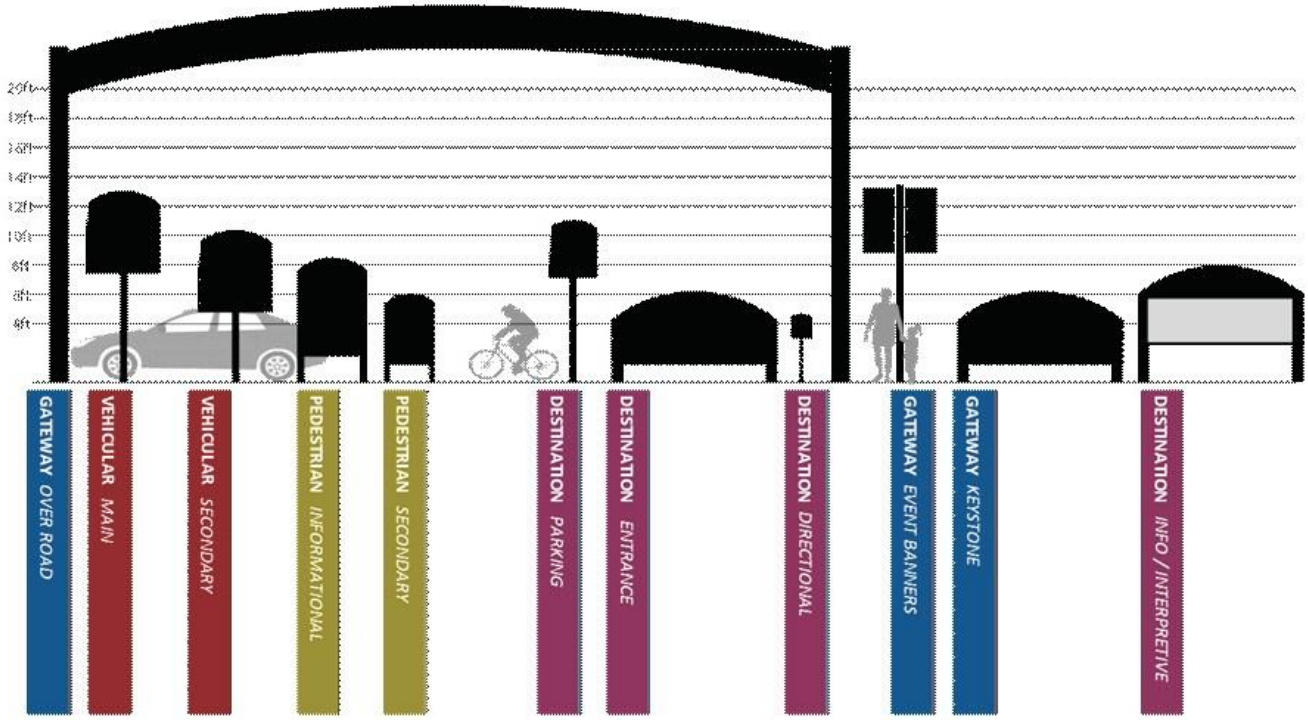
Community Wayfinding Toolbox



Winona County PartnerSHIP

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ACTIVE LIVING WINONA COUNTY

This toolkit was developed by Active Living Winona County in order to bolster active living and promote walkable communities through a uniform system of signage. Active Living Winona County is a group of leaders, practitioners, and advocates from the County, cities, schools, businesses, health care, non-profits, community groups, and local residents working on creating ways to enhance the built environment, influence policy, and transform systems to make physical activity in our communities safer and easier.

Mission: To promote and encourage a culture of healthy, active living in Winona County communities.

Vision: To enhance the built environment, influence policy and transform systems to cultivate, support and sustain a way of life that makes activity in our communities safer and easier for all.

Values:

- build strong, healthy communities
- enhance quality of life
- focus on inclusion
- empower individuals and groups
- incorporate mental health
- promote sustainable projects and policies that create positive change in individuals and communities

INTRODUCTION

Wayfinding signs are a systematic network of directional signs meant to guide the traveling public to major civic, cultural, visitor, and recreational destinations.

The wayfinding system focuses on the primary and secondary routes through a community (or other jurisdiction such as a county) that people are most likely to travel. The goal of a wayfinding sign system should be to help people more easily reach community attractions and obtain information about their destination. Through the system, an area's most prominent features and assets are called out and promoted. An additional benefit of wayfinding signage is to alert travelers to the presence of attractions even if they are unable to visit them on that particular trip.

