

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS: JEAN BAPTISE POINTE DUSABLE STATUE DESIGN

Issued by the Chicago Park District

DEADLINE: Monday April 13th by 11:59 CT

OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

The Chicago Park District (CPkD) invites artists and artists teams to submit qualifications for work in cooperation with CPkD and other entities (i.e. community members and/or organizations) on designing, creating, and installing a full body, figurative statue of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable. The statue will be displayed at DuSable Park, located at 451 N Lake Shore Drive.

The statue will honor Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, Chicago's first known permanent settler of African and Haitian descent, who established a thriving trading post in the late 18th century and played a foundational role in the story of early Chicago.

The budget is **\$498,500.00** for the permanent artwork and artist services, inclusive of all costs and fees associated with design, engineering, fabrication, site preparation, transportation, installation, and related expenses. Funding is provided via an Illinois Department of Commerce and Opportunity (DCEO) grant and through the Chicago Park District.

SITE BACKGROUND

DuSable Park is a 3.5-acre peninsula located at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, east of Lake Shore Drive and bounded by the Ogden Slip. The site was created through landfill in the late 19th century and was later dedicated as DuSable Park by Mayor Harold Washington in 1987 to honor Jean Baptiste Point du Sable.

When complete, DuSable Park will feature commemorative and educational elements including a monument honoring indigenous voices, a mural charting DuSable's life, interpretive signage, a history timeline, a commission honoring Native voices, and designed landscapes reflecting the area's cultural legacy. This statue will be a central component of the park's identity, existing in dialogue with other site features while offering a unique artistic interpretation honoring DuSable. Park construction is anticipated to begin in Spring 2026, with completion projected in Quarter 3 of 2027. This statue must be finalized and installed by the time of the park's opening.

SUBJECT HISTORY

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable was likely born in Saint-Domingue (modern-day Haiti) around 1745 to parents of French and African descent. After traveling the Mississippi River, DuSable established a trading post in the 1780's near the mouth of the

Chicago River. His wife and partner, a Potawatomi woman named Kitihawa, acted as a cultural ambassador and was pivotal to their success. Their settlement became a key center for trade among Native American tribes, French traders, and later American settlers, helping lay the economic and geographic foundations of Chicago.

ARTWORK PARAMETERS

- The artwork will fit inside the 10’ X 10’ X 12’ location above ground.
- The maximum weight is 3,500lbs.
- The chosen artist will be required to coordinate with CPKD staff, the DuSable Park Design Alliance, and site contractors to ensure all aspects of the statue design meet site specific requirements.
- Located at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, DuSable Park will experience adverse weather conditions. Material selection should account for extreme weather and potential salt spray from DuSable Lake Shore Drive which borders the western edge of the site. The statue itself must be made of bronze.
- The site can be accessed via E North Water St or the mid-level Lake Shore Drive ramp. Refer to Appendix: B for more information.

BUDGET

Total Project Funding: \$498,500.00. Funding is inclusive of all costs and fees associated with design, engineering, fabrication, site preparation, transportation, installation, and related expenses.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

All dates are approximate and subject to change.

Stage	Start	End	Weeks
RFQ Open	March 16	April 13	4
Review of Qualifications	April 14	April 28	2
Finalist Review Meetings	TBD, May 4 th – May 15 th	-	-
Artist Notified & Contract Issued	By May 22 nd	-	-

ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open to select professional artists and artist teams across the country. We strongly encourage and will prioritize applications from Haitian artists or teams, particularly those with meaningful connections to the Chicago region.

SELECTION PROCESS

Following the RFQ deadline, CPkD staff will review all submissions and identify three finalists based on the selection criteria. Finalists will be contacted and awarded a \$500 honorarium to prepare a presentation to give an artist review panel in a virtual meeting. More information on the presentation, honorarium, and meetings will be provided to finalists. The review panel will be composed of CPkD staff and up to five members of the DuSable Park Steering Committee. After a two-week review period, a final selection will be made and the chosen artist contacted.

