



TRACTION POWER SUBSTATION REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Request for Letters of Intent for Murals:

E 181st Ave Park & Ride

Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center

September 8, 2026

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT

TriMet seeks two professional artists or artist teams to create site-responsive, original murals on new substations at the [E 181st Ave Park & Ride](#) and the [Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center](#) as part of the Traction Power Substation Replacement Project. Artists will be commissioned from a shortlist of applicants. The all-inclusive fee for each commission is \$25,000. Letters of Intent are due by 12 p.m. (noon), Monday, October 12, 2026.

BACKGROUND

Public Art Program

TriMet's Public Art Program integrates site-specific artwork throughout the regional transit system to enhance the rider's experience, strengthen community identity, and celebrate the cultural and historic character of the communities we serve. Established in 1992 and formalized through agency policy in 1997, the program is also responsible for the stewardship, conservation, and long-term management of the Public Art Collection, ensuring these public assets remain accessible and in a state of good repair for future generations.

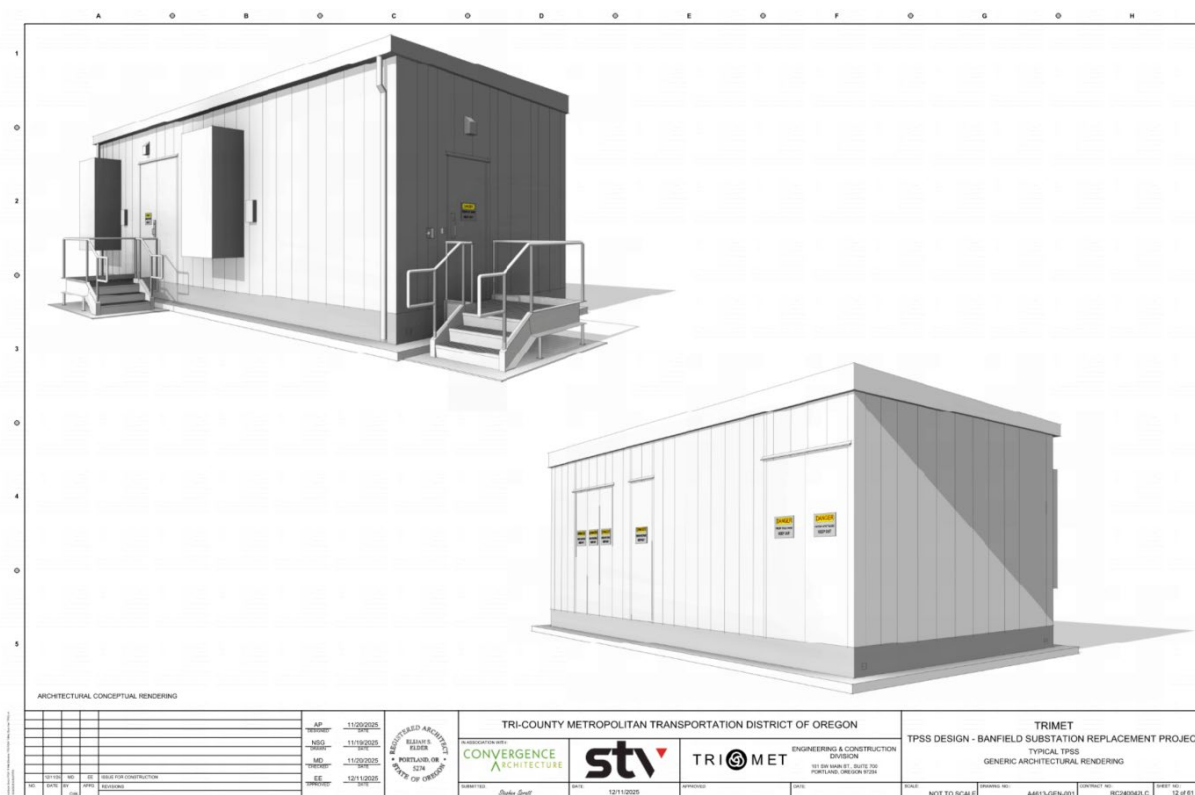
Since its inception, works by over 160 artists have been added to the bus and light rail system with the input of Public Art Advisory Committees whose members advise staff, participate in artist selection and approve art concepts. More information about TriMet's Public Art Program is available [online](#).

Traction Power Substation Replacement Project

Traction Power Substations (TPSS) are rectangular metal buildings that house the specialized, high-voltage electrical equipment that powers MAX trains. The TPSS units serving MAX Blue Line, built in the 1980s, are critical infrastructure now due for replacement. In 2027, the TPSS at E 181st Ave Park & Ride and Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center will be replaced

with new prefabricated structures placed in the same location as the existing ones. New TPSS are approximately three feet wider and 12 feet longer than those currently onsite. There is a single building design for the new structures with numerous doors, protrusions, and access panels; exact configuration and dimensions are subject to change during manufacturing.

The TPSS at E 148th Ave, NE 60th Ave, E 122nd Ave, and the Gresham Central Transit Center are also scheduled for replacement through 2029.



