



CITY OF MERCED

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Public Art Mural (R St & Fahrens Pk UC)

RFP Released: 01.23.2026 Deadline
for Submittals: 03.06.2026

678 W. 18TH STREET, MERCED CA 95340

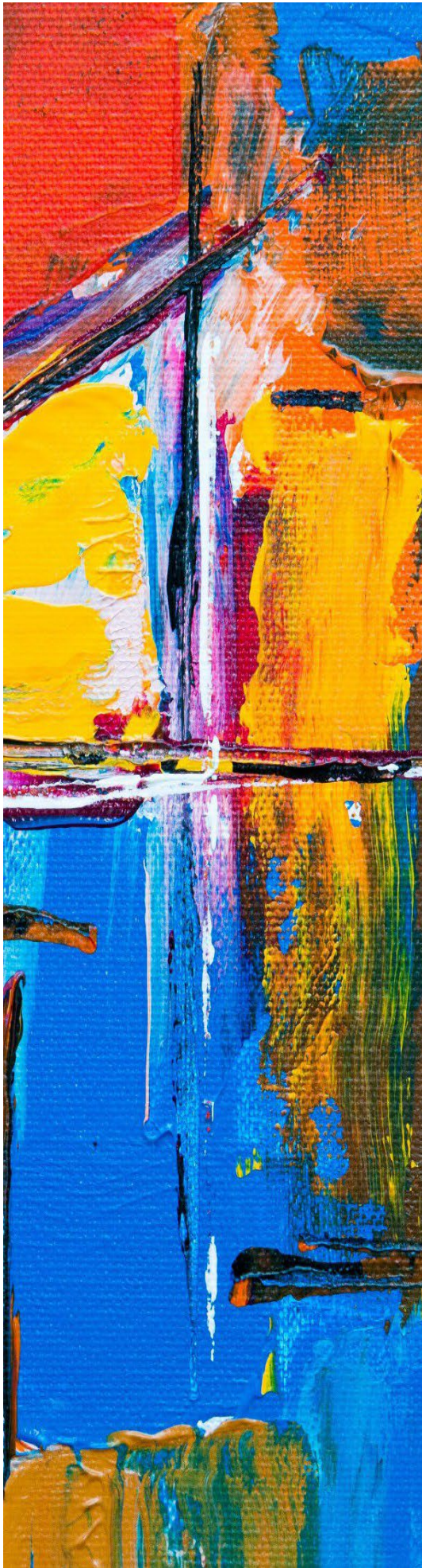


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ABOUT THE CITY OF MERCED

Merced is a dynamic community of over 90,000 people, with a friendly small-town living in a mid-size city. The University of California Merced campus, opened in 2005, provides new educational and economic opportunities, adding to the already-established growth of the region. As a result, Merced's population is youthful and diverse. Located in the heart of California's agricultural Central Valley, Merced is the region's hub for education, culture, and business. The community offers abundant shopping, pleasant neighborhoods, and tree-lined streets. Bicycle paths along creeks link major City parks. Even with recent increases in prices, Merced's housing remains affordable compared to many other California locations. In addition, Merced's revitalized downtown is emerging as the entertainment center of the area. Annual events and festivals bring regional and even national recognition.

The City's many amenities include the Applegate Zoo, Art Kamangar Center at the Merced Theatre, The Mainzer Theatre and Restaurant, The Merced Multicultural Arts Center, Playhouse Merced, The Senior Community Center, The Historic Tioga Apartments, Merced College, University of California, Merced, a wide array of restaurants, various sports facilities, Lake Yosemite, plentiful public transportation, and more.

ABOUT MERCED'S ARTS & CULTURE ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Arts and Culture Advisory Commission (ACAC) was established in 2018 to advise the City Council on matters about public art, art projects, cultural programs, and activities, and the promotion of art within the City of Merced (M.M.C. section 2.54.010). The ACAC's mission is to encourage and promote programs and events that enhance the art and cultural development in Merced while engaging community members and local businesses; promote the role of art and culture in contributing to the beautification and quality of life in Merced; recognize art and cultural events and activities that enhance vitality and innovation in Merced; promote inclusion of artistic endeavors and cultural activities reflective of the Merced community; and preserve the community's artistic works and cultural identities.



1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

R Street and Fahrens Park Undercrossing Public Art Mural Project

The City of Merced invites artists to submit proposals for a mural project at the undercrossing beneath R Street and Fahrens Park. This initiative aims to transform a frequently used pedestrian and bicycle path into a vibrant and welcoming community space.

Artists are encouraged to create a mural that depicts a lively scene reflecting the local culture and spirit of Merced. The design may include interactive elements such as augmented reality, tactile features, or other innovative components, but this is not required, proposals that are purely visual are also welcome. The goal is to create a space that inspires community pride, engagement, and enjoyment for all who pass through.

