



Sandy City Council Office

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Memorandum

June 17, 2025

To: City Council Members

Cc: Dustin Fratto, Council Office Executive Director
Brian Kelley, Administrative Services Director

From: Council Member Aaron Dekeyzer

Subject: Council Member Dekeyzer Proposed Amendment to the FY26 Tentative Budget - Investing in Community Belonging and Quality of Life through Public Art

Proposal Summary

This amendment proposes:

1. Community Art Seed funding in the amount of \$25,000 to begin a Utility Box Art Program.

Existing Proposals to Amend the FY26 Tentative Budget

Prior to hearing the budget proposal presentations on June 10th from Council Members Houseman, Robinson, and Stroud I had also considered proposing similar amendments related to hazardous concrete, an additional animal services position, and funding council meetings. However, as those proposals have already been made, I'm not including them in my proposal. Instead, this proposal will focus on an area that hasn't been addressed, public art.

What is Public Art?

Public Art is a broad term used to encapsulate any form of art or expression that occurs in a public space. Depending on the city or location, you can find public art on buildings, in parks and plazas, on government infrastructure, within transit stations, or even outside private development. Public Art can take many forms, but is more commonly recognized as murals, monuments, statues, digital or light-based pieces, or temporary performances/ exhibits. Wherever the location and whatever the form, Public Art is accessible to everyone and exists to enhance community spaces and foster a sense of place and belonging.

Why should Sandy invest in Public Art?

Sandy City's vision statement establishes a commitment to *"connecting an active, vibrant, and prosperous community, where people flourish, and you belong."* The connection is clear—public art enhances the vibrancy of our city, deepens our sense of community, and fosters neighborhood pride. Urban designer Mitchell Reardon describes public art as "community



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fingerprints,” noting that it can help develop or shape distinct identities for cities and the people who live in them.

Beyond the City vision, investing in public art also connects with the Council’s budget priorities for this fiscal year.

Quality of Life— Our commitment to quality of life is correlated with culture, personal well-being of our residents, in investments that result in vibrant spaces. By investing in public art, we beautify neighborhoods, encourage community engagement, and support cultural expression. By enhancing a sense of place, public art improves mental well-being of residents, and activates parks, streets, and gathering spaces, making them livelier and more inviting for all. A key component to quality of life is ensuring our residents feel connected to a culture and community, and public art can help us achieve this.

Community Safety— By activating public spaces, public art naturally increases community safety by transforming neglected or underused areas and increasing foot traffic in certain areas of our city. By promoting vibrant, well-used spaces, public art also builds community pride and ownership, which has been shown to reduce crime and vandalism, and improve feelings of security.

Economic Development — Americans for the Arts released an Arts & Economic Prosperity study in 2017 that found 68% of tourism in the U.S. is driven by cultural, historical, and artistic experiences. When cultural tourists visit new areas, they are shown to spend nearly twice as much while traveling as other tourists do, driving economic development and stimulating local economies.

By strategically locating pieces in commercial areas, public art can drive foot traffic to support local business and attract new business and companies to what are visibly marketable spaces. Public art can signal to residents, tourists, and businesses that Sandy is a vibrant, forward-thinking city with a high dedication to both commerce and culture.

Fiscal Health— While investing in something new may seem like an additional burden in a year of strategic spending, public art can demonstrate a visible return on investment through beautified infrastructure and strengthened tourism and local spending. A dedication to public art can also leverage outside funding, as there are many state and federal grants or partnerships available for public art initiatives.

Upgrading our City Utility Boxes

While this is a small step towards investing in public art in Sandy, I am proposing that Sandy City invest in through a city-wide utility box art project. Salt Lake City completed a similar initiative



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in 2019, called “ColorSLC,” where 28 utility boxes were wrapped with pieces of art created by students at each of the 28 elementary schools in the Salt Lake City School District. My proposal is similar—to commission local artists or work with community groups such as the Senior Center, Youth Council, community volunteer groups, or students at our local schools to create art, unique to their interpretation and perspectives, to be placed on Sandy City Utility Boxes.

By transforming often overlooked infrastructure into visual assets, this project will boost neighborhood appeal, support local economic vitality, and create a passive safety feature. Utility box art is a smart, low-cost initiatives with measurable benefits and a high return on investment.

While I don’t intend to specify exactly how this program should be implemented nor administered, I would like to appropriate initial seed funding. Depending on how the program is administered, I expect that each utility box to cost somewhere between \$500 – 3,000 to wrap or decorate. Additionally, there may be other start up costs that need to be considered. In conclusion, I request the council to consider my proposed amendment to the FY26 Tentative Budget (Exhibit A). I hope that this seed funding is only the beginning and that we as a council continuously fund public art projects, such as this one, in the future.

Exhibit A	Amount	Detail	Balance
Ongoing:			
Special Programs (Utility Box Art Program)	\$ 25,000	Dept 1900 - 412470 - [new project] (Non-Departmental)	\$ 25,000
Total Ongoing Appropriations Increase	\$ 25,000		
Citizen Scholarship	\$ (4,000)	Dept 1900 - 412470 - 91108 (Non-Departmental)	\$ 2,500
Central Wasatch Commission	\$ (21,000)	Dept 1900 - 412470 - 91004 (Non-Departmental)	\$ 16,500
Total Ongoing Appropriations Decrease	\$ (25,000)		