



Request for Proposals (RFP) from interested artists

Entry Deadline: February 28, 2024

The Mount Vernon Area Arts Council (MVAAC) is seeking proposals from artists for a three-dimensional artwork to be installed in the Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail.

Background: The Mount Vernon Area Arts Council has partnered with the City of Mount Vernon, IA, and the Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation Board to create a sculpture trail along an existing walking path in Mount Vernon. The trail runs through Nature Park, along Hahn Creek, and intersects the route of the old Lincoln Highway. The path is concrete and lighted by reproductions of old-fashioned streetlamps. The land is owned by the City of Mount Vernon and is part of its park system. In 2023, four sculptures were installed along the path, with multi-year plans to add sculptures along this trail.

Description of Opportunity Project Goals: The selected artist(s) will provide or create a three-dimensional piece which will serve as part of a multi-piece, multi-year installation. Four pieces were installed in 2023.

The artwork will be site specific but is not limited to a particular medium. Artwork will be installed outside and must be able to withstand the elements for years to come. Iowa weather can range from from -25F to 105F. Prospective artists are encouraged to view the space if possible. Photographs of the space are attached in this application. The sculpture site is visible from the city's main street. Foot traffic visitors can park adjacent to the trail for easy access from either Nature Park or the First Street Community Center.

The artwork must follow city ordinances. Most notably, any lighting must be in a downward direction.

Prior pieces have been installed on 4' circular, concrete pads, with identifying plaques measuring 8" wide by 6" tall. Plaques are adhered to the surface of the concrete. Future pieces will be installed in a similar manner unless the artwork requires different installation.

Budget: The budget for the artwork(s) placed in 2024 may not exceed \$15,000, including design, fabrication, transportation and installation. Multiple pieces may be selected for installation in 2024.

Process: A selection panel will review proposals for the project and select a finalist or finalists to purchase or commission pieces for the sculpture trail.

Selection Criteria

- Artistic excellence as demonstrated by past work
- Understanding of the project and ability to provide or create artwork that responds to the goals of the project
- Ability to meet the project timeline

Anticipated Timeline:

Deadline for submittal of proposals: February 28, 2024

Artist(s) Selection: March 15, 2024

Completion of installation: Summer 2024

Artist or artist team must submit the following, preferably in one document (PDF preferred):

- Typed letter of interest
- Current artistic resume, no longer than two (2) pages
- Description and renderings or photographs of proposed piece
- At least five (5) but no more than ten (10) digital images of previous artwork
- Names & contact information of two (2) references

Deadline: Artists must submit their applications by February 28, 2024 via email mvertcouncil@gmail.com

For questions about this project or the application process: mvertcouncil@gmail.com and include Sculpture Trail in the subject line.



Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail Case Statement

In 2022, a committee composed of members of the City of Mount Vernon's Park and Recreation Commission and the Mount Vernon Area Arts Council embarked on a plan to create a sculpture trail in the city. The City of Mount Vernon and MVAAC provided initial funding. The money was used to acquire four pieces of art, which were installed in August 2023 and unveiled on October 14, 2023.

The purposes of the sculpture trail include heightened awareness of the role public art plays within the city, education about three-dimensional art in a public context, attracting visitors to the city's existing trails, encouraging tourism and economic development within the local community, and expressing and enhancing the city's reputation as an art-friendly, creative community.

The trail is bordered by a creek and winds through a canopy of mature trees.

The joint Park and Recs-MVAAC committee has embarked on long-range planning for the sculpture trail over the next five years. The plans call for joint funding from the city (in years 1-3) and private sources (years 1-5).

The joint committee will acquire additional sculptures via this plan. Some pieces may be existing sculptures, and some may be commissioned pieces. In all cases, the joint committee will use Requests for Proposals and Requests for Qualifications to acquire the pieces.

Among the criteria to be considered in considering pieces to be added to the sculpture trail

1. Diversity of materials used in making the sculptures, including organic and recycled materials.
2. Representation of Mount Vernon's surrounding rural environment.
3. Inclusion of images and symbols of under-represented groups in the local community and in society in general.
4. Emphasis on local and regional artists.
5. Pieces that provide a visual narrative that stimulates reaction and consideration by the viewers.

City funding would be requested in Years 1-3 (beginning in FY 25) with private support solicited from individuals, businesses and foundations in Years 1-5. Among the private support would be a signature piece by Year 3 and a substantial gift resulting in naming the trail by Year 5.

Additional grant applications would seek funding to provide sustainable flora habitat (plants, shrubs and trees) for pollinators and rare and endangered species of fauna, including birds, mammals, amphibians and insects.



**MOUNT VERNON
AREA ARTS COUNCIL**



Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail

In 2023, four sculptures were installed along the walking trail in Mount Vernon. Additional sculptures will line the trail, leading to Nature Park.



MOUNT VERNON AREA ARTS COUNCIL

New sculpture park opens on Mount Vernon trail

New art installation hopes to draw more out of the city



Elijah Decious

Oct. 21, 2023 5:30 am



Kristin and Paul Reimann are seen through one of the sculptures installed along the Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail in Mount Vernon on Oct. 16. The public art trail is a partnership between the Mount Vernon Area Arts Council and the Mount Vernon Parks & Recreation Commission. Four sculptures were purchased and installed in August. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

MOUNT VERNON — A new sculpture park is shaping up a Mount Vernon trail near Nature Park in a more artistic direction.

The Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail, celebrated at an Oct. 14 ribbon cutting with four inaugural pieces of art, was borne out of an idea sparked by the derecho of 2020. Soon, the partnership between the Mount Vernon Area Arts Council (MVAAC) and the City of Mount Vernon's Parks and Recreation hopes to draw a variety of benefits for those who live, work and pursue recreation in the city.

Mount Vernon Sculpture Trail Featured in Cedar Rapids Gazette

The sculpture trail was featured upon its unveiling in the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Cedar Rapids is the second largest city in Iowa, just 20 minutes West of Mount Vernon.

<https://www.thegazette.com/people-places/new-sculpture-park-opens-on-mount-vernon-trail/>