



MEMORANDUM

To: Detroit Historic District Commission
From: Angie Gaabo, Executive Director
Re: Resident Support for Street Mural through DPW's "Paint the Street"
Date: July 5, 2021

For the last several years, Woodbridge Neighborhood Development has engaged neighbors in efforts to improve the walkability and pedestrian/bicyclist safety of the neighborhood. These efforts have included analysis of streets seeing high auto traffic speeds, a disregard for stop signs and speed limit signage, and other issues creating dangerous and unwelcoming conditions for walkers, children, and more vulnerable residents. Lincoln Street is a particularly bad spot in the neighborhood for speeding because both the street and the residential lots are wide, creating the illusion of a freeway. *At least 10 children under the age of 10 live on just the two blocks between Calumet and Alexandrine.*

In the summer of 2020, a couple residents along this stretch of Lincoln Street shared with WND a report about a community that used public art to create an interesting street visual—in this case, a street mural—to call attention to the residential quality of the area and thereby reduce traffic speeds. WND had been investigating the installation of public art at the intersection of Lincoln and Alexandrine (specifically a traffic "button") for this exact purpose, and decided that the cost and challenges of a novel infrastructure installation were too high, but that a street "mural" that did not create a roadway obstacle might be a similarly effective intervention. **The idea for the street mural(s) came directly from neighbors on Lincoln** and was deemed appropriate for the intersections at Lincoln/Alexandrine, Lincoln/Willis, and Lincoln/Calumet.

In Fall 2020 WND contacted a local muralist (Jake Dwyer) whose work was previously approved by HDC and installed in the Woodbridge Farm Historic District. Jake and WND staff pursued Department of Public Works (DPW) permission for intersection murals along Lincoln but were told that anything in the intersections would not be permitted. However, in Spring 2021 DPW staff noted that they *were piloting a program to allow murals midblock*, which could potentially accomplish the same thing. Jake and WND began preparing a permit application immediately, revising the proposed design to fit midblock, and reaching back out to neighbors to both share the good news and get their feedback on and approval of the final mural design.

In mid-May of this year, WND Director Angie Gaabo began reaching out directly to Lincoln Street neighbors on the two blocks between Calumet and Alexandrine. In a series of emails, Facebook Messenger posts, and telephone calls, we **made contact with every resident (9 total occupied households) on the two**

to Lincoln Street neighbors on the two blocks between Calumet and Alexandrine. In a series of emails, Facebook Messenger posts, and telephone calls, we **made contact with every resident (8 total occupied households) on the two affected blocks** and got their feedback on the mural design and installation as follows:

- Angela Topacio-DiDio and Matt DiDio. Supportive. Love the design elements.
- Jodi Trombley and Dan Polovina: Supportive. Brought the street mural idea to WND's attention. Did not share comments about the design but had questions about the painted surface.
- Angie and Brian Coe. Supportive. Like the barn quilt design the most. "Happy to have this unique traffic slowing art on our street."
- Renee and Zac Cruse. Supportive. "...Easy about the design, we will go with the flow."
- Jeremy Damaske. Supportive. Likes the barn quilt design. Only concern was whether DPW was planning to replace the street at some point and what would happen to the mural.
- Alan Languirand. Ambivalent. Thought the installation would be fun but wondered if it would really slow traffic and whether the paint would fade quickly.
- Eric Waters. Supportive.
- Colibri Harris. Supportive. "I would love to be part of this process." Suggested working with City's Arts & Culture Office.

On Friday, July 9th, Jodi and Dan will be hosting a meet and greet with the muralist and WND staff to discuss the final design and answer questions about the process (street closure, resident involvement, paint type and colors, maintenance, etc.).

In summary: Residents in Woodbridge—and in particular those living along those streets seeing high levels of cut-through traffic from the Lodge Freeway to Grand River and points west—are supportive of efforts to mitigate speeding, including the installation of speed humps, speed limit signage, painted crosswalks, and other physical interventions to lower speeds. We are excited that residents along Lincoln brought this novel idea to our attention and that we were able to locate a skilled muralist with relevant experience capable of executing the vision. Please let us know if we can provide further information in support of this HDC permit.