



INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Community Development

FROM: Brandon Miles, Business Relations Manager

CC: Mayor Ekberg

DATE: January 31, 2022

SUBJECT: Wayfinding and Gateway Signage for the City

ISSUE

Briefing on creation of a wayfinding and gateway signage plan for the City.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the City completed its brand development, focused on how the City would promote itself to tourists, both day and night. As part of the brand development, the City completed an in-depth “Tukwila Brand Fieldwork Report.” This report was completed by a tourism expert who visited the City and experienced it as a tourist, providing input on the City’s strength and areas of improvement for attracting and retaining tourists.

One of the categories under the Fieldwork Report was regarding “Navigation, Wayfinding, and Signage.” Under this section, the City was ranked as needing major improvement in areas regarding city gateway signs, vehicular direction, and pedestrian directional signage (see below).

Navigation, Wayfinding and Signage

First impressions start at the entrances to the city, and appearances really count when it comes to enticing visitors and the economic well-being they can bring to places. Visitors are attracted to, and spend more time in, places that are attractive, clean, welcoming, and well maintained.

Signage and navigation systems serve vital roles. They inform, guide, and motivate travelers. They are also important in shaping the identity of a place through their style, design, colors, lettering, content and placement. Access to visitor information in the form of brochures, maps and personal advice is critical to visitor satisfaction, extending a visitor's length of stay in the community and whether or not they return.

	Assessment	Comments
Main Freeway Signage	Adequate	WSDOT signs are adequate. Improvements will be identified in a detailed wayfinding assessment.
City Gateways	Major Improvement	Tukwila and Southcenter gateways do not stand out and do not provide a welcoming sense of "place" for visitors.
Vehicular Directional	Major Improvement	Directional signs that guide visitors through Southcenter are inadequate and dated.
Pedestrian Directional	Major Improvement	Integrated pedestrian level signage across the district does not exist and would be beneficial in several areas.
Business Signage	Minor Improvement	Businesses feel that people can't find them because of signage restrictions. The team did notice that at times some business signs were hard to see due to their design or size, and others were partially obscured. A coordinated, integrated approach here – where possible would help.
Map Displays/ Kiosks	Major Improvement	Display map kiosks/ directories featuring all of Southcenter do not exist and would be very useful at key points in the district.
Southside Seattle Visitor Information Center/Desk	Excellent / Minor Improvement	Excellent tourist information and booking service, with friendly and helpful staffing. It is located near one mall entrance only and without more prominent promotion throughout the mall could easily be missed.
Hotel Guest Information Racks	Major Improvement	Hotel tourism brochure racks seem to only include material on Renton and Bellevue but nothing on Tukwila, except a Westfield Southcenter, limited content, double-sided page promoting 'Seattle's Best Shopping'.

DISCUSSION

The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) has expressed a desire to create a Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Plan for the City. Signage is a valuable tool in the City's branding efforts. As people leave tourist destinations, such as the Mall, Starfire Sports, or the Museum of Flight, it is important that the City reinforce that these destinations are in Tukwila. The Plan would not involve actual installation of signage. The plan would provide a detail framework of signage that could be installed in the future. It would show locations, by type of signage, construction plans, and estimated costs of installing specific signs.

The Plan would also be branded, specifically in the City's tourist areas, such as the Southcenter District, near Starfire Sports, and near the Museum of Flight. The existing signage in the City's Southcenter District has no uniformity, nor is there specific direction on what type should be installed where. Several signs are outdated, such as signs that reference King County along the City's trail system.

Attached with this memo is a document entitled, "What is Community Wayfinding?" The document discusses the benefits and suggested process for creating a Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Plan for cities and towns. Depending on the scope, the creation of a Plan for the City could cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000. As a point of reference, the City of Burien completed its Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Plan focused on just its downtown core, with a cost of \$48,750. LTAC has expressed support for using lodging tax funds to pay for the creation of the Plan.

As part of the Plan, the City would need to determine the overall geographical scope of the project, for example do we also examine signage in residential areas or Tukwila International Blvd? Staff's initial recommendation is that we would do the entire City. Note, that in residential zones and at City facilities in commercial zones, the tourist brand likely would not be used. Even if the City does not know what the overall design of signs in residential zones should be, understanding where signs could go would be valuable as the City completes future capital projects.

