



Fred Carl Jr.
SMALL TOWN CENTER

Asphalt Art Toolkit



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
FRED CARL, JR. SMALL TOWN CENTER

Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center—2023

Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center

smalltowncenter.msstate.edu

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Introduction

About this Toolkit

Cities and towns globally are recognizing the potential of asphalt art to increase street safety and add renewed vibrancy to their communities. Even in small towns, asphalt art can have a huge impact. The goal of this toolkit is to share inspiration and provide a step-by-step guide to undertaking an asphalt art project in your town.

While there are many types of public art, asphalt art specifically refers to art applied onto roadways and/or sidewalks. Asphalt art can be relatively low-cost and can make an immediate positive impact in a community, even serving as a catalyst for future long-term improvements to public spaces.

This toolkit highlights several different types and scales of asphalt art projects, from formal city-backed programs to grassroots interventions by citizens and independent organizations. It also highlights key things to consider, including community engagement, approval processes, and tips for installation.



Benefits of Street Art



Asphalt art has many recorded benefits, including improving street safety, increasing public space's sense of character, and enriching the community through collaboration and interaction with the art.

Primarily, cities and towns are drawn to the utility of this kind of public art to make streets safer. Streets and intersections with asphalt art have been shown to encourage lower vehicular speeds, making the street safer and more accessible to pedestrians. Asphalt art in intersections and at crosswalks also increases the visibility of these pedestrian spaces to cars, prompting slower speeds and thus further improving safety conditions.

Additionally, public art adds renewed vibrancy and sense of place to public spaces, and asphalt art is no exception. Asphalt art can both reflect existing local character as well as add new character to previously neglected public spaces.



Case Studies

University Drive Corridor Connections

LOCATION

Starkville, MS

PROJECT LEAD

Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center

ARTIST

STC design team

TYPE

Corridor / crosswalks

INSTALLATION TIMELINE

5 days

MATERIALS

Gevecko thermoplastic stencils
AexcelCorp Biostripe soy-based paint

COST

\$85,000

The University Drive Corridor Connections helps connect the one mile stretch between downtown Starkville and the Mississippi State University (MSU) campus by adding new, artful intersection murals at three locations and crosswalks at nine key intersections. The mural and crosswalk series progressively leads pedestrians along the corridor, creating a safe and attractive means of connecting Downtown, Midtown, and the Cotton District.

Community input was achieved through several surveys that helped refine the design process and ultimately focus on a cowbell theme. Cowbells are a signature MSU icon and strengthen the identity of both community and campus. The cowbells progressively line the crosswalks and intersections along University Drive in this asphalt art project.

Mayor Lynn Spruill decided to involve the community in the painting process by hosting a community-wide event, called "Cowbells and Paint Pails," which included bands performing while people painted. The outlines of the cowbell shapes were created using thermoplastic for longevity, and the colors were added by volunteers using a low-VOC and biodegradable soy-based paint.

The success of these murals in Starkville inspired an initiative to implement asphalt art in eleven communities throughout Mississippi, as part of the USDA Rural Partners Network Project.





Glass Street Gateway

LOCATION

Chattanooga, TN

PROJECT LEAD

Glass House Collective
Chattanooga Department of
Transportation
Chattanooga Design Studio

ARTIST

Kevin Bate

TYPE

Corridor

INSTALLATION TIMELINE

10 days

MATERIALS

Behr Porch & Patio Floor Paint
Armorpoxy - Surface Bond
Asphalt & Concrete Coating

