BAVN may be requested by emailing <ita.bavn@lacity.org>. Sometime thereafter you may receive requests from BAVN to verify your location, the percentage of your workforce that lives in the City of Los Angeles, your status as a minority owned/operated business, and your status as a women owned/operated business. We encourage you to respond accurately so that individual artists are understood as a significant contributor to equity.

## Project Budget

The budget for the project is \$250,000. The budget is all-inclusive and must cover all expenses associated with the design, fabrication, lighting, artist fee, and installation, etc. The City will prepare the site for the artist for the purpose of supporting and facilitating the implementation of the art project. Funding for the project is provided from the Arts Development Fee Trust Fund and private donations.

## How to Apply

All applications must be submitted electronically via Slide Room by visiting <https://culturela.slideroom.com>. Incomplete and late applications will be deemed ineligible and not be considered. **Extended Deadline to Apply is September 10, 2021 at 11:59 p.m.** Artists are strongly encouraged to conduct independent research based on the information provided as well as visit the project location. At this time, DCA cannot provide additional information regarding the technical specifications of the project; finalists that are invited to participate in Round 2 to further develop their proposals will be given the specific parameters of the project and will be required to attend a site coordination meeting.

A complete application must include:

- 1. ARTIST'S CONTACT INFORMATION** including name, business name (if applicable), physical address, mailing address, telephone and email. Teams must identify one artist to be DCA's primary contact for the team, as well as contact information for each artist on the team.
- 2. STATEMENT OF INTEREST** [500 words max] in submitting a proposal for the Little Tokyo Public Art Project, as well as related experience.
- 3. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION** [750 words max] including the proposed artwork concept, physical materials, and community engagement component.
- 4. CURRICULUM VITAE** [PDF or DOC format only, 4 pages max]; teams must submit a CV for each artist on the team with a total of 4 pages per team member.
- 5. PROPOSED ARTWORK / MEDIA FILES** [max five (5) files] can include images, video, and/or audio. Each of the image files must include the title of the image, size, materials and brief description.
- 6. PAST PROJECTS / MEDIA FILES** [max ten (10) files] can include images, video, and/or audio; submit images of completed artwork that provides the panel with a sense of the proposed artwork you would produce if chosen for this commission; teams are encouraged to include projects created by the team. Each of the image files must include the title of the image, year, size, materials and brief description. For any commissioned project(s), also include the client, budget and location.
- 7. ITEMIZED BUDGET** [PDF or DOC format only] including preliminary costs for all aspects of the proposed project, i.e. design, fabrication, installation, insurance, engineering documents, permits, contingency, etc.
- 8. TIMELINE AND MAINTENANCE PLAN** [150 words max, DOC format only], estimated schedule for fabrication and installation and proposed maintenance plan.

\*Additional material included that is not requested by DCA will not be reviewed.

## Selection Process

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An artist selection panel may be composed of, but not limited to, arts professionals, a project engineer, local community representatives, and representatives of Council District 14. The panel will review all applications and select up to five (5) artists/artist teams based on their qualifications and proposal concepts. The five (5) finalists will be invited to a site walk-through, be provided with more technical site specifications, and be given a chance to refine their proposals more fully, receiving an \$800 honorarium to develop their proposal further. The five (5) finalists will then present their refined proposals to the selection panel during Round 2. Then, a community meeting will be held and the panel will convene for Round 3 to select one artist/artist team to receive the commission. The artist/artist team contract process will commence at that time.

## Rights + Responsibilities

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The Department of Cultural Affairs reserves the right to decline all applications to this RFP, and/or cancel this RFP at any time. This RFP is subject to the City's Campaign Finance, Contractor Responsibility, Equal Benefits, Equal Opportunity, Living Wage, Minority / Women Business Enterprise and Slavery Disclosure Ordinances, as well as any other ordinances in effect in the City of Los Angeles.

## About DCA

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The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) manages the City of Los Angeles Public Art Programs. DCA supports the creativity of local artists by funding and partnering with the City's arts and cultural communities. The City demonstrates an ongoing commitment to arts and culture through DCA's ongoing activities, including community arts programming, cultural grants, marketing, public arts and youth arts and education programs, to stimulate and foster the creation of arts and cultural experiences throughout the diverse neighborhoods of Los Angeles.

## Questions

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Please contact Jasmine Regala at [jasmine.regala@lacity.org](mailto:jasmine.regala@lacity.org)

RFP is available online at: <https://culturela.org/calls>

## Project Site Images

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1. [LINK 1](#)
2. [LINK 2](#)

## Additional Resources

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Sustainable Little Tokyo Resources: [LINK](#)



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