



Arts Commons Transformation Project (ACT) Expansion Public Art Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Background and Overview

Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the City of Calgary with the mandate to support the City's objectives for urban densification, community renewal, infrastructure investment and urban placemaking. Over the past 18 years, CMLC has led the redevelopment of Calgary's East Village and is currently guiding more than \$1.2B in city-building projects in the Rivers District, including the Arts Commons and Olympic Plaza Transformation projects. CMLC has successfully partnered, developed, attracted investment, planned, and delivered the revitalisation of the Rivers District, including Calgary's award-winning Central Library, River Walk, and most recently the Calgary Stampede's BMO Centre expansion.

The *Arts Commons Transformation* and *Olympic Plaza Transformation* comprise of a \$660 million program of projects consisting of a new performing arts centre building (*ACT Expansion*), modernization and augmentation of existing facilities (*ACT Modernization*), and the renewal of Olympic Plaza (*Olympic Plaza Transformation (OPT)*). Together, these make up the largest arts-focused infrastructure project currently underway in Canada. In December of 2024, after four years of extensive community consultation and planning, CMLC, the City of Calgary, and Arts Commons broke ground for the *ACT Expansion*.

The *ACT Expansion* project is a \$270 million addition to Calgary's premiere performing arts centre. The project is a timely response to the community's swelling demand for flexible and accessible arts and performance venues that support diverse and relevant programming. The Expansion features a 1,000-seat main theatre and a 200-seat flexible studio theatre, as well as lobby, event, and back-of-house spaces.

The \$70 million *Olympic Plaza Transformation (OPT)* is reimagining downtown's 36-year-old principal outdoor gathering place as a more modern, inclusive, accessible arts-focused plaza. Through imaginative design and creative programming, *OPT* will forge stronger physical and conceptual connections with Arts Commons' facilities as an expansion of the performing arts campus. Design is underway on *OPT*, and a design reveal is anticipated in late Q1/early Q2 2025.

As a result of the placement of the *ACT Expansion* within the Arts Commons campus, the building's north edge is located immediately adjacent to the public realm and is highly visible from the passing Calgary Transit (CTrain) light rail cars and by pedestrians. The design of the Expansion limits windows along the north edge, leaving a solid, rather long and tall façade bordering an important part of the public realm. As a result, CMLC and its partners are launching the ACT Expansion Public Art RFQ that will play an essential role in connecting the Arts Commons Campus with its urban context.

CMLC seeks an artist or artist team to create an artwork(s) for the *ACT Expansion* through this unencumbered call. CMLC encourages all locally, nationally and internationally qualified artists to apply. The public art design will beautify, activate, and enliven the Arts Commons campus. The successful artist/artist team will work with CMLC, Arts Commons, the design team KPMB Architects, Hindle Architects, and TAWAW Architecture Collective, and the Construction Manager EllisDon to coordinate design, fabrication, and installation.

