

Mural Approval Process

The City of Denver welcomes applications for new murals in **public areas** (excludes interior/exterior of private residences). Applications for new murals will be reviewed by Denver Arts & Venues (A&V), Public Art Staff for adherence to the policies described below. The City does not guarantee that every mural proposal/application will be approved and reserves the right to reject an application for any reason.

A. Procedures

1. Application Procedure

All applicants for new murals must obtain application guidelines and forms from Denver Arts & Venues.

Denver Arts & Venues
Mary Valdez
Public Art Program Administrator
144 W. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80202
(720) 865-5564
mary.valdez@denvergov.org

By submitting mural proposals through Denver Arts & Venues, the project will be considered for classification as a one-of-a-kind mural/work of art rather than signage. Each applicant will be given the mural review criteria (see below) and is requested to fill out a **Mural Project Information Sheet** and provide necessary application materials (see Mural Application Materials below). Each application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

2. Application Review

Once the required mural application materials (see below) are submitted to Denver Arts & Venues (A&V) Public Art department for review, an initial review of the proposal will take place within **30 days** of receipt. A&V may request additional materials to supplement the application.

3. Conforming Mural Proposals

Upon initial review of application materials, A&V Public Art Staff will determine whether a mural project qualifies as a one-of-a-kind work of art. Applicants with conforming mural proposals will be sent a letter from A&V stating that the proposal is considered a work of art and not advertising. A copy of this letter will be sent to Zoning Permitting, and the mural project can be considered “permitted.” Copies of the mural permit letter will be kept on file at A&V and at Zoning Permitting for future reference.

Zoning Administration
Tina Axelrad
Wellington E. Webb Building
Denver, CO 80202
720-865-2937

4. Non-Conforming Mural Proposals

If a mural proposal appears to not conform to the mural review criteria, it will be presented to the Public Art Committee for review. Proposals referred to the Public Art Committee may take 45-60 days for a response as the Committee meets monthly. Non-conforming applicants can make revisions to their proposal and re-submit for review or A&V can provide a letter explaining the non-conforming issues and the applicant can return to Zoning for review under Zoning's signage code (see **Zoning: Sign Code** below).

5. Landmark Preservation Commission

All applications will be reviewed to determine whether the proposed mural is in a historic neighborhood or on a landmark building. If so, the mural application must also be reviewed and approved by the Denver Landmark Preservation Commission. Attached are some interesting reads regarding Vapor-Permeable & Mineral Paint that is Vapor Permeable.

<https://www.denvergov.org/Maps/map/historiclandmarks>

<https://www.keim-usa.com/Mineral-Story/Vapor-Permeable>

<https://www.keim-usa.com/Product-Categories/Concrete-Systems/What-Makes-Mineral-Paint-Best-for-Concrete/Mineral-Paint-is-Very-Vapor-Permeable>

6. City Council Notification

Upon A&V's initial approval of the mural proposal, the City Council member for district in which the mural is proposed will also be informed of the project. Council members may request additional materials to supplement the application. City Council members are kept apprised of these projects, so when necessary, they can assist in awareness and outreach for the mural project.

B. Mural Application Materials

1. Sign Application Form

2. Mural Project Information Sheet

- a. Project manager contacts
- b. Artist name(s) & biographical information
- c. Location of mural
- d. Description of mural (whenever possible submit drawings/full color renderings)
- e. Expected dimensions and materials used
- f. Timeline for execution of mural
- g. Photos of executed mural (to add to file once mural has been approved and completed)

3. Letters of Support

While a mural project can be submitted and permitted without letters of support, the applicant is **strongly** encouraged to submit full color renderings of the proposal to one or more neighborhood groups and request a signed letter of support for the mural. If the mural is to be placed inside of the boundaries of a Business Improvement District (BID) then the BID is encouraged to provide a similar letter. Immediate neighbors of the mural should be contacted and their support given in writing. If the mural has already been reviewed and approved by the City Council representative in that district, please provide proof of their support in writing.

C. Mural Review Criteria

1. Adherence to the Denver Revised Municipal Code and City Ordinances

All murals must adhere to the Denver Revised Municipal Code and all City ordinances.

2. One-of-a Kind Works of Art

Murals must be a “one-of-a-kind” work of art and must not appear in any other public form including but not limited to advertising, logos, and trademarks and including publications where the mural is used to promote or identify the sponsor in any form.

