

**Call to Artists
Request for Qualifications**

Urbandale Public Art Committee
Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape Entrance Public Art Project
Site location address: 5301 156th Street, Urbandale, IA 50323

Issue date: Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Submission deadline: All RFQ materials must be received by **Thursday, February 11, 2026, 1:00 p.m., (CST).**

The mission of the Urbandale Public Art Committee, (UPAC), is to encourage and facilitate public art of high aesthetic quality that celebrates the uniqueness of Urbandale, enhances quality of life, economic development and community image, promotes tourism and makes art more accessible to the general public.

The City of Urbandale is seeking qualifications from professional artists or artist teams for the design, fabrication, and installation of a permanent public art installation at the entrance to Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape, one of Urbandale's most popular parks.

Barrett Boesen Park has become a regional destination for families and visitors drawn to its nature-based play areas, environmental stewardship, and community programming. The park's natural playscape encourages exploration through logs, stumps, boulders, plants, and water features, fostering creativity and connection to the environment. The City intends to commission a visually engaging, non-interactive public art installation that serves as a welcoming entrance feature and enhances the park's identity while complementing its natural setting.

The site map and park amenities for Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape are presented on pages 4 - 7 of this document.

Project Theme: Welcoming Through Nature: A Community Entrance Landmark

This theme positions the artwork as a welcoming visual marker that represents community connection and shared appreciation for nature. The artwork should function as a symbolic gateway, marking the transition from the street into a place of discovery, play, and connection with nature. The installation should be welcoming, memorable, and reflective of the park’s emphasis on nature-based recreation.

Artists are encouraged to draw inspiration from natural forms, ecosystems, growth, movement, and the Midwest landscape. While the artwork may evoke imagination and curiosity, it is intended for visual engagement only and should not encourage physical interaction.

The selected artwork should:

- Celebrate nature and environmental stewardship
- Reinforce the park’s identity as a regional destination
- Serve as a recognizable entrance landmark
- Harmonize with the surrounding landscape while remaining visually distinct

Site Description

The location for the artwork is at the primary entrance to Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape, located along 156th Street just south of Waterford Road. (5301 156th Street, Urbandale, IA 50323.) This highly visible site serves as the main gateway to the park and experiences significant daily exposure from motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

The park is located within three miles of five elementary schools—one less than half a mile away—resulting in frequent use by families, school groups, and community members. The entrance location was intentionally selected to create a welcoming focal point that reflects the park’s character while maintaining safety and clear circulation.

Artistic Parameters and Site Considerations

The commissioned artwork for Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape is intended to function as a visual landmark and welcoming entrance feature, not as an interactive or play-based element. Due to the artwork’s location at the primary park entrance and its proximity to vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, proposals should reflect a clear understanding of public safety considerations.

Artists should consider the following parameters when developing their proposals:

- **Non-Interactive Design:**
The artwork should be designed for viewing and visual engagement only. Proposals should not encourage climbing, touching, seating, or physical interaction.
- **Site Responsiveness:**
The installation should complement the natural character of the park and natural playscape through form, material, scale, and placement, while remaining visually distinct as an entrance marker.
- **Visibility and Readability:**
The artwork should be legible and visually compelling from multiple vantage points, including for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists traveling along 156th Street.

- **Safety and Accessibility:**
Designs must consider proximity to traffic and pedestrian circulation and meet all applicable safety standards.
- **Durability and Maintenance:**
Materials should be suitable for outdoor installation in Iowa's climate and require minimal ongoing maintenance. Artists should consider longevity, weather resistance, and public safety over time.
- **Integration with Landscape:**
The artwork should complement existing and planned landscaping without obstructing sightlines or park operations.

Budget

The artist selected to create and install the artwork will be provided with a commission in the total amount of \$75,000, through a contract with the City of Urbandale.

The project budget is intended to be all-inclusive, and the artist will be responsible for all aspects of the project, including design, fabrication, delivery, required site preparations, footings and installation of the artwork. The artist must also include signed and stamped structural engineered drawings for the artwork, and footings, and any other contractor and engineering costs associated with the artwork and its permanent installation.

