Program Guidelines | Creative Crosswalks

What are Creative Crosswalks?
Creative Crosswalks use colors, textures, and patterns to enliven city streets as engaging and safe places for people. They can be designed to reflect the special character of a neighborhood, mark the gateway to a district, or otherwise create local identity and pride.

They offer a playful, cost-efficient and low-maintenance tool to highlight marked pedestrian crossings. In addition to being fun, they raise awareness of pedestrian safety.

What designs and materials are allowed?
Please see the design guidelines that follow. This program is for creative crosswalks intended to last for about two years. The City provides all materials and installation services; the material used is a special, highly durable road-marking paint.

How do I request a Creative Crosswalk?
Submit a proposal on the application form provided. Staff from Austin Transportation Department will contact you to discuss the proposed project.

How are requests evaluated?
Applications are evaluated based on adherence to the Creative Crosswalk design guidelines, creativity and artistic elements. They should reflect the culture and history of a neighborhood and/or serve as a gateway to denote a special area of the city. The application review process includes a safety and design review by a City traffic engineer, and reviews by other City staff for maintenance and other issues.

What is the fee to install a Creative Crosswalk?
A standard project fee of $3,000 to $5000 covers the costs for the project, its installation, and maintenance for at least two years. Please see information about fees on the application form. The applicant is responsible for paying the fee and will be invoiced prior to the installation.

A project funding proposal may be submitted to the City’s Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP), a competitive citywide program that offers matching funding. The design should first be submitted to ATD for a cost quotation; that fee quote from ATD should be attached to the NPP application.

Applicants also are encouraged to pursue grants and other funding sources. A business association, business, or other entity may be interested in sponsoring the project. For a neighborhood fundraiser, consider using an online crowd-funding platform that allows many people to donate small amounts towards the project. For example, in the City of Memphis, the IOBY (In Our Backyard) platform has been used by residents to fund over $600,000 in creative and resident-led neighborhood projects.
The site proposed must have an existing painted crosswalk. If it does not, please call 3-1-1 first to submit a customer service request for installation of a continental crosswalk. (If a new marked crosswalk is approved for the location, include that information on your creative crosswalk application.)

Creative Crosswalk treatments are preferred at intersections with existing “Continental Crosswalk” markings (see below). If the site has an existing standard crosswalk, it may be repainted as a continental crosswalk as part of the project. All locations and design proposals must be reviewed and approved by a City traffic engineer. While creativity and artistic innovation is encouraged, Creative Crosswalk treatments cannot obscure or interfere with regulatory crosswalk markings needed for safety.

Where existing crosswalk markings have a continental style, decorative elements may be added only between the bars (10 feet wide x 2 feet deep, 4 feet between the bars).

Creative Crosswalk design proposals should:

- Be colorful, with simple patterns. Show specific colors. These will be reviewed by ATD staff for availability and appropriateness.
- Always include the reflective white parallel bars, in continental or standard layout.
- Not include shapes such as octagons, triangles, or any text, logos, or colors that can be confused with standard traffic control devices or legends.
- Not include commercial advertising or logos.
- Anticipate the need to create stencils for placement of the design. To ensure a quality installation, freehand painting is not allowed.
- Only be installed where pavement is in good condition, allowing the materials to bond well.
Preparing Your Application

Step 1: Read the application form. Identify a proposed site that meets the required criteria below.

Step 2: Suggest an alternate site, if possible, that also meets the criteria.

Step 3: Take photos of the proposed site to include with your application. Clearly identify the proposed location on the photos. (You may scan photos for inclusion as attachments).

Step 4: Create a drawing or illustration that shows your proposed design, using the template provided in the application.

Step 5: Fill out the application completely. Submit it with the photos and the design drawing.

Required Site Criteria

Before filling out the Creative Crosswalk Application, please review the checklist below. Submit an application only if your request fulfills the required criteria. ATD reserves the right to reject a proposal for safety concerns.

The proposed site:

☐ Is at a major intersection with a stop sign, traffic signal.

☐ Has an existing marked crosswalk.

☐ Is at a mid-block location controlled by a pedestrian hybrid beacon signal (PHB).

☐ Is for a permanent crosswalk, installed by the City, using high-durability road marking paint.

Please note: While ATD will strive to keep the creative crosswalk in good repair for at least two years, the City is not responsible for installations that are damaged or destroyed due to unforeseen circumstances.
Design Inspiration

Creative Crosswalks are being created across the country and the world. The examples below may serve as design inspiration for Austin proposals. Many other images are available online.

Please note that not all examples shown meet the City of Austin guidelines for a standard Creative Crosswalk.

Above: Madrid, Spain and Houston, TX projects. Below: Seattle “Community Crosswalks” reflect the character or cultural heritage of individual neighborhoods. The installations on the right celebrate Vietnamese culture.
Austin’s first Creative Crosswalk on Lake Austin Blvd. is shown below. The water imagery in the unique design (created by local artist through the Art in Public Places Program) was inspired by adjacency to the lake and LCRA.

The project below was installed on The Drag (Guadalupe Street) in Austin in 2017. This special project was done in conjunction with the University of Texas and designed by a UT student, who obtained grant funding.