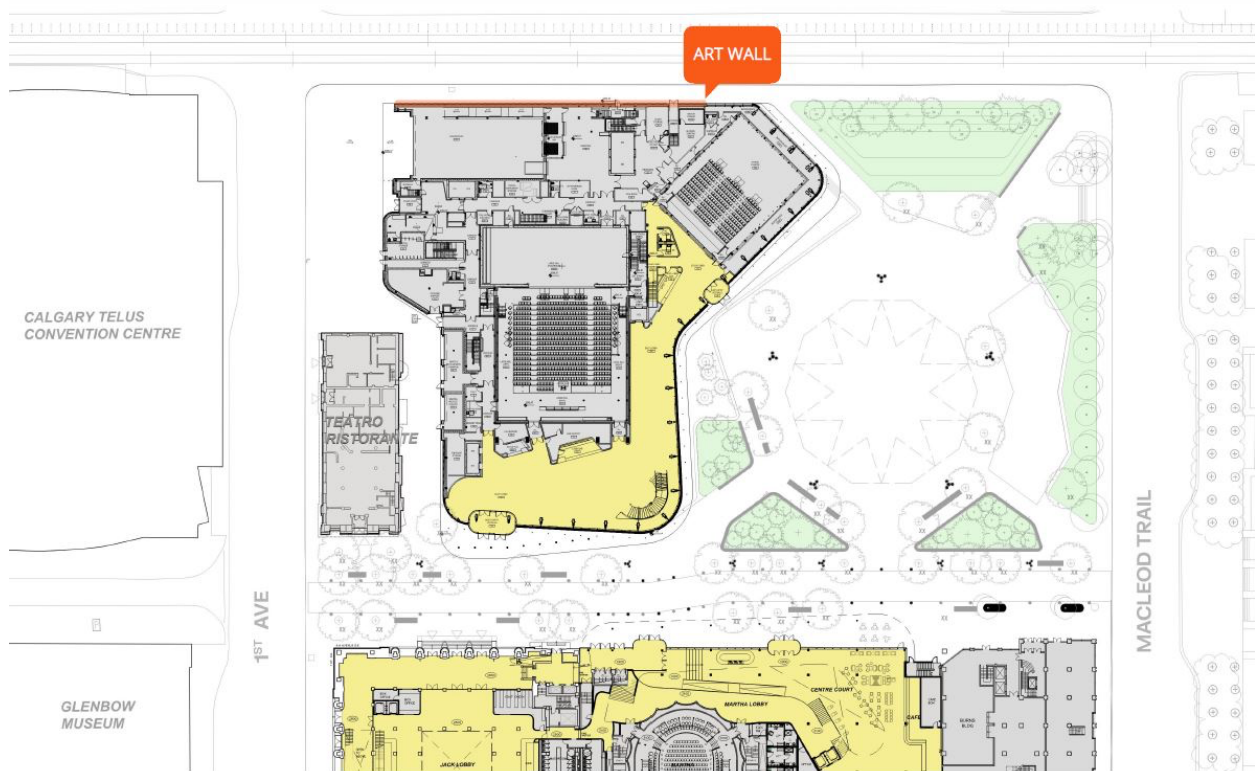
Budget: \$1.32 million CND

Arts Commons Expansion - Site Specifics

The Arts Commons Expansion will be a distinctive addition to Calgary's downtown, and its architectural design emphasizes both functionality and artistic expression. One of the key features is the brim canopy above the first floor, which encircles the building, creating separation between the distinctive upper façades, and the vibrant highly activated ground level. This design element not only provides a dynamic visual aesthetic but also enhances the pedestrian experience by establishing a human-scaled edge along the public realm.



The ACT Expansion north wall plays an essential role in further enhancing the public space beneath the canopy. The artwork will transform a stretch of the ground level area which would otherwise be somewhat opaque due to the necessity of adjacent loading infrastructure. The inclusion of public art here is a strategic move to soften and enliven this long public façade of the building.



Additionally, this public art project presents a unique opportunity for engagement with the 261,000 annual C-Train commuters that pass by the site each weekday. As part of downtown's public realm, the artwork installation is poised to reach a vast and diverse audience making it not just an aesthetic feature but an integral part of the city's broader cultural and civic landscape.

[Link to drawing available here.](#)

Required Submission Materials

A statement about your interest in public art and how it should engage or respond to its environment and the audience.

- Annotated image list – twelve (12) images with: date, title, media, and dimensions of past and current work. If the image reflects a public work, include the location of the project and the commissioning agency. Multimedia items (video and/or sound clips) that describe your work may be included as part of the annotated image list but not exclusively so. Links to web-based portfolios are encouraged.
- A selected biography (CV) including current contact information, including phone number and email address.
- If working as part of a team, a brief resumé or CV of each team member and a description of past experiences working together.
- Two (2) or three (3) reviews or news articles about past projects (optional).
- Two (2) professional letters of reference.

Selection Criteria

- Creativity.
- Originality expressed in past work.
- Demonstrated strong understanding of scale.
- Practical understanding of public art and the ability to see the project to completion.
- Proven track record in public art, museum, and gallery work.
- National and international profile through reviews of exhibitions, online texts, and other peer assessments.
- Interested in addressing the challenges of the site, the building, and a willingness to work with CMLC, Arts Commons, the design team KPMB, Hindle and TAWAW, and the construction manager EllisDon.
- Ability to produce a high-quality work within the project budget.
- Professionalism.

Selection Process

A Selection Committee will evaluate each response and prepare a long list for consideration by a jury. The adjudication and selection of the potential candidates for the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage will be formalised through a Professional Recommendation to CMLC and the Arts Common's Transformation team authored by the Selection Committee and Art to Public. Candidates will be notified if they move to the RFP stage. Those moving to the RFP stage will receive an honorarium of \$15,000.00 CND for the development of and support of the final design concept. All applicants will be notified regardless.

