



GRAND RAPIDS, MN

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Water Themed Sculptures Public
Art Opportunity

Request for Qualifications

About Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids is a unique blend of small town hospitality and character with big City conveniences and opportunities. Grand Rapids offers an excellent quality of life to residents of the region with outstanding educational opportunities, excellent medical care, exceptional cultural, natural, and recreational amenities, and an unequalled sense of community spirit. Grand Rapids provides residents safe, friendly, affordable housing and inclusive neighborhoods that retain and enhance nature in the City. Residents and visitors can move around the City with equal ease by car, bicycle, or walking. Grand Rapids welcomes and supports a diverse mix of thriving businesses and industries that provide quality jobs, promising careers, and economic vitality. Grand Rapids is a welcoming gateway to Minnesota's Northwoods tourism.

Grand Rapids, MN, population 10,869 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), is located in Northeastern Minnesota on the banks of the Mississippi and is the Itasca County seat. It's situated in the midst of numerous lakes and forests. A small City known for, logging, regional services, the arts, and its Native American and settler cultures — Grand Rapids is a place of many narratives. Grand Rapids is predominately white (96.5%), with Native American (3.1%), Latino (1.2%), Black (1.1%), and Asian (.9%) racial and ethnic minorities (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Fifteen miles west of Grand Rapids lies the eastern edge of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation; Native Americans are the largest racial/ethnic minority in Itasca County (4.9%).

The City's name hails from its 3.5-mile stretch of rapids now hidden by a reservoir created by a hydroelectric dam. The hydropower generated by the rapids attracted UPM Blandin's predecessor in 1902. The Mississippi also provided an optimal means of shipping logs to southern population centers. Whereas much of the "Iron Range" region historically focused on mining, Grand Rapids emerged as a logging town.

Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission

The City Council established the Arts and Culture Commission in 2013. It currently functions as a volunteer commission, reporting to the City Council, with nine members and a City staff liaison. Commissioners are selected by the Council and serve a three-year term. The Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission envisions a community inspired by the power of its abundant arts and culture. They believe:

- the arts pave the way to a welcoming environment for all regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation
- arts and culture combined with recreational opportunities define Grand Rapids as a regional creative destination for relocation, shopping, tourism and entertainment
- the arts contribute to health and well-being by creating aesthetically pleasing places to walk, bicycle, hike and play
- engagement in the arts helps vulnerable populations build confidence, cope with stress and aid with healing
- carefully planned and artistic street design contributes to a vibrant downtown and accommodates all modes of transportation, helping to make movement accessible to all
- the beauty of the natural environment of the Mississippi River, lakes and forests is a defining and valued characteristic of our community
- accessible, quality arts educational opportunities, cradle through career and on through retirement, are essential to the development of a creative community
- communities with robust arts and culture are more prosperous and attract large and small businesses, reward entrepreneurship, and provide meaningful careers to residents

The Sculpture Project

The Arts and Culture Commission received a Downtown Business Corridor Grant from the MN Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation to create a highly visible and creative project that creates excitement, encourages citizen engagement, and generates visible improvements. The Arts and Culture Commission projects will consist of three water-themed sculptures, and one mural with a theme that considers the natural environment or the significant relationship that historical and contemporary Ojibwe and/or Dakota people have with this area. **This Request for Qualifications is for the three water-themed sculptures.**

Water plays a critical role in the community's quality of life—from the Mississippi River, to the many lakes in the region, water is central to the City's natural beauty and recreational opportunities, as well as to public health and safety. In addition, it is important to honor the significance that water has had for our region's diverse communities and, in particular, critical for Ojibwe and Dakota people, who understand that "water is life." Knowing what a watershed is, where our water comes from and goes to, and how we can each play a role in preserving its function and value is important, but rarely understood.

The Commission would like to use this public art initiative to raise awareness of both the many water resources available to Grand Rapids, and the everyday actions citizens and businesses can take to improve water quality.

One artist will be commissioned to create three sculptures which will be sited throughout the City [see following pages for location maps].

Please see the following pages for more information regarding the project.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

The Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission is facilitating the design and creation of water-themed sculptures to be located throughout the City. Artists are hereby invited to submit qualifications to be considered to participate in the design phase for the public art opportunities described below.

