

## Request For Qualifications

### St. John Pocket Park

Budget: \$30,000

**Artist Information Meeting: January 23, 2019 6pm St. John Community Center, 7300 Blessing Ave. Austin, TX 78752**

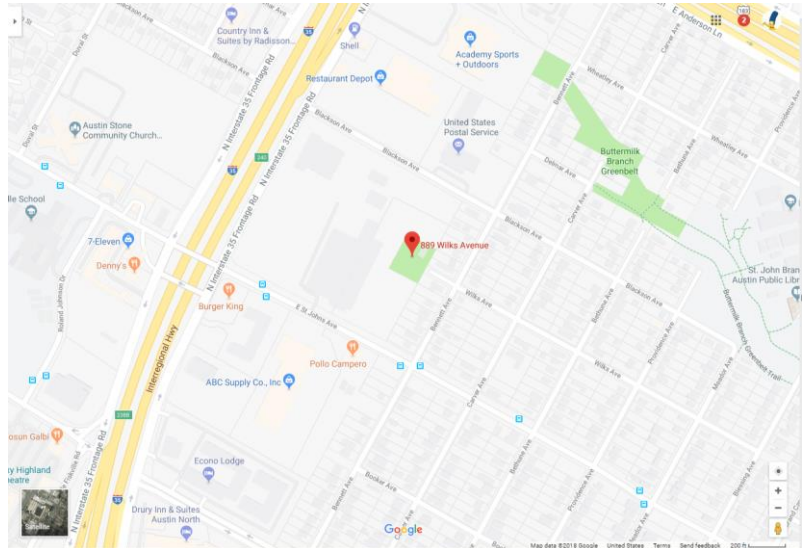
**Deadline to Apply: 5:00 PM (CST), Thursday, March 7, 2019**

### Project Summary

The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program of the Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department (EDD) seeks to commission a professional visual artist, or artist team, to design and fabricate artwork for the St. John Pocket Park located at 889 Wilks Ave, Austin, TX 78752.

### Project Background & History

Located in District 4 in north east Austin, St. John neighborhood straddles I-35. It is bounded on the west by Middle Fiskville Rd. and Twincrest, on the south by Hwy. 290, north by Anderson Ln and east by Cameron Rd. St. John neighborhood has a lengthy history dating back to the 1860's when four African American Baptist ministers met under a live oak tree to establish the St. John Regular Baptist Association and later purchase 2,000 acres of land. The land was divided into several colonies including St. John.



In the early 1900's the site which is now Highland mall held the St. John's Orphan Home. It was an important School for African American children. During the summer, The 350-acre farm land and main building hosted an annual church encampment that included sermons, games, contests, parades, practical demonstrations and barbeque stands for tens of thousands of people. The home closed in the 1930's due to lack of funds and later burned to the ground under suspicious circumstances.



St. John's Orphan Home

In the 1950's the Interregional Highway, now I-35, split St. John. The western sector was developed as Highland Mall and eastern plots were being sold to residents for home ownership.

There have been many social and cultural changes to the St. John neighborhood over the last decade causing some neighborhood tension. The cultural makeup of the area shifted in the early 2000's from traditionally African American to predominately Hispanic. Church and community leaders rallied to celebrate the diversity as well as honor the rich heritage described above and a neighborhood motto spoken by Pastor Harold Hendricks is still quoted today: "Together we can do more! Juntos podemos hacer mas!"

Neighborhood celebrity known as Thelma "Grandma Wisdom" Williams has a large "welcome" sign in her yard greeting visitors. She has lived in the neighborhood since early childhood. She hopes to create a community where people feel they can talk to each other. She has published several books and pamphlets of her thoughts and was interviewed under a pseudonym for the book *Invisible Austin: Life and Labor in an American City*.



Grandma Wisdom



Possible Play Structures



The Parks and Recreation Department Capital Improvement Project in conjunction with funding from the Austin Parks Foundation will concentrate on transforming the mostly open barren lawn of the St. John Pocket Park. They will build a picnic pavilion w picnic tables and grills, a loop walking trail, benches, a drinking fountain, a community kiosk, a swingset and playscape turning the empty feeling space into a vibrant park and meeting space.

