

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Water Park & Mount Vernon Trail Entrance Retaining Wall Mural

National Landing Business Improvement District
Arlington, Virginia

Design Competition Stipend \$2,000

Finalist Award \$40,000

RFQ led by National Landing BID

Issue Date: March 15, 2024

Due Date: March 29, 2024 at 5:00 pm EST

The [National Landing Business Improvement District \(BID\)](#) is requesting qualifications outlining relevant experience and a project portfolio from a visual artist(s) or team of artists to design and implement a mural on retention walls located at the Mount Vernon Trail head at Water Park on Crystal Drive. The project is in the fast-transforming National Landing area of Arlington, VA, and is intended to provide an attractive welcome and sense of arrival for people entering the downtown district via bike and other non-motorized means.

Respondents should consider the estimated dimensions of the walls (provided herein) and their relevant experience with delivering public art at this scale. A selected short list of respondents will be awarded a stipend to participate in a competition to develop design concepts specific to the park and trail head context and retaining wall canvas. The preferred artist that wins the competition will ultimately be awarded the mural project.

Project Purpose and Background

National Landing is a thriving mixed-use urban downtown that is set to experience momentous change. With a growing population of over 26,000, and a development pipeline of more than 9,000 new residential units, National Landing is emerging as Virginia's most vibrant, walkable urban destination. Amazon's decision to relocate their HQ2 headquarters in National Landing has unlocked an unprecedented amount of public and private investment in the district. The National Landing area represents one of the most exciting transformations and fastest growing districts in the Washington, DC region – one with the promise of becoming a prominent innovation district and urban destination among a well-balanced mix of residential, office, hotel, and retail offerings.

In June 2023, the National Landing BID released an updated [Strategic Framework](#) outlining a vision for sustainable and inclusive growth and unifying Crystal City with its surrounding neighborhoods, Pentagon City and Potomac Yard, into a thriving downtown area. The plan called for an enhanced sense of place for the BID's service area realized through urban design, beautification, public art, and cultural programming.

As part of that vision, the BID has retained Via Partnership, a public art consulting firm, to develop a Creative Placemaking and Art Toolkit that will provide a means for investing future BID resources in targeted, high impact placemaking and art installations with clear intention. The Toolkit will assess and prioritize potential placemaking and art installation sites throughout the district and pair them with placemaking and art intervention prototypes, of which murals will be one.

To demonstrate the impact of this important Placemaking and Art Toolkit effort, the BID would like to execute a concurrent placemaking and art project at the Mount Vernon Trail Head located at the recently redesigned Water Park along Crystal Drive, the district's "Main Street". To complement the catalytic investments at Water Park, the BID seeks to create a signature mural at its highly accessible southern entrance in partnership with an artist or artist team.

The goal of the project is to welcome residents, workers, and visitors to one of National Landing's prominent centers at an important gateway with an impactful and attractive arrival feature. The selected location is the seam between our downtown and access to the Potomac River, nature, miles of bike/pedestrian trails, and unparalleled views of our region's monuments as well as airplanes landing at National Airport. While National Landing is a highly connected district, many of its access points – including the Mount Vernon Trail head - are somewhat hidden. This project offers an opportunity to shine a light on one such connection point and the value it brings to the district. Given the trailhead's popularity with the cycling community and the BID's celebration of Bike Culture throughout the month of May, **we anticipate mural completion by May 31, 2024**, with an announcement of the selected artist on Bike to Work Day, May 17.



Figure 1. Mural location - Water Park & Mount Vernon Trail Head Retaining Walls. The mural site is located along the southern entrance to Water Park from Crystal Drive to the Mount Vernon Trail tunnel.



Figure 2. Mural location - Water Park & Mount Vernon Trail Head Retaining Wall Distinction. The mural site contains three separate retaining walls.

Mural Wall and Design Considerations

The proposed location of the mural is Water Park's southernmost retaining walls and the retaining wall at the Mount Vernon Trail tunnel, all of which face the Mount Vernon Trail itself and can be seen from Crystal Drive. Southern facing wall #1 is approximately 70 linear feet and approximately 12-40 inches in height; southern facing wall #2 is approximately 115 linear feet and ranges from approximately two feet to 10 feet in height; and wall #3 at the Mount Vernon Trail tunnel is approximately 60 linear feet and ranges in height from approximately four feet to 14 feet tall. Walls #1 and #2 are unfinished concrete, while wall #3 is painted concrete. The BID encourages artists to paint the mural directly onto the walls. The final mural should be as seamless as possible and include a cohesive design among all wall segments.



