



Administrative Report

J.2., File # PA24-1196

Meeting Date: 7/24/2024

To: PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

**From: GARY MARGOLIS, CULTURAL ARTS MANAGER
HAUSE, INTERIM COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR**

ELIZABETH

TITLE

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE UTILITY BOX ART 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 with the selection of up to ten additional original designs and boxes (two per council district).

BACKGROUND

With the Public Art Ordinance in place providing a source of funding and a Master Plan that included a goal to install artworks onto utility cabinets and boxes throughout the city, the City of Redondo Beach Public Art Commission launched the city’s first ever 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 were, and still 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 sub-committee to explore locations and policies for a pilot program, and on March 22, 2017, the Public Art Commission formed a second sub-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 sub-committee’s Pilot Program Application and Guidelines, and subsequently they 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 be discussing their review of a new batch of design submissions received through the Call for Entries website portal (approximately 100) and will also consider designs previously submitted but not selected (approximately 100 as well). The commissioners will also consider what to do with designs they previously approved but haven't been installed for a variety of reasons including the selected boxes weren't owned by the city.

At their May 22, 2024 meeting, the commissioners received a list of utility box locations that had been confirmed as city-owned by the Public Works Department. The commissioners agreed to do the following:

Motion by Commissioner Klein, seconded by Commissioner Cagle, and carried by voice vote, to have each Commissioner review the locations, return with preferred locations in each district, review the designs through the CaFE portal, return with their five preferred designs to the next Public Art Commission meeting, where at the end of the next meeting staff will move forward with ten artists for contract for two utility boxes within each district.

In an email from Interim Community Services Director Elizabeth Hause to the commissioners dated July 1, the deadline to submit their top five design choices was Thursday, July 18.

Attached to this report are all the previously submitted designs (except those already selected and installed). A compilation of the commissioners' "5 favorites" from the new batch of designs will be included as a Blue Folder item.

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 are no available funds in the John Parsons Public Art Fund for this project given City Council's encumbrances and the required-by-ordinance 5% set aside for maintenance. 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. This means there would need to be at least a \$10,500 fund balance to move forward with the next phase of the project.

ATTACHMENTS

- Confirmed City-owned Utility Boxes
- Completed Installations
- Previously submitted designs not selected and previously selected designs requiring a new location