



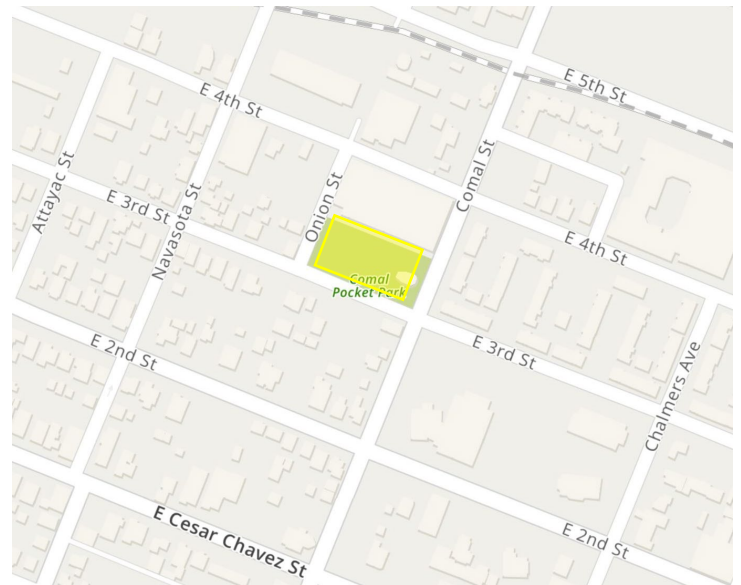
Request for Qualifications | Comal Pocket Park

Art in Public Places Project, District 3
Artwork Budget: \$43,000

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 install a permanent exterior mosaic piece for Comal Pocket Park. Located at 300 Comal Street, Austin, Texas 78702, Comal Pocket Park is nestled in east central Austin.

Artists familiar Comal Pocket Park area community and/or the history and heritage of the area are highly encouraged to apply. Multilingual artists and/or artists able to interact with the community in languages other than English are also encouraged to apply.



Project Background

Today, the neighborhood is in a stage of redevelopment with new residential buildings occurring along 4th Street and beyond. In addition, the Housing Authority City of Austin (HACA) is progressing on Chalmers South and will continue the development of their existing property in the future. The park's renovation hopes to meet the needs of the ever-changing population while maintaining a connection to the community's storied history.

For more information on the Comal Pocket Park Renovation Project, visit: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/comal-pocket-park-renovation>

Site History: Tejano Trails

The construction of Comal School was included in the school bond voted on in 1923. By 1924 construction on the new school had begun, and in 1925 Comal school opened its doors to its first class of students. At this time, it served as one of two segregated public schools for primary Mexican scholastics. In addition, it taught classes for non-English speaking first and second graders. Comal School was referred to as many names during its operation, including the Alamo Mexican School, East Avenue School, and La Escuelita. The school closed in 1936 with the opening of Zavala School.

In 1940, Mexican Consul Fidencio Soria proposed a community center to allow Mexican youths and adults to gather. The school board turned over the building free of charge to the NYA to create a community center. NYA youths worked to renovate the building, and the project was supervised by the Federacion de Sociedades Mexicanos de Austin and the Ladies of LULAC. The new Latin-American Community Center served as an NYA site in 1941. Boys and girls assigned to the Center did everything from constructing garments for public agencies to preparing and serving hot lunches to the Latin American youth working at the Fish Hatchery.

By 1942, however, the NYA changed gears and shifted its funding to defense projects in response to the needs of World War II. As a result, the Center was left in the hands of the community to maintain, and between 1942 and 1946, community organizers struggled to keep the Center funded. In 1943 the community tried to turn the Center into a Latin American Nursery School with the help of fundraising by the Presbyterian Church. The new Latin American Play Center, as it was sometimes referred to, sold Mexican food out of the Center to pay for its operations. It wasn't until three years later that the City's Recreation Department decided to revamp the Center and take over leadership employing Roy G. Guerrero as the site manager. The newly renovated Center became known as the Pan American Center in honor of the Pan American Round Table women that donated generously to the Center.

