



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NH
CALL FOR ARTISTS/ REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

RFP # 49-24

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Sealed Proposals, plainly marked “RFP 49-24,” Peirce Island Public Art on the outside of the mailing envelope, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH 03801 will be accepted until 1:00 pm on Friday May 24, 2024.

The City of Portsmouth welcomes proposals from artists in all media, including but not limited to sculpture, reliefs, mosaics, landforms, lighting and sound, for a commissioned, original, permanent work-of-art for a specific location on Peirce Island. [Peirce Island](#) is a natural, recreational 27-acre area on the Piscataqua River which includes salt marshes, tidal pools, rocky cliffs, meadows, and features many interesting views of Portsmouth and the neighboring Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Further information, including specific proposal requirements, may be obtained by visiting the Bids and Proposals section of the City of Portsmouth website:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing-bids-and-proposals>.

Please submit proposals in a **sealed envelope by 1:00 pm ET on Friday May 24, 2024.**

To be considered complete, proposals shall include all materials as described in RFP’s Submittal Requirements:

1. A current resume or CV for the artist (and members of the artist team).
2. A written statement, not to exceed three pages, that describes the artist’s or artist team’s concept for the Peirce Island artwork including a description of any planned engagement activities and installation features.
3. A preliminary sketch, rendering or representation of the proposed artwork.
4. Itemized budget estimate to include artist fee, fabrication, and installation expenses.
5. Approximate project timeline.
6. Up to 5 images of recent, relevant work with short description, project location, context, and date of installation. Provide a reference with contact name, commissioning organization, and phone/email contact information.

Artists, including finalists, will not be reimbursed for the cost of proposal. Materials will not be returned.

Requests for additional information or for administrative questions must be directed in writing to purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com. All questions will be answered in writing and posted on the Bids and Proposals section of the City of Portsmouth website. The **deadline for questions and**

requests for additional information is Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 2:00 pm ET.

The City of Portsmouth and its agents reserve the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept and negotiate any terms of a proposal that may be in the best interest of the City. The City may request clarification or additional information of artists. By submitting a proposal, the artist authorizes that The City may undertake such investigation as may be necessary to verify the artist's qualifications and reputation. The City and its agents may make the names and designs of finalists public.

Project Introduction

The City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire is commissioning a percent-for-art commission to be located on [Peirce Island](#), a natural, recreational 27-acre area on the Piscataqua River which includes salt marshes, tidal pools, rocky cliffs, and meadows, featuring many interesting views of Portsmouth and the neighboring Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

The City is commissioning an original, permanent work-of-art for a specific location on Peirce Island (see more below). The City has a growing number of public art sites that have become important to the community, e.g., the [African Burying Ground](#), the [Endeavour](#), and the [Ruth Blay mural](#), which serve as reminders of Portsmouth’s history, touchstones for universal themes, and gathering places. The City seeks a signature work that will have similar impact.

The City welcomes proposals from artists in all media, including sculpture, reliefs, mosaics, landforms, lighting, sound, and so forth, pointing out that the site is an outdoor natural site surrounded by water and subject to a harsh climate in the winter. While the selected site is located at a distance from the water and with higher ground between it and the river, the weather events brought about by climate change and sea level rise suggest that in the future there may be some tidal flooding in the area.

Description of Site

Peirce Island has close proximity to the popular Prescott Park and includes an outdoor pool, walking paths, off-leash dog walking area, a playground, and a boat launch. Portsmouth residents and its many visitors use the island for active recreation and for quiet contemplation. At one end of the island is Portsmouth’s state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant; upgrades to the plant yielded the funds for this percent-for-art commission.

The City has identified a location on Peirce Island that is accessible and will be visible to many who come to the island (Exhibit 1). The site is near the Four Tree Island parking lot closest to the entry to the island and visible from the parking lot. An accessible flat trail leads to the site. The Peirce Island playground and Portsmouth outdoor pool are near the site; the boat launch is across the road. The available site is approximately 55’ by 65’ and has a slight slope with some ledge.

Exhibit 1 Proposed Location on Peirce Island



[Map of Peirce Island](#)

Public Art Themes and Peirce Island History

The [City of Portsmouth Public Art Review Committee \(PARC\)](#), was established in 2023 to champion high-quality public art for the City of Portsmouth and to advise on public art-related topics. PARC hosted several sessions with members of the public to elicit ideas for themes to inform a work of art for the site. The input sessions yielded a full range of themes and ideas to inspire a work of art. **See Attachment A** for a summary of ideas from the input sessions. The City strongly urges applicants to review the full set of ideas. Note the following themes that PARC cited as providing a base for applicants' consideration:

- The island is a combination of an active, busy, noisy place (sounds of boats, dogs, pool fun, and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard) and a spot for solitary contemplation (trail walking, plein air painting, reading, and sunbathing).
- The island is a place to enjoy and respect nature and the environment (sea birds, ducks in the marshes, varieties of native grasses and bushes, driftwood, wonderful and varied views of the Piscataqua river). Much of the island has been deliberately left underdeveloped.
- Families, groups of friends, and children enjoy all types of active and passive recreation on the island. Active recreation includes running, walking, cycling, dog walking, swimming, and playing volleyball (in the nearby pool complex), and boating. Visitors use the current site for picnics and family parties, often setting up their own tables.
- People like the idea of interacting with a work of art, e.g., walking through it, making sounds with it, sitting or climbing on it, and seeing different light patterns.

During the public input sessions, PARC shared a short history of the Island, noting the following benchmarks:

- The City of Portsmouth sits on the homeland of the Abenaki people who lived in New Hampshire for 12,000 years.
- The earliest European settlers came to Portsmouth in the 1600s; Peirce Island was first acquired by Doctor Fernald in 1650 and was owned by members of the Peirce family in the 1700s.
- Fort Washington, located at the eastern tip of the island, was constructed at the beginning of the Revolutionary War on one part of the island and then re-fortified during the war of 1812.
- During the 1800s, Elbridge Peirce operated a ship building endeavor on the island.
- The City of Portsmouth bought the island in 1923 for recreation. Through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the City built the outdoor pool which has retained immense popularity.
- The first wastewater treatment plant was built in 1965 at the eastern end of the island. The commercial fishing pier was built at the western end of the island in the 1970s.

Budget and Resources

The maximum budget is \$140,000. The City has allotted to PARC a small reserve fund for future maintenance. The budget must cover design, fabrication, transportation, documentation, and installation expenses including installation insurance. Project work must be completed in accordance with all applicable statutes, laws, and regulations.

The City of Portsmouth’s Public Works Department will provide oversight and consultation for the installation but will not perform installation activities. The City will also be responsible for the costs and expertise associated with permitting, including any Department of Environmental Services approvals that may be required.

PARC will assist the applicant artist or team with managing/recruiting for any public engagement activities that are planned as part of the design and/or fabrication process.

Selection Process

PARC will oversee the review and selection process. The selection committee will be drawn from PARC augmented by a few additional community members. PARC members have expertise in public art, fine art, architecture, graphic design, art history, community engagement, local history, arts administration and marketing, planning, and grants/nonprofit management. The selection committee will use the criteria described below to rate each proposal. The committee intends to narrow the choices to a small number of finalists. PARC may select one or more finalists. During deliberations, the committee may ask questions for clarification, if needed.

The committee will schedule virtual interviews with the finalists to learn more about the proposals. PARC will keep applicants’ names and proposals confidential until the point of identifying finalists. The selection committee reserves the right to make public the names and designs of finalists and allow the public to comment on the finalists’ proposed designs, as part of the selection process. Following deliberations, the selection committee will make a recommendation to the Portsmouth City Council for final approval. At that point, PARC and the City legal department will conduct final negotiations and execute a contract.

Evaluation Criteria

The full description of PARC’s evaluation criteria are available [here](#). The major components of evaluation review are as follows:

- Site appropriateness, including accessibility, durability for the environment.
- Aesthetics, including relationship to the site/context, imagination, use of materials, expressiveness.
- Project feasibility, including budget and technical feasibility.
- Artist/artist team experience.

Submittal Requirements

Proposals must be submitted in a **sealed envelope, plainly marked “Call for Artists-Percent for Art Commission-Peirce Island, Portsmouth, N.H.” on the outside of the mailing envelope.** Please address the envelope to: Finance/Purchasing Department, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, 3rd Floor, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Submissions will be accepted, and remain unopened, until 1:00pm on Friday May 24, 2024.

Proposals shall include the following, organized using the headings below:

1. **Resume:** A current resume or CV for the artist (and members of the artist team).
2. **Artist’s Statement:** A written statement, not to exceed three pages, that describes the artist’s or artist team’s concept for the Peirce Island artwork including a description of any planned engagement activities and installation features.
3. **Representation:** A preliminary sketch, rendering or representation of the proposed artwork.
4. **Budget:** Itemized estimate to include artist fee, fabrication, and installation expenses.
5. **Schedule:** Approximate project timeline.
6. **Relevant Work:** Up to five images of recent, relevant work. Please include a short description of the project location, context and date of installation. Provide a reference with name of contact, commissioning organization, phone number and/or email for each work.

Artists, including finalists, will not be reimbursed for the cost of proposal. Materials will not be returned. As noted above, The City and/or PARC may make the names and designs of finalists public.

Reservation of Rights

The City of Portsmouth and its agents reserve the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept and negotiate any terms of a proposal that may be in the best interest of the City. The City may request clarification or additional information of artists. By submitting a proposal, the artist authorizes The City may undertake such investigation as may be necessary to verify the artist’s qualifications and reputation. The City and its agents may make the names and designs of finalists public.

Timeline

Questions Due:	Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 2:00 pm ET
Responses to questions posted:	Tuesday, April 30, 2024 (anticipated)
Proposal submittal deadline:	Friday, May 24, 2024 at 1:00 pm ET
Selection Committee Review:	Week of May 27, 2024
Finalist Interviews:	Week of June 3, 2024 (anticipated)
Finalist notifications:	June 10, 2024 (anticipated)
Contract Finalized:	July 15, 2024 (anticipated)

Questions?

Requests for additional information or for administrative questions must be directed in writing to purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com and will only be answered in writing. **The deadline for questions and requests for additional information is Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.**

Appendix A

PARC Public Input Sessions for Peirce Island Project Recap

Question #1: What resonates with you when you think of Peirce Island?

Words:

- Yin and Yang of sounds and silence
 - Sound (laughter, dog whistles)
 - Silence (contemplative, escape, quiet)
- Nature (trees, birds, forest bathing)
- Water
- Playful (joy, recreation)

Feelings:

- Convergence of activity and calm (nice alone or with others)
 - Peaceful, calm, quiet, solitude, away from the craziness, mindfulness, reflection
- Engagement (communication—good place to talk)
- Family-oriented (families of diversity welcome, something for everyone)
- Playful (happiness, joy)

Themes

- Activity (active trails and fitness, exercise, swimming, dog walking, kayaking)
- Quiet place (contemplative)
- Nature (exploration of nature, native plants, waterfowl, sea birds, forest bathing)
- Playfulness (laughter, sounds of kids, ships, lovers)
- Community gathering place (family gathering place, connection)

Question #2: What are the visual images or symbols that come to mind?

Images

- Activity (children running, tumbling, chasing; dogs running, leaping, peeing; swimming pool; walking, running, dogs)
- Boats (Subs, cranes, sail boats, fishing boats, lobster boats, watching tankers, shipyard cranes)
- Sea birds (cormorant drying its wings)
- Movement (water, fountains, wind, clouds, sky)

Symbols

- Activities (cookouts, picnics, swimming,)
- Dogs
- People (fishermen, children jumping into the water)
- Nature (driftwood, water, rocks/stones, sea life, greenery)
- Ships (coast, boat)

Question #3: What are some ways that people could interact with art on Peirce Island?

- Walk on it (labyrinth, raised area)
- Sit on it (bench, relaxed viewing, PORTSMOUTH to be sat upon, sit relax, rest on it, around it)
- Listen (sound tunnel, wind powered movement)
- Light (light reflecting, solar powered)
- Small amphitheater (performance, movies, art)
- Play (climb on it, through it), selfies

Other thoughts:

- Lighting
 - Area is dark at night, make it accessible 24/7
 - Light at night, follow the sun
 - Darkness or movement to activate light
 - Solar-lighted with activity, sidewalk that light when walked on
 - Light pollution is an issue, an environmental concern. Light could be activated with use, not always on.

- Other than dog walkers may not be familiar or understand it is a safe area.