CALL TO INDIGENOUS ARTISTS – Expressions of Interest (EOI)

The Cabbagetown BIA | Two (2) Permanent Public Art Installation Opportunities

Opportunity 1: SCULPTURAL ARTWORK(S) | Budget: $108,000 CAD (+ HST)

Opportunity 2: MURAL | Budget: $ 20,000 CAD (+ HST)

The Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area (BIA) and City of Toronto invite Indigenous artists who are based in Canada, preferably with connections to Toronto, to submit qualifications for the first stage of a two-stage public art competition. This EOI call is for two (2) separate opportunities for the creation of two (2) new public artworks; *Opportunity 1: Sculptural artwork, or a series of sculptures* & *Opportunity 2: Mural.* Both artwork opportunities are to be installed in Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood on Spruce Street (at Parliament Street) along the side of the No Frills.

EOI APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 29, 2026 by 11:59 PM EST

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1. PROJECT OVERVIEWS | AN INVITATION TO CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS ART AND CULTURE

The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto would like to commission the design, fabrication, and installation of one (1) large sculptural art piece, or a series of sculptural art pieces, by a single Indigenous artist, as well as one (1) mural by a single Indigenous artist, on the wall of No Frills at Spruce Street and Parliament Street. The sculptural art piece(s) and mural shall have an Indigenous theme or design elements that complement one another, where the mural will act as a backdrop for the sculptural art piece(s). The sculptural art piece(s) and mural will be owned and maintained by the BIA.

The overall budget is approximately $108,000 +HST for the sculptural art piece(s), and $20,000+HST for the mural. Please note that this amount is only an approximation and does not reflect the total amount that will be paid to any successful vendor. This amount is for information only and should not be used as the sole basis for fee calculations. The selected artists will be responsible for ensuring that the design, leading into fabrication, footings, foundations and installation, fall within the design requirements and budget limits for The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto.

- *The artworks must be unique. We will not consider existing works or versions of existing works.*

This public art competition, and the resulting artworks, are to be in keeping with goals expressed in the Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020-2030, adopted by City Council in December 2019. These goals include embedding Truth and Reconciliation as foundational principles for public art; recognising the City's responsibility to acknowledge the Indigenous history, present and future of the land as part of all its public art projects; that Indigenous projects should continue to be characterised by self-determination and decolonisation of practices; and that public art juries and advisory committees should have appropriate Indigenous representation.

The full strategy can be access here:
https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/public-art/public-art-strategy/

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The installations will centre around the idea of connecting the Cabbagetown neighbourhood and the City of Toronto to its Indigenous roots and create artworks that carry the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. The goal for these art installations is to embody and honour Indigenous history of the lands that Cabbagetown now resides through artworks that embrace Indigenous teachings, culture, and values.

The artwork should:

- The project should celebrate Cabbagetown's Indigenous connections; past, present and future.
- Share culture and history, creating artworks that are lasting and have impact in the community.
- Serve as welcoming elements for locals and invite exploration by visitors. It should also support wayfinding and placemaking by guiding people from Parliament Street into the Spruce St parkette.
- The artworks must engage the community at large, local and regional Indigenous communities, the general public and the Cabbagetown community, fostering connection and dialogue among all.
- The artworks must be impactful, lasting artworks that are durable and require minimal maintenance.
- Both opportunities should complement one another through theme or design elements. Artists must be willing to work together to agree upon a thematic connection or elements for a cohesive design.
- The Artworks must be unique. We will not consider existing works or versions of existing works.

3. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Both artworks will be installed alongside one another and should be designed in consideration of this. Artists must be agreeable to this circumstance and open to conversation to ensure that there will be some thematic connection or cohesive design elements within both artworks.

