

Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition

Interpretive Mural Project Community Guidelines

Scope of Project:

Public art in the form of a mural is meant to tell a story. From the very first time that man expressed himself through painting on cave walls, viewers have been captivated by the images and stories that accompany them. Modern communities have found great economic gains through increased tourism, thanks in part to community mural programs. A wealth of public art has been exposed to the masses through public display of each community's history.

In an effort to further enhance the cultural heritage tourism found across the state, the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition (ILHC) has received grant dollars to create a Lincoln Highway Interpretive Mural Project in selected cities across the state of Illinois. Though portions of the old Lincoln Highway exist in other states, Illinois' section is the only portion of the road designated as a National Scenic Byway. A mural program would be universally accessible to all visitors to the state and serve to promote one of America's most influential transportation links – the Lincoln Highway.

The mural will be viewed as a gift to the respective community, and the total cost of each mural (\$10,000) will be paid for by the byway's management agency, the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition.

Organizational Structure:

The Illinois Lincoln Highway Interpretive Mural Project is under the direct authority of the Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition, a 501c3 organization who serves as the management agency for the National Scenic Byway. Working with each community, a Local Organizational Committee will be formed. The Local Organizational Committee will be responsible for overseeing the creation of a specific mural within their community and will consist of one Project Consultant, two representatives from the ILHC, and two members from each community where the murals will be placed.

Mural Process:

Once the community stories are chosen, the Local Organizational Committee will be responsible for selecting the artists. Mural artisans from around the state and country will be asked to submit professional resumes, photos of previously completed murals, and a rendering of the community mural they would like to help create depicting the identified story as part of the selection process.

Each of the murals will total 200 square feet and can be in a format which works best with the selected wall in each of the communities chosen to receive a mural. Three murals are already in place in the cities of Creston, DeKalb and Rochelle. Each of these murals measured 10' high x 20' wide since a horizontal format worked best for each wall. While this seems the most workable format, as long as the total area of the mural is 200 square feet, no constraints will be placed on the design or the designer. Each mural will be painted on Dibond, an aluminum-composite sheet that has an aluminum face and a thermoplastic core.

The walls chosen for the murals must follow certain criteria for direction and wall condition. Site visits by the ILHC to inspect the final walls chosen for acceptance will be vital to the success of the project. Visibility is the key and back alleys or unattractive structures are not conducive to the image the ILHC would like to put forth. Only highly visible walls will be considered.

South and west facing walls typically are subjected to more UV rays accelerating the degradation of the paints. East and north facing walls provide optimal longevity for painted murals and are most preferred by the ILHC. Each community should factor in these criteria, and though choosing only east or north facing walls may not be possible, every effort should be made to adhere to this desire since it results in a longer lasting mural. Wall condition is paramount for public safety and loose mortar, crumbling masonry or water-damaged walls will be refused. All murals should be placed no higher than 8' off the ground. However, special exceptions may be considered in all location aspects.

The installation of the mural is the responsibility of each community, however once it has been installed it is the joint responsibility of the individual communities and the ILHC to create a media event to introduce the mural to the community

(see #6 under **Community Responsibility**). The media event can be coordinated with the ILHC board members. An unveiling process has been utilized in the previous three murals – but as a part of cost-cutting, the unveiling becomes the responsibility of the local community. While the mural installers might be utilized for help in covering the mural for an unveiling, the community must provide the rope, fasteners, tarp, etc. to safely cover the mural.

Each mural will cost \$10,000 (paid for by Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition) and will be 10' x 20' (approx. 200 sq. ft) in size.

Design Style – Mandatory Elements:

Examples are part of this project - murals done for DeKalb and Rochelle show a very strong sign painter's design style. This will be referred to often as an advertorial during the project's duration. Since the Lincoln Highway's most prominent lifespan stretched from 1913 to the late 1920's, an early 20th Century, period-style look is preferable. This time in our history had a specific advertising style and should be imitated as much as possible. All of the installed ILHC murals can be found online at drivelincolnhighway.com.

The other examples to view are murals done for the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor in Pennsylvania. While some of these have less text than what the ILHC seeks, they are indicative of the collage-style of mural painting that is preferred. They also illustrate design elements which break the traditional borders they also employ in the design. Examples of the Pennsylvania murals coordinated by the Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor can be found at lhhc.org.

All mural designs **MUST** have some text included in the design. Murals tell a story so a painting of a car on a road has little meaning without some accompanying supportive text. This mural project is intended to be historical, interpretive, and therefore concise descriptions of the story contained in the design are primary and essential. The examples from the Pennsylvania murals are minimal in copy but strong in pictorial execution.

Also seen as repetitive design elements in two existing ILHC murals (DeKalb and Rochelle) and required on each of the murals in this project are the ILHC logo, the federal government's "America's Byways" logo, the red, white, and blue "L" sign, and the state of Illinois' "Mile after Magnificent Mile" logo. These four logos are all smaller in size and with the ILHC logo, more complex – so these logos will be provided to each mural artist in a digitally printed decal provided by the ILHC's chosen vendor.

Design Themes and Stories:

Individual stories of the history of the Lincoln Highway are many and varied. As much as possible, the most dramatic and effective murals would feature stories that are unique to each specific community. In DeKalb, for instance, the story of that city being one of the first in the nation to change the name of its main road through town to "Lincoln Highway" is of importance **OUTSIDE** the borders of this state – and therefore was the obvious story to communicate in its design.

Communities received special consideration if they adhered to guidelines set forth by the original Lincoln Highway group; promotional materials such as signage with the trademark red, white and blue 'Lincoln Highway' road sign, inclusion for local businesses in the Lincoln Highway Travel Guide – and other projects that were meant to spur more development along the roadway. Creston – another ILHC mural recipient – portrayed the water fountains that were placed across Illinois (and no other state in the nation) – partly because they had no other significant Lincoln Highway stories that were found in research – or anecdotal.

