



**Civic Arts Commission
Public Art Subcommittee
Tuesday, April 16, 2024
3:30 pm**

**PUBLIC ADVISORY: THIS MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH
VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE**

To access the meeting remotely from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device, use this URL: <https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1605160261?pwd=OUV2THcvWDI2czRvVmlreGxCUWR6QT09>

To join by phone dial **(669) 254-5252** and enter Meeting ID 160 516 0261. If you wish to participate at Public Comment portions of the Agenda, click **raise hand** icon and wait to be recognized by the Chair. Time limits on Public Comments will apply. To submit Public Comment via e-mail, contact civicsarts@berkeleyca.gov. In the Subject Line type PUBLIC COMMENT ITEM #. Please observe a 150-word limit.

Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of Huchiun (*Hooch-yoon*), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (*Cho-chen-yo*) speaking Ohlone (*Oh-low-nee*) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona (*Vuh-roh-nuh*) Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Tribe and create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this Land Acknowledgement.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (For items not on the Agenda)

4. CHAIR REPORT

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

- a) Discussion: Berkeley Boxes: New Pilot Utility Box Mural Program and Management of Existing Utility Box Murals
Presenter: Rachel Arbios, Office Specialist
Possible Action: Approval of Berkeley Boxes: New Pilot Utility Box Mural Program and Management of Existing Utility Box Murals
Public Comment

6. STAFF REPORT

7. COMMUNICATIONS

8. ADJOURNMENT

Agenda Attachments:

- 1. Berkeley Boxes: New Pilot Utility Box Mural Program and Management of Existing Utility Box Murals

Staff Contact:
Mark Salinas
Public Art Program Lead
Berkeley, CA 94704
Telephone: (510) 981-7538
TDD (510) 981-6903
msalinas@berkeleyca.gov

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission or committee for further information.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION: To request disability-related accommodations to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the ADA Program Coordinator by phone (510) 981-6418 or by TTY/TDD (510) 981-6347 at least three business days before the meeting date.



Civic Arts Program

BERKELEY BOXES, NEW PILOT UTILITY BOX MURAL PROGRAM & MANAGEMENT OF EXISTING UTILITY BOX MURALS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From 2011 to 2015, the City of Berkeley partnered with Earth Island Institute's *Streets Alive!* initiative to implement a utility box mural program called the "60 Boxes Project" which resulted in the commissioning of dozens of unique murals for City-owned signal boxes throughout Berkeley. There were two separate "60 Boxes Project" calls-to-artists issued in 2011 and 2013, both with the theme of sustainability. This project aimed to transform the bland city-owned signal boxes into engaging public art reflective of Berkeley's community ideals and the city's character. There were multiple artists who created mural designs which were digitally printed onto vinyl wraps and installed on utility boxes in locations as far north as Vine Street and as far south as Blake Street, with a majority of the murals being installed in the Downtown and Telegraph areas. The murals were always intended to be temporary with an anticipated life span of two years. In the years since their creation, many of the utility box murals have fallen into disrepair.

In 2023 with the help of an intern, Civic Arts conducted a citywide inventory and condition assessment of the "60 Boxes Project" utility box murals (Attachment 1). This assessment found that:

- Because vinyl wrap has longevity problems, the condition of the murals has been negatively impacted by many types of damages, both at an individual scale and a citywide scale.
- The location of the utility boxes selected for inclusion in the "60 Boxes Project" did not adequately consider the specific setting and objects around a utility box, its walking distance to other utility box murals, and the area's risk of vandalism. The utility box mural designs were not consistently aesthetically compatible with their surroundings.
- Because the "60 Boxes Project" was implemented by an organization who initially intended to care for the murals but later discontinued their involvement, the murals were not maintained.

The assessment also included a number of recommendations based on research into best practices:

- For the existing murals that received a good or fair condition, removal will not be necessary. However, for the murals with vinyl wrap that have been classified as poor or critical, removal will be necessary.
- Civic Arts should pilot a *BerkeleyBoxes* program utilizing painted murals, rather than vinyl adhesive.
- Civic Arts staff should meet with Downtown Berkeley and Telegraph commercial district to discuss selection approach and determine locations of boxes included in the pilot of Berkeley Boxes program.
- Civic Arts should structure the pilot program to pay artists a higher fee in line with other

municipal arts program fees for utility box murals.

NEW PILOT PROGRAM GOALS

Based upon the recommendations included in the assessment, Civic Arts seeks to commission two series of new painted utility box murals as proof of concept: one in Downtown Berkeley and another in the Telegraph commercial district.

The goals of the new pilot program are:

1. Create a series of murals in each of the two pilot program areas with one artist for the series in Downtown and another artist for the series on Telegraph. Each series, created by a single artist, will have a common theme and style, visually tying the murals in each series together. The murals will be within walking distance and in some cases within sight from one another to strengthen a sense of place and connection for the area.
2. Test approaches to creating long-term temporary murals on utility boxes in highly trafficked areas of Berkeley which are resilient to environmental and social factors and actively maintained to last for up to three years.
3. Provide a public art opportunity that is accessible to artists with little or no prior public art experience.