Paying for the future signage could include a mix of courses, including lodging tax funds, included in capital construction costs of projects, or as part of the City's regular maintenance of existing signage.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Creation of a Wayfinding and Gateway Plan could cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000, likely using lodging tax funds.

RECOMMENDATION

Discussion Only. Staff would like to issue an RFQ/RFP to finalize cost. Once a final scope of work is determined, staff will go through the lodging tax application process to obtain funding.

ATTACHMENTS

- Document entitled, "What is Community Wayfinding?"
- Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Plan PowerPoint Presentation.



What is Community Wayfinding?

Community Wayfinding is the art and science of moving people through a city, town or region to desired locations within them using a number of visual cues including, but not limited to, guide signage, place identification, visual landmarks, space planning and various forms of experiential graphic design.

What Are the Benefits?

Guides Visitors to Key Places

It gets people to where you want them more efficiently.

Brings Awareness to Other Places

Destinations on guide signs expose places to visitors who may otherwise miss. Encourages extended stays.

Reassures, Reduces Stress

When visitors see well maintained signs, they are reassured knowing they are on the right path and in a safe area.

Stimulates Economic Growth

When guided to destinations and parking, visitors spend less time in cars and more time in your retail areas and attractions. Business owners feel supported. Many new residents who open businesses were once visitors who were impressed by a positive place experience and a pro business environment.

Reduces Sign Clutter

New signs replace redundant layers of old signs, they consolidate messaging onto fewer signs and improves the visual environment.

Fixes Broken Systems

The process of evaluating existing signage exposes missing signs, gaps in messaging and signs that contradict one another.

Connects people to *places*



What is Branded Community Wayfinding?

When you integrate a community's brand within the design of a wayfinding system, it not only guides people to and through places, it serves as a highly effective brand delivery mechanism.

What Are the Benefits?

Supports the Brand

When the essence of your brand is echoed in the physical environment, it enhances a visitor's perception and links your marketing communications with your place.

Knits Parts of the Community Together

Consistent graphics in wayfinding signage serve as a visual catalyst that helps to unite segmented areas and districts into one organized region.

Turns a Designation into a Destination

Brand supportive wayfinding celebrates the unique character of the community and transforms it into a unified memorable experience.

Raises Community Pride

When a brand is supported throughout a community, a stronger sense of place is felt by residents and raises their pride knowing they are part of a unique community.

Connects people to *experiences*

What are the Parts of a Wayfinding System?

Wayfinding sign systems vary in size and complexity. Depending on your community's density and geographical size, a wayfinding sign system can be as simple as a few guide signs on Main Street or as complicated as a comprehensive program with landscaped gateways, district demarcations, several levels of vehicular and pedestrian guide signs, kiosks, directories, interpretive signs and trailblazers. Each unique program incorporates a combination of device types that are customized to perform within a specific environment.

Gateways

Gateways welcome visitors into your community or district. They make that critical first impression that tells people they are entering a great, successful place. Place gateways in areas that show the best your community has to offer.



Vehicular Guides

Vehicular guide signs are very important in a wayfinding system. They guide cars to the places people seek through routes you want them to travel and to parking nearest to destinations.



Pedestrian Guides

Pedestrian guide signs help people find destinations within a reasonable walking distance. They encourage people to explore and guide them to businesses who may not have Main Street exposure.



Trailblazers

Trailblazers are small, usually iconic signs that mark bike or pedestrian paths. This group often includes site markers or interpretive graphics. When used as pedestrian trail markers, they can also serve as visual references for emergency personnel responding to 911 calls by including locator numbers.



Information Kiosks & Directories

Information kiosks are structures or monuments that include information about a place. Typically they display an area map and key destinations within walking distances. Covered versions offer shelter from the elements and may include brochure dispensers and interactive displays. Monuments require less space and serve more as directories.



Identity Signs

Streets, government facilities, parking lots, parks and public venues need to be clearly identified in order for all the dots of a wayfinding system to connect.



Regulatory

Rules and Regulations are typically placed near entrances to parking areas and public places. They control behavior for the purpose of public safety and to protect property and the environment.



Banners

Banners are a relatively inexpensive way to enhance an environment. They can support a city brand, create a sense of place or arrival, demarcate a district, celebrate seasons, or promote events and venues.