### Public Art Intent & Goals

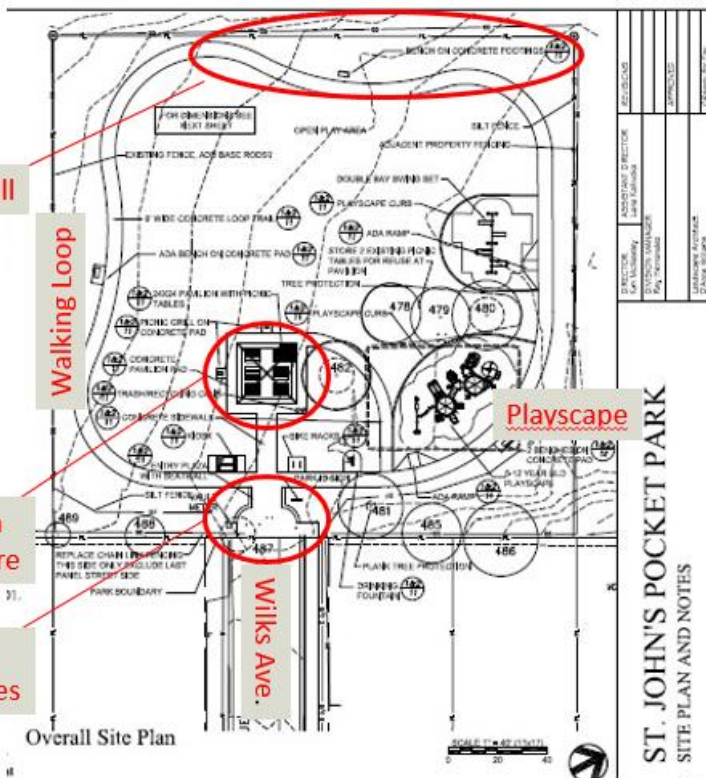
The Art in Public Places program seeks to commission works of art of redeeming quality that advance public understanding of visual art and enhance the aesthetic quality of public places through the

selection of a qualified artist or artist team who can innovatively and thoughtfully design within the context of this project. The goal of the St. John Pocket Park AIPP Project is to select an artist/artist team who will design artwork through written and/or oral dialogue with park users and neighbors that:

- ❖ Honors and respects the history and considers the future of the St. John neighborhood and community;
- ❖ inspires fun within the park;
- ❖ illuminates the diverse community who will visit and use the park;
- ❖ is easily maintained and vandal resistant in an exterior environment; and
- ❖ contributes to the depth/breadth of the City of Austin’s public art collection

### Budget

The funds for this project are derived from pooling 2% AIPP public art portion of the estimated construction budgets of Gus Garcia District Park and St. John Pocket Park. The total award for an artist contract is **\$30,000**, inclusive of design, fabrication and installation, including permitting fees, travel and shipping expenses, insurance and other project related costs.



Site Plan

### Artwork Opportunity

This public art opportunity is open to a range of ideas to be proposed by the selected artist, or artist team, in consultation with the project’s design team. The selected artist or artist team will coordinate with City staff and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive design for artwork to be integrated into the park.

Possible artwork locations include utilizing structures as possible frameworks for art. Structures include:

1. Benches that flank the entrance to the park
  2. A four post pavilion
  3. A ½ wall at the far end of the park
- Final artwork location will be determined by the selected artist in conjunction with City staff and community stakeholders.

## Artist's Scope of Work

### *Community Engagement Phase*

Once selected, the artist will engage with the St. John neighborhood community and the design team and consider their response in preparing a final design. The artist will work with AIPP staff in planning and executing community engagement, meeting(s), outreach and community participation.

### *Design Phase*

After the artist has engaged the community, they will submit the following material for the final design proposal:

- **Written Narrative** describing the proposed artwork, including relationship of the artwork to the location, compatibility with the community/neighbors in proximity to the site, and installation plan. The narrative should describe how the artist engaged with the community. The selected artist or artist team will define the process of installation, including if he or she intends to contract a third-party for, or engage the community for assistance with, installation.
- **In-Context Images** of proposed artwork, such as sketches or renderings showing what the artwork will look like in place at the proposed site. The artist will determine the artistic expression, scope, design, color, size, material and texture of the artwork in conversation with the community surrounding the project location, subject to approval by the City.
- **Preliminary Itemized Budget** including a materials list which conveys the installation method to be used. The artists will be responsible for development of a final budget to include all costs to create the mural including but not limited to installation, de-installation, site restoration, permitting, and insurance. A sample budget sheet can be found online at: <http://austintexas.gov/department/aipp-resources>. Tools or equipment for fabrication or installation are considered capital assets and are not eligible expenses. Rental of tools or equipment are acceptable expenses. No fund matching or crowd sourcing may be applied.

### *Installation Phase*

In addition, the selected artist or team will provide the following services:

- **Site Preparation.** The artist is responsible for preparing the site to receive art. This includes cleaning and priming walls for murals and/or excavating and pouring foundations for sculptures.
- **Safety.** The artist is responsible for working safely within the public space, redirecting any pedestrian traffic so that there is no conflict with artist work space.
- **Installation.** The artist is responsible for fabricating and installing the artwork or overseeing its fabrication and installation.



