

McKinley Hill Neighborhood Planning NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY, ART + IDENTITY

Virtual Event Summary

On March 10, 2022, the City of Tacoma and community residents held a virtual event to discuss opportunities to integrate art enhancements into the neighborhood. The event began with a virtual history tour, led by Pretty Gritty Tours, before representatives from Spaceworks Tacoma and the City of Tacoma Office of Arts and Cultural Vitality presented on art enhancement opportunities.

Participants then broke into teams to discuss priorities for art in the neighborhood, and ideas for a new mural project to enhance McKinley Hill. About 50 people attended the event, and around 40 participated in the small-group discussions.



About the Neighborhood Planning Program

This event was part of the City of Tacoma's pilot Neighborhood Planning Program, which provides enhanced planning and development to support communities create strong, vibrant, and diverse neighborhoods.

In McKinley Hill, the Neighborhood Planning Program is addressing issues such as neighborhood identity and art, business district vitality, traffic calming and walkability, recreation and open space opportunities, community capacity-building, and other special projects as identified by the community. The program begins with a robust community engagement phase, and then moves into implementation of key neighborhood strategies.

What We Heard

Participants discussed the following questions in their small groups:

Mural project

As we work to find a location and artist for a new mural in the business district, which of the following are most important to you?

Keep in mind: We currently have funding for just one mural through Spaceworks, and the Arts Working Group will use your feedback to select a location and mural artist.

- **Location:** Where would you like to see murals in McKinley? Be specific on locations. Does anyone have connections to the property owners?
- **Artist:** Does the artist need to be from (or have strong connections to) McKinley/ Eastside? Tacoma? Puget Sound Region?
- **Feeling:** What feelings do you want the mural to evoke (for you and for other residents/visitors in McKinley)? Are there any themes, stories, or styles you DO NOT want to see?

Topic	Themes
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants said that the placement of the mural should welcome people to McKinley Hill and help create a sense of place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several people specifically noted that the mural should be on E McKinley Ave, and/or in the business district • The mural is an opportunity to align with other signage or arts enhancement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mural can help to tell the story of the neighborhood as part of a “trail of art” throughout the neighborhood ○ Some groups noted that the specific location of the mural will also help to define the theme of the mural ○ Mural should be in a location that allows interactivity and accessibility • Participants noted specific locations in business district (listed from north to south): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chelsea Apartments (E 34th St and E McKinley Ave) ○ Eloise’s Cooking Pot – owns several buildings along E McKinley Ave ○ Blue apartment building (3420 E McKinley Ave) ○ North side of Parable (E 35th St and E McKinley Ave) ○ VFW building (E Harrison and E McKinley) ○ East-West Security Building (E Harrison and E McKinley Ave) ○ Green building at southwest corner of E Division Lane and E McKinley Ave • Other locations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retaining wall as you come uphill from the Dome ○ Restrooms at McKinley Park ○ Fire Station (E 38th St and E McKinley Ave) ○ E 40th St and E McKinley Ave; connection to the Pipeline Trail
Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most groups were interested in seeing an artist from Tacoma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connection to neighborhood was important to many groups, but most did not think they need to live there currently (especially acknowledging displacement) ○ Several groups noted the importance of the connection with the Puyallup Tribe, and/or cultural relevance with the subject matter of the mural ○ Some groups felt that “a good artist is a good artist,” and that Tacoma/Eastside connection was less important • Some groups noted specific artists with connections to the neighborhood, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Silong Chhun ○ Saiyare Refaei ○ Ley Earthwright ○ Anthony, Daniel, and Chris Duenas ○ Chris Sharp
Feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most groups noted that the mural should evoke a sense of identity for McKinley and be a new neighborhood landmark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Several groups noted the importance of interactivity – a place to take a photo or meet a friend

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups were interested in seeing a mural theme that shows a connection to McKinley’s history, cultural diversity, and future, including the Puyallup Tribe • Groups also talked about the need for a welcoming mural, and used words like: curiosity, wonder, “wow” factor, cheerful, colorful, inspires hope, and positivity
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups noted that they’d like to see the mural and mural artist connected with the overall plan for the neighborhood to ensure a cohesive feel • Several groups mentioned an interest in crosswalk or sidewalk murals, including at 34th and McKinley • There is also interest in continuing to engage the broader community with the mural process and/or implementation

Neighborhood Arts Enhancements

The feedback from this discussion will help inform the Arts, Culture, and Identity working group as they continue to explore opportunities to integrate arts into the neighborhood.

Keep in mind: We have funding to integrate some small arts enhancements, but not yet for larger pieces.

- **Significance:** As you imagine all the elements of a neighborhood—the homes, parks, businesses, and public spaces—how important are the arts to the identity of McKinley?
- **Permanence and size:** Imagine McKinley a year from now. What kind of art would you like to experience? How about 5 years from now?
 - How long do you want art enhancements to last? Is it okay if they fade (street mural) or need to be replaced over time (street banners)?
 - Is it more important to have one or two larger pieces, or multiple smaller pieces integrated throughout the business district/neighborhood?
- **Themes:** Are there cultural traditions and art forms from your own background that are not yet represented in McKinley?

Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several people mentioned specific arts interventions that they’d like to see incorporated into the neighborhood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Banners on light poles ○ Crosswalk/street/sidewalk murals ○ Welcome signage ○ Wrapped utility boxes ○ Wrapped or painted trash cans • Groups talked about an interest in a mix of temporary and permanent art pieces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future, permanent art pieces could be a focal point of the neighborhood ○ There is also interest in more temporary pieces (like storm drain murals) • Participants also noted some specific opportunities to integrate arts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunity to integrate public art into new development projects ○ Opportunities to add art to activate park and open space locations, including new micro-green spaces (pocket park on Fairbanks)