Message Centers

Also known as LED signs or electronic message boards. These displays are computerized electronic visual communication devices that can be programmed to target specific audiences.



Interpretive

Interpretive signs tell stories about a place. They are used to communicate a specific message to visitors and to connect them with the environment. They inform, educate, and entertain.



Public Art

Public art such as murals, sculptures, architectural accents and other creative expressions enhance an environment and serve as visual orientation signals.



Landmarks

Landmarks are visible elements in the environment that serve as spatial reference points helping people navigate through an environment. They can be public art, landscaped green-ways, public plazas, roundabouts, fountains, clock towers and iconic buildings.



Street Paving and Crosswalks

Applying special paving treatments to intersections and crosswalks help define pedestrian areas, improve the visual appeal of a district and help pedestrians and drivers with spatial orientation. They help to demarcate districts, public gathering places, and town centers. They also cue drivers to slow down.



Street Furniture and Fixtures

Street furniture and other fixtures such as public benches, street lamps, trash receptacles and signposts add character to an urban environment and encourage people to congregate.





*Design & Fabrication Budgets**

The **Design budget** will take care of planning, system design, bid documentation and production oversight. Design fees are based on several factors such as population size, quantity of destinations, range of sign types and aesthetic expectations. Here are very broad budgets to give you a general idea on what to plan for:

Small Town: \$40,000 to \$50,000

Medium Sized City or Large Downtown: \$60,000 to \$75,000

Large City or Region with Multiple Communities: \$75,000 to \$100,000

A **Fabrication budget** will take care of permitting, fabrication and installation. Depending on the size of the community, quantity of signs, infrastructure/ground conditions, wind load requirements, material types and travel distance, costs could range dramatically. Here are some very general estimates:

Small Town: \$150,000 to \$300,000

Medium Sized City or Large Downtown: \$500,000 to \$1,000,000

Large City or Region with Multiple Communities: \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000+

**These budget figures are very broad and are not intended to be firm recommendations. Instead, they are intended to serve as a starting point when considering a wayfinding program. There are many factors that determine what a budget should be for the specific needs of a given community. A qualified designer and fabricator should be engaged to help determine budgets for specific needs.*

Seven Steps in the Right Direction

Managing a community wayfinding project can be a challenge. There are lots of things to consider. How do I find a qualified designer? What is the process? How long will it take? Who do I need on my team? How can I get public buy-in? How do I get DOT approval? How do I manage who and what gets included on which signs? How do I find a qualified sign contractor? How can I get the most bang out of my limited budget? The following is a summary of our recommended seven step process:



1. Get Organized

If you haven't already assembled a wayfinding steering committee, this is an important first step you need to take before anything else. Managing a wayfinding program is complicated and time consuming. Once you have evaluated the need and decided to launch a wayfinding initiative, begin assembling your steering committee which will be comprised of a small, dedicated group of individuals who are vested in the successful creation of a community wayfinding program.

Include someone from the governing body such as an administrator or city manager. A public works director is good to have on the team as well. You'll want to include a representative from a downtown development organization, someone from your local tourism group and chamber of commerce. Include a city planner, a representative from the Department of Transportation and a leader from an economic development association. Also consider including key business leaders, a representative from your branding or marketing department and at least one person from the residential community.

You'll need to appoint a team leader who will serve as a steering committee point person and program organizer. The team leader will act as a conduit between outside stakeholders, the public, the program designer, the fabricator and other consultants who are linked to the wayfinding initiative.

Hire a Qualified Wayfinding Designer

Make sure you hire a qualified wayfinding designer. A good resource for candidates is the Society for Experiential Graphic Design (segd.org). Most qualified design firms who specialize in wayfinding, belong to this organization. If you reach out to SEG D, they'll notify their members about your project.

You'll want to know how long a designer has been in business and if they have experience with similar projects. Look at their samples of built programs and consider their design quality and diversity of style. They should have a good understanding of branding and fabrication. How concise is their methodology? How well do they respond? Do they demonstrate an understanding of your community's culture, history and objectives or do they respond with a cookie-cutter answers and solutions?

Issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) ahead of a Request for Proposal (RFP). This will allow you to evaluate bidders' qualifications and pair down finalists who will be invited to provide a cost proposal.

Once you have a designer on board, make sure there is no scope overlap with other consultants like architects, engineers and planners – all of which might include elements of wayfinding in their services.

