



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR MURAL PROJECT IN JOHNSON CITY, TN

The Public Art Committee of Johnson City, TN is seeking qualifications from artists or art teams for the commission of a mural to be located at 116 Buffalo Street in downtown Johnson City.

ELIGIBILITY: This opportunity is open to all professional artists over the age of 18. Applicants must reside within the United States.

BUDGET: Up to three finalists will be selected to develop design concepts for this project. The total project budget for the selected commission is \$18,000. Finalists will be paid a \$500 honorarium for their designs. The selected artist(s) will be paid \$16,500 for the commissioned work. The three finalists will be required to present their proposals to the Selection Committee via Zoom. The selected artist(s) will be responsible for own travel costs, materials, housing, and personal liability insurance when installing the mural. The selected artist(s) will also be responsible for applying an appropriate primer, UV sealant, and anti-graffiti coating to the walls/mural surface. The City of Johnson City will pressure wash the walls and attend to any necessary repairs prior to the installation.

DEADLINE: April 12, 2024 by 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)

QUESTIONS: Cheyenne Kumbhare ckumbhare@johnsoncitytn.org 423-975-2706

ABOUT JOHNSON CITY

Johnson City, Tennessee is situated in the heart of the Mountain South and Blue Ridge foothills. Abounding in natural beauty and opportunities for recreation and adventure, the city has become a regionally and nationally prominent destination for outdoor enthusiasts. In recent years, Johnson City has also begun to show off its considerable cultural assets, which range widely across the visual and performing arts. The city's public art program has played a critical role in this development. For the last decade, the Johnson City Public Art Committee has been enhancing the distinctiveness and livability of the community through arts installations and annual events freely accessible to all.

At a population of 73,000 and counting, Johnson City is primed for tremendous opportunity as it cultivates its reputation as a regional leader in sustainable growth. Preserving our cultural and historical roots, evaluating present opportunities, and investing in a diverse future are at the forefront of this vibrant city.

Johnson City's historic downtown district is an energetic hub of day-round activity and a major draw for locals and visitors alike. Downtown is home to an array of local restaurants, breweries, retailers, parks, public art, community events, and 360° mountain views. In the downtown area, the community values of honesty, authenticity, and meaningful connections are activated to welcome current, new, and potential residents and visitors.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Johnson City Public Art Committee has invested in several murals aimed at celebrating the community's distinctive identity, rich cultural history, and reverence for our shared home in Northeast Tennessee. One of the most recent additions to the mural program highlights regional artists' important and ongoing contributions to American music and craft. Continuing in this vein, the Committee is launching a new mural that will focus on our community's dynamic tradition of oral and written literature and their vivid, vernacular forms of storytelling. The mural project encourages artists to explore the intersection of word and image through engagement with local poetry. A diverse selection of poems, composed by three different modern and contemporary poets local to the region, are provided for inspiration (included in "Appendix" section). Artists are free to work with any number of the poems that resonate with them. Visual responses to the poetic text do not need to be literal or illustrative. Artists are encouraged to borrow freely, even impressionistically, from the poems. Text may be incorporated into the composition, but this is not required. The Committee hopes that the resulting mural will resonate with the poetic legacy of our region, excite viewers' imaginations, and foster pride in our community.

