



City of Nanaimo Street Banners 2026

Call to Youth Artists (19yr and under)

Date issued: June 30, 2025

Deadline: 11:59pm Pacific Time, September 28, 2025

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Drop-In Information Session

Tuesday, September 9, 2025 | 4:30 - 6 PM
Bowen Complex, Room 5
(500 Bowen Rd, lower level)

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 art from youth (under the age of 19) for its 2026 [Street Banners](#).

This program offers youth artists an opportunity to submit proposals for original banner artwork that will be hung in Nanaimo's downtown area. Banners will be put on display in spring 2026, in the Arts District downtown, along Bowen Road, Third Street and other major routes, creating a vibrant visual presence.

The selected youth artist will receive an honorarium of \$2,500 for their banner design. Fabrication and installation costs are covered by the City and are not included in this fee.

An artist/ designer from the City's [Urban Design Roster](#) will be made available to serve as a mentor to the youth artist in the final development of their design, should this be deemed necessary and/or helpful to the selected youth artist.



Left to Right: Aiyem Samay-Sampson (2025), Amy Pye (2024), Sebastian Abboud (2023)

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to youth artists under the age of 19 at all levels of experience, currently living in British Columbia.

Timeline

Anticipated Schedule		
Date	Time	Activity/ Event
30-Jun-2025		Call to Youth
28-Sep-2025	11:59PM PST	Submission deadline
Oct-2025		Selection made
Oct/ Nov		Design edits/ prep design for print
15-Nov-2025		Design must be to fabricator
Spring 2026		Banners go on display

Theme:

Through Our Eyes - Youth Perspectives

What does the world look like through your eyes? The 2026 banner theme invites young artists to share your unique perspectives, experiences, ideas, and hopes for the future. Youth are change-makers. Through Our Eyes is all about how you see your city, your community, and your place within it. Whether your art is bold or quiet, playful or powerful, it's a chance to tell your story in your own way.

What inspires you? What challenges you? What are your hopes for the future of your community? Submissions to the 2026 Street Banner program under this theme might include playful and creative envisioning of the future, a merging of visual art and advocacy (What is most important to youth in today's world?), symbols of growth and creativity, and what it means to belong. It could be a mix of personal storytelling, creative expression, or powerful messages through art.

Your creativity has the power to transform city streets into a vibrant expression of youth identity, imagination, insight, and show that youth voices matter. Let your creativity speak. Let your voice be seen.



Your Submission

What should you include in your submission?

The applicant is responsible for offering a design that illustrates their own interpretation of the banner theme. The City of Nanaimo will be responsible for the fabrication and installation of the banners.

Note: Requirements for this opportunity have been adapted for youth. Some requirements (such as a written statement and biography) will be evaluated with the age of applicant in mind.

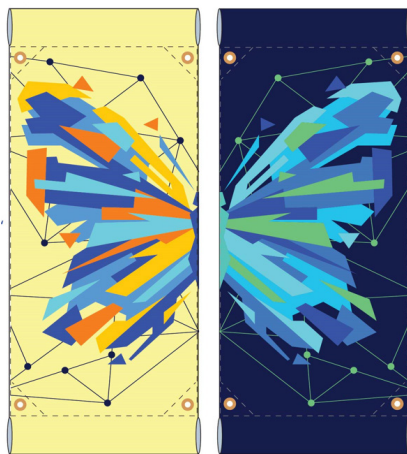
Your submission will include:

1. A completed application form;
2. A written statement about your proposed design/ art (one page). This should support how your art supports the banner theme;
3. A biography (up to 300 words, tell us about you);
4. A colour rendering of your design. The banners are printed using digital files. Original drawings/ paintings/ sketches may be submitted. Computer-generated images will be rendered from your design idea. This may be done by the youth artist using the format outlined in design specifications below, or this will be completed following selection with the help of an artist from the City's Urban Design Roster who will serve as a mentor in this process.

For submissions, we accept digital images in JPG, PDF or TIFF format. For production, we will produce vector files in a scalable vector format (usually PDF or EPS).

Important Note:

Your art should include a left design and a right design as banners include a right and left banner. You can propose up to three (3) different banner designs (each of which include a right and left side). Only one banner design will be selected.



Artist Aiym Samay-Sampson presented a design idea with a left side and a right side that came together to make one image (the abstract butterfly).



