

PUBLIC ART PROJECT PLAN

PROJECT PLAN FOR VISION ZERO PUBLIC ART

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I. Introduction

The City of Alexandria’s Public Art Implementation Plan outlined a vision and goals for the public art program and established three Creative Directions: Time and Place, Neighborhoods & Gathering Spaces, and Natural and Urban Systems. Within the Natural and Urban Systems portion of the Plan, public art is encouraged to be integrated into transportation infrastructure projects.

The City of Alexandria Public Art Program is coordinating the planning and implementation of public art to support the City’s Vision Zero initiatives. Vision Zero is an international movement founded on the belief that traffic deaths and severe injuries are unacceptable. The FY2024-2026 Public Art Annual Workplan identified Vision Zero coordination as a top public art priority and describes numerous areas for project development and potential for coordination in order to meet the Vision Zero goal of eliminating fatal and severe traffic injuries in the City of Alexandria by 2028.

The Public Art Annual Workplan recommends that a prototype project (or pilot) be initiated. An asphalt art pilot location has been identified through coordination with the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES) in an area where curb extensions are planned.

The Public Art Implementation Plan sets out a process for the commissioning of new public art. For each project approved in Public Art Annual Work Plan, the Commission for the Arts appoints a Public Art Project Task Force to advise on the entire project development process. The staff and the Project Task Force develop a Project Plan that sets out the project goals, artist selection process, budget, timeline, and communications strategy. The Project Task Force then selects an artist, through a process set out in the Project Plan. The artist develops a concept, which is then approved by the Project Task Force and the Commission for the Arts.

This document is the project plan for Vision Zero public art.

II. Site and Context

About the City of Alexandria

Alexandria, Virginia is a small historic seaport city of about 158,000 residents located on the Potomac River, minutes from Washington, D.C. It is best known for its historic Old Town but is also home to federal agencies such as the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office, the Defense Department and the headquarters of the National Science Foundation.

About Vision Zero

Vision Zero is a City initiative that is founded on the belief that traffic deaths and severe injuries are unacceptable. For years, Alexandria has been working to reframe the way we think about our streets and redesign them to be safe, accessible, comfortable, and even enjoyable for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Part of the City’s Vision Zero philosophy is that no loss of human life is acceptable on our roadways, and that fatalities and severe injuries are not inevitable “accidents”, but crashes that can be prevented by employing a holistic, safe system approach.

For the first time since the City of Alexandria’s Vision Zero goal of eliminating roadway deaths and severe injuries was adopted in 2017, the City ended 2023 with zero fatalities. While this does not necessarily indicate a trend or suggest that the City’s goal has been accomplished, it is a major milestone that demonstrates Vision Zero is achievable.

THE PROBLEM

Over 150 people were killed or severely injured in traffic crashes in Alexandria between 2017 and 2021. These were mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, friends, neighbors, and colleagues. This exacts a deep

toll, including deep emotional trauma, healthcare expenses, wage and productivity losses, and significant taxpayer spending on emergency response.

VISION ZERO KEY PRINCIPLES

- Traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable
- Human life and health is the highest priority
- Human beings make mistakes
- The human body is fragile
- Success depends on system-level change, not individual behavior

SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

A Safe System approach means taking a holistic look at traffic safety. Applying the Safe System approach involves:

- Anticipating human mistakes
- Designing and managing our transportation system so that (a) the risk of mistakes is low; and (b) when a mistake leads to a crash, it doesn't result in fatal or severe injury.

VISION ZERO AS A MOVEMENT

Vision Zero was first adopted in Sweden in 1997 and has since spread around the world. In the United States, Alexandria is one of over 50 Vision Zero communities.

Integration of Public Art in Vision Zero

In December 2017, City Council adopted Alexandria's *Vision Zero Action Plan*, with a goal to eliminate fatal and severe traffic injuries by 2028. Several components of the Action Plan provide opportunities to utilize artistic intervention:

- The first involves building safe streets for everyone, emphasizing safety treatments and infrastructure projects. Use of art driven interventions to the streetscape can facilitate slower, calmer, and more attractive streets for residents.
- The second focuses on promoting a culture of safety: educating the public about traffic safety, encouraging city-wide, interdepartmental Vision Zero initiatives, and strengthening enforcement.

