

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Emily Fernandez, Community Project Planner
CC: Thom Sheridan, City Manager; Greg Hannan, Community Development Director; Katie Behnke, Economic Development Manager
Date: April 4, 2024
Subject: **Business Directory Signs**

Background

Staff has prepared background information on business directory signs at request of Councilor Kowalski. Staff completed preliminary research on relevant sign styles and materials, level of in-house ability to produce such, and estimated costs. Of note, individual businesses included on the directories could be charged a fee to help offset the costs of the individual plaques and/or the initial installation.

Directory Signage

Styles

The following are examples of common business directory sign styles. They may be at pedestrian scale to help navigate to specific businesses or at larger scale to help vehicles identify business districts. They may be standalone or attached to existing poles such as streetlights. Installing directory signs and map kiosks similar to the below could cost approximately **\$2,500-5,000 per sign** depending on the style, overall height, number of panel details, and decorative additions.

Photos provided by Councilor Kowalski with cost estimates added by staff:



Business Directory: \$2,500-4,500



Business Map: \$3,000-5,000

Materials

- Most directory signs are non-reflective vinyl applications on aluminum framing, as pictured above. Sign poles are generally steel or aluminum and may be wrapped in additional decorative aluminum to create a wrought iron look.
- Certain gateway signs, such as signs the boundaries of a retail district, may be made of high density plastic that can be mounted to wood or aluminum poles.

In-House Capabilities

Most of the City's in-house signs are created from standard traffic sign templates, which are reflective vinyl applications and cannot be customized. Staff would not have resources to create directory signs in the non-reflective vinyl on aluminum that is typical of directory signs. Staff does have resources to create high density plastic sign panels limited to one text color on one background color. Vendors offer aluminum, steel, and wood poles with brackets that can be purchased to hang plastic panels. Installation could be completed in-house if installing in turf but would most likely require contracted work at higher cost if installing in sidewalks.



Ex. 1

Example 1 demonstrates a possibility for a fully in-house product limited to installation on existing poles. Staff could create 2-color plastic signs and purchase brackets to install them on existing streetlights. The estimated cost is \$250-400 per sign to fabricate and install in-house. Staff would consider contracting installation if a large number of signs were proposed or if installation was planned during peak seasonal work when staff resources are limited. This style would allow text-only (no graphics or business logos). A standalone version on a new pole would require purchase of the pole and contracted installation at total cost of about \$1,500-\$2,500.

Attached Sign (\$250-500)

The following are examples of in-house signs on purchased poles. In-house installation for these styles in the downtown area would be limited to turf, such as on the greens or within landscape beds.



Ex. 2

City Hall Entry Sign (\$700)

Engraved plastic mounted on cedar posts



Ex. 3

Cemetery Entry Sign (\$700)

Engraved plastic hung on single steel post

Further Considerations:

- Staff has limited resources to produce directory signs (multicolor, applied vinyl, custom shapes)
- In-house custom signs (parks, cemetery) are typically installed in turf only; installing in sidewalks would require contractors at additional cost
- Individual businesses included on the directories could pay a fee to help offset the costs of the individual plaques and/or the initial installation; purchase and installation of a base metal pole (no plaques) for a business directory is estimated at \$1,500-2,000
- A framework would need to be established to manage the sign program
 - Ex. establish an application or request process, determine an update schedule such as quarterly replacements/additions, determine a removal process such as removal within one quarter if a business leaves
- Directory signs should be considered in connection with existing signage to confirm a unified design and to minimize sign saturation in downtown

- Brand standards of directory signs would need to be established so signs are not mismatched to each other or the overall downtown aesthetic