



Region of Waterloo

## Request for Expressions of Interest

### Permanent Art Installation for the future Kitchener Central Transit Hub – Kitchener, Ontario, Canada



Exterior view of the future Kitchener Central Transit Hub, credit: WZMH Architects

**Submission Deadline:** Friday, May 15, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST

**Total Budget:** \$550,000 +HST

#### Project Summary:

The Region of Waterloo invites experienced and qualified Artists/Artist-led teams to submit an Expression of Interest for a significant, landmark art installation located at the future Kitchener Central Transit Hub (KCTH) in Kitchener, Ontario. The selected art proposal will respond to the theme of *Convergence*, which is expanded further below (see “Theme”).

The KCTH will be a bustling multi-modal transit hub housed within an architecturally beautiful building. The KCTH will be a showcase facility for the Region of Waterloo to welcome visitors, engage the public, and support transit users in our growing community.

The new transit hub is a central connection point in the thriving downtown Kitchener area at the corner of King St. and Victoria St. It will be the link for commuters using local and provincial transit including Grand River Transit (GRT) buses, ION Light Rail Transit (LRT), VIA Rail, GO Transit, and multi-use paths for pedestrians and cyclists. This new transit hub will provide more options for travellers to choose sustainable modes of transportation, thereby helping to reduce emissions and foster a cleaner future.

This call will be carried out in two phases. Phase 1 will select the artist or artist team; we are not looking for specific proposals in this phase. Those selected for Phase 2 will be provided with a fee to develop a specific proposal for submission.

### **Location Specifications:**

The preferred location for the artwork is in the atrium of the main entrance of the Kitchener Central Transit Hub. The atrium is a large, open, two storey, light-filled, interior space. It is enclosed by large walls of transparent glazing on the south and west sides which showcase broad views of the exterior plaza. The atrium area features a glass walled elevator, and the two main staircases that lead up to the open second floor. The upper floor overlooks the atrium from the extensive balconies and provides views through the building. The height and openness of the atrium draw the eye upwards and gives a sense of light, air, and transparency. The plaza, hub building and atrium are intended to capture attention, engage the community, draw visitors in, and foster connections and interaction with the public.

To help achieve this design intent, we envision that the artwork feature will be hung from the atrium ceiling, possibly in numerous locations if there are several small pieces that make up the overall artwork, or perhaps in one large art piece. The boundaries for the suspended artwork are such that the artwork must be kept out of reach of the public to avoid anyone trying to pull the artwork down, climb on it, or hang from it. The artwork must be kept out of reach from the second-floor balcony railings and beyond reach of the public on the staircases. The Region will work with the selected artist to identify load capacities of the roof structure and other suitable locations depending on the artists' layout and design of the artwork. Refer to the 3D renderings below for views of the proposed areas for the artwork in the atrium.

### **Location Constraints:**

The preferred location for the art installation is the Atrium Ceiling. However, projects that expand to include the structural columns, or floors will be considered by the selection committee. Consider the following:

- Interventions that modify the building surfaces are possible but would be developed in collaboration/communication with the architectural team
- The architectural aesthetic of the facility has been developed with public consultation and Council approval, so there is an expectation that the appearance

