

**Expression of Interest
for
5 Corners Indigenous Public Art Project**

Expression of Interest No.: **26-20**

Issued: **May 27, 2026**

Submission Deadline: **Sunday, July 12, 2026, at 11:59 pm, ET**

Introduction

The City of St. Catharines (the City) is seeking Expressions of Interest from qualified Indigenous artists and Indigenous-led artist teams for an original work of public art on the parkette located at the intersection of St. Paul Street, Geneva Street, Queenston Street, and Niagara Street (the Five Corners site).

Through this Expression of Interest (EOI), it is the City’s intention to identify and shortlist up to three (3) artists/artist-led teams to participate in a subsequent Stage 2 Request for Concept Proposals (Concept RFP). Shortlisted artists/teams will receive an honorarium of \$2,000 + HST (if applicable) to develop and present a detailed concept proposal.

Following Stage 2, one finalist will be selected and contracted by the City to finalize the design, undertake community engagement in relation to developing the final design, fabricate and install the artwork within the total commissioning budget of \$140,000 + HST [including fabrication and installation].

Respondents are asked to respond to the City and provide the information requested below.

EOI Timetable

Issue Date of EOI	Wednesday, May 27, 2026
Deadline for Questions	Monday, June 29, 2026, 4:00 PM ET
Deadline for Addenda	Tuesday, June 30, 2026, 4:00 PM ET
Submission Deadline	Sunday, July 12, 2026, 11:59 PM ET
Shortlist Notification	Week of July 20, 2026

The EOI timetable is tentative. It may be changed by the City at any time, and the City may choose to waive or extend the Deadline for Questions, Deadline for Addenda, and/or the Submission Deadline.

Background

The City of St. Catharines is looking to commission an original, site-specific, permanent work of public art for the Five Corners parkette. The successful artwork will contribute to the identity and character of this section of downtown, reflecting deep engagement with place and focusing on the history of the land and the histories within the land.

Artists are asked to broadly consider, within the context of Indigenous trails that converge at the site, the themes of travel, storied lands, meeting place, and relations. The history of this location is to be incorporated as an underlying concept for the public artwork’s content.

Indigenous Trails



Click the image above to view the map online.

The intersections of St. Paul Street, Queenston Street, and Geneva Street within the City of St. Catharines are a significant meeting point of Indigenous trails that have been navigated for millennia. Indigenous people within Niagara established an extensive trail network following waterways connecting the shores of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, the Niagara River, and beyond into the Great Lakes. These trails are still prominent routes of travel today.

St. Paul Street follows the route of the 'Iroquois Trail', one of the most important and widely used of the Indigenous trails in Niagara. The 'Iroquois Trail' proceeds west from what is now Queenston toward present-day Brantford. Queenston Street traces the path toward the base of the Niagara escarpment and the shores of Lake Ontario. Current-day Martindale Road, St. Paul Street, and Queenston Street, among others, were all once part of this complex system of well-travelled routes. The site of the proposed artwork sits at the intersection of these pathways.

Historical Context

For thousands of years, the land around the western shores of Lake Ontario have been home to many Indigenous peoples, including the Neutral Nation Confederacy, the

Anishinabek, and the Haudenosaunee peoples. Indigenous peoples have fished, hunted, and farmed the land in Niagara for thousands of years.

The Neutrals were the original established inhabitants of the Niagara Peninsula and were the largest Indigenous society in the Niagara area up until the mid 1600s. Their population steadily declined because of famine, the Beaver Wars, and diseases introduced by the Europeans. By 1641, Jesuit missionaries recorded that only about 12,000 Neutral remained. After the destruction and dispersal of their nation, Neutral survivors were assimilated into other Indigenous nations living to the west and south of their former homeland, particularly the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. As a result, information about pre-contact Neutral history comes mainly from Jesuit records and archaeological excavations.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy asserted control over the Niagara corridor in around 1650 as part of a broader effort to dominate regional trade routes, particularly in the fur trade.

By the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the Anishinabek, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, moved into the region. Through a combination of diplomacy, shifting alliances, and changing economic conditions, they established a strong presence along the north shore of Lake Ontario and the Niagara area, marking another transition in stewardship of the land prior to intensified European settlement.

