

Downtown Hopewell  
James D. Levin Underpass

# REQUEST FOR ARTIST PROPOSALS

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June 2024



We invite experienced **muralists** and **metal workers** to submit proposals for transforming this underpass. By enhancing the gateway between industry and our historic Downtown, you will improve the overall image and feel of the Hopewell area.

**Commissioned by:**

**Hopewell Downtown Partnership**  
106 N Main St  
Hopewell, VA 23860

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**Deadline:**

**July 31st,  
2024**

[heather@hopewelldowntown.com](mailto:heather@hopewelldowntown.com)  
[hopewelldowntown.com](http://hopewelldowntown.com)  
(804)571-1068



**WHAT WE DO** 

**Economic Vitality Promotions**

We create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and assist local businesses with access to capital, incentives, and education. We also catalyze property development and the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

We position Downtown as the center of the community and a hub for economic activity through creative marketing, advertisements, tourism initiatives, and events like open houses, street festivals, and the Hopewell Farmers Market.

**Design**

We provide free architectural services and spearhead placemaking projects in Downtown to enhance its unique physical and visual assets, improve its overall curb appeal, and make the district more accessible and walkable for all.

**Organization**

We create a strong and sustainable foundation for the revitalization effort in Downtown by cultivating partnerships, championing community involvement and volunteerism, and securing resources for the district.

**WHAT IS DOWNTOWN?**

When we refer to "Downtown" as our mission area, we are referring to the geographic boundaries of the "Hopewell Downtown Historic District" as recognized by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the National Park Service. We also mean "Downtown" as in the people and the places - past, present and future - that make it special. HDP is the only organization solely dedicated to representing and advocating for this district and its role as a social, cultural and economic hub for our city.

**WHO WE ARE**

**We are locals supporting local; a grassroots 501(C)3 nonprofit organization with passionate leadership and volunteers.**

Our origin story begins in 2007 when the level of deterioration of the Downtown started to threaten the integrity of its historical structures and its social, cultural and economic relevance to Hopewell and the surrounding areas. **In 2011 after several years of organizing, we hired our first Executive Director and earned Accreditation with the National Main Street Center.**

**WHAT WE BELIEVE**

**Like the National Main Street Center, we believe that "everyone deserves access to a vibrant neighborhood - a place that has a thriving local economy, is rich in character, and features inviting public spaces that make residents and visitors feel that they belong."**

Our neighborhoods and commercial districts are essential to our collective identity and shared experiences as humans and our environments directly impact our well-being.

**OUR MISSION**

**"To build a healthy, vibrant, and more prosperous central downtown district with the Hopewell community."**

By organizing our community from within and improving quality of life at the core, we are initiating a ripple effect throughout the City and the region.

**OUR VISION**

**A fully revitalized and walkable downtown with accessible, high quality public spaces, great restaurants and entertainment, historic and modern attractions, an active and connected waterfront, and shops and storefronts that represent our community equitably in style and ownership.**



**SUPPORT OUR MOVEMENT >**



Since 2011, we've championed Downtown Hopewell from a 50% vacancy rate to an emerging commercial corridor.

**Help us continue to make Downtown a place where young people are able and proud to stay, families want to live, and businesses desire to locate.**

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# ABOUT PROJECT

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For hundreds of years, Hopewell - a City of 24,000 - has served the nation as an epicenter for manufacturing and transport. However, the corridor that connects industry to our Historic Downtown stands neglected.

In the City of Hopewell's most recent Comprehensive Plan, the vision statement for Downtown Hopewell includes "an appealing gateway design that creates a welcoming environment."

**With funding from Norfolk Southern and support from locality, we are seeking proposals from a) metal workers b) mural artists or c) a metal worker and a mural artist team to transform the Levin D James underpass, its supporting columns, and retaining walls - into a welcoming gateway between industry and our Historic Downtown. It is important that the community be engaged in the design process.**

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# INDUSTRIAL HISTORY...

