



Successful Completion of Paint Pot Murals in Fort Collins!

Bike Fort Collins is excited to report the successful completion of all three Paint Pot street murals and the lasting community connections that will remain long after the paint has dried. The Paint Pot project is a grant funded partnership with Bike Fort Collins and the City of Fort Collins made possible through the city's recently formed Asphalt Art program. Funding for the project was made possible through the National Association of City Transportation Officials', [Pandemic Response and Recovery Grant Program](#). Under the stipulations of the grant, project locations were selected using multiple criteria, with special attention and focus on historically marginalized and underrepresented neighborhoods.



Beginning in 2019, Bike Fort Collins spearheaded the effort to bring street murals to our town in order to create placemaking, improve community cohesion, rethink how we use the built environment and elevate overall street beautification. Fostering input and collaboration with other cities around the country that have successfully executed similar programs, Bike Fort Collins is proud to have been at the center of a new movement in how we think about our streetscapes. It is important to note that, although the Paint Pot project was grant funded, ANYONE may apply to bring street murals to their neighborhood through the Asphalt Art program. (photo credit: Zack Haigh, City of Fort Collins)

Each Paint Pot mural has a unique story to tell based on the people who live there and the specific street dynamics of each location. Below is a brief overview of each:

Andersonville & Romero St.

Community gatherings began in late July of 2021 in order to discuss various bicycle and pedestrian issues in the Andersonville neighborhood, and to introduce the idea of street murals. Three community engagement events were held in the Andersonville neighborhood with the focus of fostering conversation and collaboration in the process of placing and designing a street mural. Events were free and included burritos dinners and coffee & doughnut mornings in the park. Many neighborhood mothers expressed concerns around vehicle speeds on Romero Ave, particularly during school bus pick-up and drop-off times.



Mural artist, Luis Santacruz, also attended these events. Connecting with residents, Luis learned about what they hoped to see represented in the mural. Because the Andersonville neighborhood is so very rich in Fort Collins latinx culture and agricultural history, it was important to make sure this was reflected in the mural. Adding to its historic significance, the Romero Ave mural is located immediately adjacent to the Museo de Las Tres Colonias. We are particularly grateful to have partnered with Luis, originally from Chihuahua, Mexico and latinx identifying as his lens was invaluable in creating a mural that resonated with the people. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)

In his own words, Luis explains his inspiration for the piece he titled "Somos Fort Collins":

"My inspiration came from the brief connections I made with the people in the community. It was important for me to capture the latin identity and to have the community members feel like it not only represents them, but belongs to them. As far as the Andersonville mural, it was important for me to uncover and highlight the history of the latin agricultural workers. To hopefully shed some truth about the history of fort collins and the important role latininos had in shaping it. The short hoe is a symbol of pride in the face of oppression that existed in the past and still today through complicated systems and institutions. I believe we can't move forward until we recognize everyone's history and the good and bad that came from it.--"

Painting day for Romero Ave took place on Sunday, October 24th. We began the day with warm temperatures, clear skies, and a pesky wind that proved to be a small obstacle as fall leaves draped across wet paint. As our first mural, it was a learning process for all of us and we are grateful for the special direction and project oversight from local painter, photographer, and faithful bicycle community supporter, Jillian Betterly. The street's canvas spread out in front of a gathering crowd of volunteers eager to help with the task ahead. Although the project seemed slightly daunting at the outset, the picture slowly came into view. Through the careful brush strokes of neighbors and friends (new and old) the piece was completed just before sundown.



Community lead and Asphalt Art applicant, Christina Silerio, is a third generation resident of Romero Street, with a family steeped in Fort Collins agricultural history. As a child Christina remembers her father's goats wandering the fields just west of Lemay during a time when neighbors knew each other well and would regularly shepherd the occasional goat that would wander astray. Christina was not only the lead applicant, but also instrumental in weaving together many of the families that have called Andersonville home for several generations. Bringing these faces to the table was critical in creating a project that belonged to the people.

Hickory Village & Hickory St.

