

Memorandum

Date: February 8, 2022

To: Chair and Members
Art in Public Places Trust

From: Michael Spring, Director
Department of Cultural Affairs

Subject: Trust Resolution No. APPT 22-04 / Xavier Cortada – Liberty Square / Addendum I

Trust Resolution No. APPT 22-04

RESOLUTION APPROVING ADDENDUM I TO THE PROFESSIONAL ARTIST SERVICES AGREEMENT IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FORM ATTACHED WITH XAVIER CORTADA IN THE FIXED-FEE AMOUNT OF \$125,000.00 FOR ADDITIONAL DESIGN, FABRICATION, AND INSTALLATION SERVICES OF THE ARTWORK PROJECT FOR THE LIBERTY SQUARE RISING HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – PHASE III PROJECT (FROM MIAMI-DADE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - RELATED URBAN – LIBERTY SQUARE PUBLIC ART FUND)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Art in Public Places Trust approve Addendum I to the Professional Artist Services Agreement in substantially the form attached with Xavier Cortada in the fixed-fee amount of \$125,000.00 for additional design, fabrication, and installation services of the artwork project for the Liberty Square Housing Development – Phase III project.

Background

On April 19, 2019, the Trust through Resolution APPT No. 19-13 approved a PAC recommendation to invite Miami-based artist Xavier Cortada to develop a site-specific proposal for the new Liberty Square Rising project. This public-private partnership between Related Urban and Miami-Dade Department of Public Housing and Community Development (PHCD) comprises the complete redevelopment of a 9-block campus of public housing and mixed-use in the center of the Liberty City neighborhood. The overall project entails the replacement of existing structures with new buildings, as well as the extensive renovation of an existing historic structure. Mr. Cortada's early involvement in the planning phase of the project and close collaboration with the developer in creating awareness for public art inclusion as part of this neighborhood's revival effort established his role as a significant community liaison.

In coordination with APP and the project team, Mr. Cortada worked on developing proposal concepts for various outdoor locations suitable for any of the first three phases of the development project. Each phase involves a block of garden-style housing units all featuring an identical central green lawn that incorporates landscaping, pathways, a children's playground, and large enclosure to conceal each block's garbage compactor system. Pursuant to the initial PAC recommendation, on May 28, 2020, the artist presented a series of newly developed concepts addressing the central green areas of Blocks 1,4, and 7. All concepts were representative of Mr. Cortada's signature style of working with images of local plants and wildlife that are consistent with his environmentally focused practice. The artist proposed two approaches: 1) to create a series of both hand-made flat tiles and sculptural tiles for exterior cladding of each of the three compactor enclosures or any other suitable building element; and 2) to fabricate a

series of vertical markers referencing his body of work “Native Flags” that depicts the leaves of trees native to South Florida.

After careful deliberation and review of the proposals presented by Mr. Cortada, the PAC recommended that he further refine his first concept to create a more dynamic placement for the tiles that incorporates organic shapes and vertical applications on more prominent locations throughout the development. The PAC provided this recommendation with the intention that APP, in collaboration with the client team, work with the artist to develop a design approach that aligned well with site conditions and maximized the artwork exposure to residents and visitors alike.

Following the PAC direction, APP staff along with the project’s design team, worked closely with the artist to identify several new locations and opportunities within Block 1, the recently completed first phase of the housing development. With a narrower focus, the artist revised the recommended concept to include a series of original tile designs, combining both flat and sculptural hand-made pieces, to serve as identifiers to all 6 entrances in each of the 6 buildings in the Block 1 housing complex. This approach expanding the placement of artwork across both the inner and outer facades of all building units, was enthusiastically supported by both the developer and the PHCD’s client teams. To expedite the inclusion of public art in this first phase of the development, the artist proposes to stagger the design, fabrication, and installation of the work to complete two buildings at a time.

On September 8, 2020, the APP Trust approved the PAC recommendation and authorized a Professional Artist Services Agreement with Xavier Cortada in the amount of \$250,000.00 for the design, fabrication, and installation of the artwork concept. Unfortunately, the Related Group team installed on those facades a series of canopies to protect the residents from the rainwater, without communicating it to the APP staff, and during a site visit it was recommended to relocate Xavier Cortada’s artwork to Phase III Block 7. The artist revised his design proposal to adapt the artwork to the new site conditions splitting the mural in two to frame the building entrances on 12th Avenue and 13th Avenue and the entrances of these same buildings on the side of the courtyard for a total of 12 entrances and 24 murals. After a year of delay in securing Related Urban’s approval for installation of the work, the developer requested that all artwork on the buildings’ façade along the 12th Avenue corridor be deleted and or relocated to other areas in the Phase III development. The developer is currently pursuing a community-based private program to commission historically inspired public art along the 12th Avenue corridor anticipated to visually conflict with Mr. Cortada’s artwork design.

Considering the lateness of this request and the advanced completion of the artist’s work, APP staff suggested that Mr. Cortada rethink his overall design and consider the treatment of additional exterior areas that could be appropriate for siting of the deleted murals. As a result, Mr. Cortada is proposing to reconfigure the placement of the original 24 murals and expand the scope to 36 murals to allow for all courtyard entrances to the buildings to be framed with his tile artwork. This additional 12 murals at a cost of \$125,000.00 will serve to unify the interior facades of all buildings in the Phase III development and increase the artist’s commission contract to \$375,000.00.

APP staff recommends the approval of Trust Resolution No. APPT 22-04 authorizing Addendum I to the Professional Artist Services Agreement with Xavier Cortada in the not-to-exceed amount of \$125,000.00 for additional design, fabrication, and installation services of the artwork project for the Liberty Square Rising Housing Development – Phase III project.