

Martin Family Legacy Garden – A Dementia-Inclusive Park

Call for Artist – Public Art Commission

Introduction

Parks Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that everyone has a place to embrace their outdoor life. Working in close collaboration with communities, donors, and research partners, Parks Foundation delivers innovative park and recreation projects that prioritize inclusion, dignity, and wellbeing for all Calgarians.

Parks Foundation is leading the development of Canada's first dementia inclusive park, a pioneering public space designed to support people living with dementia, their care partners, and the surrounding community. The park has been informed by ongoing collaboration with dementia researchers, care organizations, and community stakeholders, resulting in a landscape that emphasizes safety, comfort, orientation, sensory balance, and connection.

As part of this landmark project, Parks Foundation invites applications from artists or artist teams to design and install a dementia inclusive public artwork within the Martin Family Legacy Garden.

More information about the Dementia Inclusive Park is available at:

<https://parksfoundation.ca/projects-and-partnerships/dementia-inclusive-park/>

Artist Call

Parks Foundation is seeking proposals from a professional artist or artist team to create a site responsive, three-dimensional public artwork located within the Martin Family Legacy Garden – a Dementia Inclusive Park. Murals or two-dimensional, wall-based artworks are not eligible for this commission.

The artwork should contribute to an environment that:

- Supports calm engagement and comfort
- Encourages recognition, familiarity, and orientation
- Reduces stigma and fosters dignity and connection
- Enhances the experience of the park for people living with dementia, care partners, and the broader community

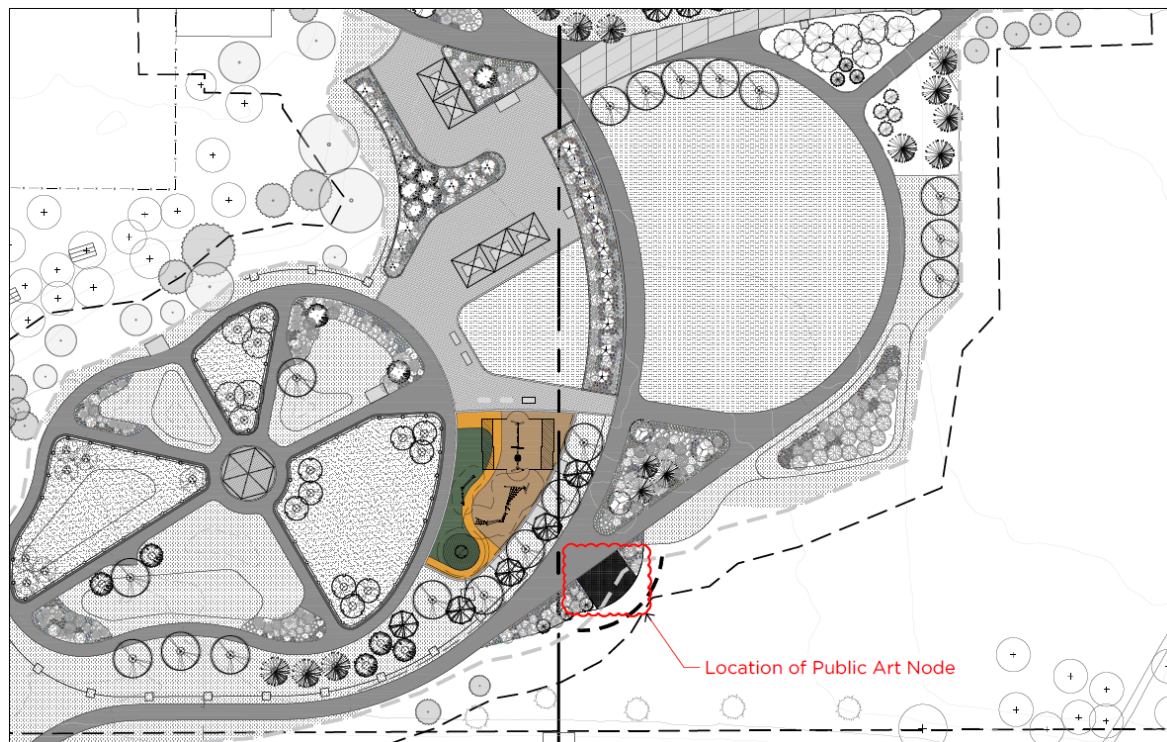
Artists do not require prior experience working specifically with dementia, but must demonstrate openness to research-informed design, collaboration, and reflective feedback.

