



PUBLIC ART & CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The City of Pittsburgh's Public Art & Civic Design Commission empowers the development of art and culture in public spaces and promotes the design of public spaces and civic structures that has a positive impact on the City's Public Realm. For that purpose, the Commission is authorized to review and approve the aesthetics of the designed environment on or over City-owned property.

The Commission conducts reviews through two Committees:

- The Public Art Review Committee reviews and approves the addition, modification, relocation, and removal of items of Public Art in the Public Realm.
- The Civic Design Review Committee reviews and approves the design of new structures and designed sites in the Public Realm, or the modification of existing structures and designed sites in the Public Realm.

The following outlines the requirements to apply for review by the City of Pittsburgh's Public Art & Civic Design Commission.

CONTACTS

The application and review process is administered by staff of the Department of City Planning. Questions regarding the Commission or the application process should be directed to staff at pacd@pittsburghpa.gov

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Commission approval requires a Preliminary Review followed by Hearing & Action, as detailed below. Applicants should begin the review process early in project planning. This ensures that the project can receive feedback and design critiques before a substantial investment of time or finances have gone into final planning, or engineering. If unsure of the appropriate time to begin the application, please consult with staff.

1. **Briefing:** Certain projects (e.g. large, complex, or multi-site) may present a Briefing of their project at a Commission hearing. This presentation will include a broad project overview to allow for early-stage comments prior to further project development. Staff will determine which projects require a Briefing; most projects requiring Commission approval will bypass this step.

2. **Preliminary Review:** This review will be the first step for most applicants. Preliminary Reviews will not take place at a hearing. The Commission will review submitted applications and provide written feedback to the applicant. There are no approvals given at this stage. The applicant will then continue with project planning and revision and when ready may submit an application for Hearing & Action.

3. **Hearing & Action:** When project details have reached a finalized state, applicants may submit an application for Hearing & Action. At this stage the project will be reviewed at a public hearing where the Commission may ask follow-up questions and hear public comment. At this hearing the Commission will vote on an action (see “Decisions” below).

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Applications for all reviews (Briefing, Preliminary, or Hearing & Action) are due by 4:00PM on the first Wednesday of each month, January through November. A full application as described below must be received by this deadline in order to proceed with review. Because a Preliminary Review must be completed before an applicant may proceed to the Hearing & Review application, these reviews cannot take place within the same month.

Feedback from Preliminary Reviews will be sent to the applicant 14 days following the application deadline.

Commission hearings take place on the fourth Wednesday of each month, January through October, and on the third Wednesday of the month in November.

The agenda for each month’s hearing will be posted on the second Wednesday of the month.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Applications are made online at:

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/pacd-commission-application>

The following checklist summarizes the information and materials to be submitted through the online application. Applications that are incomplete at the time of the deadline will not be reviewed.

FORM INFORMATION:

Applicant Information: Name, organization, mailing address, phone number, email, relationship to or role in project, presenters at hearing. Co-applicant information is optional.

Project Information: Project name, project duration, prior reviews held, current application stage.

Project Location: Address, cross streets, neighborhood, RCO/DAM requirement (see “Development Activities Meeting” below).

Project Background and Information: A summary description of the project, as well as the following questions:

- Who is this project intending to be used or experienced by?
- What users/stakeholders/community members have been involved so far?
- What is the timeline of implementation?
- Are there plans for future expansion of this project?
- What is the budget for this project, and what are the funding sources?
- Who will be responsible for maintenance of this project, and are there dedicated sources of funding for maintenance?

- Are there any time limitations, budget restrictions, or other conditions that are affecting the scope of this project?

REQUIRED UPLOADS:

Project Materials: Applicants may submit as many images, renderings, and supporting materials as is necessary to describe all aspects of the project. Submitted plans must be sufficient to visually depict the project as it will be seen/experienced by the public in the public realm. These include:

- Maps identifying project location
- Photos showing existing conditions and site context
- Plans, elevations, section views, concept sketches, and/or renderings
- Specifications for:
 - Permanent materials – Visible building components, surface treatments, colors, lighting plan
 - Landscape plans - General design, planting recommendations, who will manage the landscape programming
 - Components – Furniture and other movable elements

Applicants may find it useful to use the Visual Material Template found on the application page, or another slide deck format, to organize their submitted project materials (optional).

Letters of support: Three letters of support are required: Two from community stakeholders or neighborhood organizations, and one from the Department of Public Works or the Department of Mobility & Infrastructure. (See “Department Contacts” below). These must be submitted before the project receives final approval.

Presentation (for Briefing only): A PDF presentation that describes the upcoming project. Presentations must be under ten minutes in length. A Visual Material Template (optional) is available on the application page.

Hearing visuals (optional, for Hearing & Action only): At the hearing, applicants may give a 3-5 minute verbal introduction to the project review. As part of that introduction, applicant may reference up to five visuals from the application to support discussion of the project. These should be submitted as a separate PDF (maximum five slides). If hearing visuals are not provided by the applicant, staff will select visuals from the submitted materials to be displayed during the review.

Notes on application materials: Project scopes vary widely and each application will have unique material necessary for a comprehensive review. Applicants should strive to submit materials that give as complete of an understanding of the proposal as possible. Questions regarding completeness of application materials should be directed to staff prior to application.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Commissioners will use the following criteria to guide their reviews. Consideration will be taken of any stated limitations of scope and budget included in the application. The scope, budget, and intent of City of Pittsburgh projects has been reviewed and approved during the public budgetary process, therefore City-led projects will not be reviewed under the criteria of “Intention”.

1. Intention (not applicable for City-led projects)

- a. Does project have the potential to benefit the community and/or improve resident and visitor experience of the City?
- b. Has the project shown consideration to community interests and/or demonstrated support from community stakeholders?

2. Aesthetics

- a. Are the aesthetics of this project appropriate within the context (architectural, historical, environmental) of its location?
- b. Are the elements of this project designed and arranged thoughtfully?
- c. Does the design of this project and the materials used make sense in consideration of the project scope and budget?
- d. How will this project visually impact the experience of the City as a whole?

3. Function

- a. Is the design of this project appropriate for its intended purpose?
- b. Will the design of this project interfere with resident or visitor use and/or experience of the Public Realm?
- c. Will the design, materials, and proposed maintenance plans ensure that the project will maintain its integrity for its proposed lifespan?

4. Application Materials

- a. Are the project details sufficient to evaluate the project according to the above criteria?

DECISIONS

The Public Art & Civic Design Commission may approve, deny, or give a continuance. An approval may be given with conditions. A denial will include clarification of what criteria, if any, the applicant may address in order for the project to seek future approval. A project is given a continuance if the Commission is unable to reach a decision with the information provided, and the project is asked to return to a future hearing with additional information. A project may only be given a continuance once.

STAFF REVIEW

In certain circumstances, an Over-The-Counter (OTC) review may be conducted by PACD staff in lieu of the project going to a Public Art & Civic Design Commission hearing.

- OTC Guide: https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/16285_OTC_Process_Guide.pdf.

EXCEPTIONS

Civic design projects which are reviewed by Pittsburgh's Historic Review Commission or Planning Commission do not require review by the Public Art & Civic Design Commission.

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Public Art & Civic Design Division: Questions regarding the application process should be sent to pacd@pittsburghpa.gov.

Department of Public Works: For projects on City property, requests for letters of support should be sent to chris.hornstein@pittsburghpa.gov.

Department of Mobility and Infrastructure: For projects in the City right-of-way, requests for letters of support should be sent to kimberly.lucas@pittsburghpa.gov.

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES MEETING:

If the site of your project is within the boundaries of a Registered Community Organization (RCO), the Pittsburgh Administrative Code requires that a Development Activities Meeting (DAM) be held at least 30 days before the hearing.

- Who's my RCO: <https://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/whos-my-rco>
- Development Activities Meeting guidelines: <https://pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/dev-activities-meeting>

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

The figures in application renderings present a visual message regarding who will be using a property or facility. City of Pittsburgh property is intended for use by people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ages, and ability levels. Presented renderings should reflect this diversity.

Interpreters for the hearing impaired will be provided with four days notification by contacting staff at pacd@pittsburghpa.gov

After receiving Commission approval, any necessary permits, certificates of occupancy, legal agreements, or other City approvals are still required. These must be applied for separately at the appropriate City departments and are the responsibility of the applicant.