Call for Artists: Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Permanent Public Art Installation for E 4th Street Alley, Downtown Tulsa
Issued by: Downtown Tulsa Partnership (DTP)
RFQ Release Date: May 22, 2026
RFQ Response Deadline: June 22, 2026

Overview

The Downtown Tulsa Partnership (DTP) is seeking qualifications from experienced artists or artist teams for a large-scale, semi-permanent (10 years) public art installation in the E 4th Street Alley. The installation must incorporate lighting or illumination as a core component and contribute to the transformation of this underutilized alleyway into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly space connecting the hotels and offices of the Deco District with the Tulsa Performing Arts Center, Williams Green, and Blue Dome District.

This project is part of a broader initiative to activate Downtown Tulsa alleyways through art and placemaking. Qualified artists will be selected based on their experience, artistic vision, and ability to execute projects of similar scale and complexity. Shortlisted artists will be invited to submit detailed proposals during a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) phase in September 2026.

Project Site

Project site is a publicly accessible alleyway running southeast to northwest, located between 4th and 3rd, Boston and Cincinnati Avenues, encompassing a roughly 16 FT by 163 FT wide area.

Directly south of the alley are many of Tulsa's most historic Art Deco buildings, including several hotels. Directly north are the Tulsa Performing Arts Center and Williams Green.

Budget

Budget: $110,000

Budget for Artist(s) is inclusive of all materials, equipment, design, labor, contract terms and artist fee(s) associated with the unique, finalized artistic installation on site.

DTP will fund the following elements separately:

- Electrical infrastructure including control boxes, weather heads, power feeds, risers, brackets, compression connectors, mounting, labor and electrical construction document development and commercial permitting through the City of Tulsa.
- Structural engineering construction drawings, review, and permitting.
- The design and installation of a site sign containing the artist(s) name, information and description of work.

Requirements

The installation must include permanent, weather-resistant lighting or illuminated elements. Designs should be intentional in their goal of connectivity, drawing pedestrians from the Deco District into the area surrounding the Tulsa Performing Arts Center and the Blue Dome District beyond. Artistic components, visibility and impact should be focused on directing pedestrians *through* the alley, treating the southern portion of the alley as the entrance and the northern as the destination, utilizing the entire alley space. In addition to lighting components, artistic elements may be painted, adhered, mounted, suspended, or free-standing within the alley. Interactive elements or activations may also be included.

The artwork should align with DTP's mission to enhance vibrancy, safety, and accessibility in Downtown Tulsa. The artwork should also be suitable for long-term all-weather exposure with an emphasis on maintainability and low, long-term maintenance costs.

Artistic elements cannot block utility access including trash, water, gas, existing electrical infrastructure as well as employee and delivery access. All elements will require final approval by property owners on each side of the alley. All structural, and lighting engineering details will be finalized and permitted in close coordination with Downtown Tulsa Partnership and City of Tulsa.

Artist Responsibilities

- Develop creative concepts that align with project goals and engage the community.
- Work in active coordination with the engineering firm to ensure the artwork design is compatible with structural, electrical, and facade-mounted requirements.
- Oversee and coordinate closely with contractors and staff on all aspects of production and installation
- Provide a materials list and maintenance plan and manual to DTP for long-term- at least 10 years- care and functionality of the installation.
- Include any additional site preparation needs in their final scope of work or design.
- Collaborate with Project Committee and other relevant stakeholders.
- Understand and navigate public right-of-way and permitting procedures in collaboration with DTP.
- Be available for coordination and communication with electrical, engineering and City of Tulsa staff and consultants as needed for electrical infrastructure installation and final approvals.

Project Background

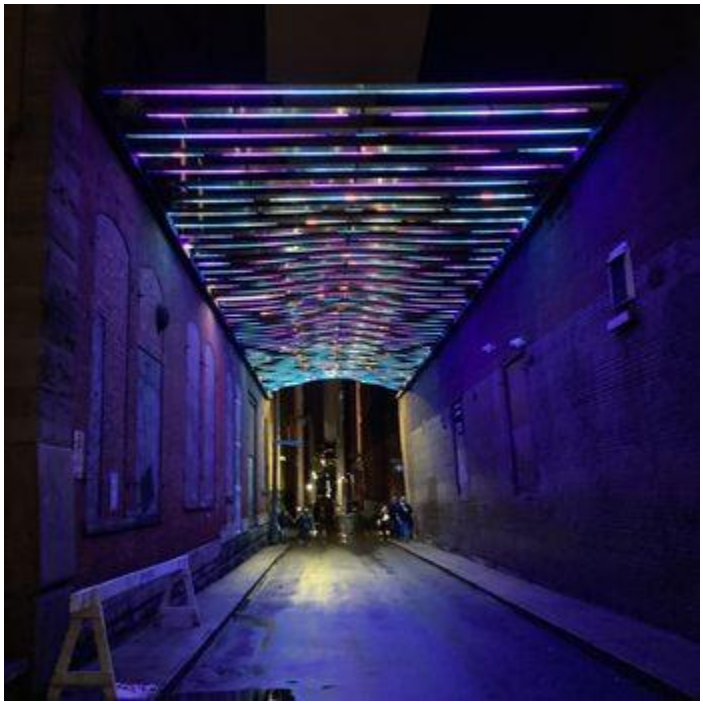
The E 4th Street Alley project embodies a commitment to community identity, public safety, and creative expression. By integrating artistic lighting and engaging elements, the project seeks to convert an underutilized urban space into a welcoming, interactive environment that fosters a sense of place.

