
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 6-30

SUBJECT: POLICY FOR MURALS ON CITY ASSETS

Responsible Department: City Manager's Office

Date Issued: November 14, 2025

Approved: *Signature on File*

Purpose

To establish a policy to define the process used by groups or individuals (Applicants) who desire to install murals in Public Owned Spaces. This process would create a proactive plan for the creation, presentation, and promotion of public art across the community that inspires and communicates the City's full commitment to the social, economic, and cultural well-being of Fresno and its citizens.

In doing so, the City recognizes the following considerations:

- Murals and other public art create a sense of place, establish character, or represent the identity of a neighborhood or location.
- The City of Fresno appreciates the importance of art in public places and the role that murals play in preserving our culture, conveying the history of our community, beautifying the city and advancing the arts.
- These guidelines will provide directions to Applicants wishing to install murals in public places. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City may decide, in its sole discretion, to reject a proposal for a mural.

By establishing this process, the City of Fresno is not and does not intend to designate Public Owned Spaces for murals as public forums. To the extent a mural is determined to be communicative, it is to be understood as the City's speech rather than the applicant's speech.

Definitions

Applicant: Any individual or organization, such as a business or neighborhood association, that accepts responsibility for design, installation, maintenance, or removal of a mural, is able to secure any and all permits for the mural project. This includes property owners and artists.

Assets: City property owned and operated by the city, or by a third-party operator contracted by the City, including real estate, parks, alleys and buildings, or infrastructure elements, including parking areas, fencing, retaining walls, fire hydrants and utility boxes.

Commercial Message: “Commercial” means words or images used elsewhere in the marketplace for the purpose of promoting a particular business, product, service, cause, place or brand.

Exhibition Period: The period of time that any mural created in Public Owned Spaces may be displayed before renovation or removal. Exhibition periods are determined on a case-by-base basis and set in the agreement with the Mural Artist.

Mural: A one-of-a-kind original artwork created by a Mural Artist, or through a community engagement process led by a Mural Artist that is fabricated directly upon the exterior of an asset, such as a building or utility box, that is hand-painted or hand-tiled and does not contain commercial messaging. For definition purposes, a commercial message is any text, image, logo, or other visual communication that advertises or references a business conducted, services rendered, commercial enterprise, or goods produced or sold on or off the premises.

Mural Artist: A person who has established a reputation of artistic excellence in the visual arts, as judged by peers and/or experts in the field, through a record of public exhibitions, performances, commissions, sale of works, recognition and/or educational attainment. The qualified artist’s creative output shall primarily consist of the production of unique fine art. If required by State law, a Mural Artist may be required to produce a valid contractor’s license.

Mural Administrator: The individual and/or Department designated by the City Manager to oversee the mural applications and approval process.

Mural Committee: A working group consisting of representatives from the City, designated by the City Manager, which may include representatives from the City Manager’s office, Public Works, PARCS, and Beautify Fresno, or the Fresno Arts Council.

Preliminary Approval: The application has been accepted, found to be in good order and complete, and the proposed mural is deemed appropriate by the mural committee.

Public Owned Spaces: The exterior surface of a building, structure, fence or garden wall.

Policy

All murals must use City-approved materials, size, design and specifications, with a goal toward simplifying their review and long-term care. The City Manager or designee, with the recommendation of the mural committee, shall approve or deny mural proposals and may enact administrative guidelines and procedures to implement this policy, including, without limitation, designation of locations deemed appropriate for murals that City will consider for approval.

Notwithstanding that certain City property is operated or managed by a private operator pursuant to an agreement, the evaluator of the mural proposal and the final decision makers shall be the City and not the private operator or manager.

No mural or portions of a mural shall remain in any location for any period of time which create hazards to the general public, city personnel, or others including, but not limited to, distractions to motorists, obstructions to the free movement of pedestrians or motorists, and threats to surrounding property, such as flammable materials. The City Manager or designee shall have the sole discretion to determine if a hazard exists.

Guidelines

Applicants interested in proposing a mural for Assets or the public right-of-way should review the mural application process described below and submit a proposal to the City through the Mural Administrator which will be responsible for reviewing all applications and managing the approval and installation process.

To ensure artistic merit and quality and to determine that a mural is appropriate to its site, architecture, and social context, the City of Fresno (City) will require that any mural proposed for property owned by the City, under the jurisdiction of the City, or both, be reviewed by the Mural Committee and approved by the City Manager.

