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## Lafayette 'Call for Walls' seeking locations for public murals

By Lou Fancher

It's rare when beauty and high visibility result from following a simple, three-step process - which is exactly why downtown Lafayette property owners might jump to join "Call for Walls." Plans and funding for adding four murals in the city's downtown over the next four years have been authorized by the city council and thematic, procedural, and logistical guidelines established by the Lafayette Public Art Committee (PAC). Together, they are putting out a call for interested property owners with public-facing walls to host a mural site; especially sought are locations along Mt. Diablo Boulevard or in the Downtown Core.

The application process begins by filling out a simple form expressing interest. If selected by the PAC for recommendation and given final approval by the council, property owners will begin working with ABG Art Group, the expert mural curation team chosen by council to facilitate the process. ABG has vetted local and regional artists, and will combine property owners' stated interests with the style of artist and mural themes approved by council to offer their recommendations.

Themes approved by council prevent a mural from becoming the equivalent of an outdoor advertisement billboard, but offer broad enough range to allow for creative artistic expression. The themes include landscape, abstract, botanical, and historical representations.

Importantly, property owners retain the right of refusal if the artwork design is not satisfactory prior to its being presented to the PAC. Permitting and all the logistics necessary for mural production of artwork designs approved by property owners and given the nod by city council are handled entirely by the PAC and ABG Art Group.

Clearly, outdoor artwork is subject to the vagaries of weather exposure and the natural aging of buildings - two realities well-thought through by the PAC. The Mural Program therefore includes funding and delivery of maintenance services for ten years. After the initial term, five year renewals are possible, as are exit options if the property is sold or major renovations are planned.

The council and PAC authorized the program with the goal of enhancing the vitality of the downtown area and, based on the themes available, to provide opportunities to honor the features most valued by residents and property owners. Beautiful open spaces, sustaining a healthy planet, paying tribute to significant people in the city's history, celebrating current and future generations-these things and more are possible to display, and all that's required are four entities to heed the Call for Walls.

The application and elated forms can be found at the Lafayette Downtown Mural Program's page on the City's website: [www.lovelafayette.org/murals](http://www.lovelafayette.org/murals).

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