

Introduction

The City of New Haven, via the New Haven Parks Department, New Haven Historic District Commission, New Haven Board of Alders and the Wooster Square Monument Committee, invites artists to apply to create designs for The Story of Italian Immigration to New Haven and the contributions of the immigrant Italian American community to New Haven and especially Wooster Square, in Wooster Square Park on the site where the statue of Christopher Columbus once stood.

Call released: Thursday April 1, 2021

Deadline for questions: Friday April 30, 2021, noon EST

Deadline for responses: Monday May 3, 2021, 11:59pm EST

Project Context

This Call to Artists opportunity is part of the creation of The Story of Italian Immigration and Italian Americans in New Haven and especially Wooster Square, in Wooster Square Park. The Wooster Square Monument Committee is accepting qualifications from interested artists with the intent to contract with the artist(s) for the design of an interpretive art element for the project. The purpose for the request for qualifications is to evaluate artist(s) ability to design, either alone or collaboratively, a sculpture to sit atop the existing or modified foundation (for example, more eye level) and incorporating four panels telling the story of Italian Immigration and Italian Americans to the City of New Haven and especially Wooster Square, in a garden setting around the foundation.

This work of public art aims to honor Italian immigrants who made the choice to leave their home and begin a new life of hope and dreams in America, and further honor their contributions and those of their children to New Haven and especially the area known as Wooster Square.

The Wooster Square Monument Committee is currently seeking to redesign the interpretive art element, the four panels and a sculpture atop the foundation, depicting the story of Italian Immigration to New Haven, and the Italian American community especially in Wooster Square. The story will begin with "The Voyage" and continue on to modern day New Haven and Wooster Square. It will tell the story of hard work, determination, sacrifice, discrimination, family and faith. The story will be told on four panels, using both sides, set around the existing foundation. On the panels will be both a written narrative and local family photographs. The panels will be set around the foundation, in a garden setting. The goal is to create a space of respite, where neighbors and visitors can socialize and the community and students can learn. We are asking the artist to design a sculpture to sit atop the existing modified foundation that reflects the Italian American Immigrant Experience. The sculpture **should not** be of any single person or historical figure. An interpretive design of the project can be seen in the photo marked Appendix A. The story to be told on the panels can be read on Appendix A.

The Wooster Square Monument Committee and the City of New Haven are anticipating a sculpture and functional work of public art that honors the hard work and sacrifice of New Haven's Italian American community. We hope for an engaging work of art that must also respond aesthetically to the landscape and the community character of Wooster Square and invokes the spirit and influence of Italian Americans.

Wooster Square Monument Committee Timeline and Process

RFQ Timeline	
Thursday April 1, 2021	RFQ released
Friday April 30, 2021	Deadline for questions
Monday May 3, 2021	Deadline to respond to the RFQ, midnight EST local
June, 2021	Sub-committee Committee reviews submissions, interviews with selected artists/teams; specific
	Date and time TBD (local and non-local artists may interview remotely)
June/July 2021	Artist/team contract executed
Proposed Project Timeline (subject to change)	
Fall 2021	Artist/team design phase
Spring 2022	Fabrication and installation

Budget

The total budget for the Wooster Square Monument Committee public art project is \$200,000. The privately funded budget includes the artist's fee and all of the artist's costs associated with the proposal, design, fabrication, timely installation, contingency and the related park like setting, reduction in the height of the pedestal (foundation), and any related administrative costs. A preliminary itemized budget is required to apply but is subject to change until the full committee approves the artist/team's final design.

Coordinating with the City Parks Department and City Plan Department and timely and thoroughly informing the Committee, the artist will manage fabrication, oversight, and timely installation of the artwork. The artist will also support publicity and outreach associated with the project and be responsible for quality control throughout fabrication and installation.

Who Should Apply / Eligibility

This Call to Artists is open to professional artists. The artist should work in three dimensional design, installation, historical interpretation, etc. Artists are expected to have completed prior outdoor art projects or installation. Artists and designers of diverse backgrounds and/or who have cultural, historic, and/or artistic connection to Italian American history are strongly encouraged to apply.

Non-Discrimination

The Wooster Square Monument Committee will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability, nor will it consider projects that discriminate on these attributes.

Project Site

This public work of art will be located on the south side of Wooster Square Park in New Haven, Connecticut, on and around the existing modified foundation. Please refer to site map marked Appendix A.

