



## **GRAND RAPIDS, MN**

### **CALL FOR ARTISTS**

Indigenous Peoples and Lands  
Sculpture  
Art Opportunity

### **Request for Qualifications**

#### **About Grand Rapids**

Grand Rapids is a unique blend of small town hospitality and character with big City conveniences and opportunities. Grand Rapids offers an excellent quality of life to residents of the region with outstanding educational opportunities, excellent medical care, exceptional cultural, natural, and recreational amenities, and an unequaled sense of community spirit. Grand Rapids provides residents safe, friendly, affordable housing and inclusive neighborhoods that retain and enhance nature in the City. Residents and visitors can move around the City with equal ease by car, bicycle, or walking. Grand Rapids welcomes and supports a diverse mix of thriving businesses and industries that provide quality jobs, promising careers, and economic vitality. Grand Rapids is a welcoming gateway to Minnesota's Northwoods tourism.

Grand Rapids, MN, population 10,869 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), is located in Northeastern Minnesota on the banks of the Mississippi River and is the Itasca County seat. It's situated in the midst of numerous lakes and forests. A small City known for, logging, regional services, the arts, and its Native American and settler cultures — Grand Rapids is a place of many narratives. Grand Rapids is predominately white (96.5%), with Native American (3.1%), Latino (1.2%), Black (1.1%), and Asian (.9%) racial and ethnic minorities (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Fifteen miles west of Grand Rapids lies the eastern edge of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation; Native Americans are the largest racial/ethnic minority in Itasca County (4.9%).

The City's name hails from its 3.5-mile stretch of rapids now hidden by a reservoir created by a hydroelectric dam. The hydropower generated by the rapids attracted UPM Blandin's predecessor in 1902. The Mississippi also provided an optimal means of shipping logs to southern population centers. Whereas much of the northeastern Minnesota's "Iron Range" region historically focused on mining, Grand Rapids emerged as a logging town.

## **Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission**

The City Council established the Arts and Culture Commission in 2013. It currently functions as a volunteer commission, reporting to the City Council, with nine members and a City staff liaison. Commissioners are selected by the Council and serve a three-year term. The Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission envisions a community inspired by the power of its abundant arts and culture. They believe:

- the arts pave the way to a welcoming environment for all regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation
- arts and culture combined with recreational opportunities define Grand Rapids as a regional creative destination for relocation, shopping, tourism and entertainment
- the arts contribute to health and well-being by creating aesthetically pleasing places to walk, bicycle, hike and play
- engagement in the arts helps vulnerable populations build confidence, cope with stress and aid with healing
- carefully planned and artistic street design contributes to a vibrant downtown and accommodates all modes of transportation, helping to make movement accessible to all
- the beauty of the natural environment of the Mississippi River, lakes and forests is a defining and valued characteristic of our community
- accessible, quality arts educational opportunities, cradle through career and on through retirement, are essential to the development of a creative community
- communities with robust arts and culture are more prosperous and attract large and small businesses, reward entrepreneurship, and provide meaningful careers to residents

## **The Sculpture Project**

The Arts and Culture Commission projects will consist of one sculpture with a concentration on *Indigenous Peoples and lands*. Fifteen miles west of Grand Rapids lies the edge of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe reservation. The commission believes that history and public art could amplify and highlight the culture, voices, and stories of Native Americans including tribal citizens – past, present, and future. Additionally, that Indigenous artists should lead public art projects throughout the city. Many signs around town have Anishinaabe language on them, and projects such as this will continue to strengthen the connections between citizens of Grand Rapids and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. **This Request for Qualifications is for the one sculpture project related to the concept of Indigenous Peoples and Lands.**

One artist will be commissioned to create the sculpture that will be sited at a Mississippi River Park, located at the NE corner of the intersections of Pokegama Avenue (TH 169) and SE 1<sup>st</sup> Street (River Road). [see following pages for location maps].

## **Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

Artists are hereby invited to submit qualifications to be considered to participate in the design phase for the public art opportunities described below.

