



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
January 17, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Eleanor Hollander, Economic Development Manager

Subject: Approval of donated sculpture gift, *Queen Shamiram* by Fred Parhad, valued at \$225,000, for inclusion in the City of Berkeley's Public Art Collection

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution approving the gift of a sculpture by artist Fred Parhad titled *Queen Shamiram*, valued at \$225,000, donated by Narsai and Venus David to the City of Berkeley's Public Art Collection. The artwork will be installed for permanent display along the pedestrian path at the southeast corner of Maudelle Shirek Building at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Allston Way as approved by the Civic Arts Commission.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The artwork valued at \$225,000, will be donated to the City. Funding for the engineering and installation of the sculpture (estimated at \$20,000) will come from the FY23 Budget of the Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148) as approved by the Civic Arts Commission.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

*Queen Shamiram* is a bronze sculpture by artist Fred Parhad depicting the historic figure Sammu-ramāt, queen of the Assyrian Empire (c.800 BCE), standing alongside a lion asleep at her feet. The work measures approximately 9 feet tall by 7 feet wide and will sit upon a 10-inch-high concrete base. The Civic Arts Commission would like to acquire this artwork for the City's Public Art Collection for permanent display near the Maudelle Shirek Building located at 2134 Martin Luther King Jr Way. The sculpture will be donated by the artist and Narsai and Venus David, with \$20,000 in engineering and installation costs funded by the Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148). Through acceptance of this gift, the Civic Arts Commission seeks to diversify representation in public statuary in the City, and provide the Assyrian community of Berkeley a place to gather for cultural events. The artwork is anticipated to be installed by June 30, 2023.

BACKGROUND

In April 2018, the artist Fred Parhad and donors Narsai and Venus David, approached the Civic Arts Commission to propose giving the artwork *Queen Shamiram* to the City of Berkeley for public display near Civic Center. It is the artist and donors' intention to have the Assyrian community of Berkeley gather at this artwork for cultural events. Assyrians

are an indigenous group native to Assyria in West Asia, a region currently divided between modern-day Iraq, southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and northeastern Syria. A majority of modern Assyrians have migrated to other regions of the world, including North America, triggered by massacres, genocide, and impacts of wars in the region of the former Assyrian homeland.

In June 2019, the Civic Arts Commission approved the sculpture *Queen Shamiram*, valued at \$225,000, as a gift to the City's Public Art Collection, and its installation near the Maudelle Shirek Building (Ayes – An, Anno, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Covarrubias, Ozol, Ross; Nays – None; Abstain – None; Absent – Passmore, Slattery, Tamano). In May 2022, the Civic Arts Commission allocated \$20,000 from the FY23 budget of Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148) to pay for the engineering and installation of the sculpture (Ayes — Anno, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Covarrubias, La, Passmore, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Dhesi, Ozol).

Subsequently, Civic Arts staff identified the pedestrian path at the southeast corner of Maudelle Shirek Building at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Allston Way as an ideal location for the sculpture. This location will not be impacted by future development of the Civic Center Vision Project. In June 2022, the Civic Arts Commission approved the exact sculpture location, depicted in Attachment 2 (Ayes — Anno, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Covarrubias, Dhesi, Ozol, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Passmore). The site was also reviewed by the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department who supervise and lead the maintenance of park property. They take no issue with the sculpture location, and will work with Civic Arts staff to coordinate the artwork placement with any existing infrastructure in that area.

Per Berkeley Municipal Code Section 2.06.150, *“any gift of funds, goods, or services worth more than \$1000 in aggregate, which may be accepted or collected by the City or any of its functionaries or Legislative Bodies, for the purpose of carrying out or assisting any City function, shall be disclosed and approved on the Agenda of a regular Meeting of the City Council.”*

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects, climate impacts, or sustainability opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

#### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Acceptance of this gift would allow the Civic Arts Commission to diversify representation in public statuary in the City, and provide the Assyrian community of Berkeley a place to gather for cultural events.

#### ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Zoe Taleporos, Civic Arts, Office of Economic Development, (510) 981-7538

Attachments:

1: Resolution

2: Images of *Queen Shamiram* sculpture and proposed installation location

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ACCEPTANCE OF QUEEN SHAMIRUM SCULPTURE BY FRED PARHAD INTO THE  
CITY OF BERKELEY'S PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2019 the Civic Arts Commission approved the sculpture *Queen Shamiram* by Fred Parhad, valued at \$225,000, as a gift to the City of Berkeley's Public Art Collection, and its installation in the Civic Center area; and

WHEREAS, on May 25, 2022, the Civic Arts Commission approved the allocation of \$20,000 for engineering and installation of the sculpture *Queen Shamiram* by Fred Parhad from the FY23 budget of the Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148); and

WHEREAS, on June 22, 2022, the Civic Arts Commission approved the location of the sculpture *Queen Shamiram* by Fred Parhad to be installed along the pedestrian path at the southeast corner of Maudelle Shirek Building at Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Allston Way; and

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Municipal Code Section 2.06.150 states, "*any gift of funds, goods, or services worth more than \$1,000 in aggregate, which may be accepted or collected by the City or any of its functionaries or Legislative Bodies, for the purpose of carrying out or assisting any City function, shall be disclosed and approved on the Agenda of a regular Meeting of the City Council.*"

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the gift of sculpture *Queen Shamiram* by Fred Parhad, valued at \$225,000, be approved for inclusion in the City of Berkeley's Public Art Collection.

