

# Public Art 201: Creating a Winning Proposal

- Brief History of Program and Process
- Michael Mowry: Founder of Mowry Studio, member of Denver's Commission on Cultural Affairs
- Michael Clapper, artist
- Proposal and Presentation Dos & Don'ts



**PUBLIC ART**  
DENVER ARTS & VENUES

# Denver Public Art – 30 Years!

- Established in 1988 by Mayor Peña
- Ordinance #650 was adopted in 1991
- 1% of any capital improvement project budget over \$1 million is set aside for public art
- More than 300 pieces installed since 1988
- More than 400 artworks in total



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# The Vision of the Public Art Program

- **Site-specific and unique**
- Artwork that speaks to its users:
  - a location
  - a group of people
  - a time in history
- Artwork that enhances an experience
- Selected through a public process



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# Artist Selection Process

1. Selection Panel Created
2. Panel Orientation & possible site visit
3. Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
4. Finalist selection  
(Request for Proposals)
5. FINALIST PRESENTATIONS
6. Finalist recommended & approved



# Approval Process

- Selection Panel
  - Approved by Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs
  - Identifies priorities for project
  - Selects artist or artist team
- Public Art Committee (PAC)
  - Experts assess feasibility and troubleshoot problems
- Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs (DCCA)
  - Appointed by the Mayor
  - Approves fair and transparent process
- Mayor of Denver

# Art Selection Panel

- THREE Community Representatives
- Artist
- Arts Professional
- Public Art Committee
- Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs
- City Councilperson
- Ad Hoc Advisors



# Public Art 201: Creating a Winning Proposal

**Michael Mowry:** Founder of Mowry Studio,  
member of Denver's Commission on Cultural Affairs



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# The RFP: What to include

YES!

Narrative  
Images  
Budget  
Schedule  
Project team  
Maintenance plan  
References

MAYBE?

Installation plan  
Material samples  
Design process

NO!

Examples of previous work



# About that **NO!**

**Do not** include examples of your previous work

...unless **DIRECTLY** relevant to your **NEW** idea.

If you've made it through an RFQ to the RFP stage, the selection panel is already well versed in your past work.

Your interview presentation is short!  
Spend as much time as possible on the **NEW** idea.

# The RFP: what should you ask for?

## All of this:

- What type of request is it? An RFP?  
An RFQ? If an RFQ, can a proposal be submitted?
- Budget
- Schedule
- Commissioning agency contact information
- Desired presentation format - Booklets?  
How many? Presentation Boards? How many? What size? How durable? A Powerpoint? An animation?
- Interview opportunities: No interview?  
In-person interview ? Skype?
- Area / Regional information
- Public Art Committee member input
- Aerial photographs
- Google placemarks for project site and/or latitude & longitude
- All relevant drawings of the project from Landscape/Civil/Architectural/Structural Plans, Site Plans, Elevations, Sections in all formats available - PDF, CAD, etc.
- 3D assets - Architect's Revit Model (Architectural), Sketchup (Architectural / Landscape)
- Site photographs - as many views of the site as possible
- a video of the site
- Boilerplate contract
- Opportunities for site visits

# The RFP: Level of Detail

Carefully consider the level of detail required to convey and explain your idea in a convincing way.

Detail is expensive (in money and time) to develop.

Detail can convey that the design is fully 'baked' and leaves no space for further exploration.

Your idea **will and should change**.

# The RFP: CHOP CHOP!

If you're a finalist, start **IMMEDIATELY!**

Fabricators, engineers, and your other team members are probably all busy.

Your design will need to change and adapt to what you learn during budgeting and scheduling - leave room in your schedule to adapt.

# The RFP: PICK ONE Design!

You may have several good ideas for a project.  
Run them past your friends and family.

**PICK ONE**, and go with it.

Selection panelists see 3-5 proposals.

Diluting your presentation with multiple  
alternate designs suggests a lack of conviction  
to the selection panelists.

# RFP: Narrative

What do you think the project is about?

How does your concept respond to the selection panel's conveyed goals?

## “Fighting for Community”

My intent for the newly created Joey Lopes Park is to create an iconic sculpture that honors the man, his sport and the community of West Sacramento.

To illustrate this concept, I plan to create a sculpture of limestone and cor-ten steel that shows Joey Lopes as a half tone, photographic image. The image will be laser cut through the steel element. I plan to integrate a curved, steel element into the stone. The steel will be placed high on the stone so that the viewer can see the graphic from both sides. It will be lit from ground lighting at night to highlight the imagery. This version will also include a custom stone bench that is part of the sculptural composition.

On the stone surface, I propose a sandblasted graphic of the waterways that surround West Sacramento. This speaks to one of the reasons West Sacramento has been able to flourish as a city. The waterways depicted include the Sacramento River and the Deep Water Channel. The graphic will serve as boundary that encompasses West Sacramento.

# RFP: Images

Your chance to show off your sexy idea.  
If you can draw compellingly....



Patrick Marold, *Shadow Array*, 2015

# RFP: Images

or hire a traditional illustrator.....

