



CALL TO ARTISTS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

CITY OF TACOMA MUNICIPAL ART PROGRAM

Prairie Line Trail Public Art & Interpretation, Tacoma, WA

Four Public Art Opportunities

Updated Deadline: November 28, 2016, 11:59pm

Budget: \$55,000, all-inclusive for each opportunity (4 total opportunities)

Call Summary

The City of Tacoma is seeking four (4) artists or artist teams to each create an artwork along the City's segments of the Prairie Line Trail (PLT), a former rail line being converted to a linear public park, running through the heart of downtown Tacoma. Each artwork should draw from extensive historic research gathered by the existing project team, and provide historic interpretation for an important location or theme in an artful way. Artworks should include interpretive text related to the narrative of the PLT, either integrated into the artwork, or as associated signage. Selected artists will be encouraged to represent less told stories along the trail, and artists with diverse cultural perspectives are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility

- Applicant(s) must live in Oregon, Idaho, or Washington State; or British Columbia, Canada.
- Applicant(s) can apply as a single artist or as an artist team.
- Applicant(s) cannot be a member of the Tacoma Arts Commission or an employee of the City of Tacoma.
- Applicant(s) must be 18 years or older and not a full-time student.

People who are members of historically disenfranchised racial, ethnic, cultural, and other identity groups are encouraged to apply.

Prairie Line Trail

The Prairie Line is historically significant as the west coast terminus of the Northern Transcontinental Railroad. The former BNSF railway travels through the Brewery District, University of Washington-Tacoma campus, past Tacoma Art Museum, and down to the Thea Foss Waterway. The Trail is located in a vibrant area of downtown, adjacent to the Greater Tacoma Convention and Trade Center, Tollefson Plaza, restaurants, and retail. The Sound Transit Light Rail crosses the Prairie Line Trail and Museum of Glass and Washington State History Museum are nearby.

Once completed, this rail to trail conversion will create a linear park and active transportation gateway to the waterfront; build on downtown Tacoma's natural, historic, and cultural assets; and become an integral component of the vision of an attractive, livable, and revitalized downtown.

To date, roughly one third of the overall trail (the section running through the University of Washington-Tacoma campus) has been completed. Construction by the City of Tacoma of the next

third of the trail has recently started, and the City is currently finalizing the design for the third segment. www.cityoftacoma.org/PLT.

Project Background

In 2015, the City of Tacoma received a Heritage Capital Projects Fund Grant to document and provide an interpretation plan for the city-owned portions of the PLT. The City of Tacoma is currently working with Artifacts Consulting, Inc. (<http://www.artifacts-inc.com/>) to develop an interpretation plan for the trail, identify historic themes, and assemble a reference archive. This work is meant to inform, inspire, and directly support historic interpretation along the trail, including the artwork. The plan will summarize design goals and concepts for the PLT, identify pertinent examples and precedents, inventory existing and planned design and interpretive features along the corridor, inventory available materials and features which could potentially be integrated into an artwork, and identify constraints and opportunities based on land ownership and physical conditions. The plan will also articulate key interpretive strategies and goals. The overall goals are to create artistic installations that connect people, including children, of many cultural groups to the stories and significance of this historic corridor in an engaging, interactive and dynamic way.

Conditions, materials and opportunities for synergy with adjacent public and private buildings and spaces vary substantially along the corridor. These include opportunities at various locations to focus on children as a primary target audience, to incorporate existing rails and railroad features, and to integrate water and vegetation. Therefore, the plan will identify promising locations for interpretive features along the corridor as well as site-specific themes or design opportunities. There are some Historic and/or salvaged materials that may be available for use in this project. Artists are encouraged to consider integrating them into their work.

In addition, the grant is funding development of an Historic Resources Assessment which will characterize the historic context, frame historic development periods and areas of significance, summarize a physical survey of historically significant and character-defining features, and identify historic resources and artifacts including images, oral histories, artifacts and pertinent documents. The assessment will be a resource for artists to inspire, inform and potentially provide materials for use in artworks.

Finally, in 2011 Urban planner Todd Bressi and the design team of Lucy Begg and Robert Gay (Thoughtbarn) developed a public art plan for the Prairie Line Trail, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. The plan should be used as a resource for developing artwork along the PLT: http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/CEDD/TacomaCulture/arts/TA_PrairieLine_Plan032712.pdf.

[The interpretation plan and historic resources assessment are currently under development and will be finalized prior to the final selection of artists. Background information is available at www.cityoftacoma.org/PLT.](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/PLT)

Art Opportunities

Each artist or artist team will coordinate with other interpretive efforts occurring on the trail to ensure a cohesive and coordinated interpretive approach. The final artworks should help provide historic interpretation for one location or theme along the PLT. While this historic interpretation can be broadly defined, final artworks need to have a clear relationship to source material assembled as part of the reference archive, and the final artwork shall include interpretive text, either integrated into the artwork, or as associated signage.

A copywriter will be made available to each artist/artist team to ensure a consistent voice in the interpretive messaging.

A successful project will:

- Contribute to and help interpret the historic narrative of the PLT, especially less known stories
- Be made of durable materials that are easy to clean and maintain
- Be site responsive, and create synergy with adjacent buildings, spaces and activities, and physical features
- Relate to multiple types of viewers, including children
- Be engaging and interactive
- Contribute to a more engaging and cohesive experience of this public space
- Contribute to a more welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- Complement the vision of the Prairie Line Trail
- Include interpretive text, either integrated into the artwork, or as associated signage

Selection Criteria

Artists will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Artistic quality as exemplified in past work
- Ability to work with durable, low-maintenance materials
- Experience working in the public realm
- Ability to think and work in a scale and with materials appropriate to the site
- Ability to engage a broad audience
- Ability to create artwork that tells a story, or relates to the narrative of a place
- Ability to contribute to the overall diversity of perspectives, when considered with the other selected artists/artist teams

Updated Timeline

November 28, 11:59pm	Updated deadline for submissions
Week of December 5, 2016	Review of submissions and selection of finalists
Week of December 12, 2016	Site visit with finalists
Week of December 19, 2016	Interviews with finalists and selection of artist/artist team

Additional Info

For more information, including more background, planning documents, and images, visit:

www.cityoftacoma.org/PLT.

