



Guidance for public art on privately-owned buildings or sites

At the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC), we believe that public art is any artwork installed in publicly accessible spaces where it can be experienced by everyone for free.

This guidance note is for anyone working on public art projects on privately-owned buildings or sites. Site owners, building managers, curators, commissioners and artists should refer to this document for guidance on public art projects and when looking to engage with the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

Thank you for your work to bring public art to all Boston neighborhoods!

When and how to get in touch with MOAC

1. If you already have a site and artist(s) selected:
 - We'd love to know about your project! Please [complete this form](#) to share details of the artwork(s) for City records. While public art on private property does not require our review at a public meeting, MOAC often receives requests from the public wanting to learn more about public artworks around the city, so we request that basic details are shared with us. We may also want to share details of your project publicly.
2. If you have a site but are looking for an artist(s) or a public art planner:
 - Let us help get the word out! Share details of your site/location, timescales, any curatorial requirements, and approximate budget to MOAC (arts@boston.gov). If the opportunity meets MOAC's priorities and is adequately compensated, our office can share out the opportunity to a wide network of artists. This could take the form of a public Call to Artists, an announcement in our newsletters and social media channels, or a targeted approach to particular artists.
3. If you have a site that you would like to make available for possible future public artworks coordinated by the City:



- While we can't commit to doing a project on your site, it would be helpful to know you'd be interested for future reference. Please reach out to bac@boston.gov with information about your site and why you're interested in working with the City on a public artwork.

Please note, if you would like to propose a project on city-owned property, please review our policies [here](#) and complete a [Public Art & Design Application](#). You can find out about funding resources for art in Boston [here](#).

How are you thinking about equity in your public art processes?

Public art opportunities should be promoted, shared and advertised publicly and through relevant local channels wherever possible. Different opportunity entry points and levels of experience should be considered in order to provide broad opportunities which are relevant to early-stage, mid-career and established artists and organizations. If you are putting out a Call to Artists, this should be left open for a minimum of 30 days.

- **Eligibility criteria** - in order to align with the wider project ambitions or meet the desired outcomes of the community, it may be relevant to include eligibility criteria or encourage responses from certain artists / curators / operators. This might include a local or geographic criteria, or a cultural, historic, and/or artistic connection to the project area. MOAC strongly encourages proponents to direct opportunities to BIPOC artists and BIPOC-led organizations.
- **Selection criteria** - MOAC encourages proponents to use equity-led selection criteria. This can include a scoring criteria or weighting related to artists, groups or organizations being BIPOC/BIPOC-owned, women/women-owned and/or locally-based.
- **Review processes** - Review and selection mechanisms should be open, transparent and not determined by the decisions of any one individual. Setting up an artist selection working group or selection panel is best practice. These typically include representation of the proponent, local artists, curators, and arts administrators with relevant knowledge of the project site and/ or community, end-users of the site and external project team members (architect, urban designer, or landscape architect). MOAC members can be included if capacity allows and the project meets the priorities of our office.



Have you considered public art planning?

- For larger projects with multiple sites, buildings or phases, public art planning is a useful tool to identify public art opportunities across phases and sites, set the curatorial vision for the project and establish the priorities of the community.
- For a large development site with multiple public art opportunities, a public art plan or strategy is recommended over the ad hoc commissioning of individual public art projects.
- If relevant, proponents should set aside funding to commissioning public art planning services which can include: assessment and recommendations for public art opportunities, coordination of public and arts community engagement processes, setting long-term governance and management mechanisms.

Are you providing opportunities for a variety of artistic practices?

- For 2-dimensional artwork: in addition to murals, consider scrim, vinyl, mosaic and other large-scale printing practices which open public art opportunities to a wider range to practices which don't require on-site installation experience and abilities. Basic hanging anchors in exterior are typically required to enable these opportunities and should be incorporated into buildings expecting to host 2D art.
- For 3-dimensional artwork: consider electricity, internet connection, pedestals etc. during construction and onsite installation: welding and related parking permits for the artist.