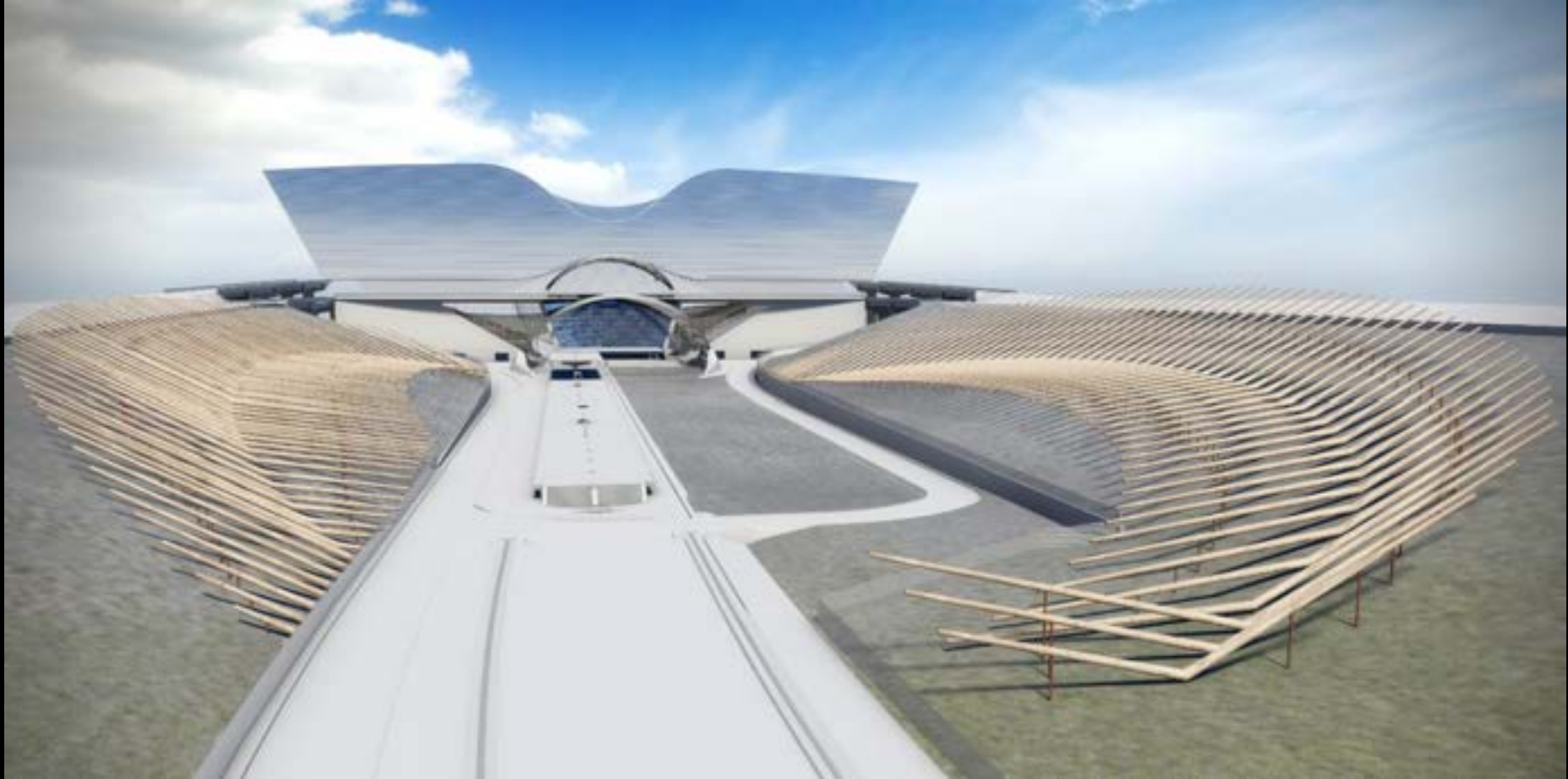


Joshua Weiner, *Land Art (unrealized)*, 2009



# RFP: Images

or a digital illustrator...

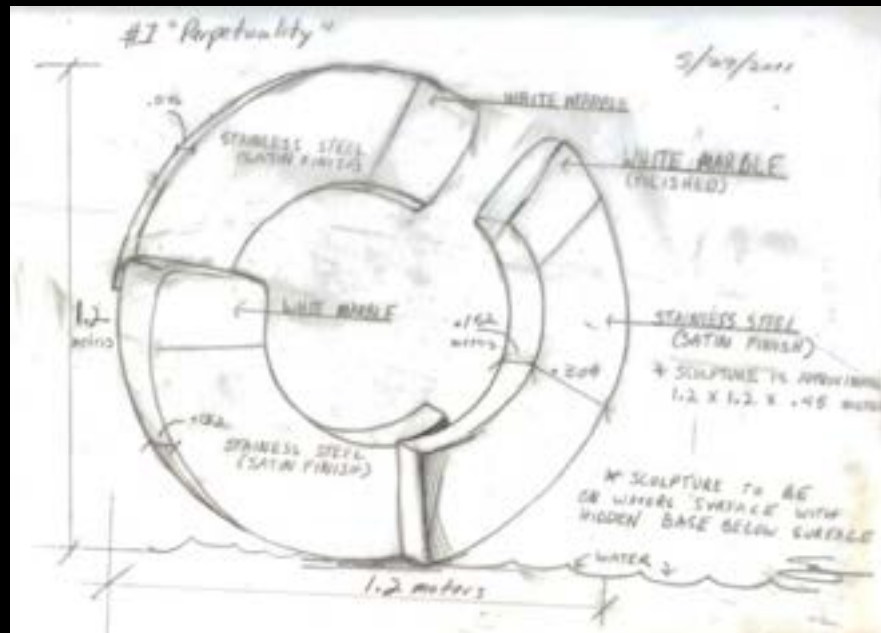


Patrick Marold, *Shadow Array*, 2015

# RFP: Images

Make sure your illustrations **accurately** reflect the scale and scope of your idea.

This is consequential.



Emmet Culligan, *Perpetuality*, 2011

# RFP: Budget

Do your research and  
get this as **realistic** as possible.

It's your chance to instill the confidence that you can probably  
succeed at building something never built before.

It's also your chance to make sure  
**you make money** on the project.

# RFP: Budget

Items to plan on:

Average % or typical cost:

1. Design fee / Artists fee	10-15%
2. Engineering / consultants	\$2,000 - 5,000
3. Material & Labor (fabrication)	70%
4. Insurance	\$300 - 5,000
5. Shipping (if applicable)	Varies
6. Travel	Varies
7. Photography	\$0-3,000
8. Taxes	Varies
9. Contingency	10%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100%</b>

# RFP: Schedule

1. Contract negotiation———— Know what you're signing!
2. Design
3. Engineering ————— Engineers are busy
4. Material acquisition———— Materials can take time
5. Fabrication ————— Quality, Price, Schedule (2)
6. Site preparation (?)
7. Site construction ——— THE BIGGEST UNKNOWN  
schedule
8. Shipping (?)
9. Installation
10. Photography

# RFP: Maintenance Plan

This is **IMPORTANT**

How do you anticipate the new owners of your artwork will have to take care of it to keep it long term?

How easy will it be to maintain?

Consider frequency, effort, accessibility, and sophistication of care.