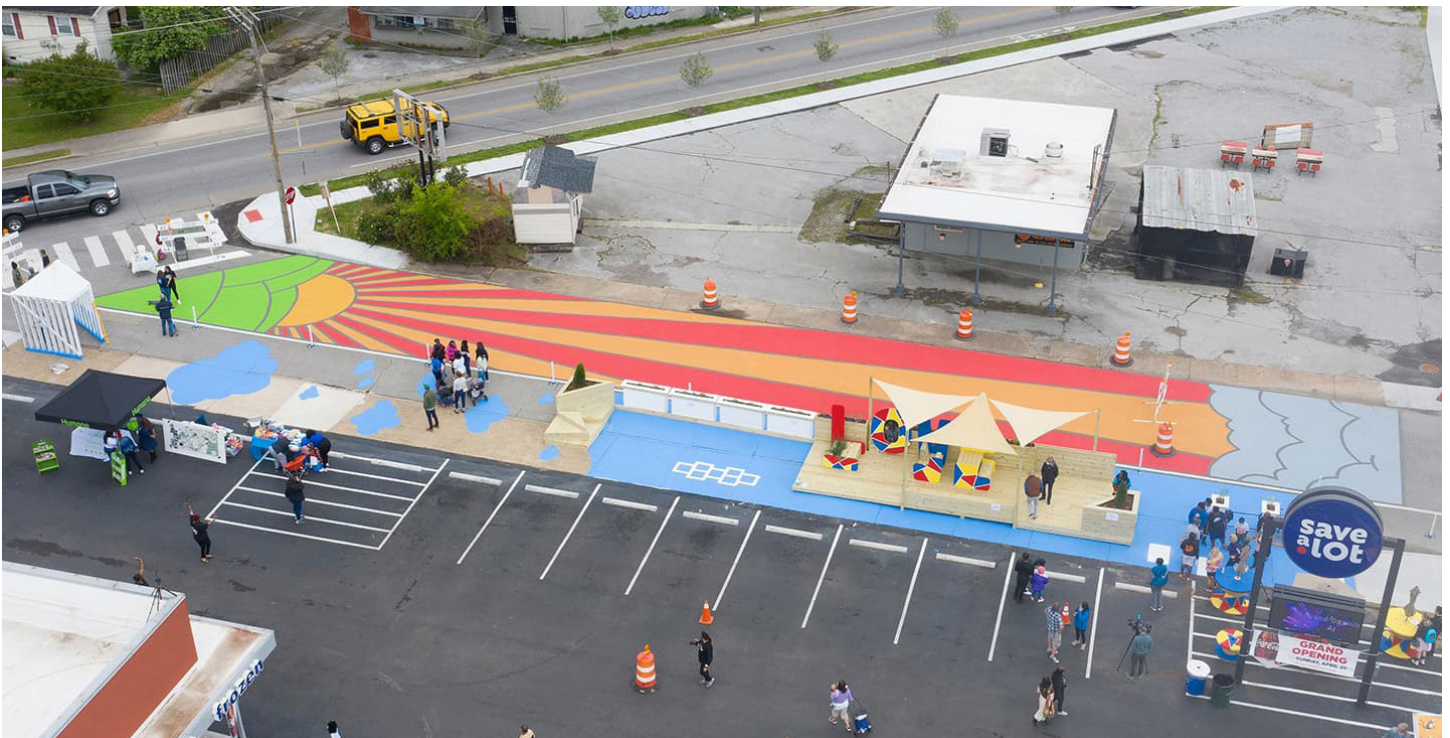
COST

\$51,563

The Glass Street Gateway in Chattanooga is an intersection of multiple residential neighborhoods and a high-traffic commercial thoroughfare. Creating spaces for residents to gather has been a years-long project, and keeping schoolchildren and other residents safe has required negotiating where and how vehicle traffic functions in the area. Crutchfield Street, which borders the newly opened grocery store in an area that historically was a food desert, was identified as an ideal candidate for a slow-down.

Local community nonprofit Glass House Collective partnered with the Chattanooga Department of Transportation and Chattanooga Design Studio to create a block-long asphalt mural. Designed by local artist Kevin Bate with input from the community, the mural was installed by a team of 3 artists. Additionally, a team of 35 artists and 150 neighbors and volunteers created community spaces around the mural to help activate the intersection and encourage foot traffic.

In addition to activating Crutchfield at the street level, artists worked with an additional 150 students and teachers at Hardy Elementary to expand the mural and mark safe walking paths in the area using stencils and wheat paste. The mural was unveiled at the grand opening block party for the new grocery store, along with a new community boardwalk and gathering space alongside the mural.





Aberdeen Elementary School Crosswalk

LOCATION

Aberdeen, MS

PROJECT LEAD

Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center

ARTIST

STC design team

TYPE

Crosswalk

INSTALLATION TIMELINE

1 day

MATERIALS

Sherwin-Williams SETFAST Traffic Marking Paint

This small intersection is important to foot traffic between Aberdeen Elementary School and the Early Childhood Center on North Long Street in Aberdeen, Mississippi. It was originally marked with two white lines with “no parking” stenciled at the edges. Parent pickup and drop-off also occurs at this location. Although this crossing was already marked, it had potential to be made brighter, more noticeable, and aesthetically pleasing.