Budget

- **Budget: \$1.32 million CND**

Deadline and Submission Details

Proposals will be accepted until **Tuesday March 4th, 2025, 5:00 p.m. MT**. Responses that do not fully meet the criteria above may not be considered. It is the respondent's responsibility to request clarification of any item that is unclear or uncertain within the context of the RFQ package by contacting:

Art to Public: info@arttopublic.net
+ 1 (587) 318-0601

Schedule (subject to change)

- Deadline for RFQ Responses: March 4th, 2025
- RFQ Response evaluation: March 5th – 18th, 2025
- Adjudication of long list of candidates: March 19th – 25th, 2025
- Notification of short-listed candidates: Week of March 25th, 2025
- RFP request sent to short-listed candidates: March 26th, 2025
- Deadline for RFP Responses: May 20th, 2025

- Adjudication of RFP Responses: May 21st to June 3rd, 2025
- Artist Interviews (tentative): June 4th to 17th, 2025
- Finalist selected: July 31st, 2025

Additional Information

- All submissions will be treated as confidential between CMLC, Art to Public, and each respondent and are subject to the protection and disclosure provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). CMLC and Art to Public will not disclose personal or business information where disclosure would be harmful to business interests or would be an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy.
- Participation in the RFQ or RFP process does not imply a contract with CMLC.
- CMLC reserves the right to withdraw the RFQ, initiate an alternative selection process, or re-issue the RFQ at any time.
- CMLC and Art to Public have no responsibility for costs incurred by artists or artists' teams for responses to this RFQ.
- All submissions become the property of CMLC.

Format and Address

- All documents in your submission must be **PDF only** and contained in a folder titled with the name of the artist or artists' team.
- You may include up to twelve (12) annotated images with corresponding information in the PDF.
- Documents may contain support material i.e. links to videos and websites.
- Please keep the file submission to a maximum of 50 MB.
- One submission per artist or artists' team only: multiple submissions will not be considered.

CMLC Arts Commons – Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

C/O Art to Public at: info@arttopublic.net

Link to Art to Public website to upload submissions: [Art to Public](#)

Olympic Plaza Transformation and Arts Commons Transformation - Design Team

CMLC has engaged the multidisciplinary team KPMB Architects, Hindle Architects and TAWAW Architecture Collective to serve as the primary design consultants for the *ACT Expansion*. The firms gh3* and CCxA have been engaged to design and execute the *Olympic Plaza Transformation* (OPT) and will be working in tandem with the *ACT Expansion* consultants to realize the project under the direction of CMLC.

KPMB Architects is an award-winning architectural firm based in Canada committed to crafting design solutions that catalyze positive change. Hindle Architects is a Calgary based firm known for its innovative and collaborative approach to architectural design and communication. Calgary based TAWAW Architecture Collective is a design-research firm leading the integration of Indigenous and western approaches to the project. gh3* is a peer-recognized and award-winning Canadian architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design practice whose members believe that spatially and visually engaging places can inspire joy and civic pride. Internationally recognized and

celebrated landscape architecture and design firm CCxA was founded by Claude Cormier in 1994 and has created several of Canada’s most extraordinary and cherished urban spaces.

The Art to Public team is an art consultancy located in Calgary, Alberta that specializes in providing comprehensive services in the area of public art. Art to Public manages public art projects and commissions for a diverse group of clients including municipalities, government agencies, corporations and private collectors and has successfully realized numerous public art projects ranging from intimate private commissions to complex major multi-million-dollar projects.

CMLC and Public Art

Since CMLC first began its work in city-building and community renewal, infrastructure investment, and placemaking, public art has been a foundational component of its mission and strategic plan. CMLC values the role of public art in creating livable and lovable urban districts, and has collaborated with celebrated local and international artists in both temporary and permanent installations. In 2018 Calgary’s Central Library welcomed the work of Christian Moeller alongside other installations in the community by national and international artists including Julian Opie’s animated sculpture *Promenade*, and Ron Moppett’s monumental mosaic mural *THESAMEWAYBETTR/READER*. In the spring of 2024 CMLC and the Calgary Stampede unveiled Gerry Judah’s colossal and lively *Spirit of Water* in the plaza of the expanded BMO Centre.

The *Arts Commons Transformation* project presents a unique opportunity to integrate public art into the vision for the new Arts Commons Campus, enhancing the cultural identity of Calgary’s downtown and the growing treasury of public art in the city.