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

The new murals will be produced in the Downtown and Telegraph business improvement districts. Locations indicated by black colored pins in the attached maps. (Attachment 2)

BUDGET

Vinyl Removal	\$	10,800.00
Downtown Artist Contract	\$	25,500.00
Telegraph Artist Contract	\$	25,500.00
Artist Selection Costs		
Panelist honorarium	\$	1,600.00
Artist finalist honorarium	\$	1,500.00
Photography/Documentation		
	\$	4,000.00
TOTAL	\$	68,900.00

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to apply, artists must be at least 18 years old and reside in Alameda, Contra Costa, or San Francisco counties. Students over 18 are eligible to apply. This pilot program aims to support and showcase emerging talents in the field of visual arts. Therefore, artists who are in the early stages of their art career are encouraged to apply. (For the purpose of this call “early stage of an art career” can be defined as not having received a prior public art commission with a budget higher than \$10,000 and/or not having had an exhibition at a museum or major art center.)

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

Civic Arts staff will issue a Request for Qualification (RFQ). Applicants will be asked to provide:

- Letter of interest and summary of artistic practice including but not limited to addressing the

following:

- A short biography that briefly describes the artist’s background, experience, and artistic practice.
- Why they are interested in participating in the *Berkeley Boxes* program and how this opportunity might benefit their practice.
- What their relationship to the City of Berkeley is and what they find meaningful about this place?
- 10 images of past visual artwork
- Resume
- Applicants will be asked to identify whether they are interested in being considered for Telegraph Avenue or Downtown Berkeley.

All applications will be reviewed by Civic Arts staff to verify eligibility and application completeness.

There will be two concurrent panel review processes: one for each pilot program areas (Downtown Berkeley and Telegraph Avenue). Eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by the separate Public Art Review Panels to identify the shortlists of finalists for the two opportunities. Each Review Panel will consist of a Civic Arts Commissioner, a member of the local Business Improvement District where the utility boxes are located, a professional practicing muralist, and a community representative.

For the first round of selection, the Public Art Review Panels will score the applications in order to select three finalists who will be invited to interview with the panel. Finalists will be paid an honorarium of \$250 to develop a presentation of relevant past work and will not be asked to develop a proposal during the selection phase.

For the final round of selection, the Review Panels will reconvene to consider the artists qualifications and approach in an interview format and will select one artist for each pilot program area to recommend to the Civic Arts Commission for final approval.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used for the panel process.

Artistic Quality:

- The applicant’s art and cultural work demonstrates high quality or promise through its artistic history, accomplishments, and examples of recent previous work

Innovation and Uniqueness:

- Demonstration of innovative approaches and originality in artistic expression.
- The potential to contribute something unique, relevant and/or distinctive to the urban landscape.

Accessibility, Inclusivity and Site Responsiveness:

- A commitment to creating art that is accessible and inclusive to a diverse audience.
- Consideration of different perspectives and the ability to create art that resonates with a broad range of people.

- Expressed interest in creating work that is responsive to the geographic area where the artwork will be located or that is expressive of the artist’s connection to Berkeley.

The following criteria will be added for the final round of the panel process

Community Engagement:

- Evidence of the artist's interest in or past experience with engaging and involving a local community in the artwork design development process.
- Interest in or previous experience working collaboratively with diverse communities.

MURAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After the two selected artists have been approved by the Civic Arts Commission, they will be placed under contract to conduct the following activities:

- Develop a design concept for the mural series and renderings of each mural.
- Completed design concepts will be available on the City’s website for the public to view and share feedback.
- Comments received from the public will be shared with the Civic Arts Commission when the proposed design is presented for approval.
- Artists will present their design concepts to the Civic Arts Commission for approval.
- After approved, Civic Arts staff will coordinate to remove vinyl from boxes to be painted then the artists will be scheduled to prepare and paint their boxes. Some of the boxes will require more extensive surface preparation than others.
- After mural painting is completed, artist will apply a protective sacrificial coating.
- Teams from the business improvement districts will monitor the condition of the murals.
- In the case that a mural is vandalized, the artist will be contracted by the City to complete the repairs.

PLAN FOR EXISTING MURALS OUTSIDE NEW PILOT MURAL PROGRAM AREAS

Based on the assessments completed in 2023, the murals deemed to be in critical and poor condition will be removed and/or painted over by Public Works staff. Murals in fair and good condition will be monitored and assessed annually.

TIMELINE (Subject to change)

- Stakeholders Meetings February 2024
- Civic Arts Commission Approval of Plan April 17, 2024
- RFQ Issued May 2024
- RFQ Deadline June 30, 2024 (6 weeks)
- Public Art Review Panels July-August 2024
- Civic Arts Commission Approval of Selected Artists September 2024
- Contracting with Selected Artists October 2024
- Approval of Designs by Civic Arts Commission December 2024
- Schedule Painting January 2025
- Removal of Vinyl on Boxes from Pilot Program/
Prepare Boxes for Painting February 2025
- New Murals are Painted/Graffiti Coating Applied March 2025

