

TO: TOWN COUNCIL

FROM: PLANNING DIRECTOR

RE: FREEWAY AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

ISSUE

At the February 2010 goal session Council requested that information be developed to solicit the services of a consultant to prepare a sign plan for freeway and other signs with a goal of directing people to, and around, the downtown and other places in order to do business in Loomis.

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and determine whether to solicit a request for proposals from sign consultants or work with a local sign company to develop direction signs.

MONEY

Since the March meeting Council Member Ucovich has suggested that rather than prepare an involved and detailed sign plan, that could cost a lot of money (up to \$50,000 was estimated in the March report), that a small sign program could be developed that would cost less than \$5,000. At present however it is unknown how much meeting time, artistry and engineering may be required on types and sizes of signs, where signs would be placed (right of way = no cost, private land could involve lease costs), what signs would be made of, installation methods (temporary, permanent, cemented in, on pylons etc) and it is not known how many signs and installations would be required. Finally, it is not known how much sign upkeep would cost. In short, it is difficult to estimate costs at this point until Council decides the level of detail required in this endeavor.

CEQA

There are no CEQA issues in discussing signs however once a project is determined (sign types, sizes and placements) there would need to be environmental clearance.

DISCUSSION

At the February goal session Council considered soliciting proposals from consultants that do sign programs. Consultant assistance would involve various studies, drawings and reports to arrive at a sign program. Attached is a letter requesting proposals, a list of firms that do such studies, and the details of the request for proposal. A rough time line, if it is decided to do a sign study, might go as follows subject to change based on amendments that may be needed in the Town codes and for environmental review.

Mar/Apr 2010	Solicit consultant services
May	Conduct interviews of top few consultants and select a firm; staff completes contract documents and scope of work
June	Council approves consultant services
July/Aug	Consultant conducts studies and meetings
Sept	Submit draft study

05/05/10

MAY 11, 2010 COUNCIL
Continued from 3/9/10 & 4/13/10

2

Oct
Nov

Planning Commission meeting
Council approval

Since the April meeting the Chamber of Commerce convened a sign committee and developed suggestions as described in the following email:

From: Charlotte [mailto:charlottika@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2010 6:21 PM
To: 'Perry Beck'
Cc: Bob Ferreira
Subject:

Hi Perry,

Thanks for getting in touch with me last week about the sign committee feedback. Listed below is what I have been able to compile so far with everyone's input. I included non-consensus comments at the bottom just as an FYI. They are not the views of the group as a whole. Feel free to leave them off if they don't apply to the agenda.

I will be sending this information out to everyone as a summary and we may get another batch of input. If that is the case I will also compile and send to you.

Thank you,

Charlotte Langston

Consensus Items:

LOCATION OF SIGNS:

1. Sierra College Boulevard and Taylor Rd. (Town Entryway)
2. King Rd. and Taylor (Town Entryway)
3. Horseshoe Bar Rd. and I-80 (Town Entryway)
4. The Loomis Depot Building Park

SIGN DESIGN ELEMENT SUGGESTIONS:

3 Town Entryway Signs (Locations listed above):

- Sign designs need to signify that they are the main entryway into the town.
- Large in size
- Identify the direction of downtown Loomis
- List categories of shops & amenities that are of interest to visitors
- Have directional arrows
- A classic look using wood and/or wrought iron material.

1 Loomis Train Depot Monumental Sign:

- Be a map of the location of businesses and attractions
- Provide direction to historical buildings and elements.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Non-consensus)

- **Modifying out of date sign ordinances.**
- **A recommend to the sign committee to submit a formal request for a temporary sign permit approval that has a set period of time.**
- **The signs should be made locally.**
- **The sign from I-80 should have large lettering and be highly visible in order to stand out amongst the existing commercial signage.**

Attached is some information from a sign firm that used by the City of Auburn showing what signs of various sizes with different wording and pictures could cost. The firm can use whatever designs a client develops.

DRAFT LETTER TO SOLICIT CONSULTANT SERVICES

_____, 2010

_____, CA _____RE: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO PREPARE A SIGN PLAN FOR THE
TOWN OF LOOMIS

The Town of Loomis seeks consultant services to prepare a sign plan as generally described in the attached project detail. Environmental review will be done by another firm yet to be determined.

The Town of Loomis will be the lead agency in coordinating the study. Submit qualifications and a proposal indicating a preliminary cost estimate range and timing (____ bound copies and 1 loose original that can be duplicated) to:

Kathy Kerdus, Planning Director
Town of Loomis
P. O. Box 1330
Loomis, CA 95650

Proposals must be received by 4:00 PM _____, 2010. Direct questions to: Kathy Kerdus, Planning Director 916-652-1840.

Sincerely,

Perry Beck, Town Manager

CONSULTANT LIST

Sacramento Sign Source, Orangevale
Commercial Sign Crafters
Weidner Architectural Signage
(Staff is contacting other jurisdictions for other potential consultants)

PROJECT DETAIL

The Town of Loomis seeks consultant services to prepare a sign plan for the Town that will identify changes needed in the General Plan and Zoning Code to insure consistent regulations when evaluating sign proposals, determine types and sizes of signs that the Town could use in various areas to encourage and direct people to businesses and other locations in the Town, and identify financing methods to accomplish the sign plan.

ISSUE

The Town lacks signage along the I-80 freeway and at other key areas to entice and direct people to find businesses and other features in the Town and the thought is that by having a sign plan that business will increase thereby helping the economy of the Town and the surrounding area.

SIGN PLAN FACTORS

Following are factors to include in the sign plan study.

- Meet with business owners (2 meetings) to determine their sign issues and ideas, work with Chamber of Commerce.
- Meet with the community (2 meetings) to determine sign issues and ideas.
- Evaluate current sign ordinance.
- Evaluate current signs throughout the Town, including traffic signs, and recommend changes that may be needed to better utilize signs and sign space. Of particular concern are entry ways into Town and specifically along Horseshoe Bar Rd from the I-80 freeway into and out of Town.
- Conclude with a draft report that recommends changes to the current sign ordinance, provide a signage plan (showing designs, types, sizes and locations) for Town signs, determine the cost of the sign plan, and identify methods that the Town could use to pay for the plan and maintenance thereof.
- Meet with Planning Commission and Council (possible 4 meetings) to complete the sign evaluation project and prepare a final sign plan report.

MEETINGS AND AGENCY COORDINATION

At this time it is expected that there would be regular (monthly) meetings with staff and at least 8 meetings involving the Park and Open Space Commission, Planning Commission and Council.

Agencies to coordinate with include, but are not limited to: CalTrans, MIG (downtown plan consultant), _____, _____, _____, _____.

LEAD AGENCY

The Town of Loomis will act as lead agency in coordinating the study. Submit qualifications and a proposal indicating a cost estimate range and timing (___ bound copies and ___ loose original that can be duplicated) to:

Kathy Kerdus, Planning Director
Town of Loomis
P. O. Box 1330
Loomis, CA 95650

Proposals must be received by 4:00 PM _____, 2010.
Direct questions to: Kathy Kerdus, Planning Director 916-652-1840.

Proposals will be evaluated primarily on qualifications and fit to do the work as well as cost and timing. Contract cost and time will be negotiated with the successful firm based on the final scope and depth of analysis that is agreed upon.

↑ Fairgrounds
↑ Old Town
↑ Downtown
↓ Recreation Park
↓ Racetrack St.



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2010/03/05



2010/03/05



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Historic Auburn

2010/03/05

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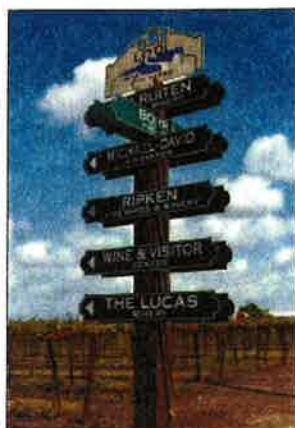
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A sign located at the intersection of Davis and Armstrong roads points in the directions of local wineries. Directional signs that dot the Lodi landscape guide visitors to wineries, the Downtown area and Civic Center. (Dan Evans/News-Sentinel)

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Lodi officials eye program to direct tourists Downtown

By Maggie Creamer
 News-Sentinel Staff Writer
 Tuesday, April 6, 2010 6:17 AM PDT

[Comments \(12 comment\(s\)\)](#)

Many people who visited a new town know the frustration of following unclear arrows signs that say "Downtown" or "Museum" but never seem to lead to a final destination.

City officials are trying to prevent that in Lodi by looking into new, clearer directional signs that will get tourists to Downtown from Highway 99 and Interstate 5. The idea was first discussed at the Downtown Summit in October, when Simon Andrews, of San Diego-based Graphic Solutions, gave a presentation on the importance of directional signs. All of the five small groups listed directional signs as the most important priority to take Downtown to the next level.

Andrews' firm has installed signs in more than 30 cities in southwestern states, and after touring Lodi, he said the area is in need of signs.

"Where are the people? They are along the freeway or visiting wineries. You need to bring those people into Downtown," he said. Many of cities that Andrews has worked with recently are installing signs to highlight revitalized

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downtowns and increase tourism to those areas. Installing signs can benefit local residents too, he said.