The design of wayfinding signage should be consistent throughout the community in order to make it easily recognizable and effective. A consistent design also supports an individual's sense of place as they move through the community.

The wayfinding system in this document consists of four signage types: Gateway, Vehicular Wayfinding, Pedestrian Wayfinding, and Destination signs. Gateway signage announces the entrance to a community or district. Travelers are then directed to the entrance of a destination by vehicular or pedestrian wayfinding signs. From there, informational/interpretive signage provides information about the destination, and directional signage provides wayfinding assistance within a destination.

The top of the sign is generally reserved for the community logo which should include the name of the community or district in which it is located. The content of the sign depends on the type of wayfinding sign as described in this document.

SUMMARY OF TOOLBOX

This wayfinding toolbox is meant to assist with the design and location of signs in communities throughout Winona County. The toolbox includes design guidance for community wayfinding signage relating to parks, trails, public facilities and other destinations within a community.

This document is intended to provide Winona County and the communities within its boundaries with information and tools needed to start a discussion and guide community decision making relating to the development and implementation of an attractive and effective sign strategy.

Properly designed and located, signs have many beneficial impacts to individuals and communities and can enhance the character of a community. However, if not properly designed and managed, signs may be ineffective at best and can distract people from what a community has to offer.

While this toolbox focuses on community signage related to public wayfinding and destinations, it is equally important to thoughtfully provide standards for signs on private property. In the interest of public safety, economic development, property value and concern for the appearance of the community, municipalities may regulate signage through adoption of sign regulations. Although sign standards can only minimally regulate content, they can specify design, and limit size, location, the number of signs and the number of words per sign. Communities can create guidelines for developers which demonstrate (preferably by illustration) how good signs fit within their surroundings and enhance the appearance of the community.

BENEFITS OF TOOLBOX

Good wayfinding signage is important because it improves roadway navigation, creates a sense of place and makes it easier to take advantage of the amenities a community has to offer. In addition, signage improves walkability, encourages physical activity and leads to an improvement in overall quality of life.

Proximity and access to areas with parks and trails for a wider segment of the population is likely to improve overall community health. By providing wayfinding tools and informative signs communities can become more user friendly and move toward creating an environment that invites citizens and visitors alike to explore their community.

There are many benefits to good community wayfinding and destination signage including:

- Creates a sense of place
- Improves roadway navigation
- Makes it easier to walk, bike and use public transportation
- Improves public health
- Improves access to goods and services
- Fosters economic and commercial vitality
- Promotes access to recreational, arts and cultural facilities
- Supports equitable use for all people
- Enhances quality of life