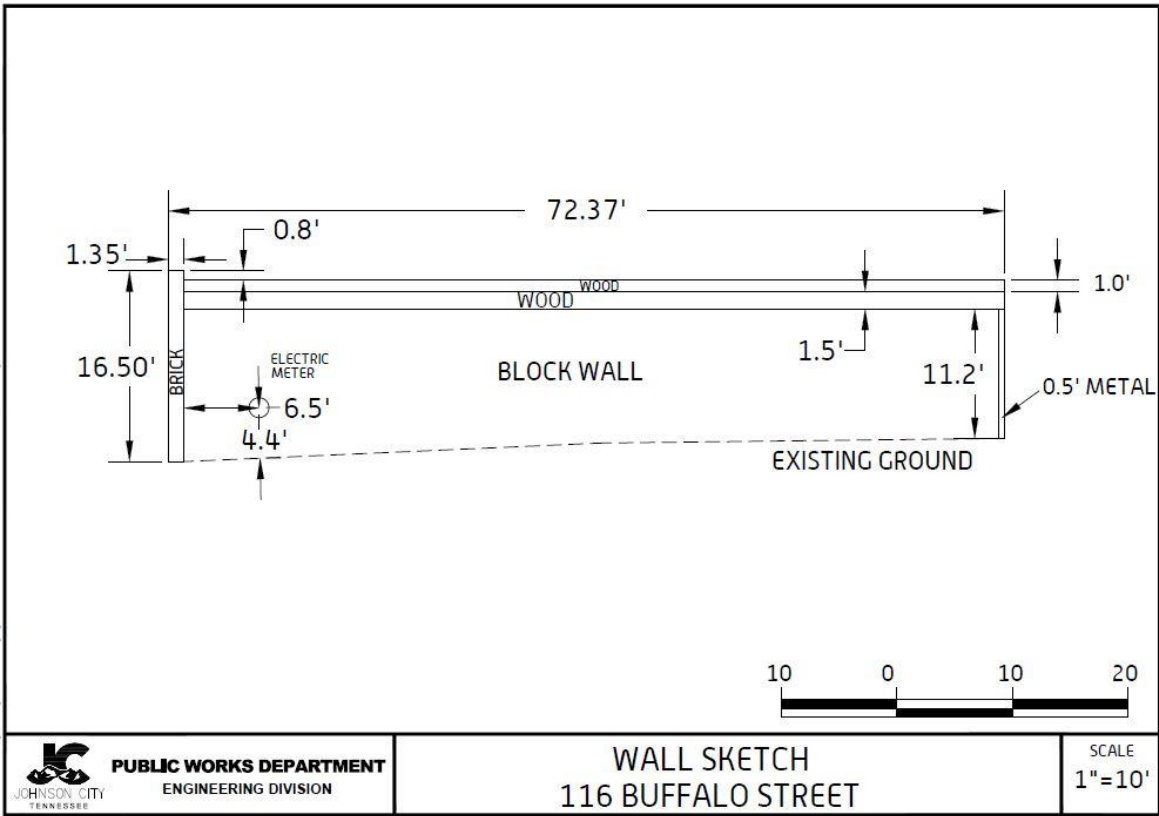
MURAL SITE



(Lower Wall Only)



(Lower Wall Only)



View the wall on Google street view: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/hsZa3VTtezfDYTeH7>
 (The wall is nearly perpendicular to Buffalo Street and matches the gray wall depicted in the photos above)

The mural site is located on the side wall of a downtown business. It faces a small plaza adjacent to Buffalo Street that includes several flagpoles and a landscaping bed. Tall pine trees run along the perimeter of the plaza area. There is a high volume of vehicular traffic at the mural site, though there is also frequent foot traffic in this area as it is located in the heart of downtown Johnson City. Plans are underway for the redevelopment of the plaza within the next couple of years.

The wall is approximately 72' x 15'. A narrow portion of wood paneling totaling 2.5' in height runs across the full width of the wall at the top of the building, and the mural should cover this section. It should also cover the brick trim that rises 0.8' above the wall on the left side. The grassy area directly in front of the mural site is somewhat uneven terrain.

