



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

29

CONSENT CALENDAR
 September 24, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson
 Subject: Referral: Telegraph Crosswalk Art Installations

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the Civic Arts Commission to develop and return to Council with a plan to:

1. Create a public contest to design new crosswalk art on Telegraph at the intersections of Bancroft, Durant, Channing, Haste, and Dwight Streets.
2. Build the winning design on the intersections.

BACKGROUND

Crosswalk art installations are a simple, effective way to improve a community street. Such installations can improve the visual character of a neighborhood and help express the history of their community. Cities such as San Francisco, Vancouver, Portland, and Long Beach have celebrated their culture through painting unique designs on their streets.

Painting an intersection in bright colors can also improve safety and reduce conflict between different modes of transportation, especially when combined with the implementation of a scramble intersection. Artwork that sharply contrasts with unpainted pavement increases drivers' awareness of pedestrians crossing the street, which significantly reduces automobile accidents.¹ Following the installation of crosswalk beautification in Oakland, the rate of drivers stopping for pedestrians has increased 86 percent.² Telegraph Avenue is a zone of heavy foot traffic, particularly from UC Berkeley students who walk to and from campus every day.

Many cities across the country have installed colorful street art and received positive feedback from residents, visitors, and the media. A notable example can be seen in the City of San Francisco, which installed rainbow crosswalks throughout the Castro District to celebrate the city's rich LGBTQ+ history and community. Local residents appreciate the improved character and aesthetic of their streets, as well as the artistic expression and representation of their culture.

¹ <https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/creative-crosswalks-street-art-meets-safety-enhancement/526474/>

² <https://www.eastbayexpress.com/SevenDays/archives/2017/10/10/oakland-develops-new-approach-to-fixing-dangerous-intersections-faster>

Oakland has also recently implemented new crosswalk designs as part of its Paint The Town initiative, in which community groups partner with the city in street beautification efforts. The city emblazoned Chinatown's intersections with a pattern historically used in China's imperial court during the Qing Dynasty.³ The design is a culturally relevant and community-rooted way to improve pedestrian safety.

This proposal is consistent with the Telegraph Public Realm Plan, approved by the Berkeley City Council in 2016. The plan lays out a proposal to build scramble intersections at the intersections of Telegraph Avenue with Bancroft, Durant, Channing, Haste, and Dwight Way. Scrambles allow pedestrians to cross diagonally at an intersection, and are accompanied by vibrant paint treatments that direct motorists to yield. The plan states that if a scramble is not possible at any of these intersections, the City should consider installing crosswalk art regardless.⁴

The City of Berkeley should create crosswalk art for the historic Telegraph district to celebrate its unique culture and history. By inviting local residents to participate in the creative process through a public contest, the city has an opportunity to build a sense of community and civic pride. These street beautification efforts would showcase the vibrancy of Telegraph Avenue, encourage foot traffic to nearby businesses, and bring the city closer to its Vision Zero goals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost depends on the specific design and the potential for outside funding. Installation costs in the various cities that have implemented permanent crosswalk art range from \$4,000 in Portland⁵ to \$35,000 per crosswalk in West Hollywood.⁶ Staff and the Commission should also consider maintenance costs when making their recommendation.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact.

CONTACT PERSON

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³ <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2008/07/17/chinatown-more-pedestrian-friendly-2/>

⁴ <https://www.berkeleyside.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Telegraph-Public-Realm-Plan-Final-Low-Res.pdf>

⁵ https://www.oregonlive.com/commuting/2015/06/portland_unveils_citys_first_c.html

⁶ https://cdn.muckrock.com/foia_files/2018/06/18/PeerCities_RainbowCrosswalk_CaseStudyReport_August2015.pdf

Attachments:

- 1: City of San Francisco, Castro District: Rainbow crosswalk
- 2: City of Oakland, Chinatown: Qing Dynasty crosswalk
- 3: City of Seattle crosswalk, Exhibit A
- 4: City of Seattle crosswalk, Exhibit B



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