

Project Support

1. Artistic/Cultural Merit – The City of Ann Arbor and the Public Art Commission kindly requests \$30,000 to support the selection, installation, and promotion of a public art project to be installed along the newly built pedestrian path which is part of the city’s Allen Creek Railroad Berm Resolution. The pedestrian path and tunnel under the railroad tracks between Depot Street and the riverfront, which is part of the larger Treeline plan and could potentially link to the open space and future development of DTE Energy’s riverfront property, begins construction the summer of 2019. The requested funding would support the art selection and installation which will occur in 2020. Because this path is a small portion of a much larger project that will have a huge impact on the city and its residences by connecting the beautiful downtown corridor to its waterways, it’s important to set an example and illustrate the importance of including Public Art now so that it will be incorporated throughout the larger project.

The tunnel will safely allow pedestrians to access the Border to Border Trail as well as the Huron River from Ann Arbor’s N. Main & Depot Streets without necessitating pedestrians to illegally cross over the railroad tracks and is the first of many connectivity projects that the city hopes to see over the next several years. Including public art in this area not only sets the tone for the projects that will follow, but will add vibrancy to an otherwise mundane walkway or as The Americans for the Arts say, “humanizes the built environment”¹. The installed work will draw attention to this new, and more importantly safer, way for pedestrians to travel across the railroad tracks, and it will “capture the eye and mind of someone passing through our public spaces”².

In recent years, the City of Ann Arbor has resolved to contract with local arts and cultural non-profit organizations to administer the Call for Art and Artist selection process for many of its public art installations. This requires an RFP to select the winning arts agency to administer the artist/art selection process. In order to standardize as well as implement best practices, The Ann Arbor Public Art Commission created guidelines for the selection of public art that allows for a fair and comprehensive selection, resulting in the use of qualified artists that are appropriate for each project and an inclusive, community oriented selection process. The full guidelines are attached as Sample 6.

This Public Art installation would hopefully be the first of many along the Treeline Path and would encourage passersby to pay attention to their surroundings, activate their imagination, and more deeply identify with the environment in which they occupy. Public Art also encourages pride in place resulting in participants taking better care of their surroundings which can lead to less litter, vandalism, etc. along these pathways, improving the overall experience for all users. Public Art also is a great way to stimulate learning and exploration of the arts, growing the communities understanding of and appreciate of the arts. It connects the community through shared conversation both during the selection and after its installation. Finally, Public Art “is uniquely accessible and enables people to experience art in the course of daily life, outside of museums or other cultural institutions. Public art provides everyone in the

¹ https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtNetwork_GreenPaper.pdf (1)

² https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtNetwork_GreenPaper.pdf (4)

community direct and ongoing encounters with art”³ furthering the well-being and happiness of its audiences.

2. Community Impact – In November 2012, city of Ann Arbor residences voted against a dedicated public art millage. Following this vote, The Ann Arbor City Council eliminated the “Percent for Art” funding mechanism as part of a major overhaul of the city’s public art program. Based on these changes, the City Council in partnership with city staff and Public Art Commissioners created a new ordinance and updated the bylaws so that the Public Art Commission and city staff could propose enhancements to be made a part of future city Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), thus creating a way for city funding to continue to support Public Art installations throughout the city.

The City of Ann Arbor and the Public Art Commission strive to include good design and public art enhancements throughout city projects. However, the elimination of the percent for Art and rejection of the public art millage illuminated the fact that residents and city council members desired the city to seek additional sources for funding outside of public funds. Now six years later, applying for this grant, as well as seeking funding from other private investors as matches is just one of the ways the City of Ann Arbor and the Public Art Commission is working to achieve this vision. Without a Public Art Administrator at the city and with the Public Art Commission made up of unpaid volunteers, this is one of the first of what is hoped to be many more grant applications submitted for Public Art Projects.

The Public Art Commission has framed expectations and included many suggested guidelines for interacting with artists in section III of the included Art Selection Guidelines (Sample 6) which include: respecting and valuing the artist’s time and creative efforts, providing additional expertise when necessary to assist the artist with a successful installation and allowing artists of various skill sets to participate in calls for art, and lastly understanding that artists will be presenting their works in the best possible light - the city should verify whether such representations are realistic for the context. The artist and city staff coordinate the installation efforts so that it meets all safety requirements and concerns while also respecting the artists original concept. Artists’ ideas often challenge city engineers to expand their way of thinking. Together they come up with creative solutions. The city has great relationships with the contracted artists and in many cases have worked with artists after installation on any repairs or adjustments to the work that are necessary. Although sometimes changes need to be made to an artists original design to address concerns or issues that arise, the city staff works hard with the artists to resolve these in a way that respects the artists creative process and honors the artists original designs. The piece that evolves through this partnership ultimately is one that the city, artist, and even members of the community are proud of.