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Please combine all documents, excluding optional videos, into a single PDF document. Upload all documents before **Monday, April 13th at 11:59 PM CT**, using the link:

https://chicagoparkdistrict-my.sharepoint.com/:f/p/matthew_santagata/IgDrAjl2RtbuT4qW-z2-l6ClAdvpnH2wKpqEgVtuPw2lXU4

1. **Letter of Interest** (1 page) describing the applicant's connection to the project's themes, relevant experience, and conceptual approach.
2. **Proposed Schedule**
3. **Work Samples:** 6–10 images of past large-scale public art projects.
4. **Annotated Image List** detailing title, media, year, dimensions, location, budget, timeline, and commissioning entity for each image.
5. **Résumé or CV** (1–2 pages per artist; team applications must include one résumé for each member in a single PDF).
6. **Team Roles** (if applicable) outlining responsibilities of each member.
7. **Optional Video** (up to 2 minutes) with accompanying 2—3 sentence description.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Artistic Excellence:** Quality, originality, and craftsmanship of past work.

- **Relevance:** Strength of connection to the project's themes and community.
- **Feasibility:** Ability to execute a large-scale public artwork within budget, schedule, and site conditions. The cost and feasibility of project logistics, including the fabrication and transportation of related materials, will be considered.

Please direct any questions or inquiries to: dusable@chicagoparkdistrict.com.

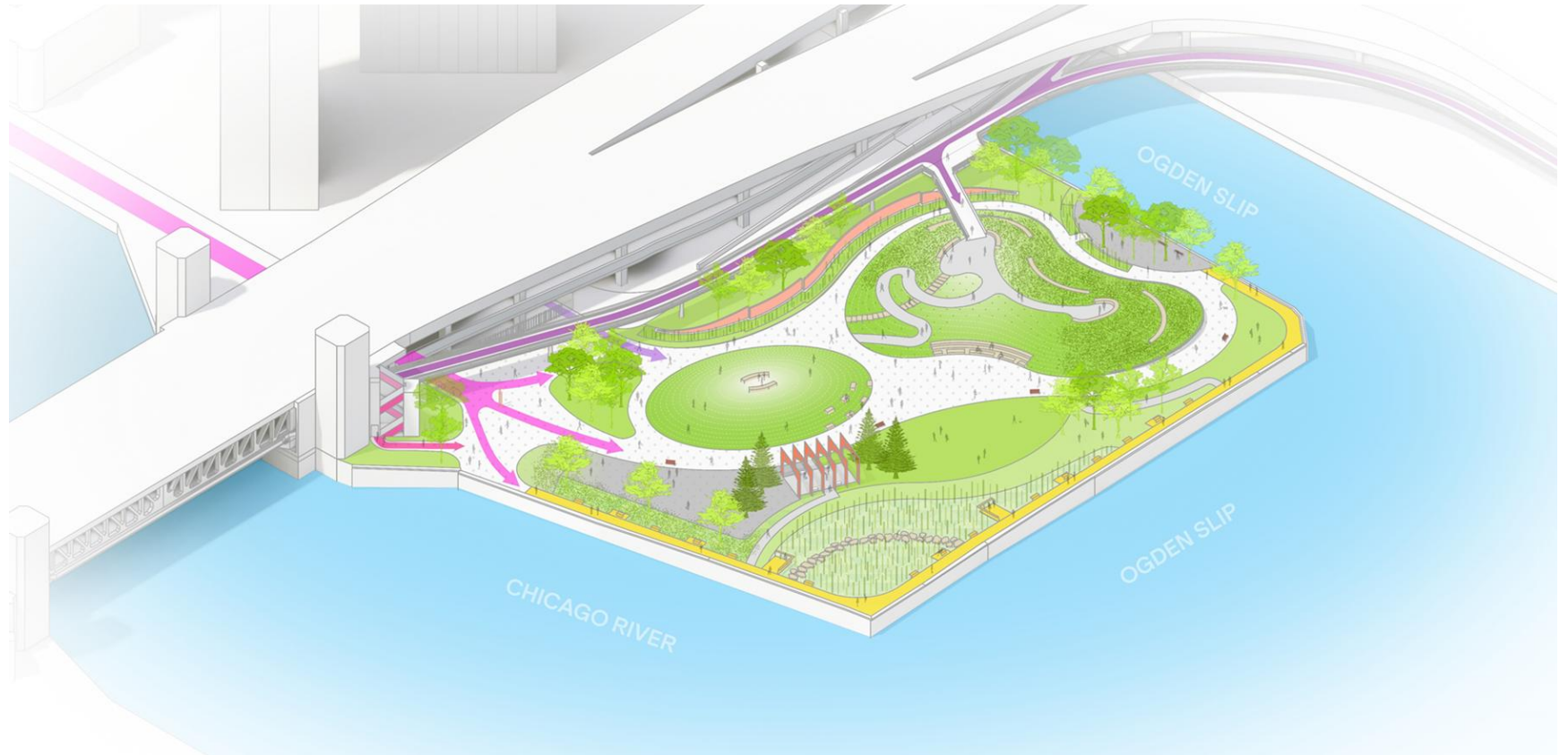
APPENDIX

- a. Site Plan & Approximate Artwork Location
- b. Site Access
- c. Site Grading
- d. DuSable Park Renders

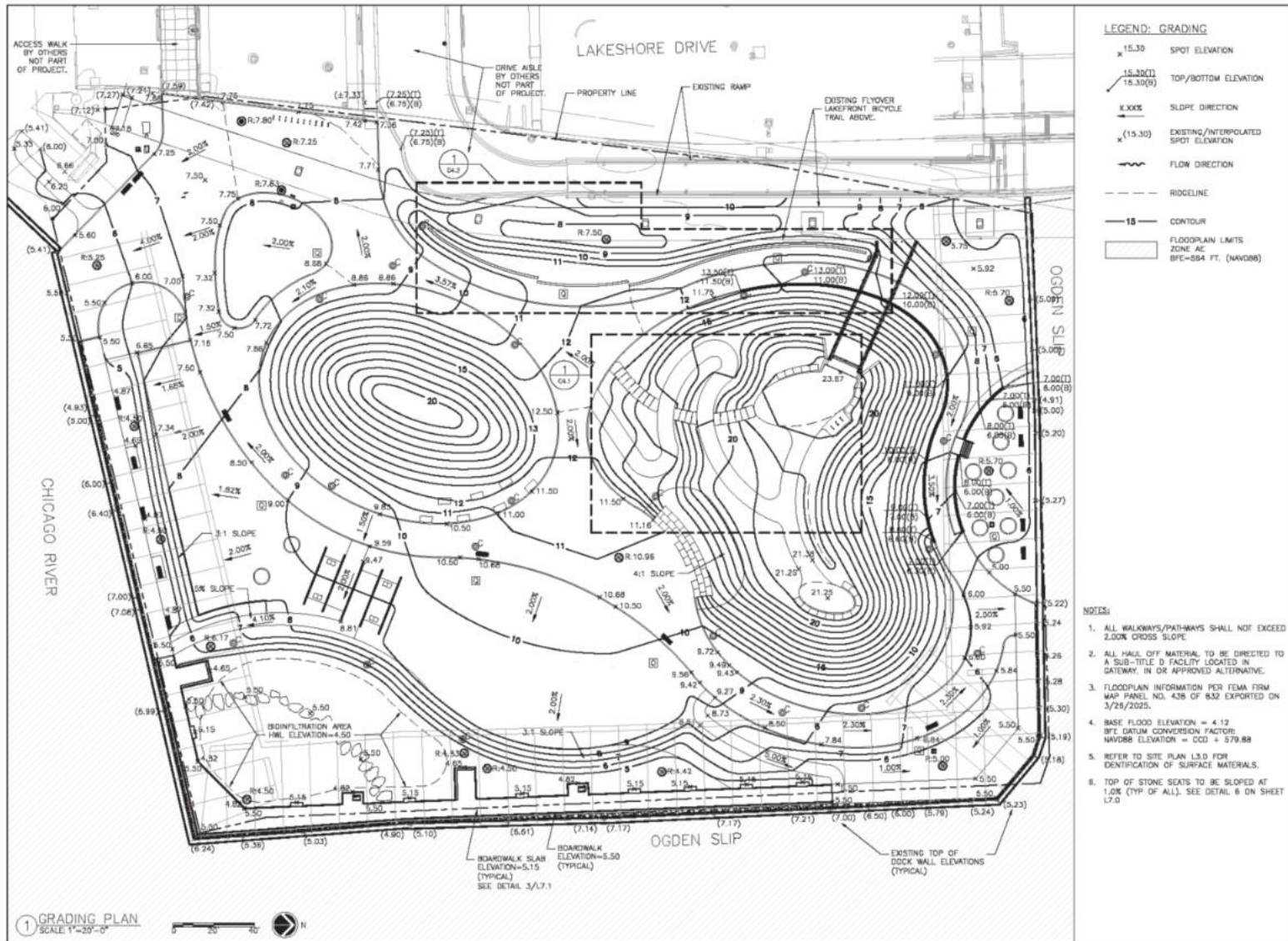
a. Site Plan & Approximate Artwork Location



b. Site Access



c. Site Grading



d. DuSable Park Renders



Park Entrance



Pavilion



Flyover Connection & Mural Wall