- Murals on Display for 3 years

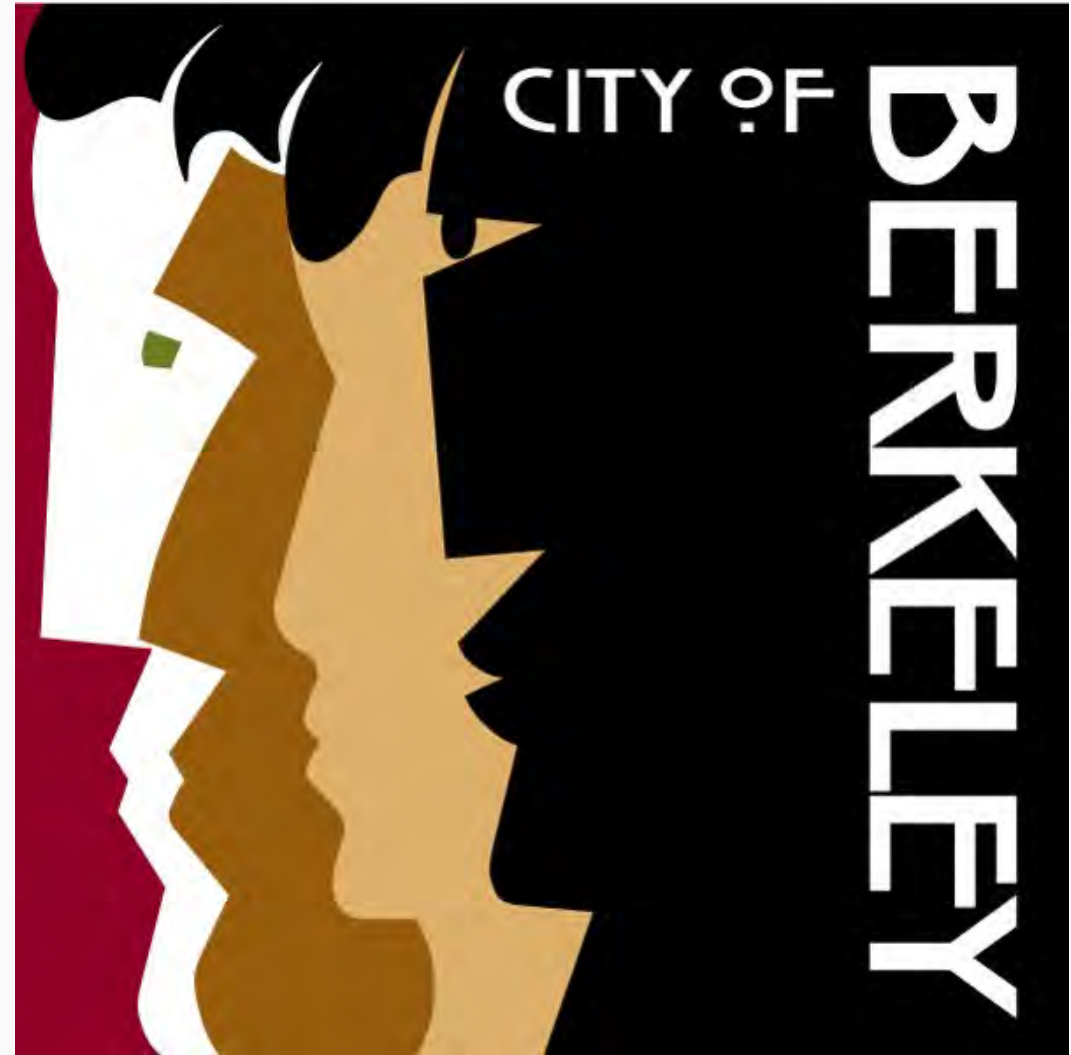
FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Rachel Arbios, Office Specialist, (510) 981-7531 or by email at RArbios@berkeleyca.gov

UTILITY BOX MURAL PROGRAM

Andrea Calderon
Civic Arts Intern

Office of Economic Development | Civic Arts
July 14, 2023



Utility Box Mural Program Overview



- A public-private partnership between the City and the Earth Island Institute through Streets Alive! Initiative, circa 2011 to 2015.
- Initially called the “60 Boxes Project.”
- Transform city-owned grey utility boxes into public art engaging with community ideals and experiences of City of Berkeley.

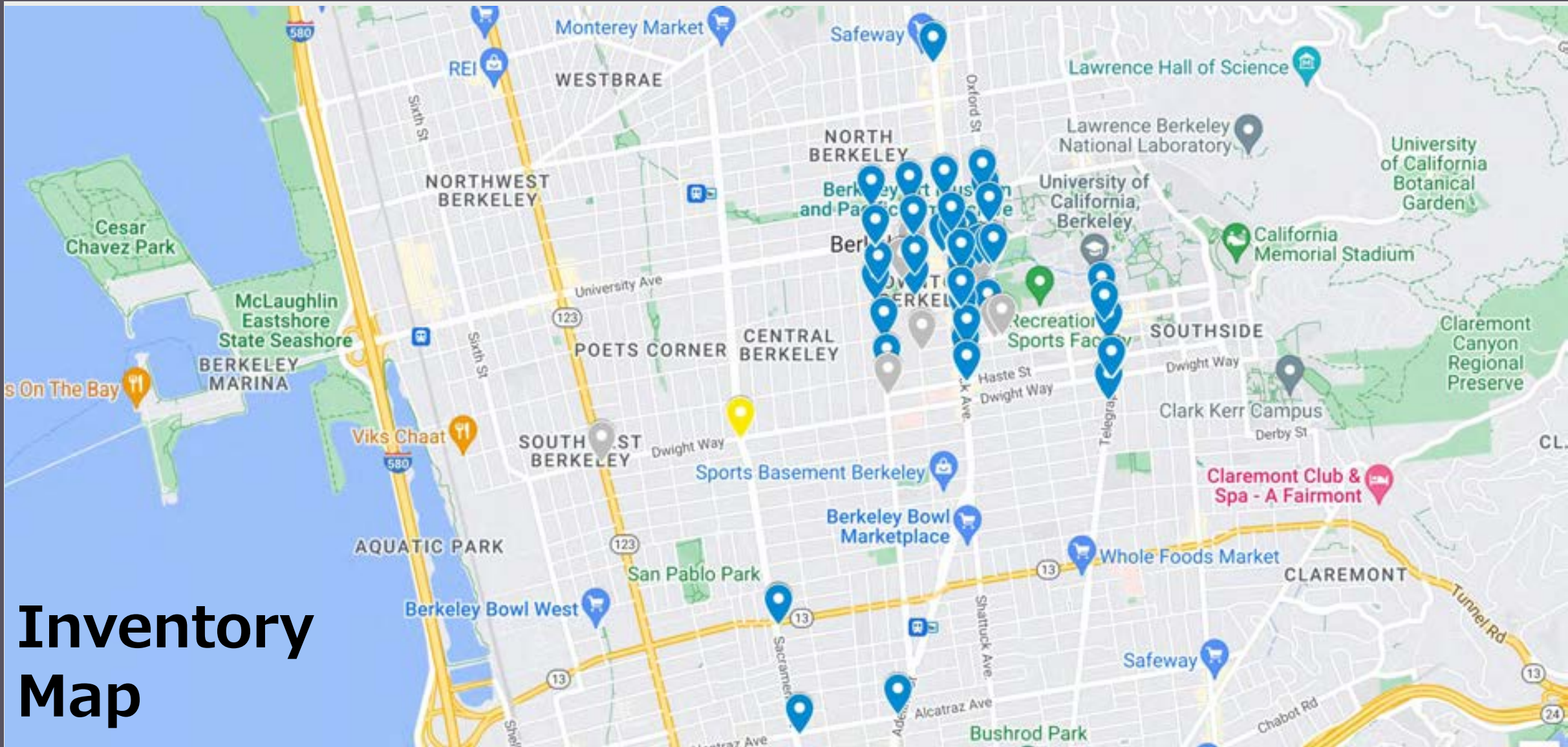
Left: University Ave./Martin Luther King Jr. Way

