

Guidelines for Mural Projects on Private Buildings in Downtown Monroe

Background

The Monroe City Council finds that the painting of art or murals on buildings located in the Downtown District can enhance the quality of life, vitality, and appearance of Monroe's Downtown. Murals are a form of public art intended to be public displays. Commissioning and painting or attaching private murals is prohibited in the Downtown District unless approved pursuant to the policies and guidelines provided herein.

Therefore, the commissioning, painting, and maintenance of public art as murals in the Monroe Downtown District should be carried out on behalf of the public only by the City of Monroe, utilizing a well-designed process involving public input and approval by Monroe City Council.

Purpose

These guidelines outline a process for requesting consideration of a mural project on a private building in the Downtown District. A private property owner can pursue a mural project within the Downtown District through a standardized process that includes public input and approval from Monroe City Council.

These guidelines will help ensure the continued visual aesthetic of Downtown Monroe while striking an appropriate balance between historic character and creative expression. It will also ensure that the location, size, shape, color palette, materials used, theme, and relationship to historic context are appropriate for our Downtown.

Definitions

Mural

A mural is a picture or design painted on or otherwise attached to an exterior surface of a structure or building.

Sign

A sign is a picture or design clearly related by language, logo, or pictorial depiction to a business or an advertisement of any product or service of any business. Such signs are not murals, and they are regulated as a sign by the sign provisions of the Monroe Unified Development Ordinance.

Private Mural

Any mural as defined herein commissioned with or without consideration for painting or attachment to the exterior of a structure or building by a private individual or entity and not commissioned or approved by the City of Monroe is a private mural.

Public Mural

Any mural commissioned through the City of Monroe Downtown Mural Policy and approved by Monroe City Council is a public mural.

Application

Private property owners may submit a Private Mural Application for consideration. An application does not guarantee selection. All murals will be commissioned and approved by the Monroe City Council pursuant to this policy, which includes public review, vetting, and input.

Requirements

- Mural themes and designs
- Mural locations must be on the side or rear walls of the building, and not on its primary façade or above its roof line
- Murals will not be approved for locations on any historically significant surfaces
- Murals must complement and enhance the building and should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features

The application must include:

- A completed application
- Descriptions of the mural concept, composition, and purpose of the mural
- A conceptual drawing of the proposed mural project, including measurements of the final size
- A detailed description of the location, including photographs of the location and measurements of the wall, the wall material, and the condition
- The proposed artist's résumé and a description of prior art experience, including a minimum of six previous mural projects. A link to the artist's website will be accepted.
- Estimate or proposal for the cost of the mural project, including fees, supplies, insurance, wall prep, cost of scaffolding, ladders, lifts, etc.
- A description of the funding source or sponsor

Not required, but recommended:

- Any letter(s) of support from organizations and/or neighbors

Approval

The Downtown Advisory Director will be assigned to review all projects, artists, and proposed mural designs. The Director will seek input as needed and will assemble all information necessary to present the project proposal to the Downtown Advisory Board for their recommendation. The Downtown Advisory Board will use a five-point scoring system based on the criteria set in the guidelines to make a recommendation to the Monroe City Council to approve or deny the project proposal.

Once the Downtown Advisory Board has reviewed the project, the Downtown Director will request a public hearing and present the project to City Council along with the recommendation from the Downtown Advisory Board for their final approval or denial.

The scoring criteria will include:

- Quality/originality in keeping with the historic character of Downtown Monroe and creative expression
- Capabilities of the artist
- Merit of the proposed mural project
- Appropriate in scale, material, form, and content for the community and physical environment
- Durability of the mural based on the surface integrity and the reasonable cost of maintenance
- The work of art should not present any safety issues in these areas
- A funding source or sponsorship has been identified

An average of 25 points or higher from the panel is needed for the mural to be approved. Once a mural proposal is approved, the property owner will enter into a Mural Easement Agreement with the City of Monroe.

Design & Material Requirements

- The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site
- The mural should be an original design
- The mural should be composed of a color palette that complements the colors or architecture found within its location

- Sponsor and artist names may be incorporated but should be discreet and not exceed 5% of the design or two square feet in area, whichever is less
- The paints and materials used should not chemically corrode nor compromise the integrity of the building's exterior or structure
- Reflective, neon, and fluorescent paints should not be used
- Once completed, the mural should be sealed with a sealant sufficient to protect the mural for a minimum of 10 years. The paints and other materials used should be of such quality to last for ten years without significant maintenance or repainting.
- Include recommendations for removal or covering the mural when the 10-year term expires
- All costs associated with installing the mural, artist fees, materials, and related costs will be the responsibility of the owner unless an agreement is reached with the City of Monroe to share in the cost of the mural. In the public interest, the owner may apply to the City to share in the cost of funding the mural.

Installation

Funding Sources

Staff will be active in applying for private funds and grants to support Public Mural projects as appropriate. Individuals, businesses, and organizations will also be encouraged to sponsor public or private mural projects.

Once approved as provided herein, the mural must be completed within six months of approval, or the approval expires.

Maintenance

The property owner will be responsible for any and all maintenance or repairs to the mural after it is installed. This includes the repair of material failure, such as peeling paint, and promptly removing vandalism in accordance with City code. Murals will be inspected periodically by City staff to determine if they need maintenance. However, if a maintenance issue arises between such inspections, the property owner shall notify City staff of the issue. The mural will be painted over by the City, at its expense.

Guidelines for Public Mural Projects

Step 1: Call for Walls

Any business owner may apply to provide a wall.

Step 2: Call to Artists

Any artist may apply, subject to any limitations established by the Downtown Advisory Board.

Step 3: Downtown Advisory Board Review

The Downtown Advisory Director will review the project, artists, and proposed mural designs. The Director will seek input as needed and assemble all information necessary.

Step 4: Artist Design

The artist will be given the mural location, theme, and budget. They will submit their mural design and fee. If the initial design is not acceptable, the artist will have the opportunity to submit a revised design.

Step 5: Project Presentation

The Downtown Advisory Director will present the mural project artist, design, and budget to the Downtown Advisory Board.

Step 6: Downtown Advisory Board Review

The Downtown Advisory Board will review and determine if a project is acceptable, and they will make their recommendation to City Council.

Step 7: Schedule a Public Hearing

The Downtown Advisory Director will schedule and advertise a public hearing to be held during a City Council meeting, during which City Council will receive public input regarding the proposed mural.

Step 8: City Council Approval

The Downtown Advisory Director will present the mural project to City Council. If approved by City Council, the mural will be scheduled for installation.

Step 9: Mural Easement

Before beginning the mural installation, the property owner will provide the City of Monroe with a recordable Mural Easement signed by the property owner(s).