SELECTION CRITERIA

A Public Art Selection Committee will review the qualifications of applicant artists and make recommendations to the Johnson City Public Art Committee. The Selection Committee includes artists, arts advocates, curators, administrators, project partners, and other arts and community development specialists. Their selections will be based on the following criteria:

- **Artistic excellence as demonstrated in 10 digital images of the artist(s) previous work**
- **Evidence of working in the mural field on large masonry surfaces**
- **Experience working on collaborative community projects**
- **Experience working on large scale projects**
- **Willingness to meet all contractual guidelines**
- **The use of content appropriate for all audiences**

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The selected artist must supply all required insurance documents and submit a general contract form prior to beginning work. The City of Johnson City will provide an Insurance Checklist detailing each required insurance item, including but not limited to a \$1 million/occurrence general liability policy and additional insured endorsements for the City of Johnson City for both ongoing and completed operations.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submit a digital portfolio:

- **Cover letter/letter of intent**

- **Resume**
- **10 digital images of previous artwork**
- **Contact information for 3 professional references**

Please note: Art teams must submit qualifications under the name of one lead artist. In the cover letter, the lead artist must indicate that they plan to work as part of a team and must list the names of the artist(s) within their team. Art teams shall submit at least 10 images of previous artwork, but they may submit up to 10 images for each team member if desired.

Submit a digital portfolio at <https://jcpublicart.com/buffalo-street-mural-project/>

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

- **Deadline for submissions: April 12, 2024 by 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**
- **Notification of three finalists: May 1, 2024**
- **Final design submission/presentation: May 31, 2024**
- **Final artist selection: June 14, 2024**

Please note: Installation of the mural will be scheduled in consultation with the selected artist. The preferred installation period is summer or fall of 2024.

APPENDIX

A1. Above Johnson City, Jesse Graves

Ice crystals form a thin and glistening crust
along the trail down Buffalo Mountain,
late sun fading to a golden nimbus
above Greenwood and Little Cherokee,
glowing beyond Embreeville and Telford.
I kept walking when I should have turned back
and now another half mile of bad footholds
waits ahead for me, but I'm wearing shoes
with deep tread and the heater works strong
in my old truck once the engine block warms.
My ancestors might have trekked off a slope
like this one, wild turkey in a shoulder sling
or whitetail buck cinched over a pack horse.
Life is meals, I read once, and I imagine
good friends around a table, with olives,
crusty bread with sliced tomatoes and salt,
shaved cheeses, marbled steaks grilling over

open flame, something amber-dark and rich
filling cups, and their voices calling me down
from these cold heights, life is meals, they say,
and we have a chair by the fire for you.

A2. *My Second Grade Teacher Reads Us Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jane Hicks*

At art time, we crafted Christmas paper, careful-kept,
reborn as tissue kites. Tethered rainbows with tattered tails
climbed into March, darted and leapt over playground minions.

A hawk on thermals glided, soared, swooped among the kites,
winged away, climbed high to wheel and hover, all below transfixed.
Back inside, teacher plucked a book from her shelf of verse,
“Listen with your heart,” she said. “Ride the words
like a hawk rides the wind or kites dance free.”

So I rode words that galloped on springs, swept off, soared again,
fell into now, cloaked in *vermillion*,
newest in my heart-cache of words.

A3. *I Surrender My Garden to Her, Lacy Snapp*

That artistic, giant yellow and black garden spider
is a dangerous woman.
When male spiders court her
plucking the edges of her web,
they always have a contingency plan
an escape route
in case she is not flattered
by their careful
advances,
and instead seeks
to kill him

and eat him.

Care must be taken by people, too.
One should speak no name
around her web,
because if she spells it out
with her zigzag weavings,
they say,
that person
will die soon.

I admit to being superstitious
of disturbing her web. I've surrendered
a corner of my garden
to her.
At night, after watering,

I press myself flat
against the house
to pass
as she restrings to snare her evening supper.
I keep my distance,
some cherry tomatoes drop from vine
to the soil
in the corner I cannot reach,
now hers alone.

I think I understand—
though she will die with the first frost
of fall,
after a full summer of webbing
at dusk,
consuming those centers
only to rebuild
each morning
with fresh silk,
she holds on for as long
as she can.
She has an egg sack to protect.
Silken souls
in the thousands
tiny as dust
wrapped up tight
until their spring exodus,
soon to be
writers of creation themselves.