



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Raul Peralez
Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: August 2, 2019

Approved by:

Date: 08/02/19

SUBJECT: Council Policy Priority #4: Electronic Billboards - Approval of Scope and Timeline for Request for Proposals (RFP) for Large Format Signage/Billboards on City-Owned Property.

RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendation with the addition that

1. Any take-down proposal prioritizes existing billboards that are historically or currently blighted permitting lease conditions, and,
2. That City Staff provides clarification on a comprehensive timeline of the RFP process including issuance and award date.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the City Council placed on its priority list a policy proposal to update our sign ordinance to permit digital billboards, intensify our downtown sign zone, reduce blighted paper billboards and generate revenue for the city. Almost four years later, we are finally issuing the RFP for Phase 1 of this item after environmentally clearing 17 publicly owned sites in September 2018. Furthermore, considering the low number of opportunities, City Council also directed to explore another process to allow additional proposals for alternative sites.

DISCUSSION

We appreciate staff for all their work and the various stakeholders who have been patiently involved in this process, putting in a good faith effort in playing by the rules.

It is key that we have the cooperation of all the stakeholders, including industry participants, since we have an opportunity to design a balanced policy that benefits and protects the community while being realistic to industry standards. This has been a top ten priority item and after almost four years of work, we are glad to finally issue an RFP for Phase 1. Therefore, we would appreciate staff providing a clear timeline on the next steps with committed dates so that we can finally move forward.

Furthermore, we have an opportunity to reduce existing blighted billboards by incentivizing a take-down or replacement element for stand-alone billboards. This is not a new concept¹ and it is important to note that we encourage competition which is why Council did not include this as an element for the Downtown Intensification Zone. However, for stand-alone billboards outside of the zone (and for Phase 2), we are ultimately looking out for the best interest of the community by trying to resolve the long time issue of blight. We have heard from both the Mayor and the community on how blighted paper billboards have been a sore issue of frustration and our extensive, compliance-driven enforcement process only adds to that frustration.

Rather, this approach can expediently reduce several billboards, hence why it should be clarified that if leasing conditions permits, prioritization should go to removing the most problematic billboards in our community. In doing so, our community will benefit from not only the funds received from projects on publicly-owned land, but an opportunity to eliminate some inconvenient signage.

¹ Peralez, R. *October 2015*. Amendment to Title 20 for Art Display Structures and Lighting Displays in Downtown. Retrieved from:
http://sanjose.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=&event_id=1467&meta_id=537298