



Arts, Culture & Heritage Commission Staff Report

Date: November 19, 2025

From: Erika Valentine, Arts & Culture Program Coordinator

Subject: Utility Box Public Art Program

Recommended Action

The Commission should make a motion and vote to recommend staff to apply to the Community Enhancement Program Grant to fund this project.

The Commission should also make a motion and vote to determine the theme(s) for a Utility Box Public Art Program, which staff will need to include in the upcoming Grant Application.

The grant application is due January 9, 2026.

Background

Implementing a Utility Box Public Art Program has been brought up multiple times during Commission meetings. Utility Boxes are existing pieces of City infrastructure, near intersections, which predominantly hold traffic light controls, cable connections, electric transformers, etc.

Putting artwork onto Utility Boxes creates an outdoor art gallery, similar to the hearts, and brings more Public Art to Wilsonville. A Utility Box Art Program also provides opportunities for local artists.

Staff has previously reached out to the Public Works Department who were in support of the program idea if vinyl wraps were utilized. Staff would work with a contracted company that produces the vinyl wraps and installs them. A heavy duty, graffiti-resistant vinyl is utilized. This also provides an equitable and accessible opportunity for artists, as they will not be doing the physical labor that is required for hand painting murals. Maintenance is expected to be very low and the wraps should last at least 5 years.

The City has approximately 23 boxes. Staff will evaluate and map out, which boxes to include in the program, and will receive future feedback from the ACHC. Staff would also develop a Call for Art application, similar to the Hearts application. Artists would need to submit their design idea and plan in the application. Then high-resolution images of the artwork or digitally created artwork images would be sent to the contractor to product the vinyl wraps. These steps would not take place until after grant funding is awarded, which would be the next fiscal year, July 1, 2026.

Budget

Artist Stipends	\$500/ per artist
Production/Installation to be paid to Contractor	~\$2,000 per box
Total	\$2,500

The above is the cost for one utility box. Staff recommends doing 6 - 7 Utility Boxes at a time. This would provide the opportunity to build excitement and roll out the program in phases, as well as stagger installations to help spread out any maintenance or replacement costs. For example, 6 could get installed in FY 26/27, 6 could get installed in FY 27/28, 6 could get installed in FY 28/29, 5 could get installed in 29/30.

Budget for the pilot program – 6 boxes

Artist Stipends	\$500/ per artist X 6 boxes = \$3,000
Production/Installation to be paid to Contractor	~\$2,000 per box X 6 boxes = \$12,000
Total	\$15,000

Grant

Funding for this project would come from the Community Enhancement Program Grant, which staff would apply for. More information about the grant opportunity can be found here:

<https://www.wilsonvilleparksandrec.com/bc-mce/page/community-enhancement-program>

This grant also funded the Memorial Park Skatepark as well as Hearts project.

The grant application is due January 9.

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Improve the appearance or environmental quality of the community.
- Reduce the amount or toxicity of waste.
- Increase reuse and recycling opportunities.
- Result in rehabilitation or upgrade of real or personal property owned or operated by a nonprofit organization.
- Result in the preservation or enhancement of wildlife, riparian zones, wetlands, forest lands and marine areas, and/or improve the public awareness and the opportunities to enjoy them.
- Result in improvement to, or an increase in, recreational areas and programs.
- Result in improvement in safety.
- Benefit youth, seniors, low income persons or underserved populations
- Foster and enhance community enrichment through educational programming, arts and cultural projects.

Theme(s)

Many Utility Box Art Programs have a theme(s) to direct artists when applying. The Commission should consider what kind of artwork they want to see in determining the theme(s). A new theme may be chosen at each phase, though not required.

Here are some ideas but the ACHC is welcome to brainstorm beyond this. Themes listed below can also be combined. The theme information will be needed for the grant application which is due in January.

Theme Ideas all relating to Wilsonville:

- **Natural Beauty:** i.e Parks, trails, open spaces, river, and native flora/fauna that create the backdrop where stories unfold in Wilsonville
- **Local Traditions:** i.e Vibrant gatherings and events, seasonal celebrations to neighborhood connections, cultural events and celebrations, and everyday interactions

- **Heritage and Legacy:** interpretations of historic sites, pivotal moments. Historic landmarks, that established the foundation for Wilsonville
- **Community Character:** What makes Wilsonville distinctive through our community pride and inclusive spirit
- **Celebrating Diversity and Culture:** imagery/artwork featuring messages of welcoming/everyone being welcome here, multiculturalism, inclusivity, diversity

The ACHC may also simply include their Mission and Vision statements in the Call for Art versus specifying a theme.

Such as “Artists should consider the ACHC’s mission and vision statements when submitting their designs...”

ACHC Mission: To enhance the Wilsonville community by supporting, advocating and advising on matters relating to advancing arts, culture & heritage. We strongly believe residents’ lives are enriched and enhanced through a thriving arts and culture environment.

ACHC Vision: Lives will be enriched and enhanced through a thriving arts and culture environment in Wilsonville.

Our vision for Wilsonville is one that:

- Supports all creatives
- Fosters a sense of inclusivity for all cultures
- Has a vibrant cultural identity • Celebrates local history and heritage Arts, Culture, and Heritage Commission
- Is recognized for accessible community cultural facilities, parks, and other spaces to host a variety of creative forms and activities
- Has a robust Public Art program

The ACHC may also NOT select a theme, if the desire is to simply create an outdoor gallery and have unique works of art on boxes, and leave it up to the artist.

Example Utility Box Art:

