

Call to Artists

City of Kelowna Public Art

12504 Public Art - Building a Stronger Kelowna – Expression of Interest (EOI)

Submission Deadline: 2:00 PM (PDT) on September 10, 2025

Online Information Session via Microsoft Teams: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 6:00 PM (PDT) [Join the meeting now](#)



Architectural rendering redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec

The City of Kelowna acknowledges that our community is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the syilx Okanagan people.

Introduction

The City of Kelowna invites professional artists and artist-led teams to submit their Expression of Interest for several public art commissions that are part of Building a Stronger Kelowna (BSK), a group of recreational projects that work together to build deeper community connections across the city.

Building a Stronger Kelowna's suite of projects is a unique opportunity to develop a curatorial program of permanent and temporary artworks that connect in and across a group of community recreation facilities in the city. Public art projects will be original, inspired by Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley, and help tell the stories of this place.

Public art sites have not been determined yet and will evolve out of the integrated project delivery approach that is being used by the BSK team and this call for artists. Artists who apply to this call may be considered for public art commissions at any of the locations.

BSK public art will contribute to the identity of the project and to the City of Kelowna. Public art opportunities will vary in size and complexity to encourage applications by experienced artists and cultural makers, as well as those who have not completed large-scale public artworks. Local, national, and international artists or artist-led teams with public art experience and cultural makers working in any artistic medium are invited to apply. Where applicable preference will be given to Canadian applicants. Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit artists with connections to the syilx Okanagan people's territory are encouraged to apply.

Building a Stronger Kelowna includes five projects, the redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, Mill Creek restoration, which is part of the Parkinson Recreation Centre site, and the all-ages activity centres at Glenmore Rec Park, Rutland Lions Park, and Mission Rec Park. The public art budget, for all five projects, is \$1,377,000 CAD (exclusive of all applicable taxes). This budget includes all costs directly associated with the creation of all artworks at all locations: fees for design, fabrication, installation, professional services including engineering as required, insurance, travel, and all other incidental expenses.

The City invites interested artists to submit their expressions of interest electronically (see Submission Requirements). Please do not submit proposals at this time. Shortlisted artists will be contacted and invited to submit a concept proposal for a BSK public art site and proceed to Stage 2 of the selection process.

More information about BSK can be found here <https://www.kelowna.ca/our-community/planning-projects/building-stronger-kelowna>.

Building A Stronger Kelowna — Parkinson Rec Centre and Activity Centres

The BSK facilities (Parkinson Rec Centre and the all-ages activity centres at Glenmore Rec Park, Rutland Lions Park, and Mission Rec Park) will serve diverse and fast-growing neighbourhoods throughout the city of Kelowna. They are designed as community hubs and gathering spaces that stimulate social interaction and recreational activity. BSK public art will respond to the uniqueness of each location, neighbourhood, and community.

Tailored to the needs of the community, the design of the activity and amenity space for the all-ages activity centres at Glenmore Rec Park, Rutland Lions Park, and Mission Rec Park—including multi-purpose gymnasiums, wellness spaces, kids play parks, community kitchens and learning centres—will be open concept and flexible enough to include a variety of uses. The activity centres are in preliminary design pending final approvals.

Rutland Lions Park Activity Centre will be located beside Rutland Lions Park, a beautiful forest in the middle of Kelowna’s largest and most diverse neighbourhood. Originally an independent town, Rutland merged with Kelowna in 1973 and is recognized for its affordability, cultural diversity, and strong sense of community. The Centre’s holistic focus highlights community aspirations, including supporting youth, sparking personal growth and solidifying social and multi-cultural connections through creative pursuits, social activities, education, wellness and sports.

Glenmore Activity Centre will serve as a cornerstone in the area, a family-friendly, community-oriented neighbourhood with strong agricultural roots. It will be built within one of Kelowna’s newest recreation parks and be the only City-owned facility within Glenmore. Among other amenities the Centre will have an Okanagan Regional Library Express Branch.