The Action Plan acknowledges that artistic intervention is a national best practice in enhancing public knowledge of the subject. Projects that engage the public around safety and commemorate those lost or injured are a means by which public education on the subject can be achieved. Alexandria will be following nearby cities (Baltimore, Washington D.C.) and others in utilizing these interventions to help achieve Vision Zero goals.

Artistic interventions can also support Alexandria's GO Alex initiative, which encourages increasing mobility and the improvement of air quality by enhancing walkability, bicycling and public transit usage, thereby reducing automobile dependence. By their nature, artistic interventions that prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety support the experience of non-automobile dominated mobility. These interventions would therefore make the area more comfortable, safe, and accessible to walk or bike.

During the development of the FY24-26 Public Art Annual Work Plan, T&ES's Vision Zero and Complete Street teams identified potential intersection opportunities, and suggested placemaking/ wayfinding at trailheads and artistic lighting at World Day of Remembrance as additional opportunities.

Examples of opportunities for public art to support these initiatives could include:

- **Barrier Beautification:** Murals painted on protective Jersey barriers beside bike lanes and sidewalks.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** Asphalt art and hardscape improvements, such as curb extensions; wayfinding and signage, planters, painted utility boxes, and boulders that calm traffic.
- **Murals:** Themed to commemorate those lost to traffic fatalities and/or encourage roadway safety.
- **Events:** Commemorating World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims through temporary art installations, performances and events.
- **Artists in Residence:** Utilizing an artist in residence program to develop artistic interventions such as those above, as well as curriculum and public service materials.

The Annual Work Plan also identified the opportunity to collaborate with artists from Baltimore and Washington to develop toolkits or standard techniques that local artists can learn to implement projects. Also, Vision Zero projects are good opportunities to collaborate with schools and community groups.

[Pilot Asphalt Art Location in Warwick Village and Background](#)

During the development of the FY24-26 Public Art Annual Work Plan, T&ES's Vision Zero and Complete Street teams identified the intersection of Hickory Street and Kennedy Street in the Warwick Village neighborhood as a potential asphalt art location for a Vision Zero pilot project. Asphalt art is a short to medium term public art intervention that can be compatible with other planned traffic control interventions; and is not intended to preclude future permanent intersection improvements, such as curb modifications or new or expanded landscape islands.

The intersection of Hickory Street and Kennedy Street was identified as a location of concern by Warwick Village residents in February 2023. The intersection has numerous pedestrians and bikes hourly and over 1,200 vehicle users per day. Speeding on Kennedy Street and the size of the intersection make it hard and uncomfortable for people walking to cross. It is also difficult for drivers to understand who has the right-of-way.

In 2023, City staff coordinated with residents on identifying options to address safety for all users. Measures that are being implemented in Spring 2024 include:

- **Curb Extensions:** The existing medians from the northside service roads and southwest corner of the intersection will be extended to help reduce active time that pedestrians are in the roadway as well as reduce vehicle turning speeds.
- **High-Visibility Crosswalks:** In addition to the "Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalk" plaques, the high-visibility crosswalks increase driver attentiveness and visibility of pedestrian crossings.
- **Mini-Roundabout / Traffic Circle:** The roundabout improves intersection flow of the intersection while also reducing conflict points with all users and reducing vehicle speeds, thereby lowering the risk of injury-related crashes.

[About Warwick Village](#)

Warwick Village History and Community

Warwick Village is named for the Warwick Estate, the country home of 19th century DC businessman and philanthropist Frank Hume. In the 1950s, Warwick and its surrounding property were sold for development (the estate, which had been on the 2900 block of Landover Street, was demolished in 1953). Originally a development of rental homes, it was converted to townhomes for sale in the 1970s.

Warwick Village Community

Warwick Village is a highly walkable and neighborly community. Residents can join the Warwick Village Citizens Association and community pool. Residents are also active in the nearby community of Del Ray.

