



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: City Administrator

SUBJECT: UTILITY BOX ART BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

MEETING DATE: October 18, 2016

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve and adopt a resolution which will:

1. Authorize staff to begin a utility box art pilot beautification program. Under the program, Staff will issue a call for local professional artist to design and paint utility boxes within the City of Commerce.
2. Approve and authorize staff to advertise and publish the Call For Artists Request For Proposals and Application to collect artist art submissions for painting traffic control utility boxes in the City of Commerce.

BACKGROUND:

Utility box art programs are very popular streetscape and public art projects throughout the United States. The objectives of utility box art projects typically are to beautify the public realm, create public art, and to deter graffiti "tags" from appearing on the utility boxes. The utility art project proposed in the City of Commerce would be implemented with these same objectives. The utility boxes that would be included are City owned/maintained traffic signal boxes. Covering traffic signal boxes with art is a relatively inexpensive way to deliver public art to the area and turns them into positive assets for the neighborhood.

At the direction and request of Council, staff has come up with the Utility Box Art Beautification Program. This program is a public art beautification program designed to transform common traffic control utility boxes in the City, into distinctive works of art, creating a more vibrant, attractive cityscape. The program also aims to celebrate local artists and their artwork, acts as a deterrent to graffiti, and involves the City and County residents in contributing to the beautification of the City.

ANALYSIS:

Staff has researched similar successful programs in other cities and recommends the following parameters for the program:

- All artists, over 18 years old, residing in Los Angeles County or the City of Commerce are eligible.

- Entries must be the original design and artwork of the entrant and suitable for viewing by all ages.
- Artist is responsible for all art materials and supplies required for creation of the artwork and protection of the surrounding area (paint, brushes, buckets, tarps, etc.). High quality, low-sheen or semi-gloss external acrylic latex paint must be used and it must cover all exposed sides and top of the box(es). Dark colors should be used sparingly due to the potential for overheating of the utility box(es).
- Artists will be awarded an \$800 stipend, this is inclusive of all artist fees, paints, and materials. Upon selection and execution of the Artist Agreement, artists will receive an initial disbursement of funds at 50% (\$400), with the remaining 50% (\$400) paid upon completion of the project.

Creativity and innovation of design are encouraged. Artwork themes may and is encouraged but is not required to:

1. Represent various aspects of the City's history, heritage and culture, or geography
2. Reflect the specific neighborhood or area of the box location.

Artist must submit and sign an application including a detailed description describing the design theme indicating if the theme has specific relevance to the City of Commerce's history, culture, heritage or geography; or to a specific location. The applicant will also submit rendering of the proposed artwork.

Example of utility box art:



Livermore



Pleasanton



Fremont



Gilroy



Hayward



Cupertino

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Disapprove staff recommendation
3. Provide further direction to staff

FISCAL IMPACT:

Measure AA funding requirements, 2.5% of the funding is to be used for City beautification activities and projects. Measure AA funds of \$20,000 are available in Category “E” – City Beautification Activities/Projects this can be used toward this project. This amount was approved as part of the FY 2016/17 budget process.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

The issue before the Council is applicable to the following Council’s strategic goal:
“Improve and maintain infrastructure and beautify our community”

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Call to Artist RFP
3. Artist Application Form

Respectfully submitted:
Jorge Rifa, City Administrator

Recommended by:
Maryam Babaki, Director of PW/Dev Services

Reviewed by:
Vilko Domic, Finance Director

Approved as to form:
Eduardo Olivo, City Attorney