QUEEN SHAMIRAM  
A GIFT TO THE CITY OF BERKELEY

Fred Parhad, Artist  
Narsai and Venus David, Donors



Fred Parhad is an Iraqi-Assyrian sculptor who is best known for his monument of Ashurbanipal (Assyrian King 600s BC), which stands in front of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.

Parhad is a self-taught sculptor, who, at the beginning of his career, focused on the art of ancient Assyria.

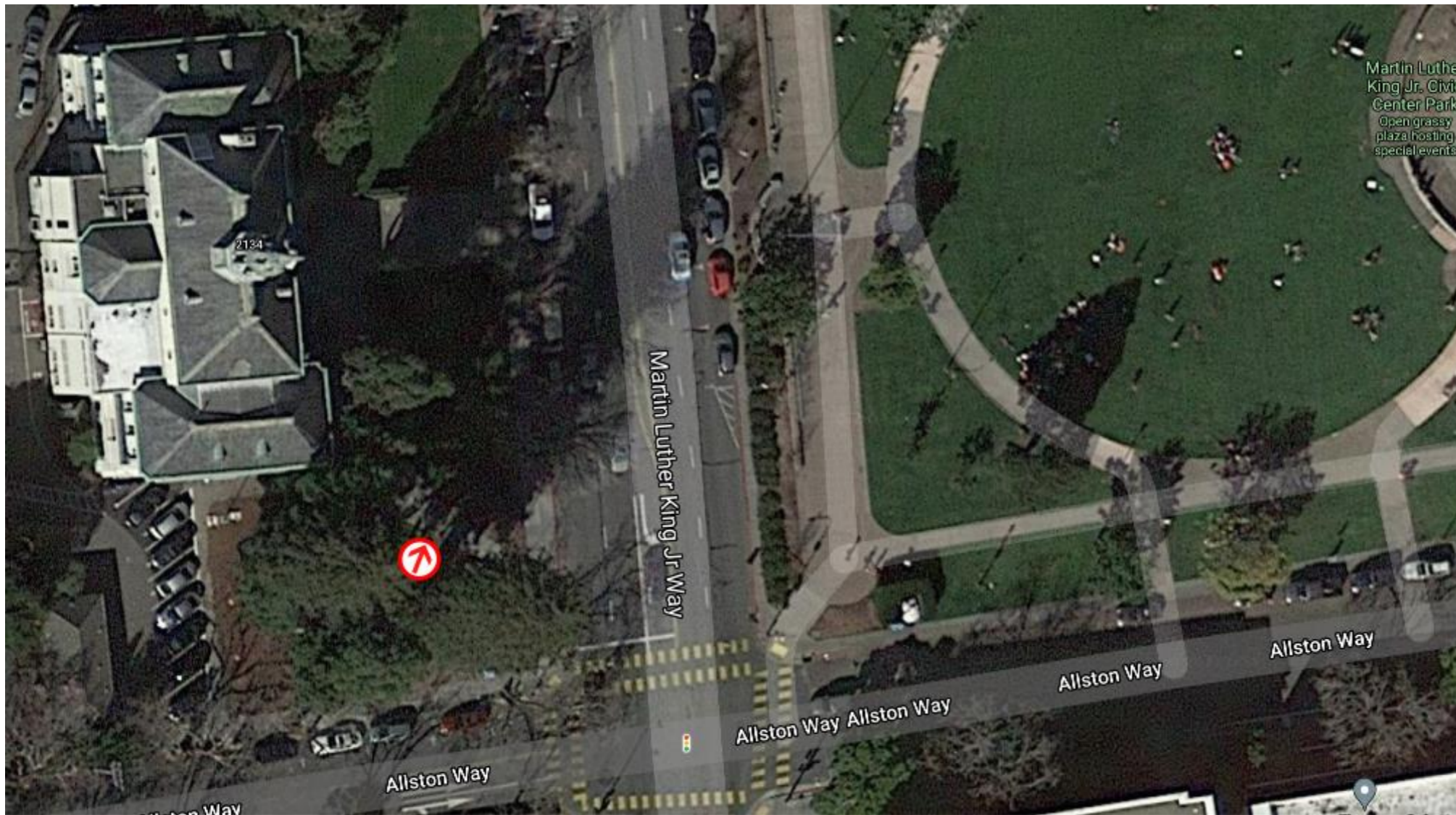




Queen Shamiram, is based on the historic figure, Sammu-ramāt, the queen of the Assyrian Empire (c.800 BCE), who took over the throne when her husband, Shamshi-Adad V, died, and assumed rule until her son, Adad Nirari III. came of age.

In 2018, the artist and Narsai and Venus David (the donors), approached the Civic Arts Commission about giving the artwork to the City of Berkeley for public display near Civic Center. The Civic Arts Commission approved the artwork for accession into the Public Art Collection, and its permanent public display.

It is the artist and donors' intention to have the Assyrian community of Berkeley gather at this artwork for cultural events.



The proposed location is along the pedestrian path at the SE corner of the Maudelle Shirek Building in Berkeley, on MLK and Allston Way.

The Civic Arts Commission has allocated \$20,000 from the FY23 budget Fund 148 for engineering and installation of the artwork. The goal is to install the artwork by June 30, 2023.

The installation location is under the supervision of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department. They take no issue with the installation and will work with Civic Arts Staff to coordinate the artwork with any existing infrastructure in that area.





In-Situ Renderings