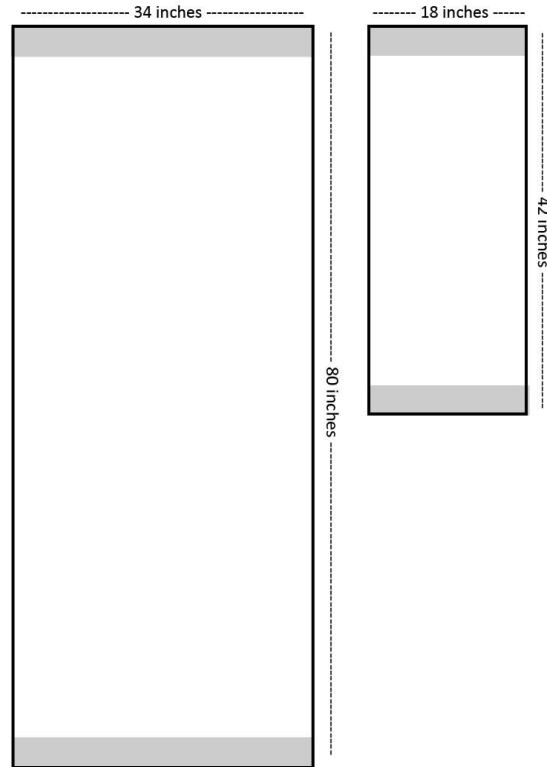
Artist Amy Pye presented a design idea with a left side and a right side that was one design with differing colour selection.

Design Specifics

Banner Dimensions

Your design should consider the dimensions (shape) of the street banners. For example, a square work of art will not adapt well to a long, rectangular banner. The city will produce both full-size and mini banners as seen below.

- mini street banners 18" W x 42" L
- full-size street banners 34" W x 80" L
- banner sleeve 3.25" on top and bottom edge



Avoid adding any important design elements on the upper or lower 3.25" banner sleeve as illustrated below.



Colour

The colour scheme for the 2026 competition is open. We strongly suggest high contrast, and a palette of no more than five highly chromatic colours containing maximum hue, plus black, white and grey. This means bright and vibrant colours. Pale colours and pastels will fade in sunlight. For best print quality, we would recommend avoiding shading techniques. However, gradient colours can be achieved. These recommendations are illustrated in the example below.

Best print results come from colours and images that take advantage of light passing through fabric. Designs should take into consideration that colours fade over the season. Darker colours typically hold their colour in outdoor settings over time much better than light or pastel colours.



Example: Sebastian Abboud's 2023 design

- Gradient: Colour fades from blue, becoming green, and yellow becoming red;
- Highly chromatic: Saturated, vibrant colours;
- High contrast: Design elements stand out against gradient background colours and are highly visible.

Contrast

When creating your design, consider the effects of a colour combination on design legibility and visual interest. Examples below are for demonstration only and do not indicate colour preference.

EFFECTIVE CONTRAST	POOR VISUAL CLARITY
LOW CONTRAST LOW VISIBILITY	HIGH VISIBILITY COLOUR CHOICE

Other Design Considerations

- Designs must be effective from long viewing distances and short viewing duration. Small details and complicated designs are not generally effective. Consider that banners will be viewed from the road at speeds of up to 50 km per hour.
- Designs must be non-commercial in theme. Banner art cannot serve as an advertisement.
- Banner designs cannot include copyright material (such as existing tv/ movie characters, for example).
- Designs must be original works of art.
- We don't encourage using words or letters in your design. If you are using lettering in your design, choose a font size and style that can be read at a distance of 50 to 75 feet. Note that words will appear in reverse on one side of the banner.

DESIGNS THAT INCORPORATE LOGOS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

What is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and machines to perform complex task normally done by human-reasoning, decision-making, creating, etc.

Use of AI

The City of Nanaimo is committed to paying artists fairly for their work, adhering to standard rates recommended by CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation/ le front des artistes Canadiens). The City of Nanaimo is also committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and fostering a safe environment for artists regardless of racial identity, age, gender identify/ expression, or perception of disability. The 2026 Call for Street Banners requests that artwork created with AI software not be included in your submission. If, however, AI software is used in the creation of your artwork, we ask that this be clearly identified in your submission package (for example, in your written statement).

AI & Accessibility

While we recognize that AI tools have been implemented in some cases to reduce barriers in application processes, the City of Nanaimo can provide other means of accomodating applicants with additional support needs.

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).

Resources:

- [CARFAC recommendations regarding AI and visual artists](#)
- [BC Government draft artificial intelligence principles](#)
- [Saatchi Art AI Policy](#)
- [BCIT Library: AI, Copyright & Liability](#)

This information and direction is subject to change in future calls to artists as AI evolves and policy/ legislation is developed.



Selection and Award

A selection panel formed by the City will review all proposals. Designs are reviewed based on the following criteria (order listed does not indicate the order of importance):

- Originality and creativity
- Quality / Effectiveness of Design
- Uniqueness of style
- Degree to which the design reflects the theme

The youth applicant whose banner design is selected will receive an honorarium of \$2,500 to be paid following completion and delivery of the final design.