Mission Activity Centre will be a connector within the Mission Rec Park that will be a social hub and event space supporting and amplifying the activities at the H2O Adventure + Fitness Centre and MNP Place. Situated within a biodiverse and climate resilient park, it will be designed in parallel with the MRP plaza, youth park, and associated amenities.

Parkinson Recreation Centre – Design Inspiration

The redevelopment of Parkinson Rec Centre (PRC) is the first of these projects to break ground in April 2025 and it is anticipated to open in 2027.

It will reside on a 19.4-hectare site, equivalent to 20 CFL football fields. The park will be easily accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and link to the Okanagan Rail Trail. The park will connect to the Apple Bowl, Parkinson Activity Centre (PAC), and Mill Creek. The redeveloped PRC will include an aquatics program, gymnasium, fitness and training rooms, multi-purpose spaces, activity rooms, and general administration spaces. Park amenities include sports fields, courts, plazas, playgrounds, and walking and cycling trails.

Project values that guide the PRC Integrated Project Delivery team and BSK public art:

- *Seven Generations*: provide long-term planning in design and delivery that demonstrates leadership in sustainability, is flexible and adaptive, and is a legacy to future generation.

- *Welcoming*: we will create a welcoming, accessible, inclusive and safe environment everyone can enjoy.
- *Community*: this will be a place of community, representing the heart of Kelowna, bringing people together for activity, and social and cultural interactions.
- *Authentic*: we will deliver a project that genuinely represents the Okanagan Region by respecting our community and heritage and aligning with local relevance.
- *Excellence*: we will demonstrate leadership and accountability through innovative practices to deliver a benchmark legacy project.

From the project’s inception, the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives has been integral to shaping a facility that is both respectful and reflective of the rich cultural heritage of the syilx Okanagan people. Thoughtful design ensures that the facility includes spaces for cultural ceremonies, storytelling, and educational workshops, making it welcoming for all community members.

Inspired by Indigenous collaboration, the building uses materials and design elements that reflect the natural environment. The organic curvature of the building is inviting. Curved walls and pathways encourage flow, connectedness, and reciprocity between people throughout the site. Materials like wood are celebrated for their texture and finish, and the exterior cladding features vertical patterning reflective of tule reeds. Design elements, like the shape of the roof, the natural ventilation system that mimics traditional pit houses, organic shapes of the campus landscape design, and the connection to water with Mill Creek reflect the culture of syilx Okanagan people.

The landscape plan strives to capture the spirit and essence of the existing Parkinson Recreation Centre through the preservation of the natural open park character while enhancing connectivity, active sport, multi-use open space and opportunities for culturally significant experiences. The redevelopment prioritizes sustainability and environmental responsibility. It includes the re-naturalization of Mill Creek and the reintroduction of native plants and eventually salmon.

The design and materiality of the PRC encourages the flow of people between spaces and the seamless transition between indoor and outdoor spaces through open atriums and glass curtain walls. Views of Mill Creek connect people in the building to the water and surrounding landscape, encouraging a unity with nature. These are key concepts that offer potential directions for public art.

BSK public art invites artists to explore the redeveloped Parkinson Rec Centre’s site, design, and materiality and creatively engage with ideas specific to the place, including how your art

- Connects to the project, and the histories and stories of Kelowna and the surrounding area
- Contributes to the creation of culturally inclusive spaces
- Encourages informal gathering that fosters community interaction and socializing
- Considers the relationship between the interior life of the building and its landscape
- Could be situated in more than one location simultaneously
- Considers sustainable practices and environmental impact

Specific sites for art will emerge out of the Integrated Project Design process. At this stage, the design team has highlighted the following areas for the potential inclusion of public art (see design renderings):

- Front entrance plaza and atrium through the building—this is the “central spine” that flows through the main space of the first floor
- The swimming pool glass curtain wall that looks out onto Mill Creek and the surrounding landscape
- 2nd floor corridors that connect different recreational and gathering spaces
- Mill Creek naturalization project
- Within the landscape design, including accessible pathways connecting the building site with the land, naturalized areas with native plantings, and a ceremonial gathering space with a fire pit

Other areas/locations on the PRC site may arise as the project develops and in response to artists’ practices.



