

City of Albany Memorial Park Public Art Project

Call for Artists

Project: Art Installation at Memorial Park, Albany CA

Eligibility: This project is open to all artists in Northern California with demonstrated ability to carry out a public art project of this nature and who are available to complete the project during the anticipated timeline.

Purpose of Project:

To create an interactive, sculptural artwork that includes landscape and seating elements at Memorial Park.

Location/Background:

Memorial Park is the main city park in Albany. It has both a formal and informal character. Its formal elements include wide lawns and entry walkway, tall trees, and the grandeur of the Veterans Memorial Building. Its informal character stems from heavy use by the community for gatherings and passive and active recreation. Public events held at the park include concerts, July 4th celebrations, outdoor movies, and festivals and fairs. It is also frequently used for picnicking. Many children and teens use the park, including students from neighboring Albany High during breaks and lunch hours, toddlers at the recently renovated and very popular playground, and students attending the Friendship Club after-school program. Picnickers and those playing with balls, Frisbees, dogs, etc. informally use the wide lawns as well as the designated picnic area. The park also attracts many users to its playing fields and tennis courts.

The centerpiece of the park is the Veterans Memorial Building, described below in the “History” subsection.

The park occupies most of the large block bordered by Portland Ave. to the south, Carmel Ave. to the east, Thousand Oaks Blvd. to the north, and Albany High School to the west. The south area of the park where the artwork is to be located is the front; playing fields are located in the back, to the north. See Attachment A, map of Memorial Park Location.

The residential neighborhood surrounding the park is made up of typical Albany single-family bungalows in a variety of vernacular styles -- Spanish, storybook, etc.

History

Memorial Park was likely established during the 1920s. The centerpiece of the park, the Veterans Memorial Building, was built between 1931 and 1933. This grand Spanish vernacular building was one of 10 similar memorials designed by Alameda County Architect Henry Meyers. A monument outside the Veterans Memorial building is dedicated to Albany’s World War veterans and dated 1926. A large stone fireplace in the park’s picnic area is dated 1933.

Historical architects have suggested that the Veterans Memorial Building is potentially eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. It still has most of its original features -- tile roof, Spanish tile accents, grand main hall with stage, etc. The modern building that was recently added to the east of the Memorial building, which houses some of the city's children's programs, has a stucco and tile exterior designed to complement and blend with the style of the Memorial building.

Photos of the park and Veterans Memorial Building are available on the Park Art page of the city website: <http://www.albanyca.org/gov/parkart.html>

Other features of the park, notably the recently renovated children's play area with many brightly colored play structures, add a modern flavor to the park.

The neighborhood in which Memorial Park is located was still open space during the early years of Albany's history, and one long-time resident recalled hunting squirrels in the area now occupied by the park and finding abundant mushrooms after a rain. Another resident, interviewed during the early 1980s when she was 90 years old, recalled that the area where Memorial Park is today was, around 1912 when she married, a "beautiful meadow -- little chipmunks had their holes everywhere -- little owls and jackrabbits."

Specific Location for Artwork

The specific area of the park within which this art installation may be located is shown on Attachment B, "Memorial Park Renovation," which is a conceptual rendering of the improvements to be made to this area of the park as part of the renovation project under the aegis of which this art commission is undertaken. The art zone is shown in red hatching. Artists are neither required nor expected to design artwork to fill this entire area but rather to choose a smaller area within the defined zone for their proposals.

Attachments C-1 through C-4 are photos of Memorial Park in its current (pre-renovation) state.

Community Profile:

The city of Albany is a primarily residential community of approximately 17,000 residents, originally incorporated in 1908 as the city of Ocean View. The name was changed to Albany (honoring the New York hometown of the first mayor) in 1909 when it was discovered that there was already another town named Ocean View CA. The first significant influx of residents moved to what is now Albany seeking to leave San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake.

Albany occupies approximately one square mile on the shore of San Francisco Bay. The geography of the city is essentially flat except for Albany Hill. The typical architecture is California bungalows, many of which were built by Nova Scotia native Charles MacGregor; Albany was known in the past as "the Bungalow City."

Since its beginnings, Albany has been a small, family-oriented town. Even today, it maintains an identity as a small town within the larger urban Bay Area. Establishing public schools for residents was an early priority; the first public school was established in 1908 (in a barn!) even before the city incorporated, and Albany today is known for its excellent school system.

For additional historical information, see the resources list at the end of this document.

Description of Project:

This project is to commission an original art installation at Memorial Park that is sensitive in theme and design to the presence of the Veterans Memorial building, which is the defining feature of this park. This artwork should be interactive in nature, incorporating artistic seating and inviting the public, including children, to enter; linger; and relax, read, chat, or play on, in, or around it.