2. Site Assessment & Planning

Before visiting the site, the designer will need to get their ducks in a row. They should prepare a detailed project schedule. Work with them to create a site visit itinerary. When the designer comes to town, the first thing on the itinerary should be a morning kick-off meeting with your steering committee. Reconfirm the plans and timing for the visit, talk about the objectives and challenges.

Pull a large site plan out mark it up with notes and highlight program specifics such as points of arrival, districts, traffic flow, pedestrian areas and destinations. This working document will be used throughout the visit and kept by the designer as a reference when they create the assessment report.

Exploring the Area

After the kick-off meeting, take the designer on a guided tour of the project area. This will give them a perspective from the resident's point of view. Then they

should go out and explore on their own. This will give them a perspective from the first time visitor's point of view.

For the next day or 2, the designer will interview several stakeholders to collect additional information, opinions and needs. Stakeholders should represent a wide sample of your community.

Before the designer wraps things up and leaves town, recap their visit and discuss their findings and possible solutions. The designer will return to their office, distill the collected data and develop their analysis. They will consolidate their findings in an Assessment Report. The report should include, at a minimum, reaffirmation of the program's objectives, a summary of stakeholder interviews, field observations and general conditions, a study of traffic flow, arrival points, destinations and decision points, photo documentation and recommendations.



3. Concept Generation

Once the assessment report has been approved. The designer will start generating concepts. We recommend that after the designer has had a chance to do some rough schematics, they will host a working charrette with your team to brainstorm. It's important that your team be part of the creative process. This will give the designer an early nudge in the right direction before they invest a lot of time developing concepts.

Depending on your scope and the availability of the designer, host a public workshop before the concepts are fully developed. This will give the designer additional design cues and will also give your residents an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns. This is great first step in gaining public



consensus and will mitigate possible negative reactions to the eventual unveiling of the final program. With input from the charrette and public workshop, the designer will develop 3 to 4 wayfinding concepts. The main objective is to explore a range of directions based on collected information and the current brand.

Select a Concept

The ultimate goal for this phase, is to identify a single concept to be refined into a final design. Sometimes there are 2 concepts that are equally preferred. To help evaluate the finalists, you'll want to get estimates of probable costs from one or more fabricators. Either build or create Photoshop mock-ups that will show you which design works best in the real environment. One concept should be chosen for further development.



4. Design Development

The designer will develop the chosen concept into its final family. Concurrently, the wayfinding plan will be developed to include sign locations and their proposed messages.



Have the designer go out in the field with one or more of your team to record the exact location of each sign with a photograph, GPS or GIS coordinates and a visual reference to the sign type.

5. Documentation

The designer will prepare 4 documents. These documents with the RFP, become the bid documents. The designer will prepare **design intent drawings** which will include scaled elevations, sections, details and specification call outs; a **message schedule** will be created to catalogue each sign type, its message and general location reference; a **location plan** is generated from the approved version of the online (Google) working plan.



In some cases a *sign removal plan* is created to identify signs that must be removed prior to the installation of new signs. If the quantity is minimal, these can be indicated on the location plan. The designer should help you with written program (technical) specifications in the form of CSI Section 101400 Signage Specifications. These will be inserted into the RFP. All templates and production-ready art should be produced before the fabrication contract is awarded.

6. Bidding

When you are ready to look for qualified sign contractors, you'll want to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). This will allow you to pre-qualify respondents in order to streamline the management process and to focus your attention on sign contractors who you know are up to the task. You will want to know how many years they've been in business, are they experienced with similar projects? Look at their sample programs, consider their fabrication quality. Check on their standing with Dunn and Bradstreet and the Better Business Bureau. Require that they be fully bonded. Ask if they will be jobbing out any of the project and if so, what part? As with the designer, do they demonstrate an understanding of your community and objectives or do they respond with vague answers and solutions. You may or may not elect to issue both an RFQ and RFP. For the sake of this guideline, we will continue from the RFP.

Allow bidders 3 to 4 weeks to respond with their proposals. Give them a week to submit questions. Post the answers as an addendum on your website or issue them to all bidders at the same time.

Once you collect the bids. Compare them with one another. Select the best 3 or 4 and see how they line up. Interview shortlisted candidates and make an award based on a reasonable price, thoroughness, experience and how you intuitively feel about them.



7. Fabrication and Installation

Start things off with a meeting with the fabricator, designer and members from

the steering committee. Review the details of the project, and make sure everyone is on the same page. Set communication protocols and go over roles, deliverables and the project time-line.

Fabrication

In about 3 to 4 weeks the fabricator will submit their shop drawings. The designer will review them for compliance with the design intent drawings and the contracted scope of work. Upon approval, the fabricator will proceed to prepare and submit product, material and paint samples which will also be reviewed by the designer. For the next couple of months, the fabricator will be building the system. At about the 70% completion point, the designer should inspect the products at the fabricator's facility to catch any last minute flaws that can be corrected before they're delivered to the project site. If the designer can't get to the fabricator's shop, then detailed progress photos should be studied.



Installation

Just before installation, the fabricator should be on site to mark the sign locations with low profile surveyors stakes. If installation is scheduled for a complete install, the process should take between 3 to 5 weeks, depending on the magnitude of your program. In many cases installation is phased over time, sometimes over a period of months or in annual increments.



After each phase of installation, the designer will inspect the products in place and assess their condition. If the install is deemed complete and there is no need to make corrections, the designer will advise you to issue final payment to the sign contractor.

Maintaining the System

Now that your branded wayfinding system is in place, a maintenance plan should be adopted. As part of their contract, the sign contractor should supply you with maintenance methods for the various materials used in the program. Someone



from your team or a designated city employee should conduct an annual inventory of all signs in the system and fill out a conditions report. If signs need to be cleaned or repaired, this should be done immediately. If you keep your system looking like new, it will tell visitors you are a successful community and your brand will continue to work for you.



Southeast Studio

12161 Ken Adams Way
Suite 110-Y1
Wellington, FL 33414

Southwest Studio

PO Box 1202
Ouray, CO 81427

Midwest Studio

5000 81st Lane North
Minneapolis, MN 55443

Alberta Studio

340 Midpark Way SE
Suite 300
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2X 1P1



Wayfinding and Gateway Signage Plan

Planning and Economic Development
March 16, 2020

Wayfinding and Entry

Signage

- Why?
- What are the Existing Conditions?
- What would be the next steps?



Wayfinding Signage

Benefits of Wayfinding Signage

- Guides Visitors to Key Places
- Brings Awareness to Other Places.
- Reassures, Reduces Stress
- Stimulates Economic Growth
- Reduces Sign Clutter
- Fixes Broken Systems

