

CITY OF SANTA MARIA  
RECREATION AND PARKS  
**CALL FOR ARTISTS**

**Living Waters: Jim May Park Gateway Bench**

*Digital artwork for a professionally fabricated exterior vinyl wrap*

|                             |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location</b>             | Jim May Park, 809 Stanford Drive, Santa Maria, CA 93454                                                                          |
| <b>Project</b>              | Original digital artwork for the exterior of one Noblewins Gateway shaded bench                                                  |
| <b>Theme</b>                | The flora, fauna, lake, and living systems of Jim May Park                                                                       |
| <b>Winning artist award</b> | \$1,000 - includes camera-ready artwork and up to two revisions                                                                  |
| <b>Call opens</b>           | Thursday, October 8, 2026                                                                                                        |
| <b>Submission deadline</b>  | Friday, November 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time                                                                             |
| <b>Eligibility</b>          | Artists/designers age 18+ who live or work in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, or Ventura County; individuals and teams may apply |
| <b>Submission method</b>    | Thumb drive delivered or mailed to the Recreation and Parks Administration Office; drives will not be returned                   |

## Opportunity Overview

The City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department invites artists and graphic designers to create original digital artwork for a vinyl wrap on the exterior of a new Gateway shaded bench at Jim May Park. The park is known for its large lake, wildlife, walking path, pier, playground, and gathering spaces. The completed artwork should transform the bench into a welcoming public landmark that reflects the park's natural character and rewards viewing from multiple directions.

Applicants must submit a strong, complete design placed on the City-provided Gateway artwork template. Sketches, mood boards, alternate templates, and designs submitted outside the provided template will not be considered. City staff will first verify eligibility and qualifications. The Public Art Committee will then review the qualifying artwork anonymously and make the final selection.



*Proposed Gateway bench location at Jim May Park. Image is a placement visualization for site context.*

## Project Goals

- Celebrate the lake-centered ecology and distinctive sense of place at Jim May Park.
- Create an engaging, family-friendly design that is visually strong at both pedestrian and driving distances.
- Encourage curiosity, care, and stewardship for the park's plants, wildlife, and shared public spaces.
- Produce artwork that responds to the Gateway bench's circular form and remains coherent around curves, seams, mounting points, and viewing angles.
- Add a durable public-art feature that strengthens community identity and the visitor experience.

## Theme: Living Waters

The artwork should interpret the flora and fauna of Jim May Park, with the lake serving as a central source of habitat, movement, reflection, and community life. Artists are encouraged to visit the park and develop a site-responsive visual story rather than a generic nature pattern.

## Theme Guidance

- Possible subjects include the lake and shoreline; trees, grasses, flowers, and seasonal color; birds and other wildlife; pollinators; water, wind, migration, growth, and interconnected habitats.
- Approaches may be representational, illustrative, abstract, patterned, or a thoughtful combination. Recognizable local details are encouraged.
- The circular structure may be treated as a portal, habitat frame, horizon, continuous lifecycle, or wraparound narrative.
- Designs should feel welcoming to all ages and cultures and should be appropriate for a civic park setting.
- Commercial logos, advertising, and unlicensed third-party imagery are not permitted. Any City mark or interpretive text must be specifically approved.
- Avoid relying on small text or fine details that will be difficult to read at full scale or may be interrupted by seams, hardware, or trimming.

### SITE RESEARCH

Applicants are encouraged to visit Jim May Park before applying. The City may provide an optional site walk and reference photographs during the call period. Species depicted as site-specific should be reasonably grounded in observation or reliable local references.

## Artist Scope of Work

The winning artist or artist team will work with City staff and the City's fabrication/installation vendor to convert the selected submission into complete, camera-ready production artwork. The \$1,000 award includes the following services:

- Participate in a kickoff/production meeting and confirm the site, project goals, vendor template, fabrication limitations, and schedule.
- Refine the winning design without materially changing the concept selected by the Public Art Committee.
- Complete up to two reasonable rounds of production-related revisions based on consolidated City and fabricator feedback.
- Create final, camera-ready artwork using the vendor-supplied Gateway template and final production specifications.
- Coordinate promptly on preflight questions, color adjustments, seams, safe zones, and minor fabrication changes.
- Provide final editable source files, linked/embedded assets, fonts or outlined type, and a color reference approved for production.

