

**Artist Letter of Interest and Approach
Public Artwork
For the Sebastapol South Entryway
of the Joe Rodota Trailhead**

“Gopher it”

Vickie Jo Sowell, sculptor

The tree-lined natural ambiance at the junction of Petaluma Ave and the old railroad corridor into Sebastapol offers us an exciting opportunity to place a signature artwork. The project is a great match for my experience and abilities. For more than a decade I have created and installed public art works in a variety of engaging, location-defining sculptures.

As Sebastapol residents and visitors begin and end their engagement with the Joe Rodota trail this new urban neighborhood pass around and through their central area they'll be joined there by the strong curving organic form and brown and tan colors of my sittable sculpture “Gopher It” (Image 1). I'm drawing my inspiration for this piece from nature—one of our commonly encountered friends of the outdoors, the Pacific Gopher Snake. I'll be constructing a sinuous shape made of Core-10 steel in three dimensions that addresses two sides of the the triangular area indicated in the RFQ, replacing the existing bench with a more permanent resting space. The piece will be fabricated in several pieces secured in place with steel posts embedded in the ground.

As an environmentally-oriented Master Gardener as well as an experienced Public Arts sculptor, I'd like to call the attention of the selection committee to the images of several other of my outdoor sculptures that are in place at “Big Daddy's Complete Rejuvenating Community Garden, which I founded and run. These include my “Delft Tower” and “Peace Towers” as well as the intriguing organic forms of my “Living Wall.” This last-named artwork is now almost ten years old! I was inspired to combine the steel material with which I usually work with the organic shapes from my extensive succulent garden to obtain this striking effect.

My resume provides an extensive list of more traditional public arts placements that should leave no doubt about my ability to perform contracts of this size and importance of the Avelle/Block B project. The images in my portfolio show how I use my art to create a sense of place, including an important signature piece nearby in Mountain View.

- **“World in a Grain of Sand”** Collaboration with glass artist Mary B. White. The three tall sculptures that stride above this sidewalk location commemorate the pioneering work of the Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory at 391 San Antonio Road in the 1950s. From this location and using the concepts embodied in

these solid-state components, the companies and technologies that make up the Silicon Valley were born.

- **“Heliotrope”**, a spiraling assortment of shapes that track the sun from the roof of a hexagonal shade structure at Stockton’s Matt Equinoa park. “Heliotrope” was inspired by plants that attract beneficial insects to gardens, reflecting my experiences and organic approach as a part of the Master Gardener program
- **“Fruitvale Revival”** The commission from the City of Oakland was for a central arch that combined architectural icons drawn from the Fruitvale district with organic fruit and branch fabrications that sprang from Fruitvale’s orchard heritage. This plaza entryway crowns four columns along the edge of International Boulevard. A follow-on commission put in place a similar single central arch around a hundred yards away.
- **“Richmond Works”** The 7 original designs I created for this project chronicle the historic legacy of this north bay City. Panels are combined and varied to provide over 600 feet of fence for the Richmond Transit Village near the City’s BART station. This vibrant cultural ribbon has made a tangible contribution to community revitalization.
- **“Niles Panorama”**, 10 strong designs mounted on the exterior of the City of Fremont’s new Fire Station feature both the firefighters and numerous other facets of local lore. The Niles connection is emphasized within a 35mm film motif, representative of the presence of the early silent film industry within the community.
- **“Gates4Yates”** I served on an advisory board, working with teachers, students, other artists, and architects for the remodel of the Anna Yates Elementary School. The kid images portrayed are derived from student portraits

I typically execute much of the fabrication for my works in my well-equipped studio, including many large and long sculptures. Given the accelerated time-frame for the Joe Rodota Trail project that will definitely be my approach in this case, but I also have a lot of experience in working with fabricators and special needs vendors to get projects done. I’m also skilled at soliciting and responding to community inputs. I plan to perform on-site installation of “Gopher It” myself, so I am conscious of the need to make this simple and effective.