Generic Traction Power Substation rendering

PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES

E 181st Ave Park & Ride

The E 181st Ave Park & Ride, at 18324 E Burnside Street, has 247 parking spaces serving the E 181st/Burnside MAX station, the Rockwood/E 188th Ave MAX Station and bus lines 20 and 87. Located in the heart of the [Rockwood neighborhood](#) in Gresham, near the new AVIVA apartments and the Rockwood Market Hall, the site is slated to become a future [transit-oriented development](#) (TOD). Toward that end, in 2025, TriMet completed a study of this property for planning purposes that also considered the future anticipated development of

the adjacent parcels located immediately to the east. The study, funded by a Federal Transit Authority grant is published [here](#).

Although the mural on the future TPSS at this location will be completed before a future TOD, the artist should consider how the mural will exist as a beacon or place-maker for the housing community. The mural will initially be visible from both eastbound and westbound light rail trains, as well as by eastbound vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and the public will have direct access to it. However, visibility of the mural is anticipated to become more limited as the site changes.



Traction Power Substation, E 181st Ave Park & Ride

In this location, TriMet must execute a Permit with the City of Gresham once a final design for the mural is approved; the artist must comply with inspections by city staff during installation to ensure that the mural conforms to the approved design.

The east side of the TPSS building at the E 181st Ave Park & Ride currently features a mural painted in 2022 by artist Mario De León in collaboration with teens from Play Grow Learn. The mural is part of the Portland Black Art Matters Initiative, funded by the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Regional Arts and Cultural Council (RACC). All parties were advised of the building's eventual replacement.



We Are Afro Village by Mario De León, 2022

Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center

Located at NE 99th Avenue and Pacific Street, adjacent to the interchange of Interstate 84 and Interstate 205, the Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center is a major multimodal transportation hub in the Hazelwood neighborhood within the Gateway Regional Center. As TriMet's second busiest transit center, connecting Blue, Green and Red MAX lines and serving more than 10 bus lines, it sees an estimated 4,800 to 5,100 average weekday boardings. The transit center has a Park & Ride garage and a surface lot with a combined 690 parking spaces. The new Gateway Green urban bike park is accessible from the transit center.



Traction Power Substation, Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center

The artist should consider the mural's multiple vantage points, including eastbound and westbound light rail trains, buses, auto traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians along the multi-use path, and patrons and staff using the transit center. The site also provides temporary parking for TriMet operations staff. Unlike the E 181st Ave Park & Ride, the public is not allowed direct access to the TPSS at this location.

Artist(s) working at this busy transit center will be required to attend On Track Safety (OTS) training prior to onsite work. Murals within the City of Portland also require a license agreement, as administered through the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC). TriMet will manage the licensing process.

The west side of the TPSS at this site currently features a mural by artist Rebecca Rodela, painted in 2022, as part of *Going Public!* RACC's Murals Skill-Building Intensive. This mural will also be removed when the building is replaced.



Loteria en Portlandia by Rebecca Rodela, 2022

ARTWORK & GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Artwork Content and Community Engagement

- **Originality:** The design must be the artist's original work. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in any submitted materials must be disclosed.
- **Community Connection:** The artwork should reflect the neighborhood's unique identity. Artists are required to engage with community members to inform their design. TriMet is available to assist with this outreach.

Design and Coverage Requirements

- Full coverage: The mural must span all four sides of the building, totaling approximately 855 square feet. The design should cover most of the building's surface.
- Composition: The artwork must read as a single, unified composition when viewed from a distance.
- Graffiti Mitigation: The mural should be designed strategically to deter and mitigate future graffiti.

Safety, Regulatory and Technical Compliance

- Worker Safety: Safety is a primary concern. The proper use of safety equipment and strict adherence to safety procedures is mandatory while on site and during installation.
- Hazard Markings: All safety hazard markings on the building must remain clearly visible from a distance of five feet, per National Electrical Code (NEC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.
- Technical Standards: The finished artwork must be durable, low-maintenance, vandal-resistant, and contribute to an overall sense of safety and security. Artists must adhere to TriMet **Mural Specification Section 3. (Paint)** and/or propose comparable means, methods and materials.

ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open to experienced professional artists and teams. Selected artists must complete the murals by **August 31, 2027 (181st)**, and **November 30, 2027 (Gateway)**, respectively. Proposing teams must designate a single artist as the primary contact and contract signee. Students may only participate as part of a team led by a professional artist.

LETTER OF INTENT REQUIREMENTS

Artists are encouraged to visit the sites and research the surrounding community before submitting their application. The Letter of Intent must be no more than **three pages total** (consisting of no more than two pages of narrative and one page of references) and must include:

1. Relevant experience: Overview of past projects and technical proficiency.
2. Project interest: Conceptual approach and interest in this specific project.
3. Community engagement plan: A prospective strategy for community collaboration and method for incorporating public feedback into the final design.
4. Availability: Work availability, including any other concurrent professional obligations.

