

DEWEY PARK

Burlington, Vermont

Public Art Proposal

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Submitted by:

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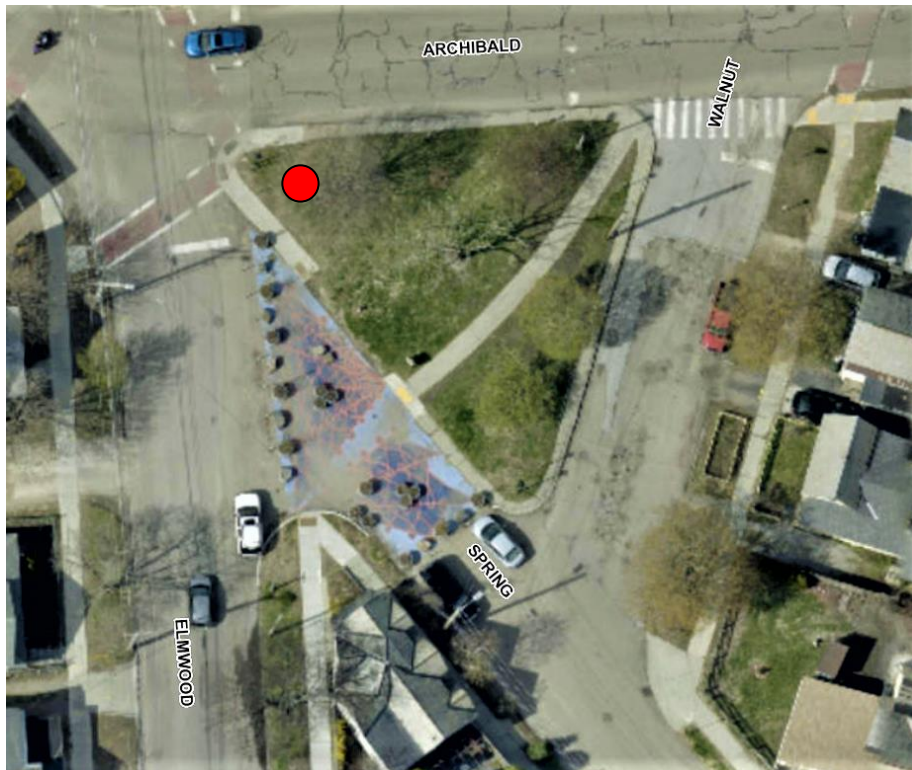
DEWEY PARK PROPOSAL

CONTEXT

This public proposal is in response to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued on August 30, 2021 by the CITY OF BURLINGTON. My goal is to satisfy the goals noted in the RFQ by creating a sculpture that encourages belonging by being engaging, sensitive, informative, and healing while highlighting commonalities among the different cultures represented in Burlington, Vermont.

PHYSICAL LOCATION

Dewey Park is a small community park located in the Old North End neighborhood of Burlington, Vermont. It is located directly in front of the Integrated Arts Academy, one of Burlington's public elementary schools, and is named after John Dewey, a Burlington, Vermont native and University of Vermont Alumni. As viewed in the diagram below, it is a triangular property bound at the north by Archibald Street, the southeast by Walnut Street, and the west by Spring/Elmwood Streets. The site faces the Arts Academy and has a concrete walkway, park bench, public fire hydrant, a street mural, natural rock seating, concrete planters, and several mature trees. There are public street lights at each of the three corners. It is my understanding that the park serves as a neighborhood hub with a variety of activities, including a weekly, outdoor community marketplace situated along the existing concrete walkway.



NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION

The Old North End neighborhood is known as the “melting pot” of many cultures. The school system supports languages hailing from over 20 countries, and Burlington depends on its immigrant and refugee population to not only add “flavor” to its tourist draw and business offerings, but to work in its manufacturing and dairy facilities.

IDEALOGICAL LOCATION

Dewey Park honors John Dewey, a philosopher whose ideas were advanced beyond his time. In his essay *Art as Experience*, he makes a profound statement that relates to belonging, equity, and diversity as far as its relationship to the arts:

” An important value that Dewey sees in art is related to these communal sides of experience. He expresses his belief that each culture is held together by its own individuality, it is still possible to create continuity and community between cultures by expanding experience to absorb the attitudes and values of other cultures. In the end, Dewey regards works of art as the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community experience (AE:110).