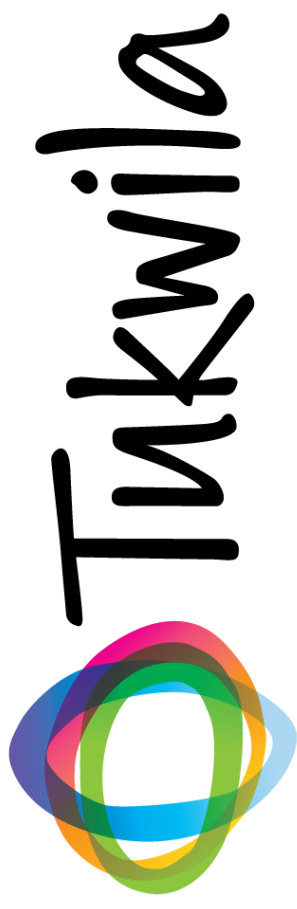


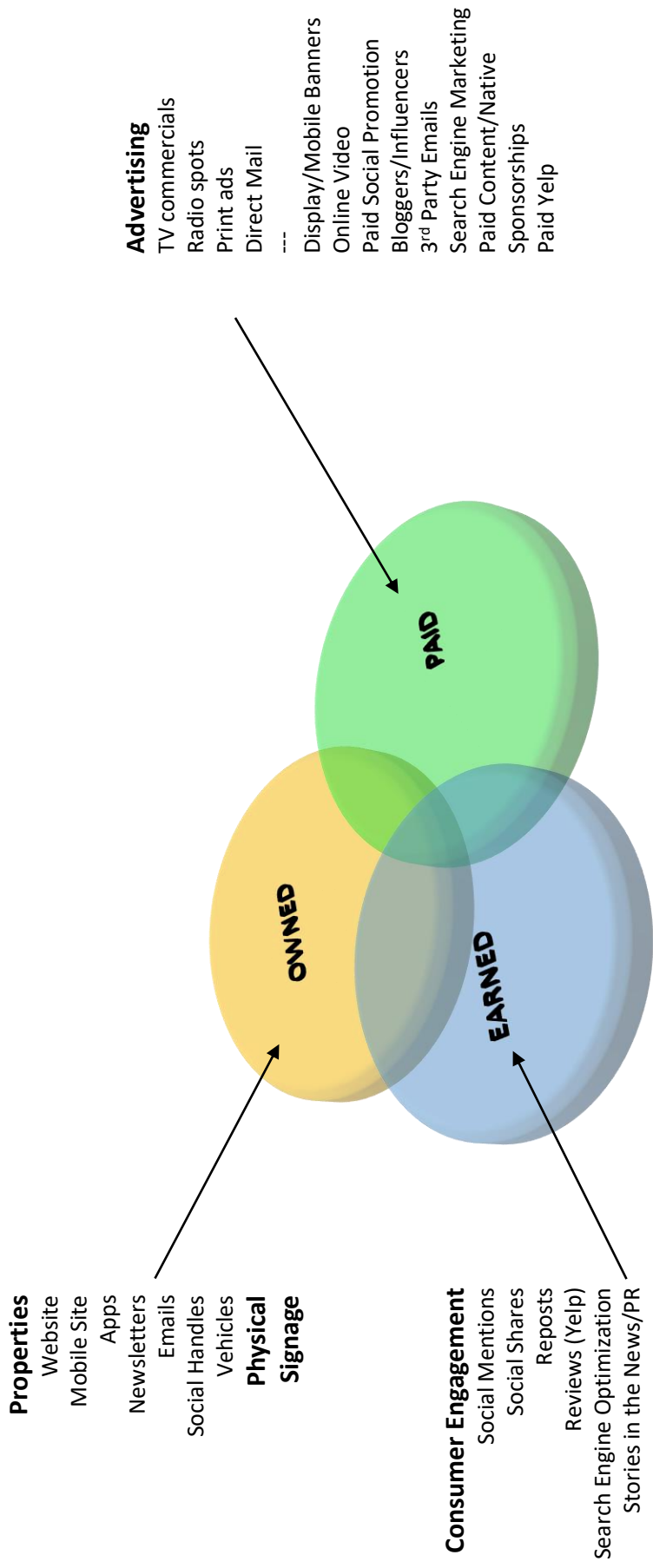
Wayfinding Signage

Branded Community

Wayfinding Signage

- Supports the “Brand”
- Knits Parts of the Community Together
- Turns a designation into a destination.
- Raises community pride.