The Arts and Culture Commission will review eligible applications and select a group of up to three finalists/finalist teams to invite to Grand Rapids for an in-person interview. Each artist/team will receive a stipend of \$750 to cover fees associated with design and travel to in-person interviews. Further information will be provided to the finalists.

Upon completion of an in-person interview, one artist/artist team will be commissioned to develop, fabricate, and install three permanent artworks. Additional requirements will be outlined in instructions to finalists. Please see the following timeline for further details.

Budget: \$30,000

The budget for all three sculptures is \$30,000. The selected artist/team can determine the budget for each artwork, as long as the total for all expenses does not exceed this amount (must include all fees, materials, transportation, installation, storage, permits, and insurance). More information about the sites will be made available to the selected artist[s].

Site Information

Sculptures will be located at three pre-selected sites in Downtown Grand Rapids.

Location 1: the NE corner of NW 3rd Ave and NE 5th St.



Location 2: the SE corner of NW 1st Ave and NE 5th St.



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Location 3: NE corner of NE 1st Avenue and Itasca Street



Selection Criteria

Phase 1: Selection of artist/designers will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of letter.
- Quality of work samples.
- Ability of artist/team to successfully complete projects based on resume and prior work experience.

Phase 2: Design concepts must meet the following criteria:

- Design concepts are engaging, interactive in some way, and evoke curiosity of passers-by either through color, movement, material, whimsicality, or other considerations.
- Artworks highlight where water comes from, either physically or spiritually, and consider natural processes in some way.
- Artworks should take into consideration all seasons in MN, and should be safe and low maintenance.
- The three artworks act as a series, and tell a story together. One sculpture will be of a larger scale than the other two.
- Artworks convey artistic excellence and innovation.

Additional considerations:

- Art should be welcoming, accessible and appropriate to the site.
- Artists should address how they would work with the Arts and Culture Commission to engage the community in some way.
- Artist must be willing to work with an early-career artist.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be experienced visual artists or artist-led teams residing in the state of Minnesota, with special preference given to artists from Northern MN.
- Applicant must provide evidence of producing at least two commissioned public art projects of a similar scale and budget within the past ten years.

We are committed to a policy of providing opportunities to people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical ability.

Selection Process Overview

The Arts and Culture Commission will review applications and select up to three artists or teams to participate in the design phase. Each artist/team will be paid a stipend of \$750 to prepare design concepts. Deliverables include graphic depictions of the proposed artwork and a brief narrative description. Artists/teams will have approximately **seven weeks** to prepare preliminary concepts, including the presentations to the Arts and Culture Commission.

Schedule

- October 24, 2018 – RFQ announced
- November 26, 2018 – Deadline for RFQ submission; all required materials must be received by 4PM CST.
- December 4, 2018 – Committee review and selection of 3 finalists
- December 17, 2018 – City Council approves contracts with selected artists/teams for preliminary designs
- February 5, 2018 – Preliminary design concepts presented to Arts + Culture Commission

- February 11, 2019 – City Council approves final contract with selected artist or team. Commence design development.
- April 2019: Based on approval of final design, artist/team commences with fabrication
- October 2019: projects installed/project completion

Required Submission Materials (in digital format only)

Please provide the following text in 12-point font, in a single PDF document:

- Contact information for lead artist and, if applicable, all team members
- Three references (contact information only) for recently completed projects
- One-page letter describing interest in project and approach to design; please include statement addressing eligibility criteria
- One-page listing of each work sample; please provide a brief description and budget for each work sample
- One-page biographical information or resume; if you have multiple team members, please keep biographical information for each team member to one page
- Work Samples: Up to 10 digital images of your recent and relevant projects. Individuals and teams are limited to 10 images maximum. Save all images as standard JPEG and label each with applicant's full name and number in sequence corresponding with list of work samples.

NOTE: Do not submit a proposal for artworks at this time.

Please submit all RFQ materials via email to: tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us. All materials must be received by **4 p.m., CST, Monday, November 26, 2018**. No RFQs will be accepted after this time. If you need clarification or further information, contact Tom Pagel, City Administrator at: tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us or 218.326.7626