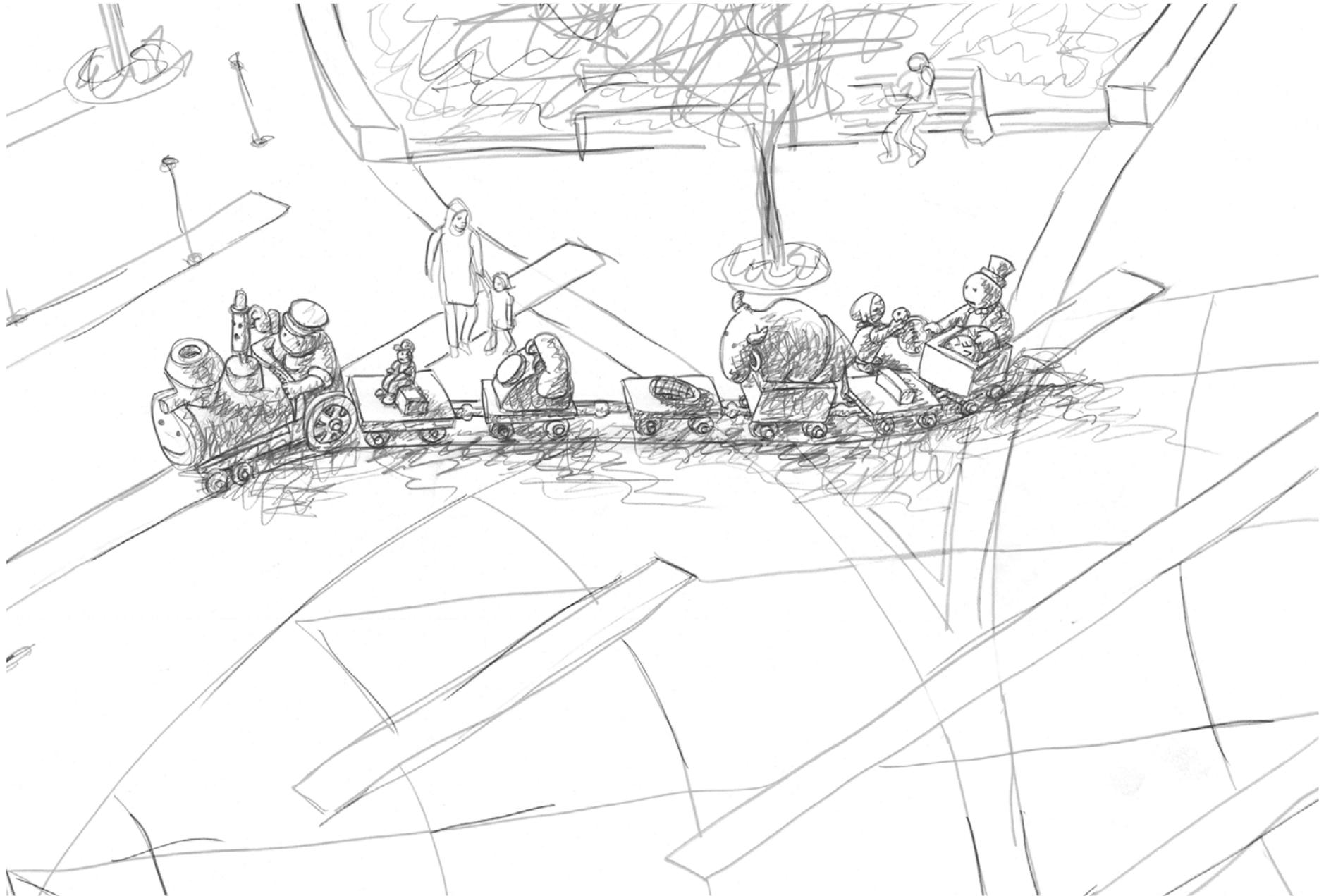


# Tom Otterness

Proposal for Pinnacle Bank Arena Plaza  
Lincoln, Nebraska



# **Tom Otterness**

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Detail of locomotive and conductor

It is a tremendous honor to be given the opportunity to propose a work of art for Lincoln, Nebraska. To have work in this location would be wonderful and I am grateful to be selected for this competition by the members of the West Haymarket Joint Public Agency.