(Source: <https://www.thegoodhartgroup.com/neighborhoods/warwick-village/>)

For more information about Warwick Village and its history, please visit the following links:

- Warwick Village Citizens Association: <https://www.warwickvillage.org/>
- Where We Live | Warwick Village in Alexandria, Va.: <https://wapo.st/3UKG9aR>

III. Standards and Best Practices for Artistic Interventions in the Roadway

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD): Section 3H.03. Aesthetic Surface Treatments

The MUTCD was revised in December 2023 to include guidance regarding aesthetic treatments of roadway surfaces and the surrounding streetscape. That MUTCD guidance is below:

Section 3H.03 Aesthetic Surface Treatments

Support:

- 01 Aesthetic surface treatments are sometimes used between the transverse lines within a crosswalk, in islands, in medians, in shoulders, within sidewalk extensions designated by pavement markings, or in other areas outside of the traveled way.
- 02 Common examples of materials used as aesthetic surface treatments include brick, paving bricks, paving stones, or other materials designed to simulate such paving. Some examples of geometries for aesthetic surface treatments include honeycomb, lattice, mesh, grid, and regular polygon patterns.
- 03 Surfaces with individual units laid out of plane and those that are heavily-textured, rough, or chamfered, could increase rolling resistance and subject pedestrians who use wheelchairs to the effects of vibration; it is desirable to minimize surface discontinuities.
- 04 Common examples of colors for aesthetic surface treatments incorporated into the material or geometry are brick red, rust, brown, burgundy, clay, tan, or similar earth-tone equivalents (see Figure 3H-1).

Standard:

- 05 **Aesthetic surface treatments shall not interfere with traffic control devices.**
- 06 **Aesthetic surface treatments shall not be of a surface that can confuse pedestrians with vision disabilities that rely on tactile treatments or cues for navigation.**
- 07 **Colors used for aesthetic surface treatments shall be outside the chromaticity coordinates that define the ranges of acceptable colors for traffic control devices.**
- 08 **Patterns that constitute a purely aesthetic surface treatment shall be devoid of advertising and shall not contain elements of retroreflectivity.**
- 09 **Patterns that constitute a purely aesthetic surface treatment for the interior area of a crosswalk shall not be designed to encourage road users to remain in the crosswalk, engage or interact with the pattern, or otherwise inhibit users from crossing the street in a safe and efficient manner.**

Guidance:

- 10 *Aesthetic surface treatments should not use colors or patterns that degrade the contrast of markings used to delineate an area, or that might be mistaken by road users as a traffic control application.*
- 11 *To provide contrast, a gap of at least one-half the width of the white transverse line used to establish the crosswalk, but not less than 6 inches, should be used between the white crosswalk lines and the aesthetic surface treatment, such as unmarked pavement or a black contrast line (see Section 3A.03).*
- 12 *To provide contrast, a gap of at least the width of the longitudinal line used to establish the area should be used between the longitudinal line and the aesthetic surface treatment, such as unmarked pavement or a black contrast line (see Section 3A.03). If the longitudinal line is a double line, the gap should be at least the width of one of the lines that makes up the double line.*
- 13 *Aesthetic surface treatments should not contain pictographs, illustrations, or symbols.*

Bloomberg Philanthropies: Asphalt Art Safety Study

This Bloomberg Study published in 2022 was designed to address this need and provide a quantitative assessment of multiple asphalt art projects to determine their impact on roadway safety. The analysis found significantly improved safety performance across a variety of measures during periods when asphalt art was installed.

Comparing the average of crash rates for before-after analysis periods, results from the Historical Crash Analysis include:

- 50% decrease in the rate of crashes involving pedestrians or other vulnerable road users
- 37% decrease in the rate of crashes leading to injuries
- 17% decrease in the total crash rate

Similarly, the Observational Behavior Assessment indicates:

- 25% decrease in pedestrian crossings involving a conflict with drivers
- 27% increase in frequency of drivers immediately yielding to pedestrians with the right of way
- 38% decrease in pedestrians crossing against the walk signal

Case Studies

The project team evaluated the following asphalt art case studies in the preparation of this project plan.