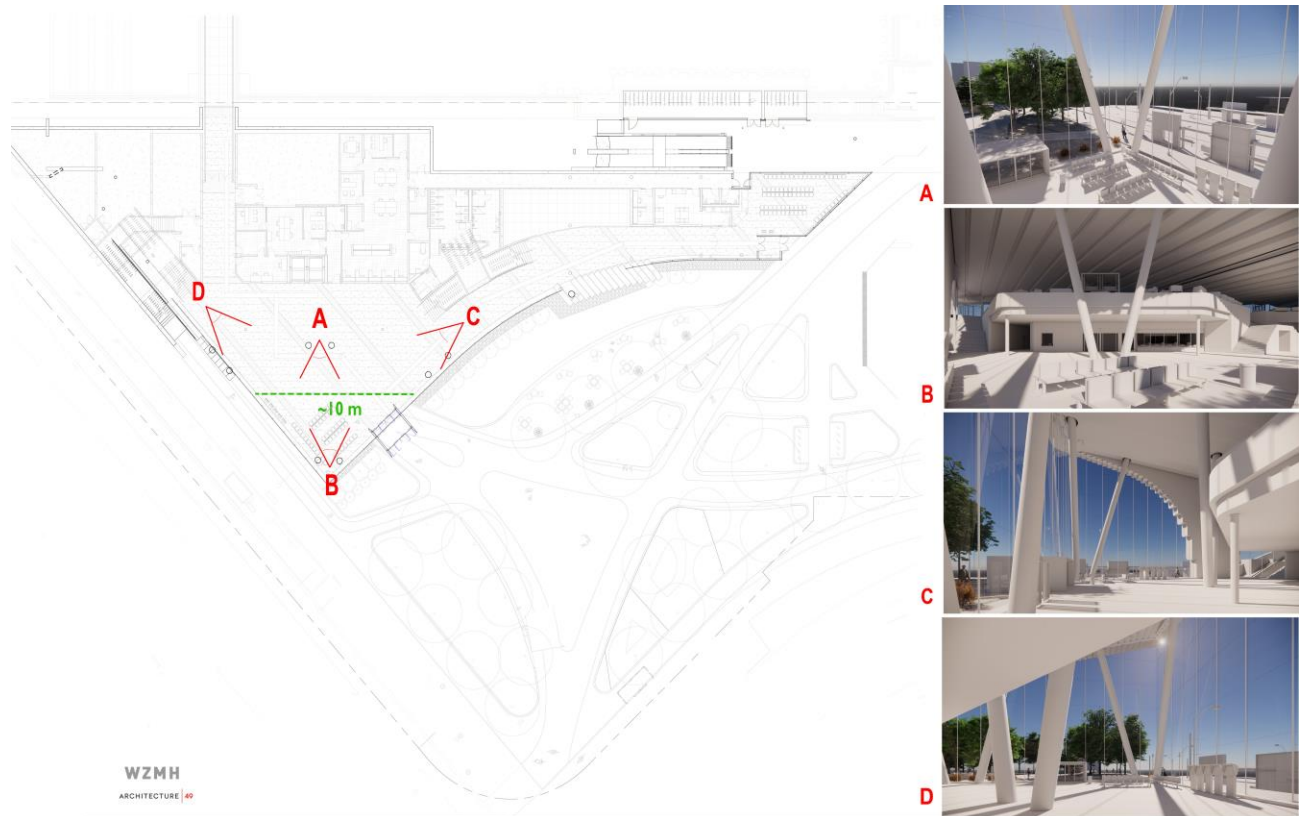
of the exterior of the building will remain true to the architectural design without significant alteration by the incorporation of the art installation

- Any hanging components need to be out of reach from all access points
- Artwork must be vandalism resistant, non-climbable, easy to clean, low maintenance, and durable
- Floor-mounted elements must not obstruct sight lines or pedestrian traffic flow

Please see the link below to view the fly-through video of the KCTH rendering. This video was prepared during an earlier stage of the design. Although some aspects of the design have changed, such as the plaza landscaping, the entrance vestibule, and the position of the interior stairs, the video can be viewed to provide a general sense of the architectural aesthetic of the building.

<https://www.engagewr.ca/king-victoria-transit-hub#lg=6518&slide=1>

Full renderings of the site can be viewed on the [Region of Waterloo Public Art website](#).



Site plan of the KCTH atrium, with ceiling-mounted & free-standing opportunities for public art, credit: WZMH Architects

## Eligibility:

This Request for Expressions of Interest is open to experienced Artists or Artist-led teams with Canadian Citizenship, permanent Canadian Residence status, and Indigenous artists

residing in or originating from the unceded territories now known as Canada. Artists with limited experience in large-scale, structural, and/or technical work who wish to apply are encouraged to do so in collaboration with a team who can support those aspects. When Expressions of Interest are equal in all other regards, the selection committee will give preference to applicants with a relationship to the Region of Waterloo and applicants that represent an IBPOC community.

