

© Copyright 2017

Cheryl L. Klotz

# **SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY STREET PAINTINGS**

Cheryl L. Klotz

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Planning

University of Washington

2017

Reading Committee:

Rachel Berney, Chair

Manish Chalana

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Urban Design and Planning  
University of Washington

University of Washington

**Abstract**

Supporting Successful Community Street Paintings

Cheryl L. Klotz

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:  
Assistant Professor Rachel Berney, PhD  
Urban Design and Planning

This thesis explores the history and current practice of Intersection-Repair-style street paintings in Seattle, WA and Portland, OR. It assesses relationships between functions street paintings perform and reasons people want to paint, and suggests that the better these factors align, the greater the likelihood of successful street painting projects that can contribute to city livability and sustainability goals. Street painting history was gathered via archival research, site visits, and interviews with city officials in Portland and Seattle and people from the City Repair Project in Portland. Seattle street painting organizers and participants shared their motivations and experiences via interviews and an online survey. After assessing street painting processes and outcomes in Seattle and comparing municipal guidance to that in Portland where the street painting phenomenon originated, this thesis suggests ways to improve Seattle's messaging and municipal rules and guidance to support better alignment between street painters' motivations and painting functions.

Keywords: City Repair, community design, intersection painting, Intersection Repair, municipal guidelines, neighborhood, neighboring, participatory art, place attachment, place identity, placemaking, public space, street mandala, street mural, street painting, tactical urbanism, traffic calming

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Acronyms .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of Study.....	1
1.2 Research Questions .....	2
1.3 Theoretical Frame .....	3
1.4 Bounds of Study .....	6
1.5 How to Read This Document .....	10
1.6 Methodology.....	11
<b>Chapter 2. Context .....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Definitions and Disambiguation of Street Painting .....	18
2.2 History of Street Paintings and Intersection Repair .....	27
<b>Chapter 3. Functions.....</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1 Why Think About Functions? .....	41
3.2 Functions Explored in This Chapter .....	44
3.3 The Problem with Traffic Calming .....	44

3.4	Claiming Space—Territoriality .....	51
3.5	Increasing Legibility.....	55
3.6	Placemaking .....	57
3.7	Fostering Place Attachment and Place Identity.....	64
3.8	Encouraging Neighboring.....	71
3.9	Functions Summary .....	73
<b>Chapter 4. Municipal Rules and Guidance .....</b>		<b>74</b>
4.1	Overview .....	74
4.2	Street Painting Rules and Regulations.....	78
4.3	Municipal Rules and Guidance Summary .....	95
<b>Chapter 5. Project Timelines and Profiles .....</b>		<b>97</b>
5.1	Chapter Overview .....	97
5.2	Portland Projects Summary 1996 to 2017 .....	97
5.3	Seattle Projects 2006 to 2017.....	106
5.4	Project Timelines and Profiles Summary .....	140
<b>Chapter 6. Motivations and Outcomes .....</b>		<b>141</b>
6.1	Many Motivations at Once .....	142
6.2	Traffic Calming .....	145
6.3	Looking Out for Each Other .....	148

6.4	Place Identity and Territoriality .....	150
6.5	Having Fun Together.....	153
6.6	Building Community Relationships.....	155
6.7	Increasing Capacity .....	167
6.8	Enhancing Place .....	174
6.9	Connecting Motivations to Functions.....	178
6.10	Motivations and Outcomes Summary .....	180
<b>Chapter 7. Recommendations and Conclusions .....</b>		<b>182</b>
7.1	Purposes of Street Paintings.....	182
7.2	Recommendations .....	183
7.3	Conclusions .....	199
<b>Bibliography .....</b>		<b>205</b>
<b>Appendix A: Municipal Ordinances and Guidance .....</b>		<b>215</b>
<b>Appendix B: Survey/Interview Protocol.....</b>		<b>234</b>

# LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Conceptual model: Supporting better alignment between the reasons neighbors paint and the functions paintings fulfill well could lead to more successful projects. .... 3

Figure 1.2. Key Questions Contributing to Street Painting Success ..... 6

Figure 1.3. Big Picture Conceptual Diagram. Key questions link four factors of People, Place, Process and Purpose to the heart of the project. Factors link to each other through connecting actions, and relate to tangible elements of the project. .... 8

Figure 2.1. SDOT crew painting a Community Crosswalk, Capitol Hill, Seattle. photo: Joshua Trujillo/Seattlepi.com (“Seattle Celebrates” 2017) ..... 24

Figure 2.2. Pavement to Parks project in First Hill, Seattle. photo: author ..... 25

Figure 2.3. The Moon-Day T-Hows, an informal community gathering space built using reclaimed and recycled materials, Portland, 1996 photo: Jennifer Lakeman/cityrepair.org ..... 27

Figure 2.4. Original Design from Share-It Square Pilot Proposal. drawing: Mark Lakeman/Portland Ordinance archives (Portland City EFiles 2017) ..... 28

Figure 2.5. Share-It Square, Portland, 1997? photo: City Repair Project/Cityrepair.org ..... 29

Figure 2.6. T-Horse, Portland, 1997 ..... 31

Figure 2.7. Burke Ave N & 49<sup>th</sup> St N, Seattle, 2006 ..... 35

Figure 2.8. Interlake Ave N & N 41<sup>st</sup> St, Seattle, 2010 ..... 35

Figure 2.9. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 60<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2013 ..... 35

Figure 3.1. Project for Public Spaces - What makes Great Places? source: (Project for Public Spaces 2017d) ..... 62

Figure 4.1. Seattle's street classification system from Seattle Streets Illustrated Right of Way Improvements Manual. Non-arterial classifications are shown in the bottom row. .... 88

Figure 4.2. MUTCD Barrier Classifications. Seattle requires Type II, Portland Requires Type III. source: Federal Highway Administration, MUTCD ..... 94

Figure 5.1. Portland Street Painting Projects Created Each Year .....	98
Figure 5.2. Portland Street Painting Location Map.....	99
Figure 5.3. Seattle Street Paintings Created Each Year 2006-2017 (12 years).....	107
Figure 5.4. Portland Street Paintings Created Each Year 1996-2007 (first 12 years).....	107
Figure 5.5. Seattle Street Painting Location Map. ....	109
Figure 5.6. Confirmed Painting: Wallybug—Burke Ave N and N 49 <sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2006. photo: Eric Higbee 2006 .....	113
Figure 5.7. Confirmed Painting: 20 <sup>th</sup> Ave and E Marion St, Seattle, 2006. photo: John Howe 2006 .....	115
Figure 5.8. Bowdoin Dots—Confirmed Painting: NW Bowdoin Pl between 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave NW, Seattle, 2008 or earlier. ....	116
Figure 5.9. Confirmed Painting: Turtle—Interlake Ave N and N 41 <sup>st</sup> St Seattle, 2010. photo: SDOT archives 2010 .....	117
Figure 5.10. Confirmed Painting: Stone Ave N between N 80 <sup>th</sup> & 81 <sup>st</sup> Seattle, 2010. photo: Emily Heindsmann 2010 .....	118
Figure 5.11. Confirmed Painting: Graham Hill Blue Whale—S Graham St west of 51 <sup>st</sup> Ave S, Seattle, 2011. photo: Jupinder Gill 2017 .....	120
Figure 5.12. Confirmed Painting: NE 98 St between 12 <sup>th</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Seattle, 2013. photo: Barb Steffens 2013 .....	121
Figure 5.13. Confirmed Painting: Green Lake Dragonfly—4 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 60th St, Seattle, 2013. photo: Seattle Times 2013 .....	122
Figure 5.14. Confirmed Painting: Swedish Ballard Map—Tallman Ave NW and NW Central Pl, Seattle, 2015. photo: author 2017.....	123
Figure 5.15. Confirmed Painting: 21 <sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Genesee St Seattle, 2015. photo source: SDOT archives 2015 .....	124
Figure 5.16. Confirmed Painting: Friends of Hawthorne Phoenix—Cascadia Ave S and S Dakota St, Seattle, 2015. photo source: SDOT archives 2015.....	125

Figure 5.17. Plan in Progress: 11 <sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Cloverdale St, Seattle, 2016. drawing source: SDOT archives .....	126
Figure 5.18. Plan in Progress: 34 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 113 <sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2017. Drawing source: SDOT archives .....	127
Figure 5.19. Plan in Progress: 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave S and S Henderson St, Seattle, 2017.....	128
Figure 5.20. Plan in Progress: Terry Ave and Harrison St, Seattle, 2017. rendering source: SDOT archives .....	129
Figure 5.21. Did Not Paint: Octopus—2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave/Baker Ave NW/NW 41 <sup>st</sup> , Seattle, 2011. drawing: Reya Callahan, source: SDOT archives .....	132
Figure 5.22. Did Not Paint: Starfish—2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW 40 <sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2011. Drawing source: SDOT archives .....	132
Figure 5.23. Did Not Paint: 12 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 96 <sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2011. drawing: Rachel Marcotte, source: SDOT archives.....	133
Figure 5.24. Did Not Paint: Helping Hand—31 <sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Bataan Pl, Seattle, 2013. drawing source: SDOT archives .....	134
Figure 5.25. Did Not Paint: (second design) 31 <sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Bataan Pl, Seattle, 2013. drawing source: SDOT archives .....	134
Figure 6.1. Dot-survey poster. This poster from a 2010 Stone Ave N street painting planning event shows examples of common motivations for street painting. This mid-event photo does not reflect the full set of responses to this question. photo: author .....	144
Figure 7.1 Portland street painting with stop signs and traffic circle at SE 15th and Alder, Buckman Community Composting Intersection Repair.....	189
Figure 7.2. Big Picture Diagram Revisited for Future Research Opportunities .....	200

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 2.1. Disambiguation of Seattle Programs that Paint Streets .....	23
Table 3.1. Gehl 12 Criteria for Good Public Space. source: Gehl Architects .....	61
Table 4.1. Comparison of City Statistics.....	77
Table 4.2. Summary of Portland and Seattle Street Painting Rules and Guidance .....	80
Table 5.1. Portland Timeline of Intersection Repairs with Street Paintings.....	100
Table 5.2. Seattle Timeline of Painted and Planned Street Paintings .....	110

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCC	Bethany Community Church
CRP	City Repair Project, a non-profit placemaking organization in Portland, Oregon
DIY	Do It Yourself
DON	Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
DOT	Department of Transportation
IR	Intersection Repair
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NIMBY	Not in My Backyard, a resident who objects to the location of something in their neighborhood
NMF	Neighborhood Matching Fund, system of grants administered by the DON in Seattle that fund community projects by matching the value of participant contributions of time, labor, expertise, materials, and money with city funds
NTO	Neighborhood Traffic Operations, Team within SDOT that handles traffic calming engineering solutions on non-arterial streets. From 2006-16 NTO has overseen Seattle street paintings
PACE	People's Academy for Community Engagement, DON program that trains a cohort of diverse upcoming community leaders from Seattle neighborhoods in civic leadership and hand-on engagement

PBOT	Portland Bureau of Transportation, formerly Portland Department of Transportation (PDOT)
PSM	Public Space Management. Team with SDOT Street Use division that oversees “fun” uses of the right of way—block parties, street festivals, parklets, play streets, etc. In 2017, PSM began taking on Seattle’s street painting oversight
PTA/PTSA	Parent Teacher (Student) Association
RSPC	Reclaiming Streets for the People Committee of the Squire Park Community Council
SAS	Small and Simple grant, small scale DON/NMF grants offering matching funds of less than \$5,000 for community projects. Several street paintings have been funded by SAS grants
SRTS	Safe Routes to School program encourages projects focused on improving safe and pleasant walking and biking opportunities near schools. SDOT administers SRTS Mini Grants of up to \$1,000. Some Seattle street paintings have been funded by SRTS mini grants
SDOT	Seattle Department of Transportation
UW	University of Washington
VBC	Village Building Convergence, City Repair’s annual 10-day placemaking gathering held in Portland, usually around Memorial Day

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the project organizers and neighbors to Seattle's street paintings who took time out to talk to me about their projects through interviews or the online survey. Your insights brought so much to this thesis and to my understanding of street paintings.

Thank you to **City Repair staff, and city officials from Portland and Seattle** for helping me pull together information about existing and past projects and the evolution of city policies around street painting. Thanks especially to **Greg Raisman, Ridhi de Cruz, Shauna Walgren, Yolanda Ho, Ed Pottharst, Thomas Whittemore, Katrina Zavalney, and Mark Lakeman**. Extraordinary gratitude to those of you who entrusted me with custody of archival materials or allowed me access to computer files, so I could sift through them for the information I needed. And thank you for your prompt attention and response to my many questions along the way.

Thank you, **Mark Chase** for sharing your insights on your ongoing data collection regarding street paintings and traffic calming.

Special thanks to **Pete Litwin** for running in the Eugene marathon, an act which brought into my possession the magical bag that held it all together and kept safe those precious and irreplaceable above-mentioned archival materials, while helping me remain mindful that thesis is an endurance race that must be taken step by step.

Thank you **to my thesis committee** for your stalwart support, your gentle guidance and help in setting deadlines and getting things done. **Lindsay McCunn** for offering me places of pause,

place attachment, and other concepts from environmental psychology. **Manish Chalana** for being my good-natured “bad cop,” and for your attention to my progress even before becoming a formal member of my committee. My eternal gratitude and best regard for **Rachel Berney** for your steady patient guidance through all my preliminary wanderings and distractions, and for seeing me through from start to finish. Thanks for your academic and editorial guidance as well as occasional stress management and courier services.

Thanks to my **family, friends, and classmates** for your interest in seeing my work, for offers of editing, and for many thoughtful conversations about a topic that might have been much dearer to my heart than yours. Thank you for your endless patience with my unavailability. Thanks for your pep talks and inspirational videos encouraging me to “Get that thing done!”

Thanks to all of you, it’s done.

# Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF STUDY

Many communities and municipal governments across the United States and Canada are working to establish rules or ordinances to allow City-Repair-style street intersection painting.<sup>1</sup> Seattle is among those cities currently reviewing and revising their process. This thesis suggests ways to update Seattle's street painting program to better support street painting success so that official messaging to the public from SDOT and grant funding programs encourages better alignment between street painting functions and painting groups goals, and municipal rules and guidance better support the ability of street paintings to perform those functions they are best suited to fulfill. Recommendations are based on an assessment of street painting processes, outcomes and participant experiences in Seattle and comparison of Seattle's municipal rules and guidance to that in Portland where the street painting phenomenon originated.

My original impulse to study Seattle's street painting came from my sense that Seattle's paintings are not thriving. Seattle's paintings seemed less likely than Portland's to get repainted, which seemed to be an indicator that their creators did not find them worth the effort of maintaining. My own anecdotal impression was that Seattle street painting groups did not include other community-enhancing elements with their paintings, and as a result, Seattle paintings did not offer opportunities to linger and connect with others near the painting or foster the lively community spaces I had seen around Portland projects in the early 2000s. The one Seattle project I knew of that had a long history of repainting had been

---

<sup>1</sup> City-Repair-style street painting arose in Portland, Oregon in the late 1990s. These artful paintings on the street surface, often compared to murals or mandalas, were first painted in residential street intersections as the visual anchor for a community gathering space created at the crossroads. See Chapter 2 for more about this history.

fraught with painful conflict among neighbors over the project. I embarked on this study to confirm that those patterns were actually present, and to investigate whether municipal rules and guidance might play a role in encouraging more positive outcomes for Seattle's street painting enthusiasts.

This thesis relies on the assumptions that the City of Seattle benefits from continuing to allow street painting projects and should continue to take an active role in supporting their creation, and that refining that role could lead to more beneficial outcomes for the city and its residents. Advocates for City-Repair-style projects in Portland first won municipal approval by showing that these projects can support citywide planning goals about creating sustainable, resilient, and livable communities while costing the city little to nothing in terms of tax dollars (Lakeman 2014; *City Repair's Placemaking Guidebook* 2006). Seattle has similar goals and engages in similar strategies. Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods was created based on the principle of engaging citizens as partners to leverage their resources and talents in improving community assets, and to empower them as active co-creators of their neighborhoods (Diers 2004). To be effective, these programs need not be large, but they do need to be well-crafted. This thesis assesses Seattle's street paintings with intent to offer suggestions for fine-tuning Seattle's rules and guidance to increase effectiveness in creating these beneficial outcomes.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

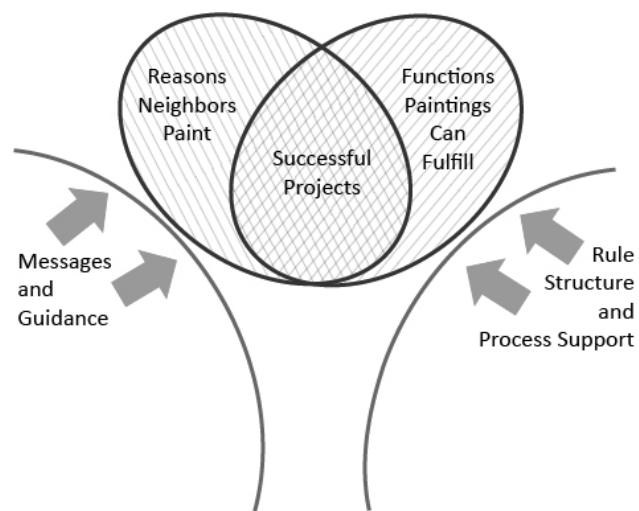
As I embarked upon this study, it became clear that the longevity of a street painting was not a sufficient way to evaluate the success of the project. Perceptions of success vary significantly depending on the goals of the group creating the painting, and goals cannot be determined by visual site inspections alone. Developing optimal guidelines also depends on understanding the intended functions of intersection paintings. We need to know what paintings do and why people want to make them in order

to create effective systems to support the success of these projects. To that end, this thesis addresses the following research questions:

- Where, when, and how have street painting projects happened in Portland, OR and Seattle, WA?
- What motivates people to paint the street? How well do those motivations align with functions street paintings can fulfill well?
- Are Seattle street painting groups satisfied with the process and outcomes of their street painting endeavors?
- How well have past and present administrative rules, procedures, and guidance supported street paintings?
- How can Seattle adapt its program to better support the success of street painting groups?

### 1.3 THEORETICAL FRAME

This thesis explores the relationship between the theoretical functions street paintings perform and the reasons people are inspired to paint them, and suggests that the better these two factors align, the greater the likelihood of a satisfying street painting project. When the reasons and functions are poorly aligned, projects are unlikely to achieve their goals and participants are likely to abandon the project soon after completing it. Improving rule structure and process support can strengthen street paintings' ability to fulfill their functions well. Clear messaging around what functions street paintings can fulfill can help push participants reasons toward realistic and achievable expectations. This idea is presented graphically in Figure 1.1.



**Figure 1.1. Conceptual model: Supporting better alignment between the reasons neighbors paint and the functions paintings fulfill well could lead to more successful projects.**

When the potential functions of street paintings are well understood and clearly communicated, several beneficial outcomes become possible. First, messaging can be shaped to promote painting for reasons that are achievable, rather than promoting street painting for functions they do not fulfill well. For example, while many think of street painting as a traffic calming strategy, street paintings have been shown to have no impact on traffic speeds or frequency of accidents; however, they can be an effective tool for building relationships among neighbors. Second, a city can establish parameters and processes that better support beneficial functions of street paintings. For example, if street paintings support community connection, procedures that encourage or require community communication and participation can boost the effectiveness of the community building function of street paintings. Third, if a group's motivations and ideas are not well served by street painting functions and processes, understanding that can help those groups choose different project types that can better achieve their goals. For example, a group that wants a playful traffic calming project that is professionally installed and maintained and that can be created with minimal community engagement might better achieve their goals through a Community Crosswalk project rather than a street painting.

Using Portland as a model of a street painting process that is working well, in this thesis, I compare the histories of street painting in Portland and Seattle, the regulations in effect in each city, and patterns of painting and repainting in the two cities. I outline the functions that street paintings support well, and then, because I want to recommend changes to Seattle's process, I examine Seattle projects more closely to better understand how that city's projects have fared over time. I compare these potential functions to the reasons that Seattle groups wanted to paint and note participants' reported sense of satisfaction with the projects, and when and whether the intersections were repainted. My reporting of the reasons groups chose to paint are drawn from goals stated by participants via interviews and responses to an online survey. Functions of street paintings are drawn from my own training and

experience with street paintings and other placemaking projects and are further informed by practical and academic literature on placemaking, public space design, environmental psychology and related fields. After making observations regarding street painting process and outcomes, I suggest ways to adjust Seattle's messaging and municipal rules and guidance to create better alignment between street painting functions and painting groups goals.

## 1.4 BOUNDS OF STUDY

The considerations that contribute to the success of street paintings are broader than can practically be examined in a single thesis. Many possible contributing factors are outlined in Figure 1.2 where they are organized under six key questions—“where” the painting is sited, “what” elements make up the site

Key Questions Contributing to Street Painting Project Success

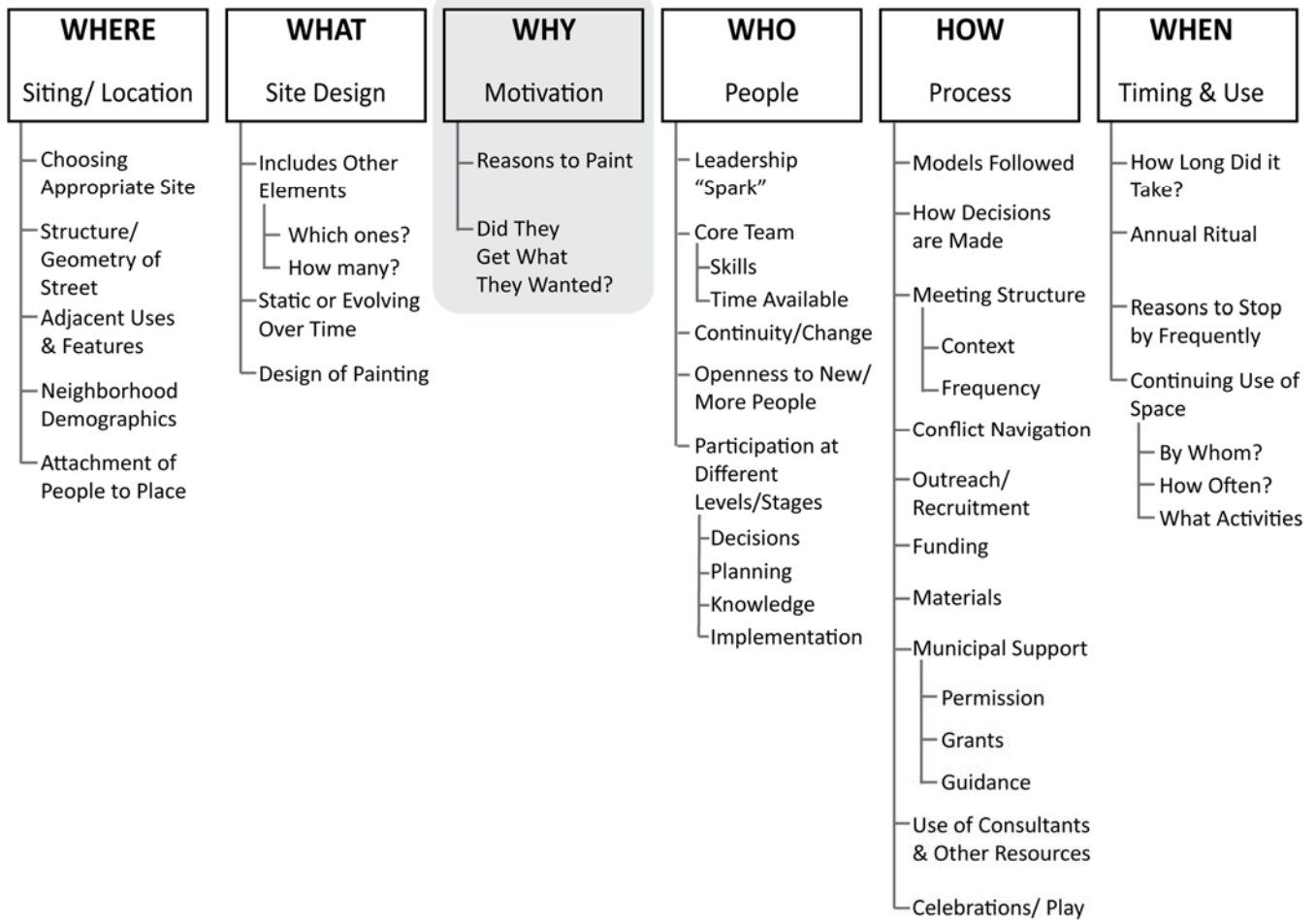


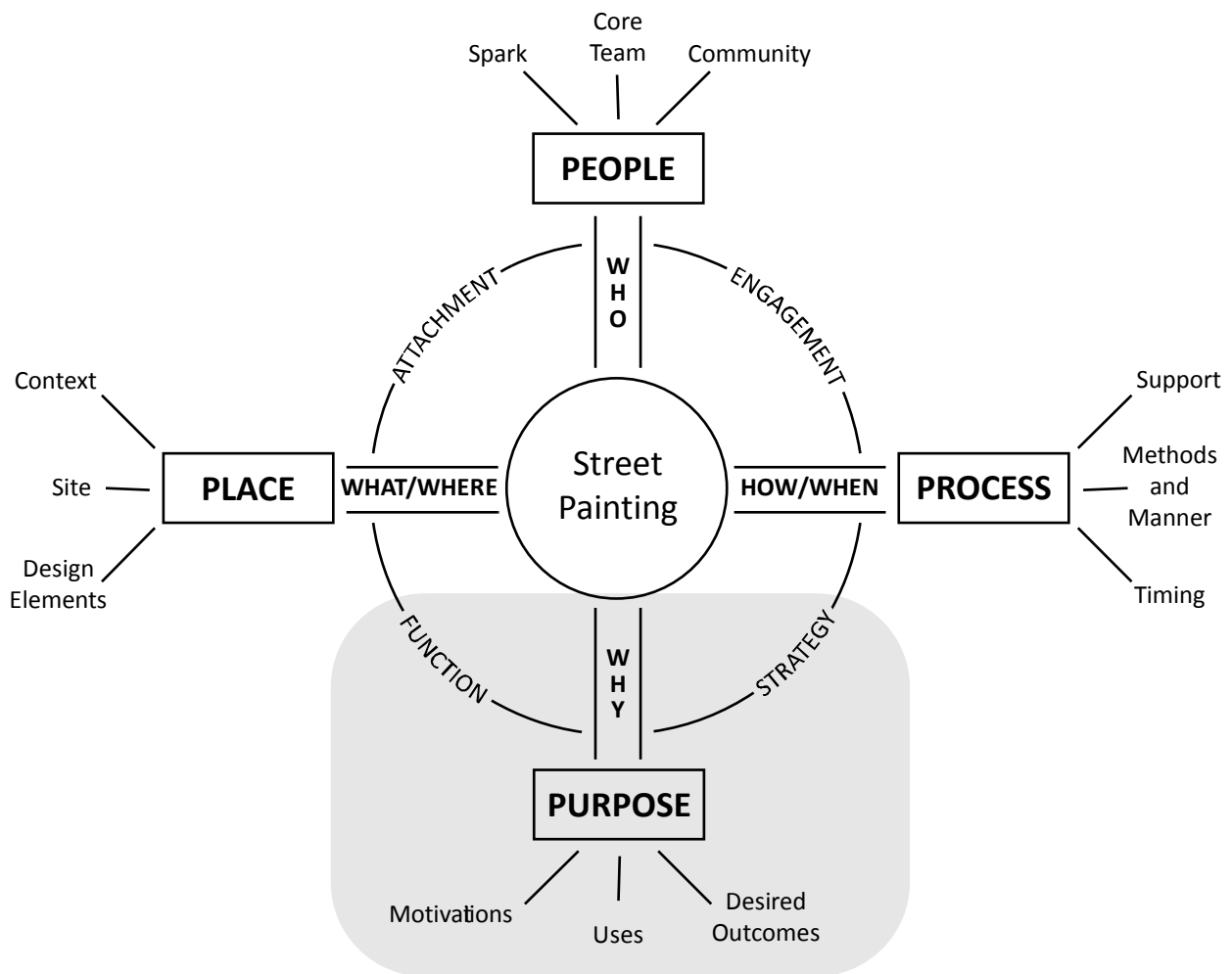
Figure 1.2. Key Questions Contributing to Street Painting Success

design, “why” the painting is created, “who” is involved, “how” their process works, and “when” the space is used and maintained. Any one of those considerations can make or break a street painting

project. This thesis does not attempt to address all of these questions, but rather, it focuses on the question of “why” by exploring participants motivations, examining their reasons to paint, and asking whether they achieved what they wanted with their projects.

Before embarking on this focused enquiry, however, I want to focus briefly on the bigger picture to see how the question of “why” and the factor of “purpose” connect to other considerations shown in Figure 1.2. After considering these connections, I have devised Figure 1.3 as a conceptual model to demonstrate how these lists of key questions relate to each other and outlined other connections among them. Where “why”-related elements influence elements listed under the other questions, this thesis touches on those other topics as well. Other key questions, where elements seem less directly related to paintings’ functions, and painters’ motivations and sense of project outcomes, indicate areas that might be fruitfully addressed in future research.

In my model shown in Figure 1.3, intersection paintings are created in the confluence of four factors— People, Place, Process, and Purpose. These are shown in the four boxes of the diagram. Each of these factors is linked to the heart of the project by a key question, and is related to several observable elements, which are shown with lines connecting them to their relevant factors. For example, the People factor arises from the key question of “who” is involved in the project. Some elements of the People factor include: the person who originally sparked the idea in that group, the core team organizing the project, and the neighboring community who participate in and/or are affected by the



**Figure 1.3. Big Picture Conceptual Diagram.** Key questions link four factors of People, Place, Process and Purpose to the heart of the project. Factors link to each other through connecting actions, and relate to tangible elements of the project.

project.<sup>2</sup> Each factor also relates to the other factors through an action that connects those two factors.

In the diagram these are shown along the arc of circle that links the factors. For example, Attachment connects People to Place, while Engagement connects People to Process. The Purpose factor, on which

<sup>2</sup> While many street painting participants are only involved on painting day, core team volunteers organize and plan the project and related events. The core team coordinates aspects like design, permitting, funding, community engagement, materials acquisition, work party logistics and long-term project maintenance plans.

this thesis is centered, arises from the key question of “why” create the painting. Elements of the Purpose factor include: the uses of the space, the motivations of its makers, and their desired outcomes. I explore the connection between Purpose and Place in terms of Functions the painting site performs, and I think about the connection of Purpose to Process as relating to Strategies employed by its makers.

I chose to explore the factor of Purpose in more depth, in part because it seems the least examined of the four factors. The City Repair organization in Portland has developed extensive practical guidance detailing the Process, Place, and People factors of how to engage your neighbors and work together to create Intersection Repair projects as described in various City Repair publications from 2001 to 2017. That excellent guidance is readily available in book, workshop, worksheet, and video formats from CityRepair.org and other placemaking organizations, and there is no need for me to rewrite it (*City Repair’s Placemaking Guidebook* 2006; City Repair Project 2017a; Lakeman 2017; Project for Public Spaces 2017a; Walljasper 2017). From an academic perspective, those same three well-explored factors are also mirrored in Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford’s explanation of attachment to place, which uses a three-part organizing framework of *Person-Place-Process* to classify place attachment theories and definitions based on those three dimensions: First, the personal—who is attached? Second, that of process—how does the psychological bond form? And third, the place—what is the attachment to? what is the nature of the place?” (Scannell and Gifford 2010a, 2). Again, the territory of person, place and process is well established, so I focus my attention on the fourth factor, that of Purpose. My first drafts of the diagram shown in Figure 1.3 showed no supporting elements under Purpose, indicative that my own preliminary understanding of this factor was also lacking detail. I engaged in this line of enquiry to fill in those gaps in my thinking. This thesis explores the role of Purpose in defining and supporting street painting success by exploring the functions that street paintings can fulfill and

comparing them with the motivations that inspire groups to paint their streets and their perceptions of whether they achieved their desired outcomes.

## **1.5 HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT**

This section provides an overview of how the thesis is organized and the contents of each chapter.

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** explains the purpose and conceptual framework of the study, outlines the research questions, and explains the research methods employed in gathering data. **CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT** has two parts. The first section defines what is considered a street painting for the purposes of this study and distinguishes street paintings from other similar programs that put paint on Seattle's streets. The second section explains how the phenomenon of street painting first arose in Portland and later spread to Seattle. **CHAPTER 3: FUNCTIONS** discusses the theoretical foundations underlying several functions that street paintings serve well, and traffic calming which it does not. It suggests that street painting projects should not focus on traffic calming, but instead, should focus on other functions that street paintings can fulfill better. **CHAPTER 4: MUNICIPAL RULES AND GUIDANCE** explains the details of municipal policies and program guidance in Portland and Seattle and explores the differences between the two cities street painting programs from an administrative perspective. **CHAPTER 5: PROJECT TIMELINES AND PROFILES** presents an overview of project timelines and trends in Portland and Seattle and a synopsis of each known Seattle project. **CHAPTER 6: MOTIVATIONS AND OUTCOMES** discusses the goals and perceptions of success of painting project teams as revealed through street painting participant interviews and survey responses. **CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS** offers suggestions for Seattle to adjust messaging, regulation, oversight structure and guidance for street paintings.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

### **1.6.1 Overview of Steps, Methods, and Sources**

This section describes in detail how this study was conducted, as well as the steps, methods, and data sources used to explore these research questions. This study is qualitative and exploratory in nature, observing common themes and general patterns that recur in Seattle street painters' experiences, and how these patterns inform the discussion of street painting functions and street painters motivations. Information about Portland's process and painting history was used as a model of a city-backed program with a longer history that is functioning well. Portland information is used primarily for background and to provide context. While a side-by-side examination of municipal rules is explored, detailed stories of specific Portland projects are not. Like many exploratory studies, the process was emergent, each step evolving and shifting direction based on what I discovered in the previous one.

Methods employed in this research included gathering the history—in terms of both regulatory guidance and project implementation—of street paintings in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington and then consulting people involved in organizing and facilitating Seattle projects about their motivations and perceptions of success. With context drawn using literature from fields of planning, urban design, and environmental psychology as well as from participant and organizer experience, the thesis frames several potential functions street paintings can successfully fulfill. Using this information, this thesis offers a set of recommendations for Seattle's regulatory guidance and project support.

#### ***Gathering Painting History***

When I began this study, I was already familiar with the history of street painting in Seattle and Portland, and with the origins of intersection painting, City Repair, and its community gathering space

movement in Portland.<sup>3</sup> In June of 2016, I took two trips to Portland, Oregon to attempt to gather detailed information about existing and past Portland street paintings. I participated in the 2016 Village Building Convergence (VBC16) and spoke with City Repair organizers and an official from Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) about the history and process of Portland street painting and Intersection Repair.<sup>4</sup> During my two trips, I visited 27 out of the then over 60, now nearly 70, street paintings in Portland, to observe and photograph existing street painting sites.<sup>5</sup> I visited six sites on their painting days during VBC16. Where painting was in progress, I spoke with participants and neighbors about their projects while lending a hand with the painting.

Surprisingly, neither city had a pre-existing comprehensive list of sites. For Portland, I compiled a timeline of projects from several sources: a list of first time painting permits from PBOT, a list of City Repair placemaking projects, and archival copies of the *Village Builder*, the VBC project and event schedule produced by City Repair for VBC4 through VBC16. I used these to create a list of street paintings and to begin to gather details about the location, painting history, proximate placemaking projects and community amenities for each painting.<sup>6</sup> I used Google Earth's Historical Imagery feature to access aerial photographs and Google Maps Street View Time Machine line to look back through time to attempt to confirm timing of paintings and proximate placemaking projects and to observe how the sites had changed over time.

---

<sup>3</sup> I had also participated in painting days at several prior projects in Portland and Seattle and served on the core team for one Seattle street painting, as well as on the weavers committee of City Repair Seattle.

<sup>4</sup> The VBC, a 10-day annual Portland placemaking event, is introduced in detail in Chapter 2.

<sup>5</sup> These numbers are best-guess approximations. See in Chapters 1 and 5 for details on the challenges to determining total numbers of projects that have been created in each city.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term "proximate placemaking" to describe placemaking elements including but not limited to benches, kiosks, gardens, play structures, artwork, etc. that help establish a sense of place and encourage gathering or lingering, or provide other reasons to visit the place and interact with others there. Proximate is used to indicate that elements are located at or near the painting site, usually within sight of it.

In 2017, I updated Portland information with the current year's new projects and then gathered similar information about Seattle street painting history and process. Like the Portland data, but even more so because street painting oversight in Seattle has shifted and staffing has changed over the years, no one had a complete record of what painting projects have occurred or were planned in Seattle. Project information from Seattle also needed to be compiled from several partial sources, including from Seattle's Departments of Transportation (SDOT) and Neighborhoods (DON), conversations with Seattle project organizers, old emails from my days as a City Repair Seattle weaver, online blogs and websites, as well as confirming what I could through site visits and Google Earth and Google Maps imagery. Many gaps in the Seattle project timeline were filled in based on survey and interview participants' reports. Many gaps still exist.

### ***Gathering History of Municipal Regulation and Support***

With the help of city officials, I compiled the history of changes to street painting regulation and process in both Portland and Seattle. This information included potential process changes under review in Seattle during the summer and fall of 2017. I also explored parameters and resources for funding and facilitation support for these projects in each city. Sources of this information included city ordinances, permit templates, municipal guidance handouts, sample project applications, and conversations and correspondence with Seattle and Portland employees working with street painting permitting and grants.

### ***Refining Research Questions and Exploring Relevant Literature***

I looked for patterns in the Portland painting history to see whether they matched my assumptions about what leads to street painting success (as measured in that step by evidence of continued

repainting).<sup>7</sup> Conversations with PBOT brought forward the questions about why people choose to paint, whether they get what they hoped to get from their project, and how their understanding of the functions of street painting change over time. After outlining several of the core functions that I believed street paintings can fulfill well, I engaged in an exploration of literature from the fields of planning, urban design, and environmental psychology to deepen my understanding of these functions and the theories behind them.

### ***Conducting Participant Interviews***

Having developed research questions regarding the functions of street paintings and participants' motivations and perceived successes, I contacted organizers whose names I had gathered from SDOT or DON archives, online articles and announcements, or had known through my own City Repair involvement, inviting them to participate and asking them to share the invitation with others involved in Seattle street paintings. I conducted oral interviews and an online survey to gather stories from organizers and participants from Seattle street painting projects. I asked about their motivations to paint, whether their subsequent experience with their street painting did or did not meet their expectations, and how their sense of their project's function, purpose and success changed over time. I analyzed these responses for common themes and experiences among painting groups.

### ***Making Recommendations***

After gathering stories about the motivations of Seattle's street painters and their expectations around street paintings' functions, I looked for patterns in how Seattle rules and procedures for street painting might contribute to participants expectations, approaches, and outcomes. I developed suggestions for

---

<sup>7</sup> Later thinking revised this oversimplified assessment of success. Success depends on perceptions of meeting project goals, which in turn depends on what those goals were to begin with. Achieving those goals may be independent of repainting, not repainting, or never painting in the first place.

improving street paintings' potential to fulfill those functions and to address the concerns, goals, and shortcomings of Seattle street painting projects.

### **1.6.2 Limitations of the Study**

It is important to emphasize that what I have written in this thesis is not what has definitively happened with these projects over time, but rather is a collage created from partial records and stories about what people remember and how people feel about these projects. Due to logistical limitations, I did not visit all the sites in either city. Even if I had, because I was trying to gather 20 years of project histories and not just their current state, I had to rely on incomplete and sometimes contradictory secondary sources, archival data, and retrospective subjective data recalled by interviewees. These types of sources are prone to unreliable reporting, error, and incomplete information.

This study involves reporting on subjective experience, contains blurring of facts and opinions, and relies on retrospective recall of projects some of which happened long ago. Details can be fuzzy, and memory is selective. In most cases, only one person shared their perspective for each project. Not all Seattle projects were represented in the interviews and survey responses. Perspectives shared came from key organizers on some projects, people with smaller roles on others, and in some cases from objectors to the project. While these perspectives are all valid and useful in assessing the motivations of neighbors and their sense of success around a painting project, they do not provide a parallel view that might allow comparison across projects. Selective participation also plays a role in what is described in this thesis. While there are as many different perspectives as there are participants in each project, few of these voices had the opportunity to tell their story. Participation bias skewed toward hearing from organizers and other people enthusiastic to tell strongly positive or strongly negative stories about their

paintings. While core questions were the same across interview and survey formats, responses recorded in live conversation are qualitatively different than those collected via an online survey.

Project histories contain gaps and inaccuracies—archival data is incomplete, unavailable, contradictory, contains errors and omissions, and is not easily verified. Information about past projects in both Portland and Seattle is unreliable. Overreporting, underreporting, and date errors about paintings and repaintings arise. Systematic records have not been kept by City Repair, PBOT, SDOT, or DON. That a project is listed as happening in one of my data sources does not confirm or deny its presence or timing in the real world. These holes in recordkeeping are so pervasive that I was unable to get a reliable total count of how many projects exist now or have existed over time in each city.

Given the unreliability of even this basic information, I did not attempt to perform any quantitative analysis comparing project parameters regarding repainting patterns, or engage in detailed quantitative analysis of characteristics like proximity of other placemaking elements, traffic calming devices, or presence along bicycle-oriented streets. This thesis contains no spatial analysis of these very spatial projects, and no consideration of socioeconomic or demographic or cultural differences across sites or cities. Several fruitful lines of enquiry remain unexplored regarding site observations of spatial design factors and behavior and interactions of users in the space.

Despite these limitations, however, I was able to create a more comprehensive timeline and overview of paintings than either city had prior to my research. I assembled a relatively detailed understanding of the process and history of street painting projects in Seattle and Portland and gathered richly personal stories from Seattle participants. I listened to stories about their experiences co-creating street paintings with their communities, what their paintings mean to them, and what challenges and benefits creating a street painting has brought. Because of these limitations, I was able to focus my analysis on a more

qualitative, experiential exploration full of person-centered storytelling, which I think tells a much more complex story than a quantitative analysis would have done, and is also truer to the spirit and culture of City Repair.

## Chapter 2. **CONTEXT**

This chapter presents information and context to establish the common understanding of language and history needed before discussing street painting functions and motivations. The first section defines terms related to street painting as they are used in the context of this thesis. The second half of the chapter presents an origin story of street painting phenomenon, tracing its timeline from its mid-1990s beginnings in Portland through its arrival in Seattle ten years later.

### **2.1 DEFINITIONS AND DISAMBIGUATION OF STREET PAINTING**

Before diving in to the discussion of how street paintings could be working better in Seattle, it is important to clarify what, for the purposes of this thesis, is considered to be a street painting and what is not. This section also clarifies some terms that are used differently in Seattle than in Portland, and explains how those terms are used in this thesis.

#### **2.1.1 Clarifying Terms**

I use the term “placemaking elements” to describe features including but not limited to benches, kiosks, gardens, play structures, artwork, and other elements that help establish a sense of place and provide reasons to visit the place and that encourage gathering, lingering, or interacting with others there.

Placemaking is discussed further in Chapter 3. This thesis frequently refers to “proximate placemaking elements” and “adjacent households.” “Proximate” describes objects located at or near the painting site, usually within sight of it. Their proximity can contribute to perceiving the painting and these other elements as features of one place. “Adjacent” describes places that share a parcel line with the right of

way where the painting is located. In this paper, adjacency is focused on the potential positive and negative impacts of the painting and activities around it on adjacent neighbors.

I use the term “Intersection Repair” (IR) to refer to a placemaking project that re-designs and re-purposes shared public space around a residential street intersection to support community connection among neighbors. A complete Intersection Repair includes multiple proximate placemaking elements in addition to the street painting. This differs from the way the term is currently used in Portland, where people from Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and City Repair typically use the term Intersection Repair to refer to any intersection painting, even if the site includes only the painting and no other placemaking elements.

I use the terms “street painting,” “intersection painting,” “midblock painting,” or “street intersection painting,” to refer to the painting itself, or to a project that includes only a painting with no other adjacent placemaking elements. In Seattle and some other cities, these paintings are sometimes referred to as “street murals,” to emphasize their artistic nature to distinguish them from regular traffic marking and other types of painting on the street. People in other places also sometimes use the term “street mandala,” to focus on both artful and spiritual intention. In Portland, standalone paintings are called “Intersection Repairs,” “IRs,” or “Midblock Repairs.”<sup>8</sup>

The City Repair Project, often called “City Repair,” is a 501c3 non-profit organization in Portland, Oregon. City Repair is comprised of few staff and many volunteers that promote placemaking and neighborhood gathering spaces through events and placemaking projects. Their grass-roots movement began in 1996 among the neighbors who created Portland’s first street intersection painting. Five years

---

<sup>8</sup> Seattle does not capitalize “street paintings” or “street murals.” Portland does capitalize “Intersection Repairs.”

later, in 2001, City Repair incorporated as a formal 501c3 non-profit organization (Leis and Lerch 2003). The term “City Repair” is also frequently used more broadly as a noun or adjective to describe the ideas and advocates of the more widespread movement, rather than just the Portland organization. Over the past 20 years, many City Repair affinity groups have arisen in communities throughout the United States and abroad. A few examples include City Repair Ottawa, City Repair Oakland, and City Repair Seattle.<sup>9</sup> Outside of Portland, these are mainly informal affinity groups rather than formal 501c3 organizations. I also sometimes refer to “Intersection-Repair-style” or “City-Repair-style” projects to note that a project, without being directly managed or coached by the City Repair nonprofit, was inspired by or created out of the movement or based in principles that began with City Repair advocates in Portland.

### **2.1.2 Key Characteristics of IR Street Paintings**

City-Repair-style street and intersection paintings have several distinguishing characteristics. First, they are located in the public right of way on a paved street surface, usually in the middle of a street intersection. Street paintings can also be located midblock. While some people create similar painting projects on sidewalks, public plazas, parking lots, driveways, or private streets, these are outside of this thesis’s definition of a street painting.

Second, street paintings are located on low-traffic residential streets. Because they are intended to create a space where people and vehicles share space more equitably, this can only work safely on quieter streets where cars are less frequent, and drivers move at slower speeds and do not have as strong a sense of entitlement to uninterrupted rapid progress in the street. Third, these street remains open to cars, bikes and other vehicle traffic, except when paint is wet or during an official block party as

---

<sup>9</sup> City Repair Seattle was most active and organized between about 2004 and 2009, and has since become dormant.

per city permit. Intersection Repairs and street paintings do not reallocate space to pedestrian-only use. They do not displace or exclude vehicles.

Fourth, they are community projects. Street paintings are created by a group of local volunteers usually neighborhood residents who live or work adjacent to the painting site. These projects are community-initiated, community-organized, community-designed, community-painted, and community-maintained.

Fifth, while not municipally driven, street paintings frequently have municipal support and/or approval which frequently includes streamlined permits and permit coaching and may sometimes include grant funding, technical support, and/or coaching in collaborative teamwork or community building. Some street painting projects are done without permitting even if permission is available, perhaps because of the appeal of guerrilla urbanism<sup>10</sup> or the perception that official processes are too slow, opaque, or arduous.

Finally, a street painting is not a traffic control device. Traffic control devices like signs and signals, speed bumps and traffic circles, and lines and symbols on street surfaces have standardized forms and meanings and are established and regulated at the state and federal levels through the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (*Chapter 468-95 WAC: 2017*; Federal Highway Administration 2017). Intersection painting is not subject to MUTCD standards, and reciprocally, should not incorporate signs and symbols that are part of the language of traffic control.

