

Transformer Box Wrap Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Which SMUD customers are eligible to apply for the program?

Business Associations, individual businesses, commercial property owners and managers, homeowners' associations (for transformer boxes in common areas only), public agencies and community arts councils and commissions may apply. Residential properties are NOT eligible for this program.

Why is there no residential program?

SMUD developed its program based on the "best practices" of successful transformer and arts commission programs in the U.S. and Canada. Issues related to property ownership, box ownership, rights of way, permits and insurance requirements, as well as community review and approval are more consistent and better defined in public places.





Which transformer boxes are eligible to be wrapped?

As an Art in Public Places program, only transformer boxes on commercial property, public property and “common areas” of neighborhood associations and apartment complexes will be considered. Boxes on private residential property and in neighborhoods in general will not be considered. Final approval to install wraps is made in collaboration with the appropriate city, county or other local government.



Can I paint or wrap a SMUD transformer box myself?

No. Any kind of painting directly onto the surface of a transformer box is not allowed and would be considered vandalism. Wraps that are approved by SMUD must be installed by vendors qualified to work around high voltage electrical equipment. Also, as a regulated electric transformer, SMUD must follow strict federal, state and local guidelines related to its transformer boxes and other facilities. SMUD designed its Transformer Box Wrap Program to assure those requirements are met, and to ensure the personal safety of those who work with and around electrical facilities, as well as the public’s safety and the safety and integrity of the electrical system.

Who can install a wrap?

Wraps must be installed and maintained by qualified vendors approved by SMUD. To be considered qualified, vendors need to carry proper amounts of liability and workers’ compensation insurance as required by SMUD.

What is the cost for wrapping a transformer box?

The applicant can usually expect an installation cost between \$1,000–\$2,500 per wrap, but that will depend upon artwork, box size, number of boxes to be installed, location(s) and other factors. The wrap vendor fees include material, printing and installation. The wrap is to be printed on high quality, SMUD-specified material—the same material used to wrap buses, cars and commercial vehicles.



Does SMUD make money on the program?

No, SMUD is a community-owned, not-for-profit electric utility. While SMUD is investing significant staff time in program development and support, the only financial relationship is between the wrap vendor and the applicant. SMUD accepts no money for participation in the program.

How long does a vinyl wrap installation last?

The term of the contract with SMUD is five years, which is within the expected life of the wrap. During that term, it is the applicant's responsibility to maintain the wrap. Each installation is unique, and the life of the vinyl depends on many factors including exposure to sunlight, weather and the surface onto which it is installed.

What if a vandal spray paints or "tags" my vinyl wrap?

SMUD specifies a vinyl wrap product that is designed to be graffiti-resistant and resistant to damage by adhesives. This should make clean-up easy for the applicant who has committed to maintaining the wrap for the five-year installation term.



Can I submit my own design or original artwork?

Yes, although it must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate local government and arts commission before it can be installed. You can submit your own artwork in AI, PDF, or PSD formats. These formats are most common because of the workability of the files, which helps prevent pixilation in the final prints. Please view the Custom Art guidelines for eligibility requirements, responsibilities and how to apply. If instead, you wish to use one of the pre-approved designs from the SMUD Design Gallery, then please view the Design Gallery guidelines.

How do I request approval for wrapping a SMUD transformer box?

Submit an application using the form found on this website. Once an application is received, SMUD evaluates the selected transformer box to determine whether it qualifies for wrapping. SMUD will respond to your request within two weeks of your submission. If you applied using a pre-approved image from the SMUD Design Gallery and your selected transformer box is approved, you'll be sent a wrap agreement detailing all your responsibilities. If you submitted an original artwork for the wrap, SMUD will first provide contact information to the appropriate local agencies for any specific municipal approvals. Once all materials are approved by SMUD and all necessary local agencies, you'll then be sent a wrap agreement along with the rest of the information.