Parks Foundation welcomes applications from artists who identify as Indigenous, Black, people of colour, LGBTQIAS+, persons with disabilities, and individuals with lived or caregiving experience related to dementia.

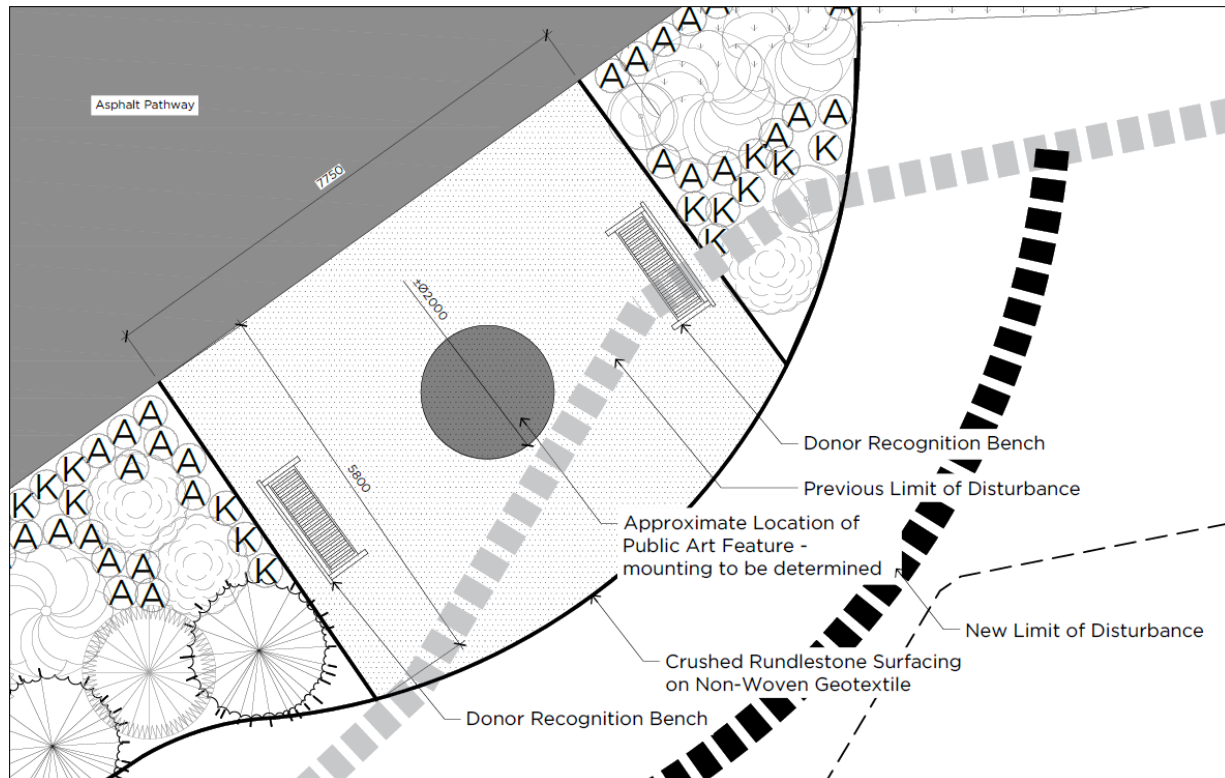
Artwork Location & Site Context

The artwork will be installed at a designated Public Art Node within the Martin Family Legacy Garden. This location is situated adjacent to primary accessible pathways and near seating elements, including donor recognition benches, within a landscaped area designed to support rest, wayfinding, and gentle engagement.

Site Map with Location of Public Art Node



Enlargement of Public Art Node



The surrounding site includes:

- Accessible asphalt pathways
- Landscaped planting zones
- Seating and gathering areas
- Crushed stone surfacing on geotextile
- Adjacent park infrastructure and services

The Public Art Node is intended to function as a visual and experiential anchor within the park, supporting orientation and moments of pause.

