



urban canvas

Building Owner Guide

A Guide for How and When to Use Artwork at Construction Sites

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Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Buildings

Robert D. LiMandri
Commissioner

urbancanvas Building Owner Guide

I. INTRODUCTION

The urbancanvas Design Competition challenged professional artists and designers to create printed artwork for temporary protective structures at construction sites to beautify New York City's streetscape and promote maintenance of these structures. Artwork can be used to enliven different types of temporary protective structures located on City-owned property: construction fences, sidewalk sheds, supported scaffolds and cocoon systems.

The New York City Department of Buildings and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, partnered to create this unique competition. A jury, including a non-voting representative from the Public Design Commission of the City of New York, and the general public selected the winning designs that are available for property owners and developers to install at their sites.

This guide informs property owners, contractors and others of the options available for installing urbancanvas designs at their sites. It provides information on how and when artwork can be displayed on construction sites, as well as what materials are acceptable for use. All urbancanvas installations must comply with the guidelines outlined below.

II. PILOT PROGRAM

The NYC Construction Codes currently prohibit, with limited exceptions, the posting of any material on temporary protective structures. The Department of Buildings is introducing the urbancanvas Pilot Program ("pilot program") to allow public artwork on temporary protective structures located on or over City-owned buildings, sidewalks and streets. For example, a privately-owned building with a sidewalk shed erected on a City sidewalk is eligible for artwork.

Temporary protective structures not located on or over City-owned property are not eligible to participate in the pilot program.

As part of the pilot program, property owners and developers are allowed to install one winning artwork package at their site. Winning artwork packages include designs for a sidewalk shed, construction fence, supported scaffold and cocoon. Artwork installed on temporary protective structures during the pilot program may have an artwork sponsor displayed according to the specifications outlined in Section VII. On supported scaffold debris netting, building owners have the opportunity to install a pictorial rendering of the exterior of the building being constructed in lieu of artwork.¹

All sites participating in the pilot program are required to post an informational building rendering of the project and an artist/competition credit according to the specifications outlined in Section VI.

Approved artwork is available on the urbancanvas website.

¹ The NYC Department of Buildings will pilot the urbancanvas project per Charter Section 645(b) (2) (g) which allows the "Commissioner to permit in specific cases experimental or demonstration construction not in compliance with the building code..."

III. TEMPORARY STRUCTURE TYPES

- **Sidewalk sheds**
Sidewalk sheds are structures built over the sidewalk and around the exterior of a building to protect pedestrians from falling debris while work is occurring. Sidewalk sheds are often placed over active businesses. Sidewalk sheds are also referred to as “sidewalk bridges” or “pavement scaffolds.”
- **Construction Fences**
A construction fence is a free-standing structure designed to restrict access to an enclosed construction site. The most common assembly of a construction fence involves pre-fabricated sections posted into the ground.
- **Support Scaffolds**
A supported scaffold is a temporary frame used to support workers and material during the construction or repair of buildings and other large structures. Supported scaffolds are typically composed of a modular system of metal pipes, although they can be made out of other materials.
- **Cocoons**
A cocoon is a protective screening system installed around the perimeter edges of a multi-floor construction site to create a closed working environment that ensures worker safety and prevents debris from falling off the top working floors. As work progresses to higher floors, the cocoon system can be repositioned to higher elevations.

IV. ARTWORK AND SPONSORSHIP

Property owners participating in the pilot program can select one of the winning artwork packages to install at their site. The specifics of these packages, including color and printing information, is available on the [urbancanvas website](#). To participate, building owners must register on the [urban canvas website](#). If approved for the pilot program, owners will be provided with artwork files for download.

As a participant, building owners are allowed to display a limited sponsorship message with the artwork. Sponsorships can be any entity, including the developer, builder or an outside organization, that has agreed to defray the costs of posting the public artwork.

Sponsorship agreements shall be between the party in control of the site and the sponsor. The City of New York will not be responsible for securing a sponsor, nor be a party to any contract relating to the sponsorship.

Sponsorships will only be allowed for the duration the artwork is on the structure. If the artwork is removed, the sponsorship message must be removed.

Sponsorships must meet the size and location requirements described in Section VII. Sponsorship signs may include the name and corporate logo of the sponsor. No advertising message or product depiction is allowed.

No artwork or sponsor message may be illuminated.

Sponsorships must include the words: “urbancanvas sponsored by:” as depicted in the illustrations in Section VII.

In addition, all sites must display an informational building rendering and an artist/competition credit as described in Section VI.

V. MATERIALS

All winning urban canvas artwork is designed to be produced on either lightweight solid vinyl or mesh materials that comply with the NYC Construction Codes, including the NYC Building Code (“BC”), and other applicable requirements.

Artwork will be printed on a completely flat surface and cannot include any illumination, electronic signage, protrusions, or projections.

Materials must be:

- Durable
- Flame retardant
- Able to withstand all weather conditions such as rain, snow, ice, heat, and wind.

