

Downtown Fort Collins Wayfinding Sign System

Schematic Design Manual

December 9, 2009

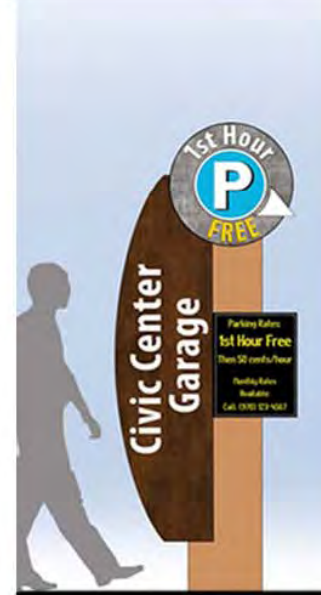
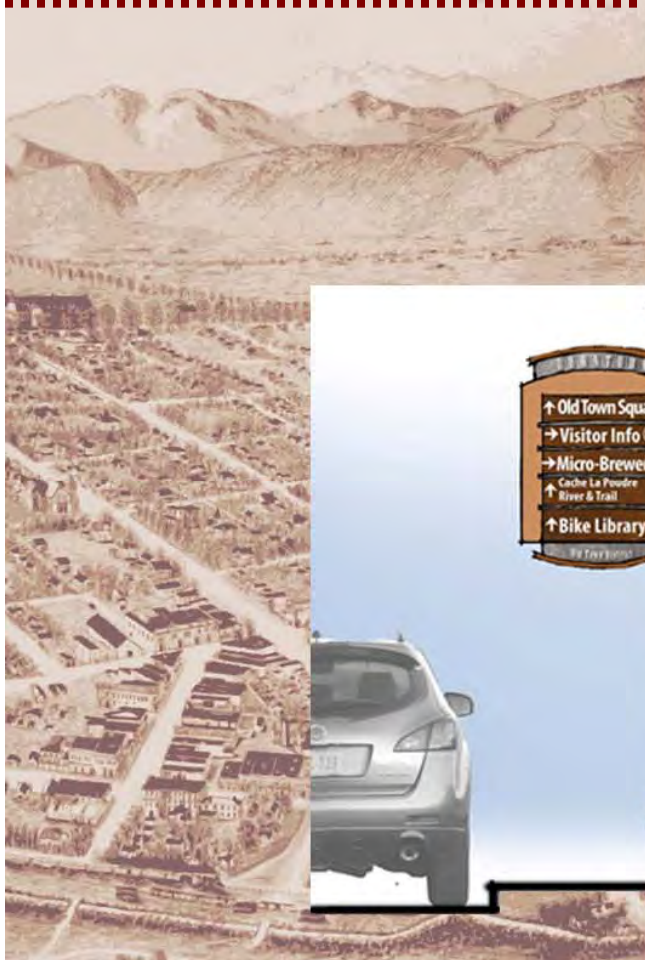


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Part 1

Part 1 of this manual is an introduction and a catalog-style overview of sign types designed as a coordinated system for signage in and around downtown Fort Collins. Part 1 may be printed or viewed as a stand-alone document, adequate to convey a complete, general understanding of the system design.

Part 2 contains more detailed design and background information for specific interest audiences, particularly those involved in implementation and administration of the system.

Introduction

This manual presents schematic design of a customized sign system for downtown Fort Collins. Its focus is mainly on signs to be placed within downtown, but it also addresses signage issues outside of downtown, on key routes leading in. It is intended to serve as the basis of a significant new City sign program. The new program would formulate specific packages of signs to be fabricated and installed, work out details beyond schematic design, and maintain and administer the system.

Need for a Wayfinding System

Support and initiative for a customized sign system was first outlined in the 1989 *Downtown Plan*. A system has been listed as a potential project for the Downtown General Improvement District since 1992, and the 2004 *Downtown Strategic Plan* reaffirmed support for a system.

The City's Advance Planning Department initiated this schematic design effort in early 2008 in response to those previous recommendations, and in accordance with project lists, work programs, and budget priorities. The design firm of Nuszer-Kopatz was retained to assist in answering key questions about parameters for a system; and to assist with sign design.

In the three decades between 1979 and 2009, downtown has continually reinvented itself as the heart and soul, or anchor, of the city; and as a major visitor destination. There has been broad agreement among consultants, interested citizens, and City staff that it is worthwhile to enhance the experience of coming downtown, by aiding and enhancing wayfinding for visitors.

The idea of a well-designed and well-administered sign system has been supported both as a practical necessity, and as a public relations tool. Besides directly aiding navigation for visitors, it can make a lasting impression, and add awareness of what downtown offers. System design can add value to signs that need to be there anyway.

Conversely, visitors frustrated by difficulty finding parking or destinations may leave downtown with a hesitance about returning, and may share their impressions with others. Besides tangible *frustrations*, issues identified in the design process reveal *missed opportunities* for a more useful system.

Audience for the Sign System

Any communication system, including any sign system, must consider its audience in order to be effective. This downtown system is designed primarily for first-time visitors and others who are least familiar with downtown. For familiar residents, the system is intended to add a positive design note to downtown. Night time users are equally as important as day time users.

Objectives

- Build awareness of downtown by announcing its presence along main thoroughfares.
- Lead visitors to main entries and clarify the entrance and arrival sequence.
- Help visitors locate public parking garages and lots, and make the garages more user-friendly, to reduce common anxieties about public garages.
- Help visitors navigate the area and find destinations easily, in cars or on bikes, and then on foot once parked.
- Build awareness of attractions in and around downtown by highlighting key destinations that may not be immediately obvious.
- Add a sense of welcome in support of the overall image.
- Enhance the perception of downtown as an interesting and desirable place with distinctive, helpful graphics.
- As much as possible, allow for flexibility and updating of signs as aspects of downtown change.

Schematic Design

The subject of this manual is schematic design. Schematic design is a term for the early stage of design in which questions and issues are identified and addressed, and concepts are developed to demonstrate a whole design approach.

Schematic design does not resolve all details; it typically identifies details requiring further work in design development and shop drawing stages of design. This further work involves refining the design, and working out all details including materials, techniques, and engineering systems. For this downtown sign system, design development will essentially be part of the schematic and shop drawing stages, rather than being a distinct stage of its own. The schematic design presented in this plan is intended to be used to develop shop drawings by sign contractors or the City's Sign Shop as appropriate.

Process

The design firm of Nuszer Kopatz Urban Design Associates led development of the design concepts, in close collaboration with City staff, and in consultation with downtown stakeholders.

Public and stakeholder discussions included 14 different groups including the Downtown Business Association and Downtown Development Authority boards, various other boards and commissions, UniverCity stakeholder committees, and interdepartmental staff groups.

To develop the schematic design, the project team:

- Identified local issues.
- Reviewed existing signs, including test-driving key routes with a person unfamiliar with Fort Collins.
- Reviewed other cities' experiences.
- Developed alternatives and iterations within the context of public and stakeholder discussions.

A Public Open House was held on the proposed schematic design, and full-size outdoor mock-ups were reviewed by staff and the public.

Implementation of the System

By definition, a new sign program to implement this schematic design will require significant work and cost above and beyond current standard practices for City signage. This manual recommends a new City staff team to implement the system, and recommends the Downtown General Improvement District #1 as the funding source.

Catalog of Sign Types

This section of the manual serves as a catalog of the signs proposed for the Downtown Fort Collins Sign System. The various signs are illustrated and described, with general information on the intent for each sign.

A preliminary estimate of cost for each sign type is included to give the City a starting point for budgeting installation projects. Cost estimates are in 2009 dollars, and should be adjusted accordingly in later years.

The design theme for signs within downtown includes a system of components. The system is based around coppery-brown metal sign panels with a mottled finish to lend an aged, weathered look with more visual interest than the standard brown sign color. These panels are layered onto background panels of accent color, or brushed aluminum, or wire mesh. Messages are white. Signs are to be reflective to look essentially the same, night or day. Sign backs are to be finished in matching colors, but need not be reflective. Poles are to be black, with bases and caps.

The top priority has been parking-related signage, involving several different sign types, all linked by a simple blue circle "P" symbol.

This manual is best viewed in color, but note that exact colors may vary with printers and computer monitors. More detailed technical recommendations for the system and for each sign, including size, color, materials, and fabrication information, can be found in Part 2 of this schematic design manual.

Implementation of the system, with fabrication and installation of phased-in packages of signs, will be determined in a new City program.

List of Sign Types

This schematic design mainly involves a family of signs for placement within downtown, including downtown edges and entries. This includes the following sign types:

- Vehicular Directional Sign - Freestanding
- Vehicular Directional Sign - Signal Arm Mounted
- Parking Directional Sign - Horizontal Format
- Parking Directional Sign - Square Format
- Parking Garage Identification and Entry Sign - Building-Mounted Format
- Parking Garage Identification "P" Sign
- Parking Garage/Lot Identification and Entry Sign - Freestanding Vertical Format
- Parking Lot Identification and Entry Sign - Freestanding Horizontal Format
- Parking Garage/Lot "You Are Here" Pedestrian Informational Sign
- Parking Garage Pedestrian Exit Directional Sign
- Alley Gateway Sign
- Alley Directional Sign
- Information Kiosk
- Transit Stop Sign
- Trail Access Marker
- Trail Directional Sign
- Regulatory Sign Cluster
- Regulatory Highway Sign Cluster
- Sign System Pole for Traffic Signs
- Downtown Gateway

In addition to the downtown sign family, this manual recommends a few additional signs to be placed at key locations on thoroughfares leading to downtown. These signs would begin to establish the identity of the city as part of the sequence of approach and arrival. These include:

- Guide Signs - Downtown Distance and Direction
- City Identity Signs - Welcome, Natural Areas, Poudre River

All listed signs are shown on the following pages.

Vehicular Directional Sign - Freestanding

Function

Provides direction to public destinations and attractions and public parking. In some cases, these signs may be the first “downtown wayfinding” drivers encounter. They set the tone in color and shape so visitors begin to identify this sign character with downtown. The primary audience is motorists, but these signs should also be useful and attractive to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Sign Highlights

Layered components include background panels with individual message panels (maximum of five) containing one message per panel. These message panels are to be easily changeable. Logos for individual attractions should be avoided, with the exception of the universal symbols for “Parking” and “Information”. Also, logos or branding for ‘Downtown’ or future ‘Districts’ can optionally be added (these would be placed at the bottom of the sign.) These signs are typically expected to include their own new poles.

Example Locations

Along key routes skirting the edges of downtown (Mulberry, Riverside/Jefferson, Mountain, College, Prospect), and within downtown along key routes to primary destinations and attractions in and around downtown.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$12,500



*Sign with Five
Message Panels
(Message text shown is a
placeholder example only)*

*Sign with Three
Message Panels
(Message text shown is a
placeholder example only)*

Vehicular Directional Sign - Signal Arm Mounted

Function

Directs visitors to primary destinations and attractions where drivers have a difficult route to navigate.

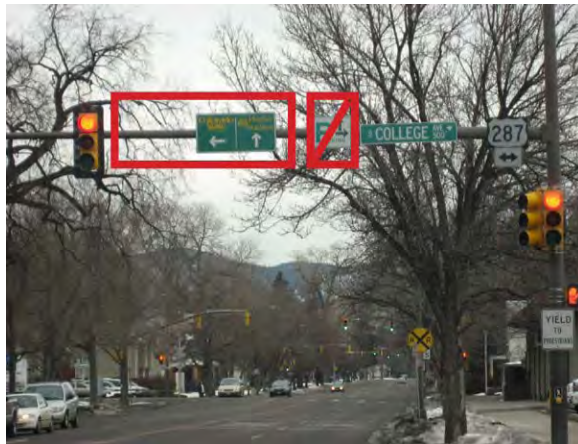
Sign Highlights

This sign is mounted onto signal arms at key intersections. This type of sign should be limited in use; however currently there are some intersections that require signs that quickly orient drivers to these major attractions. A maximum of three attractions should be listed on these signs.

Example Locations

Mulberry/Remington intersection.

Mulberry/College intersection.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$2,000



Parking Directional Sign - Square Format

Function

Provides awareness and direction to downtown public parking. Secondly, provides additional information to encourage drivers to utilize public parking facilities.

Sign Highlights

Four variations are identified for this sign type - each location should be reviewed for the most user-friendly site-specific message. In general, logical sequences of these signs should first direct drivers to parking facilities in general; and then toward a specific facility; and then should provide any useful information to assist drivers decisions, such as "FREE". Where these signs are placed on signal arms, the "mottled" brown finish may be omitted and a solid brown finish used for cost-effectiveness.

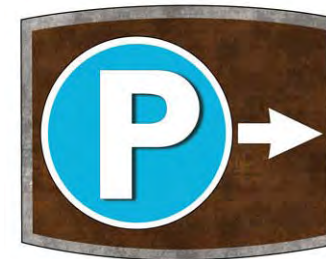
Example Locations

Any location where a green and white parking directional sign is currently located (to be replaced with one of these sign options); and any other locations useful to visitors seeking parking. Mounted onto existing poles or signal arms.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$1,200



Parking Directional Sign - Horizontal Format

Function

Provides direction to a specific public parking facility within a few blocks' proximity.

Sign Highlights

The sign message should include the name of the public parking facility. Because of signal arm height and distance from viewers, the finish can be a solid brown color rather than the "mottled" finish, for cost-effectiveness.

Example Locations

Within a maximum of two blocks distance to a public parking garage or lot.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$2,000



Parking Garage Identification and Entry Sign - Building-Mounted

Function

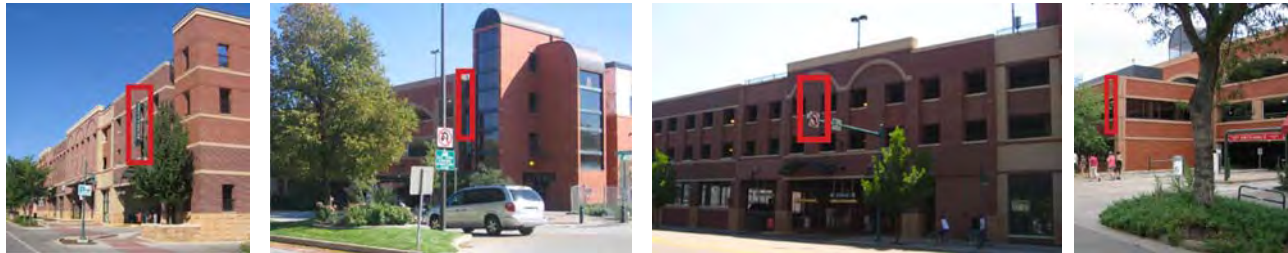
Identifies a public parking garage and the entry, mainly for approaching drivers but also for general awareness of the garages and their names.

Sign Highlights

The "P" parking symbol is the prominent feature of the sign, with the "Public Parking" message and the name of the facility as secondary messages. This is an illuminated sign cabinet that is intended to be double-sided. The location of the sign on each parking garage should be placed as close as possible to the garage entry, while being placed appropriately to avoid being obscured by trees.

Example Locations

Mounted on each parking garage, adjacent to each entry, and within view of oncoming traffic.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$20,000



Parking Garage Identification “P” Sign

Function

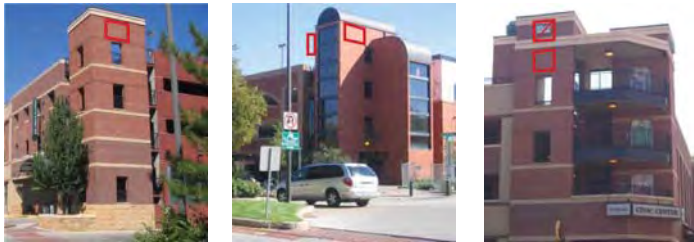
Identifies a public parking garage with maximum visibility.

Sign Highlights

Simplest, clearest, highest-visibility way to identify the garages, located high on the buildings. Intended to be supplemental to other garage identification signs, to be considered only after other signs are installed, if additional identification is still found to be needed. While this sign maximizes functionality, and visibility, it may also detract from building architecture; and that tradeoff should be carefully considered.

Example Locations

Mounted on each parking garage, adjacent to each entry, and within clear view of approaching traffic.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$1,000



Parking Garage/Lot Identification and Entry Sign - Freestanding Vertical Format

Function

Identifies a public parking garage or lot entry. Secondly provides additional information to encourage drivers to utilize public parking facilities.

Sign Highlights

The "P" symbol common to the whole system is the most prominent feature of the sign, with the name of the facility as the secondary message. The location of the sign at each parking facility should be placed as close as possible to the entry, facing approaching traffic. This is an illuminated sign cabinet that is intended to be double-sided where appropriate. A changeable electronic message board is incorporated on the side adjacent to the entry.

Example Locations

At each parking garage/lot entry, specific locations to be determined at each site. The vertical sign is recommended for parking lot entries where space is limited.

Specific locations include:

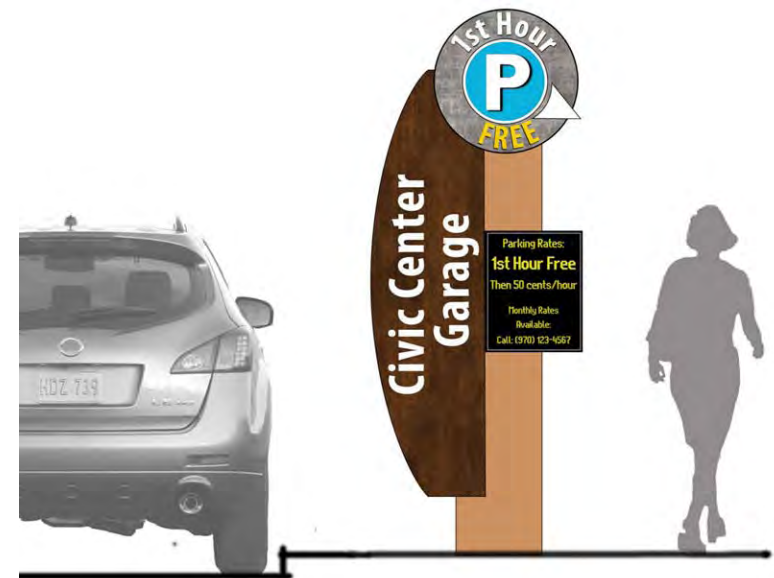
Jefferson Street Parking Lot.

Chestnut Street Parking Lot.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$22,500



Parking Lot Identification and Entry Sign - Freestanding Horizontal Format

Function

Identifies a public parking lot entry. Secondly provides additional information to encourage drivers to utilize public parking facilities.

Sign Highlights

The unifying "P" symbol is the most prominent feature of the sign, with the name of the facility as the secondary message. The location of the sign at each parking facility should be as close as possible to the entry, facing approaching traffic.

Example Locations

At parking lot entries with specific locations to be determined at each site. The horizontal sign is recommended where limited space for a sign is not a constraint. Typically, horizontal format signs are easier to read. Specific locations include:

Mason Street Lot.

Oak/Remington Lot.

City Office Building Lot.

Justice Center Lot.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$8,000



Parking Garage/Lot “You Are Here” Pedestrian Informational Sign - Freestanding and Wall-Mounted

Function

Orients parking facility users to downtown, and provides information about destinations and attractions. Helps mark pedestrian exits from Parking Garages, by being located near these exits.

Sign Highlights

“You-are-here” guide map orients users to their parking facility location within downtown. The sign encourages people to view the public parking facilities as user-friendly with a “welcoming” introduction for visitors. The guide map includes downtown attractions and public amenities and can include business advertisements to help offset the cost of the sign. This sign is intended to be easily changeable, to allow for updating the map, information about attractions and events, and advertising.

Example Locations

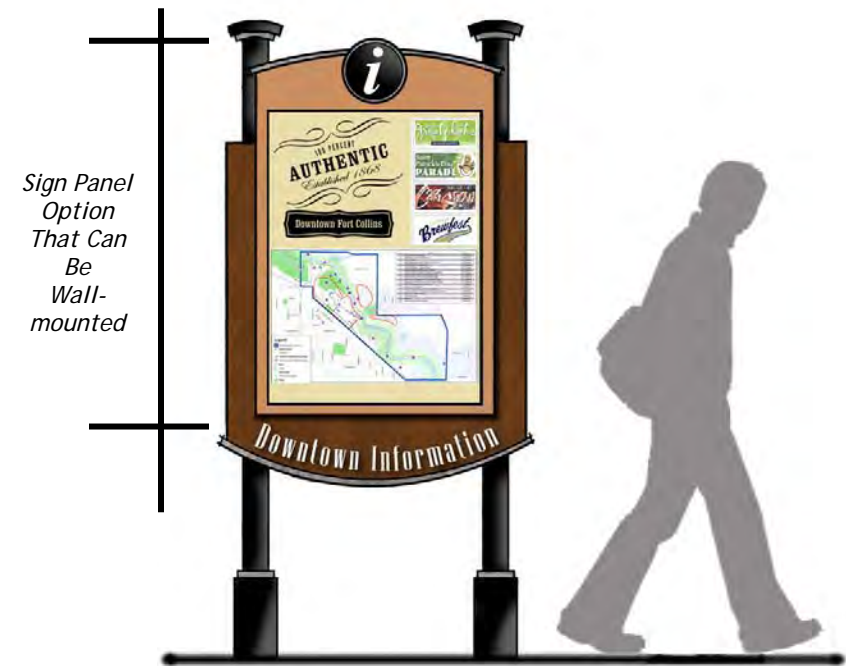
At each parking garage/lot, specific locations to be determined at each site. Highest priority for these signs is in the parking garages, to help orient people from the parking garage exits to Downtown.



