

Design Guidelines for Transportation Art

Proposed transportation art must:

1. Be appropriate to its proposed setting;
2. Be in proper scale with its surroundings;
3. Not create a distraction to the motoring public (e.g., the proposed art should be large enough to interpret at highway speed, but not be so large that it demands attention from the motorist);
4. Be composed of materials that are durable for the projected life span of the project;
5. Be located where the Permittee(s) can safely perform required maintenance as specified in the encroachment permit and in conformance with Caltrans' procedures;
6. Be fully funded for design, installation, maintenance, and removal by others for its projected life span;
7. Conform to provisions of the Outdoor Advertising Act;
8. Not be placed in median areas of controlled-access highways (freeways and expressways);
9. Not imitate, obscure, or interfere with traffic control devices;
10. Not interfere with airspace above the roadway;
11. Not be placed within State highway right-of-way up on trees, rocks or other natural features;
12. Not adversely affect existing structures, drainage patterns or storm water runoff quality, landscaping, natural vegetation, or other planting;
13. Be located outside of the clear recovery zone (as defined in the Highway Design Manual). Transportation art must be placed as far from the traveled way or edge of roadway as is practical, with consideration for the visibility of the art;
14. Not make use of or simulate colors or combinations of colors usually reserved for official traffic control devices described in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD);
15. Not include reflective or glaring surface finishes;
16. Not include illumination that impairs or distracts the vision of transportation system users. Other lighting may be permitted. Lighting may be allowed on structures only when approved by Division of Maintenance Office of Structures Maintenance and Investigations, in accordance with current requirements;
17. Not include blinking or intermittent lights;
18. Not include moving elements (kinetic art) or simulate movement;
19. Not restrict sight distance;
20. Not include any form of advertising that would be in conflict with the Outdoor Advertising Act;

21. Not display text, flags, religious, political, or commercial symbols;
22. Not include commercial symbols, except as allowed in “Artist and Sponsor Recognition”;
23. Be designed to minimize ongoing maintenance needs. Caltrans-approved protective graffiti coatings may be required by Caltrans;
24. Be consistent with Division of Maintenance Office of Structures Maintenance and Investigations inspection requirements, including:
 - Paint used on structures should not fill or obscure cracks. Latex or other flexible type paints may be used on concrete structures only with written permission from the Office of Structures Maintenance and Investigations;
 - Painting of steel structures will only be permitted with written permission from the Office of Structures Maintenance and Investigations;
 - Painted art on concrete structures should avoid load-carrying, stress-bearing structural members, including, but not limited to bridge girders, soffits, columns, and piers. Wing walls and abutments are preferred locations for painted art;
 - Artwork must not impair the necessary inspection of bridges, retaining walls and other structures;
 - To facilitate Caltrans’ inspection access to structures, mural art may be placed on removable panels; and
 - Chipping, blasting, or in any way modifying existing concrete surfaces is prohibited.

Submittal of Artwork Proposals

A transportation art proposal should be supported by the local agency that has jurisdiction in the area where the artwork will be placed.

The local agency will ensure that the proposal is developed in cooperation with the community immediately impacted by the artwork. The local agency will provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed artwork.

The responsible local agency will secure and document acceptance from the community immediately impacted by the artwork. Such community acceptance may vary, but must ensure that those most affected have an opportunity to express support or opposition to the proposal.

The method of community review will be determined by the responsible applicant local agency, with guidance provided by the district transportation art coordinator. The appropriate method for community review will depend on the nature of the artwork, and may range from developing a signed petition to conducting a noticed public meeting.