



Administrative Report

J.1., File # CA25-0026

Meeting Date: 1/22/2025

To: CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION
From: GARY MARGOLIS, CULTURAL ARTS MANAGER

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE UTILITY BOX ART WRAP PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2015 and 2023, the City of Redondo Beach and the Public Art Commission have “wrapped” 26 utility boxes with digitally printed original designs by, in most cases, professional artists. This item continues that process.

BACKGROUND

With the establishment of the Public Art Commission (2009) and adoption of the Public Art Ordinance (2014) providing a source of funding for public art, the City of Redondo Beach Public Art Commission launched the city’s Utility Box Public Art Pilot Program in 2015. The original plan was to wrap up to 25 utility boxes located throughout the city. The goals of the program are to use public art to contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of the city’s streetscapes and bring free and accessible art to unexpected places.

On May 27, 2015, the Public Art Commission approved a committee to explore locations and policies for a pilot program, and on March 22, 2017, the Public Art Commission formed a second committee to prepare a draft of the Utility Box Program Guidelines. At the July 26, 2017 Public Art Commission meeting, the commission approved the “Utility Box Program Pilot Program Application and Guidelines,” (attached) and subsequently those guidelines were released publicly on the city’s website. From among over 50 submissions, the Public Art Commission recommended the first five box locations and corresponding designs for city council approval on April 3, 2018 at a total cost of \$5,000 with \$350 for each box going to the artist and \$650 going to a company that did the fabrication and installation. Those first five vinyl wraps and all the wraps since have included ultra-violet and anti-graffiti protective coatings. In the event of a damaged installation, a wrapped panel can easily be removed and restored with a new printing and installation. It should also be noted that the pilot program received two donations towards two future installations. One donation came from former Public Art Commissioner Chantal Toporow. The second donation came from Friends of Redondo Beach Arts, a local nonprofit organization providing services to visual artists.

The Commission continued to solicit and review design submissions, and on December 3, 2019, City Council approved the next 5 locations and designs (Phase 2), and on April 20, 2021, City Council approved ten additional locations and designs (Phases 3 and 4). At the time, it was noted that at least one of the locations would require approval from Caltrans since it was the owner of the box. That permission was requested but not granted, so the commission subsequently identified a new

location. The cost per box for this group of wraps was \$1,450 with \$350 going to the artist and \$1,110 going to the fabricator/installer. City Council approved the last group of 5 locations and designs (Phase 5) on July 20, 2021 for the same per unit cost.

At today's meeting the commission will review 20 designs selected by its members from the most recent submissions received through the Call for Entries website portal. From those 20 recommended designs, the commission will select five to recommend to City Council. The commission will also discuss and possibly create a committee to bring back recommendations for the locations for the five selected designs.

COORDINATION

This report was developed with assistance from the Public Works Department.

FISCAL IMPACT

The projected expense for each utility box wrap is \$2,100: \$500 for the artist and a minimum of \$1,600 for the fabricator/installer. The vinyl wrap used for each box is printed digitally by a local vendor and includes ultra-violet and anti-graffiti protection. Currently, there is approximately \$60,000 of unencumbered funds in the John Parsons Public Art Fund, however, City Council has indicated a desire to use new funds to increase the budget for the Artesia Project, currently appropriated at \$450,000, up to a maximum of \$1 M. From the project's inception, the commission has always required a minimum of five designs to move forward due to a significant cost savings from the fabricator/installer. If the current commission wants to continue this practice, the minimum recommendation to City Council will be at least \$10,500 to move forward with the next phase of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and sign the draft "Cultural Arts Commission Conflict of Interest" Administrative Policy & Procedures (APP).
2. Select five (5) designs from the 20 recommended by commissioners attached to this report.
3. Create a "Utility Box Arts Wraps Committee," and appoint a maximum of three commissioners to that committee. It will be the purpose of that committee to recommend locations for the designs selected by the full commission at the subsequent commission meeting. In this case, the committee will bring back its recommendations for locations for the five designs selected today to the March 26, 2025 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft Conflict of Interest Administrative Policy & Procedures (APP)
- Commissioners' preliminary recommendations of 20 new designs from the most recent submissions
- Scoring Criteria
- List of city-owned utility boxes
- List of completed utility box arts wraps
- Utility Box Art Wrap Program Guidelines as approved by the Public Art Commission July 26, 2017
- List of artists (for determining conflicts-of-interest, if any)