



## Agenda Report

Arts Commission

---

Item #: 24-370

Meeting Date: 10/03/2024

---

**TITLE:** UTILITY BOX ART PROGRAM REVIEW  
**DEPARTMENT:** PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
**PRESENTED BY:** LAURETTE GARNER, ARTS SPECIALIST  
**CONTACT INFORMATION:** LAURETTE GARNER, ARTS SPECIALIST, (714) 754-5322

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Arts Commission review edits and approve the Utility Box Art Program Handbook (Attachment 1).

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Costa Mesa owns over one hundred and twenty utility (120) boxes at signalized intersections throughout the City and is dedicated to incorporating art into public spaces. The Utility Box Art Program was launched in early 2015 to spotlight a handful of utility boxes as beautiful art pieces. The City currently has over sixty (60) utility art boxes that display artwork from local artists.

The Utility Box Art Program Handbook was created with content that was combined from previous documents to create guidelines for a comprehensive handbook. This document includes a downloadable paper application and an online application, both accessible on the City website.

Key Components of the Handbook are:

- Overview and mission
- Box locations
- Maintenance processes
- Artist submission criteria
- Artist honorarium
- Sponsorship submission criteria

The sponsorship component of the program was launched in early 2017. The former Cultural Arts Committee invited Costa Mesa businesses to sponsor artistic utility box vinyl wrap. This permitted a sponsor to place their name/logo on the artistic design; not exceeding 20% of printable space. The original intent of the sponsorship box was not to create a business billboard but a tastefully appealing piece of art that met the standards set by the Cultural Arts Committee. Proceeds generated from the program originally benefitted the Cultural Arts Committee Art Grant Program.

On April 4, 2024, the commission requested to review the handbook to discuss purpose of the boxes and aesthetic guidelines to better assist in implementation of the program.

On June 6, 2024, the handbook was presented to the Arts Commission for a general review. On August 1, 2024, the Commission reviewed the handbook which incorporated recommended edits

from the commission. During this meeting, additional recommendations for edits were requested to the document.

**ANALYSIS:**

The Utility Box Art Program addresses the Arts and Culture Master Plan’s Goal #2: Expand Public Art throughout the City.

**Action 2.1:** Continue the City-operated program of temporary utility box art, which affords opportunities to local artists, established and emerging, to create images that offer the community beautification. Review additional sites that are suitable for such installations, including wayfinding signage.

The foundational framework is detailed in the Utility Box Art Program Handbook. The application is scheduled to re-open in October 2024 for the next phase of utility box art.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

Funding for the Utility Art Box Program is currently supported with funds from the City of Costa Mesa Arts & Culture Fund, as outlined in the Arts & Culture Master Plan adopted by City Council on March 21, 2021.

**LEGAL REVIEW**

There is no legal review required for this report.

**CONCLUSION:**

Staff recommends the Arts Commission review the edits and approve the Utility Box Art Program Handbook.