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Rowan's Original Gateway.

REQUEST FOR ARTIST QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Town of Spencer Downtown Mural Program

Town of Spencer, North Carolina

Issue Date: 10/18/2024

Deadline for Applications: 11/18/2024 5 PM

Project Overview:

The Downtown Mural Program Selection Committee is seeking qualifications from artists or artist teams for the commission of several outdoor public murals in the Town of Spencer, NC. The Town expects to select at least two artists or artist teams to contribute murals to an ongoing mural walk project.

The exact number of artists selected, and the number of murals commissioned is subject to change based on the Town's discretion, budget, and location availability. The murals will be located throughout Spencer's downtown and are created with the aim of enhancing connectivity between cultural and economic assets in Spencer's town center.

The Town is considering other locations for murals in downtown Spencer, and the Town may reach out to artists not chosen for the two locations in question, for another associated mural project. If the artist is not interested in being considered for other mural locations, they should state so in their application.

Artists and artist teams are welcome to express interest in completing one mural and/or a series of murals. This is a qualifications-based selection process; artists will develop concepts after they are selected based on their experience, artistry, alignment with the program's goals, and

demonstrated interest. The goals for the Mural Program, adopted by the Spencer Mural Selection Committee providing oversight for the program, are as follows:

- To use creative placemaking efforts to develop Spencer's contemporary identity through community-based collaboration.
- To explore the vibrancy of Spencer through the cultural experiences that promote the history, arts, industry, and regional authenticity that make this town special.
- To revitalize downtown as a cultural and shopping experience for both residents and visitors.
- To provide economic opportunities for local and regional artists, establishing Spencer as a place for creative people to live, work, and collaborate.
- To inspire, motivate, and instill pride in residents by creating an accessible outdoor gallery of beautiful and thought-provoking public art that reflects the unique character of our community.

Artists will work extensively with both the Town of Spencer, the Spencer Mural Selection Committee, and potentially certain experts to develop mural concepts and concept work. As all of downtown Spencer is within a historic district, the final concept work will need to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) as well as final approval from the Spencer Board of Aldermen (the elected town council).

The Committee will select artists with consideration to their entire portfolio of walls with the aim of having a variety of artistic styles, mural themes, and artistic backgrounds represented. We welcome applications from seasoned muralists, local artists, as well as national and international artists. The Committee is especially interested in receiving submissions from artists with experience and interest in collaborative, community-based mural projects that build social ties, represent diversity, and/or develop a sense of communal ownership of public spaces. Preference will be given to North Carolina artists or artists with a strong North Carolina connection.

Tying this whole project together will be a digital guide accessed through onsite QR codes which will give visitors access to digital content including interviews with historians and the artists, footage of the mural creation process, custom filters, photographs, audio, and augmented reality features. Artists will be asked to give their permission to be filmed and participate in

interviews and related project development, as well as to document the mural creation process themselves. Please refer to Charlotte South End Mural Walk as an example of this technology in action.

All materials shall be submitted to Skye Allan by email at sallan@spencernc.gov in a single PDF document by Monday 10/18/2024 at 5 PM. The Town of Spencer and the Spencer Mural Selection Committee reserve the right to change the project timeline.

Selection Criteria:

The artists will be selected based on the following criteria, as evidenced in application materials and conversations with listed references:

- Artistic accomplishment as demonstrated by images of previously completed artwork and references.
- Technical competence and comparable scale of past works.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with community stakeholders, if applicable.
- Demonstrated ability to complete projects on time and within budget.
- Professional references who can confirm the artist's skills and professionalism.

Submission Materials (combine into a single PDF document):

The following application materials are required:

- Personal Statement (no more than 1,000 words): Tell us who you are and about the kind of work you want to pursue.
 - Experience (no more than 1,000 words): Describe your experience working on relevant projects. If you have never completed an outdoor mural project before, please explain how you anticipate executing this project and scaling your work up. Indicate if your previous work was completed individually or as part of an artist team and if completed as part of a team, please indicate what your individual contributions were to the work.
 - Images: Up to 10 and no less than 5 visual images of related art and design projects you have completed, named and numbered to match an annotated image list – Name, Year Completed, Location, and a Brief Project Description. Do not use images created with the
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use of generative artificial intelligence programs such as Midjourney or Picasso (100 words or less).

