



City of Costa Mesa

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Agenda Report

Arts Commission

Item #: 24-250

Meeting Date: 6/06/2024

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 and provide feedback on the Utility Box Art Program and its handbook (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND:

The City of Costa Mesa owns over one hundred and twenty utility 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.

In the spring of 2022, the Utility Box Art Program Handbook was created, by combining information about the program that had previously lived in multiple documents. This content was combined to create one document, which includes a downloadable paper application and an online application, both accessible on the City website.

Some 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 an artistic 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.

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 on July 1, 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 and provide feedback on the Utility Box Art Program and its handbook.