Opportunity 1: Sculptural Art Piece, or series of small sculptural art pieces

The art installation may take the form of a single large-scale piece or a series of works distributed throughout the site, with careful consideration given to the public right-of-way and any above- or below-ground obstructions. The final work must demonstrate durability in both design and construction. Artists should select materials capable of withstanding extreme weather conditions, vandalism, and potential theft, and integrate these considerations into the overall concept. The artist must account

Opportunity 2: Mural

Located on the wall of No Frills, at the corner of Spruce Street at Parliament Street. The selected artist and their artwork must be willing to work with the existing No Frills signage, and the artwork must be designed in consideration of the signage and be cohesive and respectful. The artist must utilize the wall space at the very corner of the building and may extend as far along as their budget can accommodate to the second garden bed at a minimum. The final work must demonstrate durability in both design and construction. Artists should select materials capable of withstanding extreme weather conditions, vandalism, and potential theft, and integrate these considerations into the overall concept. The work must also include the installation of an anti-graffiti coating.

4. SITE INFORMATION

Located in the heart of Cabbagetown at the corner of Parliament and Spruce Street, both artworks will be installed along the South-facing wall of No Frills and sidewalk of Spruce Street. The sculptural art piece(s) to be installed on the sidewalk, between and beside the existing planter boxes, near the wall of the No Frills, maintaining the public right-of-way. The mural will be painted along the South wall of the No Frills and will act as a backdrop to the sculptural art piece(s).

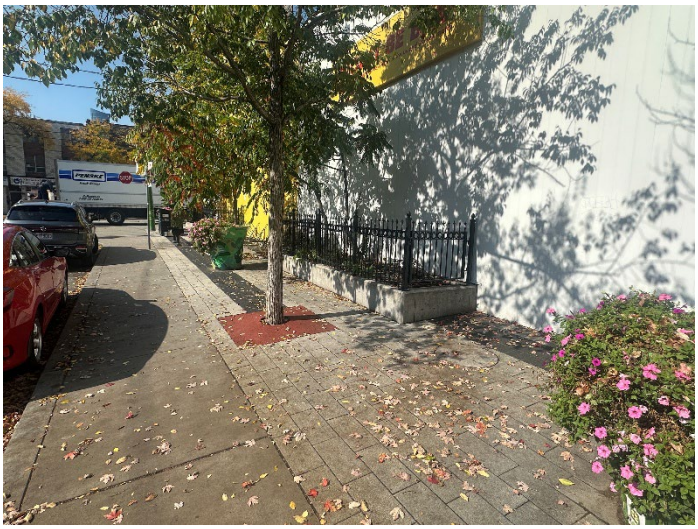


Above: View of No Frills from Spruce Street at Parliament Street.

Notes: Mural to be integrated with the existing No Frills signage.