Material examples include:

SIDEWALK SHEDS

Artwork can be printed on vinyl material that can be installed on the outer sides and ends of sidewalk sheds (4 feet in height) by stretching over the shed and fastening to the back or on self-adhesive panels that adhere directly to the outer sides and ends of the shed. Artwork cannot extend above or below the shed parapet.

Materials must be:

- Lightweight, solid vinyl material
- Flame resistant in accordance with NFPA 701 or listed under UL 214

CONSTRUCTION FENCES

Artwork can be printed on vinyl material that can be installed on the outside of the construction fence by stretching over the fence and fastening to the back or on self-adhesive panels that adhere directly to the fence structure. Artwork cannot extend beyond the top of the fence.

Materials must be:

- Lightweight, solid vinyl material
- Flame resistant in accordance with NFPA 701 or listed under UL 214

SUPPORTED SCAFFOLD DEBRIS NETTING

Artwork must be printed directly onto the debris netting mesh material, as approved in the scaffolding plans for the site. Debris netting installed on construction sites shall be designed to meet the anticipated loads during the construction pursuant to BC 3301.6m including wind loads as indicated in BC 1609.

Debris netting mesh is typically a dense material with smaller openings, usually 1/16 of an inch. The mesh is typically sized in rolls 7-8 feet in width.

Materials must:

- Be flame retardant
- Undergo a structural analysis

CLIMBING FORMWORK (COCOON)/ ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO VERTICAL NETTING

There are two types of cocoons that are alternative methods to vertical netting:

- **Mesh Cocoon:**

Artwork must be printed directly onto the mesh material, as approved in the plans for the site. Mesh material installed on construction sites shall be designed to meet the anticipated loads during construction pursuant to BC 3301.6, including wind loads as indicated in BC 1609.

Mesh is typically a dense material with smaller openings, usually 1/16 of an inch. The mesh is typically sized in rolls 7-8 feet in width.

Materials must:

- Be flame retardant
- Undergo a structural analysis

- **Solid Material Cocoon:**

Artwork must be printed on vinyl material that can be reproduced and installed on the outside of the solid material cocoon by stretching over the cocoon and fastening to the back or on self-adhesive panels that adhere directly to the structure.

Alternative methods to vertical netting installed on a construction site shall be designed to meet the anticipated loads during construction pursuant to BC 3301.6, including wind loads as indicated in BC 1609.

Materials must be:

- Lightweight, solid vinyl material
- Flame resistant in accordance with NFPA 701 or listed under UL 214

VI. INFORMATIONAL BUILDING RENDERING AND ARTIST CREDIT

All building sites with a construction fence erected in connection with a New Building or an Alteration job participating in the pilot program are required to post an informational building rendering of the project, including the following details:

1. Rendering, elevation drawing of building or zoning diagram of building exterior
2. Type of work in progress (X-story Residential, Commercial, etc)
3. Anticipated completion date
4. Owner name, address and phone
5. Contact for project information (phone number or website)
6. General Contractor name and phone for emergencies
7. Building Enforcement Safety Team (BEST) phone number (for Major Building sites)
8. 311 information
9. The primary permit (NB or Alt)

If the informational rendering is posted, no other construction signage is required on the temporary structures.

The informational rendering (sample below) must measure 4 feet high by 6 feet wide. No information other than that cited above will be permitted.

Color specifications for the blue bar background to the left of the building image are as follows:

- Pantone: 296M
- RGB: 15, 43, 84
- CMYK: 100, 88, 38, 35

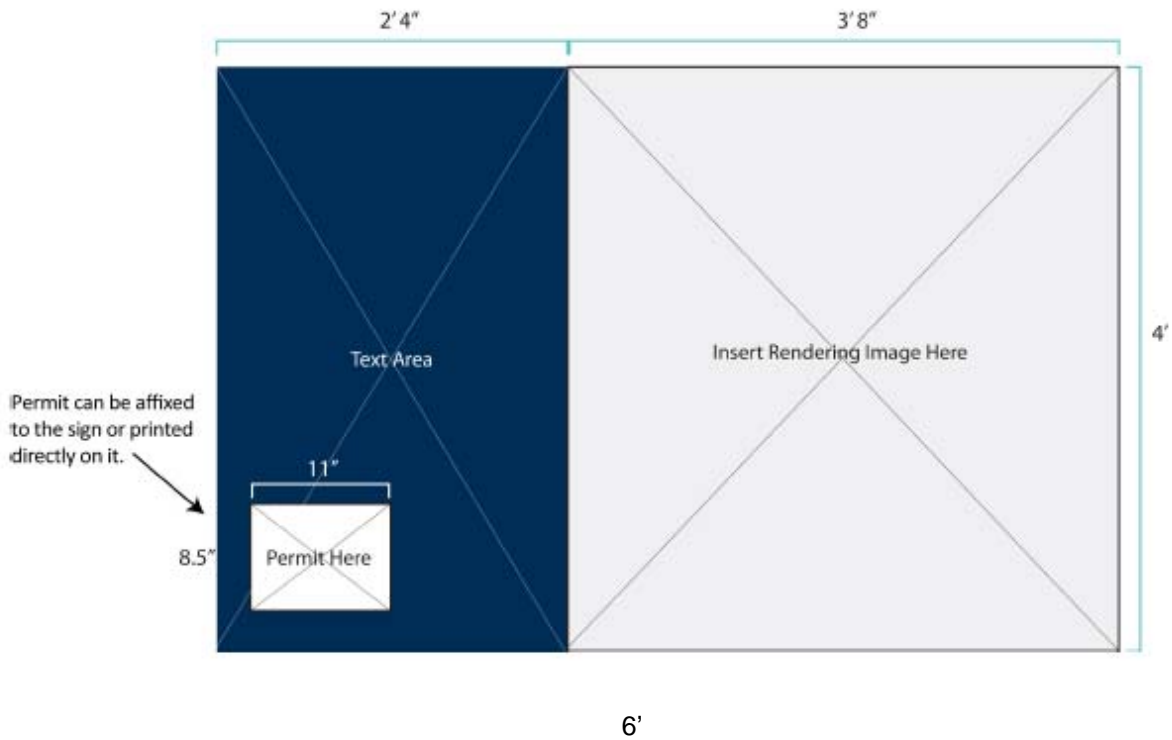
Calibri must be used as the font for all required information. All text must be white. Letter size must be a minimum of 1 inch (measured by the upper case character).

Sample Images:

4'



6'



An artist/competition credit must be posted if artwork is used on any temporary protective structure on a construction site.

These credits should be posted without any alteration such as to size, font or colors.

The artist/competition credit must always be located on the construction fence at eye-level. If a site does not have a fence, the credit must be located on the sidewalk shed. Artist/competition credit should measure 3 feet by 6 inches as depicted below.

Templates for the informational rendering and artist credits will be available for download when a site is approved for the pilot program.



VII. SPECIFICATIONS FOR HOW TO DISPLAY urbancanvas ARTWORK ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

****Note:** Representation of sponsorship messages in the following sections is an approximation

A. Buildings with active businesses requiring a sidewalk shed only

At sites with only a sidewalk shed over an active business, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. Business signs can be a maximum of 2 feet high and as wide as the business storefront. The space on the lower half of the front of the shed behind the business signs should be a solid background color that complements the artwork (see first example below).
- ii. A sponsorship message is permitted to be a maximum of:
 - 15% of the artwork or 20 linear feet, whichever is less
 - 2 feet high, in line with business signage
- iii. The sponsorship message must be limited to the bottom half of the shed.
- iv. If the sidewalk shed spans a street corner, the sponsorship message must be placed on the portion over the corner (depicted below). The solid background color behind the business signs is not required for a corner shed.
- v. Artwork must occupy the remainder of the visible space on the shed.
- vi. The artist/competition credit must appear at the opposite end of the shed from the sponsor message.
- vii. Required work-related signs must be posted visibly upon the temporary protective structure(s) in accordance with BC 3301.9.
- viii. Existing accessory signs must be lawful before installing an accessory sign for the business on the shed.

Example:

If the shed frontage is 50 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message:
 - i. 2 feet high
 - ii. 7.5 linear feet wide
2. Active business signs allowed to be as wide as the business frontage

Sample Image:



Sample Image of Corner Shed:



B. Buildings with storefronts and no active businesses requiring a sidewalk shed only

At sites with no active businesses and only a sidewalk shed, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. A sponsorship message is permitted to be a maximum of:
 - 4 feet high
 - 2 linear feet wide for each 8 linear feet of shed frontage, up to 24 feet per frontage
- ii. The artist/competition credit must be posted on the opposite end of the shed from the sponsorship message.
- iii. Artwork must occupy the remainder of shed space.
- iv. Required work-related signs must be posted visibly upon the temporary protective structure(s) in accordance with BC 3301.9.

Example:

If the shed frontage is 25 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message:
 - i. 4 feet high
 - ii. 6 linear feet wide

Sample Image:



C. Construction sites with a fence only

At sites with only a construction fence, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