Selected Design: Next Steps

A selected banner design will be announced when the competition is complete. The final design is scheduled to be sent to the Supplier responsible for banner production by November 15th, 2025, with final production slated for completion by end of January 2026. The artist may be required to make modifications to their design prior to production according to the production particulars below. The artist will agree to a guaranteed response time of 48 hours (made within office hours, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM (PST), Monday – Friday excluding Public Holidays) to support requests by the City and/or the Supplier.

Production Particulars

Note: For youth who require help in adapting artwork into final design files for fabrication (as discussed below), an artist from the Urban Design Roster will serve as a mentor and assist the youth artist in the preparation of their design for print.

The selected design will need to be produced as a high quality digital vector format (.ai .eps .pdf) or as .jpg files that are saved at each required print size, with a resolution of 300 dpi. If the file is not a vector format, each element of the drawing should be saved on a separate layer, with colours in solid coated pantone format identified for the production proof stage. The production team will review the files and make minor colour adjustments for colour fastness. A final production proof will be generated for artist review.

Copyright

The successful participant will retain copyright of their design and will grant the City license to use the selected design for the purpose of creating the street banner and for non-commercial promotional materials (this means the artwork is always yours; through this program, you grant the city permission to use your artwork in this particular way). At the end of the installation period, banners will be removed and when possible, made available for public sale.

How to Submit your Proposal

Submissions must be received no later than 11:59pm, Pacific Time, September 28, 2025. There are two ways to submit your design:

1. Submit your application and required documents [ONLINE](#) using the linked form; or
2. Drop off your application and required documents IN-PERSON to the Culture & Events Dropbox, located at the Bowen Complex (500 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo). The Dropbox is located on the lower level of the building near the tennis courts (Pine Street entrance). Hand-delivered applications must include one (1) original hard-copy of documents. A USB stick may be provided in addition to hard-copy.

The application must be enclosed and sealed in an envelope/ package clearly marked:

Your Name
Street Banner Program 2026
City of Nanaimo
Culture and Events



Lower Bowen Complex (500 Bowen Rd) and Culture & Events Dropbox

Terms & Conditions

Once submitted, the application is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The City advises applicants that submissions may be subject to the provisions of FOIPPA and the Community Charter. Personal information provided in the submission will be collected pursuant to FOIPPA and the Community Charter. 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.

Questions

Thank you for your interest! Applicants will only be contacted if their design is chosen. Questions regarding the Street Banner Program may be directed to Culture & Events at cultureandevents@nanaimo.ca ATTN: Street Banner Program, or 250-755-4483.

Note: A drop-in information session will be held at the Bowen Complex on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 from 4:30 - 6 PM. This is an opportunity to meet the Culture team, ask questions, and brainstorm ideas with guidance.

Application Form

If applying in-person, applicants must complete this form in addition to providing the attachments noted in the checklist below. Please ensure all information is legible.

PERSONAL INFORMATION	
Full Name:	
Preferred Pronouns:	
Address: (include postal code)	
Phone:	
Email:	
Date of Birth:	
Emergency Contact Name:	(if applicant is under the age of 18, please provide name of parent or guardian)
Emergency Contact Phone/ Email:	(if applicant is under the age of 18, please provide phone/ email of parent or guardian)

Attachment Checklist

- A written statement about proposed design, and how it supports the banner theme (one page)
- A brief biography (up to 300 words)
- A colour rendering of design. You can propose up to three (3) different banner designs as one single submission. Designs may be an original sketch, painting or computer-generated image of the design idea, following the format outlined in the design specifications. We will accept digital images in JPG, PDF or TIFF format on flash drive or via remote upload.

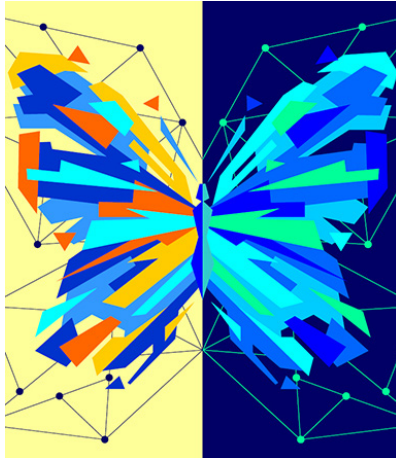
I acknowledge that I understand and agree with the terms of the Street Banner Program process as described in this program guideline, and I verify the information included in the submission is complete and correct.

Applicant Signature

Date

Examples of Previously Selected Banners

Note: These designs were done by adult professional artists/ designers.



Left: Aiyem Samay Sampson (2025)

Right: Amy Pye (2024)



Left: Sebastian Abboud (2023)

Right: Roz MacLean (2022)



Left: Becky Thiessen (2021)

Right: Amy Pye (2020)



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!