

What was the Call for Artists for the Water Tower project?

The City of Fargo sought qualifications from interested artists to develop an image for installation on a new water tower. The public art opportunity included development and implementation of community engagement that directly informed a design for the water tower.

Why was a Call for Artists posted?

The City of Fargo plans to construct a large water tower near the intersection of University Drive North and 7th Avenue North. The new water tower offers an opportunity to place art on the tower in lieu of a standard City logo.

Did the Call for Artists ask for designs to be submitted?

No; the Call for Artists asked for no designs to be submitted.

If the Call for Artists noted no designs, what did it ask to be submitted and why?

The Call for Artists focused on the community engagement process and how community engagement would shape the design. Artists were asked to develop a process to engage the community, which would be in line with the theme of “community” and highlight the unity of Fargo’s people and spirit of the evolving metro area. Application requirements included contact information, letter of interest that described project approach, community engagement process proposal, biography or resume, references and work samples.

What was the selection criteria for the artist team?

The Call for Artists noted that selection criteria included community engagement approach/process, experience working with communities and/or neighborhoods, ability to execute project based on prior work experiences, experience and work samples, and demonstration of inspiration and/or knowledge of Fargo community. The Call noted that preference was given to local applicants.

How was the Call for Artists advertised and who was notified?

The Call for Artists was posted on July 1, 2020. After the Call was posted, the City of Fargo communicated the open call through postings on the City of Fargo website and through various forms of media, including direct emails and social media. The City of Fargo included the open call as part of the homepage rotator, posted on the City of Fargo public RFQ/RFP page, posted a press release (7/7/20), posted to City of Fargo Twitter (7/7/20 and three on 7/20/20) and Arts and Culture Commission Twitter

(7/7/20 and 7/17/20), and posted to the City of Fargo Facebook page (7/7/20 and 7/20/20). An email notice was sent to nearly 300 recipients, mostly including artists, but also arts organizations within the community. The City of Fargo also created a video about the open call and project, which was posted to the City of Fargo Facebook page (7/20/20) and aired on the public access channel. In addition, Forum Communications posted two articles (7/8/20 and 7/11/20) and WDAY did a news story around the same time.

How can I be informed about future public art projects?

Email Planning@FargoND.GoV a request to be included on future emails regarding public art projects. Those interested can also follow the Fargo Arts and Culture Commission Twitter account, [@FargoACC](https://twitter.com/FargoACC), where open calls and other arts related items are posted.

What was the timeline for the Call for Artists and the project?

The Call for Artists opened on July 1 and closed on July 24. The project timeline, which was noted in the Call for Artists, was anticipated to begin in early August and conclude at the end of October. The timeline for the project was dependent on when the water tower construction documents were bid, slated for early November. The design was to be completed at the end of October in order to be included with the construction project bidding. This means that contractors who bid on the construction project will include installation of the design in their bid for the project.

What is the scope of work for the project?

The scope of work included virtual community engagement that resulted in creation of a design, with a digital file being the deliverable. The artist team was also asked to be available to coordinate with a contractor prior to and during installation, if necessary. The artist team is not responsible for installation of the design on the water tower, as noted in the Call for Artists.

How many applications were received, and were they local?

Thirteen applications were received for the project, four of which were local.

How many applicants were interviewed, and were they local?

All four local applicants were interviewed and one non-local applicant was interviewed. One additional non-local applicant was intended to be interviewed but communications resulted in no response from that applicant.

Who was on the interview and selection committee?

Six members served on the interview and selection committee: Two members from the Arts and Culture Commission (three were intended, but one had a last minute conflict), and City staff from Water Utility,

Planning, and the Communications Department.

Who were the artists selected and why?

The two finalists included a local team and a non-local team, both of which had many strengths. Black Ink Creative Partners (Connecticut) and Reach Partners (Fargo) were selected to work on the project. Black Ink Creative Partners showed expertise in public art and community engagement, a record of completing projects on time and within budget, and had a team of artists (including a public artist) and graphic designers. Reach Partners (Fargo) proposed a solid community engagement process for the project and have extensive networks in the community. Rather than select one team and their strengths, both teams agreed to work together on the project. Black Ink Creative Partners was selected as the lead artist, with Reach Partners leading community engagement and also serving as a vision keeper and local artist for the project.

Why wasn't a local artist selected as the lead artist?

While the Call for Artists noted that preference was given to local applicants, non-local applicant Black Ink Creative Partners ranked the highest out of all teams interviewed based on the selection criteria, which included: community engagement approach/process; experience working with communities and/or neighborhoods; ability to execute project based on prior work experiences; experience and work samples; and demonstration of inspiration and/or knowledge of Fargo community. Black Ink Creative Partners provided project examples demonstrating public art projects working within communities, cognizance of budget and time constraints (with project examples), communicated their particular interest in a project for and by the Fargo community, and demonstrated knowledge of the Fargo community gained through research prior to the interview.

How was the virtual community engagement process developed and what was it like?

The virtual community engagement process was determined by the artist teams, who decided how best to interact with the community and what type of input was sought from participants in order to execute and deliver a design for the project. The artist teams worked together to engage the community through direct invitation to participate in virtual discussions, a social media campaign, and an open survey.

The virtual community engagement began in August with a series of four Community Conversations, which had 40 participants. In August and September, two creative meetings were held. Twenty-one community members who participated in the Community Conversations returned to further participate on the design team during the creative meetings. Additionally, a public community survey was created and 31 responses were received. All of the feedback amassed through community engagement was synthesized by the artist teams, which directly informed the design iteration process.

An open invitation was extended via various forms to the community to participate, including direct invitations (nearly 900), on the City of Fargo homepage, and numerous social media posts (Facebook and Twitter). In addition, WDAY aired a news story (9/5/20) and KFGO aired a radio interview (9/17/20) about the project and invited the community to participate.

At the October 21, 2020 Arts and Culture Commission meeting, Black Ink Creative Partners and Reach Partners presented on project processes for community engagement, results of the engagement, and how it ultimately led to the final designs. The meeting can be viewed here:

<https://download.fargond.gov/1/6216-1-1.m4v>

How was the final design selected?

Through a series of Creative Sessions with community members, the design was narrowed from five to two options. These two designs, each with two color palette options, were presented to the Arts and Culture Commission for a recommendation to Mayor Mahoney at the October 21, 2020 meeting. Mayor Mahoney affirmed their recommendation to include the design within the bid documents. Ultimately, the City Commission will determine if the art is placed on the water tower. To learn more about the final design, see the link above to view the October 21, 2020 Arts and Culture Commission meeting.

Who decides if the design will go on the water tower?

The design is included in the water tower construction bid documents, and those bidding on the project will include installation as part of their bid. The City Commission will ultimately review the bids and at the same time, will determine if the design will be installed in lieu of a standard City of Fargo logo.