---

<sup>10</sup> Guerrilla Urbanism, DIY urbanism, and Tactical Urbanism are terms often used interchangeably to describe local residents making direct changes themselves without engaging in top-down planning processes or seeking permission to act. These changes often involve low cost, temporary, quick adaptations or repurposing of public space. Guerilla urbanism emphasizes the “without permission” factor, DIY urbanism emphasizes the doing it yourself factor, and Tactical Urbanism emphasizes the small, low cost, temporary experimental change (Sadik-Khan and Solomonow 2016).




### **2.1.3 What Are Not Street Paintings**

Seattle has several other types of projects that involve painting on pavement. Painted bike lanes and other paint placed on the street for purposes of traffic control and direction are not considered “street paintings” in this thesis. While Seattle’s Pavement to Parks and Community Crosswalks programs do involve artful or creative painting of the street, they are distinct from street paintings in intended function, location, community participation, administrative process, and in which SDOT teams manage them.<sup>11</sup> Thus, they are also outside the scope of this thesis. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the differences between street paintings, Community Crosswalks, and Pavement to Parks Projects. The table is followed by an explanation of the origins and intent of the Community Crosswalk and Pavement to Parks programs, and an explanation of a few details of each program to distinguish them from community street painting.

---

<sup>11</sup> Unlike with Community Crosswalks and Adaptive Streets/Pavement to Parks, so far SDOT does not seem to have a formal name for or acknowledge an official Proper-Noun-Capitalized-Named “program” for street paintings.

**Table 2.1. Disambiguation of Seattle Programs that Paint Streets<sup>12</sup>**

Project type		 <b>Street Painting/ Street Mural</b>	 <b>Community Crosswalk</b>	 <b>Adaptive Streets/ Pavement to Parks</b>
<b>Position in right of way</b>	<b>Intersection or midblock, usually center of street</b>	At intersections, replacing a previously marked crosswalk	Varies, usually not in intersections	
<b>Allowable in zoning/ traffic volume</b>	<b>Low-traffic, residential only</b>	Frequently commercial, arterial or non-arterial	Varies	
<b>Excludes vehicles?</b>	<b>Vehicles not excluded</b>	Vehicles not excluded	vehicles excluded, pedestrian-only use	
<b>MUTCD traffic control device?</b>	<b>No</b>	Yes, crosswalk	Sometimes use MUTCD colors or elements	
<b>Coordinated by</b>	<b>SDOT Neighborhood Traffic Operations<sup>13</sup></b>	SDOT Neighborhood Traffic, Traffic Marking	SDOT Street Use, Public Space Management	
<b>Who does the work?</b>	overall	<b>Community/neighbors</b>	Mostly City	
	select site	<b>Community /neighbors</b>	Community nominates sites	
	design	<b>Community w/ City approval</b>	City strategically targets problem/opportunity sites	
	build/install	<b>Community w/ City approval</b>	Community w/ City approval	
	paint	<b>Community volunteers</b>	City employees/ contractors, (SDOT)	City employees (SDOT/Parks)
	maintain	<b>Community volunteers</b>	City employees, (SDOT)	City employees (SDOT/Parks) partner w/local stewards

<sup>12</sup> photos: Street painting (Eric Higbee 2006); Community Crosswalk (“SDOT Pedestrian Program” 2017); Pavement to Parks (author)

<sup>13</sup> Historically street paintings have been under the purview of the Neighborhood Traffic Team. As of fall 2017, SDOT was considering shifting responsibility for street paintings to Street Use, Public Space Management Team.

## **Community Crosswalks**

Creative designs in crosswalks have been popping up all over the United States and abroad in recent years. Seattle's Community Crosswalks Program began in 2015 after SDOT, with the support of Mayor Ed Murray, painted rainbow crosswalks in the Capitol Hill business district in the days leading up to Seattle Pride celebrations.



**Figure 2.1. SDOT crew painting a Community Crosswalk, Capitol Hill, Seattle. photo: Joshua Trujillo/Seattlepi.com ("Seattle Celebrates" 2017)**

In the following months, other community

groups wanted to paint crosswalks to reflect their own cultural identity, and guerilla crosswalk paintings started to pop up. Like other cities that have been establishing ways to allow for creative expression while keeping crosswalks within the design standards of state and federal traffic marking regulations, Seattle created a process for permitting and funding community-identity-related crosswalk paintings.

Like intersection paintings, community crosswalks are initiated, designed, and approved by community members, who also pay the costs of their upkeep, but these projects differ from street paintings in several ways. Community Crosswalks are not placemaking projects. They may contribute to neighborhood character, but do not create places that people are invited to linger. They must be located where there is already a marked crosswalk, and may be located on busy arterial streets and in commercially zoned areas. As official traffic control devices, they are regulated by MUTCD standards which dictate more stringent prescriptions for location, as well as colors, lines, and other visual elements of their design. City employees paint and maintain these crosswalks.

### ***Adaptive Streets: Pavement to Parks***

Pavement to Parks projects usually use paint in combination with planters, bollards, and street furniture to establish pedestrian-only spaces that exclude vehicles from the painted area.

Pavement to Parks sites are chosen by city officials to address certain problems or opportunities and are also painted and maintained by city crews. Seattle's Department of Transportation (SDOT) began installing Pavement



**Figure 2.2. Pavement to Parks project in First Hill, Seattle. photo: author**

to Parks projects in the right of way in 2015. SDOT's website states, "Pavement to Parks projects create new public spaces by reclaiming underused street space for pedestrian-oriented uses" ("Adaptive Streets" 2017) These projects use temporary and moveable elements to experiment with potential changes in use of the right of way such as reallocating travel lanes or parking lanes or underutilized no-man's-land for pedestrian plazas and bicycle lanes. That way, variations may be explored and adapted or discarded before costly infrastructure investments and more permanent physical changes are made. They are modeled after successful tactical urbanism projects implemented in New York City beginning under Transportation Commissioner Jeanette Sadik-Kahn in 2007 to 2013 (Sadik-Khan and Solomonow 2016).

While Seattle's Pavement to Parks projects are definitely placemaking projects, they differ from City Repair style street paintings in several ways. Vehicles are excluded. These projects re-allocate right of way space from vehicle use to pedestrian-only use. They use painted surfaces to indicate pedestrian-only space, and incorporate bollards, planters and street furniture to exclude vehicles. Pavement to

Parks projects are usually not located in intersections, and they may be located in commercial areas. Project sites are chosen by the City with strategic intent to address specific site-based problems or opportunities. Design, construction, and painting are done by City employees.<sup>14</sup> Placemaking elements and paintings are designed by City employees and then approved through a public engagement process. Painting is done by the SDOT's Traffic Marking team (the same teams that paints road lines and crosswalks). The City manages maintenance of the space through agreements negotiated on a project-by-project basis that may involve community partners maintaining the space, SDOT crews maintaining the painting, and SDOT or Parks Department crews maintaining plantings.

Members of the public often do not realize that these are different types of projects with different functions. They may not comprehend the differences between these programs or the paintings created by them. Sometimes community members become frustrated when reaching to the wrong department for support, or pursuing a project type that is not the best fit for their needs because they, or their contacts in city government, did not know about other possibilities. People can also be confused about how to interact with these paintings on the street when they encounter them. Questions may arise, such as—Can I drive on this? Can I sit and linger here? Do I need to watch for cars here when I play in the street? This confusion is exacerbated when, as has been the case in some Seattle projects, there are few other placemaking elements or insufficient cues about what is people space, vehicle space, or shared space. Again, understanding the intended purpose of these spaces and projects is important to knowing how to design them to suit that purpose and clearly communicate expectation of how people and vehicles should interact in them.

---

<sup>14</sup> This may be changing. In summer of 2017, Seattle began experimenting with inviting community members to participate as volunteer painters at the 65<sup>th</sup> and Oswego Pavement to Parks project.

## 2.2 HISTORY OF STREET PAINTINGS AND INTERSECTION REPAIR

This section gives an overview of the origins of street painting. It discusses the motivations of the creators of the first intersection painting in Southeast Portland and the spread of the idea across Portland and beyond.

### 2.2.1 Portland Beginnings

The phenomenon of Intersection Painting began in 1996 in Portland, Oregon when neighbors in the Sellwood neighborhood of southeast Portland created the first street painting as one element of their plan to create a community gathering space at the crossroads of a residential street intersection in their

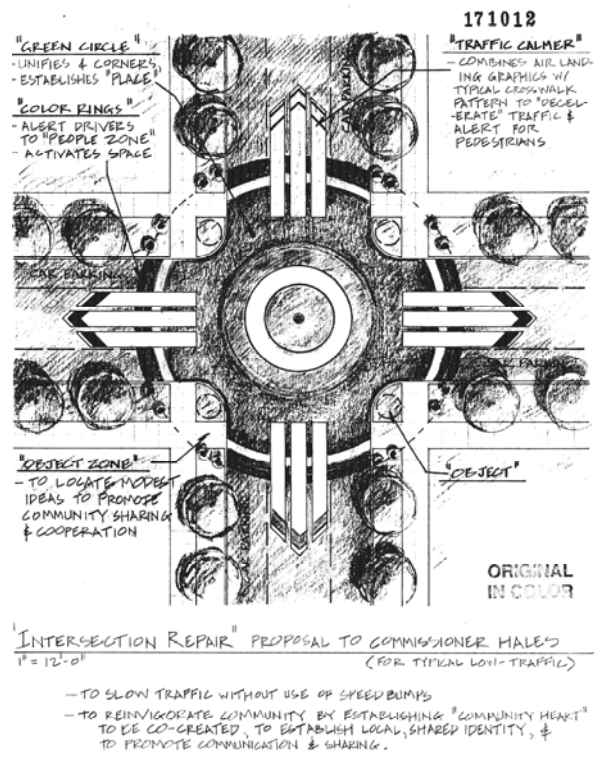


Figure 2.3. The Moon-Day T-Hows, an informal community gathering space built using reclaimed and recycled materials, Portland, 1996 photo: Jennifer Lakeman/cityrepair.org

neighborhood. This first street painting project evolved after municipal disapproval shut down the “Moon-Day T-Hows” (Monday Teahouse), an informal teahouse-like gathering space that one neighbor had built in the yard of his family’s property on the corner of SE 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE Sherrett Street, the intersection that would later become the site of the first street painting.

The T-Hows, shown in Figure 2.3, was created in the spring of 1996. It opened each Monday evening to host friends and neighbors for free tea and potluck dessert to create opportunities for people to connect with each other and build community in a non-commercially-focused context. Built in unconventional style out of salvaged materials and without permits, within a few weeks the T-Hows caught the attention of building inspectors and other municipal authorities who demanded its immediate removal.

After seeing the T-Hows in action and hearing neighbors argue persuasively that this gathering space was meeting many of the municipality’s goals for cultivating community, city officials allowed the T-Hows to remain temporarily, conditional upon its removal at the end of the summer. Labor Day weekend 1996, neighbors and friends deconstructed the T-Hows and incorporated its spirit and some of its materials into the seeds of two new projects—a permanent public square at the intersection of SE 9<sup>th</sup> Ave and SE Sherrett St, and a mobile gathering space. At SE 9<sup>th</sup> and Sherrett, where the T-Hows had been, neighbors re-designed and re-purposed shared public space around the four corners of the



**Figure 2.4. Original Design from Share-It Square Pilot Proposal. drawing: Mark Lakeman/Portland Ordinance archives (Portland City EFiles 2017)**

intersection to cultivate continued community connection, bumping spaces, lingering places, and opportunities to share resources among neighbors. In September 1996, neighbors hosted their block party to transform the intersection into a community gathering space. The sketch of their design proposal is shown in Figure 2.4. They dubbed their intersection “Share-It Square” and seeded the corners with places to share a cup of tea, to borrow a book, to share information and food, to play, and to sit and watch others in the square. At the center of the intersection, neighbors painted the street with a bright, eye-catching design to send the message visually that this was no ordinary street intersection. This was a special place where something unusual was happening (Leis and Lerch 2003).

Harkening back to the public piazzas, market halls, and squares of European cities and the plazas of Spanish colonial towns, these same neighbors declared that cities in the United States were “broken” because they lacked these public gathering places. Public squares, they noted, had been left out of the



Figure 2.5. Share-It Square, Portland, 1997? photo: City Repair Project/Cityrepair.org

grid system established by the National Land Ordinance of 1785.<sup>15</sup> They dubbed the process of creating gathering spaces in the public right of way “Intersection Repair” because they saw these places as an attempt to fix this problem of missing gathering space. That same vision later inspired the creation of City Repair, a non-profit placemaking organization established to inspire and encourage other groups of neighbors to work together to shape their shared spaces. Neighbors working together to create community gathering space in unconventional ways form the root of the Intersection Repair phenomenon (Leis and Lerch 2003).

Begun as an act of civil disobedience in 1996, the Share-It Square Intersection Repair project soon gained municipal approval. Municipal ordinances were passed, one in 1997 to permit a pilot study at Share-it Square and then another in 1998 to codify a process to support other groups of neighbors to create something similar. Advocates successfully argued that it was in the interest of the city to support similar projects because the benefits to the neighborhood aligned with many of the city’s planning goals for fostering community and improving quality of life. These types of neighbor-driven do-it-yourself projects also came at little cost to the city since the project was created and maintained by residents rather than relying on city staff and program budgets. Formalizing the process of Intersection Repair struck a balance between allowing neighbors to make creative use of the right of way while allowing the city to maintain some guidance over each project’s process and physical form, to set thresholds of community buy-in, and to mitigate impacts on other uses of right of way.

---

<sup>15</sup> This ordinance established a uniform, gridded system of land division applied systematically across all previously unplatted land across the United States so that land could be sold and developed from afar during rapid westward expansion.

## 2.2.2 City Repair Ideas Spread Across Portland

During the first few years, Share-it Square residents added more proximate placemaking features. They continued their annual ritual of repainting the intersection with a new design at its heart each year. The story of City Repair began to spread in the late 1990s and early 2000s through three primary means—events involving City Repair’s pop-up gathering spaces, formal and informal storytelling about the projects, and the Village Building Convergence (VBC).

Simultaneous to the creation of Share-It Square, the second project created from repurposed parts of the T-Hows was the T-Horse, a mobile pop-up gathering space in the form of a winged pickup truck offering tea and community. The T-Horse, part Trojan Horse, part teahouse, was created to bring the experience of the T-Hows anywhere in the city for an afternoon. Figure 2.6 shows the T-Horse in action in a Portland park. The T-Horse began making appearances in parks and block parties throughout Portland, sharing free tea and dessert and bringing people together through temporary community gathering space. A group of homeless teens built a second pickup-truck-based mobile gathering space and dubbed it the Teen-Pony (or T-Pony). In addition to T-Horse and T-Pony events, founders of City Repair continued to spread the story of Share-It Square by inviting people to visit the site and began giving slide show talks to community groups and local government agencies in Portland and other Pacific Northwest communities.

In 2001, neighbors at SE 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave and SE Yamhill St created Sunnyside Piazza, Portland’s second



**Figure 2.6. T-Horse, Portland, 1997**  
photo: Sarah Bellum/Cityrepair.org

Intersection Repair. That same year City Repair incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit, and Mark Lakeman, a Share-It Square neighbor and one of the founders of City Repair, traveled to Canada to attend the annual Pacific Northwest Natural Builder's Colloquium and introduced the ideas of City Repair to the professional natural builders of the region.<sup>16</sup> That fruitful meeting sparked collaborations between City Repair and natural builders which added materials such as mud, straw, and roundwood to City Repair's existing palette of paint and salvaged materials. This resulted in a boom of natural building elements at Intersection Repairs and other placemaking projects in Portland. The Colloquium was held in Portland the following year, 2002, where it brought its practices of daytime work parties, workshops, discussions, shared meals, and evening presentations to shape the foundation of City Repair's first annual Village Building Convergence (VBC).

At the VBC, usually held near Memorial Day, groups of Portland neighbors who have been planning placemaking projects together all year simultaneously implemented them over one 10-day period. The first VBC paired natural building instructors from all over the Northwest with local site hosts to lead daytime workshops to implement the neighbors' placemaking projects at 10 sites in Southeast Portland. In the evenings, everyone came together at a central venue to share common meals and presentations with stories and images of participants' work and ideas about community, placemaking, natural building, and permaculture.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Natural builders employ a combination of techniques and tools, some ancient, some modern, and use minimally-processed, renewable, locally-sourced, and climate-appropriate natural materials such as earth, clay, straw, bamboo, roundwood, and stone. These natural materials are frequently combined with salvaged materials such as reclaimed doors and windows, hardware, and broken concrete to create sustainable buildings and other structures (Smith 2017).

<sup>17</sup> Permaculture is a systems-based design approach based in applied ecology. The word comes from the blending of "permanent" and "agriculture" or "permanent" and "culture." Permaculturists work with nature rather than against it and model human systems on natural ecosystems to create human habitat and social systems that are resilient, regenerative, and nurturing of human and non-human life. Permaculture systems are designed to be complex, interdependent, and produce abundant yields and minimal waste (Mollison 1988; Hemenway 2015).

### **2.2.3 Village Building Convergence Grows**

The VBC has taken place every year since 2002 and has grown from 10 sites in a small cluster the first year to as many as 40 sites per year spread throughout the city of Portland and its suburbs. In addition to daytime placemaking work parties and evening meals and presentations, the schedule now includes daytime workshops and evening performances where music and dancing often go late into the night. During the first few years, most daytime work parties were led by permaculture and natural building instructors who came from all over the Northwest, but as local leadership capacity and expertise has grown, local experts have filled those project site leader roles. Now the participants who come from afar tend to be either those coming to learn rather than to teach, or special guest presenters and performers who do not double as worksite leaders. With events spread throughout the entire city and a schedule spanning as much as 20 hours of the day, the VBC has grown to a scale no longer possible for one person to experience in its entirety.

As of 2017, City Repair and the VBC have supported the creation of over 300 placemaking projects in Portland including approximately 70 street paintings. Coordination and facilitation by volunteers from City Repair working in collaboration with staff at Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) help support neighborhood groups in following Portland's Intersection Repair ordinance and City Repair process for co-creating placemaking projects including those with street paintings. The annual cycle of the VBC helps sustain the momentum of new and existing projects by giving groups target deadlines, coaching, and peer pressure that help prompt annual renewal of street paintings and inclusion of additional placemaking elements.

## 2.2.4 An Attractive Idea Begins to Spread

Images from these projects are eye-catching and the stories behind them are imagination-inspiring.

There is a certain pied-piper evocative draw to the idea of being able to transform your neighborhoods and your neighbor relationships by having fun together doing creative projects in your own front yards and streets. The Do-It-Yourself (DIY) style allows people to imagine breaking through barriers (inertia, conventional practice, bureaucratic process, financial hurdles...) to make positive changes in their immediate neighborhoods. Inspired by the example of Share-It Square and other Portland placemaking projects, by 2002 people from other cities had begun to emulate parts of Portland's Intersection Repair model.

As the story of Share-It Square spread, different people grasped onto different facets of the Intersection Repair idea and began to make changes in their own front yards, parking strips, and street intersections. Some but not all of those projects hold placemaking or creation of community gathering spaces at their core. Some were more drawn to the idea of social transformation, others liked public art, DIY placemaking, neighborly connection, or a myriad of other possibilities. Still others grabbed hold of an idea that Intersection Repair could be a strategy for improving safety or for slowing down cars that were cutting through their neighborhoods. Some were attracted to the thrill of doing something subversive but positive in public space without municipal permission.

As with any informal grass-roots movement, diversity of method and motivation of the many participants leads to some drift in focus and message. With many people spreading the different aspects of the story that appeal to them, the content of the message changed as it spread. In Portland, because of the guidance of City Repair coaching and the framework of the Intersection Repair Ordinance, there is more consistency of process and message, but elsewhere, things tend to be more piecemeal and

unstructured. People adopt the facets of the idea that appeal to them and are unaware of, forget, disregard, or adapt the rest to suit their own purposes.

Many of these groups of inspired friends and neighbors, including several groups from Seattle, have been particularly attracted to the idea of street painting. Three examples of Seattle street paintings are shown in Figure 2.7–Figure 2.9.

Street paintings are colorful and attention-grabbing. It is easy to see the colorful painting and miss that the street painting is an artifact of a larger process. Intersection painting was

originally only one element in the larger package of Intersection Repair that involved both community process and other physical

placemaking elements. Intersection paintings created outside of Portland are frequently freestanding projects separated from the context of Intersection Repair. They are often produced without the other placemaking elements of

Intersection Repair, and sometimes without the deep attention to community relationship



**Figure 2.7. Burke Ave N & 49<sup>th</sup> St N, Seattle, 2006**  
photo: Eric Higbee 2006



**Figure 2.8. Interlake Ave N & N 41<sup>st</sup> St, Seattle, 2010**  
photo: James Johnson/Phozone Photography (Johnson 2010)



**Figure 2.9. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 60<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2013**  
photo: Seattle Times (“Neighborhood Paints” 2013)

building, and without the active consent and participation of as broad a range of nearby neighbors as is required in Portland.

Recognizing both the attraction and the beneficial possibilities of these community-driven projects, over the past 15 years many municipal governments have established or are working to develop ordinances and procedures to support community groups who want to do intersection painting and other DIY placemaking projects. To name just a few, US cities including Tucson, AZ, Asheville, NC, Cincinnati, OH, Philadelphia, PA, and Ames, IA, and Somerville, MA and Canadian cities like Halifax, Vancouver, Toronto, and Ottawa have created municipally approved street paintings (Seneville 2013; Meslin 2015). In 2017, Oakland, CA consulted with City Repair to develop their street painting guidelines and launched an ambitious pilot program seeking street painting proposals. Oakland Department of Transportation hopes to approve up to 30 paintings on Oakland streets in 2018 (Oakland Department of Transportation 2017). Again, these city rules and procedures frequently consider street paintings as freestanding community-building events or as community-implemented public art projects similar to neighborhood murals, rather than as one element of a larger project intended to create community gathering space, which was the original intent at Share-It Square.

### **2.2.5 City Repair Ideas Reach Seattle**

Starting in about 2001, as the word spread out of Portland about City Repair's placemaking vision, City Repair enthusiasts in Seattle began connecting with one another. People who came home excited from the first VBC met people who had heard Mark Lakeman speak in other contexts. Others who were inspired by City Repair's stories went straight home and took immediate independent action in their own front yards and parking strips. People began planning community gathering events and placemaking projects in Seattle. Unlike the City Repair Project in Portland, which became a formal 501c3

nonprofit organization, City Repair in Seattle was more of a movement. City Repair inspiration and ideas spread as if through a web of invisible and underground connections to create a network of interested people. Ideas and projects popped up all over the Seattle area. There was no central coordination, no official authority. In 2005, a website and listserv were created to help connect Seattle’s placemakers to each other and give them a forum where they could share ideas and resources and cultivate projects.<sup>18</sup> As an informal affinity group rather than a formal organization, City Repair Seattle helped people interested in doing placemaking projects connect to each other, but not everyone was connected to everyone else.

Between about 2005 and 2009, a group of core volunteers from the City Repair Seattle group calling themselves “the weavers committee” worked together with local nonprofits like the Northwest EcoBuilding Guild, Feet First, and the Phinney Neighborhood Association to host events and spread the word about City Repair ideas. They brought Mark Lakeman and other City Repair organizers from Portland to Seattle on several occasions to speak about City Repair ideas to neighborhood groups, permaculture and green building groups, with officials from Seattle’s departments of Neighborhoods (DON) and Transportation (SDOT), at schools and colleges, and on local radio. The weavers committee managed the listserv and helped organize T-House gatherings, workshops, and placemaking projects focused on inspiring and empowering people by connecting people to each other and to the ideas, skills, and resources that would enable City-Repair-style placemaking happen in Seattle.

---

<sup>18</sup> This listserv was hosted at City Repair Seattle’s website, [Cityrepair.info](http://Cityrepair.info), from about 2005 to 2010, but is no longer active or accessible online.

## **2.2.6 Seattle's First Intersection Paintings**

Completely coincidentally on the same day, neighbor groups from Wallingford (Burke Ave N & N 49<sup>th</sup> St) and Squire Park (20<sup>th</sup> Ave and E Marion St) painted Seattle's first two street intersection paintings on September 10, 2006. Indicative of the decentralized, self-empowered nature of City Repair in Seattle, neither group was aware of the other's painting day plans until project organizers each posted announcements on the City Repair Seattle listserv. Each of these groups had been inspired by hearing Mark Lakeman speak at different events the previous year, and taking the DIY message to heart, had gone home to plan a project with their own neighbors on their own block. The two painting groups had been working with different officials at SDOT and were only vaguely aware of each other until the day before they painted. The giant ladybug painting at 49th and Burke, dubbed the Wallybug by its creators, became Seattle's longest-lasting street painting. It was repainted annually for several years before succumbing to neighborhood controversy in 2013. After taking a few years off, the Wallybug group has recently begun painting again. The Squire Park project, a more abstract geometric design, was never repainted.<sup>19</sup>

## **2.2.7 Other Seattle Street Paintings**

Since 2006, approximately nine other street paintings have been created in Seattle. Several other groups have pursued the idea and/or begun the process.<sup>20</sup> Some abandoned the idea along the way. Others still have ambitions of painting in the near future. Between 2005 and 2010, many Seattle neighborhood

---

<sup>19</sup> After painting, the organizers found it to be functioning poorly due to poor siting. It was on a T-intersection with poor visibility at the bottom of a slope where road grime accumulated on the street surface. In 2008, the city installed the traffic circle neighbors had originally requested at that location.

<sup>20</sup> As explained in Chapter 1, due to lack of systematic recordkeeping, the exact number of street paintings is not known.

groups who were planning street paintings connected with each other through the City Repair Seattle listserv and gatherings. New painting groups would consult with more experienced placemakers for advice on resources, processes, and best practices. Experienced organizers shared tips ranging from how to navigate city grants and permits to how to host block parties and design charrettes to teaching about techniques and materials for the street painting itself. See Chapter 5 for stories of these projects.

### **2.2.8 Summary of Street Painting History**

Intersection Paintings are one element of the larger concept of Intersection Repair, a movement that sprang from the desire to create community gathering spaces in residential neighborhoods. The group in Portland, Oregon that promotes these placemaking projects in the right of way named themselves City Repair because they believe that American cities, which have mostly been built without community gathering spaces, are broken because they lack these essential public spaces. City Repair is both a non-profit organization in Portland and an informal movement of like-minded placemakers outside of Portland.

Street painting arose in Portland, starting with one neighbor-driven pilot project in 1996, and has since spread throughout Portland and across North America. While street paintings began as a subversive act of DIY placemaking, they have since been embraced by the City of Portland and other municipalities as a powerful tool for promoting neighborhood connection and quality of life. As of 2017, Portland residents have created about 70 paintings in neighborhoods all over their city. In Seattle, neighborhood groups have painted about 11.

As the idea of street paintings spread, it was frequently separated from the underlying motivation of creation of community gathering space. People in different communities were attracted to street

painting for varying reasons, and projects are now frequently created as standalone paintings without other proximate placemaking elements.

## Chapter 3. FUNCTIONS

Having established a common understanding of vocabulary and history, in the previous chapter, this chapter returns focus to the exploring questions related to the factor of “Purpose” by introducing several functions that street paintings might potentially perform well. It begins by explaining why considering functions is important when determining measures of success and how understanding what functions street paintings can successfully fulfill is an important step in creating rules and guidance for street painting process. The chapter argues that traffic calming, though a popular motivation for street paintings, is often not an effective function and should not be promoted as a primary motivation for street painting projects. The chapter then discusses several specific, more effective functions of street paintings, including claiming space, increasing legibility, placemaking, fostering place attachment, and encouraging neighboring, and explores theories from fields such as planning, urban design and environmental psychology that underlie those functions.

### 3.1 WHY THINK ABOUT FUNCTIONS?

#### 3.1.1 Preliminary Surprises

My initial hypothesis relied on the assumption that creating community gathering spaces was the one primary function and motivation for intersection painting projects, and that the presence of adjacent placemaking elements is essential to their success and longevity. While creating gathering spaces played a key role in the origin stories of City Repair and Share-It Square, and was at the forefront of motivations for early Portland projects, the focus seems to have shifted over time. Out of the almost 70 Portland street painting projects, 14 out of the first 18 (about 75 percent) involved kiosks, benches, Little Free

Libraries,<sup>21</sup> or other elements intended to draw people to meet or linger near the intersection. Of the roughly 50 paintings created since 2012, I only found 12 (less than 25 percent) that include adjacent placemaking elements. All of Seattle's street paintings appear to be standalone paintings with no proximate placemaking. My initial hypothesis was that paintings without proximate placemaking elements would not thrive and those groups would cease to repaint within a few years. In my preliminary research on Portland's intersection painting projects, I was surprised to find that some of Portland's long-active street paintings seem to have no other proximate community-built placemaking elements.<sup>22</sup> This caused me to question whether creating community gathering space is as universal and central a function of intersection painting projects as I had first assumed.

I have also noticed over time that many people seem to grab onto the idea that street paintings calm traffic, even though evidence and Portland messaging confirm that this is not a function that street paintings fulfill. Anecdotally, it is frequently the first benefit described by project initiators when trying to convince their neighbors that a street painting will benefit their block or by news reporters writing a story about intersection paintings. While Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has long held that street paintings do not function as traffic calming devices, Seattle has historically taken a different approach, housing street paintings within their Neighborhood Traffic Calming division and promoting them alongside speed bumps and traffic circles as traffic calming options, albeit indirect ones. Contrary to the idea of street paintings as effective traffic calming, the few traffic studies that have been

---

<sup>21</sup> Little Free Libraries is used here as a recognizable shorthand term for a small take-it-or-leave-it book exchange. Usually about the size of a small cupboard, they are frequently set up by residents in front yards and parking strips adjacent to places neighbors pass by. While the LittleFreeLibrary.org website states that their first official Little Free Library was built in 2009, Share-It Square neighbors built a cupboard-sized book exchange in 1996 on one corner of their intersection, where it still stands today.

<sup>22</sup> This is difficult to measure. Since the trend of creating painting-only projects in Portland began after 2011, most Portland painting-only projects are not old enough to show longevity yet. Also, CRP and PBOT records grow spottier as projects become more self-sufficient, so repaintings or proximate placemaking occurring outside of VBC events might not be shown in the data.

conducted show that street paintings have no significant impact on measurable vehicle speeds or collision statistics (Raisman, Greg. Interview by author. June 27, 2016; Chase, Mark. Email to author. October 11, 2017).

If specific street-painting-only projects served neither as effective traffic calming nor successful gathering space, I thought those projects would be destined to fade away after only a few years. When my observations in Portland showed a few street-painting-only projects that have been maintained and repainted by neighborhood groups for four or more years, I began to speculate that perhaps there are other key functions that painted intersections may serve that are rewarding enough to residents to continue to invest their time, attention, and money in their painting's upkeep.

### **3.1.2 Why Explore Functions?**

As noted in the history section of Chapter 2, people are drawn to the idea of street painting for many different reasons. It follows then that their sense of project success depends on what goals their painting was undertaken to achieve. On any particular project, intentions will depend on who is doing the project, will vary within the group, and are likely to shift over time.

Creating an optimal set of municipal guidelines depends on knowing what functions intersection paintings can actually serve, and which of those functions their makers and the municipality hope to achieve. Understanding the potential functions of street paintings and the motivations of street painters are the first steps toward developing guidelines and regulations that support the success of these projects and the spaces they create. Therefore, it seems essential to delve into what these other functions and intentions may be before making recommendations.

## **3.2 FUNCTIONS EXPLORED IN THIS CHAPTER**

This chapter explores some of the potential functions of street paintings, the theories behind them, and the ways that street paintings might serve these functions. This chapter explores the following functions: Traffic Calming, Territoriality, Legibility, Placemaking, Place Attachment, Place Identity, and Neighboring. Relatedly, Chapter 6 explores the stated motivations of people who have created street paintings and take a closer look at how well these motivations align with functions that street paintings can do well.

## **3.3 THE PROBLEM WITH TRAFFIC CALMING**

Unlike official MUTCD devices that directly regulate or direct drivers' behavior like stop signs, speed bumps, road signs, or traffic marking lines on the street surface, street paintings are not formal traffic control devices. Still, many people see them as a potential way to slow down traffic on neighborhood streets. Street paintings do not perform traffic calming well on their own. Still, since traffic calming is a common motivation of street painters, it is important to examine where those ideas come from, why they are so common, and why it is important for street paintings to support functions other than traffic calming.

This section introduces a few theories about indirect traffic calming that may contribute to perceptions that intersection paintings calm traffic, explains why people frequently use traffic calming to recruit their neighbors to a project, introduces traffic studies which show street paintings have little to no impact on traffic behavior, and then shows how messaging around traffic calming and street painting is handled differently in Portland and Seattle. The section concludes with my recommendation that traffic calming not be promoted as a function of street paintings.

### 3.3.1 Theories about Traffic Calming

Perceptions that street paintings contribute to traffic calming are based on *livable streets* and *complete streets* theories that have becoming popular in the United States in recent years. Parts of this idea come from the Dutch concept of the *woonerf*, which is translated as “residential yard” or “living street” in the sense of turning the residential street into an outdoor living room. First developed in the 1960s, *woonerfs* rely on making positive physical changes to the design of the street rather than using signage, regulation, and punitive enforcement like fines. *Woonerfs* employ human-centered design principles to make physical changes such as narrowing and curving streets, planting trees, and removing curbs to require different modes of travelers and types of lingerers to share the same space, while prioritizing the slower ones. *Woonerfs* encourage people to slow down and figure it out, and attempt to create a sense of unhurried and unstressed space where there is time in which that slower pace is possible.

Dutch engineer Hans Monderman, builds on *woonerf* theory by drawing a distinction between the *traffic world* of highways, which is “predictable, uniform, . . . highly governed by rules and regulation” and the *social world* of neighborhood streets which is more “unpredictable, full of diversity and democratic” and wherein a motorist must act as a guest and behave differently than they do in the traffic world (Engwicht 2005, 43). Based on this theory, Monderman, who worked mainly in small Dutch villages, pioneered removing signage and traffic control devices to reduce a motorist’s sense of predictability and create more expectation for the spontaneous. He believed that when drivers must rely on eye contact with other people to navigate the human-centered negotiations and exchanges of the social world, it puts them in direct communication with each other. When this happens, they act more like human guests in a village than like cogs in a machine. He said, “If you want motorists to act like they

are in a village, build a village,” and “[C]oncentrate on the quality of public space. When you see traffic problems as traffic problems, you will only ever get traffic solutions”(Engwicht 2005, 50).

Another set of theories (Portland City EFiles 2017)cited by people hoping street paintings will calm traffic involve the idea of “indirect traffic calming,” or as Australian traffic calming expert David Engwicht calls them in his 2005 book of the same name, *Mental Speed Bumps*. Rather than relying on physical changes to the space, these techniques rely on social changes. The core principle of indirect traffic calming is that “speed is governed to a large extent by the degree of residents’ psychological retreat” (Engwicht 2005, 14). The theory postulates that reversing the faster-speeds-create-more-retreat-create-faster-speeds feedback loop by bringing more people back to the street can trigger a natural tendency of drivers to slow down when people are present and when more complicated, interesting and unpredictable things are happening near the street. The theory speculates that the positive feedback loop can work both ways—if more people return to the street, traffic may slow further so that more people feel comfortable returning to the street, further slowing traffic. He suggests making changes to the streetscape that engage a driver’s inner storyteller by incorporating the three “mental speed bumps” of *intrigue*, *uncertainty*, and *humor*. “Moving people into storytelling mode changes their perceptions of time.” Give them a puzzle and they’ll slow down while they try to figure out the story behind what is going on (Engwicht 2005, 55). David Engwicht asserts that when people are present and active near the street, drivers instinctively slow down, so activating your street has inherent indirect traffic calming effects.

### **3.3.2 Commonly Sought as Easy Common Ground**

Traffic calming theories such as the three outlined above are appealing because they contain evocative stories and employ techniques that seem simple and fun and achievable on the block scale by groups of

neighbors. The desire for traffic calming is an easy thing for most neighbors to understand and agree on. Neighbors who believe they have little else in common can often find the seeds of common ground with their neighbors in their shared desire that other people would drive more slowly down their street. They understand the impact of speeding cars on the safety of their children and pets, noise levels in the neighborhood, and general feelings of peacefulness and safety near their homes. As a reason for a community project, it is low-hanging fruit. It can be tempting to rely on the traffic calming argument when trying to convince neighbors to support project, but that early success can backfire when street paintings fail to deliver measurable traffic calming. As is shown in Chapter 5, this pattern is a common thread in the stories of Seattle street paintings.

### **3.3.3 Evidence Does Not Support Traffic Calming Effects**

Traffic calming was one of the original arguments presented in support of the Share-It Square pilot project, but evidence does not support street paintings having had any traffic calming effect. Traffic studies at street paintings have shown no significant long-term positive or negative change in vehicle speeds or frequency of collisions. During the 6-month pilot study on the Share-It Square demonstration project in 1997, Portland's DOT (now PBOT) examined statistics on crime, traffic speeds, and collisions and found no significant differences between these factors before and after the intersection painting and proximate placemaking elements were installed. Neighbors, however reported feeling strongly that they perceived the neighborhood to be safer and traffic to be slower after the painting was created. Some of this may be the psychological effect of getting to know their neighbors better and getting more comfortable being out in the shared spaces of the block (Raisman, Greg. Interview by author. June 27, 2016; Portland Ordinance 172207 1998). In the past few years, Mark Chase, while working with Somerville Neighborways in Somerville, Massachusetts, began gathering before-and-after traffic speed

data around their street paintings and reached similar conclusions. While this study is still ongoing, Somerville's preliminary results indicate that paint alone does not appear to calm traffic. Mark Chase expects that Somerville's upcoming plans to activate the street with more non-motorized users may produce measurably calmer traffic. While his hopes are consistent with theories that increased pedestrian activity in the street can produce indirect traffic calming effects, that portion of the Somerville project, and any study of its impacts lies in the future (Chase, Mark. Email to author. October 11, 2017). In the past two years, SDOT has also taken an informal look at traffic and collision data around intersection paintings and similarly has observed no noticeable difference between painted intersections and non-painted ones (Shauna Walgren, September 18, 2017. phone interview with author).

### **3.3.4 Why Not to Rely on Traffic Calming**

Perceived traffic calming effects of Intersection Repair are at best secondary, and may only be a matter of perception. Oversimplified characterization of street paintings as traffic calming devices can cause problems. Mixed messages on indirect traffic calming confuse the issue. Because street paintings do not reliably calm traffic, government officials, activists, and neighborhood groups should not promote street painting as a cheaper, faster, easier-to-get-approved substitution for stop signs or a traffic circle. Belief in their traffic calming function can be a distraction from the functions that street paintings serve better. When people latch onto traffic calming and fail to cultivate other beneficial functions, they may reduce the scope of their project so much that it becomes ineffective at its other functions as well. When street painting fails to deliver traffic calming effects, neighbors who were motivated only by traffic calming may perceive their project as unsuccessful, especially if the project did not also achieve other beneficial functions such as building neighbor relationships or fostering a sense of community identity.

Since indirect traffic calming, if it works at all, works by changing the level of human activity that is occurring or expected in the place, unless there is another primary function supporting increased human presence in the place, there will be no indirect traffic calming effect. Simply painting the street without increasing pedestrian presence through other placemaking elements or activities that encourage neighbor interactions and active uses of front yards and the public right of way will not change the behavior of drivers passing through. Drivers may slow down the first few times they encounter the unusual looking space, but as they learn to expect no unusual or unexpected activity there, they return to driving at their usual speeds.<sup>23</sup> A primary or sole focus on traffic calming can undermine the success of the project.

### **3.3.5 Portland’s Messaging Denies Traffic Calming**

Both PBOT and City Repair send a strong message that traffic calming should not be promoted as a primary motivation for street painting. City Repair’s online FAQ on intersection paintings makes this explicitly clear, leading off by addressing this question first: “Do intersection paintings/street murals calm traffic? No. Our street murals are explicitly not traffic calming devices. Having said that, we have witnessed innumerable examples of how they serve as a very powerful community building strategy offering so many emergent benefits. Often, people initiate a project to slow down traffic but stay committed to the project because of all the wonderful things we see happening as a result of intersection paintings” (City Repair Project 2017b).

---

<sup>23</sup> Somerville’s traffic study observed this at one street painting location where 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds reduced from 21 to 17 MPH when the painting was new, but within a few weeks had returned to 21 MPH (Mark Chase, Email to author. October 11, 2017).

Greg Raisman, the PBOT traffic engineer who has approved about 60 of Portland's street painting permits and frequently coaches officials from other cities on how to develop their street painting guidelines, says he often feels like he is on a personal crusade against the promotion of traffic calming in connection with street paintings. Greg Raisman does not believe in the theories of David Engwicht. Greg Raisman argues that indirect traffic calming, when it happens at all, only occurs during the time when those active pedestrians are visible, like in a school zone where drivers only slow down when children are actually present. Talking about traffic calming, even as an indirect or secondary effect, is discouraged by PBOT and City Repair for three reasons: First, secondary effects can only occur if a primary shift in the active use of the space changes, which generally does not happen if traffic calming is your primary or only motive. Second, talking about Intersection Repair in traffic calming terms only serves to confuse the message that the primary function of street painting is NOT traffic calming. Third, avoiding the formulaic prescriptive restrictions of MUTCD design limitations is crucial to maintaining the latitude for artistic flexibility and uniqueness of each street painting (Raisman, Greg. Interview by author. June 27, 2016).

### **3.3.6 Seattle Sends Mixed Messages Regarding Traffic Calming**

SDOT, on the other hand, has consistently sent mixed messages on the traffic calming question. Historically, SDOT has housed street painting oversight within its Neighborhood Traffic Calming team.<sup>24</sup> Individual staff members have varied in their approach. In my work with Seattle placemaking groups, I have interacted with several of the SDOT staff members who worked with street painting groups. I have seen some actively promote street paintings for traffic calming, while others denied traffic calming as an appropriate sole motivation for street paintings, and refer to them instead as community-building

---

<sup>24</sup> Currently, SDOT is shifting street painting oversight to Public Space Management team, who coordinates uses of the right of way for street festivals, play streets, placemaking, art projects, and other pedestrian-focused activity. This positive change will be discussed in later chapters.

projects or community art projects. Even so, those promoting community building and collaborative art focus still frequently returned to the idea that paintings may have indirect traffic calming effects. In Seattle, traffic calming motivations have been alternately discouraged and embraced, neither with good result.

### **3.3.7 My Perspective**

Unlike Greg Raisman, in some contexts, I do sometimes promote David Engwicht's mental speed bumps and other ideas like woonerfs that promote the idea of introducing uncertainty, humor, and more human elements into the right of way as a means of encouraging drivers to slow down. Even so, as a long-time City Repairian who has wrestled for years against the negative impacts of mis-application of the traffic calming message, I reject traffic calming as an effective primary function of intersection painting. I want to talk about the functions street paintings do or can serve well, and not only is traffic calming not among them, it also frequently serves to distract from discussing those functions.

## **3.4 CLAIMING SPACE—TERRITORIALITY**

Another function that street paintings serve relates to territoriality. In a human sense, territoriality is about claiming space and identifying it as belonging to, for the use of, and/or being cared for by a specific set of people. It involves making a legal or social claim through the designation of spatial and/or temporal boundaries via physical marking, social behavior, and/or legal contracts or actions. Territorial claims can produce benefits when they help foster a sense of group identity and of personal and group responsibility and connection to place. This is sense of responsibility and connection relates to neighboring and place attachment as well. People who feel that a place is "theirs" may feel more confident and comfortable in that space, may spend more time there, and may feel a sense of

stewardship that leads them to take steps to nurture, maintain and improve the place. The sense of “we” may promote a sense of connection to others and inspire collective action and social connection among the group.

There are also potentially negative impacts of territoriality. While many street painting groups focus more on the “we” by trying to build relationships, develop a joint vision, and take collective action with their neighbors, careful attention must be paid to who is being left out, whether by accident or by design. Defining a “we” that the space belongs to inherently creates a “them” to which it does not. Territorial claims can be aggressive and/or exclusionary, and can create conflict among those who perceive themselves or others to be on opposite sides of in-group/out-group dynamics. This section explores the facets of territoriality introduced above, then concludes by considering how street paintings can support positive elements of territoriality while paying careful attention to moderating or mitigating its potentially problematic effects.

### **3.4.1 Marking territory**

Marking territory is about defining an area and staking a claim to it. American geographer Robert D. Sack defines territoriality as “the attempt by an individual or group ( $x$ ) to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships ( $y$ ) by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area” (Sack 1983, 56). He goes on to explain that territorial relationships always occur within a social context and involve classification of an area as being “ours” or “not yours,” usually by defining a boundary and making visible a claim of power to enforce control of the area. Claims on space are only territorial, he claims, where there is “competition for things and relationships in space” and the desire to control what happens there. From this perspective, a street painting looks and acts like a territorial marker sending

the messages, “this is a distinct place” and “this is our place.” The idea of who becomes the “we” of these statements is explored in this section and again in the discussion of neighboring (Sack 1983, 59).

### **3.4.2 Taking Responsibility**

A street painting can also send the message “we care about this place and what happens here.”

Territoriality is about exerting a claim of control over a specified physical area. Part of that control is about having a say in what is done there, and part is about taking responsibility for the place. Territorial claims can encourage stewardship, a mindset and practice that involves ideas about taking care of something, usually by the careful and responsible management of resources by someone who holds responsibility and accountability for care of things without necessarily claiming ownership.

Environmental stewardship focuses on responsible use and protection of natural resources. Community Block Watch programs organized by local police departments rely on the idea of neighbors looking out for each other, taking care of shared spaces and having concern for each other’s wellbeing.

### **3.4.3 In-Group/Out-Group Dynamics**

Concepts of stewardship and neighborhood watch programs, and even group claims of territoriality have in common the idea of having concern for the wellbeing of people who are not ourselves, and deciding where we draw lines about who is included in that sense of our responsibility for and with others. Expanding people’s sense of “we” to include more people can also expand their sense of responsibility and connection to people and places. The flip side of redefining who is “us” is that it can often lead to a redefinition of “them” as well. Polish social psychologist Henri Tajfel described the dynamics of in-group/out-group behavior in his writings about social identity theory. He explains that a person’s identity is related to their sense of what groups they belong to, and that people belong to

many overlapping groups. People categorize others as either belonging or not belonging to their identity groups, then adapt their own identities to reflect the norms of their in-groups, and favor their own groups over others. Members of an in-group tend to favor the in-group, maximize perceptions of difference with the out-group while minimizing perceptions of in-group differences, and remember more positive things about in-group and negative things about the out-group (Tajfel 1982). People tend to have an “us versus them” mentality about others they do not perceive to be part of their in-group. The term “othering” is used by social theorists to describe the act of casting some people as outsiders, seeing “those people” as not belonging to a group or in a place, and characterizing them as inherently inferior and unqualified to be part of the group (Schwalbe et al. 2000). This often involves aspects of defining the in-group’s own identity by contrast and in opposition to this other (Gabriel 2017). This exclusionary territoriality and othering can come into play in street paintings promoted for traffic calming, where residents take the role of in-group and label pass-through drivers as the out-group.

