

## Art in Public Places (AIPP) Program Recommended Pathway + Draft Mural Policy Framework

Presented to the Arts Commission June 2, 2026

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### Recommended Pathway for Developing a City of Santa Fe Mural Program

#### Suggested Phased Approach

Given current departmental processes, staffing capacity, operational infrastructure, and broader public art goals, the Arts & Culture Department recommends a phased approach for developing a sustainable and well-supported mural program for the City of Santa Fe.

Rather than immediately launching a fully formalized citywide mural policy, the Arts & Culture Department is planning to test a pilot initiative to build artist relationships, develop operational knowledge, and assess long-term staffing and maintenance needs. Informed by this process, the department and AIPP Committee will then proceed with a recommendation to the full Arts Commission to adopt a permanent policy structure.

By starting at a scale staff can realistically support, the department will create visible public momentum and demonstrate what is possible, while ensuring sustainability and longevity.

#### Phase 1: Pilot Initiative + Program Testing (First Month to 1 Year)

##### *Santa Fe Mural Lab*

The initial focus would be on launching a pilot initiative that tests what a future, sustainable, mural program could look like operationally, artistically, and administratively. This phase would include:

- Leveraging the presence of well-known local and national artists and related partnerships
- Identifying and supporting local artist mentorship and capacity building
- Initiating and creating positive public engagement around Art in Public Places (AIPP)
- Allowing the department to begin testing review and approval processes
- Helping identify staffing, maintenance, and operational needs
- Building relationships with local mural artists and community partners

Rather than functioning as a standalone mural event, the mural lab would serve as an early infrastructure-building initiative tied to the broader goals of the Arts & Culture Department and the future growth of the AIPP program.

Recommended pilot activities:

- Artist workshops and mentorship
- Community engagement and charrettes
- Identifying a limited number of pilot mural sites
- Commissioning 3–5 local artist murals in the first year
- Documenting operational lessons learned throughout the process

**Deliverable:** 3-5 projects completed along with documented feedback for the mural policy.

## **Phase 2: Framework Testing + Refinement** (Overlapping with Phase 1 up to 1 Year)

As pilot projects move forward, the department can begin testing and refining the proposed mural policy framework. This phase would help determine the staffing, infrastructure, and operational support needed for a sustainable program.

This phase would allow us to:

- Test and establish the proposed review and approval pathways
- Address interdepartmental coordination challenges
- Develop maintenance and conservation standards for the local climate
- Evaluate budget ranges and timelines
- Assess community engagement expectations and capacity
- Refine artist selection and commissioning processes
- Identify opportunities for the long-term plan
- Identify and integrate cultural infrastructure language into corridor plans, economic development strategies, and capital improvement plans

Assessment and coordination would occur with Legal, Planning, Historic Preservation, Risk Management, Procurement, Facilities and maintenance staff, and community and cultural stakeholders where appropriate.

The goal during this phase would not be to over-engineer the program too early, but to use the pilot initiative to pressure test the draft framework, identify gaps, and refine a workable structure that reflects Santa Fe's operational realities, cultural context, and long-term capacity. This initiative will also inform broader AIPP planning.

**Deliverable:** Refined Draft City of Santa Fe Mural Policy Framework informed by pilot implementation experience and public feedback from the workshops.

## **Phase 3: Working Group + Policy Completion** (Overlapping with Phase 2, up to 6 Months)

This phase would review lessons learned from the pilot initiative, identify operational gaps, evaluate maintenance needs, clarify roles and responsibilities, and refine policy language to reflect Santa Fe's cultural, historic, and operational context.

The department will convene a working group to help refine the draft mural policy framework into a formal policy document. The working group will be made up of the AIPP Committee with invited topic experts to further inform and refine the policy.

The process would include departmental review, coordination with Legal and relevant City divisions, Arts Commission review, and public input as appropriate. Administrative adoption and/or Council alignment may also be required.

**Deliverable:** Santa Fe specific mural policy completed

#### **Phase 4: Formal Policy Adoption** (Beginning of Year 2)

##### *City of Santa Fe Art in Public Places Mural Policy*

Once completed, the policy can be moved to formal adoption, establish procedures for approval, maintenance responsibilities, artist agreements, permitting, insurance, safety, public process, and procedures related to mural modification, deaccession, removal, and conflict resolution.

With a phased approach we avoid overcommitting before the operational systems, staffing, and maintenance plans are established. Beginning with a pilot initiative allows the City to build public trust, support local artists, test processes, assess resource needs, and develop policy informed by real-world experience.