Community engagement events for Hickory Village began in early August with a burrito picnic followed by two after school art activities. During these events we held open dialogue around safety issues and concerns bicycles and pedestrians traveling on Hickory Street. Similar to the Andersonville neighborhood, it was many of the neighborhood mothers that expressed concerns over bicycle and pedestrian safety their children, particularly during school bus drop-off and pick-up times. It should also be noted that Hickory Street is a dead-end street, terminating at the Soft Gold Park parking lot. Because dead-end streets are less frequently traveled than through streets, the area tends to feel relatively isolated with few "eyes on the street". Adding a mural to this location holds particular potential for creating a streetscape that feels more friendly, humanizing and inhabited. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)



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Gloria Cano, of Hickory Village served as the community lead and Asphalt Art applicant. As a mother of young children, Gloria created a network of other mothers when communicating neighborhood art activities and street mural painting. Gloria has been active in her community for many years and even created a community garden within the Hickory Village Mobile Home Park. Bringing together other moms of little ones was an effective method of planting the seeds of street mural planning and discussion. During our after school art activities we discussed mural design and concept with folks from the community and they were always happy and eager to share their thoughts and ideas with artist, Luis Santacruz. His piece, titled “Mi Frida Linda”, speaks to the proud Mexican and latinx heritage and culture that is so present and vibrant in North Fort Collins. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)

Met again with the luck of good weather, Hickory St. mural painting took place on Saturday, October 30th. Many children and families from Hickory Village joined us as well as other folks from the surrounding community. Throughout the day a steady flow of happy faces continued to arrive and help with the collective cause. Neighbors chatted as they rolled out the rich and vibrant colors selected by Luis, children painted alongside parents, new connections were made and community came together. What began as a blank canvas at 10am, was a completed street mural with a couple hours of daylight to spare. Stepping back in awe of what we all created, murals are a very tangible means of feeling the power of community. (photo credit: Zack Haigh, City of Fort Collins)



Roosevelt/Maple St. & Putnam Elementary



The third and final Paint Pot mural took place in the neighborhood surrounding Putnam Elementary, a Title I school located just north and west of town. Due to limited time (with fall quickly approaching) community engagement was limited to one burrito dinner held in the yard of Unity Church located off of W. Vine Drive. Although it was a single event, the folks who showed up were a vocal crew and all agreed on the need to focus on the intersection of Roosevelt Ave and Maple St. This is the same intersection that inspired local mother of two, Kate Edberg, to take her concerns to the city’s transportation fair in February of 2020. Although street murals cannot be directly credited with traffic calming, they are an effective tool in creating a streetscape that indicates the presence of a variety of road users through placemaking and street beautification. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)

Securing the approval of our city's traffic department for this project was a significant victory, as it would become our town's first **intersection** street mural. Not only is the Roosevelt/Maple intersection critical due to its proximity to Putnam Elementary, the two streets come together at a dogleg, further complicating intersection navigation. Bringing attention and focus to this intersection addresses a major bicycle and pedestrian safety issue that has been the topic of concerned conversation in the neighborhood for years. For future projects we look forward to advocating for even more innovative and ambitious traffic calming applications with paint and other low cost/install materials.

Serving as both mural artist and Asphalt Art applicant, Brian Barrett is a long time resident of Roosevelt St and frequently travels the intersection of Roosevelt St and Maple Ave. while walking his two youngest daughters to school. Brian is also an official bike ambassador for the City of Fort Collins and dedicates himself to helping our town strive towards an even more bicycle friendly future. His patterned design brings vibrant, cheerful colors to the Putnam neighborhood, with an abundance of red outlines and highlights that help to emphasize the need for caution and consideration when approaching as a bicycle, pedestrian or vehicle. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)



“Not only was my idea to help brighten up the neighborhood but also to bring awareness and attention to the street that children walk everyday. The abstract circle design is quite the jump from my normal portrait style, but I knew wanted it to be playful, colorful and somewhat easy to produce on a larger scale. This was one of my favorite art projects that I have been a part of, and it was just amazing to see the city and the community come together and make this happen.” - Brian Barrett

Although the Roosevelt/Maple community painting day didn't quite reach the warm temperatures as the first two murals, we were equally as lucky to paint on dry pavement just warm enough to allow for curing. With school out for the day, we specifically selected November 8th to optimize the participation of neighborhood kids and minimize interruption to school bus navigation. A joyful crew of kiddos from the area came out to participate, and the simple, vibrant shapes offered the perfect place for little hands to lay down copious layers of paint. Greater than the sum of our parts, the mural quickly took form and the mural was completed at a blistering pace. With time left to reflect and converse, many neighborhood folks hung around long after the sun dipped behind Horsetooth to reflect on the day's achievement and how we can further influence safer, more community based streets moving forwards. (photo credit: A. Kelso, Bike Fort Collins)

We are infinitely grateful to the amazing community of folks who came together to help make this happen. It truly took a village to make this happen. You know who you are, and we thank you for sharing all of your time, talents, passion and care.

With an established Asphalt Art* program here in town, Bike Fort Collins is happy to offer support and guidance to anyone in the community interested in bringing street murals to their neighborhood.

*Asphalt Art program soon to be live