I was born in and grew up in Wichita, Kansas; both of my parents were from Brookings, South Dakota. I spent my childhood making journeys through Nebraska and have many fond memories of this beautiful state. To me the Midwest holds a special place in my heart and I have a deep connection to it that is like none other. The horizontal landscape, the iconic spatial plane that defines the Midwest implies to me the notion of limitless possibilities. The values that I got from this landscape are pragmatic: the idea that hard work pays off coupled with hope and optimism for the future. For me, that work is public art and over the last 35 years I have made much use of these values that I learned in the Midwest. I would take great pride in having a piece of public art here in Lincoln.



The idea for my proposal is a train that ties in to the horizontal landscape of both Lincoln, Nebraska, and also the site at Pinnacle Bank Arena Plaza. A train is a symbol of optimism. It moves goods and services of course, but it is also a vehicle for change. It is connected to our history and has a transformative effect on our culture. It is also a symbol for the city's economic growth, past and present.

The train will be made of bronze and is 5 feet high by 28 feet long; it is scaled for children to climb on it. The sculpture would be large and dynamic. It would become a signature sculpture for this neighborhood and I hope, for Lincoln. Following the conceptual layout presented in the RFP, I have added one serpentine "track" that connects two straight bands symbolizing the rail yards in Lincoln. In my proposal I have created a narrative that I hope speaks to the community of Lincoln.

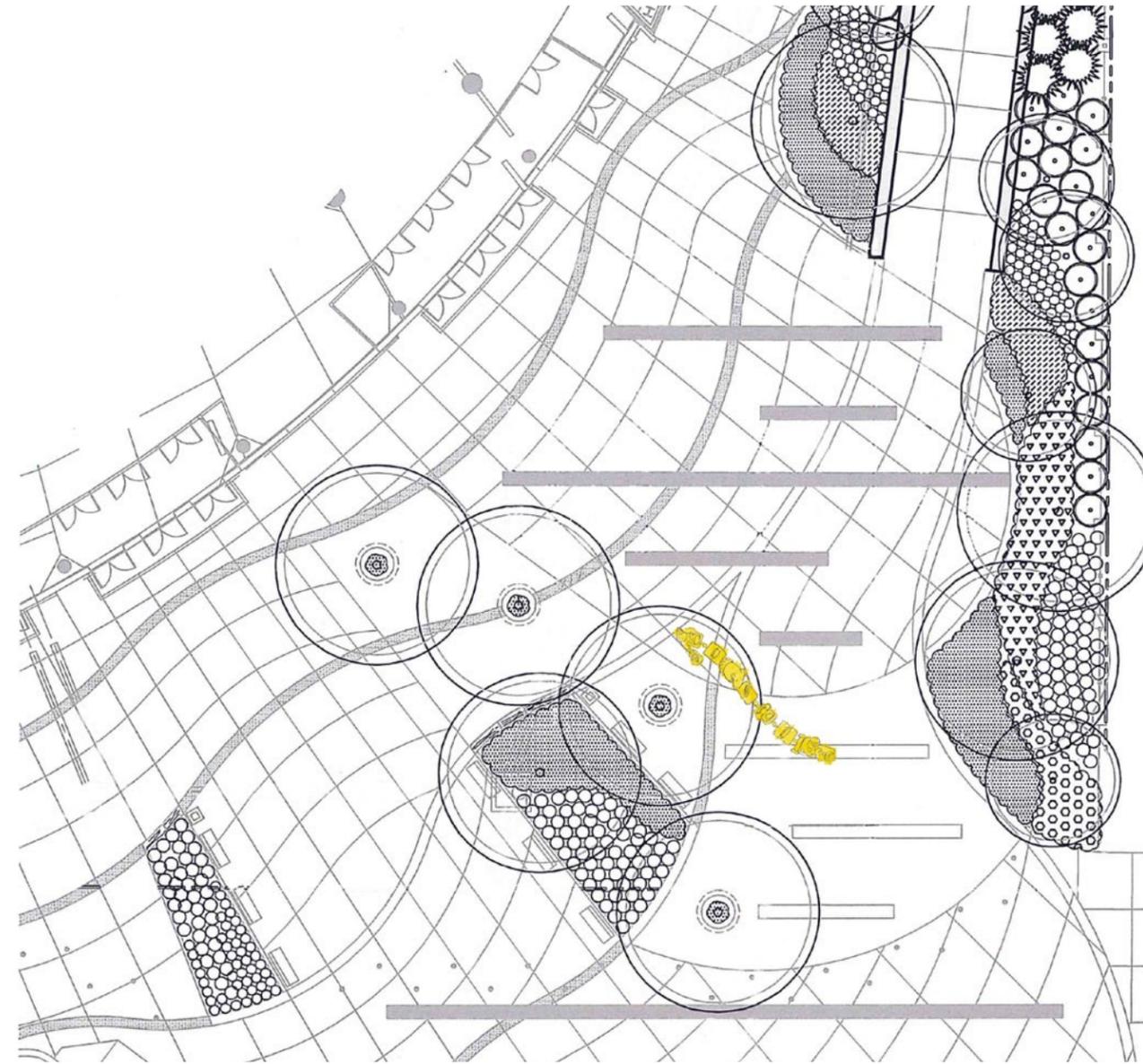
At the front of the train, there will be a lead engine with a female conductor pulling on an imaginary cord for the whistle. Next, on a flatbed rail car, there will be a large telephone symbolizing Lincoln's regional center for the telecommunications industry. At the center of the train, there will be an oversized ear of corn representing the farming industry. (Driving with my parents through Nebraska on our way to my uncle's farm in South Dakota, I remember seeing miles and miles of enormous cornfields in Nebraska.) Then there will be a cow in a much too small boxcar looking longingly at the ear of corn that remains out of reach. In the last car I have a business man. He could be a banker or an entrepreneur. He is buying an apple from a girl, a vignette about the difference in scales of economics. Two open flatbed train cars separate these narrative sections. Placed in the center of these flatbeds are simple boxes that children can ride on, making it a great location to take family photographs. Family photographs have entered a new age. Families now take photos and post them "online". Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have added a new dimension to the way people and communities experience and share public art. It is important to be conscious of this.