## City and Vendor Responsibilities

- Include the required Gateway exterior artwork template with the published call and provide the final production version to the winning artist.
- Contract and pay separately for vinyl production, lamination, surface preparation, and professional installation.
- Review and approve the camera-ready artwork, proof, and any required production adaptations before fabrication.
- Coordinate installation, site access, project credit, and public communications.

## Technical Requirements

Every entry must be created and submitted on the Gateway artwork template included with this call. No alternate template, free-form canvas, or substitute layout will be accepted. The final vendor template controls. The following planning information is based on the 2026 Noblewins Gateway materials and is included so applicants can evaluate the project scale and complexity.

| Item                         | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Gateway footprint</b>     | Approximately 36 in. deep x 96 in. wide x 87 in. high; seats 4-5                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Exterior art template</b> | Approximately 20 ft. x 3 ft.; use the required Gateway exterior artwork template included as Appendix A                                                                                                    |
| <b>Bleed</b>                 | Extend all background artwork and graphics at least 3 in. beyond the trim line on all sides                                                                                                                |
| <b>Safe zones</b>            | Keep critical artwork, logos, and any approved text inside the primary safe zone                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Hardware</b>              | Keep essential design elements clear of bench mounting locations and reserve at least a 0.25 in. design buffer around anchor-foot cutouts                                                                  |
| <b>File preparation</b>      | Native Adobe Illustrator file preferred; vector artwork wherever practical; embed or package linked assets; outline approved type; use vendor-specified color mode, scale, resolution, and output settings |

### EXTERIOR ARTWORK ONLY

This call covers only the exterior surface identified on the provided Gateway template. The interior will receive a different treatment and is not part of this competition. Entries that alter, omit, or disregard the provided template will be disqualified.

## Eligibility

This opportunity is limited to the Tri-Counties region: Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura Counties.

- Open to individual artists, illustrators, graphic designers, and artist-led teams age 18 or older who live or work in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, or Ventura County.

- Applicants must demonstrate the ability to create large-format digital artwork and deliver professional production files. Prior public-art experience is welcome but not required.
- City of Santa Maria employees, selection panel members, project consultants, and their immediate household members are not eligible.
- Teams must identify one lead artist who meets the Tri-Counties eligibility requirement and will serve as the contracting party and primary point of contact.

## Compensation

One winning artist or artist team will receive a \$1,000 award. The award compensates the winner for the selected design, preparation and delivery of complete camera-ready artwork, coordination through proof approval, and up to two reasonable rounds of production-related revisions. The City will separately pay for vinyl printing, lamination, surface preparation, and installation.

The \$1,000 award will be paid after the City accepts the complete camera-ready artwork and all required files, subject to the final City agreement and vendor requirements.

There is no fee to enter. No stipend, honorarium, reimbursement, or other payment will be provided to artists whose designs are not selected. Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with preparing and delivering their submissions.

## How to Apply

Submit all required materials on one USB thumb drive. The thumb drive must be received by the deadline; postmarks do not control. Submissions may be mailed or delivered in person to:

### DELIVERY ADDRESS

City of Santa Maria  
Recreation and Parks Department  
615 S. McClelland Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
Attn: Jim May Park Gateway Bench

Hand-delivery hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Submissions delivered on Friday, November 13, 2026, must be received by the 5:00 p.m. deadline.

Place the thumb drive in a sealed envelope or package labeled “Jim May Park Gateway Bench Call for Artists.” Include the applicant or lead artist's name and return address on the outside of the package for administrative use. Thumb drives and other submitted materials will not be returned.

The City is not responsible for postage due, delayed mail, damaged drives, unreadable files, or submissions delivered to another City location. Applicants should retain a complete copy of everything submitted.

