



City of Nanaimo Luminous Paths 2027

Call to Artists

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Deadline: 11:59pm Pacific Time, June 14, 2026

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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).

Introduction

The City of Nanaimo is seeking proposals for temporary public art as part of the 2027 [Luminous Paths](#) festival - a winter celebration of light, art, land, and community.

Temporary public art projects will be selected in the summer of 2026, with the festival taking place in February of 2027.



The Portal, Mauro Dalla Costa



Candycombs, Monkey C Interactive

Photography by Sean Fenzl

About the Festival

Luminous Paths is Nanaimo's biannual winter festival of light, art, land, and community, presented by the City of Nanaimo. Taking place in a public park along the downtown waterfront, the festival features temporary, light-based art installations that transform familiar places into immersive, placemaking experiences after dark.

First launched in 2025, Luminous Paths invites artists to reimagine public space through illumination, projection, sound, and interactive works that encourage curiosity, play, and connection. Installations are supported by opening and closing celebrations, live performances, and community engagement activities, drawing residents and visitors outdoors during the winter months.

The festival emphasizes place-making, accessibility, and creative exploration while responding thoughtfully to the natural environment and Nanaimo's dark spaces. Luminous Paths provides artists with an opportunity to present ambitious, highly visible work, engage broad audiences, and contribute to a growing signature cultural event that celebrates creativity, community, and light in the heart of winter.

The festival supports City Plan Policies [C4.5.3 \(Culture\)](#), [C4.7.2 \(Public Art\)](#), and [C4.8.4](#) and [C4.8.12 \(Festivals and Events\)](#).

Festival Overview

- Dates: (Family Day) February 15 - March 12, 2027
- Location: [Maffeo Sutton Park | Sway-a-Lana](#) (Nanaimo, BC)
- Produced by: City of Nanaimo
- Website: www.nanaimo.ca/luminouspaths

Artistic Focus

In February 2027, temporary light-based installations will invite audiences into moments of creativity, curiosity, and sensory discovery. Artists are encouraged to transform familiar public spaces into illuminated environments that people can move through, interact with, and feel inspired by. Art is at the heart of the Luminous Paths festival, inspiring hope and excitement for the future of the community - arts and culture light the way!

Artists are encouraged to explore creative approaches using light, sound, motion, and material to evoke wonder and connection. Works should be designed for outdoor public display and suitable for viewing during evening hours.

Themes & Inspiration

Artists may wish to consider the following themes:

- Light as transformation and renewal
- Interconnection between community, land, and water
- Pathways - literal or metaphorical - that connect people and place
- Play, discovery, and shared experience in public space
- Honouring the Land (see [Pg. 7](#))

Considerations

- Lighting dark/ unwelcoming spaces
- Creating place-making experiences; environments people can walk through/ interact with/ draw them in
- Sensory experiences – projects that engage more than one sense (i.e. sight and touch; sight and sound)
- Consideration for electricity available/ technical equipment needed/ exposure to weather/ securing art and technical equipment
- Consideration for Nanaimo's Dark Skies Policy: “Thoughtful public and private lighting to limit light pollution and preserve dark skies, especially in natural areas, so wildlife can thrive and residents can enjoy views of the night sky.”
- Making use of existing structures – placement of artworks feels intentional/ thoughtful



Continuum, David Martinello



Pythagorhythm, Monkey C Interactive

Photography by Sean Fenzl

Selection Criteria

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
- Artistic merit and innovation
- Relevance to festival themes and place
- Audience engagement and accessibility
- Technical and logistical viability

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to all artists, working individually or in collaboration currently living in Canada. Artists do not have to be a resident of Nanaimo or region, but local (Vancouver Island) artists will be prioritized in selection process.

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

What types of projects are eligible?

Artists can propose artworks that vary in scale, scope, and medium, but must incorporate light or illumination in some capacity.

All artworks must be designed to withstand outdoor exposure including rain, wind, and cold temperatures. Materials and electrical components should be durable, weather-resistant, and safe for continuous outdoor operation.



CyberTree, Jenny Smith



Reconversion, David Martinello

Timeline

Date	Time	Activity/ Event
23-Feb-2026		Call to Artists
14-Jun-2026	11:59PM PST	Submission Deadline
Jul-2026		Projects Awarded
Aug 2026 - Feb 2027		Project Development
Feb 11 - 14 2027		Art Installation
15-Feb-2027		Festival Opening Event
12-Mar-2027		Festival Closing Event
Mar 13 - 15 2027		Art De-Installation

Budget

Artists may propose projects based on a three-tier budget selection (Budgets are inclusive of artist fee*, cost of fabrication, materials, insurance, and any potential travel/ transportation costs):

Tier 1: \$5,000 and under

Tier 2: \$8,000

Tier 3: \$10,000 - \$12,000

*Artist fee should be at least 30% of overall budget.

Upon project selection, artists will provide the Culture Coordinator with a proposed budget based on the agreed upon tier level.

Payments will be made in two installments. The first installment will be within 30 days of the contract being signed by both parties and the artist providing proof of insurance. The second installment will be following the de-installation of art projects at the close of the festival.

Insurance

The artist must retain public liability insurance of \$2,000,000 for the duration of the contract period with the City named as additionally insured. 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. Only in circumstances where the artist is providing a digital design only will insurance requirements be waived.

Terms & Conditions

Materials submitted for consideration will be treated as confidential. Ideas presented are understood to be the intellectual property of the applicant. 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*.

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.

How to Apply

All proposals will be evaluated by a Selection Panel.

Artworks proposed with Indigenous content will require approval from Snuneymuxw First Nation. This approval process can be completed by the artist prior to submission of application, or by City Staff following initial selection. See [Page 7](#).

Submission Requirements

1. Project Proposal (1-2 pages) describing concept, materials, lighting approach, and any engagement/ public interaction. Identify budget tier selected.
2. Technical and installation notes as known (electrical needs, dimensions, anchoring method, etc).
3. Sketches, renderings, or images illustrating proposed work.
4. Artist CV or short biography.
5. Up to 5 images/ videos of previous related work.
6. 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 with support from the City of Nanaimo.

How to submit

Submissions must be received no later than 11:59PM, Pacific Time, June 14, 2026. There are three ways to submit:

1. Submit your application and required documents [online](#) using the submission form on our website;
2. Mail your application and required documents to:

ATTN: Culture & Events, Luminous Paths 2027
Bowen Complex
500 Bowen Rd.
Nanaimo, BC V9R 1Z7

3. 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
Luminous Paths 2027
City of Nanaimo



Lower Bowen Complex

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 Luminous Paths festival are asked to commit to [City Plan 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).



yahkikiw (they push forward in growth), bailey macabre

Photography by Sean Fenzl

Questions

Thank you for your interest! Applicants will only be contacted if they are selected to move forward in the selection process. Questions regarding the 2027 Luminous Paths festival may be directed to Culture & Events at:

cultureandevents@nanaimo.ca or 250-755-4483



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!

Maffeo Sutton Park | Sway-a-Lana

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.

Lighting a Path (February 16 - March 16, 2026)

[Lighting a Path](#) was a temporary public art installation in Sway-a-Lana (Maffeo Sutton Park) done in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation. This project, which featured the work of seven Snuneymuxw creators, offers a powerful example of how public art can honour the Land by illuminating stories of place, memory, and stewardship.



Art by the late W. Joel Good



Art by Noel Brown

Permissions/ Protocol

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 from Snuneymuxw First Nations prior to selection. This approval process can be completed prior to an artist's application being submitted, or in collaboration with City Staff following short-listed selection.

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.