



## ARTIST DESIGNED

## MURAL GUIDELINES

The application and permitting process for Artist Designed Murals is a two-phase process. During Phase One, applicants will submit completed applications which will identify the location and any corresponding equipment (i.e. panel brackets, lighting fixtures, etc.) of the mural. This portion of the application will be submitted to Planning and Development Services. The mural *design* is not yet needed. During Phase Two, applicants will submit a completed application containing information about the mural and a final rendering of the mural design.

For Phase One, commercial locations within the Design Review or Downtown Design Review Overlay zones, a Zoning Certificate or Design Review application must be submitted. For commercial locations within the Historic District or Historic District with Design Review Overlay zones, a Commercial Certificate of Appropriateness application must be submitted. If you have questions about which application is correct for your project, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document or contact a Planning and Development Services staff member.

Applications that meet the mural standards, after being reviewed administratively, will receive approval with any relevant conditions after a maximum of 15 weekdays from when all the application materials were submitted. Larger or more complex mural requests that Staff cannot approve based on the aforementioned guidelines will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee or Historic Preservation Commission through the public hearing process.

If the applicant would like to request approval for multiple contiguous locations the request may be able to be submitted as a single application. Depending on the scale of the proposals, Planning Staff may still require separate applications. Once approved, the applicant may complete Phase Two. There are many resources available to assist the applicant at this stage, per the Mural Guidelines and [www.boiseartsandhistory.org/programs/public-art/murals](http://www.boiseartsandhistory.org/programs/public-art/murals). Phase Two must be completed and submitted to the Arts & History Department Public Art Program Manager. This portion of the application requires the applicant to submit the final mural design, information about the mural, and



indicate whether or not the applicant would like to participate in the Mural Registry. The approval of the Phase Two application may take up to an additional 15 days.

## **SECTION I. MURAL POLICY AND THE CITY OF BOISE**

In order to beautify public areas, enhance the quality of life for Boise citizens, attract tourism, promote arts and culture and encourage businesses to locate within the City, thus expanding Boise's economic base, it is the policy of the Boise City to promote artist designed murals, where appropriate, through the implementation of a clarified process for murals and the Artist Designed Mural Guidelines.

## **SECTION II. MURAL REGISTRATION OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Phase Two Mural Registration Program is to promote and support artists and businesses by making a programmable mural map publicly accessible, thus encouraging tourism while promoting professional, high-quality murals.

## **SECTION III. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Planning and Development Services Staff will assess applications based on adherence to the City of Boise Zoning Code, Boise Citywide Design Standards and Guidelines, Boise Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines, and Design Guidelines for Commercial Historic Districts.

### **a. MURAL LOCATION**

The context of the building and the surrounding area is a critical component to the evaluation of an appropriate location for a mural. Each building is unique, and it is recommended the applicant reach out to the Design Review or Historic Preservation Staff to discuss potential locations prior to planning the mural project.

Below are general guidelines to help direct location selection:

- i. Blank firewalls are the preferred location for murals and should be utilized whenever possible.
- ii. Alley and non-street facing walls may be afforded more leeway in regard to location guidelines than street-facing walls, depending on street visibility.



- iii. Murals should not compete with or overwhelm existing architectural features such as windows with trim, moldings, entryways, or similar detailing. Do not engulf key architectural features within murals.
- iv. Murals should avoid creating harsh edges where no architectural features are present to create a natural break in the façade. Mural designs that do not contain harsh edges may be proposed in place of architectural features.
- v. Murals should be located and sized to engage and encourage pedestrian interaction.
- vi. Context should be considered when proposing a mural. There should not be any negative impact to the backdrop of significant historical institutions (e.g. the historic U.S. Post Office or Idaho State Capitol Building). Outside of specific mural districts or projects, proposed murals should be dispersed as to promote greater community presence and neighborhood compatibility.

**b. MEDIA AND OTHER COMPONENTS**

The Design Review and Historic Preservation Staff does not regulate the content of murals outside of sign regulations (see below). Colors of the mural are not restricted but should complement the surrounding area.

Throughout the duration of the installation, the mural shall be well maintained through: repainting; graffiti removal; application of sealants; component replacement; and other means not specifically noted.

If the mural will be anything other than paint applied directly to the wall surface, the Design Review or Historic Preservation Staff shall be provided details on all materials, hardware, and installation processes for approval. If using brackets or other structural components, contact the Permit Desk with questions pertaining to Building permits at (208) 608-7070. Supplemental components, such as lighting, shall meet all standards as found in the City of Boise Zoning Code and Design Review Standards and Guidelines.

Installations that contain electrical or mechanical components, or changing images, do not qualify for the Artist Designed Mural Application Process. Such installations shall submit and provide all details, including design, in the Design Review or Historic Preservation application.