History and Development



- **June 2011:** Press release of the “60 Boxes Public Art Project.”
- **Two Call to Artists:**
- 2011: Downtown Berkeley
- 2013: Telegraph Ave and South Berkeley
- **Theme: Sustainability**

Left: Map, Berkeleyside, 2011



Inventory Map

Condition Assessment: Form

Overview	Description	Location	Condition Reporting	Curatorial Choice
<p>The basic information for each mural, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of artist• Sponsor or City agency• Location (intersecting streets)• Material• Dimensions	<p>A brief explanation of the mural's imagery, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject matter• Iconography• Style• Predominant colors	<p>Information on the location's surrounding environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What objects are adjacent to the utility box?• Is the box in walking distance to other boxes?	<p>An assessment of the mural's damage, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall condition rating• Types of damage• Overall Condition notes	<p>An evaluation of the appropriateness of the mural's design and subject matter:</p>

Condition Assessment Rating: Good



Arts and Humanities Academy
Class of 2012, *Berkeley High*,
Allston and Martin Luther King Jr.
Way.



Brad Aldridge, *Sending Signals*,
Hearst Ave. and Oxford St.



Beth Fein, *Downtown*, Addison
St. and Shattuck Ave.

Condition Assessment Rating: Fair



Secret Garden, Katie McCann, Center St. (between MLK Jr. Way/ Milvia St.)



Kids for the Bay, *Drains to the Ocean*, Channing Way/Martin Luther King Jr. Way



Condition Assessment Rating: Poor



Helene Cote, *Anasazi Wedding Vessel*, Dwight Way/Telegraph Ave.



Arts and Humanities Academy Class of 2012, *Berkeley High: Looking Back to See Our Way Forward*, Allston Way/Martin Luther King Jr. Way



Erin Johnson, *Grow*, Durant Ave./Telegraph Ave.

Condition Assessment Rating: Critical



Location: Durant Ave./Shattuck Ave.



Location: Allston Way/Shattuck Ave.



Location: University Ave./Milvia St.

Condition Assessment: Key Takeaways

Condition

The condition of the murals are impacted by the types of damages, both at an individual scale and a city-wide scale.

Location

The evaluation of the location considers the specific setting and objects around a utility box, its walking distance to other boxes, and the area's risk of vandalism.

Curation and Design

The curation and design examine the impact of the mural's aesthetic value and community engagement according to its surrounding area.

Legend:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Critical
- NOT IN USE
- Other