It was also the Center of political organizing for 15 years by groups such as the Century Club, LULAC, Mexican Patriotic Club, Club Beneficiencia, and American Friends' Services, which provided English classes at the Center to meet their goal of helping Mexican Americans become eligible to vote as citizens. Ten years after opening the Pan American Center, they organized and lobbied to get local funds to build a new, larger Center in 1955, adjacent to Zavala Elementary, now called the AB Cantu/Pan American Recreation Center 2100 E. 3rd Street.

The old wood-frame building was torn down, and the site was dedicated as a small park. Today, it is a favorite neighborhood spot for basketball games and enjoyment of the shady play area. The colorful archway was built in 2002 as a community project funded by the Austin Parks Foundation. Neighborhood volunteers of all ages guided and participated in the construction process working with the City, American YouthWorks, and Clayworks Studio, which helped neighbors design, fire, and install the archway tiles.



Artwork Opportunity

The community has stated a strong preference for a mosaic piece that will complement the entrance arch and the other natural and built features of the park. Artwork will encompass both sides of arch on the cinderblock wall below and should be visible from entrance and exit of the park.



Artwork opportunity circled in yellow above.

Budget

The Art in Public Places percent-for-art funding of 2% for this project was generated from the 2012 and 2018 Bonds. The total award for the artist contract is **\$43,000**, inclusive of design, fabrication, and installation, including engineering and permitting fees, travel and shipping expenses, insurance, and all other project-related costs.

Public Art Intent & 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. This can be accomplished through the selection of a qualified artist or artist team who can innovatively and thoughtfully design within the context of this project. To help ensure the engagement of diverse, local voices, AIPP collaborated with Comal Pocket Park stakeholders to outline aims for the artwork. AIPP seeks an artist or artist team to create a mosaic piece that:

- » **Complements the entrance arch, as well as the other natural and built features of the park;**
- » **Establishes the park as a destination for gathering within the neighborhood, in a fun, inviting way for kids and families;**
- » **Recognizes the park's history and celebrates the area's diverse community and culture;**
- » **Is safe, easily maintained, and vandal-resistant in an exterior environment; and**
- » **Contribute to the depth and breadth of the City of Austin's public art collection.**

Artist Eligibility

This call is open to all artists who are over 18 years of age; and live in the 7-county Austin metropolitan area (Williamson, Travis, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Burnet, and Blanco counties). ***Mosaic artists are especially invited to apply, as the community has expressed interest in commissioning a mosaic work.***

Exceptions include:

- Artists currently under contract with AIPP for a permanent commission are **ineligible** to apply.
- Employees of the City of Austin or project sub-contractors are **ineligible** to apply.

Applications not meeting all eligibility criteria will be withdrawn from consideration.

Selection Process

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be distributed, and applications must be submitted through PublicArtist.org by the deadline. The City of Austin Art in Public Places Panel will convene a jury to evaluate the submissions. The jury and advisors will review qualifications and select three to five finalists for interviews *unless there is consensus on the selection of recommending one applicant and one alternate.*

The jury and advisors will then 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 Austin Arts Commission for approval. The approved artist(s) will be put under a design + commission contract to coordinate with the City and project team to develop a final design, which is also subject to approval by the AIPP Panel and the Austin Arts Commission prior to fabrication and installation.

Submission Requirements

Applications must be received online via www.PublicArtist.org no later than 5:00 pm (CST) on March 31, 2022 For technical assistance with your application, please contact info@publicartist.org or 210.701.0775 (9:00 am – 5:00 pm). For general questions about the application, please contact AIPP project manager Maria Teresa Bonet at mariateresa.bonet@austintexas.gov or at 512.974.7949.



