



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: DESIGNING A BOX FOR THE STREETS ALIVE! UTILITY BOX PROJECT

Thank you for participating in the Streets Alive! Utility Box Project.

This list of F.A.Q's should get you started.

For Additional Questions  
Contact:  
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1.

### **1. How is the box prepped before my art is installed?**

- The box will be lightly sanded before the art is adhered. It will not have any major bumps, but the surface will not be totally smooth (there is about 10 years of paint on the boxes already).
- the designs are being printed in 4 panels (one panel per side of a four sided box), but the sides can over lap if you have a design that you want to connect at the edges.

### **2. To submit properly scaled design concepts, how do I get the sizes of each side of the utility boxes?**

- We encourage you to look at the box and understand its particulars: locks, hinges, vents, etc. these boxes are working infrastructure and we can not cover locks, windows, etc. we can cover vents and score around the holes to make sure air can flow.
- We will give you instructions on how to take exact measurements of the box.

### **3. Is there a preview review of ideas by artists, sponsors and others?**

- We encourage artists to submit draft designs to Streets Alive! so that we may vet it with the Visual Arts Selection Panel members. This will help the process run more smoothly. Of course, artists should also run the idea/draft by sponsors at least once before submitting the draft to Streets Alive! and the Visual Arts Selection Panel (VASP).

### **4. How far should an artist go with an idea before presenting a draft to the City's Public Art approval process?**

- Artists should create a design, run it by the sponsor, make any other changes, then submit that draft to Streets Alive!. If the VASP does not recommend any changes, we will approve it and then shepherd it through the Public Arts Committee and then the Civic Arts Commission itself.

### **5. What medium can I work in?**

- Any medium that can be scanned and printed: acrylic, oil, watercolor, marker, colored pencil, photographs (but you must have the rights to use the image). You can use mixed medium as well!

## **6. How does my design get turned into a digital file?**

We prefer that artists have the ability to digitize their own images (photographed or scanned). All files need to be submitted to us that are to the scale of the box, at least at 150 DPI. We have a separate document for artists once they have been selected that reviews the instructions for file preparation and submittal. If you do not have graphic design ability, please make that clear up front. In some cases, we may be able to help you prepare files, or advise you on how to do it. See the answer to Question # 13 for more info on this process.

## **7. "It's not clear to me whether you want each side of the utility box to be an independent image with a message or if one side of the box can convey the primary message with the other 3 sides attracting attention to the primary side."**

- The design aesthetic is up to you. We have a number of boxes up already, if you would like to look at them to get some ideas. Visit our website, <http://www.earthisland.org/streetsalive> and look under "Projects" to view the boxes that are currently out on the streets.

\*It is also important to think about how the community will interact with these boxes. We do want to discourage graffiti, so that generally means we don't want a lot of white space, or blank space, on the boxes.

## **8. "Does the artist help in any way at the time the polymer sticker is placed?"**

- That is not necessary. Our printer and Installer, Bay Area Sign Installation, will handle the installation process. They will print a test of each print to ensure colors are correct. We suggest artists opt to review those color prints to ensure the quality and provide the printer with a color proof so that they can match the colors accurately.

## **9. "The boxes are uneven, there are locks and handles and hinges... how does the install work with those aspects of the box?"**

- It's true! We are putting public art on working, functional infrastructure. Police, the City, Electrical Engineers and others need to have access the box at all times. Please note all irregularities and their locations so that they do not interfere with your designs!

- The polymer will be printed in 4 rectangles (to fit each side of the box). When the polymer is being installed, the installer will cut away any seams and holes that will have to be made to keep locks exposed.

- In most cases, the locks are about the size of a quarter. Again, please visit your box and make a note of these areas.

- In the case of a handle, we will try to make the smallest incision possible to fit over the handle.

- There are also vents on each box. We can cover the vents with your design, and cut away at the design so that the vent is covered with art, but also allows for the airflow the box needs to stay vented.