Relations

The relationship between the Anishinabek, and Haudenosaunee was not always peaceful. Generations of conflict over territory and resources, intensified by the pressures of European colonization and the Beaver Wars, strained relations between these nations. Yet by the end of 1600s, Indigenous peoples sought to end hostilities and establish a framework for coexistence. The Great Peace of Montreal Agreement, established in 1701, involved the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek, among some 39 Indigenous nations gathered in Montreal to come together to form a peace treaty that encompassed the lands of Southern Ontario, stretching from the Great Lakes region east along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River to the border of Quebec. This agreement reinforced earlier understandings of peaceful relations known as the Dish With One Spoon Agreement, which represents that the land is to be shared peacefully in a spirit of mutual co-operation.

These agreements are considered living treaties and were recorded using woven belts of cylindrical shell beads called [wampum](#). Used by many Indigenous nations, (particularly the Haudenosaunee) these belts serve as visual and tactile memory keepers to document alliances, trade, and peace without relying on written documents

Other important wampum belts that illustrate relations between the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, and the Crown include:

[Two Row Wampum Agreement](#)

The Two Row Wampum Treaty (Kaswentha) is one of the earliest agreements between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and European settlers. It symbolizes a relationship based on peace, friendship, and mutual respect. Represented by two parallel purple rows on a white wampum belt, the treaty depicts two vessels travelling side by side along a river. One vessel is a Haudenosaunee canoe carrying Indigenous laws, customs, and ways of life, while the other is a European ship carrying its own traditions and governance. The rows never cross or interfere with one another, reflecting the principle that each nation would coexist independently while maintaining a relationship grounded in equality, non-interference, and mutual respect. The agreement is considered by the Haudenosaunee to be the basis of all of their subsequent treaties with European and North American governments, and the citizens of those nations, including the Covenant Chain treaty.

[Covenant Chain of Friendship](#)

The 1764 Covenant Chain is both a treaty and wampum alliance solidified on August 1, 1764, at Fort Niagara, connecting the British Crown with over 2,000 Indigenous leaders from 24 nations. The Covenant Chain of Friendship extended the existing Haudenosaunee alliance with the Crown to the Western Great Lakes peoples, establishing a lasting, nation-to-nation relationship with the intention of peace, friendship, and non-interference.

[Ojibway Friendship Belt](#)

Circa 1840, two rectangles at either end are joined by a straight line through the middle of the belt. Although this belt lacks definitive documentation, according to Mississauga Chief Rev. Peter Jones, it is thought that this was the belt given at a meeting between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek, at Maumee River, where alliances were formed and treaties of friendship were established.

Wampum is the way that Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes and northeastern Turtle Island recorded agreements, laws, and relationships of profound importance. Wampum belts are living documents, read by those who understand their language of symbol, colour, and design, and meant to be revisited regularly so that the obligations they encode are renewed in the memory and practice of all parties.

St. Catharines' Vision for Public Art

Through its Arts and Culture Advisory Committee and Public Art Policy, the City of St. Catharines strives to create vibrant public spaces that reflect the diversity of our community and engage residents and visitors with quality works of public art.

The selected work of public art will become part of the City of St. Catharines Civic Art Collection, and will be developed, installed, managed and maintained according to the St. Catharines Public Art Policy and other relevant City policies, by-laws and procedures.

Selected Site

The identified site for the artwork is the parkette located at the [intersection of St. Paul Street, Geneva Street, Queenston Street and Niagara Street](#) (see Appendix B and Appendix D). This intersection is an active corridor in downtown St. Catharines. The artwork will be integrated into the existing design of the site (see Appendix C).

This route stands as one of the longest continuously inhabited sites in North America. Communities have thrived for thousands of years thanks to the waters of Twelve Mile Creek. The Downtown streets we see today were shaped by intersecting trails. The curve of St. Paul Street reflects the layout of the “Iroquois Trail”, which followed the natural terrain rather than the standard north-south grid common in many other Ontario towns at that time.

Project Funding Context

The City of St. Catharines is working in collaboration with the Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations (NAIR) on this project. NAIR is an Indigenous-led organization that provides guidance and expertise related to Indigenous histories, cultural interpretation, public art, and respectful engagement. In accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and NAIR, the Academy will support the project through curatorial leadership of the project throughout.