Estimated Costs (2009 Dollars)

Freestanding Sign - \$11,500

Wall-Mounted Sign - \$3,500



Freestanding Sign

Parking Garage Pedestrian Exit Directional Sign

Function

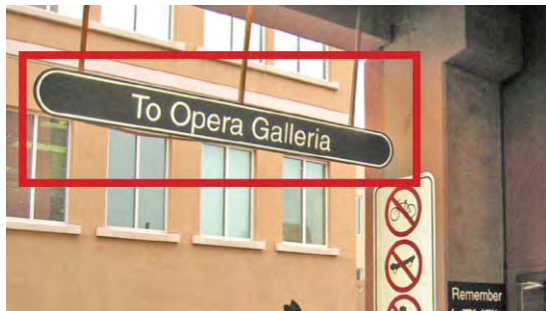
Clarifies the pedestrian exit from the Civic Center Garage to downtown.

Sign Highlights

Replaces the existing “To Opera Galleria” sign in the Civic Center Parking Garage. Orients pedestrians to major routes to the heart of downtown. Intended to be double-sided, with two sign panels sandwiching the open wire mesh panel. The facility name can be identified on the back panel for people returning to the garage entry.

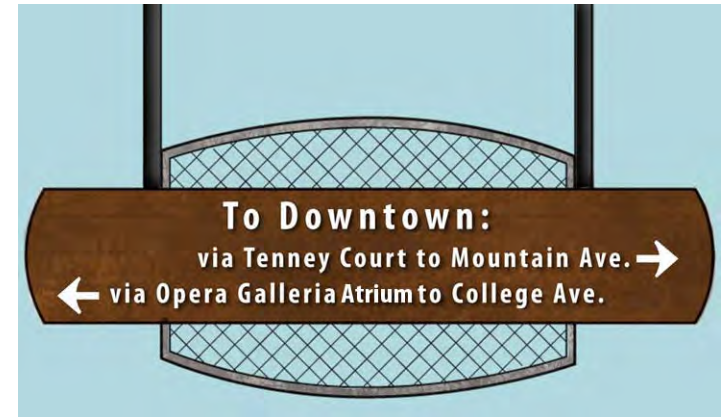
Locations

Civic Center Parking Garage on both levels, where existing “Opera Galleria” signs are located.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$3,500



Alley Gateway Sign

Function

Identifies enhanced pedestrian alleys, and reinforces downtown identity.

Sign Highlights

This sign is intended to be double-sided, with two sign panels sandwiching the open wire mesh panel. The “back side” of the sign can include historic interpretive information and graphics or can include directional information to help orient alley users to which street or major destination they are approaching. The Alley Gateway sign should be mounted so that the lowest element of the sign meets vehicular clearance as determined by the City of Fort Collins’ code. These signs offer a good opportunity for public art to enhance the signs.

Example Locations

Tenney Court entrance to Mountain Ave.

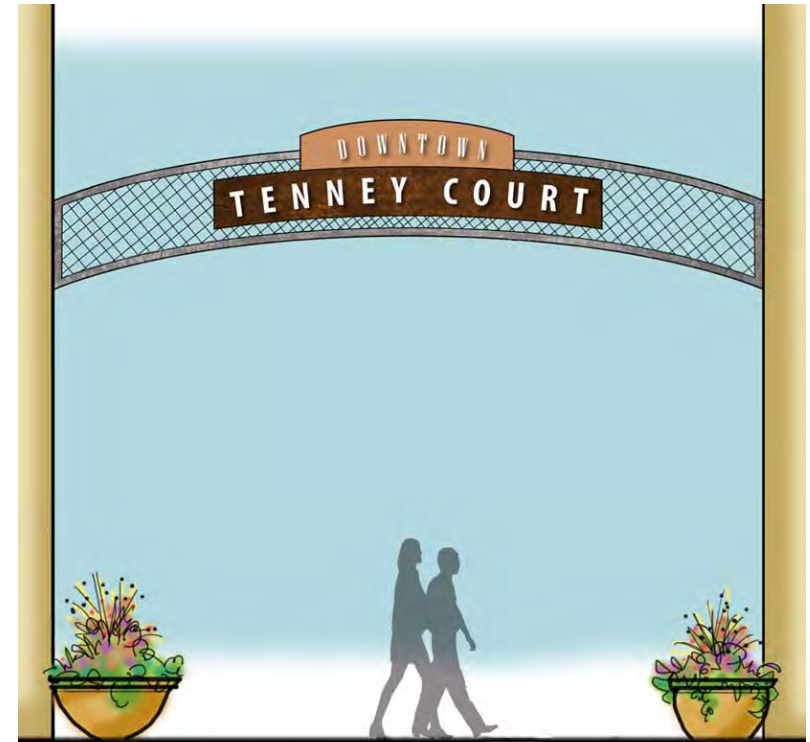
Trimble Court entrance to College Ave.

Other alleys in coordination with the alley improvements project.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$11,000



*Historical Precedent for the Alley Gateway:
The wooden arch in the photo indicates the entrance to Trimble Court off College Avenue. The date on the arch reads “Oct. 20, 1903.”*



Alley Directional Sign

Function

Provides pedestrian/bicycle direction to downtown public attractions and destinations.

Sign Highlights

The sign is designed with individual sign panels (maximum of five) that contain one message per panel. These panels are to be removable to allow for updates. Logos for individual attractions should be avoided, with the exception of the universal symbols for "Parking" and "Information".

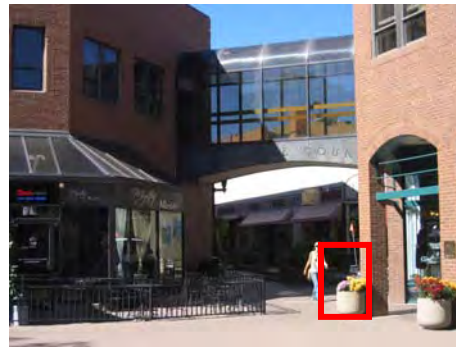
Example Locations

At key pedestrian alley entries, specific locations to be determined at each site.

Tenney Court entries.

Trimble Court entries.

Pedestrian alley between Olive and Oak Street.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$6,000



Information Kiosk

Function

Provides downtown information and links to surrounding areas and attractions. Reinforces downtown identity. Encourages walking and links to other area destinations. Although quality of walking environment encourages exploring, some “you are here” guide signs may enhance visitors’ comfort and point out attractions they may otherwise be unaware of.

Sign Highlights

“You-are-here” downtown guide map helps orient visitors to downtown and the surrounding area. The guide map includes downtown attractions and public amenities and can include commercial business advertisements to help offset the cost of the sign. This sign is intended to be highly changeable, in order to update the map and information.

Example Locations

Near intersections of major pedestrian routes and within major pedestrian “hubs” in highly visible and policed areas (to prevent vandalism) including:
 Mountain and College - recommend NW corner (to orient people coming from Civic Center Parking Garage traveling eastbound on Mountain) and SE corner (to orient people traveling northbound on College.)
 Old Town Square near Bike Library (Walnut and Linden.)
 College and Walnut, SE corner.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$7,500



Transit Stop Sign

Function

Identifies each (future) Mason Corridor Transit Stop. Provides transit schedule and information. Reinforces downtown identity.

Sign Highlights

The transit stop name is the prominent feature of this sign. A changeable panel is provided that includes the Mason Corridor transit schedule and other transit-related information. The Mason Corridor logo and the Downtown “brand” are also secondary features of the sign. This sign is intended to be viewed from the transit vehicle as it approaches each stop.

Example Locations

Proposed Mason Corridor Transit Stops (i.e., Mason and Olive Streets).



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$8,000



Trail Access Marker

Function

Provides direction to the trails and the Poudre River within downtown. Secondly this also encourages walking and biking to and around downtown.

Sign Highlights

This sign is a custom design to combine the downtown sign system identity with a more “naturalized” character, using a massive stone column and heavy-duty joinery, to reinforce the close relationship of Downtown to both the trail system and the Poudre River. The “FC Bikes” logo is included on this sign.

Example Locations

Entries to Poudre Trail off Linden Street.

Entry to Redwood Trail off Linden Street.

Entry to Poudre Trail off Cherry Street (coordinate with Lee Martinez Park Parking sign).

Entries to Poudre Trail off Lincoln Ave.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$5,200



Trail Directional Sign

Function

Provides direction to downtown, the Poudre River, and other trails and attractions accessible along the Poudre trail downtown. Reinforces downtown identity, and encourages walking, biking, and exploring, to, from, and around downtown.

Sign Highlights

This sign is a custom design to combine the downtown sign system identity with a more “naturalized” character, using a heavy timber post, to reinforce the close relationship of Downtown to both the trail system and the Poudre River. The sign panels are double-sided and are changeable, to easily add and update destinations from the trail.

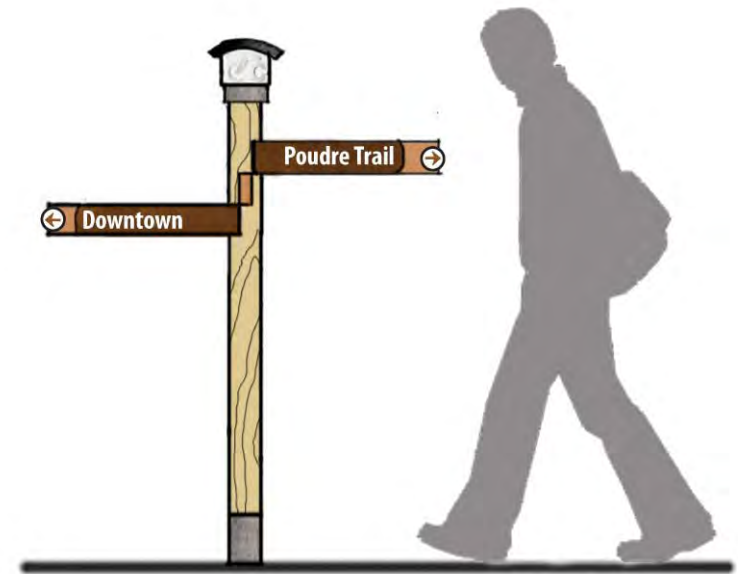
Example Locations

Trail intersections along the Poudre Trail (and any other trails near downtown). Poudre Trail spurs leading to Cherry and Mason Streets, Lee Martinez Park, and The Farm.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$2,300



Regulatory Sign Cluster

Function

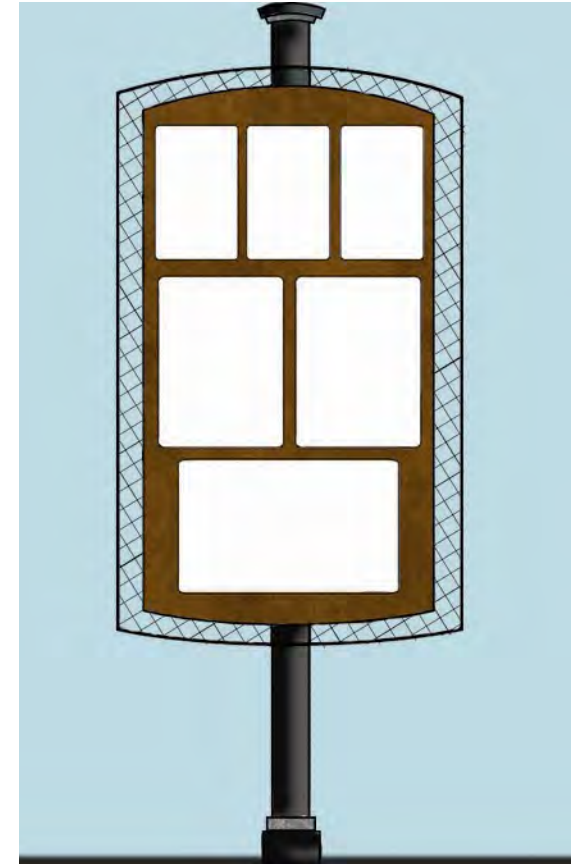
Integrates standard regulatory signs into the downtown sign system and consolidates sign clutter. May reduce the amount of posts and hardware. Reinforces downtown identity.

Sign Highlights

A background panel and post, consistent with the downtown sign system character, accommodate standard signs. The solid background panel increases visibility of the signs. Because this sign is large, the wire mesh is included to reduce the solid visual massiveness of the panel. If wind loading or visual massiveness makes the solid panel problematic, the mesh could be used alone to achieve most of the same functions.

Example Locations

Replace existing signage clusters - typically located in the center parking areas along College Ave. New locations where several regulatory and "service club/award" signs can be clustered into one large panel.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$600-\$1,400 depending on the number of regulatory signs included

Regulatory Highway Sign Cluster

Function

Integrates standard regulatory signs into the downtown system.

Sign Highlights

The idea is to integrate standard highway signs into the system in downtown by providing a panel and pole consistent with the downtown sign system character. Because this sign is large, the wire mesh is included to reduce the solid visual massiveness of the panel. If wind loading or visual massiveness makes the solid panel problematic, the mesh could be used alone to achieve most of the same functions.

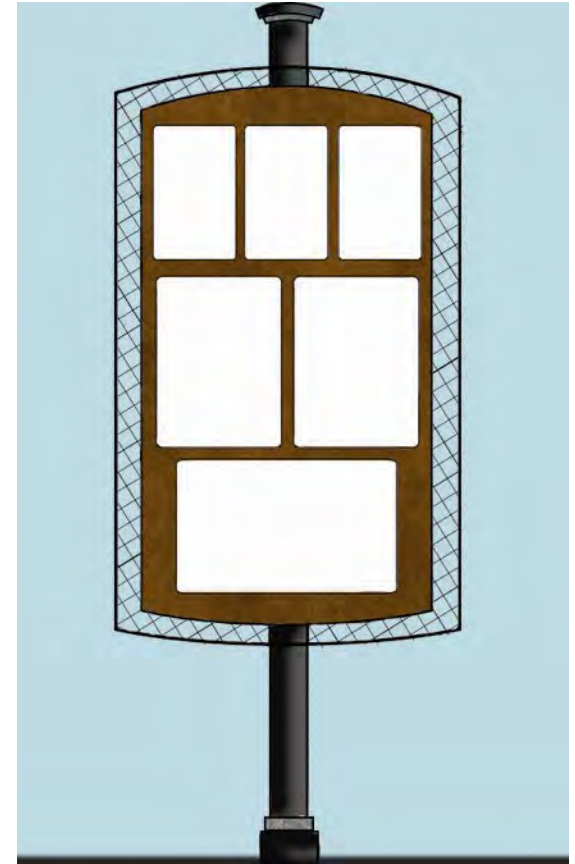
Example Locations

Regulatory signs directing drivers to Highway 14/287 and I-25 in the downtown area. Coordinate combining with other signs to reduce poles and visual clutter



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$600-\$1,400 depending on the number of regulatory signs included



Sign System Pole for Traffic Signs

Function

Reinforces the downtown identity by incorporating traffic, street and regulatory signage with a downtown sign system post.

Sign Highlights

At key, high visibility locations, a downtown sign system pole, with base and cap can be used to integrate standard street and traffic signs into the system. Plumb/level mounting hardware and visually appropriate pole proportions provide an enhanced appearance.

Example Locations

These customized sign arrangements are to be located at prominent downtown intersections with high pedestrian activity. The intent is not to replace all standard traffic and street sign poles, but to thoughtfully enhance focal intersections such as: Linden/Walnut intersection. Mountain/Remington intersection.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$1,200 (Pole and installation only)



Example of standard street and traffic signs on sign system pole

Downtown Gateway Sign

Function

Defines major entry points into the greater downtown area, and reinforces downtown identity.

Sign Highlights

Gateways involve a larger scope beyond this sign system in itself. Therefore, ideas for gateway improvements were not fully resolved as part of this manual. To provide a welcoming gateway that sets the desired tone and denotes the significance of the location, the location should be enhanced through cohesive urban design coordinated with land uses, transportation, landscaping, and lighting as defining elements. Settings for the monument-style sign as shown require significant further work on design plans at each location.

Also, the idea of incorporating public art into the sign system was raised during the process; and one promising role for public art would be to mark downtown gateways.

One potential location for art to mark gateways, is the space on traffic signal poles above the signal arms (lower right photo). This is one location where downtown identity could be established without requiring land area, structures, landscaping, irrigation, etc. The idea of integrating public art is further explained in *Appendix C: Public Art*.

Each gateway can and should be distinct, designed for each site's unique setting and constraints. However, the sign system's materials, colors, and fonts as shown should be conveyed in any gateway sign for a unifying identity. Gateway signs and/or art should convey a simple message - "This is Downtown Fort Collins".



Downtown Gateway Monument-style Sign



*Possible Location for Downtown Signage/Art
(Location of event banner in photo, possibly extending across the pole)*

Downtown Gateway Sign, cont.

Example Locations

Key downtown gateways suitable for improvements include:
College/Mulberry intersection.
Riverside/Mountain and Jefferson/Linden intersections.
College/Cherry intersection area.



Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$18,000 (for a Gateway Monument Sign as shown)

City Identity Signs

Function

Addresses issues and questions that first-time visitors have noted, by identifying Fort Collins in the sequence of approaching downtown. Also, captures opportunities to highlight City entries and notable natural features.

Sign Highlights

These signs reflect standard traffic sign styles, customized to incorporate City branding aspects. Final selection of green, blue, and brown colors can be from the City's branding kit or standard colors of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Example Locations

Prospect Road westbound from I-25.

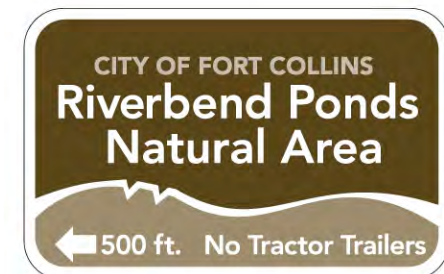
Highway 14/Mulberry Street westbound from I-25.

Linden Street southbound from Vine Drive.

Exact locations should be determined based on the visual backdrop so that the signs create a positive impression of the city in concert with the surrounding setting.

Estimated Cost (2009 Dollars)

\$750



Part 2

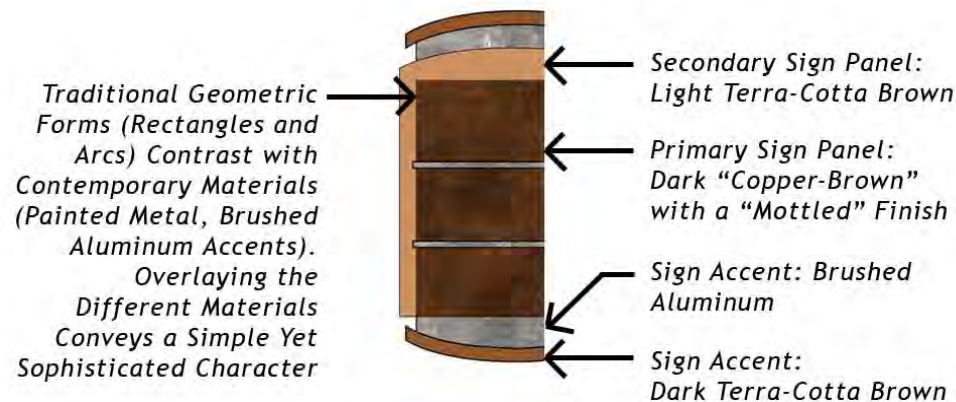
Part 2 of this manual is intended to provide additional background, details, and explanations for implementing and administering the downtown sign system.

Sign Design Choices

This schematic design sets forth a system of components, graphics, and materials to guide the sign program over time. As new signage needs and changes inevitably arise, the design choices of character, form, color, typeface and mounting details depicted here can be used to design additional new sign types to fit into the system.

Perhaps the most basic question about a sign system is the question of either harmonizing with its setting, or introducing a new design statement with a striking image of its own. Either approach can help to distinguish a distinct place. From the beginning, all discussion clearly favored the former approach to downtown Fort Collins.

While the system uses contemporary materials and methods, it avoids modern design style, in favor of sensitive use of shapes, colors, materials, and points of detail to fit into the prevailing historic or traditional character of downtown.



Key shapes, colors, and materials characterizing the sign

One particular question and choice early in the process resulted from the City of Fort Collins' recent implementation of a new logo and brand at the time of this plan. The choice was made not to include the City organization's branding in the system. Rather, the system is intended to emphasize downtown's own identity.

Form

Customized sign shapes were chosen over standard rectangular sign panels for the system of identification, directional, and informational signs. Distinct identity was preferred over basic functionality. The customized shapes are intended to create a simple, layered, and sophisticated look with more points of detail than standard signage. Still, the forms are simple, avoiding ornate shapes, and are intended to allow for fabrication of a set of panel sizes which can be stocked for replacement and re-use.

Color

The color palette is based on warm brown tones to complement the character of historic stone and brick buildings. Two colors define the primary elements of the signs:

- 1) a dark coppery brown, with a "mottled" finish to suggest an aged appearance; and
- 2) terra-cotta brown accent colors complementing the darker tone.

The coppery brown is deliberately intended to convey hues of brown and yellow, and not reddish-browns or rust browns common in sign design based on a "Corten rusting steel" look.

Sign backs should be finished to match fronts.

For signs located on signal arms, the "mottled" finish can be omitted, as most drivers and pedestrians would not perceive that level of detail.

The following colors compose the Downtown Fort Collins Wayfinding Sign System's color palette:



Because of varying printers and computer monitors, the colors depicted in this document may not be an accurate representation; refer to Pantone Matching System (PMS) samples for the true intended colors.

Typeface

The following typefaces are to be utilized for the Downtown Fort Collins Wayfinding Sign System:

Primary sans-serif font:

Myriad Pro Bold Condensed

Secondary sans-serif font: **Futura Bold Condensed**

Serif font for Downtown or District identification:

Clarendon BT Roman Condensed

Typefaces were selected to be both highly legible and appropriate to the feel of Downtown Fort Collins. Primary and secondary typefaces were selected as letter styles that are simple, with narrow stroke widths and few flourishes. A serif typeface was selected for optional "District" or "Downtown" branding, to provide a more historical look, and avoid detracting from the primary message.