Artist Responsibilities

The selected artist is responsible for:

- Conducting site and historical research as needed;
- Coordinating with the landscape architect and the professional fabricator who have collaborated with or has been selected by the Committee to work collaboratively with the artist to determine appropriate materials, scaling and siting of the Artwork;
- Conduct meetings as necessary with the Committee and city staff, as needed, to present concept and design development.

Selection Process

The members of the sub-committee of the Wooster Square Monument Committee will review the submitted qualifications. The three selected finalists who have met or exceeded expectations expressed in the Selection Criteria, selected by the members of the sub-committee, will have the opportunity to visit the site and meet with the Wooster Square Monument Committee. Finalist may receive a modest stipend to develop a design for the project and deliver a proposal of composition, concept statement and process. The Monument Committee will conduct a review of the final design. One artist or artist team will be selected to realize their proposal.

Selection Criteria

The Wooster Square Monument Committee will review proposals using the following criteria:

- Does the artist's Statement of Interest express particular attention to this project, connecting this project to their past and future work?
- Does the artist's Initial Project Concept Narrative respond to the design goals and cultural context as described in this RFQ?
- Does the artist's concept include materials that are durable, permanent, easily maintained, safe and reflective of the time period (1870-1930)?
- Does the artist/s portfolio demonstrate a strong, high quality artistic vision?
- Does the artist have experience in collaborative efforts with other artists, landscape architects, and fabricators, and comparable projects and artistic disciplines?
- Does the artist have experience working with communities and with diverse groups of people?
- Is the artist/s previous work or proposed project sustainable, secure and technically feasible?
- Has the artist's previous work been completed within the proscribed timeline and budget and is the artist able to work within the Committee's timeline and budget?

How to Respond to the RFQ

To respond to this Call to Artists, prepare your application materials and submit your written proposal via email to woostersquaremc@gmail.com. The Committee co-chairs will be responsible for distributing the application and the written proposal within the Committee. **Please note that we are not requesting design work at this time; you will be asked to communicate your artistic concept through a written proposal only.** The following files are required:

- **Artistic Description**
Please provide background information including a biography, resume/CV, or other information that best highlights the strength of the applicant. PDF, DOC or DOCX file types only; maximum five files.
- **Statement of Interest (500 words or fewer)**
Narrative describing the artist's interest in this project, connecting this project to the artist's past and future work
- **Initial Project Concept Narrative (500 words or fewer)**
Narrative describing an initial artistic concept for this public work of art (including dimensions, materials, relationship to reduced pedestal size and park-like setting, etc.)
- **Relevant Work Samples**
Up to 5 relevant work samples and a numbered, annotated image list with title, media, dimensions, location, brief description, date of work, project budget, and project partners if applicable. Accepted file types: JPG, TIFF, PNG, AVI, WMV, or MP4
- **References**
Please include contact information for up to three (3) professional references for the artist. PDF, DOC or DOCX file types only.
- **Itemized Budget**
Please provide and initial budget of your project expenses using the template provided in Appendix B. If price proposal is based on time spent, please provide your hourly rate. ODF, DOC, DOCX, XLS, or XLSX file types only.
- **Contact**
Please contact Bill Iovanne, Jr., Laura Florio Luzzi, co-chairs, with any questions: woostersquaremc@gmail.com.

Appendix A -1 (The Story)

This is an outline of what we envision for the project including the four panels, the sculpture and the park-like setting. Four vertical panels made of metal, arranged around the pedestal perhaps at each corner. The lowered pedestal, preferably or approximately eye-level, would have a sculpture /statue mounted at the top that represents the story of the Italian-American experience.

There would be a hard scape setting around the immediate area surrounding the pedestal for easier maintenance and accessibility to the panels that are designed to be viewed at eye level. A garden will surround the area with simple benches placed along the perimeter to encourage visitors to remain for quiet reflection.

Each panel would contain a simple narrative and archival photographs will be used throughout because of the detail they possess. The narrative follows a simple storyline from the voyage to becoming proud Italian Americans.

Panel 1, Side one. The Voyage

They came from the ancient towns and villages of Southern Italy, filled with hope, fears and a belief in the promise of America. Here are men, women and children leaving everything behind to live their lives in this land of opportunity. They travelled in steerage and withstood terrible conditions in order to seek their dream, but the dream was deferred because they were met with prejudice and discrimination. In the end, they prevailed because they worked hard and dedicated themselves to creating a place to call home.