#### **3.4.4 How Can Street Paintings Support Positive Elements of Territoriality While Moderating Its Potentially Problematic Effects?**

Much of placemaking (discussed later in this chapter) focuses around expanding connections of people to place, and through place, to each other. An important question this raises is whether people can create a greater sense of “us” without simultaneously defining or focusing on a “them”—individuals or groups who are still excluded from becoming part of the “we.” Can these be welcoming spaces where all are included? Or will some always be either left out by accident, deliberately excluded, or discouraged from the place and activities that happen there? The dynamics of inclusion, exclusion and othering are important to consider when modeling processes around street paintings. While many are well intentioned in their desire to create an expanded sense of “we” among near neighbors, dynamics of

competition around different land use priorities of residents, visitors, and passers-through, as well as the different aesthetics and preferences among near-neighbors can lead to disagreement about the design or use of these places. When these conflicts arise, who decides? Can differences be recognized and negotiated within a group, or are they seen as an indicator of an in-group/out-group boundary? Street painting groups may need careful coaching to successfully negotiating the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion and claiming place. Municipal guidance and support should be crafted with this concern in mind.

### **3.5 INCREASING LEGIBILITY**

Another function street paintings can serve is that of increasing the legibility of their site. “Legibility,” or “imageability,” is connected to recognizability of a place, not just in terms of a place having its own unique identity and in terms of providing guidance for how people should behave in the place, but also in how that recognizability aids in navigation and orienteering in the larger surrounding area.

#### **3.5.1 Understanding and Navigating Place**

In his 1960 book *Image of the City*, American urban planner Kevin Lynch proposed that people understand their environment through mental maps that not only allow them to navigate successfully from place to place, but also contribute to their sense of comfortable familiarity with the places they inhabit as well as those they travel to and through. This quality of *Legibility* or *Imageability*, as Kevin Lynch defines it, involves aspects of the built environment being easily read and understood. When a place is legible, it is easy to recognize and remember the elements of that place as well as to understand its spatial and functional relationships to other places within the larger geography. By helping to create a grounded sense of unique location, features or qualities which contribute to legibility counter

perceptions of placelessness (discussed below in place attachment). Further, legibility counters the fear of disorientation and contributes to attachment to place.

Kevin Lynch defined five elements—paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks that contribute to legibility of place. *Paths* are the ways of moving from place to place. *Edges* are the breaks or dividing lines between *districts*, which are areas that seem to have common character. *Nodes* are points of increased activity or awareness where people make choices about which way to go or what to do. *Landmarks* are places that people see and recognize that help them know where they are located relative to the other places in their mental map. Nodes are also often points of opportunity, like a marketplace at the crossroads. Since people come from different directions by different modes of travel may meet there by choice or chance, nodes are a natural point of increased activity (Lynch 1960).

### **3.5.2 How Do Street Paintings Support Legibility?**

Street paintings have the potential to support increased legibility of a place in several ways. Street paintings can contribute to the identity of a district by echoing and thus reinforcing existing elements of the district's common character. Some examples of this include Portland's sunflower painting in a neighborhood called Sunnyside, Seattle's Dragonfly painting in a neighborhood near Green Lake, several paintings of school mascots located adjacent to schools, or any painting that calls attention to the history, geography, or architecture of a place. Paintings can also contribute to a sense of district identity by creating a new element of neighborhood character that people begin to identify with. Visible to anyone on the street as well as from airplanes and in satellite imagery, street paintings also function as landmarks. As one-of-a-kind distinct and memorable places, street paintings create recognizable elements along the path (street) that help people with navigation and orientation. Since street paintings are often in intersections, which are the crossing of paths, places where people make choices about

which way to go, their location may also bring heightened awareness of the node that exists at the crossroads. People have a heightened sense of detail in places where they need to make choices, so enriching the amount of detail and the number of choices available to them can be a self-reinforcing cycle (Lynch 1960, 72). Giving more people reason to go there and several choices of what to do when they arrive may draw more people to the place further increasing the opportunity for interaction. For example, several street paintings located at the crossing of two bicycle boulevards bring attention to those places. Proximate placemaking at intersection nodes could further activate those spaces bringing even more neighbors and visitors to interact there.<sup>25</sup>

## **3.6 PLACEMAKING**

As introduced in Chapter 2, initially, Intersection Repair was primarily motivated by the desire to create community gathering spaces by re-creating a public square in the right of way. In many cases, more recent intersection paintings seem to have become separated from the larger concept of Intersection Repair, but placemaking is often still a frequently desired function of street paintings.

### **3.6.1 Placemaking = Place + Making**

The idea of placemaking in the context of street painting has two key components, the creation of good “places” for people and the importance of active participation of people in the “making.” As Fred Kent of the New York City nonprofit organization Project for Public Spaces puts it, “Placemaking is an act of doing something. It’s not planning, it’s doing. That’s what’s so powerful about it” (Silberberg et al. 2013, 9). Placemaking usually takes place in the public realm and the realm of Ray Oldenberg’s third places,

---

<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that neighbors may feel differently about the desirability of increased activity. Some may believe that having more “eyes on the street” and more human interaction in the neighborhood is a good thing, while others may feel that their peace and sense of privacy are invaded.

places which are not home or workplace, but the other places where people spend their time (Oldenburg 1999). Placemaking focuses on making places better for people, not just more beautiful or comfortable, but also on creating spaces that encourage connections among people. Placemaking theory engages ideas connected to Robert Putnam's thinking regarding the importance of social capital, which he defines as "the connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam 2000, 19). Placemakers argue that making better places that encourage interactions that build connections among people can help rebuild this social capital that Putnam claims have eroded among contemporary Americans. "Put into practice, placemaking seeks to build or improve public space, spark public discourse, create beauty and delight, engender civic pride, connect neighborhoods, support community health and safety, grow social justice, catalyze economic development, promote environmental sustainability, and of course nurture an authentic "sense of place" (Silberberg et al. 2013, 2). The iterative nature of placemaking and the collaborative connections it builds among people it engages foster community connection and empower people collectively and individually. "The mutual stewardship of place and community is . . . the virtuous cycle of placemaking. In this mutual relationship, communities transform places, which in turn transform communities, and so on"(Silberberg et al. 2013, 3).

### **3.6.2 What Makes Good Places for People?**

Over the past eighty years, thinking has evolved on what makes good places for people. After urban renewal and automobile-oriented central planning practices of the early twentieth century had transformed much of America's human habitat into spatially-isolated, use-segregated homogenous places, people noticed the negative impacts of these planning practices. One of the key voices in this shift of thinking was Jane Jacobs, whose 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

transformed the way contemporary planners understand how cities work and the factors that make places and the communities in them thrive. Counter to the trends of planning practices at that time, Jane Jacobs said that complexity is good and healthy for cities. She advocated for dense, mixed-use spaces where diverse people engage in many different facets of life and work simultaneously in close proximity to each other. Jane Jacobs popularized the concept of “eyes on the street,” the idea that places are safer when more people are present because they see what is happening and look out for each other. Walkable neighborhoods encourage safety, social connectivity, and community vitality (Jacobs 1961).

William H. Whyte, another New Yorker whose research builds on the prior work of Jane Jacobs, continued to transform contemporary thinking about public space. He conducted large-scale studies of the ways that people used New York City’s public plazas using time-lapse photography and video. His 1980 book, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* confirmed much of what Jane Jacobs had claimed 20 years prior about how people use public spaces, and reported how social dynamics were affected by the physical design of public spaces.

Among the features often cited as necessary to good public space are places where people can be in the presence of others, where casual contact and people watching are possible, and where people have a chance to “just be” without needing to have a specific agenda or mission (Whyte 1980). Opportunities to be in the presence of others foster social connection. Lingering places where people have a chance to stay, bumping places that encourage chance encounters with acquaintances, and places of pause that encourage people to slow down from our busy task-oriented modern lives are important features for public spaces (Carmona 2014; Cattell et al. 2008; Project for Public Spaces 2017c). Urban theorist and University of Cincinnati planning professor Vikas Mehta offers a framework for evaluating public space

that says that safety, comfort, pleasurability, inclusiveness, and meaningful activities are key elements of successful public spaces (Mehta 2014).

Another world-renown placemaker and public space designer, Danish urban designer Jan Gehl, offers many guidelines and suggestions for how to evaluate whether places are good for people along with design principles for creating great public places. His practice builds upon the theoretical foundations of Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte. Gehl Architects has been instrumental in transforming public spaces into people-friendly, pedestrian-oriented places, both through their design work and through books like *Life Between Buildings* (2011) and *Cities for People* (2010) which outline practices of making incremental changes that over time transform spaces into vibrant people-friendly places. Table 3.1 shows a summary of the 12 Qualities of Good Public Spaces, their tool for evaluating an existing place with an eye toward improving its performance in 12 different aspects that make the place feel safe (protection), welcoming (inviting), and comfortable (delight) (Svarre 2015). The three columns of the table represent the experience of whether the space is good for passing through for necessary activities, whether it invites lingering or participation in optional activities, and whether it is the sort of place one would deliberately come to for social activities.

**Table 3.1. Gehl 12 Criteria for Good Public Space. source: Gehl Architects**

<b>PROTECTION</b>	<p><b>PROTECTION AGAINST VEHICULAR TRAFFIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic accidents</li> <li>• Pollution, fumes, noise</li> <li>• Visibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROTECTION AGAINST CRIME &amp; VIOLENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well lit</li> <li>• Allow for passive surveillance</li> <li>• Overlap functions in space and time</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROTECTION AGAINST UNPLEASANT SENSORY EXPERIENCES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind / Draft</li> <li>• Rain / Snow</li> <li>• Cold / Heat</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Dust, Glare, Noise</li> </ul>
<b>INVITATION</b>	<p><b>INVITATIONS FOR WALKING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room for walking</li> <li>• Accessibility to key areas</li> <li>• Interesting facades</li> <li>• No obstacles</li> <li>• Quality surfaces</li> </ul>	<p><b>INVITATIONS FOR STANDING AND STAYING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attractive and functional edges</li> <li>• Defined spots for staying</li> <li>• Objects to lean against or stand next to</li> </ul>	<p><b>INVITATIONS FOR SITTING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined zones for sitting</li> <li>• Maximize advantages</li> <li>• pleasant views, people watching</li> <li>• Good mix of public and café seating</li> <li>• Resting opportunities</li> </ul>
	<p><b>INVITATIONS FOR VISUAL CONTACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coherent way-finding</li> <li>• Unhindered views</li> <li>• Interesting views</li> <li>• Lighting (when dark)</li> </ul> <p><b>AUDIO &amp; VERBAL CONTACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low ambient noise level</li> <li>• Public seating arrangements conducive to communicating</li> </ul>	<p><b>PLAY, RECREATION &amp; INTERACTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for physical activity, play, interaction and entertainment</li> <li>• Temporary activities (markets, festivals, exhibitions etc.)</li> <li>• Optional activities (resting, meeting, social interaction)</li> <li>• Create opportunities for people to interact in the public realm</li> </ul>	<p><b>DAY / EVENING / NIGHT ACTIVITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 hour city</li> <li>• Variety of functions throughout the day</li> <li>• Light in the windows</li> <li>• Mixed-use</li> <li>• Lighting in human scale</li> </ul> <p><b>VARYING SEASONAL ACTIVITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seasonal activities. (skating, christmas markets,)</li> <li>• extra protection from unpleasant climatic conditions</li> <li>• Lighting</li> </ul>
<b>DELIGHT</b>	<p><b>DIMENSIONED AT HUMAN SCALE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensions of buildings &amp; spaces in observance of the important human dimensions in related to senses, movements, size &amp; behavior</li> </ul>	<p><b>POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CLIMATE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun / shade</li> <li>• Warmth / coolness</li> <li>• Breeze / ventilation</li> </ul>	<p><b>AESTHETIC &amp; SENSORY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality design, fine detailing, robust materials</li> <li>• Views / vistas</li> <li>• Rich sensory experiences</li> </ul>

Another contemporary placemaking organization, the Project for Public Spaces, is based in New York and offers a rich array of online resources and guidance for placemaking endeavors (“Project for Public Spaces” 2017b). One of the tools they offer for thinking about what makes a great place is summarized in the graphic in Figure 3.1. The inner circle shows what they believe to be the four key attributes of great places—sociability, uses and activities, comfort and image, access and linkage. The second ring shows the intangible qualities that describe positive aspects of place in each key attribute



Figure 3.1. Project for Public Spaces - What makes Great Places? source: (Project for Public Spaces 2017d)

while the outer ring shows measurable features that can be evaluated to assess the success of the space in fulfilling those attributes. These tools and perspectives can be useful in evaluating street painting sites to see whether they are functioning as good public spaces, and where not, may offer tools or suggestions about how to improve them.

### **3.6.3 Tactical Urbanism**

Ideas of Tactical Urbanism currently play a large role in placemaking. These changes often involve low cost, temporary, quick adaptations or repurposing of public space. Tactical urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, and DIY urbanism are terms often used interchangeably to describe local residents making direct changes to their places themselves without engaging in top-down planning processes or seeking permission to act. To clarify the differences between them, guerilla urbanism emphasizes the “without permission” factor, DIY urbanism emphasizes the “doing it yourself” factor, and tactical urbanism emphasizes making small, low cost, temporary experimental changes (Sadik-Khan and Solomonow 2016). Rebar, a San Francisco art and design collective and the inventors of PARK(ing) Day, specializes in these kinds of strategies (Rebar Group 2017).<sup>26</sup> The work of groups like City Repair and projects like street paintings and Intersection Repairs can be tactical/DIY/guerrilla all at once. City officials have realized that strategies of Tactical Urbanism can be employed successfully by municipal governments. During her time as Transportation Commissioner in New York City from 2009 to 2013, Janette Sadik-Khan oversaw a campaign to shift the city’s streets into more people friendly spaces. Using paint, moveable street furniture, and other temporary elements to temporarily transform spaces into good

---

<sup>26</sup> PARK(ing) Day started out as one two-hour social experiment to see what would happen if, after paying the parking meter, one set up a temporary park there for two hours instead of parking a car. This experiment has grown to an annual event where people set up temporary parks in parking spaces in cities all over the world.

places for people allowed for experimentation and adaptive change without investing large amounts of money and time in permanent changes (Sadik-Khan and Solomonow 2016).

### **3.6.4 How Can Street Paintings Support Placemaking?**

Street painting has great potential to support placemaking functions, especially where organizers create more things to do, places to rest, and reasons to linger near the. Locating paintings near places people already go, like libraries, parks, schools and along bike routes can help improve the appeal of those places as well. Reviving the original Portland practice of creating a street painting among other placemaking elements like benches, kiosks, sharing stations, and other amenities that neighbors share with each other would create more opportunities for people to connect to each other through both the making and the use of those elements. Even without these added elements, the evaluation tools introduced in this section can help painting groups assess the people-friendliness of the space they are creating. When people have reasons to come and reasons to linger, it increases the presence of eyes on the street, and increased interactions of neighbors with each that other help foster relationships that increase place attachment and foster neighboring behavior (Hester 2006).

## **3.7 FOSTERING PLACE ATTACHMENT AND PLACE IDENTITY**

Place attachment and place identity relate to connections between the factors of People and Place described in the big picture conceptual diagram, Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1. Building and strengthening these connections are important functions street paintings serve well. Over the past 50 years, place attachment has been discussed across a broad array of fields including sociology, geography, environmental psychology, economics, ecology, urban design, and planning. Theorists from these many fields offer varying definitions of place attachment and hold differing views on what matters about the

connections between people and places (Lewicka 2011). This section explores several aspects of place attachment theory that seem relevant to the functions of street paintings. After defining place attachment, this section discusses theories on how attachment happens, recent thinking on placelessness, other potentially negative impacts on place attachment at the block- or neighborhood-scale, and positive impacts of place attachment on neighboring and civic participation. The section concludes with thoughts on how street painting can contribute to place attachment.

### **3.7.1 Defining Place Attachment and Place Identity**

Place attachment is about the connection of individual people to meaningful places. Place identity is not about the unique identity of a place; that is related to legibility. Place identity is about whether a person's individual sense of identity includes connection to a place. "I'm a Seattlite," or "We are city people," or "She's a Mary-dead-ender," are all expressions of place identity.<sup>27</sup> Place attachment and place identity can occur at different scales ranging from "my chair" to "my planet." Research on place attachment is usually focused on one scale at a time, with the home to neighborhood scales being the most frequently studied.

Geographers and sociologists discuss two different types of "place." More traditionally, place was recognized only among spaces perceived "as a bounded entity with unique identity and historical continuity, a cozy place of rest and defense against the dangerous and alien 'outside' (Tuan 1974; 1977; Relph 1976). More contemporary perspectives acknowledge that place can sometimes also be found or created at an "'open crossroads', a meeting place rather than an enclave of rest, a location with

---

<sup>27</sup> A cluster of neighbors in Seattle's Crown Hill neighborhood call themselves the "Mary-dead-enders" because they live in the last block of Mary Avenue NW before it dead-ends into Carkeek Park.

‘interactive potential’” (Milligan 1998). Then theorists debate whether people can become attached to the latter sort of places (Lewicka 2011).

### **3.7.2 How Does Place Attachment Happen?**

Since few studies or theories have explored how place attachment develops, the mechanisms of place attachment are not clearly understood. Place attachment and place identity develop over time, but not solely because of time. Place attachment involves attachment to both physical aspects of how the space looks, feels and functions, and to social aspects of a place when people develop individual and community connections to others in and through the shared space.

Humanistic geographers Yi-Fu Tuan (1975) and Edward Relph (1976) posed the existence of a continuum of permanent insiders and outsiders to a place. This theory, which espouses that new or transient residents and tourists do not or cannot authentically attach to place, relies on several ideas—that without contributing to creating a place newcomers cannot share its values; that they are consumers not creators of places; that because of their relatively brief time in a place, it is not possible for them to develop true attachment to it; and that the presence of their outsider influence negatively affects a place’s true character (Stedman 2006). This last idea echoes the problematic arguments we hear from nativists and NIMBYs.<sup>28</sup> More recent thinking has evolved on this issue. Researchers like Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford theorize that attachments to physical characteristics of place happen more quickly, while deeper emotional and social attachment to people and community develop more slowly (Scannell

---

<sup>28</sup> NIMBY is an acronym standing for “Not in My Backyard” is frequently used to describe objectors to the location of something they do not like near their homes or in their neighborhood.

and Gifford 2010b). The physical place itself is always present, but the social attachments require more complex and repeated interactions with others.

### **3.7.3 Placelessness**

Since the 1990s, professional practitioners and academic theorists including Edward Relph and James Howard Kunstler, have engaged in discussions and posed theories about a contemporary trend toward a more placeless society (Relph 1976; Kunstler 1993). They note several contributing factors including mass-produced generic, culturally homogenized places, mobility of populations, globalization, and an increased presence and role of non-spatial networks. Mass production and corporatization have led to the creation of placeless places. One place looks and feels much like another so that almost every city across the country seems interchangeable with the next. Since the mid-twentieth century, car-centered planning in tandem with an increased focus on the global economy has disrupted physical spaces—whether by building highways where neighborhoods once were, or by relocating jobs far from the people who once relied on them. Current planning and design practice has moved away from this sort of placeless and generic planning, but the legacy of the physical spaces created by these mid-century practices remain.

In addition to physical impacts, these choices have social impacts. They promote mobility of populations in ways that disrupt connections to community, family, and culture as well as to physical places. When people move frequently, whether migrating to other countries, across the United States, or from neighborhood to neighborhood within one city, they tend to not stay as long in any one location, and think of locations as interchangeable. People commute long distances to work, live far from family and friends, spend free time far from their own neighborhoods, and vacation far from home.

People who are more mobile have less connection to the people and places where they are currently located. People are less deeply rooted in any one place and community when they are divided among several. Many people also find deeper connection through “placeless,” affinity-based attachments, online communities, or interest-based groups, where they work and socialize online or with others who are located far from them. Since place attachment is thought to be related both to the amount of time spent in a place and to a sense that the place is irreplaceable, rather than developing deep connection with one place or community where they have several threads of connection through home, work, and social life, contemporary people may have more transitory connections to many different places, or in some cases, not seem to regard place as important at all.

Several factors contribute to claims that place attachment does not occur to the extent that it used to. James Howard Kunstler in his criticism of suburbia says that ever since World War II America has filled its built environment with “places that are not worth caring about” (Kunstler 2004). Transient populations may not get attached to place because attachment takes time and people do not spend enough time in one place. Other theorists observed that place attachment was measurably lower in neighborhoods with greater ethnic, racial and socioeconomic diversity (Taylor, Gottfredson, and Brower 1985). When neighborhoods are more mixed, neighbors do not perceive each other as having in-group commonality (Putnam 2007; Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008).

While people might be less attached to place than they have been in previous generations, thinking has varied about whether or how much that matters. Modernism and globalism promoted the idea that our attachment to non-spatial affinity-based communities combined with increased mobility in the global economy mean that place and place attachment just do not matter anymore. However, more recent thinking and practice pushes back on these assertions and express concern that this lack of deep

connection to physical places and place-based communities undermines our personal and community health, resilience, and sense of happiness (Putnam 2000; Oldenburg 1999). In his popular 1993 book *The Geography of Nowhere*, American author and social critic James Howard Kunstler describes what he sees as the negative social and spatial consequences of automobile-focused suburban development's contributions to creating "a land where every place is like no place in particular," and then calls on citizens to take action to re-invent the places they inhabit to bring back their unique sense of place (Kunstler 1993).

### **3.7.4 Overcoming Attachment Hurdles**

Working with neighbors to shape shared spaces can overcome hurdles to place attachment. Bringing unique identity and character to neighborhood places can counter the sense that places have become anonymous and interchangeable. Newcomers who work with their neighbors to shape their shared spaces have opportunities to build deep attachment to place by helping to create it, and to build the relationships that foster social attachment via their increased interactions and shared experiences with neighbors. Counter to the assumptions of the rigid model of permanent insiders and outsiders to place, activities can provide the opportunities to develop attachment that this older theory thought could not exist for newcomers. Studies show that increasing interaction with neighbors also can reverse the negative impacts of diversity on neighbor connections. "Individuals who regularly talk with their neighbors are less influenced by the racial and ethnic character of their surroundings than people who lack such social interaction" (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008).

Not only does increased interaction with people create feelings of attachment, people also feel more attached to objects and places that they spend time creating. In 2012, American researchers called this phenomenon the "IKEA effect," and demonstrated that people are more attached to, and place added

value on, objects they have participated in making (Norton, Mochon, and Ariely 2012).<sup>29</sup> The value people placed on these objects was proportional to the effort they had exerted in making them, as long as their efforts had been successful. Researchers think part of this effect results from participants spending time in direct contact with the object they assemble, and part of it is related to seeing the object as proof of their competence and capability. In the context of neighborhood placemaking, this translates into pride in personal and collective achievement, proof of competence, and proof of their ability and power to achieve change.

### **3.7.5 How Street Paintings Support Place Attachment**

Intersection Repair was originally a response to sense of placelessness and disconnection among neighbors, feelings of isolation and loneliness. One of the arguments for Intersection Repair and other forms of hands-on community placemaking is that they create opportunities for new as well as long-time residents to contribute to creating a place, and that working together to do so accelerates the formation of deeper attachment both to the physical place and to the other people who share it. Places that are more legible and unique are easier to recognize and thus have a higher likelihood of people becoming attached to them. People are more likely to attach to places they have positive memories about. The acts of co-creating these places with neighbors can both trigger the “IKEA effect” and create positive experiences with others around the site that create memories and build relationships that help people attach to their neighborhood and their neighbors.

---

<sup>29</sup> IKEA is a Swedish company that sells flat-packed furniture kits that customers assemble themselves at home.

### 3.8 ENCOURAGING NEIGHBORING

The concept of neighboring involves building connections among people who live near each other.

Neighboring involves three affective bonds: *Mutual aid* is the willingness of neighbors to assist each other and their trust that they can rely on their neighbors. *Sense of community* relates to feelings of membership in a network of people that feels larger and more dependable than themselves. The third bond, *place attachment*, is about the connections of people to place, as discussed previously in this chapter. Neighboring behavior involves practices like informal visiting and greeting each other; sharing information and connecting each other to resources; borrowing, lending, and doing small favors; informal crime watch; and offering help in case of emergency (Unger and Wandersman 1985).

“Neighboring is the human glue” between people, places, and community organizations (Unger and Wandersman 1985, 162). As with theories of placelessness, some speculate that the contemporary culture, where many people are more mobile and more engaged in non-place-based communities, makes neighboring relationships less important, while others believe that because neighboring relationships are scarcer now that they are more important and can prove even more valuable when they are strong.

Building relationships with neighbors can help increase a sense of stability, security and happiness. Familiarity with the neighborhood and neighbors can also help neighbors cultivate their sense of home territory, and expand their mental map of what places feel safe and familiar. Neighborhood relationships increase people’s sense of being part of a larger, more resilient social network and help lessen fear of crime (Unger and Wandersman 1985). Interacting with neighbors and practicing neighboring behavior helps people find or create common ground, and increased communication and interactions provide more opportunities for people to share information and resources. Having shared

sense of responsibility for common areas or resources can further deepen these connections. Increased interaction among neighbors support the sort of connections that counter the negative effects of diversity on place attachment.

Not only does neighboring positively affect people's connection to their immediate neighbors, but also it serves as a positive predictor of civic involvement and active participation in grass-roots organizations (Manzo and Perkins 2006; Perkins, Brown, and Taylor 1996). People in strong neighboring relationships are more likely to be aware of and involved in local volunteer organizations, and if involved in those organizations, have increased interactions with neighbors that further build their sense of community connection(Unger and Wandersman 1985).

### **3.8.1 How Can Street Painting Support Community Relationships and Neighboring Behavior?**

Building neighboring relationships through collaborative shaping of shared spaces expands neighbors sense of familiarity with the people and spaces around them. It fosters a greater sense of “we” and encourages practices of mutual support and concern for each other. The part of the painting permit process that requires groups to contact all the households within the petition radius of one or two blocks also helps push neighbors to knock on each other's doors and build relationships with each other.<sup>30</sup> Street paintings can invite these sorts of connections both through the process of co-creation and also through interactions of neighbors near the site of the painting through planned events and chance encounters. The practice of sharing responsibility for the creation and upkeep of the painting fosters an increased sense of stewardship for the neighborhood.

---

<sup>30</sup> This rule will be further explained and explored in future chapters.

### **3.9 FUNCTIONS SUMMARY**

This chapter has explained theoretical foundations of several functions that street paintings support well and one common motivation for street paintings that they serve poorly. The chapter presents a case for discouraging the promotion of street paintings for traffic calming purposes. Instead, it lays out the case that paintings are better at making territorial claims on space, increasing legibility of places, placemaking, fostering place attachment and encouraging neighboring. After Chapter 4 explains the regulatory framework for street paintings in Portland and Seattle, Chapters 5 and 6 explore specific Seattle street paintings and draw connections between the functions explained in this chapter, the motivations driving Seattle painting groups, and the experiences they have had through their projects.

## Chapter 4. MUNICIPAL RULES AND GUIDANCE

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

This thesis looks to Portland, Oregon as a model of successful street painting project support because, as the birthplace of the DIY placemaking movement that spawned the first intersection paintings, Portland has the longest and most successful history of street painting projects. What Portland is doing to support street paintings and other placemaking projects seems to be working well there, and while the two cities are not identical, Seattle may be able to draw a few lessons from Portland's ongoing success. Like many cities, Seattle developed their street painting rules when groups of neighbors excited to replicate things they heard were happening in Portland approached SDOT about getting permits to do paintings in their neighborhoods. SDOT did look to Portland when they initially developed the Seattle street painting protocol, but adapted and implemented their program somewhat differently. And while Seattle painters receive process and funding support from Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods and Safe Routes to Schools program, these groups do not have the specific technical expertise and placemaking focus of an organization like Portland's City Repair. Seattle's street painting rules and process have historically differed from Portland's in several significant ways which are enumerated in this chapter. Both cities have made adjustments over the years based on their own systems, available resources, and the circumstances of proposals they received. Also, in 2017, Seattle is considering several changes to their street painting protocol. These changes have the potential to improve both processes and outcomes for Seattle's street painting projects but need to be examined carefully to see whether they are likely to serve Seattle's circumstances well, or whether adjusting them differently might serve them better.

This chapter explains the current and historical rules, guidelines and support for street paintings in the two cities, and notes differences between them.

#### **4.1.1 Similar Yet Distinct Cities**

As cities, Portland and Seattle have much in common. Each is the largest city in its state. With estimated populations of 640,000 in Portland and 704,000 in Seattle (US Census Bureau 2016a; US Census Bureau 2016b). Both are cut through by water and have similarly mild climates with a rainy winter season and a dry summer season. Both cities were laid out in accordance with the National Land Ordinance grid system. Their neighborhoods grew around networks of first horsecar then streetcar lines that were built by land speculators in the 1880s through the 1910s, then consolidated and run as public utilities in the early twentieth century, and eventually retired mid-century when the rise of automobiles shifted transportation planning priorities to private vehicles. Much of each city is laid out in parcels zoned for single-family housing, and as in many cities in the United States, while the patterns of who lives where have shifted somewhat and become less absolute, the legacy of redlining and racial segregation leaves a continuing pattern of many overwhelmingly white neighborhoods. Both Portland and Seattle engage in long-range city planning governed by an urban growth boundary. Portland and Seattle each sees itself as green and progressive city.

As well, each city is proud of their reputation as a “city of neighborhoods,” which for them means not only that their many neighborhoods each have a strong sense of neighborhood character, but also that the city has a designated branch of city government that supports neighborhood-scale governance and community involvement. Portland is made up of 95 officially recognized neighborhoods, each with its own volunteer-based neighborhood association. The neighborhood associations are coordinated by the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI), which also offers grants information, fiscal

sponsorship, and other support for efforts focused on neighborhood livability, community development, and civic engagement. Seattle, with approximately 125 distinct neighborhoods, provides similar functions through its Department of Neighborhoods (DON).

ONI focuses on “Promoting a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Portlanders working together and with government to build inclusive, safe and livable neighborhoods and communities”(City of Portland 2017). DON “provides resources and opportunities for community members to build strong communities and improve their quality of life. . . .[to] meet people where they are and help neighbors develop a stronger sense of place, build closer ties, and engage with their community and city government” (“Seattle Department of Neighborhoods” 2017). Street painters express similar aspirations to the goals of these quality-of-life and community-building focused neighborhood support arms of municipal government. They also fit well with the with the cities’ ideals about the diverse use of the right of way.

Part of seeing themselves as green and progressive cities manifests in the ways that Portland and Seattle manage transportation planning and the use of the public right of way. Both the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) view the right of way as a currently underutilized public asset that should serve many purposes for many different people, both those traveling through and those who stay in place. The right of way is not just for transportation; comprising 27 percent of Seattle’s land, it is also the largest network of public space in the city. As former Seattle transportation director Peter Hahn was fond of saying, “Streets are not just pipes for cars. They are places” (*Seattle Times* 2012). While Portland has the natural benefit of flatter geography and at least a 20-year head start on prioritizing transit and bike infrastructure, Seattle is making strides

to follow Portland’s example of creating multi-modal transportation networks, complete streets, pedestrian-centered design, and community-enhancing uses of the right of way.

#### 4.1.2 Cities with Different Personalities

While the two cities have much in common, they also have some significant differences. See Table 4.1 for a comparison of a few basic city statistics. While the two cities are somewhat similar in population, Seattle, at two-thirds the land area, is more densely populated, growing faster, and on average has a higher median income and home prices. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2016 Seattle was the fifth fastest growing city in the US. While Portland is also growing, Seattle is booming, and with this boom comes high employment opportunity, income disparity, gentrification, and displacement in Seattle’s neighborhoods.

**Table 4.1. Comparison of City Statistics**

Characteristic	Seattle	Portland	Proportional difference Portland/Seattle
2010 census population	608,660	583,766	1.04
2016 estimated population	704,358	639,635	1.1
Change in population (6 years)	95,698	55,869	1.71
Percentage population change (6 years)	16%	10%	1.64
Land area (sq. mi.)	83.8	133.5	.63
Population density	8,401	4,793	1.75
Median income (per household)	\$ 83,476	\$ 62,127	1.34
median owner-occupied housing unit value	\$ 606,200	\$ 395,100	1.53
poverty rate	11.5%	14.7%	.78

source: (US Census Bureau 2016b; US Census Bureau 2016a)

Even before the boom times, the two cities seem to have distinctly different personalities that affect how some neighbors perceive DIY placemaking projects like street paintings. Portland has a reputation of being more laid back—full of hippies, hipsters, and artists. Many Portlanders embrace vibrant colors and the DIY aesthetic of using what you have and letting things be quirky. Among Seattlites some embrace that casual and quirky vibe, but in my own placemaking work in Seattle I have noticed that many Seattle neighbors seem more concerned than Portlanders about keeping things classier, using higher-end materials, and making sure things are professionally-made. Seattlites frequently pay designers and other specialists for work that many Portlanders choose to do for themselves. Whether this is about keeping up appearances, concern for how something unconventional might affect property values, or a lack of confidence in their own or their neighbors' creative abilities, Seattle overall seems more conservative than Portland when it comes to neighborhood placemaking.

These distinctions are neither absolute nor hierarchical, but rather offered to remind the reader that what works well in one place might not work the same way in another, and that rules, guidance, and design parameters are not one-size fits all, but rather must be adapted to suit the character and needs of a specific place and its people. That places are not interchangeable is, after all, one of the points of placemaking as a reaction to placelessness.<sup>31</sup> All that said, the next section explains the similarities and differences between Seattle's street painting rules and guidance and those of Portland.

## **4.2 STREET PAINTING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

This section compares Portland and Seattle street painting rules and regulations and notes where significant differences exist between them. After explaining the process by which street painting rules

---

<sup>31</sup> These concepts are explored in Chapter 3.

are established and communicated in each city, the chapter also gives an overview of potential funding sources and process coaching available to street painting projects, since granting agencies and non-profit organizations like City Repair frequently act as partners providing process support, and because administrative requirements of grants act as an additional set of rules that shape street painting projects.<sup>32</sup> The remaining sections of the chapter then follow the categories outlined in Table 4.2 to explain each city's rules for where paintings may be located, design and materials requirements, the petition process for demonstrating neighborhood support, what permits are required for painting and repainting, and the safety and liability requirements for painting day street closures.

---

<sup>32</sup> While this thesis does not delve into the details of grant requirements, knowing who these granting partners are is an important first step in recognizing that there are other rules and structures to consider.

**Table 4.2. Summary of Portland and Seattle Street Painting Rules and Guidance**

	<b>Element</b>	<b>Portland</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
Support	Funding available?	Unknown. Materials discounted through City Repair.	Grants available through DON Neighborhood Matching Fund SDOT Safe Routes to School
	Coaching	City Repair Project workshops and process/skills support, VBC annual event	DON project managers coach community building
Location	Midblock paintings	Official rules adopted 2015	Allowed since 2010
	Street class, traffic threshold	Local Service Streets w/ <2500/2000 vehicles/day, 25' setback from non-qualifying street	Residential non-arterial streets definitely include: Neighborhood Yield, may also include: Urban Village Neighborhood Access, Downtown Neighborhood Access
	Co-located w/ traffic circles and stop signs	Yes, many are at 2 way stops, some at traffic circles	Not with stop signs or traffic circles or other MUTCD device (exceptions have been granted)
Form/Content/Materials	Restrictions on painted area	Big enough to not read like an island, so drivers don't drive around painting. Don't want [unpainted] parking lane to read as travel lane. Most paintings go to the curb.	Big enough to not act like traffic circle, No paint on curb, gutter, sidewalk
	Prohibited design elements	No speech. No words, letters, numbers, or universally recognized symbols. No traffic control devices. Nothing like crosswalk, stop sign, stop bar, etc. No copyright material.	Can't mimic official pavement markings, such as stripes or signs...no words or logos...no advertising or insensitive images.
	Paint brand/grit required	Specific types/brands recommended Walnut shell grit required	Specific types/brands required Grit required
Neighbor Petition	Signature petition	Resident signatures from All 4 corners/all adjacent 80% of all street frontage properties w/in 2 blocks (2@200' block or 400')	Resident signatures from All 4 corners/all adjacent (has been waived, perpetuated problems) 60% of all street frontage properties w/in 1 block, (range from 200' to 700')
	Petition renewal	Not usually required	SDOT may require new signature petition every 3 years

**Table 4.2. (cont.) Summary of Portland and Seattle Street Painting Rules and Guidance**

	<b>Element</b>	<b>Portland</b>	<b>Seattle</b>
<b>Permits</b>	Design approval /Use permit	Revocable Dedicated Street Area Use Permit authorizes construction and maintenance, required when new painting. Fee: waived	Construction Street Use Permit for design approval, Fee: (code 15 public art installation)--\$138 base fee plus inspections
	Painting day permit	Standard block party permit for each day of street closure. Fee: \$10 for 1st block, +\$5 each additional leg. Intersection is 4 legs = \$25	Included in Construction Street Use Permit for street closure. Fee: \$138 base fee plus inspections
	Repainting permit	Standard Block Party permit for street closure on repainting day (fees \$10 to \$25)	Need Construction Street Use permit for street closure on each repainting day (fees \$138 or more)
	Permit renewal	Street Area Use Permit does not expire unless revoked. Design change requires new Use Permit w/design approval and petition	New Construction Use permit required for each repainting
	Problem resolution	City Traffic engineer may revoke permit for any cause. Nuisance conditions or failure to resolve concerns may result in permit revocation/require removal of project.	New signature petition may be required every 3 years
<b>Safety and Liability</b>	Notification	30 days prior, notify all households and businesses within 4 blocks	Notify police, fire, postal service, and neighbors in surrounding area
	Barriers	Required. Type III barricades and street closed signs	Required. Type II barricades and street closed signs SDOT issues Traffic Control Plan
	Insurance	Insurance required, usually provided under umbrella of City Repair	If working under a grant, insurance under umbrella of fiscal sponsor?
	Waivers	Painting day participants sign liability waiver; Revocable use permit includes "hold harmless" clause	Visual Artists Rights Act Waiver (VARA) artist and organizer assign rights to art to City

### 4.2.1 How Rules Are Established and Communicated

Portland's street painting procedures and policies were formally established by a series of four municipal ordinances, which have established, revised, and refined the rules as needed over time. These four ordinances detail guidelines and requirements for Intersection Repair. (Text of ordinances can be found in Appendix A.)

- 1997—Ordinance 171012—permitted Intersection Repair 6-month pilot project
  - Set up the terms of pilot project Share-It Square
  - Required neighbor survey and observational studies during the 6-month pilot
- 1998—Ordinance 172207—created general rules
  - Allowed other similar projects to be created
  - Slightly refined and clarified requirements and procedures based on pilot study results
- 2001--Ordinance 175937—refined rules
  - Raised allowable traffic volume at IR intersection from 1,000 cars/day to 2,500 cars/day
  - Clarified which neighboring households to include in the project approval petition
  - Gave the traffic engineer authority to adjust petition bounds where warranted
- 2015--Ordinance 18719—midblock painting rules
  - Expanded eligible locations to include midblock placement
  - Set traffic thresholds, petition boundaries, and other guidelines for midblock paintings

Seattle's street painting projects are managed in a less formal manner. Seattle's street painting program is more organized than a pilot program, but without the formalization of city ordinance or official codified rules. Seattle does not have specific ordinances or municipal codes that outline requirements and procedures for street paintings. This makes Seattle's street painting rules more flexible, but also less clear. Seattle's street painting rules may be adapted more easily because rules and requirements can be changed by Seattle city staff without needing to pass an ordinance. On the other hand, it was difficult to find a definitive complete list of Seattle's requirements for creating street paintings. In my conversations with municipal employees and project organizers in Seattle, different people seemed to understand

existing rules and procedures differently, and seemed to be following or enforcing different rules. Some rules, like required adjacent property buy-in, were understood as mandatory by one party for one project, but were treated as optional with other groups. In other cases, like whether projects were only eligible for NMF funding in their first year, officials or participants on one project seemed not to be aware of a rule that others had been told to follow.

Seattle Department of Transportation publishes a series of permit assistance handouts called client assistance memos or CAMs (“Client Assistance Memos” 2017). For example, CAM 2506, “Painting the Intersection in Your Neighborhood” gives an overview of the basic steps and requirements and tips for applying for grants through the Department of Neighborhoods’ (DON) Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF). This handout was first developed in 2010, when the 3-year petition renewal requirement was added,<sup>33</sup> and was revised slightly in 2011 and 2016. Rules and procedures for intersection painting remain mostly consistent across this period. The current (2016) version of CAM 2506 is included in Appendix A (“CAM 2506” 2017). In late 2017 while this thesis was being written, CAM 2506 was under revision to reflect new changes being considered for the program (Ho, Yolanda. Interview by author. October 3, 2017).<sup>34</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Who Is in Charge?—Continuity and Institutional Memory**

In terms of specific people carrying forward a sense of the big picture and institutional memory,<sup>35</sup>

Portland has had the advantage of consistent long-term city staff member involvement over time. One

---

<sup>33</sup> This rule is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> These potential changes include some revisions to Seattle’s street painting guidelines and requirements, most notably, shifting responsibility for street painting guidance and oversight from Traffic Calming Team in Neighborhood Traffic division to Public Space Management team in Street Use division, as well as potential changes to the petition process.

<sup>35</sup> Familiarity with policy, procedures, history of projects, and established relationships with project organizers and partnering organizations

PBOT city traffic engineer, Greg Raisman, has coordinated and approved permitting for all of Portland's street painting since the early 2000s, and has permitted more than 60 of Portland's street paintings.

Greg Raisman describes himself as an *advocrat*—an advocate-bureaucrat—whose work focuses on livable streets, active transportation, and traffic safety (Raisman, Greg. Presentation at VBC16, Portland. June 10, 2016).

In contrast, in Seattle, over the twelve-year history of Seattle's street paintings, no one at SDOT has had consistent involvement in oversight of street paintings. Several city employees have each handled a few street painting projects. Responsibility for street painting oversight has been passed from hand to hand through at least four different staff members at SDOT. Grants and project facilitation support have also been coordinated by several different staff members at DON. During that time, due to budget cuts and reorganization, the SDOT Traffic Calming team has been reduced from one supervisor plus three full-time staff to one half-time supervisor with no staff. Since 2015, interns, who are usually in their positions for one year or less, have handled street painting permit applications. Consequently, no one in Seattle city government holds the big-picture long-term or overall institutional knowledge of Seattle's street painting process or projects.

Seattle is currently shifting oversight of street paintings from the Traffic Calming team in Neighborhood Traffic division to Public Space Management (PSM) in Street Use division. Public Space Management oversees programs focused on community-enhancing uses of the right of way like the Pavement to Parks program mentioned in Chapter 2. PSM also oversees parklets, parking strip gardens, block parties, street festivals, and many other neighborhood-enhancing amenities and events that use the right of

way.<sup>36</sup> While this is a better fit for street paintings in the long run, in the short-term it involves orienting a new team of staff unfamiliar with the history and process of street paintings to those issues. This transition could lead to another layer of lost institutional knowledge as things pass from hand to hand yet again, or, if handled well, it could result in an intentional gathering-up of past projects history and guidance and the sort of long-term oversight and stewardship that the Portland program benefits from. Given what I have seen in my interactions with SDOT for this research, so far, I am optimistic.

### **4.2.3 Supporting Organizations**

Portland has the benefit of coordinated support and facilitation of street painting projects by the City Repair Project, a nonprofit founded by the originators of the first Intersection Repair. PBOT and City Repair have a well-developed collaborative working relationship to support placemaking in the right of way. City Repair provides coaching, workshops, and connections to resources, materials and facilitation tools to help groups of neighbors create neighborhood placemaking projects including street paintings. City Repair offers an annual cycle of support and a structured timeline of steps that encourages neighborhood groups to be ready to implement their projects during the annual 10-day Village Building Convergence (VBC) in June. While City Repair is a mostly volunteer-run organization with few paid positions and lots of turnover among volunteers, some of its members have had long-time connections that have helped develop and retain the institutional knowledge of and specialized expertise in the specific types of support street paintings need to step through their planning and painting process and to achieve their goals.

---

<sup>36</sup> Parklets are small extensions of the sidewalk, usually into the parking lane that establish people-friendly spaces like mini-parks or outdoor seating in the pedestrian realm.

Most Seattle projects seek funding and process support either through the Department of Neighborhoods' Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF), or through SDOT's Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program. The NMF is a matching fund where community contributions of labor, materials, services or cash are matched by funds from the city to support community initiated projects that build community and contribute to stronger, healthier neighborhoods. Prior to 2017, NMF offered two tiers of grants that were used to fund street paintings, a Small and Simple grant for projects under \$5,000 or a Small Sparks grant for projects under \$1,000. NMF also offers a Large Projects fund which matches up to \$100,000. In 2017 the Small Sparks limit was raised to \$5,000, which is good news for street painters because the Small Sparks grants have a rolling application deadline and administrative paperwork is somewhat simpler than that of the Small and Simple grants. NMF grants are generally only available to first time projects. After the first year, projects are generally self-funded. When working with an NMF grant, each grant award includes support from a project manager from DON who helps coach the grant recipients on project planning and grant administration. SDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Mini Grants provide up to \$1,000 to public and private K-12 schools, school-related nonprofits, PTAs, and community groups to support safety education and encouragement of walking and biking to school.

#### **4.2.4 Allowable Locations**

Both cities share the understanding that street paintings are appropriate for intersections or midblock locations on quiet residential streets. The specific language they use to define these locations differs somewhat, and those differences have significant impacts. Portland's Revocable Use Permit defines qualifying locations based on street classification and average traffic volume. Portland's street paintings may be placed only on Local Service Streets where the traffic on an average day is 2,500 vehicles or

fewer on both streets of an intersection site, or 2,000 vehicles or fewer on the single street of a midblock site.

Seattle allows paintings on residential, non-arterial streets. What counts as non-arterial is clear; what counts as residential is less so. Seattle's street classification system defines four types of non-arterial streets, which are shown in the bottom row of Figure 4.1. Of those four non-arterial street types, Neighborhood Yield streets are primarily residential, Urban Village Neighborhood Access streets and Downtown Neighborhood Access streets frequently contain residential uses, and Commercial Alleys are generally non-residential.<sup>37</sup> The most common of the non-arterial street types sought for intersection paintings is the Neighborhood Yield street, which SDOT describes as "designed as low speed and low volume streets that provide access to residences and community amenities such as parks, schools, and gathering spaces"(SDOT 2017a). *Seattle Streets Illustrated: Right of Way Improvements Manual*<sup>38</sup> lists street murals among the Public space programming options for Neighborhood Yield streets (SDOT 2017b). Depending on how much motorized traffic is present and how much of the street's adjacent land use is residential, a case could be made for including some Urban Village Neighborhood Access

---

<sup>37</sup> An online point-and-click map identifying the classification of any Seattle street may be found at <http://streetsillustrated.seattle.gov/map/>

<sup>38</sup> This online guide assists the public in navigating tools, permits, and procedures for work in the right of way.

streets or Downtown Neighborhood streets as “residential non-arterials” and allowing street painting on these somewhat more intensely developed streets. While they contain a mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses, Urban Village Access streets are defined as having an emphasis on residential uses and pedestrian amenities.<sup>39</sup> Downtown Neighborhood Access streets, such as those found in Belltown and Pioneer Square are mixed-use streets that may include residential, sometimes support high levels of walking and bicycling and may include “elements that contribute to a more intimate, neighborhood-oriented streetscape” (SDOT 2017b).

