

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: <u>03/12/12</u>		Item Number: <u>J-1</u>	
JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PARKING AUTHORITY BOARD AGENDA ITEM: Continued Discussion Regarding Dynamic Message Signs for the Downtown Real Time Motorist Information System Project			
Contact Person/Dept.: Christopher Evans / CDD; Todd Tipton / CDD; Gabe Garcia/PW;		Phone Number: (310) 253-5744 (310) 253-5783 (310) 253-5633	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: _____	
Public Notification (USPS) All Downtown Businesses within the Commercial Downtown Zone (03/01/12); All properties located within 500' of the proposed sign locations; (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – City Council/Authority Board (03/08/12); Chamber of Commerce (03/01/12); Downtown Neighborhood Association (03/01/12); Downtown Business Association (03/01/12), Gateway Neighborhood Association (03/01/12).			
Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld (03/06/12) Charles D. Herbertson (03/06/12)		City Attorney/Authority Counsel Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (03/07/12)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by N. Kimball) (03/07/12)		City Manager/Executive Director Approval: John M. Nachbar (03/07/12)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council and the Culver City Parking Authority Board (Authority Board) provide direction regarding the type and location of Dynamic Message System (DMS) signs that should be included in the Real Time Motorist Information System Project (Project) bid specifications. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> On November 7, 2011 the City Council and former Culver City Redevelopment Agency Board considered DMS sign locations and sign design and expressed concerns regarding the proposed sign locations and the information the signs would convey (Attachment No.1). The Project is partially funded through a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). The Project grant is categorized by Metro as a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) project. TDM projects are designed to reduce traffic congestion by utilizing technological innovations, ridesharing incentive programs and parking management programs.			

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The Project grant requires that Parking Guidance Signs be installed at the Watseka, Cardiff and Ince Parking Structures and the planned Washington/National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) site. Further, the Project grant also requires that Parking Guidance Signs also be placed at four strategic locations on Washington and Culver Boulevards as part of the DMS. The DMS will communicate with the parking structures via fiber-optic cable. The DMS will then display to motorists in real time the availability of parking spaces. Real time information will allow motorists to make informed decisions about where they will park in downtown or at the Expo Light Rail or TOD facilities.

City engineering consultant Kimley-Horn is now working to finalize specifications for parking sign locations and their functionality (see Attachment No.2, Project Schedule).

DISCUSSION:

Prior to Kimley-Horn completing the sign specifications, staff is requesting that the City Council / Authority Board provide direction regarding DMS locations, design and functionality.

Sign Locations

The initial DMS locations considered on November 7, 2011 were (see Attachment No.3 for the previous location map):

- Culver Boulevard median in front of the Ince Parking Structure (westbound)
- Washington Boulevard at Wesley Avenue (westbound)
- Washington Boulevard at Mentone Avenue (eastbound)
- Culver Boulevard at Jasmine Avenue (eastbound)

The City Council previously expressed concern that the Mentone and Jasmine Avenue locations were too far from downtown to be of benefit to motorists and that they would detract from the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Staff worked with Kimley-Horn to relocate the proposed location of the signs to Hughes Avenue and Madison Avenue (see Attachment No.4 for the revised sign location map).

Alternative Sign Design

To increase visibility and reduce the risk of damage/vandalism to the DMS's, the City Traffic Engineer and Consulting Traffic Engineer recommend mounting the signs 17' feet over the roadway; however, the visual impact of the signs at this height is considerable.

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To reduce the visual impact, DMS's may be located over the sidewalk instead of the street (see Attachment 7) at approximately 9'-10' (rather than 17') above the sidewalk and with a smaller display area (6'-9" X 3'-3" without aesthetic improvements¹) than an over-the-roadway DMS (8' X 4' without aesthetic improvements).

Sign Functionality

The City Council was also concerned that the messages displayed on the signs would not adequately direct motorists to available parking and address the availability of parking.

As proposed, the DMS's will primarily function to inform motorists of the availability of parking. Only in the case of road closure or emergencies would the DMS display other information. Each DMS will be programed to display parking information relevant to its location (see Attachment 5).

Parking Guidance Signs (PGS)

PGS will be located in front of and within the parking structures. The PGSs will display parking occupancy information only (see Attachment 8 for PGS examples). The signs have a standardized appearance with minor variation between suppliers. The aesthetic appearance of the signs could be improved with enhanced finishes and graphics, but would result in additional Project costs.

Next Steps

Upon approval of sign locations and design by the City Council/Authority Board, staff will proceed with final bid documents and Project specifications. The bid documents and specifications will then be submitted to Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration for review and approval.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The total cost of design and installation of the Real Time System is estimated to be \$1,072,000. The grant requires applicants to provide 20 percent of the total cost, which results in a City contribution of \$214,000 ($\$858,000 + \$214,000 = \$1,072,000$). The City's matching portion (\$214,000) has been appropriated in the Community Improvement Fund's Real Time Motorist Information System project (48795200) and the Grant portion (\$858,000) has been appropriated in the Grants Capital Fund (42300929) in the Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Budget.

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Maintenance costs for the Real Time System have been estimated to be approximately \$13,700 annually for all locations. Maintenance costs are not eligible for grant funding reimbursement. Such costs will be requested as part of the City's/Parking Authority's budget in future fiscal years.

Utility costs (electricity, internet connection) for the Real Time System have been estimated to be approximately \$4,700 annually for all locations. Utility costs are not eligible for grant funding reimbursement and will be paid for as an operational cost by the City.

Staff recommends that ongoing maintenance and utility/operational costs be funded from parking related revenues (i.e. revenues from City owned and operated structures, lots, and metered spaces).

The Director of Public Works/City Engineer proposes to enhance the DMS's by installing static signs that will direct motorists to their final parking destination. Static signage is not funded through the Project grant. Therefore, the Director of Public Works/City Engineer will return to the City Council and Authority Board with a static parking sign plan and budget prior to Project completion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Report, dated Nov. 7, 2011
2. Project schedule
3. Proposed DMS & PGS location map (Nov. 7, 2011)
4. Proposed DMS & PGS location map (Mar. 3, 2012)
5. Real Time System proposed sign comparison
6. Skyline Products DMS sign photo examples & plan set
7. TCS Products DMS sign photo examples & plan set
8. PGS sign examples

MOTION:

That the City Council and Authority Board:

Provide direction and input regarding which type of Dynamic Message System signs should be included in the Real Time Motorist Information System Project bid specifications.

NOTES:

¹ The over-the-sidewalk sign display area as shown in Attachment No.7 measures approximately 7'-4 ¾" X 4' ¾" with the additional graphics ("Downtown Parking" and "P").