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## Staff Report

**STUDY  
SESSION  
ITEM** 8

**To:** Lemoore City Council and  
Lemoore Redevelopment Agency Board

**From:** Judy Holwell, Redevelopment Project Manager

**Date:** March 23, 2011

**Subject:** Welcome to Lemoore – Entrance Signs  
and Digital Messaging Displays

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### Discussion

Staff has been working to establish a preferred design for our “Welcome to Lemoore” entrance signs. The 2030 General Plan recommends the placement of five entrance signs to create several gateways into our community as shown in Exhibit A attached. These signs will serve as identifiers as travelers drive north and south on Highway 41 and east and west on Highway 198. The specific location of the signs will be determined upon property owner approval and public right-of-way or easement. It is recommended that a sign at Gateway Entry 2, at the SR 41 off ramp at Bush Street, be erected to direct visitors to our local businesses and points of interest. Council is asked to review the following information and attached materials and select a design to adorn Lemoore’s entrances.

Redevelopment staff met informally with members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Planning Department to discuss design options that would represent the character of the community. During the discussion, it became apparent that Lemoore has two themes occurring throughout the community. One theme is the Historic Downtown with its presence of red brick in various structures such as City Hall, the Antlers Hotel, the Lucerne Hotel, Plaza Park, the arbor, various sign structures, and the base of the arches. The other is a Mediterranean style, which is present in structures such as West Hills College, Lemoore High School, Lemoore Flower Shop, Kings County Office of Education, and Lemoore Stadium Cinemas. With this in mind, the top five recommended sign designs and one additional sign, which incorporates suggestions by Mayor Rodarmel and City Manager Britz, are attached as Exhibit B.

Approximately two years ago, a small committee of merchants from the downtown area met to discuss the design of Lemoore’s entrance sign. The recommendation was that since we are a Navy town, the sign should somehow incorporate our affiliation to the Navy. The group recommended a more contemporary sign with a silhouette of a Navy jet added to the top as shown in Exhibit C. Staff was not involved in this meeting. However, the recommendation was brought before the Downtown Merchants Advisory

Committee and all agreed that community entrance signage is desperately needed as a way to “market” Lemoore to passersby.

Staff previously did some research on the cost and received an estimate for approximately \$16,000 each, which included a single sided sign to be illuminated by exterior solar lighting on a monument base made of aluminum fabricated materials. Another estimate came in at approximately \$12,000 for just the sign, without any lighting or base. Staff contacted a local masonry firm and obtained an estimate of \$2,600 each for a stone base and \$3,100 each for brick. This only included the masonry work. The foundation would have to be contracted out separately.

Exhibit D includes examples of entrance signs from nearby communities. Staff contacted each of the cities to inquire about cost; however, responses were only received from Bakersfield and Corcoran. Bakersfield recently replaced two entrance signs (in existing structures) for a cost of \$35,000. Corcoran erected two signs and spent approximately \$50,000. This did not include the cost of the footings, which were previously in place.

As indicated above, Gateway Entry 2 is slated for a directional sign. For consistency, the design should be similar to that of the entrance signs chosen for the other locations. Exhibit E shows examples of digital messaging signs, which may be ideal for this location to direct travelers to points of interest and alert them to local events and activities. The city of Coalinga recently erected this type of sign, which cost approximately \$75,000 for a full-color double-sided display, the base structure, site excavation, footings and installation.

Lemoore Racing Enterprises (LRE) is currently seeking funding from our façade improvement program to erect a digital messaging sign at the corner of Highway 41 and Idaho Avenue. The design currently being proposed is stucco with the LRE logo. According to Kyle Evans, the LRE Project Manager, the digital display would be used to promote upcoming races. However, when not promoting a race, the sign could be used to promote other events in Lemoore, such as the Pizza Festival, Relay for Life or other events and activities. The reason this item is being brought to your attention is because the location is very near the proposed location for one of the City entrance signs. To save money, there may be an opportunity to combine the LRE digital messaging sign with the Lemoore entrance sign. However, a better alternative may be to erect both signs; an entrance sign at the south end of the City Limits (south of the sand drags) and the LRE digital messaging sign at the north end of the racetrack. This would provide additional identification for Lemoore along the highway and potentially capture new revenue through travel and tourism.

In addition to the cost of the signs, our Sign Ordinance requires the area surrounding the signs to be landscaped. This is a challenge due to the proposed locations of the signs. Staff is researching options which could include drought tolerant landscaping or drip watering from a tank placed behind the sign and refilled occasionally. Another alternative is to hold off on requiring landscaping around the signs until the Sign Ordinance is revised in anticipation of possible changes in the landscape requirement.

As mentioned, several options are available with regard to the style of the sign. Staff recommends choosing a style that complements Lemoore by using a combination of

brick and stucco such as Paso Robles' entrance sign. The preferred design should also be incorporated into the digital message board proposed at SR 41 off ramp at Bush Street.

The Redevelopment Agency has \$100,000 budgeted for public signage. This amount is not sufficient to do all five signs. Staff is seeking direction as to the preferred design, the number of signs to erect, and the locations if different from those identified in the 2030 General Plan. One location is on Redevelopment owned property, just south of the racetrack on SR 41. The other locations are privately owned and the City will need to acquire a public right-of-way or easement at each site. Additional costs will likely be required. Should the project proceed, the Board/Council will later be asked to provide direction for property negotiations.

**Budget Impact**

No impact to the City's General Fund. The 2010-2011 Redevelopment Agency Budget Capital Project Fund has \$100,000 allocated for Public Signage.

**Recommendation**

That the Agency Board direct staff with the preferred design for the Lemoore entrance signs, the number of signs to erect, and the location of the signs.