# FAQ’s for the Black Lives Matter Mural Installation

**Why is the City supporting the installation of a mural of the words “Black Lives Matter?”**

The City Council approved a recommendation from the City’s Public Art Committee to sponsor a mural of the words “Black Lives Matter.” Selected artists will paint the mural on a city street. They will also receive a stipend from the public art fund for their involvement. The mural provides a way for the community to express support of the fair and respectful treatment of our communities of color.

Cities including Charlotte, Austin, Seattle, Washington D.C., Flint, and Palo Alto have completed similar temporary Black Lives Matter street murals.

**What was the decision-making process for approving the mural project?**

At their public meeting on June 25, 2020, the Petaluma Public Art Committee (PAC) voted to sponsor and fund the street mural project. On July 6, 2020, the City Council approved the PAC’s recommendation. They also approved the use of public art funds for the project. including allocation of funding from the public art fund. The PAC held two more public meetings on July 13 and July 23, 2020 to determine the location and selection process. The mural is based on Palo Alto’s recent program and is moving forward quickly to provide timely, healing community expression.

**Who is on the City's Public Art Committee and how are they selected?**

The City Council appoints people to the 7-member Committee. Both the Art Center and the Recreation, Music and Parks Commission select one member each for the PAC. Interested participants apply through the City Clerk.

**What is the mural going to look like and where will it be located?**

The mural will be painted on Fairgrounds Drive in front of the Petaluma Library. Each of the 16 letters in “Black Lives Matter” has been assigned to one of the 16 artists selected by the appointed selection committee. Each artist will create a mural within the outlined of their assigned letter.

**How were the artists selected?**

The PAC issued a "Call to Artists" on July 27, 2020. A Call to Artists is a notice that lets artists know about an opportunity. They then requested applications from interested artists. The Call to Artists encouraged black artists and artists of color to apply. It also encouraged artists in Petaluma and Sonoma County to take part. The application also allowed for youth artists to apply with adult sponsorship. By the close of the application period on August 2nd, the City received 50 applications.

The PAC appointed a selection committee to review the applications and chose 16 artists. The application requested that each artist explain their interest in the project. Artists also had the option to submit examples of prior artwork.

**How can I be involved in the painting of the mural?**

Only the selected artists can take part in the mural installation. County public health rules limit the number of participants allowed at an outdoor gathering. Thus, members of the public will not be able to view the art installation. This is meant to protect the artists and the public during the pandemic. We will photograph the installation and share those photos on the City's website.

**What is the cost and how is the City paying for the project?**

The City requires all new, non-residential development to spend 1% of its costs on public art. Some chose to pay a fee instead of including art in their project. The City collects the money and places it in a fund to pay for public art in Petaluma. The City can ONLY spend art funds on public art programs and projects.

The PAC makes recommendations to the City Council about how to spend the funds. It also approves all art funded by this program. Then the City Council approves the spending plan during a public meeting.

The PAC recommended to the City Council that they approve funding for the mural project. Each of the 16 selected artists will receive a stipend of $800 to cover some of the cost of preparing the letters. Paint for the mural is being donated by Peterson Paint and Benjamin Moore Paint.

**What happens if the mural is vandalized?**

The mural is a temporary public art installation, paid out of the City’s public art fund. As such, City staff will provide a safe space for installation of the artwork. Staff will also protect the artwork after it is installed. The Petaluma Police Department can enforce applicable laws if anyone vandalizes the art or any public property.

**Why can’t I have a mural supporting a cause I believe in?**

The City Council approved the mural and it is thus considered “government speech.” Government speech reflects a message from the government. It is not the same as the creation of a public forum where the public can express alternative messages. Members of the public are not permitted to paint messages on City streets or other City property.

**What is the best way I can express my opinion about how the city is working?**

There are a variety of ways you can be involved in how decisions are made about City programs. You can share your opinion with the City Council during council meetings or by sending an email to the City Clerk.

**How can I get involved in my community decision making?**

You can share your ideas with the City Council by email or during public comment at a public meeting. You can also take part in one of the City’s Committees or Commissions that make recommendations to the Council. For more information about the City’s Committees and Commissions, visit the City’s Website.

**What is the city doing to address inclusiveness, justice, and equal opportunity for all community members besides painting a mural?**

In response to community art installations, the City Council dedicated an area in Leghorn park for community art. The city is also listening and responding to community input about our Police and use of force.

We are also working to increase bias training and diversity among staff hiring. And, we make sure to represent all residents and businesses in city programs. We are implementing more training to help staff identify and address implicit bias. And, we are working harder to hire people from all backgrounds, genders, and races.