In instances where there is not a clear story emerging from within the specific community, stories of national importance will be considered. Stories such as the Army's convoy across the country in 1919 on the Lincoln Highway will be told. President Dwight Eisenhower was in that convoy as a young soldier and eventually signed the Interstate Highway Act as part of his presidential legacy. This story will be one of the stories told through the murals. Ideally that subject matter would go in a town which may have hosted the convoy on a stopover, but could find its home in another town.

The preference will be to tell a local story which the Lincoln Highway played a significant role in. As commerce between communities also saw large businesses be the driving reason that some communities grew, it would be perfectly acceptable for a community to pay homage to a business that began to thrive with the addition of the Lincoln Highway or was built there due to the town's location along the highway. This is as important a subject as any, since the point of the project is to convey the impact to the viewer of just how important a role the highway played in the expansion of this country.

The Local Organizational Committee will determine the story to be depicted in the mural and, based on the renderings received from perspective artist on their interpretation of that specific story; we will choose the final artist.

Community Responsibility:

The two committee members from each mural community will be the liaisons for communication between ILHC the community, and serve as members of the Local Organizational Committee. Responsibilities include:

1. Community Certification fees must be paid (and remain up to date) annually to ILHC.
2. Provide a list of the top two or three locations in each town that will allow for the best viewing of the mural must be provided to the committee
3. Create an agreement between the building's owner (the wall the mural will be placed on) and the community must provide for retention of the mural in that location, even in the event of a sale. That agreement and the contents of it are up to each community, but must include the following items: permission, duration that mural will be displayed, maintenance responsibility, waiving of all permits and/or fees, etc. Please detail copyright regulations (as stated below) when forming this agreement. A copy of this agreement must be provided to the ILHC for their files.
4. Each community must be willing to oversee all maintenance and upkeep of the mural.
5. Each community will assist as outlined in the Design Themes and Stories section. Multiple stories should be considered and researched to give the committee the option of choosing the best story for that community – and as part of the overall theme.
6. Each community will provide for the erection of the framework that will hold the mural panels. Although galvanized metal studs would be the longest lasting structural frame members, 2" x 4" wood construction has been utilized effectively to this point in time. Treated 2" x 4" SYP 'furring strips' will be applied to the wall with material-specific fasteners. For masonry walls, masonry screws such as Tapcon screws would be ideal. The fasteners must be recessed below the face of the frame members to allow for the attachment of the mural panels. Local contractors can be consulted for recommendations – or contact ILHC if no other source is available.

One point of note: Check local ordinances to verify that there is text contained in them which allow for the legal placement of murals. If there are none, it is highly recommended by the organizing committee that text amendments be added to local ordinances to allow for the mural and, perhaps the addition of more. This will set in place the opportunity for each community to add more murals by efficiently dealing with the process now so no hurdles remain in place. If permits and/or permit fees are required, they must be waived or filed locally. ILHC is not responsible for permits and/or permit fees.

Installation:

ILHC will be responsible for arranging to attach the mural panels to the frame provided by the local community (as described above). If the height of the mural is beyond the ability of the installation crew to reach easily with 10' ladders (max. height of 16' from grade to top of mural), each community must provide scaffolding or a boom lift (or scissor-lift) to attach the mural panels. With so many murals to install, the logistics of having the proper equipment for each location is impossible with the budgets available.

Local contractors or rental agencies or even the use of city equipment can be solicited for help (or donations of equipment) in the completion of this phase of the project. Prior to installation, the local committee members will coordinate the details of the installation with the ILHC – or the designated installation contractor. The mural artist may provide to the ILHC a palette of colors used in the creation of the mural for touching up the fasteners used in the attachment of the mural to the framework.

Copyrights:

Upon installation and final payment, the artist will assign his or her copyright interests in the artwork to the ILHC and the ILHC will become the copyright holder for all purposes. The only exception will allow the artist/designer retains the right to reproduce the artwork for all non-commercial purposes such as reproducing the image for the designer's portfolio.

Care and Maintenance:

One issue has become very clear with most mural programs: The mural communities want the original mural paintings to remain and to be repainted or repaired – they do not want new mural designs to replace the old. As such, it is the recommendation of the ILHC that no clear-coat or graffiti protection be applied over the mural panels by the community unless pre-arranged with the ILHC. This will allow for “touching up” the mural should any damage or vandalism occur. Vandalism of murals is rare and to plan for it to the detriment of the ability to repaint it is foolish and best forgotten. These murals will be on highly visible walls, with little chance for vandalism.

Building conditions also play a role in the preservation of the mural. Some type of adequate protection above the mural area is desired. Damaged or missing roof flashing that creates a flow of water across the mural must be repaired if that specific site is the most desired location or it will be rejected. Conversely, no water damaged walls will be considered unless repaired first. It is also public safety which must be considered in this project.

If, for any reason, the mural would have to be removed from its site (building repairs, mural repairs, building demolition, etc.), ILHC shall be contacted before any removal would take place. Details of the reason for removal, where mural will be stored, and date of re-installation will be required.

Summary:

The Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition Interpretive Mural Project, when completed, is hoped to be a model for future interpretive mural projects across the country. It is a complex project – with difficult logistics to overcome. But, no more difficult than the perils and hazards that faced drivers of the early 20th Century when considering a trip down the famed Lincoln Highway.

I understand, and agree to comply with, these guidelines.

Signature and Title (Community Representative)

Date

Signature and Title (Vendor Signature)

Date

Signature and Title (ILHC Representative)

Date

Designated Community Representatives:

1. Name: _____

Title: _____

Org.: _____

Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

2. Name: _____

Title: _____

Org: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____