

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Carlyn S. Obringer, Chair
Ronald E. Leone, Committee Member

Civic Center
1950 Parkside Drive
Concord, CA 94519
www.cityofconcord.org



**Regular Meeting of
the Housing &
Economic
Development
Committee**

Monday,
October 23, 2017

5:30 p.m.

Garden Conference
Room, Wing A
1950 Parkside Drive

AGENDIZED ITEMS – The public is entitled to address the Committee on items appearing on the agenda before or during the Committee’s consideration of that item. Each speaker will be limited to approximately three minutes.

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**
3. **REPORTS**
 - a. **Considering** – the installation of new entry and wayfinding signage for the Civic Center. **Report by Justin Ezell, Director of Public Works.**
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting
Date: 11/27/2017 - 5:30 PM

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Distribution: City Council
Valerie Barone, City Manager
Susanne Brown, City Attorney
Kathleen Trepa, Assistant City Manager
Joelle Fockler, City Clerk



Staff Report

Date: October 23, 2017

To: Council Committee on Housing & Economic Development

From: Valerie J. Barone, City Manager

Reviewed by: Kathleen Salguero Tropa, Assistant City Manager

Prepared by: Justin Ezell, Director of Public Works
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Subject: **Considering the installation of new entry signage for the Civic Center.**

Report in Brief

Council discussed replacement of the Civic Center entry signs with the City's traditional identification signage located at various parks and the Police Department with staff during the April 1, 2017, workshop to establish Council priorities. At that time, they also asked staff to explore the desirability and cost of incorporating a changeable message sign at the Willow Pass Road entry to the Civic Center.

In response, staff explored options to enhance entry and wayfinding signage at the Civic Center. The goal was to improve street entry signage and navigation for campus visitors. Staff brought forward information to the Council Committee on Housing and Economic Development at its meeting of September 25, 2017. The Committee determined that a full-scale wayfinding program for the Civic Center was cost prohibitive. Rather they asked staff to explore entry signage only. Further, the Committee expressed a preference for a more refined architectural design than the City's traditional monument signs and requested additional exploration of such signage. Last, the Committee requested additional information on adding a changeable message sign to the Willow Pass frontage of the Civic Center as part of any entry signage. This report addresses the Committee's requests.

Staff is recommending in this report that the Committee support using our existing monument signage design to replace the aging entry signage at the Civic Center because the costs for other options remain high.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the Committee direct staff to take a recommendation to the full Council to proceed with replacing the Civic Center signage with the City's traditional monument signs and that no action be taken currently to add a changeable message sign to the Willow Pass Road frontage.

Background

Council discussed replacement of the Civic Center entry signs with the City's traditional identification signage located at various parks and the Police Department with staff during the April 1, 2017, workshop to establish Council priorities. At that time, they also asked staff to evaluate adding a changeable message sign at the Civic Center.

The staff managing the project were concerned that the traditional park/building identification signage used throughout the City did not create the sense of importance that the Civic Center deserved nor did it address wayfinding needs across the campus. In an effort to explore options, staff solicited proposals from sign companies as a design and build proposal. Unfortunately, this approach is inconsistent with state law, as the projects were not of a large enough scale to allow for a design/build process. Consequently, the City will need to officially reject all bids. Staff will be taking a report to Council to do so on November 14, 2017.

At the September 25, 2017, Committee meeting, staff identified two project options for Committee consideration. The first option was a "minimum option" project that simply updates the existing Civic Center entry signage. This option would replace the three existing, worn and weathered driveway entrance signs at Willow Pass Road, Parkside Drive, and Salvio Street, which are in poor condition and not easily readable. The minimum option would replace the existing entry signs with ones that are consistent with the newer style entry signs at parks, within medians, and at the Police Department building. This sign style features a cobble base with a concrete top etched with the park name. The minimum option costs approximately \$15,000 for the three signs, or \$5,000 each. This was the option that the Council originally discussed with staff.

Staff also developed a second option, which had three separate "sub-options" for Committee consideration. In developing this additional option, the City solicited proposals from professional sign companies for the design, fabrication and installation of the new entry and wayfinding signage. The three proposals ranged from a low of \$119,000 to a high of \$206,000 for a comprehensive wayfinding signage program. (As mentioned previously state construction law does not allow a design build option for a

project of this scale, so these proposals must be formally rejected. This will occur at the Council's November 14, 2017, meeting.)

At the September 25, 2017, meeting of the Council Committee on Housing and Economic Development, staff presented the costs for the above options and potential funding sources. The Committee determined that a full-scale wayfinding program for the Civic Center was cost prohibitive and not a priority at this time. The Committee expressed interest in new monument signs that were more architecturally engaging than the City's traditional monument signage and asked staff to further refine costs and options. The Committee also directed staff to include information on including an electronic reader board with the Willow Pass Road signage. The committee members requested that staff bring this information back for review at its next meeting.

Analysis

As mentioned above, the City cannot use a design/build process for replacing the monument signage. Consequently, the City's options are as follows:

1. Replace the entry signage with the City's existing monument sign standard that is used at parks, the Police Department, building and in medians. This approach would cost approximately \$15,000 (\$5,000 a sign) and can be completed by City staff and within the existing public works budget.
2. Hire a sign designer to work with the Housing & Economic Development Committee to design new monument entry signage for the Civic Center and once the design is complete bid the fabrication and installation of the signs. Staff estimates that hiring a sign designer will cost a minimum of \$10,000 but could be as much as \$30,000. This estimate is based on phone conversations with sign designers to receive verbal cost estimates. Further, staff estimates that once designed, fabrication and installation of the signs would be approximately \$25,000 a sign. This estimate is based on the information provided by the three companies that submitted bids already. When taken together, this option is estimated to cost between \$85,000 and \$105,000.

Regardless of option selected, the City could choose to move forward with an electronic message board at the Willow Pass Road frontage. Doing so is estimated to add approximately \$20,000 to that entry sign cost.

Electronic Message Board Sign: The City Municipal Code Chapter 18.180.080(c) prohibits electronic message display signs except those permitted in connection with a freeway oriented pylon sign as part of a master sign program. In addition, variable intensity, blinking, or flashing signs are also prohibited except for public service signs, such as time-temperature displays (which are not considered signs) and barber poles.

The Council has two options for addressing this conflict with the City's Code, should it decide to proceed with an electronic message board sign. It could ignore the

regulations, as the City does not have to abide by its zoning regulations. Staff does not advise this approach as it creates conflict within our development community. Alternatively, the Council could consider modifying its code to allow changeable message signs in certain situations. Staff recommends this approach, should the Committee desire to recommend incorporation of a changeable message sign to the Council.

Financial Impact

Currently there is no funding specifically allocated for this project. Were the City to proceed with using our existing monument signs, the cost could be born within the Public Works budget.

Should the City pursue a more expensive option, funding will need to be identified. As staff previously reported, the potential funding sources noted below could be used for the project; however, utilizing any sources noted below may further delay completion of needed deferred maintenance projects, such as roofing, painting and siding repairs at the Civic Center and other City facilities.

Other financing mechanisms do exist, but because they all have costs associated with their use, they are usually employed for larger scale investments. Two common options for creating revenue to invest in infrastructure upgrades include lease revenue bonds and general obligation bonds. Lease revenue bonds allow the City to issue general fund debt to cover the cost of improvements. General obligation (GO) bonds are also secured by the City's general fund. GO bonds are not as streamlined as lease revenue bonds because they require a 2/3 approval by the voters. Staff believes discussion of debt-issuance should wait until completion of the Fiscal Stability Plan.

Funding source: CIP No. 2389 – Public Building Maintenance Available amount: \$160,000

This project included new carpet for the Senior Center, Council Chamber, and Civic Center A-wing. A total of \$200,000 was initially allocated for the work. The Council Chamber and Senior Center portions of the project were completed well under budget. The Civic Center A-wing portion of the project has been placed on hold. It was determined that the A-wing carpet has not yet reached the end of its useful life, and when it does, a more comprehensive project will be initiated to include interior painting and other associated work. Approximately \$162,000 is available in the project account. If these funds are reallocated for the wayfinding project, a new funding source will need to be identified when it comes time to complete the A-wing work.

Funding source: CIP no. 2387 – Playground Replacement Program Available amount: \$250,000

This project formalizes a playground replacement program for the City. Playground equipment has a useful life of twenty years. A schedule has been developed to replace

27 individual sets of playground equipment using a 20-year life expectancy range. A total of \$1 million was allocated for Fiscal Years 2016-18 to replace four playgrounds. When staff developed the budgetary estimates for these four playgrounds, the best available information was used for calculating replacement costs. Staff has since updated the formula used to develop project costs using the Civic Center Playground project as the model (the Civic Center project was the first of four projects to be completed).

The new formula has reduced the total cost needed for the four projects by 25%, leaving a potential available balance of \$250,000. The remaining three playgrounds will be replaced this Fiscal Year. If a portion of the available funds are reallocated for the wayfinding project, instead of remaining earmarked for playground replacement, a new funding source will need to be identified for the five additional playgrounds that reach the end of their useful life in the year 2020. The projected cost to replace these five playgrounds is estimated at \$668,000 using the new formula.

Public Contact

The Agenda was posted.