

Could more street art slow down Lexington traffic? City to explore options

BY BETH MUSGRAVE
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Lexington is exploring a new street art program that backers say could help slow traffic in high pedestrian areas and spruce up parts of Lexington, city officials said Tuesday.

City officials have recently started a pilot program along Shropshire Avenue. Chalk and other temporary drawings on Shropshire were hugely successful during the city's Streetfest in May, an annual street fair.

Now the city and Lexington Fayette Urban County Councilman Tyler Morton are working with artists to put semi-permanent street art on Shropshire.

Morton said a community-led selection committee will hopefully release a request for proposal for artists sometime in September. It's not clear when the art will be placed on Shropshire.

Hannah Crepps, a principal planner with the city, told the Lexington Fayette Urban County Council's Environmental Quality and Public Works Committee Tuesday street art can be applied to lots of different types of infra-

structure such as on sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cutouts or at key pedestrian crossings.

Lexington's most well-known street art is the rainbow crosswalks on North Limestone near the Robert Stephens Courthouse Plaza.

Crepps said street art not only creates a sense of place but can help with public safety.

"Data supports street art as a traffic-calming tool," Crepps said.

A study by Bloomberg Philanthropies showed streets with art had lower rates of severe injury crashes involving pedestrians and there were fewer "near misses."

Louisville and Cincinnati have similar street art programs, Crepps said.

If Shropshire Avenue is a success, the city will have to find money to support more street art, she said.

Cities have funded street art in different ways, including federal and state transportation grants and community arts grants, Crepps said.

Any street art must also be approved by traffic engineers to make sure it complies with all local, state and federal traffic rules, Crepps said.

Putin seeks arms control treaty following Trump summit

Bloomberg News

Russia and the U.S. can start work on a new arms control treaty after Friday's summit in Alaska, said President Vladimir Putin ahead of his meeting with Donald Trump, as senior Kremlin officials voice interest in restoring economic ties.

An agreement on the control of strategic offensive weapons could "create long-term conditions of peace," Putin said at a meeting with senior Russian officials Thursday.

Putin also praised the U.S. for making "quite energetic and sincere efforts to stop the fighting."

The Russian leader's compliments to his U.S. counterpart come after Trump warned Moscow that he would impose "very severe consequences" if Putin didn't agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine at the leaders' meeting later this week.

European allies have expressed concern that the U.S. president - who has said an eventual deal would include territorial exchanges - could unilaterally agree to peace terms proposed by Putin that would disadvantage Ukraine and undermine the continent's security.

Moscow is demanding that Ukraine cede its entire eastern Donbas region as well as Crimea, which Putin's forces illegally annexed in 2014, as a condition to unlock a ceasefire and enter negotiations over a lasting settlement, Bloomberg previously reported.

Following a call with European leaders, Trump said he hoped to use the Friday summit with Putin to set up a "quick second meeting" with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Putin's words on arms control come after Moscow's statement earlier

this month that Russia no longer considers itself bound by a moratorium on the deployment of ground-based intermediate and short-range missiles.

The Russian leader also said in December that he plans to deploy his country's Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile in Belarus, which borders several members of NATO, in the second half of 2025.

"Putin's aim is to divorce the issue of the war from bilateral relations including strategic and economic ones," said Alexander Kolyandr, a London-based senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis and former strategist at Credit Suisse.

"The topic of business, energy and financial sanctions seems to be equally if not more important for Putin," Kolyandr told Bloomberg News in a phone call.

BACK TO BUSINESS

While the talks in Alaska are formally focused on ending Russia's war in Ukraine, Trump and Putin will also discuss bilateral economic cooperation, Putin's foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said Thursday, according to Russian newswires.

On Thursday Ushakov, who will accompany the Russian president to Alaska, announced the members of Moscow's delegation.

Alongside foreign affairs and defense ministers, it will also include Finance Minister Anton Siluanov and Kirill Dmitriev, Putin's representative for international investment and economic cooperation - a lineup which suggests the parties may also discuss potential business ventures following the top-level talks.

The two presidents will hold a joint news conference after their meeting, the Kremlin said.



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Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear waits to be introduced at an election night watch party at Old Forester's Paristown Hall in Louisville, Ky., on Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023.

Andy Beshear PAC tops \$1.4 million in fundraising for first half of 2025

BY AUSTIN HORN
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A second report on Gov. Andy Beshear's national political organization, In This Together PAC, shows the governor is bringing in thousands of dollars as his national profile continues to rise.

Beshear added, in total, more than \$1.44 million to the coffers of his political action committee in the first six months of 2025, according to reports filed to the Federal Elections Commission and the Internal Revenue Service.

The latest report, published by the Internal Revenue Service on Friday, shows a surge in out-of-state fundraising into the PAC from January to June 2025.

The Federal Elections Commission report was made public earlier this month.

In addition to donations, the IRS report reveals other political causes and candidates that In This Together has supported this calendar year.

Two payments in March on direct mail for Susan Crawford, a liberal-leaning justice who won a seat to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, amounted to

\$143,600. The contest between Crawford and her opponent this year was the most expensive judicial election in American history, topping \$100 million in total, with billionaires like George Soros funding efforts to help her and Elon Musk chipping in for her opponent.

In This Together also contributed \$25,000 to a PAC supporting Katie Hobbs, the Democratic governor of Arizona.

The group has raised about \$4 million total since Beshear created it in the wake of his 2023 re-election victory.

The biggest donation in this current year came from a man who has become the group's most significant donor. Andrew Schwartzberg of Maryland gave In This Together \$225,000 in March of this year. Combined with a \$250,000 donation last year, he's donated \$475,000 in total.

Schwartzberg leads Preservations Services LLC, a real estate business with a focus on government-assisted affordable housing.