This artwork will be visible from the main approach to the park and should make a welcoming, intriguing first impression that invites viewers into this area of the park to explore the installation to discover its details. Because Memorial Park is the main city park, the Committee hopes that the artwork designed for this park will have a presence that corresponds to the scale and grandeur of the park.

The character of this area of the park is primarily open, and there is a gentle down slope from a seat wall at the northern boundary of the zone designated for art. (The seat wall and slope are shown in Attachment C-4)

This art installation could take many forms, including but not limited to:

- a group of sculptures that interrelate
- a permanent earthwork
- a labyrinth
- a sculpture garden
- a meditation garden

The proposed installation should have a clear presence at the park yet not aggressively conflict with the park design and atmosphere. This will be the first piece of public art in this park. The artwork may include walkways, paving/stonework, and plantings as well as artworks. The installation could be designed with space for additional sculptures to be installed at a later date when more funding is available, as long as the project finished for this current Call for Artists does not appear incomplete. The artwork may be abstract, figurative, or a combination.

The Arts Committee invites teams of artists as well as individuals to submit proposals for this project. Artists are invited to submit proposals that involve the community in the realization of part or all of the project, under the artist's direction.

This art installation should reflect a theme as described below.

Themes:

Artists are invited to propose a theme for their artwork that is responsive to the character of the park and one or more of its features.

Suggested construction materials and specifications:

The Arts Committee encourages submissions that use materials with an organic look that harmonizes with the landscape. The seating element should be artistic but comfortable enough to sit on for a period of time.

Some excavation is possible as part of this project. Known information on underground utilities, irrigation, etc. will be provided to finalists for use in preparing their final proposals.

Some specific construction issues to consider include:

1. Drainage

The northernmost area of the art zone, which slopes down from the existing seat wall, is expected to naturally sheet-drain across the sidewalk to the east.

Artworks located farther to the south in the flat area of the art zone should take account of the need (and cost) for adequate drainage, including possibly tying into the existing storm drain system for the park. Any below-grade features of the installation must be carefully planned to avoid drainage problems. Drainage continues to be an issue in this park, and finalists are advised to consult with the City's Project Manager on this issue.

2. Utilities

Near the Portland Ave. sidewalk at the southern edge of the art zone are two utility features artists should be mindful of: a relatively large, flat storm drain grate (visible in Attachment C-3) and a vertical, red fire supply valve standpipe that is roughly 18-24" high (visible to left of center in Attachment C-1).

There are currently functioning irrigation sprinkler heads around the edges of the art zone. Artists should take account of the possible impacts of their designs on irrigation spray patterns. The city is prepared to readjust sprinkler head spray patterns, but any substantial changes, such as relocating an irrigation pipe, must be addressed as part of the budget for the artwork.

There is an existing flat electrical box cover flush with grass and near the Carmel Ave. side of the art zone (visible in Attachment C-3). The art installation must not damage the short run of conduit from that box to the sidewalk. This box could be used to run wiring for lighting of the art installation. This could be part of the current project or added in the future. If a proposal includes a lighting component, it may be possible to solicit donations from community members/businesses to fund the additional cost of lighting.

3. Landscaping

No existing trees will be removed to accommodate the artwork although artists may propose adding trees and other plantings as part of the project.

Attachment B illustrates conceptually the plantings that will be added at the southeast corner entry to the park.

4. Maintenance, etc.

The artwork should not conflict with Americans with Disabilities Act regulations regarding accessibility and should not create climbing or other hazards for any users of the park, particularly children. The artwork should be durable, designed for heavy use, and not easily vandalized or marred by graffiti. Artists should be sensitive to the effect of the artwork on city maintenance activities (e.g., mowing and other landscaping maintenance activities). The artwork itself should require minimal ongoing maintenance.

Project Budget:

The maximum budget for this project at this time is \$25,000, with final budget approval by the Albany City Council. It is possible that this amount will be supplemented by donations from the community. This budget must cover all costs associated with design, fabrication, transportation, engineering approval, installation, and documentation of the artwork.

Required Submission Materials:

Completed application (form attached)

Application deadline:

Applications must be received no later than 5 p.m. on November 1, 2006 at the following address:

Albany Arts Committee
attn: Chelle Putzer
Recreation and Community Services
1249 Marin Ave.
Albany CA 94706

Late applications, faxed applications, and late postmarks will not be accepted.

Timeline:

Applications due: November 1, 2006
Notification of finalists: by January 10, 2007
Finalists' proposals due: February 28, 2007
Models on Public Display: February 28– March 30, 2007
Finalist interviews: March 2007
Notification of Artist Selected: by April 18, 2007

Installation complete: by October 30, 2007

Please note that this is an estimated timeline and is subject to change.

