

Council Communication

August 4, 2015, Business Meeting

Public Art Commission Test Project

FROM:

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SUMMARY

The Public Art Commission (PAC) is requesting Council approval to apply a photograph to an electric utility box using a vinyl wrap.

The PAC has researched utility box art in other communities and the use of fine art photographs or digitized photographs of fine art, rather than hand painted art has been very successful in numerous communities throughout the country including Minneapolis and Yellowstone National Park. The PAC would like to test the process on a utility box on Granite Street at the top of Calle Guanajuato staircase. A sign company will print the attached photograph on vinyl and apply it to the box. This is the same process used to apply vinyl advertisements on buses and vehicles

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

For the past several years utility boxes in Ashland have been hand painted by area artists who have responded to a request for proposal (RFP) and who were selected to execute their design on the designated box. The cost of painting each box is \$500. This pays for the cost to prepare and apply primer paint to the box, a modest \$250 commission to the artist and an application of clear coat anti-graffiti paint to the finished box. This coating protects the box from sun damage and is easily cleaned of graffiti. The organization, business or individual requesting a painted utility box provides the \$500.

The current process has multiple steps and is time consuming for the Public Art Commission, the property owner and especially for the artist. Because hand painting the boxes is so arduous and the artist commission is nominal, very few artists have responded to the RFPs in the past few years.

Communities have reported many of their wrapped boxes are more than five years old and continue to look bold and vibrant. The colors have not faded in the sun and the vinyl is easy to clean of graffiti. If the test box proves successful, the Public Art Commission intends to develop a process for property owners to request an art wrap for a utility box and a process for soliciting and selecting photographs.

The new program will provide an opportunity for photographers to show their art in public spaces and will continue to beautify the urban landscape.

COUNCIL GOALS SUPPORTED:

N/A



FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The cost of the test box is approximately \$400 and will be paid using funds budgeted for the Public Art Commission in the Administration budget.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends approval.

