



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
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PSB 127/26

PIONEER SQUARE PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting Via Webex Or Room L2-80 Boards And Commission

Board Members

Maureen Elenga, Chair, (ME)
Sage Kim (SK)
Jose Lorenzo Torres, Vice-Chair, (JLT)
Maya Spotted Bear (MSB)
Catherine Walker (CW)
Henry Watson (HW)

Staff

Genna Nashem (GN)
Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Absent:

Montana Houston (MH)
Sean O'Brien (SOB)
Katrina Plewinski (KP)

Key:

BM: Board Member
SM: Staff Member
AP: Applicant

Chair Maureen Elenga called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

042926.1 ROLL CALL

042926.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lissa Kramer commented that public art in Pioneer Square carries significant responsibility because it can either strengthen or distract from the purpose of the preservation district and the presence of the National Park. She urged the board to consider not only the design and placement of art but also its

content, noting that each project is an opportunity to interpret the neighborhood's layered and nationally significant history. Lissa highlighted those cumulative impacts matter as much as individual installations, and she encouraged the board to look beyond beautification to whether proposed artworks meaningfully engage with the area's historical narratives.

042926.3 MEETING MINUTES

April 1, 2026

MM/SC/SK/HW

5:0:0

The motion passed and was approved.

042926.4 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

042926.41 Morrison Hotel

503 3rd Ave S

DONH-COA-02105

Applicants(s): Forest for the Trees

Proposed: Installation of three framed murals.

Staff Genna Nashem gave the staff report. She said this was a continuation of Forest for the Trees efforts to place framed art murals in Pioneer Square. She said that the other murals have been on alleys and blank walls on sides of building at street level. She noted that this one is different and that it is on the 2nd floor. She also noted that there were wall anchors that could affect the placement of the murals.

AP Gage Hamilton explained that the proposal is part of an ongoing initiative to install rotating public artworks throughout Pioneer Square byt Forest for the Trees which is a non-profit public arts organization. He said, 22 installations already exist. He said the program provides artists with opportunities to create temporary works without painting directly on historic buildings, keeping the neighborhood's creative presence active while allowing artworks to be replaced annually.

AP Hamilton described the installation method: permanent wood-framed structures anchored into mortar joints, with removable MDO panels that can be swapped out safely and repeatedly. For the Morrison Hotel site, three 8-by-8-foot panels are proposed between the upper and lower window planes. He noted that while many artworks are typically painted on-site, this elevated location would require pre-painted or studio-created panels.

Board members expressed appreciation for the goals of the rotating art program but shared significant concerns about this specific installation site. Several members emphasized that the board's role is preservation, and that artwork placed on a historic façade must be evaluated, including compatibility with the building, protection of architectural features, and avoidance of visual clutter.

Board Members noted that the Morrison Hotel wall is a prominent and character-defining element of the building. They said that while there were no windows in this area it wasn't just a solid "void" but an area of brick contributing to the rhythm of the façade; the composition of the architecture. They felt the proposed panels would conceal important architectural feature, disrupt the window pattern, and compete visually with the historic design.

Board members noted the applicant had included activation as goal with other mural proposals, but Board members had also observed that this location is already an active, high-visibility area adjacent to the rail station and does not require additional activation. While supportive of the broader program and its value to the arts community, they agreed this location on the Morrison Building was not compatible.

Board members acknowledged the opportunity for art to reflect the district's history most members thought it was not their role to tell an artist what art to make. They said that their role was to consider if the proposal complies with guidelines and they reiterated that the primary issue in this case is the appropriateness of the location and its impact on the historic architecture. While one member thought that the review of the mural should be analogous to a sign, other Board members agreed that the mural was not a sign.

Action:

BM Catherine Walker moved to recommend to deny granting a Certificate of Approval for installation of art frames and rotating artwork.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of denial based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the April 29, 2026 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.160 Signs

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

3. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
4. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
5. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
6. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

MM/SC/CW/JLT

4:0:2

The motion passed. BM Henry Watson abstained.

BM Kim's vote recorded as abstained due to a technical issue that prevented her from responding to the call for a vote.

042926.42 Future Arts Way
Various locations in Pioneer Square
DONH-COA-02108
Applicant: Future Arts

Proposed: Temporary installations of wayfinding stickers in the public right of way to identify locations to view augmented reality art via phone.

AP Yuliya Bruk, founder and executive director of the Seattle-based nonprofit Future Arts, presented an overview of the organization's five-year effort to merge technology and community-centered storytelling through accessible public art.

AP Bruk described their upcoming augmented reality (AR) installation program planned for downtown Seattle, designed to highlight small businesses, cultural spaces, and untold community stories during the World Cup and beyond. Using a custom web-based wayfinding tool, visitors will be able to access AR artworks at designated locations without downloading an app.

AP Bruk detailed the planning and safety coordination with SDOT, including placement of durable, recyclable ground vinyl stickers positioned to avoid pedestrian or traffic impacts and outlined the maintenance plan involving regular ambassador checks and backup materials, and reviewed the selected Pioneer Square installation sites.

AP Bruk expressed enthusiasm for sharing this work with the community and emphasized Future Arts' commitment to elevating underrepresented voices through technology-driven public art.

SM Genna Nashem clarified that the proposed artwork itself would not be physically visible on the site and could only be viewed digitally through a phone, meaning the board's review is limited to the wayfinding elements proposed for the sidewalk and noted that a banner mentioned during the presentation was not included in the application and would require a separate submittal. Nashem confirmed that the ground-level locations shown do not appear to include any prism glass panels, which is important for ensuring no historic materials are covered.

SM Nashem does not view the wayfinding elements as signage but asked the board to confirm agreement, noting that although the Artway logo appears, it represents a concept rather than a business or organization. If the board concurs, the installation would be treated similarly to other temporary wayfinding details previously reviewed.

Board members were broadly supportive of the innovative digital-art concept and agreed that the sidewalk decals function as temporary wayfinding rather than signage. They noted that the decals do not advertise a business, are placed flat on the ground, and simply invite public engagement, making them consistent with similar temporary installations previously approved in the district.

Board members also acknowledged the program's creative value and its potential to enhance how people experience art in Pioneer Square.

Questions focused primarily on logistics rather than appropriateness. Several members asked about the number of decals proposed, especially given the anticipated congestion and overlapping wayfinding efforts during the FIFA World Cup. They encouraged coordination with other projects to avoid cumulative clutter and ensure smooth pedestrian flow.

Overall, the board expressed comfort with the temporary decals themselves while seeking clarity on timing, quantity, and coordination with concurrent neighborhood activities.

Action:

BM Sage Kim move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for temporary installations of wayfinding stickers in the public right of way to identify locations to view augmented reality art via phone.

All per the applicant's submittal.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the April 29, 2026 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

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certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.160

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

6. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

MM/SC/SK/JLT

6:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

042926.43

Pioneer Park

100 Yesler Way

DONH-COA-02101

1046 1st Ave S

Applicant: Downtown Seattle Association

Proposed: Installation of a new kiosk structure to replace existing kiosk cart.

AP Seth Geiser explained that the Downtown Seattle Association, through its multi-year activation agreement with Seattle Parks and Recreation, is proposing to relocate an existing kiosk from Westlake Park to Pioneer Square Park. The kiosk was originally designed and built two and a half years ago in collaboration with LMN Architects, using locally sourced, durable materials and drawing inspiration from historic downtown structures. Its flexible, open interior was intended to support daily park operations, ambassador staffing, and community programming. With Westlake Park now undergoing major renovations, the kiosk is no longer needed there, creating an opportunity to upgrade the smaller, overburdened kiosk currently in Pioneer Square Park.

The proposed replacement would allow all equipment to be fully enclosed when not in use and provide a cleaner, more functional setup during activations and emphasized the kiosk's durability, weather-resistant construction, and ease of repair, as well as its successful use for community events and staff engagement. The Parks Department has expressed strong interest in the relocation, and the project will be reviewed by ProView before coordination begins to move the structure to its new site.

AP Geiser explained that the kiosk would operate on the same schedule currently used by park staff, who already activate the space daily. MID ambassadors, who are present in the park ten hours a day, seven days a week, would also use the kiosk throughout the day as needed.

AP Geiser added that community interest is already emerging, with two neighborhood groups requesting to use the kiosk during the Pioneer Square Art Walk. He emphasized that, based on experience in Westlake Park, once the kiosk is in place it tends to inspire additional community-driven uses, serving both routine park operations and a wide range of future activations that may develop organically.

Board members were generally supportive of the kiosk's design and materials, noting that its curved form and wood construction complement the architectural character of Pioneer Square. Discussion focused primarily on operational and procedural considerations. Members asked about coordination with nearby stakeholders such as the Alliance for Pioneer Square, National Park Service rangers, Underground Seattle tours, and adjacent businesses given the high activity level at this corner of the park.

Overall, the board expressed interest in the kiosk's potential community benefits while seeking clarity on coordination, regulatory interpretation, and how the structure would function within an already busy public space.

Action:

Vice Chair Torres move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for Installation of a new information kiosk to replace existing kiosk cart

All per the applicant's submittal.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the April 29, 2026 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

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alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

23.66.100 Creation of district, legislative findings and purpose

A. During the City of Seattle's relatively brief history, it has had little time in which to develop areas of consistent historical or architectural character. It is recognized that the Pioneer Square area of Seattle contains many of these rare attributes and consequently is an area of great historical and cultural significance. Further, the regional sports stadiums, constructed in and near the Pioneer Square area, and the traffic and activities that they generate have resulted in adverse impacts upon the social, cultural, historic and ethnic values of the Pioneer Square area. To preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the Pioneer Square area and the buildings therein; to return unproductive structures to useful purposes; to attract visitors to the City; to avoid a proliferation of vehicular parking and vehicular oriented uses; to provide regulations for existing on-street and off-street parking; to stabilize existing housing, and encourage a variety of new and rehabilitated housing types for all income groups; to encourage the use of transportation modes other than the private automobile; to protect existing commercial vehicle access; to improve visual and urban relationships between existing and future buildings and structures, parking spaces and public improvements within the area; and to encourage pedestrian uses, there is established as a special review district, the Pioneer Square Preservation District. The boundaries of the District are shown on Map A for 23.66.1001 and on the Official Land Use Map.

23.66.160 Signs

B. To ensure that flags, banners and signs are of a scale, color, shape and type compatible with the Pioneer Square Preservation District objectives stated in Section 23.66.100 and with the character of the District and the buildings in the District, to reduce driver distraction and visual blight, to ensure that the messages of signs are not lost through undue proliferation, and to enhance views and sight lines into and down streets, the overall design of a sign, flag, or banner, including size, shape, typeface, texture, method of attachment, color, graphics and lighting, and the number and location of signs, flags, and banners, shall be reviewed by the Board and are regulated as set out in this Section 23.66.160.

23.66.180 Exterior building design.

To complement and enhance the historic character of the District and to retain the quality and continuity of existing buildings, the following requirements shall apply to exterior building design:

A. Materials. Unless an alternative material is approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director following Board review and recommendation, exterior building facades shall be brick, concrete tinted a subdued or earthen color, sandstone or similar stone facing material commonly used in the District. Aluminum, painted metal, wood and other materials may be used for signs, window and door sashes and trim, and for similar purposes when approved by the Department of Neighborhoods Director as compatible with adjacent or original uses, following Board review and recommendation.

Pioneer Square Preservation District Rules

XI. STREET FURNITURE

The cast iron and wood benches located in Pioneer Place Park and Occidental Park are the standard for the District. Approval to install benches will be determined by need and availability. All other elements of street furniture will be reviewed by the Board as to their specific compatibility within the Preservation District. This review will be extended to all bus shelters, bollards, signal boxes, mailboxes, pay phones, trash receptacles, newspaper stands, and vending carts which are both permanent and mobile. Pay phones, mail boxes, trash receptacles, and newspaper stands shall be located in the sidewalk zone adjacent to the curb, in line with street trees and light standards to reduce impediments to pedestrian flow and to avoid obscuring visibility into street level retail storefronts. (7/99, 7/03)

Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

MM/SC/JLT/SK

6:0:0

The motion passed and was approved unanimously.

042926.5 BRIEFING

No briefings

042926.6 BOARD BUSINESS

042926.7 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

042926.8 STAFF REPORT

SM Nashem reported two recent administrative approvals: one for an A-board sign for Beguiled Books, and another for the removal of mostly dead ivy from the Grand Central Building.

Meeting adjourned at 10:56 a.m.