This creates a more sustainable and realistic path forward while still allowing meaningful public-facing progress in the near term.

**Deliverable:** A mural policy adopted by the City

Where possible and appropriate, phases can overlap and accelerate.



## Draft Mural Policy Framework

Outlined below is a mural policy framework that aims to 1) allow the City of Santa Fe time to discuss and address a wide variety of possible requirements for a comprehensive and contextualized mural policy and 2) refine it for a final policy recommendation and adoption by the governing body by the end of 2027.

Once the policy has been established and approved by the Arts Commission, a consultant will be engaged to design a final document for distribution.

This document is informed by staff research looking at policies from similar sized cities, such as Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Cincinnati as well as formidable programs from Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington D.C..

### 1. Purpose

The City of Santa Fe recognizes murals as an important form of public expression, cultural storytelling, and community identity. A mural program can support local artists, activate public space, and strengthen civic engagement.

This framework guides the responsible development of mural projects supported, commissioned, permitted, or facilitated through the Arts & Culture Department and Arts in Public Places program.

### 2. Guiding Principles

The Guiding principles should help murals shape Santa Fe's civic and cultural identity over time.

The City seeks to be place-responsive and should develop a citywide cultural vision for murals to strengthen citywide cultural identity. Murals supported through this program should reflect artistic quality, cultural awareness, thoughtful site integration, and long-term stewardship considerations. Projects should contribute positively to the public realm while supporting diverse artistic voices, neighborhood identity, and meaningful public engagement.

The program should support equitable geographic distribution of mural opportunities across the community, including neighborhoods outside the historic core and traditional tourism corridors. The program should consider libraries, parks, community centers, fire station, youth-serving sites, transit areas, and other civic spaces that expand public access to arts and cultural participation citywide.

The program should encourage place-responsive storytelling and artistic practices that acknowledge the layered cultural histories and living communities of Santa Fe, including Native, Hispano/Chicano, immigrant, multilingual, and neighborhood-based cultural contexts where appropriate to the site and project.

### 3. Definitions

**Mural:** A hand-produced or artist-designed visual artwork applied directly to or affixed to an interior or exterior wall or architectural surface.

Murals may include:

- Painted murals
- Tile or mosaic murals
- Relief murals
- Wheat paste installations
- Mixed media mural works
- Artist-designed digital or projection murals
- Artist-designed augmented reality (AR) mural experiences

**Temporary Mural:** A mural intended to exist for a limited duration, typically between 6 months and 5 years.

**Community Mural:** A mural created with direct public participation, youth involvement, educational engagement, or neighborhood collaboration.

**Civic Landmark Mural:** A major commission intended to serve as a significant public artwork, gateway piece, or culturally important civic artwork.

**Prohibited Signage:** (ABQ has excellent language for this. Let's review)

Murals may not function primarily as:

Commercial advertising

- Product promotion
- Political campaign advertising
- Directional signage unrelated to artistic intent
- Business names, logos, and sponsorships may not dominate the mural composition.

### 4. Program Goals

The City of Santa Fe Mural Program seeks to:

- Support local and regional artists
- Create opportunities for emerging muralists
- Activate public spaces and corridors
- Support cultural storytelling and preservation
- Encourage youth mentorship and apprenticeship
- Improve neighborhood connectivity and identity

- Expand public engagement with the arts
- Encourage innovative and contemporary artistic practices
- Support artist workforce development

## 5. Eligible Locations

Murals may be considered for City-owned buildings, community centers, libraries, park facilities, parking structures, utility infrastructure, pedestrian corridors, and transit-related infrastructure. Additional review and approvals may be required for projects located within historic districts in accordance with adopted Historic Preservation and Urban Design policies and procedures, as well as within culturally sensitive areas and designated gateway corridors.

The City may explore future partnership models, incentives, or collaborative agreements that encourage participation from privately owned properties with publicly accessible visibility and strong community benefit.

The City will initiate and maintain an evolving inventory of potential mural locations to support future artist opportunities, equitable geographic distribution, partnership development, corridor planning, and long-term public art strategy.