Public Art is inherently accessible as it is found in our daily lives. This project is no exception. Potentially viewable by motorists, pedestrians, Amtrak passengers on trains passing through town, as well as individuals paddling or swimming by in the Huron River, this piece will be accessible to all along a highly traversed pathway, road, river, and railway. Therefore it will be enjoyed by residents of Ann Arbor, as well as visitors or even folks just passing through on their way to Chicago or Lansing. The community is engaged not only with the piece after installation,

³ https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtNetwork_GreenPaper.pdf (2)

but also throughout the selection process. It is the hope that because this work is so visible that it be a great reflection of the values and future of the city of Ann Arbor. Artists who are able to involve the community in some way into the creation of the work will be given extra consideration as community involvement and connection to the installed work is a goal of this project. Efforts for more inclusion of the community in the selection process are a direct reflection of the goal of Ann Arbor Public Art Commission and The City of Ann Arbor to engage with the residents of Ann Arbor, promote Public Art, and educate its citizens throughout the selection process so that residents may be aware, informed and connected to the commissioned works. It is the hope that this involvement will help create a better understanding and appreciation for the city's public art collection's current and future works.

3. Implementation/Management –

General Timeline or Schedule of Activities

- November/December 2019: Ann Arbor City Council approves receipt of grant funding.
- January 2020: RFP to NonProfit Arts Organizations to act as consultant to the city and make a recommendation on a selected artist.
- February: Select Art Selection Consultant
- March-May: Art Selection Consultant put out call for art, engage with community and city staff to select an artist.
- May: Selected artist recommended to Ann Arbor Public Art Commission & Selection reviewed and recommended by the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission to the Ann Arbor City Council
- June: Ann Arbor City Council approves the recommended artist
- June-August: Recommended artist creates and installs work
- September 2020: Celebration/Unveiling of work.

Throughout the selection process, it is the responsibility of the consultant with support from the city to promote and market the art opportunity and selected artist(s). The consultant will engage with the community at various points throughout the selection process and promote each of these engagement opportunities through their own website, social media, email blasts, etc. with support from the city through similar channels. Following the selection and approval of the artist by the City Council, the city will promote the artist as well as the unveiling of the installed piece. The Ann Arbor Public Art Commission is currently working on creating an inventory of all public art assets owned by the City of Ann Arbor. Upon completion this comprehensive list will be included on the [Ann Arbor Public Art Commission website](#) as a map with related information on each work. This project will be included in this list including information about the piece such as artist name, title of work, installation date, etc.

One of the great aspects of Public Art is how it is accessible to all within the communities natural surrounds. That being said, an effort will be made by both the consultant and the city of Ann Arbor to reach a broad range of members of the community throughout the process. Through public meetings, promotion via social media and email newsletters, as well as during public broadcasts of public meetings on CTN, the city keeps the community informed throughout the process and educate them at each phase of the project. Finally, images of the

resulting piece will be shared in a press release as well as the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission website, so that individuals who may not visit the piece in person can enjoy it as well.

The City of Ann Arbor has worked with hundreds of artists and several arts organizations for the successful installation of dozens of Public Art Works that are a part of the city's overall collection. City administrators and Public Art Commissioners will oversee the project with support from city engineers and communications personnel. The city has worked with several art selection consultants including [The Ann Arbor Art Center](#) and [The Arts Alliance](#). Likely one of these organizations or an organization with similar qualifications will be the consultant on this project and manage the artist selection process. Each of these organizations have worked with the city to install successful works including, [The Canoe Imagine Art Project](#), Brian Brush's "[Leaven](#)", and the [Manhole Cover Project](#) to name a few. The RFP put out for this project will be similar to the one for the [RFP for the Manhole cover project](#) and will require the qualifications of staff and previous related project experience as part of the application process, as shown on page 11 of the attached document (Sample 8). This will ensure that the most qualified consultant is hired to handle this phase of the project.

Following the Art Selection Guidelines and using their expertise, the consultant hired will work to select a strong, high quality artist. This selection will be reviewed by the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission which is made up of artists, art administrators, architects, and art enthusiasts that make up a broad spectrum of the community and bring a wealth of knowledge as it relates to Public Art and Design. The recommendation will then be passed along to City Council who will review the selection based on their experience with successful city projects and the value they see in the project moving forward. Having already approved the receipt of grant funds, and participating with the RFP of the art selection consultant, it is expected City Council would approve the recommendation as put forward. Information about several of the city staff, art commissioners, etc. can be found in Attachment 3 - Staff and Artist Bios.

The City of Ann Arbor respectfully requests \$30,000 to help support the selection and installation of Public Art near the new pedestrian walkway as part of the city's Allen Creek Railroad Berm Resolution. This project will take place between October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020 and grant funds will be matched 1:1 by city funds and private partnerships with local development companies and other project partners as identified in the included budget. Please find included with this Narrative each of the required attachments as well as supplemental materials which provide deeper insight into and visual representations of this project. The sample attachments include:

- Sample 6: The Art Selection Guidelines as determined by the Ann Arbor Public Art Commission
- Sample 7: Map and Resolution for the Allen Creek Railroad Berm Project
- Sample 8: Sample of previous RFP for Art Selection for Manhole Covers (previous city public art project)
- Sample 9: Images of the Site and links to additional resources to help illustrate and visualize the project area.
- Sample 10: Letter of Support from Ann Arbor City Council member and Ann Arbor Public Art Commission Liaison, Ali Ramwali.