

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT**

TO: Honorable City Council

FROM: David A. Bobardt, Community Development Director 

DATE: December 28, 2012 (CC Meeting of 1/16/2013)

SUBJECT: Consider Potential City Welcome Sign on State Route-23 Freeway at Los Angeles Avenue

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Consultants for Verizon have approached City staff recently about the need to construct a new cell tower adjacent to the State Route (SR)-118 freeway on the Warehouse Discount Center property near Los Angeles Avenue. Community Development staff has worked with them on a number of concepts to comply with the City's wireless communications facilities ordinance, including integrating antenna panels into the building design or constructing a "monopine" behind the building. Their transmission needs, however, called for a tower as close to the freeway as possible, so while these alternatives were viable, they were not optimal for coverage.

Separately, one idea being contemplated by staff was to create, as part of the City's economic development efforts, a City welcome sign in this location that would help freeway travelers be aware of some of the other shopping opportunities adjacent to the freeway that are not on the Moorpark Marketplace sign tower (e.g. Staples, Dick's and Petco). Verizon consultants agreed to consider a City sign tower that would hold their antenna panels and equipment inside the tower element, and have submitted an initial concept (attached). Such a sign would require an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance as "off-premise" signs are currently not permitted anywhere in the City.

Property managers of the Moorpark Marketplace and Village at Moorpark have not been contacted to gauge their or their tenants' current interest in such a sign, although interest was expressed in the past. Property owners for the Village at Moorpark had worked with staff on a sign tower at the corner of Miller Parkway and Los Angeles Avenue, but have not been actively pursuing permits for such a sign recently. This sign tower would help the visibility of their location from the freeway, but not to the extent of a sign immediately adjacent to the freeway.

Although premature to evaluate the specific design of the sign as it would currently not be permitted, staff took the idea of a City sign for economic development purposes to the Community and Economic Development Committee (Councilmembers Mikos and Pollock) on December 19, 2012 for discussion. The committee also considered the conceptual sign design submitted by Verizon. While understanding the economic development benefits of such a sign, the committee expressed concerns over the visual impact of a sign tower, and noted that the sign could be designed more like the sign tower for the Moorpark Marketplace, rather than what was proposed. After discussion, the committee had no recommendation for the Council as a whole.

As noted above, a sign at this location advertising the centers on the other side of the freeway would require an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. Staff believes that an ordinance can be drafted that would permit such a sign without leading to a proliferation of off-premise signs elsewhere in the City, due to the unique size and location of the centers. If the City Council wishes staff to prepare such an amendment for consideration and recommendation by the Planning Commission, the City Council may direct staff to return with a resolution to initiate consideration of a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff as deemed appropriate

Attachment:

1. Conceptual Cell Tower/City Welcome Sign

