



City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686

Meeting Agenda Beautification Commission

Monday, March 16, 2026

5:00 PM

City Council Chambers

Regular Meeting

REGULAR AGENDA - 5:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. [Action Item: Approval of Recommendation to City Manager and City Council for Adoption of a City of Valdez Public Art Policy](#)
2. [Discussion Item: Commission Timeline and Priorities for 2026](#)

V. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

VI. ADJOURNMENT



Legislation Text

File #: 26-0109, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Action Item: Approval of Recommendation to City Manager and City Council for Adoption of a City of Valdez Public Art Policy

SUBMITTED BY: Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve recommendation to City Manager and City Council for adoption of a City of Valdez Public Art Policy.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

At the regular meeting of January 12, 2026, the commission discussed a desire to establish a Public Art Policy Working Group to assist with developing a draft policy for the City of Valdez on public art.

Since the item was noticed for discussion purposes only, and the commission has a desire to move forward quickly with this project, the commission requested that a special meeting be held on January 15, 2026 to formally establish the group and appoint initial members.

The Public Art Policy Working Group met every other Wednesday, reviewed examples of policies from other jurisdictions and crafted a draft policy to bring back to the Beautification Commission for consideration.

Attached is the initial summary of commission recommendations for this working group and the draft Public Art Policy.

Note on process: Discussion will take place after a motion to approve is made. Edits may be adopted by consent. If there is an objection to any proposed changes then a formal amendment can be offered. If the commission requires additional time to review the draft policy a motion to postpone to the next regular meeting may be considered.



To: Beautification Commission Members
From: Elise Sorum-Birk, Commission Staff Liaison
Re: Summary of Discussion Around Public Art Policy Working Group

Below is a summary of the discussion from the Monday, January 12, 2026, Beautification Commission regular meeting on the topic of putting together a working group to develop a draft Public Art Policy for the City of Valdez.

There was consensus from the commission to hold a special meeting on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at noon to officially move forward with establishing this group.

- **Size and composition of the working group:**
 - 4 to 6 individuals including
 - 1 city staff representative (Martha Barberio, Economic Development Director)
 - 1-2 residents with professional experience in art, design or exhibitions (Caren Oberg, in her capacity of a private citizen)
 - 1-2 Beautification Commission Members (Commissioner Greene and Commissioner Miner)
 - Beautification staff to assist with scheduling and coordination for the group.
 - The desire was for the group to be informal in composition with those interested in participating being invited to help by commissioners.
- **Timeline:**
 - There is a desire to move forward quickly with this project and commission staff will help coordinate a schedule for the working group.
 - The working group will meet as needed (minimum of 4 meetings).
 - The goal would be for the commission to review the draft policy during the Monday, April 20, 2026, regular meeting.
 - Deadline for finalizing the draft policy by the working group to allow adequate time for review by commissioners: Monday, April 13, 2026.
- **Core components of policy and major considerations include:**
 - Definitions.
 - Criteria for art project review.
 - Possible grant program structures.
 - Maintenance requirements for artwork.
 - Considerations for privately owned property v. city owned buildings.
 - Designation of a reviewing body.
 - Guidance on applicability to non-local group or artists.
 - Funding mechanisms and considerations on use of public funds.
 - Accessioning and deaccessioning process.
 - Ownership, licensing and copyright considerations.
- **Additional considerations:**
 - The draft policy should be broad but still useful – providing clear guidance without being too restrictive.
 - The working group may also reach out to stakeholders and coordinate community outreach to take place during the policy development process.
 - Format of the policy should align with COV policy template and guidelines.



Policy Number:	<i>[Department Code]</i>		
Policy Name:	DRAFT Public Art Policy		
Adoption Date:		Revision Date:	
Approved By:		Expiration Date:	

1. Scope

This city-wide policy applies to all administrative program areas of public art and outlines the processes and responsibilities for all portions of the lifecycle of public art. Definitions are provided in section 5 of this policy.

2. Purpose / Background

- 2.1 To define the scope and context of public art.
- 2.2 To establish guiding principles related to the procurement, application, installation, deaccession and disposal of public art.
- 2.3 To clarify the roles and responsibilities in the provision and delivery of the city programs and initiatives related to public art.
- 2.4 To identify funding commitment for the delivery of city funded public art.
- 2.5 To ensure that city funded public art purchases and installations align with the values, aesthetics, and goals of the City of Valdez.
- 2.6 To reaffirm the city’s commitment to the ongoing investment in public art as an important element of municipal service delivery.

3. Policy

It is the policy of the City of Valdez to recognize the importance of arts and culture in enhancing the quality of life, fostering creativity, celebrating and recognizing diversity, and its contribution to the economic and social development of the community.

The city is committed to the ongoing investment in public art as an important element of municipal service delivery to celebrate the values and aspirations of a community and shape its unique sense of space and place.

City Funded Public Art recommendations must:

- Reflect the values, history, and aspirations of the city and its residents.
- Promote an inclusive and diverse community identity.
- Engage and inspire residents and visitors by fostering a sense of pride and belonging within the community.
- Be accessible to all.
- Be created with consideration for its impact of, by, and on, the physical environment.
- Be respectful, sensitive to cultural relevance, symbolism or misappropriation.
- Be of high artistic quality and contribute to the cultural and aesthetic enrichment of public spaces.

Funding for the purchase of new visual art may be from sponsors, donors, grants or public art funding. Maintenance, repair and replacement of municipal Art Collection pieces will be supported through Public Art funding.

Visual art may not sell, promote, advertise, or solicit commercial activity for individuals, not-for-profits, businesses or other organizations.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 City Council Responsibilities: Funding of Public Art Projects and Programs

City Council is legally responsible for appropriation and oversight of all City of Valdez expenditures.

- Demonstrate commitment to the enhancement of public places through public art.
- As part of the annual budget process, allocate and approve a dedicated budget for creation, maintenance, repair, deaccessioning, disposal, replacement and promotion of public art projects and initiatives and support long-term planning for public art projects in the community.
- Maintain the Beautification Reserve Fund and capitalize the fund to support public art specific programs and projects in balance with other beautification related initiatives including the Beautification Matching Grant Program.
- Review recommended selections of proposed public art projects from the Beautification Commission and provide final approval of funding.
- Where possible, participate in public art unveilings and promotions.

4.2 Beautification Commission Responsibilities: Reviewing and Recommending Public Art Projects and Programs

The Beautification Commission is responsible for making recommendations on city funded projects that will aesthetically improve Valdez and will be primarily responsible for development of programs and projects in alignment with this policy.

- Take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the public art policy.
- Review and assess proposed locations, themes and scope of public art projects and initiatives and provide recommendations.

- Receive and collect suggestions and examples of potential projects and programs from the community for consideration within the annual planning process and criteria for public art.
- Provide recommended public art selections to City Council for final approval and funding.
- Report on city funded public art and municipal public art collection annually to City Council and to the community as needed to ensure accountability and transparency in use of public resources.
- Explore partnerships, grants, and sponsorship opportunities to supplement public funding for public art initiatives to further enrich the community's artistic and cultural landscape.
- Promote city funded public art to the community.
- Develop and implement program planning tools related to city funded public art that support community and artist participation including but not limited to call for artists, call for locations, promotion and marketing.
- Where possible, participate in public art unveilings and promotions.

4.3 City Administration Responsibilities: Caretaking and Support

City administration will facilitate the practical administrative and maintenance needs throughout the lifecycle of city funded public art.

- Coordinate public art installation requirements with related internal department representatives, as required.
- Manage the Beautification Reserve and any related operating costs in accordance with the annual adopted budget.
- Ensure the maintenance of city funded public art within the city directly or through agreements or partnerships.
- Develop tools including maintenance agreements, ownership agreements, and processes for the deaccessioning and disposal of public art.
- Maintain inventories and descriptions of the municipal public art collection.
- Ensure selection and procurement of art complies with all relevant policies and code requirements.
- Ensure use of images, replicas or other applications of public art comply with agreements and applicable law.
- Ensure all public art assets are assessed and insured appropriately.

5. Definitions

- 5.1** “Administration” means city staff members assigned responsibility for oversight of the lifecycle and maintenance of the municipal public art collection.
- 5.2** “Artist” means a practicing art-maker recognized by peers as such, and who is commissioned specifically to create an artwork or design project, or to collaborate on a design team to complete a public artwork.
- 5.3** “Beautification Commission” means the citizen’s advisory body established in Valdez Municipal Code 2.66 responsible for advising council on beautification projects,

educational programming, grant programs, and other activities focused on the aesthetics of Valdez, including but not limited to design, landscaping, and public art.

- 5.4** “Beautification Matching Grant Program” means the established 50/50 matching grant program managed by the Beautification Commission that allows commercial property owners and businesses to get reimbursed for qualifying aesthetic improvements to their property.
- 5.5** “Beautification Reserve Fund” means the established city reserve fund capitalized to support Beautification Commission programs and projects.
- 5.7** “City Council” means the primary governing body of the City of Valdez as defined in Valdez Municipal Code and Charter.
- 5.8** “City Funded Public Art” means public art that is sponsored, funded, facilitated by the City of Valdez and approved by the Beautification Commission.
- 5.7** “Deaccession” means the formal process of the removal of an object from the collection of an organization.
- 5.8** “Disposal” means the physical removal of the object from the city by the process decided upon by city administration.
- 5.9** “Municipal Public Art Collection” means inventory of visual art purchased, donated or otherwise legally acquired by the city and recognized as being an asset owned by the city.
- 5.10** “Mural” means any piece of artwork painted or applied directly onto a wall, ceiling or other larger permanent surface, flat, concave or convex with or without installation medium.
- 5.11** “Privately Funded Public Art” means public art that is procured and installed on private property, outside of City Public Art Programs. Acknowledgement, promotion and inclusion of privately funded Public Art in City promotions or promotional tools, is at the discretion of City Administration and by permission of the owner.
- 5.12** “Public Places” means buildings or spaces that are easily visible to the public which are City-owned, or privately-owned buildings or spaces that, under agreement with the City are locations where the property owner may install or support Visual Art that is procured directly, or indirectly by the City.
- 5.13** “Public Art”, in the context of this policy means specifically visual arts, which are original pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works that may include, but are not limited to, two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of fine, graphic, and applied art. Examples include, but not limited to painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, filmmaking, design, textiles, crafts, and architecture.



Legislation Text

File #: 26-0110, **Version:** 1

ITEM TITLE:

Discussion Item: Commission Timeline and Priorities for 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Elise Sorum-Birk, Deputy City Clerk

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: n/a

Unencumbered Balance: n/a

Funding Source: n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

n/a

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

This discussion is intended to outline required timeline for proposing new projects or programs in 2026 to propose for inclusion in the 2027 city budget.

Commissioner Weaver has submitted comments via email on projects she would like the commission to consider.

As the commission is an advisory body to the City Council, proposed projects or programs should go to City Council for approval and funding. City Council, in turn, may direct City Administration on how to proceed.

Elise Sorum-Birk

From: Meg [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2026 8:33 AM
To: Elise Sorum-Birk
Subject: Beautification meeting

Elise,

Here are a few items I would like to put out to the commissioners.

- 1) New colored lights for Egan St. Light bulbs that would replace the existing light bulbs and remove the rope lights. Or remote color changing ones that would be added for the Christmas season then removed after the season.
- 2) New snow flakes preferably larger ones for Egan street.
- 3) Wood carvings for Dock point and Mills hill trails. Small ones that can be attached to trees or something. I talked with Rydor about this and he thought it was quite doable. I talked to Magdalena about this and we thought we could put it out to the public and have carvers submit their work to us and have a contest using a flash vote or something for the carvers to win prizes. Once completed add a map that could be given out for kids and tourists to try to find them.
- 4) We need a city director that would come to our meetings and report back to the directors and us. I feel we seem to have good ideas but not way to get anything done.
- 5) I was told there is new bigger banners being added to Egan but nobody came to us and I thought that is what was going to be.

All of these have been brought up before but as stated above we seem to not get things off the ground or a department is doing it on be known to us. Like the way finding signs, banners and so on.

Sorry if I sound cranky I don't me too.

Hope all is well for you and thank you for all that you do for us.

Sincerely,
Meg Weaver