

Call for Artists

U District Mobility Hub - Temporary Art Installation

Location: U District LINK Light Rail Station Area

Budget: Up to \$15,000

Application Deadline: March 15, 2026

Anticipated Selection: April 2026

Installation Date: June–July 2026

Installation Period: 1-3 months

Overview

The U District Partnership (UDP), in collaboration with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), invites artists, designers, and creative teams to propose **temporary, highly visible, and joyful public art and placemaking interventions** that improve how people experience getting to, from, and waiting for transit in the U District.

This demonstration project is part of SDOT's newly forming [Community and Mobility Hubs Program](#)¹ which focuses on making key transit locations easier to navigate, safer to use, and more welcoming to everyone. The U District station has been selected as a **priority pilot location** due to high ridership, equity considerations, and its role as a gateway to campus, small businesses, and neighborhood destinations.

We encourage a broad definition of public art, including but not limited to:

- Visual art & murals
- Lighting installations
- Sound art
- Performance, choreography, or theater
- Time-based or interactive activations

The selected artists, designers or creative teams, will help shape a visible, community-centered demonstration that will be installed in summer 2026 and maintained for 1-3 months of

¹ This project is funded through the voter-approved Seattle Transit Measure.

activation with support from UDP's Clean Team. Artists do **not** need prior experience with transit projects to apply. Interdisciplinary, emerging, and experimental artists are welcome.

Project Sites

Artists should submit a site-specific public art or placemaking proposal for one of the three available sites:

- 1) **U District Light Rail Station Entrance** (NE 43rd and Brooklyn)
- 2) **U District Station Bus Stop - Bays 1 and 4** (University Way and NE 43rd, Brooklyn Ave and NE 43rd)
- 3) **Public Right-of-way between Bus Stop Bay 4 and U District Light Rail Entrance** (along University Way and NE 43rd)

Project Goals

The project aims to create a temporary art-centered intervention that:

- Makes transit access feel welcoming, intuitive, and joyful for transit riders of all ages, abilities and backgrounds
- Enhances the experience of arriving at, waiting at, and moving through the U District light rail station area by making connections clearer between light rail, bus stops, plazas, and corridors

Artists are encouraged to think boldly while also recognizing the complexity of working in an active transit hub. Some community-identified needs that artists may choose to address include:

- Clarity for bike/scooter parking
- Reflects the youthful, creative identity of the U District
- Wayfinding needs between bus stop and transit station
- Models positive mobility behavior through delight, not enforcement
- Lighting in dark alleys

Once selected, artist(s) will have to work with the project team to adjust designs for specific color, coating, or safety requirements on some equipment which will be confirmed during design development. Examples may include anti-graffiti coatings for painted surfaces or judicious use of porous materials. Additional technical considerations include:

- Using durable, cleanable, climate-appropriate materials that can last for the pilot period. Depending on location, this may require taking into consideration heavy foot traffic, deliveries, or late-night activity

- Taking into account maintenance issues for materials such as artificial greenery, which has caused rodent issues in past projects

As part of the contracting and final design process, the selected artist(s) will develop a short maintenance plan and vandalism protocols in conjunction with UDP and SDOT. Other contract elements, including artwork ownership, usage rights, and insurance needs, will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the project medium(s) and scale.

Scope of Work

Working closely with UDP and SDOT, the selected artist(s) will:

1. Contracting and Concept Development (April 2026)

- Attend kickoff and site visits with UDP and SDOT.
- Sign contract and confirm piece-specific details (e.g. ownership, demonstration period length, etc.)
- Fully develop conceptual direction responsive to transit-rider needs, community identity, safety considerations, and site constraints.

2. Final Design + Coordination (May 2026)

- Produce a final design package suitable for multiagency review.
- Work with SDOT, Sound Transit, and King County Metro to address technical requirements, safety, durability, ADA considerations, and permitting pathways.
- Provide a final budget and installation plan.

3. Fabrication + Installation (Jun – Jul 2026)

- Fabricate all elements of the demonstration project.
- Install the artwork in coordination with UDP, SDOT, and agency partners.
- Provide maintenance instructions for the duration of the demonstration period.

4. Pilot Period + Evaluation Support (Jun – Dec 2026)

- Participate in occasional site walks or light-touch communications (e.g. giving a brief interview, approving blog post, etc.) during the demonstration period
 - Minor repair or replacement of installation pieces during installation period
 - De-installation of artwork at the end of the installation period
 - Contribute to a December 2026 “Lessons Learned” report.
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Budget

SDOT's Community and Mobility Hubs Program will provide up to a total of \$15,000 for public art projects. The budget is all-inclusive of:

- Artist fees/labor (including any subcontractors or assistants)
 - Fabrication
 - Materials & equipment
 - Installation/De-installation costs
 - Limited community engagement or project evaluation activities
 - Minor repair or replacement of installation pieces during the installation period
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Eligibility

Open to individual artists, artist teams, designers, and creative practitioners residing in the Puget Sound region. Prior experience with public art, community engagement, or site-based projects is helpful but not required.

We especially encourage applications from artists who represent the cultural diversity of the U District and Seattle, and from artists with lived experience navigating transit.

Selection Criteria

A selection panel including UDP, SDOT, and community representatives will review submissions based on the following criteria:

- Responsiveness to project goals around joyful, welcoming, or wayfinding-oriented spatial interventions that connect to transit (30%)
- Feasibility of proposed approach given budget, timeline, and permitting requirements (25%)
- Interest in collaborating with community or multiple stakeholders (15%)
- Ability to improve visibility, safety, clarity, and access (15%)
- Strength and creativity of past work (15%)

Selected artists will be notified in April of 2026.

How to Apply

Submit the following materials in a single PDF or folder:

1. **Project Description (500 words)** – Please share a description of the project concept, which should include:
 - How it addresses project goals
 - Description of materials/techniques and community engagement (if any)
 - Anticipated budget
2. **Examples of past work** – 5–10 images of past work with brief descriptions.
3. **Resume or Bio (200 words)** – For each team member (if applicable).
4. **Initial Concept (3 pages max)** – A sketch(es) of your proposed concept

Please submit materials to **Janet Lee** via email to janet@udistrictpartnership.org by **11:59 PM on March 15, 2026** with the subject line: **UDP x SDOT Transit Hub Demonstration – Artist Application**.

Questions?

Contact: Janet Lee, Urban Vitality Manager via email at janet@udistrictpartnership.org