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CITY OF OAKLAND

## AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** FRED BLACKWELL  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

**FROM:** Rachel Flynn

**SUBJECT:** Progress Report on 2014 Art & Soul Festival

**DATE:** May 5, 2014

City Administrator  
Approval

Date

5-15-14

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City-Wide

### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council:

**Receive An Informational Report Pertaining To Plans For The 2014 Art + Soul Festival Scheduled For August 2-3, 2014 In Downtown Oakland**

### BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

At the February 11, 2014 Life Enrichment Committee, staff presented a comprehensive, five-year analysis on the Art + Soul Festival and preliminary plans for the 2014 event. Upon accepting the report, the Committee requested that staff return in three (3) months with a follow-up report to include additional details pertaining to planning and programming the annual festival.

### ANALYSIS

Staff has provided the following summary of planning and programming to date:

#### *1. Date and Location*

Also at its meeting on February 11, 2014, the Life Enrichment Committee endorsed continuing to hold the festival on the first weekend in August (August 2-3, 2014) in and around Frank Ogawa Plaza. The date, location and basic information was released in March to media outlets requiring advance lead time and more broadly in a calendar press release distributed the week of

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May 9. As in previous years, a second release touting the festival's music lineup will be distributed in early June.

## *2. Major New Components for 2014 Festival*

### **Oaktown Throwdown BBQ Competition**

At the February 11, 2014 Life Enrichment Committee meeting, staff introduced a concept for the inaugural Oaktown Throwdown BBQ Competition which will be held on opening day of the festival, Saturday August 2. Competitors arrive and begin cooking the day before, Friday, August 1 with the judging taking place on Saturday and awards given at 5:00 p.m.

Art + Soul Oakland was selected to host this nationally-sanctioned professional and amateur/backyard level barbecue competition sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Association (KCBS) and the California Barbecue Association (CBBQA). One of the premier barbecue competition circuits in the country, KCBS-sanctioned events typically draw 25-50 top level professionals and scores of amateur/backyard participants. KCBS enthusiastically welcomed the competition to be held as part of the Art + Soul festival to make it more well-rounded to include music, art, dance, artisans, family activities, food demonstrations, product displays, beverage sales, and activities that promote local culture, community and barbecue history.

Staff believes that the barbecue component is a great fit for Art + Soul in that it adds a strong component that slides nicely onto a city street, complements festival programming, provides an opportunity for local participation and has a broad public appeal, which should help increase attendance. There are four principal ways the public can get involved: enter the backyard/amateur competition; sample the BBQ prepared by the professional-level competitors (nominal extra fee); vote for favorite BBQ in the "People's Choice" Awards and; learn about BBQ cooking and history through celebrity chef demos and presentations by local historians. The public is also welcome to watch the competitors while they cook!

Outreach is underway to Everett & Jones, B-Side, Chop Bar, Phat Matt's and other Oakland BBQ purveyors to encourage them to enter the competition, present celebrity cooking demonstrations and/or participate as celebrity judges. Outreach is also underway via local media to encourage Oakland residents and organizations to compete in the amateur/backyard level. City employees will also be encouraged to enter, either individually or through teams representing various City departments/programs. On Saturday, May 3, Art + Soul staff visited Elk Grove for its annual Western Festival/BBQ Competition to promote participation in the Oakland event. Staff has purchased a pop-up canopy adorned with the Art + Soul and Oaktown Throwdown logos to promote the event at other festivals throughout Oakland and the Bay Area.

On the professional level, KCBS conducts its competitions in four categories: ribs, pork shoulder, brisket and chicken.

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### *3. 2014 Music Programming*

In past years, festival marketing has focused heavily on the musical lineup. The same holds true for this year however with emphasis on themes for each of the two days and of course, the new BBQ competition.

#### **Saturday, August 2: Blues & BBQ**

Oaktown Throwdown BBQ competition, lining Jefferson Street between 14<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

Blues showcase on the main stage presented by and featuring the popular Bay Area Blues Society with Bay Area blues legend Tommy Castro headlining.

Gospel showcase on Clay Street Stage presented by the great Edwin Hawkins/Community of Unity featuring top local and national gospel artists. Lineup to be announced in early June.

Turf dance presented by Yak to the Bay, the internally-acclaimed turf dance producers that originated at Youth Uprising in east Oakland. The turf dance performances will take place on the Plaza Stage.

Special Performance by Project Bandaloop, the world renowned, Oakland-based aerial dance troupe that has wowed audiences by scaling some of the world's tallest and coolest buildings. The troupe will perform on the exterior of City Hall.