The Small Town Center painted a playful crosswalk that encourages students to be aware of their surroundings and quickly move across the street. A more noticeable crosswalk also increased connectivity between the two school buildings, thus strengthening the campus. Crossing Long Street from the Aberdeen Elementary School to the Early Childhood Center was transformed with paint and a stencil. The 20 Diamonds pattern uses three paint colors and one stencil to create a fun and safe zone for pre-school age children crossing the street.

Pedestrian safety is an important lesson for children, and creating safe zones on the street is important for signaling to drivers that pedestrians are likely to cross. This project achieved both of these goals.





8th Avenue West & Center Street

LOCATION

Birmingham, AL

PROJECT LEAD

Create Birmingham

Birmingham Department of
Transportation

Birmingham Public Library

ARTIST

Lydia Walker

TYPE

Intersection

INSTALLATION TIMELINE

2 days

MATERIALS

Sherwin Williams Heavy Shield
Traffic Resistant Paint

COST

\$40,000

The intersection of 8th Ave West and Center Street is an anchor point of mobility, social infrastructure, and history in the Smithfield neighborhood. It serves as the main thoroughfare between the neighborhood and downtown, connecting residents to A.H. Parker High School, Smithfield Court public housing, and the Smithfield Branch Library.

To enhance this community gateway, local artist Lydia Walker was commissioned to activate the intersection with a large scale mural. Inspired by Smithfield's vibrancy, resilience, and historical importance, she created a colorful mandala with the West African adinkra symbols for knowledge and beauty.

In October, more than 120 volunteers came together to install the intersection mural during a "paint party" organized by Create Birmingham in partnership with the City of Birmingham. Upcoming improvements include enhanced lighting and sidewalk art around the Library plaza, a gathering place located on the northwest corner of the intersection, as well as a bus shelter to increase rider comfort and safety.





BIKE Noxubee

LOCATION

Brooksville, MS
Macon, MS
Shuqualak, MS

PROJECT LEAD

Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center

ARTIST

STC design team

TYPE

Intersections

INSTALLATION TIMELINE

1 day

MATERIALS

AexcelCorp Biostripe soy-based paint

COST

\$434.91

The BIKE Noxubee street art is one component of a bike share program implemented throughout the county as part of the Noxubee County Active Transportation Plan. The stencils were placed in intersections along key routes in each of the Mississippi county's major communities - Brooksville, Macon, and Shuqualak - to both mark the routes and advertise the bike share program.

The painting was completed in one day by the STC team. Each community was given a their own stencil to keep in order to add more along their routes later, if they so choose. This project showcases how street art can be simple and functional while still adding a pop of color and sense of place to a roadway.







Materials + Methods

GETTING STARTED

Project Initiation

Proposing a Project

To get an idea for an asphalt art project off the ground, the first step is to propose the project. In general, a project is started after a site needing intervention has been identified and someone with passion for the project is willing to get behind it and see it through.

While the initial proposal and approval steps can vary based on who is proposing the project, there are some common considerations to be taken at the beginning of any asphalt art project. The following pages outline some of these initial questions to answer during the proposal process.

Typically, an asphalt art project is initiated by one of two parties:

1. A community group or independent organization with a desire to achieve a common goal
2. A local government or municipal agency that has taken on the project based on previous planning or community requests



Assembling a Team

Ideally, the project team will consist of a leading party to manage the project as well as representatives from each entity collaborating on the project. Those leading the project will manage scheduling, budgets, and make any final decisions on the project, while collaborators will ensure that all relevant parties have a say in the design and implementation of the project.

Team members may include:

- Group proposing the project
- Site owner(s)
- Public works, transportation, or whatever other government department oversees the public right of way
- Community members who live, work, or own businesses near the project
- Artist or designer creating the design for the project

Establishing a Schedule

A critical step at the beginning of an asphalt art project is establishing deadlines for design and implementation as well as a timeline of milestone in order to achieve these deadlines. The scale of the project will certainly determine a lot of the timeline, but also take into consideration local factors that may determine certain deadlines or milestones, such as weather, holidays, or other important events.

For example, the Southern climate generally tends to have a very hot and rainy spring/summer followed by dry fall months -- with this in mind, you may want to plan for installation during the fall to avoid extreme heat or wet conditions. Be sure to check the local seasonal weather conditions for your area when setting asphalt art timelines.

Another local consideration is seasonal tourism. For example, your town may have an annual festival that draws in lots of visitors, or you may have a college or university in your town that makes traffic busier in the fall/spring. With that in mind, you may want to



schedule your asphalt art installation for a time that is less busy in town, or try to align the completion and reveal of a project with the start of an annual event to showcase the new art for visitors.