The second-biggest donor to Beshear's PAC was Maegan Ford Nicholson, of Dallas. Nicholson

is the daughter of Gerald J. Ford, a billionaire Texas bank executive who owns Diamond A Farms in Versailles. Nicholson donated \$100,000 to the PAC in April.

Three others donated \$50,000.

Christopher Dischinger is, like Schwartzberg, an affordable housing developer. He founded LDG Development, a Louisville-based company that is one of the nation's leading firms in affordable housing, and donated \$50,000 in April.

Christian Larsen, a San Francisco entrepreneur who co-founded the cryptocurrency company Ripple, gave \$50,000.

John and Marcia Goldman donated a collective \$50,000 to In This Together in May. John Goldman is a retired insurance executive, philanthropist and descendant of apparel titan Levi Strauss.

Other major donors to the PAC between January and June included former Lexington mayor, current Kentucky transportation secretary and newly minted University of Kentucky board of trustees member Jim Gray. Gray gave \$25,000 to the PAC on April 1. Another board member, Edward "Britt"

Brockman, gave the PAC \$15,000 two days before Gray's donation.

Two other board members and one member emeritus gave \$5,000, according to the Federal Elections Commission report, the same day as Gray.

Other major donors include Tracy Farmer, a longtime Central Kentucky political donor, businessman and horse owner. He gave \$25,000.

Morgan Chu, a California attorney who, according to the Los Angeles Times, has secured more than \$9 billion in verdicts, contributed \$25,000 to In This Together in March.

Peter Morton, of West Hollywood, contributed \$25,000 in April. He co-founded the Hard Rock Cafe franchise. In 2018, the \$110 million sale of his Malibu home broke a record for the most expensive home sale in Los Angeles history.

Two big names in Kentucky business dropped \$20,000 into the PAC's coffers. Greg Fischer of Covington chairs The Fischer Group, the Northern Kentucky region's largest housing builder. He donated his \$20,000 in June.

Jonathan Blue leads his own Louisville private equity company, Blue Equity. He gave In This Together \$20,000 in January. Blue Equity owns several Liquor Barn locations and has holdings in oil & gas, media, talent representation and more.

The contributions to Beshear's PAC come as discussions about who might run for president in 2028 start to percolate.

Beshear has not been bashful about the prospect of offering himself up as a candidate, and has been making many moves one would expect of an aspiring candidate: the PAC activity, touring early primary states, his upcoming Democratic Governors Association role, crisscrossing the country for speaking engagements and more

Taken as a whole, the funds brought in by Beshear to his In This Together rival any other potential 2028 candidate with a similar group. Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana who ran a competitive race in the 2020 Democratic primary, brought in slightly more to his Win The Era PAC during the first half of this year.

Beshear says IDs were revoked, didn't confirm undocumented 'pay-for-ID' claim

BY AUSTIN HORN
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Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said nearly 2,000 driver's licenses were revoked in an investigation earlier this year, but did not confirm if that happened because of an alleged illegal scheme for undocumented immigrants to get licenses.

That was the claim Melissa Moorman, a Louisville resident and former clerk at a Kentucky driver's licensing branch, made in a whistleblower complaint first reported by Louisville television station WDRB. She claimed she was fired in retaliation for revealing on the practice.

Beshear said Wednesday that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet had revoked 1,985 credentials after it conducted one of its regular reviews and "identified a number of irregularities."

The governor added that all employees involved were hired through a tem-

porary staffing agency and have been "terminated."

"KYTC immediately contacted law enforcement who are engaged in a criminal investigation, and it includes multiple offices that are both state and federal," Beshear said. "The revoked credentials, if used, would not work at an airport, would be flagged if pulled over at a traffic stop. We are committed to getting all of the facts into holding anybody who violated the law accountable."

When asked, the governor did not confirm if the revocations were made because those getting the IDs were undocumented immigrants.

"There are a number of different reasons people might try to get fake identification, and I want to make sure I don't get in front of the Kentucky State Police in their current investigation. But when that's complete, we look forward to sharing any and all of those facts," Beshear said.

Moorman claimed that coworkers were taking \$200 to give licenses to undocumented immigrants several times a day at multiple locations.

"The employees were being paid under the table. I immediately let my supervisor know," Moorman told Louisville.

The governor said he didn't know if Moorman was fired because of her complaint. He did add, however, that "some statements" she made were not true.

"I don't have information on that," Beshear said. "I haven't read that complaint. What I do know is that there are at least some statements in that complaint that are not factual and that don't follow how the original investigation went."

State Treasurer Allison Ball, a Republican, sent a letter Wednesday to Beshear and Transportation Cabinet Secretary Jim Gray requesting a formal explanation on the subject.

In the letter, Ball called

for greater public transparency and asked Beshear and Gray for an "explanation of your action plan to address all of these serious matters."

"If these reports prove true, this is very concerning as it will mean not only that licenses are being issued illegally, but also that these 'contraband' licenses are issued in a manner faster and more efficiently than those provided to legal citizens who are following the rules, waiting their turn, and doing everything asked of them under the law," Ball wrote.

Attorney General Russell Coleman is also involved. The Republican told the Herald-Leader in a statement that his office has been "aggressively investigating this potential fraud for some time now."

"This week's media reports show troubling and unacceptable conduct. Hand in hand with our state and federal law enforcement partners, we've been aggressively investigating this potential fraud for some time now, well before this week's reporting," Coleman wrote.

State Sen. Aaron Reed, R-Shelbyville, responded to the controversy with a promise to introduce legislation to revert driver's licensing duties back to the county level in the 2026 legislative session. Reed is rumored to be considering a challenge to 4th Congressional District Rep. Thomas Massie.