

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SHIRTSLEEVE SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015**

A. Roll Call by City Clerk

The Shirtsleeve Session of February 24, 2015, was called to order by Mayor Johnson at 7:01 a.m.

Present: Council Member Kuehne, Council Member Mounce, Council Member Nakanishi, Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, and Mayor Johnson

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Schwabauer, City Attorney Magdich, and City Clerk Ferraiolo

B. Topic(s)

B-1 Receive Information Regarding Downtown Lighting Conditions, Options, and Funding (PW)

Deputy Public Works Director Charlie Swimley provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding downtown lighting conditions, options, and funding. Specific topics of discussion included School Street tree well, existing tree wells and outlets, current tree outlet status, current issues, options overview and cost estimates, and alley lighting.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Swimley stated that initially 110 outlets were repaired, yet some have been damaged since then because of location or vandalism.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Construction Project Manager Gary Wiman stated that the Light Emitting Diode (LED) rope lighting has the same spacing as conventional light strings, but they have a different type of bulb. Mr. Swimley added that the LED rope lights will also look whiter and more crisp, similar to the color of the uprights.

In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Swimley stated that 100 feet of conventional lights would cost on average \$70 per tree versus \$270 for LED lights; however, the substantial difference is the cost savings on the energy side. Conventional lights will cost \$13 a month in energy, while the LED lights will consume \$3.50 a month in electricity.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Swimley stated that the savings in energy costs for LED rope lights on 110 trees will equate to \$1,000 a month based on a ten-hour run time per day.

In response to Council Member Kuehne, Mr. Swimley stated that the ten-hour run time is essentially from dusk to dawn; however, that will vary throughout the year, depending on the season. City Manager Schwabauer added that LED lights qualify for public benefit funds, whereas traditional lights do not. Mr. Swimley explained that the rope lighting will require maintenance and adjustments as the trees grow.

Council Member Mounce suggested a hybrid between Options 1 and 2 in which staff installs as many of the 110 LED lights as it can prior to the Amgen tour in May, after which Option 2 can be followed to begin the relocation process of the outlets. Mr. Swimley stated that could be done.

In response to Council Member Kuehne, Mr. Swimley stated that currently none of the uprights work, all of them have been turned off, they cost about \$2,000 each for the fixture alone, and can last as long as 18 years but often less than that because they operate in a harsh environment that includes tree irrigation, rain, susceptibility to moisture, and heat from the light.

In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Swimley stated it would require installation of approximately

60 lights to ensure the downtown alleys have security-level lighting. The City would need property owner permission to install lighting on the buildings. With the public-private partnership idea, he suggested beginning with alley lighting and, as more funding becomes available, adding security cameras.

Council Member Mounce stated that greater code enforcement pressure is needed when it relates to absentee landlords and vacant buildings and that the City needs to do its part by ensuring there is sufficient security lighting in the alleys. She suggested using the economic disaster reserve fund to accomplish this.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Mr. Schwabauer stated he believed the past alley lighting project was likely accomplished by utilizing electric utility funding, but he preferred not to use electric utility resources on this effort. If a public-private partnership with the downtown business owners can factor into this, he believed it would be affordable through the annual capital program; however, without that the City would have insufficient funds to handle the alley lighting alone.

Mayor Johnson suggested the City look into cooperative arrangements in which the City could utilize another agency's code enforcement officers to assist Lodi with a specific issue, such as inspecting and tagging alleys out of compliance, and further reciprocating the offer to the agency. Council Member Mounce concurred with this suggestion, adding that a sweep could be done with all available resources to identify the problems at one time and to provide the owner with a list of corrections and a deadline by which to respond.

Mr. Schwabauer asked for Council direction on whether to pursue Option 1, 2, or a hybrid.

In response to Mr. Kuehne, Mr. Swimley stated that the lights, which were strung across Elm Street in early 2000, were festive at the time, but maintenance on this is significant and the weather is harsh, causing them to look worn out and tattered, which is why they were removed five years later. Council Member Kuehne stated he would like to see that particular lighting be brought back and also suggested that, when planning for alley lighting, consideration be given to the possibility of utilizing the alleyways as public space for events such as mobile food trucks. Mr. Swimley stated each alley will be different, but he believed there were plenty of power pedestals in the area that could be used for those types of activities. Council Member Kuehne expressed his support for moving forward with the hybrid option, working with the downtown businesses to form a public-private partnership, and pursuing the reciprocal code enforcement suggestion made by Mayor Johnson.

Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler expressed support for moving forward with the hybrid approach and further suggested considering a reduced lighting plan, such as every other tree or fewer strands per tree, and considering a more natural look, similar to the lighting at Wine & Roses.

Mayor Johnson expressed his support for leaving the tree lighting on for fewer than ten hours per day.

Myrna Wetzel suggested installing the tree lighting higher up in the branches because it produces a more aesthetic look, to which Mr. Swimley responded that it could be done, but it would be more expensive for the lighting and labor. Mr. Schwabauer added that, with tree growth, the more complicated and expensive it is to maintain the lighting, the more criticism the City will receive if it cannot ensure the lighting is preserved at the preferred level.

Roger Rehmke stated that code enforcement is also necessary along the downtown streets because vagrants are camping out in front of businesses in the doorways. In response to Mr. Rehmke, Mr. Wiman stated that the lighting material is commercial grade exterior lighting. Mr. Rehmke cautioned against using PVC coating because it will not hold up to the exterior environment and further expressed his support for the uplights.

Business Development Manager Adam Brucker provided a presentation regarding the concept for a Citywide wayfinding signage program, stating that the goal is to establish strategically-placed signage and to create a destination by highlighting points of interest for visitors. The The Amgen tour, which will be coming through Lodi in early May, is not the primary reason for bringing forward this proposal, but Lodi would see more benefit from doing so prior to this tourism-generating event. Public Works has identified funding for the program, and the design concept is a result of a collaborative effort with the consultant and task force who discussed existing signage, preferences, themes and agreed on a concept. Should Council wish to move forward with this proposal, staff will place the matter on the March 4 agenda.

Simon Andrews, of Graphic Solutions, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the preparation of a Citywide wayfinding sign program. Specific topics of discussion included research and client surveys, destination list, sign location map, vehicular directional sign color options, isometric detail, MUTCD compliant options, and site photo mockups.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler, Mr. Andrews stated that the letters on the signage would be six inches in height to make it legible to passing motorists, which would make the sign over seven feet tall and four feet wide. The sign will also have two interchangeable panels.

Mr. Brucker provided a visual mockup of the sign and its size. In response to Mayor Johnson, Mr. Brucker stated that, with the 8-foot pole, the total size of the sign would be 15 feet.

In response to Council Member Nakanishi, Mr. Brucker stated that the cost estimate is roughly \$10,000 per sign for 38 signs, including installation. City Manager Schwabauer stated that, because of the expense of the program, the suggestion on March 4 will be to phase in the project by focusing initially on the downtown and cutting back the outlying signs.

In response to Council Member Mounce, Public Works Director Wally Sandelin stated that funding for this program would come from streets capital projects, which would likely defer some traffic signal and road reconstruction projects. He reported that funds in the streets capital account come from transit funding and gas taxes, that the total budget from this account for the signage program would be \$85,000, and the City receives \$3 million annually from those funding sources for that particular capital account.

Council Member Mounce stated she believed this signage concept was archaic because most travelers use cars and phones equipped with Global Positioning Systems (GPS). In her conversations with downtown business owners, she has learned they are more frustrated with the lack of maintenance on transit kiosks than lack of directional signage and that visitors do not have a problem locating downtown businesses. Council Member Mounce expressed concern with the cost spent on the consultant and the cost of the program, adding that the City is now coming out of a difficult five years and is trying to rectify issues relating to employee salaries, crime, and lighting.

Council Member Kuehne agreed, stating that his vision was to have directional signage on the freeways to point visitors to the downtown.

Council Member Nakanishi suggested putting the signs in high-traffic areas, such as along Turner Road, Cherokee Lane, Lower Sacramento Road, and Kettleman Lane.

Pat Patrick, President/CEO of the Lodi District Chamber of Commerce, expressed support for the wayfinding sign program, stating that this would help generate more revenue for the City that could be put toward deferred maintenance. He shared his experience that many visitors have indicated how difficult it is to find downtown Lodi. He suggested that a compromise between 4 and 38 signs would be reasonable, especially if it were phased in when the funding becomes available. Mr. Patrick believed signing programs make a positive statement about a community and he would much rather rely on signage than GPS when driving through a new town. He pointed to the excellent signage in cities like Monterey and Carmel, adding that downtown merchants estimate that 50 to 60 percent of their income comes from visitors outside of Lodi.

Council Member Mounce stated she believed the signage programs in Monterey and Carmel were on the older side and that Lodi should be on the cutting edge when it comes to directing visitors to specific areas of interest in town. She added that signage for the purpose of creating a more welcoming community is a more reasonable concept.

Nancy Beckman, President of Visit Lodi!, recognized that the cost was high for the program; however, she has received feedback that visitors have a difficult time finding downtown Lodi. Many older visitors do not use GPS, and she stated she was unsure that timing was right to forego signage in lieu of technology. The current signing is scarce and cannot be viewed well by traveling motorists.

John Beckman with the Building Industry Association (BIA) stated that the BIA has been researching signage options that would direct visitors to residential subdivisions, adding that the BIA would like to contribute financially to this program if the cost were lower. He suggested there may be alternative materials that could reduce the cost per sign and, if so, the BIA would be amenable to covering a higher percentage of the program.

Mr. Schwabauer stated that Mr. Brucker is researching value engineering options to see if the cost can be reduced and any savings will be worked into the proposal.

Robin Knowlton expressed support for the signage program and stated many visitors have indicated difficulty in locating her business downtown. She stated she believed signage is marketing, which advertises the City's message about its downtown. Many people visit a community for a specific purpose but decide to see more during their stay, and she felt that signage would provide greater value in encouraging those individuals to shop and dine downtown. Ms. Knowlton suggested including bicycle pathway and route information on the signs to promote bike tourism.

Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler expressed support for the signage program, the wine-colored theme, and starting with the high-priority locations.

Council Member Kuehne expressed support for the wine-colored theme and signage directing people to bike-friendly streets, and he suggested there are 12 to 15 locations in the perimeter areas of town that should be in the initial phase, as well as signage off of the freeways.

Mayor Johnson expressed concern with the size of the signage, stating he could not support a sign that large. He did, however, state he was in favor of the color and definition.

Mayor Pro Tempore Chandler countered that the signs should be even larger so drivers can view them from a block or more away and suggested a field trip to see a display of the proposed signs as they would appear along the roadway. Mr. Brucker stated that staff could mount a cardboard mockup of the sign on a pole so Council can get an idea of the size and scale.

Council Member Nakanishi expressed support for a larger sign because it would be more effective for drivers.

Mr. Schwabauer asked if there was concurrence to move forward with the concept of a value-engineered proposal of 10 to 15 signs at the size presented, to which Council Members Nakanishi, Chandler, and Kuehne responded in the affirmative. Mr. Schwabauer stated this matter would be placed on the March 4 Council agenda.

C. Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items

None.

D. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jennifer M. Ferraiolo
City Clerk