The train sculpture will be tied together by six to seven 6 inch figures sitting on the shoulders of the larger figures: small farmers lifting the ear of corn, a small conductor sitting at the front of the train. They will be dressed similarly to the larger figures. I find these small figures add enormous impact to the work. They serve to animate the story and often become the public's favorite parts of the work. Viewers identify with these little people and become attached to them.

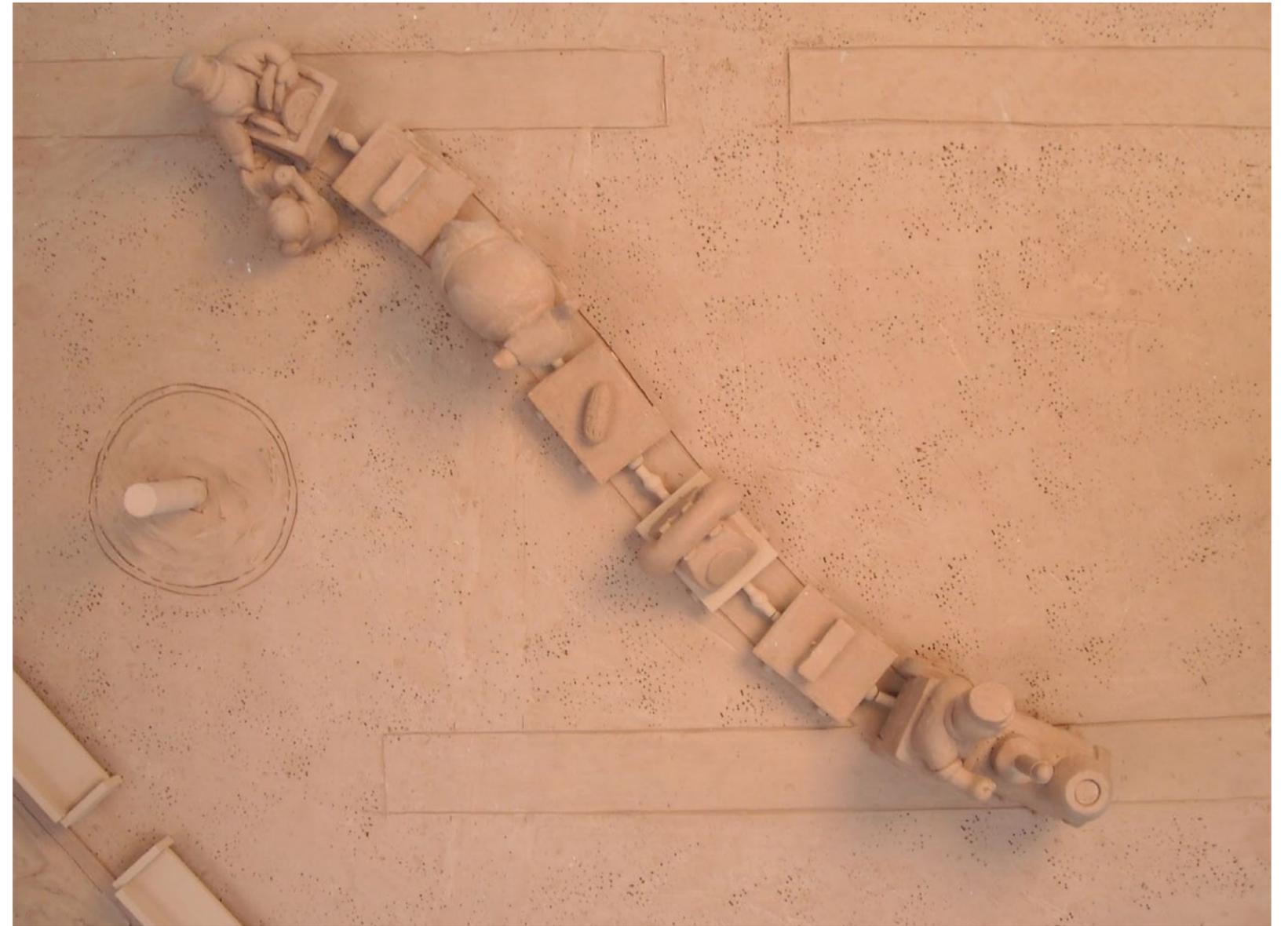
I have chosen a location that is both highly visible from the road and yet intimate. I propose to place the work under the shade of several trees and near seating benches. This placement encourages parents to sit near the sculpture and watch their children play. The train is also positioned facing towards Canopy Street and the Depot's historic canopy, looking at the past and the future of Lincoln, Nebraska.