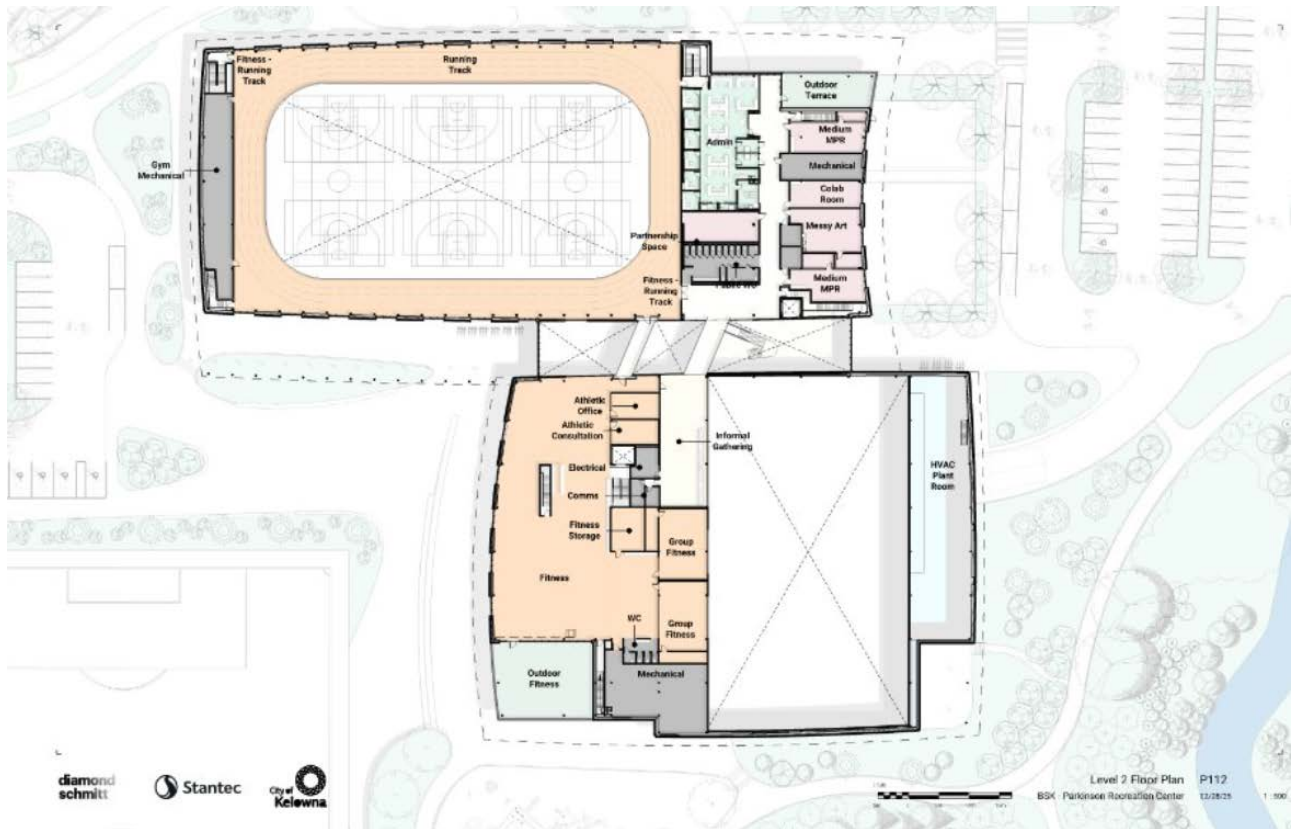
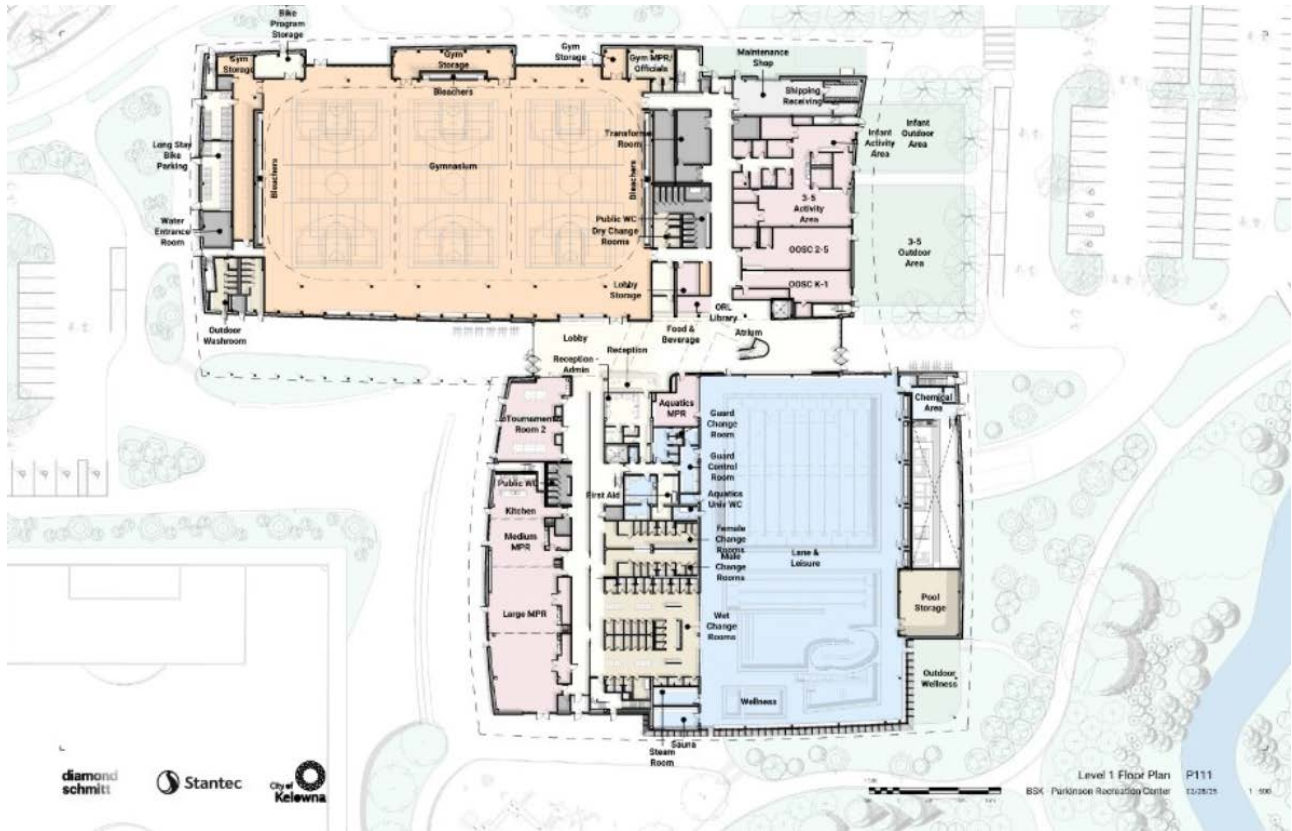
BSK General Site Plan, Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre
Van der Zalm + Associates, Scatliff + Miller + Murray