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

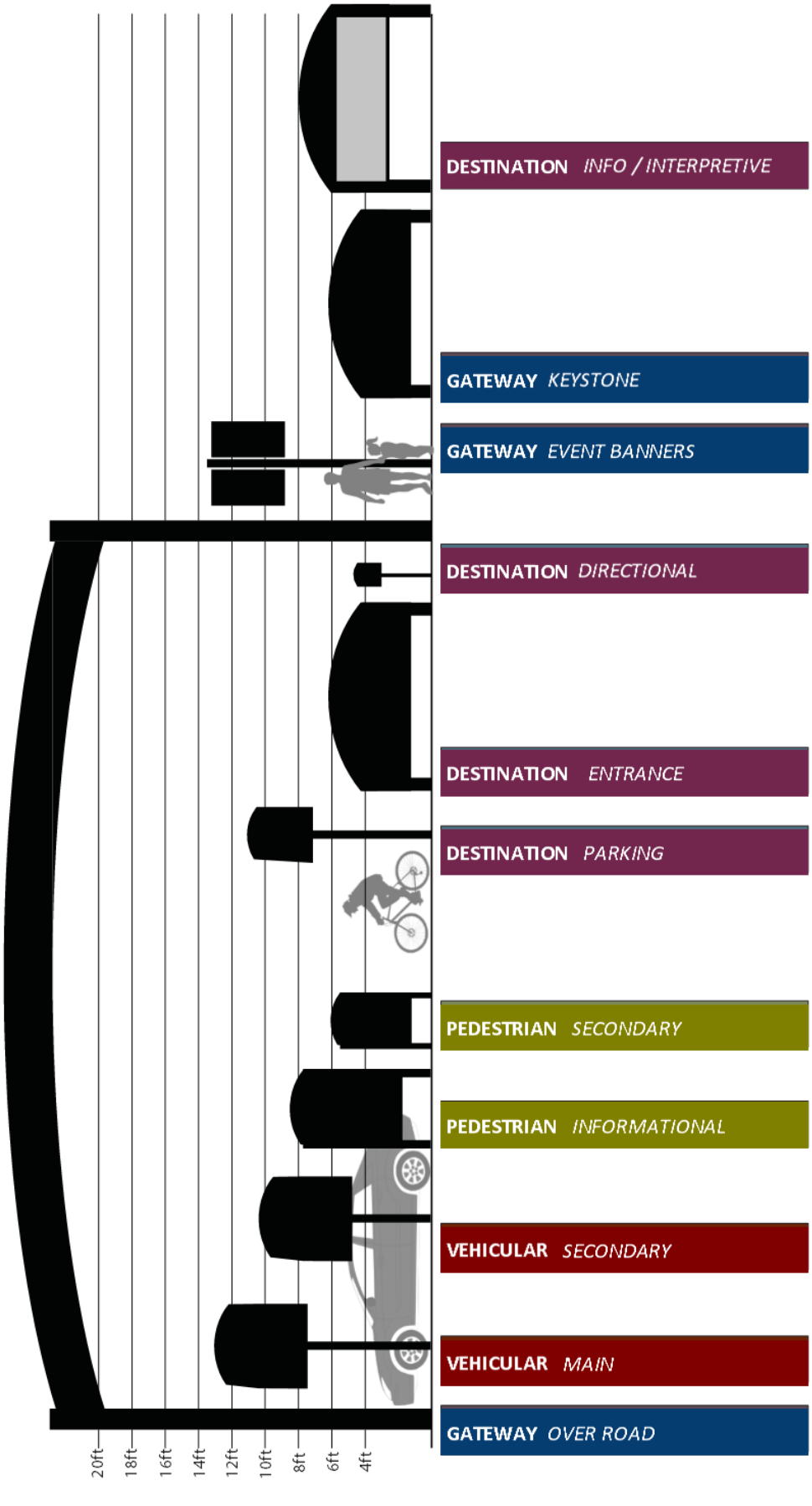
The sign design presented in this document was informed by a Visual Preference Survey (VPS) which provided public input and helped refine the design options. Results from the VPS are provided in the Appendix.

The VPS was conducted at an event on Thursday, August 27, 2015 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Winona County History Center in Winona. After the event additional surveys were provided to communities throughout the County in order to provide additional opportunities for participation.

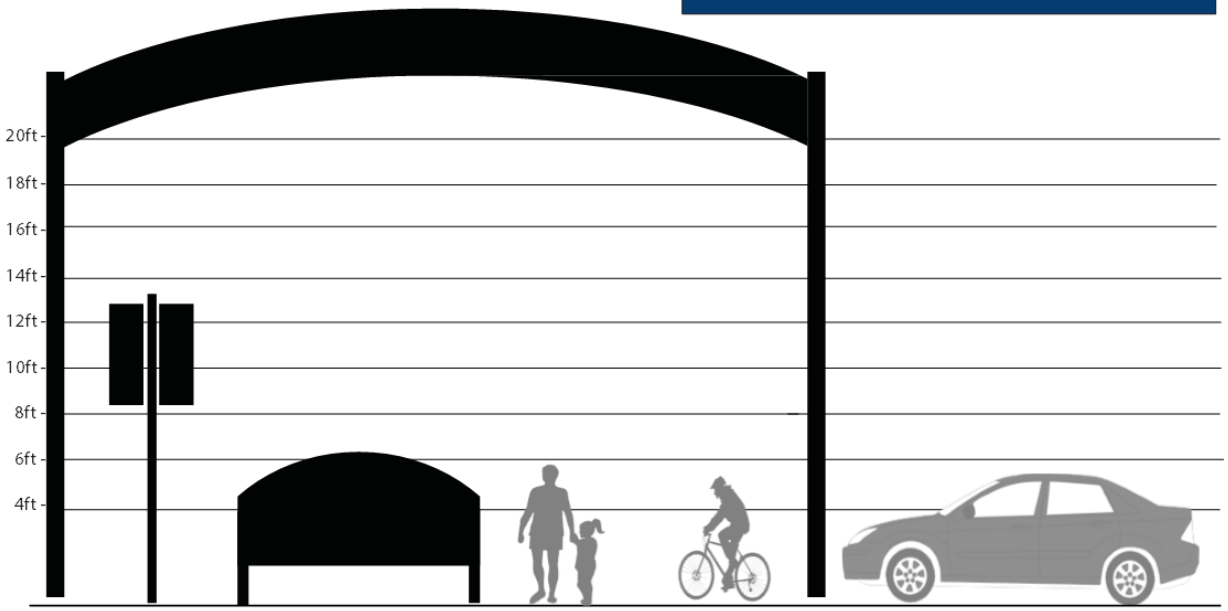
The Visual Preference Survey had six (6) categories with six (6) photos of different sign styles in each category for participants to choose from. There were a total of sixty-seven (67) surveys completed. Once the results were tabulated the preferred images in each category were used to develop the designs in this document. The design elements in this document provide a basic form communities can use as a starting point by which to develop an attractive and effective sign system. One design element that emerged from the survey was an arched cap on top of the sign to provide continuity in design across all categories. Similarly, a standard font and color scheme should be used with the Communities unique logo.