5. Professional references: Contact information for two professional references.

SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The selection panel will review all submissions and base its evaluation on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Alignment of the Letter of Intent with project goals.
- **Proficiency:** Artistic quality, design proficiency, and technical execution of past work.
- **Suitability:** Appropriateness of the proposed conceptual and community approach to the project requirements
- **Capability:** Demonstrated ability to complete the work on time and within budget, supported by professional references.

The selection panel is not required to commission any individual or team from among those who submit.

The selected artist or team will initially be issued a design contract to create and present a formal Concept Proposal (including a color rendering, a written description, timeline, and draft budget) and Final Design. A subsequent contract modification to execute the mural is contingent upon final design approval.

Artists who submit a Letter of Intent but are not chosen for these specific projects may be considered for other TPSS mural opportunities.

BUDGETS

Location	Budget
E 181st Ave Park & Ride	\$25,000
Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center	\$25,000

Fee breakdown for each commission:

Item	Percentage	Amount
Design fee	20%	\$5,000
Fabrication	70%	\$17,500
Contingency	10%	\$2,500

The commission covers all project expenses, including materials, equipment, labor, travel and insurance; the contingency amount is paid upon successful completion of the mural. The selected artist or team will be under contract with TriMet as described above with the artist

retaining copyright of their original work, and the mural will become part of the TriMet Public Art Collection. TriMet will provide surface priming, mural sealant and sacrificial graffiti coatings as per TriMet’s Mural Specification.

SCHEDULE

Milestones

Letter of Intent deadline

Interviews (tentative)

Artist notification

Date

12 p.m. PST, Monday, October 12, 2026

2:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 17

November 18

Concept Design Proposal

E 181st Ave Park & Ride

March 2027

Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center

June 2027

Final Design / Painting start*

E 181st Ave Park & Ride

May 2027

Gateway/NE 99th Ave Transit Center

August 2027

Project completion

E 181st Ave Park & Ride

August 2027

Gateway/ NE 99th Ave Transit Center

November 2027

**Contingent upon Final Design approval.*

Schedule is subject to change.

Letters of Intent must be submitted to traverm@trimet.org by 12 p.m. PST, Monday, October 12, 2026.

TriMet Public Art Advisory Committee Members

Adam Kuby

Sculptor, Visual Artist and Landscape Designer

Ling Chung Bianca Lee

Artist, Advocate, Board-Certified Registered Art Therapist

Jeff Schnabel

Professor in the School of Architecture at Portland State University

Kathy Fry

Principal, Mayer/Reed

Aleksandr Chernousov

Visual Storyteller and Research Scholar at University of Oregon

Jesse Stemmler

Project Manager, Principal, Engineering & Construction

QUESTIONS

Contact Michelle Traver, TriMet Public Art Administrator, 503-314-1579 or traverm@trimet.org.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND NONDISCRIMINATION

TriMet respects the civil rights of all the people we serve. We operate our programs without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, in accordance with applicable law.

TriMet Public Art Program

Mural Specification

Draft 5.11.22

Surface preparation for new walls or surfaces not requiring repairs

Proper surface preparation helps ensure that the paint adheres well to the surface not only for the short term, but also for future repeated cleaning, graffiti removal, and pressure washing. Concrete walls must fully cure properly before receiving a mural or excess moisture from manufacturing may later create efflorescence that will ultimately destroy the mural. In addition, efflorescence can also occur on walls where water can infiltrate from behind cladding or pool in the ground beside or beneath it.

A professional graffiti removal company performs Items 1. Clean, 2. Prime, and 4. Anti-graffiti Coatings. This maximizes their ability to effectively provide ongoing maintenance of the finished mural.

1. CLEAN

- A. Pressure wash or otherwise clean the surface to remove any dust, dirt or loose debris
- B. Allow adequate time (24 – 48 hours if pressure wash, depending upon ambient temperature) for surface to fully dry before additional surface preparation.

2. PRIME

- A. Specify high-quality Primer (KILZ Brand or equivalent) specific for surface type; use according to manufacturer's instructions
- B. Specify new high-quality paint roller covers appropriate to primer type and surface type (it's critical to avoid any type of material shedding that can "lift" later)
- C. Apply one or more coats of primer over clean, fully dry surface with high-quality paint roller cover
 - a. Allow primer to fully dry between coats; use new paint roller cover if nap is loose due to cleaning
- D. Allow primer to fully dry prior to applying paint.

3. PAINT

- A. Specify high-quality Paint (Nova Color brand acrylics, Montana brand spray paint or equivalent) for exceptional color retention along with excellent adhesion; use according to manufacturer's instructions.
- B. Apply Paint with high-quality paint roller or other tools that do not shed nap or leave excess paint residue
- C. Allow final paint coatings to dry completely or "cure" prior to applying anti-graffiti coatings (minimum of 24 hours, depending upon ambient temperature or as recommended by professional graffiti removal company).

4. ANTI-GRAFFITI COATING

- A. Apply one or more clear sealant coatings (MuralShield or equivalent) to protect; use according to manufacturer's instructions
- B. Allow sealant layers to fully dry before applying sacrificial coating (World's Best Graffiti Coating or equivalent); use according to manufacturer's instructions.