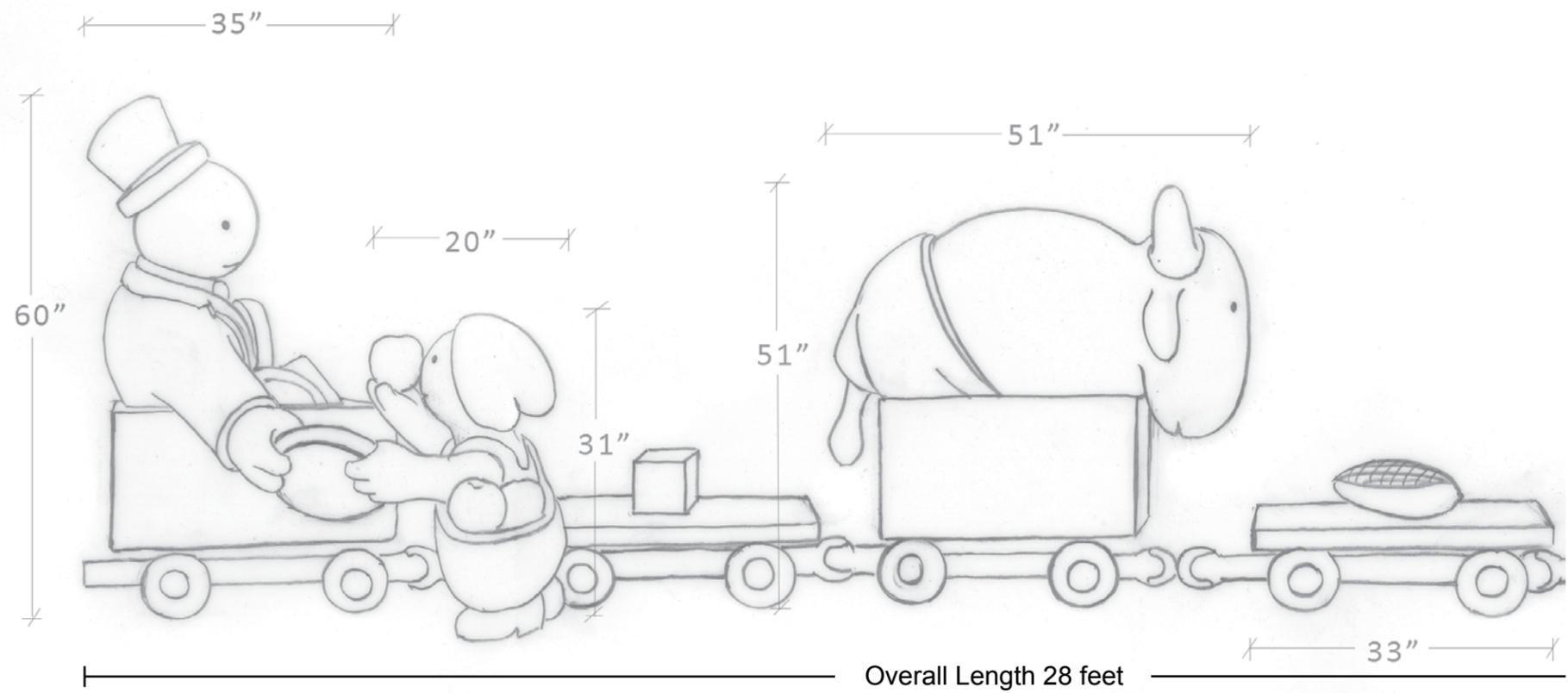




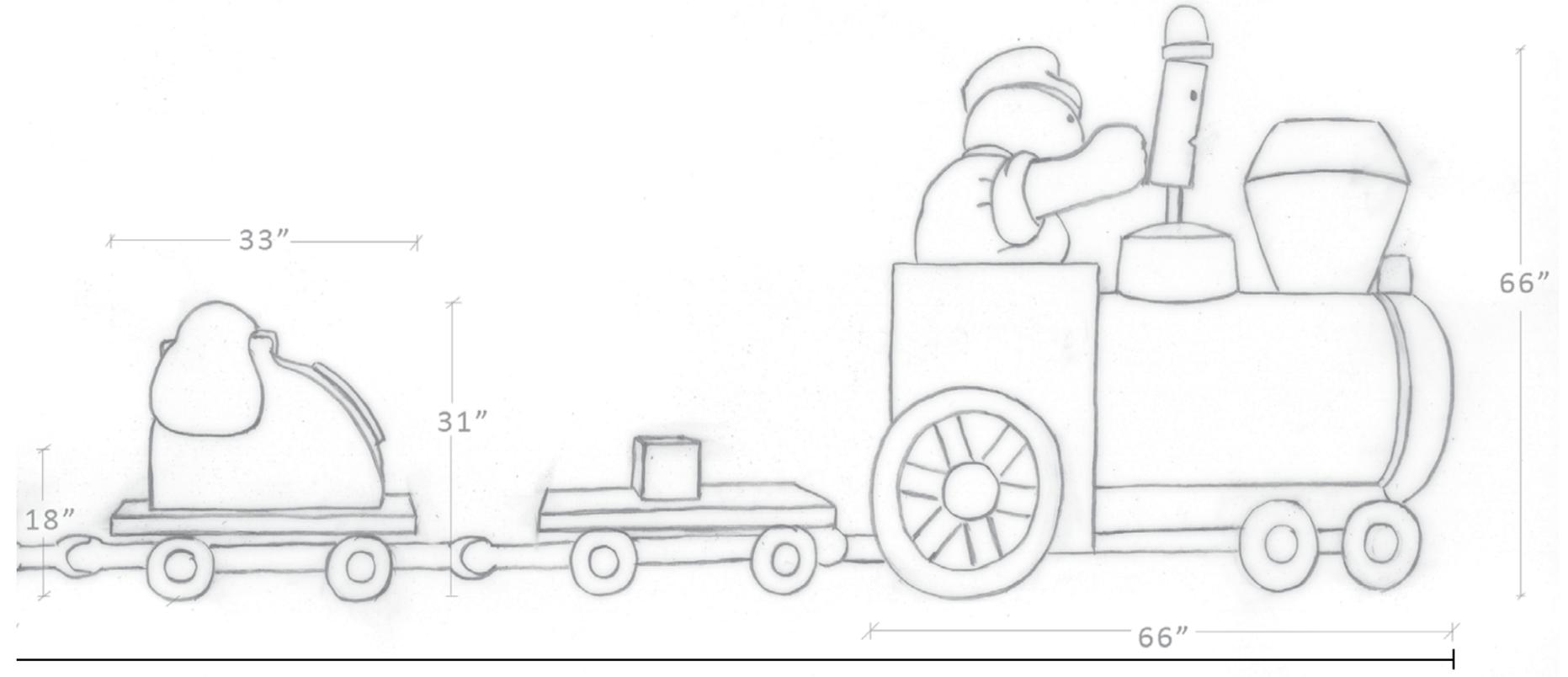
Plan of Pinnacle Bank Arena Plaza with Train

