

A. OVERALL THEMES

1. DESIGN & AESTHETICS

- **Common praise:** Some liked the *bright colors*, *detailed wildlife*, and *energy* of the murals.
- **Common criticism:**
 - **"Too busy" or cluttered:** Many feel the murals are visually overwhelming.
 - **"Disjointed and disproportionate":** Elements like animals and landscapes feel pasted together without flow or scale.
 - **"Tacky or gaudy":** Strong objections to what some called “graffiti-like,” “cartoonish,” or “cheap.”
 - **Mismatch with Los Alamos:** Several say designs look like generic Southwest art rather than *specific* to Los Alamos.

2. CONTENT ACCURACY & REPRESENTATION

- **Flora & fauna:**
 - **Roadrunner criticism:** Widely mentioned as inaccurate; "we don't have them here."
 - **Requests for more representative wildlife:** Bears, deer, elk, mountain lions, coyotes, woodpeckers, local birds (e.g., raven, towhee).
 - **Plant realism:** Saguaros and desert motifs were rejected; people asked for *ponderosa pines*, *aspens*, and *piñon*.
- **Cultural & scientific representation:**
 - Many asked to reflect Los Alamos’s **scientific and historical identity** – LANL, the Manhattan Project, or cultural heritage like **petroglyphs** or **Pueblo art**.
 - Some asked for local or indigenous artists to be involved or featured.

3. LOCATION & SUITABILITY

- **Justice Center wall:**
 - Concerns about *visibility* and *driver distraction*.
 - Objection to drawing attention to the jail.
 - Some think this location deserves something more "serious" or appropriate to its function.

4. SPENDING & PRIORITIZATION

- **Opposition to cost:**
 - Many objected to the **\$55,000 price tag**, citing better uses for funds (housing, healthcare, infrastructure).

- A few described this as “wasteful,” “elitist,” or “out of touch.”

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Design Adjustments:

- **Use local flora & fauna:** deer, bear, elk, acorn woodpecker, piñon jay, etc.
- **Replace or remove:**
 - Roadrunner (seen as inaccurate)
 - Saguaros and other desert imagery
 - “Glitches” or scribbles (seen as random or distracting)
- **Make it cohesive:** Improve proportion and composition.
- **Simplify:** Fewer elements, better flow, more calm visuals.

Representation:

- Add **Los Alamos-specific identity:**
 - Science symbols (lab, satellites, discoveries)
 - Cultural heritage (Pueblo symbols, petroglyphs)

FINAL TAKEAWAYS

This feedback reflects a **divided but engaged community**, with strong interest in *place-specific, cohesive, and meaningful public art* that reflects **Los Alamos's identity—nature, science, and culture**. However, the current designs are widely seen as **too generic, busy, or off-message**.

B. Summary of Q3:

"Do you prefer one design, but wish it included elements from another?"

This breakdown clarifies what respondents prefer and what they'd like to combine, to help inform a clearer, more focused mural design decision.

General Preferences by Design (and Desired Elements from Others)

Option 1 preferred, but want elements from:

- **Option 2**
 - *"Wish design option one could include the crow (or actually a raven) from design option two."*
 - *"I'd love to see the western tanager bird in Option 1."*
- **Option 3**
 - *"Answered that already—but the vibrant colors of the wildlife from 1 with the cultural background of 3."*
 - *"Like #1 choices of flora and fauna but without the scribbles."*
 -

Option 2 preferred, but want elements from:

- **Option 1**
 - *"I like the prickly pear cactus in #1 better than #2 (but like #2 best overall)."*
 - *"Overall I prefer the more traditional #2, but the #1 design has apricots and deer and cactus that are wonderful."*
- **Option 3**
 - *"I think we should have local birds and plants, not a road runner."*
 - *"I like #2 best but wish it had a roadrunner."*
 - *"I like the muted colors of option 3 but like the concept and content of option 2 better."*

Option 3 preferred, but want elements from:

- **Option 2**
 - *"Bring the deer and acorn woodpecker from Mural 2 into mural 3. Remove the roadrunner. Add a lizard."*
 - *"I like the cultural one but with more nature elements."*
 - *"The backdrop of the mesas from design 2 would improve design number 3."*
 - *"I like how 3 blended in better so it didn't feel so out there, but it was too much brown."*
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Requested Elements to Include Across Designs

