



**Request for Proposal (RFP): Mural Artist for Historic
Main Street Arch Mural**

**Location: 121 North Main Street, Waynesville, North
Carolina**

**Issued by: The Town of Waynesville Public Art
Commission**

**Issue Date: November 18th, 2025
Proposal Deadline: January 9th, 2026**

OVERVIEW

The Town of Waynesville, NC, is seeking proposals from qualified artists or artist teams to design and paint a public mural celebrating the town's historic character. The mural will be located on a highly visible exterior wall on Main Street and will prominently feature the iconic Main Street arch as it appeared in the 1930s. The goal is to honor Waynesville's rich heritage and visually connect past and present for both residents and visitors.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) provides information on the scope of the project and the information to aid in preparing responses. All inquiries regarding this RFP must be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk listed by the date identified in the project timeline. To be considered, submissions must comply with the requirements outlined in this document.

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Purpose: The Town seeks to commission a professional Artist or team of Artists to create a mural to be incorporated on the north facing external wall of the High Country Style building located at 121 North Main Street, Waynesville, NC 28786.

Budget: Total not to exceed \$35,000.00 (**All inclusive – consultation, design, materials, travel, site preparation and any other additional costs**). Funding is provided by private donations, fundraising, and grants.

The work shall be done in two phases:

Phase One: The selected Artist(s) shall include a proposal for this consultation which maximizes the Artist's contribution to the preliminary design work with the Town's other design professionals.

Phase Two: The selected Artist(s) shall implement the mural approved in Phase One, including all materials and construction of any art, for a total project budget of \$35,000.00. The total project budget amount is inclusive of all costs associated with this public art project including but not limited to artist fees, other consultants' and subcontractors' fees, insurance conforming to the Town's standards, engineering, permits, materials, transportation, installation (including any site modification), and post installation documentation.

Project Info: Historic Main Street Arch Mural

Location: 121 North Main Street, Waynesville, NC 28786

Project Description/History

The mural must depict the **Main Street arch from the 1930s**, incorporating historical references, photographic accuracy where possible, and a sense of period-appropriate ambiance. Artists are encouraged to use vintage color schemes and contextual imagery to evoke the look and feel of Main Street during that era.

Historical Context

The Waynesville Main Street arch, also known as the "Gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains" arch, has a rich history tied to the town's identity and the establishment of the national park. Originally erected in 1933, it served as a welcoming landmark for visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After being taken down in 1972 due to its deteriorated condition, the community spent decades working to bring it back, finally celebrating its return in 2024.

- **1933 Inauguration:** The original arch was completed on May 31, 1933, just before the official establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's motorcade passed under the arch on its way to the park's dedication ceremony.
- **Symbol of the Town:** The arch was a symbol of Waynesville's role as the "Gateway to the Smokies" and was a point of pride for the community.
- **Original Design:** The first arch, made of steel and sheet iron, spanned Main Street at its intersection with Depot Street. It featured the words "The Great Smoky Mountains National Park" with a second sign below shaped like an arrow, reading "Eastern Entrance".
- **Removal in 1972:** After nearly 40 years of service, the arch was taken down due to its poor condition caused by rust and wear from the elements.
- **Community Effort to Return:** For 49 years, there were efforts to bring the arch back, facing challenges with costs and legal issues.
- **Return in 2024:** The new arch, a faithful replica of the original, was unveiled on June 1, 2024. It was funded entirely through community donations. The new arch is located at the opposite end of Main Street from the original, at the intersection with Church Street, due to traffic and visibility concerns with the original location.

Artwork Restrictions and Preferences

Address/Wall Location: 121 North Main Street, external, north facing wall. A faded mural currently exists there, and we have permission to paint over the mural from the property owner and the previous artist.

Dimensions: The external wall is built into a slope. The wall is 84 feet long, and 139 inches tall on one end and 198 inches tall on the other.



Surface Type: Stucco on concrete with a faded mural painted over top of it.

Artist(s) Responsibilities for the Project

The services and obligations that will be required of the selected Artist(s) during the contract period include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in at least two (2) Review Committee engagement sessions to solicit input and gather feedback with the goal of including the character, shared history, experiences, and/or inspirations of the community into the artistic elements or displays. This project will require strong interpersonal skills and the ability to listen deeply and thoughtfully to community input.
- Identify unique and aesthetically pleasing elements for the site that reference community character.
- Cultivation of a cohesive singular theme
- Artistic elements should be functional and integrated into the site.
- Collaborate with the Town, landscape and architectural design teams and the community on the final design.
- Provide all services and furnishings of supplies, materials, and equipment as necessary for the design, permitting, fabrication, transportation, and installation of the Work at the site. This includes participation in coordination meetings with the Town and as necessary.
- Submit to the Town detailed drawings of the commissioned mural in order to carry out design reviews and to certify compliance of the work with applicable statutes and ordinances.
- Strictly adhere to and manage the approved project, budget, and schedule.
- Submit operations and maintenance guidelines to the Town to ensure proper preservation of the art.
- Bear the entire risk of loss or damage to the work during design, fabrication, packing, shipping, and installation.
- Site preparation. Please bear in mind there is an existing mural at this location.
- Provide and maintain insurance to cover claims for damages for personal injury, bodily injury (including wrongful death), and property damage. The Artist(s) shall require all subcontracts to provide and maintain insurance. A complete list of insurance requirements will be provided to the project finalist.
- In general, the Town shall own the physical works of art, and copyrights shall be retained by the artist(s), with reproduction rights allowed to the Town for appropriate promotional and educational purposes. Legal title and copyrights in any work of public art funded in whole or art by direct Town funding, shall be spelled out in a mutually agreeable contract between the Town and the selected Artist(s).

