

City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JANUARY 10, 2023
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARD: 7
SUBJECT: PAINTING OF SIX TRAFFIC SIGNAL CABINETS WITH ARTISTIC FEATURES ON RIVERWALK PARKWAY

ISSUE:

Consideration of painting six traffic signal cabinets with artistic features on Riverwalk Parkway between Pierce Street (S) and Pierce Street (N).

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the Public Works Department’s request to seek competitive bids and/or quotes from local artists to paint six traffic signal cabinets on Riverwalk Parkway between Pierce Street (S) to Pierce Street (N).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 8, 2022, the Mobility and Infrastructure Committee reviewed this matter, with all three members present. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council approve a competitive bid and/or quotes process to work with local artists to paint six traffic signal cabinets on Riverwalk Parkway between Pierce Street (S) to Pierce Street (N).

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside’s vision is “to inspire everyone through meaningful arts and cultural experiences.” The Downtown has numerous examples of artistic displays that the public can enjoy with murals on private property walls, Mariposa Alley, incorporation of artistic elements into new building construction, prominent statues along the Main Street Pedestrian Mall, and other artistic features that attract residents and visitors to Downtown. Public art adds value to the cultural, aesthetic, and economic vitality of a community and many residents only experience art within public space. The City is home to exceptional artistic talent and public art affords opportunities for artists to showcase their gifts which cultivates an environment for creative individuals to thrive.

Public art within neighborhoods or highly visited locations can be an investment in placemaking which is measured by livability and quality of life but can also engender community pride. The Public Works Department services nearly 400 traffic signals citywide and each signal is supported by a signal controller/equipment housed in a signal cabinet. Most traffic signal cabinets are located near the intersection and are visible to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians and are excellent locations for public art.

DISCUSSION:

In April 2022 the Public Works Department collaborated with volunteers from Sandals Church to paint twelve traffic signal locations as listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Painted Traffic Signal Locations with Sandals Church Volunteers

Location	Location
1. University Ave at Eucalyptus Ave	7. Magnolia Ave at Van Buren Blvd
2. University Ave at Kansas Ave	8. Magnolia Ave at Hole Ave
3. University Ave at Chicago Ave	9. Magnolia Ave at Tyler St
4. University Ave at Victoria Ave	10. Tyler St at Wells Ave
5. University Ave at Iowa Ave	11. Tyler St at Gramercy Pl
6. Magnolia Ave at Farnham Pl	12. Magnolia Ave at Ramona Dr

The project has been well received by the community and below are images of some of the painted cabinets.



After successful implementation of the twelve painted signal cabinets, the president of the Riverwalk Homeowners Association reached out to staff requesting similar support for the cabinets located on Riverwalk Parkway. The Riverwalk community includes amenities encouraging increased walking via meandering sidewalks, delineated bike lanes, water features, a dog park, benches, exercise areas, retail center, and gazebos. Public art along Riverwalk Parkway would foster community pride and add art to the westerly part of the City. The Riverwalk HOA conducted surveys on the type of graphic art they would like to see and residents responded with the following:

1. Active Lifestyle Images (Fitness, Dog Walking, Biking, Walking, Jogging) – 45%
2. Local Wildlife (Fish, Ducks, Birds, etc.) – 27%
3. Colorful Landscape Scenes – 23%
4. Other – 5%

Given the positive feedback with the initial painting of the traffic signal cabinets, staff is supportive of partnering with local artists to paint traffic signal cabinets on Riverwalk Parkway at:

1. Pierce Street (S) – just north of the 91 Freeway
2. Flat Rock Road
3. Collett Avenue
4. Yeager Drive (Entrance to La Sierra University)
5. Sierra Vista Avenue
6. Pierce Street (N)

This project would differ from the volunteer efforts by the Sandals Church team in that the Public Works Department would select specific paints and coating materials for pilot testing purposes and conduct planned durability reviews following project implementation.

Artists can provide a common theme, paint the cabinets to complement community features, encourage increased walking by displaying unique and thoughtful art, and attract visitors to this area. The public art would also allow staff to leverage this project to pursue grant funds or consider a program to expand art displays within the public right-of-way. The hand painting of the traffic signal cabinets provides unique displays but also allows the Public Works Department to assess their maintenance and longevity as the cabinets are exposed to direct sunlight, wind, rain, and elements impacting the aesthetics over time. If maintenance becomes a concern, the Public Works Department has the option of requesting artists to work with specialized companies to transfer their artwork onto “wrap” material which may weather better and facilitate cleanup efforts, although the wrap material requires increased investment.

Staff from the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments met with local artists to consider the project, assess implementation schedule, cost, materials, maintenance requirements, and share examples from other agencies to select project components for successful implementation. Staff would also work with the Community & Economic Development Department - Arts and Cultural Affairs to work with the artists to share the City’s goals, engage the Riverwalk HOA, and provide supporting direction to the artists.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 1– Arts, Culture and Recreation** and **Goals 1.1** and **1.2** - to strengthen Riverside’s portfolio of arts and enhance equitable access to arts. It also supports **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.3** – to strengthen neighborhood identities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.

The project aligns with each of the five Cross-Threads:

1. **Community Trust** – The Public Works Department has engaged the Riverwalk Homeowners Association to discuss the potential for painting the traffic signal cabinets and obtained community feedback on the themes and types of art they would like to see.

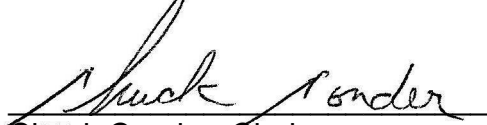
2. **Equity** – Completion of public art in Ward 7 promotes geographic equity in the City's facilitation of public art, and the Public Works Department will continue to seek avenues to deploy public artwork Citywide.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Public Works Department would work with local artists to secure competitive bids for the project.
4. **Innovation** – This project will be used to assess the durability of the paint materials, obtain feedback from the community on these types of projects, and consider a program that paints a number of traffic signal cabinets each year.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Each traffic signal cabinet would include a graffiti removal clear coating to facilitate maintenance. Further, the City may elect to secure a maintenance plan to address damage to the paintings or request touchup work for areas that may fade or may be impacted by weather.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total estimated fiscal impact is up to \$25,000. Funds are budgeted and available in the Gas Tax Fund, Miscellaneous Traffic Projects account number 9883227-440223 to cover costs associated with this project.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Concurs with:


Chuck Conder, Chair
Mobility and Infrastructure Committee

Attachment: Presentation