



DATE: May 22, 2012

AGENDA ITEM # 9

AGENDA REPORT

TO: City Council
FROM: Kathy Kleinbaum, Economic Development Manager
SUBJECT: City-wide Commercial Wayfinding Sign Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Select a Council representative to serve on the Wayfinding Sign Program Task Force

SUMMARY:

Estimated Fiscal Impact:

Amount: None

Budgeted: Not applicable

Public Hearing Notice: Not applicable

Previous Council Consideration: None

CEQA Status: Not applicable

Attachments: None

BACKGROUND

Wayfinding signs are directional signs that guide people to key destinations and help them locate important resources within the area, such as the location of public parking lots. The City of Los Altos currently has a commercial wayfinding sign system made up of a collection of different sign types and styles that have been developed over the course of several years. The existing signage lacks cohesion and is not comprehensive in nature. For example, the signs to the downtown instruct patrons to turn onto San Antonio off of Foothill, but do not direct them from San Antonio to the downtown core. In addition, there are no signs within the commercial districts that direct patrons to the parking plazas/lots. Implementing a clear and consistent wayfinding program is a high priority for the Economic Development program in order to foster the long-term vitality of the City's commercial districts.

DISCUSSION

The City is working with Explore Creative, a Sonoma-based graphic design firm with extensive experience in retail signage including the Oxbow Market in Downtown Napa, Larkspur Landing in Larkspur and the Anchorage Square project in San Francisco, to create a City-wide signage program that addresses the unique character of Los Altos. The focus of the program will be to guide patrons all the way from the major thoroughfares, such as Foothill, El Camino and San Antonio to the downtown and other commercial districts. The wayfinding program will also include signs directing patrons to public parking resources.

The Los Altos Village Association (LAVA) has requested in several of its letters to the City Council over the past year that the City improve wayfinding to the downtown. In addition, staff has been meeting with merchants from the Loyola Corners district on a monthly basis and they have stated that improved wayfinding to their district is one of their top priorities. As a result, staff believes it is timely to move forward with development of a City-wide commercial wayfinding sign program.

A Wayfinding Sign Program Task Force is being established to assist staff with developing a conceptual sign program that will be recommended to the Council for consideration. The five-member Task Force will consist of a representative from each of the following groups: City Council, Planning and Transportation Commission, LAVA, Chamber of Commerce and Loyola Corners.

A schedule of meetings will be developed once the Task Force representatives have been identified.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

ALTERNATIVE

Do not assign a Council representative to the Wayfinding Sign Program Task Force