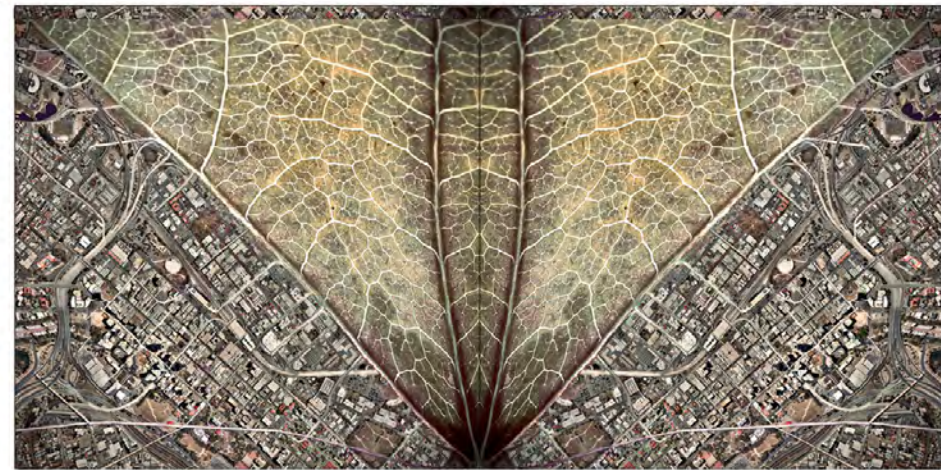
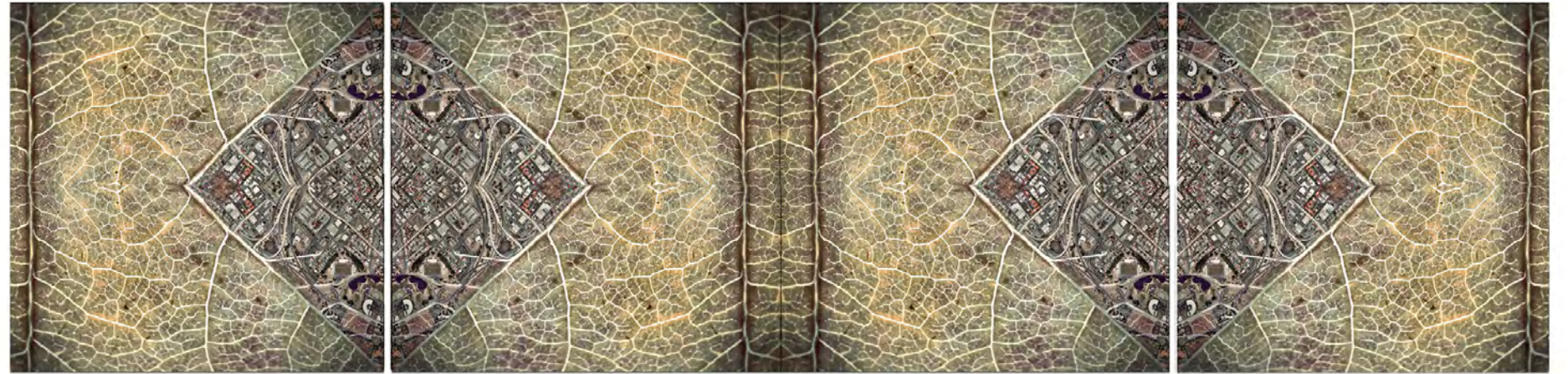
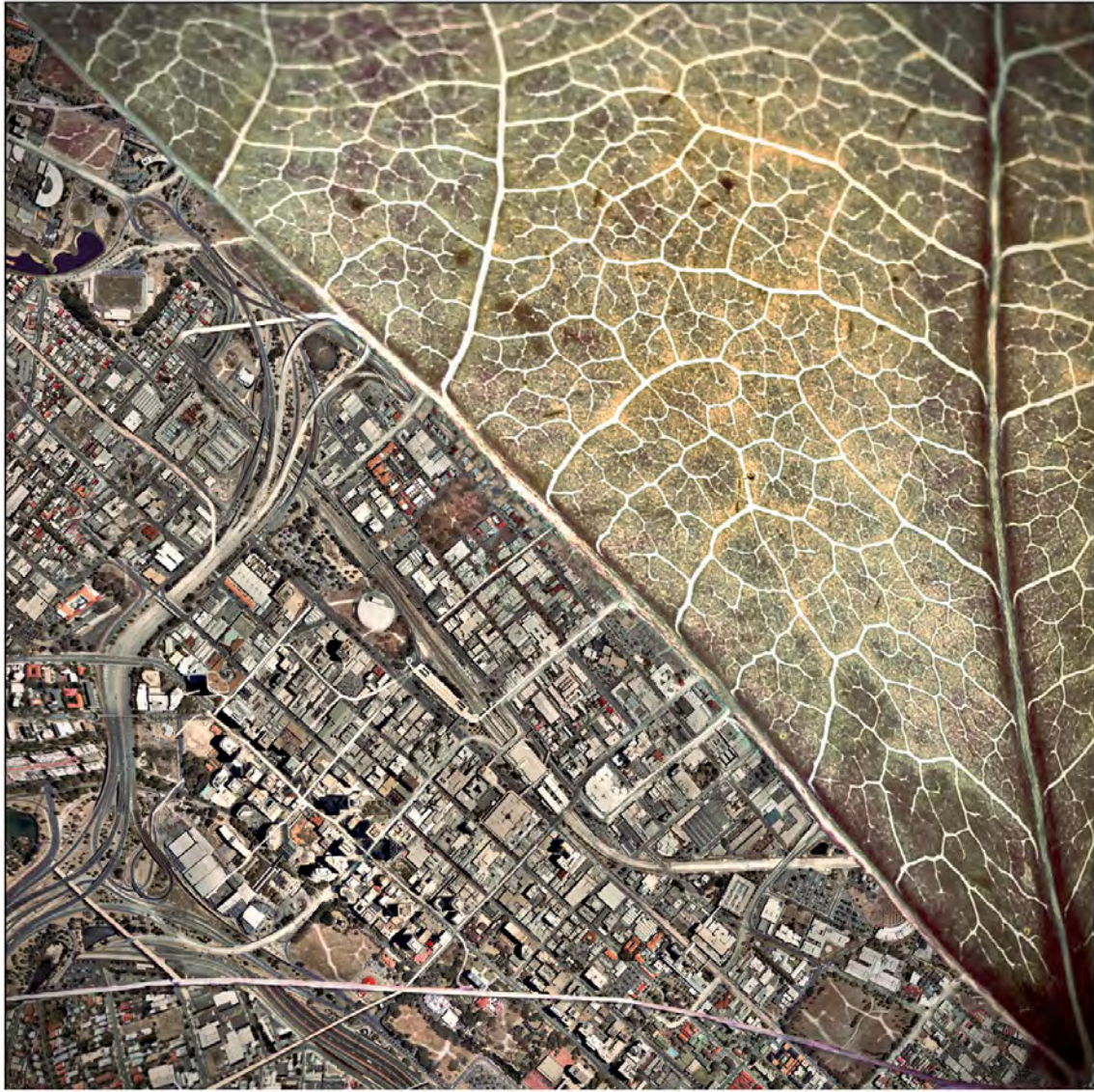
SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move approval of the Public Art Commission's request to apply a vinyl photograph to the utility box on Granite Street overlooking Calle Guanajuato.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Photograph to be used on the test box
- 2) Examples of box art wrap in other communities.





utility box wrap: *Leaf City*

© Brandon Goldman, 2015

Yellowstone National Park



Bismark, North Dakota



Victoria Canada



Location unknown



Toronto Canada



Minneapolis, Minnesota



Bozeman, Montana