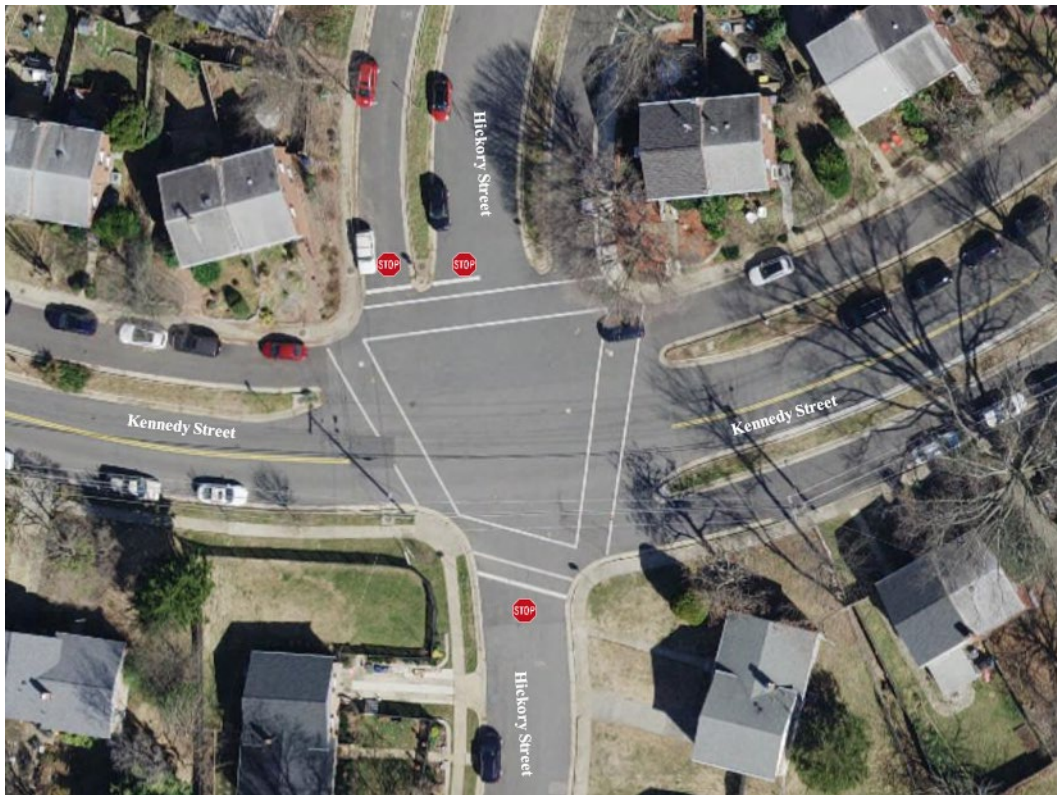
- Art in the Right-of-Way Toolkit (Baltimore, MD): [made-you-look_art-in-the-right-of-way-toolkit.pdf \(mica.edu\)](#)
- Color the Curb (Washington, DC): [Color the Curb: 2023 | Public Space Activation \(dc.gov\)](#)
- Bloomberg: [Asphalt Art | Bloomberg Philanthropies](#)
- Painted Intersection Programs (Milwaukie, OR and Seattle, WA):
<https://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/communitydevelopment/painted-intersection-program>
<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/SRTS/CAM2506.pdf>
- The City Repair Project (Portland, OR): [Street Painting FAQ — The City Repair Project](#)

