



Date: August 10, 2015
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.H.W.*
Subject: City Gateway Signage

At its April 21, 2015 meeting, at the request of Mayor Garcia, the City Council directed the City Manager to study the signage at major entrances (or gateways) to the City and to report back to the City Council within 90 days with recommendations for enhancements.

Existing Gateway Signs

Staff has completed an inventory of existing gateway signs, documenting that signage exists at 20 locations (see attached map). This signage consists of 10 monument signs, 6 pole signs, 2 retro "International City" signs, and 2 miscellaneous signs. A description of each type follows:

Monument & Pole Signs

The monument and pole signs, which have a common design theme, were installed between 2006 and 2010. The signs that were installed along the City's western and northern borders were paid for through Redevelopment or CDBG funding. The monument sign on Lakewood Boulevard near Carson Street, which includes "LGB Your Hometown Airport," was funded by the Airport. The monument sign on Carson Street near the Towne Centre, which includes "Bike Friendly City," was funded, in part, by bicycle grants. And, the monument sign of 2nd Street at the entrance to Island Village, which includes "Aquatics Capital of America," was funded, in part, by the Long Beach Aquatic Capital of America Foundation. The pole signs on Spring and Willow Streets, near the eastern border of the city, were funded, in part, by bicycle grants. The cost for a monument sign was \$8,500, and the cost for a pole sign was \$2,500. This does not include any costs for lighting and landscaping that may have been incurred, nor does it include the cost for the original design(s) of the signs. The attached photos provide examples of signs from other Southern California cities for comparison.

Retro Signs

Two 1970's vintage "International City" signs are extant: one is located on the Davies Bridge (between Marina Drive and Appian Way); the other is located on Woodruff Avenue near Carson Street. Although the sign panels are dated and faded, the sign structures appear to be in good shape.

Miscellaneous Signs

There are two other gateway signs of note. The first is a simple street sign identifying the City of Long Beach city limit that is located on the bridge over the San Gabriel River adjacent to Alamitos Bay Landing. The second is the multi-image windscreen located on Studebaker Road at the terminus of the 7th Street exit.

Opportunities

Several opportunities for new or enhanced gateways have been identified. Two of the most notable opportunities involve areas belonging to Caltrans. The first is the 405/605 freeway exit that turns into 7th Street near Studebaker Road.

Several years ago, the City partnered with CalTrans and then Senator Lowenthal to identify \$250,000 in State highway improvement dollars to implement landscaping in this area. The project required several years to identify the funding and implement the improvements, which included median landscaping and hardscape improvements. At the time, CalTrans was not open to including a City gateway sign at that location.

The second opportunity involving Caltrans is the southeastern entrance to Long Beach on Pacific Coast Highway (from Seal Beach).

Caltrans has said that the City could enter into an agreement with them to make improvements to these areas, provided the City pays for them and maintains them. The City entered into a similar agreement in 2005 for the landscaping of the Atlantic Ave. on/off ramps to/from the 91 Freeway. If these or other locations under the responsibility of CalTrans are a priority to improve for the City, the City can add that effort to its State Legislative agenda and work with our State legislative delegation to identify State dollars to improve the area.

It should be noted that there are efforts underway that will result in the improvement of several gateways. Staff is pursuing a demonstration project to convert a portion of the turf area located at the terminus of the 710 Freeway south of the Broadway exit to drought tolerant landscaping through the LBWD rebate program. This project will create a gateway opportunity for motorists entering the city from the west (Port of Long Beach) and the north (710 Freeway). There are also two major corridor studies underway -- Artesia Boulevard and Lakewood Boulevard -- that may result in gateway improvements. Further, the City is pursuing improvements on Lakewood near the Long Beach Airport to add signage to further highlight the entrance to our Airport.

Beach Signage

As part of the City's Tidelands Improvement Program permitting requirements, the City is required to add signage to help direct residents and visitors to the beach. Given the focus from the Mayor and City Council on improving signage at the City's Gateways, staff recommends that the City take this opportunity to also create a comprehensive beach signage program that will result in a standardized look and feel of the City's beach signage.

August 10, 2015

Page 3

This signage would also complement the efforts to improve the look of the City's Gateway signs, and use complimentary features to ensure a consistent signage approach.

Downtown Parking Signage

In addition, as part of the installation of parking meters in the downtown area, the City will be improving its downtown parking signage efforts. The City Council set aside any excess parking meter revenue for the first two years of implementation of the parking meters to invest in downtown parking improvements, including signage to direct visitors to our parking garages. City staff recommends using this same effort to improve our Gateway signs to also improve the City's downtown parking signage and ensure a consistent look and feel.

Next Steps

There is expected to be significant costs associated with an initiative to replace existing signs and develop new gateways. The Proposed FY 16 Budget includes \$400,000 in funds to begin this effort, to fund a study and partial implementation of the City's Gateway signs.

The first step of such an initiative would be to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to provide design and site planning services. This study would have three different components of study: Gateway signage, beach signage, and downtown parking signage. The consultant would be expected to develop three different programs for signage that would complement each other. As a part of these services, the consultant would be asked to evaluate the City's multiple slogans and offer recommendations on how or whether to incorporate them into a new gateway signage program.

At the end of the study, the City would have recommendations for new Gateway signage and the most appropriate locations, estimated costs for those new signs, a plan to improve Downtown parking signage that compliments the new City Gateway signage, and a uniform and coordinated approved to implementing signage for coastal access. Funding for the study would be provided by the funds identified Proposed FY 16 Budget, as well as Tidelands funds and Parking Meter revenue as identified above. The City would proceed with the RFP shortly after budget adoption.

Please let me know if you require additional information.

PHW:TM:gh

Attachments

cc. Charles Parkin, City Attorney
Laura L. Doud, City Auditor
Tom Modica, Assistant City Manager
Arturo Sanchez, Deputy City Manager
John Gross, Director of Financial Management
Ara Maloyan, Director of Public Works
Amy J. Bodek, Director of Development Services
Jyl Marden, Assistant to the City Manager