Approximate footprint within which the artwork will reside is approximately 2 meters in diameter. Exact siting, orientation, footprint, and mounting details will be confirmed during design development in coordination with Parks Foundation and the project consultants.

Artwork Characteristics & Interactivity

This commission seeks a three-dimensional, sculptural artwork that occupies physical space within the park landscape. Murals or two-dimensional, wall-based artworks are not eligible for this commission.

The artwork may be static, kinetic, interactive, or a combination thereof.

Any kinetic or interactive elements must be:

- Gentle, intuitive, and optional
- Easily understood without explanation
- Designed to prioritize safety, durability, and clarity
- Appropriate for a dementia inclusive environment

Artists proposing kinetic or interactive elements must demonstrate how these components avoid overstimulation and support calm, reassuring engagement.

Artwork Requirements

- The artwork must be suitable for permanent outdoor display in Calgary's climate.
- Materials, finishes, and forms should be selected with consideration for:
 - Visual clarity and contrast
 - Minimized glare or visual confusion
 - Durability and maintenance requirements
- The artwork must meet all applicable safety, accessibility, and code requirements.

Structural & Engineering Responsibilities

The selected artist is responsible for the engineering, design, and installation of all structural components required to support the artwork, including but not limited to:

- Structural piles
- Footings or slabs
- Anchoring systems
- Foundations or below-grade supports

All structural and engineering work must comply with applicable codes, standards, and project requirements. Where required, engineering must be completed and stamped by appropriately qualified professionals retained by the artist.

Coordination with Project Consultants

The artist will be required to coordinate with Parks Foundation and the project's Landscape Architectural consultant, Prime Contractor, and/or their subconsultants, to ensure alignment with site conditions, accessibility standards, landscape systems, and technical limitations.

Coordination support may be available; however, ultimate responsibility for artwork design, engineering, fabrication, installation, and performance remains with the artist.

Artist Responsibilities & Scope of Work

Artist Qualifications

Qualified artist(s) applying shall:

- Demonstrate professional experience delivering medium to large-scale, three-dimensional or sculptural public artworks for exterior environments. Mural-only experience is not sufficient for this commission.
- Demonstrate strong artistic and creative design skills, including concept development, composition, form, and materiality
- Demonstrate experience coordinating with engineers, fabricators, or construction teams
- Be available to work in Calgary, Alberta, during design development and installation
- Carry appropriate insurance coverage applicable to public art installation

Scope of Work (Selected Artist)

Upon selection, the artist shall:

- 1. Project Initiation & Coordination**
 - Attend a project kick-off meeting (in person and/or virtually) with Parks Foundation
 - Participate in design and coordination meetings with Parks Foundation, project consultants, engineers, and contractors as required
- 2. Design Development**
 - Develop an original artwork concept responsive to the dementia inclusive goals of the park
 - Provide concept sketches, drawings, and/or visual materials for review and approval
 - Engage with research-informed feedback, including input from dementia researchers
 - Ensure all work is original and does not infringe on intellectual property rights
- 3. Technical Design & Engineering**
 - Develop and coordinate a technical approach for fabrication and installation
 - Provide an installation plan outlining methods, sequencing, and site considerations
 - Retain qualified professionals to prepare engineering documentation where required

4. **Fabrication & Installation**

- Fabricate and install the artwork in accordance with approved designs
- Secure all materials, equipment, and services required for installation
- Coordinate installation timing with Parks Foundation and project consultants
- Undertake installation using their own forces or subcontractors, as appropriate

5. **Site Safety & Conduct**

- Comply with all site safety requirements and protocols
- Provide and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Maintain a clean and organized work area
- Prevent damage to surrounding park infrastructure
- Ensure environmentally responsible handling of materials and waste

6. **Completion & Recognition**

- Leave the site in equal or better condition than prior to installation
- Provide final documentation, images, and a brief artist biography for recognition and communications purposes

Artwork Lifecycle & Decommissioning

The artwork is intended to remain in place for the duration of the park's operational lifecycle. The selected artist must acknowledge that the artwork may be decommissioned, relocated, or removed in the future to align with park maintenance, safety needs, or redevelopment.