Mural Artists will be required to demonstrate their ability and experience to create high quality, well designed and well executed murals. The Mural Artist must provide a portfolio of work that is reflective of the style of the proposed mural. For Mural Artists without a portfolio of work, the City will consider other presented forms of art that demonstrate an ability to create a quality mural. If required by State law, a Mural Artist may be required to produce a valid contractor's license. Student artists and apprentices may work on a mural and submit a mural proposal under the guidance of an experienced Mural Artist. The Mural Artist shall be required to waive all moral rights to the mural.

The emphasis of each mural should be on "artistic expression" and must not include an advertisement or promotion, or in any way be commercial in nature. This will in no way limit or restrict the Mural Artist's right to include speech and/or artistic expression in a mural that is not a Commercial Message as defined above. It is recommended that mural proposals not include words or designs that would be considered inappropriate or indecent by community standards or contain political, religious, or gang messages. The Mural Artist's signature shall not be more than 1% of the mural.

The Applicant will be responsible for conducting public outreach, obtaining permission for mural installation, funding, and creating the mural. Applicants also assume liability for the mural and ensure the mural is well-maintained and kept in good condition. If an

application is approved, the Applicant will be expected to enter into an agreement with the City to maintain the mural while on exhibit and remove it prior to the end of the exhibition period. The Mural Committee may recommend to the City Manager or designee an extension of the exhibition period through an amendment to the agreement with the Mural Artist.

The Applicant must also provide proof of liability insurance, with the City and its respective elected officials, officers, employees, agents, and representatives named as additional insureds, in an amount specified by the City, that will protect the City from any potential claims which may arise with the mural.

Certain projects may require that the Applicant also obtain policies of automobile and worker's compensation insurance in an amount specified by the City.

The Applicant is required to notify the Mural Administrator prior to beginning any site work to schedule a pre-installation site inspection. The Mural Administrator will need to review the Applicant's permits, agreement, and insurance before authorizing commencement of installation, discuss any logistics prior to installation, and establish a timeframe for follow-up meetings. Authorization to install must be provided by the Mural Administrator to the Artist in writing before work begins.

The Applicant or the Mural Artist must purchase and install the required materials for the mural. Mural materials must be durable and weather resistant to prevent premature deterioration or other unintended changes in appearance. Mural materials must be appropriate for its outdoor location and climate, with special considerations for longevity. Mural materials other than paint may be considered for murals on City property and retaining walls in the public-right-of-way. All materials require pre-approval by the City Manager or designee.

Application Process

Outlined below is the process for mural application and approval on City Assets in the public right-of-way.

- Identify and submit mural location for preliminary screening.
 - Be sure that the site of the proposed mural location meets the site selection standards specified by the City.
 - After reviewing the toolkit and verifying that the location meets these standards, email a .pdf or .jpg map designating the proposed mural location, photos of the site from different vantage points, and the address or adjacent addresses to the Mural Administrator.
- Perform public outreach.
 - Make sure that anyone who will be impacted by the mural, such as neighboring residents and businesses, are aware of the proposal. Notice

may consist of canvassing the neighborhood to talk about or provide a description of the mural with contact information, presentation at a neighborhood meeting, or other methods that show a good faith effort of outreach to residents within a 1-mile radius.

- Letters of support from these entities make for a stronger mural proposal application.
- Submit mural application.
 - Submit the mural application through the City's website. City staff will review the application to ensure that it is complete.
 - As part of the application, the following documentation is required: site plans and photos, conceptual renderings, material data sheets, artist resumes, signed artist waivers and copyright licenses from each artist, outreach documentation, and any consent forms, if applicable.
 - If the mural project has a deadline associated with funding or other relevant timelines, please include this detailed information in the proposal.
- Intake and review of proposal.
 - Mural applications will be reviewed by the Mural Administrator to ensure that the design meets specified standards.
 - City departments with jurisdiction over the Asset(s) will also review the application.
 - Applicants may receive additional comments from City departments that require additional revisions or clarifications to the proposal.
 - Passing the preliminary site screening does not guarantee mural or site approval. Mural and site approval is ultimately subject to the sole discretion of the City Manager.
- Committee review of proposal.
 - Following staff review, the mural application is placed on the calendar of the City's Mural Committee for recommendation to the City Manager for final approval.
 - The committee's review should consider the following factors:
 - Concept and execution: strength of concept, originality and craftsmanship of proposed mural.
 - Scale: appropriateness of scale to the surrounding environment as well as to the wall upon which the mural will be painted/attached.
 - Context: creatively responds to site and neighborhood.
 - Community support: evidence of support from property owner, building and business owner(s), neighborhood association or adjacent neighbors.
 - Feasibility: demonstrated ability to complete the proposed mural within any applicable timeline and an appropriate budget to ensure longevity and durability.
- Mural approval.

