



Legislation Text

File #: 2018-0576, **Version:** 1

DATE: February 12, 2019

SUBJECT:

PRESENTATION AND UPDATE ON THE BAYWIDE INFORMATIONAL AND WAYFINDING PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In May of 2017, the District launched a new brand including a new logo, key messaging and platform for public interaction. The new brand provides an opportunity for the District to look at its baywide informational and wayfinding signage strategy holistically, instead of using a piece-meal approach, to create consistency and a more effective wayfinding system for visitors and residents.

As one of the Board directed projects for FY 2019, "Develop a Baywide Signage Plan" was added to the District's Strategic Plan in January 2018. The District went out with a Request for Proposals (RFP) in February 2018 to solicit vendors to help create a comprehensive signage plan and the Board selected RSM Design as the vendor at the May 8, 2018 Board Meeting.

District staff has been working with RSM Design to develop a baywide signage plan and would like to present this update to the Board on informational and wayfinding signage. This project involves looking at wayfinding signage, in addition to other types of signage such as iconic, monumental, regulatory and experiential. This presentation will focus on informational and wayfinding signage, including monumental, regulatory and experiential signs, as well as an option for cross-walks. Iconic signage is on a separate timeline and will involve additional input from various stakeholders and extensive public outreach.

The District has identified seven objectives for the signage plan, which are detailed in the discussion section. The District has been going through a thoughtful and collaborative process to develop a comprehensive plan and has welcomed feedback and input from community stakeholders. An initial design concept, the "Wave," has received positive feedback, along with the cross-walk design concept.

The informational and wayfinding signage is meant to allow for flexibility of content and flexibility to fit in with each planning district's unique characteristics. Alignment with the Port Master Plan Update (PMPU) is an important step in the process to ensure there is consistency across both plans. The comprehensive plan presented to the Board on February 12, 2019 will not include the Chula Vista Bayfront. A plan still needs to be developed for informational and wayfinding signage as it relates to the Chula Vista Bayfront. This will involve collaboration with the Chula Vista Bayfront Development team, including the City of Chula Vista.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive presentation and update on the baywide informational and wayfinding plan.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In May of 2018, the Board adopted a resolution selecting and authorizing an agreement with RSM Design for Baywide Signage Strategic Planning design services from May 9, 2018 to May 8, 2019, for an amount not to exceed \$280,000. Funds for the first two months of this expenditure were included in the FY 2018 Marketing and Communications department budget. The remaining design funds were budgeted in the current FY 2019 Marketing and Communications department budget. Fabrication and installation costs will be budgeted in the appropriate fiscal year and cost account, subject to Board approval upon adoption of each fiscal year's budget.

COMPASS STRATEGIC GOALS:

This agenda item supports the following Strategic Goal(s).

- A thriving and modern maritime seaport.
- A Port that the public understands and trusts.
- A vibrant waterfront destination where residents and visitors converge.

DISCUSSION:

Background:

In May of 2017, the District launched a new brand including a new logo, key messaging and platform for public interaction. The new brand provides an opportunity for the District to look at its baywide informational and wayfinding signage strategy holistically, instead of using a piece-meal approach, to create consistency and a more effective wayfinding system for visitors and residents.

As one of the Board directed projects for FY 2019, "Develop a Baywide Signage Plan" was added to the District's Strategic Plan in January 2018. The District went out with a Request for Proposals (RFP) in February 2018 to solicit vendors to help create a comprehensive signage plan and the Board selected RSM Design as the vendor at the May 8, 2018 Board Meeting.

This comprehensive signage plan involves looking at wayfinding signage, in addition to other types of signage such as iconic, monumental, regulatory and experiential. The sign types are defined below. This presentation will focus on informational and wayfinding signage, including monumental, regulatory and experiential signs, as well as an option for cross-walks. Iconic signage is on a separate timeline and will involve additional input from various stakeholders and extensive public outreach.

The informational and wayfinding signage is meant to allow for flexibility of content and flexibility to fit in with each planning district's unique characteristics. Also, alignment with the PMPU is important to ensure consistency across both plans. An informational and wayfinding signage plan specific to the Chula Vista Bayfront still needs to be developed. This will involve collaboration with the Chula Vista Bayfront Development team, including the City of Chula Vista.

Objectives:

The District defined the following objectives for the Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan:

- Facilitate improved navigation around District tidelands with consistent signage that allows for flexible messaging
- Help visitors and residents identify the District as a community service provider and link our amenities to the District
- Improve experiences on the waterfront and maximize engagement with the waterfront
- Ensure public safety through regulatory signage while reducing the clutter
- Encourage environmental protection and increase awareness of the District's environmental championship efforts
- Create a sense of destination and drive return visits to the waterfront
- Transform to a holistic and cohesive signage experience across all spaces

Signage Types:

- Iconic - placemaking, gateway signage, define districts such as Embarcadero or Harbor Island
- Monument - place setting, branding and entryway signs, define locations such as parks or piers
- Wayfinding - place finding, directional signage for pedestrian and vehicular traffic
- Regulatory - rule setting, enforce laws and ordinances, ensure safety
- Experiential - place enhancing, create interaction between user and the built environment; such as maps and mile markers

Signage Plan Process:

The District has been going through a thoughtful and collaborative process to develop the comprehensive Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan. The process includes the following steps:

1. Formation of an Internal District Working Group
2. Request for Proposals (RFP) for design consultant
3. Comprehensive Technical Analysis
4. Initial Design Phase
5. Community and Stakeholder Outreach
6. Complete Comprehensive Strategic Plan
7. Regulatory Approvals
8. Public Works Bids, as necessary
9. Fabrication/Installation

Step 1: Formation of an Internal District Working Group

To begin the process, a cross-departmental team was assembled and included representatives from different departments at the District, including: Marketing & Communications, Government & Civic Relations, Waterfront Arts & Activation, Engineering-Construction, General Services, Real Estate and Planning. The working group met during 2017 to discuss the signage needs, goals and challenges of the District; research other signage plans; inventory current signage on the tidelands; create a planning guide as a first step in what is envisioned to be a five-year process; and design the RFP for

the Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan that went out in February 2018. In addition, the working group created a complete list of considerations for design, production and installation to be included in the final plan. These considerations are noted below.

Design Considerations:

Prior to design work commencing, the working group created the following list of design considerations to be noted for inclusion in a final design package:

- Brand aligned - All designs should include District brand elements delivering the brand promise within the design itself, using the new brand guidelines, with particular attention to:
 - Color Palette
 - Typography
 - Iconography
 - Messaging
 - Lighting
- Consistent - Ensure a branded system of signage creates a cohesive identity for all tidelands and is aligned with the PMPU
- Flexibility - The designs should allow for flexibility to offer each planning district a unique feel while still maintaining brand identity
- Visible & Legible - The distance by which the sign is expected to be viewed should be considered, and font size should ensure the sign is generally readable at the distance from which the target audience will interact with the sign
- Non-Intrusive - Size, design and placement should consider scenic vistas and maintain public access and the natural beauty of the waterfront as a resource as regional source of pride
- Durable - Designed to withstand outdoor weather, wind and seawater for longevity
- People-Centered - Taking into account the diversity in cultures, languages, physical abilities, and the overall human experience

Iconic Signs specifically should be:

- Unique - Each sign should reflect the brand but should be uniquely designed so it is singular in nature, not modular
- Reflective of regional elements - Iconic signs should help portray the personality of the area

Monument Signs specifically should be:

- Modular - With 22 public parks, many with multiple access points, these signs should have several elements that can be combined in multiple combinations for front and back access points, large and small parks, etc.

Wayfinding Signs specifically should be:

- Flexible - Should have the ability to change out attractions and condense or expand the number of attractions as things change on the tidelands

Regulatory Signs specifically should consider:

- Tone/Voice - Welcoming tone, less aggressive language, innovative brand goals
- Balance of information versus saturation

Production Considerations:

Prior to final production material decisions being made, the working group created the following list of production considerations to explore:

- Durability/Longevity
- Safety
- Maintenance
- Costs

Installation Considerations:

Prior to a complete location map and final installation phasing timeline being selected, the working group created the following list of installation considerations to explore:

- Ensure alignment with PMPU and vision
- Ensure alignment with current Waterfront Development in planning or progress
- Installation by Signage Type versus by Geographic Location
- Compliance Impact
- Branding Impact
- Costs
- Revenue Generation Potential

Step 2: RFP for Design Consultant

Through the District's competitive selection process, the District issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on February 14, 2018. The District received nine submittals, all of which were deemed responsive, and selected four firms to interview. RSM Design was ultimately selected based upon the firms' written statements of qualifications, their interviews and the subsequent decision analysis process. The firm was determined to be the highest qualified for the services solicited based on the criteria in the RFP. The Board adopted a resolution authorizing and directing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with RSM Design at the May 8, 2018 Board meeting. The agreement began on May 9, 2018.

Step 3: Comprehensive Technical Analysis

Armed with the internal inventory taken, research done by the working group and the PMPU vision, RSM Design began a comprehensive technical analysis of the tidelands. The technical analysis helped the team to better understand each area, including the paths and nodes, and landmarks. The analysis looked at existing signage in each planning district and unique characteristics that exist in each area.

