



Comments on PW10.1, Options for Permitting Street or Intersection Murals on Local Streets

Walk Toronto is writing to reiterate its support for allowing street murals on local streets in Toronto.

Street murals have been shown to create a positive community-building benefit. Street murals originated in Portland, Oregon, over 15 years ago. A study of a street in Portland where the community had come together to create street murals showed that residents were significantly more likely to rate their neighbourhood as “an excellent place to live” compared to similar streets without murals ([“The Intersection of Urban Planning, Art, and Public Health: The Sunnyside Piazza”](#), *American Journal of Public Health*).

In another study, 85% of people living near a street mural “perceived increases in neighbourhood communication and safety and a decrease in crime and traffic speeds” (*Tactical Urbanism*, p. 97). It is clear that street murals help to build community and create a positive feeling among residents.

There is also the possibility that street murals reduce speeds on local streets. The staff report acknowledges that the City of Ottawa program has detected some speed reductions after street murals were painted. It is well established that making the environment slightly more complex for drivers results in lower speeds, as drivers are forced to pay greater attention and instinctively slow down as a result (for example, [adding street trees reduces speeds](#)).

Toronto residents want slower, safer streets. At the moment, the only thing residents can do is put up “Slow down, kids at play” signs and petition for speed bumps. Enabling street murals gives communities a tool to quickly make a difference themselves.

Street murals can be enabled through existing city programs, such as the local street closure process to enable the painting, and the StreetARToronto mural office to approve the design. The materials will be paid for by the community, and the community can decide the extent and timing of maintaining or replacing the mural. The city can establish guidelines allowing roadwork whenever necessary. There is no need for the process to be complicated.

Street murals can thus be enabled at little or no cost to the city, while resulting in significant benefits to the community. Walk Toronto encourages the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee to enable these valuable community contributions to Toronto.

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On behalf of Walk Toronto