Overall, your schedule should act as a to-do list of tasks for coordinating with collaborators. Consider the following typical tasks as you outline your schedule:

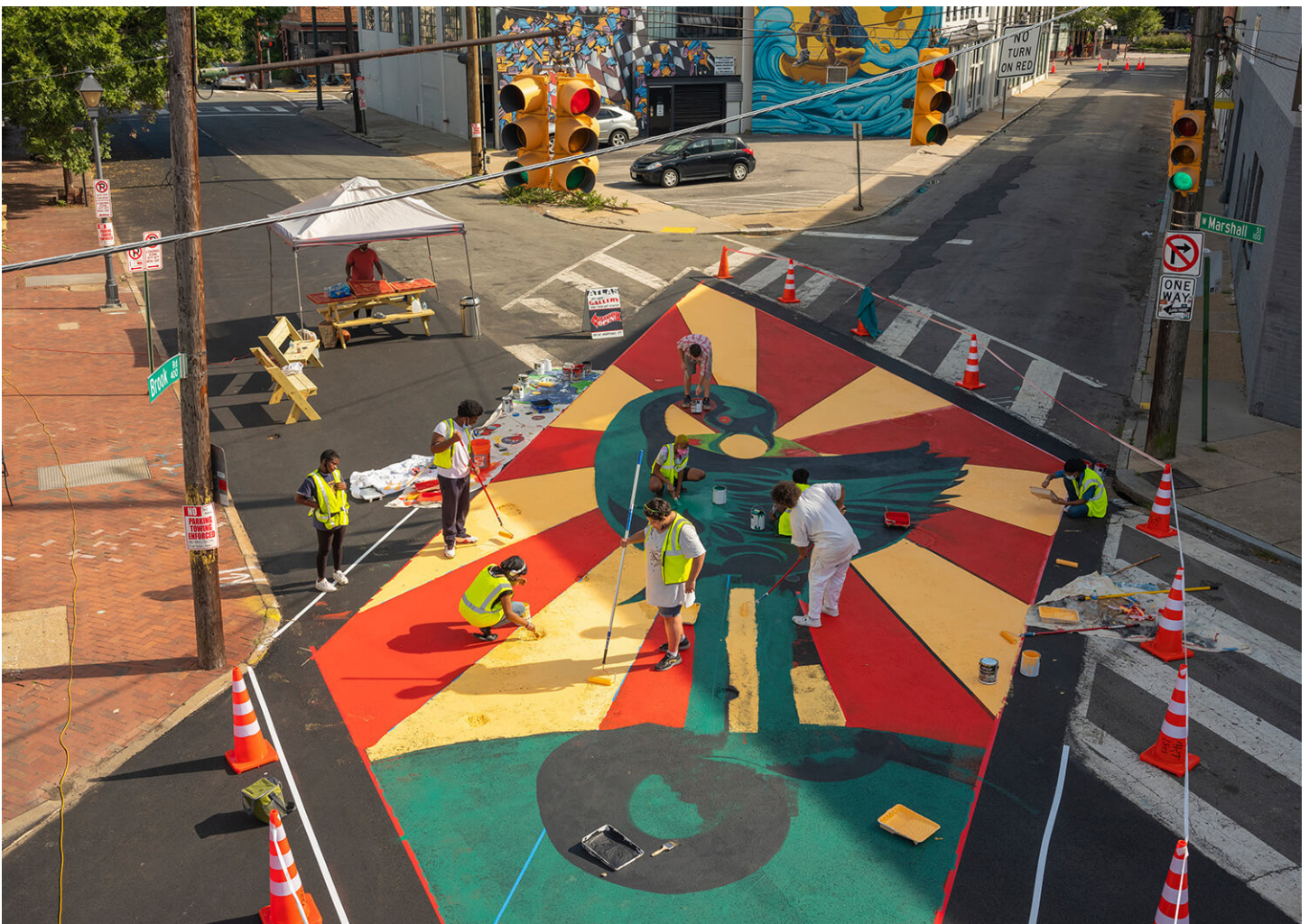
- Identify partners and stakeholders
- Evaluate the site
- Establish a budget
- Select an artist/designer
- Meet with local government (if needed)
- Engage the local community for feedback
- Develop finalized design
- Develop construction documents
- Acquire permits/traffic control
- Purchase supplies and materials
- Installation event preparation/staging
- Create maintenance and evaluation plans