Architectural Renderings Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, West Porch Plaza (top), East Plaza (bottom)
Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec



Architectural Renderings Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, West Lobby (top), East Lobby view south (bottom)
Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec



BSK Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, Level 1 Floor Plan (top), Level 2 Floor Plan (bottom)
Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec



Architectural Rendering Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, Level 1 Lane & Leisure Area
Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec



Architectural Rendering Redevelopment of Parkinson Recreation Centre, Level 2 Gymnasium and Running Track
Diamond Schmitt Architects, Stantec

Background – Kelowna

Kelowna is situated on the unceded, ancestral territory of the syilx people of the Okanagan Nation. The Syilx Okanagan Nation territory spans 69,000 square kilometers from Mica Creek north of Revelstoke to Wilbur Washington in the south, west to Nicola valley and east to between Kaslo and Kootenay Lakes.¹ These lands are shared by seven member communities of the sovereign Syilx Okanagan Nation in the southern interior of British Columbia: Okanagan Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands, and Westbank First Nation; and in Northern Washington State, the Colville Confederated Tribes.²

Kelowna—the name refers to a male grizzly bear—follows the eastern edge of Okanagan Lake at its mid-point in the Okanagan Valley in southern interior British Columbia. The Okanagan Lake winds up and down the valley, its serpentine figure flowing through and nourishing the land, from Penticton in the south to Vernon in the north, it is the lifeblood of the region. Only one of many bodies of water in the area, its importance to the syilx people is expressed in the *Syilx Water Declaration*, a living document endorsed by the Okanagan Nation Alliance in July 2014 that commits to water as life and relation.³

The Okanagan Valley is a fertile region with a wealth of biodiversity that evolves with the changing seasons. It is bound by mountains and pine forests, edged with arid foothills sparsely dotted by indigenous grasslands, creeks and wetlands interconnect with the lake. For millennia, these lands have provided the fish, wild game, berries, roots, and medicines that have nurtured the syilx Okanagan peoples' lives, ceremonies, and stories. Today they continue “to be united by the hunting, fishing, harvesting, and gathering of food as the traditional gathering of these foods on the land is ceremony itself and demonstrates honour and respect for all living things,” and they believe “to care for the land is to care for the people.”⁴

Excerpt from the report: *Weaving our Collective Threads: Offering a Pathway for Syilx Creativity Within the City of Kelowna* by Carrie Terbasket, Stands Above Consulting (2019):

For syilx people, culture is not separate from the natural world, but rather one living and breathing entity. The methods of our survival have depended on our relationship with the natural world and expressing those relationships and resulting responsibilities through our creativity. The way that syilx people view arts, culture, and heritage is very different from the western perspective.

*The underlying and all-encompassing spirit that makes Kelowna such a beautiful place to live, work, play, and be, is the very same spirit that has sustained the syilx people since time out of mind.*⁵

¹ “About Us,” Okanagan Nation Alliance, <https://www.syilx.org/about-us/syilx-nation/>

² Ibid., “Territory,” <https://www.syilx.org/about-us/syilx-nation/territory/>

³ Ibid., “siw+tk” Water Declaration,” <https://www.syilx.org/about-us/syilx-nation/water-declaration/>

⁴ “Food Sovereignty,” Okanagan Nation Alliance, <https://www.syilx.org/about-us/syilx-nation/food-sovereignty/>

⁵ Carrie Terbasket, *Weaving Our Collective Threads*, 2019, chrome-

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Background — Community Context

The Regional District of Central Okanagan includes the municipalities of Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, West Kelowna, Lake Country, and Peachland. It has an estimated population of 250,000 people and is one of Canada’s fastest growing urban areas. Surrounded by mountains and orchards, Kelowna is a major agricultural centre and Canada’s premiere wine-producing area. A burgeoning tech sector focuses on digital media, software and clean tech. Kelowna is a four-season tourist destination known for its exceptional access to outdoor activities including water sports, skiing, golfing and hiking. It has a thriving arts and cultural scene with institutions such as the Kelowna Art Gallery, the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UCBO), Kelowna Heritage Museum, and the Westbank First Nation Sncewips Heritage Museum. Kelowna’s location and rapid growth pose challenges and opportunities to address climate resilience in the face of drought and wildfires and economic sustainability in the form of housing affordability.

Traditionally the syilx Okanagan people would have hunted and gathered on the land now comprising the Glenmore and Rutland areas. Before becoming part of Kelowna in 1973, **Rutland** was an independent agricultural community. Prior to 1890, settlers called the area Ellison Flats and Campbell Flats in reference to the vast areas of fertile land. Today Rutland is a diverse multicultural neighbourhood bustling with young families and new businesses.

