Citywide Wayfinding Report
Medford, Oregon

Prepared by
Community Service Center

2014
This report was developed through a collaboration among the Community Service Center (CSC) and the City of Medford.

Community Service Center wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project. Kelly Akin, ____, and _____ with the City of Medford; members of Metro Medford, Travel Medford, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and REI.

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I. What is Wayfinding?

Project purpose and goals

The purpose of this project is to analyze the City of Medford’s existing wayfinding system and provide an action plan for its improvement. This action plan will serve as a “road map” to guide the City of Medford as it moves towards the implementation of a cohesive and comprehensive wayfinding system.

This report includes a full inventory of current wayfinding signage, recommendations for key locations for new signage to direct people to Medford’s downtown and to help people navigate the downtown area, and recommendations to reduce sign clutter. The Community Service Center (CSC) team worked with city staff, Metro Medford, and other local representatives to set specific goals, identify key locations and wayfinding points, and discuss branding options.

GOALS

This report lays the foundation to develop a comprehensive wayfinding system that will improve the city’s orientation, navigation, and experience for both visitors and residents.

- Attract and direct visitors to and through the downtown area
- Highlight natural, historic, and cultural resources
- Promote economic growth and tourism
- Reveal sense of place and identity
- Improve navigation and connectivity
- Create a sense of arrival

Cohesive Wayfinding

Cohesive wayfinding systems serve to enhance a city’s readability through a process of cues within the built environment. Comprehensive wayfinding systems address navigation, orientation, and experience using clear and consistent design elements across a variety of functional navigational tools. Unified design elements reflect the identity of the city using easy to identify and user-friendly elements. Consistent design and material of signage can be a component of this.

In today’s society that increasingly relies on personal mobile devices with mapping and smartphone applications, individuals are changing the way they navigate cities. Wayfinding is thus increasingly becoming more about creating a sense of place and enhancing the experience of the urban environment. Wayfinding provides visual clues to assist with not only with general orientation, but also to communicate the character of a community. It is an effective and cost-efficient tool that allows a city to brand itself and to highlight its best assets, thus drawing in visitors and encouraging them to linger and explore.

The foundation of any successful urban wayfinding plan is having a direct and conscious connection to the existing logic of a city or place. The logic of a city is the recognition and organization of a city’s parts into a coherent pattern, or a “mental map” used by travelers to navigate from place to place. The logic of a city may differ from place to place or person to person. In general, individuals most often associate with the built environment by one or a combination of categories: paths, landmarks, or districts. For example, people of New York City often identify with the city’s street grid, or blocks. Residents of Portland associate most commonly with the distinct character of individual districts and neighborhoods. A successful wayfinding plan translates the logic already used by residents into an understandable language for visitors. Interpreting the intrinsic logic of a city will help create a workable wayfinding plan that is still recognizable to the city’s residents and guide people from point to point.

WAYFINDING TOOLS

Map Kiosk Example (City of Salem, Oregon)

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WAYFINDING TOOLS

Signage pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular scale

Kiosks pedestrian-scale maps and information

Environmental features streetscapes, delineated paths and routes, human-scale architectural forms, well-defined districts, landmarks

Printed media brochures, maps, guide books

Interactive media directional, transit, and travel websites, points of interest maps, mobile apps
II. Efforts and Existing Players in the Wayfinding System: The Stakeholders

The Stakeholders

A cohesive and comprehensive wayfinding system can be a very effective means of building towards these goals, and can highlight Medford’s character and assets. Wayfinding systems require minimal land, allow for a flexible budget, provide wide appeal, and can be implemented in steps over time. Few planning mechanisms are more cost-effective nor support as many city goals.

Once implemented, a comprehensive wayfinding system has the ability to make significant impacts to the livability of the city for residents and the interpretation of the city for visitors. It can encourage community and economic development, enhance public safety, and improve the identity of a city.

