

Creative Crosswalk Project

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ART IN THE COMMUNITY

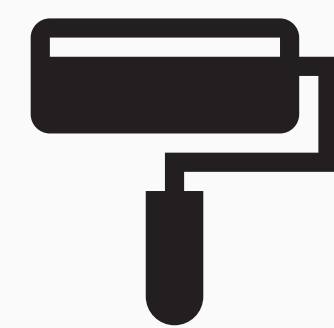
Matthew Donaldson // University of South Carolina Upstate

Abstract

Numerous cities around the world are embracing public art in the form of murals, sculpture, architecture, and various other art forms, as a means of beautifying the area, creating unique visual appeal, and promoting a sense of community amongst the locals. Spartanburg, South Carolina is one such city. In 2015, Spartanburg was officially designated as a cultural district, which is defined as an area in which collaboration is established between art and the local community. Thus, Spartanburg has seen an increase in its public art initiatives, with various artwork being used to revitalize the area. The city also sees heavy foot traffic, as shops, restaurants, and events regularly attract pedestrians to the downtown area. The Creative Crosswalk Project seeks to build upon the city's ongoing public art initiatives, and enhance driver and pedestrian safety, via the implementation of a series of crosswalk murals created by local artists and designers.

Methods

The goal of the Creative Crosswalk Project was not only to create a series of crosswalk murals in the downtown area but also to involve the local community in the project. The challenge in such a goal lies within determining how to involve the community in the creative thought process yet not in the actual physical implementation of the crosswalk murals. One method for accomplishing such a task was to poll the community on topics such as the pros and cons of being a pedestrian and/or driver in Spartanburg, the qualities of Spartanburg that instill a sense of community, imagery that symbolizes Spartanburg, thoughts on using art to enhance crosswalks, and preferred color palettes and design styles. A series of questions about the aforementioned topics were used to create an online poll via Google Forms. Chapman Cultural Center then utilized email and social media platforms to connect with the Spartanburg community and received feedback on the Creative Crosswalk Project. A total of 85 responses were received for the poll. The poll data was then analyzed and served as an aid in determining the need for more public art in Spartanburg and establishing the overall design concepts for the crosswalk murals.



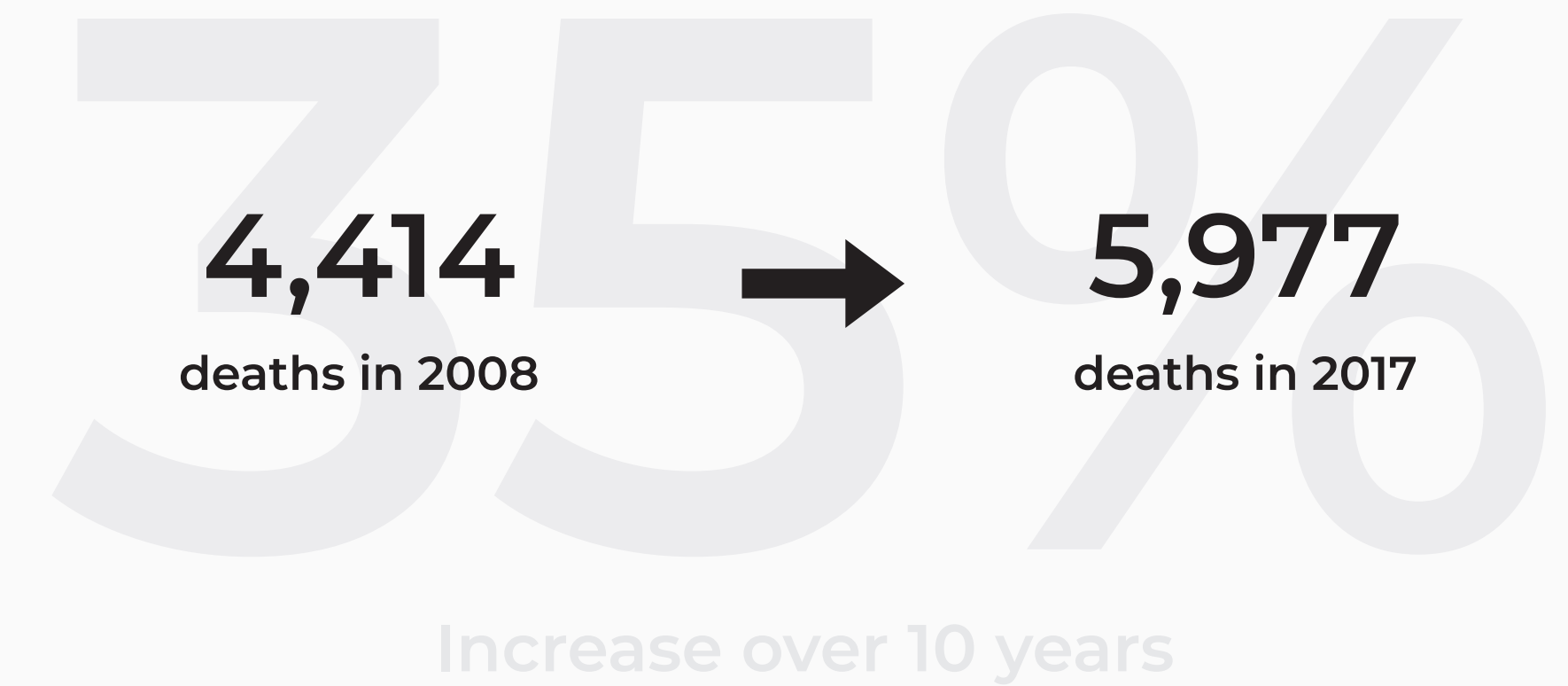
Murals



Architecture



Sculpture



*statistics from Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State. Governors Highway Safety Association

1

Faculty Member

3

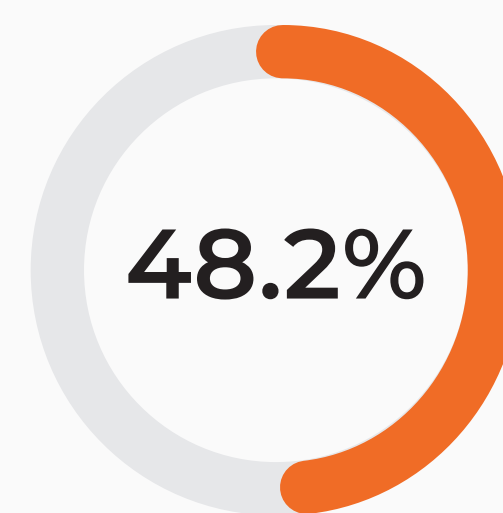
Design Students

4

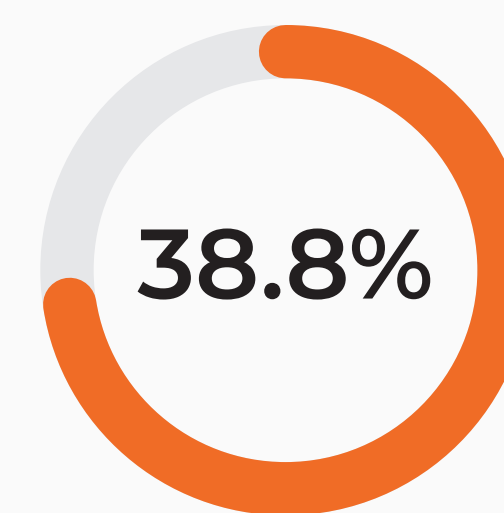
Crosswalks

\$6,000

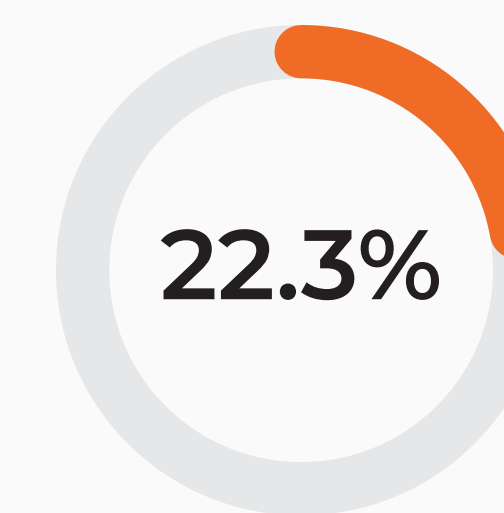
Research Initiative for Summer Engagement (RISE) Grant through USC Upstate



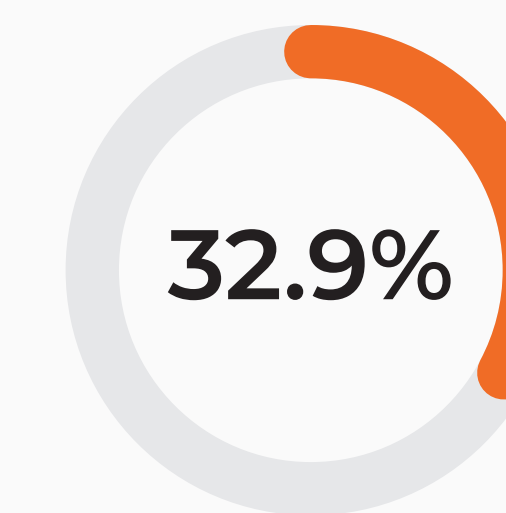
find Spartanburg to be easily navigable due to crosswalks and walking access



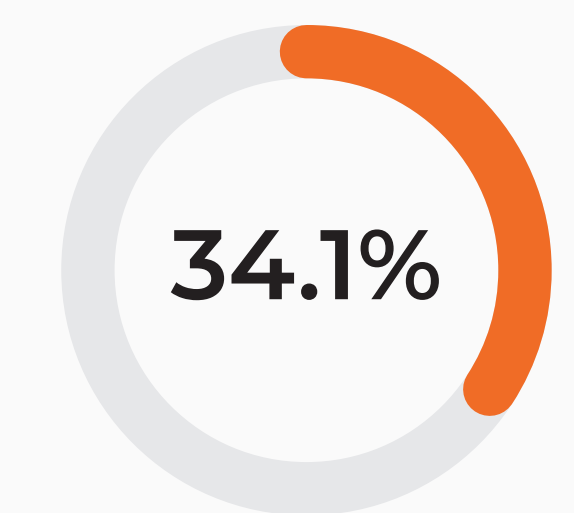
say too many drivers are endangering pedestrian lives



