



## Request for Qualifications

Project: Republic Square Park Phase II Improvements

Budget: \$105,000

**Deadline: May 21, 2015, 5:00pm**

### Project Summary

The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program of the Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, seeks to commission a professional visual artist or artist team to design and create a permanent exterior public artwork for Republic Square Park.

The City of Austin will request qualifications from professional visual artists who live and work in Texas. One artist, or artist team, and one alternate will be recommended for the project. The selected artist or artist team will be awarded a design/commission contract. The total design, fabrication and installation budget available for artwork is \$105,000.

### Project Background

The area around what is now called Republic Square was a hub of the Mexican American community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Previous names for Republic Square have been: "Public Square" (1840's), Hemphill Square" (1910's), "Chili Park" (1920's), and "Mexican Park" (1930's). The park fell into disrepair and was used as a parking lot from 1950 to 1974. It was restored and re-dedicated as Republic Square during the 1976 American Bicentennial as a community park. Now, the use of the park includes community events, farmers market, movies in the park, and annual historical events. More information on the park can be found at <http://www.austintexas.gov/blog/june-park-month-republic-square-park>.

Beginning in early 2012, the City of Austin's Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) contracted with the design firm Design Workshop for the development of a Master Plan for Republic Square. The planning process included extensive public and stakeholder engagement, which include the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA), the Austin Parks Foundation (APF), and representative from the Republic Square Partners Group.

Upon the adoption of the Master Plan, the City of Austin began the process of negotiating a Parkland Improvement, Management, and Operations Agreement with APF and DAA. The agreement outlines the operation and management roles of APF, DAA, and PAR. APF is responsible for design and construction of the park and for helping to raise the remaining funds needed to build the park. Once the park is complete, DAA will be responsible for the day to day maintenance, operations and programming of the park. PAR will provide baseline services such as mowing and trash removal, and continue to oversee

the partnership agreement in the public interest. More information on the Master Plan can be found at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/parks-and-recreation/projects>.



Preferred Concept Plan Site map

## Budget

The funds for this project are derived from the 2% for public art portion of eligible construction budgets. The total award for an artist contract is \$105,000, inclusive of design, fabrication, and installation, including permitting fees, travel and shipping expenses, insurance, and other project related costs.

## Public Art Intent and Goals

The AIPP 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 who can creatively and thoughtfully design with the context of this project. For the Republic Square project, the AIPP program seeks to commission contemporary works of art that exemplifies the objectives of the Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Austin through the following goals:

- » Responds to the historical and cultural significance of Republic Square Park;
- » Complements the goals of the Republic Square Master Plan;
- » Contributes to a family-friendly experience of the park;

- » Creates a vibrant and contemporary artwork that lends identity to the park;
- » Presents low maintenance needs through the use of appropriate and durable materials.

