

*Request for Proposals*

# Community Art Wall

**Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin**

*Entrance Gallery | Community-Driven Installation*

## About NCMW

Wisconsin's natural history museum was chartered in 1882 and has welcomed more than half a million visitors annually. The museum houses over four million objects spanning natural and cultural history and has been a national leader in immersive exhibit design since constructing the world's first diorama in 1890.

### Since 1890

The first museum diorama, a muskrat in its natural habitat, was built at MPM and set the global standard. The new building continues this tradition of defining what a natural history museum can be.

## Why a New Building?

The current county-owned facility can no longer sustain the collections or visitor experience due to significant deferred maintenance, lack of insulation and moisture barriers, and rising utilities costs. The move is essential to preserving four million objects held in public trust.

## The New Building

Located on the north end of downtown Milwaukee, bounded by McKinley Ave., Vliet St., and 6th St., will be a new facility and destination for the entire state.

### ~200,000 sq ft

Total facility footprint

### 6 Permanent Exhibits

Designed by Thinc Design

### 2 Flexible Connectors

Bridging stories across collections

### Planetarium

Reimagined dome experience

### Vivarium

Live butterfly wing

### Dedicated museum parking

Attached parking structure

## \$255M Total Project

\$90M public funding [State of WI: \$40M · Milwaukee County: \$45M · Federal funding pursued]  
\$165M statewide capital campaign

# What's Inside

01

Project Overview & Vision

---

02

Community Art Wall Logistics

---

03

Inspirational Images

---

04

Potential Structures of Participation

---

05

Art & Installation Details

---

06

How to Submit a Proposal

01

# Project Overview

*Vision, values, and context for the Community Art Wall*

# About the Community Art Wall

The Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin invites artists and artist collectives to submit proposals for a landmark installation at the museum's north entrance. This work will be the first thing visitors encounter. A living, dynamic expression of community, nature, and place.

*Inspire curiosity, excite minds, and increase desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity through exhibitions, educational programs, collections, and research.*

NCMW Mission

## Nature First

The work should lean primarily toward the natural world: flora, fauna, ecology, and seasons of Wisconsin. It can incorporate cultural elements but should prioritize natural aesthetic and components.

## Statewide Community Voice

The process and product must authentically involve community members either as co-creators, content contributors, or consultants. It should include a diversity of voices from around the state.

## Dynamic Mediums

We seek something more dynamic than a painted wall. We are excited about dimension, texture, movement, and interaction to welcome visitors.

## Place & Memory

The installation should reflect the specific landscapes, cultures, and stories of this state.

# Community Art Wall Logistics

*Timeline, budget, team, partners, and core values*

## Project Timeline



## Budget

Total Art Wall Project Budget

**\$75,000**

### Budget can include:

Artist Honorarium

Materials & Fabrication

Community Engagement

Installation

*Proposed budget should be included in proposal*

## Project Team

**Project Lead, President & CEO of MPM**

Ellen Censky

**Future Museum Project Manager**

Margaret Bridges

**Executive Project Assistant**

Perry Shaffer

**Additional Supporting MPM Staff**

Various staff from Collections & Research, Education, Visitor Services, HR, Marketing, & Graphic Design

## Partners

- Ennead & Kahler Slater - Architects
- Mortenson - General Contractor
- THINC Designs – Exhibit Designer
- Kubik Maltbie – Exhibit Fabricator
- Cardosi Kiper & ER2 – Sign Designer and Fabricator

## Art Wall Core Values

- Community Ownership & Inclusion
- Ecological Stewardship
- Aesthetically & Creatively Dynamic, Welcoming

03

# Inspirational Images

*Design imagery & renderings, site photos, and creative references*

Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.

