

SLOW STREETS

STREET MURAL PILOT PROGRAM APPLICATION GUIDE



SFMTA

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) is introducing a new pilot program to bring street murals to Slow Streets!

We believe that street murals encourage and provide opportunities for diverse partnerships between artists, local organizations and neighbors while inspiring both community-building and an increase in multi-modal travel along Slow Streets.

In addition to providing safe and comfortable low speed and low-vehicle-traffic routes for walking, biking and rolling, many Slow Streets have blossomed into spaces for communities to gather, bond and elevate the local assets, character, and potential of their neighborhoods. This unique combination makes them ideal locations to pilot a community-led street mural program.

The street mural application process will require at least three months of community collaboration as well as engagement with, and review by, SFMTA staff and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Please ensure that you review and prepare for each step in the process, this will help with faster approval and implementation of your proposed street mural.



photo: Erina Alejo

GETTING STARTED

Before submitting a formal application for a street mural, please seek confirmation from SFMTA staff that your proposal meets minimum feasibility requirements. This will help ensure a successful application.



photo: Erina Alejo

Please review the following resources before starting your application to obtain an understanding of the Slow Street Mural Pilot Program process and requirements:

[Slow Streets Community Mural Design Guidelines and Application Process \(this document!\)](#)

[Slow Streets Community Street Mural Agreement](#)

[San Francisco DotMaps Construction, Events, and Closures Map](#)

(Murals proposed for locations that are slated for resurfacing within 12 months of the proposed installation date are less likely to be approved)

[SF Arts Commission Mural Design Approval Guidelines](#)

[SFMTA Special Event Street Closure Permit requirements](#)

A confirmation of project feasibility can be obtained by submitting a short narrative description of your proposed mural design including colors, size, location, and materials to StreetMurals@SFMTA.com, via email. Questions about feasibility may also be directed to StreetMurals@SFMTA.com.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN

- Prioritize designs that elicit community pride or take advantage of a unique community feature.
- Encourage residents and people who use the street to participate in the design and painting of the mural. Create an inclusive design and painting process that's accessible to people of all ages and people with disabilities
- Use a variety of colors, themes and styles to showcase the diversity of artistic expression in San Francisco.
- Please do not develop designs that include images of any street signs or traffic control elements (such as stop signs, turn arrows, or one-way signs), or images that could reasonably be interpreted as traffic control elements.
- Please do not develop designs that include words, promotional advertisements, references to political campaigns, logos, insensitive images, or copyrighted materials.
- Please do not develop designs that encourage people, especially children, to congregate in the street (such as hopscotch templates).

PLACEMENT

- Murals must be located on a Slow Street either midblock or in a Painted Safety Zone, not on curbs or sidewalks or in intersections*.
- Leave 3 feet of clearance from the curb and crosswalks (marked/ unmarked), and 10 feet of clearance from all other markings, e.g. speed humps, bike and vehicle lane lines*, and stop bars. Unmarked crosswalks are 10 feet wide extending perpendicularly from the face of the curb.
- Murals designed to be painted within existing SFMTA-implemented Painted Safety Zones or Bike Corrals are not required to maintain 3 feet of clearance from the curb/ crosswalks. These murals must be painted within the existing zone/ corral and must not cover crosswalk striping. Note that a new Painted Safety Zone or Bike Corral must be approved by the SFMTA and may take up to 6 months to implement if approved.
- Do not paint over existing elements/ utility features in the roadway, such as crosswalks, double yellow lines, utility covers or gutters.
- Please locate murals on relatively flat blocks. If you are unsure about the slope of your block, please reach out to StreetMurals@SFMTA.com

**At this time the Slow Streets team is not yet ready to process mural applications on streets that have both centerlines and bike lanes, or murals in intersections due to space constraints and safety concerns. See the FAQ for additional information.*

MATERIALS & MAINTENANCE

Mural Materials:

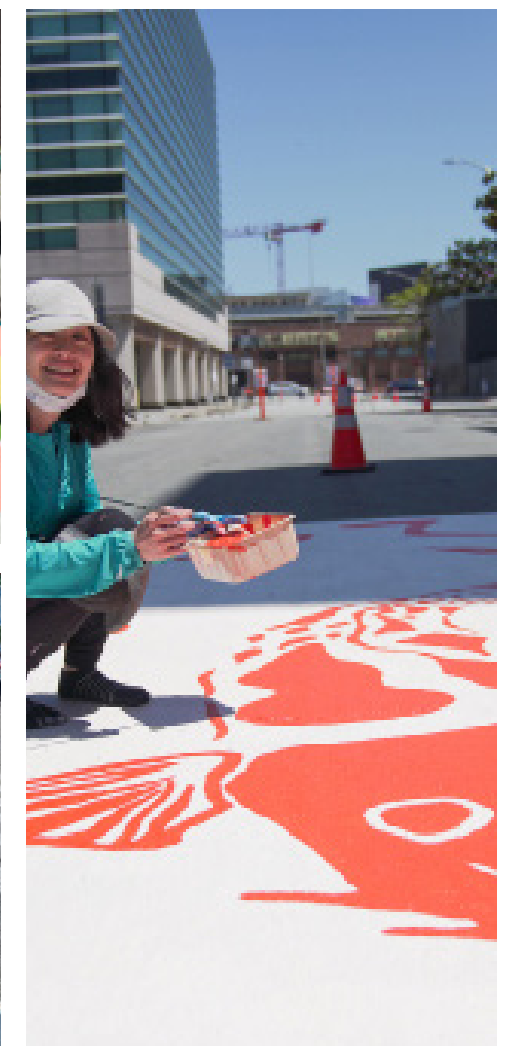
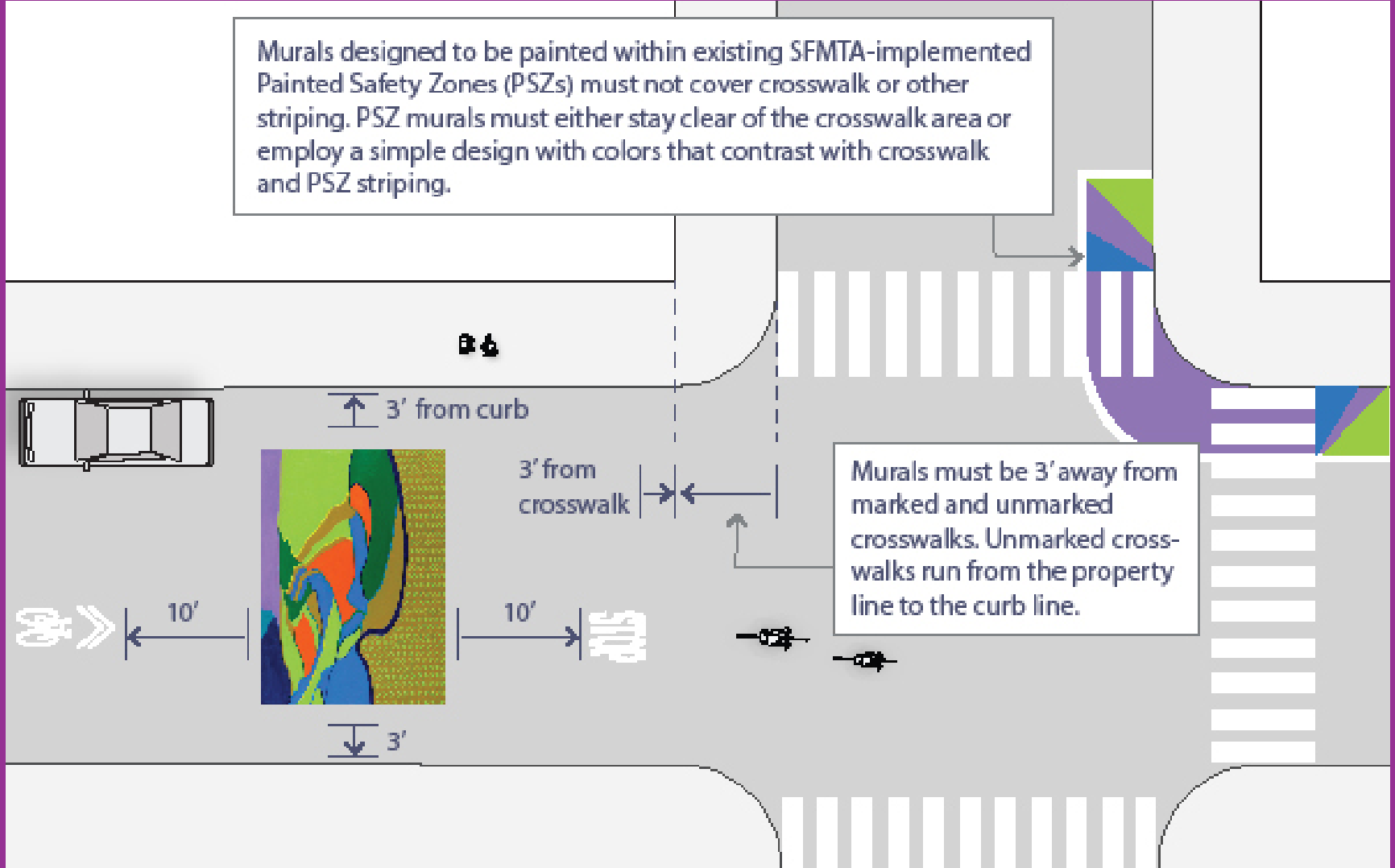
- Applying a primer prior to painting is recommended, though not required.
- Please use anti-skid material (i.e. grit) in paint.
- Please do not use retroreflective paint. See the FAQ at the end of this document for recommended paint types.