Project Details:

- **Location:** North wall of the undercrossing from the Fahrens Park entrance to the tunnel's end.
- **Dimensions:** Approximately 86 linear feet by 10 feet high.
- **Theme:** Celebrating community, culture, and creativity through an interactive and immersive design.

Artists are encouraged to submit designs that inspire connection, curiosity, and engagement, turning the undercrossing into a welcoming and dynamic public art space.

The application submittal deadline is 5 p.m. (PST) Friday, March 6, 2026

2. SELECTION PROCESS

A Selection Panel will be assembled, which may include members of the Arts and Culture Advisory Commission (ACAC) along with representatives from the City, local arts organizations, and community stakeholders.

The selection process will follow these steps:

- **Proposal Review:** The Selection Panel will evaluate all submitted proposals based on the criteria outlined in section 3 below.
- **Finalist Interviews (if necessary):** A shortlist of artists may be invited to discuss their proposals in greater detail.
- **Selection & Recommendation:** The Panel will recommend a finalist to the City Council for final approval.



- **Contracting & Implementation:** Once approved, the selected artist will enter into an agreement with the City to begin the project.

Note: When it is in the public’s best interest, the City reserves the right to waive minor informalities and immaterial irregularities or technical defects found in received proposals. Additionally, the City reserves the right at its own discretion to reject any or all proposals and to issue a new solicitation.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Selection Panel will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria and the total possible points will be 100:

- **Artistic Excellence & Originality (20 pts):** Demonstrates innovation, creativity, and high-quality design.
- **Project Feasibility (15 pts):** Proposal is realistic within a \$20,000 budget, timeline, and technical constraints.
- **Community Engagement & Impact (15 pts):** Encourages public interaction and reflects Merced’s identity.
- **Site-Specific Design (15 pts):** Appropriateness in scale, form, and materials for the undercrossing location.
- **Durability & Maintenance (10 pts):** Consideration for weathering, vandalism, and long-term upkeep.
- **Experience & Qualifications (15 pts):** Demonstrates past success with similar projects.
- **Budget & Cost Efficiency (10 pts):** Proposal is cost-effective and achievable within the project scope.

Note: Preference may be given to artists with a local connection per City of Merced Resolution 2018-18 guidelines.

4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Artists must submit a complete proposal package including:



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Request for Proposals – Open Call for Artists

- 1) **Cover Sheet** – Name, phone number, email, website (if applicable).
- 2) **Artist Statement & Vision** – A brief description of the artist’s approach and how the proposed design aligns with the project goals.
- 3) **Mural Concept Proposal** – Includes:
 - Full-color rendering of the proposed artwork.
 - Explanation of interactive features (if applicable).
 - Materials and application method.
 - Anticipated maintenance requirements.
- 4) **Resume** – Summary of relevant experience, exhibition history, and community-driven projects.
- 5) **Completed Public Art Samples** – Submit at least three (3) images of completed public art projects, with descriptions. Images should be provided electronically in a flash drive in photograph format (JPEG or PNG) and must show the location of the installed artwork.
- 6) **References** – Contact information for three references familiar with the artist’s public art experience.
- 7) **Proposed Budget** – Breakdown of anticipated costs, including materials, artist fees, and any subcontracted work.

5. INQUIRY CONTACT & SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Direct all **questions** to Senior Management Analyst, Jennifer Flachman **via email only**, flachmanj@cityofmerced.org by 5 pm, Friday, February 6, 2026.

PROPOSAL PACKAGES ARE DUE BY 5 PM (PST) ON FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2026. Address proposals to:

Senior Management Analyst, Jennifer Flachman
City of Merced / Office of the City Manager
678 W. 18th Street, Merced, CA 95340

Proposals are accepted via mail or hand-delivery if received by the deadline.
Proposals will not be accepted via postmarked mail, email, or fax.



6. PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR THE OPEN CALL FOR ART PROJECTS

01/23/2026 through 03/06/2026 – Post RFP on City Website:

- Allow 42 days for qualifications to be received
- Qualifications will be initially screened to ensure minimum requirements are met

03/09/2026 – 03/13/2026 – Selection Panel Rates Proposals:

- Review Independently and Score
- Scores compiled for March ACAC Meeting

03/19/2026 – ACAC Meeting:

- Selection Panel makes recommendation to ACAC
- ACAC adopts recommendation to City Council

04/06/2026– City Council Meeting (subject to Artist Agreement decision):

- ACAC recommendation to City Council for approval

04/08/2026 – Issue Notice to Proceed (subject to Artist Agreement decision):

- Letter sent to artist granting authority to perform work on City property

7. ARTIST AGREEMENT

Upon recommendation of the ACAC, the City Manager or designee shall coordinate the execution of a formal agreement with a selected artist, curator, or cultural organization. The agreement may include the scope of work, fee, schedule, and relevant terms and conditions. The scope of work will generally include the final design, engineering, fabrication, and installation of the artwork. Such agreement will be presented to the City Council for award and approval. See sample services agreement. Approval for other agreement types shall follow the current award authority for contracts.