



June 2025

**Chicago Avenue Streetscape Public Art
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 27, 2025, 11:59PM CST

INFO SESSION: MAY 29, 2025, 5PM CST (RSVP BY MAY 28, 2025, 5PM CST)

PROJECT BUDGET: \$225,000

INTRODUCTION

The Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) invites professional artists and artist teams with a demonstrated history of completing complex, permanent, large-scale, outdoor public art projects to submit their qualifications for a \$225,000 exterior public art commission within.

CAPITAL PLAN

This project is funded by the City of Chicago's Capital Plan. DCASE through the Public Art Program administers the Chicago Public Art Collection and implements the City's Percent for Art Ordinance. The Collection provides the citizens of Chicago with an improved public environment and enhances city buildings and spaces with quality works of art by professional artists. The Chicago Public Art Collection includes more than 500 works of art exhibited in over 150 municipal facilities around the city, such as police stations, libraries, and CTA stations.

SUMMARY OF THE OPPORTUNITY

The Chicago Ave Corridor Improvement Project is a CDOT led initiative to re-activate a neighborhood core that has historically served as a focal point for pedestrian activity, shopping, services, transportation, public spaces, and quality-of-life amenities for residents. The streetscape project consists of infrastructure, pedestrian safety, and placemaking improvements with the goal of creating a unified, safe, walkable, and attractive street. The project is comprehensive and includes public right-of-way improvements from building face to building face. Through various community outreach sessions, CDOT has identified the importance of incorporating arts and culture into the streetscape design. Based on community feedback, the design team, Smith Group, has created a color palette and theme that will be integrated throughout the new streetscape, visible in the gateway and horizontal markers.

The two public art commission sites are marked on Exhibit 1. The five chosen artist finalists will be asked to create a conceptual design for these locations, with a total project budget of \$225,000. This budget includes all costs and fees associated with the project, covering design, structural engineering, fabrication, site preparation, and installation. The artist finalists' medium proposal should be based on their expertise, the site's architecture, and its structural capacity. Proposals should also reflect community engagement and provide a rationale for the selected medium. Additionally, the artwork must align with the streetscape's overall design and color palette.

Successful public art proposals will approach the artwork's setting with a bold and creative vision that is sensitive to the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Designs will be informed by a robust community

engagement process that interacts with project area neighborhood residents and stakeholders. Designs should include elements of an appropriate size, scale and orientation to engage viewing from multiple potential vantage points, including pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The artwork must be engineered to withstand the demands of its environment and require minimal to no annual maintenance; only durable and resilient media will be considered.

Community members are encouraged to share this opportunity with artists they hope will apply.

SITE

Exhibit 1 illustrates two potential locations for public artwork installation within the Humboldt Park neighborhood, situated at the northwest and southwest corners of the intersection of Trumbull Avenue and Chicago Avenue. These sites are outlined with orange rectangles and further identified by orange stars in the overhead street view. Exhibit 2 is a detailed map of the underground utilities at the same intersection, highlighting the public art opportunity sites with red squares. The two sites' measurements are 5' x 5'.

Exhibit 1:

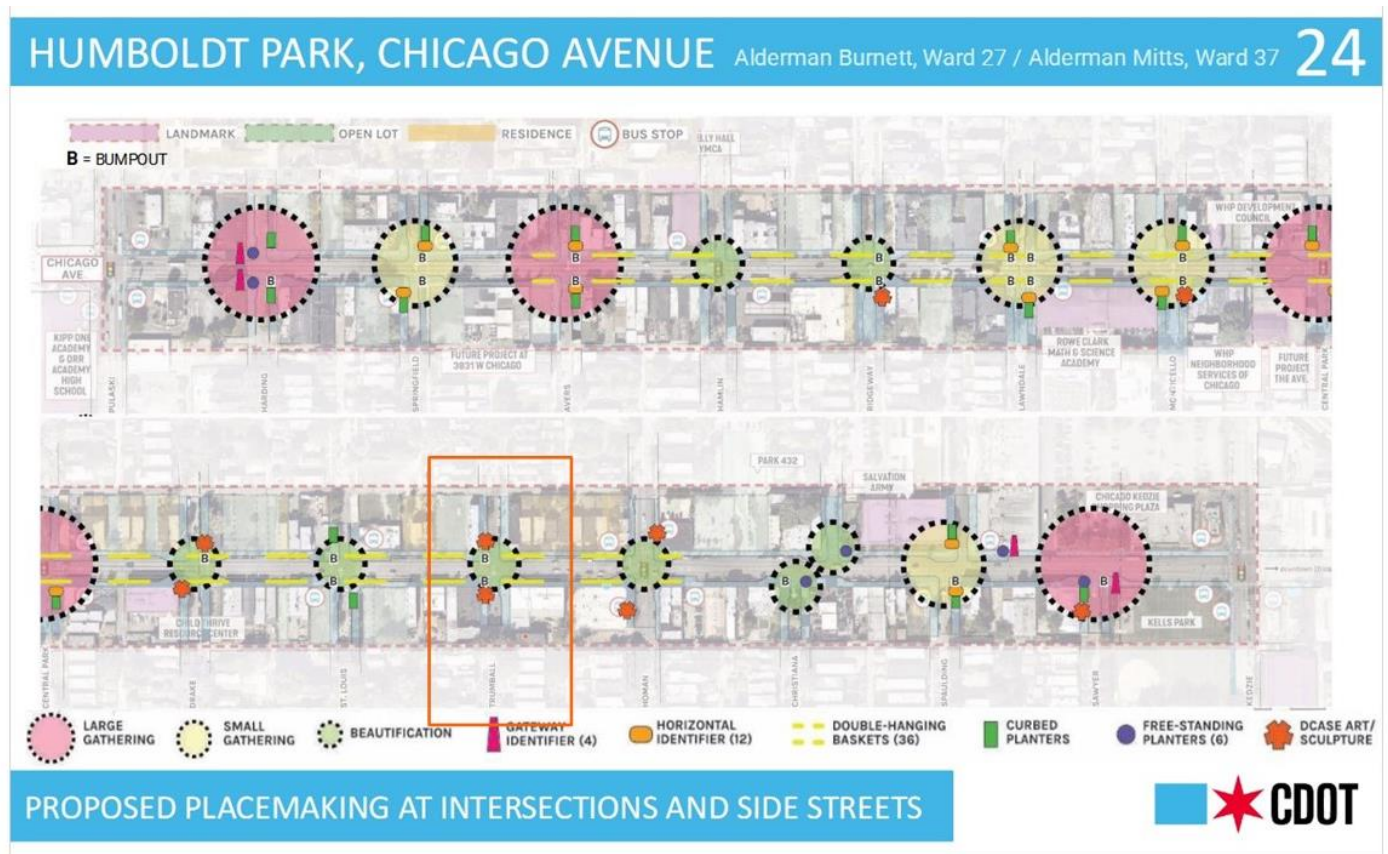
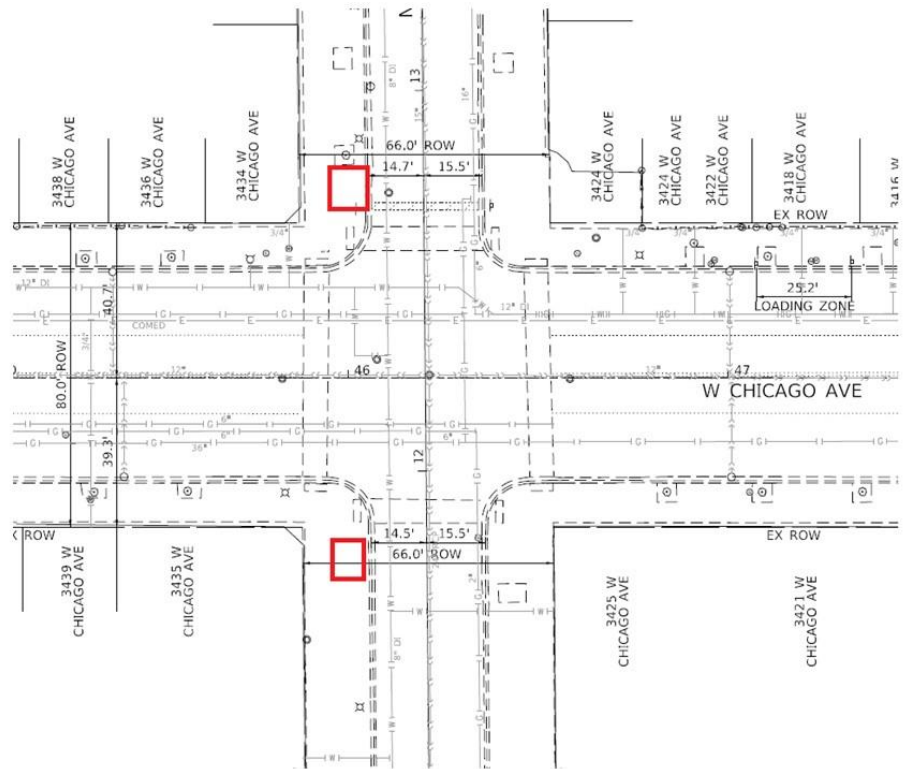


Exhibit 2:

Image of the underground facilities at the intersection of Chicago Ave. and Trumbull.