The Arts and Culture Commission will review eligible applications and select a group of up to three finalists/finalist teams to invite to Grand Rapids for an in-person interview. Each artist/team will receive a stipend of \$750 to cover fees associated with design and travel to in-person interviews. Further information will be provided to the finalists.

Grand Rapids, MN | **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LAND THEMED - SCULPTURES** |  
Public Art Opportunity

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Upon completion of an in-person interview, one artist/artist team will be commissioned to develop, fabricate, and install the permanent artwork. The City will cover the expense of site/base preparation for the sculpture. Additional requirements will be outlined in instructions to finalists. Please see the following timeline for further details.

**Budget: \$38,000**

The budget the sculpture is \$38,000. More information about the sites will be made available to the selected artist[s].

**Site Information**

Sculptures will be located at three pre-selected sites in Downtown Grand Rapids.

Location: Mississippi River Park



## Selection Criteria

Phase 1: Selection of artist/designers will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of introductory letter.
- Quality of work samples.
- Ability of artist/team to successfully complete projects based on resume and prior work experience.
- Experience with creating and appropriately generating Native American artwork.

Phase 2: Design concepts must meet the following criteria:

- Design concepts are engaging, interactive in some way, and evoke curiosity of passers-by either through color, movement, material, whimsicality, or other considerations.
- Artworks advances Indigenous people and their history and connection to the Mississippi River, either physically or spiritually, and consider natural processes in some way.
- Artworks should take into consideration all seasons in MN, and should be safe and low maintenance.
- Artworks convey artistic excellence and innovation.

Additional considerations:

- Art should be welcoming, accessible and appropriate to the site.
- Artists should address how they would work with the Arts and Culture Commission to engage the community in some way.

## Eligibility

- Applicants must be experienced visual artists or artist-led teams residing in the state of Minnesota, with special preference given to artists from Northern Minnesota who have experience in creating Native American artwork.
- Applicant must provide evidence of producing at least two commissioned public art projects of a similar scale and budget within the past ten years.

*We are committed to a policy of providing opportunities to people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or physical ability.*

## Selection Process Overview

The Arts and Culture Commission will review applications and select up to three artists or teams to participate in the design phase. Each artist/team will be paid a stipend of \$750 to prepare design concepts. Deliverables include graphic depictions of the proposed artwork and a brief narrative description. Artists/teams will have approximately **seven weeks** to prepare preliminary concepts, including the presentations to the Arts and Culture Commission.

## Schedule

- February 14, 2020 – RFQ announced
- March 20, 2020 – Deadline for RFQ submission; all required materials must be received by 4PM CST.
- April 7, 2020 – Committee review and selection of 3 finalists
- April 13, 2020 – City Council approves contracts with selected artists/teams for preliminary designs
- June 2, 2020 – Preliminary design concepts presented to Arts + Culture Commission
- August 10, 2020 – City Council approves final contract with selected artist or team. Commence design development.

Grand Rapids, MN | **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LAND THEMED - SCULPTURES** |  
Public Art Opportunity

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- September of 2020: Based on approval of final design, artist/team commences with fabrication
- May/June of 2021: projects installed/project completion

**Required Submission Materials (in digital format only)**

Please provide the following text in 12-point font, in a single PDF document:

- Contact information for lead artist and, if applicable, all team members
- Three references (contact information only) for recently completed projects
- One-page letter describing interest in project and approach to design; please include statement addressing eligibility criteria
- One-page listing of each work sample; please provide a brief description and budget for each work sample
- One-page biographical information or resume; if you have multiple team members, please keep biographical information for each team member to one page
- Work sample: Up to 10 digital images of your recent and relevant projects. Individuals and teams are limited to 10 images maximum. Save all images as standard JPEG and label each with applicant's full name and number in sequence corresponding with list of work samples.

**NOTE: Do not submit a proposal for artworks at this time.**

Please submit all RFQ materials via email to: [tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us](mailto:tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us). All materials must be received by **4 p.m., CST, Friday, March 20, 2020**. No RFQs will be accepted after this time. If you need clarification or further information, contact Tom Pagel, City Administrator at: [tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us](mailto:tpagel@ci.grand-rapids.mn.us) or 218.326.7626