Guidance on budget, material, and maintenance costs

Artists are trained professionals and should be compensated as such. Artists should not be considered an inexpensive alternative to hiring graphic designers, interior designers, or other design professionals. An individual artist's experience and professional standing should be considered when compensating artists.

- Typical public art budgets are based on the artist fee, material costs, equipment hire, and the complexity of the project (design, engagement, installation needs, environmental considerations, etc.).
- If you are able to support installation, equipment hire, transportation or material costs through pre-existing supply chains or ongoing infrastructure fit outs, you are likely to be able to elicit a broader response to public art opportunities.



- Maintenance costs and responsibilities should be carefully considered and calculated at the time of commissioning to ensure artworks are cared for in the long-term.

2022 Benchmarking artist fees (not inclusive of project management and administration):

- **Tier 1:** smaller youth-based murals and activations, etc. Budgets between \$500 - \$5000.
- **Tier 2:** medium sized walls, no taller than 15'h, youth/ community-based murals and activations, moderate complexity (ladders, small lifts, minimal fabrication). Budgets between \$5,000 - \$25,000 or \$20 per square foot.
- **Tier 3:** large walls 15'h or higher, experience demonstrated by several well-executed murals in portfolio, increased site and/or project complexity (large lifts, fabrication, sub-contractors, etc). Budgets \$25,000+ / \$35+ per square foot.

This can be adjusted up or down depending on the skillset and/or complexity of the project (design, engagement, installation needs, environmental considerations, etc.

Intellectual property considerations

Clear intellectual property rights should be established in relation to the use, future alteration and additions to a given public artwork, and for commercial uses by both/either the artist and group commissioning the work. This should be captured in the commissioning contract.

Documentation & record-keeping

If new artwork(s) are commissioned, you should collect and retain the following information: Artist(s), deed of Gift form (if applicable), bill of sale (if applicable), artist contract, or written justification for acquisition, gift acknowledgement, photographs, condition and materials report, significant correspondence relating to the artistic intent of the artwork, maintenance proposals, and provenance of the artwork, and any associated press.

Public art project on City-owned land

If your project is on public City-owned land, please refer to the City of Boston Public Art Policies and Processes document, found [here](#).

Community members who propose long-term public art projects on City-owned land should reach out to MOAC as early in the process as possible for assistance with identifying funding sources, estimating costs accurately, and creating a plan and schedule for all aspects of their project. Artwork



proposed on City-owned land will be reviewed at a [public meeting of the Boston Art Commission](#) (BAC) at which other community members may share testimony.

We use the [Public Art and Design application](#) to review proposals for all public art and design interventions and installations on City of Boston property. For long-term proposals, the Public Art and Design application is a starting point for the process. Please note that long-term projects should not have an artist selected at this stage.



About Us

[The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture](#)

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC) works to enhance the quality of life, the economy, and the design of the city through arts, culture and creativity. Key areas of work include supporting the creative economy through grants and programs, integrating public art into neighborhoods throughout the city, and making opportunities for creative expression accessible to all. MOAC is supported by a 17 person team and supports the work of two City commissions: the Boston Cultural Council (BCC) and the Boston Art Commission (BAC).

[Public Art Team](#)

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture has a dedicated Public Art Team that manages all daily operations and duties related to public art projects sited on or proposed for City of Boston property. Led by the Director of Public Art, this team facilitates the Boston Art Commission's monthly public meetings, and manages all phases of Boston's public art projects in collaboration with the Boston Art Commission, community members, and colleagues at the City of Boston.

Boston Art Commission

The BAC is an independent board of volunteers that approves and commissions innovative and transformative public artworks around the City. The Commission meets regularly. At these meetings, public art projects are presented and thoughtfully discussed. Members of the public are welcome to attend, share their thoughts, and ask questions.

City of Boston Collection

MOAC operates a detailed Collection database of the public art on city-owned properties. Pieces can be proposed for admission into the collection via the BAC.