The appendix includes VPS results and a selection of sign images used in the VPS. These images provide examples of different sign types in a variety of settings and applications that a community can draw upon for additional guidance.

WAYFINDING SIGN PALETTE



GATEWAY WAYFINDING



GATEWAY SIGNAGE

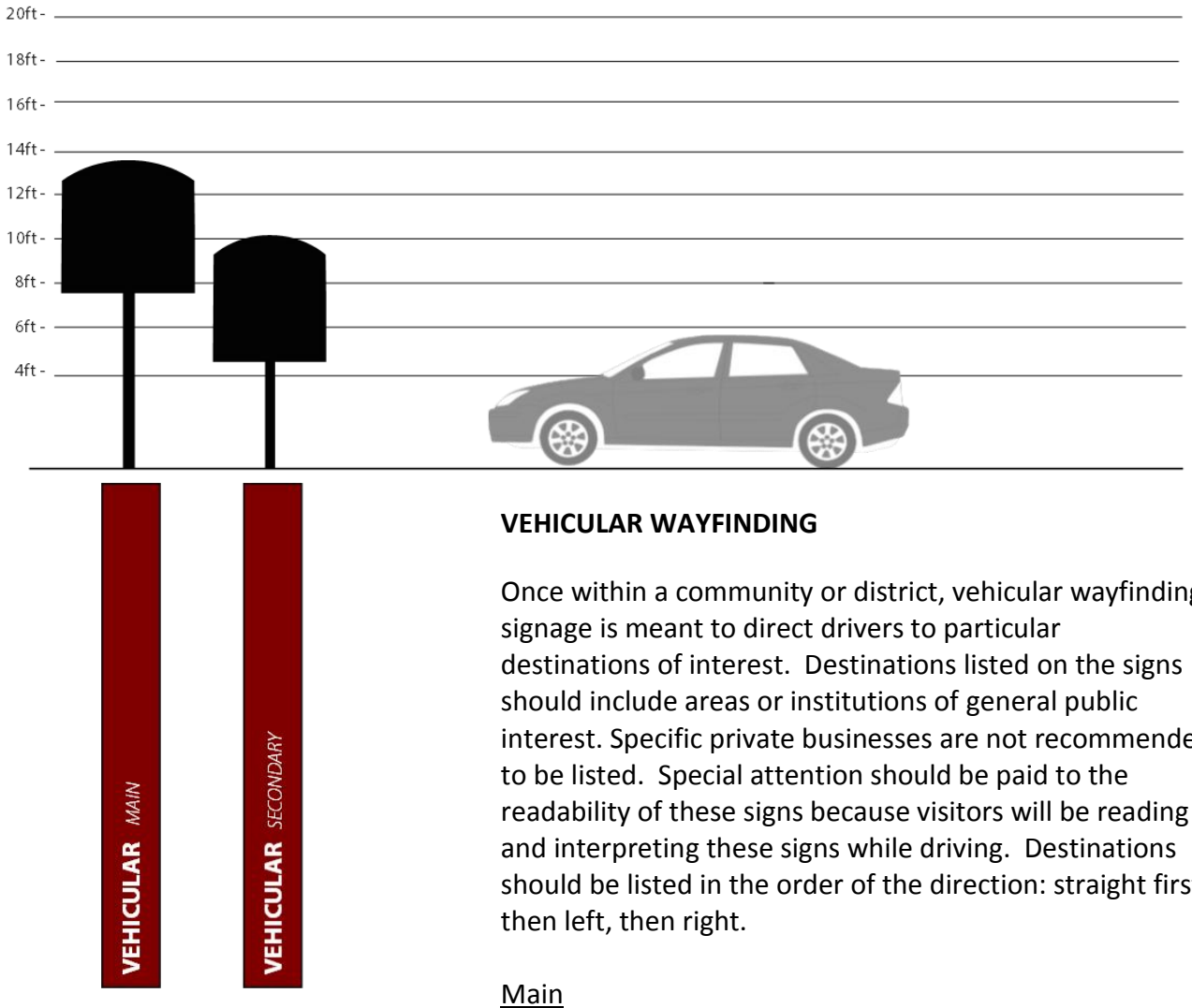
Gateway signage indicates arrival and welcomes visitors to a community or district. The sign should contain the name of the area that visitors are entering. Gateway signage should be located on primary vehicular thoroughfares. Landscaping around the sign is an important design element.