--Vickie Jo Sowell, January 2024
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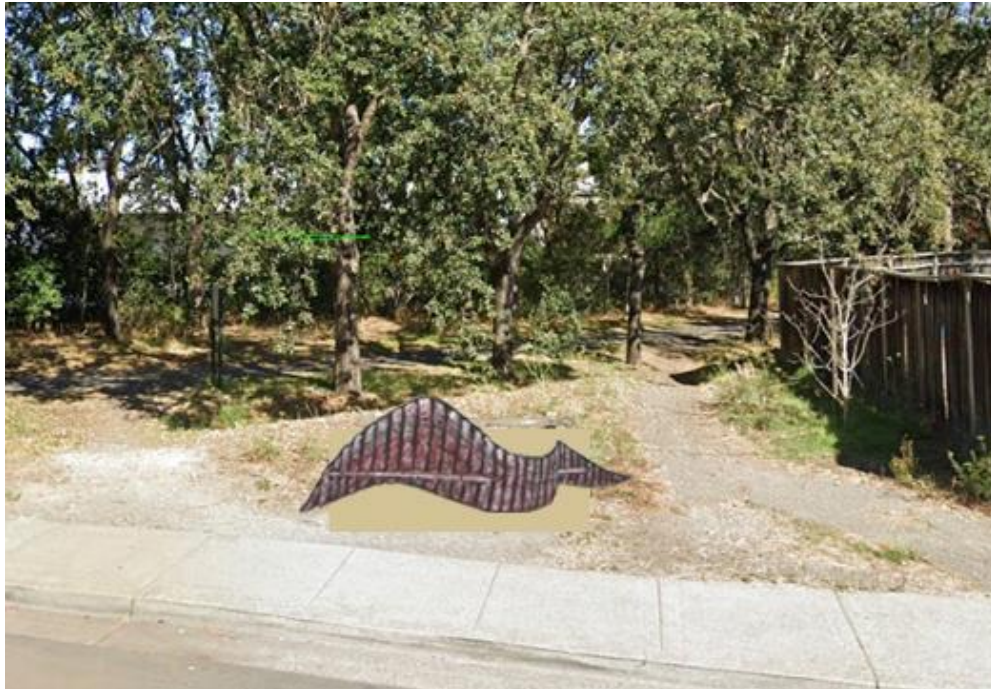
**Artist Design Proposal
Public Artwork
For the Sebastapol South Entryway
of the Joe Rodota Trailhead**

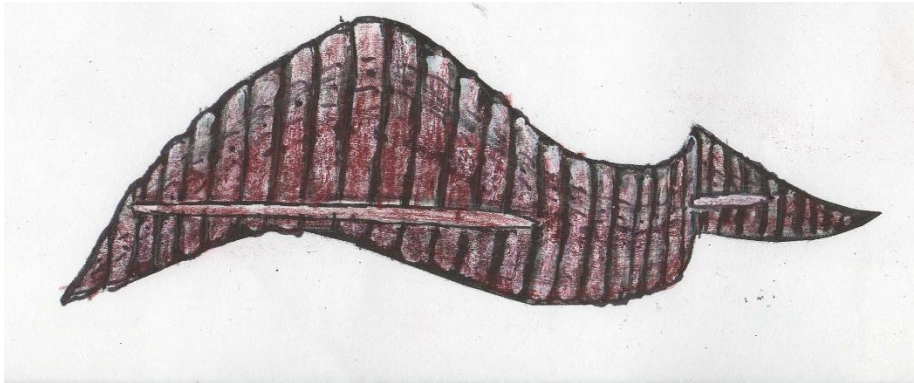
“Gopher it”

Vickie Jo Sowell, sculptor

1. Art description/depiction. Using a text description please describe your concept for this project (250 word maximum), with or without a sketch or more specific visual image.

Taking inspiration from our friend in nature, the Pacific Gopher Snake, I propose to create a sittable sculpture in the triangular area indicated in the RFQ. The sculpture will be extended along two sides of the area, providing views along Petaluma avenue and the path that merges with the main Joe Rodota trail. The sculpture will be constructed from 3/8" thick Core-10 steel, 12' in width, 4' high, with a 3' depth created by the curve. The piece will be secured in place by steel posts sunk into the earth.





2. Timeline/Schedule for fabrication and installation

Following contract award in May 2024, the key driver of the project schedule is receipt of an initial payment of \$15,000 sufficient to produce computer renderings of the sculpture components, procure the materials and insurance and pay for artist labor. Once this down payment is received, artist will commit to complete installation of the artwork within six months. So, for example, if funds are made available by the end of May, we will finish the project by no later than the end of November. I recognize that ideally installation should be complete prior to the beginning of rainy weather.

- Computer renderings for waterjet cut components complete 2 weeks
- Material procurement and delivery to waterjet subcontractor 3 weeks
- Waterjet cutting complete 4 weeks
- Assembly and welding at artist studio in Emeryville 12 weeks
- Site preparation (embedding of posts to secure sculpture in place) 16-20 weeks
- Delivery and final installation by 24 weeks

3. Budget. Address each of the following elements in the following order (if not applicable, so indicate):

A. Artist Design	\$4,100
Computer Renderings	\$2,400
B. Materials (Core-10 Steel)	\$4,000
WaterJet Cutting	\$2,100
Artist Labor	\$5,000
C. Studio Fees	\$4,000
D. Transportation	\$ 600
E. Installation	\$1,800
F. Lighting N/A	
G. Insurance	\$1,100
H. Taxes	<u>\$ 100</u>
Total:	\$25,000

VICKIE JO SOWELL

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2001-2022 **Big Daddy's Complete Rejuvenating Community Garden**

Founder and Manager of Emeryville's Organic Community Garden #2 / Urban Sculpture Garden. Our garden is featured in the Smithsonian Institution's Community of Gardens (<https://communityofgardens.si.edu/items/show/12132>) and serves as a beautiful entry marker to the City of Emeryville.

