

Painted Intersections in Seattle

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, quite a few, and 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.
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 temporary Street Use installation permit from SDOT is required.

How does the approval and permit process work?

1. First, call or email SDOT Neighborhood Traffic division to let us know you're interested in an intersection painting project. Contact Neighborhood Traffic at (206) 684-0353 or by email at 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.

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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 must sign the petition, and you also need to notify residents who live at the intersection to ensure that they are aware of the project.
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 temporary Street Use installation 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 is \$101 and requires an additional \$75 inspection fee, for a total of \$176. 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 temporary 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>.