



# City of Homer

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## Memorandum 19-161

TO: City Council and Mayor Castner

THROUGH: Katie Koester, City Manager

FROM: Jenny Carroll, Special Projects & Communications Coordinator

DATE: December 4, 2019

SUBJECT: Additional Information on WF-SS Plan scope and proposed Task Force

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This memo provides City Council with more information regarding the scope of the Wayfinding Streetscape Plan and proposes restructuring the WF-SS Task Force proposed in Ordinance 19-54(S)(A).

*WF-SS Scope:* The following provides a framework from which staff will develop a detailed RFP including specific project tasks, deliverables and timetable. The amendment adding public parking solutions to the streetscape scope expands the original scope of the project. If exploring public parking options/solutions in the Central Business District remains part of the scope, Council should consider authorizing more funds to cover this additional deliverable or have clear expectations about the limited nature of parking within a WF-SS plan (e.g. identify strategic locations for public parking that promote walkability within each primary commercial district).

*WF-SS Task Force:* The EDC proposed a Task Force for the purpose of bringing representatives of various user groups together to provide input to the consultant on current conditions, to provide information about specific user groups and their wayfinding/streetscape needs, and to promote robust citizen engagement in focus groups and public meetings. Items 4.b. and 5.b below address the envisioned role of the proposed WF-SS Task Force.

The purpose of the proposed WF-SS Task Force lacks specific criteria required by City Council Resolution 19-051 to authorize a Task Force, specifically deliverables to City Council. WF-SS Plan deliverables is the job of the consultant. Therefore, staff recommends an amendment to Ordinance 19-54(S)(A), striking Task Force authorization from Section 3 and adding a Whereas clause which supports creation of a WF-SS Committee.

The WF-SS Committee would meet monthly at a regular time to serve as a communication link between citizens, user groups, city staff and the consultant and actively promote the project and public participation by communicating with community members and their respective user groups. The Committee's function is better served by a more informal worksession setting with City staff and/or the consultant as facilitator. The City has successfully utilized a similar structure before,

namely for the PARC Needs Assessment in 2014, the Comprehensive Plan in 2006-7 and the Climate Action Plan in 2005.

Staff will work with user groups (e.g. Pioneer Avenue Revitalization Task Force, Independent Living Center, Senior Center, trail advocates, Park, Arts, Recreation and Culture Commission, Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce, arts groups and community business owners, etc.) to solicit broad-based representation on the Committee. Committee membership will be solicited and completed during the time the WF-SS RFP is advertised. Meetings will be regularly scheduled and conclude when a final plan is ready for presentation to City Council. Staff will provide a follow-up informational memo to City Council at the time the WF-SS Committee is being formed.

### **Wayfinding-Streetscape Plan Objectives**

1. Help distribute economic activity among Homer's primary commercial districts by:

- Informing the travelling public about Homer's primary commercial districts; and
- Assisting them in navigating between these districts and to key destinations within the central business district.

2. Encourage pedestrian activity and foster economic development along Pioneer Avenue and within the Central Business District by:

- Providing realistic streetscape amenities that, when combined, create an inviting, safe, dynamic and desirable character and feel.

The City plans to use the plan to guide future City purchases and placements of wayfinding-streetscape enhancements.

### **Scope of Work:**

1. Develop a wayfinding plan to include the following:

- a. Identify appropriate location and propose sign design for permanent orientation signage at Homer's gateways: Baycrest Overlook and Pioneer Dock; and
- b. Identify need for, appropriate locations for and propose sign design for minimal, but effective vehicular directional/gateway signage at route decision points (e.g. from the Sterling Highway onto Pioneer Avenue and to Old Town); and
- c. Design and locate pedestrian route finding signage to main attractions and trail systems keeping safety, maintenance costs and replacement costs in mind; and
- d. Propose sign designs that can be cohesive across the City while enhancing and reflecting the distinctive character of each economic district; and
- e. Steps to reduce existing sign clutter.

2. Develop realistic streetscape and public space improvements to enhance the quality of the street environment and enhance pedestrian experience and safety in the Central Business District, primarily along the Pioneer Avenue corridor and on routes from Pioneer Avenue to main attractions:

- a. Locations for street furniture to provide pedestrian rest stops that will not interfere with maintenance activities; and

- b. Propose designs for durable street furniture that can withstand the elements (e.g. benches or other seating, refuse receptacles, bicycle amenities); and
- c. Evaluate potential for landscaping/pocket parks to house rest stops; and
- d. Provide plant list of salt and moose tolerant vegetation along busy streets; and
- e. Design pole banners to utilize existing infrastructure on Pioneer Avenue; and
- f. Other realistic ways to improve quality of the street environment to help meet objectives.

### 3. Develop an Implementation Strategy

- a. To enable City staff to carry out the results contained in the WF-SS Plan in a manner that is fiscally and operationally logical.

### 4. Participation in Project Meetings

- a. Consultant will work with City staff to discuss project progress/direction and to acquire necessary materials already produced including but not limited to the Comprehensive Plan and the Non-Motorized Transportation and Trail Plan; and
- b. Consultant will work with WF-SS Task Force through City staff to gain input on current conditions and help identify user groups and their specific wayfinding/streetscape needs; and
- c. Consultant will be knowledgeable of and work with State of Alaska on ROW requirements/permissions.

### 5. Develop a Communications Program for Community Engagement

- a. Develop and establish a transparent and inclusive community engagement process to build upon previous community work to refine and articulate a shared vision of wayfinding-streetscape improvements;
- b. Consultant will work with WF-SS Task Force (through City staff) to promote robust citizen participate in public input meetings including Council and task force meetings and potential focus groups.
- c. Consultant will be expected to make multiple site visits to Homer for stakeholder engagement.

In response to the RFP, the Consultant may expand on these tasks, provide detail on how they are to be accomplished, and/or suggest additional tasks as warranted to meet the stated project objectives.

### **Estimated Timeframe subject to change:**

January 2020: create RFP

February: Advertising and proposal submission and solicit for WF-SS Committee members

March: Selection of consultant, finalize contract

April: Project Kick-Off

September: Final deliverables due from consultant

October/Nov: Presentation of plan to City Council, plan adoption