The text should be a combination of uppercase and lowercase, called "Title Case," where the first letters of each word should be uppercase. Optional messages, such as branding text for Downtown or Districts, should match each brand's designated case (i.e., the current logo for Downtown Fort Collins is also a combination of lowercase and uppercase).

Type Size and Other Considerations

Type sizes are recommended for each specific sign in the "*Family of Sign Types*" Chapter. However, type size may need to be adjusted smaller where a sign message is too long and cannot be abbreviated (e.g., "Colorado State University").

In determining type size for signs, capital letter height is used as the measurement standard (not typographic point size, as is typical with print graphics).

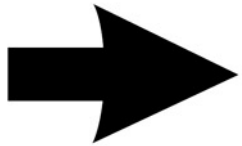
If a sign is vehicular-oriented, the speed limit, setback distance and number of messages are all factors when considering the height of the letters. A general rule of thumb is that a minimum of 4" letter height should be

used for primary sign messages on vehicular-oriented signs. However, given that space is limited on the signage, 3" or 3 1/3" letters may be used if necessary. Optional messages, such as Downtown or District branding, are not considered critical messages for drivers, and smaller letter heights can be used as needed.

The letterspacing--that is, the spacing among the letters of a word, should be consistent among all words to the maximum extent feasible because sign layouts with inconsistent letterspacing impair visual unity and legibility.

Arrows and Symbols

A simple arrow with a tail and a slightly curved head has been selected as the primary arrow for most signs within this sign system:



In some instances, the "tail" is graphically not appropriate (e.g., the Freestanding Parking Garage/Lot Vertical Sign). This arrow is a shortened version of the standard arrow above:



On signs with multiple stacked messages (i.e., the Vehicular Directional and Alley Directional Signs), arrows should be positioned at the left side of the sign layout, regardless of which direction the arrows are pointing, as the audience reads from left to right. This consistently organizes all the arrows at the beginning of each sign message.

Arrows (and necessary symbols) should be positioned in line with typography (known as "side-by-side positioning"). The horizontal centerlines of the arrows and symbols should align with the horizontal centerlines of the typographic cap height.

Graphics, symbols and/or logos are generally discouraged from being included as part of the primary message on vehicular-oriented signs. As useful as symbols can be, some symbols do not transcend all cultures. It is preferred that if symbols are strongly desired, those symbols be used to reinforce the word message and not stand alone. However, two internationally-recognized symbols that are acceptable and strongly encouraged to be used as part of the sign message: the letter "P" (universally accepted when colored in blue for "Parking") and the letter "i" (universally accepted for "Information").

General Message Layout

Sign messages should fit on one line of text if possible, and be centered vertically in the sign panel. The horizontal alignment of text should be flush left (often known as left justified). Abbreviations may need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. To ensure readability, no more than five vehicular messages should be included on any sign. The ideal maximum number of messages conveyed by any sign is three.



Materials and Mounting

These signs can be fabricated through several fabrication methods, including the following:

The majority of the sign components will be built from aluminum, for ease of fabrication and connection.

To match the specified colors, this will then either be painted, powder-coated, silkscreened, and/or adhered with vinyl graphics. Large-format digital printing of whole sign decals may be a cost-effective approach to achieve the design intent, including the desired mottled finish for many of the signs. Sign edges and backs need to be considered in the decision.

Each method has pros and cons, and each should be evaluated for value-engineering and life-cycle implications in consultation with the fabricator. This is beyond the scope of this schematic design effort, and should be part of implementation by a new downtown sign program. The best way to determine and evaluate these methods is to have a signage fabricator produce full-size samples of the appropriate material and finish. See the *“Administration and Maintenance” Chapter* for more information on the sign program and staff team.

Unless illuminated, most signs within the system utilize a reflective material application (vinyl). This both allows for nighttime visibility and for alterations to the sign message.

All sign panels should be coated with UV-resistant and graffiti-resistant coatings.

General mounting requirements include the following.

All sign heights must meet legal requirements - vehicular-oriented signs must be at least 7 feet off the ground to satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act. This also helps to deter vandalism.

In any instances where signs are mounted to buildings (i.e., Alley Gateway Signs), all efforts should be made to minimize damage to the building.

The Alley Gateway sign should be mounted so that the lowest element of the sign meets vehicular clearance as determined by the City of Fort Collins' code; emergency and maintenance vehicles still need access to these alleys and the Alley Gateway Sign cannot interfere with this access.

All signs that are ground-mounted and adjacent to streets are required to meet break-away requirements. In many instances, this may require a decorative aluminum sleeve

to be placed over the post, to achieve both the desired aesthetic look AND the required structural standards. The posts and bases need to comply with crashworthy performance criteria contained in the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Report 350, "Recommended Procedures for the Safety Performance Evaluation of Highway Features."

As part of the aesthetic character of the signs, all mounting connections and brackets are to be hidden; the design intent is not to have exposed hardware as part of the overall design. All connections and brackets should be hidden under covers and tamper-proof screws.

Any changeable information in informational kiosks or map-oriented signage should be lockable, with tamper-proof locking mechanisms.

In keeping with the enhanced design, posts for any signs within the system should be set plumb with signs set level. This may require more attention to footings than typical municipal traffic control signage.

Part of the overall intent is to use component panels where possible, to allow messages to be updated without replacing the entire sign.

Sign Details

The primary focus of this design effort has been on a family of signs for placement within downtown, including downtown edges and entries. These sign types are shown in greater detail in this chapter:

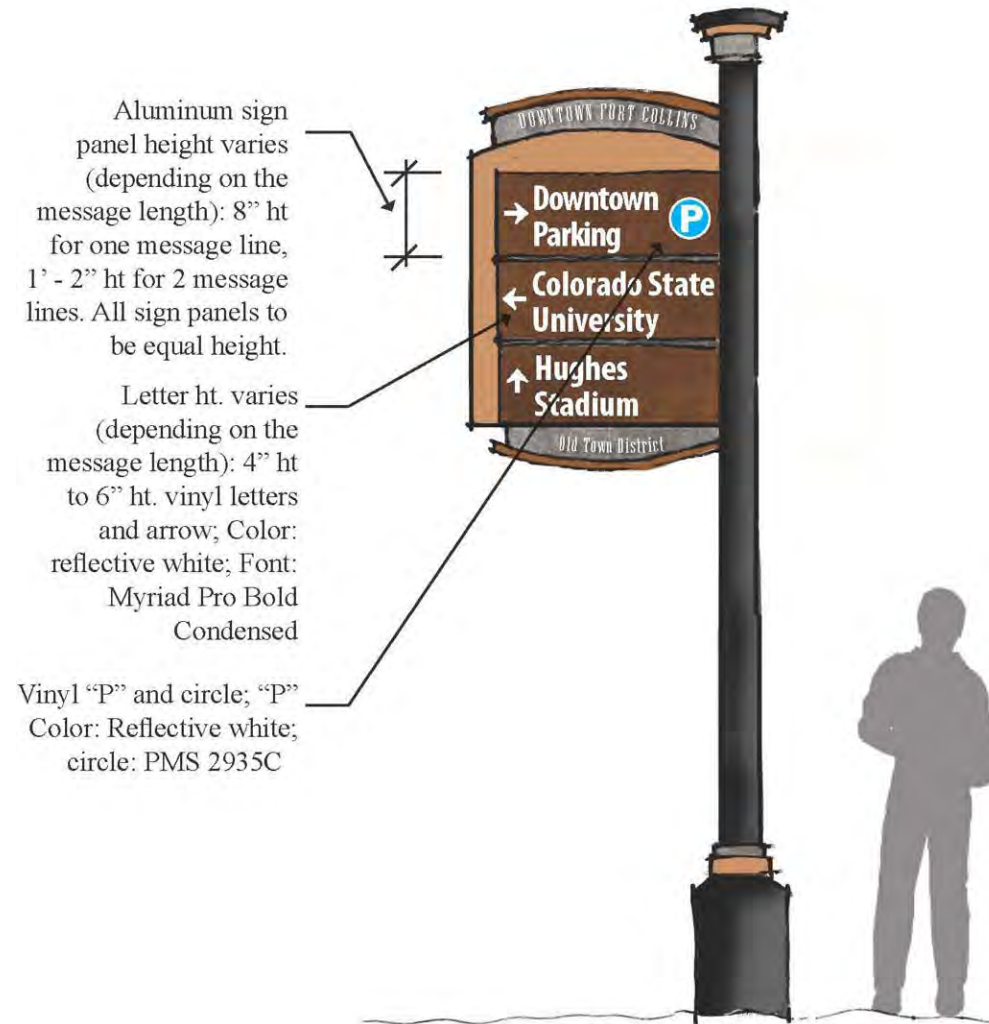
- Vehicular Directional Sign - Freestanding
- Vehicular Directional Sign - Arm-Mounted
- Parking Directional Sign - Horizontal Format
- Parking Directional Sign - Vertical Format
- Parking Garage Identification “P” Sign
- Parking Garage Entry Sign - Building-Mounted Format
- Parking Garage/Lot Entry Sign - Freestanding Vertical Format
- Parking Lot Entry Identification Sign - Freestanding Horizontal Format
- Parking Garage/Lot “You Are Here” Informational Sign
- Parking Garage Exit Directional Sign
- Alley Gateway Sign
- Alley Directional Sign
- Information Kiosk
- Transit Stop Sign
- Trail Access Marker
- Trail Directional Sign
- Regulatory Sign Cluster
- Regulatory Highway Sign Cluster
- Downtown Gateway

In addition to the downtown sign family, this manual recommends a few additional signs to be placed at key locations on major thoroughfares leading to downtown. These signs would begin to establish the identity of the city as part of the sequence of approach and arrival. These include (but are not detailed in this chapter):

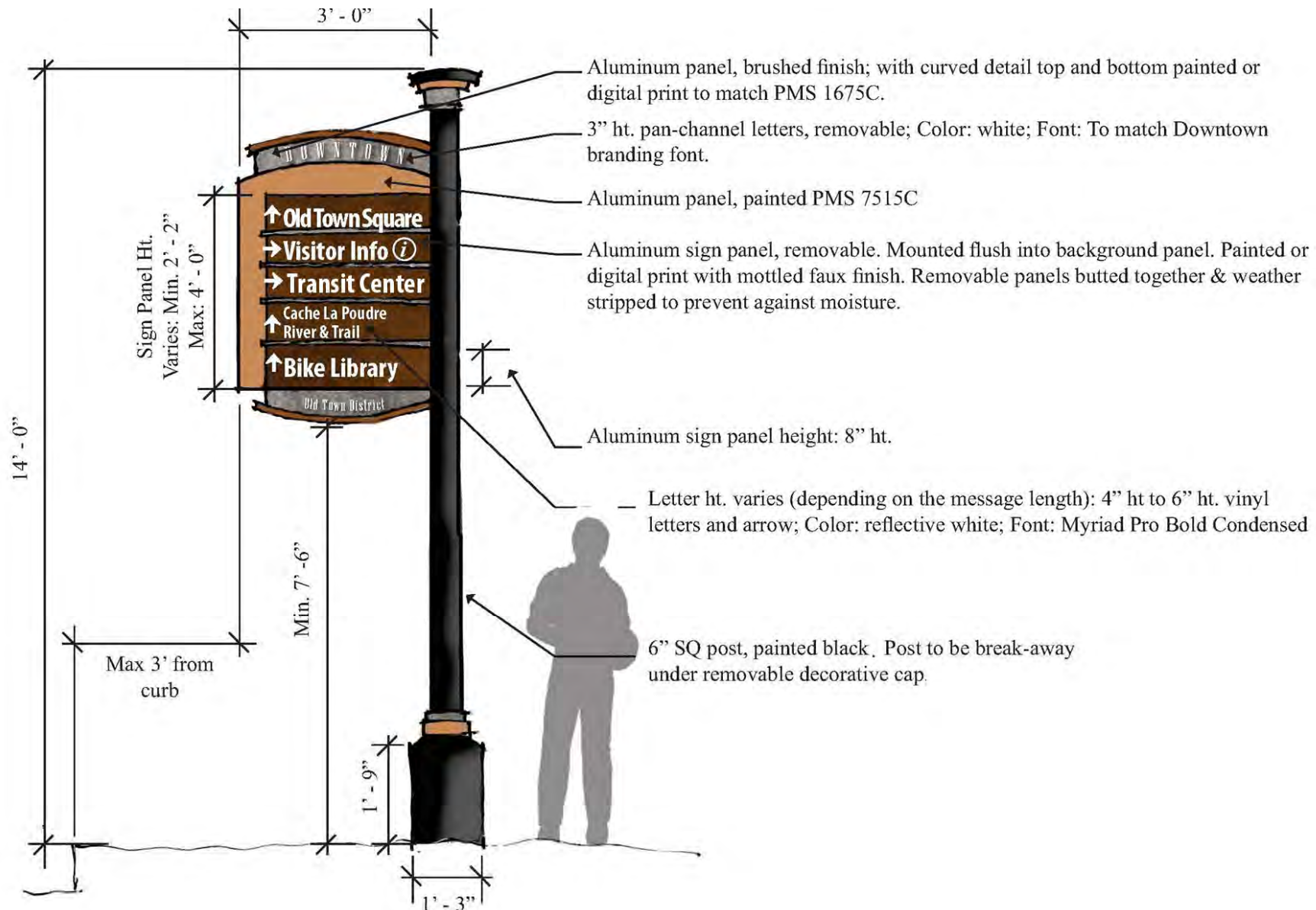
- Guide Signs - Downtown Distance and Direction
- City Identity Signs - Welcome, Natural Areas, Poudre River

These latter signs are to be developed further by City staff in a separate but related effort to the downtown sign system.

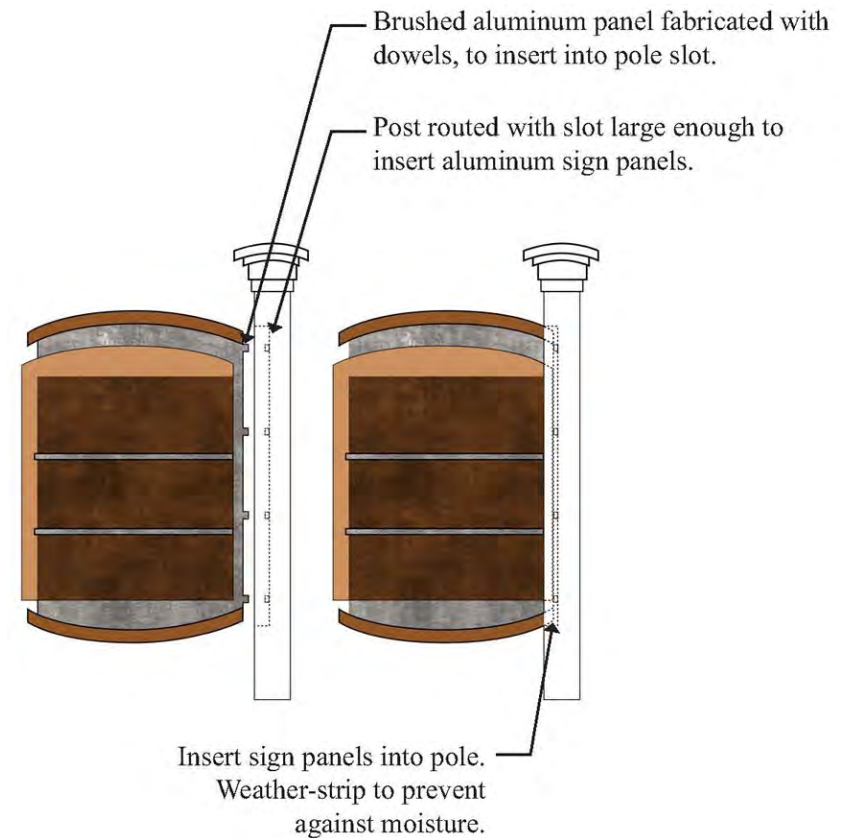
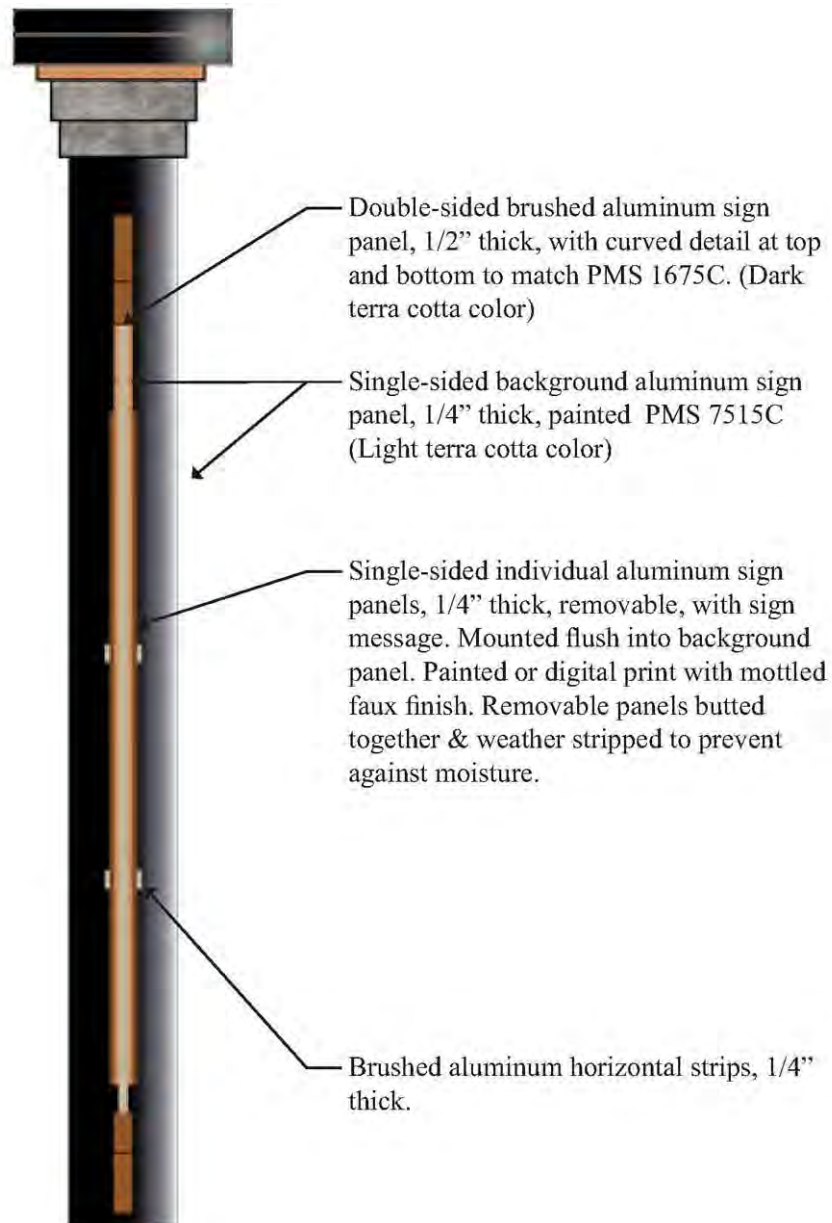
Vehicular Directional Sign – Freestanding (3-Message Option)



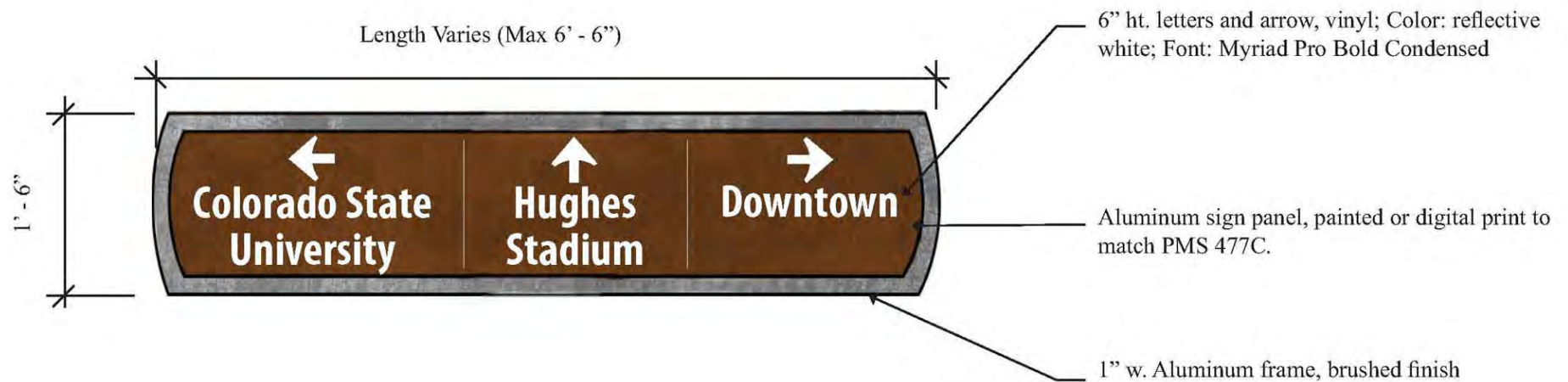
Vehicular Directional Sign – Freestanding (5-Message Option)



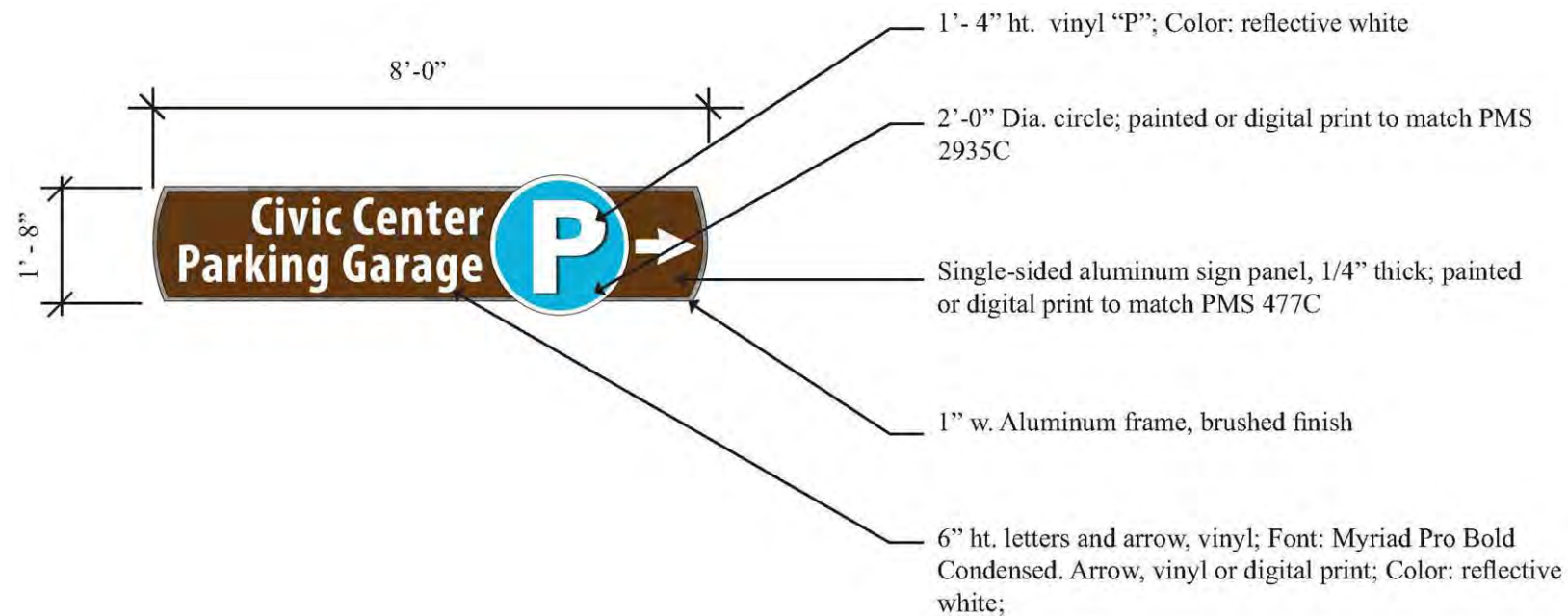
Vehicular Directional Sign – Freestanding, Cont.