## 6. Mural Categories

### Tier 1: Community & Youth Murals

Neighborhood-based, educational, youth-centered, and community storytelling projects

#### Typical Characteristics

- Mentorship-based
- Youth engagement
- Schools/community centers
- Temporary or semi-permanent
- Collaborative process

**Maintenance Expectation:** 3–5 years

**Review Process:** Staff review + community review

**Estimated Budget Range:** TBD

#### Typical Budget Includes:

- Artist stipend
- Youth stipends
- Paint/materials
- Lift rental as needed
- Community engagement

- Surface prep
- Protective coating
- Documentation

## **Tier 2: District & Corridor Murals**

Mural designed to activate commercial districts, cultural corridors, neighborhood gateways, or public infrastructure.

### **Typical Characteristics**

- Professional artists
- Corridor identity
- Tourism/cultural engagement
- Neighborhood partnerships

**Maintenance Expectation:** 5–8 years

**Review Process:** Selection panel + Arts Commission notification (review & approval?)

**Estimated Budget Range:** TBD

## **Tier 3: Civic Landmark Murals**

Major public commissions intended as long-term civic artworks.

### **Typical Characteristics**

- Nationally or regionally recognized artists
- Iconic locations
- Major civic or cultural significance
- Complex fabrication or installation

**Maintenance Expectation:** 8–15 years

**Review Process:** RFQ/RFP process, selection committee, Arts Commission review

**Estimated Budget Range:** TBD

## **Tier 4: Experimental & Digital Murals**

Innovative public art practices utilizing technology, projection, AR, sound, or temporary interventions.

### **Examples**

- Projection murals
- AR overlays
- Interactive murals
- Digital storytelling walls
- Temporary installations

**Estimated Budget Range:** TBD

**Maintenance Expectation:** Project-specific

## 7. Governance + Decision Making

As the mural program framework develops, clear governance and decision-making pathways must be established across departments and advisory bodies to reduce procedural confusion, support timely project review, and ensure consistency with adopted Historic Preservation and Urban Design policies.

This effort involves defining the specific roles of the Arts Commission, AIPP Committee, review panels, staff, Historic Preservation, consultants, and community engagement processes. Additionally, it will establish distinct review pathways and administrative authority, clarifying which projects can be approved administratively by Arts & Culture or Historic Preservation staff versus those requiring broader public review, commission recommendations, or governing body approval.

## 8. Artist Training & Workforce Development

Development, Education, and Workforce Development initiatives should be explored in tandem with the Economic Development Department and should be considered in the context of a larger effort around identified creative industry practices. This effort should include measuring impact and reporting on outcomes annually.

The City of Santa Fe may support mural workforce development through partnerships, workshops, apprenticeships, and artist mentorship opportunities to strengthen local creative capacity and expand equitable access to public art opportunities.

Training and professional development may include mural design, fabrication and installation techniques, safety practices, budgeting, conservation, public engagement, cultural responsiveness, and project management.

Where feasible, the City may consider a lead artist or artist-collective model in which commissioned muralists work with paid apprentices during project implementation. Apprenticeships may provide hands-on experience in design development, fabrication, installation, public engagement, conservation, and professional practice while supporting emerging artists, youth, and local workforce development.

### Apprentice Artist Program

The City may establish or partner to support paid apprenticeship and mentorship opportunities, youth mural crews, and artist workforce development initiatives in collaboration with schools, colleges, nonprofits, cultural organizations, and Indigenous communities.

## 9. Eligibility

Anyone can submit a proposal for a mural, however, a professional artist or artist team should execute the work to ensure professional standards

Applicants may include:

- Individual artists
- Artist teams
- Nonprofits
- Other agencies
- Neighborhood associations
- Schools
- Cultural organizations
- Tribal entities
- Community groups
- Cultural Event Teams

## 10. Selection Criteria

Murals will be evaluated based on artistic quality and originality, relationship to site context, cultural sensitivity and appropriateness, contribution to neighborhood or civic identity, feasibility and durability, maintenance considerations, public visibility and engagement, community participation where applicable, artist qualifications, budget alignment, and safety considerations. Additional consideration may be given to local artists' participation, mentorship opportunities, innovative approaches, and cultural storytelling.

Primary and secondary criteria could be established to help balance diversity of artistic approaches and cultural narratives across the broader public art collection.

## 11. Community Engagement Standards

Depending on project scale, engagement may include:

- Neighborhood meetings
- Listening sessions
- Design workshops
- Community charettes
- Youth participation
- Stakeholder consultation
- Tribal or cultural consultation
- Online feedback opportunities
- Not all projects require full consensus.

Final approval authority would remain with the City through established review processes.