Over Road

Over Road gateway signage is an option for streets that lead directly to a specific district or area of interest. Passing under the gateway signifies entrance into a special place. The sign should contain the name of the district or area of interest. It should be located over the primary entrance road at the boundary of the district. Specific attention should be given to the design and materials of the pillars on each side of the road.

Event Banners

Event banners are meant to help visitors identify that they are within a special district. Event banners should contain a community or district logo and limited text with a large font size. Event banners are typically located on light poles with relatively uniform spacing along a corridor. The color of the banner background is an important consideration and should match the branding of the special district.



VEHICULAR WAYFINDING

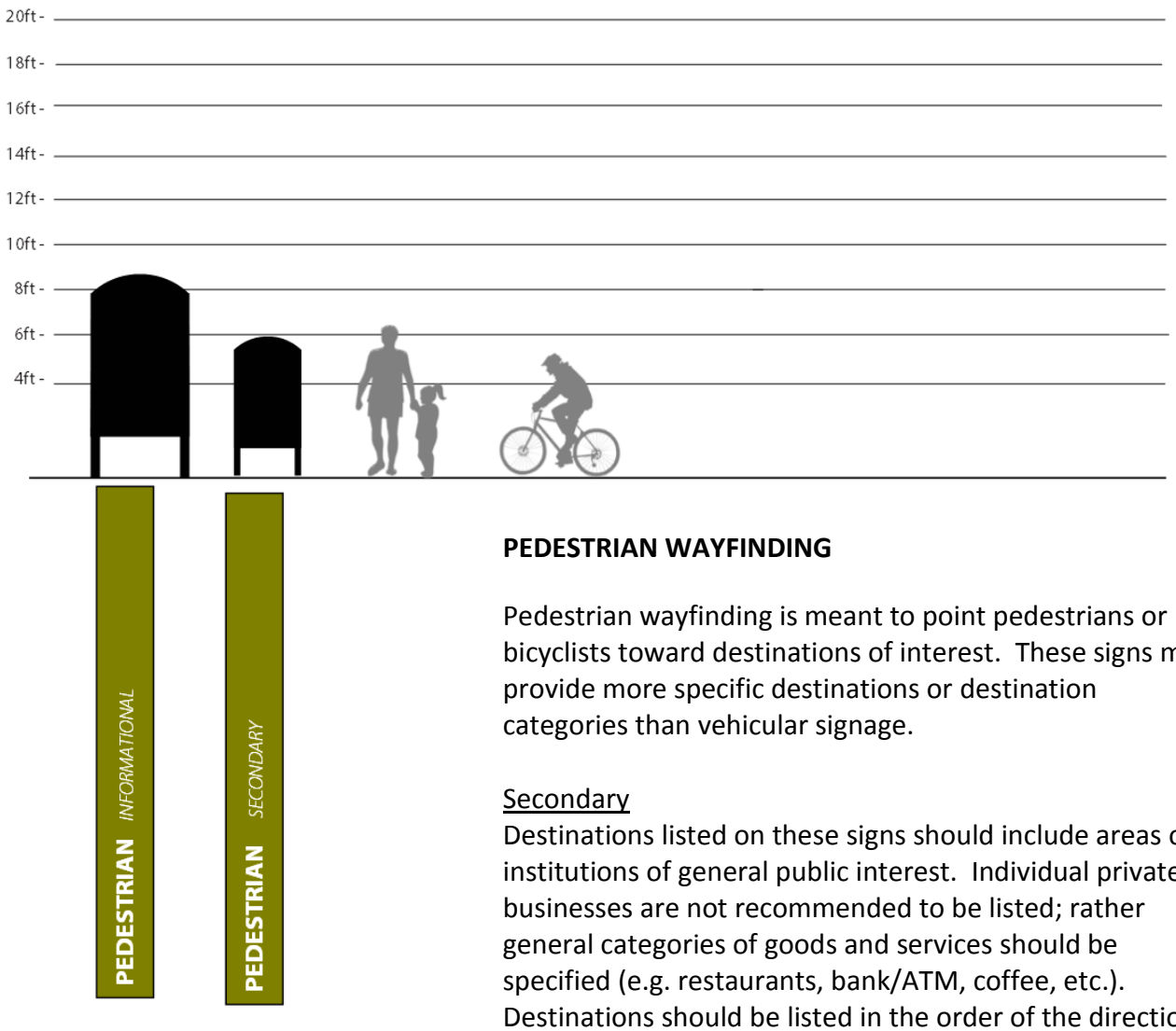
Once within a community or district, vehicular wayfinding signage is meant to direct drivers to particular destinations of interest. Destinations listed on the signs should include areas or institutions of general public interest. Specific private businesses are not recommended to be listed. Special attention should be paid to the readability of these signs because visitors will be reading and interpreting these signs while driving. Destinations should be listed in the order of the direction: straight first, then left, then right.

Main

Main vehicular wayfinding signage should be located on primary streets with higher traffic levels. This includes principal arterials, minor arterials, and major collector roads. Destinations listed on the signs should include areas or institutions of general public interest. Destinations should be listed in the order of the direction: straight first, then left, then right.

Secondary

Secondary vehicular wayfinding signage should be located on streets with lower traffic levels such as minor collector or local roads. Destinations listed on the signs should include areas or institutions of general public interest. Destinations should be listed in the order of the direction: straight first, then left, then right.



PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING

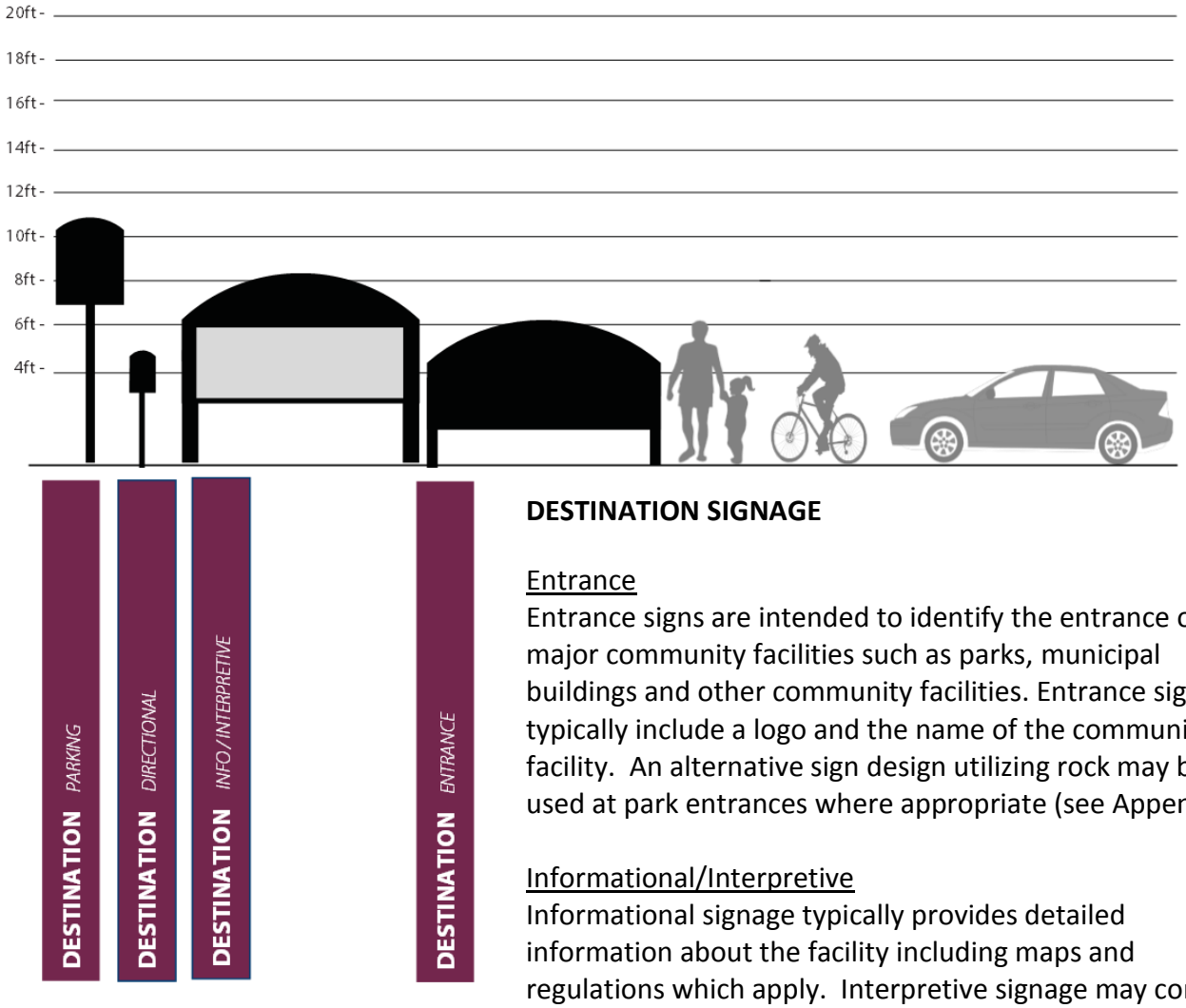
Pedestrian wayfinding is meant to point pedestrians or bicyclists toward destinations of interest. These signs may provide more specific destinations or destination categories than vehicular signage.