2020 **Las Animas**, Free-standing sculpture for Cambridge Place community, Gilroy, CA
Core-10 Steel, powder-baked enamels
Artwork commemorates the location of Gilroy's legacy schools
Contract Value: \$43,500

2018 **World in a Grain of Sand**, Silicon Valley Monument, 391 San Antonio Rd, Mountain View, CA
Collaboration with Mary B. White
Powder-baked enamel on steel, stacked, fused glass

The three tall sculptures that stride above this sidewalk location commemorate the pioneering work of the Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory at 391 San Antonio Road in the 1950s. Contract Value: \$170,000

2017 **Curriculum**, Panels for Hilltop High School, Richmond, CA
Powder-baked enamel on steel
Fence panels celebrate the educational curriculum at Richmond's new High School
Contract Value: \$30,000

2016 **Always On**, Fire Station #9, Livermore, CA
Powder-baked enamel on steel
Commission for the City of Livermore's Fire Station No. 9. This wall-mounted frieze extends for 44 feet along the front of the facility.
Contract Value: \$30,000

2014 **Orange is the Happiest Color**, Ecole Bilingue, Emeryville, CA
Powder-baked enamel on steel
Signature sculpture for new bilingual school campus. Extensive interaction with school staff and students to create panel designs that present images and words in three languages
Contract Value: \$27,600

2011 **Marina Gates**, Marinas Int'l, Emeryville, CA
Powder-baked enamel on steel
Entrance artworks for the Marina and Sportsfishing docks. Reconditioning of existing structure, additional artworks, new panels.
Contract Value: \$21,500

2011 **The Rippling**, McKinley Arts and Culture Center, Reno NV
Powder-baked enamel on steel
Sign supports for informational signs at Reno's Arts Center that featured local endangered species
Contract Value: \$15,000

2010 **Niles Panorama**, Fire Station No. 2, Fremont, CA
Powder-baked enamel on steel
15 inset panels for new Fire Station in historic Niles district
Contract Value: \$27,500

2009 **Gates4Yates**, Anna Yates Elementary School, Emeryville, CA
Enamel painted steel
Entryways and decorative fencing for Elementary school renovation
Contract Value: \$25,000

2008 **Life is a Ball**, King Park, Brentwood, CA
Welded Bronze
Commission for City of Brentwood, CA's King Park. Figures of five bronze dogs are rendered in the act of leaping for a thrown ball. The standalone figure of "King," Brentwood's first licensed canine, sits nearby.
Contract Value: \$44,000

2008 **Roots of Oakland**, Highland Hospital, Oakland, CA
10 tile mosaic panels with hand-crafted text and floral elements
I was commissioned to provide 10 ceramic tile mosaic panels for the terraced main entryway to Alameda County's Highland Hospital.
Contract Value: \$13,000

2007 **Sweidy-Stata Poolhouse**, Atherton, CA
Powder-baked enamel, zinc-dipped steel
Private Commission, Sweidy-Stata Home, Atherton, CA. I was commissioned to provide a full suite of artworks for the poolhouse location, including three gates, two railings, a large window treatment, and over 50 feet of ornamental fence.
Contract Value: \$37,000

2005, 2007 **Richmond Works**, Richmond, CA
166 waterjet cut steel panels, powder-baked color coatings
Public Art Commission for the City of Richmond's Transit Village. The commission consists of approximately 600 feet of fence in three sections along Marina Way, bordering the Transit Village. Panels depict 7 original thematic designs relating to the people and times of Richmond. Follow-on for Traffic Circle barrier, 2007.
Contract Value: \$150,000

2005 **Stockton Heliotrope**, Stockton, CA
Enamel on Steel 50' diam.
Commission installed at Matt Equinoa Park in Stockton, California. Three sculptural sections sits atop a hexagonal shade structure establishing a spiraling floral bouquet that tracks the sun. Floral images are of native flowers that attract beneficial insects.
Contract Value: \$20,000

2004 **Neighborhood Convergence**, Emeryville, CA
11 8' tall Enamel painted steel figures
Public Art commission, Emeryville, CA. The commission consisted of eleven enamel-painted steel figures, each approximately 8' tall, executed in collaboration with Emeryville painter M. Louise Stanley and lighting designer Jeremy Hamm. The figures are installed on both sides of the Powell Street undercrossing of Interstate 80 in Emeryville.
Contract Value: \$125,000

2004 **Fruitvale Revival**, Oakland, CA
Public Art Commission, City of Oakland. The commission was for a central arch that combined architectural icons drawn from the Fruitvale district with organic fruit and branch fabrications that sprang from Fruitvale's orchard heritage. This plaza entryway crowns four columns along the edge of International Boulevard. A follow-on commission put in place a similar single central arch around a hundred yards away.
Fruit glass enamels by Deborah Lozier
Contract Value: \$30,000 + \$12,000 f.o.