## 12. Historic & Cultural Review

(The historic preservation passed an exception to include murals. This section will account for that)

Murals proposed within historic districts or culturally sensitive areas may require:

- Historic Preservation review
- Archaeological review
- Additional material restrictions
- Modified scale or placement considerations

### **13. Material Standards and Specifications**

**(subject to technical consultation)**

All mural projects must use approved exterior-grade materials and preparation methods appropriate for Santa Fe's climate and long-term durability.

Requirements may include:

- Proper surface preparation and substrate stabilization
- Professional exterior mural paints and approved coatings
- UV and weather protection
- Anti-graffiti protection where appropriate
- Consideration of freeze/thaw, UV, moisture, wind, and dust exposure
- Interior-grade paints are prohibited.

Artists must provide final material specifications, maintenance recommendations, color references, installation notes, and final documentation photography.

### **14. Maintenance & Stewardship**

Murals may have varying lifespans depending on project type, location, materials, and long-term maintenance. The City reserves the right to conserve, restore, rotate, repaint, deaccession, or remove murals based on condition, public safety concerns, redevelopment needs, maintenance limitations, or the end of a designated lifespan. Murals may undergo periodic condition assessments, including annual reviews, post-weather event inspections, or evaluations prior to conservation or restoration work.

### **15. Temporary Murals**

Temporary murals are encouraged as opportunities for artist incubation, neighborhood activation, experimental public art, and youth engagement. These projects may be eligible for simplified review and approval pathways.

### **16. Selection Panels**

Selection panels may include artists, arts professionals, architects or designers, neighborhood and youth representatives, cultural advisors, Indigenous representatives where appropriate, and relevant City staff.

## 17. Funding Sources

In general, Murals may be funded through a combination of AIPP funds, Lodgers Tax funds, grants, sponsorships, other City Departments, public-private partnerships, philanthropic support, and neighborhood partnerships.

As the mural program develops, long-term funding and operational sustainability will need to be evaluated alongside project implementation. In addition to installation cost, future planning should consider maintenance and conservation reserves, staffing administration capacity, documentation, permitting coordination, and the ongoing resources required to responsibly steward a growing mural program.

## 18. Insurance & Safety (Standard)

Artists must comply with all applicable OSHA requirements, lift and scaffold certification standards, insurance requirements, traffic and pedestrian safety protocols, and youth protection standards where applicable.

## 19. Ownership & Rights

Artists retain copyright to their work unless otherwise negotiated through a contract. Any commercial licensing, merchandise, reproductions for sale, or revenue-generating uses by the City shall be addressed through a separate agreement.

The City retains the right to document, archive, and use images of the work for educational and promotional purposes. Artists may also be asked to sign agreements allowing future maintenance, restoration, relocation, removal, alteration, or deaccession of the work without triggering claims under the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990, and VARA waivers may be required where appropriate.

## 20. Creative Community Archive

The City may maintain a public archive documenting mural history, artists, process documentation, oral histories, neighborhood narratives, digital or AR components, and related educational materials. The archive may include photography, interviews, gathered community stories, GIS mapping, conservation records, and public engagement documentation.

## 21. Public Art Program Code of Civic and Cultural Responsibility

(subject to legal consultation)

The City recognizes that murals may address complex social, cultural, historical, political, or spiritual themes. Works shall not be excluded solely because subject matter is challenging, contemporary, culturally specific, political, or unfamiliar.

Projects involving culturally specific Indigenous imagery, histories, languages, ceremonial knowledge or sacred symbolism may require consultation with appropriate tribal governments, cultural practitioners, or community representatives.

Political, social, cultural, historical, or activist subject matter is not automatically prohibited. Context and artistic intent will be considered.

**Public Safety & Conduct Standards**

Murals may not contain:

- Unlawful hate speech
- Direct threats
- Incitement to violence
- Discriminatory harassment prohibited by law

**22. Future Program Development**

This framework is intended to support measured growth, realistic staffing and long-term stewardship while avoiding overextension. As the program can expand under these conditions the city may develop:

- Annual mural initiatives
- Corridor-based mural programs
- Artist residencies
- Mural festivals
- Apprenticeship pipelines
- Conservation plans
- Digital interpretation platforms
- Regional and international artist exchanges

**23. Naming Hierarchy**

Type	Example
Policy	City of Santa Fe Mural Policy
Public Program	Santa Fe Mural Lab Mural Brigade (ArtForce)
Initiative	Creative Corridors Initiative