Secondary

Destinations listed on these signs should include areas or institutions of general public interest. Individual private businesses are not recommended to be listed; rather general categories of goods and services should be specified (e.g. restaurants, bank/ATM, coffee, etc.). Destinations should be listed in the order of the direction: straight first, then left, then right. This type of signage should be located along pedestrian corridors (e.g. sidewalks) or adjacent to bicycle routes or paths.

Informational

Informational pedestrian wayfinding signage provides a greater level of detail about a district. Informational signage should contain a map of the district or area. Destinations listed on the sign and map should include areas or institutions of general public interest. Specific businesses should not be listed; rather general categories of goods and services should be specified (e.g. restaurants, bank/ATM, coffee, etc.). Informational wayfinding signage should be located in key areas within a district where visitors can stop, identify their location on the map, and determine which direction to travel to their destination.



DESTINATION SIGNAGE

Entrance

Entrance signs are intended to identify the entrance of major community facilities such as parks, municipal buildings and other community facilities. Entrance signs typically include a logo and the name of the community facility. An alternative sign design utilizing rock may be used at park entrances where appropriate (see Appendix).

Informational/Interpretive

Informational signage typically provides detailed information about the facility including maps and regulations which apply. Interpretive signage may contain information about the area in both traditional and digital formats.

Interpretive themes could include:

- Arts & Culture
- History of community, Transportation & Industry
- Geology History
- Waterfront & Nature
- Nature & Ecology
- Forest Ecology & Recreation

In general, informational/interpretive signage should be located at major pedestrian nodes such as trailheads, transportation hubs and next to public parking lots.

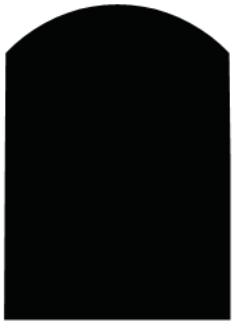
Directional

Directional signage is meant to direct visitors to points of interest within community facilities. Directional signage typically includes basic information such as the name of an attraction and the direction to it. This type of signage is typically located along pedestrian trails or paths or at key intersections. Directional signage may contain links to digital/electronic information or maps accessed via smart phone.

Parking

Parking signs identify or direct motorists to public parking lots. Parking signs can include unique lot numbers or names. Parking signs should be located along roadways, immediately adjacent to a public parking area.