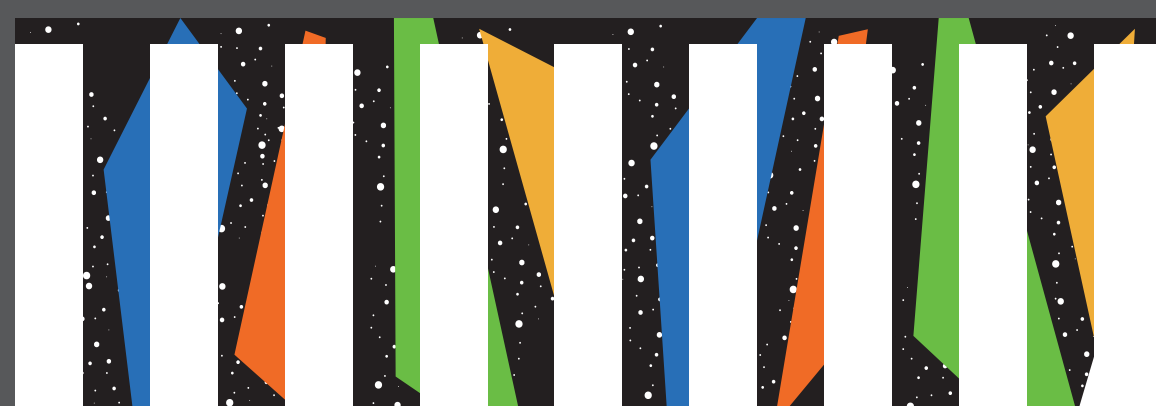
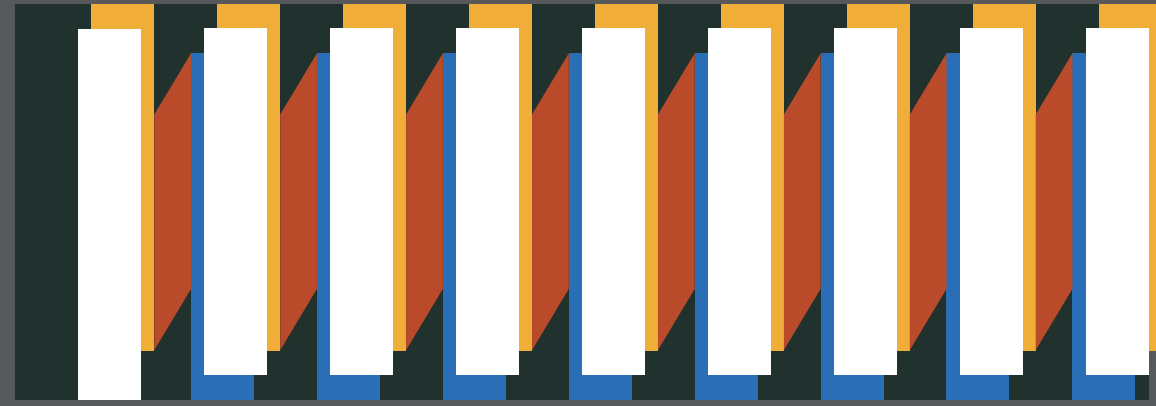
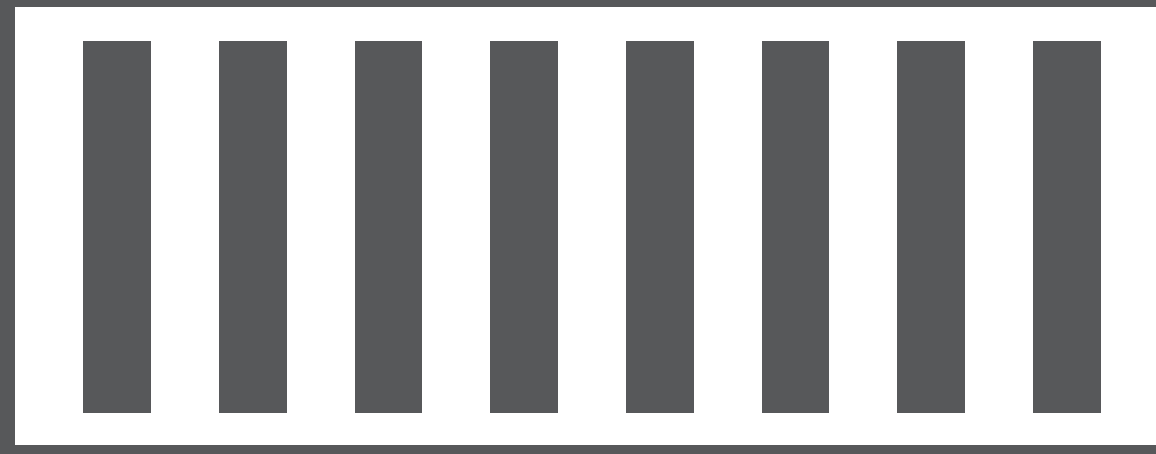
say art and murals build a stronger connection to the city