Site Selection + Approval

There are several factors to consider when selecting a site for a new asphalt art project. A few questions to ask when determining a site include the following:

- What are the ultimate goals of the project? What site would ultimately help us achieve those goals? How would this site fit into goals already established in the community?
- What scale of art are you aiming for (crosswalk, intersection, full street, etc.)?
- Who owns or oversees the site? What entities have to be involved in the the design and permitting process?
- What are the existing street conditions? Do any infrastructural improvements need to be made to the pavement to make it possible to paint?
- Are there any existing crosswalks or striping? How will this interact with the design?
- Are there other existing street elements to take into consideration (ADA ramps, bus stops, electrical poles, parking, curb cuts, etc.) that may affect the proposed design?
- What kind of traffic control will the site require for installation?

Once a site is selected, find out who oversees the approval of asphalt art projects in your town. This could be the public works, transportation, or planning department, or even a decision to be made by a board of aldermen or similar governing body. Reach out to your local government to find out what the approval and permitting processes look like in your town, then compile all required documentation to move forward with that process.



Establishing a Budget

Asphalt art projects can be a quick and relatively inexpensive way to make a positive impact in your community. While there are ways to make these projects more affordable - for example, by receiving donations of supplies or recruiting volunteers - there are still hard costs associated with any asphalt art project. The following list breaks down potential costs that may be included in the budget, although not every item will be part of every project:

PLANNING

- Planning staff time
- Permit fees
- Legal fees
- Insurance
- Fundraising and fund management

DESIGN

- Artist/designer fees
- Production of design documents
- Sample materials

IMPLEMENTATION

- Materials and supplies
- Equipment
- Labor and fabrication
- Traffic control (police fees, barriers, traffic control fees)
- Event programming elements
- Storage or security for equipment, supplies, and personal belongings
- Opening celebration
- Documentation during installation

MAINTENANCE

- Labor and materials for project touch-ups
- Documentation post-installation



Potential Funding Sources

The following list provides a place to start when looking for funding for your asphalt art project:

Bloomberg Asphalt Art Initiative

<https://asphaltart.bloomberg.org/grants>

Mississippi Arts Commission Grants

<https://arts.ms.gov/grants>

National Endowment for the Arts Grants

[see: “Our Town” and “Grant for Art Projects”]

<https://www.arts.gov/grants>

South Arts Community & Organization Grants

<https://www.southarts.org/community-organization-grants>

Mississippi Main Street Community Development Grants

<https://www.msmainstreet.com/services>

Percent-for-Art Program

<https://artsandplanning.mapc.org/percent-for-art>

AARP Community Challenge

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge>

America Walks Community Change Grant

<https://americawalks.org/programs/community-change-grants>

Project for Public Spaces Community Placemaking Grants

<https://www.pps.org/community-placemaking-grants>

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a critical component of undertaking a public art project. Letting your community give input on the project - especially those residents who will interact with it frequently - will allow the design to better reflect the community's needs and desired character.

There are several methods to choose from for getting feedback from the community. These could include any combination of the following:

- Public survey
- Community meetings
- Feedback stations at public events
- Focus groups

These can be advertised in many ways, including flyers/posters, social media, community newsletters, and word of mouth. Some other creative ways to get the word out include placing handouts such as bookmarks or stickers with URLs or QR codes linking to the survey in public places.

Take this feedback into consideration as best you can throughout the design and implementation process, and consider getting additional feedback at multiple points throughout the process if needed.

Help us transform University Drive!

Take this survey and tell us what you think:



help us MARK THE MILE
between downtown and campus

The City of Starkville is one of only 26 cities from around the nation recently awarded a Bloomberg Philanthropies Asphalt Art Initiative grant. Secured by the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center, the grant helps connect the one-mile stretch between Starkville and the MSU campus. It is also intended to improve pedestrian safety through the implementation of temporary asphalt painting at multiple intersections.



Thank you for participating in the Hail Paint! project. Your feedback is valuable to help guide the design/creative and installation process that will take place along multiple University Drive intersections in July 2022.

The personal information you provide below will not be shared with anyone and cannot be linked to your personal identity. You will remain anonymous. We are gathering data so we can understand what demographics are participating in this process and what people are missing. Our goal is to gather as much input from the entire community as possible!

This process should only take 5-10 minutes of your time. Thank you for participating!