## Submission Materials

- **01\_Artist\_Information.pdf:** name, mailing address, phone, email, county of residence or work, and website or social portfolio link, if applicable.
- **02\_Qualifications.pdf:** a 150-250 word artist statement; résumé or experience summary (maximum two pages per individual or four pages per team); and three to five work samples with title, year, medium, dimensions, location/client, applicant role, and a brief note on relevance.
- **03\_Anonymous\_Artwork.pdf:** the complete, full-color design placed on the provided Gateway template. The artwork file must not display the artist's name, signature, studio name, logo, website, or other identifying information.
- **04\_Design\_Statement.pdf:** a maximum 300-word anonymous description of the completed design, its connection to Jim May Park, and its approach to the wraparound composition. Do not identify the artist in this file.
- **05\_AI\_Disclosure.pdf:** state whether generative artificial intelligence was used. If used, identify the tool or service and briefly describe which visual elements or production steps involved AI. If not used, state “No generative AI was used.”
- **Team roles, if applicable:** identify the lead artist and describe each member's responsibilities.
- **References:** provide up to two professional references with name, organization, relationship, phone, and email.

### COMPLETED DESIGN REQUIRED

The Public Art Committee will judge the submitted artwork, not a sketch or proposed direction. Submit a strong, complete piece on the provided Gateway template. The winning artist will then prepare the selected design as camera-ready production artwork and complete up to two revisions.

## Selection Process

City staff will conduct an administrative and qualifications review before any artwork is presented to the Public Art Committee. Staff will verify that the applicant is eligible, the submission is complete and readable, the artist appears qualified to deliver camera-ready artwork, and the design uses the required Gateway template. Staff will separate identifying materials from the artwork and assign an entry number.

The Public Art Committee will review the qualifying artwork and design statements anonymously. Committee members will not receive the artist names or identifying qualification materials during judging. The Public Art Committee will make the final selection. The City reserves the right not to select a design if no eligible submission adequately meets the project requirements.

## Evaluation Criteria

| Evaluation criterion                                         | Weight |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Responsiveness to theme and Jim May Park                     | 30%    |
| Artistic quality, originality, and visual impact             | 25%    |
| Site appropriateness and use of the circular/wraparound form | 20%    |
| Technical feasibility for large-format vinyl production      | 15%    |
| Overall completeness and readiness for production            | 10%    |

## Anticipated Schedule

| Milestone                                                | Date / target                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Call opens                                               | Thursday, October 8, 2026                                                                               |
| Questions due                                            | Friday, October 23, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.                                                                  |
| Optional site walk                                       | Saturday, October 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.<br>Jim May Park, 809 Stanford Drive,<br>Santa Maria, CA 93454 |
| City responses posted                                    | Friday, October 30, 2026                                                                                |
| Submission deadline                                      | Friday, November 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time                                                    |
| City staff eligibility and qualifications review         | November 16-20, 2026                                                                                    |
| Public Art Committee anonymous judging / final selection | Thursday, December 3, 2026                                                                              |
| Winning artist notified                                  | Monday, December 7, 2026                                                                                |
| Agreement and project kickoff                            | By Friday, January 15, 2027                                                                             |
| Camera-ready artwork and up to two revisions             | January 18-February 19, 2027                                                                            |
| Final artwork accepted                                   | By Friday, February 26, 2027                                                                            |
| Fabrication and installation                             | Spring 2027; subject to vendor and site schedules                                                       |

*All dates are subject to change. The City will notify applicants of material schedule changes through the same channel used to publish the call.*

## Questions and Addenda

Submit questions by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 23, 2026, to [Dsmitherman@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:Dsmitherman@cityofsantamaria.org). Responses that materially affect the call will be posted by Friday, October 30, 2026, and issued in writing as an addendum. Applicants are responsible for reviewing all posted addenda before submitting.

## Terms and Conditions

- The City may amend, suspend, cancel, or reissue this call; reject any or all applications; waive minor irregularities; and select the artist it determines best serves the project.
- Selection does not authorize work. The selected artist may begin only after the City agreement is fully executed and a written notice to proceed or purchase authorization is issued.
- The selected artist must certify that the artwork is original or that all incorporated material is properly licensed. Every applicant must submit the required generative-AI disclosure, whether or not generative AI was used.
- Visible artist names, signatures, studio names, logos, websites, or other identifying marks are prohibited in the anonymous artwork and design-statement files. The City may disqualify an entry that compromises anonymous judging.
- Applicants retain copyright in unselected submissions. By entering, each applicant permits the City to reproduce submitted images for noncommercial administration, review, public meetings, archival purposes, and promotion of the opportunity or selection process, with reasonable credit after judging is complete.
- As a condition of the \$1,000 award, the winning artist will assign to the City of Santa Maria all right, title, and interest in the selected artwork and final camera-ready files, including copyright. The final City agreement will govern the assignment and any required representations, warranties, and releases.
- The winning artist may reproduce and display the selected artwork in the artist's personal portfolio, website, social media, résumé, exhibitions, and other self-promotional materials with appropriate project credit. The artist may not sell, license, manufacture, or authorize a third party to commercially use the City-owned artwork without the City's written permission.
- The City may fabricate, display, photograph, reproduce, publicize, maintain, repair, adapt for production, modify, replace, or remove the artwork. Because vinyl has a finite service life, installation does not guarantee permanent display. City legal review is required before publication of final copyright and rights language.
- The selected artist may be required to complete City vendor documents and meet applicable contracting, tax, insurance, business-license, and accessibility requirements, as determined by the City for this scope.
- The City is not responsible for incomplete, late, corrupted, misdirected, or inaccessible submissions.

# Gateway Exterior Artwork Template

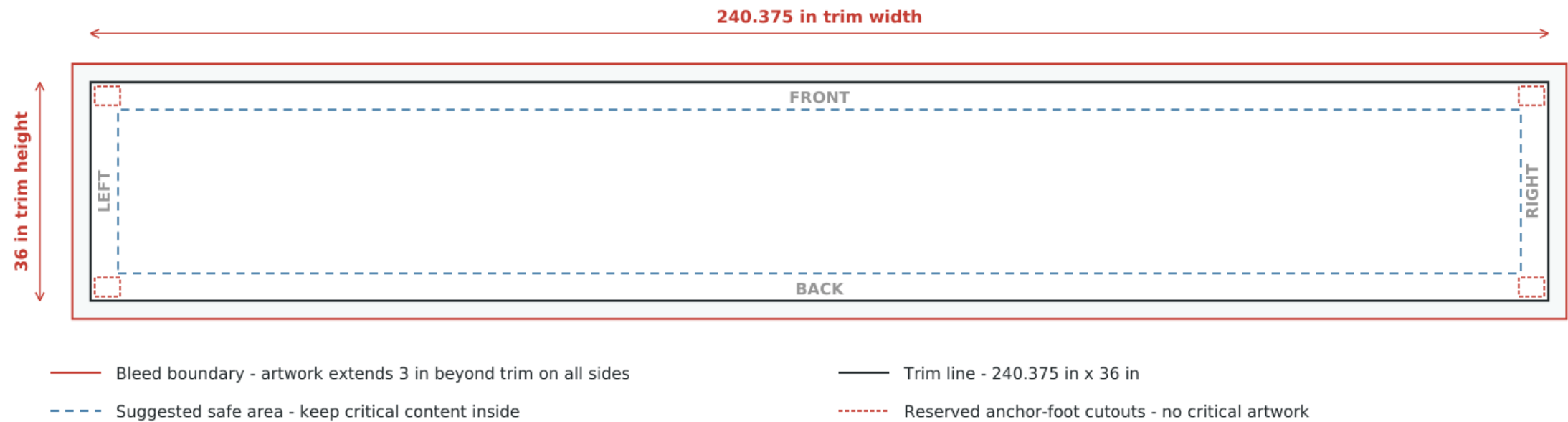
## Jim May Park Gateway Bench Exterior Artwork Template

Anonymous competition submission sheet | Exterior surface only | Not to scale

ENTRY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

For City use only - do not add an artist name

Place one complete, full-color design in the continuous exterior wrap area below. Extend artwork through the bleed boundary.



### Submission requirements

- Submit this sheet as the artwork file. Do not change the proportions, orientation, trim dimensions, or reserved mounting zones.
- Do not include an artist name, signature, studio name, logo, or contact information anywhere on the artwork or this sheet.
- Keep text, focal imagery, and other critical elements inside the safe area. Artwork may continue across all four labeled edges.
- This competition template is not a fabrication file. The selected artist will prepare camera-ready artwork using final City-approved production specifications.

Applicant note: artwork files and qualification materials must be placed in separate folders on the thumb drive, as described in the Call for Artists.