



PRESS RELEASE

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CITY OF SAGINAW RECEIVES GRANT FUNDING FOR ASPHALT ART INITIATIVE

July 16, 2020 SAGINAW, MI – The City of Saginaw, in partnership with the Great Mural Project, has been awarded a \$25,000 national grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The Asphalt Art Initiative grant is intended to revitalize and beautify underutilized public spaces, improve street safety, and to promote collaboration in Saginaw.

The City of Saginaw is one of sixteen cities, out of over 200 applicants, awarded this grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The Asphalt Art Initiative not only seeks to create vibrant public spaces but also looks to build city capacity by working with artists and community groups on projects involving transportation infrastructure. From this funding, the City and members of the Great Mural Project will create a collage of colorful murals on the streets, intersections, and crosswalks of Saginaw, or vertical surfaces of transportation infrastructure like utility boxes and traffic barriers. The Great Mural Project has been very active in creating art in Old Town and downtown Saginaw over the past three years, including the recent mural along the Court Street Bridge underpass.

Through this grant and the art it creates, the group hopes to remake Saginaw streets, improve public safety, inspire people, attract visitors, and enhance the quality of life for residents. Cassi Miller, Business Development Manager for Saginaw Future and Great Mural Project Steering Committee Member, commented on the positive impact this project will have on the Saginaw community “Public art has the power to reshape the way we experience our city. Our goal is to not only create a new atmosphere in our downtown, but to create new experiences that allow community connections to be forged. Through the planning, outreach, and strategy, we hope to unite and inspire our community.”

This project will enhance three intersections along Court Street between Michigan Avenue and Fordney Street with asphalt paintings in the intersections and colorful crosswalks along Court Street. A committee of diverse leaders will guide local artists as they create asphalt art that celebrates the diversity in our community.

Jamie Forbes, City Council Member and Great Mural Project Steering Committee Member, commented on the award “It is quite an honor to be chosen among all the cities that applied. We are grateful to Bloomberg Philanthropies for this opportunity. This is a big step forward for the City of Saginaw and members of the Great Mural Project. Receiving this award will allow all those who are involved in this initiative to collaborate with a team of globally recognized experts who will provide the necessary knowledge for each step of this project.”

Other goals of the project are to improve safety and the pedestrian experience through slower traffic speeds, shorter crossing distances and enhanced vibrancy and

beautification. Installing art on asphalt infrastructure is a growing trend, as cities and their partners paint creative crosswalks to enhance public space and promote safety. The creative designs are said to catch drivers' attention which makes them slow down and be more cognizant of pedestrians in the crosswalk.

The success of the Asphalt Art Initiative is dependent upon citizen engagement. Project development will kick off in mid-summer 2020 with the goal to install in mid-fall 2020. Dawn Goodrow-Hillier, Saginaw Arts and Enrichment Commissioner and Great Mural Project Steering Committee Member, commented on the need for community involvement, "We're calling all artists and creative community members to join us. We're excited to unite with our citizens and create a masterpiece on the streets of Saginaw."

To apply as an artist for the Saginaw Asphalt Art Initiative, [click here](#). Application deadline is August 14, 2020. To learn how you can get involved with the Great Mural Project, visit <https://www.greatmuralproject.com/>

For additional information about the Asphalt Art Initiative, visit [Asphalt Art Initiative](#).

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