



## **PLANNING A MURAL PROJECT – QUICK GUIDE**

This is a guide to some of the items and issues that need to be addressed when creating and managing a community-engaged public art mural project. Each program and community will be different and the answers and the ways that these items are dealt with will be unique to your project.

Before starting your project, ask these important questions:

- Identify goals - What do you want to accomplish by creating this mural?
- What is the purpose? Who is the target audience? What outcomes do you expect?
- Identify key players – Who is the project lead? Who owns the idea? Who might partner?
- What will your role be?
- How will the mural be paid for?
- Are you accountable to a private client, a committee, the public?
- OR Can you make decisions on your own?
- Is this part of a larger project?
- Do you have the experience and the commitment of resources: time and energy?
- What is the expected lifespan of the mural?
- Who takes final responsibility for the mural?

### **Mural Site selection**

When selecting a wall or mural site consider these things:

- Visibility – minimal visual distractions, good view for the public
- Wall material (substrate)
- Wall condition and environment
- Ownership
- Wall surface
- Wall construction – what is it made of?
- What prep has to be done?
- Can the artist do this work or do you have to hire a specialist?
- Is special equipment required?

### **Selecting the Medium**

Choosing the mural material

- Paint type: Acrylic, Latex or Aerosol
- Aluminum Composite (also known as Dibond)
- MDO Panels (Plywood, also known as Crezone or Sign Board)
- Mosaic
- Non-woven media
- Other



### **Choosing a Theme or Subject**

The theme of the mural may be chosen by considering many factors:

- Relevance to the mural location (historical research, current issues, future visions)
- Purpose of the mural project (does your organization have a mandate? is the funder or property owner have a purpose for the project?)
- Significance to the community being impacted (consult the community)
- Artistic expression (allow the artist(s) to propose an idea based on the site)

### **Getting Permission**

Talk to the wall owner and ensure that they are “on board” with the idea. Ensure you get a Contract signed ([sample](#)). Things to consider:

- What the owner agrees to (i.e. not to deface, cover, destroy, damage, alter or directly obstruct the visibility of the mural)
- What they expect the artist to agree to (i.e. theme and sketch proposal will be presented to the owner for approval before painting)
- Who is in charge of maintenance and for how long?
- Schedule painting times and access to the site.
- If repairs are required in the property, it is being demolished or painted over – who is the main point of contact?

### **Community Involvement & Partnerships**

The most lasting and successful mural projects have a connection with the local community. There are many opportunities for community involvement on planning committees, advisory groups, fundraisers, artist liaison or “cheer leaders.” Community Partnerships can be for:

- Community engagement
- Consultation (selecting a theme and artist)
- Promotion
- Funding
- In-kind services
- Celebration and events

### **Selecting the Artist**

Ways to select an artist:

- Competition/Call for Artists (open, invitational or limited to a category of artist)  
[Example](#) [Example](#)
- Call for Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Request for Proposals (RFP) or Quotations (RFQ)
- Commission

Mural Routes’ recommendation is to avoid requesting sketches, concept designs, or fully rendered designs in initial proposals (or submissions) unless artists are being compensated.



### **Create a Contract with the Artist**

Some items to be covered:

- Liability – who is responsible for insurance and onsite supervision?
- Decisions – who has authority to make decisions? How are decisions made?
- Working conditions – timeline, provision for bad weather etc.
- Division of responsibility – roles and expectations of each party
- Copyright – are there any conditions or waivers?
- Fees and payment schedule
- Deadlines – start, deliverables and completion dates

Written contracts are essential to clarify the roles and responsibilities between the artist and the client and set the terms of engagement ([sample](#)).

### **Liability Insurance**

- coverage in case of injury to a third party
- it is the responsibility of the organization or business managing the project, but as independent contractors, artists also have to provide this (\$2M-\$5M coverage)

### **Artists' Fees**

Considerations to take into account when deciding on the Artist Fee

- Artist's experience
- Expectations and roles of the artist
- Size of the mural (square footage)
- Complexity of the design
- Complexity of the Site
- Individual criteria
- Available funding
- Industry standards
- Design fees based on number of designs and revisions required

### **Health & Safety Preparation**

- Scaffolding requires knowledge to construct and use properly
- Working at Heights Certification may be required by artists depending on project
- Lift equipment such as scissor lifts or swing stages require special training

### **Budget Expense Items**

- Administration expenses
- Project Management costs
- Competition costs/Design fee
- Artists' fees
- Health & Safety (training, equipment)



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- Insurance
- Permit fees
- Wall preparation
- Paint, brushes and other materials
- Storage, portable toilets
- Scaffolding, ladders or other lifting equipment
- Signage / identification
- Documentation
- Marketing and Promotion
- Celebration Event
- Maintenance
- Other

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For more information, check Mural Routes' [Mural Production Handbook](#)