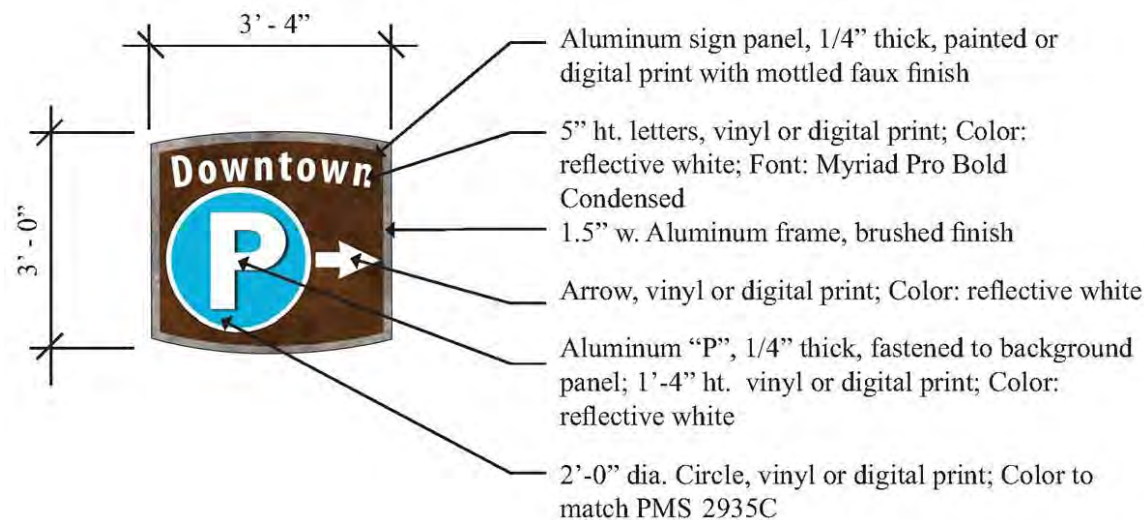
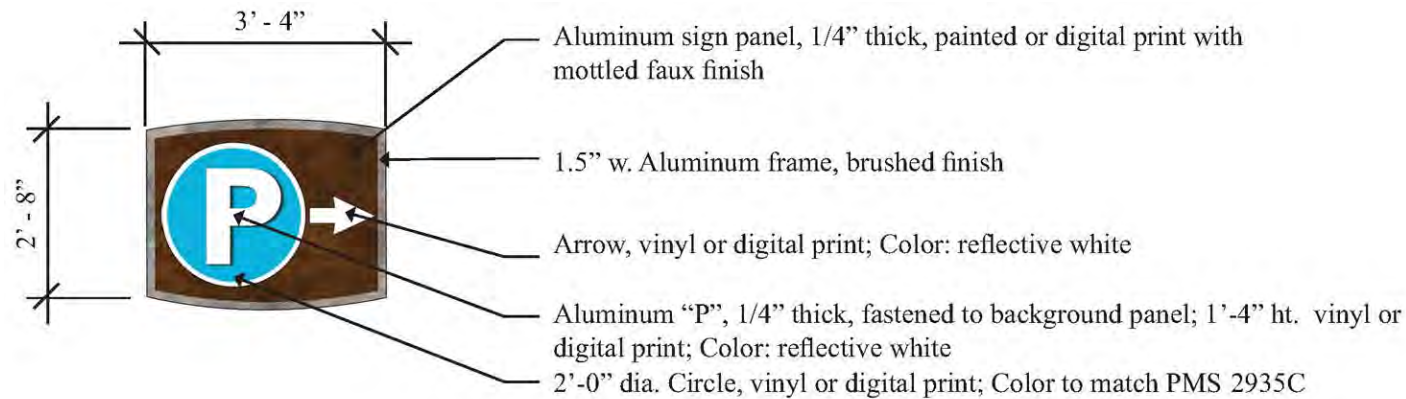
Vehicular Directional Sign – Arm-Mounted



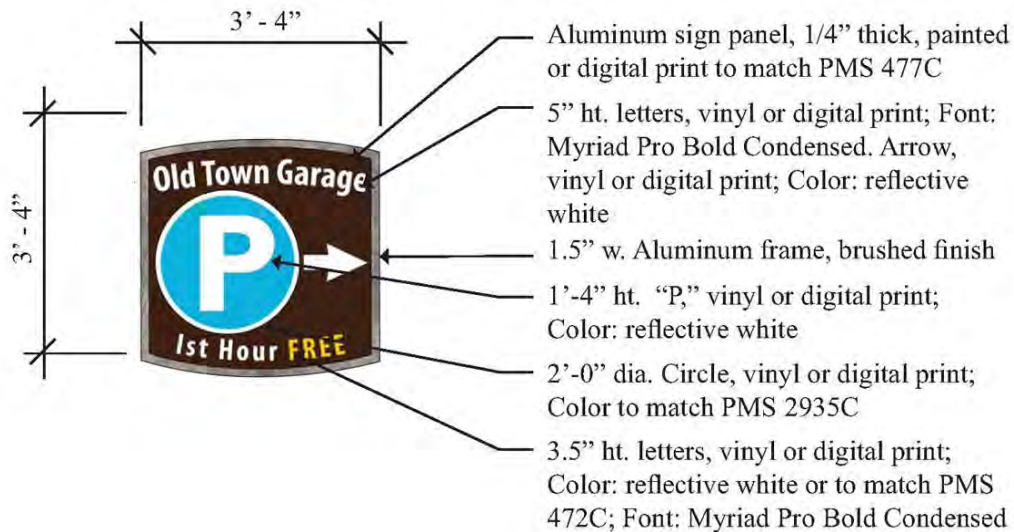
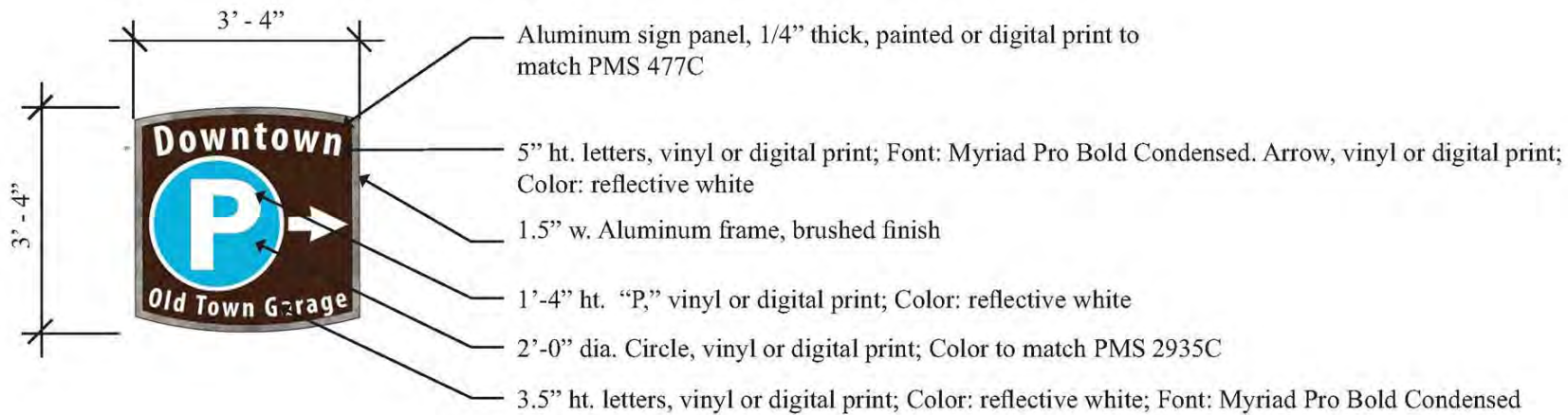
Parking Directional Sign – Horizontal Format



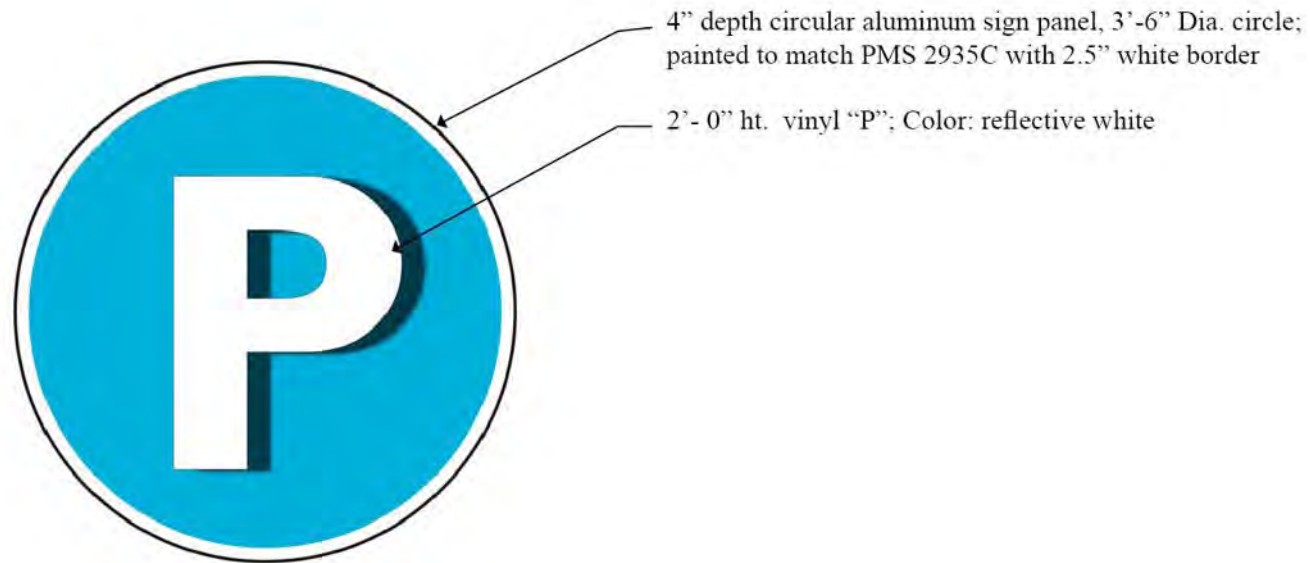
Parking Directional Sign – Vertical Format (Small Options)



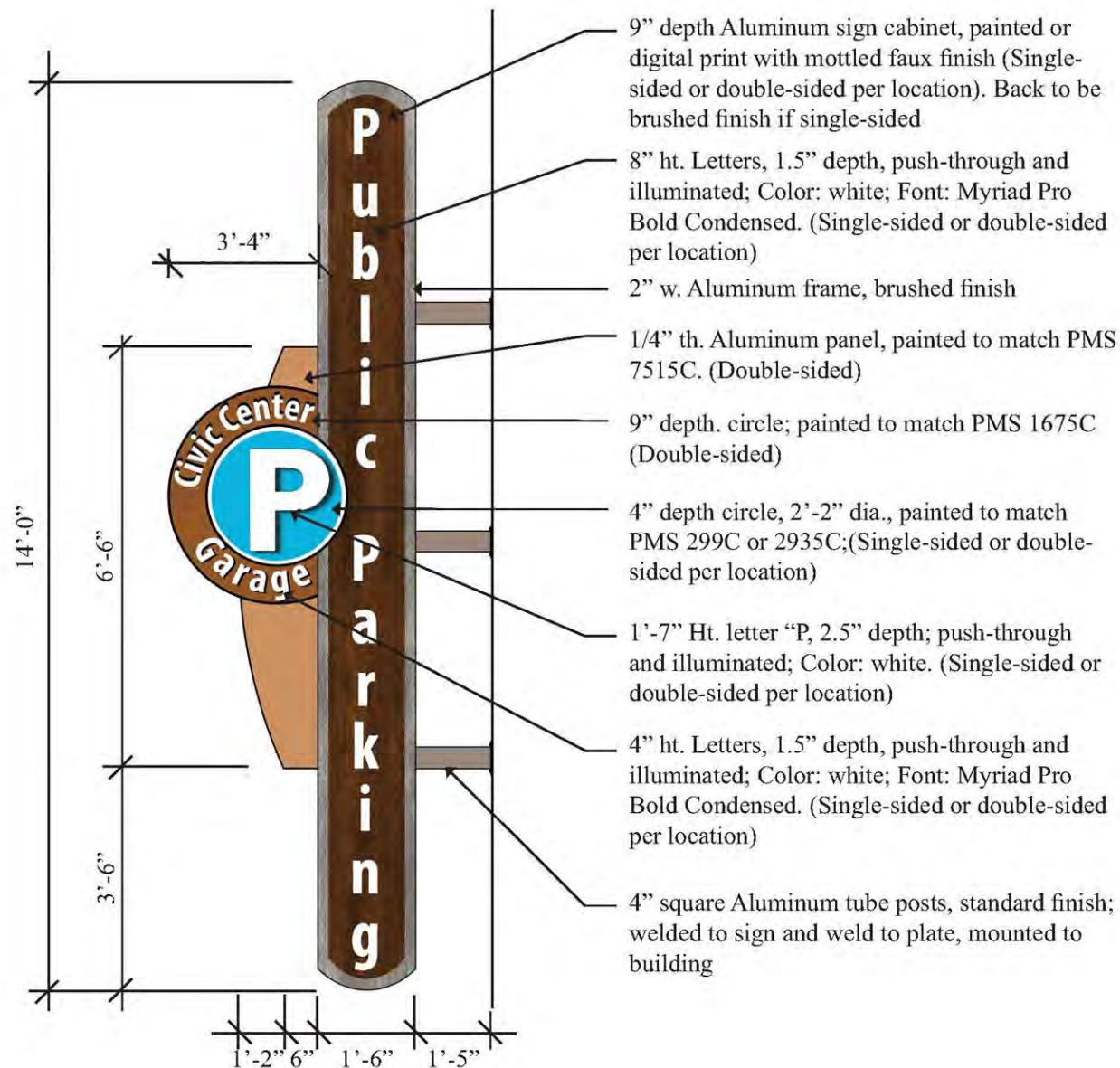
Parking Directional Sign – Vertical Format (Large Options)



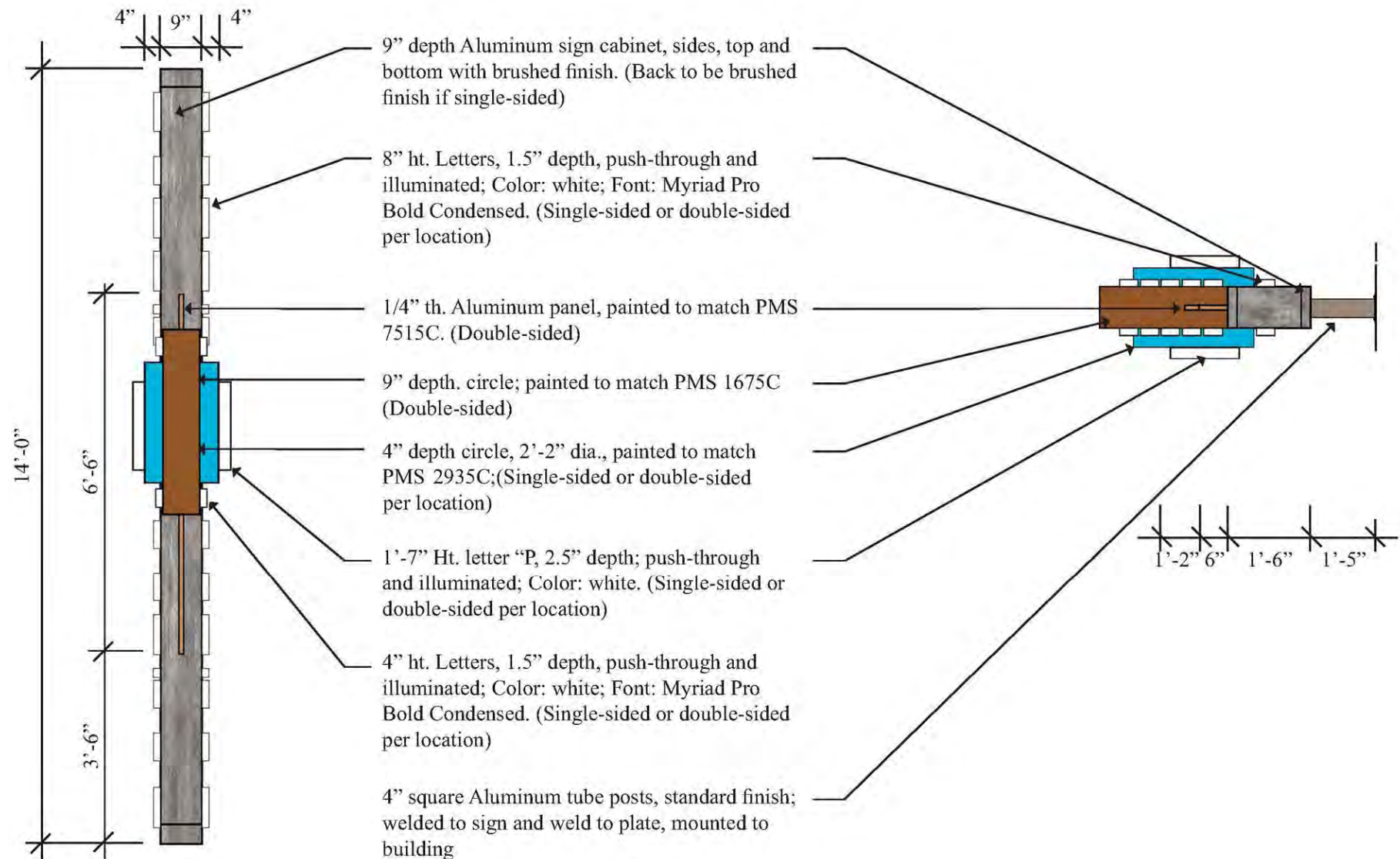
Parking Garage Identification "P" Sign



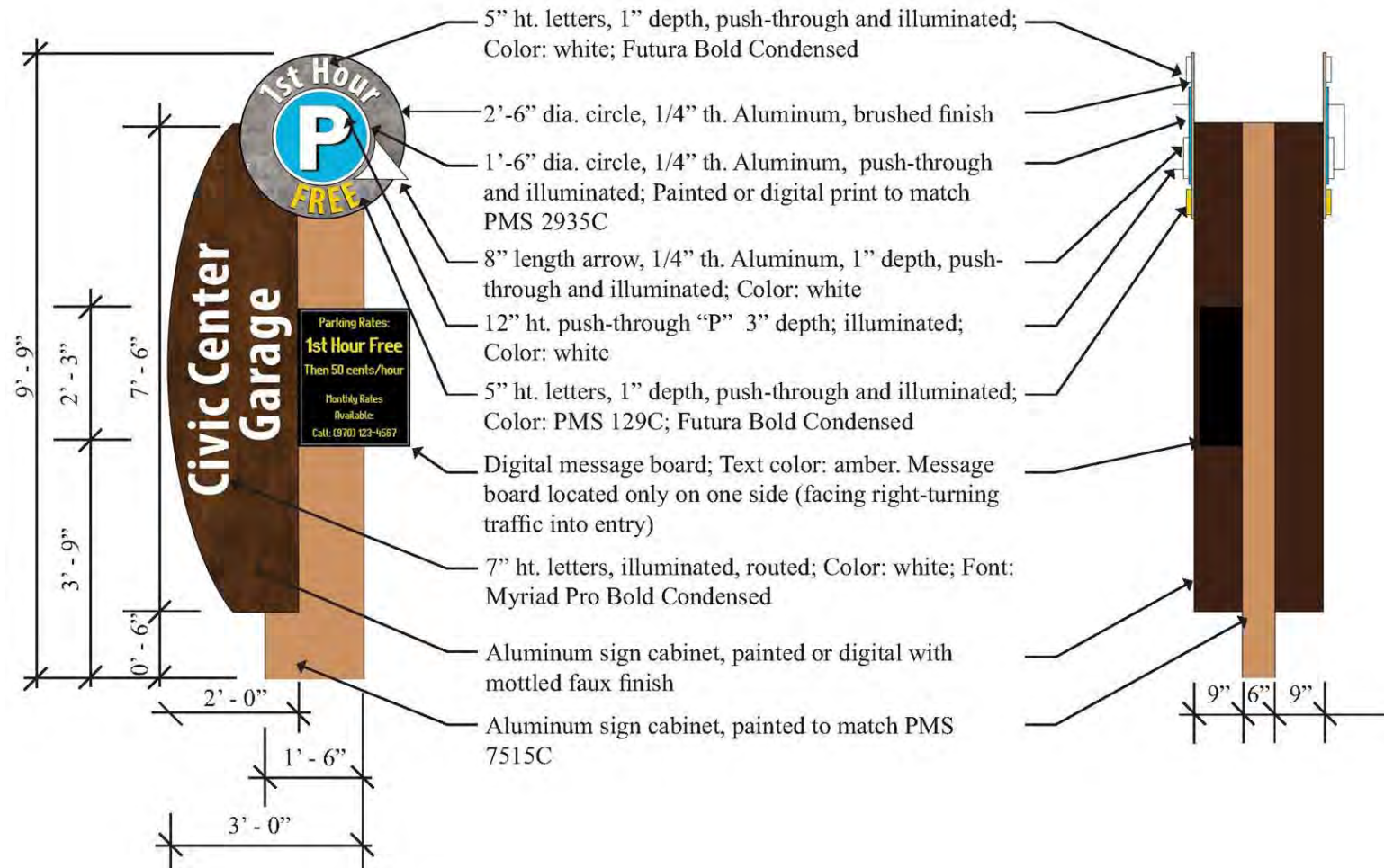
Parking Garage Entry Sign – Building-Mounted



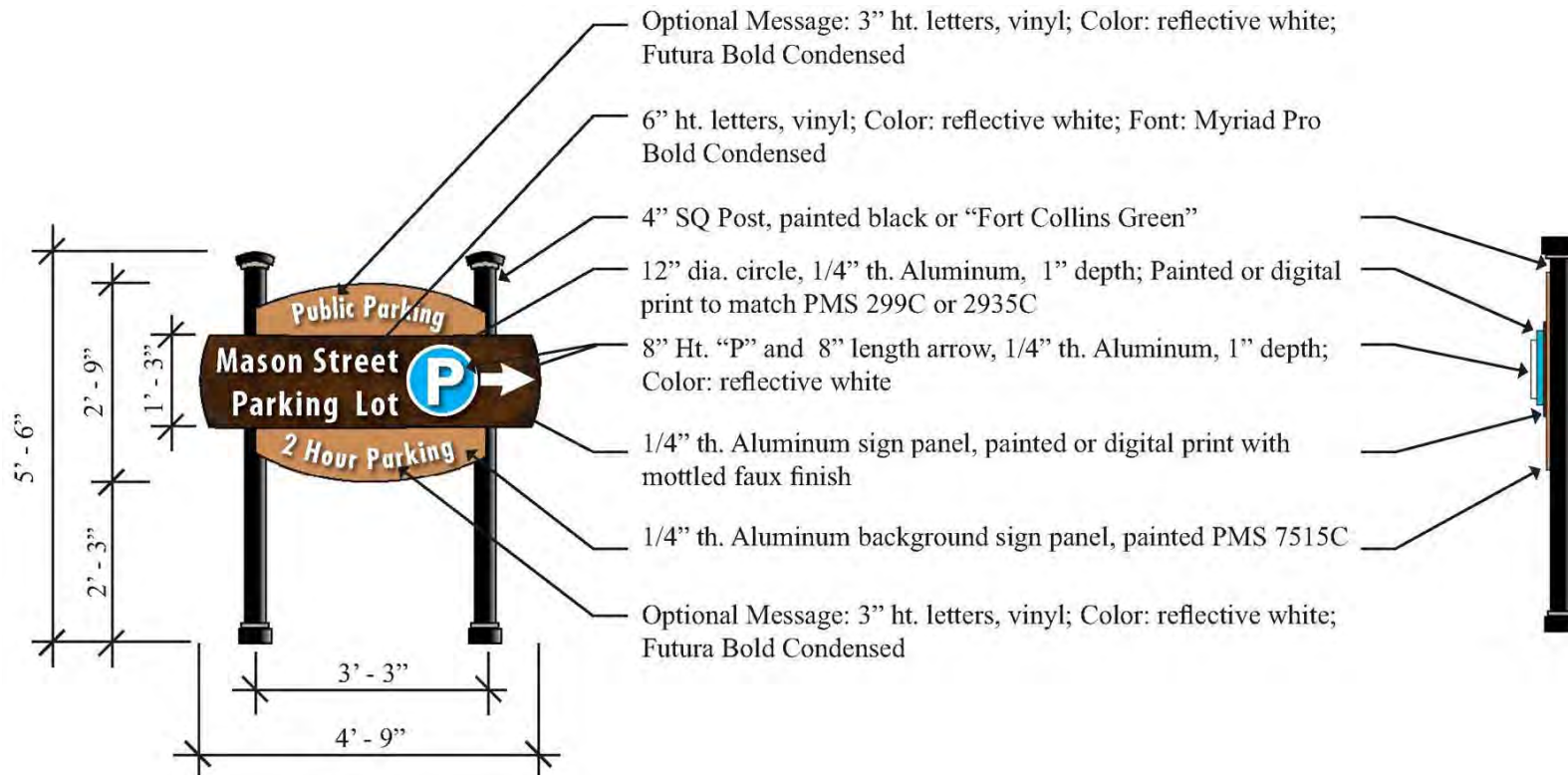
Parking Garage Entry Sign – Building-Mounted, Cont.



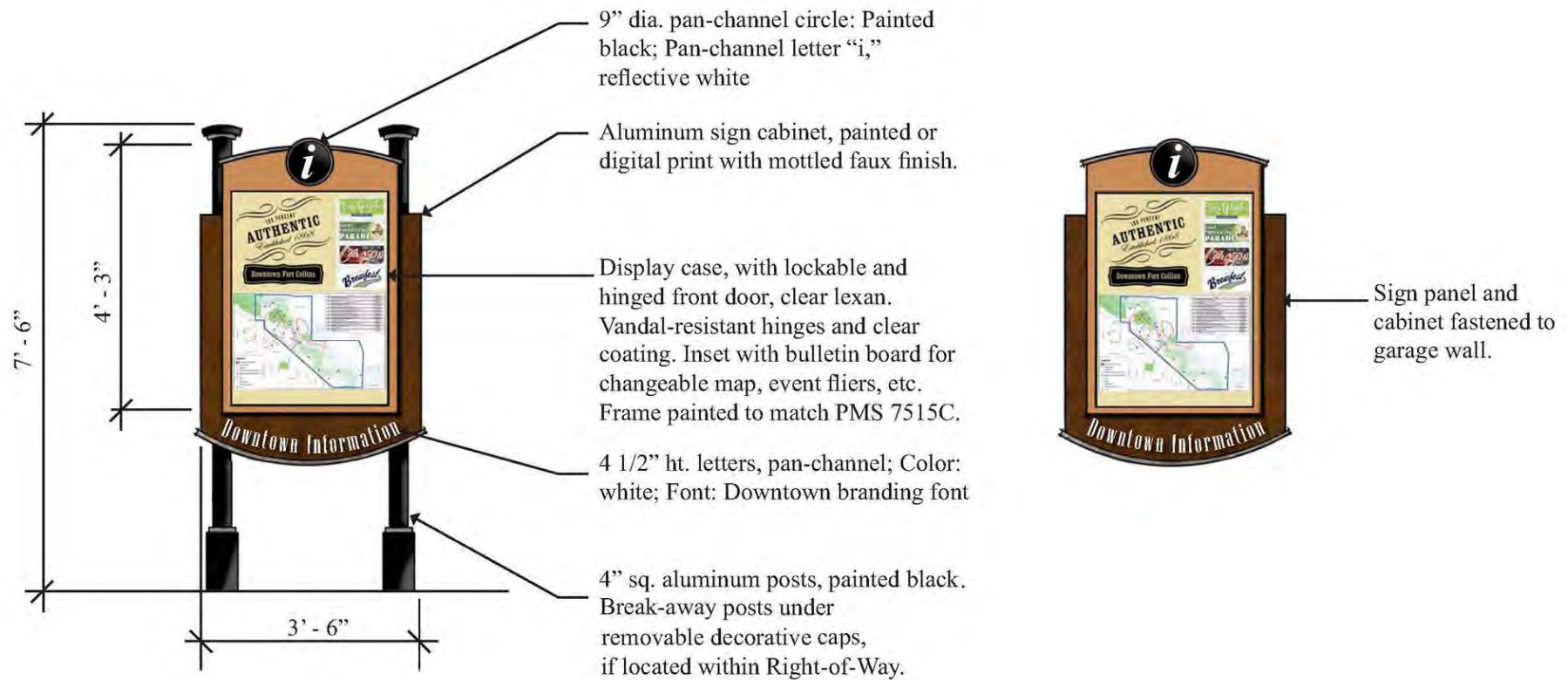
Parking Garage/Lot Entry Sign – Freestanding Vertical Format



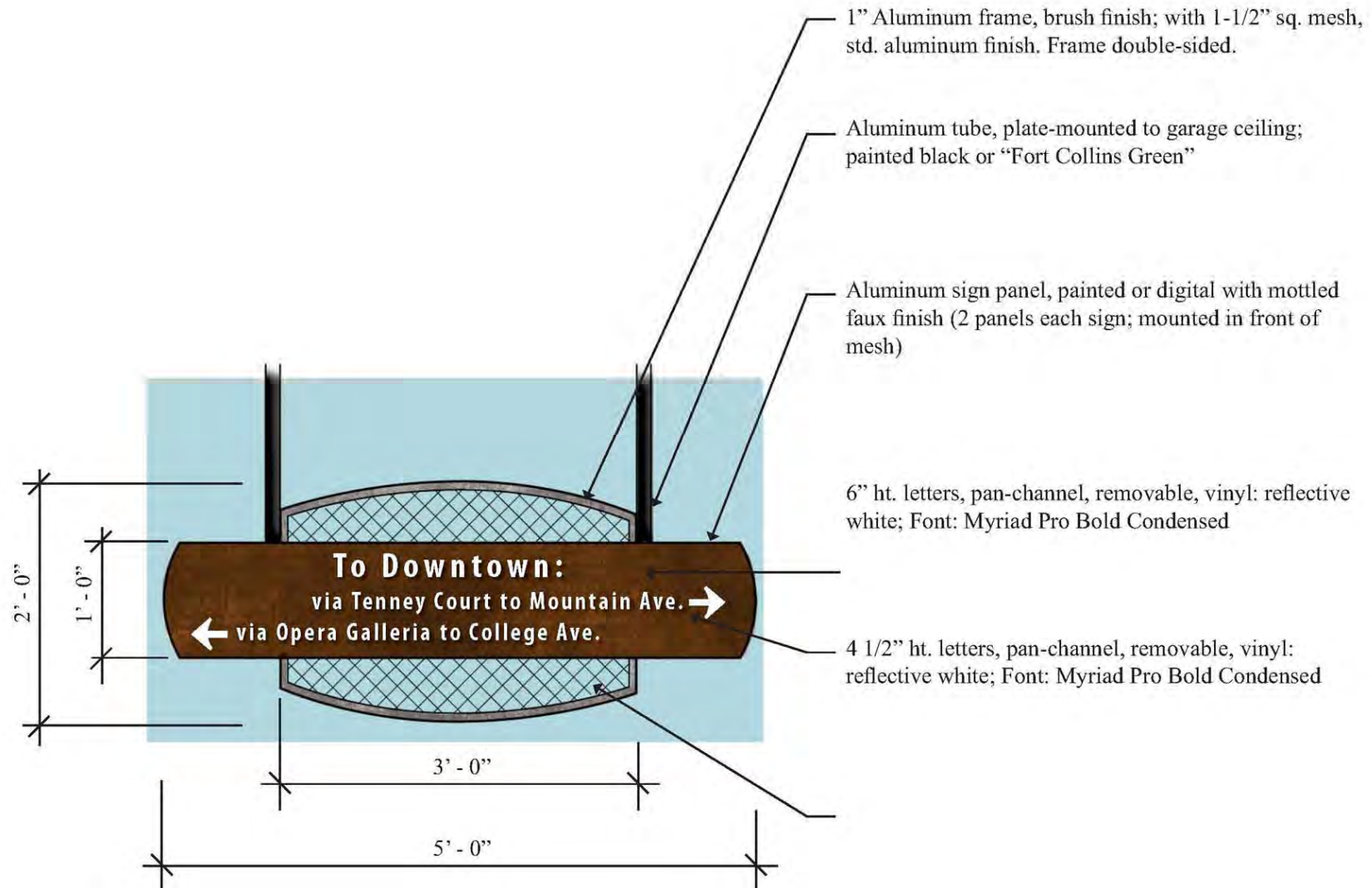
Parking Lot Entry Identification Sign – Freestanding Horizontal Format



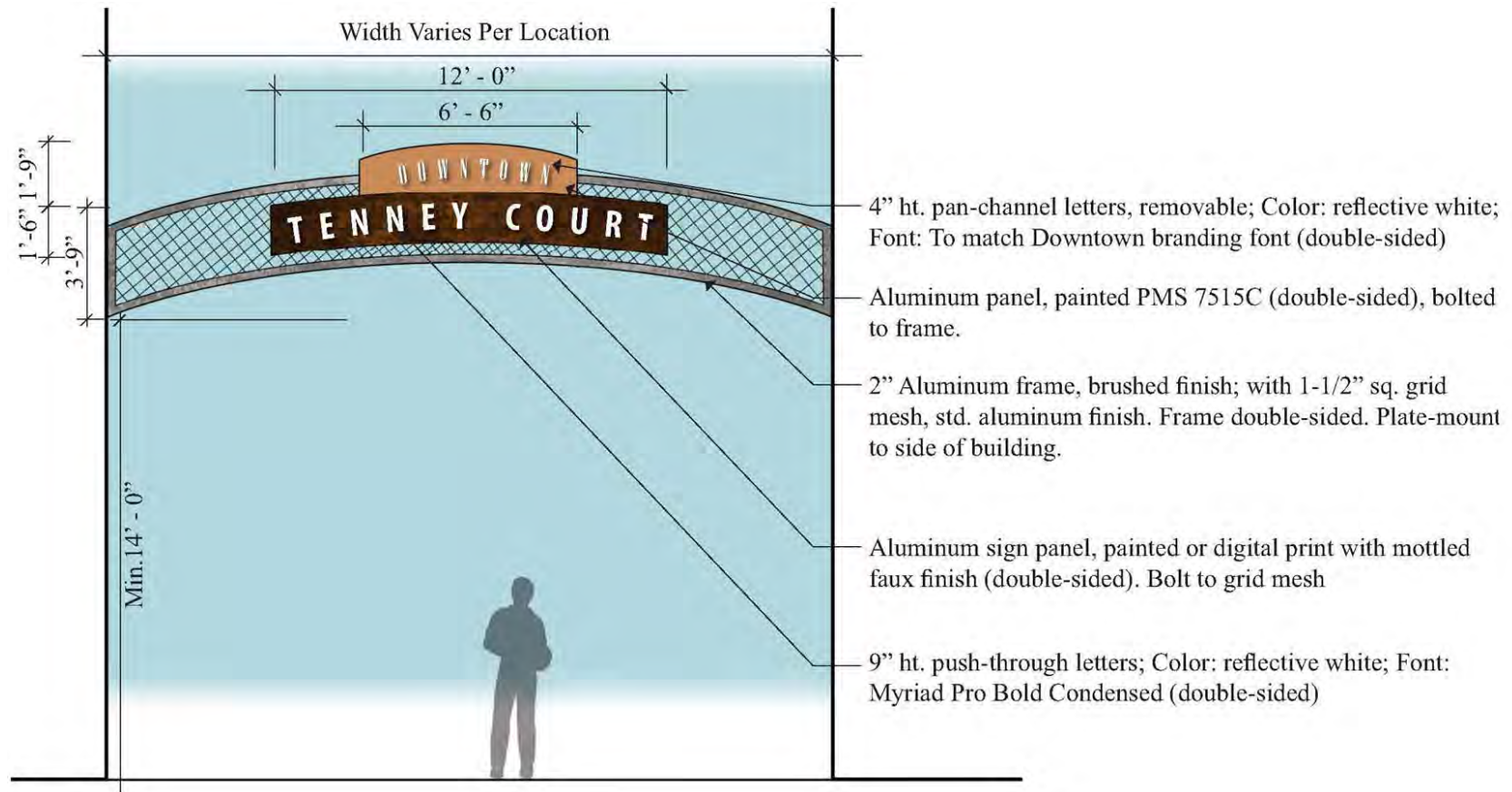
Parking Garage/Lot "You Are Here" Informational Sign