# RFP: Project Team

If you are proposing a project that you cannot build yourself, who's going to help you?

Hire professionals.

# RFP: Installation Plan (maybe)

How do you anticipate  
installing your artwork?



# RFP: Material Samples

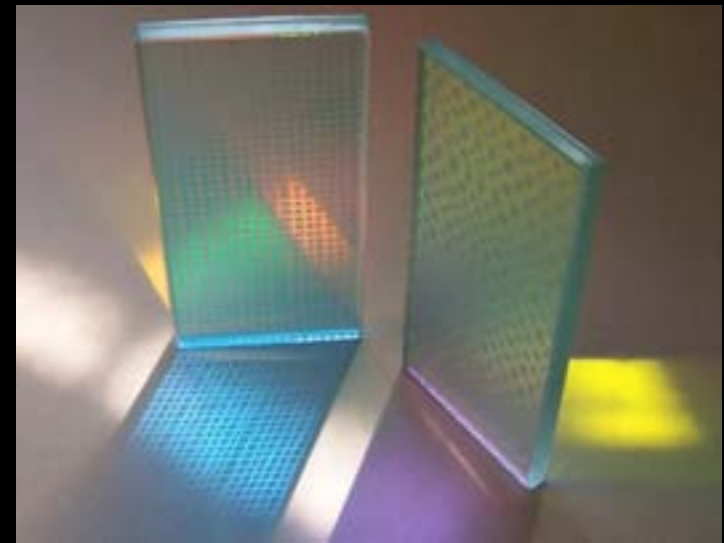
Are you using unusual materials?

Bring samples of the materials  
you plan to use.

They provide first-hand  
understanding and tangible  
"ownership" to selection  
panelists.



Project model, Larry Kirkland, 2016



# Presentation: Physical Models



*Iowa Childrens Hospital model, Larry Kirkland, 2016*



*Project models, Becky Steele, 2018*



*Project models, Ty Gillespie, 2018*



*Sunsilo model, Patrick Marold, 2016*

# RFP: References

Do your previous clients believe that you delivered your projects on time, on budget, and were professional to work with?

Do they think you are a team player?

# Presentation: Parts and Pieces

Booklets/pamphlets

PowerPoint

Presentation boards

Animations

Material samples

Physical models

Proofs-of-concept

# Presentation: Tips

Use PowerPoint (not Keynote) if you're not using your own computer system for your presentation.

PowerPoint is ubiquitous, used by all public art agencies (government!), and runs on Windows and Macintosh computers.