Unlike Portland’s guidelines, Seattle does not define a traffic threshold for street-painting-eligible streets. Instead, Seattle forbids paintings at intersections where traffic control devices like stop signs or

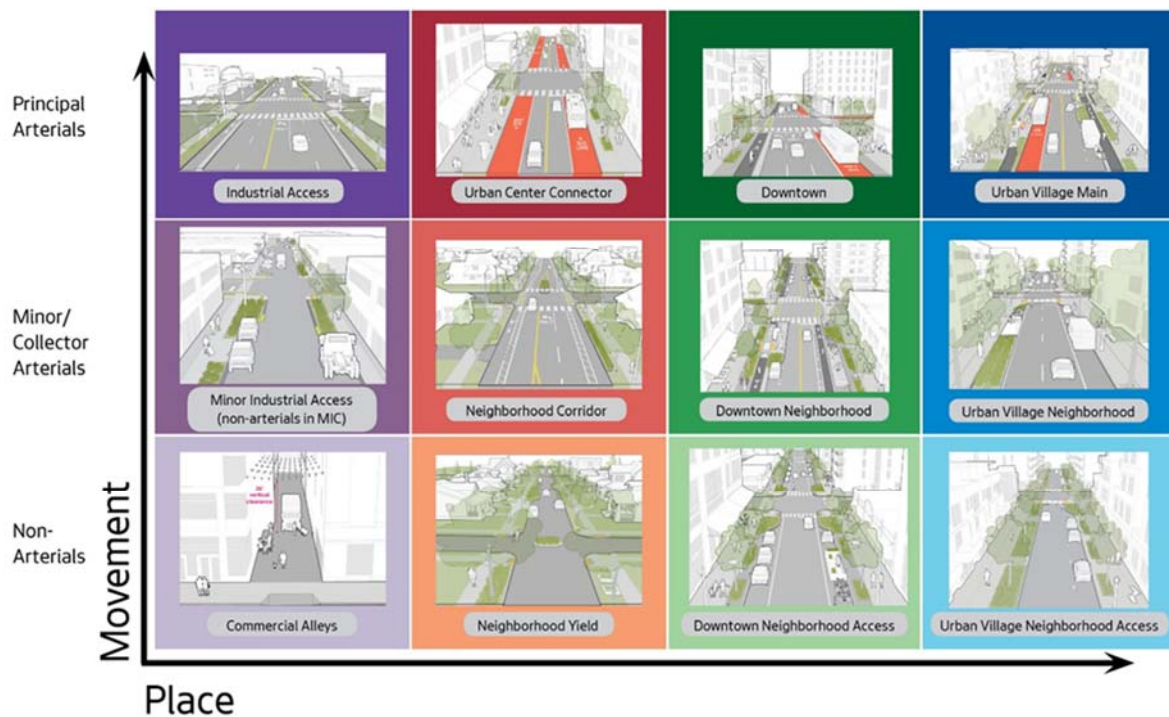


Figure 4.1. Seattle’s street classification system from Seattle Streets Illustrated Right of Way Improvements Manual. Non-arterial classifications are shown in the bottom row.

<sup>39</sup> A proposed painting at Terry Ave and Harrison St in South Lake Union is located at the intersection of two Urban Village Neighborhood access streets.

traffic circles are present.<sup>40</sup> This rule may have been established as a proxy indicator that an intersection may be too busy for street paintings or it may be a rule based on the misclassification of street paintings as traffic control devices. Portland does not include such a restriction, and never has. More often than not, intersection paintings in Portland, including the original painting at Share-It Square, are located in stop-sign controlled intersections. Portland also has several paintings at intersections with traffic circles.

#### **4.2.5 Painting Form, Content, and Materials**

Portland and Seattle have similar rules about the form, content and materials used in street paintings. Both cities prohibit street paintings from mimicking or obscuring traffic control markings on the street surface. Portland rules specify “No traffic control devices. Nothing like a crosswalk, stop sign, stop bar, etc.,” while Seattle says the design “can’t mimic ‘official’ pavement markings such as stripes or signs.” Portland also restricts content without regulating speech by specifying “No speech. No words, letters, numbers, or universally recognized symbols,” and “No copyright material.” Similarly, Seattle forbids “words, logos. . . .advertising or insensitive images.” Both cities want paintings to be large enough that they do not seem like traffic circles that drivers need to drive around instead of over. While following a similar guideline discouraging paintings that mimic traffic circles, Seattle also sets an upper limit on the painting extent by specifying that the paint should stay on the street surface, with no paint allowed on curb, gutters or sidewalk.<sup>41</sup> Both cities specify certain types of traffic marking paint and require a commercial anti-skid additive to the paint to reduce potential slipperiness of the painted surface.

---

<sup>40</sup> This prohibition once included marked crosswalks, but in the past three years at least two Seattle paintings have been approved for intersections with marked crosswalks.

<sup>41</sup> Exceptions were made for one or two cases where a sidewalk painting project was approved through the street painting permit process, but those projects had no paint on street surface, so still maintain the intention of the rule by not blurring the boundary between street and not-street.

(Portland Revocable Use Permit, PBOT guidance to street painters; SDOT archives; “CAM 2506” 2017; City Repair Project 2017b).<sup>42</sup>

#### **4.2.6 Petition Demonstrating Neighbor Approval**

Both cities require a petition to certify neighborhood approval of the design and location of a painting. Portland’s petition threshold is more stringent than Seattle’s. This petition is the formal mechanism by which the cities determine that the painting is broadly welcome and that it is not coming from a few without the informed consent of their neighbors. The petition is an essential step to ensuring that the painting is being created by broad neighborhood agreement, and that the neighbors most directly affected by the painting approve of having the painting, and all that it brings, right outside their doors. After location and design have been determined, SDOT or PBOT generates a map and list of addresses for neighborhood organizers to use to gather signatures of neighboring residents who approve of the painting proposal. Both cities require a signature from a resident (or business occupant)<sup>43</sup> of each property directly adjacent to the painting. In the case of a typical 4-way intersection, this means the four corner properties. In midblock locations this means any parcel that shares a boundary with the right of way where the painting is located. Each city then requires signatures from residents of the other homes or businesses along the street frontages leading up to the painting. Portland requires 80 percent of residents within two standard city blocks in each direction. Seattle requires a significantly lower threshold—only 60 percent of residences for one block in each direction, and includes the adjacent

---

<sup>42</sup> City Repair has an arranged for street paintings to get a discount with Miller Paint. In 2017, City Repair says Portlanders paid about \$16 per gallon for paint while some Seattle painters report paying more like \$55 per gallon, while others get all their paint donated by a local paint store.

<sup>43</sup> In the case of rental properties, resident signatures are valued over owner signatures because residents are the ones whose quality of life is directly affected by living near the street painting. Non-resident-owner signatures are not required.

properties in the percentage calculation. Portland specifies that properties with more than four units (business or residences) should get a signature of the property manager rather than for each unit. For duplexes and triplexes, the one resident signature from each unit counts separately. Vacant properties are marked as vacant on the petition and are subtracted from the total number of units on the petition. Seattle has been following a similar protocol for multi-family residences. Portland requires the petition only in the first year of painting. In 2010, after problems with community support arose at one Seattle painting, Seattle amended its rules so that SDOT may require a new signature petition every three years to verify continuing community support for the project.

Length of blocks differ significantly within the two cities. In some cases that mitigates the difference between Seattle's one-block and Portland's two-block petition range; in other cases, it exacerbates it. The standard Portland block measures 200 feet by 200 feet. The Portland ordinance stipulates that the city traffic engineer has the latitude to adjust the range of included blocks or households based on the specific geography of the site in question. The engineer usually includes households that fall within about 400 feet to 500 feet beyond the painting site in each direction that the streets extend without terminating or crossing an arterial. For Share-It Square and Sunnyside Piazza, Portland's two most long-lived intersection paintings, the petition zone includes approximately 60 households and businesses, about 50 of which would need to sign to reach the petition threshold of "all adjacent properties plus 80 percent within two blocks." Seattle blocks lengths range from less than 200 feet to more than 700 feet, with a standard Seattle block measuring 320 feet by 420 feet. Seattle's rules do not stipulate "standard blocks" and the "within one block" rule has been interpreted generally to mean "along the street until the next cross street." For midblock paintings this means that the petition zone includes only the block of the painting itself regardless of its length. In the case of the Stone Ave N painting between N 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> St and the Crown Hill proposal at NW 95<sup>th</sup> St between NW 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Ave the whole petition range

has contained only two or three parcels, while in the case of the Dragonfly, one long block contains over 30 of the 46 parcels in its petition zone.<sup>44</sup>

#### **4.2.7 Structure of Permits**

In either city, with location approval, design approval, and a certified petition, a street painting proposal is well on its way to qualifying for its permit. The types of permit required differ significantly between the two cities. In Portland, any new Intersection Repair element, including a new painting design at an existing site, requires two permits, one for the approval of the ongoing use of the street, the other for the closure of the street for painting day. Portland's Revocable Permit to Use Dedicated Street Areas is specific to Intersection Repair projects and outlines all the steps and requirements for intersection painting in one form. Repainting does not require a new Revocable Permit to Use Dedicated Street Areas unless the design or location of the painting is changing. Similar to the sort of permit issued for a bench in the right of way, Portland's permit for Intersection Repair/street painting does not expire unless revoked, but may be revoked at any time. A street painting and any adjacent placemaking elements like benches, kiosks and other elements placed in the parking strip can be approved under one permit, which streamlines the process for simultaneous creation of street paintings with adjacent placemaking projects. The revocable street use permit fees are waived for Intersection Repair/street paintings in Portland.

This revocable street use permit does not govern the street closure for painting day. Instead, painting day street closures are managed through Portland's regular block party permit process. For repainting an existing design, the group needs only the standard block party permit to close the street on painting

---

<sup>44</sup> In Seattle, this disparity of block length can result in a project being approved by very few people. More about how this may affect a painting's success explored in Chapter 7.

day. Portland block party permits cost \$10 for one block and \$5 each for up to three additional blocks. The total cost for permits in Portland is usually about \$25 for an intersection painting and \$10 for a midblock painting in each year they paint.

In Seattle, a street painting requires a Construction Street Use permit. This permit governs the temporary street closure for painting day(s). The same type of permit is needed to divert traffic or close part or all of a block for road repairs or staging of building materials in the right of way. After design, location and community petition are approved by SDOT in the first painting year, a Seattle street painting applicant uses the same Construction Street Use permit application form as is used for everything from storing a dumpster in a residential parking strip to arrange multi-week lane closures for a continuous concrete pour for a skyscraper downtown. Street painting falls under Use Code 15—Public Art Installation, so in 2017 the base price of the permit was \$138, and may also involve additional fees if an inspector visits the site to address problems with compliance with the Traffic Control Plan or other terms of the permit. In repainting years, this Construction Street Use permit and its associated fees are required in every year that the group wants to paint.

In the case that problems arise, Portland specifies in the revocable street use permit that the city traffic engineer may revoke the permit at any time. Nuisance conditions or failure to resolve neighborhood concerns may result in permit revocation or require removal of part or all of the project. Since Seattle does not issue an ongoing use permit, there is nothing to revoke. SDOT may require a new signature petition every three years to ensure that neighborhood support for the project continues.

## 4.2.8 Safety and Liability

Both cities have a few other requirements regarding notification of the street closures, the rental of approved traffic control barriers and the necessity for participant liability waivers and liability insurance coverage on painting day.

Portland requires painting groups to notify all

households and businesses within four blocks 30

days prior to painting day. The block party permit

functions as notification to traffic management

and emergency services. In Seattle, in the

Construction Street Use permit performs a similar role, but SDOT also asks organizers to inform police,

fire and postal service. Both cities require rental of formal traffic control barriers and street closure

signs. SDOT provides a Traffic Control Plan specifying number, type, and arrangement of barriers to be

rented.<sup>45</sup> Portland’s Revocable Use permit includes a “hold harmless” clause protecting the city from any

claims for damages to persons or property resulting from the permitted activity and a clause asserting

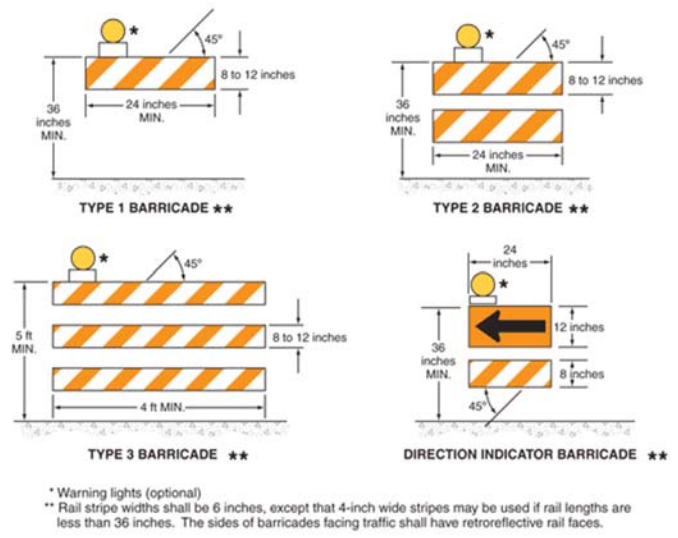
the right of the city to remove or alter the painting, or abate nuisances at the site if necessary. The

permit is signed by a project organizer on behalf of the team. VBC participants and painting day

participants also sign a consent form at the worksite that brings them under cover of liability insurance

provided by City Repair. In Seattle, grant-funded projects are covered under the liability insurance of the

grant’s fiscal sponsor. Seattle also requires the lead organizer and the artist to sign a Visual Artists Rights



**Figure 4.2. MUTCD Barrier Classifications. Seattle requires Type II, Portland Requires Type III. source: Federal Highway Administration, MUTCD**

<sup>45</sup> Seattle TCPs require type II barriers. Portland’s permit dictates type III. Barrier types are shown in Figure 4.2.

Act Waiver (VARA) that assigns all rights to the art to City so that the city may alter or remove the painting if necessary.

### **4.3 MUNICIPAL RULES AND GUIDANCE SUMMARY**

This chapter has described the administrative procedures and support structures for street paintings in Seattle and Portland. Table 4.2, shown earlier in the chapter, provides a side-by-side summary of the rules and guidance for street paintings in the two cities. Most of the differences between them seem minor, but some have significant impacts on site choice, logistics, cost of projects, and community interactions.

The most important differences between the two cities' procedures that might be worth evaluating for revision include the following: While both cities use street classification to determine street eligibility, Portland defines traffic volume thresholds to determine whether a street is low-traffic enough for a painting rather than using presence of existing traffic control devices as a proxy. If the street meets the traffic threshold, Portland allows paintings at intersections with stop signs and traffic circles while Seattle forbids them in those locations. While Portland only requires a petition when a design is new, they define a more rigorous and consistent petition radius than Seattle and require a higher approval threshold. This larger petition area results in a painting having a larger number of households to support its creation, and the higher buy-in threshold means fewer households potentially opposing it. The structure of permits for painting and repainting make Seattle's permitting process less clear and more expensive for painting groups, and more labor intensive for SDOT.

Next, Chapter 5 examines the projects that have developed under these regulatory frames. Chapter 6 explores painting groups' motivations and experiences with their paintings. Then Chapter 7 draws all of

these factors together to offer recommendations for changes in Seattle’s street painting procedures to create a program that supports the more successful functions of street paintings and positive experiences for neighbors connected to these places.

## Chapter 5. **PROJECT TIMELINES AND PROFILES**

### **5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter provides an overview of projects in Portland and Seattle. This thesis is focused on the functions and motivations of Seattle paintings. As the first city where street paintings appeared, Portland has the longest and most successful history of street paintings and so offers a context with more projects over a longer timeline than were available in Seattle. Looking at Portland projects helped me to develop preliminary questions about patterns among street paintings. In this thesis, Portland cases are used more for context than as a side-by-side comparison. With that in mind, only general patterns are noted about Portland's projects, while specific details on Seattle paintings are covered in more depth. Rather than making side-by-side comparisons between specific projects in each city, this section presents a general timeline of Portland projects and notes a few trends about them, then examines Seattle paintings at that same broad scale before introducing Seattle paintings project by project at a finer level of detail. The next chapter, Chapter 6, is organized by theme rather than by project and draws from the surveys and interviews about Seattle street painters' motivations and their perceptions of success.

### **5.2 PORTLAND PROJECTS SUMMARY 1996 TO 2017**

It is difficult to determine precise number of street paintings that have been created in Portland, and even more difficult to track which projects get repainted. PBOT issues permits only in the first year of a painting. Some projects that get permits do not end up painting on the timeline they intend to, or at all. Some projects may have painted outside of the typical VBC cycle and permit process. This data is even more likely to underreport repaintings, since no systematic or centralized records are kept regarding

repainting. The longer-lived and more self-sustaining a project is, the less support it needs from City Repair, and the less likely its repaintings would be to be shown in City Repair’s schedules. Repaint permits are issued through the block party program which does not track the purpose of a block party. From a recordkeeping perspective, the more successful and long-lived a project becomes, the less visible it is in the records.

That said, In the 22 years since the first Intersection Repair project at Share-It Square, Portlanders have created street paintings in approximately 70 locations throughout the city. Portlanders have repainted intersection and midblock paintings at least 105 times, so there have been at least 175 street painting block party events in Portland since Share-It Square neighbors first painted in 1996. A few projects that are included in this count are located on private property<sup>46</sup> or painted sidewalk areas rather than street, but they are included in this count (but shown in grey text in Table 5.1) because they were treated by PBOT or City Repair as Intersection Repair projects.<sup>47</sup> Most Portland paintings are at intersections, with a

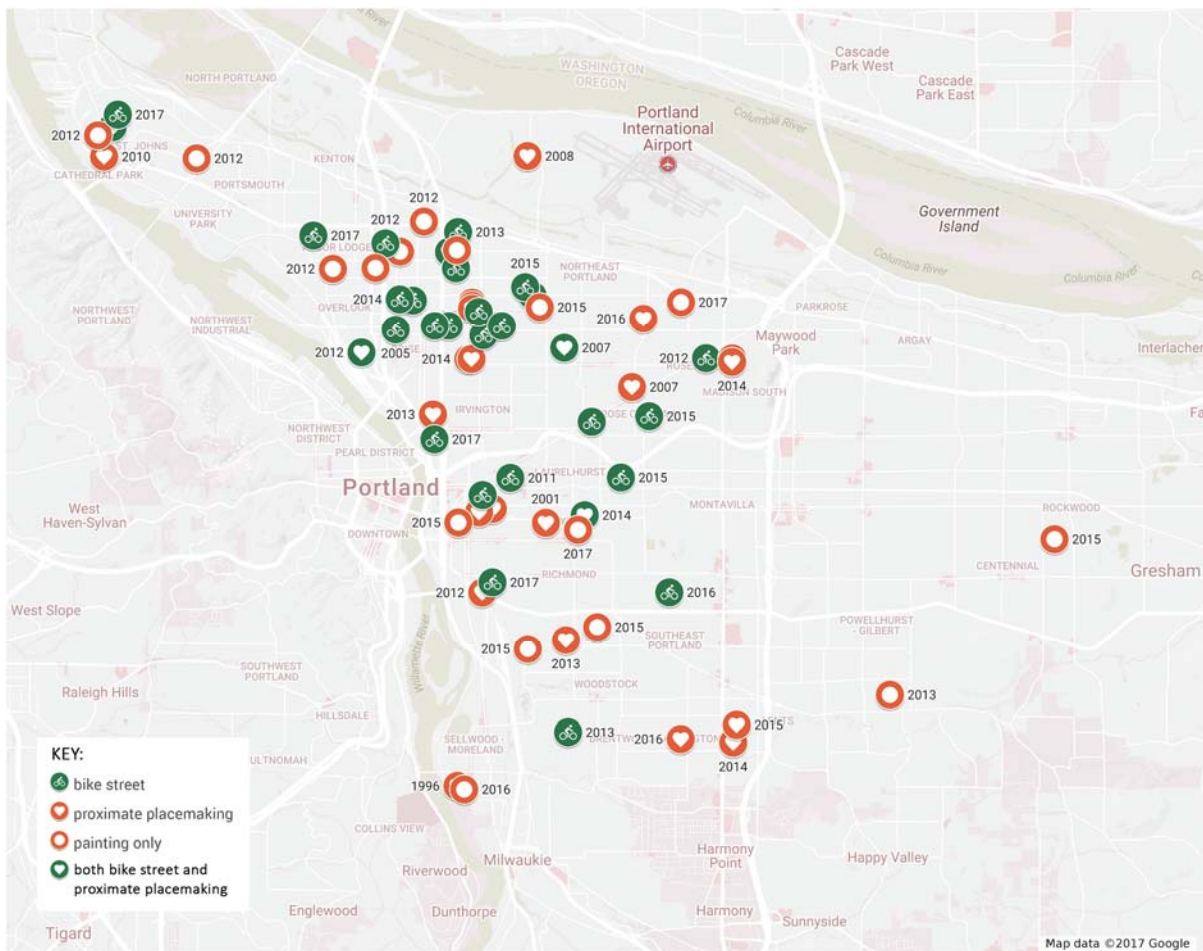


**Figure 5.1. Portland Street Painting Projects Created Each Year**

<sup>46</sup> For instance, I have included the painting in the heart of Dignity Village, Portland’s self-governed tiny-house village where people can create community and shelter together rather than sleeping in the rough.

<sup>47</sup> However, in Seattle summaries and project details, I excluded one or two projects that painted on sidewalk areas even if they went through SDOT’s street painting program, partly because they were managed differently and partly because I could not tell whether or not they had actually been painted.

few located midblock or in cul-de-sacs. The chart in Figure 5.1 shows the number of new painting and repaintings occurring in each year. Figure 5.2 shows a map of Portland’s street painting sites and indicates which sites include proximate placemaking and which are on Bike/Walk streets. Table 5.1 lists Portland street painting projects in chronological order with graphic representation of the timeline of each project’s new painting permits, repainting events, and creation of proximate placemaking projects. Table 5.1 also indicates whether a project is located on a Bike/Walk-prioritized street. Projects that show no Revocable Use permit may not have needed them because they are on private property. Share-It Square redesigns their painting each year, so they get a new permit every year.



**Figure 5.2. Portland Street Painting Location Map**

**Table 5.1. Portland Timeline of Intersection Repairs with Street Paintings**

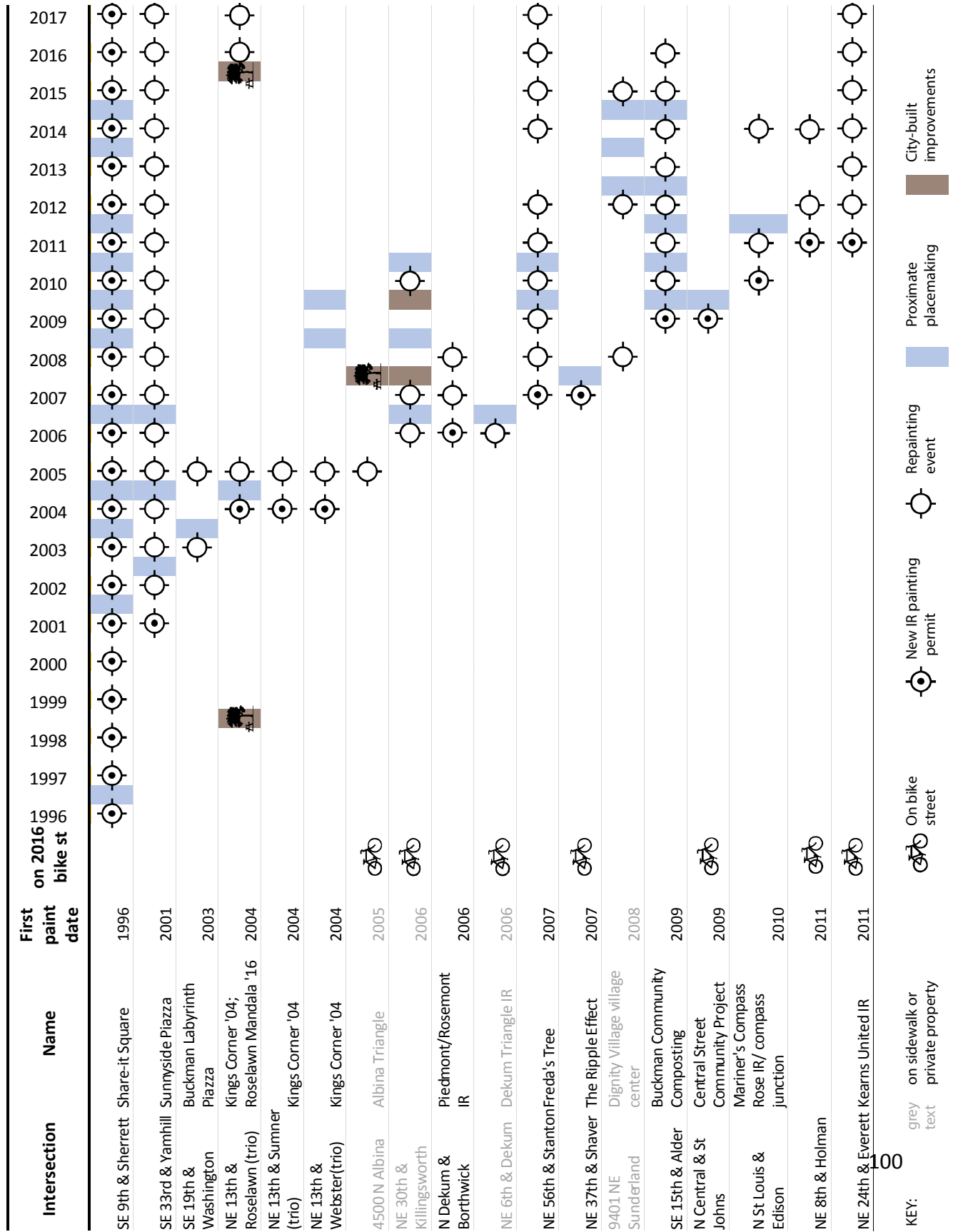


Table 5.1. (cont.) Summary Timeline of Portland Intersection Repairs with Street Paintings

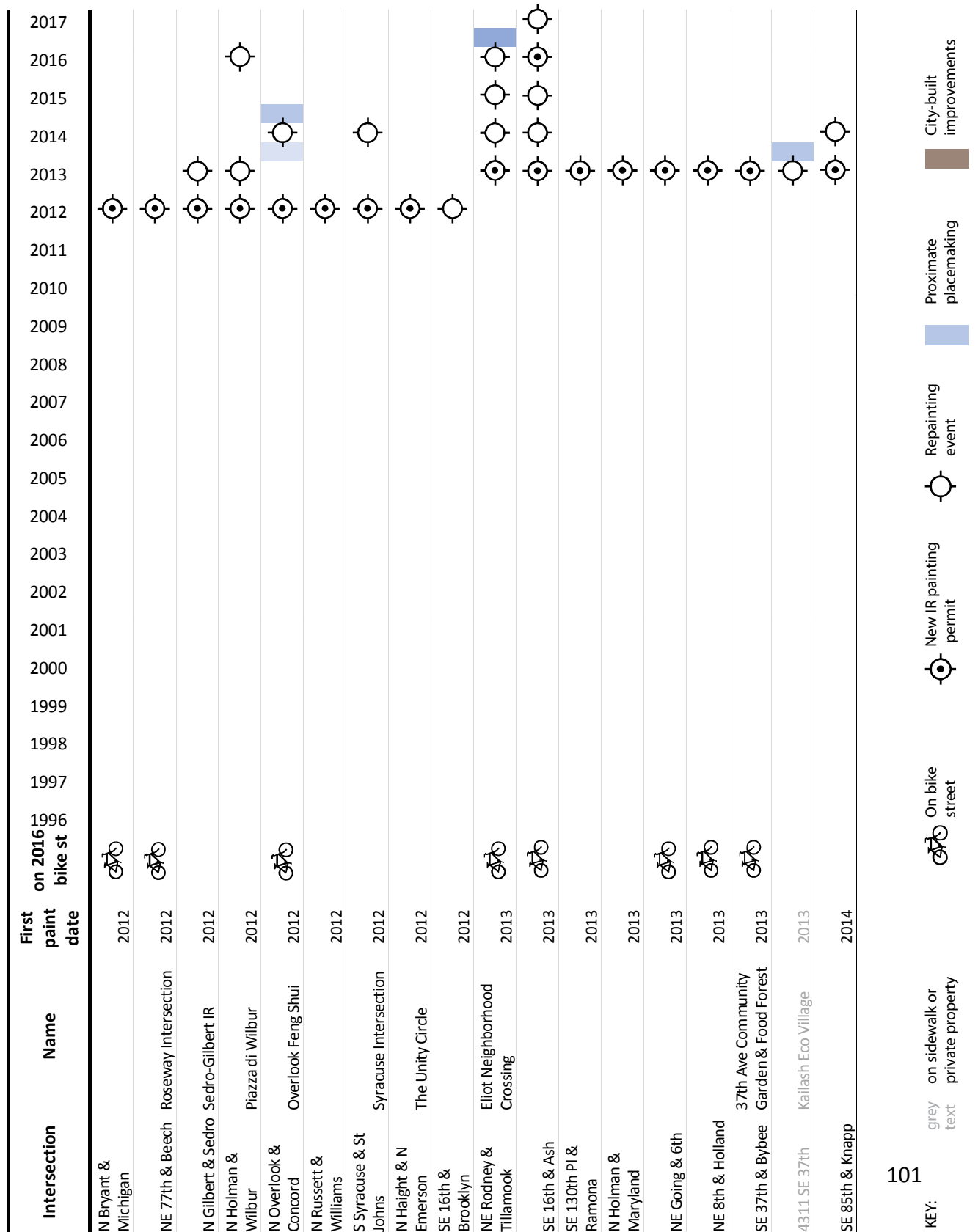
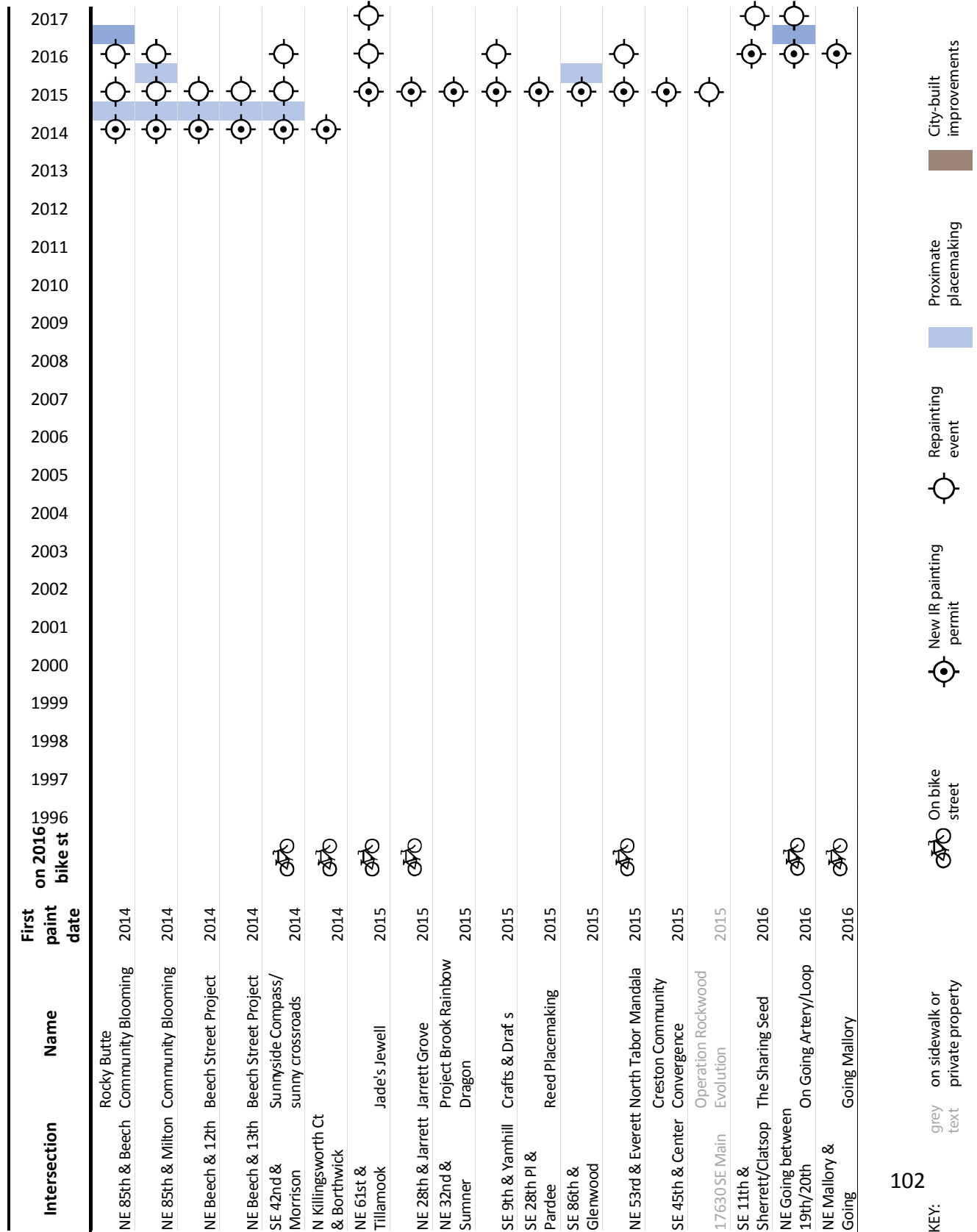


Table 5.1. (cont.) Summary Timeline of Portland Intersection Repairs with Street Paintings



KEY:

- on sidewalk or private property
- On bike street
- New IR painting permit
- Repainting event
- Proximate placemaking
- City-built improvements

**Table 5.1. (cont.) Summary Timeline of Portland Intersection Repairs with Street Paintings**

Intersection	Name	First paint date	on 2016 bike st
NE Hancock btwn 44th/45th	Hollywood Farmers Market	2016	
SE 70th & Ogden	Ogden Street Mural	2016	
SE 67th & Woodward	South Tabor Street Painting	2016	
NE 16th & Skidmore	Stairstep Gang Medallion	2016	
NE 14th Place & Alberta	Spirit of P-town	2016	
NE - 6800 NE Durham	Woodlawn Farmers Market	2016	
NE Wygant btwn 57 <sup>th</sup> /60th	Wygant St Width of a Circle	2016	
NE Going & 21st	Prismatic Pinwheel	2017	
NE 2nd & Clackamas	Lloyd Ecodistrict intersection Mural	2017	
NE Emerson & 70th	Emerson Street Painting	2107	
N Reno between Smith/James	Play Everywhere: Cookie Tree	2017	
SE 40th & Salmon		2017	
SE 19th & Clinton		2017	
N Knowles btwn Holland/Morgan	Knowles	2017	

KEY: grey on sidewalk or private property

On bike street

New IR permit

Repainting event

Proximate placemaking

City-built improvements

Before 2012, in the first 15 years of Intersection Repair, Portland neighbors created 18 street painting projects. 14 (about 75 percent) of those projects also included proximate placemaking elements like seating, planters, mosaics, and stations for sharing everything from surplus produce, to tea to books to neighborhood information. After 2004, about five or six sites would be painted each year, one to three first-time paintings and the rest, repaintings. A street painting boom began in about 2012. Since then, 7 to 10 new paintings have been created each year. As the total number of existing paintings grew, the number of repaintings per year also jumped from about half a dozen paintings per year to at least 10 to 15.<sup>48</sup> Of the 50 paintings created since 2012 only about 11 (less than 25 percent) include proximate placemaking elements.

More of the earlier projects are co-located with other placemaking elements, but more of the later projects are on Portland's network of bicycle streets. In total, about 30 (45 percent) of Portland's street paintings are located along streets that are shown on Portland's 2016 Bike/Walk Maps as recommended for cycling and walking. Most of these streets are designated as either low traffic streets where bikes and cars share the roadway or Neighborhood Greenways that prioritize safe bicycle and pedestrian movement over car traffic. Low-traffic streets use wayfinding signage, reduced speed limits, and speed bumps and traffic calming devices that allow bikes to pass through where cars cannot to discourage cars from using streets as cut throughs. Street paintings on these streets create orienteering landmarks and a sense of place along these people-friendly routes. Three of these projects are located at the crossroads of two greenways, and three are located where a greenway turns. About 20 other paintings (another 30 percent) are located within one block of bike/walk streets.

---

<sup>48</sup> As mentioned previously, this data may underreport repaintings since repaint permits are not tracked by PBOT and not all paintings repaint as part of VBC.

This rapid shift in the patterns of Intersection Repair projects in Portland that happens around 2012 is likely part of a cultural shift among City Repair's membership and leadership around that time. As volunteers continuously come and go from this 22-year-old loosely-organized activist collective, projects and events shift to suit the interests and talents of the people involved at any one time. Around 2012, new standalone street paintings and other one-day projects started to make up more of the VBC daytime schedule, with fewer multi-day projects and large natural building projects that held work-parties all week long. VBC night programming also expanded to include more late-night entertainment that draws a broader crowd that does not necessarily also participate in daytime work parties. While City Repair organizers still support neighborhood placemaking projects through an annual cycle of workshops and project coaching, the current momentum in the larger group seems more focused on building community through event-oriented gathering and is less focused on physical placemaking. This is not a new focus for City Repair, but rather a shift in balance. From the earliest days of City Repair, the group has always supported people building community through events and gatherings as well as through physical transformations of space. This shift of strategy is an important reminder that for City Repair, the creation of physical projects is not their end goal, but rather, transforming physical space is one of several means by which people create community together. This co-creation of community and human connection is the heart of City Repair.

One of the results of this cultural shift, however, may be that Portland street painting projects have begun to look more like Seattle projects. Standalone paintings with less proximate placemaking are becoming very common in Portland. Without making an analysis of Portland painters motivations, but looking at recent Portland painting trends from a functional perspective, Portland Intersection Repairs seem less focused on placemaking than they used to be. They function more as neighborhood landmarks and nodes, and their frequent location along the Bike/Walk street network suggests a

stronger association with legibility-oriented functions. The requirements for broad community involvement in Portland street painting continue to cultivate connections among neighbors that foster collaborative relationships that encouraging neighboring, while participation in co-creation of places together cultivates both physical and social aspects of place attachment.

In summary, Portland's 22-year history of street painting projects begins slowly in the late 1990s. By the early 2000s, one to three Portland Intersection Repairs per year were beginning to show up around the city. Most of these early projects included proximate placemaking elements. In 2012, a street painting boom began. Since then, they have added 6 to 10 paintings per year. These later projects tend to be stand-alone paintings without proximate placemaking, and are frequently created along Portland's network of bicycle streets.

## **5.3 SEATTLE PROJECTS 2006 TO 2017**

### **5.3.1 Overview**

This section offers some history of Seattle's street painting projects. Here I describe the location, design, project origins and general timeline of repainting for each project based on grant applications, SDOT records, news articles and blogs, and communication with project organizers. Participants and organizers from several projects (including some who have painted, some who are planning to paint and some who decided not to paint) participated in interviews or online survey. Chapter 6 goes into more detail about individual participants experiences with their projects, their reasons for painting and their sense of success.

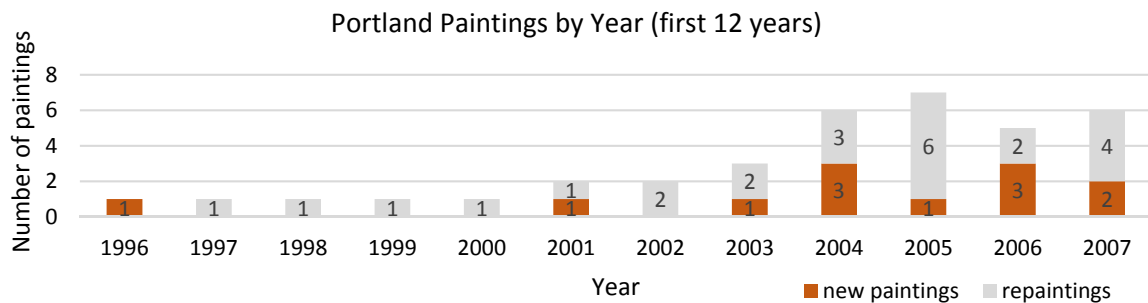
City of Seattle city records of street painting projects are even less complete than those of Portland.

Since street use permitting for Seattle paintings falls under the generic construction use permit without



**Figure 5.3. Seattle Street Paintings Created Each Year 2006-2017 (12 years)**

its own use code, searching for street painting permits is like searching for proverbial needles in haystacks. The same is true for DON Neighborhood Matching Fund grants—giant database, no distinct searchable code. Also, only first-time projects are eligible for grants. In Seattle, oversight of intersection painting has been passed through many different hands due to shrinking budgets, job changes, and staffing reductions. Few city staff have knowledge of more than a few projects; no one holds the complete big picture or the long view. Data gathered from Seattle city sources and online articles and blog posts was supplemented by information provided by project organizers who participated in the survey or live interviews. Still, gaps may exist in this information, and repaintings may be underreported.



**Figure 5.4. Portland Street Paintings Created Each Year 1996-2007 (first 12 years)**

As introduced in Chapter 2, street paintings first appeared in Seattle in 2006. At least one painting has been painted or repainted each year since then, and several groups are currently in their planning phase with an intent to paint in 2018. See Figure 5.3 for a summary of Seattle painting and repainting totals in each year from 2006 to 2017. The total numbers of new and repainted projects are very similar to those for Portland's first 12 years (shown in Figure 5.4). Seattle residents created 11 new paintings in 12 years and repainted 24 times. Portlanders created 12 new paintings over a similar period and also repainted 24 times. However, the distribution is a bit different. The idea caught on faster in Seattle, since by the time Seattle groups begin to paint, projects in Portland and other cities were widely known and the model well established. By the time Seattle reached their year six, when Portland's second painting was created, Seattle had six paintings on the ground.<sup>49</sup> However, individual projects in Seattle seem less likely to repaint since even though they had more paintings sooner Seattle has the same number of repainting events.

In the more detailed descriptions of Seattle projects, I have classified Seattle's street paintings into three broad categories: Confirmed Paintings, Plans in Progress, and Did Not Paint. "Confirmed Paintings" have definitely been painted in the past. "Plans in Progress" are projects in development that have not been painted yet, but hope to soon. Projects classified as "Did Not Paint" include those who engaged in planning a street painting, but decided not to paint in the end. This section introduces 11 confirmed paintings, 4 plans in progress, and 7 project groups who decided not to paint. It is likely these lists are not exhaustive. Other project teams may have painted without my finding evidence of their existence, especially if they painted informally without going through the SDOT permit process. Even more likely, this research may have overlooked other groups who may have plans in progress. It is certain that many more people than

---

<sup>49</sup> Year six is 2011 in Seattle and 2001 in Portland.

those shown in this chapter have made preliminary plans but have decided not to paint. Table 5.2 shows known Seattle projects in the three categories outlined above with a rough timeline for each project. Due to incomplete information, not all repaintings of projects may be shown. The map in Figure 5.5 shows the approximate locations of these projects.

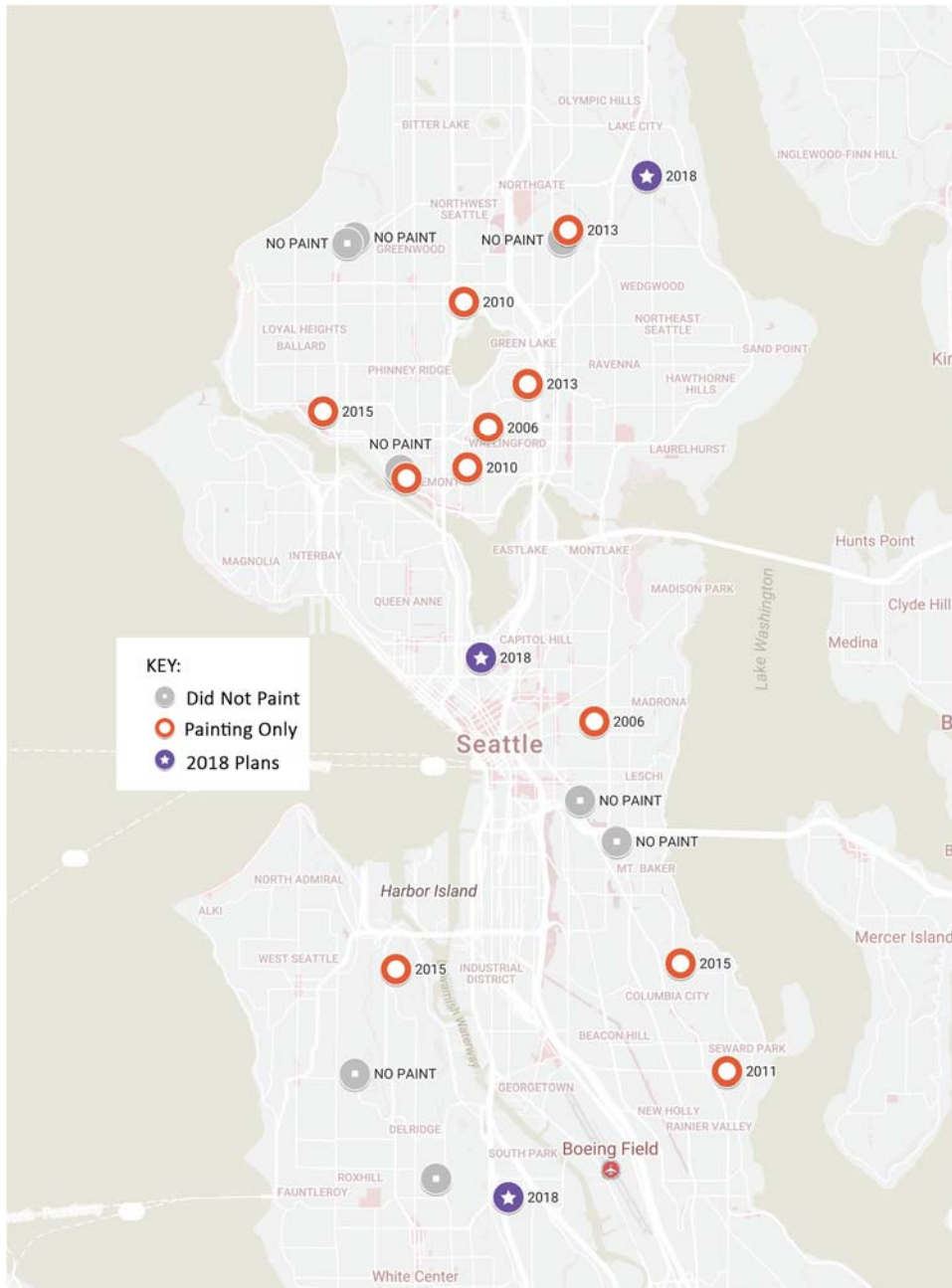


Figure 5.5. Seattle Street Painting Location Map.