- We will print your design in 4 separate panels, and will install each panel on each side of the box. You will need to provide enough bleed so that we can wrap the edges, or allow the panels to line up on each side if your design is one that is meant to connect. Please make sure to take into consideration that each side of the box is not the exact same size. Generally two sides are shorter and narrower than the other two, so you need to make sure that your artwork fits within those panel sizes.

- Don't worry about gaps (in the case of a top half of the box being smaller than the lower half). the installer will make necessary cuts as long as you provide us with a single continuous design for the box, with the details of the design that fit within the panels.

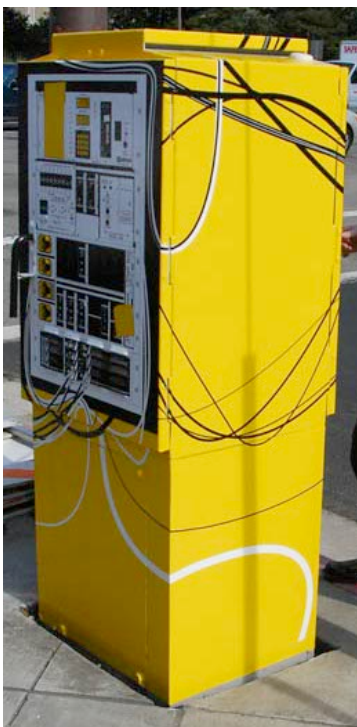
- Do not put major details on the edge of the work, some of the edges may get trimmed to fit boxes during installation.

## **10. If the design will be printed on 4 panels, what happens to the parts of the box left grey? Will the edges have a design on them?**

- We ask that you provide enough bleed (this is the area of *artwork* that is extended beyond the actual dimensions of the document) to cover any additional grey space on the box (the tops and corners), unless you do not mind the top of the box being left grey. Due to maintenance costs and City requests, we will not be painting the sides of tops of the box a particular color.



Example of Continuous Image.  
K. Gravier



Example of Wrapped Box Top.  
B. Aldridge

### 11. How should I measure my box and make sure I create my design to fit it correctly?

- *For Continuous Image*, such as Keenan Gravier's on Telegraph & Bancroft: Take blue painters tape and go all the way around until it overlaps and make a mark. Then measure the entire length of the tape. The printer will panel it into 4 sections based on the dimensions of each side (so make sure you mark the measurements of each side/panel).

- *Non Continuous Image*, such as Erin Johnson's on Telegraph & Durant: measure edge to edge and make sure to over compensate for the sides as they will overlap (the bleed should be at least 1.5").

- *TOP of box*, see Brad Aldridge's box on Oxford & Hearst: If you include enough bleed at the top of the box of a background color to match your design, the installer can use this extra to wrap the top/roof of the box. You will need to get this measurement.

- Again, do not worry about gaps where doors open. The installer will make the necessary cuts and seams.



Example of Non-Continuous image.  
E. Johnson

### 11. How will my art be protected once it is installed?

- We are printing the images onto 3M High Quality polymer, with an additional overlay of anti-Graffiti film. In the event your art does become victim to graffiti, we can wipe it off with rubbing alcohol. In the event it gets scratched or damaged in any way, or in case the City needs to replace the electrical box, we can reprint the art and reinstall.

### 12. When do I get paid?

- Artists are compensated when their final designs are approved by the City's Public Arts Process and the final art has been given in digital form ready to be printed to Streets Alive!

### 13. My Design is ready, has been approved and we are now ready to print. NOW

#### WHAT?

*Here is exactly what you need to provide us with to ensure a smooth installation process:*

- 1) Laser Print Hard copy (not to exceed 11x17) for color matching
- 2) .pdf of complete layout indicating which panel goes on which side of the box - East Facing, West Facing, etc. (does not have to be 100%) just for visual reference only.

- 3) Print files need to be separated. One file for each side to be printed. pdf, jpeg, or tiff 100% to scale minimum 150dpi
- 4) Measurements of boxes to be exact, print files to have at least 1½" bleed on each side, and bleed to cover the roof of the box, unless you want it to remain grey.