



Staff Report

TO: Economic Development Committee Members
FROM: Joseph Cale, Management Analyst
DATE: February 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Intersection Murals and Painted Crosswalks in Downtown Beaumont

Description Discussion and Direction on Potential Intersection Murals and Painted Crosswalks in Downtown Beaumont.

Background and Analysis:

At the most recent Economic Development Committee (EDC) meeting, the committee expressed interest in exploring the potential for incorporating intersection murals and painted crosswalks in the downtown area of Beaumont. The goal of this project is to slow down traffic, create a more vibrant, inviting atmosphere for visitors, and differentiate the downtown area from other parts of the city.

This report examines the pros and cons of such an initiative and offers potential points of discussion for the committee to consider.

Benefits of Intersection Murals and Painted Crosswalks

1. Traffic Calming:

- **Visual cues for drivers:** Painted crosswalks and intersection murals can serve as visual cues that encourage drivers to reduce speed, especially in high pedestrian traffic areas. Studies have shown that painted crosswalks, especially those with bold designs, tend to reduce vehicle speeds.
- **Safety Improvements:** Slower traffic speeds can lead to safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This is especially important in areas where foot traffic is expected to increase, such as in downtown centers or near popular attractions.

2. Enhanced Aesthetic Appeal:

- **Creative Expression:** Intersection murals can add vibrancy, character, and a sense of place to the downtown area. They serve as a form of public art that may become a point of pride for the local community.
- **Attract Visitors:** Aesthetic improvements such as intersection murals can act as a draw for visitors, contributing to the area's cultural identity.

Intersection murals can showcase local history, themes, or art, fostering a sense of uniqueness.

3. **Economic and Social Impact:**

- **Increased Foot Traffic:** By creating a visually appealing and pedestrian-friendly environment, these improvements could encourage more people to visit the area, thereby benefiting local businesses.
- **Public Engagement:** Intersection murals may present opportunities for local artists, schools, and community groups to be involved in the project, increasing community investment in the downtown area.
- **Tourism and Social Media Influence:** Well-designed intersection murals and creative crosswalks are often shared on social media, which could increase the downtown's visibility, potentially attracting more visitors and boosting local tourism.

4. **Low-Cost Infrastructure Improvement:**

- **Affordable Solution:** Compared to other infrastructure or traffic management solutions, painting crosswalks and intersection murals can be relatively cost-effective, especially when compared to building physical traffic barriers or adding additional signage.

Additional Items to Consider for Intersection Murals and Painted Crosswalks

1. **Maintenance Costs:**

- **Fading and Wear:** Over time, intersection murals and painted crosswalks fade due to weather conditions, pedestrian traffic, and vehicular wear. Regular touch-ups or repaints may be required, which could potentially incur maintenance costs.
- **Vandalism and Graffiti:** Public art, including intersection murals, can be subject to vandalism or graffiti. This may necessitate additional maintenance or restoration efforts, especially if the artwork is targeted for defacement.

2. **Traffic Congestion Concerns:**

- **Distraction for Drivers:** Although intersection murals and painted crosswalks are designed to calm traffic, there is a possibility that overly intricate designs could distract drivers and negatively affect driving behavior if not properly executed.
- **Potential for Confusion:** If not carefully planned, the placement and design of intersection murals and crosswalks could confuse drivers or pedestrians, especially if the markings are not clear or standardized.

3. **Funding and Resource Allocation:**

- **Budget Constraints:** While the project may be cost-effective, there could be competing needs for city funds. Ensuring that adequate resources are

allocated for planning, implementation, and ongoing maintenance could present a challenge in the context of other city priorities.

- **Long-term Sustainability:** Ensuring that the intersection mural and crosswalk project remains financially viable long term is critical. The city may need to consider how to fund repairs, updates, and potential expansions of this initiative. City Council recently adopted a sponsorship packet and painted crosswalks could be added to the packet.

4. **Community Approval and Preferences:**

- **Varied Artistic Preferences:** Intersection murals are subjective, and not everyone may agree with the designs or themes. Public input and community engagement should be considered to ensure that the project resonates with the broader community. A policy may need to be drafted and adopted to formalize the overall vision and expectation of the community.
- **Business Impact:** While some businesses may benefit from increased foot traffic, others may feel that the painted crosswalks or intersection murals distract from their own storefronts or brand identity. Understanding local business opinions will be essential.

Examples of intersection murals painted in 2021 located in Downtown Banning have been provided for reference (Attachment A).

The proposal to incorporate intersection murals and painted crosswalks into Beaumont's downtown area offers exciting potential benefits, including traffic calming, enhanced aesthetics, and increased economic activity. However, careful consideration of potential drawbacks, such as maintenance costs, traffic safety, and community preferences, will be essential to ensure that the project achieves its intended outcomes.

Murals can vary in costs depending on size, detail and the artist commissioned. Other cities have solicited donations and fundraising events to cover the costs of street murals. An on-going budget would be required for the touch-up costs and possible recommissioning depending on the fading and wear.

Recommended Action:

Discuss the points outlined above and provide feedback to be forwarded to City Council.

Attachments:

- A. Downtown Banning Intersection Paintings