



# CITY OF CARSON

## Legislation Text

File #: 2016-984, Version: 1

### Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, October 04, 2016

Discussion

#### **SUBJECT:**

**CONSIDER PROVIDING DIRECTION ON OPTIONS FOR UTILITY BOX ARTISTIC TREATMENTS ALONG CARSON STREET IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CARSON STREET IMPROVEMENTS (CITY COUNCIL)**

#### **I. SUMMARY**

On September 20, 2016, this item was continued to October 4, 2016. On March 15, 2016 staff presented a discussion of possible designs for the utility box artistic treatments proposed as part of the Carson Street improvements. Staff provided various examples of flowers, artistic drawings, pictures of famous people, etc. The City Council supported the idea of using these types of pictures/art forms over staff's previous recommendation of using historical photos. The City Council further directed staff to engage services of a professional firm to prepare artwork for the utility boxes. After completion of an RFP process, the City engaged the services of SMLZ to develop the artistic design for the utility boxes. Based on reviewing several concepts, staff directed the designer to bring two concepts forward: (1) a flower theme, and a (2) famous paintings theme. These options help provide a colorful contrast to an otherwise beige and gray urban environment. Staff is requesting the City Council to choose one of the options. SMLZ will then develop the chosen option and provide staff with 10 distinct designs to be used for 14 utility boxes.

#### **II. RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER choosing one of the two presented options for utility box artistic wraps along Carson Street in conjunction with the Carson Street Improvements.

#### **III. ALTERNATIVES**

TAKE such other action the City Council deems appropriate.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND**

The improvements to Carson Street as part of the Carson Street Master Plan are currently underway and are expected to be completed by April 2017. Most of the design elements of

the improvements were previously approved by the City Council with the exception of the design for wrapping the utility boxes.

Staff has evaluated the wrapping of utility boxes with a high quality, graffiti-resistant and UV-resistant vinyl against painting the boxes and determined that wrapping the boxes provides a more professional finish, is more resistant to vandalism, and has a lower life-cycle cost than painting.

There are a total of 47 utility boxes along Carson Street and the immediate vicinity of Carson Street. The Carson Street improvement project budget includes funding for 14 utility wraps at \$650.00 each. The current budget also includes painting of the remaining 33 utility boxes to upgrade them from their existing state. To apply the wraps to the remaining 33 utility boxes would cost an extra \$21,450.00 if the City Council directs staff to apply the wrap to the remaining 33 utility boxes. This cost could be absorbed by the project contingency fund.

A staff committee comprised of the Director of Public Works, the Director of Community Development, the City Engineer and the Planning Manager worked with the consultant on the design elements. The consultant originally provided 21 design ideas which were then narrowed down to 12. This 12 included the two recommended concepts, Famous Paintings and Floral and included other “typical” ideas like Sunsets & Sunrises and scenes of Southern California Paradise; surrealistic ideas like Gift Wrapped Packages, Giant Sockets, Furniture, Shrubbery, and Apartment Buildings; abstract images like Kaleidoscopes, or other uniquely tailored images like Faces or Comic Book art.

In the end, staff believed that the addition of significant splashes of color to Carson Street on the utility boxes was the most necessary aspect of the Utility Box program. Flowers provide a wide array of color and visual variety, even without using Photoshop; the use of elements of famous paintings (and not a “framed” image of an entire painting) was a way of introducing color in a manner that is both familiar and unique at the same time.

The proposed options, especially in colorful, whimsical ways, will help enliven Carson Street and enhance the pedestrian environment. The attached exhibit provides the two options.

## **V. FISCAL IMPACT**

No impact if only 14 Utility Boxes are wrapped. If the City Council directs staff to wrap the remaining 33 utility boxes, the fiscal impact of \$21,450.00 (\$650 X 33) will be paid by FY 2016/17, Account Number: 82-70-793-981-8008-0104301; which will necessitate a budget amendment to be brought back to the City Council.

## **VI. EXHIBITS**

1. Utility Box Makeover, Creative Concepts Wrapping Artistic Concepts. (pgs. 3-30)

1.

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