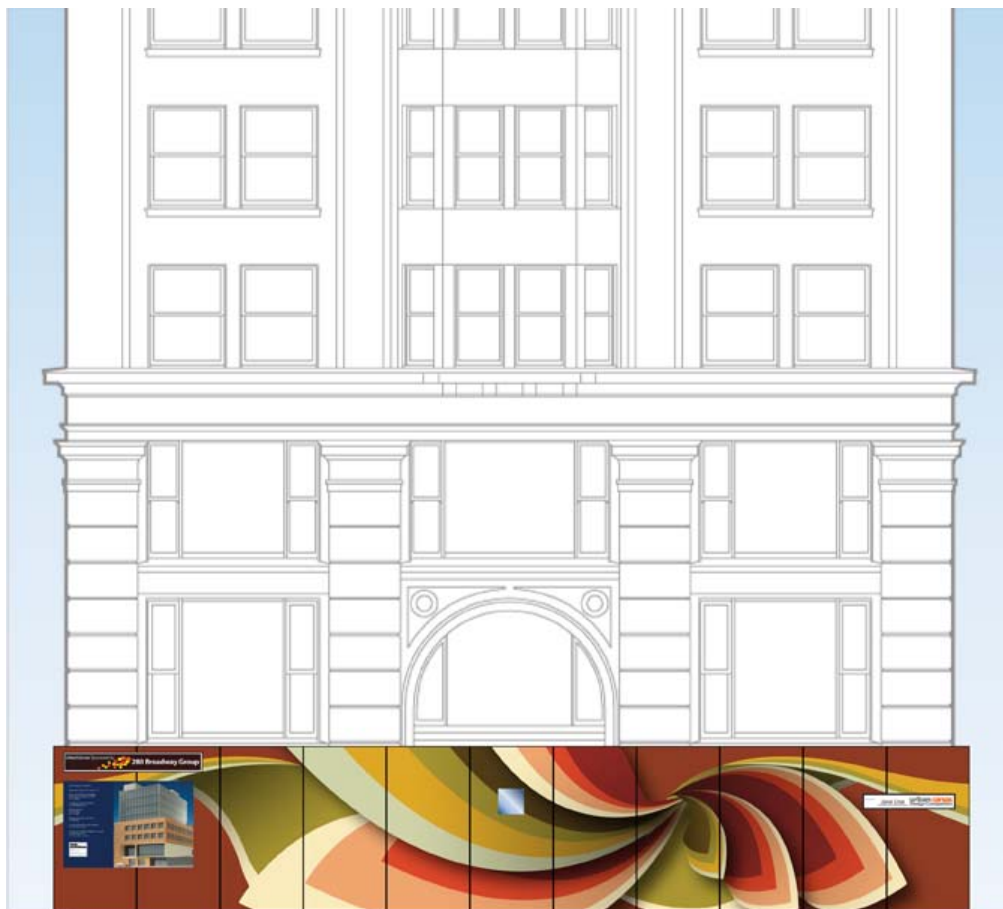
- i. A sponsorship message is permitted to be a maximum of:
 - 1 foot high
 - 2 linear feet wide for each 8 linear feet of the fence frontage, up to 24 feet.
- ii. If the job is not required to post the informational rendering (not a NB or Alt), a 311 sign and permits must be displayed on the temporary structure(s). Required work-related signs must be posted visibly in accordance with BC 3301.9.
- iii. The sponsorship message must be above required signs and the informational building rendering (see below).
- iv. Portholes/view panels (12"x12") for public viewing must be provided at a rate of one for every 25 linear feet per frontage, with a minimum of 1 per frontage.
- v. The artist/competition credit must be posted at eye-level on the opposite end of the construction fence from the informational building or 311 sign.

Example:

If the fence frontage is 50 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message:
 - i. 1 foot high
 - ii. 12 linear feet wide
2. 2 portholes/view panels required

Sample Image:



D. Construction sites with a sidewalk shed and a fence

At sites with a sidewalk shed and a construction fence, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. A sponsorship message is only permitted on the sidewalk shed and must be a maximum of:
 1. 4 feet high
 2. 2 linear feet wide for each 8 feet of shed frontage, up to 24 feet.
- ii. The sponsorship message is not permitted on the construction fence.
- iii. If the job is not required to post the informational rendering (not a NB or Alt), a 311 sign and permits must be displayed on the temporary structure(s). Required work-related signs must be posted visibly in accordance with BC 3301.9.
- iv. Portholes/ view panels (12"x12") for public viewing must be provided at a rate of one for every 25 linear feet per frontage, with a minimum of 1 per frontage.
- v. The artist/competition credit must be posted at eye-level on the opposite end of the construction fence from the informational building rendering or 311 sign.

Example:

If the shed/fence frontage is 50 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message (on shed only):
 - i. 4 feet high
 - ii. 12 linear feet wide
2. 2 portholes/view panels required on the fence

Sample Image:



E. Buildings with active businesses, requiring sidewalk shed and scaffold

If a scaffold and sidewalk shed are installed over active businesses, participants must agree to the following criteria:

- i. Participants can place a pictorial rendering of the exterior building being built on the full scaffold mesh in lieu of artwork.
- ii. Business signs can be a maximum of 2 feet high and as wide as the business storefront. The space on the lower half of the front of the shed behind the business signs should be a solid background color that complements the artwork (see example below).
- iii. Artwork must occupy the remainder of visible space on the shed.
- iv. Existing accessory signs must be lawful before installing an accessory sign for that business on the shed.
- v. A sponsorship message is only allowed on the sidewalk shed and is permitted to be a maximum of:
 1. 2 feet high and
 2. 2 linear feet wide for each 8 feet of frontage, up to 24 feet.
- vi. The artist/competition credit must be posted on the opposite end of the sidewalk shed from the sponsor message.
- vii. The sponsorship message is not allowed on the scaffold.
- viii. Required work-related signs must be posted visibly upon the temporary protective structure(s) in accordance with BC 3301.9.

