

Painted Intersections in Seattle

What is a painted intersection?

A painted intersection (also called “intersection repair”) is a mural that is painted by community groups on the pavement at the intersection of residential streets.

This photo shows the best example of a painted intersection in Seattle, which is located at Burke Ave N and N 49th St in the Wallingford neighborhood.



What’s the purpose of a painted intersection?

Painted intersections help give your community a sense of place, and are a great way to organize your neighborhood around a common goal. They may also have indirect effects on helping to slow traffic in your neighborhood by making drivers aware that this is a socially organized neighborhood, and helping encourage them to be respectful of the people that live there while driving down your street.

Are there any requirements?

Yes, quite a few, and you’ll need to get a permit from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to paint your intersection. But we’ll work with you throughout the process. Here are some of the rules and requirements.

1. Intersection paintings are only allowed on residential (non-arterial) streets.
2. Only the driving area can be painted, not the curb/gutters/sidewalks.
3. Only special paints (Rodda is one manufacturer) that have grit added to increase skid resistance are allowed
4. The design needs to be approved by SDOT. There aren’t many specific rules on designs that are acceptable. It can be abstract, or it can represent something. But it can’t mimic “official” pavement markings, such as stripes, to ensure that drivers aren’t confused. No words are allowed, and there are obvious things we can’t allow, such as advertising, and culturally insensitive images.
5. A petition is required to ensure that the community is on-board.
6. A temporary street use permit from SDOT is required, along with an annual street use permit.

How does the approval and permit process work?

1. First, call or email SDOT to let us know you’re interested in an intersection painting project. Contact Neighborhood Traffic at 206-683-0353 or by email at Christina.legazpi@seattle.gov.
2. Prepare a drawing to scale of your design concept and send it to SDOT. We’ll advise you on your conceptual drawing to make sure you are on track for approval prior to formal permit application. Neighborhood involvement in the design process ensures that you will have strong support for your project. Finalize your design for SDOT review and approval.

3. Circulate your design through the neighborhood and obtain a petition (SDOT will provide the necessary form) to ensure that your neighbors support the project and its final design. At least 60% of residences/businesses within one block of your project must sign the petition, and you also need to notify residents who live at the intersection.
4. Make a formal application for your street use permits. This will require 3 copies of full color scaled drawings. Please provide a minimum of 10 business days for SDOT Street Use to review and issue the permit. If there are errors that have not been corrected from the draft version, the review and permitting process may take longer.

Two permits are required. The first is a Temporary Street Use Permit to close the intersection for cleaning the pavement and painting your mural. Traffic control will be required. SDOT will prepare a traffic control plan for the community. Traffic control devices (barricades, signs) will be delivered and picked up on a first come/first served basis by SDOT. Only one set will be available on any given weekend. ***It is the applicant's responsibility to have sufficient traffic control devices to meet the traffic control plan.***

The second permit is an annual permit (currently \$103.00 for the first year, and \$97.00 for subsequent years. This allows for re-painting each year as needed to keep the colors vibrant. It's important to remember that annual re-painting is almost always required.

Is funding assistance available?

The *Neighborhood Matching Fund* (NMF) is a City of Seattle grant program administered through the Department of Neighborhoods. NMF provides cash grants to neighborhood and community organizations for a wide variety of neighborhood-based projects.

The Small and Simple NMF provides awards of \$15,000.00 or less. Applications are accepted four times each year and funds become available about two months after an application is submitted. A project must be completed within a six-month timeframe.

For most projects, the community is required to donate cash, volunteer labor or donated services or materials at least equal in value to the cash provided by the City of Seattle. For additional information regarding a proposed project you may contact the SDOT NMF liaison, Jennifer Britton by phone at 684-5171 or by email at Jennifer.britton@seattle.gov

The *Safe Routes to School Mini-Grant Program* provides assistance for groups to promote more biking and walking on established walking routes to schools. All accredited K-12 public and independent schools located within the City of Seattle are eligible to receive Mini-Grant funds. Groups can request funds up to \$1,000 to be spent within one calendar year. Groups eligible to apply for these funds include schools, PTA groups, Safe Route to School teams, Walking School Bus groups, other parent or teacher groups and neighborhood councils. For more information contact SDOT Safe Route to School Coordinator Brian Dougherty at 684-5124 or Brian.dougherty@seattle.gov