


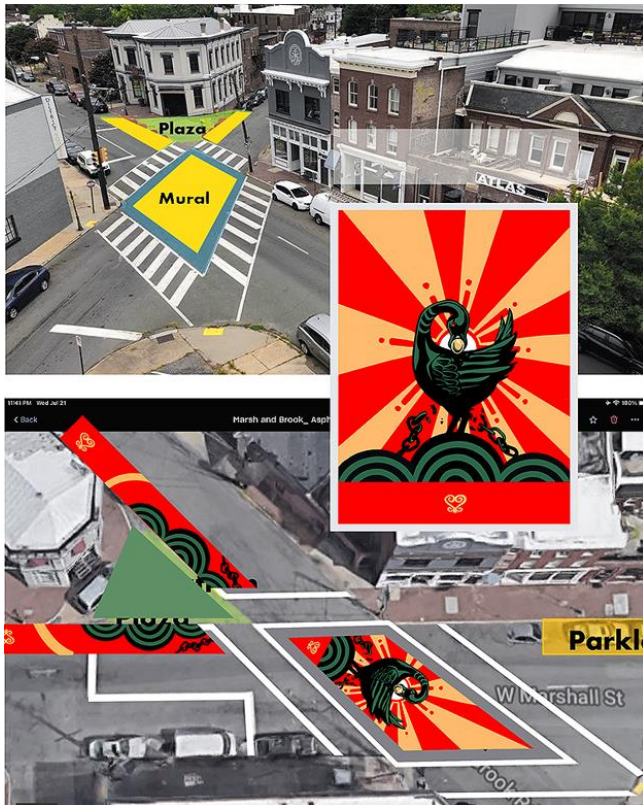


OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DATE: August 17, 2021
TO: Joe Davenport, Department of Public Works
FROM: Mayor Levar Stoney 
CC: Susan Glasser, Kevin Vonck, Neil Gibson, and Matthew Ebinger
RE: Jackson Ward Road Mural

As Mayor of the City of Richmond, I want to convey my full support of the messaging contained within the proposed design for the road mural at the intersection of Marshall Street and Brook Road in Jackson Ward. Although the mural is not being funded by the City of Richmond, the content of this design is, in keeping with the City's consistent messaging of anti-racism, equitability and the importance of embracing Richmond's diverse cultural heritages, as well as—in this instance—the lost and forgotten stories that are the foundation of Jackson Ward, one of the City's most noted and historic African American neighborhoods.

As the artist of the mural, Chris Visions, has written, "The design of the road mural is based on the Sankofa, an Andikra symbol from Ghana meaning 'to go back and retrieve/get'. It is a prominent symbol at the Ancestral Burial Grounds in Shockoe and speaks to the intention of the Jackson Ward project to reach back to a rich legacy and make sure it shines as a beacon to others. The colors echo the red, black and green of the Pan-African flag."



The decision to use art to address these themes aligns with Richmond's commitment to public art. The City recognizes that public art is a vital tool for encouraging dialogue between different cultural groups within a community, while also serving as a catalyst for urban revitalization. This commitment has been formally demonstrated by City Ordinance 18-205 that details the City's Public Art Master Plan and City Ordinance 20-236 that integrates that plan into the broader City Master Plan. Both ordinances make clear that Richmond supports a strong public art program that contributes to tourism and culture.

This project will be an important and creative net asset for the City, its citizens, and visitors alike. I request that DPW grant Venture Richmond, the organization leading this project, a WISP so that installation may proceed.