

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



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DANIEL TARICA
GENERAL MANAGER

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Karen Bass
Mayor of the City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall

The City Council
C/O City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
Attn: Legislative Coordinator

RE: REQUEST TO APPLY TO THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION "MONUMENT PROJECT" TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF THE "1871 CHINESE MASSACRE IN LOS ANGELES."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs respectfully requests that the City Council, subject to approval by the Mayor:

1. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to submit a grant application to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation "Monument Project" grant initiative;
2. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to submit all necessary paperwork relative to the grant, subject to City Attorney approval as to form and content;
3. AUTHORIZE the Department of Cultural Affairs to expend funds for the purposes of a project match:
 - A. \$250,000 from Fund 100, Department 30, Account 9868, "Victims of the 1871 Anti-Chinese Massacre Memorial," pending City Council approval and adoption of the FY 23/24 City budget;
4. AUTHORIZE the Department of Cultural Affairs to accept grant funding, if awarded, from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, in an amount up to \$4,000,000 for a two-year grant period;
5. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to negotiate and execute the grant award and agreement on behalf of the City and submit the required reporting relative to the grant, subject to City Attorney approval as to form and legality;
6. AUTHORIZE the Department of Cultural Affairs to receive and expend Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant funds for activities for all eligible purposes, for a two-year grant period, commencing upon execution of an award agreement;



7. AUTHORIZE the Controller to:

A. ESTABLISH a new appropriation account within Fund 337, Cultural Affairs Grants, to be labeled “Victims of the 1871 Anti-Chinese Massacre Memorial”;

B. APPROPRIATE grant funds received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation into the newly established account within Fund 337, “Victims of the 1871 Anti-Chinese Massacre Memorial”;

8. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs or designee to prepare any Controller’s instructions needed to implement actions approved by the Council and Mayor on matters presented in, or deriving from, the transmittal, and/or to make necessary technical adjustment, and further, request that the Controller implement these instructions.

SUMMARY

In accordance with Los Angeles Administrative Code 14.6(b) and 14.8(c), DCA requests authority to submit a grant application to Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (Mellon), in accordance with the recommendations above, and authorization to subsequently accept and disperse grant funds.

The Mellon Foundation, a New York-based philanthropic corporation, has invited the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) to apply for up to \$4,000,000 in grant funding over 2 years to support a memorial to the victims of the 1871 Chinese Massacre in Los Angeles. The final grant amount and timeline will be determined by the outcomes of the in-process design selection and community engagement, along with secured city funding demonstrating the applicant city’s dedication to construct a memorial in line with the foundation’s new “Monument Project.” initiative.

Supporting projects nationally, Mellon is committing \$250 million in grant awards to municipalities to reimagine and rebuild commemorative spaces and transform the way history is told in the United States. The Monument Project seeks to ensure that future generations inherit a memorial landscape that venerates and reflects the vast, rich complexity of the American experience, and tells a fuller, more inclusive story of our history and our many different forbearers.

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), along with a consortium of municipal and community nonprofits, is seeking support from the Mellon Foundation’s Monument Project for developing a memorial to the victims of the 1871 Chinese Massacre (massacre). The massacre remains the deadliest mass killing in modern Los Angeles history. At least eighteen Chinese residents of the city were killed by a vigilante mob on the afternoon and evening of October 24, 1871. The massacre killed an estimated nine percent of the city’s Chinese population, a spasm of violence that meets the formal definition of a lynching. Historians estimate that a similar proportion of the Los Angeles population at the time — nearly one in ten Angelenos — participated in the attacks. In the spirit of the Mellon initiative, DCA’s proposed project will remember the victims of this violence with a prominent public memorial for the first time — an overdue reckoning with the violence and the ways in which its memory continues to reverberate in Los Angeles. It also reflects a new and carefully considered approach to developing and installing memorials in the city of Los Angeles that privileges community voices and multifaceted public engagement.

In its FY 2023/24 City Budget submission, DCA is requesting a \$250,000 line item to support the 1871 Monument. This budget submission, if successful, would be leveraged through this application to the Mellon Foundation to support further outreach, design, planning, fabrication, and installation.

The effort to build and dedicate this memorial grows out of the Los Angeles Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group, which convened for the first time in November 2019 in City Hall and included historians, artists, architects, Indigenous leaders, community leaders, and representatives of a number of city departments, including DCA,

City Planning, and other offices. The Working Group's report, entitled *Past Due*, was released in April 2021 and endorsed in full by then Mayor Eric Garcetti. In July 2021, acting on *Past Due* recommendations, the Mayor's Office, working closely with the leadership of the Chinese American Museum (CAM) and other stakeholders, established the 1871 Memorial Steering Committee to develop the initial framework for the memorial. Made up of Chinese American civic, cultural, and business leaders as well as historians, architects, experts, public art experts, and officials from several Los Angeles City and County agencies, it ultimately numbered more than 70 members. Its work was given added urgency by a wave of anti-Asian violence that rose during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 1871 Memorial Request for Ideas (RFI) was released in August of 2022, and drew more than 175 responses from architects, artists, and teams of designers around the world. A nine-member jury of experts in public art and memorialization met in the fall of 2022 to choose a shortlist of six respondents. Each shortlisted team was provided \$15,000 as a stipend to further develop their proposals. In addition, each team made a public presentation in 2023 and heard feedback from the community, part of the ongoing effort to weave engagement into each step of the design and development process. DCA engaged the Los Angeles artist and designer, Rosten Woo, to lead the community engagement efforts for this phase. DCA announced the six shortlisted teams in January 2023 and the teams presented proposals to the public in February 2023, drawing media coverage from the Los Angeles Times, LAist/KPCC, and Artnet, among others.

The memorial will be built at one of two primary locations along the 400 block of North Los Angeles Street, the site where much of the massacre took place. These sites are on public property immediately adjacent to CAM and the El Pueblo Historical Monument and Plaza, the historic birthplace of Los Angeles. The memorial at its primary site will be accessible 24 hours daily, and will be installed either directly in the sidewalk along the north side of Los Angeles Street or take advantage of the airspace above the street, thereby dramatically touching down on the sidewalk on either side of this block of Los Angeles Street. In addition, most of the shortlisted teams have proposed complementing the memorial at the primary location with smaller or digital markers at a number of secondary sites strategically located around the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund 100.


DANIEL TARICA
General Manager
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs