

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission  
FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager  
DATE: ,

SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FEASIBILITY OF INCORPORATING ART TO PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

The following is presented to the members of the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee for discussion. If the project is recommended for implementation, funding would need to be identified and the artist commissioning process could follow the City's Art in Public Places Selection Process, which includes review by Historic Preservation Board / Design Review Board, as applicable, and approval by the City Commission.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

On September 20, 2021, Neighborhood and Quality of Life Committee (NQLC), Commissioner Steven Meiner submitted for consideration a discussion on the feasibility of incorporating art to public infrastructure. The NQLC referred with favorable recommendation to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee for discussion.

### **ANALYSIS**

Creative placemaking is when arts and culture are integrated into community revitalization work. Creative placemaking aims to activate public and private spaces by enhancing the visual appeal of existing structures and streetscapes. The process of identifying community assets and using those to create vibrant, welcoming spaces for everyone to enjoy is vital.

In the interest of augmenting the visual experience for residents and visitors, municipalities have invited artists to transform industrial essentials into public works of art. One example that is commonly utilized is identifying electrical boxes for artistic enhancement as a form to incorporate art into a city's streetscape.

#### Creative Placemaking Via Public Infrastructure in Miami Beach:

Artworks commissioned by the City of Miami Beach add value to the City's public art collection, attract international attention, strengthen economic development and tourism and heighten civic identity. The Art in Public Places program commissions professional visual artists that demonstrate innovative, contemporary and creative approaches in addressing permanent, site specific works. The strength of the artist's concept, design capabilities and established track record of museum/ gallery exhibitions are the program's highest priorities.

In 2008, the AiPP put out a call to artists for the *Washington Avenue and Third Street Plaza* project (the Project). The Project's focus was to incorporate art in public infrastructure, specifically City of Miami Beach owned electrical boxes on Washington Avenue and Third Street. The AiPP selected local artist Wendy Wischer's proposal for the project.

Wendy Wischer's *Liquid Measures*, art installation was incorporated on the electrical boxes, which included hand-cut, blue mirror, water glass tiles that cover three (3) 4'x4' electrical boxes and their 4' foot pedestals. The eight-foot high, 360' square foot installation made reference to the wind and water currents that pass through the area while reflecting the surroundings of the environment and those within it.

In November 2010, *Liquid Measures* was installed at the *Washington Avenue and Third Street Plaza*. Image of completed project attached (Exhibit A).

Total Production Cost:  
**\$33,000.00**

#### Previous Request for Incorporating Art in Public Infrastructure:

This item was sponsored by Commissioner Micky Steinberg and heard by the Neighborhood/Community Affairs Committee, at that time no recommendation was made by the Committee. At the September 23, 2020 the item heard at the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee under Commissioner Ricky Arriola's sponsorship. The Committee discussed the potential of incorporating public art in City-owned infrastructure. At the time staff identified 248 utility boxes in the City. The majority of boxes in City are owned

by Miami-Dade County, FPL and other telecom utilities.

As part of the discussion, staff presented research based on a Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places (MDCAiPP) project that commissioned a series of artist to design vinyl wraps for traffic control boxes located in Miami-Dade County District 11. Image of completed project attached (Exhibit B).

The following information was obtained from MDCAiPP regarding the project scope mentioned above:

1. **Project Budget:** \$35,000/ \$1750 per box.

2. **Number of boxes wrapped:** 20

3. **Material:** 3M Vinyl adhesive (3-5 year life span). It was determined paint was not feasible or durable for this type of installation due to tags and graffiti. As well, the utilitarian nature of the boxes calls for a complex wrapping process, as ventilation and accessibility are necessary.

4. **Maintenance:** Approximately 1 box was replaced every 2 -3 months due to vandalism. Please keep in mind, this project is in a residential /suburban part of the County with light pedestrian traffic (if any at all). When the work was commissioned, a double overage of vinyl was produced in anticipation of high vandalism.

5. **Ensure Professional, High Quality Artistic Content:** Michelle Weinberg, a well noted and exhibited Miami based artist, was commissioned to create the design for the boxes. She created a geometric pattern that could be replicated on all of the boxes with inversions of the pattern. This was to ensure ease of replacement of vinyl.

6. **Determine Ownership of Boxes:** Various entities have boxes throughout the County, including Miami-Dade County Transit, FPL, Telecom, City of Miami Beach, etc. For this project, it took approximately one year to negotiate a contract with FPL to allow for temporary use of the boxes.

**The project was not recommended for funding by the FECRC at the September 23, 2020 meeting due to ongoing financial uncertainty.**

Other examples include, incorporating visual art into the City's water tanks. The tanks located in North Beach currently have art created by visual artist We are Nice and Easy. Work is underway with visual artist from O Miami to add art to the tanks located on Dade Boulevard.

#### **SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA**

N/A

#### **CONCLUSION**

The following is presented to the members of Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee for discussion. If the pilot project is recommended for implementation, funding would need to be identified in amount of \$35,000 and the artist commissioning process could follow the City's Art in Public Places Selection Process, which includes review by Historic Preservation Board / Design Review Board, as applicable, and approval by the City Commission.

#### **Applicable Area**

Citywide

**Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?**

No

**Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?**

No

#### **Strategic Connection**

Neighborhoods - Enhance the beautification, physical appearance and cleanliness of neighborhoods.

#### **Legislative Tracking**

Tourism and Culture

#### **Sponsor**

Commissioner Meiner