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The City Point Railroad, built in 1838 between City Point (Hopewell) and Petersburg, lies above the Levin D. James Underpass and is considered the oldest portion of the Norfolk and Western Railway, now a part of Norfolk Southern. Hopewell was developed by DuPont Company in 1914 as Hopewell Farm. DuPont first built a dynamite factory, then switched to the manufacture of guncotton during World War I. Hopewell became known as the "Wonder City" when it recovered from nearly burning to the ground in 1915 and then grew from a population of 400 to more than 20,000 in a few short months.

A large number of kit homes were hauled in and erected in neighborhoods laid out by DuPont as "A Village" for management and "B Village" for workers. Hopewell also became known as an internationally diverse city. Immigrants from the Caucasus and Bohemia regions (now the western lands of the Czech Republic), as well as Italy, and Greece worked in the factories and opened small businesses.

After DuPont abandoned its sites following World War I, Hopewell experienced a ghost town period until 1923 when Tubize Corporation took over the site. The Tubize plant was later acquired by Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and was a major employer in Hopewell for decades. Numerous other sites were established over the years Hopewell continues to be a chemical engineering and manufacturing hub and critical to the national supply chain.

In the 1970's and 80's, chemical dumping, urban sprawl led to disinvestment and vacancy in our downtown; a situation not unique to our City. Hopewell has encouraged re-development along its waterfront areas at the confluence of the James and Appomattox Rivers, and the City Point Historic District. Our organization has spearheaded the revitalization of the Hopewell Downtown Historic District for the past 15 years. Since 2011, we've championed Downtown from a 50% vacancy rate to an emerging commercial corridor.

# PROJECT GOALS...

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**This project will result in a welcoming gateway between Hopewell's industrial corridor and Historic Downtown. Animating this underpass space will balance and tie together existing placemaking and beautification efforts in the area.**

**Direct outcomes from this project could include:**

- a community-informed visual narrative about the historic railway, industry, or Downtown
- art as “wayfinding gateway” to indicate that one is entering/leaving a special place
- bright, vibrant colors added to the color palette of Downtown
- community engagement with the arts and history
- increased feeling of “welcomeness”
- increased feelings of community pride
- increased foot-traffic
- increased sales and/or new business attraction
- crime and blight deterrent
- positive local, regional, and state media coverage

**This project should benefit:**

- City of Hopewell
- Downtown Historic District
- Business owners (some who have served the community for 30+ years)
- Industrial Corridor
- Norfolk Southern as our generous funder
- General public

