

Legislation Text

File #: 18-700, Version: 1

Presenter/Contact
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SUBJECT:

Presentation and direction to staff on updates to the City of New Braunfels Wayfinding System

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

The City of New Braunfels Wayfinding System was developed between 2006 and 2007. The system is based on the *Design Intent Documents* which include sign types, color palette, destinations and locations. The document was developed by Jacobs, formerly Carter Burgess, with input from a council-appointed wayfinding advisory committee. The drawings in the document were intended for illustrative design; final engineering, fabrication and materials were the responsibility of the fabricator. The system was funded through an agreement with the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation (4B) and New Braunfels Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The City contracted with Executive Signs from San Antonio to install the vehicular signs on city streets and state highways between 2007 and 2009. The signs were shop-fabricated and included specialty welding and non-standard materials and anchors. The Public Works Department accepted maintenance responsibility of the signs after installation.

Since the implementation, the City has been experiencing many challenges with the wayfinding system including appearance, legibility, maintenance, and the ability to replace, update and change signs. Furthermore, it has been difficult to find a sign contractor to replace or install new signs without an established design standard. These issues prompted city staff to start the development of a design standard for vehicular signs.

City staff approached the development of a design standard with meeting the design intent and providing a design that is maintainable by the city, cost efficient and meet engineering standards as required by state law. The proposed design standard is for three vehicular direction signs: (1) vehicular citywide directional; (2) vehicular downtown directional; and (3) vehicular water venue trailblazer. The proposed design standard addresses the following key needs for vehicular signs:

1. Improved maintenance by the city and/or roadway sign contractor
2. Specialized sign crew or crane for installation or replacement not required
3. Allow for efficient changes or additions by the city and/or roadway sign contractor
4. Use standard traffic materials that are lightweight and readily available
5. Use standard anchors that meet breakaway and engineering requirements
6. Use standard sign sheeting where the sign is retroreflective and visible at night
7. Use standard font and that meet engineering requirements
8. Meet Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) standard requirements

It is also proposed that the vehicular water venue trailblazer be included with the citywide directional sign based on sign uniformity and cost savings. The vehicular downtown directional sign will also be utilized in low speed areas such as Gruene, Landa Park and other areas where the speed limit is less than 30 mph or where there are other size limitations. Specialty welding, scroll work, finials and foundations are proposed to be removed; however, the sign post will remain black.

The proposed design standard was developed based on the *Design Intent Documents* and the Public Works Department sign shop. The standard keeps the color palette standard sign panels that can be easily replaced and updated by the city and/or roadway sign contractor. The bottom panel includes the “river wave” and allows for the city’s logo or a specialty logo or customization. The typical cost of a sign is approximately \$400 whereas the previous signs cost up to \$1,500.

The next steps in the process include:

1. Obtain input on the proposed design standard
2. Develop a wayfinding system policy and criteria for vehicular signs
3. Review existing inventory, sign destinations and locations
4. Update sign destination, locations and message schedule
5. Develop implementation plan
6. Contract fabrication and installation

The process will include various city departments and key stakeholders identified by the City Manager’s Office. It will also include the TxDOT for signs to be placed on the state highway system.

Additional design and policy efforts are planned for large highway, pedestrian and parking signs after the implementation of the vehicular signs.

Mockups for the vehicular citywide directional and downtown directional will be presented at the meeting.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

Envision New Braunfels, Strategy 7: Connect All

Action 7.35: Collaborate with local stakeholder groups and CVB on Downtown, Gruene, and area information directories, wayfinding, app/websites for tourists.

Envision New Braunfels, Strategy 7: Connect All

Action 7.58: Develop a survey/study to evaluate the signage of city streets, Downtown traffic circle, county roads and Interstate Highway 35, including wayfinding, street names, and regulatory signage. Within the next three years. Based on recommendations from the study, begin implementation of approved changes.

FISCAL IMPACT:

TBD

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A