



City of Nanaimo

Temporary Public Art 2026

Call to Artists

Date issued: June 16, 2025

Deadline: 11:59pm Pacific Time, October 26, 2025

Information Sessions:

- Friday, Aug. 29 | 7:30pm: [ZOOM Meeting](#)
- Monday, Sept. 15 | 6pm: [ZOOM Meeting](#)

Should you experience challenges or barriers in this application process or require additional support, we encourage you to reach out to: cultureandevents@nanaimo.ca (250-755-4483).

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Introduction

The City of Nanaimo is seeking proposals for [Temporary Public Art](#) to be initiated in 2025 and realized in 2026.

The Temporary Public Art Program offers artists of diverse backgrounds and skillsets the opportunity to create artwork for public spaces in Nanaimo. Artists can propose artworks that vary in scale, scope, and medium, including temporary sculptural installations, social practice and community engaged artist projects and artwork that is integrated into landscape, architecture or civic infrastructure. The City of Nanaimo's Temporary Public Art Program supports artists in the creation of new works, by providing necessary resources and staff support through the course of project development and realization.

This application process will be completed in two stages. Initial applications will be reviewed and candidates selected following a panel review and possible interview process. The second stage will involve collaborating with City staff on potential public engagement, establishing budget parameters and scope, and final proposal approval.

Proposed projects will be realized in 2026 and must be able to endure for a period of 5 years. Selected artists will receive a fee of \$7,500 for the design and implementation of a project, and may propose expenses toward the production or realization of their project up to \$5,000.

PUBLIC ART 101

What is public art?

Situated at the intersection of public life, cultural ideas and the social conditions of our time, art in public places takes on many forms. It is always evolving in shape, size, medium and duration, and while there is no one medium, public art shares the common condition that it is a cultural expression that is accessible in a public space or place.

A goal of public art is the enhancement of community life and place-making. Often, public artworks celebrate or critically reflect on a location's unique attributes, such as the histories, traditions, values and aspirations of a place and the people who live there. Made by artists, or by community members through artist-led processes, it is a cultural contribution that fuels imagination, sparks curiosity and critical

thinking, and offers a unique reflection of place, contributing to character and shared sense of identity.

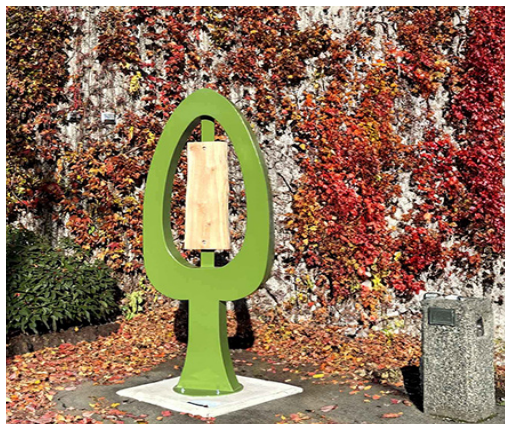
A public art project could:

- unfold as a long-term intervention into a civic process
- be the result of a community workshop or opportunity to be involved in creative work
- take the form of a sculpture, mural, or other sensory installation
- include programming in public spaces like video screens or outdoor performance venues
- result in the design of new community spaces

About the Temporary Public Art Program

Background

The program began with the City of Nanaimo inviting artists to exhibit sculptural works in Maffeo Sutton Park on an annual basis through open calls for Temporary Public Art. Responding to growth and change, in 2021 the program expanded to new spaces and supports art in public spaces that can endure for 5 years. This program continues to evolve as a longstanding commitment by the City of Nanaimo to integrate artwork into public spaces. Past projects have included temporary works such as:



From top left: Victoria Drakeford, *The Porthole* (2018), Carl Sean MacMahon, *Breaching Orca* (2011), David Martinello, *Compelling Agency* (2023), Curtis Grahauer, *Millstone* (2022)

Objectives of the Temporary Public Art Program

- To encourage the creation of publicly accessible artwork that has artistic merit and community benefit
- To foster neighbourhood pride, identity and creativity by supporting community-driven art projects
- To create memorable spaces and experiences
- To support artists in producing public art
- To employ sustainable practices and enhance the environment and community resiliency
- To reflect the diversity, needs, and ambitions of the cultural community
- To provide a sense of place and celebration

