

PEEKSKILL ARTS COUNCIL

Public Art Guidelines

January 1, 2025

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1. Public Art in Peekskill

Mission Statement

The **Peekskill Arts Council** (“Arts Council”) seeks to preserve and grow Peekskill’s reputation as a “City of Art” by advising the Common Council, reducing barriers to exhibiting and performing public art in Peekskill, and maintaining a regionally acclaimed collection of outdoor sculpture and visual arts.

Types of Artists and Public Art

As defined in § 575-60 of the City of Peekskill Code, an **Artist** is “an individual who practices one of the fine, design, graphic, musical, culinary, literary, computer or performing arts; or an individual whose profession relies on the application of the above-mentioned skills to produce a unique creative product.”

For the purposes of this policy, **Public Art** embodies all forms of art and culture conceived in varied disciplines including, but not limited to, visual, performing, literary, and new-media arts. Public Art must be exhibited in a place that is broadly accessible and available for the public to experience. The following are possible projects:

- Temporary artistic and cultural projects proposed by applicants
- Temporary artistic and cultural projects commissioned by the City
- Temporary artworks or long-term loans that are on city property, but not owned by the City
- Permanent artworks donated to or commissioned by, and owned by, the City (**the “Municipal Art Collection”**)

The City of Peekskill

Peekskill, New York is a diverse and thriving city on the eastern bank of the Hudson River at the foothills of the Hudson Highlands. Peekskill is home to a growing community of professional artists who live and work here. The **City of Peekskill (“City”)** refers to the municipal government of Peekskill, NY, which is led by a seven-member elected **Common Council**.

2. General Roles and Responsibilities

Peekskill Arts Council

The Arts Council is responsible for making recommendations to the Common Council about the selection of Public Art. Specifically, the Arts Council will:

- Assist City staff in reviewing the location, safety, sustainability, and term of exhibition for proposed Public Art.
- Establish and maintain an inventory of all Public Art, including the Municipal Art Collection.
- Establish and maintain a maintenance plan for the Municipal Art Collection.
- Establish and maintain an accessible application process for new Public Art proposals.
- Serve as the City’s curatorial committee for the review of Public Art, when necessary.
- When opportunities for new Public Art installations in Peekskill arise, assist with open calls and reviewing submissions.
- Establish and maintain a website that provides complete information about Public Art, local arts and culture organizations, and relevant events in Peekskill.

- Foster collaboration in Peekskill's arts community, connecting various arts nonprofits, artists, residents, businesses and City representatives.
- Amplify messages about funding resources and Public Art exhibition opportunities for artists.
- Recommend Common Council actions to increase the City's budget for Public Art.

The Arts Council is subject to applicable Local Law. Generally, the Arts Council consists of nine members, each with voting rights and service obligations. Unanimous consensus is rarely attainable. However, as with any professional committee, the Arts Council will uphold standards of behavior including open discussions and mutual respect.

[Arts Council Officers](#)

The Arts Council officers include a Chair and a Vice Chair. As the Arts Council does not receive or distribute funding, the duties of a treasurer are performed by the Staff Liaison when direct City funding or other contributions (as described in Section 6) are necessary for artwork installation, maintenance, or outreach.

[Private Arts Organizations, Property Owners, and Arts Applicants](#)

Numerous private arts organizations, working artists, and community members help form Peekskill's artistic identity daily. The Arts Council seeks to collaborate with everyone and support those with artistic ideas and intentions. Any private arts organization, property owner, or artist can initiate a Public Art project by contacting the Arts Council.

[City of Peekskill Staff](#)

The City appoints a **Staff Liaison** to the Arts Council. The Staff Liaison works with the Arts Council Chair to facilitate regular Arts Council meetings, member term renewals, and new member appointments. The Staff Liaison will coordinate with all City departments as needed to review Public Art applications and maintain the Municipal Art Collection.

Here are some examples of the ways City staff may be involved:

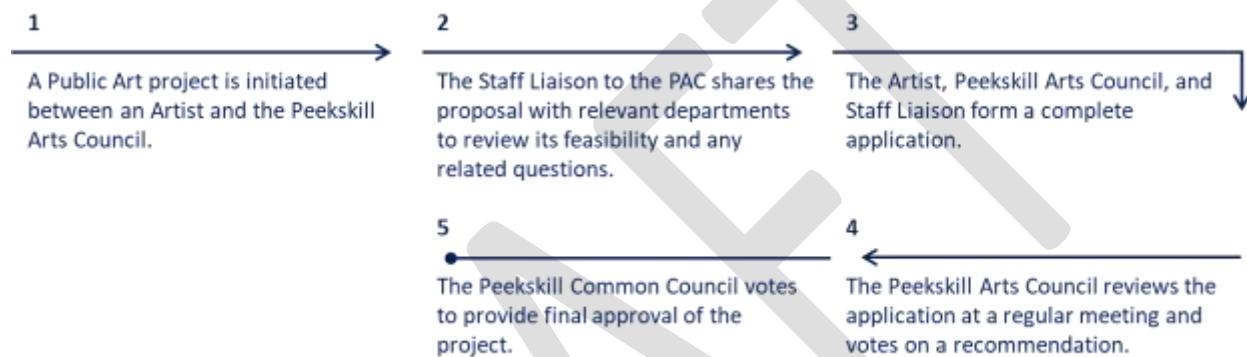
- The Arts Council will coordinate with the City to commission artworks funded by the City budget or grants.
- Departments will coordinate with the Arts Council on temporary Public Art exhibits, installations, and performances.
- Relevant City staff will approve the locations of proposed Public Art in order to ensure that the artwork does not compromise infrastructure or interfere with City operations.
- City staff will engage the Arts Council to assist with proper documentation and cataloging of artworks in the Municipal Art Collection.
- City staff will direct inquiries about public art to the Arts Council.
- The Corporation Counsel advises on legal matters concerning Public Art, establishes and maintains a standard contract for Public Art commissions, signs-off on individual contracts, and periodically reviews the Peekskill Arts Council Guidelines and related documents to assess compliance by City departments.

Common Council

The Common Council is ultimately responsible for decisions concerning Public Art and the Municipal Art Collection. The Arts Council advises the Common Council. The Common Council authorizes new Public Art proposals by resolution after receiving a presentation and recommendation from the Arts Council. The Common Council also authorizes maintenance actions and deaccessioning of artworks, when necessary, by resolution after receiving a presentation and recommendation from the Arts Council.

Generally, the Peekskill Common Council is apprised of all Arts Council activities, interviews and appoints Arts Council members, approves the City's budget (which may include funds related to Public Art), and supports community outreach.

3. Process for Exhibiting Public Art



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The procurement, installation, exhibition, and marketing of public art in Peekskill must celebrate, reflect, and express the diversity among residents of this historic city. “Diversity,” as used in these guidelines, acknowledges that Peekskill is home to communities of all races, ethnicities, gender identities, and sexual orientations. In its process for exhibiting public art, the Arts Council will seek to ensure representation of these groups.

Project initiation

Any private arts organization, property owner, or artist (an “**Applicant**”) can initiate a Public Art project by contacting the Arts Council. The City can also initiate a Public Art project. The following types of temporary or permanent public art projects may be initiated:

- Temporary Public Art
 - Community proposal for a temporary exhibition, performance, installation etc.
 - Temporary exhibition, performance, or installation commissioned by the City through an “open call”
- Permanent Public Art
 - An artwork donated to the Municipal Art Collection by a private individual or entity
 - An artwork commissioned by the City and added to the Municipal Art Collection

If the City is selecting an artist through an open call, the Arts Council should lead the selection process and should consider the guidelines contained in Section 6.

Application Development

Once a Public Art Project is initiated, the Arts Council, Staff Liaison, and City Staff will work with the Applicant to develop the project. Generally, Public Art proposals undergo multiple phases of design:

- Conceptual Design: The artist presents initial ideas including form, materials, method, ideas behind the work, and any additional research.
- Preliminary Design: The artist works with the Staff Liaison to ensure that the artwork will be feasible for the proposed site, identifying any alterations to the site that are necessary (and funds to cover said alterations), and conducts additional research or community engagement. This level of design may be used to finalize bids from fabricators and installers.
- Final Design: Drawings, prototypes, or templates used to produce the artwork. An independent New York State engineer may be required to review the drawings. The services of a conservator may be engaged to anticipate issues related to ongoing care. The cost of these professionals is typically borne by the artist, though the Arts Council will investigate ways to help offset this cost.

Complete Application

Applicants must complete an application using the form established and maintained by the Arts Council (attached hereto). The complete application expands upon the following Public Art considerations:

Location

- Is the site located on city property and is it accessible to the public?
- Is utility electric service available at the site (if needed)?
- Is the site located in a flood plain or otherwise unduly susceptible to weather damage?

Context

- What is the relationship of the artwork and the site to the community?
- Who are the stakeholders and how should they be involved in the process?
- Is there a particular legacy or are there stories to tell that might guide the thematic direction?
- How can the artwork best activate the site?

Artwork

- What is the appropriate artwork lifespan in this location? Can the work easily be removed if necessary (for maintenance or if it is temporary)?
- What is the optimum scale of the artwork?

The Staff Liaison is responsible for confirming that an application for proposed Public Art is complete, and the Staff Liaison notifies all Arts Council members, relevant City Staff, and the Common Council at the time of a complete application.

Peekskill Arts Council Recommendation

The Arts Council reviews all pending Public Art applications at quarterly review meetings. The Arts Council may vote to approve an artwork as presented, approve an artwork with changes recommended, or request a resubmission, by a simple majority.

Important questions to ask during the design review:

- Does the project meet the goals of the Arts Council guidelines?
- Are the projected costs accurate and realistic?
- Have written estimates been obtained from qualified technical support and fabrication contractors for the final design?
- All review criteria should be available on the Arts Council website.

Following an affirmative vote by the Arts Council, the Artist or Applicant and a representative of the Arts Council present the artwork to the Common Council and deliver the Arts Council recommendation. When the Common Council agrees to vote on the Public Art application, the Staff Liaison prepares a resolution.

Common Council Resolution

Each resolution of the Common Council authorizes the City to temporarily exhibit or accept a donation of a specific temporary or permanent artwork upon installation according to the approved plans as verified by the Staff Liaison.

Project Fabrication and Installation

Upon approval of the final design, the artist fabricates or oversees the fabrication of the artwork as represented. Artists are encouraged to work with local fabricators when possible and to consider the sustainability of the process and the ecological impact of the artwork in the site.

The artist should be in communication with the Arts Council and the Staff Liaison throughout the installation. The Artist may make design modifications as the work progresses, insofar as such modifications do not involve significant changes to the scope, design, size, or material of the artwork as detailed in the approved design.

The artist notifies the Arts Council in writing when fabrication of the artwork is completed and ready for delivery and installation. Representatives of the Arts Council review the artwork prior to delivery, either in person, via video call or photo documentation. The artist installs the artwork in accordance with the approved plan following safety and other guidelines. This may include obtaining permits at the artist's expense. The artist discusses signage with the Arts Council to provide information to interpret the artwork for the public on the sign and online according to the Arts Council Design and Branding Guidelines.

Final Acceptance and Celebrating the Artwork

Once the installation is complete and a maintenance manual has been submitted, the Arts Council signs off on the installation and provides written confirmation to the Common Council. This signals that the contract requirements are fulfilled and that the final payment is released.

In exceedingly rare cases, the artwork may fail to meet acceptable professional standards, including, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Faults of design or workmanship pose a hazard to public health or safety hazard or diminish the value of the work.
- The artwork is fraudulent or inauthentic.

Once the artwork is complete, the Arts Council, the Artist, and the City collaborate on a public announcement. Generally, press releases and social media may include interviews with the artist(s) and other stakeholders. The Arts Council and the City will seek to hold an opening reception or other community event. The Arts Council website and social media, as applicable, include information about the artwork.

Assessing Outcomes

After completion, the Arts Council assesses the outcome of a Public Art project and uses that information to adjust its practices. Strategies may include the following:

- Conduct an exit interview or share a survey with the artist to evaluate the process and the project from their perspective.
- Share a survey with key stakeholders, including selection panelists, to evaluate the process and the project.
- Assemble press and social media regarding the project.
- Track the number of Applicants for projects over time.
- Assess diversity of Applicants, including race, religion, age, experience level, gender, sexual orientation, or other.
- Annually review these outcomes to assess any adjustments to the process.

4. Municipal Art Collection

Municipal Art Collection (inventory)

The Municipal Art Collection includes artworks that have been or are, in the future, commissioned by, purchased by, or donated to the City of Peekskill. As a rule, these artworks should be on display in areas that are accessible to the public. The Arts Council will seek to maintain full documentation for each artwork as further described below, in order to establish ownership and record information pertinent to insurance, maintenance, and interpretation. The Municipal Art Collection inventory should be viewable on the Arts Council website.

Acquisition Types

Commission refers to contracting with an artist or artists to create new, original artwork for a location or a permanent project that becomes part of the Municipal Art Collection. Commissions for temporary artwork will not be part of the permanent Municipal Art Collection.

Purchase refers to artworks acquired through direct financial obligation of the City of Peekskill and are existing works designated for display in particular public city-owned sites. Purchased artworks become part of the Municipal Art Collection.

Donation refers to an artwork that is offered to the City of Peekskill without direct financial obligation in assuming legal title.

Acquisition Criteria

The Arts Council considers the following criteria to determine whether new artwork should be added to the Municipal Art Collection, whether by commission, purchase, or donation. The criteria are guidelines to encourage artwork acquisition for the public good.

Merit Criteria

- Artwork is consistent with the Arts Council mission statement.
- Artwork is of exceptional quality and enduring value as judged by the Arts Council.
- Artwork has importance/significance within the context of the artist's career and work.
- The artwork embraces values of antiracism, equity, and inclusion.
- Permanently sited artwork considers the architectural, historical, geographical, and/or sociocultural context of the site.

Technical Criteria

- Title and exhibition criteria for donations must be unrestricted.
- Existing artwork must have provenance information establishing clear title.
- Transportation to the site, installation, and future maintenance must be agreed between Arts Council and the artist.
- As applicable, the artwork must meet City structural, building, right-of-way, electrical, and other codes for safety.
- As applicable, the artwork must meet Federal Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
- Artwork must be in stable condition and will retain its intended appearance and function over a substantial period, and the City will be able to maintain it.

Acquisition Policy Review and Acceptance Process

The process for acquisition follows the process for all artwork exhibition outlined in Section 3.

Additional guidelines for donations:

- The donor should provide an artwork appraisal at the time of the gift.
- All gifts require a deed of gift contract that stipulates the conditions under which the artwork transfers to the City.
- On an as needed basis, the donor may be required to provide funds for an endowment to cover the maintenance costs.

Documentation, Records, and Art Maintenance

The Arts Council collects basic information about the artists and artworks for which the City is responsible. The City is responsible for maintaining these files. Proper documentation clarifies ownership of artworks and creates a baseline for monitoring their location, condition, and value.

Arts Council Responsibilities

- The Arts Council develops and a physical and digital inventory of all artworks in the Municipal Art Collection and updates the inventory when necessary. The Arts Council checks the inventory against exhibited artworks biannually.
- The Arts Council develops and oversees the installation of signs that provide basic information about each artwork in accordance with the Arts Council Design and Branding Guidelines.
- The Arts Council finds publicly accessible sites for artworks in the collection and helps identify secure and climate-controlled storage for artwork not on display, as needed.
- The Arts Council oversees the framing, documenting, and routine maintenance of artworks in the Municipal Art Collection, as well as develops agreements for maintenance of artworks as

needed. When possible, all maintenance agreements and schedules are developed in collaboration with the artist.

City Department Responsibilities

- City staff may be required to assist in properly installing artwork signage.
- The City is responsible for keeping the area surrounding each artwork clean and neat.
- The City protects artworks from damage caused by watering systems, furniture placement, and maintenance equipment, such as mowers.
- City staff undertake cleaning and repairs only as specified by the Arts Council. City staff should never remove, alter, or relocate artworks in the Municipal Art Collection unless directed by the Arts Council.

Placement and Relocation of Works of Art

While the Arts Council and the City intend for site-specific artwork to remain in the location for which it was created, artwork may be moved throughout City facilities at the discretion of the Common Council and City staff on advice by the Arts Council. The Arts Council will consider the following criteria for relocating site-specific artwork:

- The artwork's condition or security can no longer be reasonably assured at its current site.
- The artwork has become a danger to public safety in its current site.
- The site has changed so that the artwork is no longer compatible as placed.

Deaccessioning Policy and Procedures

Deaccessioning is the formal procedure by which an artwork is permanently withdrawn from the Municipal Art Collection. Deaccessioning will be considered only after a careful and thorough evaluation. The Arts Council will make every attempt to notify the artist and/or donor. The Common Council approves deaccessioning based on the Arts Council recommendation.

An artwork may be deaccessioned for one or more of the following reasons:

- The condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed.
- The artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated and the cost of repair is disproportionate to the value of the artwork as determined by the Arts Council or by an appraiser as the situation dictates.
- The artwork endangers public safety.
- The location of a site-specific artwork is so severely altered that the work's installation is no longer physically possible or conceptually relevant.
- There has been sustained and overwhelming public objection to the art over multiple years.
- The property on which a site-specific artwork is located is no longer owned by the City.
- The artwork has been stolen or destroyed.
- The artwork is significantly at odds with values of antiracism, equity, and inclusion.
- The artwork is an ongoing rally point for gatherings centered on racist or bigoted ideology.
- The artwork does not support the Arts Council mission statement.

Procedure for Deaccessioning

- The Arts Council recommends artworks for deaccessioning in consultation with the artist, City staff, and the City Corporation Counsel.
- The Arts Council presents the deaccessioning findings to the Common Council.
- The Common Council either approves or rejects the recommendation.
- If approved, the Arts Council proceeds with the final dispositioning with City assistance as needed.
- The Arts Council or City staff permanently retain proper deaccessioning documentation.

Manner of Disposition

An artwork may be deaccessioned through exchange, transfer, or destruction. The artist will be given the first opportunity to exchange the artwork. Any artwork that is accessioned into the collection through an exchange is subject to the exhibition process described in Section 3. An artwork may be destroyed only if it has deteriorated or been damaged and the cost of repair is disproportionate to the value. Options for recycling will be pursued when possible.

5. Best Practices for Commissioning Public Art

The City and the Arts Council utilize the following methods for open calls for artists and widely publicize such calls.

- **Call for Artists—Request for Qualifications (RFQ):** In this two-step process, applicants present their qualifications and finalists are selected to either interview or present proposals to the Arts Council. In the initial stage, no proposals are expected or accepted. Artists typically submit 10 work samples, a resume, and a brief statement about their approach to the project. The Arts Council identifies 3 to 5 finalists who then receive more detailed information about the project, visit the site, and present their work to the panel as an interview or audition.
- **Call for Artists—Request for Proposals (RFP):** By this method, artists present renderings and a written description along with work samples and a bio/resume.
- **Invitational Selection:** A group of artists is invited to submit their qualifications for a specific project and the Arts Council selects from this group. Arts professionals and community stakeholders are invited to recommend candidates to submit their qualifications. The Arts Council invites finalists to either interview or present proposals. This method is advisable for projects that require a quick turnaround or where established artists are desired.
- **Outreach to Artists:**
 - The Arts Council should allow enough time to publicize calls for art widely, with time for artists to respond.
 - Artist information sessions may be conducted virtually and recorded for applicants to view. In-person sessions may also be offered. This is particularly important for artists who are new to public art. Questions and answers may be posted on the Arts Council website.
 - Applications can be processed and shared through online portals such as Slideroom, Submittable, and CaFÉ.

Community Engagement in the Public Art Process

The City of Peekskill and the Arts Council are committed to engaging the public. In these guidelines, “**communities**” are groups of connected people who live or work in a common neighborhood, or those with a common profession, workplace, age, religion, heritage, hobby, pastime, sport, or other connection. It includes residents, visitors, and the range of organizations and institutions that serve them such as schools, libraries, and faith-based groups.

As Applicants develop projects, they may meet with community members to learn about the Peekskill’s history, culture, and aspirations. The Arts Council may help to identify people and organizations that may provide opportunities to connect. Artists may be invited to give presentations about their approach to artmaking and the project they are developing in Peekskill.

Public meetings are not always widely attended. Therefore, the Arts Council seeks to organize a range of forums, from formal project presentations both virtual and in-person, to informal events where information about projects is available. The Arts Council seeks to offer such events in inclusive and welcoming spaces hosted by community organizations and stakeholders.

6. Funding Sources

Anticipated Program and Project Expenses

- **Staff and Arts Council member development:** Professional development (including attending conferences and acquiring certifications or specialized training), memberships to professional organizations, and subscriptions, as needed.
- **Artist Selection:** Producing and publicizing municipal art opportunities, application submission services such as Submittable, Slideroom, or CAFÉ, etc.
- **Engagement, Outreach, and Education:** Audio, virtual and printed guides to public art in Peekskill, artist talks and lectures, panels and symposia, and special events connected to public art projects.
- **Signage and Artwork expenses:** Costs associated with exhibiting and explaining public art.
- **Maintenance and Conservation:** Cleaning, replacing components, the repair of broken parts, and paying for the labor or expertise to manage and perform this work.

Fundraising

Over time, the City of Peekskill must cultivate varied funding streams that enable incremental growth for the administration, acquisition, and maintenance of public artwork in Peekskill. Additional resources must be identified for project management, marketing, and conservation of the existing public art collection and the commission of new art. This section outlines potential resources to access:

- **Allocation from the City budget:** Monies for new public art or collection management may be allocated from a city’s annual budget as approved by the Common Council.
- **Contributions and Partnerships:** The Arts Council seeks strategic partnerships with artists, arts organizations, public and private entities, and those working in all artistic disciplines.
- **Integrating Artwork into Design:** Hiring artists to collaborate in design teams with architects, engineers, landscape architects, and others to fully integrate artwork into capital projects using the construction budget is a way to allocate a portion of construction costs to public art.

- **Voluntary or Incentivized Contribution from Developers of City-Subsidized Projects:** The City can include public art as an option when negotiating incentives with developers for capital projects on city-owned property or for private developments.
- **Grants:** The Arts Council and the City seek to diversify funding streams from varied grant sources that may support initiatives such as community or business development, transportation enhancements, social engagement, historic preservation, health and wellness, and more. Where possible, grants should cover administrative expenses along with project expenses.
- **Government Sources:** Federal, state, and county governments have grant opportunities for art in the public realm. Potential sources include the National Endowment for the Arts, Collection Assessment for Preservation Program of the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Saving America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service, and the New York State Council on the Arts/Greater Hudson Heritage Network Grants.
- **Aspirational Funding Stream**
 - Through a “percent for art” formula, a mandated allocation of a percentage of construction costs for new and renovated buildings, is budgeted for public art. Most allocations range from 0.5% to 2%. In general, these are mandated through an ordinance. Flexibility is important where permitted. Ideally, funds may be pooled from multiple small projects into larger amounts of money. When possible, funds are allowed to cover conservation and maintenance of works of art owned by the city. Allocating a percentage of the City’s budget to art source requires investigation to understand if it might be applicable. Broad-based support will be required to establish an ordinance.

Funding for Artists

The Arts Council is an advisory body to the Peekskill Common Council. As such, the Arts Council does not receive or distribute funding. However, in keeping with its mission to reduce barriers to exhibit and perform public art in Peekskill, the Arts Council actively seeks to link artists with local non-profit organizations and funding sources. Relevant information and resources may be found on the Arts Council website.

Appendices

1. Public Art Application Form & Instructions **coming soon**
2. Peekskill Arts Council Design & Branding Guidelines **coming soon**

Please contact Peter Erwin at perwin@cityofpeekskillny.gov for more information.

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