The City

Medford recognizes the potential of its downtown as a vibrant hub for residential, business, retail, finance, government, arts, entertainment, and education in its goals and visions. Medford’s comprehensive plan makes it clear that the City has prioritized making this into a reality. Downtown is envisioned as “not only the heart of Medford, but also the Rogue Valley, and is a unique irreplaceable component to the City’s identity and sense of community.” Furthermore, Medford’s city center has an active business association that has already taken an initiative to brand the downtown. The City of Medford has historically taken a much more passive role in their downtown branding processes, resulting in a disconnect in the branding efforts and a lack of a cohesive system. Metro Medford has taken several branding and wayfinding efforts, including: making use of the downtown’s banner system, it produces a downtown map of businesses for visitors, maintains a Metro Medford website that is visitor friendly, and they have worked collaboratively with The Commons, resulting in projects such as the pedestrian kiosks at Pear Blossom Park. They have made clear efforts in branding, but these efforts still have room to grow and develop. Metro Medford and the City have an opportunity to maximize the banner system for a wider variety of purposes, and an opportunity to collaborate on creating a distinct downtown brand that is cohesive with the overall city.

The Downtown Historic District

The Downtown Historic District has taken some steps to improve wayfinding and placemaking, including signage and a self-guided historic walking tour of downtown. These are positive steps and have helped to draw in tourists, but there is a lot of room for growth to promote the historic uniqueness of downtown Medford, draw in tourists, and encourage them to actively explore the downtown on foot.

The Commons

The Commons, in partnership with Metro Medford, has already actively started creating a brand for itself, which extends to Pear Blossom Park. The branding for The Commons is by necessity very closely tied to Downtown Medford, and thus a collaborative effort particularly between the City, Metro Medford, and The Commons should be taken as closely as possible as they continue to expand and develop their branding efforts.

Travel Medford

Travel Medford makes an acting effort to draw visitors into Medford and the Medford area, using methods including signage, their website, and they hold an office for visitors at the Chamber of Commerce.

Recreational Stakeholder Groups

Medford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

The Medford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has created a Medford Bicycle Facilities Plan among other projects.

Bear Creek Greenway Foundation

The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation has created the Bear Creek Greenway Sign Plan, the most progressed signage plan to date.

The Stakeholders

Metro Medford

The Commons

Travel Medford

Recreational Stakeholder Groups

Downtown Historic District

City of Medford

Metro Medford

The Commons
Many destinations, notably civic institutions such as the City Hall and the police station, have unique banners. Finally, they have already been undertaken, notably by Metro Medford with regards to the branding effort. Key destinations currently lack adequate wayfinding signage or totally lack signage entirely. That kiosk can be found at Front Street Station. Currently, only one pedestrian kiosk was located that was being used for wayfinding purposes. This kiosk could aid in encouraging more people to exit the greenway and enter the downtown area.

4) Key Destinations* Lack Signage

Key destinations currently lack adequate signage or never have had any signage at all. Alarming, these destinations include the vast majority of Medford's regional draws. Destinations lacking wayfinding signage include Alba Park, the Craterian Theatre, the Holly Theatre, Jackson County Courthouse, Pearl Bloom Park, BOC, SOU, and the Bear Creek Transit Station, and the Library. In addition, regional trails require signage on key highways to attract more visitors to downtown.

5) Limited Gateway Signage

Only one gateway sign located on Highway 62 was found during our field analyses. Gateway signs serve a number of roles in wayfinding. Most importantly they create the first impressions of a city for visitors and often are often located at the most logical or busiest gateways into a city. This makes them particularly important areas to maintain. Gateway signage is critical in helping visitors and tourists navigate the greenway and enter the downtown area. With the implementation of the Bear Creek Greenway, Medford now has excellent north-south bicycle connections to allow riders and commuters utilizing the paths along the greenway in order to get to their desired destinations.

6) Lack of a Distinct East-West Bicycle Route

As mentioned above in a strength of the current wayfinding system, Medford has a number of active bicycle routes in the downtown area. Medford is in the fortunate position of being a city with a number of willing partner agencies and organizations who are all invested in improving Medford's identity through branding and its wayfinding system. A number of efforts have already been undertaken, notably by Metro Medford with regards to the branding of Downtown Medford, and The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation in relation to improving signage on the Bear Creek Greenway. With these partners, Medford has a significant base of support to draw upon to make improvements to its wayfinding system.