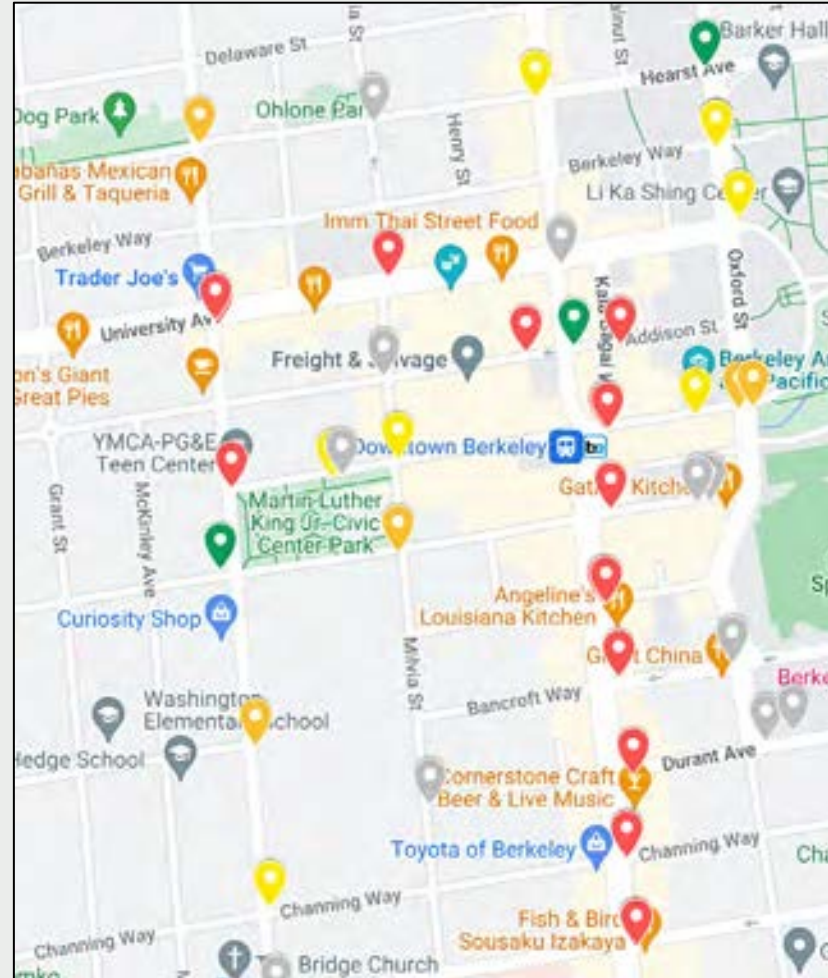


Inventory Map: Condition Rating

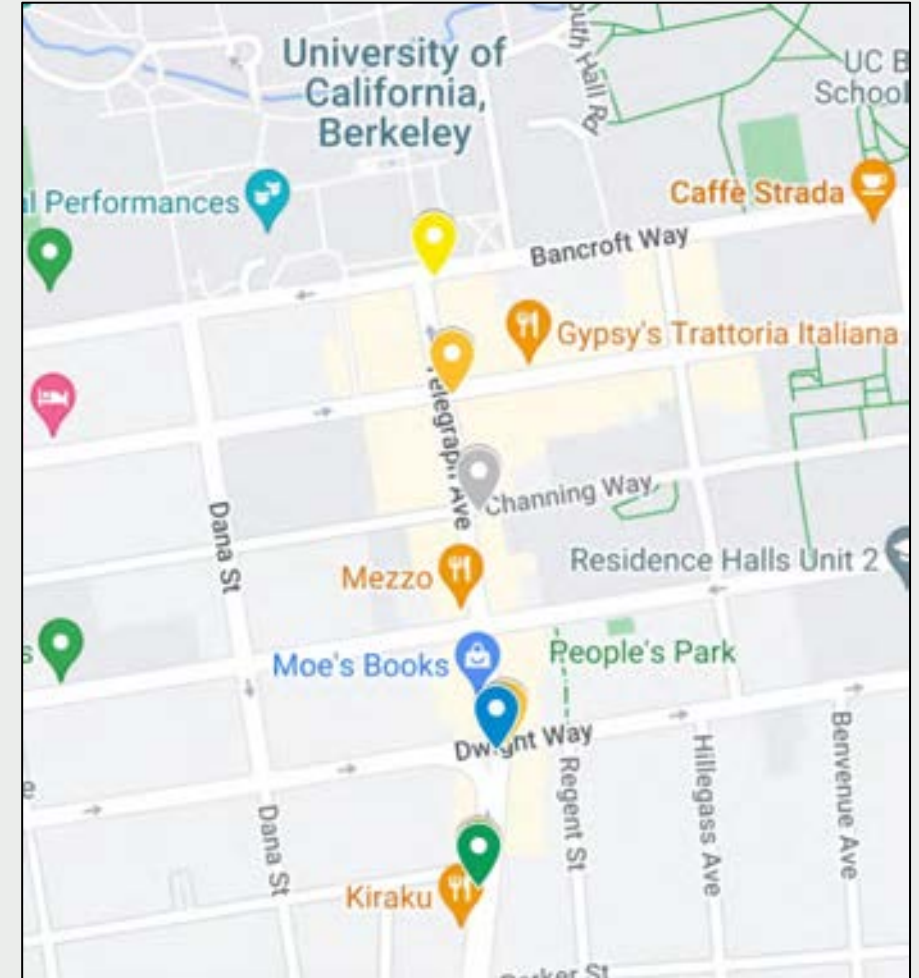
Condition

Legend:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Critical
- NOT IN USE
- Other

