



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art Project

Larimer Bridge – Connecting Auraria

Budget: Approximately \$55,000.00 USD

Eligibility: Artists residing in the United States

DEADLINE: Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 11:59 pm MST

Introduction

The City of Denver's Public Art Program seeks to commission an artist or team of artists to create an original public artwork, or series of artworks, for the *Larimer Bridge – Connecting Auraria* project located on Larimer Street between 14th Street and the Auraria Campus, in Downtown Denver, CO 80202. A 13-member selection panel of community representatives, arts and culture professionals, and civic leaders has been assembled to identify art opportunities, and to select and recommend an artist or artist team for this project. The selection panel will select one artist or artist team for the allocated total budget of approximately \$55,000.00 USD.

Larimer Bridge

This project will improve the pedestrian experience and safety on Larimer Street between 14th Street and the Auraria Campus. The sidewalks along the Larimer Street bridge over Cherry Creek are narrow and do not support the high demand from pedestrians who regularly use Larimer Street to connect between downtown Denver and the campus. This project includes full reconstruction of the bridge over Cherry Creek to accommodate a larger pedestrian and amenity zone. It will address the non-ADA-compliant ramps at the bridge approach and at two Larimer Street and Speer Boulevard intersections. Additional improvements include landscaping and mobility enhancements.

Larimer Street

Larimer Street began in the Auraria neighborhood, west of Cherry Creek. In 1858, the Colorado Gold Rush was sparked after prospectors discovered gold in the South Platte River. The street was named for General William Larimer who built Denver's first residence. In 1861, Denver became a territory and Larimer Street was designated as the main street. Development boomed and Larimer Street was very prosperous over the next 30 years. In 1893, a crash in the silver market sank the state into a depression. Larimer Street became stagnant; not much new building development followed and by 1900 the street had become Denver's skid row.

By 1916, prohibition helped put Larimer Street back on the map. Former bars transformed into soda fountains, but it was rumored that speakeasys existed in the basement of businesses. While most of Denver was starting to boom after WWII, but Larimer Street had not caught up with the new economic growth, still housing 46 bars, 57 flophouses (cheap hotels), 17 pawn shops and 22 secondhand stores. The city started talking about demolishing old Larimer Street including the 1400 block.

In 1965, Denverite Dana Crawford formed Larimer Associates to save the area. She worked to refurbish buildings and create courtyards, and leased space to office and retail tenants. The 1400 block was saved

in 1965 by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority. In 1971, Larimer Square received the designation of Denver's first Historic District. Today, Larimer Square remains an active and lively area of Downtown Denver. With the preservation and restoration of its heritage, architecture and streetscape, the area's modern renaissance honors Denver's pioneering spirit while setting the stage for a colorful and community-centered new era.¹

Auraria

Auraria is Denver's oldest neighborhood. In 1860, the area was annexed by Denver in a moonlight ceremony on Larimer Street bridge. Many people settled in Auraria over the years, including Scottish, Irish, English, German, Jewish and Mexican immigrants. Between 1940 and 1960, the area changed from residential to mostly industrial. In 1940, there were more than 800 homes, but just 30 years later, this number had dropped to 130. In the late 1960s, during the height of Denver's urban renewal era, the neighborhood was chosen as the site for the future Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC), prompting protest from the remaining residents. Those who remained were given funds to relocate, but it meant leaving the neighborhood where they had lived for generations.²

Today, the Auraria Higher Education Center is home to three separate and distinct institutions: Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Colorado Denver. The student population across all three institutions is approximately 38,000, with an additional 5,000 faculty and staff. All three institutions have a full-time enrollment of at least 25% of students from Hispanic descent.

Cherry Creek

The South Platte watershed was the ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne and Ute nations; the lands were also the hunting grounds and migration routes of other indigenous nations, including the Lakota, Apache, Comanche and Shoshone. The confluence of the Cherry Creek and the South Platte River was a favorite campground of the Arapaho. For decades, the Arapaho had camped at the two rivers during the winter months. In 1858, the Arapaho returned to find settlers camped in their home. By the end of 1858, 50 cabins had been erected and eventually the Arapaho and other indigenous nations were forcibly removed from their lands.

The Cherry Creek is a 48-mile tributary of the South Platte. It flows from near Franktown, CO northward where it meets with the South Platte River at today's Confluence Park.