Images:

Ship

Manifest

Map of southern Italy

Ellis Island

Immigrant images

Panel 2, Side one. The Neighborhood

They settled in neighborhoods throughout New Haven close to the workplaces that were available to them. They lived in tenements and small apartments that provided only the basic amenities. Somehow they managed to make these places home, and surrounded themselves with familiar reminders of the things they left behind. They clustered together and supported each other. Mutual aid societies were formed to provide assistance in times of need, and the family was at the center of their lives.

Images:

Vintage New Haven neighborhoods (not just Wooster Square)

Typical buildings of the era

Society founders photos

Fig tree/gardens

Panel 3, Side one. Working

They found employment in most of the local industries, but not easily. There was overt discrimination and condescension. Men and women worked long hours under difficult conditions in order to provide for their families. They worked in dress and shirt shops, manufactured clocks, corsets and hardware, quarried and carved stone, and provided necessary services. Their strong work ethic became the foundation for the growth of

manufacturing throughout the area in the early twentieth century and an essential foundational value for their children.

Images:

Strouse Adler

Women in dress shop, Sargent Manufacturing, Clock Co

Franklin St. fire

Men and Women on strike

Panel 4, Side one. Entrepreneurs

They created opportunities to provide goods and services within their neighborhoods. Small family-operated stores offered familiar foods and all the necessities in a friendly setting. There were grocery and fruit markets, butcher shops, tailors and bakeries, macaroni factories and service providers. Within the first generation the immigrants had created business enterprises that continue to this day. As entrance into the professions became possible for the children, they began to provide medical, legal and financial services within their own community. Hard work and a desire to succeed created a productive environment.

Images:

Local owners stores

Community Banks

Doctor and Lawyer

Pepe's/ Sally's

Pastry shops

Foxon Park soda

Macaroni factory

Panel 1, Side two. Becoming a Community

The growth of the neighborhoods offered opportunities for religious societies to be established that provided links back to their homes in Italy. Other organizations were formed to foster pride in their Italian heritage. In 1895 St Michael, the first ethnic Italian church was established to minister to the religious and social needs of the Wooster Square community, followed by St Anthony in the Hill neighborhood. They recognized that honoring their cultural and religious traditions was an important aspect in the creation of their identity here. Everyone provided assistance for those in need and they took care of their own.

Images:

San Carlino

Opera House

St Michael/St Anthony/St. Donato/ St. Rose of Lima

Street festa

First Communion/May crowning

Organizational symbols

Panel 2, Side two. Learning to be an American

Neighborhood schools became the primary sources for the education and Americanization of the children and adults as well. The schools were the means of integration into the cultural, historical, and political environment in which they now lived. It included harsh treatment to force the abandonment of the Italian language, dress and culture, often resisted. Within the first generation of residence here, boys and girls were seeking opportunities to enter the professions and gained admission into colleges and universities. They also served as community leaders and public servants, and participated in all aspects of government.

Young men and women proudly served their country in the armed forces. The American dream was beginning to become a reality.

Images:

New Haven school photos

Graduation photos eighth grade/high school/college

Americanization class photo

Political events

Panel 3, Side two. Being An Italian American

They developed a unique, blended community that became the foundation for our current definition of the Italian American.

The fusion of the traditions and customs of the old world with our American culture and ideals has become their identifying characteristic. Love of family, respect for the past, hard work, and fulfilling the promise of their future in America became the hallmarks of our modern day Italian Americans. This is the end of the voyage that began 150 years ago, and the beginning of a new opportunity for us to carry their aspirations forward so that future generations will continue to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Images:

Holiday family celebrations

Family gatherings

Italian/American flag

Panel 4, Side two. Wooster Square

Wooster Square today is a neighborhood rich in tradition with an appreciation of its unique place in history. It is a symbolic bridge between the old and the new and it continues to be the spiritual and emotional home to Italian Americans from throughout the region.

The promise of the American dream still lies ahead for many who would aspire to participate in it, just as the Italians did almost 150 years ago. The mosaic of America grows richer with each succeeding generation of immigrants who come to our shores seeking freedom and opportunity.