IV. Maps, Photos, and Exhibits

Public Art Pilot Location



Location



Existing Conditions

Hickory Street and Kennedy Street Neighborhood Mini-Roundabout Concept

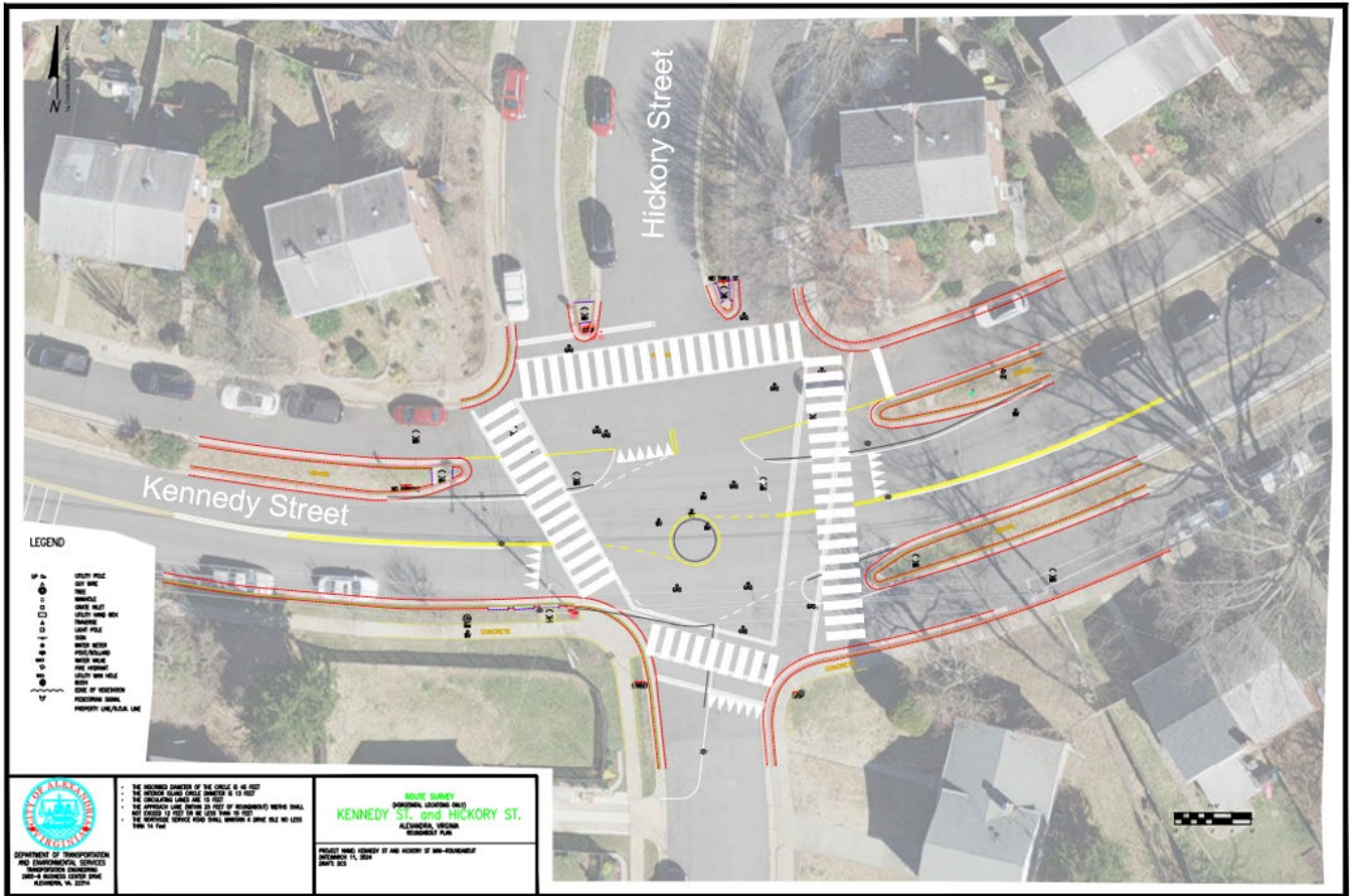
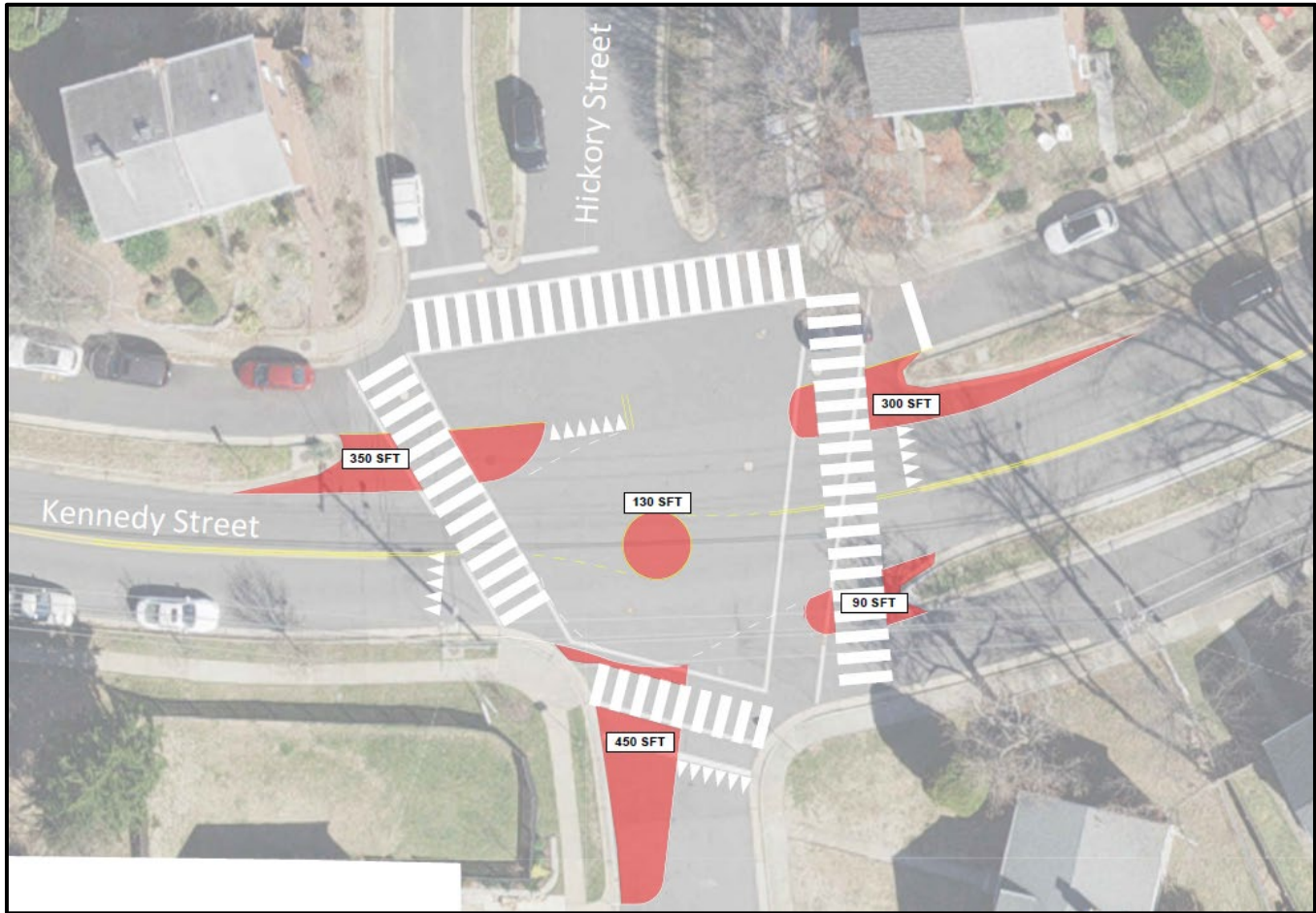