Cherry Creek has flooded multiple times over the years. The 1864 flood was the first major devastation to impact the early town of Denver. It took out several structures, including Larimer Bridge. Cherry Creek overran its banks six more times over the next 50 years.

Today, Cherry Creek boasts a pedestrian and bicycle trail along its length. It is a major recreational amenity for residents of the Denver Metro Area.

Goals, Site, Media & Materials

The selection panel members have set forth specific goals and parameters for this public art project with

¹ *Larimer Square*, <https://www.larimersquare.com/>.

² Fetter, Rosemary. *A Brief History of Auraria*. Office of the Executive Vice President for Administration at the Auraria Higher Education Center, 1997.

the hope of creating unique and inspiring works of art for students on the AHEC campus, and downtown residents, employees and visitors.

Goals:

The panel is invested in creating connections between the Auraria Campus and Downtown Denver. Currently the campus feels separated and isolated from the downtown core; successful artwork will help to bridge the two neighborhoods. The panel is very invested in honoring the people who once inhabited the area and elevating the stories of those who were displaced. Given the proximity of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, the panel is also invested in the natural history of the land and the relationship of people to the land. The panel seeks to commission artwork that is inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all. The panel is also invested in artwork that activates the space, but also seeks artwork that creates a moment to pause and reflect. Artists should also consider the existing artworks in the immediate area and how they could relate to the new work(s). The panel would particularly like to encourage emerging and indigenous artists to apply.

Site:

While a preferred location has not been selected, the panel is open to artwork that could be located anywhere within or near the project limits.

Media & Materials:

Artworks could be created using diverse media including, but not limited to, paint, sculpture, mosaic applications and augmented reality. Works that are engaging and help to tell the story of the area, its people and its history are encouraged. The selection panel is open to artwork in **all media and materials that are suitable for outdoor display.**

Maintenance & Durability

As this permanent artwork will be accessioned into the Denver Public Art collection, all applicants must consider the issues of long-term conservation and maintenance of public art, along with time and budget. These projects are in the public realm and may therefore be exposed to physical stresses, as well as be subject to vandalism. Public Art projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional conservator prior to the submission of a final proposal. Artist proposals awarded contracts will be reviewed by the City of Denver's Public Art Committee to ensure conformity with city standards of maintenance and durability, as well as ADA standards. All finalists are expected to stay on budget and to complete work in an approved time frame.

Who May Apply

This project is open to artists who reside in the United States. The City and County of Denver is committed to building a public art collection that represents artists from a broad diversity of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation, or mental or physical disability. The selection panel is especially interested in artists who can demonstrate a deep understanding of the area's occupants, as well as the neighborhood, history and urban landscape.

Can a team apply?

Applicants may apply as a single artist or multi-person collaborative group. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé for the team, with no more than one page per team member.

Applying for these opportunities

In response to this RFQ, applicants will be asked to submit the following items via www.callforentry.org (CaFÉ™).

1. Six digital images of past work
2. Résumé
3. Statement of interest no longer than 2,000 characters

From these applications, the selection panel will choose three to five finalists who will create site-specific proposals and be interviewed in-person. Artists will be paid an honorarium for this work. Artists/teams selected as finalists will be required to submit a Diversity & Inclusiveness Form for their proposals to be considered, which will be provided upon notification. As directed by Executive Order 101, this form must be submitted for all city solicitations of proposals. Denver Arts & Venues Public Art Program staff can provide guidance on filling out this form.

Based on the interview and proposal, an artist or artist team will be selected for this commission. The selected artist or artist team will work with Public Art Program and Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) staff when finalizing their designs for installation.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Denver Executive Order No. 101 establishes strategies between the City and private industry to use diversity and inclusiveness to promote economic development in the City and County of Denver and to encourage more businesses to compete for City contracts and procurements. The Executive Order requires, among other things, the collection of certain information regarding the practices of the City's contractors and consultants toward diversity and inclusiveness and encourages/requires City agencies to include diversity and inclusiveness policies in selection criteria in solicitations for City services or goods where legally permitted. Diversity and Inclusiveness means inviting values, perspectives and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds, and integrates diversity into its hiring and retention policies, training opportunities and business development methods to provide an equal opportunity for each person to participate, contribute and succeed within the organization's workplace. "Diversity" encompasses a wide variety of human differences, including differences such as race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical disabilities, appearance, and historically underutilized and disadvantaged persons, as well as social identities such as religion, marital status, socio-economic status, lifestyle, education, parental status, geographic background, language ability, and veteran status.

Budget

The budget for this commission is approximately \$55,000.00 USD which will be allocated to the artist/team selected. These funds come from the City of Denver's 1% Percent for Public Art Ordinance resulting from the *Larimer Bridge – Connecting Auraria* project. This contract amount is inclusive of all costs associated with the project including, but not limited to, the artist's design fee, other consultation fees such as structural engineering consultation, insurance (including Colorado Workers Compensation), tools, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, any building or site modification required, travel to and from the site, per diem expenses, project documentation, contingency to cover unexpected expenses, and any other costs. For all work done on City property, prevailing wage requirements will be applied.

Timeline

(Except for online application deadline, timeline is subject to adjustments)

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 11:59 P.M. MST
August 2022
December 2022

Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)
Finalist Selection
Selected Artist or Artist Team Notification

Project Selection Panel

According to Denver's Public Art policy, the project selection panel plays an active role in the commission of public art for Denver. The *Larimer Bridge – Connecting Auraria* art selection panel is comprised of 13 voting members and one additional non-voting advisor. The selection panel is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria for a request for qualifications, reviewing applications, selecting and interviewing finalists, and selecting an artist or artist team for the commission.

Selection Process

1. Three to five artists/artist teams will be selected as finalists. Those selected will receive more specific information regarding the site and have the opportunity to meet with community members from the art selection panel, Denver Transportation and Infrastructure representatives and Denver Public Art program staff. The finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare the proposal and present it in-person or virtually.
2. The selection panel will review the proposals, interview the finalists and recommend an artist/artist team for the commission.
3. The final recommendation of the selection panel will be presented to the Public Art Committee, the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs and the mayor of Denver for final approval.

*All decisions of the City and County of Denver are final.

Materials to be Submitted

Please read this section carefully. Incomplete applications will NOT be considered. The applicant's name must appear on all materials submitted.

All materials must be submitted online, via the CaFÉ™ website (www.callforentry.org). There is no application fee to apply or to use the CaFÉ™ online application system.

Digital Images—In order to be considered for this project, the applicant must electronically submit six digital images of **previously completed** artworks through the online CaFÉ™ system. Artists who wish to submit kinetic, sound or media works must submit a complete CaFÉ™ application and will have the opportunity to upload one video file.

IMPORTANT: If submitting audio or video files, do not use them as your very first image. They must be submitted last in your image sequence.

Instructions on how to format images to CaFÉ™ specifications can be found at <https://www.callforentry.org/uploading-images-audio-and-video-files/>.

Assistance in using the CaFÉ™ system is available here: <https://www.callforentry.org/artist-help-cafe/>.

If an artist does not have access to a computer, s/he/they may call 720-865-5564 to make arrangements to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues. To request this RFQ in an alternate format

(such as Braille, large print or accessible electronic format) please contact DisabilityAccess@denvergov.org.

Statement of Interest—Please submit a brief statement (2,000-character maximum) outlining the following:

- Your interest in the *Larimer Bridge – Connecting Auraria* Public Art project
- Description of your general concept and design approach
- Please also include information on your experience working with diverse communities and stakeholders

Résumé—Submit a one to two-page current résumé via CaFÉ™ that highlights your professional accomplishments as an artist. Please name your résumé file accordingly: *Last name.First initial* (i.e. *Smith.J.pdf*). Résumés that are more than two pages will not be downloaded. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé with no more than one page per team member.

Survey – Applicants will also be required to fill out a short demographic survey that will be sent to the email on file from the CaFÉ™ application.

References – Applicants who are selected to be finalists will be required to provide three professional references.

Please direct all questions about the project to:

Megan Deffner, Denver Public Art Program Administrator, megan.deffner@denvergov.org, 720-865-5564.

Project Area Photos



Above: On Larimer St. looking west



Above: On Larimer St. standing on the bridge, looking west.



Above: On Larimer St. looking east towards downtown.



Above: On northbound Speer Blvd. looking south at the bridge.



Above: On Larimer St. on the bridge, looking southeast.



Above: On Larimer St. between northbound and southbound Speer Blvd. looking east towards downtown.



Above: On Larimer St. looking southwest towards AHEC campus.