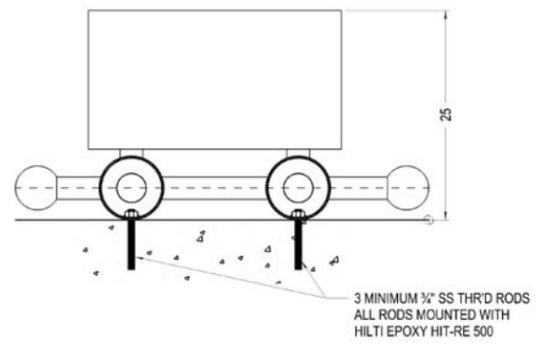


Top view of Train

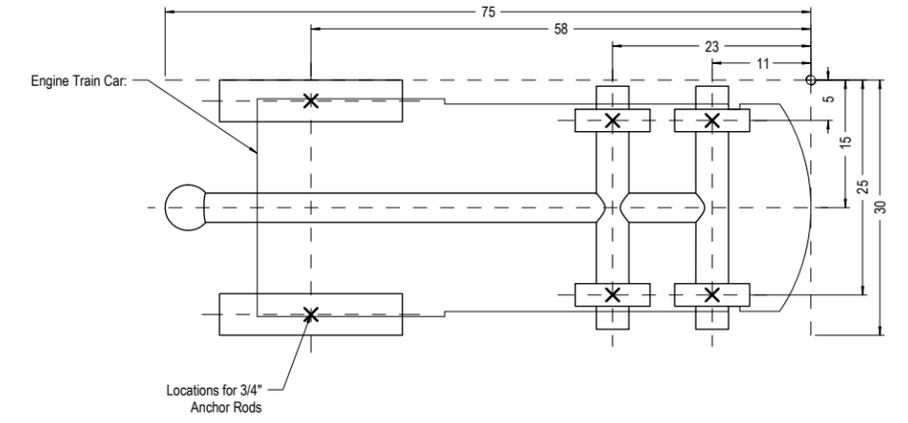
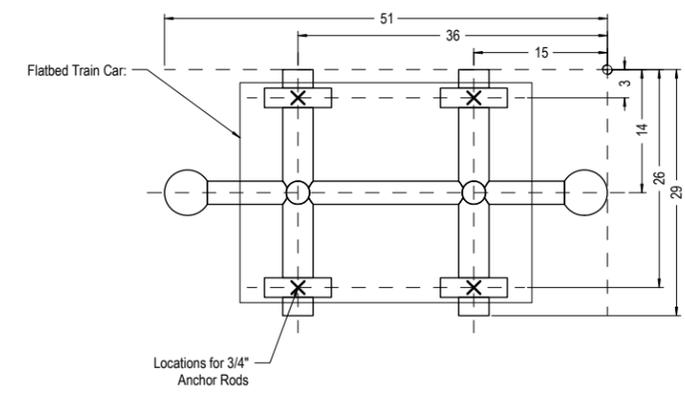
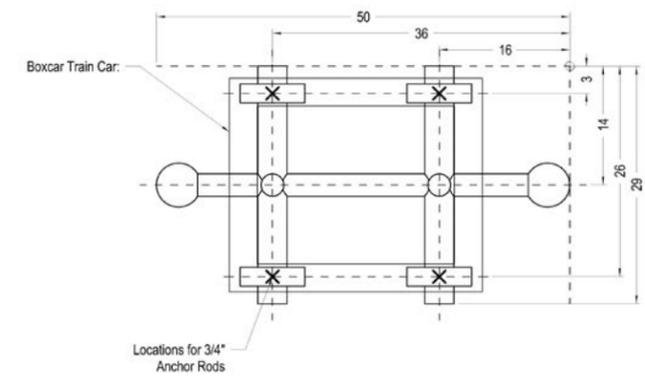
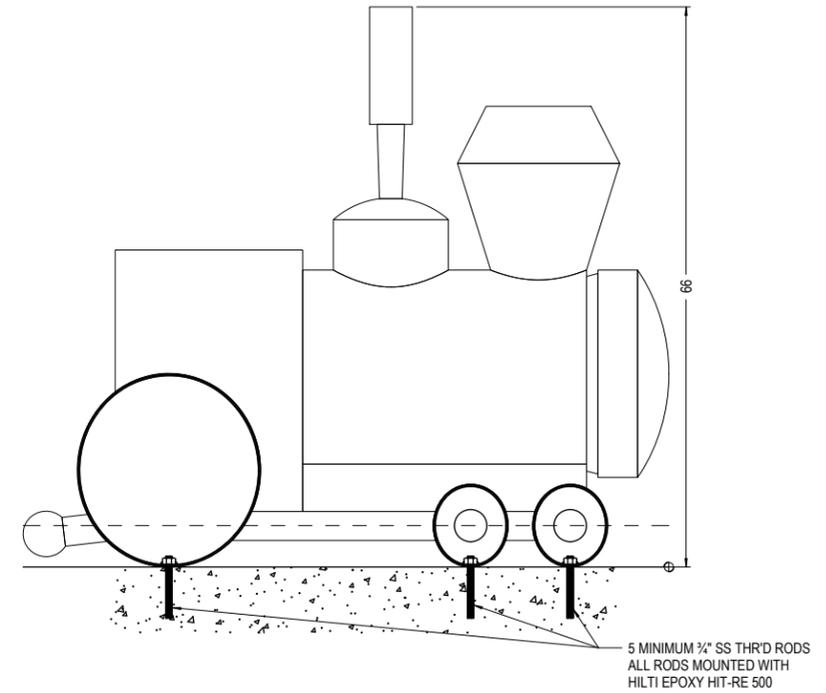
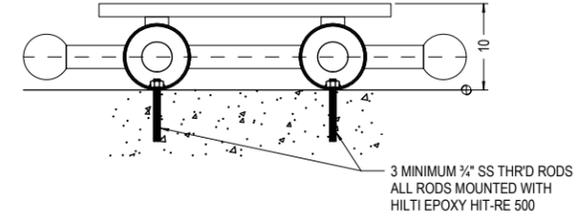


Elevation of Train with dimensions





3 MINIMUM 1/2" SS THRD RODS  
ALL RODS MOUNTED WITH  
HILTI EPOXY HIT-RE 500





Detail of phone car

The studio will require 6 months to sculpt and mold the work and the foundry will need 6 months to cast and fabricate the work in bronze. We estimate 2 weeks to install the work on site. The studio must commence work no later than September 2012 to meet the opening of the Arena in September 2013.

The cost of the proposed work including installation is \$750,000. The budget can be adjusted by adding or eliminating cars from the train.

A projected annualized cost to maintain the bronze is approximately \$2,500-\$4,500. A local art conservator or an art foundry can be contracted to wash and wax the bronze on a semi-annual basis.



Detail from *The Real World*, Battery Park City, New York, 1992

Bronze is the best material for an outdoor sculpture due to its low maintenance requirements and its durability. Bronze has lasted thousands of years around the world and its beauty is enhanced by touching and handling. The handled areas become polished over time and become a kind of democratic record of which sculptures are the most loved.