Applications will include:

- A series of short answer questions (responses between 100-200 words/question)
 - Why are you interested in the Comal Pocket Park AIPP project? Do you have a connection to this area and/or its community?
 - The selected artist will be collaborating with the community on this project. Provide an example of past collaborative design work or community engagement resulting in an artwork.
 - If applying in a team, please indicate each team members' contribution or role in the project.
- 10 images of completed relevant artwork with the required descriptions
- Resume
- 3 professional references

Jury & Project Advisors

A 3-member jury shall be selected that includes at least 1 visual artist. Possible jury members include:

- » Lys Santamaria, Visual Artist
- » Dianne Sonnenberg, Visual Artist
- » Trenton Anthony, Visual Artist
- » Andrew Long, Visual Artist
- » Juliet Whitsett, Visual Artist

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:

- » Lori Renteria, Community Activist, Tejano Trails
- » Lauren Serota, Comal Pocket Park Community Member
- » Emily Dalton, Community Member
- » James Teasdale, HACA Staff Member
- » Scott Sinn, Landscape Architect II, PARD
- » J Muzacz, AIPP Panel Liaison
- » Felipe Garza, Arts Commissioner District 3

Staff Advisors will include:

- » Marjorie Flanagan, Interim AIPP Program Manager, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, City of Austin
- » Maria Teresa Bonet, AIPP Project Manager, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Development Department, City of Austin

The jury and project advisors will work together to review the applications submitted by each artist. 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 to bring a diversity of interests to the selection process and to match the expertise of the jury members more precisely to each project.

Artist Information Meeting

To ensure information about the project is available to all interested artists, an artist information meeting will be held during the open application period at a to be determined time. **Due to the constraints of COVID-19, this meeting will be held virtually.** The purpose of the meeting is to further explain the parameters of the project and outline the application procedures. The meeting will include discussion of possible locations and opportunities for artwork. AIPP staff and project representatives will be available to answer questions. The presented materials will be posted to City's website after the meeting: www.austintexas.gov/aipp.

AIPP Alignment with City of Austin Vision

As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all. <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/imagine-austin-vision>

City of Austin’s Strategic Direction 2023 (SD23)

The Austin City Council adopted a strategic direction guiding the City for the next three to five years. SD23 outlines a shared vision and six outcomes of which two directly guide Art in Public Places: Economic Opportunity & Affordability and Culture and Lifelong learning.

- » As part of the SD23 process Art in Public Places and the Economic Development Department will quantify a number of key performance measures including, participants who are satisfied with City-offered culture and lifelong learning events, activities, and resources, and number of jobs supported. The Department will use that data to better align decision making and budget allocations.
- » Because artists are small businesses, Art in Public Places may ask commissioned artists to outline how many jobs were supported based on their current City of Austin contract as well as whether the contract strengthened their overall business operations.

Commitment to Equity

Art in Public Places embraces cultural equity. It is the goal of the program to ensure as many people as possible have meaningful engagements with public art and access to viewing, experiencing, and creating artwork.

- » Art in Public Places actively seeks to provide members of historically underrepresented communities, which can include identities such as Black or African-American, Arab-American, Asian-American, Hispanic or LatinX, Pacific Islander, Indigenous Nations, LGBTQIA, or a person with a disability, with equitable access to public art opportunities.
- » In support of this commitment, the program will make every effort to expand access to the collection and programmatic decision-making.
- » For each project, every effort will be made to comprise project selection panels and finalist pools for Art in Public Places commissions with representatives from a variety of historically underrepresented communities to better reflect the diversity of Austin.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

2022

January	Prospectus to AIPP Panel and Arts Commission for approval Request for Qualifications Opens
February	Artist information meeting
March	Request for Qualifications Closes
April	Jury review of applications (Meeting #1) Artist interviews with Jury (Meeting #2)
May	Approval of artist and alternate by AIPP Panel and Arts Commission
June	Artist Pre-Contract meeting Artist Design + Commission contract executed
July	AIPP kick-off meeting

Aug – Oct	Artist community engagement
December	Mid-Design review by AIPP Panel
<u>2023</u>	
March	Final Design review by AIPP Panel and Arts Commission
April	Fabrication
TBD	Installation Dedication