As a result of such engagements, we start to “learn to hear” with someone else’s “ears” and “see” with someone else’s “eyes.” Works of art are, then, for Dewey “the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living” (AE: 339).

PROJECT GOALS

As per the RFQ, the goals of the project include:

- be a catalyst in Burlington’s shift to be an inclusive community—a community where Black Indigenous people of Color members feel like they belong, not as an assimilated version of themselves, but as their authentic selves with all of the power and uniqueness that brings
- represent the broad range of identities that exist within the city, standing as a message of visibility to those commonly forgotten
- become a Burlington landmark and cultural destination, build on the sense of community and pride within the neighborhood, make excellent artwork accessible to all residents, and benefit the immediate neighborhood economy
- be a beautiful artwork engages local residents, celebrates the cultures, traditions and people of Burlington, and represents community belonging and inclusion

DESIGN CONCEPT

My concept for the Dewey Park Public Art incorporates John Dewey's philosophy on the power of art to change perceptions and employs "Cultural Universals" – those things that we all have in common that exist in every culture on the planet, yet vary from culture to culture. I believe that the more individuals are given the opportunity to share commonalities, the more they can see themselves in the eyes of their fellow man.

My design illustrates a diverse group of BIPOC individuals demonstrating the most deeply engrained need of humans, the need for inclusion. The design concept depicts the following "Cultural Universals" as they apply to the Burlington and worldwide human community:

- Most individuals have a need for *intimacy*, connection, and belonging to a unit. We long to belong and search for companionship. Within the family unit we nurture and protect our members, especially our children.
- Communal consumption of food is a ritualistic expression of the equality of all humans. Farming and food preparation is often shared and as evidenced by Burlington's active immigrant farming programs. Many immigrants come to Vermont with the longing to continue their native agricultural roots. We all enjoy family gatherings and sharing of food.
- Dance is a great example of a cultural universal because it exists in every culture as form of expression, social interaction, or presented in a spiritual or performance settings.

It is only fitting that a prominent feature of this 6.5-foot sculpture reflects the original families that hunted, fished, loved, and raised their children in Burlington. The main figure represents a turtle. Chief Don Stevens, Chief of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk - Abenaki Nation, explained that "Tolba" the Abenaki name for Turtle symbolizes Mother Earth, Turtle Island, and the Abenaki Turtle Clan, which includes those Abenaki Tribes living predominately along the Lake Champlain Basin in Vermont. He further explained that we are all on Turtle Island and this symbol is part of the Abenaki Human Creation Story. The story of the turtle is prominent in many cultures and the subject matter of many folktales around the world.

My color choices are geographically driven. People of color who generally live in warm climates enjoy the warm colors reflected on the left quadrant of the Color Wheel. African wax fabrics, Indian Holi festivals, Caribbean parades, all celebrate reds, oranges, and yellows. The images depicted in my design model love, marriage, food, dance, and

