



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 11, 2026

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – PROPOSED REVISIONS TO INCLUDE AN ART CROSSWALK AND PAVEMENT MURAL PILOT PROGRAM

ISSUES:

Review of proposed revisions to the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to include establishment of an Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program as a local street secondary mitigation measure option under the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Establish new Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program as a local street secondary mitigation measure option under the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

BACKGROUND:

The Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) was designed to provide general guidelines for the assessment of traffic issues on local, collector, and arterial roadways throughout the City as well as outline various traffic mitigation measures which may serve as suitable solutions to demonstrated traffic issues.

On August 10, 2023, the Mobility and Infrastructure Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council reinstate the use of speed humps as a local street secondary mitigation measure option under the NTMP and establish an art crosswalk and pavement mural pilot program as another local street secondary mitigation measure option under the NTMP. While staff brought the speed hump item to City Council shortly after the Committee decision, the art crosswalk & pavement mural discussion was omitted pending projects and funding that would help advance construction of such improvements.

DISCUSSION:

As a key element of the City of Riverside's vision is "to inspire everyone through meaningful arts and cultural experiences", potential use of art crosswalks and pavement murals to beautify and better define pedestrian and bicyclist spaces while increasing motorist visibility of the areas in an effort to improve safety would both align with the City of Riverside's artistic and roadway safety goals. To examine the potential benefits, impacts, and costs of art crosswalk and pavement mural improvements, the Public Works Department is proposing a revision to the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) to establish an Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program as a secondary mitigation measure option for local roadways. The proposed pilot program would allow for selection of locations for temporary art crosswalk and pavement mural improvement projects, selection of artists and designs, community outreach, post-implementation evaluations of the project sites to assess enhancements in the areas of beautification and pedestrian and bicyclist safety associated with the improvements to determine effectiveness, and examination of the longevity of the materials and artwork.

The pilot would also facilitate installation of art crosswalks and pavement murals in association with larger capital improvement projects and in collaboration with community organizations. For example, the Riverside Civil Rights Walk includes several art crosswalks, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements associated with the Mission Heritage project include a proposed art crosswalk, and the City is also partnering with the Riverside Blue Zones to install an art crosswalk at the intersection of Magnolia at Farnham.

The City's core Downtown is already adorned with numerous examples of artistic displays that the public can enjoy with murals on private property walls, Mariposa Alley, incorporation of artistic elements into new building construction, prominent statues along the Main Street Pedestrian Mall, and other artistic features that attract residents and visitors to Downtown. Public art adds value to the cultural, aesthetic, and economic vitality of our communities and many residents only experience art within public space. Riverside is home to exceptional artistic talent and public art affords opportunities for artists to showcase their gift which cultivates an environment for creative individuals to thrive. Public art within neighborhoods or highly visited locations can be an investment in placemaking which is measured by the livability and quality of life but can also engender community pride. The Public Works Department services over 400 traffic signals Citywide and each signal is supported by a signal controller/equipment housed in a signal cabinet. Most traffic signal cabinets are located near the intersection and are visible to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians and are excellent locations for public art. The proposed pilot project would expand the City's use of artwork for beautification and cultural enhancement to create greater visual enjoyment, a more vibrant and broader cultural experience, stimulate conversations and creativeness, and promote art appreciation, while also adding an important new element of augmented safety.

Promoting alternative modes of transportation including walking and cycling is also a focal point for the City's Public Works Department and enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety is essential for elevating active transportation within our city. Art crosswalks are a common intersection treatment across Southern California which bring greater attention and awareness to the defined crossing area, may aid in reducing traffic speeds, may create a more comfortable pedestrian and/or cyclist environment, may improve motorist yield compliance, and most importantly may aid in reducing pedestrian and/or cyclist involved collisions. The selected designs utilized may include artistic enhancement of existing marked crosswalks to bring heightened awareness to

the crossings, extension of space for walkers and cyclists by including painted curb bulb-outs to shorten the crossing distance, and/or murals at the center of the intersection to elevate driver awareness and slow traffic through the intersection.

The City of Riverside proposed pilot project location criteria would focus on sites with the following:

- Existing marked pedestrian crosswalks and ADA ramps;
- Existing street lighting at or in close proximity to the crossings;
- Higher levels of pedestrian crossing activity; and/or
- On routes to schools, libraries, or other key cultural or Downtown locations.

The California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Chapter 3H – Colored Pavement, contains standards and guidance regarding the placement and nature of aesthetic surface treatments including purely aesthetic surface treatment for the interior area of a crosswalk such as Art Crosswalks and Pavement Murals. As part of the Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program, Traffic Engineering Staff will continue to apply the MUTCD Aesthetic Surface Treatments standards.

A recent study commissioned by Bloomberg Philanthropies (Attachment 1) found that asphalt art is associated with measured reductions in the number of injury collisions at a site. The study included seventeen locations in Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York. Sample pavement art referenced in the study included a broad range of artistic elements, colors and configurations. The study had the following findings for sites with crosswalk art alone, notably finding that injury crashes were reduced by 31% despite certain increases. Specifically, the study states, “the negligible increases in overall and vulnerable user crash rates at improvement sites with crosswalk art alone may also be due to an increased rate of pedestrians, cyclists, and even motor vehicle traffic generated by site and nearby improvements. Despite a slight increase in overall (+1%) and vulnerable user (+8%) crashes at crosswalk art sites, **injury crashes were reduced by 31%.**”

The Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program as authorized via this report will be inclusive of crosswalk designs similar to those deployed successfully in other agencies, where configuration / spacing, designs, and colors may be more vibrant and denser than traditional crosswalk designs. Southern California agencies including Santa Monica, Lancaster, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Glendale, Palm Desert and more have deployed similar art crosswalks. When considering art crosswalks, Traffic Engineering would review the proposed artwork alongside the City’s Arts & Culture Division. Traffic Engineering would ensure that word messages or advertisements are not included as part of the artwork.

The proposed Art Crosswalk and Pavement Mural Pilot Program would also promote community engagement and involvement by allowing the immediate community to participate in selection of potential project locations, artwork motifs, and/or project designs and configurations. The Public Works Department would conduct public outreach to obtain input from the potentially impacted communities to gauge community support and review community feedback during the pilot project. Goals and metrics for each project would be developed to allow for post-installation assessment to determine effectiveness, longevity of the materials, and maintenance costs and this information along with public input will aid in assessing potential retention and maintenance of the improvements and formulation of recommendations regarding continuation and/or expansion of the temporary pilot program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are no fiscal impacts associated with establishing the pilot program. Costs for a new pavement mural or art crosswalk are estimated to range between \$10,000 and \$35,000 per installation based on the size of the project, materials, artist costs, and necessary traffic control for implementation and will be funded by budget availability on a case by case basis. In addition, Public Works plans to install art crosswalks as part of larger capital improvement projects and through partnerships with local organizations.

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Attachment: Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Safety Study