Above: View of No Frills from Spruce Street at Parliament Street

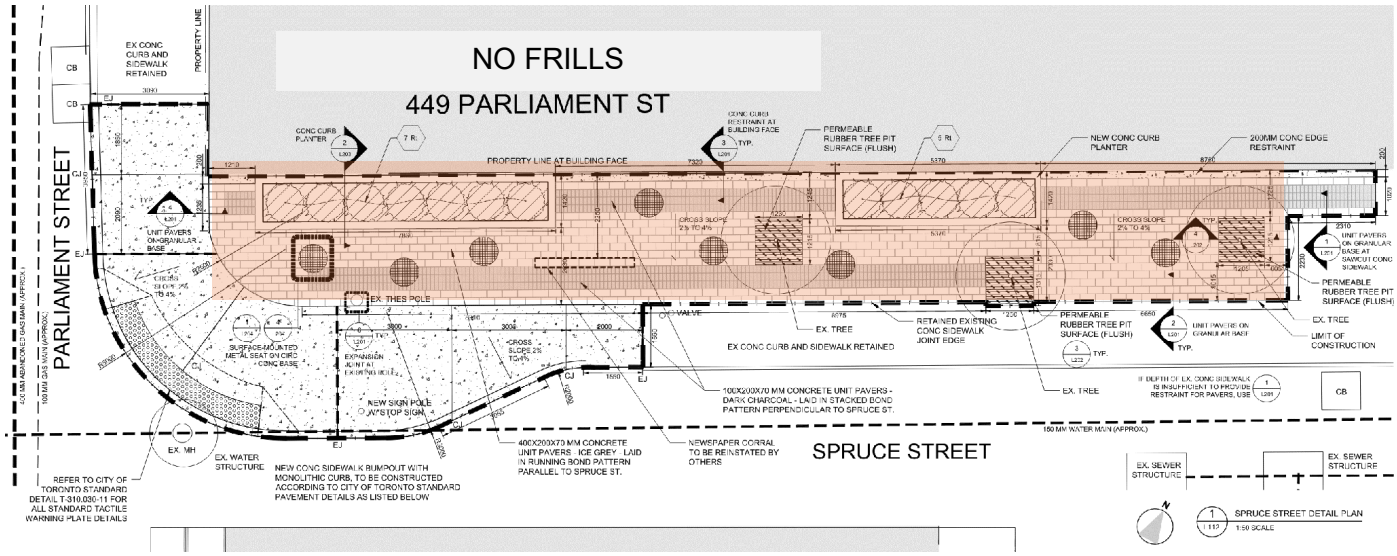


Above: Spruce Street view of potential sculptural locations



Above: View from Spruce Street at Parliament Street

Notes: Mural to be integrated with the existing No Frills signage. The bike rack, grey bench, and green-painted planters will be removed before installation; the green bench will remain but can be relocated within the area if needed.



Above: Location drawing with artwork locations highlighted. Spruce Street at Parliament Street.

5. COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Nestled between Wellesley Street and Shuter Street and bound by Sherbourne Street on the West and the Don River on the East; Cabbagetown embodies a unique blend of recent historic charm and modern vibrancy. Renowned for its picturesque streets adorned with the largest area of preserved Victorian homes in North America, this community exudes an inviting ambiance that beckons exploration. Beyond its architectural wonders, Cabbagetown thrives with an eclectic mix of businesses that add to its allure. Local shops, cozy cafes, and delectable eateries line the streets, offering a rich tapestry of experiences to residents and visitors alike. The neighbourhood's dynamic atmosphere seamlessly intertwines with its contemporary roots, creating a distinct character that captivates anyone who wanders its streets.

6. TWO-STAGE COMPETITION

Eligibility

The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto are inviting Indigenous artists, based in Canada, with connections to the City of Toronto, to submit their credentials for consideration as part of the first stage of a two-stage public art process. Applicants must be Indigenous artists with a history of public exhibition, a background of artistic training, and/or recognition as artists by arts professionals and peers. Applicants must also have some form of recognition as an Indigenous person within their Indigenous community, and ability to demonstrate learnings from their own lived experiences.

- The definition of Indigenous for this project includes those who identify as Indigenous; status or non-status, Métis or Inuit.
- Do not hesitate to submit your credentials even if you have not previously completed a public art commission.
- Please note that these opportunities entail Artist collaborations.
- We will not consider non-Indigenous Applicants.

Selection Process

Shortlisted artists, as well as the final selected artist, will be determined through a combination of scoring criteria and deliberation by the Selection Panel. Preference will be given to applicants with a strong background in public art and a connection to the Cabbagetown neighbourhood. Selection Panel members will consist of two (2) Professional Indigenous Art Evaluator and three (3) BIA/Community members, and in the case of *Opportunity 2: Mural*, the Selection Panel will additionally include one (1) representative of the adjacent property owner and one (1) representative of the adjacent property tenant.

Stage One: Expression of Interest (EOI)

- The Selection Panel will review all submissions and identify a shortlist of up to six (6) artists; four (4) Indigenous artists for *Opportunity 1: Sculptural art piece(s)*, and two (2) Indigenous artists for *Opportunity 2: Mural*. These selections will be based on artistic excellence, relevant experience and demonstrated or perceived ability to create and execute an innovative, engaging public artwork that is complementary to the overall design scheme and community context. ***Design proposals will not be accepted during this Stage One selection process.***