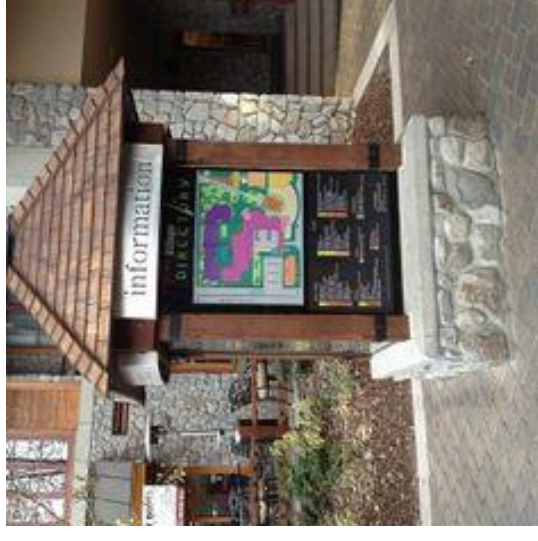
Gateways



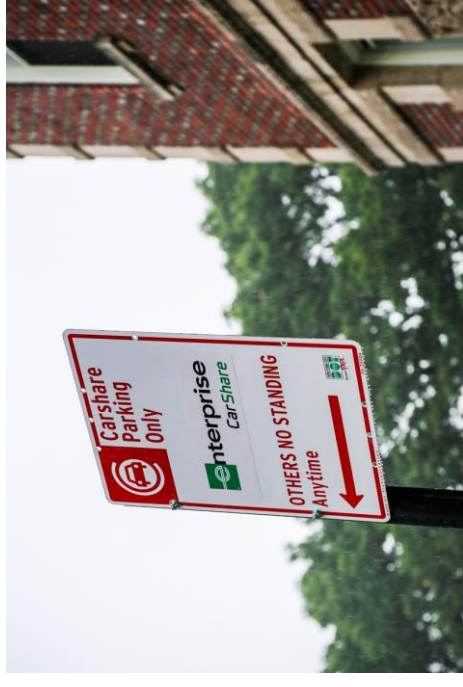
- Vehicular Guides
- Pedestrian Guides



- Information Kiosks
and Directories
- Trailblazers



- Identity Signs
- Regulatory



- Banners
- Message Centers



- Interpretive
- Public Art



- **Street Paving and Crosswalks**



Existing System

- Broken
- Not Unified
- Missing Key Elements



Tukwila Brand Fieldwork Report

Part A



First-time Observations

- As a first-time visitor, Tukwila-Southcenter presents as an industrial city, with confusing masses of shopping and dining establishments. It's impersonal and cold. It's easy to get lost driving around the shopping district. At night, lighting is inadequate and adds to the feeling of uncomfortableness.
- There are cars everywhere and no perceivable housing.
- Whatever sense of place or warmth is tied to the familiar, brand-name retailers and restaurants. With no downtown per se, Tukwila's identity is likely driven by these establishments.
- Tukwila has a lot going for it in terms of activities that may be missed by a visitor's initial observations. Many of the family-friendly places are outside of the core shopping area.
- It's easy to see why the name "Tukwila" has an identity problem. The freeway signage alternatively lists "Tukwila" or "Southcenter." It really wasn't clear if you were entering or visiting Tukwila as a city or whether Southcenter itself is a city, let alone a major shopping district.
- Given the scale and complexity of options within the area, there is a lack of signage and well-designed maps and directories. This problem holds particularly true for accessing the Southcenter shopping precinct itself, as well as navigating in and around the key Westfield Mall which lacks sufficient directories, readily understandable and functional maps, and related navigational aids. As web feedback states, 'it is easy to get lost'.

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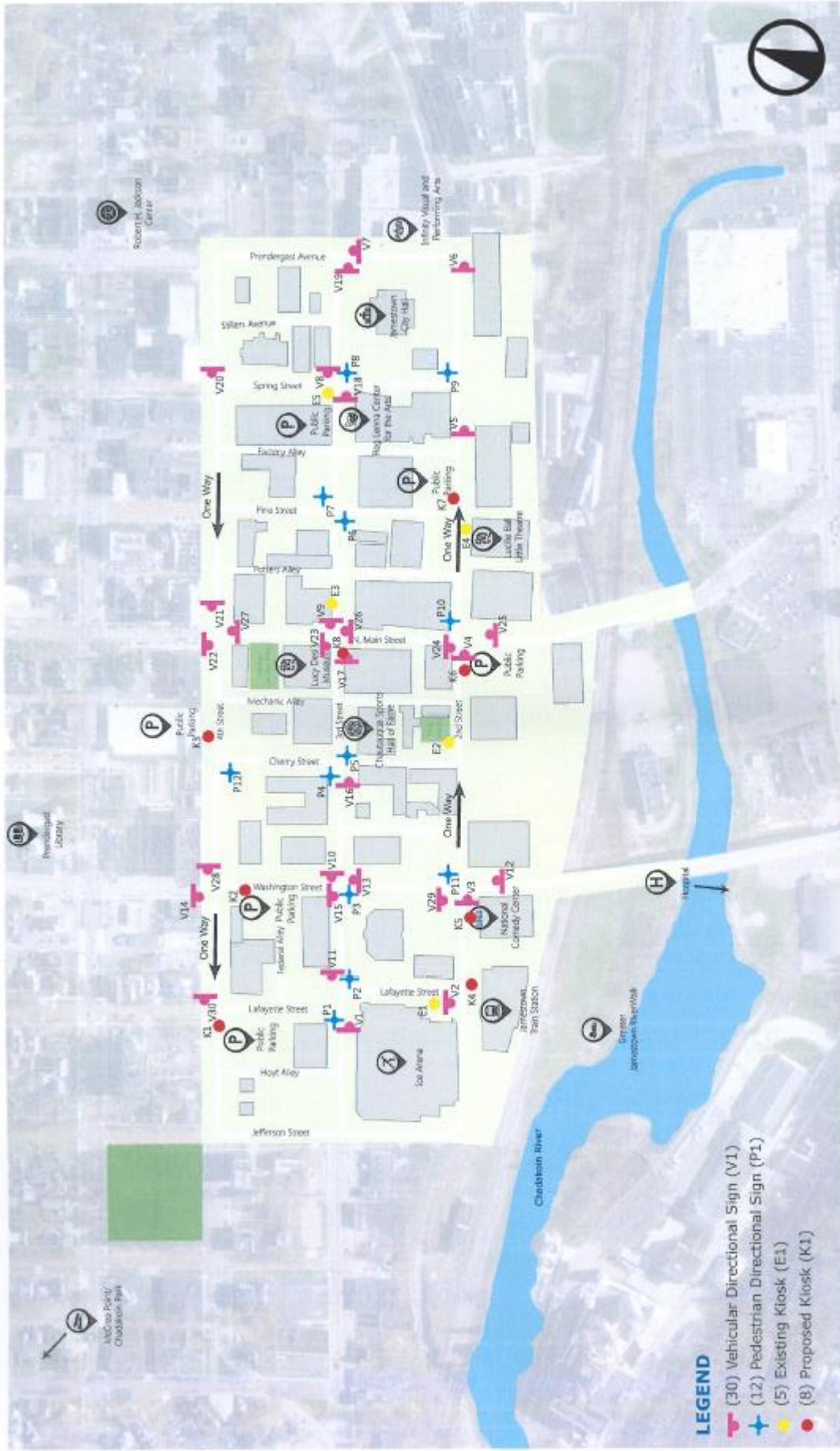
Wayfinding Plan