THINC Design Concept Images and Renderings



New Model: copron (15ft)

New Model: atus (male) (1ft) g: -shaded, darker and lighter below; to the sediment an); head and probably colorful like-shaped first in on spine.

lucent graphic: on window: (mullions not shown)



05.02.04.G04: Custom illustrated underwater graphic wallpaper; Should be similar to MPM's current background. Mostly (80%+) neutral underwater texture, with corals in distance to visually connect to the edge of the physical corals in the scene)

Wallpaper dimensions: 450" w x 118" h  
\*Diorama background is curved horizontally and curves vertically near the top of the wall onto the ceiling. Height dimension here is to the beginning of the vertical curve and may need to be hand painted to

Animals in the distance projected onto cyclorama

above visitors, two in diorama

onto cyclorama

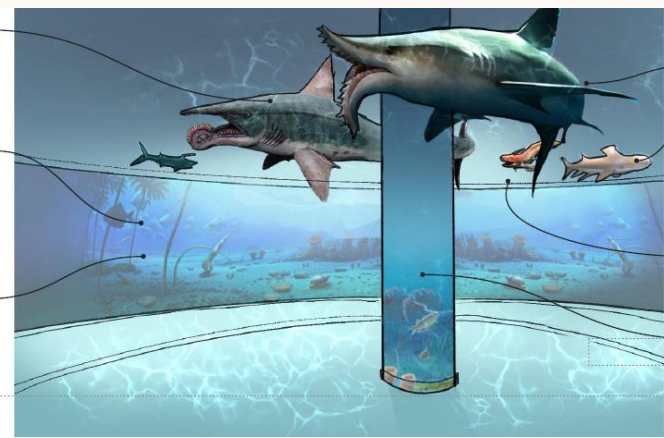
Ocean floor: Reuse as much existing corals as possible

New Jawless fish (1' long) hiding in hole; pops out when visitor activates button (not visible in this view)

New Pop-up bubble for kids

New Corals "spilling" into interactive table (you don't have to

Existing Trilobites: crawling over sea



New Model: Edustus (20ft)

New Model: Stethacanthus (3ft)

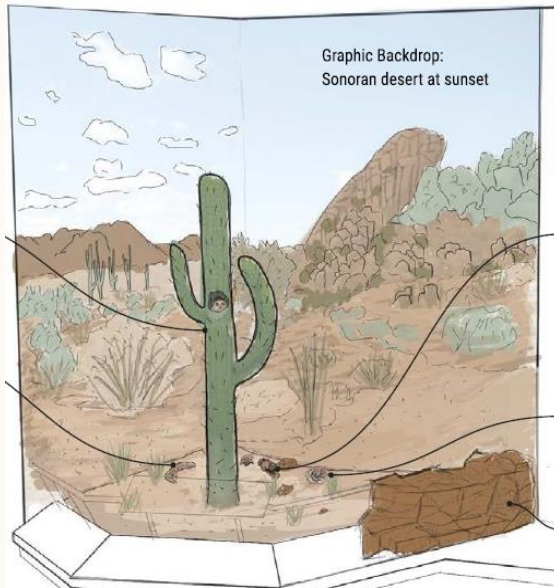
New Model: Xenacanthus (3.3ft)

Graphic w/ plants & ID; clear acrylic kick

Models suspended from ceiling

Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.

**THINC Design Concept Images and Renderings**



Graphic Backdrop:  
Sonoran desert at sunset

Existing Horned Lizard  
(Phrynosoma sp.)  
Cat# RA2142

Existing Rattlesnake model  
Cat# ZT2022.31  
\*From current buffalo scene

Button for rattlesnake hidden in rockwork

Torosaurus model (new) on "wet muddy" base 7' AFF



Triceratops skeleton (existing) on "wet muddy" base 7' AFF

Overflow of mud onto floor

Broken faux tree as evidence of fight

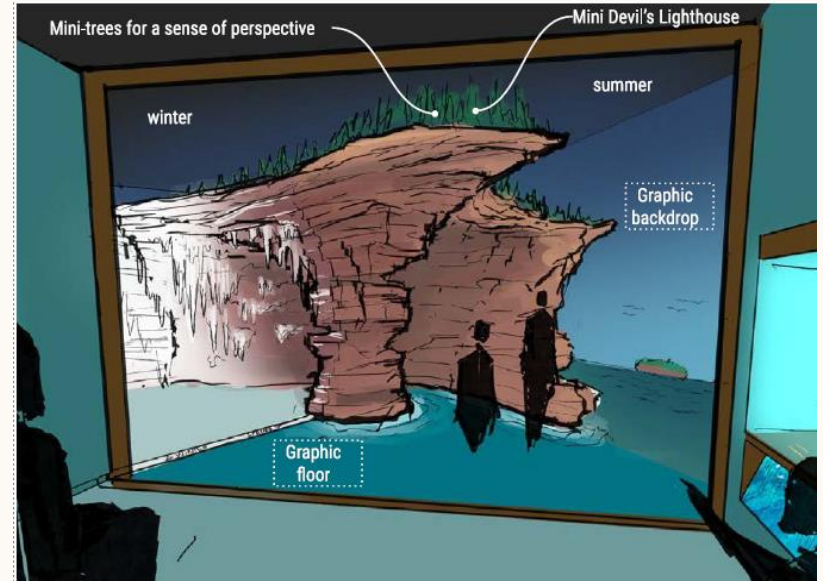
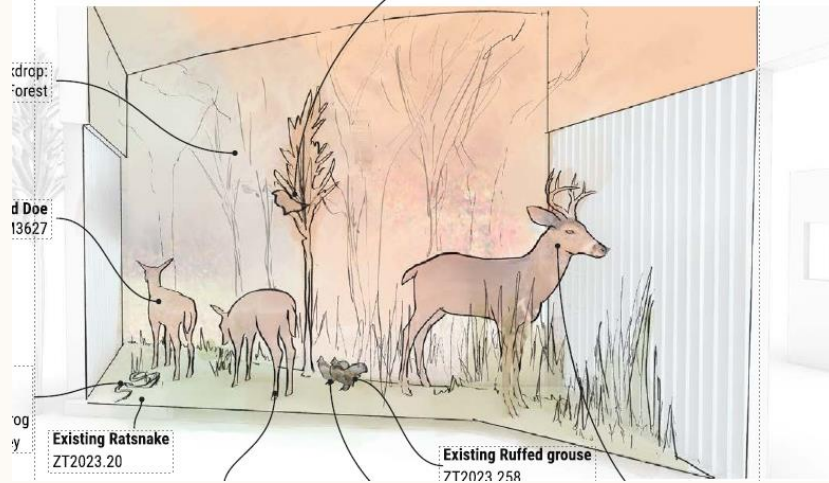


kull has rockwork

Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.

**THINC Design Concept Images and Renderings**

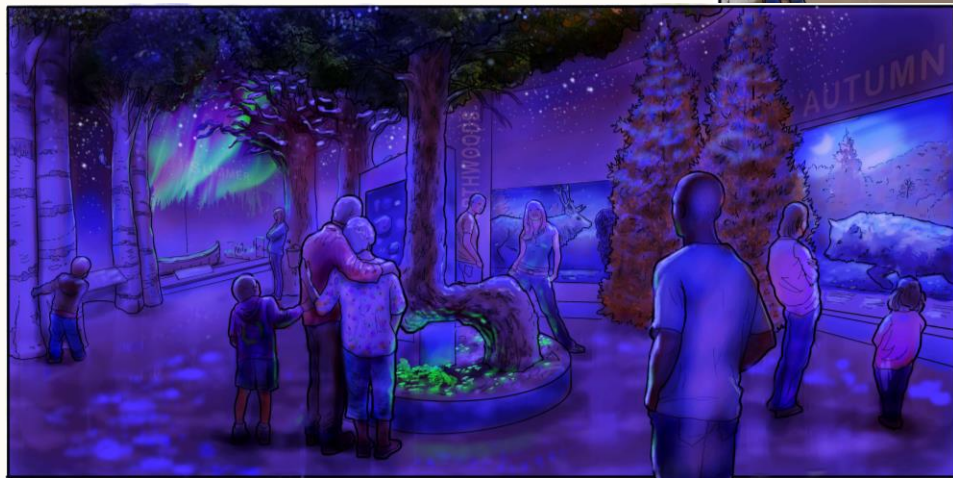
**1 - DEER DIORAMA**



03 · INSPIRATIONAL IMAGES

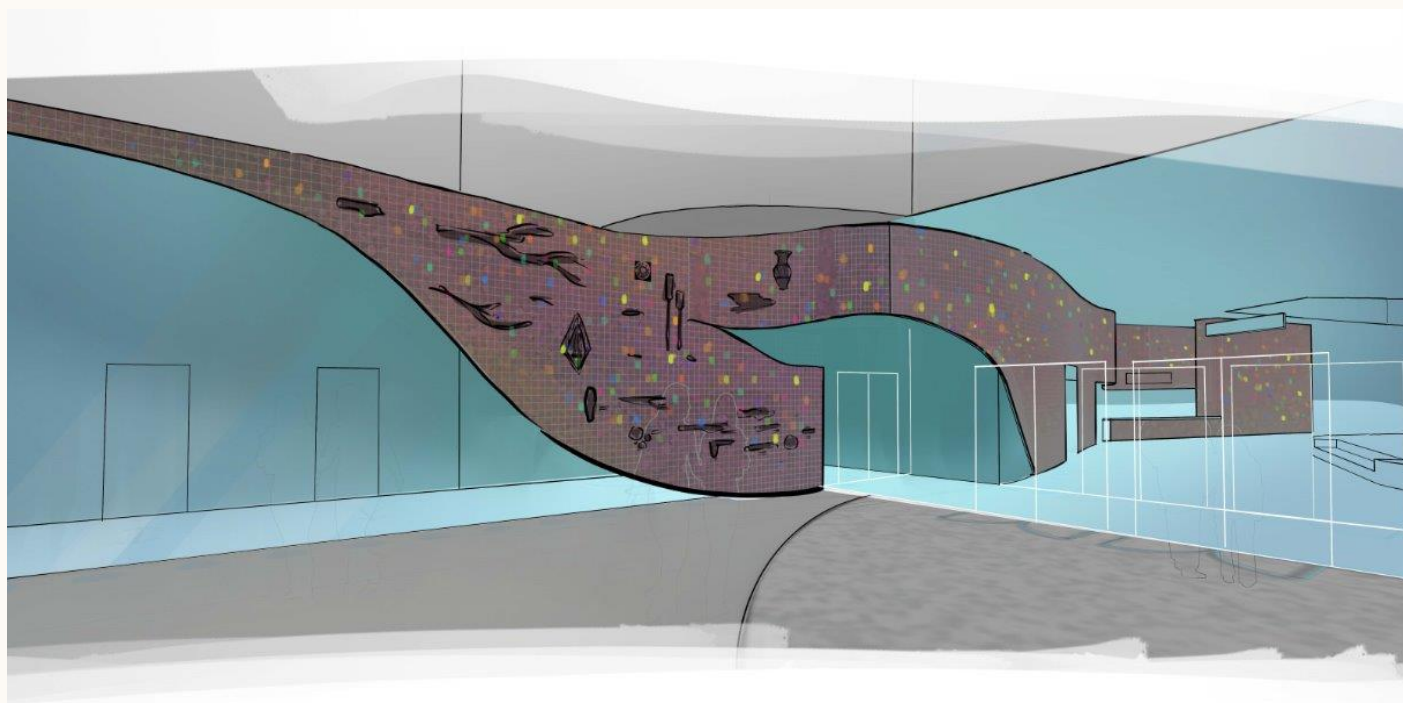
*Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.*

**THINC Design Concept Images and Renderings**



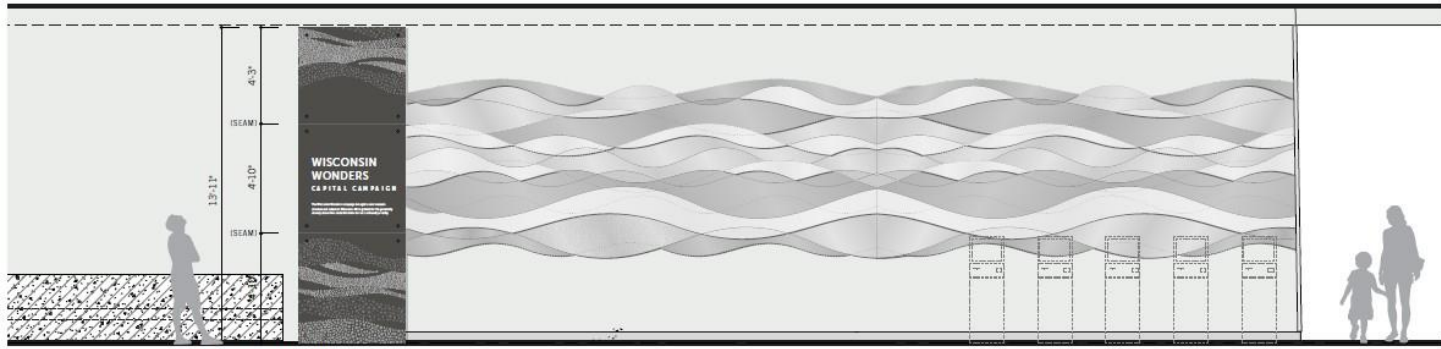
*Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.*

**Early THINC Rendering of Community Art Wall**



Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.

**Cardosi Kiper Donor Wall Rendering**



**LEVEL 1 - EAST ELEVATION**

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**A** —————→ **Z**  
 NOTE: All Names to be Uniform and Ordered Alphabetically from Left to Right

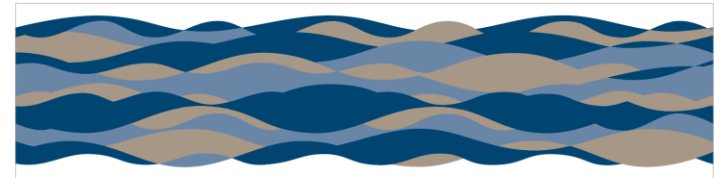


**INDIVIDUAL PANEL DETAIL**

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

Donor Names to be Etched & Infilled on Frosted Acrylic Panels; Panels to Vary in Thickness

**Reference Photo**



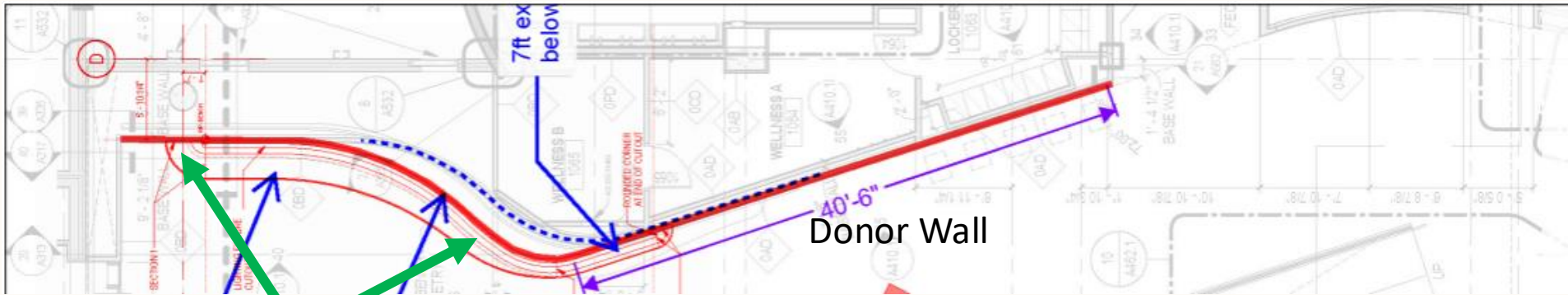
*Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.*

**Building Rendering of Art Wall location**



Images in this section should inspire proposals and concepts.

**Wall Location**



Art Wall

Donor Wall

# Potential Structures of Participation

*Potential frameworks, examples only*

Artists should propose work that engages community as a stakeholder. Three examples of what that could look like:

01

## Mail-In Contributions

Community members contribute elements remotely. This could include drawings, photographs, written words, or handmade pieces that are incorporated into the final work. Accessible, wide-reaching, and scalable to any geography.

*e.g. hand-drawn leaves sent by classrooms; nature photographs from across Wisconsin*

02

## Co-Created Workshops

The artwork incorporates physical art pieces and objects from facilitated community workshops. This could be natural materials, representations of meaningful keepsakes, locally foraged items. The collection process is itself an act of community engagement, and would include partnership with the museum staff and partners.