Exhibit Showing Potential Locations for Asphalt Art within the Mini-Roundabout Design



The shaded red areas show the approximate locations for asphalt art. The shaded areas total approximately 1,320 square feet. Asphalt art locations are subject to change due to final engineering of the mini-roundabout, which is being designed and installed in Spring 2024.

V. Goals

The Alexandria Public Art Program is interested in commissioning an artist to create and install an asphalt art design at the pilot project location. The program goals of this Vision Zero pilot project are to:

- Elevate the importance of safe intersections for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- Incorporate artwork that is reflective of the neighborhood's identity and celebrates the culture, spirit and/or history of area.
- Help strengthen the sense of community by engaging the local community and neighbors in the public art project.
- Create safer streets for people that follow federal and industry guidance on best practices and address ADA guidelines.
- Develop a pilot project that contributes to research and the larger knowledge base about public art and transportation.

VI. Project Scope

- The design of the mural should be appropriate for-all audiences.
- Designs should be colorful and bold to allow for viewing from a distance.
- The selected artist will be required to meet with the community prior to beginning mural installation, and the conversations may inform the concept design.
- The location of the artwork will be generally as shown on *Exhibit Showing Potential Locations for Asphalt Art within the Mini-Roundabout Design*, which is subject to modifications due to final engineering of the mini-roundabout.
- Paints must be approved by the City prior to installation and should be selected based on their durability for use on asphalt.
- The artwork must comply with Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards.