- References: Three references from previous projects with current contact information, with their relationship to the artist noted.
- Insurance: Artist must be able to provide proof of insurance in the form of a Certificate of Insurance prior to beginning work, if insurance will be obtained before start of the project, please indicate those plans.

The following application materials are optional:

- Community Engagement Experience (no more than 500 words): Outline your experience collaborating with community members on public art projects and any proposed methods of engaging with community stakeholders and gathering input. Include at least one professional reference with current contact information
- Preferred Wall (no more than 300 words): Which wall would best host your work and why? Please note that you are not guaranteed your preferred wall. Information on potential mural locations can be found at the end of the document and additional walls may be included in the final project plan.
- Resume: You may upload your professional resume.
- Interest in Working with the Spencer Community (no more than 100 words): Are you interested in people from the Spencer community assisting in executing the mural project? If so, please describe the type of assistance that would be helpful to you.

Artist Fee & Projected Budget:

The project fee is to be negotiated on an individual basis according to the scale and scope of the mural concept, as well as the qualifications of the artist. Selected applicants will be asked to provide examples of previous project budgets and associated artist fees.

The artist will be responsible for ordering their own paint and equipment, keeping an accurate track of project expenses. The Town will work with the artists to determine a budget for paint and other required equipment (e.g. scaffolding). Artists will be expected to use high quality exterior paint and seals to ensure the longevity and sustainability of the murals and to protect the work from graffiti. The Town is open to considering the use of other materials, to be negotiated.

Community Profile:

The Town of Spencer was an integral part of the industrial development of the United States in the previous century. The town was founded in 1905 around the establishment of a steam locomotive repair shop, due to its location exactly 160 miles between Atlanta and Washington, DC.

The Spencer Shoppes were the largest of their kind at that time, servicing a variety of trains travelling the Southern Railway. Most of the Town was employed at the Shoppes or at businesses that supported the Shoppes, and the Southern Railway sold individual plots of land to individuals for residential builds. The Town largely avoided the hardships of the great depression due to a healthy economy centered around transportation. Spencer retains a wealth of unique stylistic historic architecture boasting build dates ranging from the late 1800's through 1940. The Spencer Shoppes closed for good in the late 1960's with the development of the diesel engine.

In the modern day the Town of Spencer has approximately 3,300 community residents and is primarily residential with a small downtown area that is the focus of this project. Right across the street from downtown Spencer where the Spencer Shoppes used to reside, is the North Carolina Transportation Museum which attracts over 175,000 visitors annually. These murals will encourage visitors to come across the street to engage with the Town, recentring an area called Park Plaza as the town's central social and commercial zone. The public murals will also encourage residents and potential residents alike to spend time in our downtown areas, facilitating a greater community closeness and pride.