Questions?

Contact Rebecca Solverson, Public Art Specialist, 253-591-5564,
rebecca.solverson@cityoftacoma.org.

Submission Process

Eligible artists and artist teams interested in this opportunity must submit the following three items via Submittable: <https://tacomaarts.submittable.com/submit>

1. Short Responses

Responses to the following questions in 250 words or less each:

- Why are you interested in this project?
- What is your approach to public art?
- How have you used storytelling or source material in a past project?
- How can you bring a unique perspective to this project?

2. Work Samples with Descriptions

10 digital images of past work with concise descriptions. If available, work samples should include documentation of similar past public projects. Artist teams are encouraged to submit work that was previously completed as a team.

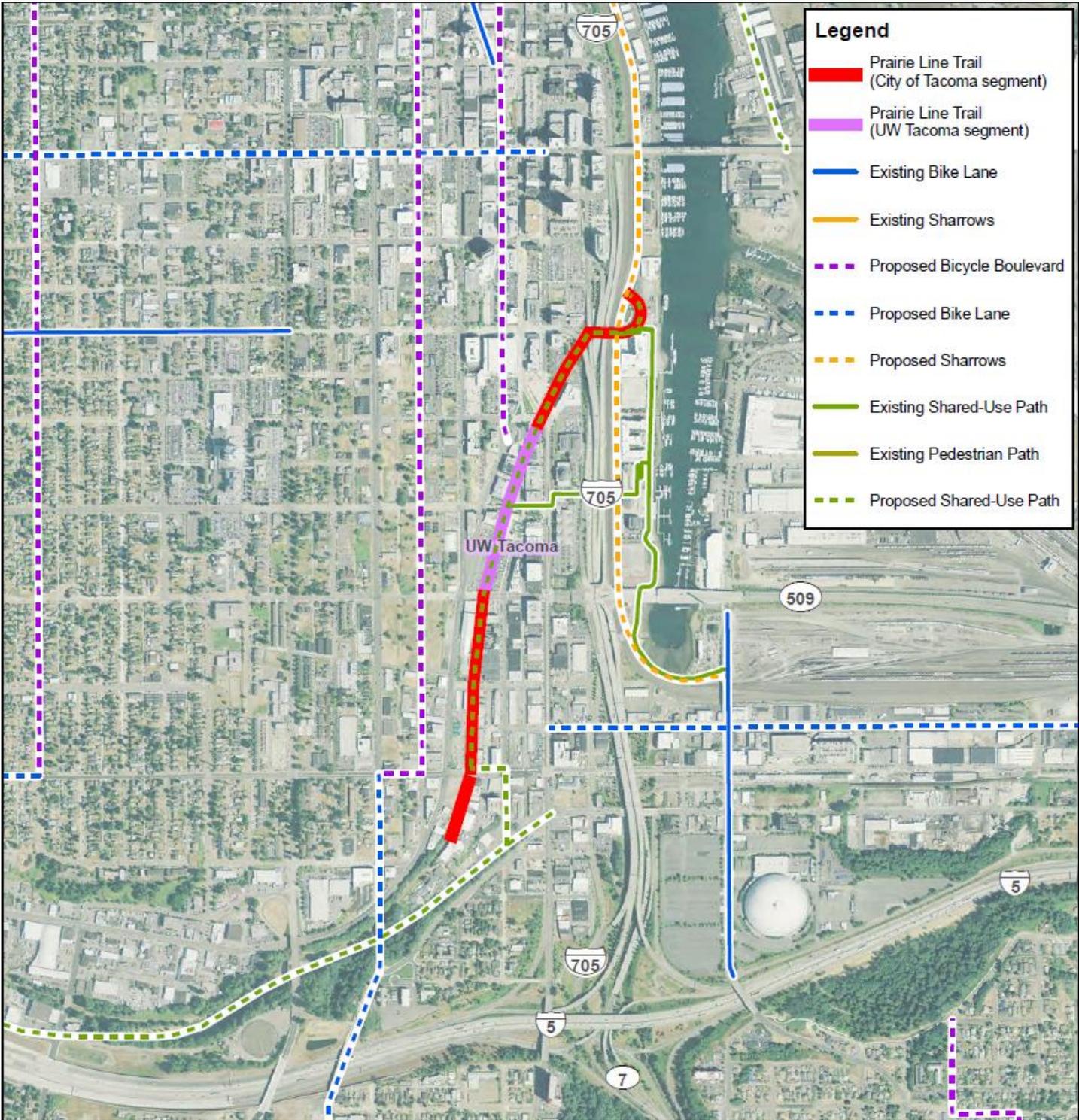
3. Resume & References

Three pages or less, including three professional references. Artist teams should submit a resume for each artist.

If you have trouble submitting or would prefer to submit via email or hardcopy, contact Rebecca Solverson, 253-591-5564, rebecca.solverson@cityoftacoma.org.



Historic photo of the Prairie Line corridor



Prairie Line Trail Map (Project area shown in red)



Brewery District segment



Pacific Avenue to 15th Street segment



Ramp to waterfront segment



Construction of University of Washington Tacoma segment