# Presentation: Tips

1. Bring two USB thumbdrives with both **PowerPoint** and **PDF** versions of your presentation,

**AND**

2. Submit both to the selection panel via email/dropbox.

**AND**

3. Put copies online where you can download them.

# Michael Clapper Studios

Denver, Colorado

# Sculptural Concept for the Block 3, Sloan's Lake Site

Referencing Place: the Evolution of the  
Site through Nature and History

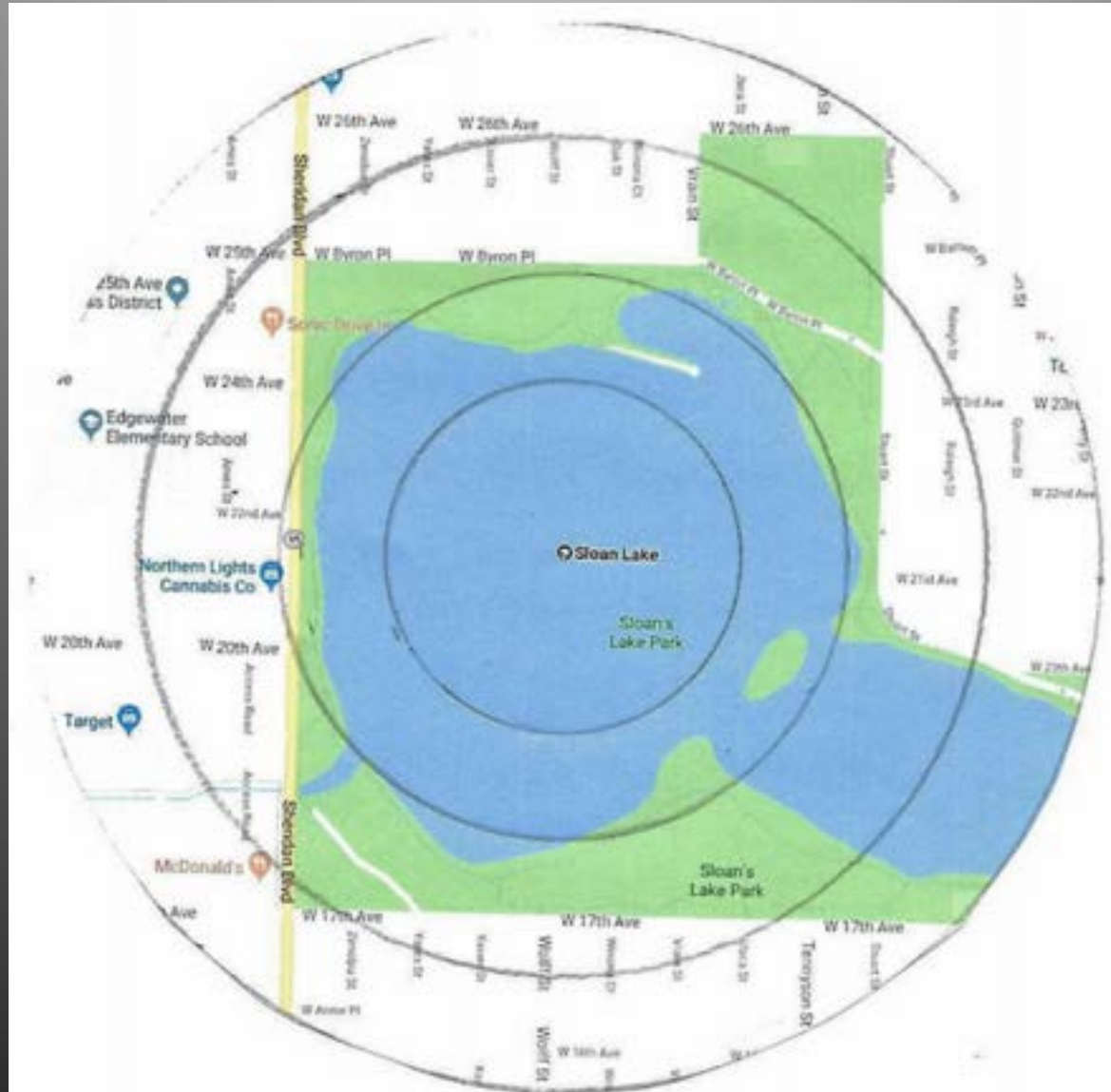


# Inspirations



Sloan's Lake

# Inspiration



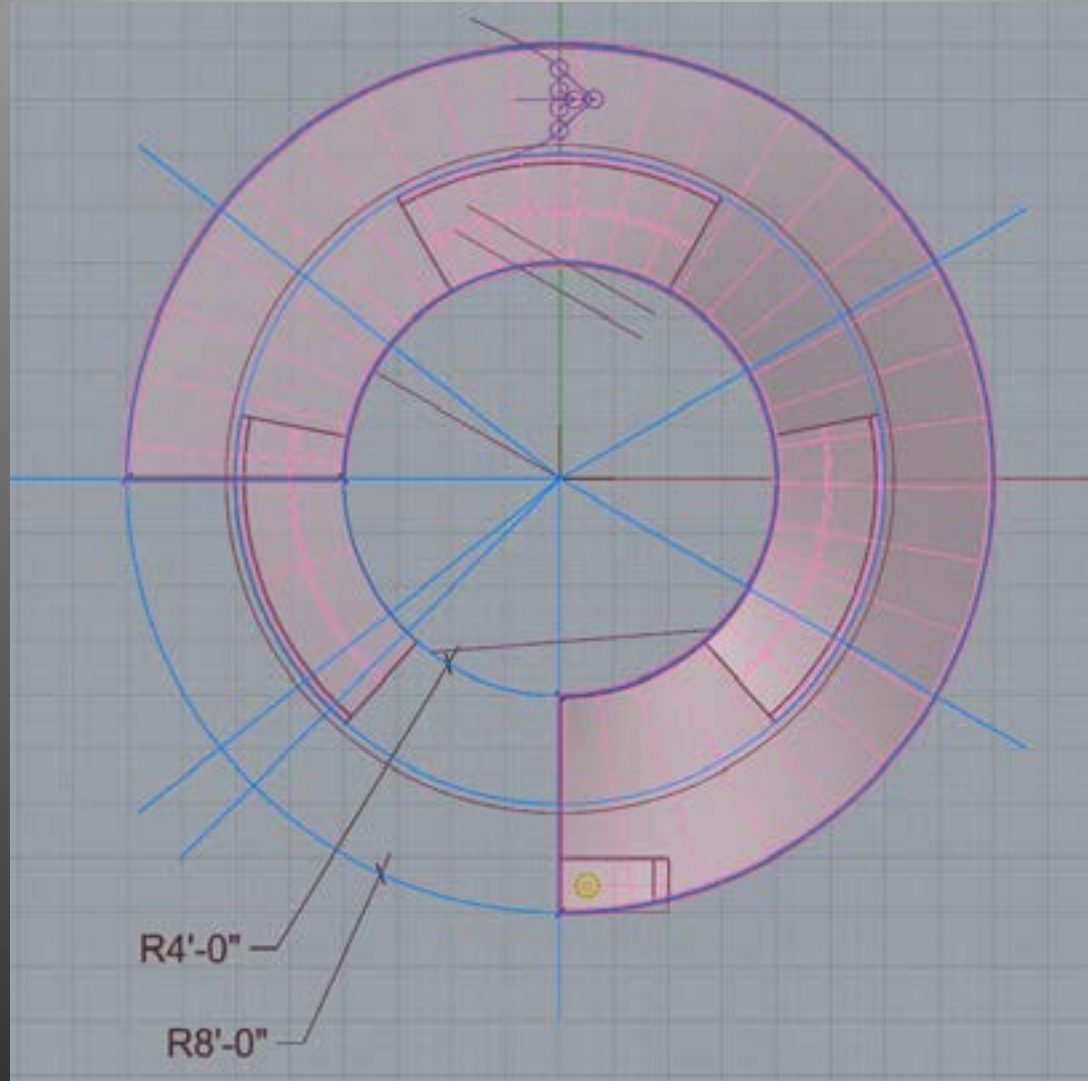
Actual Neighborhoods Surrounding Sloan's Lake

