

8th Street West Oakland Traffic Calming Project Public Art Notice

The City of Oakland is paving and redesigning 8th Street in West Oakland between Pine Street and Market Street, with the goal of reducing traffic collisions and speeding to make the street safer for residents, and more comfortable for users of all transportation modes.

This project was submitted by the community advocacy group [Safe 8th St](#) as a [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#) request and was funded as part of the City of [Oakland's Fiscal Year 2021-23 CIP](#). This project seeks to traffic calm the street into a quiet residential street. This includes reducing the speed limit. The project will pave the length of the street, upgrade curb ramps to meet accessibility standards, install high-visibility crosswalks and install traffic circles, speed humps, and upgraded hardened centerlines at intersections to reduce speeding. The project also includes a community art element. For more information on the 8th Street West Oakland Traffic Calming Project, see <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/8th-st-project>.

Since 2021 the City of Oakland's Department of Transportation (OakDOT) has been seeking partnerships with community-rooted West Oakland artists, community organizers, and organizations for the project's art component. One project that has emerged is painting the eleven utility boxes along 8th Street that are owned by the City of Oakland. This notice includes information on the painting of five of these utility boxes. See the reverse side for details about the proposed murals on the utility boxes at the indicated locations.

About the Artist – Refa One

For over two decades, Oakland, California native Refa One has been instrumental in the development of the innovative, unorthodox genre of art known as “Aerosol Art” (Graffiti Art/Style Writing). Immersed in HipHop culture as a youth, the walls of urban structure became his canvas. Refa's refined HipHop calligraphy speaks to the legacy of style writing, a cultural tradition born from the NYC subway painting movement. A lifetime of involvement in HipHop culture via the Universal Zulu Nation combined with his radical political awareness, has translated into a successful career as a HipHop calligrapher, muralist, illustrator, activist, and educator.

Refa's design aesthetic promotes African culture as a vehicle for radical political and social change. His pieces are maps of vision and reflection that capture the intellectual value and heritage of the HipHop vernacular. His themes materialize in the fusion of his unique stylized letters and his use of eclectic cultural iconography. That fusion result is a multitude of powerful works engaging the spirit, intellect, and the imagination. His work has been featured nationally and in various countries throughout Europe and the African continent.

Refa One is currently the director of AeroSoul, an international organization of spray can artists from the African Diaspora.

Comments

If you have questions or comments about the proposed murals, contact OakDOT staff, Stephen Tu, at stu@oaklandca.gov



Existing utility box (example)



A. 8th St and Mandela Parkway

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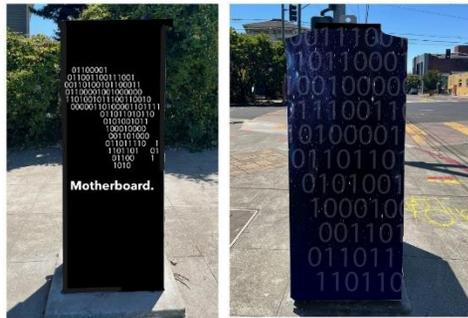
Black Panther: West Oakland was the foundation and organizing epicenter of the internationally renowned Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1966. The Graphic prominently features the Black Panther iconography on top of a light blue background commonly used by the Party. The design boldly reads "SERVE THE PEOPLE", a slogan championed by the BPP which rallied the community in a formation of self-determination through service to those in need.



B. 8th St and Peralta St

B. 8th St and Peralta St

Red, Bike and Green: This design uses the local vernacular aimed at promoting Black community cycling with the phrase "Red Bike & Green". The phrase references Red Black & Green which are the flag colors tied to the historic 8th street chapter of the U.N.I.A. (Universal Negro Improvement Association) lead by the Honorable Marcus Garvey.



C. 8th St and Peralta St

C. 8th St and Peralta St

Motherboard: The graphic features the continent of Africa made from binary code that reads "Africa is home". This is meant to inspire the children at the school across the street to imagine a future in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) linked to a glorious past. The front facing image has the graphics in full view while the rear and side panels have elements of the binary code with a cosmic stardust background aesthetic.



D. 8th St and Mandela Pkwy or 8th St and Willow St

D. 8th St and Mandela Pkwy or 8th St and Willow St

This design has a futurist aesthetic of two West African symbols representing Hard work and community support. This design is done to commemorate the local history tied to Marcus Garvey and U.N.I.A. The colors of the graphic wrap around the pedestal.



E. 8th St and Mandela Pkwy or 8th St and Willow St

E. 8th St and Mandela Pkwy or 8th St and Willow St

"Oakland 1966" is another Black Panther Party themed box dedicated to point two of the 10-point program that reads, "We want full employment for our people." This is an updated original design of the Party's panther logo that was created for this work.