

Intersection Repair: Program Information

Intersection Repair is the **citizen-led conversion of an urban street intersection into a public square**. It is a form of grassroots city planning that can nurture art, public gathering and volunteerism in your neighborhood. The process is sanctioned by the City of Portland and sponsored by The City Repair Project, a local non-profit organization that promotes neighborhood livability through citizen action.

Why Intersection Repair?

*Public gathering places encourage **communication** and **social interaction**, and provide a **sense of place** -- essential components for building vibrant neighborhood communities.*

*In the United States, nearly all of our cities, towns and suburbs were planned and built by **real estate developers**. For most of human history, however, settlements were largely planned and built by the **people** who would be living in them.*

*If you visit a town or village that has developed naturally - and many still exist throughout the world - you'll notice that **public squares** are very common. These are the places where the people gather: to trade goods, exchange news, meet friends, organize, fall in love, or any of the other countless interactions that happen daily in a **healthy community**.*

*Public squares are almost **completely absent** from the American landscape, in part because our cities were primarily built for commerce, not communities. Without these places, where does the daily practice of community happen? Often, throughout the nation, it simply doesn't.*

*If something doesn't work the way it should, it needs to be fixed. The City Repair Project aims to repair our cities to make them true **places for communities to live and grow**. We start with Intersection Repair by returning public squares - the heart of community - to our neighborhoods, one by one.*



How It Works

Public gathering places encourage **communication** and **social interaction**, and provide a **sense of place** -- essential components for building vibrant communities. **Intersection Repair** provides a way for Portland citizens to reclaim the identities of our communities and *return public squares to our neighborhoods*. Intersection Repair:

- **reinterprets existing public space** and adapts it for a new, socially uplifting use.
- establishes a site and a framework for **local participation** in a process of "community building itself."
- provides a **focus for neighborhood identity**.
- provides a place for the things that people do in the **heart of a community**, such as sharing news, lending tools, exchanging garden produce, or simply enjoying each others' company.
- establishes a **locally-created sense of place**, built by participation and cooperation.

What It Will Do For Your Neighborhood

The City government supports Intersection Repair because it improves neighborhood livability – without spending a single tax dollar. We've seen first-hand how neighborhoods have changed simply by people working together to create an Intersection Repair:

- increased *communication and interaction* between neighbors
- a stronger sense of *local identity and culture*
- *reduced traffic speed, lower crime rates*, and safer adjacent streets
- *beautification* of the public environment
- greater *participation* in community affairs

Contact Us!

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Intersection Repair: *Frequently Asked Questions*

How do you public square out of a street?

Simply by working together to make the intersection **special**, your community can turn even a sea of asphalt into a place where people want to go to, and where they feel safe and welcome. Make it beautiful, interesting, and meaningful – an **expression of your community's local culture**.



Is it just painting the street, or something more?

Each Intersection Repair project is **the work of neighborhood residents**. You and your group decide what it will look like, how it will function and how it will develop. One neighborhood may only **paint a giant mural** on the intersection. Another may go through many phases: painting the street, installing a community bulletin board, building a mini-cafe on a corner, reconstructing the intersection with **brick and cobblestones**, opening businesses to make it a village center... and on and on!



Does this close the street to cars?

No. Many public squares throughout the world are in fact **shared by cars and pedestrians**. These spaces are **designed** in ways that make drivers move more slowly and expect pedestrians. Such design is one of the goals of an Intersection Repair.

Why would a neighborhood want an Intersection Repair?

It depends - each one is different. Maybe people want a **focal point for their neighborhood**, a place for community interaction and seasonal celebrations. Maybe they want to slow down traffic, and let **pedestrians share the public space of the road** equally with cars.



Who makes a project happen?

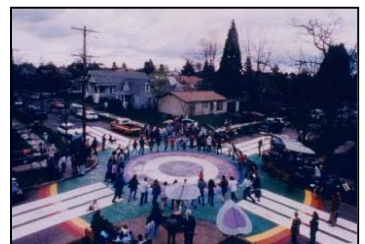
You and your neighbors do! You start the idea, get your community involved, create a design, and install it at your intersection. **City Repair** is here to help you navigate the process, work with your neighbors, connect with skilled people in your community, and meet City requirements.