This public art project is supported in part by Niagara Region’s Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP), which has confirmed a funding contribution toward an Indigenous public art installation at the Geneva and St. Paul triangle. Additional public realm enhancements associated with this initiative may include enhanced lighting, interpretive signage, and community plantings.

Production & Installation Timeline

- Production/fabrication window (minimum): September 2026 – May 2027
- Installation target: June 2027

Competition Format & Process

The City of St. Catharines is administering this competition in an administrative capacity. Submissions will be reviewed and juried by a Selection Committee convened for this project, comprised primarily of Indigenous artistic, design, historical, and/or curatorial professionals, with Indigenous advisory participation including the Niagara Academy for Indigenous Relations (NAIR).

Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI) Open Call

Submit qualifications and support material as outlined in Section 2 – Submission Instructions.

An artwork concept proposal is not requested at this stage.

A Selection Panel will review submissions and shortlist up to three (3) artists/artist-led teams for Stage 2.

Stage 2: Request for Concept Proposals — By Invitation Only

Design, Technical & Durability Considerations (Stage 2)

Shortlisted artists/teams will receive an honorarium of \$2,000 + HST (if applicable) to develop and submit a detailed concept proposal and present it in an interview/presentation format.

Shortlisted artists/teams will be provided with detailed technical information, requirements, and evaluation criteria. One finalist will be selected to enter into a contract with the City.

Shortlisted artists/teams should anticipate that Stage 2 will include technical requirements and site conditions. At a minimum, proposals will be expected to address the following considerations:

Maintenance: The artwork should be designed to minimize ongoing maintenance requirements and costs, and the selected artist will be expected to provide recommended maintenance guidance as part of project close-out.

Vandalism and graffiti resistance: The design should minimize opportunities for vandalism and include durable, cleanable finishes and/or anti-graffiti strategies where appropriate.

Durability and weather resistance: Materials and finishes must be suitable for year-round outdoor conditions in St. Catharines (including UV exposure, freeze–thaw cycles, precipitation, and temperature fluctuations) and designed for long-term performance.

Public safety: The final artwork must not pose an unreasonable risk to the public (e.g., sharp edges/points, pinch hazards, entrapment, climbing risks where applicable, or trip hazards). All components must be properly supported and/or anchored.

Context of location: The design must respond to the site’s scale, sightlines, circulation patterns, and surrounding streetscape, and must not obstruct required pedestrian routes, maintenance access, or utilities.

Accessibility: The artwork and its immediate surroundings must consider accessibility and inclusive public use, including safe clearances, approach routes, and visibility within the parkette context.

Artwork Production Timeline: Provide a detailed production timeline from contract award to installation, identifying key milestones (e.g., design development/finalization, engineering review if required, fabrication, finish work, delivery/logistics, site

coordination, installation, and contingency time) and confirming the ability to meet the City's project schedule.

Anticipated Timeline for Stage 2

This timeline is tentative. It may be changed by the City at any time, and the City may choose to waive or extend the Deadline for Questions, Deadline for Addenda, and/or the Submission Deadline.

- Stage 2 Request for Proposals issued: Monday, July 27, 2026
- Optional site meeting: Week of Monday August 3, 2026
- Stage 2 submissions due: Sunday, August 30, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- Presentations/interviews: Week of Monday, September 7, 2026
- Final selection: Week of Monday, September 14, 2026
- Contract execution target: Friday, September 18, 2026

Submission Instructions

This opportunity is open to professional Indigenous artists (First Nations, Inuit, Métis) and Indigenous-led artist teams living in Canada. Indigenous-led artist teams are eligible to apply. Teams must identify an Indigenous lead artist. The City may request confirmation of Indigenous identity/affiliation and/or the Indigenous lead role in a respectful manner as part of due diligence during the selection process.

A professional artist is an individual who has specialized skills and/or training in their artistic discipline (not necessarily in academic institutions), has a history of public presentation, and is critically recognized as an artist.

The Respondent must complete the City's online submission form:

<https://webforms.stcatharines.ca/Culture/Public-Art-Call>

This form will require you to provide the following information:

a. Statement of Interest (max. 2 pages)

- Describe your interest in the project and how it relates to your current practice.
- Describe your approach to design development, including how you will engage with the site and project vision.
- Describe your approach to community engagement, including engagement with Indigenous community members, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, as appropriate.

b. Artist Statement & Bio (max. 1 page)

- i. Resume/CV (max. 3 pages; include team members if applicable and identify Indigenous lead)
- ii. Visual Documentation of Past Work (max. 10 images)
- iii. Provide an Image List with image number, artist, title, date, materials, dimensions, location, and budget/commissioning body (if applicable).

c. References

- Provide contact information for two (2) references (letters are not required).