Public Engagement & Public Art

As the City of Nanaimo's cultural landscape grows, creative place-making and public art become integral to the shaping of our community identity, contributing to physical and social character of place, spurring economic development, and improving physical environment. Essential to the success and positive reception of art in public spaces is establishing connections to local communities through public engagement. This involves an intentional process of instigating dialogue, seeking feedback, and actively listening. Artists are expected to be thoughtful of local communities without seeking community consensus or exhaustively engaging all community stakeholders (which we recognize are not realistic goals, nor necessary outcomes of public engagement).

A variety of modes of engagement are linked to feelings of civic pride, engendering a sense of inclusion and belonging within communities, and the reinforcing and/or reimagining of shared cultural identities. When communities are engaged in public art development, the resulting artwork better reflects a diversity of voices, helps serve stakeholder needs and priorities more effectively, and amplifies the stories, the people, and the spirit of local communities. Impacted community stakeholders may change, based on the premise of a given project, and identifying shared purpose is central to the development of effective public engagement strategy. Considerations regarding the nature and scope of a public art project may benefit from an active community engagement process. The result is that impacted communities feel represented.

Questions to consider in the development of a public art project:

- Who are impacted community stakeholders? Cultural partners?
- What communities will be most impacted by the project?
- How do communication needs differ between stakeholder groups?
- Are there barriers to engagement and how can they be mitigated?

Predicted outcomes:

- Fostering community/ neighbourhood identity, attachment, and pride
- Provide a sense of place and celebration; Supporting community vibrancy
- Reflecting the environment/ community
- Contributing to/ supporting local economy

When is public engagement expected?

Only artists selected to complete a public art project will be expected to participate in the development and implementation of a public engagement strategy in collaboration with City staff. The public engagement strategy will be project specific as it relates to and/or benefits an artist's proposal. The public engagement strategy will be implemented in Stage 2 of the project development (expected to begin January 2026). City staff will support artists throughout the development and implementation of the strategy and provide resources when available.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

The Temporary Public Art Program is open to all artists, working individually or in collaboration. For the purposes of this call, the definition of an artist is a professional who:

- has completed basic training in art or an apprenticeship with an accomplished practitioner in the field, or
- maintains an artistic practice and has publicly shared an independent body of their work for at least two years, or
- is recognized as an artist by peers within their community

You do not have to be a resident of Nanaimo, but you must have significant experience with, and relationship to this place.

Partnerships are also encouraged and welcomed between artists and non-profit arts groups, businesses, community service groups, community associations, multicultural societies, and historic societies. However, please note that preference will be given to individuals artists.

Who cannot apply?

For-profit entities (such as small business, corporations, developers) undertaking public art projects. Artists who are registered as a business or in partnership with a business may apply, as long as they retain creative control over the proposed project.

Inclusion & Accessibility

The City encourages applications from those who experience barriers of access due to gender identity/expression, racial identity or perception of disability. Should you experience challenges or barriers in this application process or require additional support, we encourage you to reach out to cultureandevents@nanaimo.ca (250-755-4483). The City is committed to improving accessibility for all by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers.

Individuals engaged in City of Nanaimo Public Art programs are asked to commit to the City's Policy C4.2 Equity and Inclusivity:

- Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities to support more positive outcomes for all regardless of age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, faith practice, ancestry, or background. By identifying inequities and targeting investment in prevention and intervention, the wellbeing and inclusion of the diversity of people that make up our entire community can be enhanced, creating a city that puts people first and supports a sense of belonging.
- Contribute to a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere where all people feel safe, comfortable and represented (Policy C4.2.1); Encourage diversity awareness and build a culture of compassion for people of all cultures, genders, orientations, ages and abilities (Policy C4.2.8).

What types of projects are eligible?

Artists can propose artworks that vary in scale, scope, and medium, including performative artworks. Public art projects need to be freely accessible to the public, be it a temporary event or a sculptural installation.

