



PROCESS SUMMARY

Sabine Street Promenade Art in Public Places Project

Project Summary

The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program of the Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department seeks to commission permanent exterior public artwork that connects conceptually to the energy flow of Waller Creek and creates a moment of restoration by recharging the viewers' batteries literally and/or metaphorically. The project, known as the Sabine Street Promenade, is located along Sabine Street between 4th and 6th Streets. The project will transform a one-way roadway and sidewalk into a "festival street" style right-of-way design that gives priority to bikes and pedestrians.

Budget

The total award for an artist contract is \$37,800. The AIPP funding for this project is generated from the Sabine Street Promenade CIP project (2010 and 2012 Bond).

Project Background

The new design of the street will enhance connectivity between the existing Lance Armstrong Bikeway and the historic buildings, pedestrian activity, and planned downtown Great Streets along the eastern stretches of 5th, and 6th Streets. The creation of a thoroughfare for cyclists and pedestrians along the west side of the right-of-way is intended to provide a "festival street" environment for events without disrupting local access for vehicular traffic. A portion of the project site is in the **Sixth Street Historic District**, as listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 30, 1975.

The project was designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVAA) to 30% design, when the City of Austin Engineering Services Division in-house staff took over to create construction documents reflecting MVVA's design. Completion of construction documents is anticipated in the first quarter of 2016 with construction completed by the fourth quarter of 2019.

Artwork Goals

The goal of the Sabine Street Promenade AIPP Project is to select an artist/artist team who will design artwork that:

- » takes inspiration from nearby Waller Creek by connecting conceptually to the notion of energy flow;
- » creates a moment of connection or restoration through the provision of amenities, such as shade, light, solar powered system for charging devices, solar powered system cooling system, enhanced seating, a game to play at the site or other ideas for amenities;
- » will be attractive for the viewer to interact with, while creating an integrated and aesthetically positive impact on the streetscape;
- » is sustainable, easily maintained and vandal resistant in an exterior environment; and

- » contributes to the depth/breadth of the City of Austin's public art collection.

SELECTION PROCESS

Professional visual artists, or artist teams, who were selected for the 2015-2017 Prequalified Artist Pool and who live and/or work in the Austin metro area were eligible for this opportunity.

- Artist teams with one Austin-based artist were eligible.
- Artists who were under an active contract with the Art in Public Places program at the time of first selection process meeting or who had more than two commissioned, permanent projects in the AIPP Collection were ineligible for this opportunity.

Using the 2015-2017 Pre-Qualified Artist Pool, a list of eligible artists was provided to the Project Team, made up of the AIPP Panel Liaison, Design Team members, Project Advisors and Sponsor Department staff. The Project Team included:

- » Randy Harvey, Sponsor Project Manager, Public Works, City of Austin
- » Tonya Swartzendruber, Principal Planner, Urban Design, Planning and Zoning Department, City of Austin
- » Kristen Pipkin, Watershed Protection Department, Waller Creek Conservancy Staff Liaison
- » Dharmesh Patel, AIPP Panel Liaison
- » Meredith Bossin, Waller Creek Conservancy Director of Programming (Creek Show)
- » Melissa Barry, Downtown Austin Alliance (not present for the first selection meeting)
- » Lucia Athens, Office of Sustainability and member of the Waller Creek Local Government Corporation, City of Austin (not present for the first selection meeting)

The Project Team was advised by:

- » Meghan Wells, Cultural Arts Division Manager, Economic Development Department, City of Austin (not present for the second selection meeting)
- » Sue Lambe, AIPP Project Manager and Acting Administrator, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, City of Austin

In accordance with the Pre-Qualified Artist Pool policy guidelines, the Project Team met on February 3, 2016 to review the eligible 2015-2017 Prequalified Artist Pool artists' qualifications and selected five artists or artist teams to submit proposals for this project. They were:

1. Andrew Bellatti Green, Austin, TX
2. Legge Lewis Legge, Austin, TX
3. Eto Otitigbe, Austin, TX
4. Steve Parker, Austin, TX
5. Thoughtbarn, Austin, TX

On March 30, 2016, the Project Team convened a panel to interview four artists/ artist teams and hear them present their proposals. (Eto Otitigbe withdrew from the proposal process before the second selection panel). The Project Team voted 6-1 to recommend the artist team of Legge Lewis Legge (Austin, TX) be awarded the commission and voted 6-1 to recommend Thoughtbarn (Austin, TX) as the alternate.