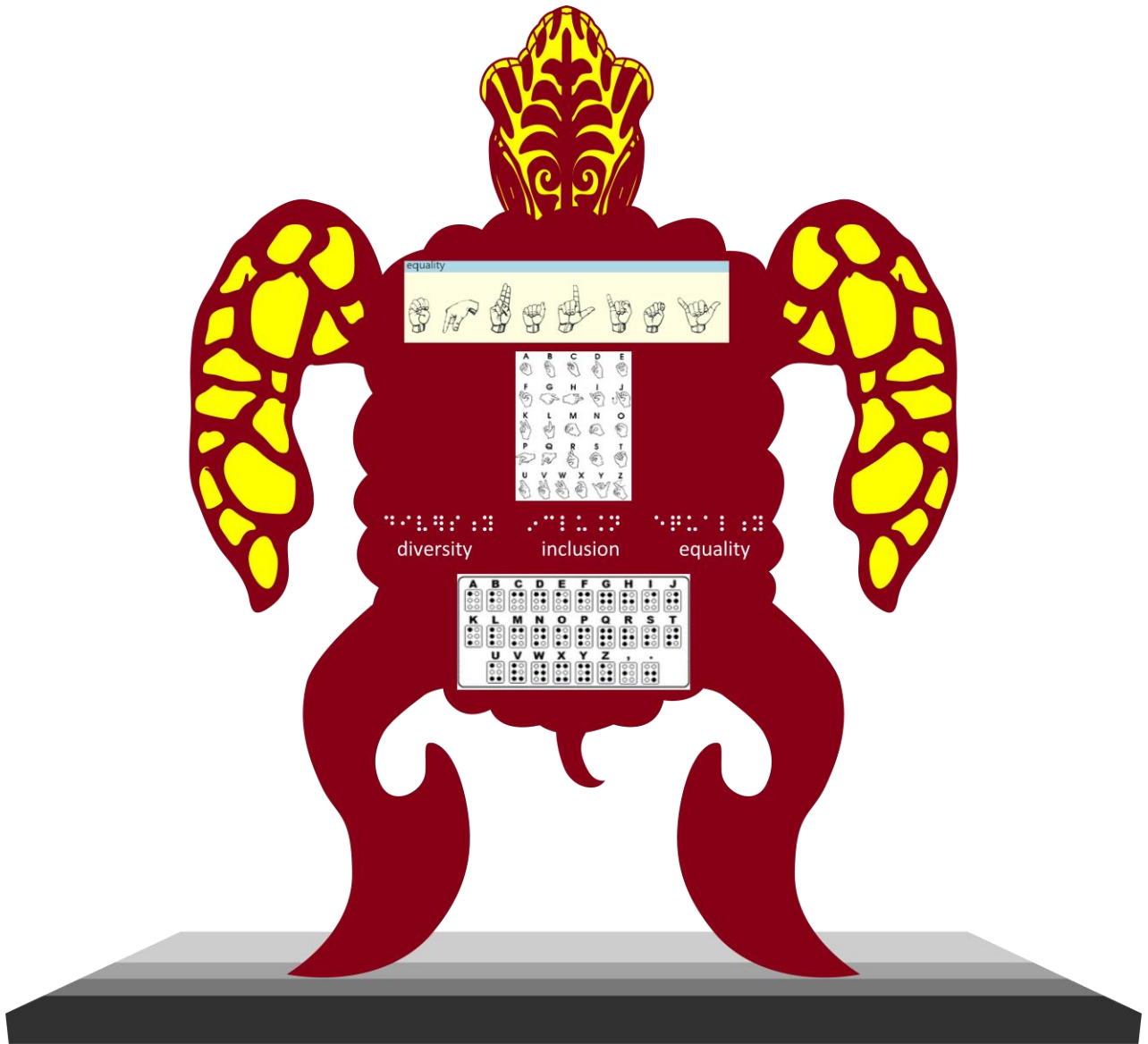
family. My design below incorporates those bright colors and compelling images of communal activities. Illuminated from within, the sculpture will have both a day and night presence and engage both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Proposed Design (6.5 Foot Sculpture)



The need for inclusion, diversity, and equality extends beyond race, color, and cultural differences. It is not just an issue for the BIPOC community. The physically and mentally challenged are affected by exclusion. My community outreach will include some of these populations. At the rear, the sign language component will illustrate the American Sign Language alphabet and encourage viewers to practice using the three-dimensional sculptures of hands to spell out “equality.” The Braille alphabet will expose

viewers to this method of communicating. They will be able to “read” the words inclusion, equality, and diversity by Braille touch using embedded Braille dots, as depicted below.



6.5 Foot Sculpture Depiction in Dewey Park



Sideview



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The pandemic has wreaked havoc on my usual community engagement plans. In spite of the world we currently live in, ART LIVES ON. Those that are flexible learn to pivot, so pivot I must. For over 30 years, I have been a Master Artist in Residence with the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. I develop and offer arts integrated programs that encourage enjoyment of the visual arts. I love in person teaching, however, for over two years I have taught virtually and ZOOM and Microsoft Teams have become my new best friends. Materials are delivered to a school or community center and individuals and families join in online and we throw color and create art.