Artists who would like to propose functional art such as benches or bike racks, streetscape improvements to infrastructure such as sidewalks or plaza surfaces, or adornments to public utilities may apply to the [Urban Design Roster](#). Artists may participate in both programs, but must submit separate applications. The call for the 2026-2028 Urban Design Roster will be available by the end of June 2025.

Project Location/ Site Selection

Artists can propose a site of interest for their project with their initial proposal, or refer to the suggested sites listed in this Call. If selected, the artists will work together with City Staff to adapt or confirm site location.

Potential locations for works on City-owned properties could include plazas, greenways, community centres, parks, and on/in civic infrastructure. Privately owned sites may be considered, but only if they are freely accessible to the public and an agreement with the owner to ensure accessibility can be demonstrated.

If you have an idea for a piece that doesn't have a location in mind, you can apply with the idea and subsequently work with the City of Nanaimo to find a suitable place.

Timeline

Anticipated Schedule		
Date	Time	Activity/ Event
16-Jun-2025		Stage 1: Call to Artists
29-Aug-2025	7:30PM PST	Information Session via Zoom
15-Sept-2025	6:00PM PST	Information Session via Zoom
26-Oct-2025	11:59PM PST	Submission Deadline
Nov-2025		(Possible) Artist Interviews
Dec-2025		Projects Awarded/ Approved by City Council
Jan-2026		Stage 2: Project Development Begins
May-2026		Final Project Approval
Spring/Summer 2026		Project Completion

How to Apply

All proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Panel of City of Nanaimo Staff and members of the [Art in Public Spaces Working Group](#).

Please note: This is a multi-step process.

Short-listed artworks proposed with Indigenous content will require approval of content and site location from Snuneymuxw First Nations prior to final selection. This approval process can be completed prior to an artist's Temporary Public Art application being submitted, or in collaboration with City Staff following initial short-listed selection.

STAGE 1 Submit a preliminary proposal

At this stage in the application, artists should offer an idea for a new public artwork.

Requirements:

1. A detailed Statement of Intent about your Temporary Public Art project including: the artwork you're proposing, how you see the work situated in location, how your project relates to Nanaimo and/or the location selected/ proposed, how your project relates to your artistic practice, and how you intend to approach concept and project development. (1 to 2 pages maximum).
2. Up to 15 images, or up to 15 pages of materials in PDF or paper form. You may include up to 2 videos that offer context or are indicative of previous work. Supporting materials must have a corresponding descriptive listing, such as an image list.
3. A resume for all artists/lead collaborators who will be undertaking the project.
4. If a project proposal engages with Indigenous content, please clarify whether the approval of Snuneymuxw First Nations has been acquired and/or whether you intend to seek approval in collaboration with the City of Nanaimo.

When considering what to include in your proposal, note that the emphasis is on a Statement of Intent about a project. It is expected that the work has not been made and the concept not fully realized, but will be developed in Stage 2 with support from City staff. The Selection Panel will review all proposal materials. Please include a preliminary set of drawings or other relevant supporting materials such as examples of previous artwork that demonstrate your artistic ability to undertake the work.

Should it be deemed necessary, the Selection Panel will contact artists and schedule brief interviews to discuss project proposals in more detail.

STAGE 2 Project Development & Final Approval

Selected artists will be offered feedback from the Selection Panel, and will continue the development of their proposed project. This will include communication and collaboration with City staff on potential opportunities for public engagement as these strategies will benefit and/or be appropriate to project proposals.

Artists will seek final project approval from City staff and the Selection Panel by providing finalized details of proposed projects. This may include: design drawings, production timelines, research on the durability and availability of proposed materials, evidence of feedback and consultation with public and relevant community groups/ stakeholders, budget development, specific placement of artwork at project site. When approval has been confirmed, fabrication of projects may begin.

- Public engagement developed with support from City staff may include:
 - » Identifying impacted community groups, stakeholders, businesses, and/ or cultural partners
 - » Communication and dialogue with impacted community groups and interested public
 - » Engaged research: collection of information on local issues, needs, and goals
 - » Opportunities for engagement/ feedback in project development process
- City support & resources in development of public engagement may include:
 - » Collaborative brainstorming on effective strategies for public engagement
 - » Support through online platforms including social media channels
 - » On-site support and location scouting for in-person programming/ workshops
 - » Liaising with relevant cultural partners, community groups, neighbourhood associations, businesses, and so on.