Mural Maintenance:

- Once murals are in place, they are the sole responsibility of the implementing group or organization to maintain and refresh/restore, as needed (eg. in the event that the mural is damaged by a City contractor).
- Any refreshing or restoration of the mural will require another street closure permit.
- City crews reserve the right to remove murals for any reason.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Murals designed to be painted within existing SFMTA-implemented Painted Safety Zones (PSZs) must not cover crosswalk or other striping. PSZ murals must either stay clear of the crosswalk area or employ a simple design with colors that contrast with crosswalk and PSZ striping.



APPLICATION GUIDELINES

01

Compile your application documents

- Short narrative description of your proposed mural design including colors, size, location, and materials to be used. Please describe the distance from the curb and from any traffic markings (including crosswalks or speed humps – see pages 3-4 of this document - DESIGN GUIDELINES for more details.)
- Signed Street Mural Agreement.
- Map of the proposed location, showing distances from curbs and traffic markings. You can hand-draw or create the map in Powerpoint or Goodle Slides.
- Screenshot of the San Francisco DotMaps Construction, Events, and Closures Map (<https://sanfrancisco-public.dotmapsapp.com/map>) that clearly shows the block(s) your design is proposed.
- Photos of the current street conditions. Please include two photos of the site that show the entirety of the curb-to-curb area, one facing each direction.
- Color image/mockup of the proposed mural design(s).
- Signed letter of support from your District Supervisor (please feel free to request an example letter of support from us).

02

Submit required application documents for review by SFMTA staff and secure letter of approval

Once all of the required documents outlined in STEP 01 have been gathered, please submit them via email to StreetMurals@SFMTA.com. SFMTA Staff will review the proposal to ensure it meets the Street Mural Guidelines. Please note: This is a collaborative process. During this phase, staff may request more information and/or adjustments to your proposal. Some elements of your application may need to be resubmitted once they are edited. Once your application meets all requirements, you will receive a letter of approval from the SFMTA. You must secure a letter of approval from the SFMTA before you can proceed to the next step (03).

03

Submit street mural design to the SF Arts Commission for approval

Prior to implementation, all proposed street mural designs must also be approved by the SF Arts Commission (SFAC). Be sure to review the Arts Commission Mural Design Approval Guidelines and include the SFMTA letter of approval in your submission. Please see the link below for the SFAC Mural Design Approval Guidelines:

www.sfartscommission.org/our-role-impact/about-commission/policies-guidelines/mural-design-approval-guidelines

To receive approval from the San Francisco Arts Commission, your mural design must be approved by their Visual Arts Committee (VAC) who meet the 3rd Wednesday of every month. Please submit your packet to Craig Corpora at Craig.Corpora@sfgov.org and CC/copy StreetMurals@sfmta.com, by Monday the week prior, to allow time for any changes that may need to be made.

04

Apply for a Special Event Street Closure Permit at least 30 days before your planned painting date.

Apply for a Special Event Street Closure Permit here:
www.sfmta.com/permits/special-event-street-closures

You will need to provide proof of approval for the proposed street mural from the SFMTA before a Special Event Street Closure Permit can be granted. Please note:

- Street Closure Permit applications must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the paint date.
- Fees increase the closer the application is submitted to the street closure date.
- To avoid paying more in application fees, as well as to prepare for the possibility of needing additional application materials, submit your Special Event Street Closure Permit as early as possible.
- All the rules and requirements for the street closure permit must be followed, including attendance at the [Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation \(ISCOTT\)](#) virtual permit hearing, and advance posting of “No Parking” signs, if required.
- A single permit application can be obtained for multiple paint days.
- Consider the drying time that will be needed when planning the number of days you will need to close the block, and the number of hours on each day.
- Consider emergency access requirements for your street closure permit. You may wish to paint the mural in stages (eg. starting on one side of the street, leaving the other open for emergency access, then switching).
- Consider the street sweeping schedule to make sure it will not conflict with the paint day.

05

Paint your street mural!

Enjoy painting a new street mural with your community on your local Slow Street!

- Be sure to coordinate with any partner organizations to secure painting materials and barricades for the street closure.
- Painting materials must not enter the sewer system and/or cover existing roadway paint or utility features.
- Be sure to talk to your neighbors about the closure of the street, especially when it comes to accessing driveways and on-street parking on paint days.
- Please inform the Street Murals team when your mural is being painted, and please share some photos of your artwork with us! Staff will visit the site to ensure the mural follows all required design guidelines and other agreements, and may request modifications to murals if they do not meet guidelines or the approved design.