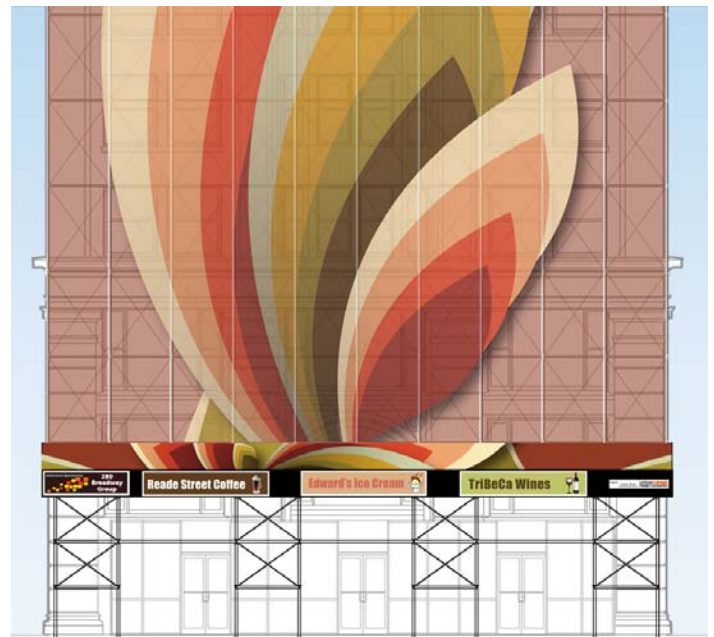
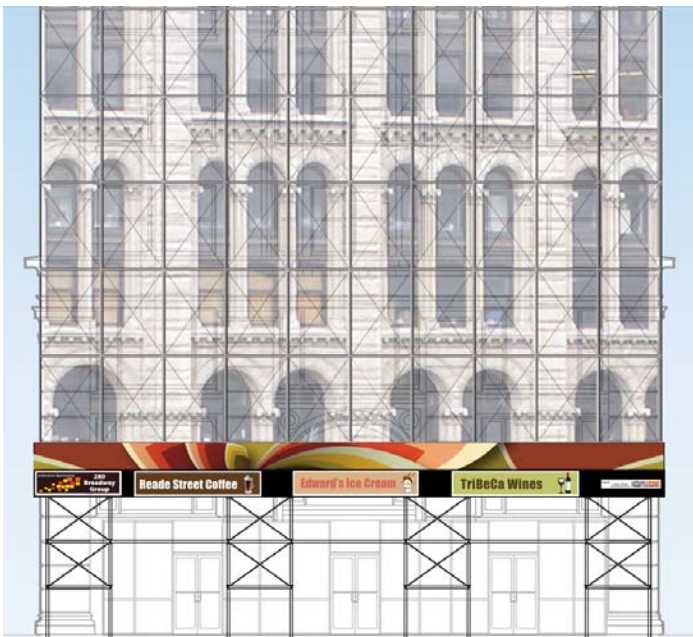
Note: If full mesh is not used, no artwork or pictorial rendering can be installed. Artwork can only be placed on the sidewalk shed.

Example:

If the scaffold full mesh and shed frontage is 96 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message (sidewalk shed only):
 - i. 4 feet high
 - ii. 24 linear feet wide

Sample Images:



F. Buildings with no active businesses, requiring a sidewalk shed and a scaffold

If a scaffold and a sidewalk shed are installed on a building with no active businesses, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. Participants can place a pictorial rendering of the exterior of the building being built on the full scaffold mesh in lieu of artwork.
- ii. Artwork/pictorial building rendering must cover the entire scaffold mesh.
- iii. A sponsorship message is only allowed on the sidewalk shed and is permitted to be a maximum of:
 1. 4 feet high
 2. 2 linear feet wide for each 8 linear feet of shed frontage, up to 24 linear feet.
- iv. The artist/competition credit must be posted on the opposite end of the sidewalk shed from sponsorship message.
- v. The sponsorship message is not allowed on scaffold mesh.
- vi. Required work-related signs must be posted visibly upon the temporary protective structure(s) in accordance with BC 3301.9.

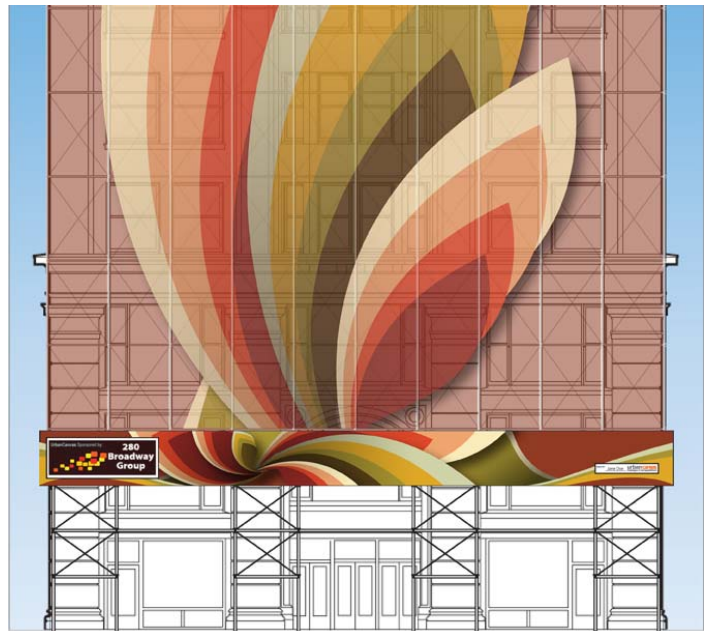
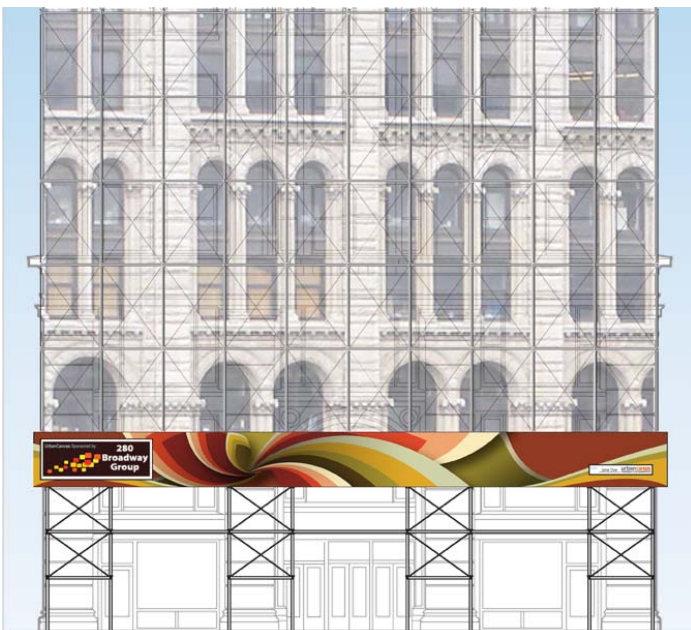
Note: If full mesh is not used, no artwork or pictorial rendering can be installed. Only artwork is allowed on the sidewalk shed.

Example:

If the scaffold full mesh and shed frontage is 96 linear feet or more:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message (shed only):
 - i. 4 feet high
 - ii. 24 linear feet wide

Sample Images:



G. Construction sites with a scaffold, fence, and shed

At sites with a scaffold, fence, and shed, participants must agree to the following criteria:

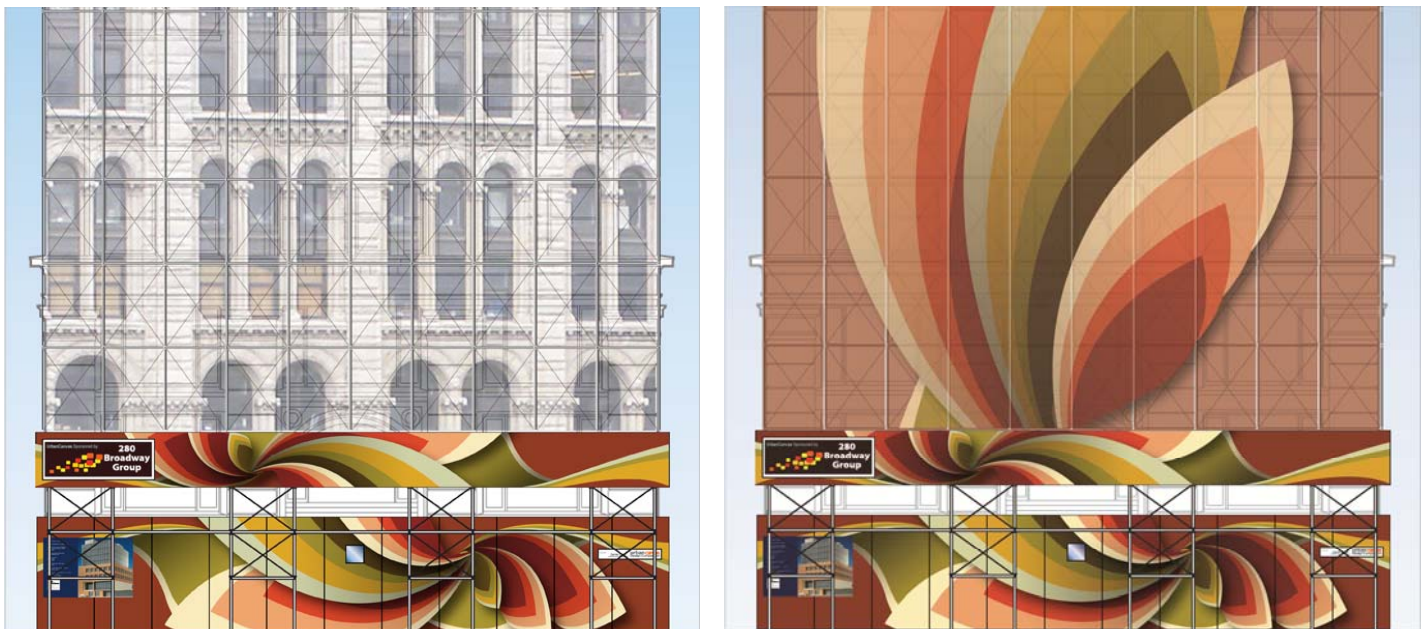
- i. Participants can place a pictorial rendering of the exterior of the building being built on the full scaffold in lieu of artwork.
- ii. A sponsorship message is only allowed on the sidewalk shed and is permitted to be a maximum of:
 1. 4 feet high
 2. 2 linear feet wide for each 8 linear feet of shed frontage, up to 24 linear feet.
- iii. The sponsorship message is not allowed on the scaffold or fence.
- iv. The artist/competition credit must be posted at eye-level on the opposite end of the construction fence from the informational building rendering or 311 sign.
- v. Portholes/view panels (12"x12") for public viewing must be provided at a rate of one for every 25 linear feet per frontage, with a minimum of 1 per frontage.
- vi. If the job is not required to post the informational rendering (not a NB or Alt), a 311 sign and permits must be displayed on the temporary structure(s). Required work-related signs must be posted visibly in accordance with BC 3301.9.