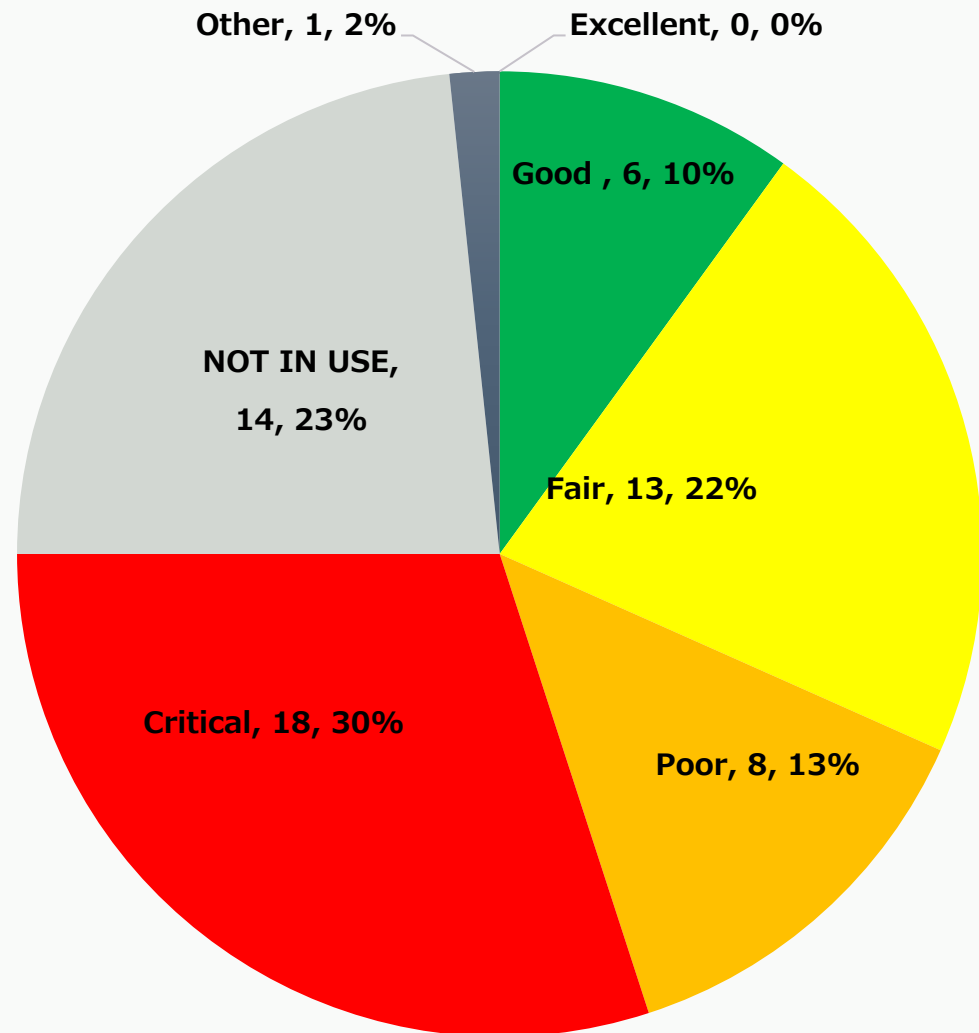


Close up of Downtown Berkeley



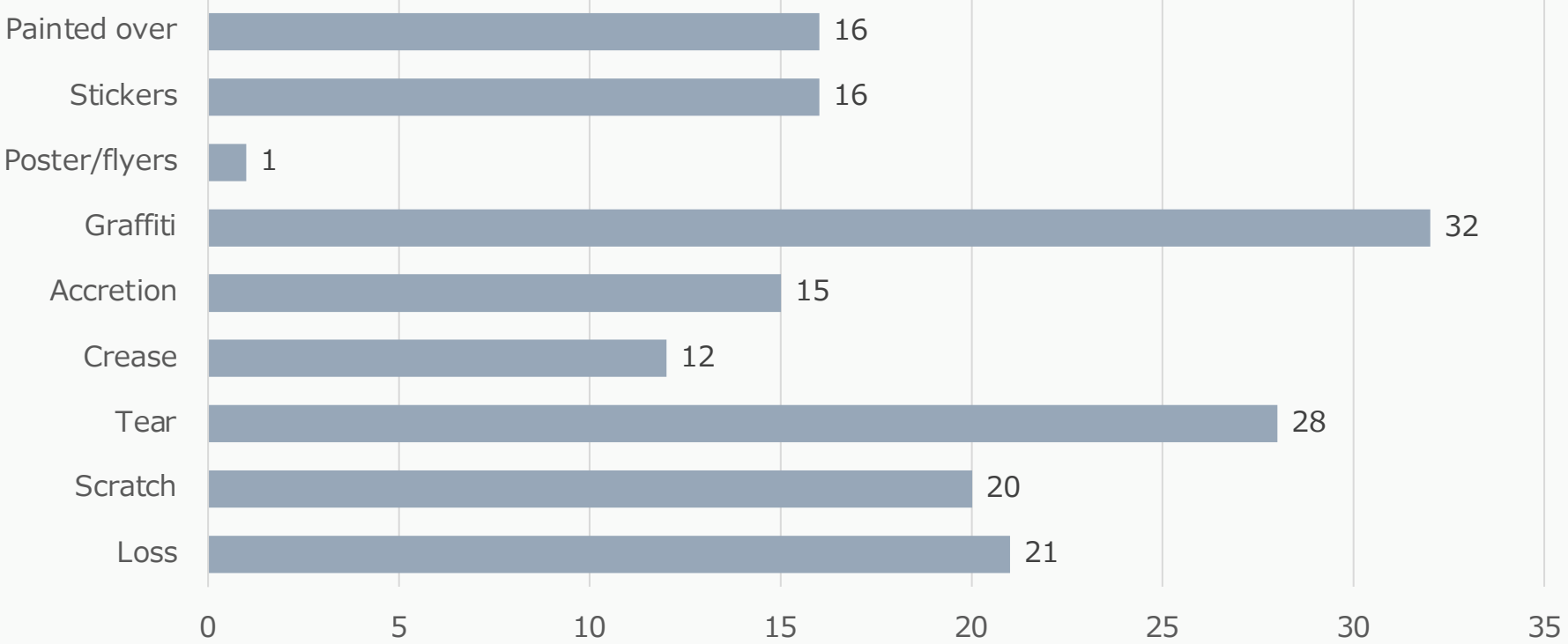
Close up of Telegraph Ave. District

Condition: Rating Breakdown



Condition: Types of Damages

Type of
Damage



Number of Utility Boxes

**Condition:
Types of
Damages**

Graffiti



Tear



Loss



Location

A good location for public art:

- Visibly accessible to the public from different angles, even if occasionally blocked by adjacent objects.
- Located in an area with high pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- In walking distance to other utility box murals.

