



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jim Ortbal  
Kim Walesh

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** April 2, 2018

Approved

Date

4/11/18

**COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3**

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON THE DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING SYSTEM AND REGIONAL TRANSIT MAPPING AND WAYFINDING PARTNERSHIP**

## RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Accept the report on the Downtown Wayfinding System, which includes findings and recommendations for a wayfinding program for Downtown San José and a commitment to collaborate with the Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Partnership led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).
- (b) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a Master Consulting Agreement with City ID LLC for wayfinding and placemaking design services for an initial three-year term ending June 2021 for an aggregate maximum compensation not to exceed \$2,000,000, subject to the appropriation of funds; the City has budgeted \$550,000 for work under this agreement, and will need to identify additional funds to complete work beyond that amount.

## OUTCOME

Approved consultant will assist the Office of Economic Development, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, and the San José Norman Y. Mineta International Airport with development of an integrated, multi-modal, scalable wayfinding system and user-centered design on an as-required basis and as funding is made available.

## **BACKGROUND**

Downtown San José is home to more than 200 dining, retail, and entertainment venues in a very walkable setting at the hub of the Valley's transit network. Unfortunately, trying to find your way around Downtown can be challenging, particularly for a new or infrequent visitor:

- Downtown has multiple distinct subareas and districts with varying levels of activity and identity.
- “Dead blocks” – stretches of parking lots, vacant units, underutilized lots, or blank walls – frequently separate subareas and keep people from exploring.
- Existing wayfinding measures are primarily auto-oriented, directing drivers to parking lots or to freeways.
- Signage that may be relevant to pedestrians is not pedestrian-scale or predictable.

With new development, urban placemaking, activation of parks and plazas, and investment in bicycle and transit infrastructure, downtown needs a wayfinding program to assist visitors and encourage them to explore amenities on foot and bike.

### **Timeline**

In February 2014, the San Jose Downtown Association released the Downtown Street Life Plan, which recommended a wayfinding program and identified the City as the lead project manager. Also, in early 2014, Department of Transportation (DOT) staff removed most of the old pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage in the downtown core in an effort to reduce sign clutter. Most of the signage was worn and faded and consisted of various designs from many years of Redevelopment Agency projects.

Given the lack of signage and emergence of new technologies for personal navigation, staff in the Office of Economic Development (OED) and DOT began best-practice research of wayfinding programs. OED and DOT convened an informal group of staff from the Office of Cultural Affairs; Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services; Planning, Building & Code Enforcement and partners including the San Jose Downtown Association, SPUR, California Walks, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy to provide ongoing input.

In summer 2015, the Knight Foundation provided funding of \$130,000 for design firm City ID to assist staff and partners in better understanding wayfinding and associated needs. The firm's work focused on ways to enhance the pedestrian experience by encouraging more exploration and awareness of Downtown San Jose. City ID summarized its process and recommendations in a Wayfinding Program Development Final Report which can be found here: (<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/53878>).

As a pilot project, City ID designed a map of Downtown San Jose, geared toward visitors and using GIS-based information. This pilot was made possible by one-time funding for activities

related to Super Bowl 50 with collaboration from Team San Jose, the San Jose Downtown Association, and the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

The Super Bowl 50 downtown map was well-received and has been updated to serve as the standard downtown map used by the San Jose Downtown Association, Team San Jose, and the City of San José. It has also been featured as a fold-out in Content Magazine, which is now placed in all hotels participating in the Hotel Business Improvement District (HBID).

One of the recommendations from City ID is to “implement with partners.” This led to an innovative partnership with the MTC, the Cities of San Francisco and Oakland, SPUR, Motivate (Ford GoBike) and San Francisco International Airport (SFO), described below.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **City ID Recommendations**

Through observations, research, and community feedback, the team from City ID found that the public realm – sidewalks, street furniture, street design – in Downtown San José is high-quality and pedestrian-friendly. The street grid and increasing density make walking feasible for many trips, and robust transit and quality bike infrastructure allow for numerous transportation options. The challenges of navigating Downtown are less about infrastructure and more about information (maps, detailed destination, arrival and transfer information) and subliminal signs (urban design, “dead blocks,” the presence or lack of other people).

To overcome these challenges, the report recommends that the wayfinding system San José develops should:

- Focus on user-centric design, addressing the needs of travelers at different points in the journey
- Be provided through multiple channels (digital, print, signs)
- Be multi-modal, prioritizing pedestrian and non-auto travel
- Be pursued in conjunction with complementary efforts (for example, enhanced urban design, new transit infrastructure)

City ID recommends the following approach to further developing San José’s wayfinding system:

- Design and build a modular and extendible system
- Implement with City partners
- Work smarter by sharing resources
- Achieve economies of scale
- Deliver in phases

The Wayfinding Program Development Final Report includes more detail regarding these recommendations, including user-friendly design interventions, potential projects, and estimated costs.

### **Regional Transit Mapping and Urban Wayfinding Project Partnership**

During the 2015 community and stakeholder engagement process led by City ID, other jurisdictions attended open houses and presentations and later expressed interest in working together on a regional approach toward wayfinding. Several jurisdictions expressed interest in procuring the services of City ID immediately and asked about the City of San José's "RFP" process, which was privately funded by the Knight Foundation. These were encouraging early signs of support for City ID's second recommendation to "Implement with Partners," which, given that our partners are also public agencies and jurisdictions, would require an innovative procurement strategy. Having a unified wayfinding system requires an open procurement process or other similar process to develop agreed-upon design standards.