Example:

If the scaffold mesh, fence, and shed frontage is 96 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message (shed only)
 - i. 4 feet high
 - ii. 24 linear feet wide
2. 3 portholes/view panels required on the fence

Sample Images



H. Construction sites with a cocoon and fence

At sites with a cocoon and fence, participants must adhere to the following criteria:

- i. A sponsorship message is only allowed on the fence and is permitted to be a maximum of:
 1. 1 foot high
 2. 2 linear feet wide for each 8 linear feet of frontage, up to 24 linear feet.
- ii. The sponsorship message must be above required signs and the informational building rendering (see below)
- iii. The artist/competition credit must be posted at eye-level on the opposite end of the construction fence from the informational building rendering or 311 sign.
- iv. Portholes/view panels (12"x12") for public viewing must be provided at a rate of one for every 25 linear feet per frontage, with a minimum of one per frontage.
- v. If the job is not required to post the informational rendering (not a NB or Alt), a 311 sign and permits must be displayed on the temporary structure(s). Required work-related signs must be posted visibly in accordance with BC 3301.9.

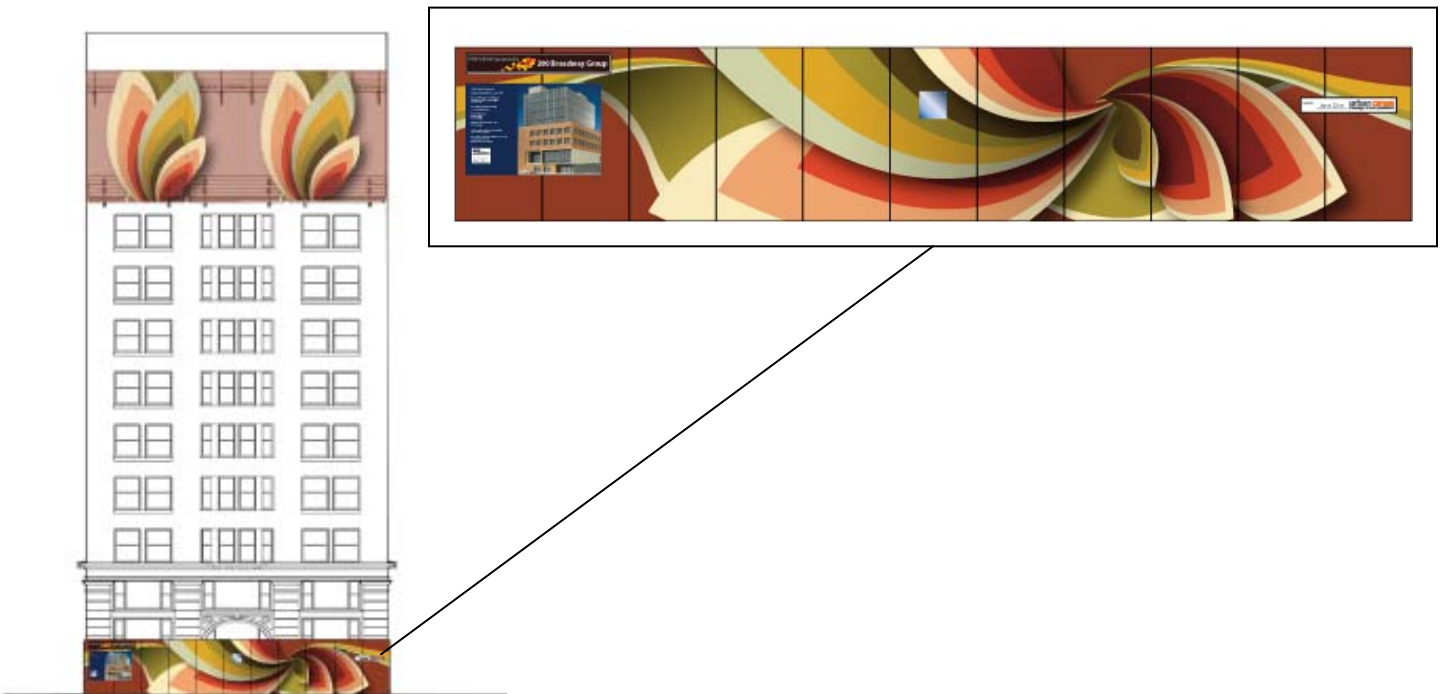
Note: A sponsorship message is not permitted in the cocoon. Only artwork is allowed on the cocoon.

