



## PUBLIC MURAL GUIDELINES

The application and permitting process for Public Murals is facilitated jointly by Boise City Planning and Development Services and Boise City Arts & History. Applicants must submit completed applications to Planning and Development Services. Applications must include mural location, final mural design, and additional information about the mural. For commercial locations, a Zoning Certificate or Design Review application must be submitted. For commercial locations within a Historic District, a Commercial Certificate of Appropriateness application must be submitted. If you have questions about which application is correct for your project, please contact a Planning and Development Services staff member.

Completed applications will be reviewed administratively and will receive approval with any relevant conditions. Larger or more complex mural requests that Staff cannot approve based on the mural guidelines will be reviewed by the Design Review Commission 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.



## 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 clear process for murals and the Public Mural Guidelines.

## SECTION II. MURAL REGISTRATION OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Mural Registration Program is to promote and support artists and businesses by maintaining a high-quality, publicly accessible mural map that encourages exploration, learning, and tourism. All murals are subject to inclusion in the Boise Mural Registry. Applicants must provide high quality-images of the completed (painted) mural to Arts & History Staff to participate in the Boise Mural Registry.

## 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

Design Review and Historic Preservation do 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 applicant shall provide 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 Public 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 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. PUBLIC 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 a public 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.

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 preparation 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 temporary in nature. The average lifespan of a mural is approximately ten years. 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 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.