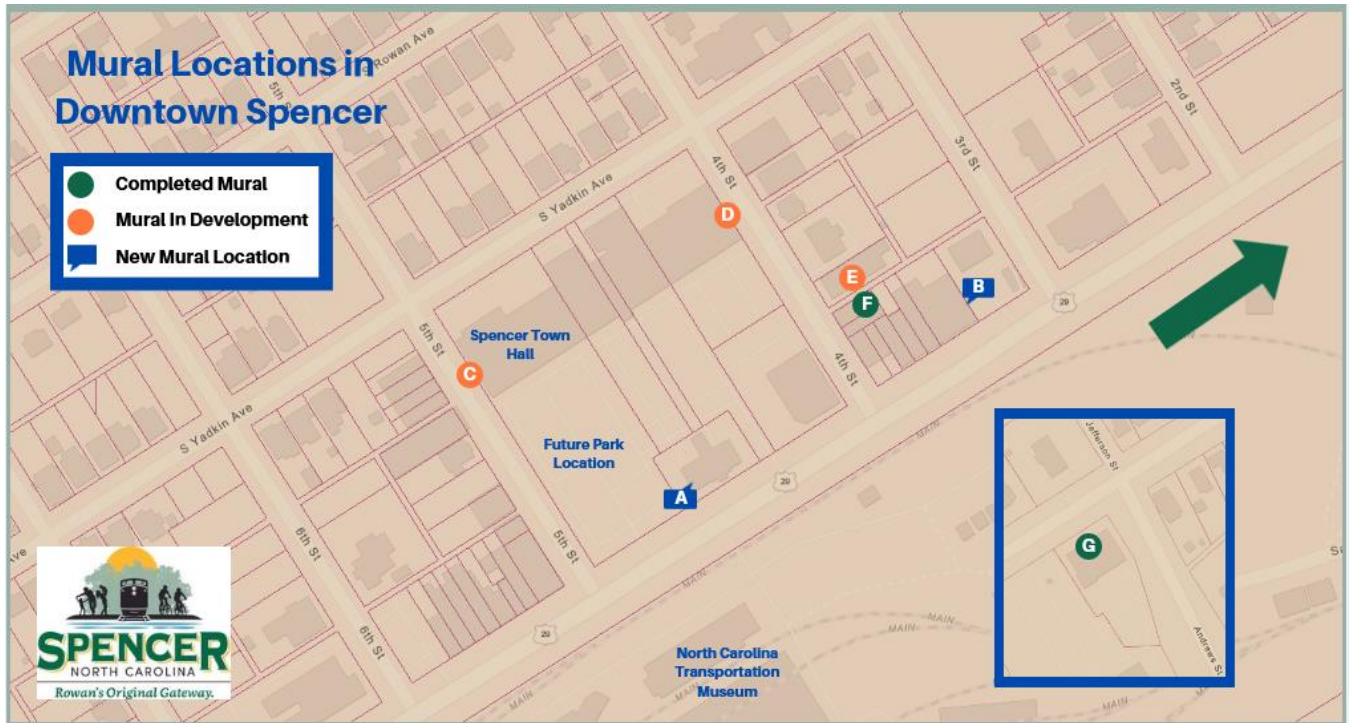
Current growth trends anticipate a population boom in Spencer, of people working in Winston Salem, Concord, and Charlotte wanting to live close to nature in a close-knit walkable community. The Town of Spencer is rising to meet that future, developing our outdoor recreation spaces including the Yadkin River Trailhead Park, linked by the Wilcox pedestrian bridge to the Yadkin River Park, and connecting to the Piedmont Legacy Trail, the Yadkin River State Trail, the Daniel Boone Heritage Trail, and has been accepted as the Northern Entrance to the North Carolina Thread Trail. Beyond the trails, Spencer is expanding the Stanback Educational Forest, transforming the center of town back into a public park, and improving our outdoor sports facilities. These facilities, including the mural walk, will be open and accessible by all residents and visitors at all times. The committed goal of the Town of Spencer is to promote healthy and

affordable activities for community residents in a manner that is inclusive, accommodating, and rewarding.

Spencer is mostly known as where the railroad repair shop was and where the Transportation Museum is now. While both are important to the Town's identity, they are not all that the Town is and the main thrust of this process is to diversify the represented identity of the Town. Potential topics to explore in the murals are: the civil rights history of the area including movie theater sit-ins to protest segregation, the local music scene, family resilience, the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape, our modern racial and cultural diversity, the school that instructed young disabled people to become watchmakers and jewelers, the workers of the Spencer Shops, local industrial history, the white squirrel colony, and our identity as the Gateway to Rowan County. We hope to explore a lot of concepts in these murals and intend to connect chosen artists to people familiar with Spencer history.

For more information on Spencer, please visit: <https://spencernc.gov/> and review the [Spencer Parks and Recreation Masterplan](#)

Downtown Spencer Mural Project Locations



Location A: North Carolina Transportation Museum Office Building

- **Address:** 420 S Salisbury Avenue, Spencer
- **Parcel Number:** 032 170
- **Owner Name:** North Carolina Transportation Museum
- **Location Notes:**
 - Art will be painted on panels installed over top of the brick.
 - Panels can be installed over the bushes to the left of the door and/or the wall of the right of the door. The Town is open to one piece or two corresponding pieces on the available sections of wall.
 - This piece will face the new downtown park.



Location B: Stoudemire Furniture

- **Address:** 310 Salisbury Ave, Spencer, NC 28159
- **Parcel Number:** 032 146
- **Owner Name:** Spencer Stations LLC
- **Location Notes:**
 - The Town would like to cover the old yellow train mural below the windows with a new piece.
 - The vintage advertisements above the windows have been restored and must be unaffected by this new mural.
 - Depending on discussions between the Town and Artist, the older mural could be removed or covered with paint, panels, or vinyl wrap.
 - This location is at one of the primary entrance points to the Town



Current Murals of the Downtown Spencer Mural Project

Location C:



Location F:



Location G:

