

# ADOPT-A-MEDIAN INFORMATION PACKET

## 2024 Edition (updated August 2024)

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in the Adopt-A-Median Program with the Board of Public Works, Office of Community Beautification. Originally established in 1988, under the authority of the Board of Public Works, this program was designed as a way to empower neighborhoods to engage in community improvement efforts. This program has evolved into a tool for the community to:

- Beautify and increase the quality of life in neighborhoods;
- Promote community involvement through landscape and streetscape projects;
- Promote a sense of ownership by community members through “sweat equity” on their projects; and
- Infuse the City of Los Angeles landscape with color, culture, and creativity.

### **WHAT IS THE ADOPT-A-MEDIAN (AAM) PROGRAM?**

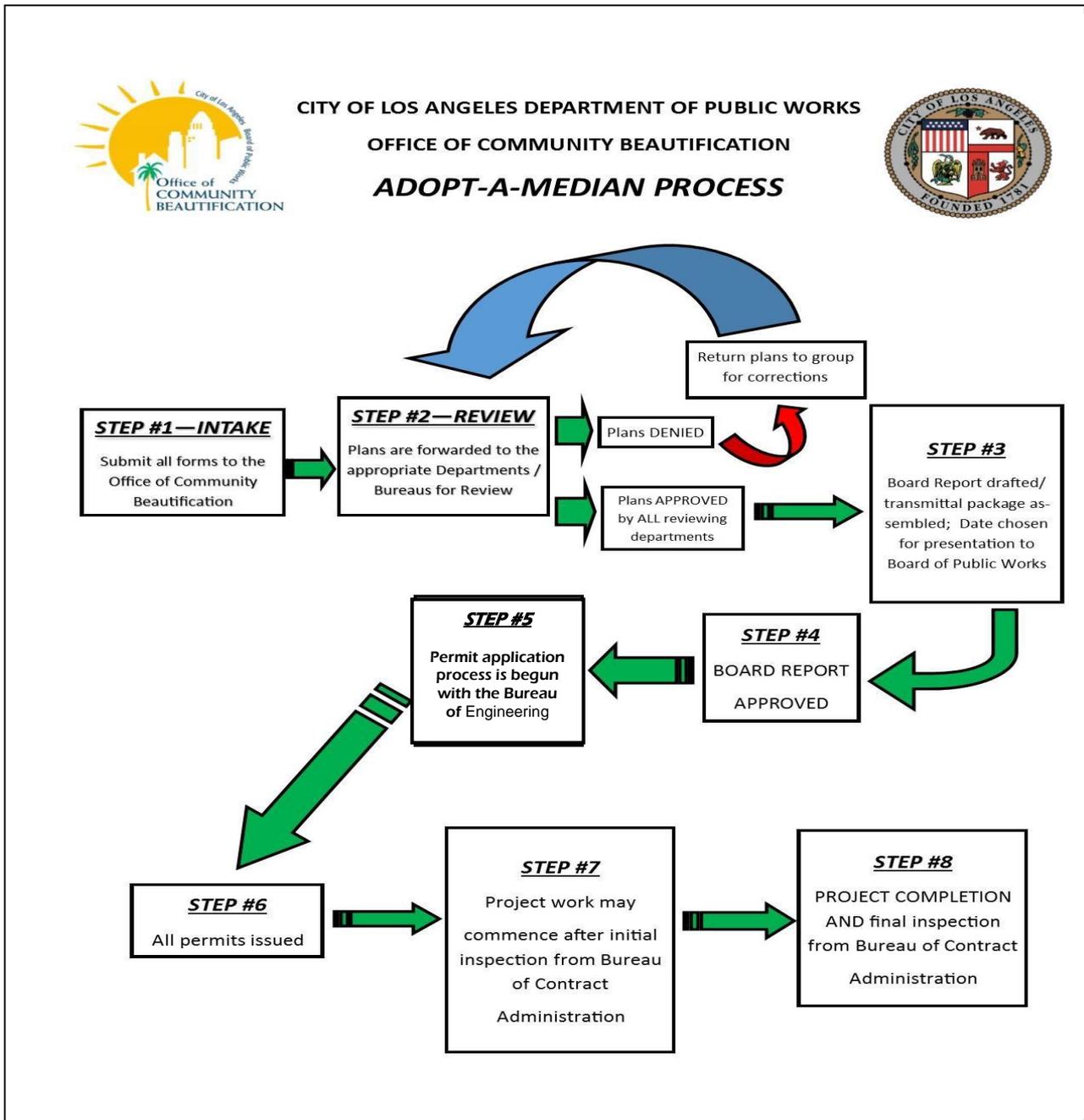
The AAM is a community-friendly, interactive program established by the Board of Public Works, Office of Community Beautification (OCB), as a way to assist community groups with the installations of creative beautification/improvement projects along the City’s **public right-of-way**. It is collaborative, in the sense that OCB will guide and assist groups through the submission, review, adoption and permit process. Lines of communication with the sponsoring group are maintained, with OCB responding to inquiries, and providing needed information. The AAM also partners with the Keep L.A. Beautiful Grant Program, and reviews projects that are submitted through that platform, using the exact same guidelines.

