

CALL TO ARTISTS

AUSTIN ENERGY SYSTEM CONTROL CENTER ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PROJECT, AUSTIN, TX *Request for Qualifications*



DEADLINE: November 17, 2008
ART BUDGET: \$284,000
ELIGIBILITY: Professional artists living & working in the U.S.

OVERVIEW

The City of Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) program of the Cultural Arts Division seeks to commission an artist or artist team to design and create innovative artwork for Austin Energy's new System Control Center (SCC) which oversees the city's electrical grid throughout its neighborhoods. It is desired that this artist establish a strong, overarching concept for artwork that will be integrated into the site to enhance the experience of the more than 300 people who will work there. In addition, since this is a secure facility which is not open to the general public, *the artist will be challenged to find innovative ways for expanding public accessibility to the artwork and artwork concepts.* Possible solutions could include: creating a satellite artwork component which could physically leave the site or be located at an alternate public space; strategizing ways for networking to other Austin Energy sites; or exploring outreach through virtual or digital means. Any artwork components must be linked by a connecting idea which *may* explore timely themes of energy usage and sustainability. The City of Austin requests qualifications from professional visual artists who live and work in the United States. Up to three finalists will be interviewed and one will be selected for the project. Artwork budget is estimated to be \$284,000. Application deadline is midnight November 17, 2008.

To be considered for the project, applicants must join the Austin AIPP Artist Registry and submit a letter of interest and qualifications for the System Control Center Project, in the Application System for Art in Public Places (*ASAPP!*) See submission requirements below.

PROJECT INFORMATION

This is a remodel and relocation project. The City of Austin purchased an existing building (formerly owned by Tokyo Electron) on 12 acres of land at 2500 Montopolis Drive in East Austin. This 120,000 sq. ft. building will be remodeled to house Austin Energy's new System Control Center, as well as the primary Corporate Data Center and various work groups from other Austin Energy locations. These work groups will varied, and will likely include Forestry, GIS, Project Management, Security Management, Real Estate Services, Transmission and Distribution Planning, and Substation and Transmission Engineering & Construction. It is estimated that approximately 370 employees and 175 City vehicles will be relocated to the new building.