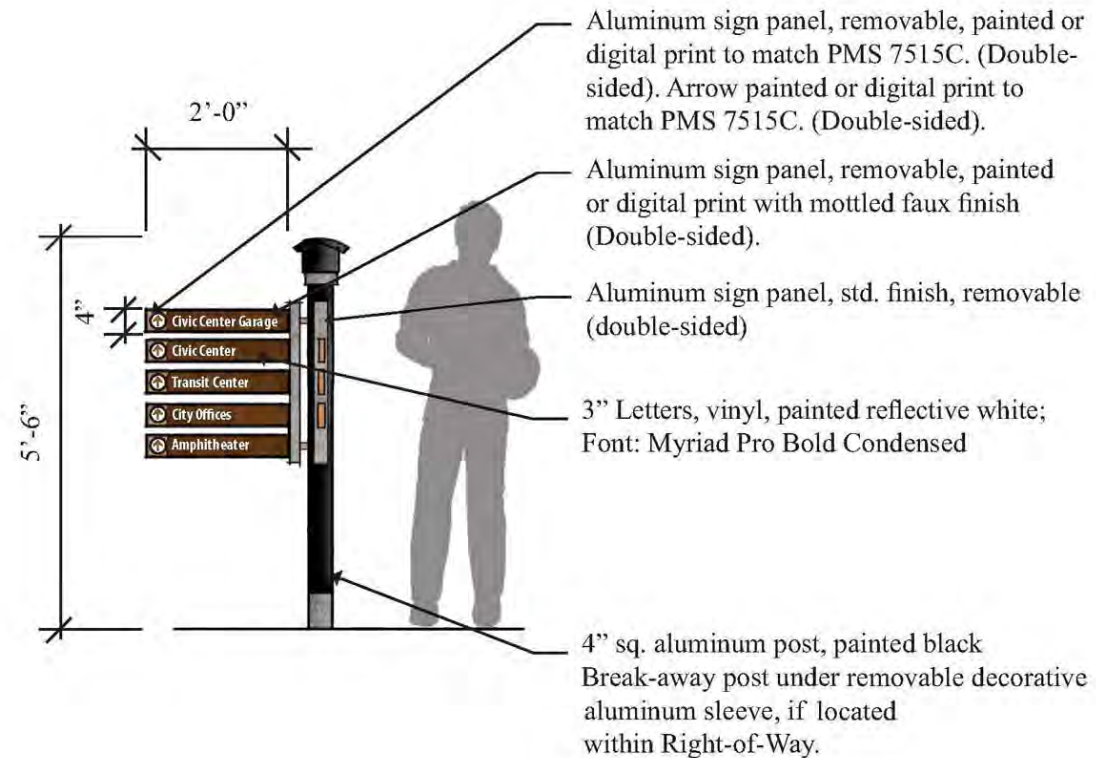
Parking Garage Exit Directional Sign



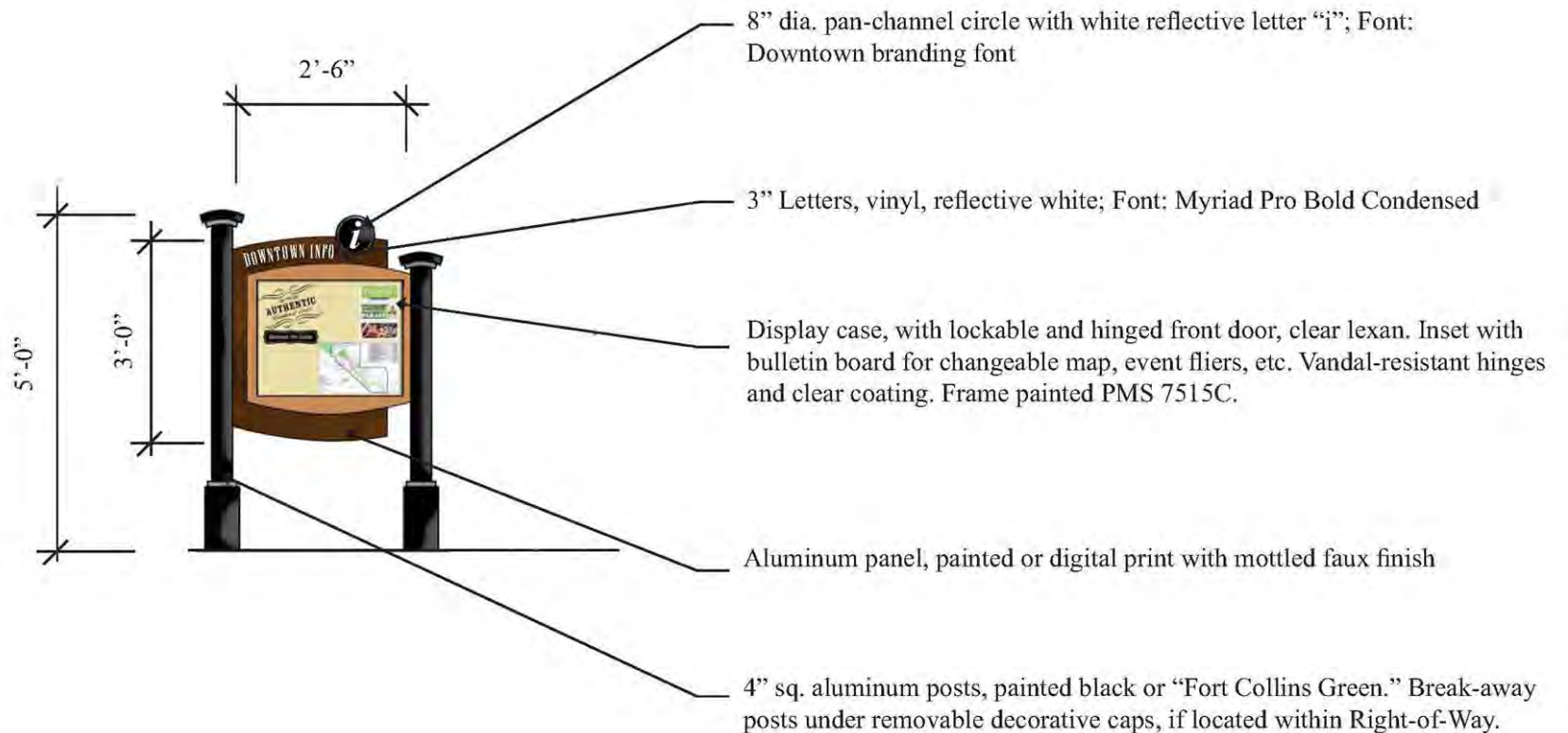
Alley Gateway Sign



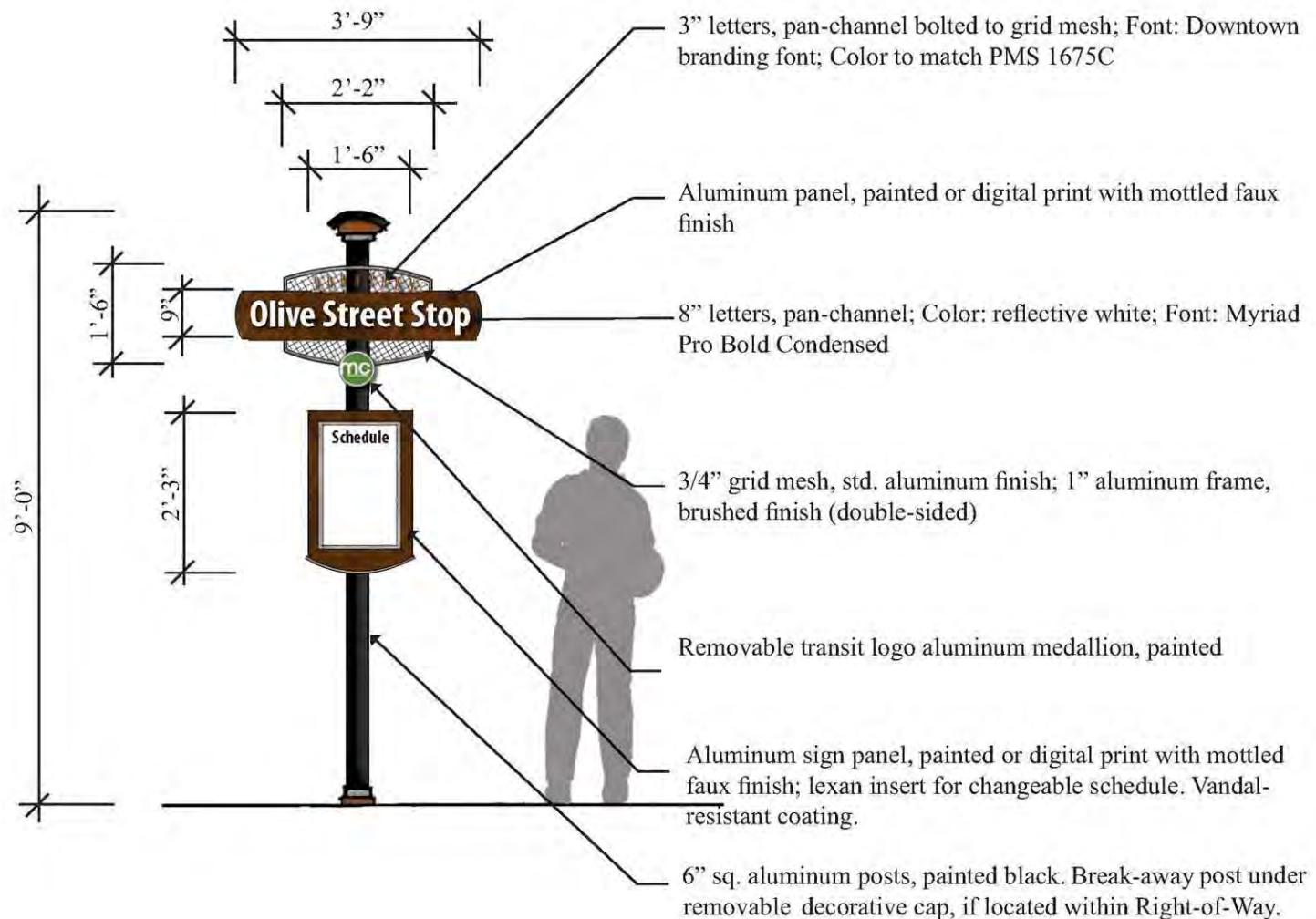
Alley Directional Sign



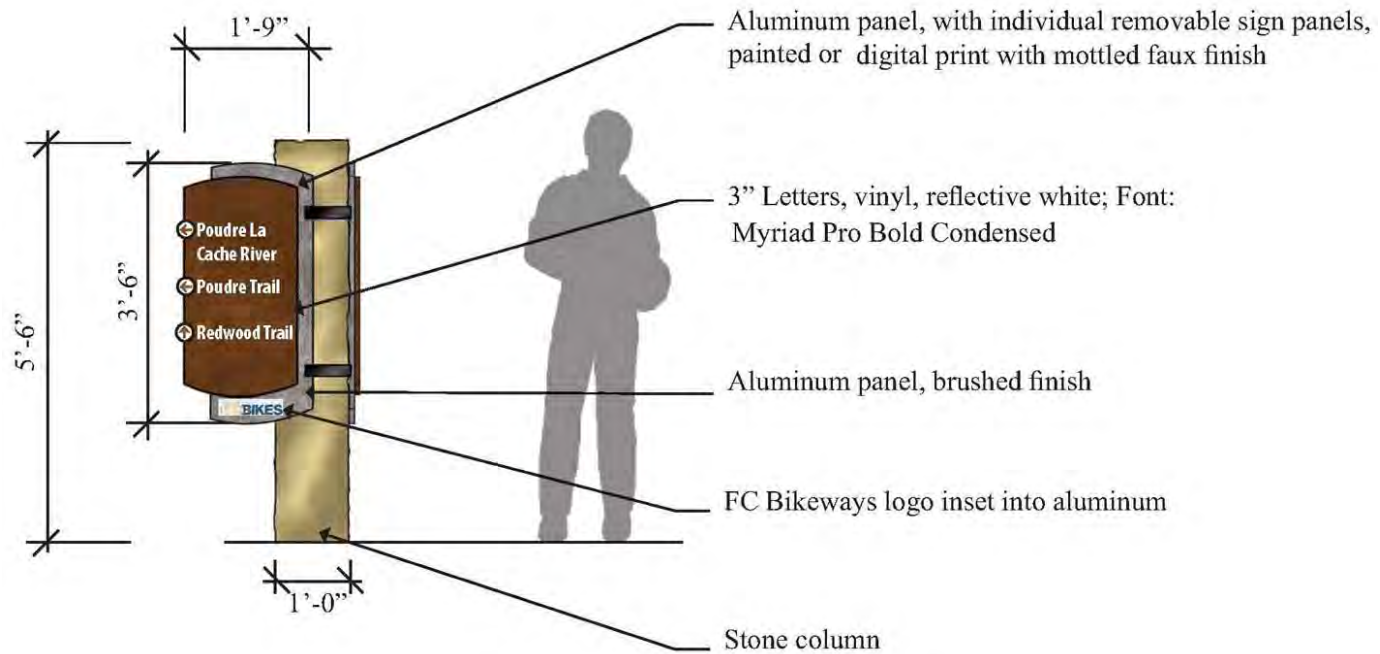
Information Kiosk



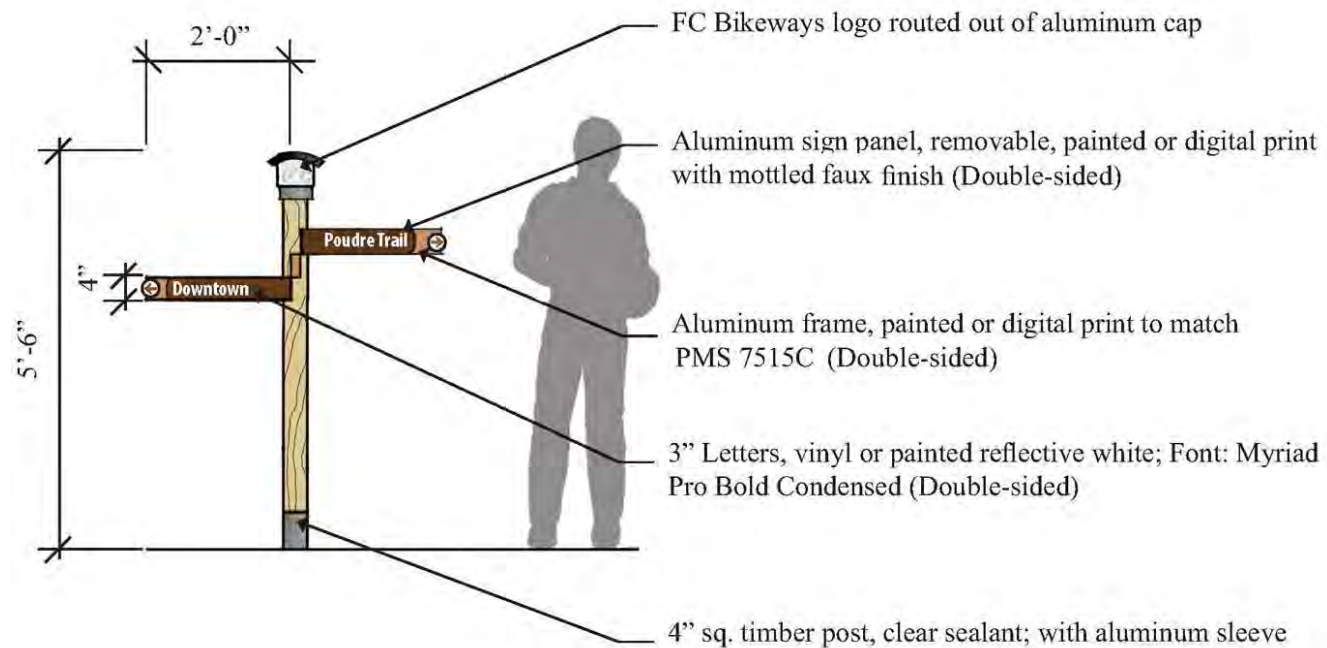
Transit Stop Sign



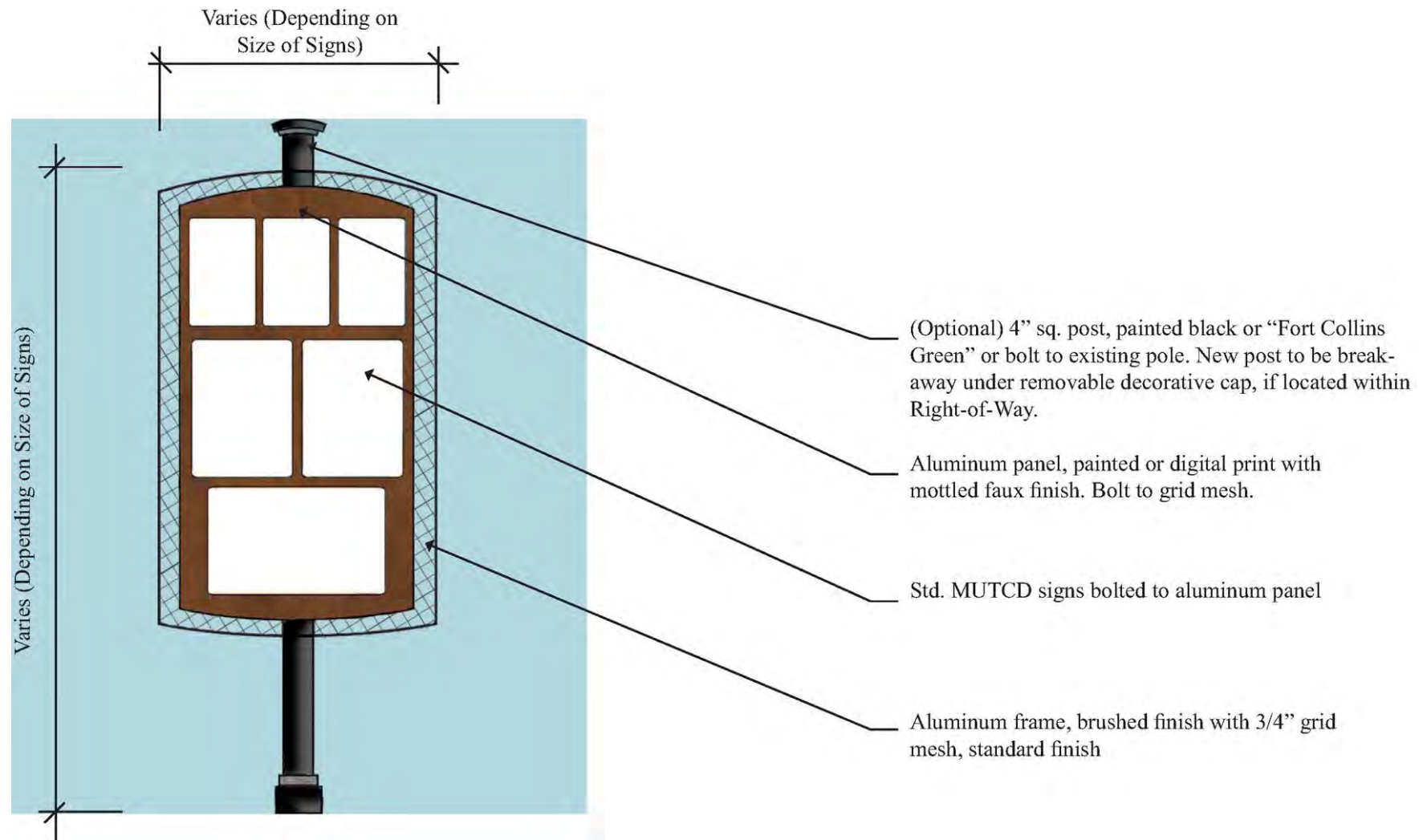
Trail Access Marker



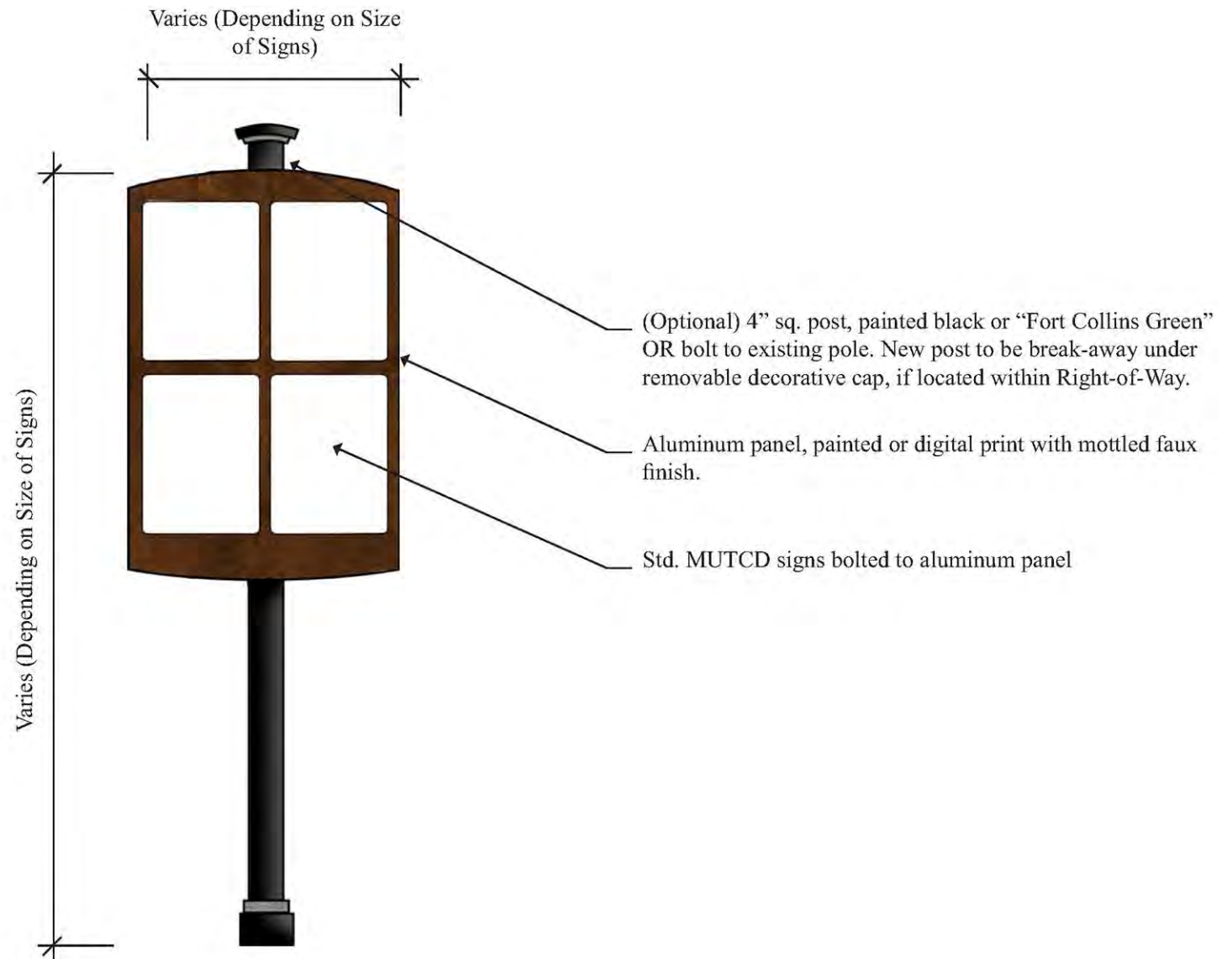
Trail Directional Sign



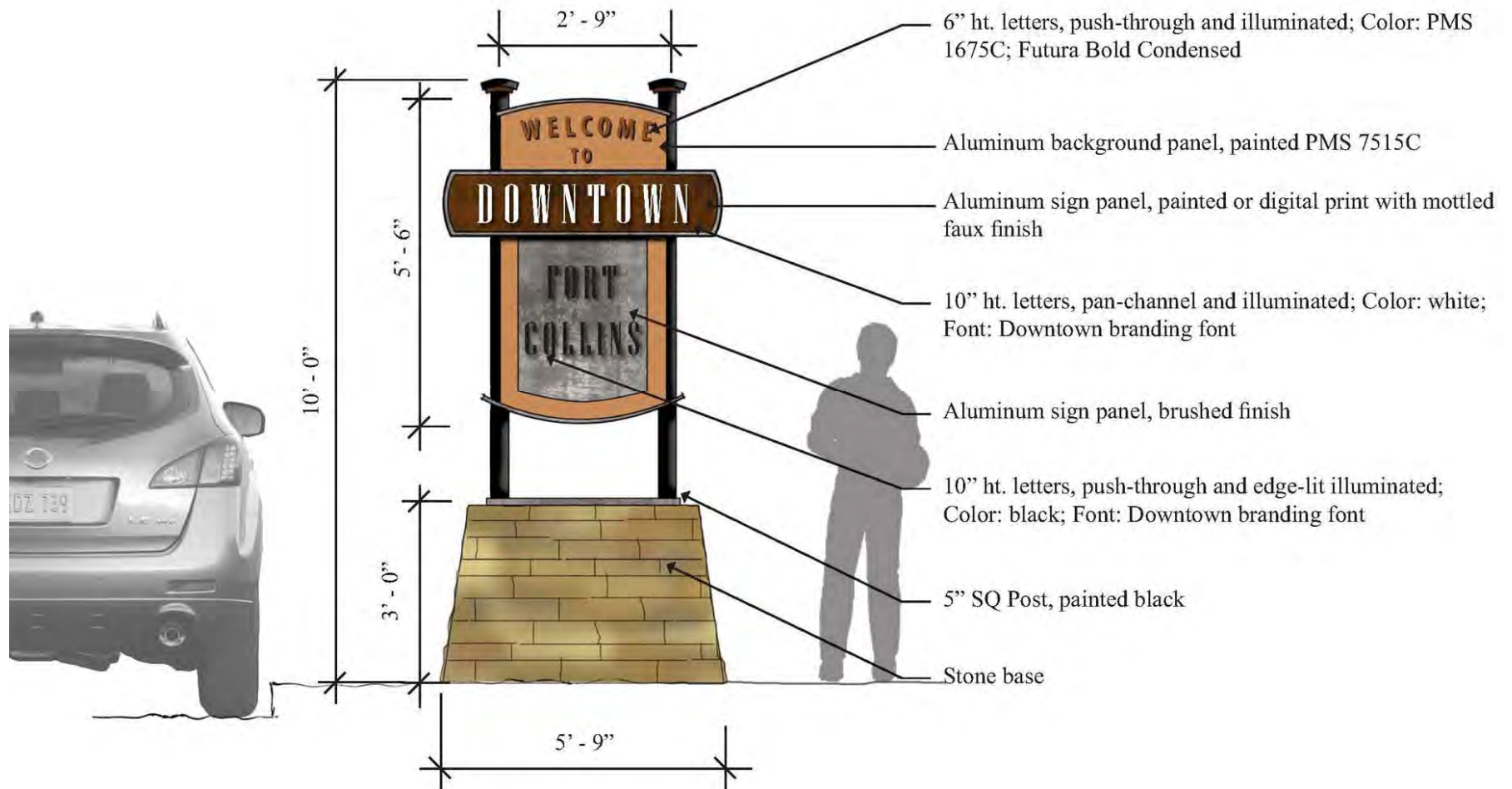
Regulatory Sign Cluster



Regulatory Highway Sign Cluster



Downtown Gateway Sign

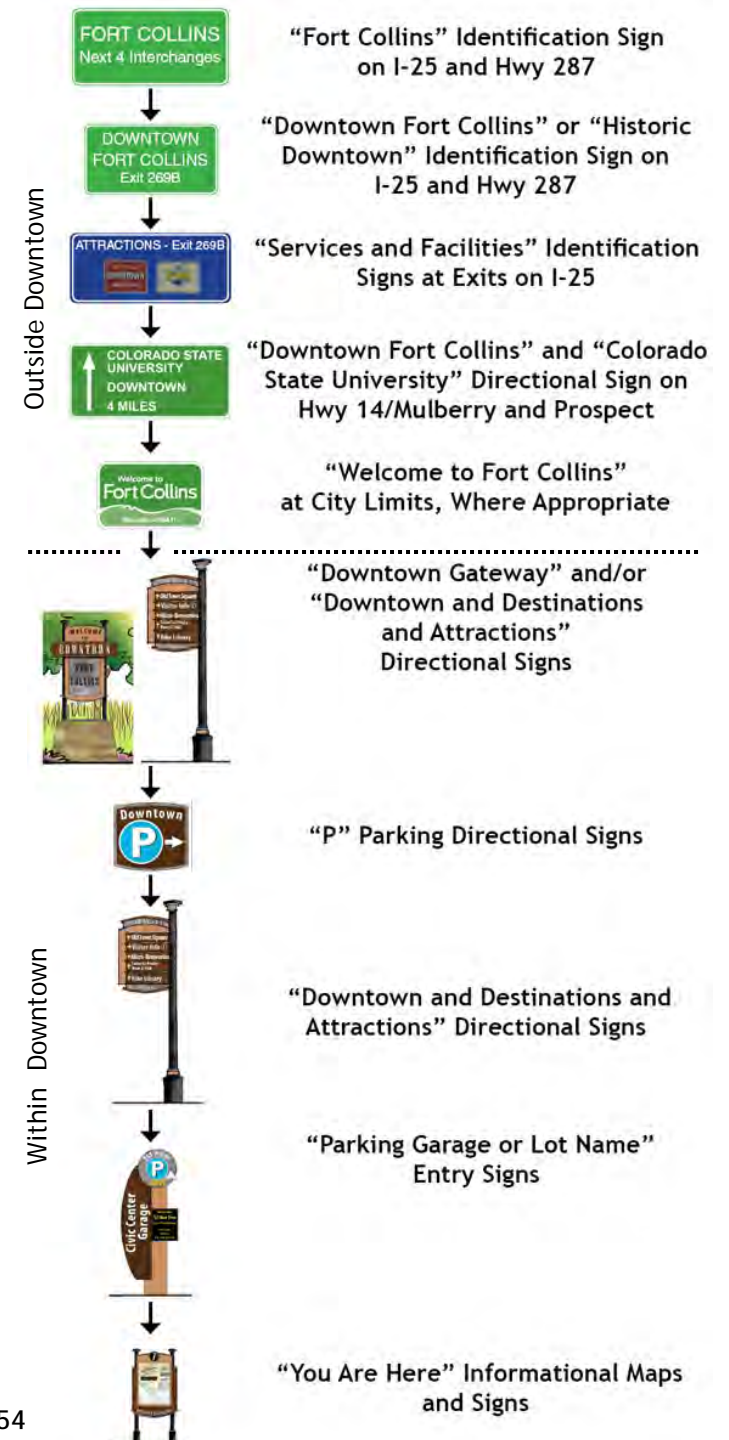


Sign Messages

What Information Do Sign Users Need and Where Do They Need It?

These are the simple, critical questions that should determine sign messages and locations. Answers should be decided with the primary audience in mind--people unfamiliar with Fort Collins' downtown.

For visitors to Fort Collins and downtown, there is a basic logical message sequence, from general to specific, illustrated at right. The illustrated sequence shows two main sets of signs, reflecting Fort Collins identity leading to downtown, and then reflecting a distinct downtown identity upon arrival.



Locations of Signs

The scope of this schematic design effort did not allow for mapping out specific locations for all signs, nor the ultimate quantity of signs. Some signs, such as parking structure identification, have messages and locations that are fairly self-evident. Most, however, will require careful attention, discussion, and possibly debate by a decision-making team as installation packages are formulated. Site-specific and route-specific complexities need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis, often with field coordination with utilities, right-of-way, existing poles, user visibility, and other practical requirements.

The system should maintain a consistent sign message vocabulary among signs. This is a key to clear communication, and will require attention and effort by a team that formulates sign packages for installation.

General rules of thumb for sign placement include:

- Vehicular-oriented directional signs should always be more than 75 feet from an intersection to give the driver adequate decision-making time, and to avoid conflicts with traffic signals and signs at the corner.
- Spacing between vehicular-oriented signs should be at least 30 feet.
- Pedestrian-oriented signs should never create confusion with vehicular signage. There is more flexibility in locating pedestrian-oriented signs; thus these signs should never be located where a driver might misinterpret them.
- Sign components should be at least 12 inches from the street curb adjacent to parallel parking to prevent damage from vehicles. In instances of diagonal parking, sign components are recommended to be located 24 inches from the street curb due to vehicles overhanging the curb.

Sign Sequences Along Major Routes Leading to Downtown

Appendix B is a listing of existing sign sequences along key inbound routes to downtown, along with observations and suggested ideas for improvements.

The key routes are:

- I-25 approaches, especially SH14 (exit 269B) and Prospect Road (exit 268) - Both Traffic Directions
- SH14/Mulberry Street - Westbound Traffic
- Prospect Road - Westbound Traffic
- North College Avenue/SH14/US287 - Southbound Traffic
- South College Avenue/US 287 - Northbound Traffic
- Linden Street - Southbound Traffic
- Riverside Avenue/Jefferson Street/SH14 - Both Traffic Directions

Destinations and Attractions

The following list was developed through the schematic design process, as candidates for possible inclusion on directional signage. The list was limited to public destinations. Although some of the most sought-out destinations for visitors are private businesses, private businesses should not be named on public signage in the right-of-way.

One possible exception could be pedestrian-oriented, changeable business directories on informational signs and kiosks. This possibility would need to be negotiated between the City and the business community regarding protocols for how businesses are included, how changes are administered, etc. A local example of this type of issue is the provision of newspaper cabinets within the public right-of-way, which required an extensive public process to vet the issues and allow all interests to be heard.

Destinations and attractions listed under “Primary” are those deemed most important to the most visitors, and which have parking, thus making them candidates for vehicular directional signs. Those listed as “Secondary” are also important to visitors, but have a more specialized audience, or lack parking and are typically encountered on foot after parking elsewhere.

The list is not intended to be exclusive or authoritative. Rather, it is intended as a reference to aid decisions in implementation of the system.

Primary

“Downtown” or “Historic Downtown” (from I-25, from other parts of city, from Poudre Trail)
 Colorado State University
 Parking Garages and Lots
 Library
 Museum
 Lincoln Center
 Poudre River Trail Access
 City Hall
 City Offices, 215 Mason and 281 N.College

County Offices
Justice Center
Civic Center Park
Transit Center

Secondary

Northside Aztlan Community Center
The “Farm” and Lee Martinez Park
Old Town Square
Visitor Information Center
Old Town Historic District
Public Restrooms
Bike Library
Museum of Contemporary Art
Oak Street Plaza
Post Office
Original Fort Site
Self-Guided Tours
Old Power Plant
Historic Mills
Old Power Plant
Avery House
Washington Park
Buckingham Park
Old Fort Collins Heritage Park
Views of City from Downtown (*from atop the Garages*)
Chamber of Commerce
Mulberry Pool
Raptor Center
(Future) MAX Corridor Stops
To City Park and Trolley
To City Park Golf Course
To CSU Trial Gardens

Message Content

The sign messaging must also be concise; limiting the amount of information per sign conserves sign space and prevents information overload. To ensure readability, no more than five vehicular messages should be included on one sign. The ideal number of sign messages is three to four. See the “*Sign Design Choices*” Chapter for more information about message layout.

Destination Arrangement on Directional Signs

The Vehicular and Alley Directional Signs display multiple destinations, often with arrows pointing in several directions. It is recommended that the destinations be arranged by proximity, whereby destinations are listed from the nearest to the farthest. In this way, destinations will be listed in the order in which people will encounter them. In some instances, it may also be preferable to arrange destinations by both proximity and by arrow direction, grouping together close destinations that are in the same direction; this often provides more visual organization which people can quickly determine destinations in the same vicinity and direction together.

Administration and Maintenance

A New Program

A significant new City program is needed to successfully implement this schematic design for a coordinated public signage system. By definition, the program will require more investment, work, attention, and discussion among multiple interests, than is currently given to City signage.

Downtown Sign System Team

The program will need a commitment of staff with experience in design, communications, and sign systems. A recommended City staff team was identified during schematic design discussions:

Traffic Operations and its Sign Shop, for a sign systems perspective.

Advance Planning, for an urban design perspective.

The Communications and Public Involvement Office, for a communications perspective.

The team should involve other appropriate interests as specific signs are implemented. For example, managers of facilities identified on signs, or actual intended sign users, should be consulted on questions of exact sign messages and locations. Parking Services, in particular, will need to be heavily involved, because its facilities are a central priority of the system.

The team should develop a “charter” to guide its discussions and actions. For example, it may be helpful to lay out roles of team members, degree of time commitments, how initiatives will occur, how funding will be secured, how decisions will be made, how City leadership will be kept informed, and how to explore suggestions for further work noted in this manual. *

Implementation Actions

To implement the system, the team will need to:

- Identify funding for implementation, including maintenance, repair, and replacement.
- Initiate sign installations.
- Decide locations and message content, and all details, with value engineering as needed.
- Formulate bid packages for fabrication and installation contracts.
- Review shop drawings.
- Oversee sign installations.
- Decide on removals of signs, and oversee removals.
- Monitor and periodically review the state of the sign system.
- Review and respond to any requests and suggestions for signs.
- Follow the design intent and details for all signs within the system. Visual clutter and confusion must be minimized; they undermine the investment by diminishing the overall impression created by the system.

*Examples of further work include:

- Graphic design of maps, artwork, and design for “you are here” informational signs.
- Working with downtown entities on a program to maintain and update those informational signs.
- Working with Parking Services to coordinate garage entry and interior signs and equipment with the new sign program.
- Working with an artist on public art ideas noted in Appendix C.
- Working with CDOT on ideas for changes to their highway signage.

Appendix A: Issues

The following issues were identified and discussed in the schematic design process, and are recorded here for future reference.

Appendix B is closely related to this Appendix A. It records comments, questions, and ideas about existing signs along key roadway routes leading to downtown.

Existing Signage

In a sense, all issues relate to problems or missed opportunities with existing signage. Specific issues include the following:

- An abundant assortment of signs has been placed over decades, with a lack of coordination that diminishes the effectiveness of communication with intended users.
- Key City and County buildings' identification signage could be improved for users in terms of visibility from abutting streets and intersections.

New Signage

- Adding new signs could have the effect of adding to visual clutter of assorted signage. The issue may involve integrating existing signage into a new system, removing or replacing existing signs, and establish a pervasive theme with new signs.

Public Parking

- Desires have been stated for stronger identification of public parking facilities, with consistent signage that is easy to understand, user-friendly, and contributes to the positive image of downtown.

Parking Garages

- Many visitors to Downtown are unaware of the extensive amount of parking spaces in the public garages that are free for one hour and 50 cents per hour thereafter.
- There is a perception of not enough parking downtown, because of the limited street parking right in front of popular businesses.
- There is a perception that using the public garages is difficult or requires special knowledge, creating a lack of comfort in using the garages, especially for visitors unfamiliar with them.
- Entrances need to be explicitly identifiable, and as user-friendly as possible.
- There is a need to reassure visitors about ease of use, as much as possible.
- A particular source of uncertainty for visitors is the possibility of the garage being full, requiring a fruitless search of the entire garage. At the time of this writing, the occurrence is rare, but the issue remains and may grow over time. Technology to monitor the open/full status of garages is complex and expensive.
- Consistency is especially important for parking garage users who are unfamiliar. They are typically following signs to locate the appropriate parking space, and the approach, entry, and interior signage needs to be easy to follow and user-friendly.

I-25

There are widespread desires to better highlight the presence of and direction to downtown on I-25 signage.

As noted previously, Appendix B is closely related to this Appendix A. It notes issues, ideas, and questions related to CDOT signage on I-25. Some salient examples are:

- The idea or desire to add “Downtown” or “Historic Downtown” into the sequence of official guide and attraction signs (besides the blue Logos Colorado signs).
- The question of adding “Downtown” and “Mulberry Street” to Highway 14 exit signage.
- Ideas for adding “Fort Collins” or “Downtown Fort Collins” to directional signage around the Prospect exit, possibly with consolidation of redundant signage for the Welcome Center and Rest Area.

These and other ideas have been discussed with CDOT, and none appear to be clearly consistent with the interests or space constraints of CDOT’s signage system. Still, requests can be made to CDOT at any time, and would be evaluated based on merit, consistency, and funding. Other issues regarding CDOT signage include:

- CDOT has a regional perspective relevant to local desires for signs on highways. It is common for communities with struggling businesses downtown to desire I-25 signage as a solution. CDOT must consider how to handle all communities equally, and generally does not support guide signs for downtowns in the region.
- Regarding the lack of signs for “Mulberry Street” on I-25: again it is common for local communities to desire the use of their local street names for stretches of CDOT highway. CDOT policy for the region is to use the highway name and not the municipal street name as a consistent approach.
- The Prospect exit lacks Fort Collins directional signage. Some visitors are unsure which direction Fort Collins is from I-25. Once drivers exit I-25 at Prospect, nothing indicates that Fort Collins is to the west, and some first-time visitors would benefit from that information. Welcome Center staff anecdotally indicate that the #1 visitor question is “where is Fort Collins?”
- Southbound I-25 approaching Fort Collins lacks a “Fort Collins Next 4 exits” sign similar to the one on northbound I-25.

Thoroughfares Leading to Downtown

- Some visitors new to Fort Collins arriving from I-25 are unsure whether they are headed in the right direction, where Fort Collins begins, and where downtown is located. Some pass by on Highway 14 without realizing the presence of a vibrant community and historic downtown.
- Downtown lacks entry recognition at key gateways along Mulberry, Riverside/Jefferson, and College Avenue. Signage alone may not be adequate to properly highlight these exceptional locations. Other elements of landscaping and streetscapes may need to be improved along with signage.

Directional Signage

- Directional signs exist for a few key destinations (Lincoln Center, Library, Museum, Post Office, Colorado State, Hughes Stadium) and these are not well-coordinated.
- Some of most frequent wayfinding needs for visitors involve direction to businesses. However, an operating principle for the system is that only public destinations will be listed on directional signs in the public right-of-way. Business directories could, however, possibly be placed on building walls.
- Key destinations without on-site parking facilities raise a question about whether to highlight their locations with directional signage for drivers. Examples are Old Town Square, Visitor Information, the Poudre River, and the Justice Center. A driver may be interested to know about the presence and location of these destinations, but if he or she were to follow directional signs, there would be no clear point of arrival for the driver to park.

The question is whether to direct drivers to parking, and then provide pedestrian directional signs to these facilities for people once parked.

- A question was raised about technology reducing the need for directional signs. An increasing number of digital information products offer wayfinding maps, directions, and related information at people's fingertips; the question is whether street signs are becoming adequate for wayfinding in combination with electronic products.

Districts Within Downtown

- The question of identifying "Districts" within downtown was raised during the process. For example, a River District and Civic Center District are two areas cited as being meaningful to visitors. Pros and cons of districts were discussed, and the idea does not appear worthwhile at this time. There are concerns that identifying districts could diminish the identity of downtown as a place, that downtown is not big enough to be divided, and that clear district boundaries do not exist.
- In the future, the River District could become a more identifiable place, and may make sense as a district to identify with signage. Likewise, the area between CSU and Downtown has been noted as an area that may become a place worth identifying.

Administration and Maintenance

- A custom-designed system will require more time and money than current Traffic Operations Sign Shop practices allow. New funding and new staff commitments will be required. Maintenance and replacement responsibilities need to be defined as part of a sign program to implement the downtown sign system.
- A new system and implementation program needs to involve urban design and graphic design perspectives.

Downtown-CSU Relationship

- CSU and the City are both developing themed wayfinding signage, and the overall cumulative effectiveness for users should be kept in mind.

Downtown-Mason Corridor Relationship

- The Mason Corridor will involve a system of signage, and design character and messaging should be coordinated with the downtown sign system for overall effectiveness for intended users.

Appendix B: Sign Sequences along Key Inbound Routes

This Appendix records observations, ideas and comments regarding existing sequences of signs along key roadway routes to downtown.

Basic Message Sequence – Inbound Vehicular

A logical sequence of messages for first-time visitors to downtown Fort Collins arriving in vehicles, would generally follow a basic order:

- ↓ “Fort Collins” guide signs along regional highways, at exits
- ↓ “Historic Downtown” or “Downtown Fort Collins” guide or attraction signs along regional highways, at exits
- ↓ “Fort Collins” and “Welcome” where appropriate
- ↓ “Downtown” at entryways to Downtown; may combine with directional signs for Destinations & Attractions
- ↓ Directional signs to “P” and Destinations & Attractions
- ↓ “P” with garage or lot name parking identification signs
- ↓ “You Are Here” pedestrian maps

Key Roadway Routes – Inbound Vehicular

The key thoroughfares approaching and skirting downtown for motorists are:

- I-25 -- especially Mulberry and Prospect Exits
- Hwy. 14/Mulberry Street Westbound
- Prospect Road Westbound
- North College Avenue Southbound
- South College Avenue Northbound
- Linden Street Southbound
- Riverside Ave./Jefferson Street Both Ways

Formatted: Normal

Existing Sign Sequences – Inbound Vehicular

The following pages list existing wayfinding-related signs along the key roadway routes. Comments and ideas for potential improvements to sign sequences are [highlighted in brackets with yellow shading.] This listing is intended to remain a useful reference as wayfinding signage improvements are implemented and administered. Comments and ideas regarding I-25 and Highway 14/Mulberry Street would require further exploration and work with CDOT.

I-25 Northbound

Fort Collins
Next 4 Interchanges

Colorado State
University
Next 3 Interchanges

Harmony Road 2
Prospect 6
Jct SH-147

Historic Downtown Small billboard, privately owned.
Shops Dining Art

Exit 268 Colorado Welcome Center
Tourist Information 2 Miles

Lodging Exit 268
Hilton Logo

Exit 268 Colorado Welcome Center
Tourist Information Next Exit
Rest Area 1 Mile
Handicap, phone, I, etc

Prospect Road 1 Mile
Exit 268
H

Colorado State University [Add: "Downtown"? "and Exit 269B"? "Next 2 Exits"?]
Next Right

Prospect Road
Rest Area
Exit 268

Signs grouped at base of exit ramp.

State Highway 14
Ft Collins
Ault
1 mile

[Add "Downtown" in front of "Fort Collins?"]

Attractions Exit 269B
Fort Fun
Historic Downtown Fort Collins

[Need follow-up trailblazer sign on Mulberry with distance to downtown.]

Lodging, Food, Gas
Next Two Exits

[Add a sign into this stretch, similar to southbound sign approaching Hwy. 14 exit?]

Exit 269B to 287
Laramie
Next Exit

Exit 269 A
C 14 East Ault >
Exit 269B
C 14 West Fort Collins^

[Add "Downtown" in front of "Fort Collins"? Would need a new sign layout to fit.]

Attractions
Downtown Fort Collins

At mid point of circular ramp. [No harm, but low visibility and little meaning for a driver decision.]

I-25 Southbound

[Add a new sign? "Fort Collins Next 3 Exits" approaching Hwy. 14?]

Lincoln Center
Museum Next Right

Just south of Mt. Vista exit. [Add or substitute "Downtown Fort Collins?"]
[Get the equivalent sign on I-25 northbound, which brings more visitation?]

Exit 268
Colo Welcome Center
Tourist Info 3 miles

Attractions Exit 269B
Logos: Fort Fun,
Historic Downtown Fort Collins

Exit 269 B and A
Fort Collins Ault 1 Mile

[Add "Downtown"?]

Colorado State University
Next 3 Interchanges

[Should say "2", to avoid directing southbound traffic to Harmony Road for CSU.]

Food Exit 269
Waffle House & Denny's Logos

Lodging Next 2 Exits
Various Logos

Exit 268 Rest Area 1 Mile
Phone, HC, I, etc.

269B Fort Collins>

At base of ramp. [Add "Downtown"?]

Mulberry Westbound

Attractions
Historic Downtown 3>
Best Western>

On northwest circular ramp. [Low visibility but better than northeast ramp location with arrow and miles.]

West C14

[New trailblazer sign with distance to downtown and possibly CSU is needed just west of hotel/commercial complex at the exit.
Standard brown Historic Downtown sign?]

Begin Scenic Byway
Cache La Poudre
North Park

Colorado State University^

[Replace with new trailblazer sign that includes "Downtown" and "3 miles" just west of hotel/commercial complex.]

