

Memorandum

TO: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Blage Zelalich
Jessica Zenk

**SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING
PROGRAM UPDATE**

DATE: February 12, 2020

Approved



Date

2/13/20

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

RECOMMENDATION

Accept Downtown Wayfinding Program and Regional Transit Mapping and Wayfinding updates, which provide a status report of activities undertaken for a permanent wayfinding system for Downtown San José since February 2019.

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 because:

- 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, an emphasis on urban placemaking, activation of parks and plazas, investment in bicycle and transit infrastructure, an increase in conventions, and the recruitment of national and international sporting events, San José needs a wayfinding program that helps people navigate its urban core and encourages them to explore Downtown amenities.

Staff has been working with local partners to advance wayfinding for San José, as well as regional partners to collaboratively develop a regional wayfinding program and

transit map. These efforts have produced a Wayfinding Program Development Final Report, funded by the Knight Foundation, which laid out a path for scoping and implementing a comprehensive wayfinding program; a digital “base map” with critical information about the Greater Downtown; an interactive online and print map of the Downtown, which has been used daily and for special events; and a regional partnership to implement the recommended system.

In April 2018, City Council accepted a report on the Downtown Wayfinding System, which included findings and recommendations for a phased wayfinding program for Downtown San José and a commitment to collaborate with the work of the Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Partnership, led by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Additionally, Council authorized 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 \$800,000 for work through this agreement, \$550,000 for design services by City ID and \$250,000 to fabricate and install the initial totem signs by a vendor to be secured through a separate procurement process.

San José’s new wayfinding system focuses on pedestrian and non-auto travel and employs user-centric design. The wayfinding system will be accessible through multiple channels (digital, print, signs). It is designed to complement other efforts – for example, enhanced urban design, new transit infrastructure – that help people navigate the city.

The wayfinding system will be modular and extendible – it will grow over time with diverse but integrated wayfinding products and funding. The City is working smarter by sharing implementation resources with partners such as MTC, the San Jose Downtown Association, Team San Jose, San Jose State University, Valley Transportation Authority, and other Bay Area jurisdictions. This process is designed to achieve economies of scale and will be delivered in phases, as resources are available, and opportunities arise.

Downtown Wayfinding Program: Design and Deployment of Initial Totems

In May 2018, staff and City ID began to develop digitally based maps, information, and product design standards for San Jose’s local wayfinding system. This work built on the previously developed Downtown maps and was the first time that industrial designers began to design initial physical structures – totems to display maps and wayfinding information.

City ID held stakeholder workshops and conducted site visit research and observations in July, October, and November 2018. Based on the data gathered, City ID recommended that San Jose’s local wayfinding system ultimately included four types of totems - Arrival, Destination, Navigation and Route. The first phase of the program focuses on delivering a static, potentially illuminated, Navigation totem. This type of signage will be deployed at key intersections and is designed to help a user orientate themselves and then plan and

navigate their route to an intended destination. The totem information will contain a downtown district and landmark map, combined with a ten- minute walk map highlighting specific types of street-level activity.

Wayfinding Pilot Program

The first deployment of wayfinding totems is proposed to be along San Carlos Street, between the McEnery Convention Center and San Jose State University. This corridor was selected because the convention center consistently hosts large events with thousands of attendees, yet these attendees do not seem to venture out to Downtown's SoFA District, just two blocks away. Similarly, San Jose State students often do not explore beyond Second Street into the SoFA District. Additionally, San Jose State has expressed an interest in partnering with the City to develop a wayfinding system to help students fully integrate into Downtown and assist visitors in finding their way to and around campus. The recently built Student Union contains conference space that Team San Jose is utilizing as overflow for larger conventions and conferences such as Nvidia's GPU Tech Conferences in March. Staff and consultants will evaluate the impact of the pilot with quantitative and qualitative data regarding trips by students and visitors.