Selection Process and Criteria:

A Selection Panel made up of artists, Arts Committee members, and community representatives will review all applications and select, from those that meet the specifications described in this Call for Artists, 3 finalists to prepare designs and models for final consideration. The Selection Panel's decisions are subject to final approval by the Albany Arts Committee and the Albany City Council.

The criteria to be used in selecting the finalists are as follows:

- Artistic merit (excellence, originality) as evidenced by representation of relevant past work in slides and other supporting material.
- Appropriateness of the artist's medium, style, and experience in relation to the project goals and settings.
- Responsiveness of the application narrative to the specifications of this call for artists
- Experience with projects of a similar scale and scope and/or adequate professional experience (studio and employment experience included) to fulfill the requirements of this project. Experience should include familiarity with public agencies, the public review process, and/or collaboration with city agencies and community groups. Artists must have good communication skills and be able to work with diverse city representatives and community members.
- Ability to assist residents in shaping the course of public art at the park.
- Capacity to improve the overall appearance of the vicinity and to create a community asset and sense of place.
- Demonstrated ability to recognize, honor, and link together significant historic, cultural, and natural resources representative of a site and surrounding community.
- Experience with developing educational themes that demonstrate an area's historic, geographic, or environmental significance.
- Availability to fabricate and install the project during the time period identified for this project.

The process for finalists is summarized in the next section below.

The Albany Arts Committee reserves the right to reject all design proposals as well as the right not to award any contracts for this project. This call for artists does not constitute an agreement to fund artwork for the site described above.

Process for Finalists:

Finalists will receive an honorarium of \$300 each to meet the following requirements:

- submit a model of the proposed project by the deadline announced when finalists are selected

NOTE: The model will be displayed publicly (at City Hall or Community Center) for public comment prior to the artist's presentation of the model to the Arts Committee.

- provide the following additional materials:
 - a materials list and samples of all materials to be used
 - a detailed budget for the project
- present the model to the Selection Panel/Arts Committee in an in-person, public interview

Models and proposals submitted to the Arts Committee shall be original and unique in design and fabrication. The Albany Arts Committee has the right to retain ownership of models provided by finalists.

The artist whose work is selected for the project will be required to sign a contract that will include, among other obligations, the following:

- give a brief public presentation as part of the opening ceremonies after the installation of the sculpture
- give one presentation at an Albany public school
- document the artwork once it is installed (in photos and slides) and provide documentation to the committee
- provide a description of maintenance required for the artwork installed

Reference Resources:

The Story of Albany, Albany Police and Fire Employees Civil Service Club, 1947

Stories of Albany, Catherine J. Webb/Albany Historical Society, 1983

“From Berkeley’s Garbage Dump...to the Thriving Albany of ’75? “ (photocopy), *North News*, March 19, 1975

Copies of the above resources are available for on-site review at Albany Library Information Desk (at the address above).

This Call for Artists and its attachments can also be downloaded from:

<http://www.albanyca.org/gov/parkart.html>)

Attachments:

Attachment A: Map of Memorial Park location

Attachment B: Drawing of Memorial Park renovation plan, indicating public art zone

Attachments C-1 through C-4: Photos of Park in its current condition

Application for Memorial Park Art Project, City of Albany CA

Deadline: November 1, 2006

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City & State _____
Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____
Website address _____

Application checklist:

Please check to make certain that you have enclosed all of the following items, and label each item with your name, address, and telephone number:

◇ A plastic slide sheet containing six (6) slides (individual applicants) or twelve (12) slides (team applicants, total from all members) of relevant previous work, numbered, fully labeled including artist's name, title of work, date completed, media, dimensions and with a red dot in the lower left corner of each slide.

◇ Two (2) copies of a one-page corresponding slide list including title, date, media, dimensions, location, and other pertinent information that you deem useful in orienting the committee to your previous work.

◇ A self-addressed, correctly sized and stamped envelope (SASE) for the return of slides and other materials. Materials will only be returned if a SASE is provided.

Please submit ten (10) complete, one-sided, collated sets of the written materials listed below. Each set should contain one of each of the materials, in the order in which they are listed below. Please do not bind materials and do not submit in plastic sleeves, folders, or binders.

◇ Up to a one-page narrative of your proposed idea, including a brief description of the maintenance requirements envisioned for the finished piece. A thumbnail sketch may also be included but is not required.

◇ Resumé (two pages maximum).

◇ Names, addresses, and phone numbers of three (3) professional references.

◇ **OPTIONAL:** One or two relevant printed materials such as reviews, essays, catalogs, articles, etc. that might assist the committee in understanding your work. All materials should clearly indicate the portion(s) that the committee should consider.

Incomplete or incorrectly assembled applications may not be accepted.

The Arts Committee is not responsible for lost, missing, or damaged materials.