Figure 3. Approximate Wall Heights

Artists are encouraged to consider the following design objectives:

- Deliver iconic imagery
- Create a memorable and attractive aesthetic

- Provide an IG-worthy moment (photogenic)
- Ensure a place-specific design
- Announce arrival/departure to Crystal City/National Landing
- Support wayfinding to pedestrians and cyclists
- Reinforce community-building and inclusivity: Welcoming to all!

RESPONDING TO THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Please send a proposal addressing the following:

- **Cover Letter** (1 page)
- **Project proposal and approach** (2 to 3 pages)
 - Approach
 - Proposed Schedule
- **Team Qualifications** (3 to 6 pages)
 - Participating firms and/or individuals joining proposed bid
 - Lead artist(s) profile (company and resumes)
 - Relevant project experience with murals and large-scale public art
 - Visual portfolio
 - **Individual Team Members:** List individuals who will be working on the project, which task they will specialize in, and the name of their organization if applicable. Indicate independent members where necessary. Please include façade preparation and mural implementation team where possible.
- **Submission Format:** Responses shall be submitted as a single PDF file.
- **Due Date:** 5:00pm EST on March 29, 2024

SELECTION PROCESS AND BUDGET

Interested and qualified artists should respond to this Request for Qualifications per the instructions outlined above. Up to five (5) selected artists (or artist teams) will each receive \$2,000 stipends to create a proposed concept design for the walls as part of a design competition. The BID and an advisory panel of area stakeholders will select a finalist based on the project concepts and finalist interviews. Upon selection, a binding fee and schedule will be requested from the preferred artist/team for a scope of services that will include: finalizing the mural design and treatment, developing renderings and presentations, preparing wall surfaces (power washing, primer, etc.), and installing the mural. Note that all files, images, graphics, etc., related to the mural must be provided in electronic format.

SCHEDULE

- March 15: RFQ released
- March 29: RFQ responses due at 5:00 pm EST
- April 8: Finalists selected for competition
- April 26: Finalists design concepts due
- Week of April 29: Finalists interviews
- May 6: Winning concept selection/artist notification
- May 10: Artist contract signed/work to begin
- May 17: Mural and Selected Artist announcement on Bike to Work Day
- May 31: Mural completion

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ***Non-signage visual:*** To avoid violating county signage rules, the design should in no way act as signage or include words of any sort (outside of the artist's signature). Further guidance will be provided to selected artists.
- ***Materials:*** The paint materials used to implement the mural will need to reasonably withstand weathering, including a masonry primer as well as appropriate types of paint.
- ***Final award:*** The final award of \$40,000 is inclusive of any and all materials or third-party services required for wall and mural preparation.
- ***Existing National Landing murals:*** Provided as attachment #1 herein are photos of existing murals throughout the district for artists' consideration.
- ***Standard contract:*** Shortlisted candidates that participate in the design competition will need to agree to our standard mural contract should the artist be selected as the finalist to perform this work.

POINT OF CONTACT

Direct all inquiries and correspondences to the contract manager at the following address:

National Landing Business Improvement District

Ashley Labadie
National Landing BID
Planning and Economic Development Senior Manager
<mailto:ashley@nationallanding.org>

About the National Landing Business Improvement District

The National Landing Business Improvement District is a nonprofit public-private partnership that serves as the place management organization for National Landing. We're storytellers, placemakers, idea champions, and community builders that uplift our downtown district. We foster community in National Landing through programs that support art, economic development, events, marketing, placemaking, and transportation. The National Landing BID is a steward for the area's reinvention, managing growth and the needs of our business and residential community. For more information, visit www.nationallanding.org or @nationallanding.