Larimer County
Workforce Center^

[Sign clutter with little reason. One of many destinations downtown.]

Airport

[Obsolete sign clutter.]

H ^

<Riverbend Ponds Natural Area Approaching Timberline Road.

<H	Just east of Mulberry/Lemay shopping center.
	[Add a Ft Collins identity/welcome sign, to fit with step up in development quality approaching Lemay?]
Preserve America, Welcome to Fort Collins	[Poor legibility of some content. Could be combined with other community awards signs to integrate into a system.]
	[Just west of Lemay, near the Cache La Poudre River, is an ideal location for a positive city identity or welcome statement.]
Huge Billboard	South side of Mulberry facing westbound traffic with river cottonwoods as backdrop.
Highway Cluster 14 & 287	Approaching Riverside Drive.
Scenic Byway >	Approaching Riverside Drive.
Colorado State University^	Approaching Riverside Drive, in median. [Add "Downtown".]
	[Coordinate the whole plethora of signage for westbound traffic at this key location. Could extend downtown system out to this intersection to help consolidate and integrate multiple sign messages and styles. Urban design-driven landscaping is needed in the median and on the north side of the street to appropriately mark the importance of this intersection for inbound traffic, and to create a setting for coordinated signage.]
	[Approaching Peterson, add a downtown directional sign for Library & Museum?]
<Colorado State University Hughes Stadium^	At Remington, and repeated at College. [Word "University" is illegible.]

Prospect Road Westbound Including Northbound I-25 Exit Ramp

Exit 268 >	At base of ramp, redundant with overhead sign.
Rest Area >	At base of ramp.
Logo Sign	Along ramp.
< Prospect Road	Along ramp near top. [Prospect also goes to the right; put street sign on signal arm and replace this sign with "<Downtown Fort Collins", and/or "CSU"?]
<Rest Area	Along ramp near top, fairly large 2-post sign.
<Welcome Center	At top of ramp. [Could be consolidated with "Rest Area" signage. Alternate location to add "Downtown Fort Collins" and/or "CSU?"]

<Rest Area	Approaching frontage road. [Also leads to Welcome Center - add? This frontage road intersection could be an opportunity for a vehicular directional sign with multiple destinations including Downtown and CSU.]
<Colorado Welcome Center	[Much smaller than Rest Area sign, plus brown color, detract from sequence clarity.]
Welcome Center, multiple listings, 7 lines, 22 words	[Unreadable to traffic.]
<Colorado Welcome Center	At driveway. [Brown wood, home made, done in response to unreadable monument sign for Welcome Center facility. Should REPLACE with consistent format, similar to Rest Area signs.]
Bicycle Friendly Community	Across from Welcome Center Driveway. [Community awards signs could be grouped and integrated into a system.]
H^	
Ram Country Banners	
<Running Deer Natural Area	[Special opportunity to replace with enhanced City and Natural Areas identity sign.]
Riverbend Ponds Natural Area>	[Special opportunity to replace with enhanced City and Natural Areas identity sign.]
	[Add Fort Collins Welcome? First light pole after Summitview. Indicate City identity to drivers.]
	[Add Cache La Poudre River sign, maybe National Heritage Area; relate to any City Welcome and Natural Areas signs. Special opportunity to highlight positive City identity to drivers.]
Preserve America Welcome to Fort Collins	[Poor legibility of some text. Community awards signs could be grouped and integrated into system.]
H^	
Pet Licensing and Animal Ordinances Strictly Enforced	[Meaning to drivers worth the position in hierarchy of messages?]
<City Police	
<Collindale Golf Course, City Logo	
H^	
Recycling Center>	At Riverside Drive. [11 words barely readable to traffic. Could include an angled right directional to downtown. Could note CSU again as well.]
<Edora Park 11 more words	

Riverside Ave./Jefferson Street Northbound

<^Parking	At Mulberry. [Add "Downtown" or replace with a downtown directional sign.]
Noise Ordinance Enforced	
<Fort Collins Museum	At Olive Street.
Noise Ordinance Enforced	
To 287 ^	Stack of 3 signs, approaching Mountain.
<^Parking	At Mountain/Lincoln Avenues. [Add "Downtown".]
To 287 C14	
<Parking	At Chestnut Street. [Add "Downtown".]
	[Need downtown gateway and/or vehicular directional signage at Linden/Jefferson. Significant location for historic downtown and entry into downtown.]
Parking >	At Jefferson Lot. [Use down angle arrow when replacing sign with a downtown system sign to avoid confusion.]
Cache La Poudre North Park >	[Add Columbine & "Scenic Byway" to match other signs with same message?]
	[Lack of any downtown signage at Jefferson/College creates a void and opportunity for some kind of sign to mark the key intersection. Directional sign? Downtown parking sign? Ground space is constrained.]
To C14> <287>	Highway sign cluster.
Laporte> <Loveland	Double telspar posts.
To W C14 ^	At old power plant site. [The "To" is confusing, as if there's a junction ahead. Would be better without the "To".]

North College Avenue Northbound

In Loving Memory
James Leroy Snider

Laramie 66
Walden 100

Cache La Poudre River [4x4 posts. Opportunity for customized version to add City identity.]

College Avenue Southbound

Fort Collins City Limits
Elevation 4980 [Could replace with customized version to add City identity.]

Colorado State University^

To C14 I-25
Left Lane ½ Mile At Woodlawn Drive.

Legacy Park>

Bicycle Friendly Community Orange color scheme. [Positive message but busy image adds clutter.]

Cache La Poudre River [4x4 posts. Could replace with customized version to add City identity.]

The Gateway Bridge
Thank You!
North College Business Assoc. [Doesn't integrate well into its setting. Opportunity for higher quality identity features or sign.]

[Consider a directional sign somewhere on south side of bridge; include CSU.]

To E C14 I-25 Left 500 Feet On light pole in median.

Historic Old Town
Use Jefferson Street [Is this message worth having? Would need follow-up on Jefferson Street.]

Loveland^
<Ault Denver

< C14 I-25 In sidewalk just north of Maple on pedestrian light pole. [The ornamental pole makes an attractive setting, but silver hardware straps clash. Visual quality would be better if they were black.]

<Historic Old Town With triangle symbol, just north of Laporte Ave. [Contradicts previous "use Jefferson St." Very low visibility for drivers, behind street parking.]

^>Parking	At Laporte on signal arm.
<Museum	[Mounted at indeterminate angle, intent and orientation is unclear.]
<Parking, <Parking>	At Mountain Ave. 2 signs, former in median, latter on mast arm.
<Public Restrooms	At Oak.
Adopt-a-Street	[Are these worth the place in the hierarchy of messages for users? Who all keeps sidewalks clean?]
<Museum	At Olive. [Mounted at indeterminate angle, intent and orientation is unclear. Low visibility to traffic. No left turn is allowed at Olive--if a motorist saw it, it would be contradictory.]
Bicycle Friendly Community	Orange color scheme. [Positive message but busy image adds clutter. Could be consolidated with other community awards.]
^Colorado State University Hughes Stadium>	Single directional sign on signal pole. [Attractive custom signs in CSU design theme. Word "University" is illegible. 2 different fonts detract from clarity.]

Jefferson Street/Riverside Avenue Southbound

< ^ Parking	
Noise Ordinance Enforced	In channelized island at Maple intersection.
<Parking	On north side of street, at east entry to lot. [Lack of any downtown signage at Jefferson/College creates a void and opportunity for some kind of sign to mark the key intersection. Directional sign? Downtown parking sign? Ground space is constrained.]
Parking>	At Chestnut.
Parking>	At Riverside/Mountain signal arm.
Multi Hwy. Signs	Approaching Mulberry, a couple of locations.
<Scenic Byway	Approaching Mulberry. Includes columbine graphic and "Cache La Poudre North Park".

Mountain Avenue Westbound

< ^ Parking

At Mathews. [Straight arrow takes drivers clear to Mason. The left turn onto Mathews needs detailed attention to follow-up signs leading drivers around this block.]

[Public Parking sign on Remington Structure – attractive custom design, but bigger and more visible would serve users better. Conduits could be painted to match brick. Green pole with pink bracket arms at garage entry should be removed or altered to fit new system.]

Linden Street Southbound

[Lack of any downtown signage south of Vine Drive creates a void and opportunity for some kind of signage to mark the key approach across the river to Old Town. Directional sign? Cache La Poudre River sign? National Heritage Area? Natural Area? Great opportunity for identity.]

[Ped crossing and bikeway signs near bridge could be integrated into a downtown theme – an opportunity for identity.]

[Lack of any downtown signage at Jefferson, which is a key gateway. Add gateway and/or directional signs? Add Downtown Parking or Historic District signs?]

South College Northbound

Tourist Center

H

Science Museum

Approaching Prospect.

CSU Wayfinding Sign

Directional sign to CSU facilities, in CSU theme.

Welcome to Fort Collins

Series of signs alternating with sign listed below. [Colors, type don't match CSU signage, detract from emerging CSU-themed wayfinding sign system. Telspar poles detract from custom message intent.]

Home of the Rams

[Unreadable logos. Colors, type don't match CSU signage. Telspar poles detract from custom message intent. Signs are inconsistent with emerging direction for University and City identity.]

Lincoln Center

Just south of Mulberry, high on light pole. [Better if integrated into a system.]

Appendix C: Public Art

During the schematic design process, the project team received a suggestion that public art should be considered as a possible enhancement to any new sign system, for example by hiring an artist to provide input into the system that was emerging at that time.

To respond to this input in a timely manner, Andy Dufford of Chevo Studios, a Denver studio specializing in public art within the region, was hired to provide conceptual input. This small contract was only intended to provide ideas for further work. Chevo Studios was selected using the City's Art in Public Places (APP) program.

This Appendix C consists of a report provided by Chevo Studios. It contains suggestions for further exploration based on a tour of downtown, discussions with the project team, and review of the draft schematic design.

Fort Collins Wayfinding Plan: Integrated Art Opportunities

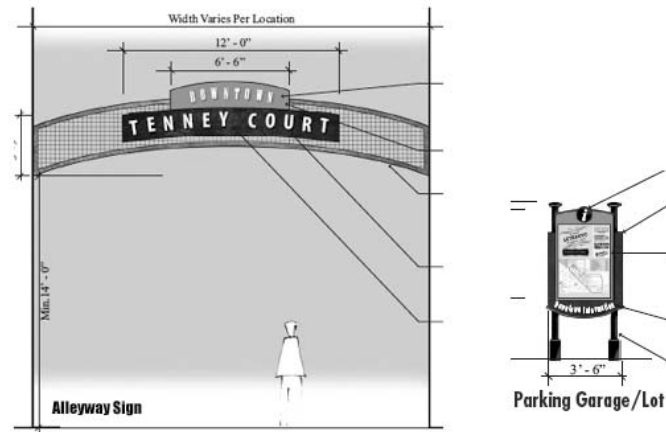
Introduction:

Wayfinding is not only a result of good street signage. Subtle cues, significant landmarks and changes in activity, architecture and vegetation are all part of the way that people find their way through town. Integrated art elements can be part of an effective orientation program.

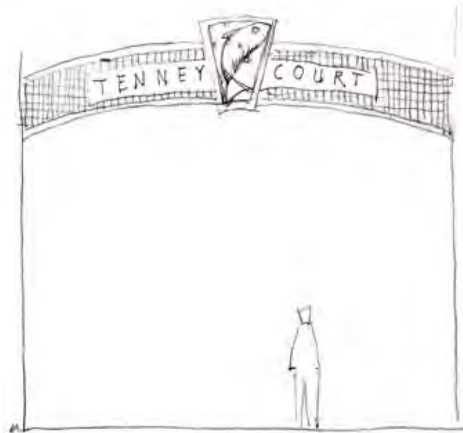
The sign program laid out by Nuszer Kopatz creates a unified hierarchy of signage that allows drivers and pedestrians to recognize where to look for detailed navigation. The information system that those signs provide can be enriched by art elements.

The value of a unified sign system is that people can spot directional signs amidst the clutter of urban signscape. Consistency of size form and type establish a clear signal of where to look for directions on navigating the city. However, within this standard, the addition of art can help create another level of differentiation. The use of art falls into two broad categories: Embellishment of the sign standards and the creation of landmarks.

Alleyway Gateways and Parking Lots: The signage program calls out a standard for all alleyway entries and pedestrian orientation signs in each parking garage/lot.



Embellishment of the Alley gates and Parking lot signs: During the production of these signs, there is the opportunity to involve an artist. On a simple level, artists could be engaged to design a keystone for each alley or each parking lot. Those pieces would add a unique feature to each sign that might help visitor remember/identify “Oh yeah, it’s the alley with the jumping fish keystone” or “we’re parked in the lot with the dancing cows” or whatever the visual theme turns out to be. This level of differentiation is not at odds with the unified look of the directional sign program and helps with wayfinding by providing another set of demarcating features.



Alley Entry with one of a series of artist designed keystones

Creation of Landmark Alley Gates: The alternative is to use the alleyway entries as significant landmarks and devote the entire project to an artist designed gateway, as in the examples below:



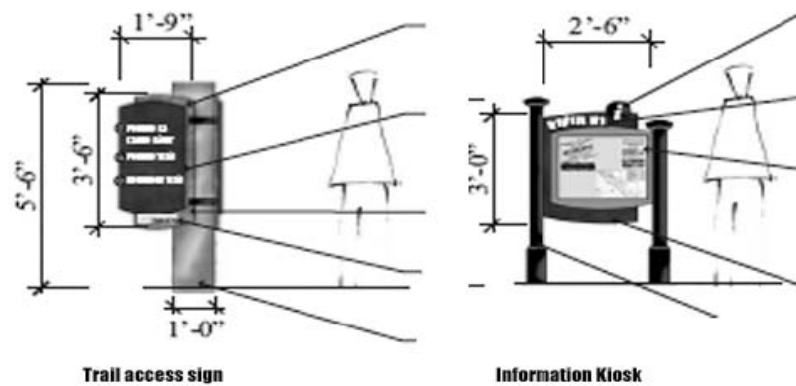
6th Ave W park, Seattle GGLD design



Skyquilt, A. Dufford & C. Muller

These portals become reference points because each one is unique. Locals can use them to give directions (“*turn into the alley with the leaf arch...*”). Visitors can use them to locate themselves by remembering the uniqueness of the landmark.

Trail Markers and Information Kiosks: The plan calls out a number of pedestrian signs. The same approach of embellishment or landmarks can be applied to this class of signs.

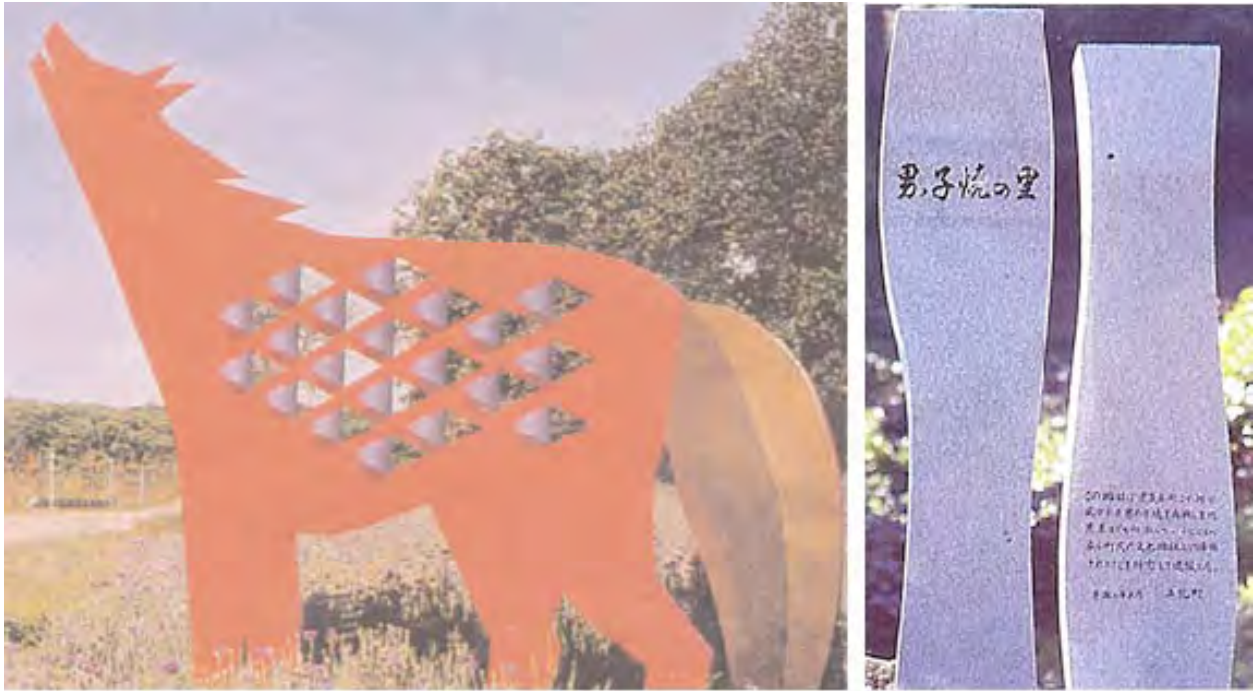


Embellishment of the Markers and Kiosks: Artists can be engaged to create insets for the standard forms that will make each one unique and identifiable. The purpose is not mere decoration, but to add a level of detail that makes each sign into a place maker.



Artist embellished trail markers: Banff, Canada (L) and three forks Montana (R)

Trail Markers as Landmarks: As with the alleyways, the alternative is to expand the notion of trail markers and kiosks to include landmark pieces, and engage artists to create sculptural works that delineate the path system.



Sculptural Trail Markers

Downtown Gateways:

The Nuszer Kopatz Plan identifies the median as a location for placing the downtown gateway monuments. The intent of these signs is to demarcate and edge to the old town area and distinguish it from other neighborhoods.

Embellishment of the gateway markers: The approaches outlined above for the alley gateways could work equally well with the downtown gateways. Special attention needs to be paid to scale of the imagery as most visitors with experience these monuments from an automobile. However, because of this automotive focus, the gateway monuments are especially suited to a sculptural treatment outlined in the next section.



Downtown Gateway location and sign standard



Sculptural Landmarks as Gateways: In lieu of a sign, it is possible to create a series of sculptural pieces that define the entrance into downtown. These pieces could occur in the median (see the slender piece by Grygutis below). Alternately, these pieces can inhabit the space above, attached to the light pole (see the Night Critters images below). Both of these examples use light to add an element of surprise and richness for added nighttime orientation and interest.



Sculptural Entry Markers: B. Grygutis (L) and A. Dufford (Center and R)

Conclusion:

The current signage plan does much to address the need for a unified look to the navigation system of roadways, parking and pedestrian routes. That plan relies on text, form and color to signal to visitors where to look for information.

This integrated art plan takes a different approach to provide other options for wayfinding. The cornerstone of the art plan is the notion that people need both a consistent set of standards (as described in the signage program) as well as a set of unique experiences that allow them to identify and remember important places. The urban landscape is filled with text. Artful elements, placed with purpose and clarity can help cut through the textual clutter and create memorable landscapes that are easy to navigate.

Next Steps: A review of both plans is in order to decide how the strategies can best be combined to meet the goals of the wayfinding program. If integrated art elements are to be included, a budget for each phase must be established and then a scope of work outlining the creative possibilities and constraints needs to be written. Artists can be contracted through an RFQ or a invitation process to create imagery to be integrated into the sign program or to produce stand alone sculptural elements.

Appendix D: Other Ideas

During the schematic design process, a few additional ideas were suggested that would require further exploration beyond the scope of this schematic design effort, and are recorded here for future reference and consideration.

Barrel vault canopies, Civic Center garage entries: this garage has barrel vault canopies over its driveway entrances. It appears that these could be made more explicit as entry markers with the addition of sign letters across the arched fronts saying PUBLIC PARKING or PARKING. This would be in addition to the other garage identification signs.

Arts District: a desire was expressed by representatives of the local arts community to identify the collection of arts venues as the “Arts District” as a basic aspect of reinforcing downtown’s identity. The idea would need to be reconciled with the identity of “Downtown”, “Historic Downtown”, and the Arts District.

Art routes: permanent or temporary pieces of art could be placed, scavenger hunt style, to encourage exploration, especially for kids, in certain alleys and other routes less traveled. Art could tie to local stories such as bikes, beets, trains, and so on.

Lighting: as solar LED lighting technology continues to improve, consider the possibility of adding a glow or illumination to enhance certain identity signs, in the evening or all night, with appropriately scaled and designed, attachable lighting.

E-Kiosks: Electronic information kiosks with wayfinding, downtown stories, events, and other information would be useful to some visitors, and could provide the maximum amount of up-to-date visitor information. Costs, maintenance, and vandalism are major constraints.

Podcasts: signs could direct visitors to podcasts for more information. One particular idea is a podcast on the history and sustainability aspects of trains, to offset aggravation they sometimes cause.

Public Restrooms: The current public restrooms at Oak Street lack any design qualities to convey the appearance of a public amenity. If they are to remain as an important facility serving downtown, then the image should be upgraded to be more inviting to the general public. An architectural roof would help to transform the image as part of a design upgrade.

WELCOME and THANK YOU, COME AGAIN messages: include with rules and other messages at garages, Old Town Square, etc.

UniverCity Connections Initiative

While the proposed sign system was being developed, another public process called UniverCity Connections was taking place, in which public discussion overlapped somewhat with discussions of this sign system. That process was an open community discussion of Downtown-CSU relationships, and some of its work involved the experience of visiting and navigating downtown.

A related source for more ideas and inspiration related to signage and visitor experiences is the UniverCity Connections report entitled [Our Home is Your Home](#), dated August 28, 2008. UniverCity Connections can be thought of as a broader umbrella under which the downtown sign system takes its place. UniverCity Connections may continue to launch additional, ongoing, or follow-up initiatives that should be coordinated with the downtown sign system.