Additional Wayfinding Products

City ID recommends that the City deploy several wayfinding product types in a phased approach. After the initial pilot program, they recommend investments in Arrival, Destination and Route totems. The Arrival totem will be a planning-based product, located at origin sites such as Diridon Station and the convention center and would help the user to establish their overall orientation and travel plan. The Destination totem will contain information about specific areas or sub districts such as San Pedro Square, the SoFA District and San Jose State University. Route totems will be designed for wayfinding along corridors like trails and major bikeways. Navigation and Route products will be static and illuminated while Arrival and Destination products will offer active and interactive options. Examples of "active" and "interactive" options would be welcoming messages or announcements and search features or queries, respectively. Active and interactive product types involve complex technologies that require additional design and more robust system requirements to function properly.

Over the years, including recently, media companies, telecommunications companies and kiosk vendors have approached the City wishing to put interactive digital kiosks in the Downtown public right of way. These kiosks typically include a substantial amount of private advertising or sponsorships and they often include the opportunity to integrate information from city government and other conduit providers. In exchange for use of the public right of way and rights to advertise, the commercial kiosk vendors typically offer free community benefits that include public Wi-Fi, USB device charging stations, 311/611/911 public assistance, and municipal dark fiber. Some preparatory environmental work is underway (Council Policy Priority #6: Electronic Billboards) that could open the door for consideration of interactive kiosks with commercial advertising in the public right of way, along with other street furniture with advertising. This environmental work is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2020, with the necessary City Council hearings in

early Summer 2020.

A number of issues would need to be addressed before the City could move forward with the implementation of a commercial digital kiosk program. Some of these issues include:

Creating the appropriate regulatory framework - While existing Council Policy 1-7 allows for sponsorships, there is no existing City policy that allows commercial advertising in the right-of-way.

Identifying the proper procurement process - Multiple companies have approached the City advocating for advertising-based kiosk solutions. If the City decides to pursue this, a fair procurement process would need to be identified.

Determining the potential for revenue - Securing the ability to advertise in the public right of way is potentially a lucrative opportunity for the selected company. The City would need to ensure that it secures the appropriate value in revenue or services in exchange for allowing commercial kiosks in the public right of way.

Properly integrating privacy/data/Smart City initiatives - The City will need to incorporate emerging Privacy Principles and Privacy Policy work into a kiosk program and develop a consistent approach to the funding and placement of connected devices on the public right of way to support economic development, digital inclusion and smart cities initiatives while protecting the City's investment in pavement and sidewalks.

Ensuring an integrated approach - It would be imperative to coordinate and integrate Downtown's local wayfinding system with potential interactive commercial kiosks as well as any other proposed street furniture such as benches or newspaper condominiums. Other cities that have gone down this path have experienced "clutter creep" on sidewalks due to lack of a holistic approach.

MTC Region Mapping and Wayfinding Program

On January 11, 2019, MTC staff released a prototype, print-ready, regional transit map showing an overview of all principal transit modes in the Bay Area. This effort (Phase I) was the culmination of an 18-month process which also included stakeholder interviews and workshops with Bay Area cities and transit operators. The map is a combined effort of 28 transit agencies, the MTC, SPUR and consultant City ID and is intended to provide a sense of the region's overall transit network and call for 'harmonization of information' for transit users, which was documented in SPUR's white paper, Finding Transit. At the January MTC Operations Committee meeting, an approved allocation of \$950,000 in new funding was intended to develop and install a prototype suite of maps and arrival and destination totems in San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Rosa and San José's Diridon Station and Downtown, as described above. This second phase of work proposed further harmonization and the potential development of a network brand (including product form and size, map scales, colors, pictograms, illustrations, textures, etc.) and would include testing with Bay Area transit riders in late 2019.

ANALYSIS

Downtown Wayfinding Pilot Project Update

Over the past year, City ID conducted user testing and workshops to iterate on design concepts to be included in the prototype product. Key considerations focused on information design and relevant levels of information to create a seamless pedestrian experience based on path of travel, and placement of the various wayfinding products providing the progressive disclosure of information at the locations where pedestrians will need it.

A mock-up of the Navigation totem was deployed in front of the convention center during NHL All-Star weekend festivities in January 2019, City ID compiled and analyzed the feedback received on the mock-up totem and provided the information at the February 2019 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

City ID took in the user feedback received in January and integrated it into the next iteration of the Navigation totem design work. They presented this more advanced design at a stakeholder workshop on June 13, 2019. Based on feedback from this workshop, a second round of user testing was conducted in front of the McEnery Convention Center on August 16, 2019 during the Silicon Valley Comic Convention.