Projects will emerge from a process of listening and engaging; information gathered through public engagement is woven into processes and final project development.

Examples of engagement strategies include: social media engagement and information sharing; public surveys; virtual information sessions; interactive public art programs; one-on-one consultations with local businesses; presenting to neighbourhood associations; engagement of local media; polling of public in decision-making; and so on.

Note: We recognize public engagement cannot involve every stakeholder in every decision, but expect artists to make efforts to be inclusive and involve as diverse an array of impacted communities and members of the public as possible. Community consensus is not an expectation, nor a requirement for final project approval.

Criteria for selection

Proposals are reviewed by the Selection Panel based on the following criteria (order listed does not indicate the order of importance):

- Strength and creativity of past work
- Demonstrated ability to produce and present work
- Feasibility of the project timeline and available budget
- Understanding of priorities outlined in this Call including a commitment to collaborating with City staff in the development of public engagement opportunities when appropriate
- Connection and relevance to place
- Engagement with critical dialogues in contemporary art
- Approval by Snuneymuxw First Nation if the project involves Indigenous content
(Note: Can be acquired pre-submission or post-shortlisting with support from City staff)

Selected Projects - Next Steps

The Selection Panel will recommend projects to be commissioned for approval to City Council. All artists will be contacted with the results. The artists whose projects are commissioned will receive an honorarium of \$7,500, and a production budget of up to \$5,000.

A signed agreement is required before a commission is awarded. The artist/ contractor must have commercial general liability insurance of \$2,000,000 for the duration of the contract period.

How to submit for Stage 1

Submissions must be received no later than 11:59PM, Pacific Time, October 26, 2025. There are two ways to submit:

1. Submit your application and required documents [online](#) using the submission form on our website;
2. Drop off your application and required documents in-person to the Culture & Events Dropbox, located at the Bowen Complex, 500 Bowen Road. The Dropbox is located on the lower level of the building near the tennis courts (Pine Street Entrance). Hand delivered submissions must be in a sealed envelope/package clearly marked:

Your Name
Temporary Public Art Program
City of Nanaimo
Culture and Events



Lower Bowen Complex

Terms & Conditions

Once submitted, the application is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Personal information will not be released except in accordance with the FOIPPA. Questions about the collection of your personal information may be referred to the Legislative Services Department at (250) 755-4405, or via email at foi@nanaimo.ca.

Confidentiality

Materials submitted for consideration to the Temporary Public Art Program will be treated as confidential. Ideas presented are understood to be the intellectual property of the applicant and the information contained therein will not be reproduced or adapted for any purpose, except to the extent necessary to communicate information to Staff and the committee for the purpose of evaluation and analysis. The City will not release this information to the public except required under the Province of BC's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Questions

Thank you for your interest! Applicants will only be contacted if they are selected to move forward in the selection process. Artists will be notified of final selection of public art projects by December 2025. Questions regarding the Temporary Public Art Program may be directed to Culture & Events at:

cultureandevents@nanaimo.ca or 250-755-4483

We strongly encourage you to attend one of two available information sessions. An opportunity to ask questions will be provided at this time.

Temporary Public Art Information Sessions:

- Friday, August 29 | 7:30PM: [ZOOM Meeting Link](#)
- Monday, September 15 | 6PM: [ZOOM Meeting Link](#)



Stay in touch! Find info on latest projects and opportunities to get involved. Follow the Culture & Events team on Instagram [@prc_nanaimo](#). Or sign-up for the [Love Arts Nanaimo Newsletter](#) and learn about how the City is amplifying and championing local creativity!

Supplementary Information - Important Aspects of the Public Art Process with the City of Nanaimo

Budget

A budget may include the following line items. Consider every aspect of the work and include consultants, fabricators and others as needed for estimates to build a feasible budget. Applicable taxes can be included.