### **WHAT IS OCB’S ROLE?**

1. OCB is the ‘conduit’ between the constituent group and the various City entities that are responsible for reviewing and approving a proposed project. OCB staff serve as the “administrative arm,” of the program and oversee a project from “cradle to grave,” in a manner of speaking. OCB’s role is:
  - To serve as the main point of contact for the City in all aspects of the process
  - Project manager - regarding project status and tracking, liaison to constituents, facilitating review and coordination among the involved City entities, and oversight in navigating through the process of Board approval and final permitting.
2. OCB is equally responsible for overseeing the status of AAM projects, even after installation. In exchange for the City waiving the project permit fees, the constituent signs a Maintenance Agreement, agreeing to maintain the project site in perpetuity. OCB ensures that projects are being maintained per the agreement.
3. OCB facilitates the permit application process on behalf of the constituent group.
4. OCB will advocate on behalf of the group to obtain any necessary extensions from the Bureau of Engineering.

## THE PROCESS

Adopt-A-Median involves a sequential process, from proposal of the project, through plan review, Board of Public Works recommendation, and permit application. The length of time it takes to navigate this sequence is dependent upon many factors, which include, but are not limited to, the overall scope of the project, its design complexity, current backlog of projects, and available City review staff. It is also important to note, that if plans need modification to conform to City standards, the time that the constituent group spends on plan revision can also be a factor in a project's life span. The following graphic shows the general sequence of the AAM process:



## **WHAT THE ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROGRAM (AAM) IS NOT:**

1. The AAM is NOT a permitting authority. Permits are not issued by the Office of Community Beautification. All permit issuance is handled exclusively by the Bureau of Engineering.
2. The AAM is NOT a technical advisory agency. OCB staff are not technical personnel. Any questions specifically related to: landscape architecture/design, allowable plants/foilage, structural parameters, visibility restrictions, or similar questions of a technical nature should be directed to the City entity with expertise in those areas.
3. The AAM is NOT an option for “expedited permitting.” OCB staff do not conduct plan review—projects are forwarded to various City bureaus and departments for plan review. Projects are then absorbed into that bureau/department’s queue and are reviewed on the basis of priority dependent upon their staff’s availability and current workload. **Constituent groups should allow a minimum of 3 months for an initial review to be completed.**

## **TYPES OF ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROJECTS**

The following are examples of projects previously approved through the AAM:

**Street Furniture / Community signage and monuments / Trash receptacles / Murals  
Statues/obelisks / Landscape improvements (plants/trees/boulders/walkways)**

## **HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROJECT QUALIFIES AS AN AAM PROJECT?**

Your proposal must fall under certain criteria to be accepted as an AAM project. All the following should have a “YES” response, to be accepted into the AAM Program:

1. Is the project to be undertaken/constructed completely in the public-right-of-way?
2. Does the project have positive aesthetic, cultural, practical, educational, or artistic qualities that will benefit the area of the City where it is being proposed?
3. Is the project sponsored and submitted by a neighborhood-based organization such as a homeowners’ association, Neighborhood Council, improvement association, block club, neighborhood watch group, chamber of commerce, beautification committee, and/or City of L.A. Council Office\* (\*a City Council Office applying to Adopt-a-Median must partner with a community group willing to provide maintenance in perpetuity)?
4. Is this sponsoring entity willing to assume the maintenance of the project in PERPETUITY, and willing to sign a Maintenance Agreement to that effect?