*e.g. painted river stones, tiles of pressed plants, collected lake glass, storytelling workshop with objects with personal stories*

03

## Inspired By

The artist creates original work deeply informed by community input: interviews, workshops, surveys, or storytelling sessions. Community voice shapes the aesthetic and content without requiring physical contributions.

*e.g. a textile piece of patterns derived from community-shared memories of Wisconsin nature*

**Mail-In Contributions**

**Co-Created Workshops**

**Inspired By**

*These are purely examples to inspire artist's own creative interpretation. The museum is eager to hear the creative and unique ways artists will propose community engagement for the Community Art Wall inspired by their own practice and experience. Engagement should be aligned with the artist's proposed medium for the piece and should serve as a part of the artistic process, not separate from it.*

# Art & Installation Details

*Physical requirements, constraints, and opportunities*

## Physical Specifications

### APPROXIMATE SIZE

20 feet wide × 7 feet tall  
*Size is not bound, can vary with coordination*

### WEIGHT LOAD / WALL DETAILS

Wall will be outfitted with 3-5/8" ProSTUD 30mil drywall studs every 12 – 16 inches. Exact specs can be provided on request.  
Blocking can be incorporated.  
Wall is curved as shown on renderings

### NATURAL LIGHT

Yes — entrance gallery, northern exposure

### TOUCHABLE

Yes — the work will be reachable and sit above a bench

### ACCESS

The north entrance is a free and accessible part of the museum

### INSTALL OPTIONS

Option A (if dust expected): Fall/Winter 2026  
Option B (if dust should be avoided): Winter / Spring 2027

## Key Considerations

### Dynamic > Mural

We are looking for something more than a painted surface. Depth, texture, movement, and interactivity are all welcome. Will consider murals in some circumstances.

### Future Opportunity

A separate mural RFP may be issued in the future for a different exhibit in the museum. This RFP is specifically for multi-dimensional or dynamic work.

### Installation Window

The selected artist will coordinate one of two installation windows with the project team. Artist is responsible for installation.

### Durability

Work must withstand high-traffic public interaction and require minimal maintenance.

# How to Submit a Proposal

*Requirements, format, and evaluation criteria*

# What to Submit

*Proposals must be submitted as a singularly designed PDF or presentation in one file. Physical proposals can be coordinated for drop off with the Project Manager*

## Proposed Work - Concept

- Overall vision for the Community Art Wall
- Aesthetic concept represented through sketches or mood boards
- A concept rendering
- Material Palette and structural approach
- Outline of how the work leans towards nature

## Proposed Work - Details

- Proposed project schedule including community engagement and install
- Budget breakdown for \$60,000 which should include your artist fees, materials, contracted work (if needed for install or art build support)
- Potential risks and associated costs

## Community Engagement

- Proposal for community involvement
- Capacity for your involvement to organize or lead community process
- Potential need for supplemental support (and what kind) from the museum
- How community voice will shape the final work

## Additional Elements

- Artist bio / collective statement
- Portfolio of past work: 3 – 5 projects of a similar size, scope, and budget
- Potential gift or in-kind contributions for materials (for example, if you have a local resource to donate materials to reduce cost, please include that information). Not necessary or expected.
- A statement on why you want your art/your group's art to be part of the new Nature & Culture Museum of Wisconsin

# RFP Process Timeline

March 27

## RFP Released

April 10

## RFIs / Info Period Opens

- Submit questions via email at any time
- Attend an info session: 1 in-person + 2 virtual (dates TBD — email to register your interest)
- Propose another way to connect with staff

May 1

## Proposals Due

- Proposals should be submitted virtually to Margaret Bridges at [bridgesm@hmkc.org](mailto:bridgesm@hmkc.org)
- If artists have physical components to submit, reach out to Margaret to coordinate a drop off or mailing

May 4–7

## Interviews

*May include a site visit to the new museum (currently under construction)*

May 8

## Award

- The museum will aim for this target date. We will communicate any delays to applicants

# We can't wait to see what you imagine.

Proposals are due: April 24, 2026 · Questions or Requests for Information Due: April 10, 2026

Submit to: Margaret Bridges at [bridgesm@hmkc.org](mailto:bridgesm@hmkc.org) | Subject: "Community Art Wall RFP – [Your Name/Collective]"