# Inspiration



The Community of St. Anthony's

# “Evolution of Place”



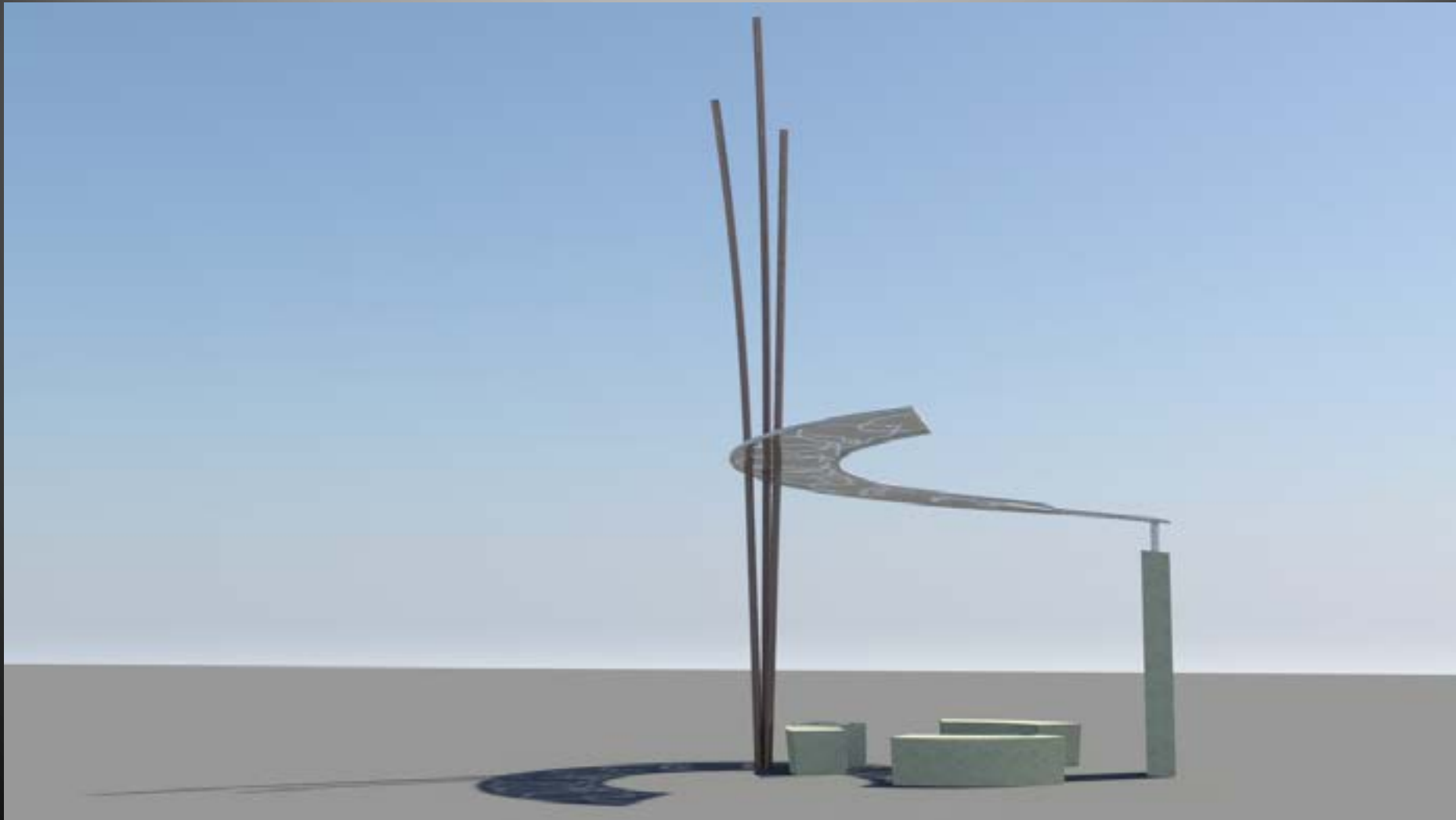
Combining the Site's Nature,  
Neighborhood and History into a Circular Form

# “Evolution of Place”



Combining Water-Neighborhood-History

# “Evolution of Place”



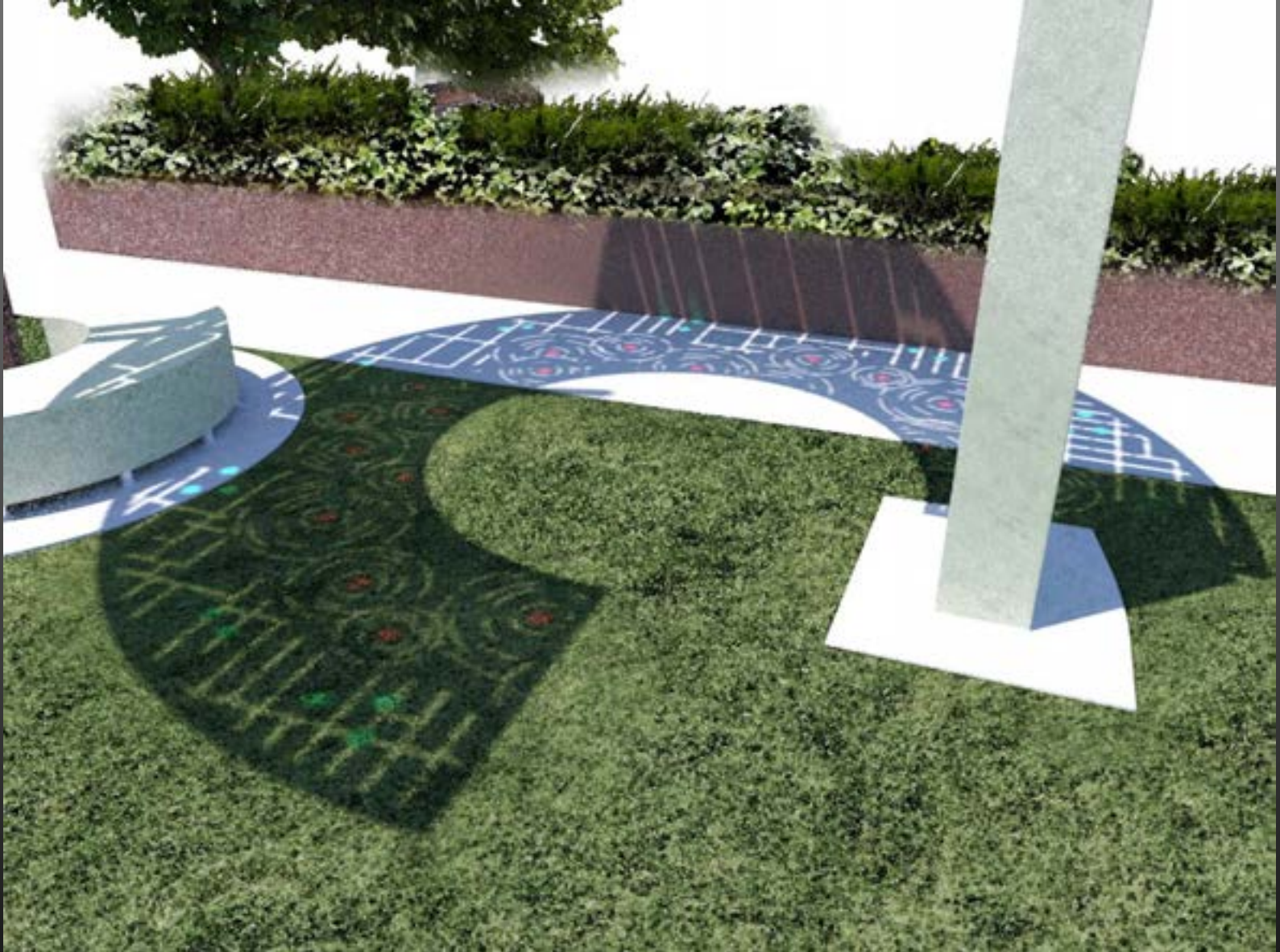
Creating an Artistic Composition  
that Speaks to the Evolution of Place