\*NOTE: If the sponsoring entity intends to HIRE an outside group to maintain the project, this 3<sup>rd</sup> party is NOT covered under the City of L.A.’s insurance. Appropriate proof of insurance for the 3<sup>rd</sup> party will have to be submitted for review and approval before the project can be permitted.

5. Is the total project cost under \$100,000? There is a \$100,000 cap on the overall costs for a project proposal submitted to the AAM Program.
6. Does the project maintain structures below 36” in height from the road surface, for freestanding objects, such as street furniture or signage? (Acceptable exceptions to this requirement include, but are not limited to, murals (see section on murals) on existing walls and/or new trees).
7. Is the project free of improvements requiring extensive technical review such as: alterations to the horizontal alignment of the street (i.e. changes to street width, curbs, gutters, median locations/shapes, or traffic lanes), alterations to water drainage patterns on the street, alterations to traffic lane alignment(s) or street parking, high voltage (120V) electrical equipment drawing in excess of 330 watts, fountains/water features requiring pump equipment, etc...?
8. If it is a landscaping project, do you have a plan for irrigation of the vegetation?

If you answered “NO” to any of the above questions, please contact the Bureau of Engineering office in your district for information on the permitting process.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS • BUREAU OF ENGINEERING • <http://eng.lacity.org>

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES for PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

**Please read the following before you submit your package.** Be sure that your plans adhere to the following:

Effective March 2020, all Adopt-a-Median application materials are to be submitted **in DIGITAL form (.PDF file format) NO EXCEPTIONS**. You may email the following items to Adopt-A-Median Program Manager, Gerry Valido at [gerry.valido@lacity.org](mailto:gerry.valido@lacity.org) Your proposal package should include:

1. A signed/completed “Adopt-A-Median Neighborhood Beautification Partnership” Agreement
2. A signed/completed Maintenance Agreement (2 pages)
3. A signed/completed Waiver and Release of Claims form
4. A signed letter of support from the Council Member presiding over the project location, on the Council Member’s City letterhead. Letter must have been signed no earlier than 6 months PRIOR to submission of the Adopt-a-Median application and must be from a currently seated Council Member.
5. Current photographs of the project site at street level. Aerial view is also recommended (may be obtained from Google Maps in “satellite view”).
6. A rendering of some type of what the complete project will look like.
7. A cost listing of the materials (costs can be estimated) that will be used for the proposed improvement
8. For landscaping projects—A plant listing including plant species, quantities, container sizes and spacing, irrigation equipment/system components, decorative paving materials, street furniture, community signage, etc.
9. For landscaping projects—A planting diagram indicating the positioning of all plants.

10. For landscaping projects—An irrigation plan
11. For any projects with structural components, please include structural calculations along with your plan sets.
12. Project plans showing the proposed encroachments and/or improvements in relation to property lines and existing infrastructure, such as: power poles, light poles, traffic signals, utility boxes, sidewalks, curbs, storm drains, trees, etc. Proposed improvements such as decorative paving, community signage, or furniture will require additional detail drawings or instructions that show or note how these proposed elements will be secured to the site (please refer to the sample .pdf files on this website).
13. (OPTIONAL) A signed letter of support from the Neighborhood Council (NHC) presiding over the project location on NHC letterhead.
14. (OPTIONAL) Signed letters of support from business/home owners in the immediate area.

**As of March, 2020, ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROPOSALS SHALL BE EMAILED TO THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION. PLEASE ONLY SEND YOUR PROPOSAL PACKAGE IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT. NO EXCEPTIONS. – Thank you.**

\*NOTE - If any of the above mentioned items are missing from the application at time of submittal, applications will be placed on a pending status until all necessary items are received.