Goals

- Enhance Safety: Use lighting to improve perceptions of safety and comfort for pedestrians.
- Celebrate Tulsa's Culture: Reflect the city's unique identity through artistic storytelling.
- Foster Engagement: Create a space that invites public interaction and exploration.
- Drive Tourism: Establish an attraction that draws visitors to Downtown Tulsa.
- Direct Pedestrian Traffic: Serve as a connection between the hotels and Deco District and the Performing Arts Center and Blue Dome Districts to the north.

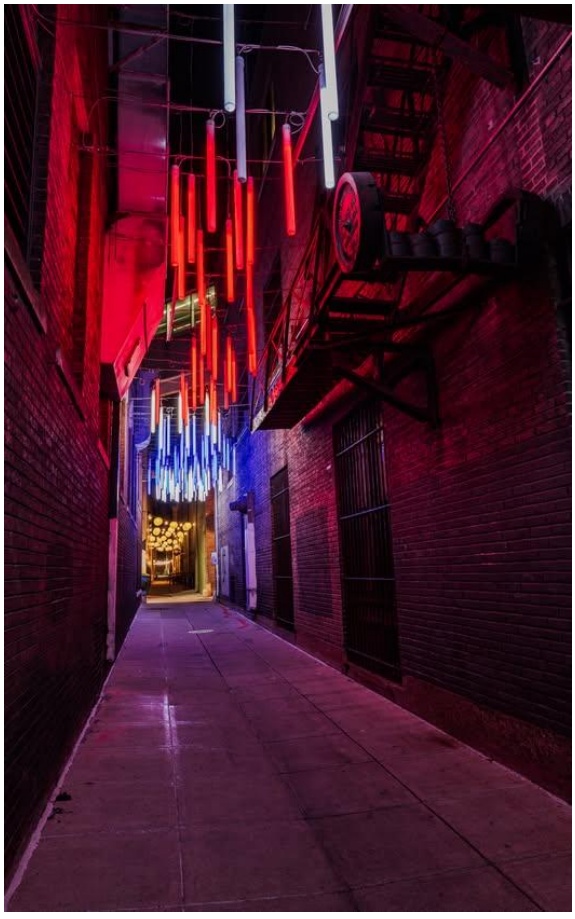
Precedent

Below are some examples of similar projects in other communities.



" Garrison Canal" by Andrea Polli in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

“Electric Street” by David Guinn and Drew Billiau in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



“77 Steps” by Kelty Tappy Design in Fort Wayne, Indiana

Project Committee

Final, approved designs will be developed in close coordination and approval by the Project Committee which includes:

- Chris Bumgarner – Adjacent Property Owner (Kennedy Building, 4th Street Parking)
- Nolan McDonald – Adjacent Property Owner Representative (Tulsa Performing Arts Center)
- Jameson Shaffer – Adjacent Property Owner Representative (314 Building)
- Lydia Duncan – Adjacent Property Tenant (Coracle Coffee)
- Carolyn Sickles – Tulsa Artist Fellowship
- Kate Green – Urban Core Art Project (UCAP)
- Amber Litwack – Tulsa Girls Art School
- DTP Staff: Jamie Pierson (PM), Emily Scott

Eligibility

This RFQ is open to professional artists and groups of artists with experience in large-scale public art installations involving lighting. Local and regional artists are encouraged to apply, though all qualified applicants will be considered.

The selected artist must maintain general liability insurance throughout the project. Coverage requirements include:

- Minimum **$1,000,000 per occurrence** and **$2,000,000 aggregate**.
- Coverage for **bodily injury, property damage, and personal injury** related to the project.
- **Additional insured:** Downtown Tulsa Partnership (DTP), the City of Tulsa, and any involved subcontractors.
- Proof of insurance must be provided **before contract execution** and maintained through project completion.

Submission Requirements

Interested artists should submit the following materials in a single PDF:

- **Artist Statement & Bio (1000 words max):** Describe relevant experience and artistic vision.
- **Portfolio:** Examples of past public art projects, particularly those involving lighting, fabricated structures, or interactive elements in outdoor and public spaces.
- **CV/Resume:** Outline of professional experience and notable projects.
- **References:** Contact information for at least two previous collaborators or clients.

Timeline

- RFQ Issuance: May 27, 2026
- Submission Deadline: June 29, 2026
- Request for Proposals (RFP) Issued to Shortlisted Artists: July 20. 2026
- Proposal Submission Deadline: August 28, 2026
- Final Artist Selection: September 18, 2026
- Installation & Project Completion (*estimated*): Summer 2027

Selection Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on:

- **Artistic Merit & Creativity** – Strength of portfolio and artistic vision.
- **Experience with Public Art Projects** – Demonstrated ability to execute large-scale, lighting-focused installations.
- **Technical Feasibility** – Capacity to deliver within budget and timeline constraints.
- **Community Engagement Approach** – Experience incorporating public input into design.

How to Apply

Submit all materials as a single PDF document to:

Jamie Pierson, Public Realm and Placemaking Manager
Email: jamie@downtowntulsa.com
Subject: E 4th Street Alley Public Art RFQ
Responses must be received by midnight on XX. Late submissions will not be considered.

Additional Information

Shortlisted artists will be invited to submit detailed proposals in the subsequent RFP phase. The final selected artist will collaborate with DTP and the CPC throughout the design, fabrication, and installation process. A ribbon-cutting event will be held upon completion- estimated xx and the selected artist(s) must attend.

For further details, contact Jamie Pierson at **jamie@downtowntulsa.com** / **918-221-8635**.