## Artist Information Meeting

To ensure information about the project is available to all interested artists, **an artist information meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on January 23rd at the St. John Community Center, 7300 Blessing Ave. Austin, TX 78752**, during the open application period to further explain the parameters of the project and outline the application procedures. The meeting will include discussion of possible locations and opportunities for artwork. AIPP staff and project representatives will be available to answer questions. The presented materials, along with Q&A, will be posted to City's website after the meeting: [www.austintexas.gov/department/aipp-opportunities](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/aipp-opportunities).

## Artist Eligibility

Professional visual artists, or artist teams, at least 18 years of age who live in the Williamson, Travis, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Burnet and Blanco counties are eligible to apply. A professional visual artist is defined as "A practitioner in the visual arts with an original self-conceptualized body of work, generally recognized by critics and peers as a professional possessing serious intent and ability."

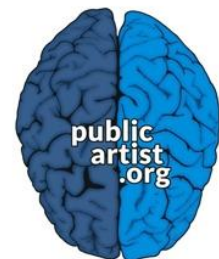
Full-time, permanent City of Austin employees including employees of the Economic Development Department are ineligible to apply. Employees of the project consultants and sub-consultants are also ineligible to apply.

Applications not meeting all eligibility criteria will be withdrawn from consideration.

## Submission Requirements

**Applications must be received online via [www.PublicArtist.org](http://www.PublicArtist.org) no later than 5:00 pm (CST) on March 7.** For technical assistance with your application, please contact [info@publicartist.org](mailto:info@publicartist.org) or 210-701-0775 (9:00 am – 5:00 pm).

Applications include: a Letter of Interest stating why you are interested, what makes you a good match for the project; 10 images of completed relevant artwork with the required descriptions; resume; and 3 professional references.



## Selection Process

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be distributed and applications must be submitted through [publicartist.org](http://publicartist.org) by the deadline. The City of Austin Art in Public Places Panel will convene a Selection Panel to evaluate the submissions. The Selection Panel shall review applications and select up to three finalists for interviews or they may select one artist or artist team and one alternate at that time. This recommendation will be presented to the Art in Public Places Panel and Arts Commission for approval.

The selected artist(s) will be put under a design contract to coordinate with the City and the project's design team to develop a comprehensive design for artwork. The final design is subject to approval by the Art in Public Places Panel and the Austin Arts Commission and may be subject to review by other relevant City Boards and Commissions and stakeholder groups.

## Selection Panel & Project Advisors

A 3-member selection panel shall be selected that includes at least 1 visual artist. Possible selection panel members include:

- » Luis Guerra, visual artist
- » Lidia Perez, Founder La Pene Gallery
- » Clifford Gillard, Founder Capitol View Arts
- » Christine Esposito, Arts Management Specialist
- » Thelma Williams, Poet
- » Paloma Mayorga, Artist and Curator

Project advisors will be invited to participate in the process to provide assistance and expertise to the selection panel. The project advisors to the panel may include:

Project Advisors may include:

- » D’Anne Williams — Landscape Architect, Trails Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Department, Development Division
- » Larry Houseton—Engineering Technician, Parks and Recreation Department
- » Jodi Jay — Division Manager, Aquatics, Parks and Recreation Department
- » Emily Little — Liaison Art in Public Places Panel
- » Brett Barnes — Liaison Austin Arts Commission, District 4
- » Anissa Castillo—Chair, St. John Park, Neighborhood Association

Staff Advisors may include:

- » Sue Lambe, AIPP Program Manager, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, City of Austin
- » Marjorie Flanagan, AIPP Project Manager, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, City of Austin

The selection panel and project advisors will work together to review the applications submitted by each artist. No gallery owner, dealer, or art agent may serve as a juror due to the potential for conflict of interest. No juror may serve more than once in any two-year period in an attempt to bring a diversity of interests to the selection process and to more precisely match the expertise of the jury members to each project.

## Selection Criteria

The selection of an artist, or artist team, shall be based on whose qualifications best meet the requirements contained in this Project Outline. In addition to the standard AIPP project selection criteria found on the City of Austin’s Art in Public Places website ([http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/aipp\\_selection\\_criteria.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/aipp_selection_criteria.pdf)), the Selection Panel will review and consider the following evaluation criteria:

- » artistic merit and technical expertise;
- » demonstrated successful, innovative and effective approach to public art projects of a similar scope;
- » ability to successfully execute a public art project; and
- » expressed interest in creating artwork within this community setting.

## Schedule, *subject to change*

### 2018

August AIPP Panel and Austin Arts Commission Approval of Prospectus

October CIP Project Construction Starts

### 2019

January Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released  
Artist Information Meeting

March Deadline for RFQ submission  
Selection panel review of applications

April Artist Interviews

May Approval of artist and alternate by AIPP Panel and Arts Commission  
Artist contract executed  
CIP Project anticipated completion

June Artist Community Engagement

August Mid-Design review by AIPP Panel

October Final Design review by AIPP Panel and Austin Arts Commission

Q2 2020 Artwork installation

## Contact/Questions

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