Example:

If the fence frontage is 50 linear feet:

1. Maximum size of the sponsorship message on the fence:
 - i. 1 foot high
 - ii. 12 linear feet wide
2. 2 portholes/view panels required

Sample Image:



VIII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What if I have a temporary protective structure on private property? Can I participate in the pilot program?

A: No. The pilot program applies only to construction sites with temporary protective structures on or over City-owned property, including sidewalks.

Q: What if I put up artwork that is not part of the pilot program?

A: If you place artwork on a temporary protective structure that has not been approved or permitted under the pilot program, the Department of Buildings may take enforcement action, including issuing a violation to the appropriate entity or individual including an owner of the site.

Q: How is this program a benefit to the City and the public?

A: The competition is an opportunity for professional artists and designers to develop designs that enliven temporary protective structures and enhance quality of life. By using these structures as blank artwork canvases, artists and designers can create a more inviting environment.

Additionally, all sites participating in the pilot program will be required to post an informational building rendering of the project, including details about the project such as the type of work in progress (i.e. residential, commercial), an anticipated completion date and other information. This will help inform the community about the development and provide an aesthetic improvement while construction is in progress.

Q: Can I keep my temporary protective structure up longer than would otherwise be allowed if I enter into the pilot program?

A: All temporary protective structures with artwork must be permitted under the pilot program at the Department of Buildings. All permit requests must meet the requirements of all City regulations. If permits lapse and/or artwork remains in place illegally, the Department will take enforcement action if warranted which may include the issuance of violations and if necessary, action to remove the artwork.

Q: Can I place a sponsorship on my temporary structure if I use urbancanvas artwork?

A: Yes. Any company, business or organization can sponsor your urbancanvas artwork. Sponsorship messages must meet the size requirements outlined in Section VII. Sponsorship messages are only permitted on certain temporary protective structures that are part of the pilot program.

Q: Why are sponsorships allowed under the pilot program?

A: The Department of Buildings is piloting a program to allow very limited sponsorship messages on City-property where public artwork is installed. Therefore sponsorships are only permitted on those sites that are part of the pilot program. Results will continue to be evaluated during the course of the pilot program.

Q: Are there restrictions on the size of my sponsorship?

A: Yes. Specific requirements for each type of temporary protective structure and the size of the sponsorship allowed can be found in Section VII.

Q: Do I have to post the artist's name in conjunction with the artwork?

A: Yes. All artists must be credited if you use an urbancanvas artwork on your site. Artist/competition credit templates are available for download from the urbancanvas website after pilot registration approval.

Q: How do I get the files for printing the artwork, and how will I know what the colors should be?

A: Artwork files are available for download on the urbancanvas website after a participant registers and is approved for the pilot program. All color details will be available in CMYK specifications for your selected printer. Building owners are responsible for providing this information to the printer to ensure the artwork is printed as intended. No alterations of artwork or coloring are permitted. The pilot program and the Department of Buildings are not responsible for review of color specifications for each installation.

Q: What if I alter the winning artwork and install it on my site?

A: Alterations to the winning artwork are not permitted. If winning artwork is altered and installed on site, it will be considered unapproved artwork outside of the pilot program and a violation may be issued to the appropriate entity or individual including the owner of the site.

Q: Do I have to maintain the artwork after it is installed?

A: Artwork, as well as the temporary protective structures themselves, must be properly maintained. Artwork that is damaged must be removed or replaced. To the extent artwork is on the temporary protective structure, failure to maintain the artwork may be considered a failure to maintain the temporary protective structure and be subject to violations.

Q: Can I contact the Department of Buildings with questions on artwork, sponsorship or construction sign placement?

A: Yes. All questions can be sent to urbancanvas@buildings.nyc.gov.