



Call for KDFN and TKC Artists

Design Elements for Whitehorse's Wayfinding Plan

The City of Whitehorse in association with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) and Northern Cultural Expressions Society, are seeking two artists — one from each Nation — to create original cultural design elements for integration into the new City of Whitehorse's Wayfinding System.

The City of Whitehorse is developing a comprehensive Wayfinding Plan to improve how residents and visitors navigate the city, discover key locations, and connect with community spaces. The plan identifies major signage types, mapping elements, and opportunities to incorporate First Nations cultural design and language throughout the city.

This project is being developed in collaboration with KDFN, TKC, with additional input from Yukon Government, business support organizations, tourism partners, and community and heritage organizations. Through this project, the partners are working together with a focus on reconciliatory action to ensure that Indigenous presence, identity, and sovereignty are visible throughout the city's public spaces.

1. Project Overview

The City of Whitehorse contracted a signage company, Behrends Group, to develop a Wayfinding Plan for the city. After consultation with KDFN and TKC, it was decided that one artist from each Nation would be commissioned original design elements to embed in the signs.

The developed design elements may be used on various types of signs: City Entrance Signs, Neighbourhood Signs, Informational Signs and Kiosks, Interpretive Panels, Vehicle Directional Signs, Pedestrian Directional Signs, Building Entrance and Identification Signs, Trail Head Signs, District Entrance Signs, Community Signage, Park Signs, Pageantry, Banners, Parking Signage, Street Signs, Transit Signage and Structures.

Here are some signage concepts for reference:





2. Inspirational Guidance

We encourage artists to draw from their Nation’s traditional, language, teachings, materials, and culture. Inspiration may include the land, animals, plants, beading patterns, carving textures language, colours. Inspiration could also be drawn from the city slogan “The Wilderness City”.

Artists may submit artistic concepts in digital format, created in any medium:

1. Beading designs
2. Copperwork
3. Carving (wood, antler, or other materials)
4. Hide or Textile Arts
5. Drawing or Painting
6. Digital Illustration
7. Photographs

The selected artists’ design element(s) will be integrated into the final signage design using current signage technology.

Formline artwork is not being sought for this project, as it is a coastal art tradition. The intention of this call is to highlight artistic expressions that reflect the cultural practices of KDFN and TKC.

3. Eligibility

Open to KDFN and TKC Citizens (18+). No formal training required. Professional support available.

4. Application

To submit your application, please provide the following:

➤ Contact information

- Name
- Nation (proof of Nation)
- Phone
- email
- Birth year

➤ Artistic proposal

- Three to five samples of previous artwork (photos)
- Three sketches or artistic concepts in alignment with the Wayfinding project
- Short written or recorded (audio or video) description of the elements, inspiration, cultural significance, materials used.

You can **email, send by mail or bring your submission in person** to:

Northern Cultural Expressions Society

102 Lambert St, Whitehorse YT Y1A 1Z2

Hannah Silverfox-Belcher, Workshop Coordinator/Gallery Assistant

102 Lambert St, Whitehorse YT Y1A 1Z2 opened Monday to Friday, 10:00 AM–5:00 PM

867-336-2787

submissionsnorthernculture@gmail.com



If you have questions, or if you do not have digital images but want to make a submission, please reach out to NCES for assistance.

All submission materials remain owned by the artist and will not be used or duplicated unless selected. Submissions will be returned to artists upon request.

5. Selection Process

Selection will be made through consensus by a Wayfinding Selection Committee composed of representatives from Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and City of Whitehorse; Behrends Group and Northern Cultural Expressions Society will participate as technical advisors.

Considerations could include cultural grounding, clarity of concept, creativity, adaptability to signage application, and collaboration readiness.

Submissions must be **dropped in person or emailed by Wednesday, February 25th at noon**. No late submissions will be accepted.

If your work is selected, you will collaborate with Behrends Group to adapt it for use in the wayfinding system. Your artwork will be used solely within the signage family defined in the Wayfinding Plan. Any use of your design outside this signage system will require a separate contract and additional compensation.

6. Commissioning of Design Elements

Artists selected will create design elements and collaborate with Behrends Group, the signage company, to adapt their designs to the final signage.

Commissioned work will include:

1. Primary cultural motif
2. Four to six supporting elements (borders, textures, secondary motifs)
3. Collaborate with the designers to refine and adapt the design elements to be used in the signage and adapt the signage.
4. Written description of the elements, inspiration, cultural significance, materials used in the final piece.

7. Payment of selected artists

Each selected artists will receive \$5,000 for its conceptual design and collaboration with Behrends Group to integrate the design into the wayfinding signs.

Closing Statement

We raise our hands to the artists, knowledge keepers, Elders, and community members whose creativity and teachings continue to shape these lands. Your work, your voice, and your cultural expressions are vital to how we see and understand Whitehorse today.

By bringing forward your designs, motifs, and ways of seeing, you help root the Wayfinding Project in the languages, stories, and relationships that come from this land. Your artistic contributions will help guide residents and visitors through a city that recognizes and celebrates the rich history and culture of the Peoples whose homelands it sits upon.

Shǎw níthǎn. Thank you.