"Subliminally, it reminds people we have those destinations like the beautiful library or park," Andrews said.

City staff have estimated it would cost Lodi between \$100,000 to \$150,000 to put in the signs. The project would include design, placement, construction and maintenance.

With the tight budget, City Manager Blair King said at the last Lodi City Council meeting in March that the city would not pay for the project with General Fund money, which funds most services like police, fire, the library and the animal shelter.

Instead the council voted in support of city staff researching funding options and then bringing it back for discussion.

"I am in favor of going forward with it, if we can find some money that does not create an 'Oh my god. What are you doing?' reaction," Council member Larry Hansen said at the meeting.

Some options for funding include raising more money from the Business Improvement District, sharing costs with specific businesses or organizations or using Art in Public Places money.



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The city of Merced installed 75 signs to direct people to places like Downtown, Merced Mall and University of California, Merced. Lodi is looking at installing similar directional signs. (Photo courtesy of Simon Andrews)

Andrews said cities he has worked with paid for the signs with redevelopment funds, Community Development Block Grant funding or transportation funds, if they improves traffic flow or direct residents to public transportation options.

Directional signs are not a new concept for Lodi.

Outside of city, there already are about 40 signs guiding Lodi residents to wineries. Each cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000, said Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. The poles and basic signs were jointly funded by the Grape Commission and wineries, and then each winery paid for their own arrow pointing to their business.

The signs stretch from east of Highway 99 to Interstate 5 and from Armstrong Road toward Peltier Road.

"They are attractive; they lend a nice atmosphere to the areas. It lets people know it's not just grape country, but it's wine country," Chandler said.

Because of the lack of signs, Chandler said it can be a challenge to direct tourists to Downtown, and the wineries rely on word of mouth directions or using maps.

City officials looked at Merced as a model for the sign program. The city hired Andrews not only to create the logo, but also to identify where the signs will direct visitors to and decide the best routes to navigate the city, said Bill Cahill, assistant city manager for Merced.

"It has been incredibly beneficial to us in establishing a new identity and a new brand for the city," he said.

Merced spent \$130,000 on the signs; \$27,000 went to Andrews' firm and then the rest to a local sign shop to fabricate them and to a contract to install them.

The city had originally budgeted for \$150,000; \$50,000 for each of its two redevelopment areas and another \$50,000 from its economic development program.

There are 75 signs spread throughout Merced, each of which have between two to five arrows pointing to different destinations. All of the destinations are public with the exception of the Merced Mall. Other destinations include the airport, sports complex, downtown, Applegate Park and

LodiYellowPages.

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The signs could either go on existing polls or new poles. The city was able to install all the city and the county properties but have been delayed with the signs on the California Department of Transportation because the state has specific sign stipulations.

On the top of the signs, the city has a cutout design of the top of the Merced Theatre Building.

The city assembled a small committee of downtown business and property owners, representatives of the University of California, Merced and others to review the design. Cahill said the goal was to find a logo that represented the city, as opposed to playing off the theme that they are near Yosemite.

The theatre works because it is visible from the highway, Cahill said, and the city owns it and is restoring it.

"We wanted something durable and public, not something privately owned," he said.

Another reason the tower works is it makes the sign stand out, Andrews said.

"It needs to be unique to the place or it looks like another Caltrans sign because that does not attract you to a place," Andrews said.

Contact reporter Maggie Creamer at maggiec@lodinews.com or read her blog at www.lodinews.com/blogs/citybuzz.

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Cogito wrote on **Apr 6, 2010 1:58 PM:**

" Move Lodi Forward, we do have some great wineries, where you can talk to the winemakers. But so does Clarksburg, Plymouth, Murphys, Fairplay, and a few others within an hours drive of us. We also have sweltering summer heat with little in the way of landscape, tourist attractions, artisans, and fine dining. Have you tried "Taste" in Plymouth? We need places like that. I think, right now, Lodi is nothing more than a fun day trip for outsiders, with little to keep them coming back. Which is too bad, because our wineries are surely doing their part. "

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Inquisitor wrote on **Apr 6, 2010 1:57 PM:**

" Some statements just scream "clueless."

>>> "after touring Lodi, he said the area is in need of signs."

Did the CC solicit this company to survey the situation, or did the company approach the CC first?

>>> "...installing signs to highlight revitalized downtowns and increase tourism to those areas."

Giving a town a facelift is not revitalizing. Revitalizing is infusing life, and Downtown fails at that. In the Bay Area, the culture is to be social downtown -- meet, eat, shop, play. In Lodi... not so much. The "build it and they will come" philosophy is always poor advice.

>>> "Subliminally, it reminds people we have those destinations like the beautiful library or park"



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