National Poetry Slam performances; both days.

The National Poetry Slam will be held in Oakland August 5-9, 2014 at various locations, with finals on 8/9 at the Scottish Rite Center.

Artisan marketplace, community mural, art exhibits; both days

Wide range of food vendors; both days

Family Fun Zone on the Plaza Lawn; both days

#### **Sunday, August 3: Dance Party - R&B, Funk, Latin Rock**

R&B/Funk showcase and dance party on the main stage in association with KBLX. Full lineup to be announced early June.

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Car show on Jefferson Street, between 14<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> (filling in where BBQ competition is being held day before)

Latin Rock showcase and dance party on Clay Street Stage. Lineup to be announced in early June.

World/Urban Dance showcase on Plaza Stage presented by Carla Service/Dance-a-Vision

National Poetry Slam performances; both days.

The National Poetry Slam will be held in Oakland August 5-9, 2014 at various locations, with finals on 8/9 at the Scottish Rite Center.

Artisan marketplace, community mural, art exhibits; both days

Wide range of food vendors; both days

Family Fun Zone on the Plaza lawn; both days

*Note:* The above reflects the major festival components; other activities to be added accordingly.

### *3. Festival Task Force*

At the request of the Life Enrichment Committee, staff convened a Festival Task Force to augment staff efforts to plan and promote the festival. Staffed by City Marketing Manager Samee Roberts and Special Events Coordinator Jim MacIlvaine, the main Task Force is composed of 12 Oakland community representatives with professional expertise in the following key areas: artists booking; concert, music and dance production; visual and performing arts and; community arts programming. The Task Force meets monthly and has been extremely resourceful and productive.

A complete list of Task Force members is provided below:

Lionel Bea, Music Promoter, Bay Area Productions

Larry Batiste, Board of Directors, NARAS, co-producer of the Grammy Awards

Tracy L. Reed, Tramai Entertainment, Producer, California Music Industry Summit

David Roach, Producer, Oakland International Film Festival

Ronnie Stewart, President, Bay Area Blues Society (blues stage)

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Bob White, Bay Area Blues Society	(blues stage)
Edwin Hawkins, Co-Founder, Community of Unity	(gospel stage)
Sandra Hunter, Music Director, Community of Unity	(gospel stage)
Carla Service, Director, Dance-a-Vision	(world/urban dance stage)
Dave Campbell, Founder, Oaktown Throwdown	(BBQ competition)
Dahled Jeffries, Co-chair, National Poetry Slam	(poetry performances)
Yoram Savion, Yak to the Bay	(turf dance competition)

### 3. Marketing

In addition to the main Task Force, Marketing Manager Samee Roberts has convened a small marketing/publicity working group composed of representatives from Visit Oakland, Oakland Marriott and a few local freelance marketers/publicists. Publicity efforts commenced in April, continuing through and including festival weekend. As in past years, a comprehensive marketing campaign commences in June for a two-month blitz consisting of paid advertising on billboards, bus shelters, radio, television and social media, as well as newspapers (both print and digital) including Oakland Tribune, Oakland Post/El Mundo, San Francisco Chronicle and East Bay Express, among others. Posters and postcards will blanket Oakland and neighboring cities starting in June.

### COORDINATION

The City Attorney's Office and Budget Office have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

There are no cost implications associated with this informational report.

### SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

**Economic:** The Art + Soul festival bolsters the cultural arts identity of Oakland and its downtown, establishes the city as a destination, attracts foot traffic and positive media exposure, and helps fuel economic development and community revitalization.

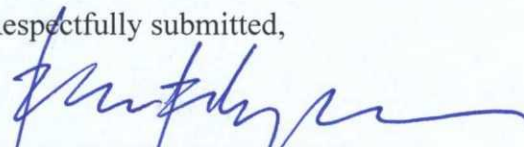
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**Environmental:** There are no environmental opportunities or benefits resulting from any action outlined in this report. The Art + Soul festival itself employs the most up-to-date environmental practices including requiring food vendors to use compostable materials and sorting/recycling of festival debris.

**Social Equity:** The Art + Soul festival adds to existing cultural, economic and enrichment opportunities, thereby increasing the quality of life for Oakland residents and visitors. The festival's community organizations, vendors, suppliers, artists, businesses and workers represent the broad cultural, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of Oakland.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Samee Roberts, Marketing Manager, Department of Economic & Workforce Development, at 510-238-2136.

Respectfully submitted,



RACHEL FLYNN, Director  
Economic & Workforce Development Department

Prepared by:  
Samee Roberts, Marketing Manager  
Cultural Arts & Marketing

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