# “Evolution of Place”



Creating a Magical Pergola that Envelops the Viewer

# “Evolution of Place”



Patterns projected onto the viewer by the sun

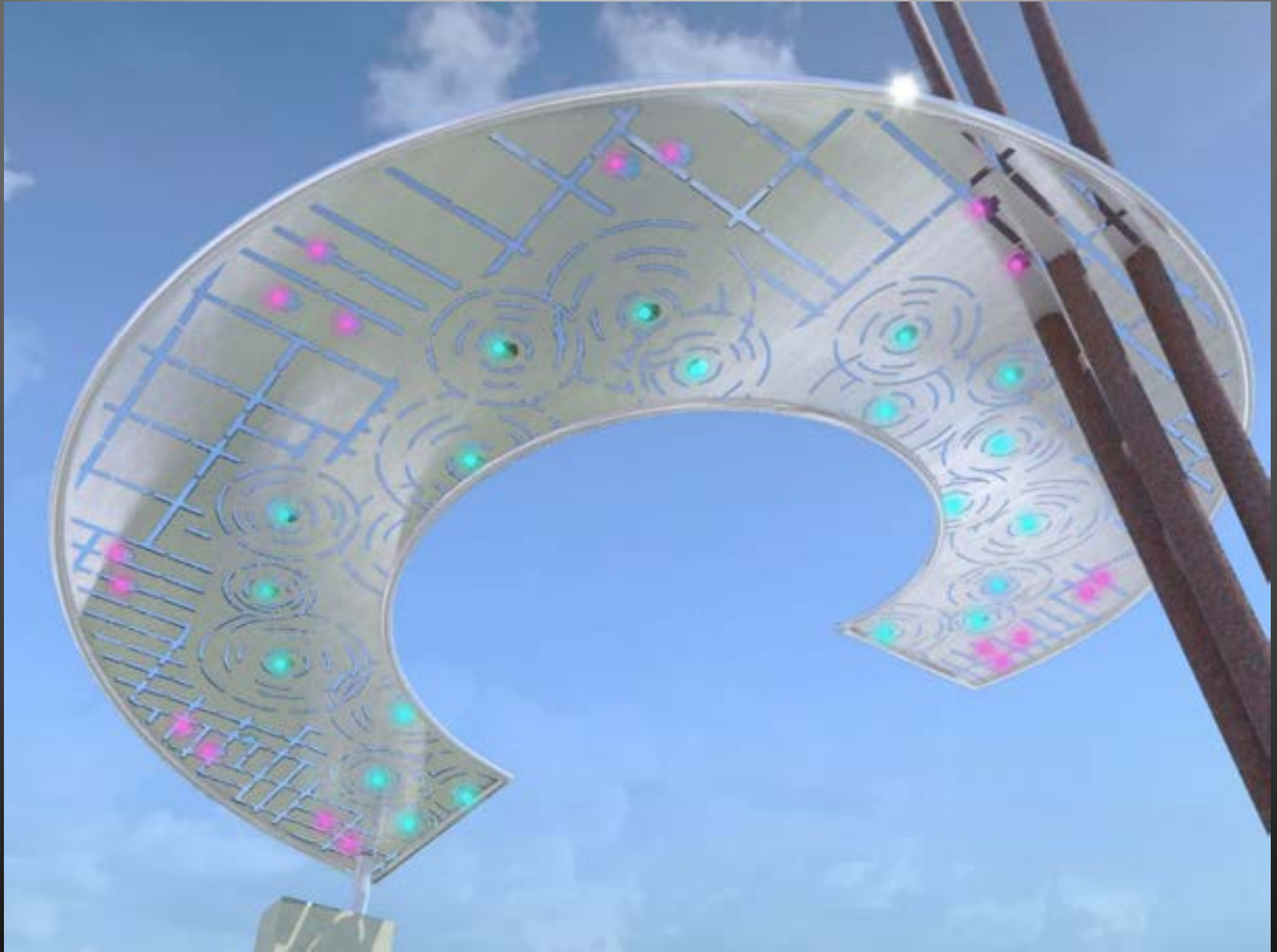


# “Evolution of Place”



Functional as a place to view the lake and the art

# “Evolution of Place”



The water of the lake morphing into the neighborhood

# “Evolution of Place”



26' tall “cattails” – 15' diameter spiral

# “Evolution of Place”



Dichroic Glass changes colors as you walk around

# “Evolution of Place”



# “Evolution of Place”



# “Evolution of Place” adjusted site plan

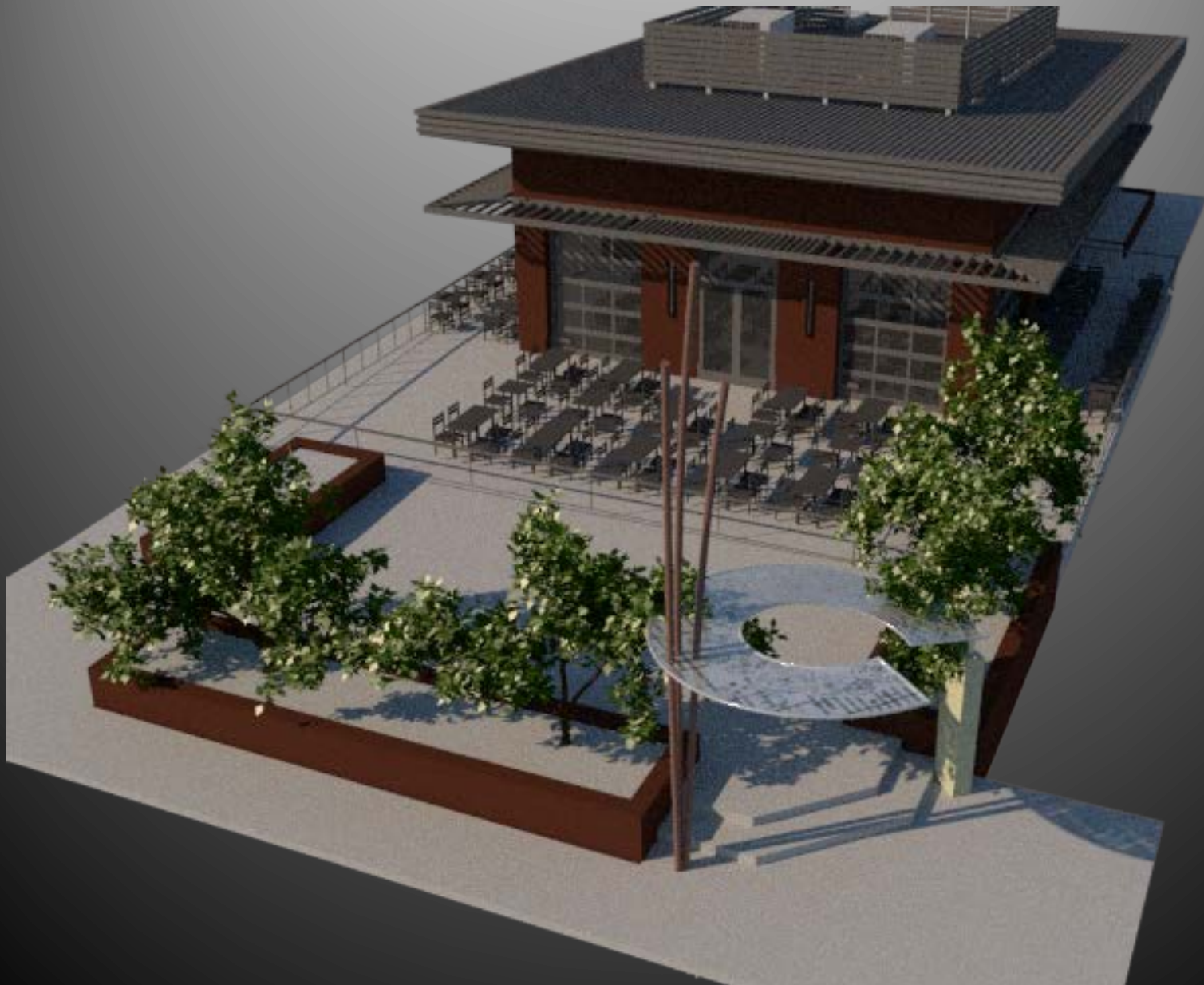


“Evolution of Place”  
adjusted site plan





“Evolution of Place”  
adjusted site plan



“Evolution of Place”  
adjusted site plan

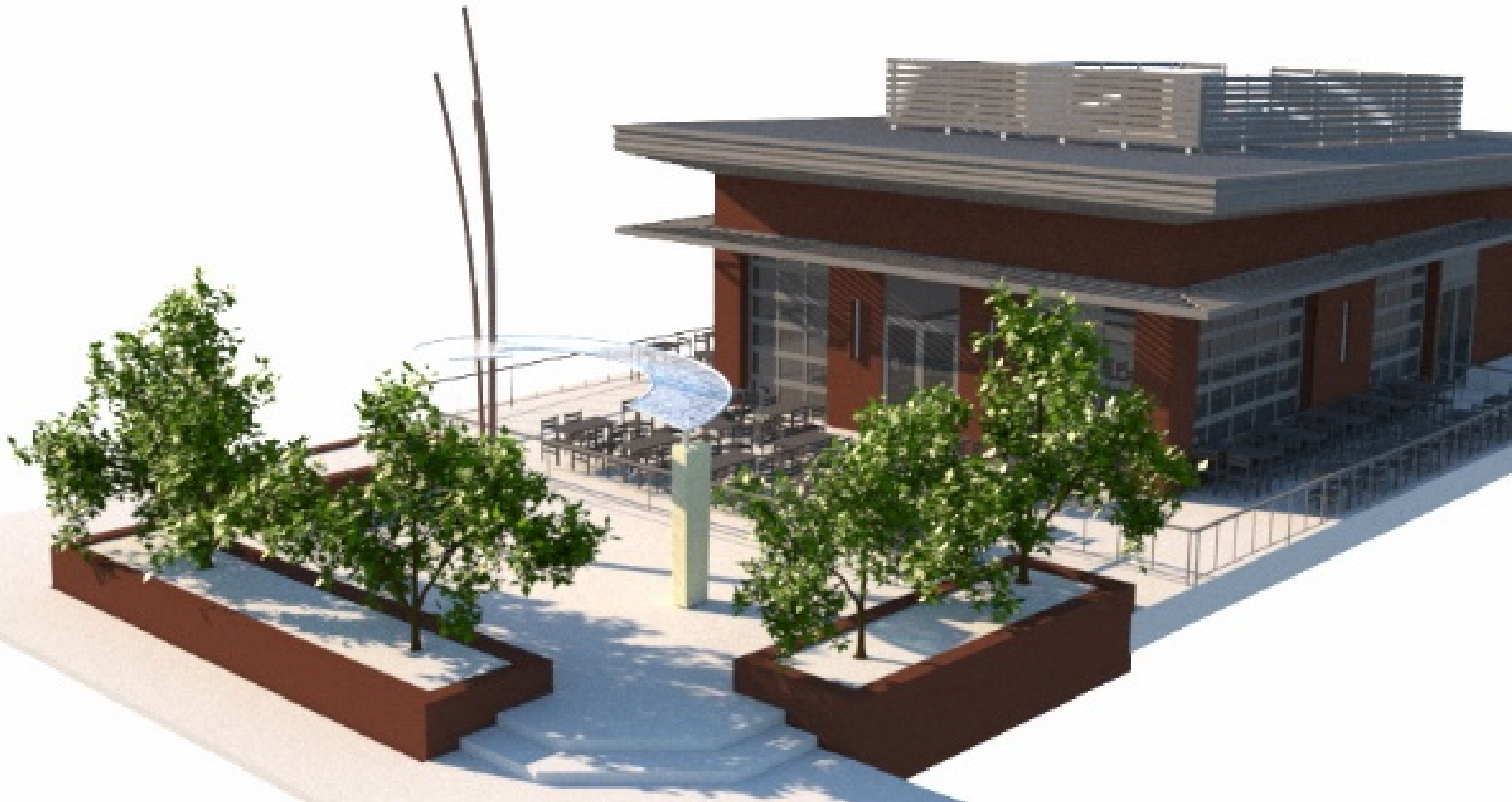


On Plaza Location

# “Evolution of Place” adjusted site plan



# “Evolution of Place” adjusted site plan



# Possible Materials and Methods



Custom Perforated Stainless Steel

# Pre Rusted CorTen Steel



“Mining Minds” University of Texas

# Materials and Methods: Limestone or Granite



# Dichroic Glass





# Dichroic Glass



# Thank You



# Typical Documents to the Committee

## **Narrative of the Sculpture “Evolution of Place”**

My concept for the site at Block #3, along the south shore of Sloan's Lake, address's the link between the natural geography of the site and the evolution of its cultural history. It is my goal to create an iconic sculpture that artistically address's this theme while creating something of an artistic pergola to sit and contemplate one's surroundings.

To illustrate this concept I will create a 15' diameter, spiraling, circular element that will be held aloft horizontally. The negative space within the circular element that the viewer will see when they look up is meant to represent the Sloan's Lake. Within the 3-dimensional steel element will be a series of 2-dimensional graphics that allude to the evolution of the area surrounding Sloan's Lake. Starting at the inside edge of the circle will be a series of water elements that will be cut through the stainless steel. Extending outward, from the center of the steel spiral, the water elements will morph into a graphic that will consist of a pattern of the