## Theme:

An extensive community consultation process resulted in the selection of **Convergence** as the theme for the Kitchener Central Transit Hub public art installation. The theme helps to describe the unique history and future trajectory of this particular site in the Region of Waterloo. Artist applicants are invited to consider how their art installation will intersect the rich multi-cultural heritage of the past and present, specific industries of yesterday and tomorrow, or the unique natural areas and land formations such as the O:se Kenhionhata:tie watershed (Mohawk name for the Grand River, meaning Willow River due to the water-loving trees historically found on its banks). The Ojibwe name for the same river is Owaashtanong-ziibi, describing the River's ability to wash away debris.

The narrative for the theme of **Convergence** is: *The organic flow of paths and railway tracks connect our urban and rural landscapes, and take us through time; fusing where we have been to where we are going. At this intersection of stories and memories, commerce has converged, old and new. Large city and small town, we are shaping and reshaping where we live and our relationship to the world. Rooted in a connection to nature, we flourish in creativity and technical skill.*

## Phase 1 Submission Requirements:

Please submit the below requirements in PDF format using the [Kitchener Central Transit Hub Public Art online form](#).

1. Statement of Interest: In 500 words or less, explain why this project is of interest to you. Address how your artistic practice connects to or aligns with this project. Include descriptions of how you worked with design and construction teams, and other comments that might help to differentiate you as a candidate for this project. **Do not submit a specific proposal for the commission at this time.**
2. Experience and Qualifications (CVs and Visual Portfolio):
  - a. Three-page (maximum) CV outlining applicable professional accomplishments. For team applications, include a 3-page CV (maximum) for each team member and a cover letter that briefly explains each individual's role. Please merge all team members' files into one document.

b. Up to 10 images of past work including details in a single document. These will be the main basis for evaluating the quality of your work. Under each image, include the following information: title, year produced, medium, dimensions, location, budget, and a brief description. Additionally, you may include up to two (2) links to videos embedded into this document.

3. Two (2) Letters of Reference connected to previous public art projects. Please ensure the letters include a contact name, title, organization, email address, and phone number.

## **Phase 1 Evaluation Criteria:**

Statement of Interest (artist's interest in the project; how art practice connects to the goals of this project; description of successful technical collaborations) = 30 points

Artistic Vibrancy of Submitted past work = 30 points

Experience and Qualifications as demonstrated by CVs = 20 points

Successful track record as demonstrated by Letters of Reference = 20 points

## **Anticipated Project Timeline:**

Deadline for Expressions of Interest: Friday, May 15, 2026, at 5 p.m. EST

Jury selects short-listed EOIs: June 2026

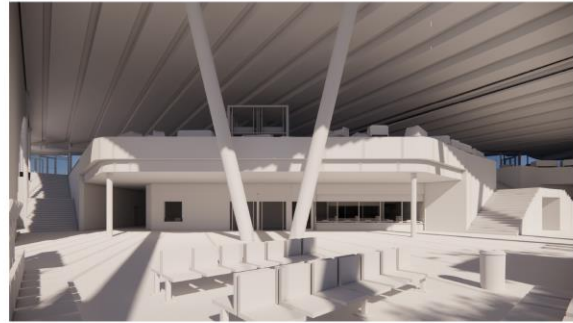
Deadline for Phase 2 proposals: September 2026

Community input sessions: September/October 2026

Artist presentations to the jury: November 2026

Winter 2026 – Public Art Advisory Committee endorsement and Regional Council final approvals

Note that the timeline may be subject to change at the discretion of the Region of Waterloo



Interior views of the KCTH main atrium, credit: WZMH Architects

## Compensation:

There is no fee provided for Phase One Expressions of Interest. Artists/Artist-led teams that move on to Phase Two will receive a fee of \$2,500 (+HST) as described under “Review Process” below.

The awarded Artist/Artist-led team will have a budget of \$550,000 (+HST), which will include all costs: artist fees, design and engineering consultation fees, materials, fabrication, travel/transportation, delivery of work to site, insurance, disbursements, tariffs, import duties, and any legal fees. The Region of Waterloo will assume the labour and associated costs of installing the artwork.