Stage Two: Shortlisted Artist Proposal Development

- The shortlisted artists will be notified shortly after the Selection Panel's first meeting and invited to participate in the stage two proposal development period. A *Terms of Reference* document will be provided to shortlisted artists, containing all the information required to prepare and submit their full proposals, which will require a detailed final design concept and proposal, and will include a detailed budget that breaks down fabrication quotes, any professional fees, and installation costs.
- Shortlisted artists will be paid a fee of $1,000 (+ HST if applicable) for this completed stage.
- Elements of each artist's proposal will be shared online with the Cabbagetown community for feedback. Shortlisted artists will be required to prepare a brief statement outlining their proposal to be shared with the community.
- Shortlisted artists will submit final proposals for Selection Panel review. The panel will choose one (1) artist for each opportunity (Opportunity 1: Sculptural art piece(s), and Opportunity 2: Mural), whose vision best suits the overall scope and intent of the project, and has the ability or perceived ability to conceive and realize a public artwork on the site. The public artwork will be fabricated and installed by August 2027.
- The selected artists proposals will be reviewed by a technical team composed of City of Toronto staff from relevant departments who will comment on the technical feasibility, safety, and maintenance requirements of each proposal. Artists will not be present at this review.

7. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Indigenous artists based in Canada, with connection to the City of Toronto, are invited to respond to this EOI by submitting all submission requirements in a **single PDF document** no larger than 20 MB. Please submit your EOI packages via email to Indigenous Public Art Curator Tessa Shank at tkaronto.art@gmail.com.

Please specify the opportunity you are applying for in the PDF document title and in the email header; (Opportunity 1: Sculptural art piece(s), or Opportunity 2: Mural). You must submit separate artist packages that are relevant for each opportunity in order to be considered for both opportunities. If you are applying as a team, please include all the following requirements for each team member applying.

A complete submission PDF package must include the following documentation:

I. **Artistic Statement**: 1-page maximum. Outline your artistic experience, ability, approach and interest in this project, highlighting relevant experience. If applicable, please note your personal connections to the City of Toronto and to the Cabbagetown neighbourhood. **Proposals will NOT be accepted at this stage of the competition.**

II. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**: 2-page maximum. Detail professional experience as an artist, past public art experience, and other information relevant to this EOI.

III. **Artist Portfolio**: Maximum of ten (10) images of previous work, on similar/relevant projects. Each image has an accompanying list that clearly outlines the following information, in the following order: Title, year, location, mediums, commissioning agents and/or collaborators, project budget, dimensions, and a brief description of the works (maximum 50 words).

IV. **Connection to Community**: A written statement describing your connection to Indigenous community, and/or lived experience as an Indigenous person.

8. KEY DATES

Please note that this timeline is subject to change and the final timelines will be confirmed and published in the upcoming Terms of Reference.

- **October 6, 2026:** EOI issued
- **November 29, 2026: EOI submissions due**
- Mid-January, 2027**:** Shortlisted artists notified
- Late January: Introductory meeting with Short-listed Artists
- Late March 2027**:** Stage Two Proposals due
- Late April 2027: Stage Two deliberations and final Artist selected, feedback delivered
- Late May 2027: Technical review/ Agreements signed /Artwork fabrication period begins
- **Completed artworks installed at the latest by August 27, 2027**

9. PROJECT NOTES

- Submissions must be received by **November 29, 2026 at 11:59 PM EST**. Incomplete and/or late applications will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to ensure the application package is complete and submitted by the posted deadline.

- Applicants who need accommodations or support applying for this opportunity are encouraged to contact Indigenous Public Art Curator Tessa Shank, tkaronto.art@gmail.com, before the application deadline to discuss alternate formats for submission.

- The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto reserve the right to reject any or all submissions, or any part thereof, or to terminate or re-advertise the EOI. The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to determine the number of pre-qualified Artists. The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto, at their sole discretion, may request clarifications or request additional information, as deemed necessary to evaluate the submissions. The Cabbagetown BIA and the City of Toronto retain the sole discretion to determine whether a submission is responsive and if the prospective Artist can perform the proposed work. The Cabbagetown BIA and the City of Toronto reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine the number of pre-qualified Artists. The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto reserve the right to not proceed with awarding a contract. The decision of the Selection Panel is final. The Cabbagetown BIA and City of Toronto shall have the exclusive right to issue all public announcements regarding the competition.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information or clarifications, please contact:

Tessa Shank | Indigenous Public Art Curator | Tkaronto.art@gmail.com