trails, roads and city blocks that surround the lake. Set within and throughout this circular composition will be a series of elements made from Dichroic glass. The colorful glass will be cut into the shapes of circles and crosses. The circles to represent water, will be at the center of the splash, or rain drop water elements. The crosses will represent the history of the medical and spiritual influence of St. Anthony's.

The artistic spiral will be held aloft (approximately 10' to 14') by a steel element on one side that will allude to cattails that typically grow on the edge of a lake. This element will be 26' tall. Holding up the other side of the spiral will be an element of stone that represents the bedrock of the area. Underneath the composition will be a matching stone bench where the viewer can take time to rest, or to sit and take in the composition. As the sun crosses the sky, the viewer below will be bathed in a magical setting that consists of shadow and color. This will be created by the patterns and glass of the canopy.

I hope you share my vision of a functional sculptural installation that speak to the evolution of place.

Sincerely,  
Michael Clapper

# Typical Documents to the Committee

## Budget for Proposed Sculpture “Evolution of Place”

Design Fee and Project Management:	\$19,500
Consultation: (Structural Engineer)	\$1,000
Consultation: (Graphics)	\$1,200
Sub Contractors: (concrete)	\$5,500
Sub Contractors: (Limestone elements)	\$6,500
Sub Contractors: (steel and fabrication)	\$20,000
Sub Contractors: (water jet steel and glass)	\$6,500
Insurance:	\$400
Installation: (Crane-Travel-Labor)	\$3,000
Overhead:	\$1,000
Photography:	\$100
Plaque:	\$300
<u>Contingency Fee:</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>

# Typical Documents to the Committee

**Michael Don Clapper**

**6505 E. Colorado Dr.**

**Denver, CO 80224**

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**[www.michaelclapperstudios.com](http://www.michaelclapperstudios.com)**

## *Commissions and Current Representation*

- 2019 Public Sculpture for Duke Realty in Indianapolis, IN \$50,000 budget  
Sculpture Commission for 9-Dot Art Consultants, Lake House Project, Denver, CO \$50,000 Commission
- 2018 Outdoor Public Sculpture for the City of Stockton, CA \$184,500 budget  