To overcome the challenges that the pandemic brings, outdoor classes could be held in the spring/summer at venues such as The Clemmons Family Farm. Lydia Clemmons has indicated that she may be open to such a collaboration. Chief Don Stevens, Chief of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk - Abenaki Nation, has expressed an interest in collaborating with me in Abenaki related workshops. Since becoming a finalist, I have been actively seeking the counsel of Abenaki Chiefs and Council members and they have been quite generous in responding to my questions. They have guided me in choosing some of the imagery and costuming utilized in my design concept.

If chosen as the artist for this project, I would like to approach the following organizations and invite them to play a role in fabrication this project. I envision glass fusing, mold making, and casting workshops that would produce elements to be included in the sculpture:

Integrated Arts Academy
Vermont Abenaki Arts Association
Vermont Language Justice Project
Mosaic of UVM
Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Core Adult Center
Old North End Community Center (serves many immigrants)
Burlington City Arts - to identify local artists and arts organizations

MATERIALS

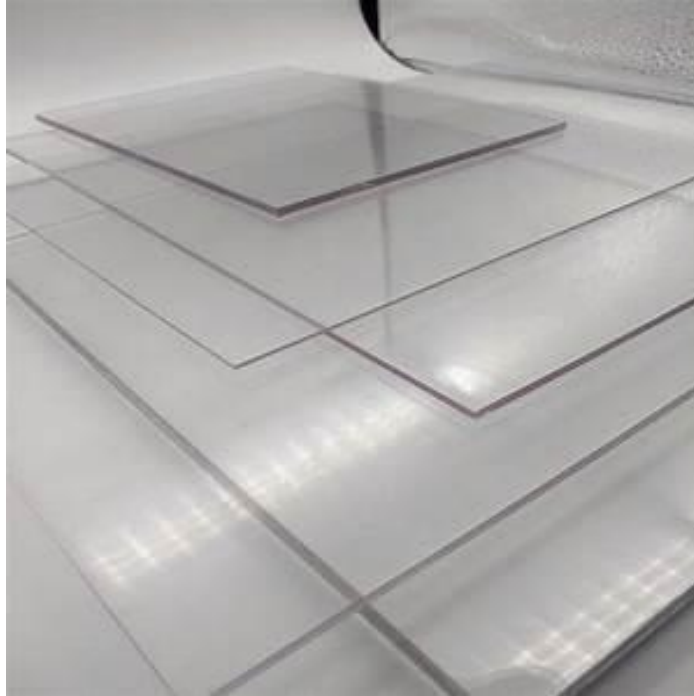
The main structure will be fabricated out of 3/4-inch aluminum and powder coated in bright red. The “stained glass window” will be hand painted in traditional stained-glass paints and vitreous enamels and fired many times to 1000 – 1250 degrees.

Aluminum



The entire field of glass will be protected by acrylic-coated, polycarbonate (Extended Life Lexan - XL10™). The acrylic coating is harder, providing more resistance to scratching, and it protects the polycarbonate from ultraviolet (sun) light to reduce yellowing. The polycarbonate is virtually shatter proof providing a greater level of security for the stained-glass windows.

Polycarbonate



The rear of the sculpture will display the American Sign Language alphabet and sculptures of hands spelling out the word EQUALITY. Workshop participants will make models of their hands and cast them in a Forton Duo Matrix Dryve. There will be a steel armature embedded in the hands at appendage joints.

LED lighting, light sensors, and a transformer will be installed within the body of the sculpture. It is my understanding that the Parks Department is working with the Burlington Electrical Department to install 400 amps of electrical service to Dewey Park. We have been provided a list of electricians licensed by the city to provide electrical services to make all connections.

LED lighting systems use low voltage and emit less heat than traditional lighting systems. Traditional lighting sources don't like cold weather. When the temperature drops, lighting sources, particularly fluorescent lamps, require a higher voltage to start, and the

intensity of their light diminishes. LED lights, on the other hand, perform better in cold temperatures by about 5%. Their ability to perform so efficiently in cold weather also makes them the perfect choice for lights in parking lots, lights used to illuminate the perimeters of buildings and lights used in public art.