An open procurement process allows other public entities (e.g. VTA, SJSU, Samtrans/Caltrain, BART) to participate and procure services or eventually products to create a unified wayfinding system. Otherwise, regional wayfinding would likely be disparate, disjointed, and unpredictable. Such a collaboration would also fall in line with the rest of the recommendations offered by City ID: Design and Build a Modular Extendable System, Work Smarter by Sharing Resources, Achieve Economies of Scale, and Deliver in Phases.

### **Commitment to Collaborate**

In September 2016, staff from San Francisco (Planning, MTA, and SFO), Oakland, MTC, and SPUR expressed an interest in working collaboratively toward a regional wayfinding program to learn from San José's recent experience and develop funding strategies, best practices, and future economies of scale through bulk purchasing of products. Each jurisdiction lacks a clear, coordinated wayfinding system to guide residents and visitors, which results in confusion, inefficient trip planning, trips not made, and thus economic activity not generated.

All regional wayfinding partners agreed that an open procurement process would be the best way to develop a unified wayfinding program that provides the user a reliable, consistent, predictable experience and encourages more pedestrian activity.

### **MTC Open Procurement Process**

At the request of the partners, in March 2017, MTC issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to establish an on-call bench of pre-qualified consultants to provide technical assistance for mapping and wayfinding design services. In response to the RFQ, MTC received proposals from 30 consulting firms. An evaluation panel, including staff from MTC, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the City of San José, evaluated the proposals based on each firm's

qualifications, quality and creativity of samples/previous projects, cost effectiveness/reasonableness of hourly rates, and written and oral communications.

In June 2017, MTC approved 12 design consultants for mapping and wayfinding design services. From that pool of consultants, MTC selected a team lead by City ID, LLC to initiate development of a regional mapping and wayfinding program, which is currently underway. The MTC solicitation was a cooperative RFQ that allowed other public agencies the ability to “piggyback” and contract with the selected vendors without further bidding. The San Jose municipal code allows the city to “piggyback” on competitive procurement processes by another public agency which substantially comply with the City’s procurement procedures (SJMC§4.12.225 B.3).

### **Use of Master Agreements**

A master agreement sets forth all of the business and legal terms and conditions, standards of performance, general work scope, and compensation rates. When a specific task is identified and budgeted, the City will then execute a task order against the master agreement that defines the work, deliverables, maximum compensation, period of performance, etc. With a master agreement, one agreement is executed with the vendor, with task orders issued as work is identified and budgeted.

The FY 2017-2018 City budget includes \$500,000 from the General Purpose Parking Fund and \$300,000 from the Convention and Cultural Affairs Fund. The deliverables will include:

- Wayfinding design standards and a specific wayfinding signage plan for Downtown
- 10-15 pedestrian totem signs fabricated and installed in heavily travelled locations Downtown, anticipated by year-end 2018.

The wayfinding signs will have maps and information about distances to destinations and routes. Potential examples of the wayfinding product to be developed and installed are provided in Attachment A. These totem signs are described as “Phase One, Project One” in the Wayfinding Program Development Final Report. This work will be performed subject to a task order under the proposed Master Agreement.

Over the next three years, other city departments may wish to engage City ID to provide wayfinding design services and other sources of funding may become available to further extend the wayfinding network. For example, the City received Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program grant funding, which includes funding for wayfinding; under the Master Agreement, that signage could be developed and align with other wayfinding information. The use of a master agreement will allow the wayfinding program to develop in coordination within the city and achieve economies of scale efficiently.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Staff will provide updates on the progress of the San José and Regional Transit Mapping and Urban Wayfinding Project at the Community and Economic Development Committee.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the April 24, 2018 City Council agenda.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the Finance Department, and the City Manager's Budget Office.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

### **FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT**

This action is consistent with the Economic Development Strategy approved by the City Council, specifically Initiative No. 1, "Encourage Companies and Sectors that Can Drive the San Jose/Silicon Valley Economy and Generate Revenue for City Services and Infrastructure" and Initiative No. 10, "Continue to Position Downtown as Silicon Valley's City Center." A healthy Business Improvement District will encourage growth of the retail community and consequently result in additional sales tax revenue for the City.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action in this memorandum will allow for the execution of Master Agreements for an aggregate amount not to exceed \$2,000,000. The budget for the agreements is included in the following appropriations: General Purpose Parking Capital Fund and the Convention and Cultural Affairs Fund. The ability to spend against the agreements is subject to the appropriation of funds. As described above, the City currently has \$800,000 identified to begin work on pedestrian-oriented wayfinding in the Downtown (see Attachment A).

**BUDGET REFERENCE**

This table below identifies the funds and appropriations to fund the contracts recommended as part of this memo.

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Amt. for Contract	2017-2018 Adopted Capital/Operating Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
559	7782	Greater Downtown Area Multi-Modal/Streetscape Improvements	\$2,201,000	\$250,000	N/A	2/13/2018 30070
536	2107	Downtown Wayfinding Signage	\$300,000	\$300,000	981	6/20/2017 29962

**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-003, Agreements/Contracts (New or Amended) resulting in no physical changes to the environment.

/s/  
JIM ORTBAL  
Director of Transportation

/s/  
KIM WALESH  
Deputy City Manager  
Director of Economic Development

For questions, please contact Sal Alvarez, Executive Analyst in the Office of Economic Development at (408) 793-6943 or Jessica Zenk, Division Manager in the Department of Transportation at (408) 535-3543.

Attachment