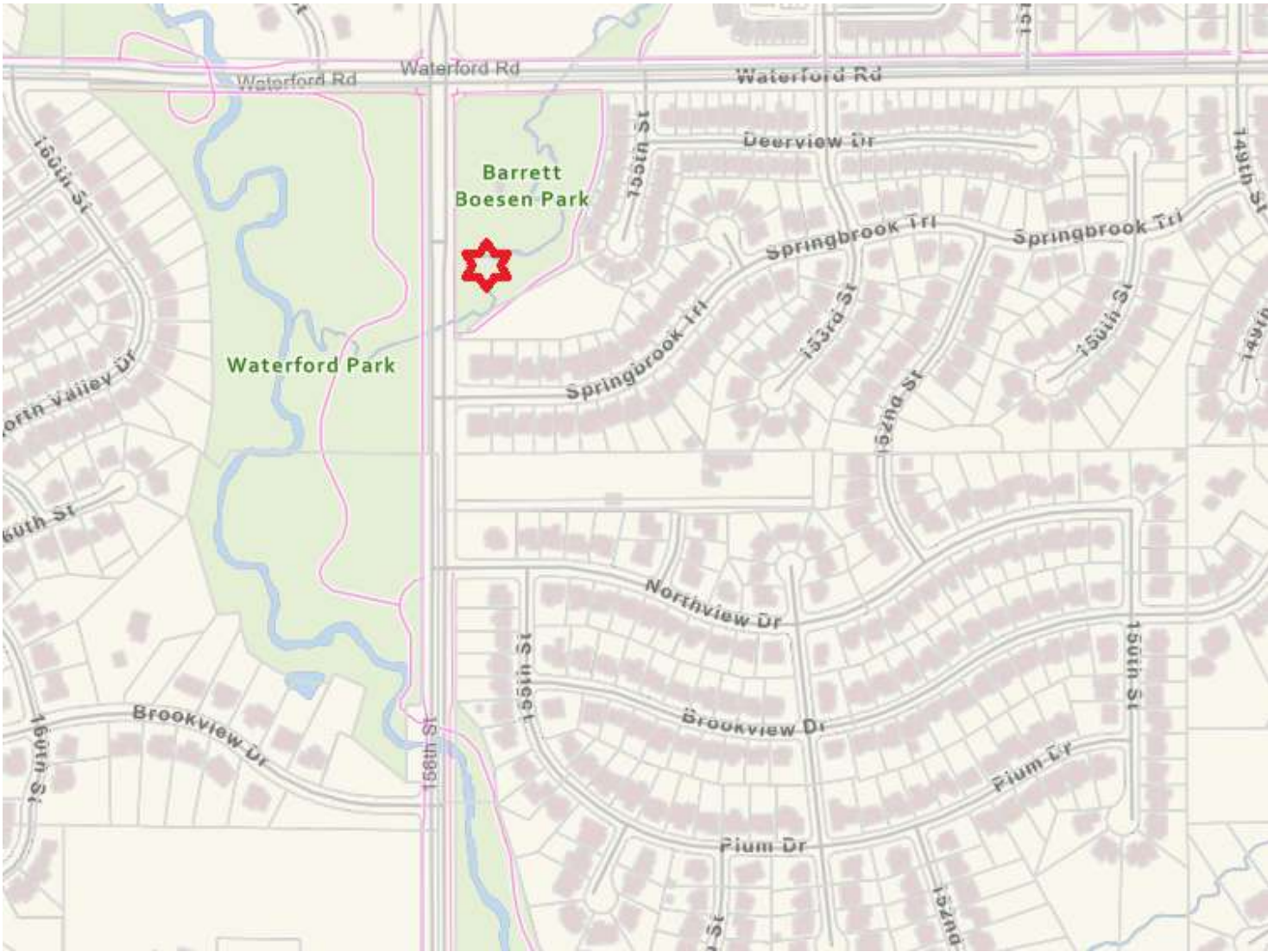
If lighting is part of the proposed project, the city would provide one 20-amp circuit to the site. The artist would be responsible for extending the circuit to the art piece, and any planned light fixtures and components, all complying with the city's electrical code.

