



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 24-349, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-6.

CC - ACTION ITEM: (1) Discussion and Direction Regarding Digital Kiosk Program and Potential Sign Ordinance Amendments; and (2) If Desired, Creation of an Ad Hoc Signage Subcommittee and Appointment of Two Council Members thereto.

Meeting Date: October 23, 2023

Contact Person/Dept: Elaine Gerety Warner/ Office of Economic and Cultural Development

Phone Number: (310) 253-5777

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Attachments: [x]

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (10/17/2023)

Department Approval: Jesse Mays, Assistant City Manager (10/4/2023)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council (1) discuss and provide direction regarding a digital kiosk program and potential Sign Ordinance amendments; and (2) if desired, create an Ad Hoc Signage Subcommittee and appoint two Council Members thereto.

BACKGROUND

On November 8, 2021, the City Council directed staff to release a Request for Information (RFI) relative to the inclusion of interactive kiosks in strategic locations throughout the City. The purpose of the RFI was to understand the value of providing real-time interactive information about transportation services, City meetings, special events, facilities, classes, local businesses, weather, and emergency updates among other things. The RFI was released in January 2022. Four firms responded, with two providing prototypes suitable for an outdoor environment: Ike Smart City and Soofa. (Attachment 1)

In April 2023, the Economic Development Subcommittee (Mayor Vera and Council Member Eriksson) reviewed the options and directed staff to invite both firms to present their prototypes via two community meetings. The purpose of the community meeting however was not to identify a particular model or style but rather to invite a high-level discussion as to whether digital kiosks would

be an asset to the City. Two community meetings were held in August 2023. Ike Smart City attended with a working prototype and provided information about their model. Soofa was unable to attend, but information about their unit was made available. A survey (Attachment 2) was issued after the presentations for meeting attendees to complete. Twenty-two (22) completed surveys were returned. The results of the survey indicated that many of the survey participants believe the kiosks could be a benefit to the community. The top five categories for potential content/public information included transit information, City map, City meetings, cultural events and emergency alerts. About half of the respondents to the survey noted that they had some concerns with a potential kiosk program with the two highest categories (five responses each) as sidewalk space and potential advertising. In considering potential locations for the kiosks, survey participants liked the following (in order of popularity): Downtown Culver City, Arts District/Ivy Station/Helms Bakery District, City Hall, Culver Village. About half of survey participants liked the idea of kiosks in City Parks/Plunge, and half did not like the idea. The last question of the survey asked whether the City should move forward with consideration of a digital kiosk program of which 15 survey respondents noted “yes”, one responded “no” and five were “undecided.”

Staff presented these results to the Economic Development Subcommittee on October 3, 2023, for their consideration and recommendation to City Council. Public comment during the meeting included requests that local businesses receive priority advertising via a tiered structure, that the kiosks display artwork by local artists, that maintenance considerations be included for the long term, and that kiosk locations be included near transit hubs. During that meeting comments also included concerns regarding the number of potential kiosks installed and the impact on pedestrian and public space.

DISCUSSION

Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Chapter 17.330 - Signs (Sign Ordinance) currently prohibits privately owned or controlled signs in the public right-of-way, with a few exceptions. In addition, the Sign Ordinance generally prohibits offsite signs, defined as “any sign with a message that does not relate directly to an active use of the premises on which it is displayed.” Further, there are restrictions on the type of signage- for example, electronic message signs are only permitted if the information displayed is public information; and digital signs are not permissible (digital signs currently are not contemplated by the Sign Ordinance).

At this time, the allowance of a digital kiosk program would require an amendment to the City’s Sign Ordinance. To that end, and prior to considering the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP), it is recommended that the City Council first provide direction as to whether there is interest in pursuing a kiosk program, and the criteria of such a program (i.e., general locations, quantity, etc.) and, if there is interest in a kiosk program, direction on the process to amend the Sign Ordinance to allow such a use. This could potentially be accomplished per the options below:

1. Explore the feasibility of expanding the scope of work with the consultant currently conducting the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update to include a discussion of necessary amendments to allow for a kiosk program; or

2. Pursue an amendment to the Sign Ordinance to allow for a kiosk program on a separate track from the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update, which may require external consultation.

For either option 1 or 2, the City Council may also wish to consider creating an Ad Hoc Signage Subcommittee to address off-site signage relative to a kiosk program and other off site signage requests (i.e., Westfield).

Conversely, the City Council may also decide not to amend the Sign Ordinance and forego a digital kiosk program at this time.

In considering these options, the Economic Development Subcommittee recommends the City Council direct staff to pursue an amendment to the Sign Ordinance to allow for a kiosk program on a separate track from the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update. In addition, the Subcommittee recommends the Council direct staff to assess interest from business improvement districts to determine potential locations within their commercial districts.

If the City Council directs staff to move forward with amendments to the Sign Ordinance, staff will work with the City Attorney's Office to ensure any potential legal issues associated with a kiosk program are considered and addressed.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Fiscal impact is unknown and dependent upon the direction of City Council as the City will require assistance from consultants to complete any amendments to the Sign Ordinance Update. In addition, there may be costs associated with installing and maintaining kiosks.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1- Digital Kiosk Prototypes
2. Attachment 2 - Digital Kiosk Community Survey

MOTIONS

That the City Council:

Discuss and provide direction on whether or not to proceed with a digital kiosk program and, if desired:

1. Provide direction on whether to explore an expanded scope of work with the consultant conducting the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update to include potential

amendments to allow for the implementation of a digital kiosk program; or,

2. Provide direction to pursue an amendment to the Sign Ordinance to allow for a kiosk program on a separate track from the Comprehensive Sign Ordinance Update, which may require external consultation; and,
3. Create an Ad Hoc Signage Subcommittee to address off-site signage relative to a kiosk program and other off site signage requests and appoint two Council Members thereto.