



**STAFF REPORT  
WEST ALLIS PLAN COMMISSION  
Wednesday, September 22, 2020  
6:00 PM  
City Hall – Room 128**

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/user/westalliscitychannel>

- 7. Architectural Plan Amendments for murals of original artwork on existing buildings located at 5901 W. Burnham St., 6012 W. Burnham St., and S. 65 St. and W. Becher St. (north of the railroad on the west side of the street), submitted on behalf of the West Allis Artscape Committee, the West Allis Living Streets project, and Kasten Mural Co. (Tax Key No. 455-0094-000, 454-0618-001).**

**Background**

The City of West Allis Artscape Committee aims to positively increase the visual character of the city through a variety of artistic endeavors. Most recently, the Artscape Committee has partnered with Kasten Mural Co., led by Katie Stensburg who used to work with Stacey Williams of Wall Papered City. This is the same team of local mural artists and curators that helped kick-start the West Allis Living Streets (WALS) mural project in 2020.



Three buildings/walls along Burnham/Becher St. have been selected as part of the Living Streets project. Two artists have been selected under an open Call for Artists. The third artist was requested via a special artist invitation, due to the large scale of the mural and the level of expertise required for such a project.

**5901 W. Burnham St. – Gold Coast Subs**

The southwest corner of S. 59 St. and W. Burnham St. is home to Gold Coast Subs. The eastern façade is where the mural is proposed.



**6012 W. Burnham St. – Burnham Bowl**

Just west of S. 58 St. and W. Burnham St. is Burnham Bowl. The mural is proposed to be located on the southern façade and wrap around to a portion of the eastern façade. The billboard on the eastern façade will be removed. This mural will be across the street from the newly built Burnham Pointe Park.



**S. 65 St. and W. Becher St. (north of the railroad on the west side of the street) – City owned retaining wall**

As we move further west, W. Burnham St. becomes W. Becher St. and curves towards the south. Before reaching the railroad track is a City owned retaining wall with lots of overgrowth. The trees and shrubs will be cleared to make way for the largest of the three murals.



**Plan Commission Role**

Under the Creative Sign section of City Code, Plan Commission has an established process for approving exterior murals intended to be used as business signage. However, strictly artistic murals seem to fall into a grey area under existing formal approval processes.

Staff does not wish to over-regulate artistic programs or place the responsibility of approving artistic designs upon the Plan Commission. However, staff also recognizes that

adding large murals to the exterior of buildings represents a significant change in the urban landscape and the visual character of structures.

Staff is working to establish a more formal process for approving large-scale murals that are not considered signage, whether that request come internally from a City body or externally from a private building owner. In the meantime, staff is requesting Plan Commission's support of the proposed locations for the West Allis Living Streets program, assuming there are no major concerns related to proposed walls. Of note each of the property owners are participating in the Living Streets project.

Under the City's Living Streets project, actual design proposals are not expected to come before Plan Commission. A jury of City staff and local residents review the call for artists responses and select the winning mural designs. Kasten Mural Co. helps facilitate the jury selection process.

**Recommendation:** Approval of the Architectural Plan Amendments for murals of original artwork on existing buildings located at 5901 W. Burnham St., 6012 W. Burnham St., and S. 65 St. and W. Becher St. (north of the railroad on the west side of the street), submitted on behalf of the West Allis Artscape Committee, the West Allis Living Streets project, and Kasten Mural Co. (Tax Key No. 455-0094-000, 454-0618-001).