The City will assist with street closures, permits, and site preparation costs (specifically power washing). Areas with curb extensions will include flex posts provided by the City. The City will make an effort to retain the completed artwork for between 2 and 5 years. Public art in this location is not intended to preclude the City from completing more permanent intersection improvements at this location in the future, such as permanent curb modifications or expanded or new landscape islands.

VII. Selection Process

For the Vision Zero project, the Office of the Arts will issue a regional call for artists living and working in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. Finalists will be selected and given the opportunity to come to Alexandria and visit the pilot project location, meet with staff, and interview with the Task Force. Artists will be encouraged to provide information about how they may choose to engage with the community as a part of the art-making process, which may include opportunities during the design and/or installation process.

Vision Zero Task Force

The Vision Zero Task Force helps shape the Project Plan, and recommends selection of the artist and approval of concept.

The two Commission for the Arts representatives on the Task Force are:

- Stacey Becker
- Hosai Rasuli

The Community Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Amy Anda
- Casey Kane
- Eli Pollard

Project Stakeholders for the Task Force include:

- Alexandria Carroll, The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Daniel Scolese, The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Artist Selection Process

An open call process will be used to select artists for the project.

In accordance with the Public Art Implementation Plan and Policy, the Office of the Arts, will draft a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) based on the information provided in the Project Plan. This call will be issued via an online application system (Café – callforentry.org). Interested artists/artist teams will be welcome to submit a letter of interest, qualifications, work samples, and a statement indicating their approach to community engagement for the project.

The Task Force will review the applications and qualifications and recommend an artist for the project. The selected artist/artist team will be approved by the Commission for the Arts.

The selected artist/artist team will develop a Concept Proposal in collaboration with the Office of the Arts staff, consultants, and other partners. The Concept Proposal will include a rendering, narrative description, and fabrication method. The Concept Proposal will be reviewed for feedback by the Task Force and be recommended for approval by the Commission for the Arts prior to execution.

VIII. Timeline

May 2024	Task Force reviews and approves Project Plan*
May	Project Plan submitted to Commission for the Arts for approval
May/June	Staff develops call to artists for review by Task Force*
June	Issue Call for Artists via Café (callforentry.org)
June/July	Review qualifications and select artist/artist team (optional interviews)*
July	Task Force Recommends Artist*
July	Arts Commission Approval of Artist(s)
July/August	Artist contract and work plan submitted
August	Community Engagement
September	Artist presents concept for Task Force approval*
September	Concept approved by Commission for the Arts
September	Artist submits final design for technical review
October	Installation
TBD	Post installation observation of the pilot public art project.*
TBD	Establish a process and framework for future Vision Zero public art projects in the right-of-way that includes guidelines, standards, roles and responsibilities.*

**identifies steps with which the Public Art Task Force has a role.*

IX. Budget

The project plan recommends the following budget for pilot project:

Final design, fabrication & installation	\$20,000
Community participation and engagement (managed by Public Art Program)	\$5,000
Total	\$25,000

X. Community Engagement, Marketing and Communications

Community engagement, marketing and communications should be geared toward engaging with existing stakeholders and community members, as well as bringing new audiences to experience the artwork.

Stakeholders

Community engagement, marketing, and communications should build upon the existing stakeholder base for art and tourism in Alexandria and include additional community members and stakeholders in the area of the pilot project. These will include, but are not limited to, representatives from:

- Alexandria City Public Schools Students
- Del Ray Artisans
- Del Ray Business Association
- Duncan Branch Library
- Mount Vernon Recreational Center (RPCA),
- Transportation and Environmental Services
- Warwick Village Citizens Association

Marketing and Communications

The Office of the Arts staff will develop a marketing and communications strategy for the public art. Information/materials should be provided in languages relevant to the nearby communities. The marketing plan will include:

- Web-based information about the project.
- Social media.
- Print materials to be distributed at local events.
- Media releases to local publications and blogs.
- Lawn signs
- Including the project on the Public Art Archive ([Alexandria Public Art - Public Art Archive](#))
- Warwick Village Citizens Association Newsletter