Public Sculpture for Sloan's Block 3 LLC – City of Denver \$70,000 budget
- 2016 Public Sculpture for Pioneer Park, Commerce City, CO \$74,500  
Public Sculpture for West Sacramento, CA \$70,000
- 2015 Outdoor Public Sculpture for RTD, Wheat Ridge, CO \$125,000  
Outdoor Public Sculpture for Duncan Park, Englewood, CO \$30,000
- 2014 Outdoor Public Sculpture for Karmiel Park, Denver, CO \$30,000  
Outdoor Public Sculpture to Commemorate the Birth of the NFL, \$150,000 budget
- 2012 Outdoor Public Sculpture for Kent Place, Denver, CO \$20,000 budget
- 2010 Outdoor Public Sculpture for University Texas, El Paso \$85,000 budget  
Outdoor Public Sculpture for the City of Denver \$28,000 budget
- 2009 Outdoor Public Sculpture for Snowmass Village, CO \$75,000 budget
- 2008 Outdoor Public Sculpture for Fire Station #6 Fremont, CA \$47,500 budget
- 2007 Outdoor Sculpture for the Pinnacle Group, Denver, CO \$20,000 budget
- 2007 Outdoor Sculpture for Ridge Gate Development, Lone Tree, CO \$20,000 budget
- 2006 Outdoor Sculpture for the Lowry Foundation, Denver, CO \$40,000 budget

Currently represented by the William Havu Gallery, Denver, Co. -  
Numerous private commissions throughout the United States and abroad

## *Awards and Honors*

- 2006 2nd. Place Award Juror George Nuebert "North American Sculpture Exhibition"
- 1996 Artistic Award Juror Manual Neri, "North American Sculpture Exhibition"  
Foothills Art Center, Golden, CO
- 1994 Best of Show Award "Skaneateles Art Struck Competition"  
Skaneateles, NY

## *Teaching experience*

- 2001-2005 Adjunct Professor, Dept. of Art, Metro State College of Denver
- 1989-1990  
Courses in furniture design at the Genoa School for Furniture Design
- 1991 Acting head of wood program at the Genoa School for Furniture Design

## *Education*

- 1985-1988  
Studies in Design  
Wendell Castle School  
Rochester, NY

# Finished Product



# Finished Product



# *Dos & Don'ts*

1. READ application carefully, follow instructions
2. PHOTOS
3. LETTER OF INTENT
4. Apply EARLY



**Where do I find public art  
opportunities?**

[www.DenverPublicArt.org](http://www.DenverPublicArt.org)

[www.CallForEntry.org](http://www.CallForEntry.org)



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