Submission File Format

- PDFs preferred (including embedded images).
- Links to cloud drives (e.g., OneDrive/Google Drive) are accepted if file size is too large; ensure links are accessible until at least 30 days after the submission deadline.

APPENDIX A – SUBMISSION TERMS

1. Respondent Information

Respondents are to provide their information in the City's online submission form.

2. Terms of Reference

In responding to this EOI, the respondent acknowledges its acceptance of the following EOI Terms of Reference:

a. EOI Not a Formal Competitive Bidding Process

This EOI is issued for information-gathering purposes and is not intended to be a formal legally binding "Contract A" bidding process. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, this EOI will not necessarily result in any subsequent negotiations, direct contract award, invitational tendering process, or open tendering process, and does not constitute a commitment by the City to procure any goods or services.

b. EOI Not to Limit the City's Pre-Existing Rights

This EOI will not limit any of the City's pre-existing rights. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the City expressly reserves the right, at its discretion, to:

- (i) seek subsequent information or initiate discussions with any potential supplier, including potential suppliers that did not respond to this EOI;
- (ii) initiate direct negotiations for the procurement of any good or service with any potential supplier or suppliers, regardless of whether the potential supplier or suppliers responded to this EOI;
- (iii) contact a limited number of potential suppliers, which may include only those that responded to this EOI or may include potential suppliers that did not respond to this EOI, for the purpose of a competitive process for the procurement of any good or service;
- (iv) elect to proceed by way of open tender call where all potential respondents, including those that did not respond to this EOI, are eligible to compete for the award of a contract for the supply of any good or service; and
- (v) elect not to procure the good or service that is the subject of this EOI.

These expressly reserved rights are in addition to any and all other rights of the City that existed prior to the issuance of this EOI.

c. Pricing Information for General Information Purposes Only

Any pricing information provided by respondents is for general information purposes and is not intended to be binding on respondents. Any legally binding

pricing or purchasing commitments will be established only where specified by the express terms of a subsequent tender call process or established through the execution of a written agreement.

d. Information in EOI Only an Estimate

The City and its advisers make no representation, warranty, or guarantee as to the accuracy of the information contained in the EOI or issued by way of addenda. Any quantities shown or data contained in this EOI, or provided by way of addenda, are estimates provided only as general background information.

e. Parties to Bear Their Own Costs

The City will not be liable for any expenses incurred by a respondent, including the expenses associated with the cost of preparing responses to this EOI. The parties will bear their own costs associated with or incurred through this EOI process, including any costs arising out of, or incurred in, (i) the preparation and issuance of this EOI; (ii) the preparation and making of a submission; or (iii) any other activities related to this EOI process.

f. Accuracy of Responses

The respondent acknowledges that the information provided is, to the best of its knowledge, complete and accurate.

g. Submissions Will Not Be Returned

Except where set out to the contrary in this EOI or expressly requested in the respondent's submission, the submission and any accompanying documentation provided by a respondent will not be returned.

h. Confidential Information of the City

All information provided by or obtained from the City in any form in connection with this EOI either before or after the issuance of this EOI (i) is the sole property of the City and must be treated as confidential; (ii) is not to be used for any purpose other than replying to this EOI; (iii) must not be disclosed without prior written authorization from the City; and (iv) must be returned by the respondent to the City immediately upon the request of the City.

The respondent may not, at any time directly or indirectly, communicate with the media in relation to this EOI without first obtaining the written permission of the City.

i. Disclosure of Information

The respondent consents to the City’s collection of information as contemplated under the EOI for the uses contemplated under the EOI. Respondents should not include information in their response that is proprietary or confidential.

Information provided by a respondent may be released in accordance with governing laws. To the extent that a respondent does include confidential or proprietary information, the respondent should identify any information in its submission or any accompanying documentation supplied in confidence for which confidentiality is to be maintained by the City. The confidentiality of such information will be maintained by the City, except where an order by a tribunal or court requires the City to do otherwise. The respondent consents to the disclosure, on a confidential basis, of this submission by the City to advisers retained by the City for the purpose of reviewing this submission.