Element	Comments
Local Animals	Deer, elk, bear, lizard, raven, mountain bluebird, acorn woodpecker
Birds (General)	“More birds,” “Western tanager,” “Raven from 2,” “Ditch dove for bluebird”
Plants	Prickly pear cactus (prefer flowering), apricots
Petroglyphs	“Include petroglyphs in Option 2”
Cultural Elements	“More cultural references,” “Serene Southwest” over “Cultural References”
Natural Scenery	Ponderosa pine, mesas, blended muted colors
Design Qualities	“Less disjointed,” “Better contrast,” “No scribbles,” “More realism”

C. Analysis of Q4

“Is there something missing from these designs that you’d like to see added? (For example, local plants, animals, symbols, or colors.)”

Total Responses: 78

Responses that Suggested Additions: 45

Responses that Said "No" or Gave a Negative Answer (i.e., no suggestions): 33

Most Mentioned Animals

Animal	Mentions
Bear	8
Coyote	6
Deer	5
Elk	5
Roadrunner (opposed)	~5 (mostly negative mentions)
Mountain Lion	2
Bobcat	2
Pinon Jay	1
Whiptail Lizard	1
Gopher	1
Wild horses	1
Acorn woodpecker	1
Geese (in a flock)	1
Snail	1

Plants and Trees		Symbols and Cultural References	
Plant/Tree	Mentions	Symbol/Reference	Mentions
Ponderosa Pine	5	Zia Symbol	3
Aspen Trees	4	New Mexico State Flag	1
Yucca	1	Lab equipment (e.g., sat dish, Omega bridge)	2
Prairie Flower	1	Main Gate / History of Los Alamos	2
		“Los Alamos, where discoveries are made” slogan	1
		People / Society / Culture / Equity	1

Landscapes and Geographic Features

- Mountains – 3 mentions
- Rio Grande – 2 mentions
- High-elevation flora/fauna – 2 mentions
- Los Alamos/Mesa/Vistas – several mentions indirectly (e.g. subtle beauty, mountain sunsets)

Conclusion

- **Majority (58%) want changes/additions** to better reflect **Los Alamos-specific** nature, culture, and identity.
- **Common critique:** Current designs don't reflect the **real Los Alamos**—either ecologically, culturally, or aesthetically.
- **Top requests:** More **mountain wildlife** (bear, elk, deer, coyote), **ponderosa/aspen trees**, and **symbols tied to Los Alamos or NM culture**.

D. Analysis of Q5

"Is there anything in your preferred design you would like to see removed or changed?"

Total Responses Analyzed: 70

Responses Suggesting a Change or Removal: 36

Responses Indicating No Change Needed (e.g., "No", "N/A"): 34

Criticism of Inaccurate Flora

- **Saguaro cactus** mentioned multiple times as inappropriate for Los Alamos:

"We don't have saguaro cactus in these parts... not a cartoon representation of what people think the southwest looks like."

- Desire for **mountain landscape** over **desert motifs**
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Animal-Related Critiques

Animal/Symbol Comment Summary

Roadrunner Multiple mentions that it's **not commonly seen in Los Alamos**; seen as inaccurate.

Western Tanager Suggested removal in favor of **raven**.

Dove One suggestion to **ditch the dove**, replace with **mountain bluebird**.

Birds in General Comments on **disproportionate size** or awkward positioning.

Animal Sizing Frequent concern about scale not matching surrounding elements.

Calls for Better Local Representation

- Design doesn't reflect **Los Alamos**:

"None of them represent Los Alamos."

"Cactus is more natural to parts of NM south of us but not really Los Alamos."

- More **cultural or community-based content** requested:

"Use cultural references rather than more flora & fauna."

"Community based art wall."

Summary Table

Theme	Mentions / Comments
Too busy / cluttered	6–7
Roadrunner not representative	5
Cactus inappropriate	3
Abstraction issues	3–4
Scribbles / spray paint	3
Animals/birds unrealistic size	4–5
Suggest more mountain landscape	3
Want cultural or historic touch	3
Specific replacements (e.g. birds)	2–3
No change needed	34

Conclusion

- Roughly **half the respondents want changes**, mostly to make the design more **realistic, locally accurate**, and **visually cohesive**.
- Key removals requested: **saguaro cacti, scribbles, disproportionate animals**, and **elements viewed as not reflecting Los Alamos**.
- There is **no strong consensus** on style (abstract vs realistic), but accuracy to **local nature and culture** is a unifying theme.