### **TECHNICAL GUIDELINES for PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

1. Existing landscape medians and traffic circles that require reconstruction **will not** be approved for an Adopt-A-Median application.
2. Existing landscape medians and traffic circles that require 15% or less of hardscape repair (minor curb or gutter repair) *may be* approved for an Adopt-A-Median application (this is subject to review and final approval).
3. Existing hardscape areas proposed for removal (sidewalk, parkways, capped medians, streets etc.) **will not** be approved through the Adopt-A-Median program.
4. Hardscape *may* only be removed for the implementation of a gateway/community sign or art element - in non-pedestrian zones. Designs are subject to approval/denial by the Bureau of Engineering.
5. Utility installations, connections or modifications will be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis. Electrical connections for community marker elements (signage, clocks etc) may be considered. Water meter connections will require Department of Water and Power (DWP) approval.
6. Improvements in existing landscape parkways must be implemented adjacent to multiple property parcels (more than 3 individual owners). Parkway improvements **will not** be approved if proposed in front of a single owned property.
7. Improvements in front of other adjacent properties require written approval from all affected property owners.
8. Improvements in existing landscape medians and traffic circles are subject to approval or denial based on traffic patterns and other elements.

9. Improvements of any kind **shall not** be on private property or any property owned by City, State or other jurisdictions. All improvements must be in the public right-of-way. This shall be determined by the applicant via Zimas or NavigateLA prior to submitting an application.
10. Improvements **shall not** be under freeway bridges or overpasses.
11. Improvements that require review and approval of access ramps, sidewalks, driveways, streets and pedestrian plaza spaces (and any other elements utilized by pedestrians or vehicles) **will not** be approved through the Adopt-A-Median Program. Furniture/benches will be reviewed on a case by case basis and may only be installed in areas that have existing ADA compliance.
12. The applicant will be responsible for the cost of all improvements, including the fees associated with any water meter installations from the Department of Water and Power (DWP). Fees for water meter service (monthly bills) may be funded by the City on a case-by-case basis.
13. Letters of support from neighborhood groups, Council Offices shall be included in the Adopt-a-Median application submittal. It is recommended to review all above requirements prior to obtaining letters of support.

All projects will require a Revocable Permit and an "A" permit. The Revocable permit and an A-permit shall be obtained on your behalf by Board of Public Works, Office of Community Beautification (OCB) staff. All fees associated with a revocable permit and an A-permit shall be waived. For projects requiring a B-permit, your organization is responsible for applying for a B-permit with the Bureau of Engineering, coordinating the associated project review, and and pay all applicable permit fees.

An "**A**" **Permit** (LAMC 62.106.a) is issued only for the repair, construction or reconstruction of curbs, sidewalks, driveway approaches or gutters, and work appurtenant to the foregoing, or work within a public easement, where the work contemplated is limited in extent and can be constructed to match existing grades without a survey or engineered plans.

The purpose of the **Revocable Permit (R-Permit)** is to grant conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way by private parties not authorized to occupy the right-of-way. The R-Permit review process ensures that encroachments are checked for compliance with the City's specifications for design, use, material, and inspection.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PERMITS ISSUED BY THE BUREAU OF ENGINEERING, PLEASE VISIT: <https://eng.lacity.org/permits>**

## **TRASH RECEPTACLE PROJECTS**

Neighborhoods wishing to improve quality of life issues with the installation of new trash receptacles may apply to do so through the Adopt-A-Median Program. The following list is what you will need to submit to the Office of Community Beautification:

- **Adopt-A-Median Neighborhood Partnership Agreement**
- **Adopt-A-Median Waiver of Liability**
- **A signed letter of support from the Council Member who oversees the project site.**