Images:

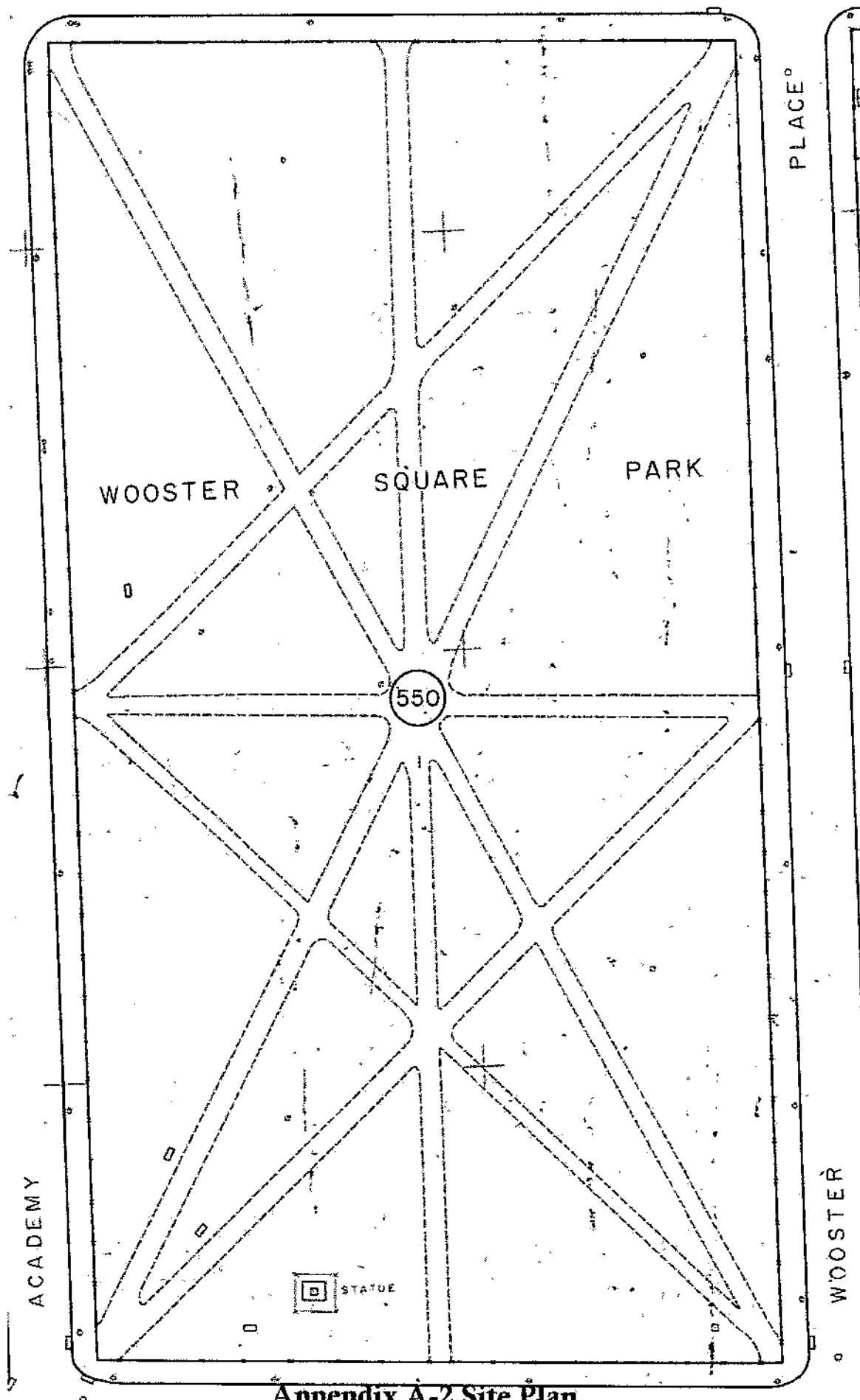
Cherry trees,

Wooster Place home,

Wooster St arch,

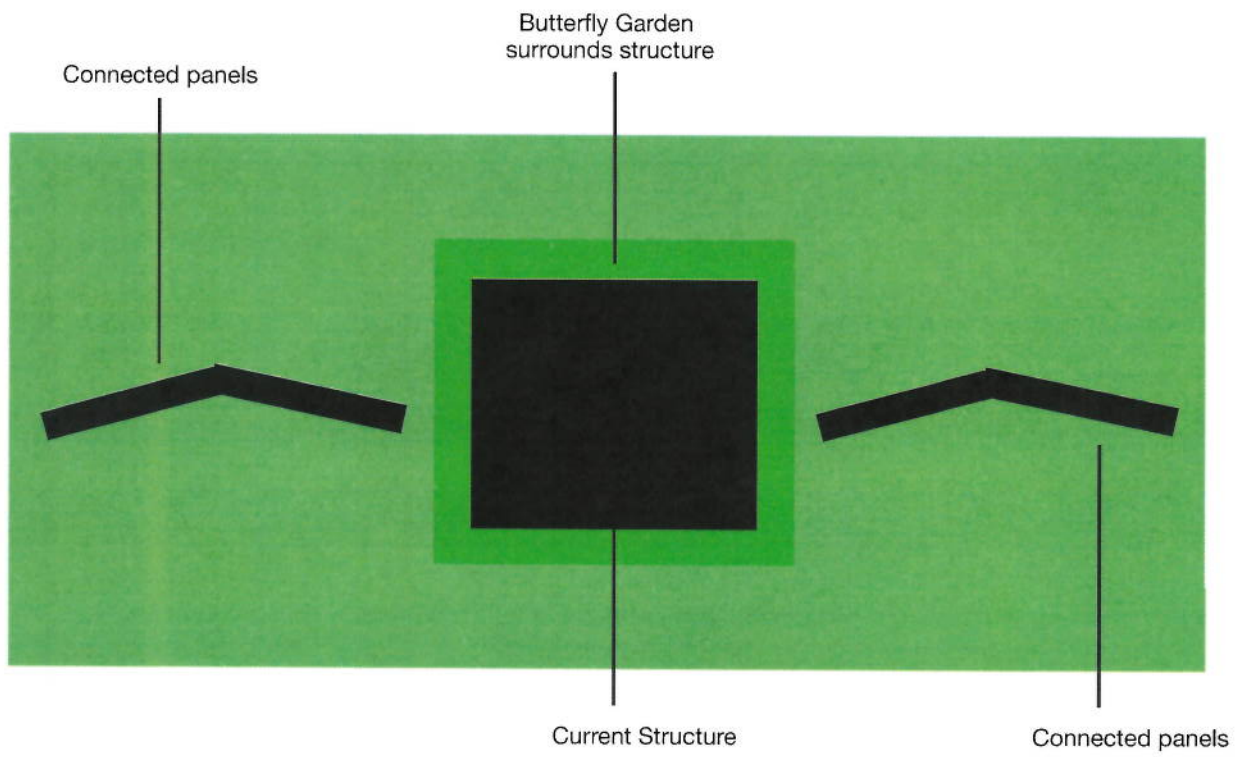
Children playing in the park

Newly arrived immigrants

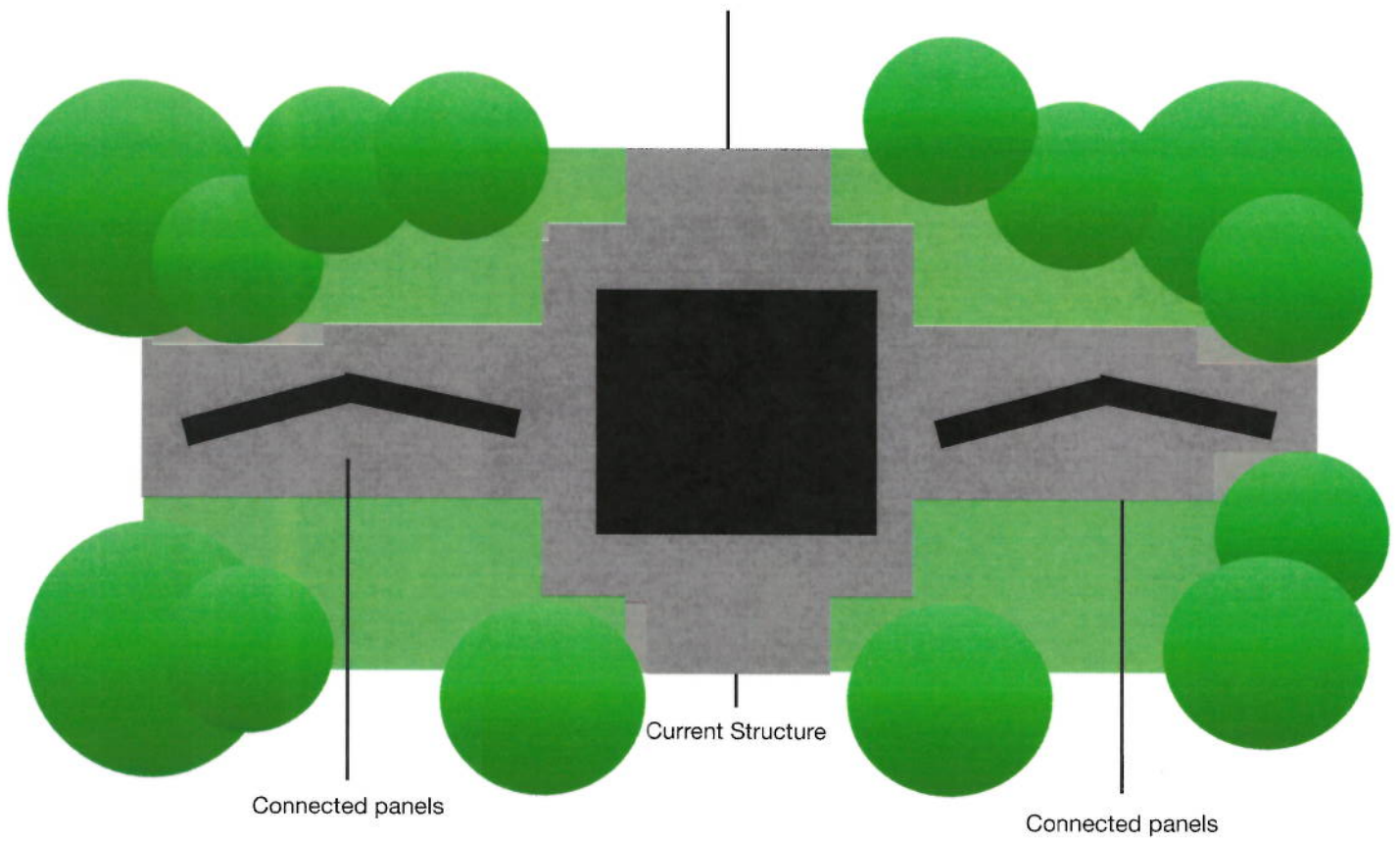


Appendix A-2 Site Plan

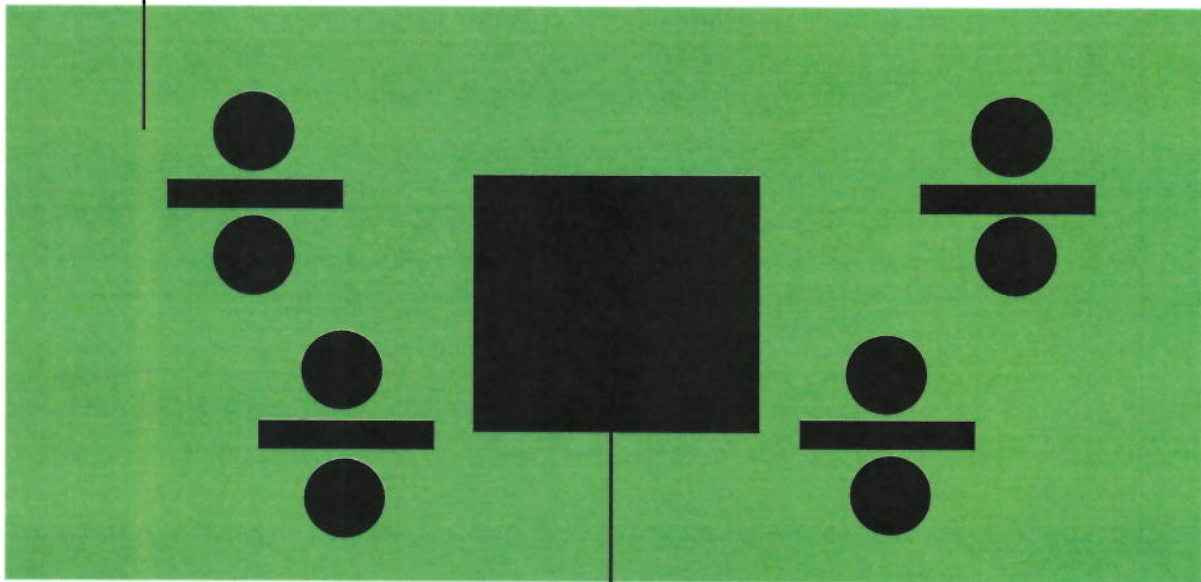
Appendix A-3 Interpretive Design



Gravel or Stone Walkway
Surrounded by plantings making softscape entrances on 4 sides



Stepping stones w/
engraved w/donor names or
historical fun facts
on eithe side of panels



Current Structure

Appendix B – Budget Template

Please itemize your project expenses using the template below or something similar. The City and the Committee requires that total project costs will be less than or equal to \$200,000.

Budget Item	Dollar Amount
Design, including models, maquette's, etc.	
Materials	
Fabrication	
Installation	
Documentation	
Project management/administration	
Public presentation & policy materials (artist talk)	
Artist fee	
Insurance, as needed	
Subcontractors	
Other expense:	
Other expense:	
Total project cost	

Explanation of other expenses: