Welcome to Downtown Ashland Gateway Art

OVERVIEW
The Town of Ashland’s Public Art Commission seeks qualifications from artists/artist teams for a new public artwork to welcome residents and visitors to the western entrance of Downtown Ashland at the intersection of US Route 1 and England Street.

Artists/artist teams are invited to submit qualifications for this exciting opportunity to celebrate and represent the Ashland community through a large-scale work of art. The ideal piece could tell the local story or history, strengthen community pride, evoke feelings of inspiration or joy, encourage fun and play or outdoor recreation, cultivate community dialogue, foster reflection, promote unity and connectedness or instill a sense of home and place.

The site is highly visible. It serves as the primary entrance to Downtown, is proximal to the Interstate 95 interchange, and will be viewed by travelers when entering and leaving Ashland.

RFP Deadline:                      March 25th, 2024
Honorarium for Semi-Finalists (up to 3): $1,500 each
Number of Commissions:                1
Commission Budget:                      $60,000 commission inclusive of artist’s/artist team’s fees, materials, insurance, fabrication, installation, travel, and all other project-related expenses

BACKGROUND
Incorporated in 1858, the Town of Ashland is a vibrant and spirited community with a rich history and heritage. The Public Art Commission functions as the catalyst for local public art experiences and works to enhance community vibrancy and small-town character.

Ashland is known for its family-friendly charm, and our motto is “Center of the Universe.” Ashland is distinguished by its vibrant and historic downtown, distinct identity as a diverse and welcoming community, and the home of Randolph-Macon College.
Located in Hanover County just 20 miles north of Virginia’s capital, the City of Richmond, Ashland boasts a rich railroad history and growing outdoor recreation amenities, especially among cyclists. Turn of the century Victorian homes line leafy Center Street and the art deco-inspired Ashland Theatre and 100-year-old Visitors Center serve as downtown icons. Berkleytown, Ashland’s historic African American neighborhood, is also a celebrated facet of the community thanks to the soon-to-be completed Berkleytown Heritage Park.

Newly formed in 2023, the Ashland Public Art Commission is embarking on an endeavor to create additional artistic places of interest in Downtown. This welcoming piece will be highly visible to locals and visitors alike as they drive in to enjoy special events, restaurants, and shopping in Downtown.

SITE LOCATION AND ARTWORK SPECIFICATIONS
The site is located west of the intersection of US Route 1 and England Street and consists of two parcels directly along both sides of England Street, specifically the southern side of 100 N Washington Highway (Wawa) and northern side of 605 England Street (Tobacco Hut). As travelers exit the interstate and head west towards Downtown Ashland, the site is visible from the road.

The dimensions available for art installation footings on either side of England Street are 6 feet wide by 6 feet long. Any portions of the artwork that arch over the roadway (either fully or partially) must be a minimum of 15 feet in height to allow for vehicles of all widths and heights, including tractor trailers and construction vehicles, to pass through safely.

Ideal works of art would create an arch or archway effect to welcome visitors and provide passersby in vehicles safe viewing access. The ideal work of art would also not block the view of vehicles turning into and out of adjacent businesses/roadways and be able to withstand car pollution while maintaining graffiti/vandalism-proof qualities.

The site can be modified to provide anchors or a concrete pad(s), as well as electrical at the expense of the project budget. Please reference the included site images.

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

1. The proposed artwork must be an original work.
2. The proposed artwork should be distinctive in design, color, and subject matter and appropriate for public viewing of all ages. The piece will ideally be colorful to contrast the existing tan/concrete surrounding installation site.
3. Enjoyed day or night. Proposals and proposal budgets should include lighting elements. All lighting elements must be dark-sky compliant.

4. The proposed artwork should be scaled for maximum viewability and be easily experienced from vehicles traveling both east and west along England Street. The scale of the artwork should also relate well to surrounding architectural elements and be attractive from a distance, as well as up close.

5. The artwork may at some point be required to be relocated to a new location due to future regional transportation needs; ideal works would be sturdy and have the potential for relocation.

6. The artwork acquired for this site must be durable, low-maintenance, pose no hazard to the public (especially drivers), require minimal conservation (optimally maintenance-free for up to 15 years), meet safety standards, and adhere to building codes and other state regulations.

7. Given the expected attention that this project will attract, the artist agrees to participate in any press/media-related opportunities as they arise, including, but not limited to, print, radio/televised interviews, and discussions/presentations, as deemed appropriate by the Town of Ashland.

**Additional Considerations:** The artist/artist team will not be responsible for the general maintenance of the artwork but agrees to be available after the completion of services for consultation if the need arises.

**Potential adverse site conditions include:** Wind, sun, snow, extreme heat, freezing temperatures, potential for vandalism and graffiti, car pollution, etc. The selected artist will be required to provide a statement of recommended maintenance.

**BUDGET**

The budget for this commission, including all elements and the artwork’s foundation and lighting, is $60,000. Once a finalist is selected, 10% of the project budget will be paid to the artist for their design. The project will commence as soon as possible once the project and its budget is approved by Town Council. The remainder of the project payments will be completed in phases determined in agreement by the artist and the Town.

An itemized breakout of costs is required. Artists selected to submit formal proposals should include ALL expenses for the proposed art piece/s, including design fees, supplies and materials, the cost of transportation, per diem expenses, project documentation, insurance, sub-ground-level anchoring (footing), foundational requirements, excavation, engineering review and approval fees, labor and equipment, all costs of installation, any above-ground base, electrical
connections for lighting and plaques/signage to identify the artworks, and travel expenses for site visits. No design fees will be paid for preliminary sketches or designs submitted with the proposal.

ELIGIBILITY

The Request for Qualifications is open to all artists/artist teams with legal status to work in the United States without preference to racial/ethnic origins, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or disability.

Any group or individual awarded the project will be required to have general liability insurance throughout the project and must submit a current certification of insurance at the time of signing a project contract to ensure that coverage limits are appropriate to the scope of the work being completed.

OWNERSHIP

The artist/artist team will retain ownership of design ideas submitted for consideration until a selection has been made and a contract signed between the artist/artist team and the Town of Ashland. At that time, the title and 100% ownership of the artwork produced, in whatever stage of completion, shall become the property of the Town of Ashland.

The artist/artist team shall retain all rights under the Copyright Act of 1976 as the sole author of the work for the duration of the copyright. However, the signed agreement with the Town of Ashland will include licensing provisions to allow for public photography of the artwork due to the public nature of the piece and its location. In addition, the artist/artist team will represent being the author of the work and that all services are original by the artist/artist team and not copied in whole or in part from any other work. The artist should also agree to not install within a 50-mile radius of the site any additional exact duplicate or reproductions of the final artwork.

CRITERIA FOR AWARDING

A Sub-Committee will choose up to three (3) semi-finalists who will be asked to continue in the process by presenting to the Public Art Commission. Each semi-finalist will receive a stipend of $1,500 for complete concept proposals. Finalists would ideally be available to present their concepts in person to the PAC, although virtual accommodations can be made if the need presents itself.

If selected as a finalist, proposals will be evaluated for:

1. Design within the context of the site.
2. Originality, creativity, and uniqueness of the proposed artwork.
3. Quality and level of detail of models, maquettes, fully executed illustrations, and/or digital simulations.
4. Budget and projected timeline for completion.

The Public Art Commission will make a recommendation to Town Council regarding final awarding. Town Council will have final approval of the selected art and reserves the right to reject any/all proposals submitted.

TO APPLY
Applications are to be submitted in a format that allows uniform review and easy access to information by the Sub-Committee, which is made up of Town of Ashland staff, a member of Town Council, and two (2) Public Art Commission members. The Applications are to be clear and to the point and must contain ALL required items.

1. Statement of Interest/Ability to Provide: 250 words or less
2. Resume: Outline your accomplishments as an artist
3. References: Provide at least two (2) current references who are familiar with the quality of your artwork. References of potential finalists will be contacted.
4. Images of Past Work: Provide at least two (2) and up to five (5) images of your past completed artwork. These works should demonstrate your ability to meet the defined scope of services. Images are to be in JPEG Format and 300 dpi.

Please submit the above items via this link: https://ashlandva.info/gatewayrfq

All applications must be submitted electronically by 11:59 pm on March 25th, 2024. Hard copy submittals will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

TIMELINE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- February 26th, 2024: Announcement and distribution of RFQ
- March 25th, 2024: Deadline for submissions to RFQ at midnight
- By April 1st, 2024: Semi-finalist selection
- April 25th, 2024: Semi-finalist presentations and finalist selection
- Summer 2024: Project Commencement

QUESTIONS
Martha J. Miller | Community Engagement Manager
Town of Ashland, Virginia
IMAGES OF APPROXIMATE ARTWORK LOCATION

England Street looking west

England Street looking east