What does this all cost?

Paint for an intersection mural will generally cost between \$500 and \$800. Materials for corner installations can often be obtained by salvage or in-kind donations. Neighbors are responsible for all **project expenses**, but City Repair provides project facilitate and assistance free of charge.

How do I get started?

It all starts with a **potluck**. Have some of your neighbors over to share food, and find out what your concerns and dreams are for your community. If your group wants to move ahead, hold another potluck with more of your neighbors - and invite The City Repair Project (503-235-8946). We'll give a **short presentation** on Intersection Repair, help you identify neighborhood goals and resources, and talk with you about next steps for a project.



10 Steps to an Intersection Repair

A public square in every neighborhood...

*In January 2000, the Portland City Council established City Ordinance #172207, the first "Intersection Repair" ordinance, which set a precedent of **allowing neighborhoods to develop their own public gathering places** in certain street intersections. Through a process of creative involvement, neighborhoods are now **legally empowered** to design and build public places that reflect their **local culture**.*

Intersection Repairs are currently governed by the most recent applicable ordinance, #175937 (09/19/01).

- STEP 1- Assemble a representative group of residents** living within a two-block radius of the street intersection you would like to consider for an Intersection Repair. Ascertain through discussions whether there may be sufficient local support for a project, especially including the property owners and/or residents immediately adjacent to the site.
- STEP 2- Contact City Repair.** Call us at 503-235-8946 and tell us you want to explore doing a project! We're a non-profit citizen organization set up to guide you through the Intersection Repair process and provide you with technical assistance.
- STEP 3- Hold a neighborhood meeting.** Notify all residents within the two-block radius of the Intersection Repair site for this meeting, where you should discuss the state of your neighborhood, the value of public gathering places, the Intersection Repair idea and any other ideas that may come up for improving neighborhood livability.
- STEP 4- Form a core group** that can begin the process of involving more residents within the two-block radius. Conduct planning meetings to determine a time schedule for your community involvement processes, including design workshops, installation dates, maintenance plans and an organizational structure.
- STEP 5- Hold a preliminary event**, such as a large block party in the intersection, so you can close the space for a day and get a sense of what it feels like when people are there together. You might have music, creative activities, or a potluck to test the idea for an Intersection Repair.
- STEP 6- Conduct neighborhood workshops** to determine your design concept and organizational structure. The City Repair Project can provide technical assistance in establishing criteria for developing a sense of place, identifying a local structure of responsibility and involvement, and facilitating group discussion and mediation.
- STEP 7-** Before you receive final approval from the City, there are **two things to do** in order to complete your project. Start working on these during your neighborhood workshops:
- 1) You will need to **provide signatures of approval** of each owner and resident adjacent to the proposed site, and of at least 80% of the residents (on per household) *within two standard city blocks*. (A business tenant is equivalent to a household.)
 - 2) You should form a **neighborhood organization** with responsibility for organizing neighborhood participation in the project and overseeing the usage and maintenance of the new public place. The City Repair Project can provide a model for you to use and help you form the organization.
- STEP 8- Present your concept to the City Traffic Engineer** for approval. City Repair can help you create your proposal and guide it through the appropriate City agencies.
- STEP 9- Create Your Public Square!** If your plan is approved by the City, you can start creating your Intersection Repair with a day of installation and celebration. It is a good idea to involve as many of the talents and skills of local residents as possible in the processes of construction, installation, and during celebration events and performances.
- STEP 10- Look to the Future.** After your day of installation and celebration, your organization will need to review its work and provide for ongoing work on a sufficiently regular basis to ensure the Intersection Repair's proper usage and maintenance. It is important to hold further discussions, and design workshops -- as your community and local culture develop, so will the look and usage of your new public square. Keep the City and The City Repair Project involved at every step of your process and, be sure to abide by the open-ended conditions of the City Intersection Repair Ordinance.

City Ordinance No. 175937
Conditions of Revocable Permit to Modify City Intersections
(passed by Portland, Oregon City Council 09/19/01)

- (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.
- (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.

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