

Paint the Streets

CINCINNATI

Street murals are creative designs that promote traffic calming by contributing to a sense of place. Traffic calming is an important component of the City's Vision Zero program, which aims to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries while simultaneously increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for everyone.

By converting parts of streets into public art installations, street murals also showcase the creativity and input of local artists and residents. Street murals take advantage of our most extensive public spaces—streets—to bring more art into daily life, fostering inclusive and vibrant communities.

The City of Cincinnati has established a process by which neighbors can come together to install a pavement mural project on their street. This information packet explains the process and requirements.



Intersection of Borden St and Dreman Ave in South Cumminsville

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Step:
1

Have a Community Council representative fill out the Application (Form A) and return it to the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE). Applications should be submitted at least 60 days before you plan to paint.

Step:
2

DOTE will contact you to let you know if your proposed location is approved.

Step:
3

Find a community artist to create a draft design and submit a sketch to DOTE for review. Let us know if you need help finding an artist, we can help!

Step:
4

DOTE will contact you to let you know if your proposed design is approved or if any changes are needed.

Step:
5

Sign and return the "Paint the Streets License Agreement" (sent to you after approval of your design).

Step:
6

Apply for a Street Blocking Permit (application is available at <https://opencounter.cincinnati-oh.gov/special-events>). This will allow you to close the street and paint your mural. Make sure to apply as soon as your design is approved, as the permit can take up to 45 days to process).

Step:
7

Paint your mural! Please take pictures of work-in-progress, and the finished mural, and e-mail pictures to DOTE.

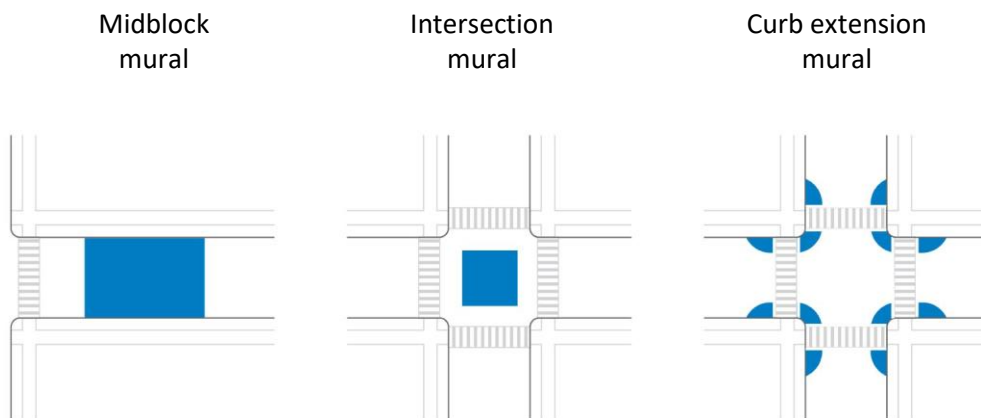
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General Location Criteria

There are three types of pavement murals:

- **Midblock murals:** May only be located on lower traffic volume residential streets. Mid-block murals are discouraged on streets that have an existing yellow centerline.
- **Intersection murals:** May only be located on lower traffic volume residential streets. These murals may not be located at signalized intersections.
- **Curb extension murals:** May be located on any type of street and at signalized or unsignalized intersections. May only be painted where a curb extension is currently outlined with plastic bollards.



Projects on busy streets may require barricades and detours to be set up by Public Services. Very busy streets may also require CPD presence, or flaggers and orange cones. Depending on the size of the street and the required safety measures, these costs could range from \$500 to several thousand dollars. When you submit a location for consideration, we will give you a cost estimate for Public Services/CPD and let you know whether or not additional safety measures will be required.

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Design Criteria – Midblock, Intersection, and Curb Extension Murals

- Designs must be original artwork.
- Designs should not include any shapes or colors that could be perceived as directions to the roadway user or pedestrian (no images of stop signs or traffic signals).
- Designs should not include words, universally recognized symbols, or logos.
- Designs should not invite pedestrians to linger or be distracted in the street (e.g., hopscotch).
- For murals in intersections, there should be at least 5ft of space between the design and any adjacent marked crosswalk.
- There are no color restrictions, but paint must be a “flat” finish.



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Maintenance and Removal

- The City bears no responsibility for repairing or maintaining the street mural even if street repair, street maintenance, street reconstruction, repair of existing utility facilities or installation of new utility facilities in the right-of-way affects the installation.
- Applicant shall follow the standard application procedures, in place at the time of application, to obtain City approval to complete any future repair or repainting of the pavement mural, if desired.
- The City of Cincinnati has the authority to remove the mural, in part or in whole, at any time.

Helpful Tips

Getting started:

- DOTE will provide you with a “maximum” size for your mural, based on your location. One gallon of paint should cover about 100 square feet (the bumpy asphalt will consume more than you expect). A typical intersection mural could be as large as 900 sq ft (requiring 9 gallons of paint). Exterior house paint or stain is recommended.
- Consider using primer; the primer will fill in small cracks in the pavement and create a smoother surface for the paint to adhere to.
- Buy cheap brushes – you won’t be able to salvage them. Foam brushes work well on asphalt.
- Make sure you buy brushes in multiple sizes (small for edging, larger for filling in).
- The paint adheres best in warmer weather – plan for a day where temperatures are 70° and rising. Applications will only be accepted for painting in May through September.

Day of painting:

- Bring brooms to sweep away debris.
- Have your artist onsite at least an hour before volunteers to outline the design in chalk, and indicate what colors go where by placing a small dot of paint (like paint by numbers).
- Gorilla tape can be used to paint straight lines, and mat boards from art stores can be cut to create stencils.
- Don’t forget stirring sticks, drop cloths, small buckets, disposable cups, and garbage bags.
- Pour paint in small buckets for adults or disposable cups for children to dip their brushes into. Use a drop cloth on the ground where you will be pouring paint.
- The paint may appear dry quickly, but you should wait several hours before allowing vehicles to drive over it.

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Sample budget:

Item	Per item cost	Total cost
Paint	\$50/gallon	\$150 - \$450 depending on design
Brushes	\$4-9/brush depending on size	\$40 - \$90 depending on # of volunteers
Disposable cups/buckets for paint	\$3/for 25 cups, \$40/10 buckets	\$43
Public Services/CPD	Varies by street size	\$0 - \$10,000
Street Blocking permit	\$25	\$25
Total cost range		\$258 - \$10,000