



OPEN CALL FOR ARTISTS

Project: AB Ford Park Radar Towers

Location: 100 Lenox St., Detroit, MI 48215

Deadline to apply: May 8, 2026

Mural Completion: July/August 2026

Total Number of Opportunities: Up to 2

The Opportunity

The City of Detroit Parks, City Walls Detroit, and SpaceLab Detroit are partnering to incorporate public art into the newly renovated AB Ford Park and Community Center in the Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood. This initiative aims to incorporate public art and honor the history of the park and neighborhood by transforming relics of the park's past as a feature.

Note: This call is open to individual artists or teams, with the potential for one artist to be selected for the full scope of the project or for the project to be divided between two selected artists.

Community Vision and Theme

Jefferson Chalmers is a neighborhood with a rich history and roots. Pre-industrial revolution, the area was known as the Grand Marais, or Grand Marsh, attributed to the marshland that extended south from E. Jefferson to the Detroit River. The area has formerly been home to Fox, Iroquois, and Anishinaabe tribes and French, British, and eventually American Settlers. The neighborhood is also distinctively known as Detroit's Little Venice in reference to the canals that snake through the neighborhood, connecting boaters to the Detroit River.

AB Ford Park was formerly home to a Nike Missile radar site during the cold war. The radar site, identified as site D-23, supported other sites throughout the city and region, including missiles housed on Belle Isle at the time. Remnants of that history stand in the form of two non-descript



concrete towers which radar systems used to sit atop. These towers will serve as the base for the murals.

The towers are beloved and peculiar relics to the community, so the vision is to use the history to tell the history!

Historic References:

- Jefferson Chalmers Neighborhood Framework Plan (Chapter 2)
https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2019-05/Jefferson%20Chalmers_Final%20Book.pdf
- WDET “Alfred Brush Ford Park’s Cold War History” -
<https://wdet.org/2015/07/31/alfred-brush-ford-parks-cold-war-history/>
- Additional Links:
 - <https://nikehercules.tripod.com/d-23.html>
 - <https://www.archives.gov/chicago/finding-aids/nike-missile-sites.html>

Project Scope & Specifications

- **The Canvas:** (2) 19’ tall x 18’ circumference concrete towers located within AB Ford Park
- **The Objective:** Develop a mural to tell the rich history of the park and/or neighborhood
- **Key requirements:**
 - Artwork should incorporate elements of Jefferson Chalmer’s cultural identity, history, and environmental resilience
 - Design must be family-friendly and suitable for all audiences
 - Consideration should be given to durability, weather resistance, and ease of maintenance
 - Artists are encouraged to engage with the community for inspiration and input

Application and Submission Requirements

1. **Portfolio:** 3-5 images of past large-scale work (PDF or JPEG)



2. Artist/Artist Team Statement

3. Capacity & Management Statement: Outline your strategy for managing a project of this magnitude, including your approach to working with assistant artists or collaborators

4. 5-Year Maintenance Strategy: Provide a maintenance plan including a schedule for top coat, UV protection, and annual inspections & minor touch-ups

5. Preliminary Sketch or Sketches: You may submit up to 2 distinct sketches. (Mandatory): A rough visual representation of how you would interpret one or all the core themes

6. CV/Resume: Highlighting relevant public art experience

7. References: You must submit contact information for at least 2 previous clients

Timeline & Budget

- **Design Development:** Preliminary Sketch and incorporating community feedback post submission
- **Installation Window:** Summer 2026
- **Total Project Budget:** \$10,000 / radar tower
 - This is **all-inclusive**, covering artist fees, assistants, insurance, materials, and equipment.
 - One artist may be selected for both towers or the towers will split between two separate artists. (Selection Panel Discretion)



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Site/Canvas Context

North Tower



South Tower





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AB Ford Park Rendering



Selection Criteria & Artist Selection Process:

A selection panel consisting of community members, stakeholders, and arts professionals will score proposals.

Winning artists/artist team will be selected based on the section panel's evaluation of the following criteria:

- **30pts:** Technical experience & proven ability to create permanent, large-scale public artwork. Evaluation of the portfolio for technical skills and durability



- **20pts:** Project management & Capacity demonstrating the ability to manage complex projects within a strict timeline and budget. Strategy for managing assistants and collaborators
- **15pts:** Preliminary Sketches showcasing design composition & visual impact using creativity, use of color, and scale. Prelim Sketches should translate a clear, art-focused connection to the AB Ford Park's history while making sure the mural(s) are visually engaging and appropriate for a high-visibility public space.
- **15pts:** Mural Sustainability and Mural Maintenance Strategy
- **10pts:** Experience in community-engaged art processes. Does the design foster "Community Ownership" and a sense of gathering?
- **10pts:** Detroit-based artist preference

The Selection Panel consists of 1 member from each category below and is facilitated by City Walls Program Director:

- City of Detroit - General Services Department (GSD) - Parks
- Community Member/Youth
- Community Member/Local Artist
- Community Member
- Community Member
- Community Member
- Community Member

Eligibility

- **Eligibility:** Open to all artists 18+; preference is given to Detroit-based artists.
- **Selection Process:** A panel of community members, stakeholders, and arts professionals will score submissions.



Detroit City Walls

Questions? Email: citywalls@detroitmi.gov

Subject Line: AB Ford Park Project