# SITE DETAILS



## **Measurements:**

### East Bound Retaining Wall:

sloped section 2169 sqft  
center section 750 sqft  
sloped section 1440 sqft

### West Bound Retaining Wall:

sloped section 1420 sqft  
center section 676 sqft  
sloped section 2006 sqft

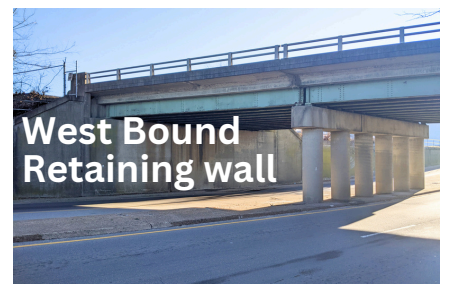
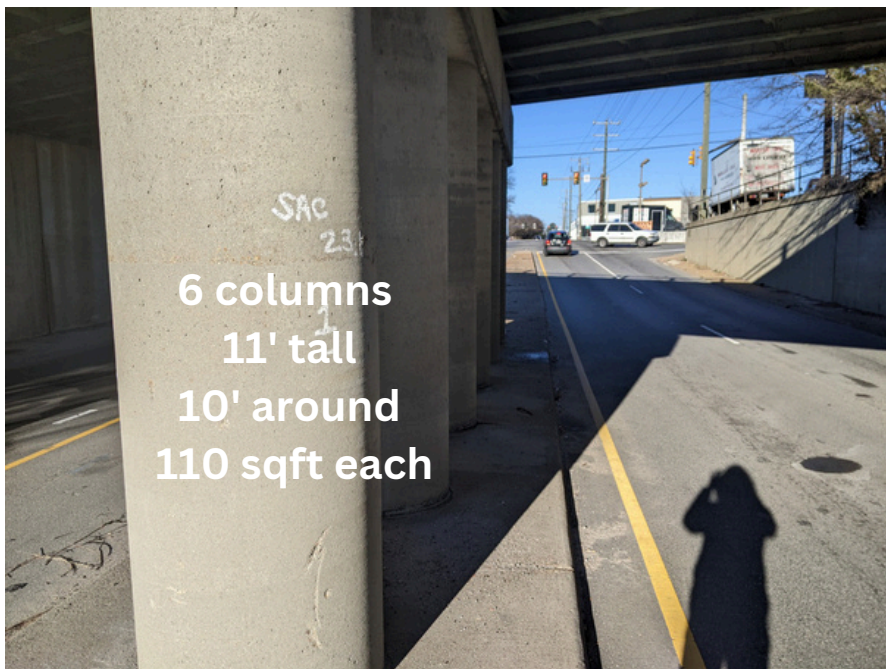
Columns (6):

110 sqft each x 6 = 660 sqft

## **Highly Visible:**

The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) and Annual Average Weekday Traffic (AAWDT) demonstrate the impact that this site will have on perceptions and first impressions of Downtown Hopewell, the City, and Norfolk Southern. Between Main Street and Winston Churchill Dr., 10,000 cars drive through each day which averages to 300,000 cars on average each month. With approximately 1.5 people per vehicle, that amounts to 15,000 impressions on average per day and 450,000 impressions per month.

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# PROJECT BUDGET

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**Total Artist Stipend Available:  
\$10,000**

**Total Monies Available for  
Artist to Source Supplies and  
Materials: \$11,000**

**Total Travel & Lodging  
Stipend: \$1200**

to be used for gas, flight,  
lodging and per diem

This project is being funded through the generosity of Norfolk Southern and their Thriving Communities Grant program.

You will be supported by Hopewell Downtown Partnership staff and their local network. We are open to discussing the budget categories but do not have more than the total \$22,000 to offer. We acknowledge the large size of the project site and are open to your ideas and expertise for the highest and best use of the stipend and materials.

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# HOW TO SUBMIT

**Deadline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**July 31st,  
2024**

Email the following materials to [heather@hopewelldowntown.com](mailto:heather@hopewelldowntown.com)  
with **"UNDERPASS PROPOSAL"** in the subject line:

1. **Cover Letter** explaining your interest in the project
2. **Digital Artist Portfolio** showcasing previous work
3. Estimated **budget**
4. **Timeline:** interview/kick-off call, pre-research, site visit, community engagement, design drafts, site prep, and completion.  
*\*\*We secured a non-standard non-environmental right of entry application with Norfolk Southern\*\**
5. **Community Engagement plan** (to inform design/during project)
6. **Maintenance plan**
7. **Contact information**
8. **References** appreciated

You can combine these materials into one document or send each as a separate attachment. **Be as brief or lengthy as you wish!**

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# REVIEW CRITERIA

**A NEW DAWN - NICO CATHCART**  
Downtown Hopewell, May 2021



## **How does your proposal:**

- Celebrate the history of the Norfolk Southern Railroad, Industry, and Downtown.
- Positively impact public perception of the Downtown Historic District.
- Incorporate elements that reflect the cultural or historical identity of the area.
- Engage the community in the design process i.e. residents, business owners, industry, youth, local leaders, historians.
- Integrate educational components, such as workshops, to promote communal learning and generate support for the project.
- Consider the legacy of Levin D. James, City Manager (1943 - 1963).
- Enhance the underpass's role as a local landmark and gateway.

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**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU!**