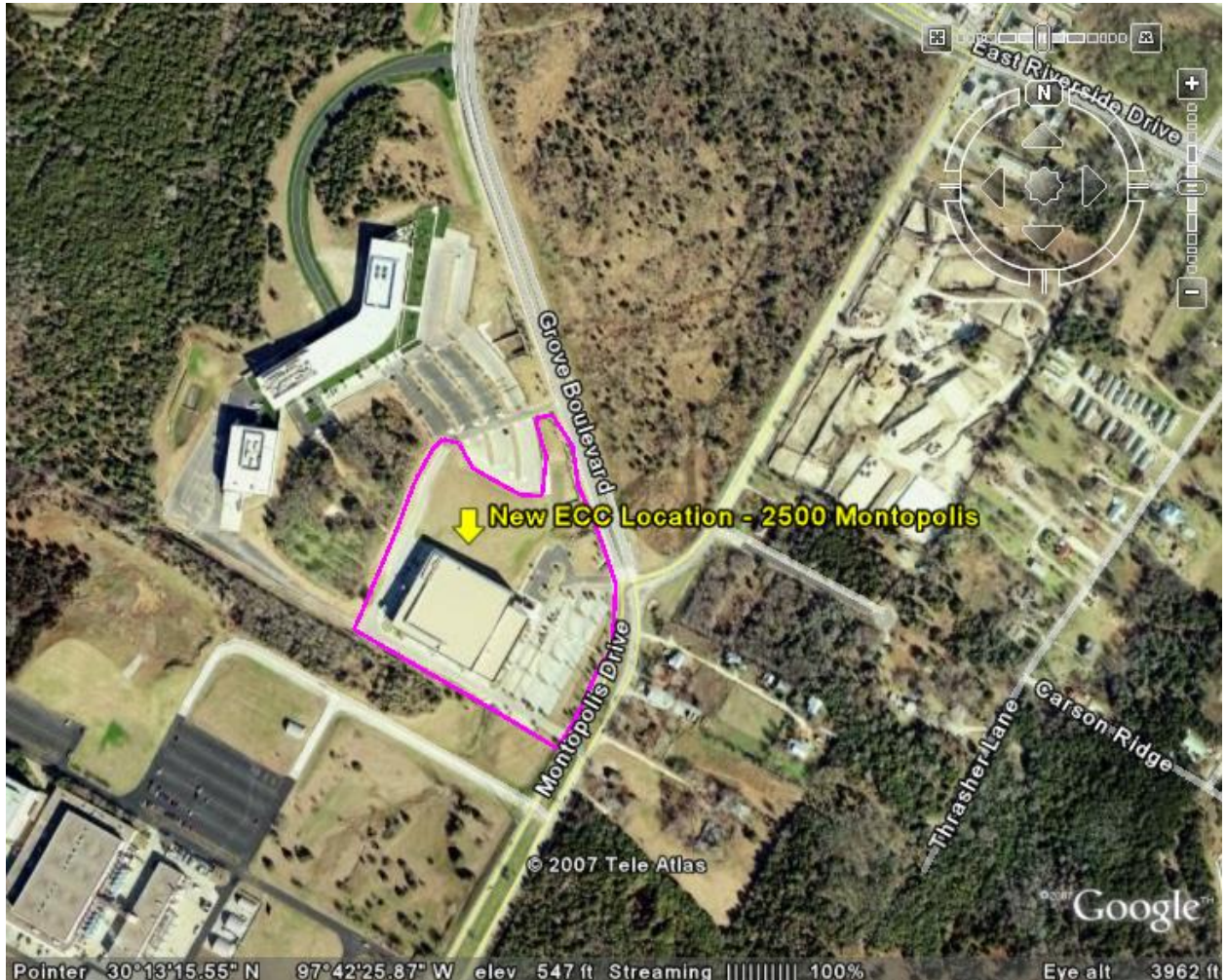
USER DEPARTMENT / SITE

Austin Energy (AE) is the nation's 9th largest community-owned electric utility. As a publicly owned power company and a city department, Austin Energy serves 388,000 customers and a population of more than 900,000. It has been owned by the City of Austin since its inception in 1893 and now is the top performing renewable energy program in the nation. AE owns the nation's first and largest green building program, and has one of the most comprehensive residential and commercial energy efficiency programs. AE returns profits to the community annually – helping to fund City services such as fire, police, EMS, parks and libraries.

AE's goals for this project are to improve efficiency; increase customer satisfaction, system reliability, security, and employee satisfaction. While some parts of the new facility will have standard office designs, much of the building will need to be highly engineered to account for the very technical functions of the control room and data center, and the need for security and redundant power supply and generation. The SCC is a controlled facility. It will be gated with perimeter fencing and will have no public access. Occasionally the media may have controlled access to the site – such as during storm events.

The operators of the System Control Center itself are essentially isolated in a large room while monitoring the transmission (high voltage – from generator to substation) and distribution (low voltage – from substation to neighborhood) of energy. They use a variety of video walls, mapboard displays and other operational display technology. In order to maintain complete separability of the control room in the new facility, there will be bathrooms, showers, and kitchen facilities within the control room for the employees.

The building itself is a 1 ½ story (split level) concrete tilt wall construction. The basic structure of the building will remain as is, with square footage added to accommodate business needs. As a retrofit project, there will be certain limitations on design possibilities. There is a buffer zone to the south of the building which will help provide further security.



New ECC Facility location

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT / DELIVERY

The delivery method for the project is "Construction Manager at Risk" (CM@R) which means that the Construction Manager at Risk (CM@R) is hired in roughly the same timeframe as the Architect/ Engineer. The city has hired the firm of Ellerbe Becket from Minneapolis as the Architect/Engineer and the GC is scheduled to be hired by October, 2008. Ellerbe Becket has completed similar projects which can be viewed online at www.ellerbebecket.com/expertise/portfolio/5/0/0/Energy_Technology.html. The CM@R will do value engineering, estimating, and constructability auditing during the design process. The project is scheduled for completion in March 2010.



Former Tokyo Electron building to be remodeled

ARTWORK OPPORTUNITIES

There is an opportunity for an artist or artist team to significantly impact the quality of experience of the 300+ users of the ECC site. Artwork could be located in the outside entrance space or in a number of gathering spaces within the building. There is some potential to address the perimeter fencing if the art does not interfere with important security functions; however, it must be noted that AE does not want to draw extensive outside public attention to this location. In the early phase of the design development, the artist will work with the project team to identify appropriate locations and a conceptual approach. Themes related to the timely issues of energy generation and consumption may be addressed in some way. A goal of the project is to achieve LEED[®] silver certification, so art using recycled materials may be another option for this site.

While there is no public education planned here because it is a secure site not open to the general public, the selected artist is asked to strategize opportunities to reach a wider audience through innovative, unconventional means. As stated before, this could possibly be done through a migrating satellite artwork component; connecting in some way to other AE sites (one example could be the plug-in hybrid parking places located at city facilities); or outreach through other virtual or digital means. It is desired, however, that all artwork components on and offsite work as a whole – connecting through a strong overall concept.

AIPP PROGRAM AND PROJECT GOALS

The goal of the Art in Public Places program is to commission works of art and art projects of redeeming quality which advance public understanding of visual art and enhance the aesthetic quality of public places.