## Scope of Work:

It is the artist’s responsibility to engineer the structural soundness of the artwork, provide construction drawings, and calculate the loads of the artwork. The artist is responsible for ensuring the structural integrity and stability of the artwork, including the locations of supports or hanging points. The Region’s engineers are responsible for designing the structure of the building to support the loads of the artwork. The artist/artist team will work with the Region’s engineering team to ensure the installation is safe. Reasonable alterations to the artwork and minor changes to the building may need to be considered in

collaboration. The Region of Waterloo will assume the labour and associated costs of installing the artwork.

## **The Region's Public Art Collection:**

The selected artwork will become part of the Region of Waterloo's permanent public art collection and will be maintained by the Region. Costs associated with ongoing maintenance will be covered by the Region's Public Art Reserve.

## **Review Process:**

Phase 1 and 2 applications will be reviewed by a selection committee that may consist of members of the Region's Public Art Advisory Committee, other local arts professionals, individuals connected to the local area, municipal Councilors, and members of the design and construction team. Regional staff will be available during the selection process to advise on feasibility. The selection process will occur in two phases.

### **Phase 1: Expressions of Interest**

Eligible artists will submit an Expression of Interest. The selection committee will review all eligible submissions and shortlisted artists will be invited for Phase 2. Approximately five (5) artists/artist teams will be shortlisted. This number is subject to change at the sole discretion of the Region. Applicants not selected for Phase 2 will be notified via email.

### **Phase 2: Concept Development**

Short-listed artists/teams will be provided with a list of submission requirements and will be invited to submit concept proposals. Proposals will be shared with the public for community input prior to the final selection committee meeting. Short-listed artists/teams will present their Phase 2 proposals to the selection committee (virtual meetings will be available as needed). Each short-listed artist/team will receive an honorarium of \$2,500+HST for the successful completion of Stage 2 submission requirements.

An itemized project budget will be required for Phase 2, identifying estimated costs for:

- Artist fees for each team member
- Design, engineering, fabrication, and all specialized hardware for installation
- Fees for any consultation outside the Artist's team and the Region's construction team/staff
- Materials
- Insurance, tariffs, import duties, and legal fees
- Transportation and delivery of work to the site
- Transportation costs for site visits and presentation to the jury

**Note:** The selected artist-led team must be prepared to carry \$2M general liability insurance and property insurance on an All-Risk basis covering the value of the artwork

throughout the creation and installation process, and fulfill all requirements as described in a legal agreement with the Region of Waterloo. The artists shall provide the Region of Waterloo with a certificate of insurance evidencing such insurance coverage and naming the Region of Waterloo as an additional insured.

## **Phase 2 Evaluation Criteria:**

During Phase 2, applicants will be provided with submission requirements that will be ranked by the Selection Committee based on the following points distribution:

Artistic vibrancy\* of the concept based on submitted renderings/maquette = 40 points

Technical and budgetary feasibility, ease of maintenance, durability, and use of Canadian materials = 30 points

Ability to collaborate well with the Region's design/construction team based on past projects, references, and presentation to the jury = 30 points

\*Artistic vibrancy is defined as an artistic practice that:

- Demonstrates integrity of process.
- Embodies excellence of craft and skill.
- Demonstrates imagination, distinctiveness, and responds to the theme.
- Engages with the diversity and complexity of contemporary life.
- Is relevant in a local, national and global context.

## **Application Deadline:**

All submissions for Phase 1 must be received by 5 p.m. EST on Friday, May 15, 2026, using the [online form](#).

Sign up for project updates, FAQs, and additional information by subscribing to the [“Kitchener Central Transit Hub Public Art Call” e-Newsletter](#).

Applicants are invited to submit questions to [culturalservices@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:culturalservices@regionofwaterloo.ca) by May 1, 2026 to allow for response time prior to the deadline.

For accessibility accommodations, please contact [culturalservices@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:culturalservices@regionofwaterloo.ca).