06

Maintaining your street mural

Once murals are in place, they are the sole responsibility of the implementing group or organization to maintain and refresh/restore as needed. Murals may be reinstalled or retouched, when possible, but would require another SFMTA Special Events Street Closure Permit (see Step 4).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

photo: Erina Alejo

What is a Slow Street?

Slow Streets are low-speed and low-vehicle-traffic routes that prioritize active transportation and community-building. These shared streets are implemented on residential streets to provide safe, comfortable alternatives to driving. They are open to all forms of transportation, including people driving vehicles to access properties along the corridor, but emphasize slow and safe speeds to support a diverse mix of uses.

Why is the Slow Street Mural Pilot Program only available to Slow Streets?

We are working with communities to bring street murals to Slow Streets because they are low-traffic residential streets and already function as community gathering spaces. Public art will bolster this community-first feel and encourage more non-vehicle uses and placemaking on Slow Streets.

Will the program be expanded in the future to other streets?

Expansion of the program will depend on the outcomes of the pilot and SFMTA staff capacity.

How long will the street mural application process take?

The mural application process is, at a minimum, a three-month process, including SFMTA review, San Francisco Arts Commission approval, and SFMTA Special Event Street Closure permitting. Ensuring you have reviewed and are prepared for each step will facilitate a faster process.

Who can apply to paint a Slow Street Mural?

Anyone can apply to paint a Slow Street Mural. Building community support for your street mural is crucial, so we encourage groups of neighbors or community organizations to apply.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

photo: Erina Alejo

Who pays for the installation of Slow Street Murals?

The SFMTA does not have funding to pay for mural painting, permitting, or maintenance. We are working on identifying outside funding sources, such as grants, to share with community groups.

How much can I expect to pay to implement a mural?

Street murals can range from several hundred dollars to \$15,000 depending on artist fees, materials used, and how far in advance your group submits a Special Event Street Closure Permit application. Artist fees may range from several hundred dollars up to \$10,000. The San Francisco Arts Commission suggests budgeting around \$40 per square foot for paint; however, be prepared to budget more depending on the street surface conditions (i.e., bumpy asphalt requires more paint and, therefore, extra cost). Depending on when the application is submitted, fees associated with Special Event Street Closure Permit applications range from \$150 to \$300. There is a detailed fee schedule shown below.

Community Event application received	Jul 1, 2023—Jun 30, 2024 fee
120+ days before event	\$150
90-120 days before event	\$150
60-89 days before event	\$250
30-59 days before event	\$300

What kind of paint should I use?

Primer is recommended as this will fill in cracks to create a smoother surface for the paint to adhere to. We recommend using exterior house paint or acrylic, water-based paint and foam paint brushes since they work better on asphalt. You must add an anti-skid material (e.g., grit or walnut shells) to your paint, and do not use reflective paint or designs that conflict with official roadway striping.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

photo: Erina Alejo

How are the murals maintained, and what happens if a mural is defaced?

Once murals are in place, they are the sole responsibility of the implementing organization to maintain and refresh/restore as needed (including if a City crew or contractor damages the mural). City crews reserve the right to remove murals for any reason. The mural contact person will be notified if the mural needs to be removed by City crews due to damage, vandalism, or any other reason.

Why can't I paint a mural in an intersection, or on a street with bike lanes?

The Slow Streets team is not yet ready to process mural applications on streets that have both centerlines and bike lanes, or murals in intersections. Streets with both centerlines and bike lanes have limited space for murals, and the canvas size is further limited by the requirements for maintaining distance from lane lines and traffic markings as well as curbs. For intersection murals all four legs of the intersection would need to be closed for painting, and we need to spend more time thinking as an agency about how this can be done safely, since we would still need to allow for local traffic and emergency access. We are committed to continuing to explore how we can permit murals on streets with both centerlines and bike lanes and murals in intersections.

How can I get a decorative crosswalk painted?

Decorative paving treatments/decorative crosswalks (examples: Castro Street at 18th Street, Fern Alley at Polk Street) differ from street murals in that they use permanent materials that must be installed professionally. These treatments are outside of the scope of the Slow Streets Mural Pilot Program. If you are interested in installing decorative paving, please contact the Department of Public Works at dpw@sfdpw.org.

How can I implement improvements such as murals or planters on sidewalks?

To implement sidewalk improvements such as murals, planters, and benches, contact the Department of Public Works about the Love Our Neighborhoods permit at dpw@sfdpw.org.

Questions? Contact us at:
StreetMurals@SFMTA.com