Glenmore is located north of downtown Kelowna at the base of Knox Mountain. It is one of Kelowna’s oldest areas; its history of farming and ranching dates to the late 1800s. Older homes and heritage trees pepper Old Glenmore closer to downtown, while North Glenmore is more mountainous and serves as a gateway to Lake Country.

The syilx people fished, hunted and gathered sustainably for years along the Okanagan Lake, particularly in the areas now known as Mission Creek and Bellevue Creek. The **Mission District, Kelowna** takes its name from a mission site established by the Catholic Oblate missionaries and Father Charles Pandosy in 1859, the first permanent European settlement in the Okanagan Valley on unceded syilx territory. An early agricultural area, Mission is now an established affluent suburban neighbourhood reaching the southern most edge of the City of Kelowna.

Background — Public Art Program

Kelowna's Public Art Program was established by resolution of Council in 1997. Public art is art in public space that is free and accessible to everyone and often engages ideas about the public realm, urban space, place-based identities, and contemporary art and culture. The public art collection formed in 1998 when City staff identified thirteen existing artworks in public space as the Kelowna Public Art Collection. The City began to formalize its commissioning of public art through integration with civic capital projects in 2000. To date the Public Art Collection includes 89 artworks located throughout the city, ranging from murals to sculptures and artworks integrated into local streetscapes.

The City is currently completing a Public Art Plan that sets the direction for public art for the next ten years. It includes the ambitions and principles for public art; identifies public art priorities; sets parameters; formalizes processes and procedures, and develops a flexible curatorial framework to commission contextually responsive public art. It aims to diversify the collection and be responsive to current issues in the public realm and contemporary art and culture.

Building a Stronger Kelowna's suite of projects is the City's first opportunity to enact processes and the vision outlined in the public art plan. BSK is a unique opportunity to develop a curatorial program of permanent and temporary artworks that connect in and across a group of community recreation facilities in the city. BSK public art will contribute to the unique identity of each location and to the City of Kelowna. Public art projects will be original, inspired by Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley, and engage people's imaginations to help tell the stories of this place

Artist Eligibility and Selection Process

This competition is open to all local, national, and international professional artists⁶ and artist-led teams with public art experience and cultural makers working in diverse artistic mediums. Indigenous, Métis and Inuit artists with ties to the sylix Okanagan territory are encouraged to apply.

Selection process stages include:

Stage 1 is an open Call to Artists (Expression of Interest). Artists' submissions will be reviewed by a five-person Public Art Selection Panel.

Criteria used to evaluate submissions are:

- Artistic Merit 40% — Artist's practice is recognized as making significant contributions to their field by their peers.
- Past work 40% -demonstrates Artist's interest and ability in creating artwork specific to the context and community.
- Public Art Experience 20% — Artist has experience in public art; Artist can demonstrate how their work can successfully translate into public art; Artist has experience working with teams and/or in a collaborative way; Artist has completed projects on time and within budget.

Stage 2 will invite shortlisted artists to prepare a detailed concept proposal for a specific BSK site(s). Shortlisted artists will be expected to attend a public art information session as part of the RFP process. A CARFAC⁷ honorarium will be paid to each of the invited artists upon submission of their concept proposal and an invoice. A land tour/walk with Indigenous collaborators on the project will be offered for those who are in or can come to Kelowna.

Shortlisted artists will be required to participate in an interview. The venue will be 1435 Water Street, Kelowna, B.C. If unable to attend in person, the City will arrange an online interview with the Artist. All travel costs and expenses associated with the presentation will be included within the artist's honorarium.

Artist Selection Based on the preferred proposal(s), the selected Artist will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the City prior to commencing any work. Selection is not considered final until the agreement between the Artist and the City has been executed.