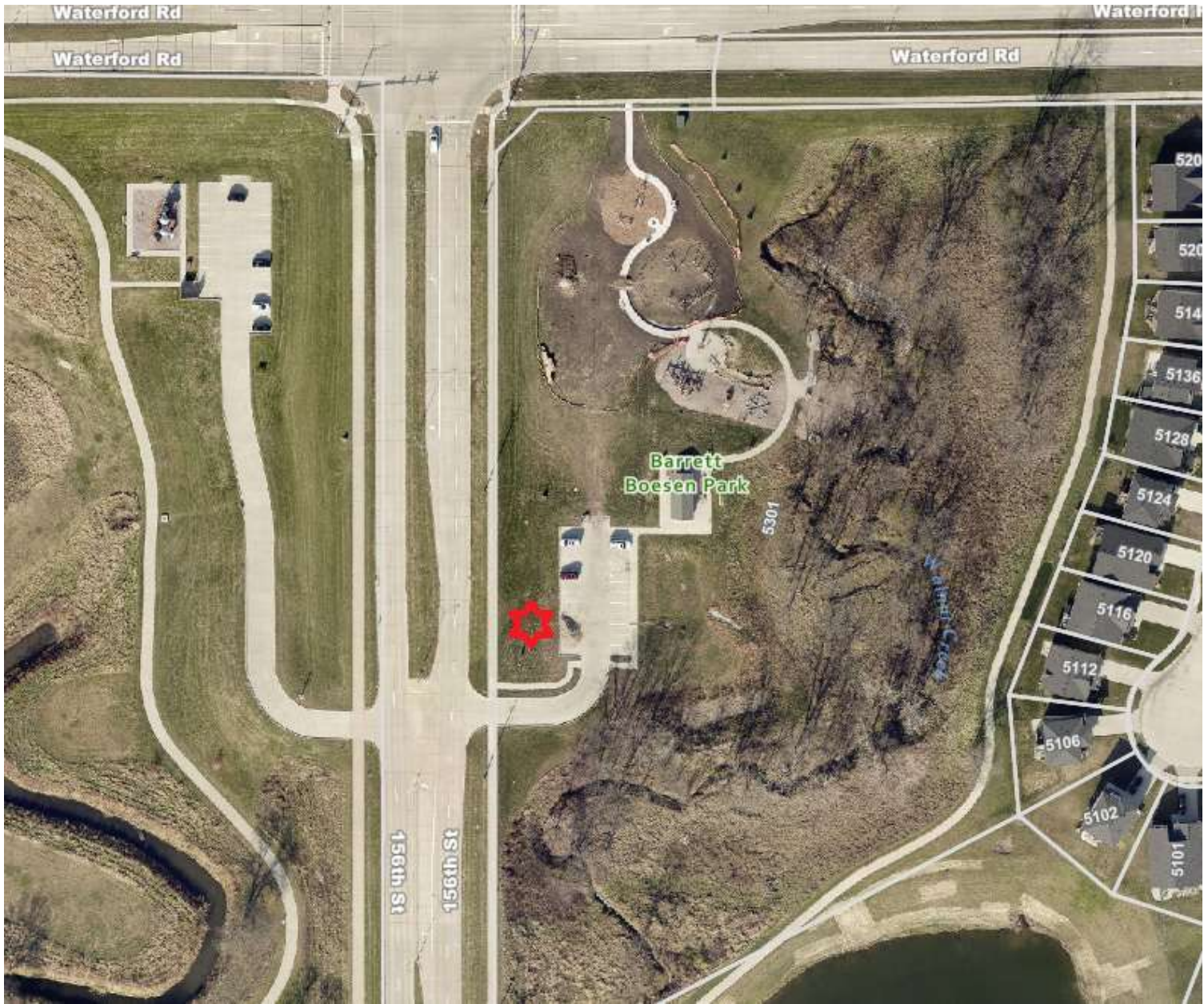
Up to three finalists will be selected to develop design concepts for this project. A stipend of \$1,000 will be provided to the two RFP finalists who are not awarded the commission.

The three finalists will be required to present their designs to the Selection Committee. One artist or artist team will be selected for the commission.

<p>The City is seeking original artwork that is site and project specific. The proposed artwork must be a unique design idea, which has not been replicated for any other project the artist has done.</p>
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Site map for the project: Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape (156th Street and Waterford Road)
5301 156th Street, Urbandale, IA 50323





Photos of the Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape (156th St. and Waterford Rd.)

The public art project will complement the existing park through introducing a unique commissioned artwork at the entrance of the park.



Open turf area at the entrance of the park, where the commissioned artwork would be located.



Unique play amenities at the park



***Proposed Project Timeline:**

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued	Wednesday, January 7, 2026
RFQ submission deadline	Thursday, February 11, 2026 (1:00 P.M. CST.)
Up to 3 finalists announced	Monday, March 2, 2026
Request for Proposal (RFP) distributed to three (3) finalists	Friday, March 6, 2026
RFP submission deadline	June 1, 2026
Artist presentations to UPAC & community representatives	1 st or 2 nd Week of June (TBD)
Commission award announced and contract executed	July 2026
Installation of artwork at specified site completed	Spring 2027
Dedication ceremony	Spring 2027

***Note:** The proposed timeline is intended to outline anticipated milestones for the project. The City may adjust the schedule as needed, in its discretion, to accommodate project coordination, approvals, or other factors.

Application Requirements:

- Artist Statement: (Maximum 250 words) Include a general introduction to your work. Discuss the concepts and ideas you explore in your artwork and how they are presented and represented. If you are applying as a team, the letter should clearly describe the contribution of each collaborator. Teams may present an artist statement up to 350 words maximum.
- Resume: (Maximum 2 pages) Outline your recent experience and accomplishments as an artist. If applying as a team, each member may submit a separate one-page resume.
- Samples of your work - a maximum of five (5) files: digital images, video, and audio files are all acceptable with corresponding titles to match the Support Description list. Each file should highlight only one project.
- Support Description list: (Maximum 2 pages) For each image/file submitted, include relevant project information. For example, list the title, date, size, and medium for studio work. For public art projects include a description, location, materials, budget, and commissioning organization.
- References: Name and contact information of at least three (3) individuals who can speak to the range and quality of artist's experience and artwork as well as follow through with commissioned works. Include names and contact information only.

• Preliminary Proposal: (Maximum 250 words) Briefly describe your design process. If you have ideas for the artwork for this project, describe what you might design for this location. Selected finalists will receive a full information packet, so this preliminary proposal is only meant to give a general concept overview of the kind of artwork you might create. Details design plans are not required for the RFQ application. The committee understands this is a preliminary proposal and subject to change once you are given more information about the site. However, the preliminary proposals will give the committee an ability to understand your conceptual thought process. Proposals need not discuss fabrication specifics but should address what types of durable materials that might be used to create the artwork.

All application materials must be submitted as a single PDF document.

Multiple files or links will not be accepted.

Selection Process

The UPAC will review all applications and will select up to three (3) artists to receive a Request for Proposal (RFP). In selecting the artists, the Committee members will consider input from representatives of various community organizations, agencies, and boards.

The following criteria will be used in selecting the artists to receive a RFP.

Selection Criteria

- **Artistic Merit and Conceptual Strength**
Quality, originality, and clarity of the proposed concept, and its ability to translate effectively into a finished public artwork.
- **Alignment with Project Theme and Site**
Demonstrated understanding of Barrett Boesen Park and Natural Playscape, including the artwork's role as a non-interactive entrance landmark that reflects nature-based recreation and community identity.
- **Site Responsiveness and Scale**
Appropriateness of the artwork's scale, form, and placement in relation to the park entrance, surrounding landscape, and visibility from 156th Street.
- **Safety and Feasibility**
Clear consideration of public safety, traffic proximity, durability, and compliance with applicable codes and standards.
- **Material Selection and Craftsmanship**
Suitability of proposed materials for long-term outdoor installation in Iowa's climate, including resistance to weathering, vandalism, and wear.
- **Experience and Ability to Complete the Project**
Artist's demonstrated experience with comparable projects, public art installations, or large-scale works, including the ability to manage fabrication, transportation, footings and sitework, and installation.
- **Maintenance Considerations**
Evidence that the artwork can be reasonably maintained by the City over time, with minimal specialized care.

The UPAC will select no more than three (3) finalists from the RFQ process to develop designs that they feel best meet the themes and criteria outlined above and best complement the site.

Additional Information

This project represents the City of Urbandale’s continued commitment to enhancing public spaces through art, nature, and community connection. The City encourages artists to propose thoughtful, site-responsive concepts that respect the park environment while creating a meaningful and lasting visual presence.

Questions about this RFQ should be emailed to Jan Herke, Director, Urbandale Parks and Recreation, at jherke@urbandale.org
Deadlines for questions is Thursday, February 2, 2026, by 4:00 pm. CST

Application must be received by Thursday, February 11, 2026, by 1:00 pm. CST

**All application materials must be submitted as a single PDF document.
Multiple files or links will not be accepted.**

**Submit all materials via email by the posted deadline to:
Jan Herke, Parks and Recreation Director at jherke@urbandale.org**

Electronic Submission:

The City has a secure e-mail system, and if it detects the possibility of a virus, zipped, packed or any other questionable transmission, your submittal will be rejected without knowledge to the intended recipient.

Please note that any attached file should be the format of name.pdf and should not have an extra period in the file name (multiple extension.) It is the artist’s responsibility to follow up before the closing date and time to verify the City received the appropriate information.