EVALUATION /SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The Review Committee will consist of the Waynesville Public Art Commission, which is comprised of Waynesville residents appointed by the Waynesville Town Council. The Committee will select the artist(s) that best meets the requirements, based on the information contained in their response to the RFP. Specifically, the Review Committee will review and consider the following:

1. The conceptual basis for the Artist's body of work, as defined in the written statement.
2. The technical and aesthetic quality of the Artist's past work as represented in the submitted images.
3. Artist's experience successfully designing, fabricating, administrating, and completing public art projects or custom architectural elements on time and within budget.
4. Experience successfully completing prior work in cooperation with the owner, landscape architects, architect, and general contractor and within the project schedule and budget.
5. The Artist(s) training, education, and experience.
6. The quality and comprehensiveness of the submission package. Incomplete submissions may be rejected.

After the submission deadline, the Review Committee will assess each package and will narrow the pool of applicants to several finalists.

Each of the selected finalists will participate in an interview with the Review Committee. The Review Committee will make a recommendation to the Town of Waynesville Council for final selection. An initial design contract (phase one) will be awarded to the selected Artist(s). Upon completion and approval of the design, a final fabrication contract (phase two) will be issued to the Artist(s) for completion of the remainder of the scope of work outlined within and further defined in the fabrication contract.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Submission Deadline: 2:00 p.m. (EST) on January 9th, 2026.

Any submission received after this deadline time will be ineligible.

Schedule Information:

RFP Posted November 18th, 2025

SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE BY 2:00 p.m. (EST) on January 9th, 2026

Finalist(s) selected and notified for Site Visit/Interview January 19th. (Presentations can be given virtually)

Finalist(s) Site Visit Presentations on February 9th

Anticipated Date to Notify Selected Artist(s) February 10, 2026.

Work on the mural must begin no later than April 20th, 2026.

The Town of Waynesville reserves the right to modify this schedule as required. Project completion to be determined once an artist has been selected.

Submission Requirements:

All responses to the RFP can be submitted electronically as a single PDF file. The PDF file, no larger than 15MB, is to be emailed to cpoolton@waynesvillenc.gov by the deadline of 2:00 PM (EST) Friday, January 9th, 2026. Label the PDF file as follows: **(Historic Main Street Arch Mural– Last Name, First Name)**. Hard copies are also permitted. Please mail proposal in a sealed envelope and labeled correctly to the following address:

Town of Waynesville

Historic Main Street Arch Mural

Attn: Candace Poolton

16 South Main Street

Waynesville, NC 28786

Incomplete responses and any response submitted after the deadline will be deemed ineligible and not considered. Submissions shall include the following:

Format:

Cover Sheet: Include name, address, telephone, email, website (if applicable) of the Artist to receive all Project information or any official correspondence relating to the Mural. Please reference the Project name, **Historic Main Street Arch Mural**, on all correspondence.

Section 1: Artist(s) Resume and References (Max of 2 pages)

Include a list of public art projects completed within the past 10 years, selected public art projects, awards, current gallery affiliations and grants/fellowships.

Section 2: Digital Images of Past Work

Include images of previous work. Submit eight (8) images featuring select examples of previous public art projects with particular emphasis on works of a similar scope or utilizing similar techniques. Each image shall be numbered and include title, date of completion/installation, budget, media, dimensions, location, and a brief description of the work.

Section 3: Artist Statement (Max of 2 pages)

Include a statement which describes the conceptual basis for your body of work. Include a section to include your community engagement approach with public outreach and input. Provide any past examples and outcomes.

Mail Submission Packet to: Candace Poolton, Town Clerk

16 South Main Street

Waynesville, NC 28786

The Town of Waynesville reserves the right to request additional information from each individual artist or artist team.

Prospective Artist(s) shall not include in the RFP response any site-specific conceptual artwork or renderings for consideration by the Review Committee, as previous work examples will be utilized for review purposes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General Terms/Requirements

The submittal of a proposal shall be taken as prima facie evidence that the proposing individual/firm has full knowledge of the scope, nature, quality, and quantity of the project to be performed and the detailed requirements and conditions under which the project is to be performed.

This solicitation does not commit the Town of Waynesville to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred with the preparation of a proposal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. The Town reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received in response to this request, to negotiate with any qualified source, or cancel in whole or part, this proposal process if it is in the best interest of the Town to do so. Subsequent to contract negotiations, prospective consultants may be required to submit revisions to their proposals. All proposers should note that any contract pursuant to this solicitation is dependent upon the recommendation of the Public Art Commission and approval of the Town of Waynesville Council.

Cultural Equity

The Town of Waynesville supports a full creative life for all. The Town commits to championing public art policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable nation. Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people - including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion.

Eligibility

Candidates must be artists, designers, or fabricators or partnered with artists, designers, or fabricators, eligible to work in the United States, and age 18 and older. Candidates are eligible regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, gender identification, military status, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical ability.

Confidentiality of Documents

In general, documents that are submitted as part of the response to this RFP will become public records and will be subject to public disclosure. North Carolina General Statutes Section 132-1.2 and 66-152 provides a method for protecting some documents from public disclosure. If the Artist or Artist Team follows the procedures prescribed by those statutes and designates a document “confidential” or “trade secret”, the Town will withhold the document from public disclosure to the extent that it is entitled or required to do so by applicable law.