Art Selection + Design Review

Call for Artists

If seeking out an artist or designer for the project, it's essential to send out a call for artists. This call should outline the following details for potential artists:

- Project overview/scope of work
- Design goals
- Specifications (dimensions, pre-selected color palette, etc.)
- Timeline
- Estimated budget
- Application requirements

Involving local artists can also open doors to getting additional funding from local and state arts organizations, so prioritizing local artists could be a prudent financial move in addition to being the best possible way to reflect local artistic character.



Reflecting Local Character

Cultural identity and public art are mutually influential -- public art can (and should!) influence public art, and public art can influence and enhance a place's cultural identity.

The influence of cultural identity on public art can be seen in many "traditional" examples of public art, such as memorials and monuments to influential figures and events. This type of memorialization and commemoration of a place's history is an intuitive subject for public art, as art made for the public should be created with the intention of connecting to a place and its people.

On the other hand, public art provides an opportunity to influence cultural identity and assist in placemaking. This is especially significant when it comes to amplifying the voices of historically underrepresented groups.



Review + Approval

Some back-and-forth between the project team and the artist/designer is to be expected before approval. These reviews should be intended to ensure that the design meets all stated project goals as well as reflects the design character desired by the project team and the community. If needed, additional community feedback on the proposed design could be gathered during this phase.

For example, in more contemporary iterations of public art, there has been increased focus on not only telling previously untold stories through art but also highlighting the work and style of indigenous, African American, and other artists who belong to cultural minority groups. Creating a space for these artists to make their cultural art styles part of the public landscape is a way for public art to enhance cultural identity and tell the complete story of a place.

In planning for public art, attention should be paid to a place's cultural identity. Public art is meant for the public and should be created with the public in mind. The more a piece speaks to a place's cultural identity, the more the public will relate to and engage with a piece.



Once the project team has reviewed the design and come to a consensus, detailed construction documents can be prepared and approved by the team. These documents can then be pushed through the appropriate channels to get full approval from the city and other officials as necessary.

Materials

Painting Supplies

A typical list of materials for an asphalt art project might include some or all of the following supplies:

Paint that is specifically suited for adhering to asphalt and/or concrete, depending on the chosen application surface

Thermoplastic, an alternative to paint that is more durable but can be more expensive and requires professional installation

Stencil(s) either from a custom vinyl stencil shop or DIY stencils made using cardboard or other available materials

Tape (*painters' tape, duct tape, etc.*) for marking out designs and ensuring crisp lines

Chalk for initial design layouts before taping

Ruler/tape measure for measuring design layouts and for use as a straight edge

Paint rollers + brushes in various sizes (large for large areas, small for edging and details) for smooth paint application

Paint mixer (*paint sticks, drill attachment, etc.*) for prepping buckets of paint

Paint pans for holding paint and dipping brushes

Spill protection (*drop cloths, tarps, sheets of cardboard, etc.*) to keep paint off of grass, sidewalks, unpainted asphalt, etc.

Rags for cleanup

Trash bags to collect used roller covers, used tape, and other waste after painting

Utility vehicle for transporting materials



Miscellaneous Considerations

Other materials may be needed depending on the type of event that is planned for the day of installation. Consider the following for your painting day:

Signage to advertise and organize your event

T-shirts for volunteers

Volunteer waivers + pens

Reference images of street art design

Tents for shade

Tables to hold any volunteer paperwork, pens, extra supplies, personal belongings, etc.

Fans for cooling stations (if needed)

Water in a cooler for volunteers

Entertainment for the event



PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Preparation + Staging

Community Outreach + Event Planning

Once the design is finalized and ready for installation, the community can be notified! Advertising installation day is a great way to notify those who will be affected of road closures and to recruit volunteers. Getting volunteers from the community is a great way to cut down on installation costs as well as create an avenue for the community to be involved in the process in a hands-on way.

Installation day has the opportunity to be a fun community event! Consider getting custom signage, refreshments, and entertainment to draw more people out. Begin advertising the event well in advance in order to give volunteers time to sign up. Utilize posters/flyers throughout the community, community newsletters, and social media posts as various ways to advertise to different groups of people.

At this stage, it is also crucial to plan out a timeline for the day of installation. Include a time for set up, volunteer arrival, and an estimated timeline for painting and cleanup. Also be sure to plan an alternate day in case of unexpected delays such as weather. Make sure all necessary parties are aware of this schedule to ensure installation goes smoothly.



COWBELLS & PAINT PAIS

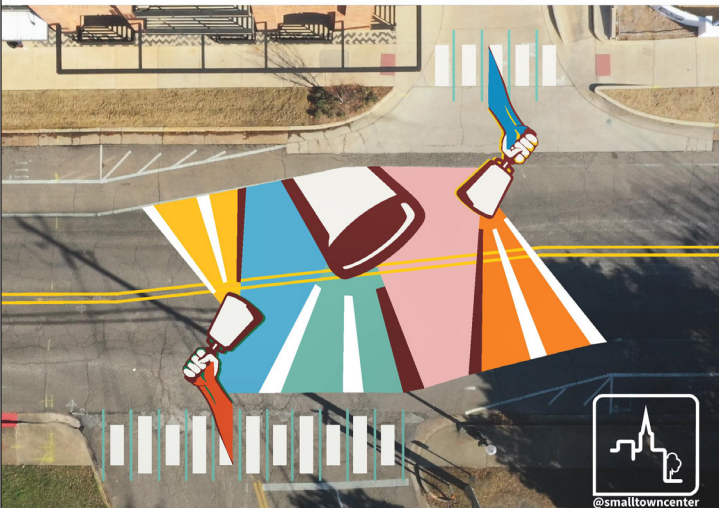
JULY 22, 2022
UNIVERSITY DRIVE
STARKVILLE MS




Time	Activity
8am	volunteers meet at intersection of University and N. Nash (Coconuts)
8am - 12noon	painting of murals at Fellowship and N. Nash
HEAT BREAK 12-3	
3pm	volunteers meet at intersection of University and Camp (Visual Arts Center)
3pm - 7pm	painting of mural at Camp

LIVE MUSIC!

BRING A LAWN CHAIR AND HANG OUT!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
AUGUST 4, 2022 . 3PM - 7PM
FELLOWSHIP DR
(IN FRONT OF HUMBLE TACO)



Prepping the Site

Before the day of installation, transport all of the necessary supplies to the site and set up anything that is possible to set up beforehand, such as tents and tables. This will speed up the process for the team on the day of. If it is available in your town, request street cleaning to be done before the day of as well.

On the day of installation, make sure traffic control is set up before any other site preparation takes place. If city street cleaning is not available or if debris has accrued on the street in the time after cleaning, use brooms or a blower to clear the pavement for easier paint application.

Storing + Staging the Supplies

Storing the materials on or near the site makes installation day much easier. Work with a local business or other property owner to arrange storage near the site if possible. Additionally, be prepared to be moving heavy materials while staging supplies - things such as 5-gallon paint buckets, tents, and tables should be handled by individuals capable of lifting these heavy loads!

On the day of installation, stage all of the supplies where workers and volunteers have easy and clear access to them. Place paint buckets and pans on cardboard, tarps, or other protective surfaces to avoid major spills. Additionally, designate individuals to mix the paint and help pour it into paint pans.

Project team leaders should be on site at all times to direct volunteers and ensure the design is installed correctly. Have those who are familiar with the design lay out chalk or tape lines for the volunteers to follow, and have drawings of the design on hand for reference.

See the following pages for an example of staging and materials.







PAINT MIXER

ASPHALT PAINT

PAINT ROLLERS



SPILL PROTECTION

PAINT PANS





Painting!

After all of the design and preparation is done, it's finally time for the main event: painting! Depending on the brand and type of paint you buy, there may be different application protocols - be sure to follow all instructions for application provided by the paint distributor.

Some general tips for painting include the following:

- Use smaller rollers or even brushes where necessary for edging and details.
- For large areas, pouring the paint directly onto the pavement and spreading it instead of dipping

from a paint pan can speed up the process. Just be wary of doing this on hot days, as the paint can dry quickly and create bubbles.

- Plan on applying at least two coats of paint. Also, be aware that different paint colors can require different amounts of coats to achieve full coverage - be prepared to be flexible on installation day to account for this!
- Allow the paint to dry for at least 24 hours before reopening the street, if possible.

Documentation

Be sure to document your installation to showcase your process and advertise the new art! Documentation could include photography, video, and even timelapses of the painting progress. This media can then be given to news outlets and shown to community leaders to highlight the project.

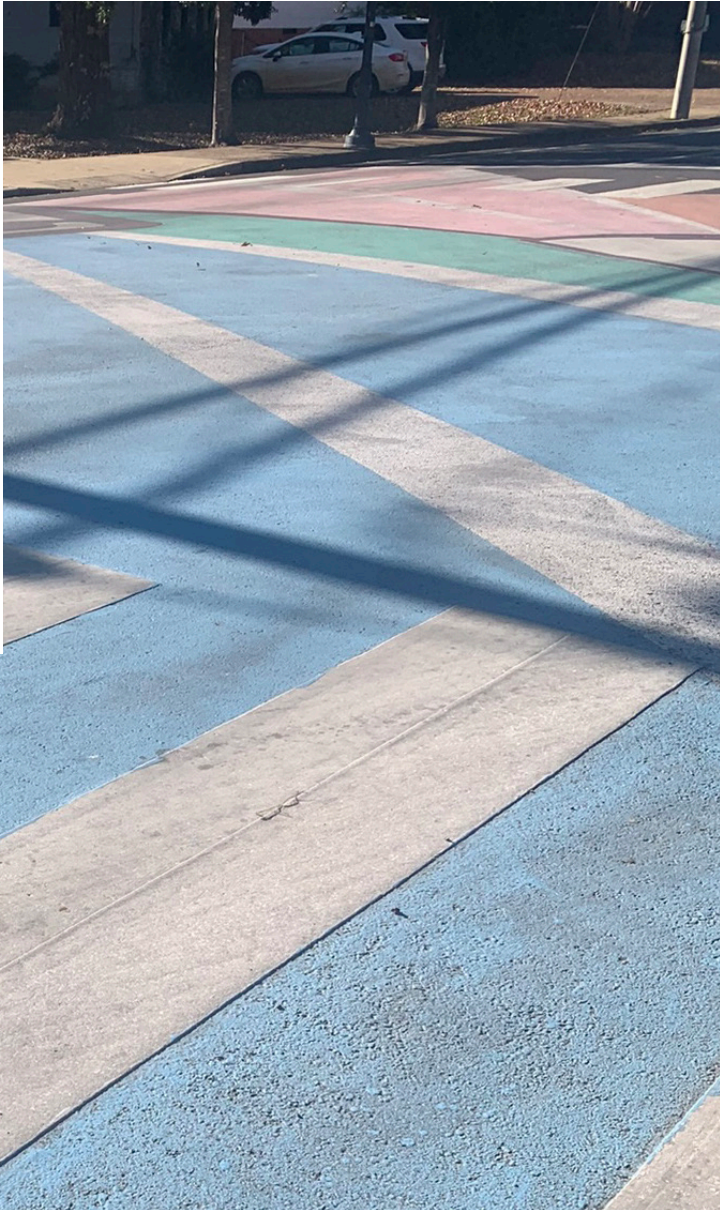


MAINTENANCE

Wear + Tear Considerations

Congratulations, your project has been installed! However, asphalt paint doesn't last forever and requires some maintenance and touch ups over time. Cars driving and pedestrians walking over the paint and different weather conditions can contribute to this deterioration. However, most asphalt art projects only need touch ups every year or so, and projects on less-busy streets can last for even longer.

Working maintenance costs into your original budget can make refreshing asphalt art down the line easier. Buying some extra supplies ahead of time - particularly extra paint in the right colors - cuts down on planning for maintenance in the future.



Stewardship

Establishing who will be responsible for maintenance of the project in the future is also crucial. This could be the organization that originally proposed the project, a municipal department, or a community group established for the sole purpose of being stewards for the art. No matter what party is designated for this stewardship, ensure that they have full access to any additional supplies left over after initial installation, as well as any information such as paint colors and construction documents that they might need for future reference while conducting maintenance.

EVALUATION

If you want to have a strong factual basis for creating more asphalt art projects in your town, or if the stipulations of a funding source call for metrics after installation, it is critical to do a post-install evaluation. This data not only provides proof of the project's success but also gives the project leaders information about what was successful and what was not as successful, which is valuable insight if and when they are to propose future asphalt art projects.

Some critical metrics to evaluate after installation could include some or all of the following, depending on your project's goals:

- Vehicle speeds before and after installation
- Pedestrian crossing behavior
- Foot traffic counts before and after installation
- Perception of safety before and after installation
- Frequency of use of the space before and after installation

This data can be collected in much the same way as initial community feedback, either through surveys, public meetings, or other engagement methods. Additionally, speed guns, digital counters, and other digital collection methods can be used to collect quantitative data on-site.





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