

# Memorandum



**Date:** April 14, 2026

**To:** Chair and Members  
Art in Public Places Trust

**From:** Ashlee K. Thomas, Interim Director  
Department of Cultural Affairs

**Subject:** Trust Resolution No. APPT 26-16 / Francisco Lo Castro – Jose Marti Gardens / Professional Artist Services Agreement

---

## **Trust Resolution No. APPT 26-16**

RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST SERVICES AGREEMENT IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FORM ATTACHED WITH FRANCISCO LO CASTRO IN THE FIXED FEE AMOUNT OF \$75,000.00 FOR PHASE I – DESIGN AND PHASE II – FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION SERVICES OF THE ARTWORK PROJECT FOR THE JOSE MARTI GARDENS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (FROM MIAMI-DADE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED URBAN PUBLIC ART FUNDS)

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Art in Public Places Trust approve a Professional Artist Services Agreement in substantially the form attached with Francisco Lo Castro in the fixed fee amount of \$75,000.00 for Phase I-Design and Phase II – Fabrication and Installation Services for the artwork project at the Jose Marti Gardens Housing Development.

### **Background**

A meeting of the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) was held on March 26, 2026 to review design proposals from a group of seven (7) artists shortlisted from a Regional Call to Artists for multiple public art opportunities for the new housing development at the former site of the Jose Marti public housing community. This public-private partnership between the Miami-Dade Department of Housing and Community Development and Related Urban Group comprise two (2) separate sites and facilities. The first build known as the Jose Marti Gardens (rebranded as Brisas del Sol II) is a 3-story garden-style building with 36 units and the second build, Jose Marti Midrise (rebranded as Brisas del Sol I), is an 8-story mid-rise building with 110 affordable units and community amenities. The call envisioned commissioning public art inspired by the works of seminal Spanish-Cuban author and activist José Martí and his poem “Guantanamera” famously interpreted by renowned singer Celia Cruz

The PAC unanimously recommended commissioning South Florida-based artist Francesco Lo Castro to develop his concept of *Arcadas* for the gazebo at the rear of the Jose Marti Gardens facility (Brisas del Sol I). Highly visible to all residents exiting the facility into the parking lot, the proposed artwork treats the threshold between building and street as an architectural event. Ornamental ironwork drawn from the pointed arch — resonant across Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Latin American civic traditions — repeats in compressed rhythm across the back and side panels, creating a screen that is simultaneously permeable and monumental. Hardwood cladding drapes the existing structure, emanating warmth and comfort. The greenscape in the background

along a perimeter chainlink fence will be enhanced with native Florida plan materials. The PAC also suggested the artist include the proposed add-on of a projector screen for outdoor movie screenings. All ironwork would be hot-dip galvanized prior to powder coating for long-term corrosion resistance in Miami's coastal climate.

APP staff recommends the approval of Trust Resolution No. APPT 26-16 authorizing a Professional Artist Services agreement in substantially the form attached with Francisco Lo Castro in the fixed amount of \$75,000.00 for Phase I-Design and Phase II- Fabrication and Installation Services of the artwork project for the Jose Marti Gardens (Brisas del Sol II) public housing development.