DESIGN ELEMENTS



Panel Shape

Material suggestions

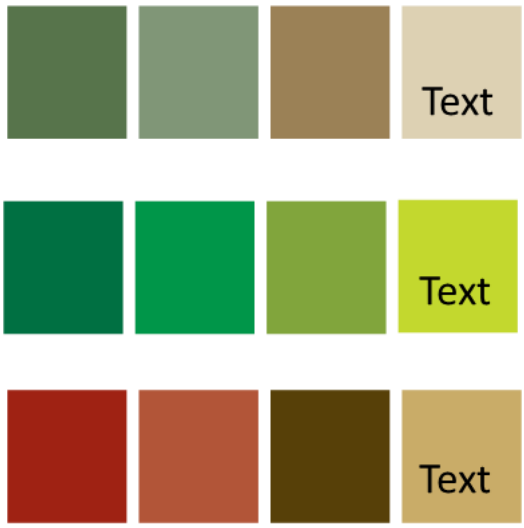
Materials used need to consider the long lasting durability of being outdoors to withstand the wide range of elements they are exposed to during this time.

Recommended: Aluminum, treated lumber , acrylic &/or lexan

Not recommended: Steel, non-treated lumber, glass

Possible color combinations

Lighter colors are best for text / copy on darker background for plenty of contrast



Add an outline of color to ensure text contrast

Font suggestions

Fonts need to be simple and easy to read from a distance as well as from varying speeds

Sans Serif Font: Arial (regular) **Arial** (bold) **Arial** **(black)**

Serif Font: Times New Roman (regular) **Times New Roman** (bold)

NEXT STEPS

The implementation of a community signage system is the responsibility of the local government unit, whether it be Winona County or one of the municipalities taking advantage of this toolkit. This toolkit is meant to provide communities a solid base from which to work from as they develop an attractive, coherent and effective signage system.

Next steps may include:

- Conduct an inventory of existing signs in your community
- Identify community destinations
- Develop a detailed schematic location plan / map
- Work with consultants in order to refine and finalize designs
- Phase in new signs and replace old signs as funding and opportunities arise

APPENDIX

Visual Preference Survey (VPS) results. Including winners and selected alternatives from the survey.

<u>Gateway Signage</u>

Survey Results A = 21 B = 29 C = 23 D = 15 E = 17 F = 9

B

<u>Wayfinding – Vehicular</u>

Survey Results A = 23 B = 25 C = 13 D = 34 E = 13 F = 3

D

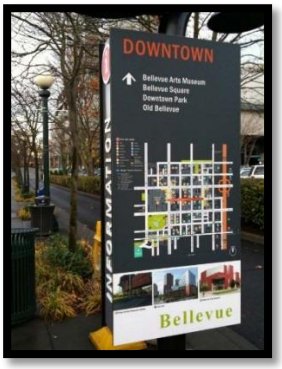
B

Wayfinding – Pedestrian / Bicycle

Survey Results **A = 19 B = 8 C = 38 D = 21 E = 22 F = 3**

C

E



D

A

Destination Signage – Parking

Survey Results **A = 15 B = 35 C = 11 D = 27 E = 9 F = 13**

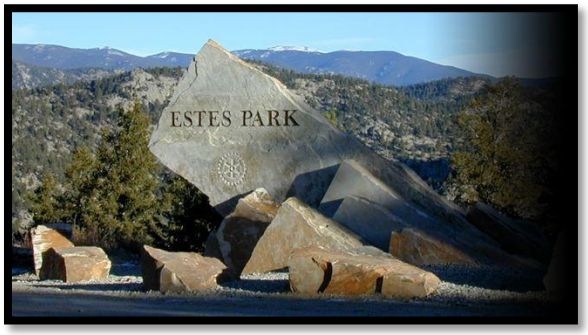
B

D

Destination Signage – Entrance

Survey Results **A = 13 B = 38 C = 8 D = 16 E = 20 F = 32**

B



F

Destination Signage – Directional

Survey Results **A = 18 B = 19 C = 14 D = 13 E = 20 F = 32**

F

E

B

Destination Signage – Informational/Interpretive - Kiosks

Survey Results **A = 17 B = 23 C = 18 D = 10 E = 4 F = 22 G = 16**

B

F

E

G

<u>Destination Signage – Informational/Interpretive</u>

Survey Results A = 19 B = 23 C = 11 D = 26 E = 27 F = 10

E

D

This project was made possible through support from the Statewide Health Improvement Program, Minnesota Department of Health