If the Mural proposal is viewed as a work of fine art, the applicant is given a letter of acceptance from Denver Arts & Venues and directed to Tina Axelrad in Zoning Administration to complete and an application for a sign as a work of art permit. **The Zoning Administration makes final determinations for permits.**

If a determination is made by Denver Arts & Venues that a proposal does not qualify as a one-of-a-kind work of art, the applicant will be given a letter from Denver Arts & Venues stating that the proposal does not qualify as primarily a work of art in nature. The applicant will be directed to the Zoning Administration to complete an application for sign permit. The Zoning Administration makes final determination for permits.

3. Zoning: Sign Codes

Mural applicants must adhere to existing sign codes (see below). If a proposal appears not to conform to this code, the proposal will be rejected and/or applicants will be asked to re-submit proposal with changes.

Excerpt from Denver Revised Municipal Code [DRMC 59-537]

(Ord. No. 852-92, eff. 11-27-92)

(10) Signs which are works of art as defined by section 20-86 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code. Such signs shall be primarily artistic in nature, but up to five (5) percent of the sign may be the

name or logo of a sponsoring organization. The percentage of the sign devoted to the sponsoring organization may be increased up to ten (10) percent of the sign if the zoning administrator, with input from the director of the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs, determines the portion of the sign devoted to the sponsor does not detract from the artistic quality of the sign.

(Ord. No. 650-93, eff. 6-25-93)

(11) Off-premises identification sign. A sign identifying a public facility which is located on a different zone lot than that containing the sign. The number, location, height, size and illumination of such signs shall be approved by the director of planning and the zoning administrator or their designated representative; however, in no case shall such sign exceed ten (10) feet in height or forty (40) square feet in area. A decision to approve such signs must be based on a favorable evaluation of their compatibility with nearby structures and signs. The installation of such identification signs shall not reduce the size or number of other signs permitted on a specific site by other provisions of article V.

4. Non-One-of-a-Kind Works of Art

If a determination is made by A&V that a proposal does not qualify as a one-of-a-kind work of art, the applicant will be given a letter from A&V stating that the proposal does not qualify as primarily a work of art in nature. The letter will be forwarded to Zoning Permitting and then the applicant will be directed to the Zoning Permitting at 201 W Colfax Dept 205 to complete an application for a sign permit. The Zoning Administration makes final determination for permits.

5. Mural Sponsorship

Identification of mural sponsorship as indicated in ordinance # 460, series of 1993 is allowed, however, overt use of logos or trademarks may lead to a determination that the proposal is advertising in nature and thus subject to signage code provisions concerning advertising and "off-site advertising."

6. Approval of Existing Murals

If a person wishes to seek approval for an existing and/or historic mural, the same application materials must be submitted to A&V or Zoning Administration for review. The approval process is identical to a new mural. If the existing mural is designated a work of art, a letter will be sent to Zoning Administration indicating such. If not, the owner of the mural should work with Zoning Administration to obtain the necessary signage permits.

7. Re-Approval of Murals

The City will approve a mural as a one-of-a-kind work of art based upon the materials submitted in an application. However, if the

completed mural is executed in a manner that differs greatly from the description in the application, the City can discontinue its approval of the existing mural. In this case, it is up to the artist or project manager to seek re-approval for the new mural, so that the existing mural better matches the approved mural on file.

D. Mural Maintenance and Repairs

1. City Responsibility

By permitting a mural project as a one-of-a-kind work of art, the City does not assume any financial obligation for its creation, upkeep or repair.

2. Owner Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the designated mural project manager or owner of the facility on which the mural is executed to create and maintain the mural. The City assumes that the mural will be kept in good repair with periodic maintenance to be performed by the project manager/artists/owner as needed.

3. Mural Vandalism

It is recommended that the mural be coated with a sealant or graffiti coating so that graffiti vandalism or tagging can be more easily removed. If vandalism to the mural occurs, it is the responsibility of the mural owner/project manager/artist to remove graffiti within 48 hours (consistent with City-wide ordinances regarding graffiti removal). If it is not removed and repaired by the owner/project manager/artist, the Public Works department could be called to remove the graffiti vandalism using their standard removal techniques/materials.