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Staff Report for a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Prepare and Transmit a Transportation Art and Community Identification Proposal Application to the California Department of Transportation

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the City Council approve a resolution to authorize the City Manager to prepare and transmit a Transportation Art and Community Identification Proposal Application to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for approval to place mural wraps on traffic control utility boxes on East 14th Street.

BACKGROUND

On November 16, 2013, the Mayor and the City Manager held an Arts and Culture Town Hall meeting to present ongoing cultural and art programs in the City and to seek input on future programs. The format was interactive and offered multiple opportunities for participants to provide direction on the City’s arts and culture programs. The utility box mural wrap demonstration project presented by staff received enthusiastic support from the public at the meeting.

ANALYSIS

Through a partnership with the Earth Island Institute’s Streets Alive program, the Office of Business Development has identified six boxes on East 14th Street in Downtown San Leandro. The utility boxes proposed in this demonstration project are owned and operated by Caltrans. Placing artistic murals on the traffic control utility boxes owned by Caltrans requires the submission of a Transportation Art and Community Identification Proposal application. Staff is also exploring art wraps on utility boxes at additional locations that do not require Caltrans approval.

With the theme of “Innovation, Sustainability & Technology,” Streets Alive issued a call-for-artists to

submit mural designs with a preference for San Leandro and Alameda County artists. The mural wrap designs and the Caltrans application will be prepared and submitted by Streets Alive with assistance from staff in the Office of Business Development. Once the wrap design and application are approved by Caltrans, Streets Alive will work with the mural installer to convert the digital mural designs into the vinyl wrap overlay and have them installed. The installation is expected to be completed later this year.

If this demonstration project is successful, staff anticipates expanding the program and partnering with businesses and property owners to identify additional locations for utility box art. The proposed resolution is written such that it will support the six boxes in the demonstration project and all ongoing future Caltrans boxes citywide.

Fiscal Impacts

No additional funds are needed for the preparation and submission of the Transportation Art and Community Identification Proposal application. The funds for the mural wrap project have been identified and appropriated in the current budget.

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