EXHIBIT 1: Existing National Landing Murals

Synetic Theater Mural by Jay Shogo (Located at 1800 S Bell Street)





“Harmony” by Lisa Marie Thalhammer (Located at the Crystal City Metro Plaza - northwest corner of S Bell Street and 18th Street)



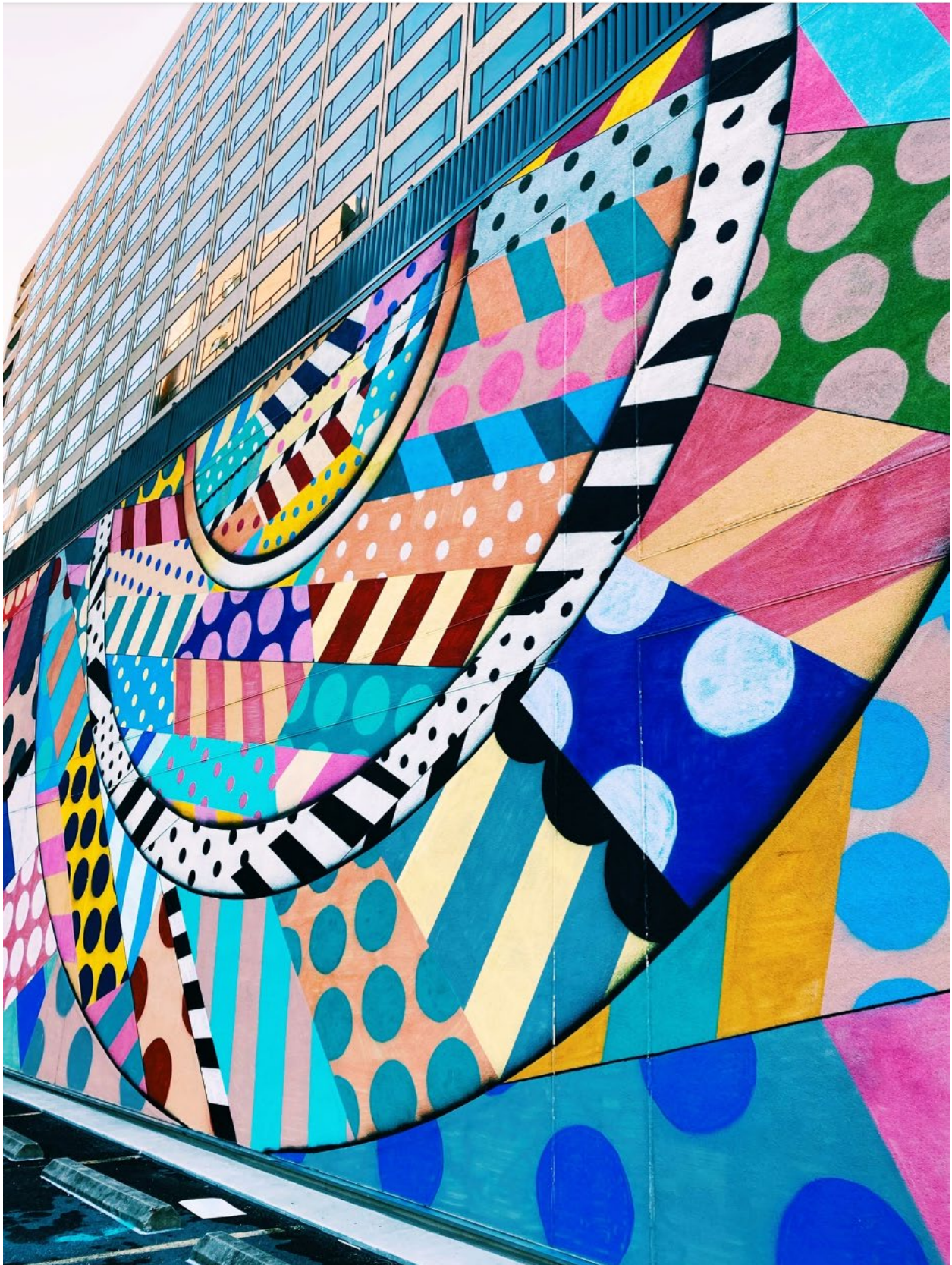


Mural 23 curated by Pipkin Creative, artists include Juan Pineda/Criomatic, Miss Chelove, Mas Paz, and Jeff Huntington (Located on 23rd Street between Route 1 and Crystal Drive)





Hyatt Mural by Jason Woodside (Located on the northern façade of the Hyatt – 2799 Richmond Hwy)



Route 1 Mural by Juan Pineda/Criomatic (Located along the east side of Route 1 from the northbound Airport Access Ramp to 23rd Street S)