**c. HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

In addition to the above guidelines, historic buildings located in one of the City’s Historic Districts or in the Downtown Design Review Overlay Zones may have more restrictions regarding location and how the mural is attached to the structure. The historic context of the structure should be maintained. Drilling into or otherwise altering the historic façades must be avoided. Painting murals directly to the building’s exterior is the preferred method of media and installation. However, considerations to materials and condition of historic building facades (such as brick or stucco) will further influence whether a mural is appropriate for the proposed location.

**d. ARTIST DESIGNED MURAL OR HAND-PAINTED ADVERTISEMENT: SIGN REGULATIONS**

The Boise City Zoning Code defines a sign as any device visible from a public right of way that displays either commercial or noncommercial messages by means of graphic presentation of alphabetic or pictorial symbols or representations. Applicants looking to execute an artist designed mural are exempt from acquiring a sign permit if the mural does not contain advertising. Advertising includes company names, business logos, and/or symbols that are synonymous with the company in question.

The Design Review Staff will review mural designs during Phase Two to ensure compliance with the sign regulations.

**SECTION IV. MAINTENANCE**

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that a mural is maintained in good condition and is repaired in the case of vandalism or accidental destruction. The party providing maintenance to the mural is encouraged to establish measures that will discourage vandalism or facilitate an easier, less costly repair of the mural in the future.

There are many maintenance best practices to prolong the mural’s lifespan, reduce deterioration and increase the likelihood of a successful installation. Such best practices may include, but are not limited to: proper engineering of armatures or panels that may be installed; preliminary wall prep or pre-cleaning, priming, curing; the use of proper paints, enamels or materials that best match the surface; top coats, sacrificial layers, graffiti coats that do not compromise the painting by yellowing or



trapping moisture; consideration of drip edges, gutters or sprinkler overspray as water may degrade mural over time; environmental considerations such as, exposure to direct sun, bird nesting cavities, the potential industrial trash cans to damage the surface; consider height and line of sight in relation to how repairable the design is; etc.

While murals often prevent or decrease acts of vandalism in the form of graffiti, it is critical to report and remove illegal graffiti as soon as possible to prevent a negative impact. Measures for preventing vandalism may include lighting the mural at night or the application of an anti-graffiti coating. The use of the anti-graffiti coating may not always be a necessary solution as the application is dependent on factors such as location and materials used. Research shows that the removal of illegal graffiti within 24 – 48 hours is most effective in discouraging repeat vandalism.

Please report vandalism in the form of graffiti to the Boise City Police Department, non-emergency phone number (208) 377-6790 or [police.cityofboise.org/online-crime-reporting/](http://police.cityofboise.org/online-crime-reporting/). Once you have reported graffiti on your property, remove the graffiti as soon as possible. If you want to receive restitution in the event that a suspect is caught please call (208) 577-3837 with costs of removal.

Murals are considered more temporary in nature. In the case of excessive deterioration due to the elements and/or the natural aging process, the mural should be considered for removal (see VARA and Section VIII). Painting commercial structures in Design Review Overlay and Historic District zones requires further review through Planning and Development Services.

#### **SECTION V. ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS**

A competitive selection process may be utilized, but isn't required, to promote professional, high-quality murals while ensuring a greater level of communication for ease of process. Boise City Department of Arts & History's Public Art Division is available as a resource to advise and help promote your Call to Artists. For more information, visit [www.boiseartsandhistory.org/programs/public-art/murals](http://www.boiseartsandhistory.org/programs/public-art/murals).



## **SECTION VI. PUBLIC NOTICES**

A Public Notice may be provided to encourage positive community feedback. This may be important for establishing buy-in and support for the applicant's mural project from the neighborhood. Public Notice may take the form of, but is not limited to, a posted notice at the mural location, a public meeting (notice for which should be provided at least 7 days beforehand), and/or mailed notification letters. Surrounding properties will be notified by the City of mural approvals for projects within the Historic Districts.

## **SECTION VII. ARTIST CONTRACTS**

A contract is used to clearly establish the project's parameters and outline responsibilities while establishing the expectations of both parties involved. For property owners, the document is an opportunity to address and identify a reasonable strategy to approach and understand the Artist's inherent legal rights in the event a mural expires.

## **SECTION VIII. MURAL REMOVAL AND THE VISUAL ARTIST RIGHTS ACT (VARA)**

For more information about the Visual Artist Rights Act of 1990 (VARA), 17 U.S.C. § 106A, you may visit the U.S. Government Publishing Office online to view the United States Code titled "Rights of Certain Authors to Attribution and Integrity."

The City reserves the right to deny applications based upon City of Boise policies and the qualifications stated herein. The materials available are for informational purposes only and not for providing legal advice. You should contact your attorney to obtain advice with respect to any issue or problem.