COMMUNITY

Humboldt Park, located on Chicago's Northwest side, is known for its rich cultural presence and stands as a center of Puerto Rican culture in both Chicago and the Midwest. Named after naturalist Alexander von Humboldt in 1869, the community was annexed into Chicago that same year, following the creation of the West Park System, which also includes Douglass and Garfield Parks. The expansion of public transit in the 1880s further spurred settlement after the Great Chicago Fire.

The neighborhood initially attracted immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, and European Jews. Statues in Humboldt Park honor their heritage, such as Alexander von Humboldt for the Germans and Thaddeus Kosciuszko for the Poles. Starting in the 1950s, Puerto Ricans migrated to the area, displaced from other neighborhoods by gentrification. Humboldt Park became a social justice hub, especially after the 1966 Division Street riots, sparked by police violence during a Puerto Rican parade.

Humboldt Park remains a center for Puerto Rican culture, hosting annual festivals and home to murals dating back to the 1970s that depict the community's history of struggle and resilience. Gentrification is a current challenge, threatening to displace longtime residents, yet the neighborhood continues to advocate for social justice and cultural preservation. The Paseo Boricua and other streets showcase murals that serve as cultural landmarks, some of the oldest public art murals in the country, continually restored by community efforts.



SELECTION PROCESS

Following the RFQ application deadline, DCASE will convene a selection panel of community representatives, arts professionals, CDOT, and elected officials to review the applications. The committee will select 5 finalists, who will be commissioned to develop public art proposals. Finalists will present their design proposals to the selection panel and a final artist or artist team will be selected.

SCHEDULE*

* All dates are approximate.

STAGE	START	END	WEEKS
RFQ open via CAFÉ online application system	5/9/2025	6/27/2025	8
Artist Information Session, zoom, 5pm -6 pm CST (email for link)	5/29/25		
Review of qualifications	6/27/25	7/14/25	2
Committee selects 3-4 finalists	Week of 7/14/25		1
Notification of finalists	Week of 7/21/25		1
Finalists' design development	7/21/25	9/8/25	8
Finalists' presentations	Week of 9/8/25		1

BUDGET

Finalists will be paid a \$1,000 honorarium to develop proposals.

The artwork commission will be \$225,000, inclusive of all costs and fees for the artist to execute the project from design through structural engineering, fabrication, site preparation, and installation.

ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open nationally to all professional artists and artist teams, though the project advisory panel may have a preference for locally-based artists and artist teams.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be shortlisted based on a competitive review of the following:

- Artistic excellence: demonstrated skill and quality craftsmanship in examples of past work; strength and originality of concept conveyed in the letter of interest.
- Meaningful relationship of the artwork to the Humboldt Park community.

HOW TO APPLY

Application is available via CaFÉ (www.callforentry.org) at this link:

https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=15462



Interested applicants should register with CaFÉ in order to view the application. Deadline for submissions is June 27, 2025, 11:59pm, CST.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

Each artist or artist team must submit an entirely digital application.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications should include:

- a) A one (1) page letter of interest stating why Humboldt Park and this project is meaningful and appropriate for the applicant's work, as well as potential approach and initial conceptual ideas.
- b) Six (6) to ten (10) total images of past large-scale public art and infrastructure projects by the artist or the artist team's lead artist(s).
- c) Optional: one (1) video, edited to no more than two (2) minutes in length, may also be submitted but is not required.
- d) Annotated Image List: An annotated image list that includes the title, media, year completed, dimensions, location (if site-specific) project budget (if applicable) timeline, and client or commissioning entity for each corresponding image.
 - i. If a video is submitted, please include two (2) to three (3) sentences to describe its context.
 - ii. Please note, the annotated image list may include thumbnails of submitted images but does not replace the need to upload individual image files in fulfillment of b) above.
- e) If applying as an artist team, a list of key team members and their roles/affiliations.
- f) A one (1) to two (2) page resume or curriculum vitae (CV).
 - i. If applying as an artist team, provide one (1) resume or CV for each member in one (1) pdf

Note

The commissioned artist will need to hire an electrical, structural and civic engineer to assist during the OUC permitting process.

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/construction_information/svcs/office_of_undergroundcoordination.html

INFO SESSION:

May 29, 2025, Thursday at 5pm.

Please RSVP by May 28, 2025, 5pm CST

You will be emailed a Zoom link for the virtual meeting.

QUESTIONS

No phone calls.

Contact: Maryrose Pavkovic, Maryrose.pavkovic@cityofchicago.org