The respondent acknowledges that the City may make public the name of any and all respondents.

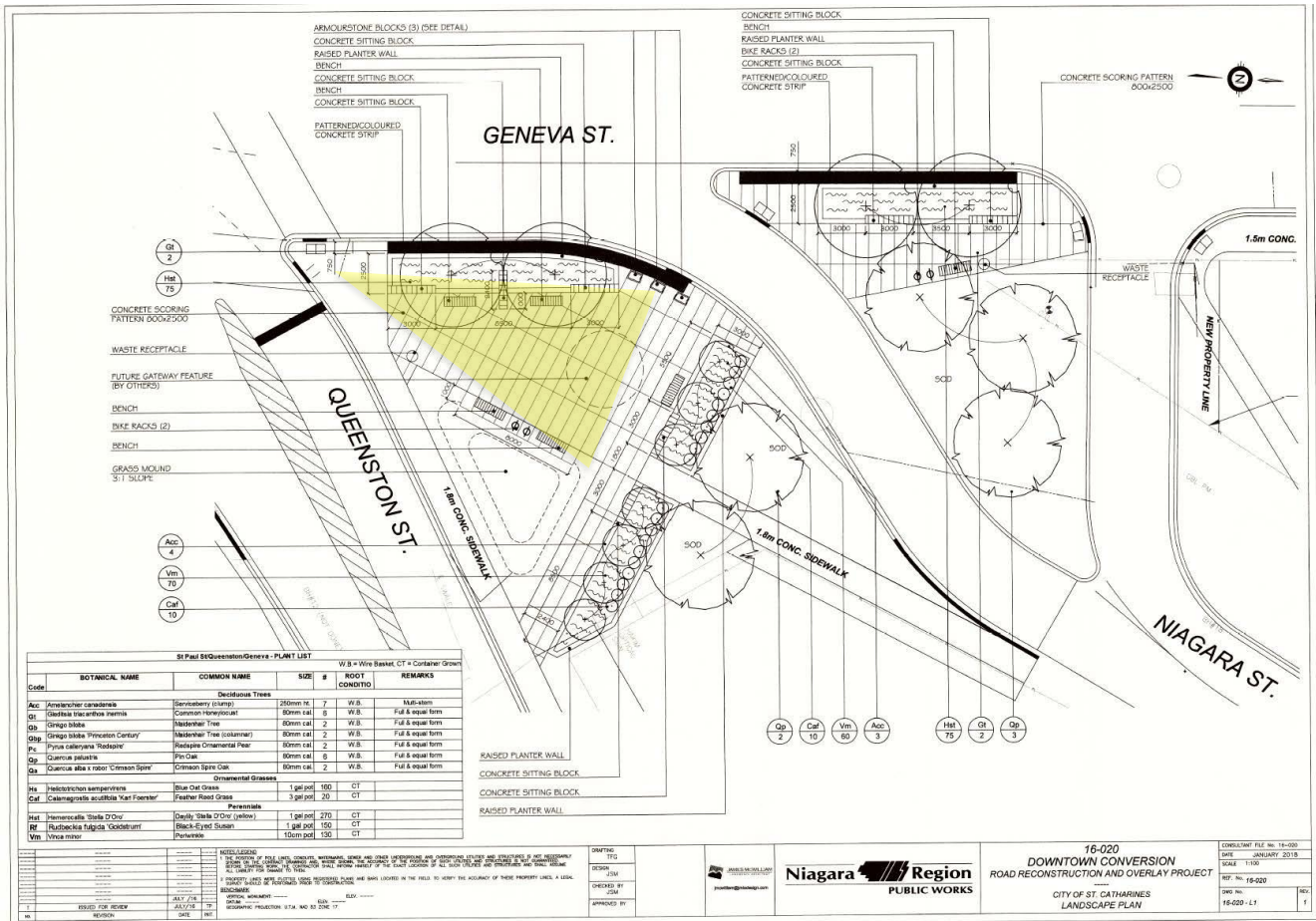
j. Governing Law

This EOI process will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the province of Ontario and the federal laws of Canada applicable therein.

APPENDIX B: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



APPENDIX C: EXISTING SITE DRAWINGS



APPENDIX D: GOOGLE MAP STREET VIEW