**Table 5.2. Seattle Timeline of Painted and Planned Street Paintings**

Intersection	Name / image	first paint date (plan)	on bike street adjacency	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018																								
<b>CONFIRMED PAINTINGS</b>																																								
Burke Ave N and N 49th St	Wallybug/ ladybug	2006																																						
20th Ave and E Marion St	Squire Park /abstract floral-compass	2006																																						
Bowdoin Pl btw 1 & 2 Ave NW, 1st btwn Bowdoin & 40	Bowdoin Dots/ dots, squares	before 2008																																						
Interlake Ave N and N 41st St	"Bubbles"/ turtle	2010																																						
Stone Ave N and N 80th/81st (midblock)	Sustainable Green Lake & Bethany Community Church	2010																																						
S Graham St west of 51 Ave S	Graham Hill Blue Whale	2011																																						
NE 98 St btwn 12th & 15th Ave NE	fall leaves	2013																																						
4th Ave NE and NE 60th	Green Lake Dragonfly	2013																																						
Tallman Ave NW and NW Central Pl	Swedish Hospital public benefit/ Ballard map	2015																																						
21st Ave SW and SW Genessee	Pigeon Point/ flower	2015																																						
Cascadia Ave S & S Dakota St	Friends of Hawthorne Phoenix	2015																																						
<b>PLANS IN PROGRESS</b>																																								
11th Ave SW and SW Cloverdale St	Highland Park Elementary	(2016)																																						
34th Ave NE and NE 113th St	Jane Adams Middle School	(2017)																																						
4th Ave S and S Henderson St	South Park / leaves & flowers	(2017)																																						
Terry Ave and Harrison St	Amazon/ flower bouquet	(2017)		Amazon																																				
<b>DID NOT PAINT</b>																																								
12th Ave NW btn NW 95&96 St	Sustainable/Walkable Crown Hill	(2008)																																						
2nd/Baker Ave NW and NW 41th St (then 2nd & 40th)	octopus or starfish	(2011)																																						
12th Ave NE and NE 96 St	dog walk	(2011)																																						
31st Ave SW and SW Bataan Place	helping hand or flowers	(2013)																																						
Hiawatha Pl S and S Dearborn St	N/A	(2013)																																						
NW 95th St btwn 13&14th Ave NW--Small Faces	Crown Hill Neighborhood Assn	(2015)																																						
25th Ave S and S Massachusetts St	Friends of Jimi Hendrix Park	(2017)																																						
<p>KEY:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>new traffic circle</td> <td></td> <td>school</td> <td></td> <td>park</td> <td></td> <td>new petition</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>on transit route</td> <td></td> <td>church</td> <td></td> <td>museum</td> <td></td> <td>repainted</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>on bike street</td> <td></td> <td>hospital</td> <td></td> <td>planning</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>																		new traffic circle		school		park		new petition		on transit route		church		museum		repainted		on bike street		hospital		planning		
	new traffic circle		school		park		new petition																																	
	on transit route		church		museum		repainted																																	
	on bike street		hospital		planning																																			

### **5.3.2 Seattle Project Profiles**

The following project profiles describe the basic facts of where each project is located, what was done at each site, who initiated the idea, what groups and organizations were involved, their goals, how the project was funded, and the arc of story for each project. Information about these projects came from a combination of several sources including SDOT and DON records, interviews, survey responses, conversations with participants, online articles, Google Map and Google Earth imagery, site visits, and my own knowledge of project histories. I was able to uncover more information for some projects than others. If details are sparse or missing in a project's profile, it is because I was not able to determine them. Within each of the three categories described in the previous section (Confirmed Paintings, Plans in Progress, and Did Not Paint), projects are presented chronologically based on their first year of planning or painting. Locations appear in the same order in the chapter as they appear in Table 5.2.

\*Asterisks indicate that at least one organizer or participant from that project shared their perspective via interview or the online survey.

### **5.3.3 Confirmed Paintings**

The projects described in this section are the 11 known sites where groups have created painted streets between 2006 and 2017. Ten have been created through SDOT's permit process, and one is a non-permitted guerrilla project. Four of these groups appear not to have repainted, four repainted at least once, and the remaining three, including the guerrilla painting group, have repainted annually for most years since their initial creation.

### ***\*Burke Ave N and N 49th St—Wallybug***

Known to many as the “Wallybug,” this Wallingford street painting of a ladybug on a sunflower is Seattle’s longest-running and best-known street painting (Figure 5.6). The Wallybug was first painted in September 2006, on the same day as the painting at 20<sup>th</sup> and E Marion. The first year of painting was funded via a Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) grant. Subsequent years were self-funded by the neighbors. The project arose out of conversations about traffic calming when neighbors who were seeking a traffic circle to discourage speeding cut-through traffic saw street painting as an achievable substitute. The idea was first proposed by neighbor Eric Higbee<sup>50</sup>, then a graduate student in Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington, who had heard about the Portland paintings and was excited about them for their creative placemaking and potential traffic calming effects. A strong core team of neighbors worked together to design and paint the bug and to support its continuation long after Eric, the original spark,<sup>51</sup> moved away. Many neighbors strongly supported the project, even after it proved to provide no traffic calming benefit. Supporters of the bug cite its community-building benefits and the fun of doing something creative together. Others lost enthusiasm for the painting, believing that it brought unwanted attention and problematic energy to the neighborhood, and found it ironic that something that became so divisive among their neighbors was being touted as a tool for building good neighbor relationships. By 2009, conflicts had escalated between neighbors who disagreed about whether to continue to paint. The Wallybug was repainted every year from 2007 to 2012, though the years between 2009 and 2012 were fraught with intense disagreement. In 2010, SDOT added the 3-year petition renewal rule. 66 percent of

---

<sup>50</sup> Eric Higbee is now executive director of the Pomegranate Center, a nonprofit organization in Issaquah, WA that facilitates public space design projects that strengthen communities through collaborative placemaking.

<sup>51</sup> The term “spark” is used by City Repair Seattle weavers to describe the role of a person who initiated the idea of a specific placemaking project, and usually brings strong energy for carrying it forward.

households signed the petition to support the project, just barely above the required 60 percent for approval. If the “100 percent of adjacent properties” rule existed at that time, it was not enforced that year. Beginning in 2013, the group ceased to paint for several years. The Wallybug painters have recently begun painting annually again and, while some still strongly oppose the project, those that support it have enjoyed repainting work parties in 2016 and 2017 ( Participant surveys; City Repair Seattle weavers’ archives; SDOT archives; “Spotted in Wallingford: Ladybug Is 5 Years Old” 2017; Nelson 2017).



Figure 5.6. Confirmed Painting: Wallybug—Burke Ave N and N 49<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2006. photo: Eric Higbee 2006

### ***\*20<sup>th</sup> Ave and E Marion St***

This abstract compass and flower mandala painted at a T-Intersection in Squire Park neighborhood shares the distinction with the Wallybug of being Seattle's two co-first street paintings (Figure 5.7). This project painted once-only in 2006, on the same day as the Wallybug. This Squire Park project was one element of a larger campaign to create a safer, more walkable pedestrian and bicycle friendly neighborhood. In January 2006, Squire Park Community Council formed their Reclaiming Streets for the People Committee (RSPC), and hired transportation consultant Jodie Vice from Otak to outreach to neighbors to gather information on pedestrian safety priorities for the neighborhood. When they heard Jan Semenza, from Portland's the Sunnyside Piazza (SE 33<sup>rd</sup> and Yamhill) Intersection Repair, present at an RSPC outreach event about Portland's City Repair projects, many neighbors got excited about Intersection Repair ideas. Neighbors Karensa Stoll and Barb Biondo,<sup>52</sup> who were working closely with the larger project, proposed the 20<sup>th</sup> and Marion painting as a fun hands-on project at an intersection that they felt needed traffic calming treatment. Technical challenges at this site made the painting not wear well. It was located at the bottom of a slope where street grime constantly washed downhill and collected on the painting. That combined with skipping the pre-painting pressure washing step caused the painting to deteriorate quickly. Also, with poor visibility at the corner, drivers would encounter the painting suddenly. It did not feel safe to linger at the painting, which inhibited its placemaking function. While the street painting struggled, the larger planning project thrived. According to a 2007 event announcement, the complete Squire Park Traffic Calming/Pedestrian Safety Improvement Plan recommended "projects like woonerfs, Intersection Repairs and public art that invite pedestrians and bicyclists to be a part of the streetscape environment while encouraging community-building activities."

---

<sup>52</sup> Barb Biondo works with Seattle Neighborhood Group, a local nonprofit organization whose mission is "to prevent crime and build community through partnerships with residents, businesses, law enforcement and other organizations" ("Seattle Neighborhood Group" 2017).

Several of the plan's proposed improvements were implemented in the next few years. By 2008, as part of the greater neighborhood improvement project, a traffic circle replaced the painting at 20<sup>th</sup> and Marion (Squire Park Organizers. Emails with City Repair Seattle weavers. March 2006 thru May 2007; Participant survey; Google Earth Imagery).



Figure 5.7. Confirmed Painting: 20<sup>th</sup> Ave and E Marion St, Seattle, 2006. photo: John Howe 2006

***NW Bowdoin Pl between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW; 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW north of Bowdoin—Bowdoin Dots***

This simple series of colorful polka dots running down one block of Bowdoin Place NW first appear in Google’s 2008 Street View imagery, which is the first set of imagery for this street (Figure 5.8). The squares, reminiscent of hopscotch, which run up 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW north of Bowdoin do not show in 2008 imagery, but had appeared by 2011. According to a neighbor on the block, the dots are repainted each year near the summer solstice. This project seems to be authentic DIY guerrilla urbanism happening outside of the formal permit process. No records of this project exist in SDOT’s files. The site is located within two blocks of two 2011 intersection painting sites that did not paint which were proposed for 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue near 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> streets. It is possible that some people involved in those proposals may be among the dedicated crew behind this informal street painting project (neighborhood scuttlebutt; Google Earth Imagery).



**Figure 5.8. Bowdoin Dots—Confirmed Painting: NW Bowdoin Pl between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW, Seattle, 2008 or earlier. photo: Seattle Rental Management 2017**

### ***Interlake Ave N and N 41<sup>st</sup> St—Turtle***

This painting of colorful sea turtle was first painted in 2010 at the intersection of Interlake Ave N and N 41<sup>st</sup> St near where Wallingford and Fremont neighborhoods meet (Figure 5.9). This painting is sometimes called “the turtle”, “Bubbles.” The turtle painting team was led by retired Boeing engineer Bill Lindberg and local artist Rachel Marcotte who engaged family, friends, and neighbors in creating this intersection painting. In a painting day article on the Fremont Universe blog, Bill Lindberg stated, “The purpose of this is to acquaint neighbors to each other better and make children feel pride in something they’ve helped create for the community” (“Street Intersection Transforms into a Colorful Turtle Mural” 2017). The first year of painting was supported by an NMF Small Sparks grant.<sup>53</sup> The turtle got a fresh coat of paint in 2011. I could not determine when it has been repainted since, but it seems to have been refreshed, because while somewhat worn when I saw it this year, it is still strongly visible on the street.



**Figure 5.9. Confirmed Painting: Turtle—Interlake Ave N and N 41<sup>st</sup> St Seattle, 2010. photo: SDOT archives 2010**

<sup>53</sup> Small Sparks grants, which in 2010 funded community projects needing under \$1,000, now fund projects up to \$5,000.

**\*Stone Ave N between N 80<sup>th</sup> & 81<sup>st</sup>**

This painting of lily pads and abstract swirls of water spans the length of Stone Avenue N between N 80<sup>th</sup> and N 81<sup>st</sup> Streets (Figure 5.10). A few bees on its south end represent the Bagley Bee, mascot of the Daniel Bagley Elementary School located across 80<sup>th</sup> street. Planning began in 2009, and they painted in 2010. The project was funded by an NMF grant. This painting was a collaborative project of Bethany Community Church (BCC), whose buildings occupy both sides of that block, and Sustainable Green Lake, who held meetings in BCC’s buildings at that time. The core team, consisting of Sustainable Green Lake members Megan Horst<sup>54</sup> (the spark) and Pennie O’Grady, BCC staff members Andrea Moon and Sarah Buehler Neill, and myself,<sup>55</sup> was interested in fostering cross-connections among people from church, school, neighborhood, and Sustainable Green Lake. They also hoped the painting might create a playful and inviting connection between the church buildings on both sides of the block that was closed to



**Figure 5.10. Confirmed Painting: Stone Ave N between N 80<sup>th</sup> & 81<sup>st</sup> Seattle, 2010. photo: Emily Heindsmann 2010**

<sup>54</sup> Megan Horst was a UW Urban Design and Planning student who had learned about Portland street paintings through her studies.

<sup>55</sup> I was invited to join this project as a technical and process consultant because of my work with City Repair Seattle.

traffic each week during Sunday services. Since BCC owned all parcels on the block, this project's petition required only one signature. Nevertheless, organizers engaged in a knock-and-talk campaign covering several blocks around the site to invite neighbors to get involved. The community design process engaged more than 400 people from a cross-section of these communities. Painting day involved more than 100 participants, over half of whom were elementary and pre-school-age children. While many were engaged in the project at this low level of commitment, this team did not recruit a big enough core team of committed organizers who knew the process well enough to carry the project forward. The project lost momentum after the first painting year and was never repainted. By 2017, the painting has almost completely worn away (Participant Interviews).

***\*S Graham St west of 51<sup>st</sup> Ave S—Graham Hill Blue Whale***

The Graham Hill Blue Whale is located on a street that slopes uphill along the approach to Graham Hill Elementary School and acts as a symbol of school pride and a reminder that children are present along this route to school (Figure 5.11). The blue whale is the school's mascot and the multicolored fish represent the diversity of the community. This painting was spearheaded in 2011 by Julie Grove, a parent who was involved in a larger movement to improve safe walking and biking options for students at the school. The original painting was funded by part of a \$20,000 Fed-X Safe Kids USA grant which also funded organization of walking school buses, safety education, and installation of speed bumps near the school. Meanwhile, SDOT's Safe Routes to School program provided another \$10,000 to fund curb ramp and traffic circle improvements. Partners in this larger effort included the Graham Hill PTA, Harborview Medical Center Safe Kids Seattle Coalition, and Pedestrian Safety Task Force members including Feet First and Seattle Police Department. By 2015, the whale was looking worn and faded. PE and Health teacher Jupinder Gill coordinated efforts to refresh the painting as part of her focus on

promoting biking and walking to school. The 2017 repainting was funded by a \$1,000 SDOT Safe Routes to School Mini Grant. Both iterations of the painting engaged parents, neighbors, teachers, students, and children as young as four years old in painting the street. In both years, volunteers from Harborview provided event support (Participant Interview; Nielsen 2017b; Nielsen 2017a).



**Figure 5.11. Confirmed Painting: Graham Hill Blue Whale—S Graham St west of 51<sup>st</sup> Ave S, Seattle, 2011. photo: Jupinder Gill 2017**

***NE 98 St between 12<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NE***

This midblock painting of autumn leaves was painted in the Maple Leaf neighborhood in 2013 (Figure 5.12). Spark Ylanda Thomas and her neighbor Barb Steffens, who designed the image, worked together with their friends and neighbors to create this painting. After the street surface was chip sealed, the group repainted once in 2015 (“Check out the New Street Mural on 98th!” 2013; “Return of Male Leaf’s Street Mural” 2015).



**Figure 5.12. Confirmed Painting: NE 98 St between 12<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Seattle, 2013. photo: Barb Steffens 2013**

**\*4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 60th St—Green Lake Dragonfly**

In 2013, this T-shaped painting of Washington’s State insect, found its home just east of Green Lake at the T-intersection where 4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE meets 60<sup>th</sup> Street (Figure 5.13). This group began plans in 2012 after neighbor Lisa Cach saw an article on a neighborhood blog that explained SDOT’s process for creating street paintings. Her neighbors agreed that it seemed like a fun thing to do together. The group understood that traffic calming was unlikely, but some neighbors hoped the painting would slow down cut-through traffic heading for the Interstate entrance a few blocks away. Many neighbors adopted responsibility for specific parts of the project, which they each spearhead from year to year. They call their strong collaborative team “Team Dragonfly” and are pleased that the Dragonfly has helped build lasting relationships among many neighbors who did not know each other before. Their first painting was funded by an NMF grant. In subsequent years, neighbors have coordinated garage sale days to raise money for the permits and barriers. They repainted in 2014, 2015 and 2016, then decided to take 2017 off to give organizers a rest. They look forward to painting again (Participant Interview; “Green Lake Neighborhood Project” 2017; “Neighborhood Paints Giant Dragon Fly” 2013)



**Figure 5.13. Confirmed Painting: Green Lake Dragonfly—4<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 60th St, Seattle, 2013. photo: Seattle Times 2013**

***\*Tallman Ave NW and NW Central Pl—Swedish Ballard Map***

This 2015 painting of map of Ballard with a you-are-here star on the hospital’s location is unusual because rather than being instigated and created by a group of neighborhood residents, it was created by the hospital (Figure 5.14). The painting was required by the city as a public benefit mitigation during the renewal of the permit for the pedestrian skybridge that crosses between Swedish Medical Center and the parking garage on the other side of Tallman Ave NW. In addition to the street painting, the public benefit mitigation included other public-space-enhancing elements such as sidewalk and landscaping improvements, public access easement, and an 8,000 square-foot publicly accessible private open space. Recognized as a benefit to the greater public that was accessible to all, not just those visiting the hospital, this project was approved by the City of Seattle and funded by Swedish Hospital.

Most of the petition signatures came from businesses, many of them from various Swedish Hospital facilities. The Ballard map has not been repainted yet. It has faded but is still legible. The hospital is responsible for maintaining the painting (“Seattle Design Commission Meeting Minutes 8/7/14” 2017; Participant survey).



**Figure 5.14. Confirmed Painting: Swedish Ballard Map—Tallman Ave NW and NW Central Pl, Seattle, 2015. photo: author 2017**

### ***21<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Genesee St***

Created in 2015, this flower mandala is centered on an awkwardly-shaped intersection in the Pigeon Point neighborhood near Pathfinder K-8 School and Youngstown Cultural Arts Center (Figure 5.15). The project was led by Alon Bassok, a sustainable transportation planning teacher at UW, and Toni Wells, president of the Pigeon Point Neighborhood Council. They requested a traffic circle at the intersection, but the intersection’s history and geometry did not support that option. Local blog articles, endorsement letters from the PTSA and neighborhood council, and SDOT correspondence cite safety reasons and traffic calming as their main objective. This project did not seek grant support and was self-funded. SDOT made an exception to its prior rules by allowing this project on an intersection with marked crosswalks, which proved problematic for SDOT when the layout team did not honor the required buffer between the painting and the crosswalk. The Pigeon Point mural was repainted in 2016. In an unusual decision for a painting project adjacent to a school, the repainting invitation specified that adults would do the repainting while children were welcome to play nearby (“Pigeon Point Street Mural Painting” 2017; “A Little Paint, a Lot of Safety: Pigeon Point’s New Street Mural” 2017).



**Figure 5.15. Confirmed Painting: 21<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Genesee St Seattle, 2015. photo source: SDOT archives 2015**

***\*Cascadia Ave S and S Dakota St—Friends of Hawthorne Phoenix***

This graphic of a blue Phoenix rising out of flames represents the mascot of Hawthorne Elementary School located where Columbia City and Mount Baker neighborhoods meet (Figure 5.16). Painted in 2015, this project was led by Hawthorne parent, PTA member, and pedestrian safety advocate Pete Intravato, who had heard about street paintings through Feet First and the Safe Routes to Schools program. Supporters of the project hoped the painting would promote school pride and support student and pedestrian safety by increasing drivers' awareness of the school zone. Pete Intravato also hoped the STEAM-based<sup>56</sup> art project would build school community, promote school identity, and teach civic activism to the students. As a bonus, he expected it would be fun to close the street to create art. This project has not yet repainted, and is showing significant wear that inspires its organizers to do better street cleaning prep before painting next time (Participant survey; SDOT archives).



**Figure 5.16. Confirmed Painting: Friends of Hawthorne Phoenix—Cascadia Ave S and S Dakota St, Seattle, 2015.**  
photo source: SDOT archives 2015

---

<sup>56</sup> STEAM stand for Science Technology Engineering Art and Math

### 5.3.4 Plans in Progress

The four projects described in this section were actively making plans in 2016 or 2017. It is unclear whether the first still intends to paint, but the other three groups plan to paint in 2018. These projects are presented chronologically based on when they started their planning process. An asterisk (\*) indicates at least one of that project's participants took part in this study's survey or interviews.

#### ***11<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Cloverdale St***

This proposed design of horses running near a tree by water was designed by a child patient at Children's Hospital and proposed to be painted at the L intersection near Highland Park Elementary School and Highland Park playground (Figure 5.17). A team working together under the name Friends of Highland Park received a Safe Routes to Schools Mini Grant and were seeking permits to paint in 2016. I did not visit this site to confirm whether this group painted, but SDOT records seem to indicate they did not. However, I have left them listed

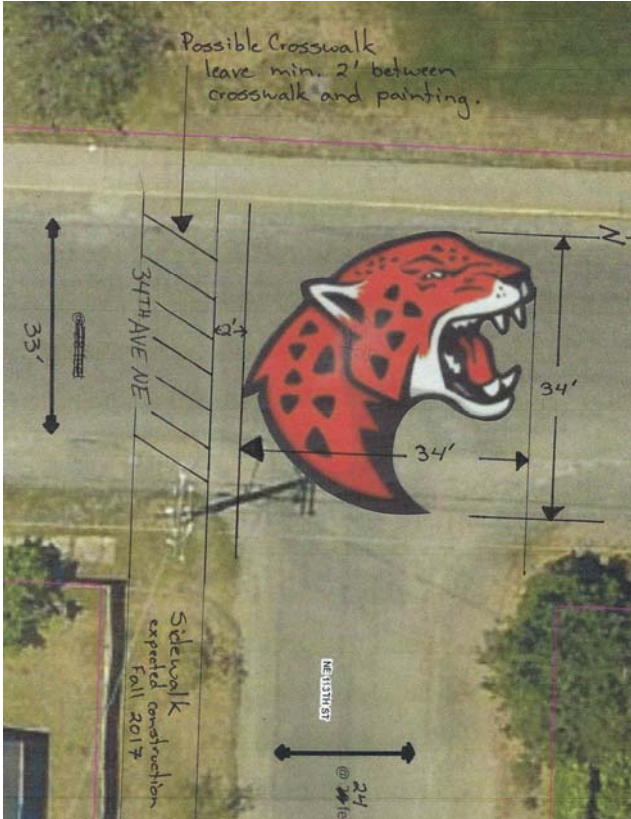
under Plans in Progress because sometimes it takes more than one year to complete a project, so they may still have intentions to paint (SDOT archives).



**Figure 5.17. Plan in Progress: 11<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and SW Cloverdale St, Seattle, 2016. drawing source: SDOT archives**

**\*34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 113<sup>th</sup> St**

Plans are coming together to paint this jaguar, the school mascot of Jane Addams Middle School on the T-intersection near the east entrance of this Meadowbrook neighborhood school (Figure 5.18). While they originally planned to paint in 2017, this group has decided to wait until after currently planned sidewalk improvements are completed. Organizer Colleen Weinstein, an active PTSA parent volunteer, reports that the team hopes that their “project will instill school pride, enhance our community and slow down traffic,” and that other students and staff hope that it will be fun. Having seen other Seattle street paintings, she thought creating their own street painting at Jane Addams Middle School could serve these goals well. They look forward to painting in 2018 (Participant survey; SDOT archives).



**Figure 5.18. Plan in Progress: 34<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 113<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2017. Drawing source: SDOT archives**

**\*4<sup>th</sup> Ave S and S Henderson St**

In 2017, plans were under way to paint this pattern of geometric leaves and flowers on a T-intersection near Marra-Desimone Park in South Park next year (Figure 5.19). Project organizer Jodi Mack cites concerns about traffic calming at this uncontrolled intersection, and reports that neighbors are looking forward to seeing the bright and colorful art in the intersection. She reports that they have achieved funding through a Safe Routes to Schools grant and have their permits lined up to paint in 2018 (Participant survey; SDOT archives).



**Figure 5.19. Plan in Progress: 4<sup>th</sup> Ave S and S Henderson St, Seattle, 2017.**  
drawing source: SDOT archives

***\*Terry Ave and Harrison St***

This project aspires to paint a bouquet of flowers made of thousands of brushstrokes on the intersection of Terry and Harrison in South Lake Union (Figure 5.20). This project is atypical in two important ways. First, it is unusual in that it has a corporate spark and is being organized like an institution-driven public art project. Amazon, who has offices on these blocks, approached the Downtown Seattle Association to help coordinate this project intended “to bring more of a sense of place and vitality” to South Lake Union. Downtown Seattle Association staffer Erica Bush who is managing this project reports that Amazon “wants to help community groups be involved and take ownership of the spaces around Amazon buildings. Amazon thinks the more inviting the public spaces are the more likely their new staff will enjoy these spaces and spend more time outside experiencing the city” (survey). Downtown Seattle Association has engaged Seattle mural makers Urban Artworks to coordinate technical and artistic elements of the painting. It will be interesting to see how the painting process, which was designed with small grass-roots groups of neighbors in mind, can adapt to this more institution-driven context. Not only is this project unusual in its corporate origins and project management model, the site itself also differs from a typical Seattle street painting location.



**Figure 5.20. Plan in Progress: Terry Ave and Harrison St, Seattle, 2017. rendering source: SDOT archives**

While still technically non-arterial streets, these blocks of Terry and Harrison are classified as Urban Village Neighborhood Access streets. Land uses along these blocks are mixed use, allowing commercial, office, and multifamily residential uses. Prior street paintings have typically been permitted only on Neighborhood Collector streets. Those streets have strictly residential zoning that includes lower-intensity development of houses, parks, churches and schools. Also, this project has been granted exceptions to rules that have previously banned street paintings on streets with stop signs or transit service. Two sets of street car tracks cross this to-be-painted intersection which is controlled by all-way stop signs. These exceptions may affect the painting's process, function, and post-painting performance in significant ways. I am curious to see what happens as this project moves forward. Currently, they plan to paint in 2018 (Participant survey; SDOT archives).

### **5.3.5 Did Not Paint**

The seven project groups outlined in this section each began planning paintings, and engaged with SDOT's permit process. In the end, each of these teams decided not to paint. When assessing whether a program or process is working, the experiences of those who do not complete the process, and an examination of the hurdles they encountered, can offer valuable insights into how Seattle's street painting process. These projects are presented chronologically based on when they started their planning process. An asterisk (\*) indicates at least one of that project's participants took part in this study's survey or interviews.

***\*12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW between NW 95<sup>th</sup> & 96<sup>th</sup> St—Sustainable/Walkable Crown Hill<sup>57</sup>***

In 2008, knowing that the intersection at NW 95<sup>th</sup> St was slated for a traffic circle, this group envisioned a large, midblock painting of a dragon. Since this project did not reach its formal design phase, no images exist. Neighbors from nascent groups Walkable Crown Hill and Sustainable Crown Hill were stewarding a large SDOT grant-based study to gather traffic data and propose projects to improve walkability and pedestrian safety in Crown Hill, a neighborhood that mostly lacks sidewalks. The grant focused on creating a neighborhood walkability plan with specific action-ready projects prepared to include as improvements and public benefit mitigations when Holman Road construction would be funded a few years later. While gathering traffic data and envisioning engineering solutions for pedestrian improvements, a group of neighbors got excited about the idea of doing something fun and creative together that might show results sooner than their long-term walkability plan. Neighbor Doug Gresham spearheaded a team of six or seven neighbors in envisioning their street painting. His neighbor, Bert Hopkins, had been to VBC in Portland several times and was part of the City Repair Seattle weavers committee encouraging City-Repair-style placemaking projects in Seattle. At first, neighbors discussed placing their painting on their shared paved driveway the neighbors call “Cherry Lane,”<sup>58</sup> but then moved their painting site to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue because they wanted it to be visible to more people and thought it might do more to calm traffic and improve the pedestrian experience there. At that time, SDOT had not yet issued a permit for a midblock painting, which created some stumbling blocks in the permitting process. While this project did not paint, it helped to kindle long-lasting neighbor relationships between the so-called “Cherry Lane Gang” and their 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue neighbors. They still host

---

<sup>57</sup> This proposed project in Crown Hill (in NW Seattle), and the proposed Maple Leaf (in NE Seattle) both have cross streets of 12<sup>th</sup> Ave and 96<sup>th</sup> St. While easily confused in writing, these sites are 3.3 miles apart.

<sup>58</sup> Cherry Lane is technically owned by two of the 8 to 10 houses it serves. The others have access easements. A painting on a shared driveway would not need to go through the permitting protocol because it is private property.

their annual block party together on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue where the street painting would have been. The NW 95<sup>th</sup> St between 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NW project involves some of the same neighbors as this one, but occurred later under different circumstances (Participant Interview; neighborhood scuttlebutt).

**\*2<sup>nd</sup> Ave/Baker Ave NW/NW 41<sup>st</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW 40<sup>th</sup> St**

In 2011, neighbors hoped to address traffic concerns at a location they describe as a “hilly. . .dangerous five-way intersection with blind spots.” When they could not get approval for a traffic circle, stop signs, or other traffic control devices for the intersection, they decided to try street painting, which learned of while talking with a city employee about traffic calming options. Neighbors got excited about creating sense of ownership and community in a fun way. While they understood that street paintings were not shown to slow traffic, a few neighbors held out hope that drivers might slow down to look at the painting. They designed an octopus (Figure 5.21) that they circulated for petition signatures. When they could not achieve full four-corner buy-in at 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW/Baker/41<sup>st</sup> St, they shifted their hopes one block

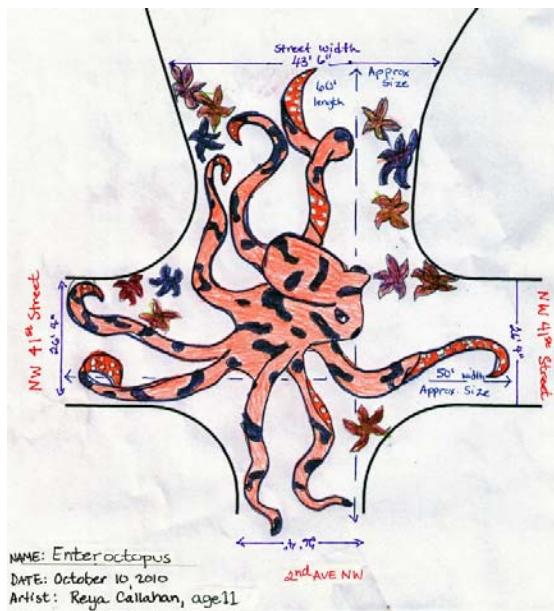


Figure 5.21. Did Not Paint: Octopus—2<sup>nd</sup> Ave/Baker Ave NW/NW 41<sup>st</sup>, Seattle, 2011. drawing: Reya Callahan, source: SDOT archives

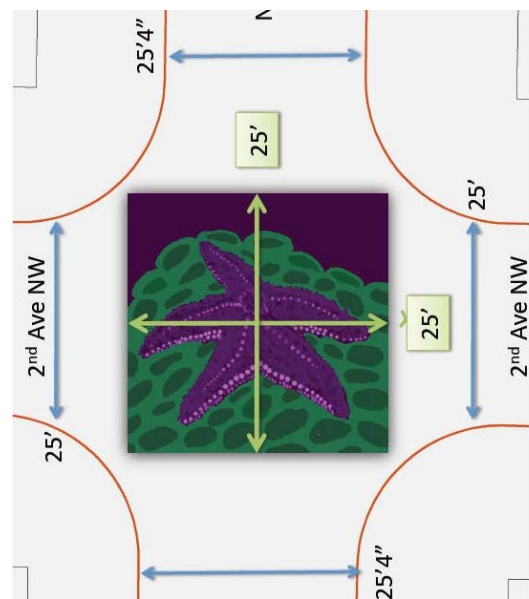
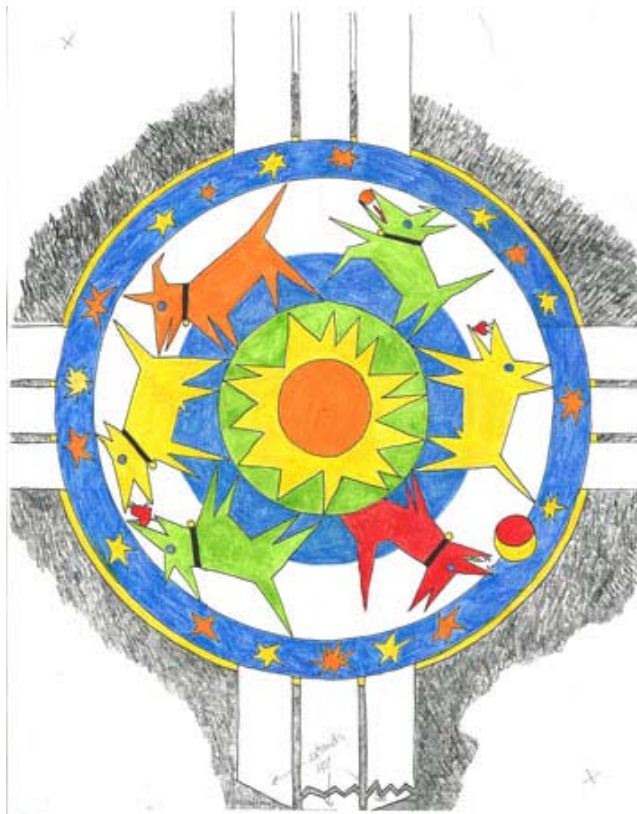


Figure 5.22. Did Not Paint: Starfish—2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW 40<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2011. Drawing source: SDOT archives

south to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW and NW 40<sup>th</sup> St, turned the octopus into a starfish (Figure 5.22), and tried to gather momentum to paint there. In the end, they did not paint at either site, though it remains possible that some neighbors who supported this painting project might be involved in creating the Bowdoin Dots, which are located one block south of this group’s proposed locations (Participant survey; SDOT archives).

### **12<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 96<sup>th</sup> St<sup>59</sup>**

In 2011, Rachel Marcotte, the same artist who designed the Turtle at Interlake and 41<sup>st</sup>, tried to interest Maple Leaf neighbors in creating a street painting in her own neighborhood. She proposed the design shown in Figure 5.23 for an intersection along a popular dog-walking route in the neighborhood. Conversations among neighbors led to neighborhood meetings and discussions on the neighborhood blog about the merits of street paintings and whether neighbors were interested in creating this one. Neighbors, some of whom had heard of the Wallybug’s problems, had mixed feelings about the project and ultimately decided not to paint (SDOT archives; “Proposal to Paint Maple Leaf Intersection Moves Forward”



**Figure 5.23. Did Not Paint: 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 96<sup>th</sup> St, Seattle, 2011. drawing: Rachel Marcotte, source: SDOT archives**

<sup>59</sup> This proposed project in Maple Leaf (in NE Seattle) and one of the proposed Crown Hill Projects (in NW Seattle) both have cross streets of 12<sup>th</sup> Ave and 96<sup>th</sup> St. While easily confused in writing, these sites are 3.3 miles apart.

2011; “Maple Leaf Street Mural Painting on the Rocks” 2011).

### **31<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Bataan Pl**

This team proposed two different designs for this intersection at the entrance to High Point Commons Park in the High Point neighborhood. In 2012, they submitted a Northwest-Coast-style design they called Helping Hand (Figure 5.24). In 2013, they replaced it with the floral design shown in Figure 5.25 with which they completed their petition step. I did not visit the site to confirm this, but based on Google Maps and Google Earth imagery, they do not appear to have painted at or near this site (SDOT archives).



Figure 5.24. Did Not Paint: Helping Hand—31<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Bataan Pl, Seattle, 2013. drawing source: SDOT archives

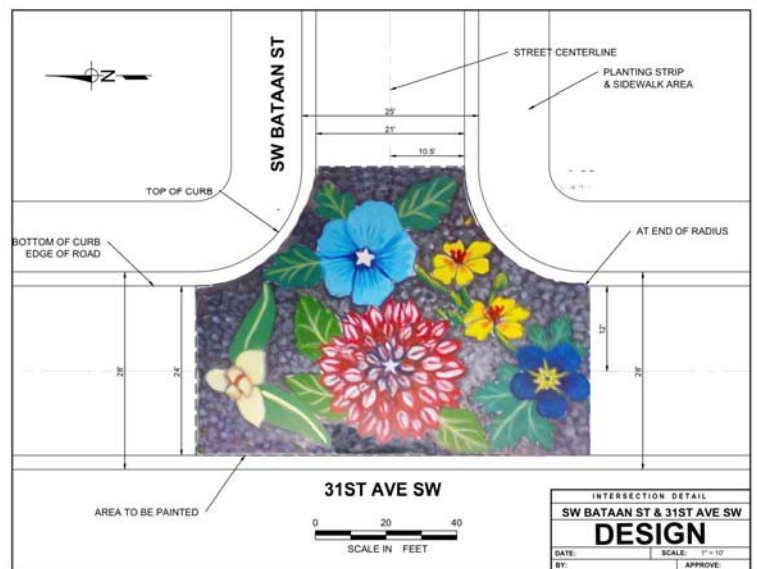


Figure 5.25. Did Not Paint: (second design) 31<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and SW Bataan Pl, Seattle, 2013. drawing source: SDOT archives

***\*Hiawatha Pl S and S Dearborn St***

Located in Jackson Place in the Central District, this project was proposed in 2013 as a potential project the People's Academy for Community Engagement (PACE) program. PACE is a Department of Neighborhoods civic leadership training program for neighborhood activists and organizers that involves bringing a NMF Small Sparks project to completion. The project was proposed based on concerns about speeding traffic and a desire to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians at this intersection. This street painting proposal was not chosen as a PACE project that year, and when it became clear that the street was becoming a designated bicycle greenway<sup>60</sup> and would be receiving increased signage and protection for cyclists and pedestrians, organizers decided not to move forward with the street painting project. This project did not reach the design phase, so no design images exist (Participant survey; SDOT archives).

***\*NW 95<sup>th</sup> St between 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NW--Small Faces/Crown Hill Neighborhood Association***

In about 2015, Deb Jaquith started talking with Bert Hopkins about the idea of doing a community art project as part of reviving the Crown Hill Neighborhood Association, which had recently re-formed after a few quiet years. They proposed creating a midblock painting on 95th Street NW outside of the in Small Faces Development Center in the former Crown Hill Elementary School. Staff and parents from this day care center were enthusiastic about the project. Compared to their previous experience six or seven years prior, SDOT was much more prepared to support a midblock painting, with straightforward guidance and readily available solutions to problems that arose. SDOT required petition sign-off from the only three properties on the block: the former school and two residences across the street. This

---

<sup>60</sup> Seattle's Neighborhood Greenways are a network of streets where traffic calming measures are put in place to shift the priority to people traveling on foot and by bicycle with the underlying intention of making these streets safer, calmer and more pleasant for all.

group's hurdle came from a dearth of neighborhood leadership. While many people supported the idea of the painting, attempts to recruit a larger coordinating team found no one ready to step up help lead the project. They decided not to move the project forward both because they were missing key skills on the team and because they did not seem to have enough momentum to carry the painting to completion. This project did not reach the design phase, so no design images exist (Participant Interview).

***\*25<sup>th</sup> Ave S and S Massachusetts St—Friends of Jimi Hendrix Park***

Proposed in 2017, this painting would have been located at an intersection adjacent to Jimi Hendrix Park which is adjacent to Sam Smith Park and the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM) in Mount Baker. Maisha Barnett, project manager for the newly-created park, brought the idea to the Friends of Jimi Hendrix Park, the leadership team of the park design project. They agreed that a street painting could offer a chance to improve safety and visibility for cyclists and pedestrians, while expressing neighborhood character and complementing the design of the new park. They applied for and received a Safe Routes to Schools Mini Grant. After receiving the grant and examining the details of the street painting process, she realized a street painting project was not a good fit for their group. Some of the requirements, like taking responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the painting, were outside of the group's capacity and interest. Also, since Massachusetts is designated as an arterial and this is a stop-sign-controlled intersection, it is unlikely it to be approved by SDOT for a street painting under current rules. Prior to engaging in the design phase (so again, no images), the group decided not to paint and forfeited the grant award (Participant survey; conversation with organizer).

### **5.3.6 Patterns Among Seattle Paintings**

The previous section having told the stories of Seattle's paintings one by one, this section offers some observations on common threads among Seattle paintings. These threads include a lack of proximate placemaking projects, ubiquitous pursuit of traffic calming, a shift in funding sources over time from DON's NMF to SDOT's SRTS grants, the well-made match between school groups and street paintings, and an observation that the length of the petition list helps community groups form more capable and resilient teams to carry their projects forward.

Except for the public space and landscaping elements of the Swedish Ballard hospital painting at Tallman and Central, none of Seattle's street paintings include proximate placemaking projects. However, several street paintings are located near schools, parks, churches, or other places people might gather or linger. A few paintings were created as one part of a larger campaign to shape the public realm into a more pedestrian-friendly environment where the pursuit of an artful, fun, and comfortable environment matter as much as the desire for increased safety.

All Seattle projects mention traffic calming as a motivation for their painting. While many of the earlier sparks had heard about street painting via City Repair advocates in Portland or Seattle, those discovering the idea after 2010 generally heard about them through SDOT. Many of these groups had been seeking traffic control devices, often traffic circles, when they heard about street paintings through SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic division. Most recently, people have been discovering the idea via Safe Routes to Schools programs, which, while also a safety-focused program, recognizes that creating a positive pedestrian environment requires more than traffic calming devices. Participants from most confirmed paintings report that they perceive no traffic calming effect from the painting's presence in the street. Some even report an increase in traffic as people seek out the painting. Many report that even though

they had been told that street paintings do not calm traffic, they or their neighbors had held out hope that theirs might. This hope is unsurprising given SDOT's message about street paintings has historically been, "While a street mural is not an official traffic calming device, it may have an indirect impact on traffic speeds by encouraging drivers to be respectful of neighbors who live in the area" ("Street Furniture & Decorations" 2017).

Most projects are grant funded in their first year, and then self-funded if they decide to repaint. Prior to 2015, most (but not all) projects were funded by DON Neighborhood Matching Fund Small Sparks or Small and Simple Grants. One or two were funded by other non-NMF grants as part of a larger project. SDOT's CAM 2506 suggests that potential street painters apply for NMF grants.<sup>61</sup> However, since 2015, most new paintings have not been receiving funding from DON. Recently, about half a dozen projects have been awarded funding through SDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Mini Grants. Two other paintings were funded by businesses, and at least one neighbor-driven project decided to self-fund in year one. Parts of SDOT's current thinking on potential changes to SDOT's role and requirements assume that most first-time paintings will apply for and receive NMF funding, and will have DON support to guide their community process. In revising current street painting program requirements, SDOT also suggested that some elements of the NMF grant reporting requirements might substitute for current SDOT requirements, like the neighbor petition. While coordinating with these grant programs is good practice, it is important to remember that not all projects operate under the same funding guidance or have access to the same set of tools from their funder. Also, since almost all projects self-fund after the first

---

<sup>61</sup> "CAM 2506: Painting the Intersection in Your Neighborhood" is discussed in Chapter 4 and included in Appendix A. This Client Assistance Memo gives an overview of the basic steps and requirements for Seattle street painting permits and suggests applying for grants through Department of Neighborhoods' Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF).

year, regulating paintings via grant-based rules does not work to provide structure or limits for street paintings over the long term.

Schools seem to be another common thread running through many Seattle street paintings. Seven Seattle sites described in this chapter are next to schools. Parents and teachers report that the opportunity to engage students in a project that is artful, collaborative, and community-focused that allows them to play in the street and accomplish something remarkable together is powerful. It boosts school pride and students' individual pride in themselves while increasing visibility for the school, both on the street and in the community. Street paintings work well with other Safe Routes to Schools programming and are a good fit for SRTS Mini Grants. In another interesting tie-in to schools, the sparks for three of Seattle's street painting projects have been students or teachers from the University of Washington.

Most of Seattle's street paintings have been organized by community based groups, either groups of neighbors or members of a school community. A couple of outliers exist. Two exceptions, the Swedish Hospital painting in Ballard and the South Lake Union painting proposed by Amazon, have corporate origin and organizational processes. The other outlier among these projects, the Bowdoin Dots, is interesting because it is a guerilla painting happening outside of the formal permit process, but maintaining within its own small and secret team enough momentum to carry the project forward for at least 10 years. Among the community-based groups operating within the formal permit process, those with a larger number of households and businesses in their petition zone tend to build more rigorous core teams of committed organizers and find the diversity of necessary skills and interests within in their group that make these teams more likely to repaint. Projects with very small catchment areas seem to have had trouble building enough momentum to carry forward.

## 5.4 PROJECT TIMELINES AND PROFILES SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of project locations and timelines for all the known street paintings in Portland and Seattle, as well as more detailed narrative descriptions of the stories of 22 known projects in Seattle—11 confirmed paintings, 4 projects that were recently planning new paintings and may paint in the future, and 7 groups who planned to paint but then did not. The profiles in this chapter are presented project by project and focus on what happened when and where, who was involved, and offer basic information about why they wanted to paint, and the outcomes each group achieved.

Outlined in this form, these profiles offer perspective on the range of experiences of different groups as well as revealing some of the common threads and trends among their projects stories. Some patterns include the lack of proximate placemaking and the pursuit of street painting as a traffic calming solution. Earlier painting groups were more likely to be groups of neighbors, to have heard about street painting through City Repair, and to have sought funding through DON. More recent projects include more school groups, heard about street paintings through SDOT, and were more likely to have sought funding from Safe Routes to Schools grants. To draw some generalizations about why groups want to paint and whether they are getting what they want from their paintings, Chapter 6 explores excerpts from participant interviews and survey responses and discuss them grouped by theme rather than by project. When reading that chapter, cross-referencing this one may help the reader to better understand a participant's statements in the context of their project's story.

## Chapter 6. MOTIVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

This chapter explores the reasons that Seattle street painting organizers and participants expressed for wanting to do their projects, and the outcomes they achieved. Aspirations and the sense of what their street painting projects accomplished are drawn from participant responses expressed in interviews I conducted in person, by phone, or via the online survey. Quotes from participants are grouped by themes related to their goals and perceived successes, and each theme is explored in a subsection of the chapter. Participants frequently expressed multiple motivations. Participants' comments cluster into themes of calming traffic, improving safety and awareness, claiming territory, creating a sense of "we," having fun together, building community relationships, increasing community and individual capacity, and enhancing a sense of place. The chapter also discusses some complications related to these motivations and the trickier areas where groups struggled. Those subsections offer participant perspectives and practical observations on the areas where teams encountered difficulties. For example, the section on community relationship building includes a sub-section about struggles with managing community conflict. The section about increasing personal and community capacity includes a subsection about navigating the challenges of forming effective teams.

Survey and interviews were conducted in October 2017. Interview and survey questions and protocol are included in Appendix B. Responses include 17 completed surveys and 5 live interviews. These responses span 15 of the 22 Seattle projects described in Chapter 5. This includes 7 of the 11 profiled Confirmed Paintings; 3 of the 4 with Plans in Progress; and 5 of the 7 that Did Not Paint. From most of these projects, I only have the benefit of one participant's perspective, though I did interview two

organizers from the Stone Ave painting,<sup>62</sup> and several neighbors from the Wallybug painting at Burke Ave N and N 49<sup>th</sup> St completed the survey. Wallybug survey participants included project organizers, painting participants, and neighbors who object to the painting. While all participants agreed that it would be acceptable for readers to know what project they were from, several participants asked to remain anonymous. Quotes, where identified, are attributed to their project rather than to a specific author or speaker. Statements made by participants reflect their personal views and do not necessarily represent the perspective of their employing institutions.

## **6.1 MANY MOTIVATIONS AT ONCE**

Even on the same project, people engage in street paintings with many different goals in mind. When Intersection Repairs simultaneously serve multiple functions, they can offer more options to more users. They create more vibrant and lively places and provide multiple ways for people to connect with the place and with each other. In permaculture, this principle is referred to as “stacking functions” so that each element of a design performs several functions in the system (Hemenway 2015, 24). Different goals and functions were important to different participants, and even where only one person shared the story of their painting, most project organizers expressed more than one reason for painting. Several projects expressed two or three motivations for wanting to paint. The group planning to paint at Jane Addams Middle School hoped “the project will instill school pride, enhance our community, slow down traffic on our busy street” (34<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 113<sup>th</sup>). Another group who did not paint reported that they “were motivated by the possibility of the process and the painting itself creating a better sense of

---

<sup>62</sup> I was also one of the core team members for the Stone Avenue painting.

ownership and community. We also had hoped that maybe the mural would help to slow traffic” (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Two other painting groups expressed several reasons for painting. The Stone Ave N painting group hoped to focus on art and fun and to beautify the street while creating connections between church facilities across the street from each other, as well as building connecting relationships between the church, the nearby school, and neighboring residents. Figure 6.1 shows an interactive poster from a dot survey<sup>63</sup> taken during one of the Stone Ave N group’s planning events surveying members of the church, school, and neighborhood about which of several benefits they most hoped the painting might bring.<sup>64</sup> The Safe-Routes-to-School-funded project at Hawthorne Elementary School offered an excellent example of well stacked functions with their description of their motivations for the Phoenix painting. “The primary goal was student and pedestrian safety. Hope was to help increase driver awareness of school zone, students, and pedestrians and reduce speeds. Other goals were building school community, increasing school identity, school pride, STEAM<sup>65</sup> based art project, and a chance to teach civic activism to the students. And the fun of closing down a street for the purpose of art” (Cascadia S & S Dakota Phoenix).

---

<sup>63</sup> A dot survey invites participants to use stickers to express their preferences. In this survey participants were given 4 stickers to answer 4 questions.

<sup>64</sup> This is a mid-event photo and does not show the full set of responses to this question.

<sup>65</sup> STEAM = Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics

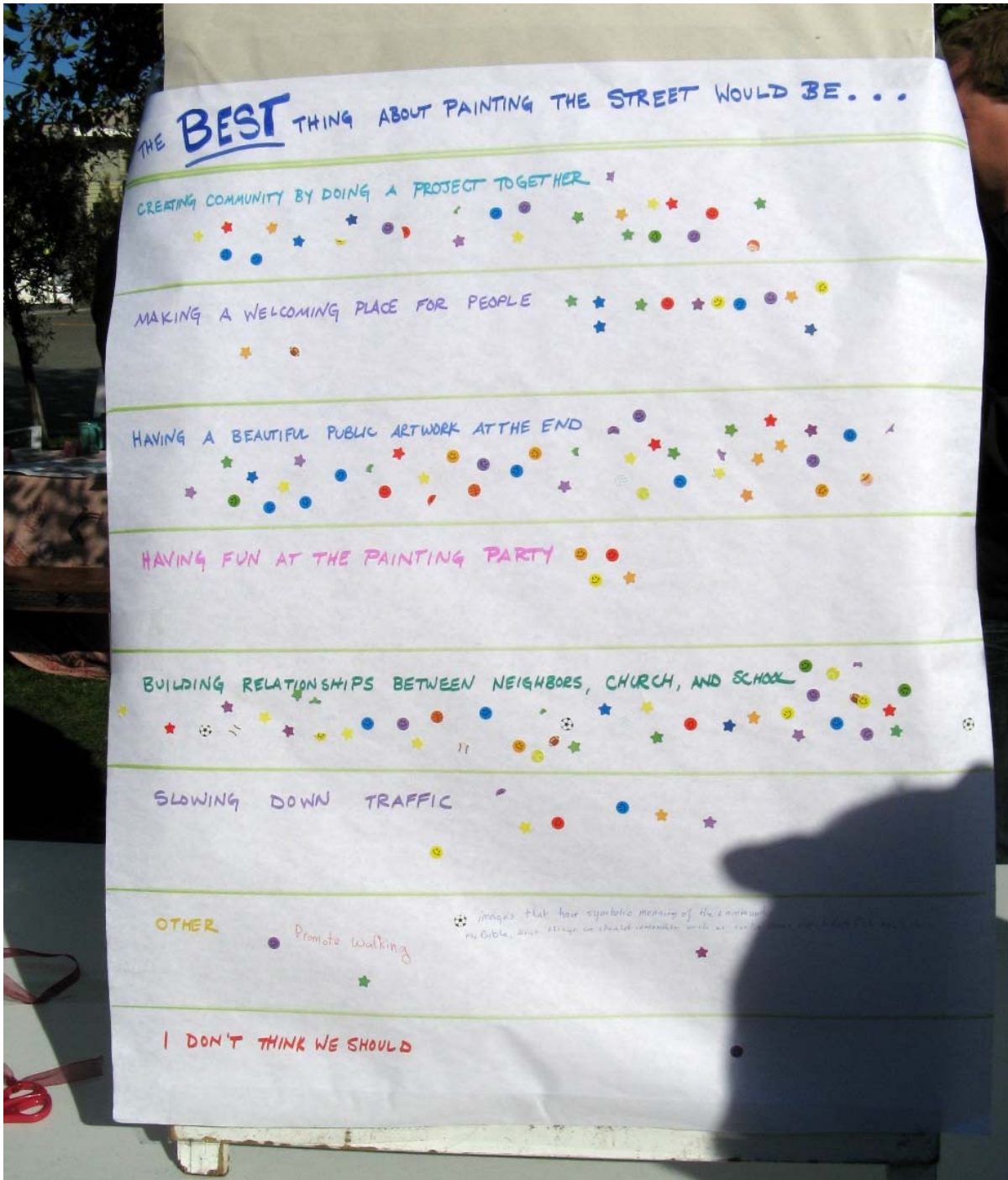


Figure 6.1. Dot-survey poster. This poster from a 2010 Stone Ave N street painting planning event shows examples of common motivations for street painting. This mid-event photo does not reflect the full set of responses to this question. photo: author

## 6.2 TRAFFIC CALMING

Most street painting groups expressed a primary or secondary motivation related to traffic calming. Even after they were told that street paintings do not calm traffic, neighbors often still held out hope that their painting would slow down traffic on their block. Many groups come to the idea of street paintings while pursuing traffic calming solutions after SDOT told them that their intersection did not qualify for MUTCD traffic calming devices like stop signs or traffic circles. Painting groups frequently reported that their completed paintings do not solve their traffic issues, and in some cases, may even attract more drivers to the painting. Some painters resented the lack of traffic calming effects, especially if that was their sole motivation for doing the painting.

### 6.2.1 Desire for Traffic Calming

Traffic calming was the most frequently cited motivation for Seattle street paintings. Participants from all but three street paintings<sup>66</sup> listed either traffic calming or slowing down cars/speeders/traffic as a primary or secondary motivation for their street painting. Wallybug painters said that there had been “some talk around it slowing down speeders,” and that their neighbors “thought it would be a fun thing to do that was supposed to slow traffic” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). One project had proposed to “[r]educe vehicle speeding to protect cyclists and pedestrians” (Hiawatha S & S Dearborn). Another organizer reported that “Traffic calming is a big [motivation] on this corner” (4th S & S Henderson).

---

<sup>66</sup> The three exceptions were Stone Ave N & 80<sup>th</sup>/81<sup>st</sup>, Tallman NW & NW Central, and Terry & Harrison

## **6.2.2 Holding Out Hope**

Some people seemed to get the message that street paintings do not calm traffic. They said things like “SDOT does not expect such projects to slow traffic” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>), or “From what I read online it doesn't help calm traffic really, but people were hoping that it might” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

These comments suggest that while some organizers understood that street paintings did not calm traffic, other neighbors had difficulty understanding or accepting that message and held out hope that traffic calming might happen anyway. “We also had hoped that maybe the mural would help to slow traffic as people would slow to see it possibly . . . Not many people really believed that it would slow traffic which is what we really need” (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>).

## **6.2.3 Challenge: Wanted MUTCD Device at a Problematic Location**

Several project participants who hoped for traffic calming also mentioned that they had dangerous intersections with poor visibility. They report things like “Cars fly around this corner” (4<sup>th</sup> S & S Henderson); “[T]here is a blind corner at the north end of the intersection” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>); and that they were “hoping to find a way to slow traffic on our hill and our dangerous five-way intersection with blind spots. We were not successful in getting any other traffic remediation plan approved so tried to sell this to the neighbors” (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>). Because of increased pedestrian activity near street paintings, they are not appropriate for sites where sightlines are poor. They need good sightlines to allow drivers to see the painting and adjacent activity as they approach the intersection.

Participants from several projects, like the next two Wallybug neighbors, mentioned pursuing a street painting after being turned down for traffic circles or other traffic control devices. One neighbor reports, “It was always to slow down traffic. We were turned down for a stop sign or traffic circle and someone

in the neighborhood thought this would help. It hasn't" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>), and another agrees, "I had talked to neighbors . . . about trying to get a traffic circle. . . . I had three small children at the time and was very concerned about their safety as well as the safety of our pets" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

#### **6.2.4 Challenge: Traffic Not Calmed**

Participants from projects that have painted generally confirm that they did not get the traffic calming effects they had hoped for. People for whom traffic calming was a secondary motive and who are happy with other functions their painting has served seem to shrug off the lack of traffic calming easily. "Q: did you get what you hoped for? . . . A: Yeah! Except for the traffic calming" (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

Others, like these three neighbors from the Wallybug, for whom traffic calming was their main motivation, report feeling duped by the false promises of traffic calming, and seem to resent a shift to focus on other functions as a bait-and-switch. "I wanted to slow down traffic. I still do. I'm concerned about my children being hit by cars going too fast for a residential neighborhood. Since the ladybug was painted, my car has been hit again" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). "Originally neighbors said they wanted the ladybug painting as a 'traffic calming' device. As the years have gone on and it became very clear that the painting was doing nothing to slow down traffic, the neighbors now use it for community building" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). "My family wished there had been a roundabout that would have actually done something to slow down traffic on our street" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

#### **6.2.5 Challenge: Increased Problem Vehicle Behavior**

Some Wallybug neighbors approved the painting on their neighborhood street on a trial basis for traffic calming. One of their biggest complaints was that contrary to their hopes for calmer traffic, it seemed to them that the painting drew more traffic to the neighborhood. "I think everyone was surprised it did

nothing to calm traffic and even made it a bit worse” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “There continue to be accidents in the intersection. One driver said the ladybug painting distracted her and that was what caused the accident” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). These same neighbors report that while some visitors wanted to enjoy the painting, others seemed to come with specific intent to engage in aggressive mischief toward the painting. “There was often, especially after being freshly painted, tire marks on it that appeared vehicles had been doing ‘doughnuts’ on it” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Another neighbor reported that “[a] motorcycling blog lists the address and at least one blogger promised to run over the ladybug in an attempt to do damage” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). When the street painting failed to calm traffic, and in their eyes made it worse, these neighbors wanted to stop painting, and resented that their neighbors continued to paint against their wishes.

### **6.3 LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER**

Similar to the traffic calming motivation but with a slightly different approach, several project participants expressed a focus on safety. Organizers of safety-focused paintings say they hoped to increase awareness and visibility of people using different travel modes, and report things like a desire to “improve safety and visibility for pedestrians and cyclists” (S 25<sup>th</sup> & S Massachusetts), or that they “believe that [the painting] has had some effect in . . . alerting pass-through folks that there are children in the neighborhood” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Many projects that included this motivation are located in school zones or adjacent to parks, and several of these were funded by Safe Routes to Schools grants, like Hawthorne Elementary School, where a painting participant reports that “[T]he primary goal was student and pedestrian safety. Hope was to help increase driver awareness of school zone, students, and pedestrians and reduce speeds” (Cascadia S & S Dakota Phoenix). Rather than seeing cars as invaders to the space, these projects take a less combative, more cooperative view.

*You can see that you are approaching a school and how you should be driving. . . it has played such a huge role in keeping the kids safe or telling the neighborhood that this is a school area, how we should be driving and be mindful. . . .If the kids are safe walking and biking to school, then that will help them make it as their habit. . . .That was the main point . . . spreading the word that this is a safe zone for students and their families to walk and ride bikes (Graham Hill Whale).*

When talking about their projects, organizers of paintings in school zones say they see the street painting as a visual reminder for all people, whether on foot, on bikes, or in cars, to watch out for each other. “[A]ll of a sudden you have this big bright painting in front of you which reminds you ‘oh yeah that’s what this is for.’ . . .[Students] are very mindful . . . when they pass through the Blue Whale that yes, we are approaching the school . . .[W]hen we painted this we talked about it to the students. . . why we need that painting . . . That really changed the attitude of the students. . . to being safe; watchful” (Graham Hill Whale).

### **6.3.1 Challenge: Eyes on the Street Versus Stranger Danger**

While neighbors who welcome visitors to the painting see them as contributing to Jane Jacobs’ beneficial “eyes on the street.” People like this Wallybug neighbor report that they feel that the people-attracting nature of the painting “has the effect of making the neighborhood safer because there are more people walking through on a daily basis” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Meanwhile, others from the same project may report perceiving people who are not immediate neighbors as unwanted invaders. “After the first year, it was clear to me that the bug was neither deterring traffic nor slowing it down. In fact, the bug became an attraction and seemed to bring more and more people to the intersection. I really did NOT like this aspect of the bug” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). This concern relates to where different people define in-group/out-group boundaries and their perceptions of who is a potential ally and who might be

a threat. This perception of “stranger-danger” connects with concepts of Territoriality and “Us versus Them” dynamics discussed in Chapter 3.

## **6.4 PLACE IDENTITY AND TERRITORIALITY**

Participants mentioned motivations that related to the desire to mark or claim territory and to cultivate a shared sense of community identity among people attached to the place. At the root of it, the difference between place identity and territoriality falls in the distinction between whether the desired effect is to promote the idea that “the people belong to the place” (place identity) or “the place belongs to the people” (territoriality). In school related projects, these territorial claims centered around creating a shared sense of place-based identity around the school, but sometimes involved problems with “us versus them” dynamics in neighborhood contexts when coupled with a strong focus on traffic calming.

### **6.4.1 Creating a Sense of “We”**

Elements of working together contribute to a shared sense of “we.” That is one element of what project organizers aspire to do when they talk about bringing people from different groups together. Some projects incorporate this theme of inclusion and connection into the design itself, “The whale is the mascot for our school and the multicolored fish in there...it means people from different cultures . . . ‘We all belong.’ We are all respected, so that was the main theme . . . a big project to show we all belong” (Graham Hill Whale). Others promote inclusion through the processes they engage in and the way they outreach to and include more neighbors and people from outside their core group in the project team and on painting day. Whether it is the Stone Ave N project’s attempts to build bridges among church, school, neighborhood organization, and neighborhood residents; a school’s attempt to

bolster a sense of school pride; a project's attempts to engage residents from different races, ethnicities or cultures; or a neighborhood group's desire to get to know each other better, many of these groups are working to establish a place-based sense of "we."

*[W]hen we all put in, that's when you get the feeling of community . . . [I]t's very important in present times, or any times, for us all to get together and do community work . . . to show that we are together. You know when people start marching on the street, OK that's fine. You have the right. But these are the things which actually give you the bigger picture, that these people did not march, but these people created something to show that we all are together . . . and we really can survive together, and everybody is welcome. . . . It's working together. It's not thinking about yourself; it's thinking you all are for one goal, and let's get it done (Graham Hill Whale).*

These motivations relate directly to functions of place identity and territoriality introduced in Chapter 3. These functions seem to act as positive factors in cases like those at the Graham Hill Blue Whale, Friends of Hawthorne Phoenix, or Jane Addams Middle School (34<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 113<sup>th</sup>) where the emphasis is on place identity related to school pride and a shared sense of belonging, and the sense of territorial marking is about marking the street as connected to the school, rather than about claiming territory to drive intruders out of it.

#### **6.4.2 Challenge: "Us versus Them" Dynamics**

While many times defining a "we" has positive, all-inclusive intentions, creating a sense of belonging can, by intent or by accident, define a subset of people who are not included. Any definition of "we" or "us" requires a careful check of who is cast in the role of "them" and attention to the dynamics of "us versus them." There is a big difference between "We all belong, and we need to look after each other," and "This place belongs to us, so those other people and cars should stay away." As discussed in Chapter 3, "othering" is the act of defining outsiders and seeing "those other people" as not belonging to a group or in a place.

Frequently, when traffic calming is an element of the discussion, “othering,” is at play. Cars, and the people driving them, are often cast in the role of “them.” Speeding, cutting through on residential streets, and even parking in places neighbors feel entitled to call their own are seen as aggressive, anti-social, threatening behaviors and as invasions of places neighbors perceive as belonging to them. This perspective gets expressed in statements like these: “We have many people cutting through our neighborhood . . . and they drive too fast” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>), or “[T]he neighborhood had been concerned about people tearing down 60<sup>th</sup>” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly). The message behind these complaints is essentially, “*They* should not be invading *our* space.”

This sort of “othering” may be directed at pedestrians as well as drivers. “[S]ome feel it brings people to the neighborhood to enjoy the Bug. Some like that, some have not” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Wallybug supporters who see visitors to the intersection as a welcome addition to their expanded idea of “we” report enjoying interacting with visitors, while Wallybug objectors report feeling intruded upon by strangers they see as outsiders. “It never occurred to me that the painting would be an ‘attraction’ that would draw more people to the intersection. If it had I would have fought against it from the beginning. The ‘attraction’ aspect affected my sense of safety and privacy in my home” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). They report being uncomfortable with “people gawking and lurking around” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Some resent those they perceive to be the wrong people in the wrong place or the wrong time. “I have observed people enjoying being out ON the Bug, though it is a busy intersection, not a park” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

When a street painting is perceived as an attempt to repel unwanted vehicle traffic or exclude certain types of people, it can be met with backlash. Wallybug neighbors report graffiti and littering and aggressive behavior by drivers. “Many motorists seemed to take it upon themselves to race through the

intersection. A motorcyclist was seen spinning donuts around and around the bug, leaving tire marks on purpose” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Unpleasant othering dynamics can also arise among close neighbors in cases where conflicts arise between neighbors, like when some want to paint the street, and some do not. “While the painting is presented by its supporters as a ‘neighborhood bonding’ and ‘community building’ project, some neighbors find the project has had the opposite effect. Some feel the ladybug has created an ‘us’ and ‘them’ feeling among neighbors” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Learning to address and grow through conflict among neighbors is one of the most important challenges faced by street painting groups, and is explored further in the section on building community relationships.

## **6.5 HAVING FUN TOGETHER**

One of the most common themes among street painting projects was simply the idea of having fun. One of my personal principles in community projects is to have more fun than meetings, so I think if having fun is high on a group’s list of motivations they are probably doing it right. For some, they saw having fun together as the greatest success of their whole project. “Fun with the neighbors. . .doing something with the neighbors. . . that was where the big success was” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

Many hoped for and found their fun in the act of painting the street. “Sitting in the middle of the street painting - it's FUN! Hanging out with neighbors while doing something to claim the space—that's fun, too” (20<sup>th</sup> & E Marion). “On painting day, the first time, it was fun. It was full of hope and it did seem to bring people together” (Burke N and N 49<sup>th</sup>). “So many people . . . came and went, and some people came back later, so that was. . . definitely a fun aspect for me that people really got into it” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).

Others also enjoyed block parties and other special events, and appreciated the special opportunities that happened when holding events around the painting. “People really like to close the street off for a couple days ‘cuz then the kids can play and run around in the street without worrying about traffic. And the barbeque is fun. One year when we did the barbecue at the end some young people in their 20s who rent the house a couple doors down, they brought a fire pit out in the street. . . . one of them had just came home that day from. . .working all summer on a fishing boat up in Alaska. He had this duffle bag full of frozen salmon, so he handed a bunch of it out to everyone but then we also thawed a bunch of it and had it as part of our barbecue” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

While not everyone enjoys the increased activity that a street painting can bring to the block, some reported enjoying the casual neighbor interactions that were the result of having painted the street, and the attention that having a painting on their block drew to the neighborhood. This was revealed in responses like the following: “I have been totally for it from the beginning because of the community connections and the fun and joy of the ladybug being there” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “It’s fun to sit out on the porch too, just kind of hidden out there and then hear people who haven’t seen it or just stumbled on it. Hear them pause and talk about it” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

Some groups who have not painted yet report enjoying the planning process and anticipating the fun of painting day. “I think the school staff and students think this is fun” (34<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 113<sup>th</sup>). One organizer expressed that even though in the end their project did not paint, the planning process itself was rewarding. “We had fun together while we were doing it. We didn't get to have the kind of fun that we had hoped to have together you know what I mean? But that's OK. . . . it sure would've been cool if it had all come together. It would've been a blast. I would have loved to go out with all those neighbors that were involved and slap paint on the street. It would have been super-fun” (Crown Hill).

## **6.6 BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

Building community relationships was another commonly cited aspiration of many street painting groups. Many were optimistic that by working together and getting to know their neighbors, they would build lasting relationships, bridge differences, and improve their everyday lives and their resilience as a community. While many groups and individuals made close friends and built strong collaborative partnerships, many also found significant challenges in navigating disagreements. Difficulties in working through conflict damaged relationships among some neighbors. Their stories underscore the need for careful support for navigating the conflicts that arise when neighbors endeavor to make decisions about shaping shared spaces together. Neighbors need support that helps them tend to their relationships as well as, or in some cases even instead of, help pushing their projects through. To that end, this section presents stories of aspirations and rewarding experiences of building community relationships and then delves into some of the more painful struggles with community conflict that arose among neighbors regarding their painting plans.

### **6.6.1 Desire for Community Connection**

Many groups express a desire that the street painting will help them build stronger more positive relationships among their neighbors, whether as individuals or among different sub-groups within the neighborhood. “We were motivated by the possibility of the process and the painting itself creating a better sense of ownership and community” (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>). Community connection was definitely a strong motivation for the Stone Ave N project whose organizers report that “[O]ne of the main motivators was to engage the community. . . . including neighbors and inviting them to be a part of the creation of the communal space” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>). “I think [the church] definitely had an interest in building a better connection with the community. . . . [T]hey have. . . as part of their vision to

be a member of the community. . . building community by supporting neighboring principles” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).

Community connection was one of the most frequently mentioned motivations, and also one that participants frequently perceived as most successful. One Wallybug painter reports, “For me it quickly took on a community building focus which for a while, and again now, seemed to me the higher priority and the greater success” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Another says, “It continues to be a magnet for bringing folks together. People who have moved to other neighborhoods will come back to paint. Landlords who own houses in the neighborhood have also enjoyed taking part and even help funding” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). The creators of the Green Lake Dragonfly capture this feeling best with their favorite celebratory saying about their painting:

*We like to say, you know that line from [the film] The Big Lebowski, about the carpet? The way it brings the room together... (laughs). . . So that’s what we say about the Dragonfly. ‘It really brought the neighborhood together.’ (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly)*

## **6.6.2 Working Together**

City Repair in Portland promotes the idea that taking on a project that is too big to manage and then inviting others to help is one of the best ways to build mutually supportive relationships. Giving neighbors that opportunity to work together to shape their shared spaces is one of the key ways that street paintings can build community. Many painters appreciated this aspect of the paintings. They saw how “people who didn't have a prior connection came together around a common interest and made something happen” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>). Some described their painting projects as “a way,”—a process leading to the opening of a path to accomplish something they wanted—“a way to do something together in the neighborhood that had a visible impact” (20<sup>th</sup> & E Marion); “a way to get

together with neighbors and get to know them. . . . [while] working together to come up with a fun design for a street painting” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Again, many painters felt they achieved good success in working together. “[I]t is a fun community project that brings the neighborhood together. We need to get to know our neighbors and this is something that highly encourages that, even for a day a year. Also, the painting provides a very neighborhood ‘feel good’ kind of vibe to our area. you know that people who care live there” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Many of these projects, like the Graham Hill Blue Whale or the Stone Ave N projects aspired bring different groups together that may not have worked together before. “I was hoping. . .that it would bring the neighbors together with an institution that impacted them. . . . [to] bridge some of the gaps of misunderstandings, . . . to heal some wounds. I wouldn’t say there were deep hideous scars, but just kind of not having as much connection as I thought there might have been” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>). The Graham Hill PTA “want[ed] to invite people from different cultures. . . . we wanted to involve the whole community, make it a community project, a family-based project where people see each other working and cooperating . . . for the same cause” (Graham Hill Whale). In addition to building connections between groups and individuals, experiencing this coming together to achieve a common goal can contribute to an increased sense of what is possible when people work together.

*These kinds of things show you how far people can come and connect with the community. You know, when anything happens, any hurricane or anywhere something happens, how people just come together. . . . Just going there and helping others is amazing and I think street murals . . . really bring that togetherness out and brings everybody on the same stage to work. . . . You know, me, Indian, coming all the way from India, Somali people, people from Harborview Medical Center, the grandparents, . . . bringing all of them together . . . kids, old people... It’s amazing (Graham Hill Whale).*

Bringing neighbors who do already know each other to work together in a new way can also help deepen existing relationships by allowing people to explore a different aspect of their skills and interest

than they usually use in their everyday interactions. A participant from the project planned for 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW between NW 95<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> St appreciated that aspect of their planning together. “[W]e engaged together in a different way. When you're being creative, . . . Creating and imagining together, even if you don't actually get to the manifesting it in the large...that's powerful. I think there is magic in that. And from my perspective, that carried through” (Crown Hill). For that team, the deepened relationships among neighbors, and the other things they accomplished together later because of those deepened relationships, were counted as great successes even though they eventually abandoned their plans to paint.

### **6.6.3 Getting to Know Neighbors**

Getting to know neighbors is one of the most important steps in community building. The best first step toward working together well is getting to know each other. Many participants expressed the desire to make these neighbor-connections. “I enjoy[ed] the painting and getting to talk to others who lived in the area while we painted. . . .I joined in painting because I wanted to get to know some of my neighbors and understood street painting to be a good way to help build community in a neighborhood” (20<sup>th</sup> & E Marion). They found that organizing or participating in a street painting created lots of opportunities for people to meet: through project-planning meetings and activities, through outreach campaigns and petition signature gathering, by participating on painting day, and by interacting with others around the painting afterwards. “During the planning process and neighborhood canvassing it started a lot of conversations between neighbors and the school community. Painting day brought out all kinds of helpers, and curious on lookers” (Cascadia S & S Dakota Phoenix).

Participants reported that engaging in the street painting process produced changes in their perceived quality and frequency of neighborly interactions. “We got to meet a lot of people who we might not

ever meet in the radius around our block. It also brought people in from other blocks to help, thus increasing familiarity and cohesion within the neighborhood. we have a very festive block party on painting days” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Some project groups report increases in neighboring, both in their participation in mutual aid and in their sense of being part of a larger community. The Dragonfly project offers good examples of this sense of increased neighboring, and a strong sense of their appreciation for these changes. “[N]eighbors two doors down but you've never talked to them, you know, you've lived here 10 years and never spoken to them... and then all of a sudden with this project we were having progressive dinner parties, going to each other's houses, and hanging out in each other's yards, and knocking on the door and borrowing tools. You know? People from all the way down at. . . the next cross street . . . we won't see them all year, but they'll come up to paint” (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

*Everyone agrees it's just a lot more comfortable and friendly. We feel much more familiar with each other now. . . . this just opened doors (laughs)... literally! We went into people's houses that we hadn't ever gone into their house, and saw people and met people who were only four doors down, but I swear I had never seen them before. And people will come after we painted. This woman came up, this older woman. . .and I saw her standing out on the sidewalk just staring at it, and so I came out to say hello and stuff and . . . she's lived here 40 years . . . and was just curious. . . . Now I know her name (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).*

Another Green Lake neighbor from the Stone Ave N project reports an increased sense of community lasting long after engaging in a door-to-door knock-and-talk campaign to get the word out about the painting project. “I definitely felt more connected to the neighborhood, and you know, it's easier [now] for me in general to talk to people on the street. It doesn't have to be somebody that I knew, and I definitely see people that I met through Sustainable Green Lake. . .or who worked on

the painting project . . . You know it's just nice to run into people when you are out walking or going to the PCC" (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).<sup>67</sup>

#### **6.6.4 Challenge: Community Conflicts**

While most groups seem to have found some success in their community-building endeavors, in places like the Wallybug, where difficult conflicts arose and remained unresolved, the resulting impacts to community and sense of belonging were complicated. Some participants had positive experiences like those described above, while other experiences were painful and created rifts and lingering hard feelings among neighbors.

Neighbors from the Wallybug and from 42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & 2<sup>nd</sup> NW talked about difficulties involving conflict over the painting. Wallybug neighbors report that "it was complicated and challenging when there has been disagreement" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). "After it became clear it wasn't a traffic calming device we were told the real value in it was [as] a community builder. This proved to be ironic considering it destroyed more than a few neighborly relationships. . . . It was surprising to have a 'community building' event create such a hostile environment" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Some participants reported lingering hard feelings where a painting project failed to garner enough support for a successful petition, particularly when it involved not getting buy-in from mandatory-for-the-petition adjacent households. An organizer from 42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & 2<sup>nd</sup> NW, reported that "There was a lot of frustration that there were just 2 neighbors that could just shut down the rest of the group" (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>). They also revealed lingering feelings of frustration, rejection, and resentment among neighbors. "Since we didn't get passed the approval process I think it left a divide in the neighborhood

---

<sup>67</sup> PCC Community Markets is locally grown, community-owned grocery store based in Seattle, Washington. The acronym originally stood for Puget Consumers Coop.

that still exists with some neighbors . . . But we've all lived here for many years and it's not the only incident nor will it be the last" (42<sup>nd</sup>/Baker NW & NW 2<sup>nd</sup>). These stories of conflict and hard feeling raise a caution flag that street painting projects do not build community automatically, that care must be taken to help participants effectively address difficulties when they arise, and to support these projects with processes and resources for collaboration, decision making, conflict resolution, and relationship building that support positive community-building experiences regardless of whether they end up painting the street.

### ***Failure to See or Understand Each Other's Viewpoint***

Many neighbors to the Wallybug project<sup>68</sup> expressed that neighbors had difficulty understanding and valuing each other's conflicting perspectives. Some felt the conflict was overblown. "I can't believe how much conversation there is around a stupid street mural. love it, hate, I don't really care. It's a painting" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). "I think the people who hate it are too sensitive but the people who love it, can be quite insensitive. I didn't know. . .how polarizing it would become. . . . I find it funny how much people love or hate this ladybug. The people who love it don't understand why others hate it and vice versa" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Objectors felt that painting advocates disregarded or minimized their concerns. They expressed feeling unheard and disrespected, partly because their concerns were treated as an affront to painting advocates ambitions and partly because painting advocates seemed to say that since they had enough support to fulfill their petition requirements, it did not matter what others wanted. "[S]everal neighbors had opposed the painting from the beginning but felt they were not listened to. . . . I can't really explain

---

<sup>68</sup> Several survey participants from this project asked for anonymity. To honor that request, I have removed identifying information from their stories wherever possible and obscured which comments came from the same participant.

the feelings of my neighbors and how strongly they reacted when they felt their painting was threatened. They thought it was fun and wanted to continue to enjoy it, despite the objections of others. We met to discuss the opposing desires, . . . one of the neighbors put forth a proposal that we enter into a consensus-building process, but the ladybug proponents refused” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “They also said that they wanted what they wanted and any attempts to explain other perspectives were met with, ‘Majority rules’. . . . and that any different perspective came from people who ‘wanted to take away their fun.’ . . . They scoffed at any different opinions, often denigrating the people offering different perspectives” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “[W]e were treated like, ‘There, there little lady, don't go getting all afraid of the boogeyman.’ I can't even imagine the privilege and gall it takes to dismiss someone else's fears and concerns in such a rude, offhanded manner. The lack of compassion was astounding!!!” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Now that painting of the Wallybug has resumed, some supporters of the painting seemed to see the conflict as fully resolved, since it is no longer standing between them and the outcome they want. “[A]fter the 2nd year of painting there was a small, but vocal minority that did not want to repaint and that became contentious enough that we did not repaint for a few years. It eventually led to SDOT . . . setting some standards for polling the neighborhood . . . . There has to be 60-80% support, that has to be attained every three years. . . . We have never had less than 90% ( I think :) )” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). According to SDOT records, only 66 percent of eligible households signed the Wallybug petition in 2010. This overestimation of community approval is consistent with supporters’ tendency to believe that “most people” support the project, and whether inadvertently or intentionally, to underestimate or minimize those who disagree.

Supporters seem unaware of the lingering sense of exclusion that neighbors who do not support the painting say they feel when community-wide gatherings are focused around renewing the painting. A supporter reports that “Most of the minority voices have left the neighborhood and those who do not support, do not get involved with the painting, but it does not appear to affect our overall interactions with them as they are involved in other neighborhood activities such as ‘America's Night Out’” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). This comment contradicts the feelings reported by neighbors who would rather they stop painting. “For more than 20 years the neighbors have enjoyed ‘community building’ through the City’s annual Night Out Against Crime program. This year a planned potluck for the painting of the ladybug took place rather than occurring on Seattle's Night Out. Those of us opposed to the painting therefore had no opportunity to ‘hang-out’ with our neighbors and build community” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “I generally like my neighbors. But on painting day, I feel angry and usually try to be gone. . . . After the project is complete I avoid the intersection for several months” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

### ***“Us versus Them” Bullying***

One way that things go wrong when confronting conflict is that people in disagreement sometimes become more focused on building walls that impede addressing conflicts rather than building bridges of understanding. Several neighbors report that objectors were subject to bullying and other sorts of “othering” treatment that sent a message that they were unwelcome in the neighborhood. They report that “relationships in the 4 blocks began to deteriorate. . . . it did cause irreparable damage to us and our relationships in the neighborhood. We were no longer invited to parties, one neighbor would not talk to us” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Another said, “I am surprised by the people who love it and their lack of compassion for those who do not want to do it anymore. . . . Each year we're bullied and/or made to feel guilty for not contributing” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

People afraid to talk to each other have trouble overcoming cycles of fear and aggression to resolve their conflicts in a healthy, relationship enhancing way. Neighbors report that “It caused hurt feelings and some people have moved away. I saw bullying between people” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “One neighbor felt so alienated from many of her neighbors that it was one of the reasons she and her family decided to leave the neighborhood she had thought of as her permanent home” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Some survey participants double-checked with me before completing the survey to assess the potential risks of participation because “For some, there is so much animosity around the ladybug that they are afraid to speak out against it” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). One mentioned in their survey response that “Some of those who oppose the painting are afraid to complete this survey for fear the ladybug proponents will find out and ‘bully’ them” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

### ***Desire for Consensus Process***

Wallybug objectors said they wanted to engage in a consensus-building, mutually-agreeable-solution-seeking process, but they felt that painting enthusiasts rejected those proposals because, being in the majority, painting supporters thought they had the right to do what they wanted without their other neighbors’ support or consent. One reports that “Many years ago, those neighbors vocally opposed to the painting asked that neighbors work to reach consensus rather than vote. . . . The majority voice was unwilling to have this type of compromise, even though they knew there were quite a few of us opposed to the project” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Another said, “My partner and I sat down and talked with . . . people who we had been close to. We discussed our concerns and fears about what having the bug in front of our house felt like to us. . . . They said they didn't really care how we felt because it was fun for them. We were told not to ‘let fear rule our lives’” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “We suggested a compromise: to move the bug to a nearby corner . . . or

to not paint it often . . . They said they were in the majority, so they did not have to compromise. I suggested that the way they were going would cause hard feelings, a winner/loser dynamic that might be irreparable. They scoffed” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). When talking about ideas for addressing these conflicts, neighbors said, “Some have raised the issue of the simple majority being an inadequate means of decision making on this type of project. I would agree and would advocate for a consensus-building process” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “The planning process left those of us opposed to the project out of the process entirely. Because we were in the minority, our voices were discounted” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

### ***Poor Conflict Management Hurt Relationships***

Unresolved conflicts around the Wallybug painting hurt relationships among neighbors. While many neighbors built positive long-lasting relationships with those who agreed with them, the positive experiences do not cancel out the negative impacts of poor conflict engagement hurting neighbors on all sides of this issue. The divisions that arose among neighbors in conflict over the painting have had deep and long-lasting impacts on neighborhood relationships. One neighbor says, “This project was incredibly divisive. . . . Ultimately it led to neighbors literally screaming at each other on front porches and yelling profanities over fences” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Another reports a transformation of neighborhood relationships that sounds incredibly painful. “In subsequent years there was a great deal of ill will toward . . . neighbors who opposed the painting . . . . We went from a friendly place where most of us knew each other, shared meals, sometimes even shared holidays, who sometimes provided childcare for each other, and who enjoyed good, friendly relationships to a place where I was ostracized, told I should move, told I wanted to ‘take away [their] joy,’ who was ignored when I said hello, and who was no longer included in gatherings. . . . it also changed my outlook on humanity in general” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Several neighbors who felt “othered” in this disagreement over whether to paint summarize their experience of the conflict similarly “It caused heartache, lack of trust in humans to be fair or do the right

thing, and made us feel like outcasts and pariahs in our own home” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “By far the most surprising and worst consequence was the impact on the relationships and the hard feelings between neighbors. This has affected my ability to remain positive and optimistic about human nature in general, which I certainly wouldn't have foreseen” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “Overall, my respect has been diminished for the neighbors who have insisted that the painting be continued year after year” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

The negative experiences around the Wallybug conflict highlight the reality that while community building is an important motivation for street paintings, it is not automatically successful without proper support. Rather, it must be navigated and cultivated with careful attention both to skill building and relationships. Adjustments to street painting guidance must support neighbors in collective decision making and coach better navigation of disagreements. Neighbors would be better served by a relationship-building process-oriented model of addressing conflict rather than a winner-take-all outcome-oriented model. The latter asks only how many people hold which views while the former can consider relational implications of meeting each other's needs and addressing each other's concerns to find a solution that can suit all parties. The low approval threshold of the Seattle street painting petition supports a system where neighbors in the majority feel they are in the right simply because more people agree with them. Concerns of other neighbors matter also, however, as do the means by which neighbors make decisions about the spaces they share, and how they treat each other along the way. Previously, SDOT's oversight of street painting projects was more focused on their engineering than on supporting community relationship building. Hopefully new changes to the program will better support neighbors as they navigate conflict in the future.

## 6.7 INCREASING CAPACITY

Learning how to work in teams with neighbors creates capacity not only by helping people cultivate collaborative skills, but also by providing opportunities to imagine and discuss other shared ambitions and concerns. It also allows people to demonstrate their competence in ways that boost their sense of their own capacity and allow others to notice and appreciate their skills as well.

When you try to do a project you discover people's capacities, interests, abilities to see through on things, . . . where the energy is and where the energy stays, and how you dance with stuff that comes up in people's lives . . . [the street painting] was one pulse point in the flow of neighbor connections. . . That carried through into regular neighbor gatherings around other things... [O]ur neighbors are still super-tight, and . . . [planning the painting] was one of the things that brought the whole . . . group together to start talking about doing things like potlucking . . . it seeded out regular neighbor gatherings and doing things in other ways that have carried through to this day. As a community building exercise . . . it was . . . successful in giving us something to gather and dream together about (Crown Hill).

At the Stone Ave N painting, Sustainable Green Lake used the street painting project to recruit new members. They hoped to benefit from building a network of neighbors who know of each other's skills and assets. "There's that piece of resilience that comes from. . . neighbors knowing neighbors and getting to know each other. And if there's any kind of crisis, people know where to turn to find somebody who knows how to [help], . . . the doctor on the street, or whatever. Talents people have that nobody knows about until they get to know them" (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).

Sometimes involvement in street paintings can inspire or supplement other types of community stewardship or collaborative projects. Crown Hill neighbors, Squire Park (20<sup>th</sup> & E Marion) neighbors, and the original organizers of the Graham Hill Blue Whale were engaged in larger grant based projects, of which the street painting was the fun, relationship building element. Positive experiences with collaborative endeavors like street painting can encourage both the physical and social aspects of place

attachment and encourage neighboring. Positive connection among neighbors and toward the place can create a self-reinforcing cycle of generosity among neighbors or toward the neighborhood. For example, one Green Lake Dragonfly neighbor is making plans to deed her property to the city to turn into a pocket park, and hopes to help steward that project through its design and implementation.

### **6.7.1 Pride in Work**

Taking pride in their own work and noticing the good work others have done increases people's sense of both individual capability and community capacity. It involves self-esteem, appreciation for others, building positive associations with place, and the IKEA effect.<sup>69</sup> Participants from several projects mentioned feeling proud of their group's work. "I think it provided one moment in time where we could come together and take pride in our neighborhood and work together to complete this project" (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>). "Afterward, anytime I went through that intersection I was proud of the work we'd done together" (20<sup>th</sup> & E Marion). "It turned out beautifully. Really provided a focal point for the school community to identify with, and take pride in" (Cascadia S & S Dakota Phoenix). They mentioned being proud of individuals whose capacity they saw shine as they displayed their skills and talents. "My [college age] daughter was there. . . . You know, people praise your kids, but you never see that, but I saw how her leadership qualities showed . . . She was instructing kids and even the adults . . . It was amazing. You see how the qualities come out of kids. . . [Y]ou see. . . what they are" (Graham Hill Whale). [W]atching those little guys work with the paints and brushes was amazing. You wanna see them explore their creativity, you might see them be independent and take responsibility" (Graham Hill Whale).

---

<sup>69</sup> The Ikea Effect, discussed in Chapter 3, observes that people place a higher value on something they participated in making, partly because having built the thing demonstrates their competence.

## 6.7.2 Involving Children

Seeing children succeed in painting streets increases our sense of possibility and capacity. Relating to pride in work and appreciation of other's capacity is the particular delight people take in the ability of even small children to participate successfully in street paintings. Participants and organizers from several projects mentioned the value of children's contributions to the project. One Wallybug neighbor indicated that they supported the project partly because the painting "[e]ncouraged and featured children in the guided planning and process."<sup>70</sup> The seed ideas for several street painting designs came from children's design ideas. Many groups mention children's capable contributions to painting day. Interviews with Stone Ave N and Graham Hill Blue Whale organizers exemplify some of these comments.

*I: [S]o many people came to the painting, there were so many kids! There were so many kids there, and little tiny kids, right? . . . and they did such a great job.*

*P: and [the kids] were really, really into it. I remember there were moments when I would take a step, take a few breaths and look at everyone and it would be like... people were totally absorbed. And they really put a lot of effort to make it look really nice.*

*I: . . . Yeah, that it went so smoothly with so many little tiny painters was. . . [At a] lot of the street paintings . . . if somebody spills paint you just paint over it with the color that's supposed to be there. But this design had . . . a lot of bare street . . . Here we are with all these four- and five-year-old kids running around with paint brushes...and that the paint ended up where we wanted it and not where we didn't want... It felt like a miracle (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).<sup>71</sup>*

"I'm telling you, the 4-year-old . . . painting—and how the parents let him do that—the trust and the confidence that built in that kid. . . there were tiny little kids, my kindergarteners, my first graders, they are painting. They are doing the right thing in the right direction. That was surprising. That was amazing"

---

<sup>70</sup> SDOT and DON records and online articles also frequently mention positive contributions of children to street painting projects.

<sup>71</sup> (I)nterviewer, (P)articipant. Though technically, I offer this interview excerpt as dialogue between two participant-organizers, since I was also a core team member on the Stone Ave N project.

(Graham Hill Whale). “Kids are very proud that they did it. They were a big part of it. They were involved in the whole process. . . . giving them the responsibility always makes them proud” (Graham Hill Whale). Frequently, kids involved in street paintings exceed expectations in their ability to focus, participate and paint inside the lines. Adults are proud of the children, and the children are proud of themselves. People of all ages leave painting day with an increased sense of kids’ capabilities.

### **6.7.3 Challenge: Teamwork**

Teamwork is a key element to increasing community capacity. When people work together well, they can accomplish much more together than they would be able to do separately. When working well together, not only do they have access to more person-power and person-hours to devote to the project, they also have a greater diversity of skills to draw from and they can build on each other’s energy and creative ideas.

#### ***Having Enough People***

One element of supporting effective teamwork is having enough people on the team. Projects thrive when lots of people contribute, and can struggle when their core teams are too small or do not involve people with many different skills. An organizer from the Green Lake Dragonfly provided an example of a large team of neighbors where people brought a wide range of skills and interests and each took on an important role in getting the job done.

*I was surprised how some neighbors you almost wouldn't expect to step up stepped to do stuff. The neighbor across the street . . . he's an emergency room doctor who, you know, we'd say hello to on the street but just never made a connection with. But he volunteered to do all the paperwork for the grant. . . . A woman who works at Microsoft in the accounting department, she lives over there (gestures)...she set up the fiscal sponsor thing and she does the money part of it. Her husband has taken on the job of gathering signatures. . and also arranging for the rental of the barriers and for the street permit. . . . But we all got together to come up with designs. . . Then another neighbor and I drew out the ideas. . . then a graphic artist who lives down the street . . . simplified it . . . . And then a guy who lives across the street there who is literally a rocket scientist, came up with a plan for using . . . a stake . . . and then measuring strings to . . . plot the whole pattern. . . . Oh and . . .this one guy . . . measured up the whole intersection and made a grid drawing of it so that we could design it on that . . . .and some other people regularly . . . get food together. . . . A woman across the street, . . . she wants to wash the brushes (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).*

Crown Hill's proposed project at 95<sup>th</sup> St NW between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> provided a contrasting example of a group that chose not to move forward because they could not gather a large enough core team of organizers. "I was real clear up front on the boundaries. I'm not gonna be the sole driver on this. . . . I will partner with someone, better there's a small group of folks...It didn't have a big enough coordinating team. Like it was me. And . . . that was my boundary up front, it's not gonna be just me... Nobody. . . stepped up to that, which was fine, and we never got to the point where we actually had a planning group" (Crown Hill). In the other Crown Hill project proposed for 12<sup>th</sup> Ave NW between NW 95<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> St , which also did not paint, not only did they feel they did not have a large enough team, they also recognized that they were missing key skills that they would need to move forward.

*[T]he other part of the story is . . . there were no artists in our mix, like skilled artists—artist-energy to keep that infused. We were all creatively engaged together. . . . someone to hold that creative process through. . . . Artists know how to continue to evolve the creative process and if there's not that facility in the community... I think the community would have stayed with their process and kept that as a way to sustain the energy—we discover that ourselves—but I don't know that we were able to maintain it (Crown Hill).*

A project needs a team that is big enough, both for the total embodiment of energy and people, but also because they need a certain distribution of skills among the group.

Stone Ave painting team pushed through with a small core team, and while they got the project painted its first year, in the long term they were disappointed not to have enough momentum to carry forward to repaint in future years. “We got the job done. We got the painting and that was great. I was hoping to, and this was the bigger piece about Sustainable Green Lake—I was really hoping to pass the baton. I was hoping that the street painting project would continue year after year, or even if it was biannual. So that part did not, that was disappointing” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).

Both Stone Ave N and NW 95<sup>th</sup> street projects were midblock paintings that only had two or three parcels in their petition area. This factor may have contributed to their failure to engage a broader core team. When asked what they thought might have helped their project carry forward, Stone Ave N organizers suggested that engaging more neighbors more deeply in the core organizing team may have helped.

*P: I think we might have had more success if there were more people, if there was more momentum. I feel like we were a small committee and we put in the effort to make it happen, but it was a lot of effort on a very few. . . people and I think if there had been more . . . from the community it might have been better in the longer term. . . .*

*I: . . . [W]hat I would've wanted to do differently in our project was to essentially recruit more people into that core team so that there were people who were involved and engaged in the project at that deeper level who would carry forward with it. . . Because at the end . . . the team of five became a team of two, . . .*

*P: Well and then [she] and I both no longer work there. So . . . there was no one rooted in the place long term to carry the project forward.*

*I: Right. Right. Whereas if we had if we had some people . . . from the church community who were super-involved and engaged and knew the process . . . they would have both the*

*enthusiasm to carry it forward and the skills-base to continue. . . .So, . . . how do you encourage people to have a big enough core team that the momentum can carry on if a couple people drop out?*

*P: . . . I think that if we'd've even had two neighbors, or just a representation of someone who lived near it and cares about it, that would have made all the difference (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).*

Another organizer of the Stone Ave N project said similarly, “[We] missed [an] opportunity to build a bridge with the neighbors . . . that might also have been a motivator to keep the street painting happening. . . . [H]ad [the artist] been a neighbor . . . there may have been greater motivation to rekindle the street painting. . . .[T]hat would be the energy for that. We really missed that. . . . [I]n my mind, knowing what we know, it confirms my initial desire to keep it with a neighborhood artist (*Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>*).

### ***Team Building Takes Time***

Because street painting projects are often planned by groups of neighbors as a means to get to know one another better, most of them have not tried to do a big project together before. They do not know each other well yet, and do not have a lot of practice working together as a team. Developing relationships, learning how to work together effectively, figuring out what needs doing and who is going to do it takes time. Wallybug and Crown Hill neighbors acknowledge the complexity of these working relationships and the need to take time to develop them. Wallybug’s “[p]lanning process - involved decision making as a group of people who did not know each other very well at the time - mostly good, but some felt not heard I believe. Painting days - pretty much a great time. Some committed neighbors have taken on tasks, lots of people show up to clean, paint, eat, be neighborly. . . . We have a few neighbors who seem to take on most of the organizing. Not sure if it would happen if they didn’t” (*Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>*). “Relationship building takes time. We were able to move from ‘hey this is a great idea’ to

‘let’s start drawing pictures’ because we all knew everybody and had existing relationships . . . because we were next-door neighbors or across-the-alley neighbors,” but neighbors up the street by the planned painting site that they did not know as well needed more time to establish relationships and get to know each other before jumping in to design ideas (Crown Hill).

## **6.8 ENHANCING PLACE**

Several projects mentioned that the project would enhance the place they occupy in some way. This motivation is more focused on the artifact than on the process of designing and creating the painting, though one or two groups did mention that the process of creating art also empowered people. Most of them were more focused on abstract qualities like beautification, vibrancy, or sense of character, though some were also interested in how the painting might enhance the function of the space. Some focused on creating a sense of place; some on public art. Others wanted to create a neighborhood landmark or to bring more activity to the site.

### **6.8.1 Sense of Place**

Several projects near churches, parks, and businesses that involved core team members from related institutions and businesses frequently expressed interest in creating more inviting public spaces and contributing to the character or vibrancy of the neighborhood. “[W]e saw this as an opportunity to express neighborhood character in a rapidly changing (and some would say gentrifying) area” (S 25<sup>th</sup> & S Massachusetts). “We want to bring more of a sense of place and vitality to SLU<sup>72</sup> which has been completely reconstructed and therefore lacks a sense of authentic urban vibrancy” (Terry & Harrison).

---

<sup>72</sup> Seattle’s South Lake Union (SLU) neighborhood has changed rapidly from a blue-collar area to a mixed-use neighborhood featuring offices of high tech and biotech firms.

“Amazon funded our project and wants to help community groups be involved and take ownership of the spaces around Amazon buildings. Amazon thinks the more inviting the public spaces are the more likely their new staff will enjoy these spaces and spend more time outside experiencing the city” (Terry & Harrison). Some responses, like that regarding the site near Swedish Hospital in Ballard which was created as part of a contractual agreement between the hospital and the City, took a more calculated approach to measuring the benefits of a street painting. “[T]he street painting added vibrancy to the pedestrian environment. . . . In evaluating public benefit mitigation for skybridges, the City weighs the ‘public-ness’ of the proposal. This street painting was part of a larger package of public benefit that included enhanced open spaces, etc. The street painting proposal was deemed to have a benefit to the larger public and accessible for all people, not just visitors and staff at the hospital” (Tallman NW and Central). Others spoke more from the heart. “I really liked the idea of creating communal place where people are invited, and they feel a part of something bigger than themselves. I personally love the feeling I get when I cross the street in Cap Hill<sup>73</sup> over the rainbow crosswalks. . . I would hope the street mural would provide that sense of joy for someone” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>).

## **6.8.2 Public Art**

Several projects talked about creating public art. Some school projects focused on the value of offering the students a participatory experience creating public art. A Hawthorne Elementary participant expressed the value of a project that was both an “art project, and a chance to teach civic activism to the students,” as well as giving them “the fun of closing down a street for the purpose of art” (Cascadia S & S Dakota Phoenix). At Graham Hill Elementary, an organizer noted the value of participating in

---

<sup>73</sup> Capitol Hill neighborhood’s rainbow crosswalks, mentioned in Chapter 1, were the pilot project for Seattle’s Community Crosswalks program.

making art together in an unusual context “was also giving their kids an exposure of how things can work together. . . . It’s like an outing, a creative outing instead of . . . painting in the classroom, you’re [painting] on the big, big street” (Graham Hill Whale).

Most respondents that mentioned art were more focused on the finished painting as a work of art. “The neighbors wouldn’t mind seeing a bright and colorful piece of art on the intersection” (4th S & S Henderson). When asked about teammates’ motivations, one organizer offered that another member of her core team, “really liked the idea of a painting on the street, and that it was visually. . . arresting. She just really liked the idea of public art” (Stone N & N 80/81<sup>st</sup>). Others mentioned the impacts street painting as art can have: “much like other public art. It enriches me” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>) and that as art, a painting “beautifies the place but also is a very good creative way of expressing the culture” (Graham Hill Whale).

### **6.8.3 Creating a Landmark**

A few participants talked about whether their paintings function as landmarks that help people anchor their sense of where they are. Wallybug participants differed on whether they considered the painting a landmark. One said definitively, “It created a landmark” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>), while another said “I also think it is funny that some people think it is now a Seattle landmark. It’s not. For every person who does know the ladybug, more people have no idea what I’m talking about. I try and use it as a reference to explain where I live and more times than not, no one knows what I’m talking about” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Regarding that difference of perspective, neighborhood landmarks do not need to be universally known. If they are visually distinct and prominent in their location, they can be effective as local landmarks that contribute to the legibility and character of a neighborhood. A South Lake Union participant hopes that the project near Amazon will create that sort of legibility at their site. “So many people have a hard time

even visualizing the intersection we're talking about because it's changed so much. Once installed this painting will act as a means of rooting the location and giving it something that will make it more identifiable and memorable" (Terry & Harrison).

#### **6.8.4 Attracting Activity**

One of the ways that a painting enhances place is by becoming a place where things happen. Because of its uniqueness and novelty, people seek the painting out as a destination within the neighborhood. They go there when they want to do something fun, and sometimes they go there to hang out or to see if something interesting is happening. "[T]he bug became a destination and/or a route by which people would walk/ride through our neighborhood—creating casual interactions that would inevitably begin with 'how did you do this...?'" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). It "brings families, strollers and school children to the neighborhood, which adds vitality and neighborhood interaction" (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>) "Sometimes at 11 o'clock at night in the summer you'll hear all these voices and you'll come out and they'll be a group of young people hula-hooping on the dragonfly, videoing each other and stuff. And there's a Pokémon monster that appears occasionally here so we'll see people out there (mimes Pokémon Go game) and there was briefly a geocache, but I think it was only briefly, and once a costumed race went by. . . all these people [adults] dressed up as Catholic school kids . . . little plaid skirts and stuff. The men as well. . . We loved it!" (4<sup>th</sup> NE & NE 60<sup>th</sup> Dragonfly).

Some neighbors embrace this activity, while others may feel invaded by it. "[T]he bug became an attraction and seemed to bring more and more people to the intersection. I really did NOT like this aspect of the bug. Over time, the bug was even included in a citywide scavenger hunt, so that when the hunt was going on, hordes of people would stream to our intersection. . ." (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Some increased activity might be embraced by some, and unwelcome to others. What one may see with

nostalgia for a time when children played in the street, others may see as an attractive nuisance that tempts kids to danger or mischief. “Over the years, adults and children have played and biked on the painting, . . . parents of children have said they were worried about their children running into the street because the ladybug painting ‘calls to you to play on it’” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). “One night. . . teenagers raced a shopping cart around the ladybug” (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>).

Other activities do not seem to have a good side. Some Wallybug neighbors who object to the painting say that increased activity at the site included several impacts that were entirely negative. They cite increased graffiti, vandalism, littering and “more cigarette butts than you could imagine,” people loitering, drinking, leaving cans and bottles in the bushes and suspicion of possible drug dealing at the intersection, as well as the previously described malicious mischief of car and motorcycle drivers trying to make tire marks on the painting (Burke N & N 49<sup>th</sup>). Whether residents welcome increased activity at street paintings depends on the nature and timing of the activity, whether residents perceive those doing the activity in-group or out-group, and that resident’s general outlook about the painting.

## **6.9 CONNECTING MOTIVATIONS TO FUNCTIONS**

The motivations expressed through these survey responses and interviews are interconnected with each other and with the functions explored in Chapter 3. In addition to the hope for the street painting to function as a traffic calming device, traffic calming motivations relate to territoriality and claiming space, to defining in-groups and out-groups, and attempting to assert control over space and what happens there. This motivation was more commonly expressed by residential neighbors. Those motivated by a desire to increase safety and awareness were also seeking traffic calming functions, but tend to pursue them by creating metaphorical bridges, while traffic calmers seem more interested in building metaphorical walls. Safety and Awareness theme was frequently expressed by project at schools, whose

organizers also express the desire to promote school pride, which is related to place identity, creating a common sense of “we,” and attachment to place. They also focus on legibility-related ideas about increasing visual cues to raise awareness of the school zone and the presence of children in the area. These safety and awareness motivated groups seem to focus more on communication and working together to shift the culture of the place to one of cooperation rather than control.

Motivations related to having fun together, building community relationships, working together and getting to know neighbors were often expressed together. Neighbors motivated by having fun together enjoyed activities related to neighboring, the physical and social aspects of place attachment and the active “making” aspects of placemaking. They were interested in building relationships with each other that opened doors to further collaboration, social connection, and mutual aid. They reported enjoying the experience of changing their neighborhoods in fun and artful ways, and about the social transformations of relationships more than they talked about the physical elements of the project. Doing artful and creative work together led to deeper attachments to and affection for each other and the places they were having fun shaping together. The sense of increased capacity and pride in each other and in their work also seemed closely connected with this cluster and related both the sense of empowerment that comes from acts of placemaking and IKEA effect ideas about demonstrating competence and to the aspects of neighboring and place attachment that promote a sense of connection to and ability to rely on the shared skills and resources of a larger community. This cluster of motivations was also where many participants reported their greatest sense of success, and, in groups in conflict, their greatest sense of pain and loss.

Different aspects of the motivations related to enhancing space, also relate to several different functions. The desire to create physically distinct and memorable landmarks and public art relates to

both legibility and placemaking. The design of the painting can contribute to affirming a shared sense of place identity, like in cases where groups paint school mascots or neighborhood icons. Both the acts of creating places like painted streets and the interactions that happen in them can contribute to both the social and physical aspects of place attachment. Corporate and institutional street painting sponsors expressed placemaking-related ideas about creating people-friendly places with a sense of neighborhood character that are based in ideas about encouraging people to enjoy the public realm and interact with the site and with other people there.

## **6.10 MOTIVATIONS AND OUTCOMES SUMMARY**

This chapter has reported Seattle street painting participants' responses to questions about their motivations and experiences and their perceived outcomes of their projects. Each of the 22 participants representing 15 different Seattle street painting projects presented their own unique story. The plots and tones of their stories ranged from exuberantly positive ones where neighborhood relationships have flourished due to street painting endeavors among neighbors who were once strangers, to extraordinarily painful ones where neighborhood conflicts over their painting have created rifts among neighbors who were once close, with a few more matter-of-fact ones in between.

While not comprehensive, when taken together this sampling of stories from Seattle street painters present a glimpse into many senses of purpose underlying Seattle's street paintings and describe some of the motivations and desired outcomes of their creators. Participants' responses, when assessed collectively, cluster into several common themes. Their motivations included having fun together, building community relationships, increasing capacity by working together, enhancing place by creating landmarks and public art, and addressing safety concerns like traffic calming. These themes are closely interrelated with each other as well as with the functions explored in Chapter 3, which included several

functions that street paintings perform well—claiming space, increasing legibility, placemaking, fostering place attachment, and encouraging neighboring—as well as the oft-desired function of traffic calming, which street paintings consistently fail to do despite many people hoping otherwise. Participants stories of having fun, working together, and building relationships were richly detailed and dynamic. They were highly attuned to the social impacts of the work they were doing together, and often reported these elements as the biggest and most rewarding successes of their projects.

## Chapter 7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 PURPOSES OF STREET PAINTINGS

So far, this thesis has explored the origins of street painting, the potential beneficial functions of street paintings, the existing municipal regulations in Portland and Seattle, the timeline of projects in both cities and the details of Seattle projects, and the motivations and perceived successes and challenges of Seattle painters. This chapter synthesizes my findings and presents recommendations for several adjustments to Seattle's street painting program. These recommendations are intended to create better alignment between the reasons street paintings are painted and the functions street paintings fulfill well and to tune municipal guidance and regulation to better support these beneficial functions. Regardless of whether the program grows or simply becomes more effective, done well, the street painting program has the potential to support neighborhood and citywide livability and sustainability goals for creating lively walkable neighborhoods, connecting people to communities, building neighbor relationships that support emergency preparedness and other forms of community resilience, and accomplishing all of this at relatively little cost to the city in terms of staff time or resources.

As previous chapters have shown, while on their own, street paintings are not effective at calming traffic, they do serve other functions well. Street paintings can be good at building and supporting community. Working on a painting together can be a fun way for neighbors to build relationships that lead to place attachment and positive neighboring behavior. Paintings can make a significant visual impact on neighborhood streets and can create highly memorable places that contribute to legibility by reinforcing activity nodes and creating landmarks. They can draw attention and activity to a place, and they can be used to make territorial claims which can send messages of inclusivity or divisiveness,

depending on how they are implemented and who participates in the making, especially over time. Street paintings can contribute to sense of place and neighborhood identity, and, especially when built in conjunction with other placemaking elements, can contribute to a lively and welcoming pedestrian realm.

Beyond traffic calming, groups who want to paint the street have several different motivations.

Some of these functions and motivations are supported by the artifact of the painting, but many more are fulfilled through the process of engaging in collaborative, creative work together. In some cases, both are at play in the virtuous cycle of placemaking where “communities transform places, which in turn transform communities” (Silberberg et al. 2013, 3). The relationships and connections that neighbors make while engaged in the process of planning and creating the painting are in some ways more valuable than the finished product of a painted street. Repainting cycles and other proximate placemaking that take place over several years add important layers to these beneficial interactions among neighbors. Deeper relationships and attachment to place are strengthened over time and built in layers through repeated interactions with the place and people in it. In short, “how we do what we do” matters more than the artifact that remains once we have done it. Because so much of the benefit of painting comes from the process of working together to imagine it and plan it, it is particularly important to structure municipal rules and procedures for street painting so that they support a beneficial process.

## **7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following section outlines several recommendations for adjustments to Seattle’s street painting rules and guidance based on improving the process to support building stronger neighbor relationships and creating shared neighborhood places that support community connection and an inviting pedestrian

realm. These recommendations include a change from recommending street paintings for indirect traffic calming while shifting focus to promote and support other motivations and functions. I also recommend making small adjustments to the types of locations where street painting is encouraged, changing the permit types, strengthening the petition requirement, and creating a process that provides more support for building strong community relationships.

### **7.2.1 Complete the Shift Away from Traffic Calming**

Street paintings do not calm traffic. Focusing on traffic calming and promoting them as standalone projects and technical solutions to traffic problems undermines the success of street paintings by neglecting or even sabotaging the other functions that street paintings can serve. Seeing them as traffic control devices can encourage siting of street paintings in locations with safety problems that further undermine their capacity to fulfill their other functions. Seattle should not promote street paintings for traffic calming. This change consists of several key elements. SDOT should continue their planned shift of street painting oversight from Neighborhood Traffic Operations to Public Space Management, remove all traffic calming language from program materials, and instead promote and support the other beneficial functions that street paintings serve.

#### ***Shift Oversight to Public Space Management***

Shift of oversight and facilitation of Street Paintings from Neighborhood Traffic Operations (NTO) to Public Space Management (PSM). Throughout 2017, SDOT has been taking steps to move street painting oversight from NTO to PSM because they perceive that PSM has more capacity and is a better fit to manage these projects. I wholeheartedly endorse this move. Shifting oversight should have several positive benefits for Seattle's street painting program. The Neighborhood Traffic team handles traffic calming and MUTCD traffic calming devices. The NTO team is focused on engineering solutions to

technical problems and does not focus on or specialize in supporting community process. Community project facilitation and participatory design are outside of their expertise, and given budget cuts to NTO in recent years, NTO needs to keep their resources focused on their primary mission and their strength: producing engineering solutions to traffic problems.

That said, when a project is focused on efficiently producing an artifact, projects can get rushed to completion or focused exclusively on technical details rather than deeply engaging in processes that support building community relationships. Street paintings need a process- and relationship-oriented focus. Otherwise, projects that check all the boxes on a permit application but do not involve widespread and deeply committed community support may have difficulty carrying forward into future years. Street painting projects require oversight that is focused on connecting people to place and people to each other. Not only is PSM more fully staffed, the Public Space Management team handles most of SDOT's other community-oriented placemaking projects in the right of way. The focus of their programs is much better aligned with the functions street painting can fulfill well. The SDOT website describes PSM this way: "Public Space Management Program works with residents, organizations, and businesses to make it easier for them to enhance their neighborhoods and strengthen their community by enlivening public spaces and promoting economic vitality. Vibrant public spaces encourage social activity, help local businesses thrive, and create safer, more attractive streets, which are essential to our city's livability" ("Public Space Management Programs" 2017). Moving street paintings to PSM should benefit NTO as well since it should allow them to devote that time to projects that do provide effective neighborhood traffic calming.

PSM is better suited to guide processes that support community collaboration and creative use of the right of way. PSM's other programs offer other alternatives for beautification and creative, people-

oriented uses of the right of way including placemaking opportunities like Pavement to Parks and PARK(ing) Day. They are fluent in “tactical urbanism” techniques involving rapid prototyping, iterative change, creative experimentation, and the use of temporary materials. PSM also handles encroachment permits for adding benches, kiosks, parking strip gardens, and other amenities to the right of way. These projects pair well with street paintings, and having them overseen by the same team could help encourage projects that involve more than just a painting. PSM also handles event-oriented programs that provide synergistic opportunities like block parties and play streets which could be hosted at street painting sites.

### ***Remove Traffic Calming Language***

Remove all language promoting street painting as traffic calming, even indirect traffic calming. Without a focus on other placemaking elements or activities and a strong community process, Seattle paintings are set up to fail not only at traffic calming, but also at the other functions street paintings can better serve. Mistakenly promoting intersection paintings as traffic calming and putting them under the purview of Neighborhood Traffic team may be among the reasons intersection paintings in Seattle are frequently not repainted. Paintings fail to thrive when they are created as traffic calming device for three reasons. First, attention is not paid to fulfilling other street painting functions. Second, they are treated as engineering projects rather than as a collaborative relationship-building process. Third, paintings may be getting sited in places that need traffic calming, rather than on streets that are quiet enough for activities near the painting to feel safe.

From 2006 to 2017, SDOT has referred to indirect traffic calming in their online information and Client Assistance Memo (CAM 2506) about painted intersections and has suggested intersection painting to people looking for traffic calming solutions. The location of street painting information on the website

alongside traffic calming programs rather than with placemaking and community-building programs has encouraged several neighborhood groups to seek them as a DIY substitution for a desired traffic circle, with disappointing results. The move SDOT is currently undertaking to place street painting under the purview of SDOT Public Space Management team should result in relocating any street painting website references alongside the other placemaking programs of SDOT managed by PSM.<sup>74</sup> In addition, a thorough revision of all Seattle street painting references and support materials to refocus the message away from traffic calming, along with retraining SDOT personnel to stop promoting street paintings as traffic calming will also be needed to complete this transition. These steps should effectively address this problem.

### ***Shift Program Messaging to Encourage Beneficial Functions***

Promote street painting for functions such as placemaking, legibility, place attachment, community building, and neighboring rather than for traffic calming. The city should shape online information, outreach materials, toolkit suggestions, and resources around these functions that street painting is more suited to serve.

Encourage adjacent placemaking elements and active uses of the right of way in conjunction with street paintings. These elements and activities should incite curiosity and playfulness, draw people to linger, and encourage neighbors to meet each other in the right of way. Promote and permit right-of-way encroachments for benches, kiosks, sharing stations, and other elements that create lingering places, bumping places and reasons to come to the painting. Encourage activities such as block parties and play streets events that enliven spaces and encourage neighbor interaction.

---

<sup>74</sup> As of November 2017, these changes are already beginning to appear on SDOT's website because of the shift to PSM oversight.

## **7.2.2 Adjust Siting Requirements**

To further encourage siting in locations that can support their other functions, Seattle should make some small changes in parameters for allowable locations for street paintings. Street paintings are appropriate on low-traffic neighborhood streets where pedestrian-prioritized uses are safe and encouraged. There is no need to ban them at locations with stop signs and traffic circles. Setting site qualifications based on street classification combined with traffic volume thresholds is a more appropriate guideline.

### ***Set Allowable Traffic Thresholds***

Keep street paintings limited to low traffic non-arterial streets with no transit service. Street paintings are appropriate on quiet streets with 20 mph speed limits and good visibility approaching the painting. Set a traffic volume-based threshold rather than one based on lack of traffic calming devices. Since street paintings are not traffic calming devices, do not encourage them on streets seeking traffic calming measures, especially in problematic locations like blind corners or areas where drivers drive recklessly or disrespect speed limits. Instead, encourage paintings along bicycle greenways, in school zones, and in other places that are appropriate for pedestrian-oriented playful street use.

### ***Do Not Allow on Transit Served Streets***

Streets with transit service are not appropriate locations for street paintings. Traffic negotiation can be difficult where transit vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians compete for priority and safe use of the street. Transit vehicles bring noise and exhaust that may contribute to the place feeling unsafe or unpleasant in ways that discourage people from lingering there. Transit vehicles are out-of-human-scale. Not only are they large in comparison to people and bicycles, their drivers sit high above the road, and their higher eye-level compared to other users of the right of way increase the difficulty of establishing eye contact

that is necessary to safely negotiate the more varied uses of the roadway that street paintings invite. Paintings would not last as long on transit-served streets because transit vehicles cause increased street wear. Also, diversion of transit routes would be necessary on painting days or for other event related street closures, which would make these events harder to schedule and less likely to occur.

### ***Allow with Stop Signs and Traffic Circles***

Street paintings in Portland perform well at intersections with stop signs and traffic circles. Most Portland paintings are at stop-sign-controlled intersections. There is no reason to forbid them at these intersections in Seattle if paintings are limited to low-traffic 20 mph streets and painting does not obscure traffic markings on street such as stop bars or marked crosswalks. Figure 7.1 shows a successful Intersection Repair in Portland at an intersection with stop signs and a traffic circle. Neighbors at this intersection have painted eight times since 2009 and have created several proximate placemaking



**Figure 7.1 Portland street painting with stop signs and traffic circle at SE 15th and Alder, Buckman Community Composting Intersection Repair.**

elements including garden beds and planters, community composting bins, a neighborhood kiosk, and a Little Free Library.

### **7.2.3 Change Permits**

Adjusting Seattle street painting permit types and procedures could make program requirements and processes easier for participants to understand and may encourage more proximate placemaking and community events near the painting. Suggested permit changes include clarifying and streamlining information about street painting permits and shifting permit types. Rather than utilizing construction use permits to permit street paintings, permit them as ongoing right-of-way encroachments. Use block party permits for street closures on painting days, but in the interest of safety, continue to require formal Traffic Control Plans and official barriers.

#### ***Clarify Program Requirements and Streamline Information***

Create a specialized Public Space Management permit for this ongoing use or a checklist for street paintings that summarizes all permitting, planning, and liability requirements for street paintings in one form. Either by consolidating several different current forms into one, or by providing a checklist of the different forms that must be included and steps to be taken, streamlining this paperwork could make it easier both for painting groups to understand what is required of them and for SDOT to keep track of their progress through the process and permits. Consolidate information and process to support one-stop-shop for administrative support for these and synergistically related placemaking and community building programs. Train permit counter folks to expect and know how to handle this type of project. Continue to have project teams work through a single-point-of-contact at SDOT who helps them through all the steps.

Adjust expectations and messaging about timelines. Project organizers report being surprised by how long the planning process took and by how much work they had gotten themselves into. Clarify that the 3-to-6-week estimate referenced in CAM 2506 and SDOT website is for the permitting approval step only. Counsel groups to expect teambuilding, design, and full project planning phase to take six months or more. Emphasize that the relationship building necessary to successfully create these projects takes time and should not be rushed. Encourage people to begin planning in autumn so they will be ready to paint the following dry season. Encourage groups to plan to paint early in the summer, both so that they have time to reschedule if they encounter delays, and so that once they paint they can enjoy the new painting all summer long.

### ***Permit as Ongoing Encroachment Use***

A construction use permit is a formality of scheduling street use on installation day, and is not intended for approving a long-term encroachment in the right of way (“Construction Use in the Right of Way” 2017). Having a permit structured more like the ongoing use permits issued for street furniture or alley encroachments would be more appropriate to the type of use a street painting is, and would allow revocation of this permit if problems at the painting site are not being successfully resolved. Since encroachment permits are the type used to permit proximate placemaking elements like kiosks, parking strip gardens and benches, using them for street paintings would also streamline processes for proximate placemaking and familiarize street painters with these permits (“Public Space Management Programs” 2017).

### ***Shift to Block Party Permit for Street Closure***

Shift toward a block party permit or play streets permit model for painting day closures rather than a construction use permit (“Block Party Permits” 2017; “Play Streets” 2017). Using block party or play

street permits maintains an appropriate traffic control plan for low-traffic 20 mph streets and still triggers appropriate notification to emergency services. Since block party permits are free in Seattle, this could reduce repainting costs for permittees as well as reducing administrative time for SDOT. As an added benefit this would promote neighbor familiarity with block party or play streets programs and permit applications. This increased familiarity could encourage painting groups to host other block parties or play streets events at or near the painting's location, which would further activate the space and promote neighbor-relationship-building opportunities.

Perhaps the Construction Use permit might be required for first time installations only, both to enable the longer closure needed for a new design and to establish higher requirements for barriers and signage on a location where drivers are not used to encountering a street painting or its affiliated activity in the right of way. A new painting usually requires two days of street closure. The first day the street needs to be pressure washed and have time to dry and then the drawing must be laid out, so everything is ready to paint on the second day. There is no need to close the street overnight between the two days.

For a repainting, which only requires one partial day of street closure, the Construction Use permit seems like overkill. Under current rules, Block Party permits may be issued for one day per month, and Play Streets permits can cover as many as three days per week, though their closure is limited to six hours per day during daylight hours only. Either of these permits is sufficient closure for a repainting day.

### ***Continue Type II Barrier Requirements with Traffic Control Plan***

I was originally going to suggest that use of block party or play streets permits could reduce traffic control barrier requirements and expenses related to barrier rental, but given the difficulties reported

by groups with getting drivers to respect the street closure, that change may not be advisable. I do think the idea has merits that should be considered, but I would suggest closer evaluation to ensure appropriately safe and effective street closure can be created under block party or play street barrier guidelines before making a policy change. One option would be to issue the repainting permit under the block party or play street program, but require the closure to continue to follow the more rigorous traffic control plan (TCP) and barrier requirements provided for the site by SDOT with their first-time permit.

In my conversations with at least two different painting groups' organizers expressed that even with the TCP, they sometimes had difficulty convincing drivers to respect the street closure.<sup>75</sup> Drivers did tend to see the closure, but some seemed to think it should not apply to them or did not apply at that time. Painters report seeing drivers get out of their cars to move the barriers or drive around them and then drive through the painting. Driver behavior seems worse when active painters are not present while the painting is curing or when the project is first beginning its workday. One group reported it took them over 45 minutes to get drivers to stop pushing through at the beginning of their painting day. Once there are many people visible actively painting in the street, drivers seem to understand the closure and be more respectful of it. This concern is a good reason to encourage painting teams to host a painting-day block party at the completion of their painting. Not only is it a good way to celebrate their success in completing the painting, but their presence also helps protect the painting while it cures.

---

<sup>75</sup> One team did not have the exact barriers recommended by SDOT in their TCP since rather than renting them, they had borrowed barriers from one of their partnering institutions.

## **7.2.4 Strengthen Petition Requirements**

The neighbor consent petition is one of the most important requirements of the street painting process. The petition is essential to ensuring widespread support of a project which contributes to the project's success not only by making sure the project is welcomed by most of its neighbors, but also by encouraging the participation of many neighbors in the painting's creation. Involving more people in decision making around street painting projects contributes to recruiting larger core teams that have a broader range of skills and resilient capacity to support the project without burning out a few key organizers. Raising the petition buy-in threshold promotes the pursuit of broader consensus among neighbors and may help to address some of the problems with majority-rules mentality that have plagued neighbors in conflict. To those ends, I recommend strengthening the petition by standing firm on requiring buy-in from all project-adjacent properties, increasing the radius of the petition area and raising the percentage threshold for neighborhood buy-in.

### ***Do Not Eliminate Petition***

My conversations with SDOT employees revealed that SDOT has considered eliminating the required petition of community support entirely. I cannot recommend more strongly against that. The petition performs several essential functions without which several foreseeable difficulties are likely to arise. Without the petition, a few enthusiastic people could create a painting where it was not broadly welcomed, or could place a painting in front of the homes of others who do not welcome the increased activity that paintings bring. The petition is a formal mechanism for confirming that the decision to create the painting is a collective one and that the design is approved by a broad consensus of neighbors. The petition confirms that a painting is not placed directly in front of the home of someone who does not support the project. SDOT has considered letting a parameter of the NMF grant

reporting requirement demonstrating community involvement stand in the place of the neighbor support petition, but this is not sufficient for two reasons. First, not all projects are funded by NMF grants, and second, the NMF requirement can be met by an even smaller number of neighbors than is currently required under SDOT's street painting petition.

Portland does not require a new petition unless the group makes changes to the design. However, given Seattle's problematic history of neighbor conflict over repaintings, I recommend SDOT continuing to reserve the option to require a new petition every few years to confirm continuing neighborhood support. Like retaining the right to revoke the permit, retaining the right to require a new petition does not require that that right be exercised at every opportunity, only that it is available when need for it arises.

### ***Require 100 Percent Approval from Adjacent Households***

The impacts of increased activity at the painting itself, and of having a bright public artwork right outside your front door are significant for any household sharing property line with the painting's location in the right of way. No permit should be issued without the full support of these residents. Always require buy-in at 100 percent of project-adjacent properties. Those neighbors would have to see the image every day, and deal with the increased activity around the painting whether they like it or not, so it will be much better if they like it. If adjacent neighbors are not comfortable and willing to be patient and welcoming with strangers who come to interact with the painting, they may feel that their space is being invaded and feel impatient with people standing in front of their homes, talking excitedly, playing around, stepping in their gardens, and climbing their steps to get a better vantage for a view or a photo of the painting. Approval of all adjacent properties is essential to the success of the project and the relationships among neighbors on the block. If full consent cannot be obtained in the site envisioned by

the painting group, they need to adapt, either by choosing a different site where enthusiasm for the painting is stronger, or by listening more deeply to the concerns of their objecting neighbors and adapting the project so it better satisfies those neighbors' needs.

### ***Increase Petition Radius***

Increase petition boundaries to approximately 400 to 500 feet beyond the painting in each direction (unless a street ends sooner). Mindful of the variation in Seattle's block lengths, establish an operational definition that defines a petition boundary in whole blocks in each direction at SDOT's discretion with the intent of defining a radius at about 500 feet beyond the bounds of the painting. Consider including perpendicular streets in petition zone for midblock paintings. Defining a radius of concern that involves more households seems to benefit the painting group's ability to maintain momentum for future repaintings. More rigorous analysis of existing projects in Portland and Seattle might produce an optimal number of households for a petition catchment area, but as a ballpark preliminary estimate, a petition zone containing about 50 households seems to be successful in the cases of Portland's Share-it Square and Sunnyside Piazza, and Seattle's Dragonfly paintings.

### ***Increase Buy-In Threshold***

The current threshold of 60 percent is not sufficient to show broad consensus. A 60/40 split, which allows two objectors for every three supporters leaves too much room for a majority-rules mentality that does not do enough to encourage deep commitment to working together to create widespread agreement among neighbors. Portland's practice of allowing only one objector per four supporters mandates a much higher standard of community agreement. If SDOT is worried this higher threshold will be too rigorous for groups to meet, consider experimenting with offering a longer-lasting permit for groups meeting this higher threshold. For instance, for now, they could keep the current 3-year petition

for 60 percent neighbor-approval, but also offer a 5-year petition for reaching 80 percent neighbor approval. If the 80 percent petition proves successful, SDOT can phase out the 3-year/60 percent option over time.

## **7.2.5 Emphasize Teamwork and Community Building**

Teamwork and community building are essential to the success of street painting projects. Seattle can support these essential functions both by shifting program parameters to require more consensus and collaboration, and by providing support and resources that cultivate these skills among participants. This increased support for community process may come from PSM's more community-participation-oriented programs or through partnerships with other departments or organizations as well as by cultivating mentoring relationships between experienced project organizers with other teams of neighbors planning projects. These adaptations support functions related to neighboring and the social aspect of place attachment, as well as motivations related to building community relationships, increasing capacity, and having fun working together.

### ***Shift Program Requirements to Support Stronger Teamwork***

A larger participation group improves potential for long-term success. Full adjacency buy-in and higher buy-in threshold across a larger territory enable sustainable team size, increase potential for skills diversity, and improve chances of successful project completion and longevity. Again, a higher buy-in threshold avoids the trap of close-majority-rules dynamics, promotes and supports neighbor-connection, communication, and collaboration, more requires more outreach and inclusion. These changes could encourage groups to create broader agreement and operate closer to consensus model decision-making. Encouraging neighbors to create a broad coalition of agreement and working together

to bridge their differences rather than bullying each other into paint or no-paint camps is essential to creating healthy neighbor relationships.

Do not grant painting permits to groups that are not managing conflict well or who do not achieve required buy-in thresholds. No exceptions. Groups in ongoing conflict engage in “othering” that can be detrimental to their neighbor relationships. Over-attachment to the outcome of painting can lead to neglecting or undermining the relationships of good neighboring. While neighbors may be unhappy with each other when disagreement stands in the way of getting a permit to paint, their relationships may be even more damaged if a painting is railroaded through without a strong consensus for creating it. If denied their painting permit for lack of consensus, they may shift their strategy to discover a mutually agreeable way to shape their neighborhoods that is more satisfying to everyone.

### ***Support Community Relationship Building***

Provide more active community engagement and collaborative process resources and coaching focused on relationship building more than project artifact. This support can come from PSM directly and from Department of Neighborhoods (DON), as well as from other grant providers like Safe Routes to Schools, or nonprofits such as Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Feet First, or community peer mentors who have engaged in street paintings and other community collaborations before (“Seattle Department of Neighborhoods” 2017; “Seattle Neighborhood Greenways” 2017; “Feet First” 2017). However, do not rely partner organizations’ grant requirements or other rules to create mandatory processes since not all groups will engage with these partnering groups.

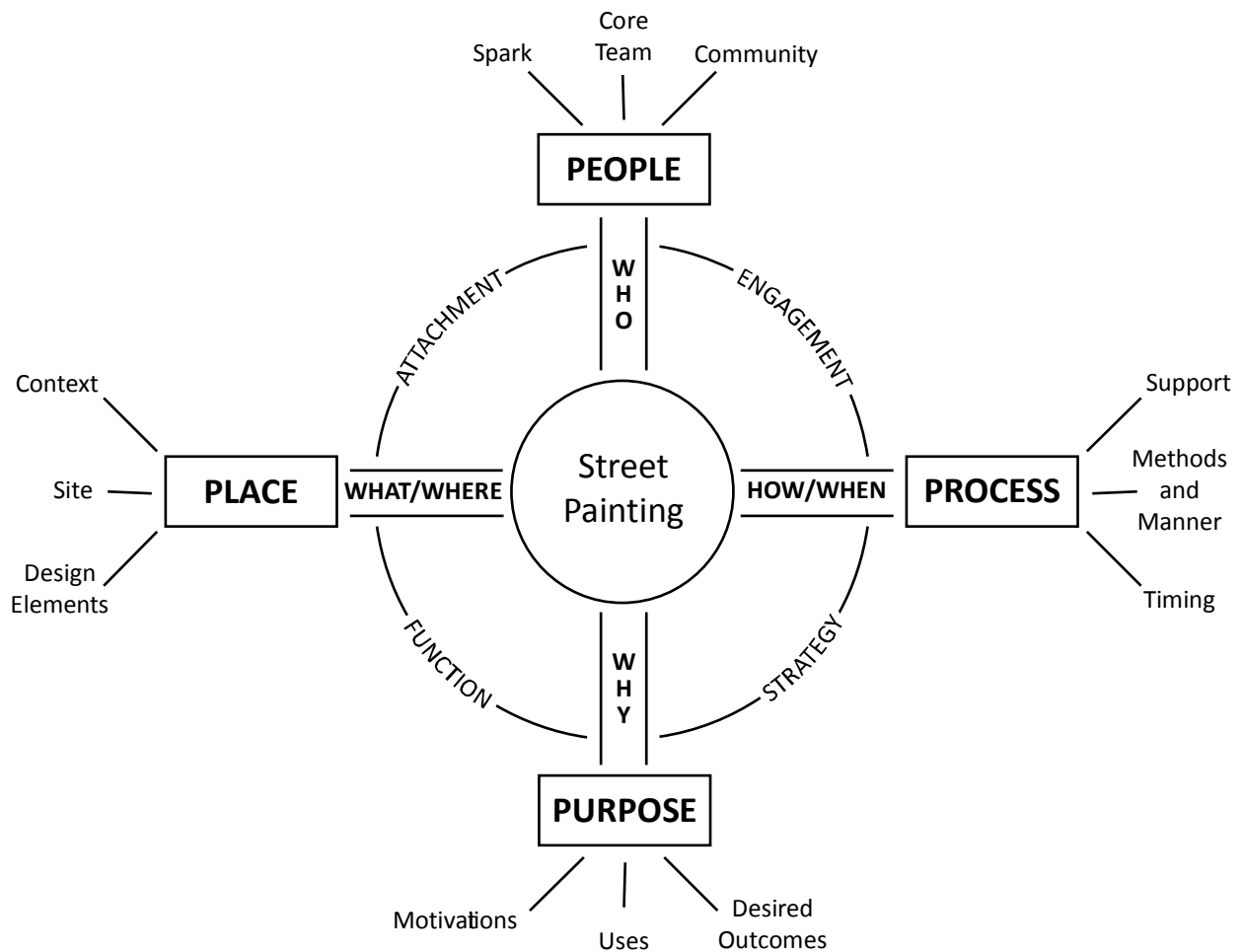
This support is especially necessary in the early phases of group formation, for project planning, and for groups in conflict. Can SDOT encourage and facilitate access to DON community-building and process resources even if project is not funded by DON? Are conflict engagement coaching resources available

through the city or local nonprofits? Work closely with DON project managers to ensure painting groups have support in the community relationship building stages of their process. Notice that community-building and collaboration support may be needed before grant applications are complete, since groups may need more process support around building working relationships with neighbors and deciding whether painting or something else is right for them than about making it happen once that decision is clear.

Develop a network of previous painters and placemakers to act as peer mentors to new groups. Build relationships between SDOT and existing project teams. Connect organizers of existing projects with organizers of projects in planning so that they can pass along the wisdom they have learned. Whether it is about sharing painting tools and techniques, grant application tips, or learning how to build a functioning team or navigate a consensus process, experienced painters have a lot to offer those who are embarking on a project for the first time. Not only would peer mentorship allow the wisdom of experience to pass from group to group, it also could foster community connections across painting groups and allow them to meet others who share their common interest and build community at that level as well.

### **7.3 CONCLUSIONS**

Assessing the success of street paintings is far more complex than noting whether they continue to paint from year to year. As PBOT traffic engineer Greg Raisman has reminded me more than once, a street painting project “can be a success from a community-building standpoint even if a drop of paint never hits the ground” (Raisman, Greg. Presentation at VBC16, Portland, June 2016; Interview by author. June 2016; Email to author. September 2017) To understand whether a project is successful, it is essential to understand the purposes it intended to fulfill. To that end, this thesis has explored street paintings



**Figure 7.2. Big Picture Diagram Revisited for Future Research Opportunities**

through the lens of Purpose, one of the four factors introduced in the big picture conceptual diagram in Chapter 1, Figure 1.3, which described the many elements contributing to street painting success. This model is shown again as Figure 7.2. In exploring the factor of Purpose, this thesis has sought to describe the relationships between several functions that street can paintings serve well and the reasons that motivate street painting groups to paint their streets. These functions include claiming space, increasing legibility, placemaking, fostering place attachment, and encouraging neighboring. This thesis explores many motivations of Seattle’s street painting creators and assesses whether participants believe they

are succeeding in achieving their purposes. In the case of street paintings, which are created by many people working together, each participant may have their own combination of motivations and hopes for what the painting will accomplish. The motivations expressed by participants in this study clustered around several themes including having fun together, building community relationships, increasing capacity by working together, enhancing place by creating landmarks and public art, and addressing safety concerns like traffic calming. While many participants are pleased with their street painting's success, others report not getting what they wanted. Some of those disappointments related to hoping for street painting to calm traffic, or to perform other functions that street paintings do not serve effectively. Other disappointments relate to not including elements of process that would have supported their purposes better, or to problems among neighbors who did not work through conflicts well. While frequently expressed as secondary motivations, the desires to have fun together and to build community by working together and getting to know neighbors seemed to be the most successful and rewarding for participants. The recommendations presented in this chapter for changes to Seattle's municipal rules and guidance for street paintings have focused on better supporting Seattle's street painters to pursue and achieve these potentially rewarding functions.

### **7.3.1 Generalizability**

This thesis was primarily exploratory in nature, and was focused on seeking common themes through story rather than through quantitative analysis. The stories shared by street painting participants through these interview and survey responses do not express the full range of participant experience. They do shed some insight on the reasons some people in Seattle were inspired to paint their streets, and whether the city's guidance and procedures supported them attaining their desired outcomes. Recommendations for Seattle policy around its street painting program are based on Seattle-specific

context and may not be directly translatable to another city's situation, though some of their underlying principles may offer insights for other cities to consider when developing their own guidance. Every city will have specific context that will shape what works for its people and places. Differences in geography, climate, state and local laws, municipal governance structures, community culture, politics, aesthetics, demographics, and many other factors make each community unique in its needs and desires. No one-size-fits-all set of municipal guidelines will suit every community.

That said, some of the basic principles discussed in this thesis may be broadly relevant. The three most important of these include the following: Street painting is not effective for calming traffic. Community relationship building is a key element of street painting that requires careful cultivation and takes time. Different people, even within the same project, are motivated by different facets of street painting and their sense of success depends significantly on what it was they wanted the street painting to accomplish.

### **7.3.2 Applicability**

This thesis has resulted in a more completely compiled history of street painting projects in Portland and Seattle than was available when I began. Much of what I found confirmed my initial impressions of Seattle's street painting history, though I did learn of several new projects that had previously escaped my attention, and deepened my knowledge of the details of projects I had only been superficially aware of previously. Stories from individual project organizers enriched my understanding of that history significantly. Hopefully, the list and timelines and maps of projects will prove useful for people in Seattle, Portland, and elsewhere who want to explore these street painting projects, whether in person or using online tools, whether for fun or in pursuit of some of the avenues for further research mentioned below. I hope this thesis has offered some recommendations for changes in Seattle's rules,

guidance, and communication that are both useful and timely for SDOT and DON as they consider revisions to Seattle's street painting program.

### **7.3.3 Opportunities For Further Study**

My exploration has been by no means exhaustive. In fact, in many ways I feel that I have just begun.

There are many opportunities for future research, both within this investigation of how the factor of purpose impacts street paintings, and among the many other elements and connecting actions relating to the other three factors of People, Place, and Process outlined in Figure 7.2.

Even the most basic facts I was able to gather for street paintings in Portland and Seattle involve gaps and uncertainties about what happened and when. Further research could gather missing information to fill in these gaps in this data and answer lingering questions about projects whose organizers I was not able to reach. Investigating specific Seattle projects more closely by interviewing many participants from a project, not only core team organizers but also neighbors who have had smaller roles as painting day participants or non-painting neighbors, could yield a much more complex understanding of the diversity of motivations and experiences of the many different people working on the same project. A deeper dive into the complex story of the Wallybug neighbors' conflict, or the recent cultural shift in City Repair in Portland could fill an entire thesis on its own. While this thesis made no attempt to do so, a wealth of interesting questions could be explored by analyzing street paintings spatially. These range from site analysis of how the painting fits into the physical context of its block and with the other elements and land uses in proximity, to exploring paintings' spatial distribution throughout a city and whether there are demographic patterns about who creates street paintings in what sort of neighborhood contexts and what kind of outcomes they experience there.

Portland and Seattle are just two of many cities creating street paintings. While I did not investigate the motivations of painters in Portland or make any other cross-city comparison regarding purpose and motivation, there may be value in determining if street painters in other cities report similar motivations and experiences. Many cities across the United States and beyond have engaged in conversations, pilot projects, and policymaking regarding developing street painting rules for their cities. Investigating any of these factors, patterns and stories across other cities could yield some interesting perspectives, and perhaps some more broadly generalizable recommendations for supporting street painting success.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “A Little Paint, a Lot of Safety: Pigeon Point’s New Street Mural.” 2017. *West Seattle Blog*. Accessed August 28. <http://westseattleblog.com/2015/07/a-little-paint-a-lot-of-safety-pigeon-points-new-street-mural/>.
- “Adaptive Streets.” 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 3. <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/public-space-management-programs/adaptive-streets>.
- “Block Party Permits.” 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 13. <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/block-party-permits>.
- “CAM 2506.” 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 13. [www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation).
- Carmona, Matthew. 2014. “The Place-Shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process.” *Journal of Urban Design*. Taylor & Francis. doi:10.1080/13574809.2013.854695.
- Cattell, Vicky, Nick Dines, Wil Gesler, and Sarah Curtis. 2008. “Mingling, Observing, and Lingering: Everyday Public Spaces and Their Implications for Well-Being and Social Relations.” *Health & Place* 14 (3). Pergamon: 544–61. doi:10.1016/J.HEALTHPLACE.2007.10.007.
- Chapter 468-95 WAC: 2017. *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*. Accessed September 8. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=468-95>.
- “Check out the New Street Mural on 98th!” 2013. *Maple Leaf Life (Blog)*. <https://mapleleaflife.com/2013/10/23/check-out-the-new-street-mural-on-98th/#more-33731>.

City of Portland. 2017. "Neighborhood Involvement." *Portlandoregon.gov*. Accessed October 21.

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/>.

*City Repair's Placemaking Guidebook*. 2006. Second. Portland, OR: The City Repair Project.

City Repair Project. 2017a. "City Repair Consulting 2016 Workshop

ModulesPresentationOfferingsFeb92016.pdf." *Cityrepair.org*. Accessed December 10.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2eoLed7RYGXdmFvZzdwalBUZHc/view>.

———. 2017b. "City Repair Project FAQ." *Cityrepair.org*. Accessed October 2.

<http://www.cityrepair.org/faqs/>.

"Client Assistance Memos." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 13.

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/document-library/client-assistance-memos>.

"Construction Use in the Right of Way." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 13.

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/construction-use-in-the-right-of-way>.

Diers, Jim. 2004. *Neighbor Power*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Engwicht, David. 2005. *Mental Speed Bumps*. First. Annandale, Australia: Envirobook.

Eric Higbee. 2006. "IR2006." *Picasa Album*. <http://www.erichigbee.net/projects/IR2006/>.

Federal Highway Administration. 2017. "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)." Accessed

September 8. <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/>.

"Feet First." 2017. *Feetfirst.org*. Accessed December 14. <http://www.feetfirst.org/>.

Gabriel, Yiannis. 2017. "The Other and Othering: A Short Introduction." *Yiannisgabriel.com*. Accessed December 13. <http://www.yiannisgabriel.com/2012/09/the-other-and-othering-short.html>.

Gehl, Jan. 2010. *Cities for People*. Washington: Island Press.

———. 2011. *Life Between Buildings*. Washington: Island Press.

"Green Lake Neighborhood Project Results in Giant Street Mural - Green Lake Seattle." 2017. Accessed August 28. <http://greenlakeinseattle.com/green-lake-neighborhood-project-results-giant-street-mural/#>.

Hemenway, Toby. 2015. *The Permaculture City: Regenerative Design for Urban, Suburban, and Town Resilience*. White River Junction: Chelsea Green.

Hester, Randolph T. 2006. *Design for Ecological Democracy*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books.

Johnson, James. 2010. "Wallingford Turtle." *The Phozone (Blog)*. <http://www.phozone.com/2010/09/>.

Kunstler, James Howard. 1993. *The Geography of Nowhere The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

———. 2004. "The Ghastly Tragedy of the Suburbs." *TED.com*.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/james\\_howard\\_kunstler\\_dissects\\_suburbia](https://www.ted.com/talks/james_howard_kunstler_dissects_suburbia).

Lakeman, Mark. 2017. "The Chronology of City Repair (1 through 14)." *YouTube.com*. Accessed December 10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DGE9BtSK4Q>.

———. 2014. "Badass Democracy: Reclaiming the Public Commons at TEDxSantaCruz." *YouTube.com*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYES81Ibj4A>.

Leis, Jenny, and Daniel Lerch, eds. 2003. *City Repair's Placemaking Guidebook*. First. Portland: The City Repair Project and Southeast Uplift.

Lewicka, Maria. 2011. "Place Attachment: How Far Have We Come in the Last 40 Years?" *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 31 (3). Elsevier Ltd: 207–30. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001.

Lynch, Kevin. 1960. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Manzo, Lynne C, and Douglas D Perkins. 2006. "Finding Common Ground: The Importance of Place Attachment to Community Participation and Planning." *Journal of Planning Literature* 20 (4): 335–50. doi:10.1177/0885412205286160.

"Maple Leaf Street Mural Painting on the Rocks." 2011. *Maple Leaf Life (Blog)*.

<https://mapleleaflife.com/2011/05/11/maple-leaf-street-mural-painting-on-the-rocks/>.

Mehta, Vikas. 2014. "Evaluating Public Space." *Journal of Urban Design* 19 (1): 53–88.

doi:10.1080/13574809.2013.854698.

Meslin, Dave. 2015. "Why Don't We Do It in the Road? - Spacing Toronto." *Spacing Toronto (Blog)*.

<http://spacing.ca/toronto/2015/06/12/meslin-dont-road/>.

Milligan, Melinda J. 1998. "Interactional Past And Potential: The Social Construction Of Place Attachment." *Symbolic Interaction* 21 (1): 1–33. doi:10.1525/si.1998.21.1.1.

Mollison, Bill. 1988. *Permaculture a Designer's Manual*. Seventh. Tyalgum, Australia: Tagari.

"Neighborhood Paints Giant Dragon Fly." 2013. *Seattletimes.com*.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/photo-video/photography/neighborhood-paints-giant-dragon-fly/>.

Nelson, Alyse. 2017. "Coloring Inside the Lanes." *Sightline Institute*. Accessed August 28.

<http://www.sightline.org/2011/11/28/coloring-inside-the-lanes/>.

Nielsen, Peg. 2017a. "A Whale Surfaces on Graham Street." *SDOT Blog*. Accessed October 25.

<http://sdotblog.seattle.gov/2011/08/30/a-whale-surfaces-on-graham-street/>.

———. 2017b. "Whale of a Design to Take Shape on S Graham Street." *SDOT Blog*. Accessed October 25.

<http://sdotblog.seattle.gov/2011/08/25/whale-of-a-design-to-take-shape-on-s-graham-street/>.

Norton, Michael I., Daniel Mochon, and Dan Ariely. 2012. "The IKEA Effect: When Labor Leads to Love."

*Journal of Consumer Psychology* 22 (3): 453–60. doi:10.1016/j.jcps.2011.08.002.

Oakland Department of Transportation. 2017. "Paint the Town! Pilot Program Guidelines and

Application." <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oak/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak066557.pdf>.

Oldenburg, Ray. 1999. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and*

*Other Hangouts at the Heart of Community*. New York: Marlowe.

Perkins, Douglas D., Barbara B. Brown, and Ralph B. Taylor. 1996. "The Ecology of Empowerment:

Predicting Participation in Community Organizations." *Journal of Social Issues* 52 (1): 85–110.

doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1996.tb01363.x.

"Pigeon Point Street Mural Painting." 2017. *Pigeon Point Neighborhood (Blog)*. Accessed October 23.

<https://pigeonpointseattle.com/pigeon-point-street-painting/>.

"Play Streets." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 13.

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/public-space->

management-programs/play-streets.

Portland City EFiles. 2017. "Portland City EFiles Council Ordinance." *Efiles.portlandoregon.gov*. Accessed September 8. <http://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/classification/543>.

Project for Public Spaces. 2017a. "A Street You Go To, Not Just Through: Principles for Fostering Streets as Places - Project for Public Spaces." Accessed February 18. <https://www.pps.org/reference/8-principles-streets-as-places/>.

———. 2017b. *Pps.org*. Accessed December 13. <https://www.pps.org/>.

———. 2017c. "Public Space at the Crossroads of Everything." *Pps.org*. Accessed December 15. <https://www.pps.org/blog/public-space-at-the-crossroads-of-everything/>.

———. 2017d. "What Makes a Successful Place?" *Pps.org*. Accessed December 12. <https://www.pps.org/reference/grplacefeat/>.

"Proposal to Paint Maple Leaf Intersection Moves Forward." 2011. *Maple Leaf Life (Blog)*.

<https://mapleleaflife.com/2011/02/27/proposal-to-paint-maple-leaf-intersection-moves-forward/>.

"Public Space Management Programs." 2017. *Seattle.gov*.

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/public-space-management-programs>.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

———. 2007. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30 (2): 137–74. doi:10.1111/j.1467-

9477.2007.00176.x.

Rebar Group. 2017. "Re:Launch." *Rebargroup.org*. Accessed December 12. <http://rebargroup.org/>.

Relph, Edward. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Limited.

"Return of Male Leaf's Street Mural." 2015. *Maple Leaf Life (Blog)*. <https://mapleleaflife.com/tag/street-mural/>.

Sack, Robert D. 1983. "Human Territoriality: A Theory." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73 (1): 55–74. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8306.1983.tb01396.x.

Sadik-Khan, Janette, and Seth Solomonow. 2016. *Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution*. First. New York: Viking.

Scannell, Leila, and Robert Gifford. 2010a. "Defining Place Attachment: A Tripartite Organizing Framework." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 30 (1). Elsevier Ltd: 1–10. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006.

———. 2010b. "The Relations between Natural and Civic Place Attachment and pro-Environmental Behavior." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 30 (3): 289–97. doi:10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.01.010.

Schwalbe, Michael, Sandra Godwin, Daphne Holden, Douglas Schrock, Shealy Thompson, and Michele Wolkomir. 2000. "Generic Processes in the Reproduction of Inequality: An Interactionist Analysis." *Social Forces* 79 (2): 419–52. doi:10.1093/sf/79.2.419.

SDOT. 2017a. "2.15 Neighborhood Yield Seattle Streets Illustrated." *Seattle.gov*. Accessed December 10. <http://streetsillustrated.seattle.gov/street-types/neighborhood-yield/>.

———. 2017b. "Seattle Streets Illustrated." *Seattle.gov*. Accessed October 21.

<http://streetsillustrated.seattle.gov/>.

"SDOT Pedestrian Program." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed September 7.

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/CommunityCrosswalks.htm>.

"Seattle Celebrates Supreme Court Ruling on Gay Marriage." 2017. *Seattlepi.com*. Accessed September

7. <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/slideshow/Seattle-celebrates-Supreme-Court-ruling-on-gay-112375/photo-8221185.php>.

"Seattle Department of Neighborhoods." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed October 27.

<https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods>.

"Seattle Design Commission Meeting Minutes 8/7/14." 2017. Accessed October 1.

<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/DesignCommission/ProjectArchive/SeattleDesignCommission-2014.08.07SwedishBallardSkybridgeminutes.pdf>.

"Seattle Neighborhood Greenways." 2017. *Seattlegreenways.org*. Accessed December 14.

<http://seattlegreenways.org/>.

"Seattle Neighborhood Group." 2017. *Sngi.org*. Accessed December 15.

<http://www.sngi.org/welcome/index.php>.

*Seattle Times*. 2012. "McGinn Announces Two-Year Transportation Agenda."

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/mcginn-announces-two-year-transportation-agenda/>.

Seneville, Wayne. 2013. "Can Intersections Lead to Stronger Neighborhoods and Empowered

Residents?" - *PlannersWeb*. <http://plannersweb.com/2013/08/can-intersections/>.

Silberberg, Susan, Katie Lorah, Rebecca Disbrow, Anna Muessig, and Aaron Naparstek. 2013. "Places in the Making How Placemaking Builds Places and Communities." [www.dusp.mit.edu](http://www.dusp.mit.edu).

Smith, Michael. 2017. "The Case for Natural Building." *Networkearth.org*. Accessed December 8. <http://www.networkearth.org/naturalbuilding/natbild.html>.

"Spotted in Wallingford: Ladybug Is 5 Years Old." 2017. *MyWallingford (Blog)*. Accessed October 1. <https://mywallingford.com/2010/07/13/spotted-in-wallingford-ladybug-is-5-years-old/>.

Stedman, Richard C. 2006. "Understanding Place Attachment among Second Home Owners." *The American Behavioral Scientist* 50: 187–205.

Stolle, Dietlind, Stuart Soroka, and Richard Johnston. 2008. "When Does Diversity Erode Trust? Neighborhood Diversity, Interpersonal Trust and the Mediating Effect of Social Interactions." *Political Studies* 56 (1): 57–75. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2007.00717.x.

"Street Furniture & Decorations." 2017. *Seattle.gov*. Accessed October 31. <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/public-space-management-programs/street-furniture-and-decorations#intersectionpainting>.

"Street Intersection Transforms into a Colorful Turtle Mural." 2017. *FremontUniverse (Blog)*. Accessed August 28. <https://fremontuniverse.com/2010/08/28/street-intersection-transforms-into-a-colorful-turtle-mural/>.

Svarre, Brigitte. 2015. "Senses Scale and 12 Quality Criteria." Copenhagen. [https://courses.washington.edu/gehlstud/gehl-studio/wp-content/uploads/documents/BirgitteSvarre\\_Lecture\\_2015.pdf](https://courses.washington.edu/gehlstud/gehl-studio/wp-content/uploads/documents/BirgitteSvarre_Lecture_2015.pdf).

Tajfel, Henri. 1982. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Ralph B., Stephen D. Gottfredson, and Sidney Brower. 1985. "Attachment to Place: Discriminant Validity, and Impacts of Disorder and Diversity." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 13 (5): 525–42. doi:10.1007/BF00923265.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1974. "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective." *Progress in Geography* 6: 233–46.

———. 1975. "Place: An Experiential Perspective." *Geographical Review* 65: 151–65.

———. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minnesota: The University of Minnesota Press.

Unger, Donald G., and Abraham Wandersman. 1985. "The Importance of Neighbors The Social, Cognitive, and Affective Components of Neighboring." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 13 (2): 139–69. doi:10.1007/BF00905726.

US Census Bureau. 2016a. "Census Reporter for Portland, OR." *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US4159000-portland-or/>.

———. 2016b. "Census Reporter Profile for Seattle, WA." *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US5363000-seattle-wa/>.

Walljasper, Jay and Project for Public Spaces. 2017. "The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Placemaking - Google Books." Accessed February 18.  
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ngOfk6cfnwC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=placemaking&ots=pjjCiRxkoQ&sig=2cquoXhuKluBf0qn3i-Oc5C36S8#v=onepage&q=placemaking&f=false>.

Whyte, William H. 1980. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers.

## **APPENDIX A: MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES AND GUIDANCE**

This appendix contains copies of city documents from Portland and Seattle that form the basis for street painting requirements in each city. Portland materials consist of the current version of the Revocable Permit to Use Dedicated Street Areas and copies of the four relevant City Ordinances that govern all Intersection Repair projects, including those involving street painting. The permit, which PBOT provided, outlines street painting rules and procedures in one form. These ordinances were retrieved from Portland City Archives and show the evolution of Portland's rules over time. Seattle rules are summarized in the current version of CAM 2506: "Painting the Intersection in Your Neighborhood." This SDOT information handout gives an overview of Seattle's street painting permit process. While not as detailed as Portland's materials, it is the most complete summary of Seattle street painting requirements that is publicly available.

**REVOCABLE PERMIT TO USE DEDICATED STREET AREAS**

---

The undersigned applies for a revocable permit in accordance with the provisions of City Charter and Title 17, Public Improvements of the Code of the City of Portland for use of the street area at \_\_\_\_\_ for (project name/description) \_\_\_\_\_, from (effective date) \_\_\_\_\_.

(CONDITIONS)

- (1) The permittee shall hold the City of Portland, its officers, agents, and employees free and harmless from any claims for damages to persons or property, including legal fees and costs of defending any actions or suits, including any appeals, which may result from permitted activity.
- (2) The intent of a proposed project and the likely outcome of such project shall be consistent with the goals of the Portland City Council.
- (3) For street modifications within intersections, the two streets must be classified as Local Service Streets and carry less than a combined 2,500 vehicles on an average day.
- (4) For street modifications between intersections, but that do not include the intersection area, the one street must be classified as a Local Service Street and have fewer than 2,000 motor vehicles per day. If the street segment is adjacent to an intersection that does not qualify for street modification, the modification should not include the area that is within 25 feet of the intersection.
- (5) Modifications between intersections can be adjacent to modifications within intersections if each meet the requirements for modification outlined in this permit.
- (6) The applicant for a permit must provide to the City Traffic Engineer a petition of support for the proposed intersection modifications. The support petition must have signatures from each of the adjacent residents and at least 80 percent of the residents on the project street frontage(s) within two standard city blocks of the proposed project. The City Traffic Engineer shall have the authority to modify the petition boundaries when considered appropriate. The City Traffic Engineer shall certify the accuracy of the petition.
- (7) The applicant for a permit must provide to the City Traffic Engineer a petition of support for the proposed mid-block modifications. The support petition must have signatures from each of the adjacent residents and at least 80 percent of the residents on the project street frontage within two standard city blocks of the proposed project. For blocks that are more than 400 feet long, the petition area will include the entire block. The City Traffic Engineer shall have the authority to modify the petition boundaries when considered appropriate. The City Traffic Engineer shall certify the accuracy of the petition.
- (8) The applicant for a permit must provide the City Traffic Engineer with a written description of the proposed changes, including diagrams depicting how the intersection will look when completed. The applicant must demonstrate how the project will improve, or at least maintain, traffic safety and the safety of individuals at or in the vicinity of the intersection.
- (9) The City Traffic Engineer may approve a revocable permit authorizing construction and maintenance of the project as described and shown in the submitted diagrams, subject to any changes that may be required by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (10) The permit shall be for use of the public right-of-way only, and does not exempt the permittee from obtaining any license or permit required by the City Code or Ordinances for any act to be performed under this permit. Nor shall the permit waive the provisions of any City Code, Ordinance, or the City Charter, except as stated herein.

- (11) The permit shall not exempt any party from complying with all applicable traffic laws, including laws regarding pedestrians.
- (12) The permittee is not authorized to do any excavation, except as specifically identified in the project plans. The permittee shall be responsible for protecting all public and private facilities placed in the public right-of-way, including underground utilities.
- (13) The permittee shall notify all households and businesses within four standard city blocks of the proposed project at least 30 days before the project installation date.
- (14) The permittee shall obtain a Block Party Permit to close all legs of an intersection, for up to one block distance, in order to install the intersection modifications. Permittee shall use Type III barricades and STREET CLOSED signs as provided in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. No street shall be blocked for more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period unless specifically allowed by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (15) Repair, maintenance, or installation of existing or future utility facilities in the right-of-way may require the permittee to reconstruct, move, or remove the project, or portions of the project, with all costs borne by the permittee.
- (16) The permittee shall work with all affected neighbors to resolve any concerns that may arise regarding the project. The inability to resolve such concerns may be grounds for revocation of this permit by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (17) The permittee shall maintain, at no cost to the City, all aspects of the project during the term of the permit. If any nuisance condition is allowed to exist in the area of the project, the City may summarily abate such nuisance. The existence of a nuisance in the area of the project may be grounds for revocation of the permit.
- (18) All permits shall be revocable by the City Traffic Engineer. The City Traffic Engineer may revoke a permit for any cause. The City Traffic Engineer shall immediately revoke a permitted project no longer meeting the intent of City Council goals.
- (19) The permittee shall, at no cost to the City, remove all aspects and/or features of a project when either the permit expires or is revoked.

Insurance Required: YES

Permit Fee: WAIVED

---

Permittee Name  
 Address  
 Portland, OR 97

---

City Traffic Engineer (designee)

ORDINANCE NO. 171012

Title

\*Grant  
A revocable permit for the intersection of SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street to install a demonstration project. (Ordinance)

INTRODUCED BY	DATE FILED: <b>MAR 14 1997</b>
Commissioner Hales	Barbara Clark Auditor of the City of Portland
NOTED BY COMMISSIONER	
Affairs	By: <u>Coy Kinohm</u> Deputy
Finance and Administration	
Safety <u>C. Hales</u>	For Meeting of: _____
Utilities	
Works	
BUREAU APPROVAL	ACTION TAKEN:
Bureau: <u>Traffic Management</u>	
Prepared by      Date Brant Williams 3/12/97	
Budget Impact Review:	
Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Required <input type="checkbox"/>	
Bureau Head: <u>Goran G. Sparrman</u> Goran G. Sparrman, Director	

AGENDA		FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
			YEAS	NAYS	
Consent	Regular <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Francesconi	Francesconi	✓	
NOTED BY		Hales	Hales	✓	
City Attorney		Kafoury	Kafoury	✓	
City Auditor		Sten	Sten	✓	
City Engineer		Katz	Katz	✓	

ORDINANCE No.

**171012**

\*A revocable permit for the intersection of SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street to install a demonstration project. (Ordinance)

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. The applicant, with support of the neighborhood, has requested a permit for a demonstration project for the SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street intersection;
2. the project is an appropriate and reasonable effort by a neighborhood to promote a stronger sense of community and to enhance the safety and overall livability of the immediate neighborhood;
3. the goals of the project are consistent with adopted City goals for making neighborhoods safer and more livable;
4. the project is a demonstration project to determine the benefits of this unique type of community improvement effort;
5. the intersection of SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street is an appropriate location for such a demonstration project;
6. a petition of signatures from the immediate neighborhood has been received that indicates a high level of support for the project;
7. the Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League Neighborhood Association and the Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program support the project;
8. within the conditions set forth in this permit, there are no identifiable safety problems with either the initial installation of the project or the longer term operation of the project;
9. the City will have the ability to require modifications to or the removal of the project upon identifying safety problems or other negative impacts of significance to the neighborhood.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- a. The Commissioner of Public Safety is authorized to issue a revocable permit to the permittee for the use of the public right-of-way for the demonstration project described in the attached Exhibit A under the following terms and conditions:

- b. The permit authorizes a block party on March 23, 1997, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. for the installation of the project. The block party may be rescheduled to an alternate date with the agreement of the City Traffic Engineer. Permittee is authorized to close SE 9th Avenue from SE Clatsop Street to SE Harney Street and SE Sherrett Street from SE 8th Avenue to SE 11th Avenue, using "STREET CLOSED" signs and placing Type III barricades on SE 9th and SE Sherrett as provided in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Barricades are to be equipped with flashing yellow lights at dusk. The affected streets shall be opened to travel by 11:00 p.m. on March 23, 1997. Permittee shall obtain consent of those affected by the street closure.
- c. The permit authorizes construction and maintenance of the demonstration project as shown in the Exhibit A, subject to any changes that may be required by the Commissioner or the City Traffic Engineer. The permit shall expire on September 23, 1997, unless the term is extended by the City Traffic Engineer.
- d. The permit is for the use of the public right-of-way only and does not exempt the permittee from obtaining any license or permit required by the City Code or Ordinances for any act to be performed under this permit, nor shall this permit waive the provisions of any City Code, Ordinance, or the City Charter, except as stated herein.
- e. This permit does not exempt any party from complying with all applicable traffic laws, including laws regarding pedestrians.
- f. This permit is revocable by the City Traffic Engineer at any time in the event the public safety or need requires it, or if the permittee fails to comply with the conditions of the permit, and no expenditure or money, lapse of time or other act or thing shall operate as an estoppel against the City of Portland, or be held to give the permittee any vested or other right. Upon the expiration of this permit or its sooner revocation by the City Traffic Engineer, the permittee shall, within 30 days, remove the installations from the street area and restore the street area as directed by and to the satisfaction of the City Traffic Engineer.
- g. Repair, maintenance or installation of existing or future utility facilities in the right-of-way may require permittee to reconstruct, move, or remove the demonstration project at the permittee's cost.
- h. This permit does not authorized excavation other than the minimal excavation required to install sign posts and other fixtures as described in Exhibit A. The permittee shall be responsible for protecting all public and private facilities placed in the public right-of-way. This includes underground utility facilities.
- i. Signs shall be installed as provided in the attached Exhibit B.

- j. Permittee shall work with all affected neighbors to resolve any concerns that may arise regarding the demonstration project. The inability to resolve such concerns may be grounds for revocation of this permit by the City Traffic Engineer.
- k. Permittee shall maintain the demonstration project during the term of the permit and any extensions of the permit that may be granted. If any nuisance condition is allowed to exist in the area of the demonstration project, such nuisance may be summarily abated by the City. The existence of a nuisance in the demonstration project shall be ground for revocation of the permit.
- l. The Bureau of Traffic Management shall conduct an evaluation of the demonstration project on traffic in the area and shall report to the Commissioner in Charge regarding its effectiveness and safety.

Section 2. The Council declares that an emergency exists because a delay would prevent the neighborhood from following their block party and installation plans; therefore, this Ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after its passage by Council.

Passed by the Council: **MAR 19 1997**

Commissioner Hales  
Brant Williams  
March 12, 1997

**BARBARA CLARK**  
Auditor of the City of Portland  
By *Britta Olson*  
Deputy

~~S-401~~

536

Agenda No.

**SUBSTITUTE**

ORDINANCE NO.

**172207**

Title

Request for a <sup>semi-</sup> annual revocable permit for the intersection of SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street for the neighborhood public square project; provide conditions for future similar requests and authorize the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue permits. (Ordinance)

INTRODUCED BY	Filed: <b>APR 21 1998</b>
MAYOR VERA KATZ	Barbara Clark Auditor of the City of Portland
NOTED BY COMMISSIONER	
Affairs	
Finance and Administration <i>UK</i>	By: <u><i>Cory Kerahmer</i></u> Deputy
Safety	For Meeting of: _____
Utilities	
Works	
BUREAU APPROVAL	ACTION TAKEN:
Bureau: Transportation Engineering & Development	<b>APR 22 1998 SUBSTITUTE PASSED TO SECOND READING</b> <b>APR 29 1998 9:30 A.M.</b>
Prepared by      Date Brant Williams: cab      April 20, 1998	
Budget Impact Review:	
Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Required	
Bureau Head: Goran Sparrman <i>Goran Sparrman</i>	

AGENDA		FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:	
			YEAS	NAYS
Consent	Regular XX			
NOTED BY		Francesconi	Francesconi	✓
City Attorney		Hales	Hales	✓
City Auditor		Kafoury	Kafoury	✓
City Engineer: Brant Williams		Sten	Sten	✓
Approved By: <i>Brant Williams</i>		Katz	Katz	✓

## SUBSTITUTE

# ORDINANCE No. 172207

Request for a semi-annual revocable permit for the intersection of SE 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sherrett Street for the neighborhood public square project; provide conditions for future similar requests and authorize the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue permits. (Ordinance)

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. On March 19, 1997, Ordinance No. 171012 provided for the issuance of a Temporary Permit for a Community Demonstration Project at the intersection of SE 9th Avenue and Sherritt Street. The applicant, Mark Lakeman on behalf of the "Friends of Share-it Square," has requested an indefinite permit for continuing this neighborhood public square project at the SE 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sherrett Street intersection (Exhibit A);
2. Based on survey results of residents in the immediate vicinity, the demonstration project was a success and still receives strong support by these residents because it facilitates frequent interaction and fellowship with one another at this particular intersection;
3. As required by the ordinance, the Bureau of Traffic Management has conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness and safety of the demonstration project and has submitted the findings in a report to the Council (Exhibit B). The findings from the evaluation indicate the demonstration project resulted in the intersection remaining safe from a traffic standpoint, even though there were no significant benefits observed in reducing traffic speeds or lowering the crime rate in the area;
4. The project continues to be a successful effort representing a significant initiative by the local neighborhood to promote a stronger sense of community and to enhance the safety and overall livability of the neighborhood. The goals of the project remain consistent with adopted City goals for livability;
5. A broad-based but specific group of persons, identified as the "Friends of Share-It Square" will provide for the monitoring, maintenance, planning, and other needs of the public square, including accountability and responsibility for responding to concerns and desires of Portland residents in the affected area (generally south of Tacoma St. and west of 13th Avenue to the Willamette River), as described in the submitted application.
6. Two petitions and several letters have been received by the City from neighborhood residents and interested citizens who are not in favor of the project (Exhibit C). The vast majority of the residents live more than two blocks from the intersection; at the request of the Council, the applicant has made numerous efforts to inform and gain support from residents not in favor of the project.

7. The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League Neighborhood Association continue to support the project (Exhibit D); and
8. The City will have the ability, by the authority granted to the City Traffic Engineer, to require modifications to or the removal of the project upon identifying safety problems, a lack of maintenance of the project, a lack of broad support from residents and property owners in the immediate vicinity of the project, and any other negative impacts of significance to the neighborhood.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- a. Recommend approval of the Report of Effectiveness and Safety, SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street Demonstration Project by the Bureau of Traffic Management;
- b. Directs the City Traffic Engineer to issue a six-month revocable permit, to the applicant for the use of the public right-of-way for the neighborhood public square project described in the attached Exhibit A under the terms and conditions as listed in Appendix A of Exhibit B, "Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections."
- c. The City's Office of Mediation will provide a process for mediation for neighborhood residents in the affected area (generally south of SE Tacoma Street and west of SE 13th Avenue to the Willamette River. This process will include the development of: 1) a project maintenance plan; 2) a process for evaluating and establishing aesthetic requirements; and 3) an outreach plan for involving neighbors outside the immediate area to be notified and involved in the process. The applicant will provide a written report to the City Council as to the status of the issues and mediation efforts at one month, three months and six months.
- d. Directs the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue revocable permits to applicants for similar neighborhood projects which meet the terms and conditions as listed in the "Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections."

Passed by the Council, **APR 29 1998**

Mayor Vera Katz  
 Brant Williams:cab  
 April 20, 1998  
 \mgt-bw\Ordinanc\9thShsub.ord

**BARBARA CLARK**  
 AUDITOR OF THE CITY OF PORTLAND

BY  DEPUTY

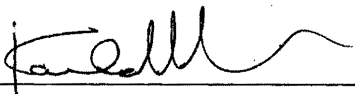
1115-

Agenda No.

ORDINANCE NO. 175937

Title

\*Modify conditions under which the City Traffic Engineer may issue revocable permits for use of dedicated street areas for an Intersection Repair Project. (Ordinance)

INTRODUCED BY	Filed:
Commissioner Charlie Hales	SEP 14 2001
NOTED BY COMMISSIONER	Gary Blackmer Auditor of the City of Portland
Affairs	By:  Deputy
Finance and Administration	For Meeting of: _____
Safety <i>Charlie Hales</i>	ACTION TAKEN:
Utilities	
Works	
BUREAU APPROVAL	
Bureau: Transportation System Management	
Prepared by: Eileen Dent/blb/ks Date: Sept. 11, 2001	
Budget Impact Review:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Required	
Bureau Head: <i>John D. Widmer</i> John D. Widmer, Director	

AGENDA	FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:	
		YEAS	NAYS
Consent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/>			
NOTED BY	Francesconi	Francesconi	✓
City Attorney	Hales	Hales	✓
City Auditor	Saltzman	Saltzman	✓
City Engineer	Sten	Sten	✓
	Katz	Katz	✓

**ORDINANCE No. 175937**

\*Modify conditions under which the City Traffic Engineer may issue revocable permits for use of dedicated street areas for an Intersection Repair Project. (Ordinance)

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. On April 29, 1998, City Council passed Ordinance No. 172207, which authorized the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue revocable permits to applicants for neighborhood projects that are similar in scope to the demonstration "Intersection Repair" project at SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street, and provided conditions for these permits.
2. Additional information and analysis of this type of project has shown the need for minor changes for the previously established conditions.
3. Changes include increasing the combined traffic volume entering an intersection from 1,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to 2,500 vpd; clarifying language regarding the petition of support to reflect the intention that the two-block condition related to properties with frontages on the affected streets, and allowing the City Traffic Engineer the authority to adjust those boundaries when appropriate; and other changes that do not affect the content of the conditions and are housekeeping in nature.

NOW THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- a. Accept the proposed changes to the Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections, attached, and direct the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue revocable permits to applicants for neighborhood projects that meet the applicable terms and conditions.

Section 2.

The Council declares that an emergency exists because of the seasonal nature of the work that would be done if a permit were granted. Delay in approval would push work out to spring of 2002.

Passed by the Council  
Commissioner Charlie Hales  
Burchfield/Dent/blb/ks  
TBA:\COUNCIL\ORDS\2001\ORD18 BURCHFIELD-REVOCABLE PERMITS.DOC

SEP 19 2001

GARY BLACKMER  
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  Deputy



Victor F.  
 Rhodes  
 Director

Eileen  
 Argentina  
 Information  
 Technology

Richard  
 Steinbrugge  
 Finance

Steve  
 Dotterrer  
 Planning

Jeanne  
 Nyquist  
 Maintenance

Toby  
 Widmer  
 System  
 Management

Brant  
 Williams  
 Engineering &  
 Development

**Conditions of Revocable Permit  
 to Modify City Intersections**  
*(Modified 9/19/01)*

- (1) The permittee shall hold the City of Portland, its officers, agents, and employees free and harmless from any claims for damages to persons or property, including legal fees and costs of defending any actions or suits, including any appeals, which may result from permitted activity.
- (2) The intent of a proposed project and the likely outcome of such project shall be consistent with the goals of the Portland City Council.
- (3) The two streets must be classified as Local Service Streets and carry less than a combined 2,500 vehicles on an average day.
- (4) The applicant for a permit must provide to the City Traffic Engineer a petition of support for the proposed intersection modifications. The support petition must have signatures from each of the adjacent residents and at least 80 percent of the residents on the project street frontage(s) within two standard city blocks of the proposed project. The City Traffic Engineer shall have the authority to modify the petition boundaries when considered appropriate. The City Traffic Engineer shall certify the accuracy of the petition.
- (5) The applicant for a permit must provide the City Traffic Engineer with a written description of the proposed changes, including diagrams depicting how the intersection will look when completed. The applicant must demonstrate how the project will improve, or at least maintain, traffic safety and the safety of individuals at or in the vicinity of the intersection.
- (6) The City Traffic Engineer may approve a revocable permit authorizing construction and maintenance of the project as described and shown in the submitted diagrams, subject to any changes that may be required by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (7) The permit shall be for use of the public right-of-way only, and does not exempt the permittee from obtaining any license or permit required by the City Code or Ordinances for any act to be performed under this permit. Nor shall the permit waive the provisions of any City Code, Ordinance, or the City Charter, except as stated herein.
- (8) The permit shall not exempt any party from complying with all applicable traffic laws, including laws regarding pedestrians.
- (9) The permittee is not authorized to do any excavation, except as specifically identified in the project plans. The permittee shall be responsible for protecting all public and private facilities placed in the public right-of-way, including underground utilities.

Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections  
Modified 9/19/01  
Page 2 of 2

- (10) The permittee shall notify all households and businesses within four standard city blocks of the proposed project at least 30 days before the project installation date.
- (11) The permittee shall obtain a Block Party Permit to close all legs of an intersection, for up to one block distance, in order to install the intersection modifications. Permittee shall use Type III barricades and STREET CLOSED signs as provided in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices*. No street shall be blocked for more than 12 hours in any 24-hour period unless specifically allowed by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (12) Repair, maintenance, or installation of existing or future utility facilities in the right-of-way may require the permittee to reconstruct, move, or remove the project, or portions of the project, with all costs borne by the permittee.
- (13) The permittee shall work with all affected neighbors to resolve any concerns that may arise regarding the project. The inability to resolve such concerns may be grounds for revocation of this permit by the City Traffic Engineer.
- (14) The permittee shall maintain, at no cost to the City, all aspects of the project during the term of the permit. If any nuisance condition is allowed to exist in the area of the project, the City may summarily abate such nuisance. The existence of a nuisance in the area of the project may be grounds for revocation of the permit.
- (15) All permits shall be revocable by the City Traffic Engineer. The City Traffic Engineer may revoke a permit for any cause. The City Traffic Engineer shall immediately revoke a permitted project no longer meeting the intent of City Council goals.
- (16) The permittee shall, at no cost to the City, remove all aspects and/or features of a project when either the permit expires or is revoked.

Agenda No. **ORDINANCE NO. 187193**

Title

\*Modify conditions under which the City Traffic Engineer may issue revocable permits for use of dedicated street areas for an Intersection Repair Project. (Ordinance)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INTRODUCED BY</b> Commissioner/Auditor: <b>COMMISSIONER STEVE NOVICK</b></p>	<p>CLERK USE: DATE FILED <u>JUN 12 2015</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMISSIONER APPROVAL</b></p> <p>Mayor—Finance and Administration - Hales</p> <p>Position 1/Utilities - Fritz</p> <p>Position 2/Works - Fish</p> <p>Position 3/Affairs - Saltzman</p> <p>Position 4/Safety – Novick <i>a</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mary Hull Caballero Auditor of the City of Portland</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mary Hull</i> By: _____ Deputy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BUREAU APPROVAL</b></p> <p>Bureau: <b>Transportation</b> Policy, Planning and Projects Manager: <b>Art Pearce</b> Director: <i>[Signature]</i></p> <p>Prepared by: Greg Raisman:slg Date Prepared: June 9, 2015 Supervisor: Margi Bradway</p>	<p><b>ACTION TAKEN:</b></p>
<p>Impact Statement Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends Budget <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Portland Policy Document If "Yes" requires City Policy paragraph stated in document. Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>City Auditor Office Approval:</b> required for Code Ordinances</p>	
<p><b>City Attorney Approval:</b> required for contract, code, easement, franchise, comp plan, charter</p>	
<p><b>Council Meeting Date</b> <b>June 17, 2015</b></p>	

<b>AGENDA</b>
<p><b>TIME CERTAIN</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>Start time: 10:30</b>  <b>Total amount of time needed: 15 Min</b>                  (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>
<p><b>CONSENT</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>REGULAR</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>Total amount of time needed: _____</b>                  (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>

FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:	
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz	✓	
2. Fish	✓	
3. Saltzman	_____	
4. Novick	✓	
Hales	✓	

## ORDINANCE No. 187193

\*Modify conditions under which the City Traffic Engineer may issue revocable permits for use of dedicated street areas for an Intersection Repair Project. (Ordinance)

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. On April 29, 1998, City Council passed Ordinance No. 172207, which authorized the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue revocable permits to applicants for neighborhood projects that are similar in scope to the demonstration "Intersection Repair" project at SE 9th Avenue and Sherrett Street, and provided conditions for these permits.
2. On September 19 2001, City Council passed Ordinance No. 175937, which authorized the City Traffic Engineer to update the criteria by which Intersection Repair Projects are reviewed and issued revocable permits to applicants for neighborhood projects at intersections. Changes include increasing the combined traffic volume entering an intersection from 1,000 vehicles per day (vpd) to 2,500 vpd; clarifying language regarding the petition of support to reflect the intention that the two-block condition related to properties with frontages on the affected streets, and allowing the City Traffic Engineer the authority to adjust those boundaries when appropriate; and other changes that do not affect the content of the conditions and are housekeeping in nature.
3. The continued success of this type of community building project has demonstrated the need for expanding eligible locations to include mid-block location on similarly classified, low-traffic Local Service Streets.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- a. Accept the proposed changes to the Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections, attached as Exhibit A, and direct the City Traffic Engineer to review and issue revocable permits to applicants for neighborhood projects that meet the applicable terms and conditions.
- b. Administrative rule number C.13 within TRN-8.08 Encroachments in the Public Right-of-Way shall be updated to reference this ordinance.
- c. This ordinance is binding City policy.

Section 2. The Council declares that an emergency exists because of the seasonal nature of the work that would be done if a permit were granted, delay in approval would push work out to spring of 2016; therefore, this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage by the Council.

Passed by the Council, JUN 17 2015

Commissioner Steve Novick  
Prepared by: Greg Raisman:slg  
Date Prepared: June 9, 2015

**Mary Hull Caballero**  
Auditor of the City of Portland

By



Susan Parsons  
Deputy

# Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

## Painting the Intersection in Your Neighborhood

### What is a painted intersection?

A painted intersection is a mural that is painted by a community group on the pavement at the intersection of residential streets. This photo shows an example of a painted intersection in Seattle.



### 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 residents take pride in their neighborhood, and may encourage them to be respectful of the people that live there while driving down your street.

### Are there any requirements?

Yes, you'll need to get your design approved by the Seattle Department of Transportation's

(SDOT) Neighborhood Traffic section and obtain a permit from SDOT's Street Use Division 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. Usually, they are located at the intersection, but in some cases they may also be allowed in the middle of the block. They will not be allowed at intersections with existing traffic control devices, such as stop signs or traffic circles.
2. Only the driving area can be painted, not the curb/gutters/sidewalks.
3. Only specific paints (Rodda is one manufacturer) that have grit added to increase skid resistance are allowed.
4. The design needs to be pre-approved by SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic division. 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 or traffic signs, to ensure that drivers aren't confused. No words or logos are allowed, and there are obvious things we can't allow, such as advertising or insensitive images.
5. A petition is required to verify that the community is on-board.
6. A Construction Street Use permit from SDOT is required for the installation.

### How does the approval and permit process work?

1. First, call or email SDOT Neighborhood Traffic division to let us know you're

[www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)



interested in an intersection painting project. Contact Neighborhood Traffic at (206) 684-0353 or by email at [neighborhood.traffic@seattle.gov](mailto:neighborhood.traffic@seattle.gov).

2. Prepare a drawing to scale of your design concept and send it to SDOT Neighborhood Traffic division. We'll advise you on your conceptual drawing to make sure you are on track for approval prior to formal permit application and petition circulation. We strongly advise getting initial feedback from your neighborhood at this point to ensure that they support your project.
3. Finalize your design for SDOT Neighborhood Traffic division review and approval.
4. Circulate your design through the neighborhood and obtain a petition (SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic 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 AND the residents that live on the corners immediately adjacent to the painting must sign the petition.
5. Make a formal application for your Street Use permit. This will require 3 copies of full color scaled pre-approved 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.

A Construction Street Use permit is required to install the street painting. This Street Use permit is to close the intersection for cleaning the pavement and painting your mural. Traffic control (barricades, signs, etc.) will be required. SDOT Traffic 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 Traffic. Only one set will be available on any given

weekend. It is the applicant's ***responsibility to have sufficient traffic control devices in place to meet the traffic control plan.***

The Street Use permit fee includes an issuance fee and an inspection deposit. Please see the fee schedule for rates. The inspection will verify that all permit conditions are met, including proper traffic control set-up and best management practices (spill kit, etc.). If the inspector needs to make additional inspections because permit conditions were not followed, additional inspection fees may be assessed.

6. Any re-painting or maintenance of the street painting installation will require a new Street Use permit to close the intersection for this activity. It's important to remember that annual re-painting is almost always required to keep the colors vibrant. SDOT will not be responsible for maintaining the street painting. It will be the responsibility of the neighborhood to perform any maintenance or re-painting and to obtain the required Construction Street Use permit. Because community interests can change over time, SDOT may require a new petition every three years, prior to obtaining a permit to re-paint.

### **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. For NMF projects, the community is required to donate cash, volunteer labor or donated services or materials at least equal in value to the award provided by the City of Seattle. For additional information regarding a proposed project you may contact the Department of Neighborhoods at 206-684-0464. You can also find information about NMF grants at the Department of Neighborhoods web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf>.

## **APPENDIX B: SURVEY/INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

The following questions comprised the online survey I administered via UW's Catalyst WebQ online survey tool. Participants also had the option to answer these questions via telephone interview or face to face conversation. This survey was designed to gather information about participants motivations for street painting and their sense of success. The survey was also designed to gather information about projects' basic details and timelines that may not have been available to me through SDOT and DON records.

A direct invitation to participate in the survey was emailed to project organizers whose names were

- identified by SDOT or DON as project organizers, permit applicants, or grant applicants
- connected to online articles and announcements about their street paintings
- known to the researcher as street painting organizers

The invitation included a link to the online survey, which these contacts were encouraged to share with others who were involved in their street painting or other Seattle street paintings and who might be interested in sharing their perspective.

The survey was open from September 28 to October 25, 2017.

A total of 17 online responses were received and I conducted 2 in person interviews and 3 phone interviews. All responses appeared to be from different individuals. These 22 participants represented 15 different street painting groups. Of these groups, (7 that had painted, 3 were in the process of planning a new painting, and 5 had abandoned plans to paint. Of these, 9 projects were initiated by groups of neighbors, 4 by school groups, 2 projects by place-based advocacy groups, and 2 by corporations). No responses were received from participants in 4 of Seattle's 11 known paintings.

Survey Content and Questions:

## **SEATTLE STREET PAINTING PARTICIPANT SURVEY**

Page 1 of 2

Thank you for considering taking this survey, which explores people's motivations for creating street paintings and the outcomes their projects achieve.

What's this survey for? I am a student in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington in Seattle. This survey is one part of my Master's thesis research, which examines the history of street painting projects and processes in Seattle and Portland. I hope to learn the reasons that motivate people to undertake street painting projects and to assess how well those reasons for painting align with the functions street paintings can perform well. Based on that information, I will recommend how Seattle might adjust its process and/or messaging to better support successful street painting projects.

What counts as a street painting? Street paintings are designs painted by community groups on the paved street surface in the public right of way, often in the middle of a residential street intersection. They do not exclude vehicle traffic from the space they occupy. They are permitted by Seattle's Department of Transportation as community art projects, and are sometimes funded by Department of Neighborhoods grants. Street paintings are distinct from Seattle's Pavement to Parks projects and Community Crosswalks, both of which fall outside the scope of this research. This photo shows one of Seattle's street paintings:



### Who should take this survey?

This is a survey for people who have participated in creating neighborhood street paintings (sometimes called street murals) in Seattle. You may take the survey:

- as long as your project has at least begun planning
- even if your project painted or planned to paint many years ago
- even if your project has not painted yet
- even if your group decided not to paint
- regardless of the size of your role in the project
- People involved in actively objecting to a Seattle street painting near their home or workplace may also complete this survey

You may share the link to the survey with others you know who have been involved in Seattle street paintings.

If you have questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at [klotzc@uw.edu](mailto:klotzc@uw.edu).

Thank you for sharing your time and your story!

Sincerely,

Cheryl L. Klotz

### How to take the survey:

Fill out the following online survey, OR if you prefer to answer these questions orally, either in person or by phone, instead of in this online format, please contact me at [klotzc@uw.edu](mailto:klotzc@uw.edu).

Plan for it to take about 20 minutes to fill out the online survey. If you have a lot to say, or want time to think or look up details, you may want more time.

The survey consists of about a dozen questions, most of which are open-ended responses with space to write as much as you like. Responses to the first two questions (about the location of your painting and your role(s) in the project) and the question near the end about anonymity are required. You may skip any of the other questions if you do not wish to answer. Throughout the survey you are welcome to go into any level of detail that feels comfortable to you.

Before submitting the survey, you can answer the remaining questions in any order and revise your responses. Once you submit your survey, you will not be able to return to edit or amend it, or to see what you wrote before. You may wish to look over the survey first and copy the questions so you can compose (and save!) your answers elsewhere, then come back to the survey to paste them in. If you leave the survey before clicking the 'submit responses' button to receive a confirmation code, your partial responses were not recorded.

You can also take the survey again if you find you have more to add. If you do, please make some indication that will help me to connect your update with your prior response.

On the second page of the survey, please indicate whether you would like to remain anonymous in the report. You may also add contact information if you are willing to be contacted by the researcher, or quoted by name. Otherwise your responses are anonymous by default.

**QUESTION 1.**

Where is your street painting located?\* Please list intersection or block.

What does it look like?\*

Is there a name your painting or your project team goes by?

\*With this and other questions, if your group has not painted please say so and then answer however makes sense based on your past or future plan.

**QUESTION 2.**

What role(s) did you perform in creating your street painting?

Think about your roles in all phases of the project, including during planning phases, on painting day, in maintenance and upkeep phases, and/or any other steps of the process you may have contributed to.

**QUESTION 3.**

What did you hope the street painting project would accomplish?

What motivated you to want to paint your street? If you list multiple reasons for supporting the project, which was most important to you?

If you had concerns or objections to painting the street, please describe those here also.

**QUESTION 4.**

What do you think motivated your neighbors and teammates?

What potential advantages and disadvantages did they perceive painting the street might bring?

**QUESTION 5.**

How did you first hear about street painting? How did your group discover the idea?

**QUESTION 6.**

How did the street painting project change your block or your perception of your neighborhood and your neighbors?

...during the planning process?

...on painting day(s)?

...after the project was complete?

**QUESTION 7.**

Did you get what you hoped for?

What surprised you? Were there unexpected benefits or consequences?

**QUESTION 8.**

Would you paint again? Why or why not?

Is there anything you would change (add, remove, do differently)...

...If you could go back?

...As you go forward?

**QUESTION 9.**

How did interactions with Seattle Department of Transportation (permits), Department of Neighborhoods (grants), and/or other supporting groups or organizations impact your street painting?

**QUESTION 10.**

Is there anything else you would like to add?

**QUESTION 11.**

What year(s) did your group paint the street? Which year(s) were you involved?

Check all that apply.

	street painted	not 100% sure, date estimated	I was involved
we have not painted yet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
we decided not to paint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
we plan to paint in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2016	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2015	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2014	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2013	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2011	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2010	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2009	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2008	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2007	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2006	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

[Next >>](#)

**Questions or Comments?**

Contact CHERYL L KLOTZ at [klotzc@uw.edu](mailto:klotzc@uw.edu)

# SEATTLE STREET PAINTING PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Page 2 of 2

## QUESTION 12.

If a quote or detail from your survey response is used in the final report, is it ok if you are identifiable?

- It's ok if I'm named.
- It's ok if the reader can tell what street painting I am involved in.
- I would like to remain anonymous.
- Other:

## QUESTION 13.

Are you willing to be contacted for follow-up questions?

- yes
- no

## QUESTION 14.

Your responses to this survey are anonymous by default.

If you are willing to be contacted or quoted by name, please list your name and contact information here:

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your street painting experience.



[<< Previous Review >>](#)

### Questions or Comments?

Contact CHERYL L KLOTZ at [klotzc@uw.edu](mailto:klotzc@uw.edu)