

Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards New Round of Asphalt Art Initiative Grants to 25 Cities in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. to Improve Street Safety

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The Asphalt Art Initiative provides funding and technical support for arts-driven street redesigns to improve safety, revitalize public spaces, and engage local communities

Fourth round of grants expands the Asphalt Art Initiative to Canada and Mexico, and brings the total number of Asphalt Art projects to 90 since 2020

New York, NY – Bloomberg Philanthropies today announced that 25 cities in Canada, Mexico, and the United States will receive Asphalt Art Initiative grants – up to \$25,000 each plus technical support – to install projects that use art and design to improve street safety, revitalize public spaces, and engage residents. The new Asphalt Art Initiative projects, to be installed in 2024, were chosen from more than 200 applications, and each addresses a particular challenge related to pedestrian and cyclist safety in their city.

The following cities will receive support to:

- **Improve a challenging intersection using curb extensions and other tools**
 - *Mexico:* Colima, Colima; Mérida, Yucatán
 - *United States:* Anderson, South Carolina; Clarksdale, Mississippi; Fall River, Massachusetts; Fort Collins, Colorado; Honolulu, Hawaii; Little Rock, Arkansas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Passaic, New Jersey
- **Reduce conflicts between drivers and pedestrians along a series of intersections**
 - *Canada:* Halifax, Nova Scotia
 - *Mexico:* Puebla, Puebla
 - *United States:* Flagstaff, Arizona; Louisville, Kentucky; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; Rockville, Maryland; Stamford, Connecticut
- **Create or enhance safe pedestrian space**
 - *Canada:* Calgary, Alberta
 - *Mexico:* Juárez, Chihuahua; Mazatlán, Sinaloa; Mexico City; Oaxaca, Oaxaca
 - *United States:* Milwaukee, Wisconsin; San Francisco, California

In addition to grants, the selected cities will receive technical consulting provided by Bloomberg Associates in partnership with tactical urbanism firm [Street Plans](#). The expansion of the Asphalt Art Initiative in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. builds upon three prior rounds of Asphalt Art Initiative [grants](#) given between 2020 and 2022, which supported a total of 65 street-design projects across 42 cities in the U.S. and 22 in Europe. This fourth round of the Asphalt Art Initiative will bring the total number of Asphalt Art projects to 90.

“The Asphalt Art Initiative has proven that when cities invest in these low-cost projects, streets become safer and communities become stronger,” **said Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and 108th mayor of New York City.** “The new Asphalt Art Initiative projects in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. will save more lives, inspire more imaginations, and strengthen more cities across the continent.”

Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Asphalt Art Initiative responds to the growing number of cities around the world embracing art as an effective and low-cost strategy to improve street safety through interventions on crosswalks, intersections, plazas, and other transportation infrastructure. In addition to safer streets, the initiative creates vibrant public spaces, fosters interagency collaboration, and increases each city’s capacity to work with artists and community groups on creative projects. The 65 projects supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies underway or completed to date have transformed a combined 475,000 square feet of streetscape with artwork while engaging nearly 10,000 residents and 200 artists in the design and installation process.

The Asphalt Art Initiative is inspired by work done to improve pedestrian safety and revitalize New York City streets during Michael R. Bloomberg’s mayoralty (2002-2013) and Bloomberg Philanthropies’ pro bono consultancy, Bloomberg Associates, which, as part of their scope, advises cities around the world on implementing arts-driven street design projects.

“Asphalt Art Initiative projects around the world continue to showcase the safety and community benefits of public art,” **said Kate D. Levin, who leads the Arts Program at Bloomberg Philanthropies.** “The latest round of grants will bring these benefits to even more cities in the U.S. and support the growth of asphalt art in Canada and Mexico.”

“What started as a low-cost, high-impact way to make New York City streets safer has grown into a life-saving movement spanning 90 street transformations across 20 countries,” **said Janette Sadik-Khan, Principal for Transportation at Bloomberg Associates.** “As the cities around the world fight against traffic deaths, the Asphalt Art Initiative shows how much progress you can make with a fresh coat of paint and fresh thinking about how to design streets that are safer for everyone.”

Data shows that asphalt art projects at problematic intersections or locations in need of safety improvements can lead to a dramatic reduction in traffic crashes and unsafe driving. The [Asphalt Art Safety Study](#), released by Bloomberg Philanthropies in collaboration with Sam Schwartz Consulting in 2022, found traffic safety to be demonstrably improved across a cohort of 22 asphalt art projects in the U.S. The study results showed a 50% drop in the rate of crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists and a 27% increase in the rate of drivers yielding to pedestrians with the right of way. Other local impacts include:

- **Improving pedestrian safety:** In [Cincinnati, Ohio](#), the percentage of drivers complying with stop signs

tripled to 60% from 20% after a series of intersection murals were installed along a downtown street.

- **Revitalizing public space:** In Ferizaj, Kosovo, a dark and underutilized pedestrian underpass that offers safe passage across busy train tracks was transformed with inviting murals and better lighting, leading to a 23% jump in the number of people using this critical crossing.
- **Engaging community:** In Helsinki, Finland, where the vast empty plaza in front of a neighborhood cultural center was filled with an interactive artistic board game, over 1,000 community members attended the opening event and the percentage who feel positively about the public space increased to 78% from 27%.

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Resources for cities:

To help create asphalt art projects, cities can consult with the Bloomberg Associates *Asphalt Art Guide* and other resources on AsphaltArt.bloomberg.org. Materials in English, Spanish, French and other languages have been downloaded in 90 countries. More information is also available on Bloomberg Connects, the free mobile app for arts and culture.

Photos and Videos for Press Use:

Videos and photos along with credits and descriptions can be downloaded here.

About Bloomberg Philanthropies:

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 700 cities and 150 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health. Bloomberg Philanthropies encompasses all of Michael R. Bloomberg's giving, including his foundation, corporate, and personal philanthropy as well as Bloomberg Associates, a pro bono consultancy that works in cities around the world. In 2022, Bloomberg Philanthropies distributed \$1.7 billion. For more information, please visit bloomberg.org, sign up for our newsletter, or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

About Bloomberg Associates:

Bloomberg Associates is the philanthropic consulting arm of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable organization, Bloomberg Philanthropies. Founded in 2014, we work side by side with client cities to improve the quality of life for residents, taking a strategic, collaborative and results-oriented approach to making cities stronger, safer, more equitable and efficient. Our team of globally recognized experts and industry leaders has worked with cities across the globe on hundreds of projects in order to ignite change and transform dynamic vision into reality. For more information on the consultancy, please visit associates.bloomberg.org or follow us on Twitter.

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