Selection Panel Comments:

Legge Lewis Legge

“LLL meets all the project goals – their proposal relates best to Waller Creek and offers multiple benefits while achieving the project goals. It is also unique from other AIPP projects and I feel like it would add an interesting diversity to the collection. Family and kid-friendly component in the downtown is a bonus!”

“Legge Lewis Legge’s concept covered all the goals of the project. They had a unique approach that was site specific and engaging for all audiences. They worked well within their budget constraints.”

“Playful, fun piece that will engage all ages in the community. Appreciated that it was scalable, nimble, creative and connected to Waller Creek.”

“LLL’s concept specifically engages the idea of a hidden natural ecosystem in the middle of an urban landscape. The team was prepared to work within a tight budget and technical constraints.”

“I’m interested in LLL’s concept because it’s accessible to all ages and covers the entire length of the project. This team’s concept is the most related to Waller Creek.”

“LLL’s concept beautifully addresses all the project goals. The direct connection to the creek ecology is a clear and educational opportunity that connects the public to the creek, including kids and families. The idea of creating a game or field guide to accompany the work should be pursued.

THOUGHTBARN

“Thoughtbarn’s approach to their work as ‘art for utility’ is a very good concept and their work relates well to the ecology of Waller Creek.”

“Drawn by the natural outcropping along Waller Creek – inviting for people to sit and stay a while.”

“Thoughtbarn’s proposal enhances the streetscape by recalling shapes and materials found in the nearby creek.”

“Great tie in to Waller Creek, liked that it was functional art. Not as scalable as LLL’s concept.”

“Thoughtbarn’s concepts to the creek flow dynamics could be elegant and educational. Thoughtful proposal; possible issues with creating a place for loitering.”

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Presentation)

On September 14, 2015, this project was first presented to the AIPP Panel for discussion of artwork opportunities. No action taken.

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Prospectus)

On November 2, 2015 the prospectus for this project was presented to the AIPP Panel. Panel member Little made a motion to approve. Panel member Patel seconded. Motion passed 6-0-0. Panel member Barnes was absent.

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Revised Prospectus)

On January 4, 2016, Sue Lambe requested a revision to the Sabine Street Promenade prospectus, approved at the November AIPP Panel meeting, to use the Pre-qualified Artist Pool for selection, and proposed including a finalist proposal phase. Panel Member Frank made a motion to approve and Vice Chair McCray seconded. Motion passed 7-0-0.

AUSTIN ARTS COMMISSION (Prospectus)

On January 25, 2016 Commissioner Polgar made a motion to approve the AIPP Panel’s recommendation for the prospectus and selection process for the Sabine Street Promenade AIPP Project. Commissioner Mok seconded the motion. Motion approved (10-0). Item #

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PANEL (Selection Process Recommendation)

On April 4, 2016 the AIPP Panel approved the Selection Panel’s recommendation that the artist team of Legge Lewis Legge (Austin, TX) be commissioned for the Sabine Street Promenade AIPP Project,; and the artist team of Thoughtbarn (Austin, TX) be the alternate. Panel Member Frank made a motion to approve, provided that Legge Lewis Legge provide a sample of sculpture at the mid-design review and that funds should be allocated to ‘field guide’ signage in the streetscape. Motion was seconded by Panel Member Little. Motion approved (5-0-0), Chair Hammonds and Panel Member Walker were absent.