Next Steps

Wayfinding Signage Plan Development

1. Organize
2. Site Assessment and Planning
3. Concept Generation
4. Design Development
5. Documentation
6. Bidding (deferred)
7. Fabrication and Installation (deferred)






OPTION A)



DOUBLE SIDED NON ILLUMINATED MONUMENT SIGN
 ALUMINUM CONSTRUCTION SIGN BODY WITH PAINTED ACRYLIC GRAPHICS
 INSTALLED ON MASONRY BASE WITH STACKED STONE CLADDING

 Big Mouth Signs, Inc. 48 Rockbridge Road, Suite 200, Lithium, GA 30047 Phone 770-581-6300 Fax 770-581-9922	Company Name <u>McGinnis Ferry Road</u> Job Title _____ Notes _____ Date _____ Signature _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Change: Please modify the design as marked above and re-send <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted: The above specifications and conditions are satisfactory and are hereby accepted. You are authorized to do the work as specified. Accepted by (Print name): _____ Date _____	DESIGNER SL DATE 04-23-2015	ACCOUNT MOR. MK REVISION DATE _____	SCALE 1/2"=1' SHEET NO. 1	SALES ORDER TBD FILE NUMBER QLBD11202013
	THE ENCLOSED IMAGE AND LAYOUT ARE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF BIG MOUTH SIGNS / SURESIGNS AND CANNOT BE REPRODUCED, DISTRIBUTED OR ALTERED IN ANY FORM WITHOUT THE EXPRESSED PERMISSION OF BIG MOUTH SIGNS / SURESIGNS OR ONE OF ITS AGENTS. <small>The colors listed and shown here are representations of Pantone Matching System colors. Please use a Pantone color book to view the actual colors they represent.</small>					

Wayfinding Signage

Costs for Plan Creation

- \$50K to 100K (subject to scope)
 - ▶ Public Outreach
 - ▶ Geographical Limit
 - ▶ Lodging Tax Eligible
- Burien, \$48,750
 - Focused only on Downtown Burien.

Wayfinding Signage

Advisory Committee

- LTAC Member(s)
- Arts Commission
- Public Works
- Parks Department
- Community Development
- Business Reps

Paying for the Signage

- Lodging Tax Funds
- Grants
- Through O/M Activities
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Exaction on Redevelopment
- Private Contribution
- Other




Wayfinding Signage

Next Steps

- Brief LTAC
- Brief City Council
- Recruit for Advisory Committee
- Select Consultant
 - RFQ/RFQ
- Secure Funding from LTAC/City Council





Wayfinding Signage

Questions?