

Art Acquisition Proposal
Golden Public Art Commission



Golden Eagles

April 25, 2017

Public Art Commission
City of Golden
Golden, Colorado 80401

Subject: **Golden Eagles Sculpture - Acquisition Proposal**

Dear Board of the Golden Public Art Commission

I am pleased to present for your consideration this self-initiated proposal for a site-specific public art project for the people of Golden.

The Artistic Vision: Please envision this bold but simple artistic addition to the current construction at our City's new Sixth Avenue Bridge. High atop each of the two tall columns are 6-foot tall stone Golden Eagles, gazing towards Lookout and Table Mountains. From afar, their profiles and noble character are instantly recognizable. Up close, their personalities and beauty are highlighted by the deep sculpted details. Each is carved from limestone, that was selected because it is an enduring, time-tested natural material, and is a warm tan-color that compliments the stone columns, the bridge paint colors and the natural setting.

Fit with Golden: This artwork is created on all levels of design and concept to fit with a specific location, the City's stated public art selection criteria, and most importantly the community.

- The tall bridge columns are ideally suited to display our native eagles, complimenting the site's high broad vistas of the cityscape and natural landscape.
- Due to the placement high on the existing bridge columns, the artwork is visually accessible to all, yet is unreachable, ensuring public safety, as well as protection of the artwork.
- The subject, Golden Eagles, is ideally suited to the city's name and natural setting, and could become a positive symbol of local pride and the community's identity.
- The art will be a prominent and memorable symbol to inspire pedestrians, residents, visitors, local traffic, regional commuters and bicycle riders.
- The contemporary design and material follow long artistic tradition and have broad appeal, yet are unique in the community and region. The design's unique, bold qualities and natural fit with the community will enhance Golden's broad recognition in the arts.

As a longtime Golden resident, Mines alumni and art enthusiast, I believe this public art project is ideal for this location and for this community. As a stone sculptor, I see this project as a meaningful and lasting personal contribution to my home town.

Additional project information is provided in the attached material. Please contact me if you need additional details, or have questions, suggestions or feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Gee', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

William Gee

Additional Details & Discussion on the Project

Technical Feasibility: Sculpting stone is a remarkably simple process. However, it does require significant planning, flexibility and perseverance. Following the process of project approval, stone acquisition, and design iterations, the sculpting phase is expected to be approx. 6-months, (more in winter). Assuming an expedient go-ahead decision, permanent installation could be expected approximately one year from now.

Partnership is Better, Cheaper, Faster: A *partnership approach* between the City and artist can produce the optimum project results, in terms of design, quality and cost. In this arrangement, each contributes what they do best. The artist provides sculpting and related advisory services for an agreed fee. The City contributes indirect costs such as heavy equipment for moving the stone, and directly pays the associated costs, such as stone, sculpting expenses, supplies and installation.

Assuming the *partnership approach*, the City will incur indirect costs, such as truck and crane operators. The City's direct cost is primarily the stone purchase/shipping, the sculpting supplies/tools and the artist fee. Direct costs are estimated to total \$100,000. (Note that in the alternative *turnkey approach*, the direct cost to the City would be at least doubled.)

To better understand each party's responsibilities in the *partnership approach*, shown below are the major operational stages in the process, from the go-ahead decision to installation and maintenance.

<i>Project Stage</i>	<i>Artist Activities</i>	<i>City Funds & Services</i>
Go-Ahead	Contract, Planning	Budget, designated contact
Buy Stone	Trip to quarry, Inspect, Select, Cuts, Transport	Purchase, Transport & Travel
Delivery to City	Place stone at City Facility	Facility, Cribbing, Crane
Cut Block	Horizontal blocks , Bottom notch & seal	Concrete saw, Artist access
Deliver to Studio	Vertical blocks on cribbing	Crane, Truck, Cribbing
Sculpting	Rough-in, sculpting, finishing, sealing	Tools (abrasives, grinders, sealer)
Completion	Deliver sculptures to City	Artist's fee, Crane, Truck
Installation	Assist & advise	Crane, Road closure, etc
Maintenance	Assist & advise	Periodically inspect, spray wash & seal

Model Images

The basic artistic concept is well established and clay maquettes are now available. The design details of the final stone carvings are inevitably refined in an iterative process that responds to the specific stone blocks (such as the size, colors and structural characteristics), as well as to the final site characteristics (such as the column caps, lighting, planting, nearby artworks).



Artist Background

- I am a dedicated artist, with 20 years experience focused on sculpting in stone. I am self-taught and self-motivated. Like artists since Neolithic days, I am inspired by the natural sciences and natural forms, in particular our native wildlife, birds and the human form. Over fifty stone sculptures have been completed, including a dozen large outdoor pieces.
- Past art showings include Loveland's Sculpture in the Park in 2015 and 2016. Currently, one artwork (a basalt buffalo) is being loaned and installed on Golden's Clear Creek art-walk. And I will be exhibiting July through October of this year at the Foothills Art Center in Golden.
- Golden has been my home for 39 years. I was a board member of the Foothills Art Center until year-end 2016.
- A naturalist by inclination, I also have a strong technical and business background. This includes a M.S. degree from Mines and a long career as a professional geologist. This may explain my affinity for stone as an artistic medium.
- I am familiar with the City's approach to arts and believe that I can work cooperatively and effectively with the City's Public Art Commission and Public Works Department.
- A studio tour can easily be arranged to see my artworks in person. And much of my artistic product can be viewed on the web, at www.GeeSculpture.com. Shown below are some of my sculptures with a subject matter similar to this proposal.



Installation & Maintenance

The City is responsible for installation and maintenance, however, the artist wants to be significantly involved in both activities and is anxious to assist or advise.

Installation: The overall installation plan is simple. However, because of the sculpture weight and column height, the logistical details require close collaboration and planning between the bridge engineers, City and artist. Some minor installation preparations would be easier before the columns are completed. So this dialogue should start as soon as possible.

The basic plan is for a crane to lift the sculptures onto the column capstones. The towers will easily support the vertical weight of the sculptures. To resist lateral forces, the sculptures will be anchored to the columns with stainless steel rods, inserted vertically between the sculpture and capstone. This requires that slots be carved in the base for removal of the crane straps, and holes be drilled into the base and capstone for insertion of the rods. These engineering preparations, plus ensuring a perfectly flat and sealed base, must be completed by the sculptor before the artistic carving can begin.

Maintenance: Limestone is a durable material, and requires a relatively low level of care. In addition, the specific site conditions are excellent with abundant sunshine, little acid rain, no ground moisture and limited access to avoid most accidents and vandalism. With proper care these artworks will last centuries.

The finished stone surface is naturally non-gloss or flat, and will not take a polish like marble. The stone will get dirty from airborne dust, bird droppings and pollen. However, most dirt is not inherently harmful to the appearance or integrity of the sculptures, and accepting some dirt is better than excessive cleaning.

The key maintenance concern is reducing absorbed moisture, particularly during freeze-thaw cycles. The overall sculpture form is designed for water to runoff the statue, to minimize pooling. Before installation, the sculptures will receive several coats of water repellent stone sealer. This sealer should last several years. To determine the frequency of resealing, the surface can be sprayed with water and the degree of absorption assessed by how quickly the stone darkens.

The expected maintenance plan is as follows.

- **Periodically:** Inspect from ground or drone for mould and structural integrity.
- **Every 2 Years:** Access with lift to inspect up close, wash with low pressure water spray and mild detergent.
- **Every 4 Years:** As above, plus apply water repellent sealer, such as widely available silicone stone sealer.