VICKIE JO SOWELL

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1. Fruitvale Revival

2004

Enamel paint on Steel 22' arch, 14' flanking arches

Public Art Commission, City of Oakland. The commission was for a central arch that combined architectural icons drawn from the Fruitvale district with organic fruit and branch fabrications that sprang from Fruitvale's orchard heritage. This plaza entryway crowns four columns along the edge of International Boulevard. A follow-on commission put in place a similar single central arch approx. 100 yards away.

Fruit glass enamels by Deborah Lozier

Contract Value: \$30,000 + \$12,000 f.o.

2. Richmond Works

2005

Powder-baked Enamel on Steel 166 panels, approx 3' x 4'
three sections, > 600 ft.

Public Art Commission for the City of Richmond's Transit Village. The commission consists of 166 waterjet cut steel panels, with powder-baked color coatings, approximately 600 feet of fence in three sections along Marina Way, bordering the Transit Village. Panels depict 7 original thematic designs relating to the people and times of Richmond.

Contract Value: \$150,000

Contact: Winifred Day (510) 533-8852

3 Delft Tower (Center)

2007

Enamel on welded steel 26' tall x 5' x 5'
Big Daddy's Complete Rejuvenating Community Garden

When the auto-detailing shop across from our home burned down in 2000, the City asked me what we would like to see on the site. This thriving community garden and sculpture garden (which I also manage) is now twenty years old! It serves as an unofficial gateway to our thriving City and community.

Permanent installation at Big Daddy's Complete Rejuvenating Community Garden in Emeryville CA. The detail insets contain images of the neighborhood recyclers who pass by the garden.

Contract Value: n/a
Contact: Vickie Jo Sowell,

4. **Local Totems** 2007
Enamel on welded steel 12' tall x 5' x 5'

Images shows a temporary installation at the Orinda Town Center. Individual totems from this series are in place in Inverness, Orinda, and Emeryville.

5-6 **World in a Grain of Sand** 2018
Powder-baked enamel on Steel, Glass, stacked and fused

Silicon Valley Monument. Collaboration with glass artist Mary B. White. The three tall sculptures that stride above this sidewalk location commemorate the pioneering work of the Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory at 391 San Antonio Road in the 1950s. From this location and using the concepts embodied in these solid-state components, the companies and technologies that make up the Silicon Valley were born.

Contract Value: \$170,000
Contact: Kristin Strahl, kristin47@gmail.com

1,2 **Neighborhood Convergence**
"Emeryville Banner", "Wheelchair Willie" 2004
11 8' tall Enamel painted steel figures

Public Art commission, Emeryville, CA. The commission consisted of eleven enamel-painted steel figures, each approximately 8' tall, executed in collaboration with Emeryville painter M. Louise Stanley and lighting designer Jeremy Hamm. The figures are installed on both sides of the Powell Street undercrossing of Interstate 80 in Emeryville.

Contract Value: \$125,000
Contact: Amber Evans, City of Emeryville,
aevans@ci.emeryville.ca.us

8. **Sweidy-Stata Gates** 2007

Powder-baked enamel on Zinc-dipped Steel

7' x 8'

Private Commission for the new Sweidy-Stata home in Atherton, CA. The commission was for an overall treatment of the poolhouse complex, and included the gate and window guard shown here as well as several railings and 50 feet of decorative fence with two utility gates.

Contract Value: \$37,000

9. Native Bee Hotel
Steel, wood, bamboo

2019

10. Always On
Powder-baked enamel on Steel

2015
44' frieze

In collaboration with the City of Livermore/Pleasanton and Bill Louie Architects of Fremont, CA, I installed a 44' frieze for Livermore's Fire Station #9. With elements extending from 9' to 13' tall, the dramatic streetside panels celebrate the heroism of our firefighters in images drawn from nighttime firefighting events.

Another scene celebrates the Fire Station's constant readiness—in the form of the station's celebrated always-on lightbulb. The architect and I considered both the wall-mounted frieze, with back-lit illumination, and a lower perimeter fence design.

The increasing availability of LED technologies can make lighting a valuable component for projects such as the Del Rio Trail.

Contract Value: \$30,000

Contact: Bill Louie, blouie@wlcarchitects.com





FRUITVALE

FARM







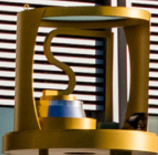








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RIGHT LANE
MUST
TURN RIGHT

TRUCK
ROUTE

