



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, October 25, 2022

TO: City Council

FROM: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER VIDES
Elizabeth Padilla, Sr. Administrative Analyst

THROUGH: CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WAYFINDING DESIGN CONCEPT
AND PROVIDING DIRECTION TO IMPLEMENT A PHASED
INSTALLATION PLAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that City Council adopt the City’s Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan and that staff be directed to prepare a multi-year implementation program for consideration.

BACKGROUND:

The last wayfinding system was installed over 20 years ago and since then the City has changed significantly, and navigation tools and guidelines have evolved. Since December 2021, the City engaged with consultants, Selbert Perkins Design on developing a new comprehensive Wayfinding Signage Program. This project included an assessment of existing wayfinding signs, consideration of community entrance/gateway signage, stakeholder engagement, and assistance with procurement, fabrication, and installation.

DISCUSSION:

The public outreach process began in April, with an online survey designed to gather feedback on respondents' perceptions of the City, information on how respondents got around the city, and assistance identifying primary attractions in Watsonville. More than 170 people responded to the online survey and, as intended, their feedback laid a foundation for the design concept considered by the consultants.

Some of the April survey highlights:

What is your current perception of the City of Watsonville?

Response Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Positive	14.9%	26
Generally Positive	52.3%	91
Neutral	23.6%	41
Generally Negative	8.6%	15

How do you get around town? What is your primary mode of transportation? (Top Responses)

Response Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Walk	20.1%	35
Car	97.1%	169
Bus	2.9%	5
Bicycle	4%	7

What are the primary attractions/destinations in Watsonville? (Top Responses)

Response Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Downtown Watsonville	49.7%	84
Historic Attractions	29%	49
Watsonville Slough Trails	58%	98
Parks	37.3%	63
Events	51.5%	87

What wayfinding ideas would you find most helpful? Please select your top 3. (Top Responses)

Response Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Web & Mobile App Directions	42.6%	72
City Gateways & Landmarks	46.2%	78
Historical Markers	55.6%	94
Park and Trail Signage	58%	98

The results of the survey, lead to a slough-inspired wayfinding design concept. The slough concept captured the surrounding natural beauty of the sloughs throughout Watsonville. Using clean lines and large legible fonts, the intent of the sign system is to display a highly branded look – creating a sense of place and connection as people move around the city.

In September, the slough-inspired design concept was shared with the community and key stakeholders for feedback. Public input was collected through a combination of four in-person stakeholder meetings which included meetings with the Watsonville and Freedom Rotary Board Members, the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce Board Members, and the Empower Watsonville Youth Group. In addition, a second online survey was distributed via the City’s website, various social media platforms, the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce newsletter, the City’s business, and Our Town electronic newsletters. In addition, display boards and surveys featuring the design concept were displayed at both public libraries for a week. Overall, the majority of respondents liked the slough design concept and a few suggestions were included and highlighted below.

Are there any additional elements that should be considered in the design of the Wayfinding signage program?

Respondents who selected “yes” added the following:

- Signs need to be easy to read at night (lights over street signs) clear and large font
- Bilingual signage should be included
- We should have a gateway entry sign over downtown Watsonville
- Add QR codes for historical and detailed information
- Consider a different gateway entry sign, or add texture to the letters and possibly lighting. We should consider adding a viewing/parking area that allows vehicles to stop and take pictures.
- Consider a protective coding to discourage graffiti and vandalism on signs
- Ensure that the sign program is accessible to people of all ages and abilities
- Explore opportunities to link technology in the future and QR codes that direct people to websites for additional information, maps, directories
- Add the City logo or heron image on street signs
- Reduce on-street clutter
- When possible, utilize images that describe the essence of our community, our people, our events, and our natural surroundings.

The final contract deliverable for Selbert Perkins Design is to produce design guidelines and specifications for the Way Finding System (construction documents). The Construction documents include the location, specific sizing, coloring, and materials for fabrication, and all the technical specifications that allow for the installation of the signs.

At this time Selbert Perkins Design has obtained preliminary manufacturing costs for the proposed signs. Funding has not been identified and appropriated for the implementation of this Way Finding Project. Staff will work on procuring this project in phases, prioritizing elements of the Way Finding Program that are most beneficial to the public, and will apply for grant funding that allows for all elements of the Program to be set in place.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The proposed Wayfinding Signage Program and project are consistent with Strategic Plan priorities:

- 3-Infrastructure & Environment
- 4-Economic Development
- 5-Community Engagement & Well-Being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The first proposed quote for the entire wayfinding signage program came in at around \$3 million. Installing wayfinding tools in phases will allow for quick implementation and immediate impact on the user experience. To support the phased implementation of the wayfinding project, about \$890,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds has been allocated. A multi-year phased approach will also allow staff to explore additional funding options to implement the rest of the project.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The City Council may choose not to approve the wayfinding design concept.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

- A) Wayfinding Signage Family – Concept B