



# Request for Proposals for Manhole Cover Designs

# I. Introduction

The Village of Oswego has identified both existing and aspirational design elements comprising an Oswego aesthetic. A full presentation of the aesthetic, including existing and aspirational themes, shapes, colors, and other ideas is attached. Artists are strongly encouraged to review the Oswego aesthetic document for a clearer idea of the vision for public art in Oswego.

Initial inspiration for this project came in part from decorative manhole covers seen around Japan. While most elements of the Japanese aesthetic will probably not be a fit for the Oswego aesthetic, artists may be interested in searching for examples of Japanese manhole covers for a better understanding of the medium.

For this project, the Village is seeking a design that will continue to build upon that aesthetic, influenced by the following terms:

- Inviting
- Evoking curiosity
- Connection
- River, especially the bend or curve of the river
- Natural setting
- Warm
- Gathering
- Community
- Encouraging exploration
- Friendly
- Casual
- Old is new again
- Flowing
- Organic
- Fluid
- Modern rural
- Playfulness

The mission of the Village of Oswego is to grow our community and maintain the public's trust. We do this through the innovative and collaborative delivery of public services that meet the community's quality of life expectations.

The Cultural Arts Commission fulfills that quality of life by establishing high-quality, diverse cultural and artistic programs, building participation in the arts, and adding to the public art collection.

This Request for Proposal is a request for the first in what we hope will be many permanent public art installations procured by the Village of Oswego.

# II. Design

Up to 18 new manhole covers will be purchased and installed in the downtown as a part of street reconstruction projects related to new developments in the downtown. The Village is seeking a single design that will be forged into all of the new manhole covers in downtown. Several of the

manholes will be located on streets that are designed to be shared by heavy pedestrian traffic and limited vehicular traffic.

Most communities use either a standard forged pattern or, occasionally, a community's logo, on manhole covers. Instead, the Village of Oswego is seeking proposals for a new and unexpected design that will engage passing pedestrians with an artistic idea. See the Prompt section, below, for details.

Manhole covers are approximately 25 inches in diameter, forged from iron, and have certain limitations because of their location, traffic and other utilitarian considerations.

### III. Specifications

To meet the specifications of the manhole cover supplier and to be functional manhole covers with limited required maintenance, the following constraints need to be considered in the design:

- Dimensions: Round, approx. 25 inches in diameter.
- Designs must be two-dimensional.
- No color can be used. Designs must be visually interesting and discernable without the use of color.
- To maintain structural integrity, manhole covers cannot have cut-outs.
- Designs must include a band for the words "Water," "Sewer" or "Electricity," in addition to "Village of Oswego." See included Banding Guidance document.
- Intricacy level: Intricate lines and shapes may not be achievable in the forging process. See the attached Intricacy Guidance document for examples of designs that are likely achievable. Note that less intricate designs will be less expensive to produce and will have an advantage in the selection process. During the final design process, the selected artist may be asked to make edits to the design to accommodate limitations of the medium. Other constraints may be added as more information becomes available from the supplier. Artists may be asked to edit their designs to adapt to the constraints of the supplier.
- For examples of custom manhole covers by a possible supplier, see <https://www.nfco.com/municipal/products/manhole-frames-covers/custom-covers>.

### IV. Selection Process

The following process will guide the selection of the design for the manhole covers:

1. Interested artists should respond to this Request for Proposals by **Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. local time**, with rough sketches of proposed design. Each artist may submit up to 3 sketches.
2. The project selection committee, comprising representatives from the Cultural Arts Commission, Village staff, residents, students/educators, and other community members in a formal voting process, will narrow down the selections to approximately three finalist designs, in ranked order, each of which will be awarded \$200, using the following criteria:
  - a. Embodiment of the prompt
  - b. Unique Oswego design
  - c. Conformance to the downtown Oswego aesthetic

3. Village staff will price out each of the three proposed designs with the manhole cover supplier and select a final design from among the three finalists, based on ranking and cost considerations.
4. The winning artist will receive a stipend of \$1,000 to complete the design. Artists must be willing to work with Village staff to edit the design to accommodate the limitations of the medium and the needs of the project.

## **V. Basis of Award**

The award determination shall be based on a number of factors, not necessarily the lowest price. Following the deadline for submittal of proposals, the Village will review, analyze, and rank all submittals based on their response to the information requested. If desired, the Village may short list the number of qualified Vendor(s). Vendor(s) are required to sign a copy of the Village's contract.

The Village reserves the right to finalize a contract based on all or some factors involved in the written qualification submittal without further discussion or interviews.

The Village also reserves the right to reject all proposals.

## **VI. Contract Term**

The contract shall be in effect when executed.

## **VII. Billing/Invoicing**

The Vendor will receive payment in full within 30 days of delivery of product.

## **VIII. Submittals**

Proposals will be ranked based upon the information outlined in this RFP.

All technical questions shall be submitted in writing no later than **Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. local time**, by e-mail to [jsturges@oswegoil.org](mailto:jsturges@oswegoil.org). An addendum, if deemed necessary, will be posted on the website, <http://www.oswegoil.org/business-and-development/bids-and-rfps.aspx>. Price proposals must be sent in a separate sealed envelope.

Proposals must be received no later than **Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. local time**. All proposals must be sent to Community Engagement Coordinator Jenette Sturges either as an email attachment to [jsturges@oswegoil.org](mailto:jsturges@oswegoil.org), or in person at Oswego Village Hall, Second Floor, 100 Parkers Mill, Oswego IL, 60543.

## **IX. Additional Documents**

- Intricacy and Banding Guidance
- Oswego Aesthetic