

# CORE AREA MURAL GRANT PROGRAM

*A catalytic identity action for the Core Area TIF District* • Draft for Board Input • CAAB

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## THE PROPOSAL

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BURA will commission **6–10 murals** in the Core Area within **twelve months** of BURA approval, sited near the existing arts, culture, and entertainment cluster. Total initial-round budget: **\$75,000–\$125,000**, drawn from the placemaking allocation in the 2025–2030 Core Area Strategic Investment Plan. The program is structured as a stand-alone activity, separate from the Development Assistance Program Suite, and is intended as the agency's first catalytic identity action for the Core Area.

## WHY NOW

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The Core Area has an existing cultural identity — anchored by independent food and beverage, performance, and maker businesses — that has not been deliberately fostered. Comparable redevelopment districts (Asheville's Foundation Walls, Denver's CRUSH and Denver Walls, Boise's Neon Grove on Grove Street) used early, low-cost, high-visibility public art as the first catalytic identity move, years before larger public-realm investments arrived. A mural program is the fastest way to make the Core Area visible while longer-cycle work continues.

## WHY SEPARATE FROM THE INVESTMENT PROGRAM SUITE

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The seven Development Assistance Program Suite tools are economic instruments, evaluated on jobs, activated square footage, and economic impact. A mural program is a cultural and identity tool with different success measures. Keeping it separate allows it to move on a 90-day timeline rather than the longer adoption cycle of the investment programs and avoids forcing it into a frame where it competes poorly against conventional return-on-investment criteria.

## PROGRAM PARAMETERS

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**Scale:** 6–10 murals in the first round, all sited within the Core Area

**Budget:** \$5,000–\$15,000 per mural; \$75K–\$125K total initial round

**Funding model:** Direct payment to artists — deposit at signing, balance on completion

**Geographic priority:** Within 2–3 blocks of the existing anchor cluster identified through Board mapping

**Property owner:** Written consent, license or easement, defined maintenance and removal framework

**Selection:** Curatorial committee — BURA staff, independent arts professionals, one anchor business representative

**Longevity:** 10-year minimum life with refresh option; not permanent installation

**Curatorial direction:** Reflective of and amplifying the Core Area's existing independent, distinctive cultural character

## TIMELINE

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Stakeholder conversations (anchors, artists, property owners) 30–60 days

Final program design and standard agreement template 60–90 days

Board endorsement of final program First meeting after design complete

Open call → curatorial selection → first commissions 90 days after endorsement

All first-round murals complete Within 12 months of first commission

## **REQUEST OF THE BOARD**

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- Staff requests Board input on the following questions. This is a draft, not a final document for adoption — a revised program design will return for endorsement at the next regular meeting.
- Is the proposed scale (6–10 murals, \$75K–\$125K) appropriate, too modest, or too ambitious for a first move?
- Is the curatorial committee the right structure, or should the decision-making body be configured differently?
- Is a 10-year longevity framework appropriate, or should the program commit to permanent or shorter rotating installations?
- Is the geographic priority near the anchor cluster the right placemaking discipline, or should the first round be distributed more broadly?