

# Artist envisions murals in Rapid City alleys

# Murals:

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■ Art proponent wants the city council to adopt a 'mural ordinance' he says will turn a 'trashed' area into a focal point.

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By Bill Harlan  
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A Rapid City musician, artist and self-described art "gallery volunteer" wants to put large murals on the back walls of buildings in a downtown alley.

"We have a vision for this alley, even though it's pretty much trashed," Todd Rigione told members of the Rapid City Council on Wednesday. He calls the vision "Art Alley."

Rigione asked the council's Legal and Finance Committee how he could get permission for the murals, which likely would run afoul of a city sign ordinance.

The murals would line the alley that runs between Main Street and St. Joseph Street, between Sixth and Seventh streets.

Rigione told aldermen that groups promoting downtown Rapid City often said the downtown core needed a center or a focal point. "I believe it already exists, between Sixth and Seventh," he said.

Rigione already has tested his idea, using a slide projector to project large images of paintings and photographs onto walls in the alley. He did it during a Kitchen Sink Gallery show in June and again during "The Poetry Slam" on Sept. 19.

The first mural Rigione proposes would reveal a family looking at an art exhibit. Rapid City painter David Horan will create the image based on an old photograph of a family at an art gallery. Rigione showed aldermen what the photo

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Photo courtesy of Todd Rigione

Murals in a downtown alley would look like this image of a family at an art exhibit that was projected onto the back wall of a building downtown. A Rapid City artist wants the city council to adopt a "mural ordinance" that would allow permanent murals downtown.

looked like when he projected it onto the back of the building at 514 St. Joseph St.

Elements of buildings also could serve as elements of the murals, he said. An image he projected of George Washington and other founding fathers, for example, gave the impression they were sitting at a table. The table was a nearby rooftop.

The Legal and Finance Committee voted to recommend that city attorneys write a sample mural ordinance the city council could consider.

Meanwhile, Rigione is moving ahead with the project. A \$2,500 donation from local doctors helped kicked off his fund-raising drive, he said.

Rigione also will have to get permission from the building owners. Mayor Jim Shaw, for example, owns 514 St. Joseph St. Shaw said Wednesday that he didn't know much about Rigione or the Art Alley project, but he said it sounded interesting.

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