



Staff Reports

File #: 842-2017, **Version:** 1

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Rick Tooker, Community Development Director

Prepared By: Michael Walker, Senior Planner

TITLE:

Historic District Signage Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive a report on the Historic District Signage design theme and provide direction to staff to be incorporated into a resolution for future consideration.

DISCUSSION:

BACKGROUND

Based on a series of recommendations from the Cultural Heritage Commission (“Commission”), over the past several years, for the City to establish a program for signage to identify and promote the City’s historic districts, City staff has been working on a draft Historic District Identification Signage Program. The work has included hiring a design consultant and working closely with an Advisory Committee (consisting of Commissioners Van Giesen and Shotwell). City staff has presented iterations of the draft Signage Program to, and received valuable input from, the full Commission on several occasions; and, most recently, on January 12, 2017, the Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council implement the Historic District Signage Program.

This informational Historic District Signage Program would help to provide awareness and promotion of Napa’s rich history. In this context, signage informing people of Napa’s history would also help to implement adopted General Plan policies which encourage strengthening the economic vitality of the community, including in the downtown, providing a harmonious and compatible relationship between historical structures and new development, and fostering civic pride in the beauty and character of the city.

After reviewing various options for potential signage approaches, including street “sign topper” options, the Commission identified its members to serve as an Advisory Committee to guide staff’s work on the project. In October of 2015, staff presented a report to the Commission regarding the work conducted with input from the Advisory Committee. At that time, the Advisory Committee suggested a more comprehensive historic district identification sign program was needed to encourage a greater awareness of the City’s historic districts and resources rather than pursuing the limited street sign topper option.

Following the October Commission review of the proposed program, staff discussed the appropriate process needed to adopt and implement a Historic District Identification Signage Program. With Advisory Committee input, Staff determined that the best approach to expedite implementation would be to follow the standard City program (such as Directional sign standard and copy-font type used) for Historic District Signage types based on the current City of Napa Public Information and Signage Program which had been approved in 2000 and implemented throughout the Downtown area. Staff worked with the Advisory Committee to develop specific

sign types to add to that program and staff presented a proposal to the Commission at their regular meeting on March 10, 2016. The Commission recommended that City staff solicit the services of a graphic design professional to assist in the creation of the signage program, and City staff approved an agreement for the services of Amy Linn of Linn Design Studio to prepare design options for the Historic District signage.

PROPOSED SIGNAGE

The Commission considered several options for sign types and styles. While the attached Sign Program (Attachment 1) focuses mainly on the City's two existing historic districts; the Napa Abajo-Fuller Park National Register historic district and the Calistoga Avenue local historic district, the proposed sign types can be replicated for any of the City's seven potential historic districts. The Sign Program contains recommendations for signage colors and icons which can be further refined when each district is formally adopted.

Bronze Medallions -Medallions to appear on signage and can also be used as resource identification. Options include consistent for all districts ("Heritage Napa") or unique to each district.

District Gateway Monument - Contain medallion, welcome text, and a map of the historic district. Monuments can also contain "smart technology" in the form of a QR Code or similar smart phone scan code to link to walking tours or additional historic district information. Monument signage can also be in the form of a Gateway Interpretive sign.

District Gateway Pole Sign - Contains medallion, name of historic district, and district logo. Options include larger rectangular sign and smaller oval sign.

District Identification Sidewalk Marker - Bronze plaque installed in sidewalk, unique to each district. Plaques could also be used as resource identification on larger buildings.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following direction from City Council, the proposed Signage Program will be brought back to Council for final approval to document how, where, and when the signs will be installed, addressing the policy and programmatic considerations as outlined below:

- Final cost considerations will be considered separately at a later date. Notwithstanding the design-centric approach, the Consultant has prepared draft cost figures for reference purposes. Staff will analyze potential cost saving options (i.e., the use of bronze versus another material providing the same result), that would continue to retain the quality and design elements proposed by the Commission.
- Funding mechanisms to assist with initial program costs and maintenance to be identified, including (1) resources for implementation of the general program, (2) fee schedule and development of process for individuals to purchase Historic Resource building identification signs, (3) develop policy for private/public partnerships in funding sign program, and (4) develop maintenance schedule
- Signage Locations - Location and quantity of signs will be addressed during the implementation of the individual signage program for each historic district or potential district. Exact locations and types of signs will be further analyzed by Staff, including considerations for maximum visibility, easement locations, and utilities.
- Incorporation of Smart Technology may be best addressed by working with the County of Napa Library and the State Office of Historic Preservation.

- Monument Map Narratives - District-specific Monument/Interpretive Sign Narratives to be developed in consultation with local historic interest groups to ensure accuracy.

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION MEETING SUMMARY

On January 12, 2017, the Cultural Heritage Commission considered the proposed sign program. The consultant presented the final draft with recommended changes from previous meetings. During deliberation, the Commission was unanimously in favor of the program. The Commission also expressed their prioritization of this program and were hopeful that the program would receive the proper funding to be implemented quickly and in a manner sensitive to the proposed designs.

At the conclusion of the hearing the Cultural Heritage Commission voted 5-0 to forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the program.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

No direct financial impacts to the City have been identified with consideration of the Sign Program designs. Additional cost considerations will be determined at the time of formal adoption of the Sign Program.

CEQA:

The Community Development Director has determined that the Recommended Action is not in-and-of-itself a "Project" (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378) since it does not result in a physical change in the environment. However, the Recommended Action is part of a larger "project" that will be subject to environmental review in accordance with CEQA at the "earliest feasible time" prior to "approval" consistent with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15004 and 15352. The larger "project" is the preparation of a plan for the design and placement of historical signage in the community, and Staff plans to bring back a CEQA analysis of that project to Council prior to the placement of historical signage in the community.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

ATCH 1 - Historic District Sign Program

NOTIFICATION:

Legal notices of public hearing were published in the Napa Valley Register at least 10 days prior to the hearing date.