While City ID's scope is to develop visual design and product recommendations, the master agreement includes funding for industrial design firm Billings Jackson Design to take product concepts and develop engineering drawings for the Navigation totem prototype. In the fall, Billings Jackson solicited cost estimates from three industrial fabricators with experience in this field and has recommended that United Visual Branding fabricate the prototype Navigation product, based on experience and cost. Because the prototype is a test of the product design, cost is a key consideration to maximize the budget for the full-scale production of the Navigation totem. The development of the prototype will take approximately 12 weeks from the date of execution of the unique services agreement totaling \$12,450. Installation of the prototype is anticipated in late Spring/early Summer 2020. Once the prototype is tested for functionality and evaluated for quality of fit and finish, staff will conduct a formal procurement process for the production of the ultimate Navigation totem.

When prototype testing of the Navigation and Destination totems is completed and a fabricator has been identified through a formal procurement process, the program will be able to leverage state funding from multiple affordable housing projects - Balbach Street in SoFA, Bassett Street in North San Pedro and Roosevelt Park in the East Santa Clara Street Business District – to incorporate wayfinding. Approximately \$370,000 in grant funding will help the program achieve economies of scale as fabrication costs go down when a greater quantity of products is purchased.

Expanded Wayfinding Base Map

During user-testing and workshops, City ID received requests to include information about adjacent neighborhoods and business districts in their map to encourage resident and visitor exploration beyond the downtown core. City ID worked with cartographic design firm

DCR Design on the development of an expanded base map to include Japantown, The Alameda, East Santa Clara Street, South First Street past HWY 280, Calle Willow and San Jose State University South Campus. As the City's Better Bikeways Network is built out and the expansion of services from mobility device companies like Bay Wheels, Byrd, Lime and Lyft occurs, areas beyond the downtown core are more accessible without the use of a car and provide increased opportunities for exploration of surrounding business districts and neighborhoods.

San Jose State University

San Jose State University has been active participant in workshops and, as a result, decided to update their on-campus wayfinding program. In Fall 2019, they secured funding to work with City ID on a campus scoping study and prototype and to test two Destination totems with the ambition to add more. This partnership will enable the deployment of the Destination products in the coming year.

Additional Funding and Partnership Opportunities

The County of Santa Clara recently awarded the City's Human Resources Department a grant to establish permanent wayfinding to encourage City Hall employees and visitors to explore the downtown on foot or bike. This program could potentially support wayfinding products on City Hall Plaza. Staff will continue to coordinate with stakeholders and work to identify funding and partners to deploy the wayfinding program.

MTC Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Program Update

After the MTC awarded funding to develop prototype products, transit stakeholders raised questions about how to balance and support their individual network brand identities and achieve consensus on standardized transit information infrastructure. So the MTC's second phase of work proposed further work on these two key issues. In January 2020, MTC and City ID released Regional Mapping and Wayfinding Program Update and Next Steps for Phase I and II of the regional effort. Phase II will conclude this Spring with a questionnaire released in January, a "listening tour" by City ID and MTC staff with transit stakeholders in February/March, and second workshop in April/May 2020.

Next Steps

Next steps for the Downtown Wayfinding Program include:

- Prototype fabrication and delivery of a single Navigation totem prototype (June/July 2020)
- Prototype evaluation, feedback and final product design (August/September 2020)
- Procurement process for full pilot delivery and options for expansion (Starting September 2020)
- Identification of additional partnerships and opportunities to leverage program funding (On-going)

To: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
February 12, 2020
Subject: Downtown Wayfinding Program Update
Page 7

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The local and regional wayfinding programs contain explicit evaluation provisions. The results of those evaluations and an update about both programs will continue to be shared with the Community and Economic Development Committee annually at the February Committee meeting.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the February 24, 2020 Community and Economic Development Committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

/s/
BLAGE ZELALICH
Downtown Manager
Office of Economic Development

/s/
JESSIC ZENK
Deputy Director
Department of Transportation

For questions please contact Sal Alvarez in the Office of Economic Development at (408) 793-6943.