The goal for this particular project is to select an artist who will design with the following priorities in mind:

- Conceptualize a strong overall artwork design approach for the facility

- Find a creative approach to accessibility, inaccessibility and place as it relates to this secure facility
- Create a unique experience and quality environment for the users of the facility
- Explore ways of addressing contemporary issues of energy usage and sustainability

ARTIST/MEDIA ELIGIBILITY

This artwork opportunity is open to professional artists living or working within the United States. Interested and eligible artists must submit qualifications and a letter of interest that includes at least one paragraph describing how he or she might conceptually approach this project and any artistic elements that might be preliminarily identified for the project. The selected finalists must be available for an interview in early December, and the selected artist/team must be available for an intensive collaboration with the project consultants during the period of January to March 2009. City of Austin employees and project consultants and their employees and sub-consultants are not eligible.

The possibility for types of artwork is open, as long as maintenance requirements can be met by AE.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants must demonstrate the following qualifications and qualities:

- Strong conceptual skills with demonstrated successful innovative and effective approaches in other creative projects;
- Ability to discern a location's sense of place, and design in a context-sensitive manner;
- Excellent communication and organization skills, and the ability to collaborate with other design and engineering professionals and City staff;
- Experience working successfully within a budget while being flexible and creative about extending its reach; and
- A proven mastery or skill in at least one artistic medium.

BUDGET

The total available budget for artwork is estimated at \$284,000 for all design and artwork costs including artist fees, fabrication, insurance, travel, installation, documentation, etc. Depending on the artwork design solutions, fabrication and installation of art elements may be incorporated into the construction documents and work of the General Contractor.

SELECTION AND COMMISSION PROCESS

Applications must be submitted by November 17, 2008. The Art in Public Places Panel will convene a selection panel of three (3) visual arts professionals to evaluate the applications. This selection panel with the project advisors shall review artist qualifications (images of work, resume, letter of interest, references) in order to recommend up to three finalists to invite to Austin to interview and meet with the project team (all expenses paid).

Based on those interviews, the selection panel will recommend one art/artist team and one alternate. This recommendation will be presented to the Art in Public Places Panel and Arts Commission for approval. The artist will be put under a design contract to develop a conceptual approach to the project, identify artwork locations, and develop designs. Some of the artwork components may be integrated into the construction documents. Prior to fabrication, the artist's final design will be also be presented to the Art in Public Places Panel and Arts Commission for approval. City Council will vote to authorize the commission contract with the artist.

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Release Call to Artists

October 6, 2008

Deadline to submit qualifications

November 17, 2008

Selection Panel & Advisor review; recommend finalists

November 2008

Finalists' orientation meeting and interviews by


Art in Public Places Program, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, 301 W. Second St, Suite 2030, Austin, Texas 78701, 512.974.7819

Selection Panel and Advisors; recommend artist & alternate
 AIPP Panel & Austin Arts Commission approve recommendation
 Execute Design Contract with Artist
 AIPP & AAC approves final design
 City Council approval
 Execute Commission Contract
 Construction to be completed

Early December, 2008
 January 2009
 January 2009
 April 2009
 May 2009
 May 2009
 March 2010

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Apply for this project through *ASAP!* (Application System for Art in Public Places).

Visit www.cityofaustin.org/aipp and click on  to begin.

Register Online (please submit the following):

1) PROFESSIONAL RESUME

Please outline your experience as an artist. In the case of a team application, please include a resume for each individual in the application portion marked "partner resume" (under Calls to Artists, see Step 4 below).

2) THREE REFERENCES AND CATEGORIES OF WORK

Please include the names and contact information for 3 individuals with whom you have worked or who have commissioned your work in the past. Actual letters of reference are not required, and will not be accepted. You will also be asked to click categories which best describe your medium(s) and genre(s) of work.

3) DIGITAL IMAGES

10 to 20 images of past work (in .jpg format) must be uploaded (a minimum of 10 is required to be considered for the project). Installation or 3-dimensional work may be illustrated by multiple images. Only submit images with maximum dimensions of 800 (w) x 600 (h), with a limit of 400kb in file size. Teams are limited to 20 images, which must be submitted via the Registry of one (lead) artist on the team.

Apply for Call to Artists (Austin Energy System Control Center Project):

4) LETTER OF INTEREST

Briefly describe your interest in this commission with the City of Austin and how you might approach this project. What are your current artistic interests, and how might these be incorporated in the System Control Center project? You do not need to outline a specific artwork proposal, but if you have general artistic approaches that interest you in conjunction with this site, please include them here. This paragraph is to provide information to the selection panel about how you would be a good "fit" for the project. If you are a team, submit only one letter of interest and include the names of all your team members.

Selection of application images and any partner resumes are also added at this point.

Note: AIPP is not responsible for distortion/alteration of images as they appear on monitors or projected. If your work is best represented by other media types (video or audio), please call AIPP at 974-9313.

**CONTACT: Jean Graham, Art in Public Places Coordinator
 (512) 974-9313 or jean.graham@ci.austin.tx.us**

Art in Public Places Program, Cultural Arts Division, Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office, 301 W. Second St, Suite 2030, Austin, Texas 78701, 512.974.7819