- Administration includes travel and accommodation, postage, courier, supplies, phone, printing, documentation, maintenance manual and accounting/legal fees.
- Professional Consultant Fees
- Production/Fabrication
- Installation

Insurance

The artist/contractor must have public liability insurance of \$2,000,000 for the duration of the contract period. This includes liability for injury of public and employees working on the project. Insurance should be included as part of the costs of the project. In particular circumstances, the insurance requirement may be waived and covered by the City or contractor.

Maintenance & Conservation

Project maintenance needs will be discussed to understand materials and conservation requirements. If deemed appropriate, a maintenance manual will be created in collaboration with the City that will describe in detail the specifications of materials and finishes, method of cleaning, preserving and maintaining the final artwork, and drawings and instructions for its care.

Copyright

Copyright for the completed work usually belongs jointly to the artist and to the commissioning organization or the City.

Contract

A signed agreement is required before a commission is awarded. The contract is signed once legal provisions have been agreed between the City and the Artist. Independent legal advice is recommended and can form part of the costs of the project. Contract payments are made in installments, usually as a percentage of the total contract amount, and geared to specific stages of certification and production.

Indigenous Protocols & Permissions

Context

The City of Nanaimo is located on the traditional and ancestral territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. The City is committed to ensuring that the development of art in public spaces includes respect of local First Nations protocols. We recognize that longstanding discussions on Indigenous Protocols are complex, dynamic, and unique to each Indigenous Nation and community, regardless of location.

We recognize the rights of all Indigenous Peoples, regardless of origin, to own and control their cultural heritage, confirmed in Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Permissions

The City of Nanaimo is committed to supporting artworks that increase the visibility and acknowledge the ongoing relationship of the Snuneymuxw First Nation to the land.

Artworks proposed with Indigenous content will require approval of content and site location from Snuneymuxw First Nations prior to final selection. This approval process can be completed prior to an artist's Temporary Public Art application being submitted, or in collaboration with City Staff following short-listed project selection.

Protocols

Protocols are traditional ways of doing things in a particular territory. They range from hard rules and laws to softer customs such as good manners. Protocols are appropriate ways of engaging with Indigenous cultural material and interacting with Indigenous artists, Nations, and communities. Protocols arise from value systems and cultural principles developed within and across communities over time.

As the primary guardians and interpreters of their own cultures, Indigenous communities present in Nanaimo have well-established protocols covering cultural production and sharing. We Honour and comply with the protocols of the Snuneymuxw First Nations by ensuring that we conduct our work based on good faith and mutual respect, and ongoing good relations.

In accordance with the protocols of Snuneymuxw First Nation, we require that artists working in Nanaimo, whose artwork holds Indigenous content, will first obtain permission to show their work by contacting the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Indigenous content is considered to be present when imagery, expressions, motifs and methods convey Indigenous knowledge, formally or informally.

Responsible use of Indigenous Cultural Knowledge and expression ensures that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis cultures are maintained and protected so they can be passed on to future generations.

Possible Project Locations

Site-Specific Public Art

Public Art is a powerful place-making tool with a multitude of proven community benefits. When developed with consideration for a particular environment and/or location, public art has the potential to serve as a bridge between people and place, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural identity. In this way, public art is seen as a vital contribution to the health and happiness of communities. In the outlined project, we ask you to consider the significance of place in the development of your proposal. Site-specific public art evaluates existing communities cultural assets, identifies how local needs and priorities can be addressed and/or establishes an approach to do so, and is inclusive of impacted communities.

Locations

Unless otherwise indicated, a variety of potential sites at each listed location are possible and dependant on the project proposed.

- Salish Garden/ Pearson Park
- Entrance to Harewood (Harwood Rd & Bruce Ave)
- Bowen Park
- Pioneer Square Park (Victoria Crescent)
- Beban Recreation Park
- Harewood Centennial Park
- [Smaller Neighbourhood Community Parks](#)

Considerations

- Existing infrastructure
- Existing community cultural assets
- Local businesses
- Community/ Neighbourhood identity/ goals
- Impacted community stakeholders
- Projects are expected to endure for a period of 5 years



Bowen Park



Harewood Centennial Park