Project Schedule (Estimated)

- Optional Artist Information Session (Microsoft Teams)..... August 13, 2025 at 6:00 PM (PDT)
- **Deadline for Stage 1 Call for Artists EOI..... 2:00 PM (PDT) on September 10, 2025**
- Shortlisted Selection and Artist Notification..... November/December 2025
- Shortlisted Artist Site Visits and Information Session..... January 2026
- Stage 2 Proposals Due..... April 2026
- Shortlisted Artist Presentations April 2026
- Final Artist Selection and Notification May 2026

⁶ <https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/professional-artist>

⁷ <https://www.carfac.ca/2-public-art-proposal-fees/>

- Concept & Design Development..... Spring 2026 – Fall 2026
- Fabrication and Site Planning..... Fall 2026 – Spring 2027
- Installation..... Spring – Fall 2027

The final project schedule will be revised in agreement with the City.

Stage 1 Submission Requirements

Artists are to include the following information:

1. Expression of Interest

A written statement—no more than 2 pages—addressing

- Why they are interested in the opportunity
- Why their artistic practice is suited to this project/context
- What their experience in public art brings to the project

2. Artist Resume (4 pages max.)

- Artist’s name and contact information
- Public art and exhibition history, education, relevant work experience
- List three (3) references including name and contact information, title/organizational affiliation and relationship to the artist. Reference letters are not required.

3. Examples of Past Work

- A list of completed artworks relevant to this opportunity (no more than 6), including date of completion, budget, materials, description of concept and commissioning process.
- Images/photography/video of listed artworks (no more than 2/project). All video and audio files must be Window and Mac compatible (MP3 and MP4 files are preferred), and accessible via a secure link contained in the PDF application.

This Expression of Interest does not require the preparation of a proposal.

All submissions are to be in PDF format no larger than 4 MB in size. Each page of the submission should include page numbers and the artist’s name.

Submit applications to the City’s online portal <https://kelowna.bonfirehub.ca/portal/>

or

Emailed to Artcalls@kelowna.ca.

Submissions by other methods may not be accepted. Minimum system requirements are Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. JavaScript must be enabled.

Uploading large documents may take significant time, depending on the file(s) size and the Internet connection. You will receive an email confirmation receipt with a unique confirmation number once you finalize your submission.

All information provided shall remain as property of the City of Kelowna and will be used solely for the purpose of evaluation. Thank you for your interest in this call.

Questions

For questions about the Call for Artists, contact Ciara McKeown, CMCK Public Art at Artcalls@kelowna.ca or at <https://kelowna.bonfirehub.ca/portal/> (the “City’s Bonfire Portal”) and initiate the communication electronically through the Messages>Opportunity Q&A function.

Alternative Submission Formats

Artists can submit their expression of interest in the form of a 3-to-5-minute recording. Please ensure your recording is easily accessible in Window and Mac compatible files (MP3 and MP4 files are preferred) via a secure link contained in the PDF application. Artists who choose this method of presentation are still required to submit an Artist Resume and Examples of Past Work as described above.

Information Session

The City will host an Information Session for interested artists to learn more about the project and to ask questions. This will be hosted by the City of Kelowna PM and an external public art consultant working with the City.

Online Information Session via Microsoft Teams: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 at 6:00 PM (PDT)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Notification and Selection

All artists that submit will receive notification of results by email. Please do not call for results. Those artists selected to provide a concept proposal will be contacted directly.

No Contract A and No Claims

This process is not intended to create and will not create a formal, legally binding bidding process and will instead be governed by the law applicable to direct commercial negotiations. For greater certainty and without limitation:

- a) This process will not give rise to any Contract A–based tendering law duties or any other legal obligations arising out of any process contract or collateral contract; and
- b) Neither the proponent nor the City will have the right to make any claims (in contract, tort, or otherwise) against the other with respect to the award of a contract, failure to award a contract or failure to honour a proposal submitted in response to this process.

No Contract until Execution of Written Agreement

This process is intended to identify prospective artists for the purposes of negotiating potential agreements. No legal relationship or obligation regarding the procurement of any good or service will be created between the proponent and the City by this process until the successful negotiation and execution of a written agreement for the acquisition of such goods and/or services.