Artists are encouraged to consider end-of-life planning in their material selection and design approach, including durability, maintenance, and responsible decommissioning.

The City of Calgary retains final decision-making authority regarding long-term maintenance, relocation, or decommissioning of the artwork, subject to the terms of the artist's agreement.

Selection Process & Jury

Artist selection will be conducted through a jury review process.

The jury may include representatives from:

- Parks Foundation
- Project design and construction team members
- Dementia researchers and specialists who contributed to the development of the park

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Artistic merit and originality
- Alignment with dementia inclusive design principles
- Sensitivity to sensory, cognitive, and emotional experience
- Feasibility within the project timeline and budget
- Ability to collaborate and respond to feedback

Shortlisted artists may be invited to refine or clarify their proposal prior to final selection.

Artist Budget

The total budget for this commission is up to \$175,000 CAD (excluding GST).

This budget is inclusive of:

- Artist fees
- Design development
- Engineering and professional fees
- Materials and fabrication
- Installation and site coordination
- All associated project costs

Artists are encouraged to propose concepts that are feasible within this budget and responsive to the technical and dementia inclusive goals of the project.

Compensation

The selected artist will be compensated based on the completion of key project milestones, in accordance with the artist's agreement.

Invoices may be submitted upon completion of the following milestones:

1. **Approval of Design Concept – 30%** of the total artist budget
2. **Approval of Engineer Stamped Drawings / Commencement of Fabrication – 30%** of the total artist budget
3. **Completion of Artwork Installation – 40%** of the total artist budget

Final payment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the artwork in accordance with approved designs, technical requirements, and installation standards.

Timeline (Deadlines)

- **Artist Call Issued:** April 2, 2026
- **Application Deadline: April 24, 2026 @ 4pm MST**
- **Artist Selection:** May 5, 2026
- **Draft Concept Submission:** May 19, 2026
- **Design Development & Engineering Coordination:** June 19, 2026
- **Engineer Approved Drawings:** June 29, 2026
- **Anchorage Installation Deadline: July 31, 2026**
- **Final Artwork Installation Deadline: August 31, 2026**
 - Installation beyond this date will not be permitted.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Parks Foundation understands that artists approach proposal development in many ways. At this stage, artists are **not required to submit a design/concept**. Submissions should communicate artistic practice, relevant experience, and a thoughtful preliminary approach to the dementia inclusive context of the project.

Clear, concise materials and plain language are encouraged.

Submission Format

- **Length:** Maximum **ten (10)** pages, 8.5 x 11 inches
(excluding one optional cover page)
- **File Size:** Maximum **15 MB**
- **File Type:** One combined **PDF file**
- **File Name Format:**
MFLG_PublicArt_FULLNAME.pdf
- **Email submissions and/or questions to:** info@parksfdn.com

Submissions exceeding the page limit / file size, or received after the deadline may not be reviewed.

Submission Contents

1. Artist Profile Information (1 page maximum)

- Legal and preferred name(s)
- Email address
- Phone number
- Mailing address (including city of residence)
- Artist website and/or social media (if available)
- **Optional:** Pronouns and self identification (shared at applicant's discretion)

2. Artistic Practice & Approach (1–2 pages recommended)

- Conceptual approach, themes, and influences
- Materials and methods
- Experience with public, outdoor, or civic artworks
- Experience collaborating with engineers or fabrication teams (if applicable)

Prior experience with dementia inclusive environments is **not required**.

3. Preliminary Conceptual Approach (optional but encouraged)

- Early ideas, values, or guiding questions
- Considerations around materiality, scale, or interactivity
- Reflections on how the artwork could support comfort, orientation, or calm engagement

This section is intended to communicate thinking and process, not a finalized proposal.

4. Portfolio of Relevant Work (up to 4 pages)

- Images and/or documentation
- Brief descriptions including location, year, scale, materials, and role
- Clear identification of collaborative roles where applicable

Additional Information

Late submissions will not be considered. Parks Foundation thanks all applicants for their interest; only selected artists will be contacted.