say murals add uniqueness to the city



say murals would aid in getting the attention of pedestrians and drivers

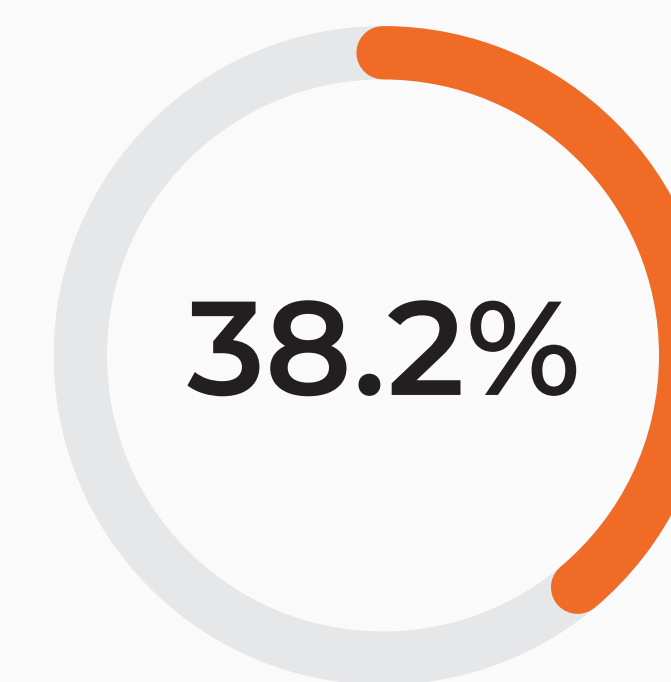


Results

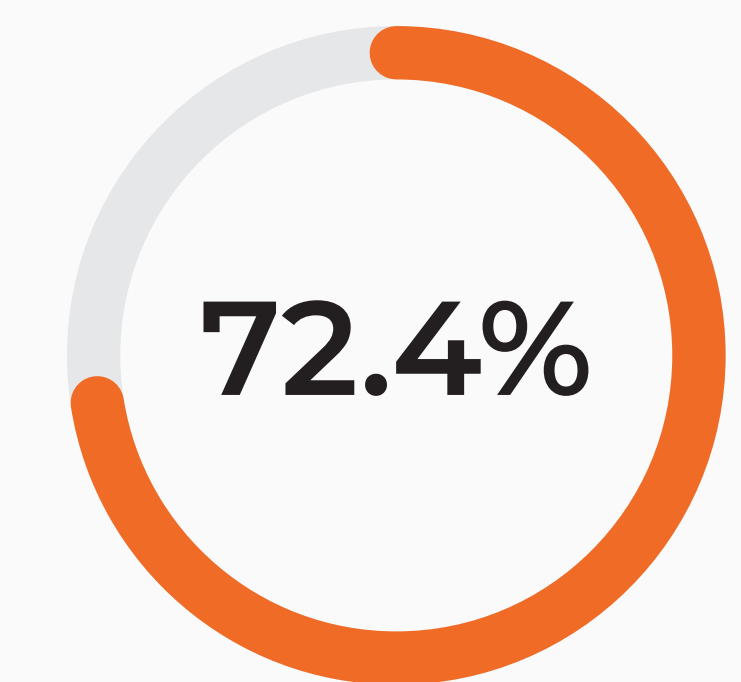
The Creative Crosswalk Project resulted in a series of murals that now serve as a means of drawing attention and awareness to driver and pedestrian safety, connecting with the local community, revitalizing easily overlooked spaces, and transforming a section of the downtown Spartanburg area.

A post-project poll of the Spartanburg community indicated that 72.4% of the 76 respondents feel that the crosswalk murals have had a positive impact on pedestrian and driver safety. That number represents a significant increase from the pre-project poll in which only 34.1% of respondents felt that crosswalk murals would enhance pedestrian and driver safety. These results indicate that the crosswalk murals were successfully implemented and serve as yet another example of Spartanburg's commitment to driver and pedestrian safety, public art, and the growing downtown cultural district.

Poll Results



spend the majority of their time as a pedestrian in the downtown area



feel the crosswalk murals have had a positive impact on pedestrian and driver safety.

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