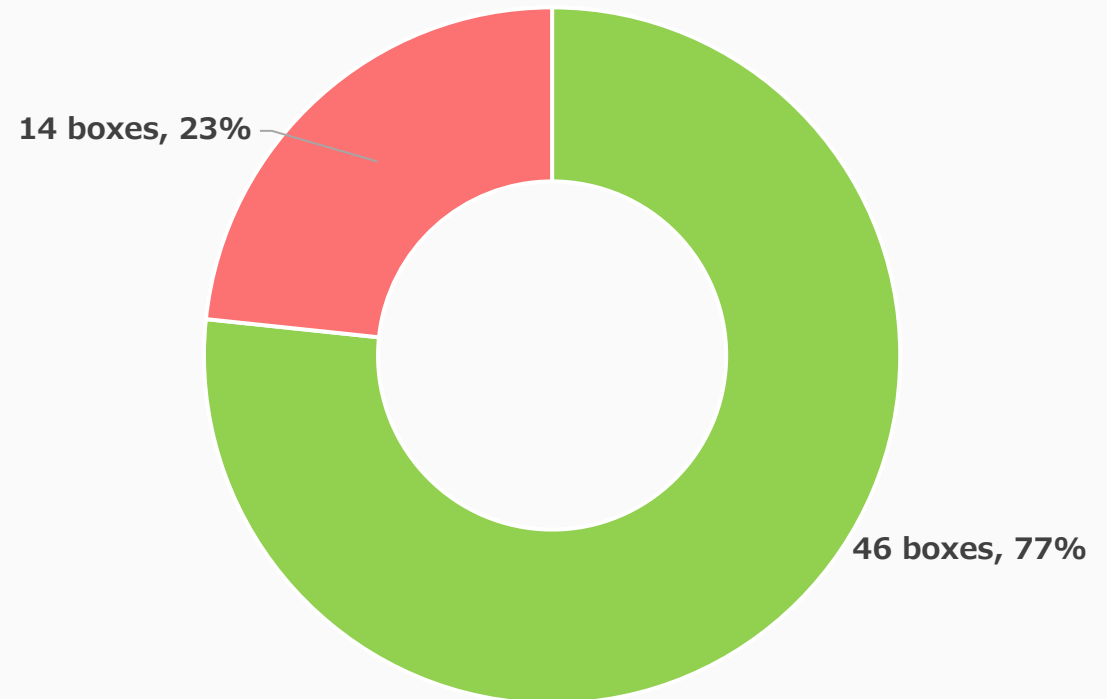
A bad location for public art:

- NOT visibly accessible to the public.
- Frequently blocked by parked vehicles or buses.
- Located in an area with low pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- NOT in walking distance to other utility box murals.

Location

Good Location for Public Art

- Utility boxes with all three criteria for a good location
- Utility boxes with at least one criteria for a bad location



Location

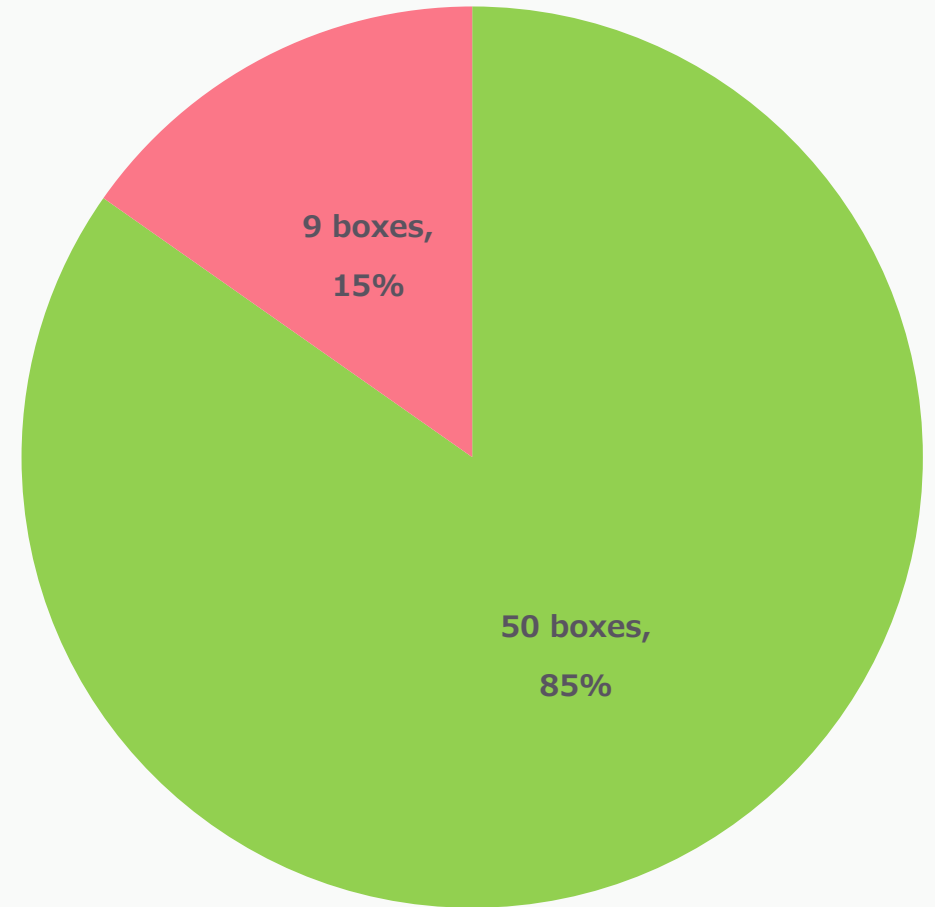
Walking distance:

- 1 to 3 blocks away from another utility box mural

NOT walking distance:

- more than 3 blocks away from another utility box

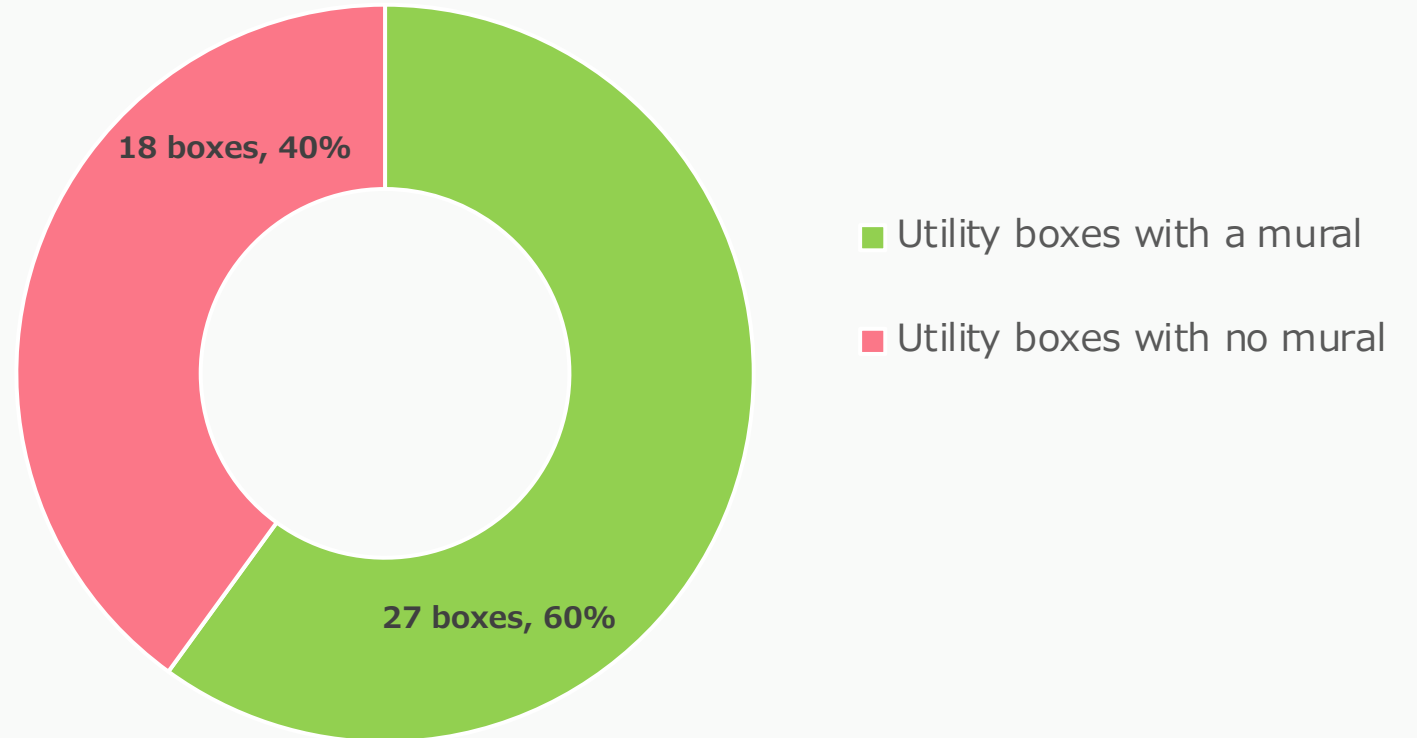
Walking Distance



■ in walking distance ■ not in walking distance

Curation and Design

Of all the utility boxes in the program,
how many boxes still have a mural?



Curation and Design



Example of an appropriate subject matter



Example of a NOT appropriate subject matter



Left: Ann Arnold, Higgins, Saki, and Carmella, Vine St./Shattuck Ave.

Center and Right: Rtystk, The Continuum of Art, Culture, and Wellness, Hearst Ave./Martin Luther King Jr. Way

Curation and Design



Next Steps...

- **Research managerial structure of other utility box art programs, both in-state and out-of-state.**
- Research environmentally-friendly materials.
- Revise the criteria for artist selection and design submission.
- Revise the curatorial framework and themes.
- **Final Goal: Provide recommendations for how to proceed with the Utility Box Mural Program**

Questions?

Andrea Calderon
Civic Arts Intern
Acalderon@berkeleyca.gov

Attachment 2

Downtown Berkeley Map



Box Location:

- Addison/Shattuck
- Addison/Kala Bagai
- Center/Oxford
- Center/Oxford (on campus)
- Center/Oxford (across from campus)
- Center/Shattuck
- Center/Shattuck (smaller)
- Allston/Shattuck (side wall)
- Allston/Shattuck
- Kittredge/Shattuck
- Kittredge/Shattuck (smaller box)
- University/Shattuck

Telegraph Map



Box Location:

- Bancroft/Telegraph
- Bancroft/Telgraph (side wall)
- Channing/Telegraph (large box)
- Channing/Telegraph (side wall)
- Channing/Telegraph (IKE box)
- Channing/Telegraph (small box)
- Durant/Telegraph
- Durant/Telegraph (side wall)
- Durant/Telegraph (horizontal box)
- Haste/Telegraph
- Telegraph (between Haste & Dwight) (IKE Box)
- Telegraph (between Haste & Dwight) (IKE Box) #2