Compared to the lifespan of the average incandescent bulb, the lifespan of a LED light is far superior. The average incandescent bulb lasts about a thousand hours. The lifespan of an average LED light is 50,000 hours. Depending on how you use it, its life may be as long as 100,000 hours. This means that an LED light can last anywhere from six to 12 years before you need to replace it. That is 40 times longer than an incandescent bulb. Even if you're using fluorescent, metal halide or sodium vapor lights, an LED light will last at least two to four times longer. In order to extend that life expectancy, I intend to provide a timer which turns on at 5 PM and turns off at 11:00 PM. I am sure that the city does not want to encourage the use of the park after dark beyond that timeframe.

FOOTING AND MECHANICAL ATTACHMENT

The sculpture will arrive on site as one unit with a fabricated mechanical attachment. It will be lifted into place onto threaded rods that have been embedded into the concrete footing and screwed into place with hex nuts. Damage to grass will be repaired and small shrubs will be added to the front of the base. The rear will be left clear so that individual elements can be touched.

DEWEY PARK PUBLIC ART BUDGET

TRAVEL	\$ 4000
STUDIO OVERHEAD	\$1,200
Studio rental	
Phone, supplies	
INSURANCE	\$1,000
General Business Liability for artist and contractors	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	
Certified engineering drawings (Vermont)	\$3,500
Computer Draftsman Services, DXF file conservator	\$1,000
Structural Engineer	\$6,000
FABRICATION COSTS	
Metal fabrication	\$40,000
Built in LED lighting LED lighting	
KILNWORK traditional glass painting	\$15,000
Sign Language molds	\$2,000
Signage – silkscreened legend	\$1,000
SITE PREPARATION	
Sculpture footing pad w/mounting mechanism	\$5,000
Landscaping	\$2,000
Electrical modifications (install conduits from city installed junction to sculpture)	\$5,000
INSTALLATION COSTS	\$13,000
Police	
Traffic barriers	
City permits/fees	
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	\$4,000
DOCUMENTATION	\$1,000
MAINTENANCE DOCUMENTS	\$200
CONTINGENCY	\$15,000
ARTIST FEE	\$30,000
TOTAL	\$150,000

TIMELINE

First 30 days from awarding of Commission

Incorporate any changes suggested by Selection Committee

Secure:

Stamped Construction drawings

Structural footing drawing approval

Conservation Study

Structural artwork drawing

Initiate any changes in the list of all fabrication materials

Lighting plan

Landscape plan

Months 2 and 3

Glass fabrication begins

Community Engagement Sessions

Metal Fabrication begins

Lighting installation begins

Glass installation

Progress photos

Month 4

Community Engagement Session

Pre-Installation Meeting

Secure permitting

Progress Photos

Month 5

Complete Fabrication

Footing installation

Electrical modifications to site

Progress photos

Month 6

Sculpture Installation

Installation of additional signage

MAINTENANCE PLAN

POWDER COATING - While powder coating is much more durable than paint, and lasts a lot longer as well, it still is not 100% impervious to dirt, dust, and the extreme weather conditions. Thus, it's important to adhere to the following:

1. *Avoid harsh chemicals:* Unlike spray paint, powder coating is much more resistant to things like rust, corrosion, peeling and fading. However, that resistance does not mean it's completely fine to use chemical cleaners and solvents to clean powder coated items. Harsh cleaners and solvents like acetone can actually damage powder coating.

2. *Clean gently:* You can still clean powder coated surfaces. Just wipe off dust with a soft cloth. If more cleaning is necessary, use a highly diluted, mild soap in water and a soft towel or soft sponge to very gently clean. Rinse with a little water, then dry with another soft towel.

3. *Wax:* If your powder coated metal has lost its gloss and shine, after removing dirt with mild soap, you can apply a thin layer of wax just like you do after you wash your car. After the wax dries, wipe all of it off and powder coated metal will look like new.

STAINED GLASS INSERT

A protective shield will be provided for the stained glass. Again, do not wipe off with any harsh chemicals. The glass painting is kiln fired and will not fade.

DOCUMENTATION

Video and photographic documentation will be provided periodically during the fabrication process and upon the completion of the installation.