- Once the proposed Mural Project has met all review standards and has been approved by the City Manager, the Mural Administrator will notify the applicant of the results of the review process.
 - The Applicant will enter into an agreement with the City to maintain the mural while on exhibit and remove it at the end of the exhibition period.
- Permits and fees.
 - Applicant may also be responsible for additional permit applications and fees. These may include permits for traffic control if the mural project will encroach into the public right-of-way, including the sidewalk area, and permits for construction if the applicant plans to fabricate a structure to affix the mural to a wall. If the painting of the mural will involve a “paint out” with community members or a similar planned event, the Applicant may be required to obtain a special event permit. The Applicant will be responsible for any fees associated with these permits.
 - All permits and agreements issued by the City are subject to inspection and murals must be installed per approved plans and specifications.
 - Deviation from the approved design could result in citations and the mural’s removal.

Commissioning Guidelines

The City may commission public art projects through a selection process approved by the City Manager or a designee. Mural Artists selected for public art projects will enter into a formal commissioning agreement with the City of Fresno. This agreement will outline the scope of work, responsibilities, compensation, project timeline, and any other relevant terms and conditions.

The City recognizes the importance of fair compensation for artists. Mural Artist compensation, including stipends for concept development, will be negotiated based on the project's budget, scope, and the artist's qualifications and experience. The City is committed to providing competitive compensation to artists that reflects the value of their creative contributions.

Installation

Prior to installation, each mural site should be properly prepared. This may involve cleaning to remove dirt and debris, and the repairing of any cracks or irregularities on the surface. Pressure washing and other prep equipment is the responsibility of the applicant.

Once the Applicant has received the required permits and licenses, completed the pre-installation site inspection meeting, and assembled all the necessary materials, the mural installation may begin. The Applicant should manage the site to ensure that

the artist and any other participants are safe and secure, adhering to all health and public safety protocol and using materials in compliance with all state and federal regulations and according to manufacturer's specifications. Materials should be applied in a quality manner and all clean-up and material disposal must adhere to state and federal regulations. All materials and equipment must be removed from the site after installation is complete.

The Applicant is required to notify the Mural Administrator upon completion of the installation to schedule a post-installation site inspection. This inspection will verify that the mural installation is consistent with the features, dimensions, and materials specified in the approved design.

Maintenance and Removal

The Applicant is required to keep the mural well-maintained and in good condition, keeping the mural free of debris, grime, and graffiti. Murals may require restoration from time to time due to wear and tear from prolonged exposure to the elements. The City will continue to monitor the mural for compliance with the maintenance agreement. Failure to comply may result in removal of the mural before the exhibition period ends.

If the Applicant decides they no longer want to exhibit and maintain the mural, the applicant is responsible for removing it. Removal may require additional permits from the City for traffic management or construction. The Applicant must notify the Mural Administrator prior to removing the mural.

Because murals may sit on top of buried utilities, there may be instances when the mural will need to be removed with little or no notice. In the unlikely event of a utility failure threatening public safety such as a water leak, the City may remove the mural or parts of the mural with little or no notice. The Mural Administrator will notify the Mural Artist and coordinate a plan for restoration or removal if any damage is incurred. Restoration efforts will be subject to available funding and are ultimately at the sole discretion of the City Manager or designee.

City of Fresno Mural Administrator Responsibilities:

Budget Oversight

- Allocating and managing budgets for public art projects.
- Ensuring funds are allocated efficiently and transparently.
- Tracking expenditures and managing financial aspects of mural installations.

Site Coordination:

- Preparing and ensuring the site is appropriately prepared for art installations.

- Obtaining necessary permits and approvals for site selection.
- Coordinating with artists, architects, and other stakeholders to ensure the chosen sites are appropriate and safe.

Artwork Installation:

- Collaborating with artists and contractors to address any technical issues.

Documentation and Reporting:

- Designate a Risk Manager to oversee insurance compliance.
- Review contracts that outline the terms and conditions of the artist's involvement in the project. This includes details such as project scope, timeline, budget, payment structure, intellectual property rights, and any specific deliverables.
- Once the contract is finalized and all parties agree to the terms, the City Manager signs the contract, formalizing the agreement with the Mural Artist.
- The Mural Administrator manages the payment process, disbursing funds to the Mural Artist according to the contract terms, which may include milestone payments or a final payment upon completion.