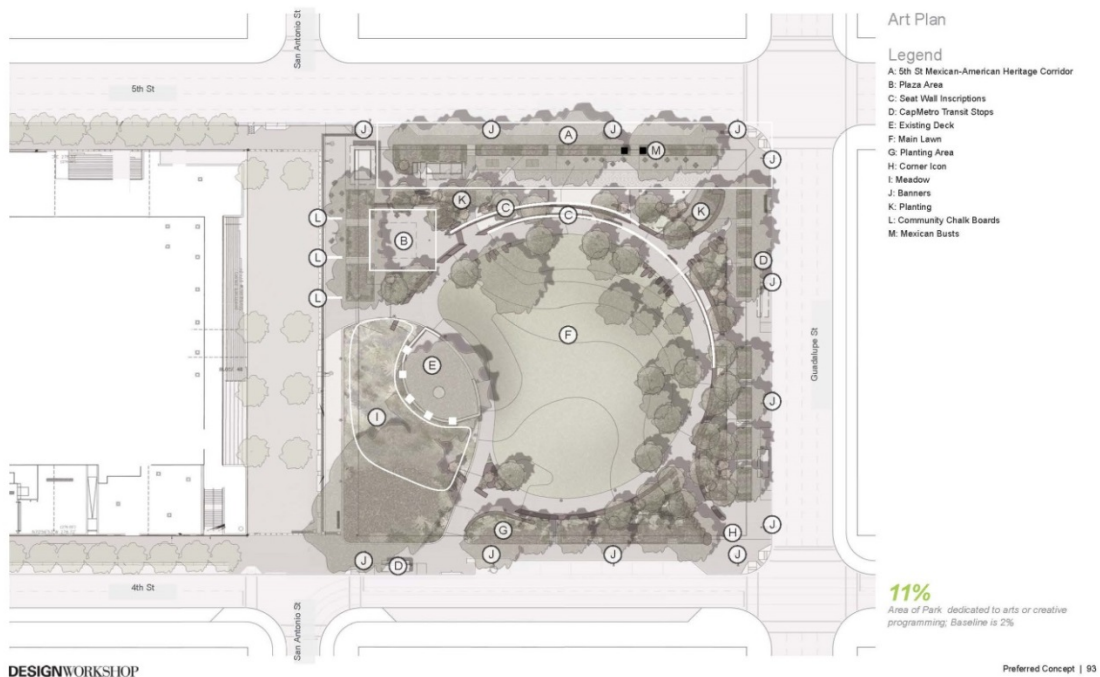
## Artwork Opportunity

The historical context of Republic Square Park, which was the center of a thriving Mexican community for fifty years beginning in 1880, may influence the artwork with attention given to identifying and collecting local history, oral histories, and stories of the park. The artist may work with archives at the Austin History Center that reveal significant Mexican and Mexican-American sites and events that took place along this portion of 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Permanent physical objects cannot infringe upon the main lawn area, market area, deck area or arc promenade, which are intended to remain open and flexible to accommodate everyday use, events and programs. Consideration must be given to not encroach on the critical root zones of trees.

Artwork could enhance planned design elements in the park (such as benches, walls, paving, etc.) or could be proposed as a separate work or series of works that meet the goals of the project and tie in with the overall plan of the park.

The diverse uses of the park allow for a large variety of Austin residents and visitors to enjoy the various aspects of the park. Community events, programming, farmers' markets, neighborhood dog walking, socializing, recreation, and other activities draw participants from a range of backgrounds including individuals of all ages. The artist must consider how the artwork will be integrated into this context and how stakeholders' input might inform his or her design process.



Art Plan Site Map

## Artist Information Meeting

An artist information meeting will be held at the Cultural Arts Division Offices at 201 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (Austin, TX 78701) on April 16, 2015 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm to explain the parameters of the project and outline the application procedures. AIPP staff and project representatives will be available to answer questions.

## Artist Eligibility

Professional visual artists at least 18 years of age who live and work in Texas are eligible to apply. Full-time, permanent City of Austin employees including employees of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and the Economic Development Department, and project consultants and their employees and sub-consultants are ineligible to apply. *Artists who currently have one active contract with the Art in Public Places program or who have more than two permanent works in the AIPP Collection are ineligible to apply.*

## Selection Process

A Request for Qualifications will be solicited from eligible professional visual artists. Applications must be submitted through [www.PublicArtist.org](http://www.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 and advisors shall review qualifications and may select three finalists for interviews. The selection panel and advisors shall convene for interviews and select one artist/artist team and one alternate. This recommendation will be presented to the Art in Public Places Panel and Arts Commission for approval. City Council must authorize negotiation of the contract. The approved artist(s) will be put under a design and commission contract to coordinate with the City and project team to develop a final design, which is subject to approval by the AIPP Panel and the Austin Arts Commission prior to fabrication and installation.

## Submission Requirements

Applications include a letter of interest stating what makes them a good match for the project and how they might approach it; 10 images of completed relevant artwork with the required descriptions; a resume; and names of 3 professional references. Applicants must submit applications through [www.PublicArtist.org](http://www.PublicArtist.org).

## Selection Criteria

The selection of an artist or art 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/aipp/selectioncriteria.htm>), 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
- » A willingness, interest and ability to design a work of art in the context of a public park.

## Selection Committee (Selection Panel & Project Advisors)

A three member Selection Panel shall be selected that includes at least one visual artist. Possible Selection Panel members include:

- » Sylvia Orozco, Executive Director, Mexic-Arte Museum
- » Steven Spears, ASLA, PLA, AICP, Partner and Principal at Design Workshop
- » Claudia Aparicio Gamundi, Graphic Designer, Sanders\Wingo
- » Roy Watson, Principal, Dyal and Partners
- » Wells Mason, Designer and sculptor at Ironwood Industries
- » John Yancey, Professor at The University of Texas at Austin

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:

- » Susan Benz – Project Manager, The Benz Resource Group
- » Rey Hernandez – Project Manager, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department
- » Melissa Barry – Downtown Austin Alliance
- » Colin Wallis – Austin Parks Foundation
- » Meredith Powell – Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association
- » TBD – Representative from the Republic Square Partners Group
- » Emily Little – AIPP Panel Liaison

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.

## Contact/Questions

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512-974-7841

## Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

### **March 2, 2015**

*Presented to AIPP Panel for approval*

### **March 16, 2015**

*Presented to Arts Commission for approval*

### **March 19, 2015**

*Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released*

### **April 16, 2015**

*Artist Information Meeting*

**May 21, 2015**

*Deadline for RFQ submission*

*Design Development starts*

**June 2015**

*Selection Committee review of submissions and selection of finalist and alternate*

**July 6, 2015**

*Approval of Artist and Alternate by AIPP Panel*

**July 20, 2015**

*Approval of Artist and Alternate by Arts Commission*

**August 2015**

*Approval of Artist and Alternate by City Council*

*Artist under contract*

**November 2015**

*Mid-Design review*

**March 2016**

*Final-Design approval*

**May 2016**

*Construction begins*

**Fall 2016 to spring 2017**

*Artwork installation*