- **A Maintenance Agreement signed by the maintenance entity-** Please include a maintenance schedule. Keep in mind that if a 3<sup>rd</sup> party will be used to maintain the receptacles, this 3<sup>rd</sup> party will NOT be covered under the City of L.A.'s insurance. Appropriate proof of insurance must be uploaded to the City's Kwik Comply website before permits are issued.
- **A one-page listing of each trash receptacle to be placed, and its installation location.** Each receptacle should be numbered. Also include the approximate address of the receptacle.  
ie: RECEPTACLE 5 – 347 E. 1st St Los Angeles, CA 90012
- **A map of the general area and placement locations of each receptacle.** A mapping program such as Google or NavigateLA (www.navigatea.lacity.org) is acceptable. This can also be drawn. Add red dots on the map to indicate where the receptacles will be placed.
- **A photo showing the placement of the receptacle at each location.** A symbol (in red), or image of the receptacle should be used on the diagram to indicate its placement.
- **Technical information about the receptacles.** This should include the receptacle's dimensions, weight, type, and vendor contact information. A picture of the receptacle should be included as well.
- **Information detailing how the trash receptacle will be anchored to the ground.** Please include the type of bolt, the size of the bolt, and the information for the contractor performing the work.

### **~EXTRA INFORMATION~**

- ✚ All requests will be reviewed to determine that there is no conflict with the City's Coordinated Street Furniture Program or other existing City agreements or contracts.
- ✚ All receptacles placed on the public right-of-way must be approved by the Bureau of Engineering.
- ✚ Once the Adopt-A-Median review has been complete the Bureau of Engineering will issue a "Revocable" Permit (granting conditional encroachment of the public right-of-way by private parties) and an "A" Permit (allowing the cutting into the sidewalk).
- ✚ All receptacle placements must follow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations to allow wheel chair access in the sidewalk area around the receptacle:
  - ✚ Suggested 5 feet (minimum 4 feet) required from the receptacle to the nearest obstructions and subgrade equipment (tree wells, poles, traffic control boxes, news racks, hydrants etc...)
  - ✚ Minimum 2 feet required from the receptacle to the curb face.
  - ✚ Minimum 4 feet required from the far-end of the receptacle to the property line.
  - ✚ Minimum 6 feet from edge of driveways

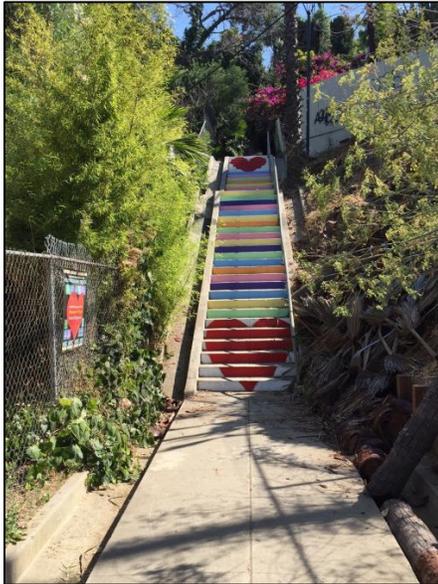


### **MURAL PROJECTS**

The AAM Program will accept a mural project if it is to be painted on City-owned property. City owned property primarily consists of: public staircases, bridges, and retaining walls. Although murals do not need to have any permits issued, they must be registered with the City of L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs, and be approved by the Bureau of Engineering. Since the AAM is a program with the Board of Public Works, we act as the intermediary between the constituent group and the Bureau of Engineering.

The process begins by registering the mural with the Department of Cultural Affairs. Please visit: <http://culturela.org/murals/>

Cultural Affairs will then contact our office and forward all the necessary information to initiate the AAM review process for the proposed mural project.



### **BUREAU OF STREET LIGHTING**

For any projects involving light poles owned by the Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL), all review and approval for such projects come directly from them. The process of going through the Board of Public Works for adoption of a project is bypassed, and any necessary authorization will be granted by BSL.

-----

**Please allow a minimum of 3 months completion for an initial review.** Once the project has been adopted by the Board of Public Works, there is a period of up to 3 weeks until permits are issued. Once you receive permits and all conditions are met, please contact the Bureau of Contract Administration prior to commencing work, for inspection. If the improvements involve digging, please contact DIG-Alert prior to digging. Please refer to the reverse side of the A-permit for further instructions.

For more information, please contact the Office of Community Beautification, Assistant Director Gerry Valido, who oversees the program, at (213) 978-0225 / [gerry.valido@lacity.org](mailto:gerry.valido@lacity.org).

-End-