This analysis helped to inform the design phase of the comprehensive sign plan.

Step 4: Initial Design Phase

Following the technical analysis, the team moved to the initial design phase, providing options for District, community and stakeholder comment. The designs include samples for each of the major types of signage contemplated in the plan. The iconic signage types need additional design work and extensive public outreach, so those are on a separate timeline and not part of this presentation.

Two initial wayfinding design concepts were presented. The "Wave" concept garnered overwhelming support for its versatility, brand alignment and user appeal. The initial design concept will be fully

expanded for each planning district in the final design phase, allowing for flexibility. The initial design concept for the “Wave” is included in *Attachment A: Informational Wayfinding Signage Design Concepts*, along with a cross-walk design concept that has received positive feedback as well.

The design concept proposes a consistent brand look for wayfinding signage across the District, with flexibility of materials used around the sign to fit in with each planning district. The Chula Vista Bayfront will have separate stakeholder outreach and potentially a different design due to the nature of the development. This is still to be determined with input from the Chula Vista Bayfront Development team.

Step 5: Community & Stakeholder Outreach

To ensure collaboration and transparency, outreach to the District’s five member cities is being done. Stakeholders at each of the member cities have been presented with the design and given opportunity to provide feedback and input.

Additionally, the District hosted a well-attended District tenant meeting on November 27, 2018. The District tenants were shown two initial design concepts, with the “Wave” design concept receiving unanimous positive feedback. Tenants provided helpful input on visitor behaviors and general feedback, which will be taken into account as the final implementation policy and placement strategy are created.

Next Steps (Steps 6-9):

After receiving feedback from the Board, the next step in the process will be for RSM Design to complete the Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan. RSM Design is currently working on a comprehensive design, production and installation plan that will allow the District to move to the production phase. The Port Master Plan identifies the need for comprehensive wayfinding signage and current phases of the Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan will align with the PMPU policy concepts. For example, specific locations for signage have not been selected so that alignment with mobility hubs can be assured. The District will also work closely with the City of Chula Vista regarding the redeveloped Chula Vista Bayfront signage needs.

In addition to PMPU alignment, the Baywide Informational and Wayfinding Signage Strategic Plan will also take into consideration any applicable signage regulations including those of the Board, the five member cities, San Diego County, the California Coastal Commission, and the State of California, as well as any federal regulations (such as ADA compliance). RSM Design included these considerations in their technical analysis of applicable regulations and will work in partnership with the District to ensure all signage plans are within compliance.

Long-term, District staff will determine which signage can be fabricated and installed, as budgets are approved, over the next several years, and whether Public Works bidding is necessary, prior to fabrication and installation of the signage.

General Counsel’s Comments:

The General Counsel’s Office has reviewed this agenda sheet as presented to it and approves it as to form and legality.

Environmental Review:

The Board direction or action, including without limitation, a presentation and update to the Board on the information wayfinding plan, does not constitute an “approval” or a “project” under the definitions set forth in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15352 and 15378 because no direct or indirect changes to the physical environment would occur. CEQA requires that the District adequately assess the environmental impacts of projects and reasonably foreseeable activities that may result from projects prior to the approval of the same. Any project developed as a result of Board’s action or direction that requires the District or the Board’s discretionary approval resulting in a physical change to the environment will be analyzed in accordance with CEQA prior to such approval. CEQA review may result in the District, in its sole and absolute discretion, requiring implementation of mitigation measures, adopting an alternative, including without limitation, a “no project alternative” or adopting a Statement of Overriding Consideration, if required. The current Board direction in no way limits the exercise of this discretion. Therefore, no further CEQA review is required.

In addition, the proposed Board action complies with Section 35 of the Port Act, which allows for the Board to do all acts necessary and convenient for the exercise of its powers. The Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed Board action is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.

The proposed Board direction or action does not allow for “development,” as defined in Section 30106 of the California Coastal Act, or “new development,” pursuant to Section 1.a. of the District’s Coastal Development Permit (CDP) Regulations because it will not result in, without limitation, a physical change, change in use or increase the intensity of uses. Therefore, issuance of a Coastal Development Permit or exclusion is not required. However, development within the District requires processing under the District’s CDP Regulations. Future development, as defined in Section 30106 of the Coastal Act, will remain subject to its own independent review pursuant to the District’s certified CDP Regulations, PMP, and Chapters 3 and 8 of the Coastal Act. The Board’s direction or action in no way limits the exercise of the District’s discretion under the District’s CDP Regulations. Therefore, issuance of a CDP or exclusion is not required at this time.

Equal Opportunity Program:

Not applicable.

PREPARED BY:

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Attachment(s):

Attachment A: Informational Wayfinding Design Concept