KEY DESTINATIONS*

For the purposes of this report, key destinations refer to destinations that have been identified and agreed upon to be essential for including in wayfinding signage for residents and visitors.
IV. Action Areas

After analyzing the strengths and challenges facing the current wayfinding system, meeting with key stakeholders, and inventorying over 1,500 existing signs, 15 Action Areas have been identified to strengthen and transform Medford’s wayfinding system into a cohesive, user-friendly system that helps to establish Medford’s brand.

Recommendation:

1. Identify key organizations and agencies who have a stake in the city and the wayfinding system
2. Form a steering committee headed by the city that meets regularly throughout the duration of the wayfinding project

The City of Medford has a number of key stakeholders who either contribute or benefit from wayfinding in the city. Therefore, collaboration with key stakeholders is essential for developing a comprehensive wayfinding system that meets the needs of the community and all parties. The first step in developing a wayfinding system is to form a collaborative wayfinding committee headed by the city that includes stakeholders who are important for the development of the system.

City leadership is imperative to the success of this project. The city needs to take ownership on key decision points and should be the final authority on contentious issues including the city-wide branding. A wayfinding committee is important for a number of reasons. Among these are, the number of wayfinding initiatives or projects, notably the Metro Medford Banner System, have been undertaken by private parties that are serving their goals and interests. Direction is needed from a committee to tie all these initiatives together so that they complement, rather than oppose each other and future wayfinding efforts. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the most effective wayfinding systems exhibit key attributes that lead to success. In short they are cohesive. This leads to less confusion by visitors and can help reinforce how the city wants to advertise itself.

A steering committee should function by guiding the development process, assisting with administrative strategies, outlining primary issues, informing design and wayfinding decisions, and assisting with formal approvals.

A wayfinding committee could consist of city staff, such as representatives from the Planning and Transportation Departments, Travel Medford, The Commons, Metro Medford, Medford Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, and the Historic District.
2) Prioritize Wayfinding Goals

As an example, if the city should choose to prioritize promoting downtown businesses, emphasis would be put on drawing visitors in from the highway corridors via gateway and trailblazing signs. Furthermore other measures within the downtown would be taken, such as including business promotion on pedestrian kiosks and banners. To minimize costs and to accommodate for the changing nature of businesses, these measures would use non-permanent measures, and businesses can opt in to paying to be included on the kiosks and banners at a monthly rate rather than the city choosing which businesses to include. This type of system was adopted by the City of Greenville, NC.

Examples of such goals could include:

- Draw in tourism to the downtown from the highway corridors
- Promote downtown businesses
- Improve connectivity and signage for bicycles to, from, and around the downtown
- Encourage foot traffic in the downtown
- Celebrate Medford’s identity as the heart of the Rogue Valley and for its historic character

Recommendation:
1. Identify and prioritize wayfinding goals to best suit the needs and goals of the city.
2. Use prioritized goals as guiding principles for implementing Medford’s wayfinding system.

3) Create a Citywide Brand

Wayfinding is an essential branding tool for a city that can influence a sense of place or a person’s experience within a city. Signage is not only informational, but can often also communicate more about the character of the city and its best assets than navigational information. A cohesive wayfinding system with strong branding can reflect community character and can create a distinct sense of place for a visitor.

The City of Medford is responsible taking leadership in creating a citywide brand that will ultimately be reflected in downtown and citywide signage. This brand should embody the entire city, and incorporate the organizations that are included as steering committee partners. The City’s involvement in branding efforts should be collaborative with the existing stakeholders through the steering committee, and should work to blend and enhance the existing brands. It is also recommended that existing brands should likewise make an effort to blend their brand in as complimentary as possible with the City’s to help create a more cohesive branding system. This will be especially important with the branding efforts in the downtown area, particularly with Metro Medford.

An important aspect of branding is cohesion across the system. Design guidelines across all signage that standardize design elements, nomenclature, and font styles are essential to this.

Recommendation:
1. Collaborate with the steering committee to establish a citywide brand.
2. Include the citywide brand into new signage, particularly downtown and gateway signage.

BRANDING

(Right) These are examples of simple yet effective design palettes that successful highlight a unique quality of Medford and could indicate to a visitor that they have entered a special place. A stylistic yet basic and easy to read design could easily be incorporated across all signage.
4) Celebrate and Promote the Historic Downtown

Medford’s historic downtown has already successfully demonstrated its potential for drawing in visitors to downtown businesses with the simple addition of ODOT signage directing visitors to “Historic Downtown.” While Medford is a relatively new city, its historic characteristics may still act as a major draw to regional visitors. The historic downtown district should be highlighted specifically for this purpose. Furthermore, improvements to the historic downtown signage and multimedia wayfinding could potentially open up the downtown to additional funding sources for its wayfinding system.

The current ODOT signage and arch plaques should be considered for replacement, where possible, for signage that is cohesive with Medford’s branding efforts and stands more prominently. These signs should not only be more stylistic and promote placemaking principles, but should also be more strategically placed so as to stand out to visitors. The historic district should have its own historic downtown gateway signs that create a sense of arrival. Furthermore, the arch plaques that are currently around the downtown seem to be haphazardly placed and are easily missed by the average person. Removing these plaques and replacing them with more strategically placed signage will better promote creating a sense of place for the historic downtown district.

Other opportunities to highlight the historic downtown district is with the existing banner system and with the proposed pedestrian kiosk system. Brochures and historic signage that include QR codes could provide an additional level of depth, allowing for full multi-media presentations including additional audio, photos, and videos.

Medford has a variety of public art works and has an opportunity to use public art to enrich its wayfinding system. Explicit directional information or simple imagery evocative of the place can be integrated into public art to reinforce a person’s sense of place.

A specific location that could benefit from public art wayfinding is The Passage in addition to the city blocks on either end of The Passage. The Passage currently is ripe with potential for mural space, cement inlays, sculptures at either end to draw people through, and more stylistically prominent entryways. Using public art for these wayfinding projects also opens up additional funding opportunities.
Recommendation:
1. Decide on location and install Downtown Gateways.
2. Decide on location and install City Gateways.

6) Install Downtown and City Gateway Signs

Gateway points are important for wayfinding for a number of reasons and serve a number of purposes for effective wayfinding. Namely, they celebrate arrival into the city and downtown areas accommodating most visitors to the city. Thus, gateways frequently serve as the first impression visitors gain of a city. As a result, with the use of physical improvements including unique arrival signage, trailblazing signs, lighting, landscaping, streetscapes and public art improvements, gateways can create a positive coherent identity, a strong sense of place and improve connectivity to downtown destinations for all transportation modes.

The city of Medford is well placed in that it has a handful of routes where the majority of visitors and residents enter downtown. A number of exercises were conducted with key stakeholders in which participants identified the main gateways or entry routes into downtown for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Based on the results of those exercises and the CSC’s own field analyses, four natural or logical gateway points or routes were identified.

(See Appendix __ for maps)

Downtown Gateway Points

Downtown Gateway Point 1 - North Central Avenue and 5th Street (Vehicular and Pedestrian)

This is seemingly the main vehicular gateway point into downtown from the north handling a large portion of traffic heading into downtown (check with ADT document/Neil’s work). Significant infrastructure is currently in place (See pic) that is an ideal location for an arrival banner when events are not being advertised. Additionally, this gateway is lined with arguably Medford’s best and most iconic building stock reinforcing a positive image of the city for visitors.

Downtown Gateway Point 2 - 8th Street and South Oakdale Avenue (Vehicular, Bicycle and Pedestrian)

This gateway is the location where vehicular traffic from Jacksonville and West Medford, as well as bicycle and pedestrian traffic from South Medford enter the downtown. It also marks the entrance into the city’s Civic District where key public institutions and spaces including City Hall, Jackson County Courthouse, and Alba Park are situated.

Downtown Gateway Point 3 - East Main Street (Vehicular, Bicycle, and Pedestrian)

This is the key gateway point for multimodal traffic heading from East Medford into downtown. In addition, it is also the location of an exit off the Bear Creek Greenway and houses a number of key historic buildings.

City Gateway Points

Gateway Point 4 - South Riverside Avenue and 10th Street (Vehicle, Bicycle and Pedestrian)

This gateway point is the main vehicular gateway for visitors approaching from the south. It is also the point in which pedestrians and cyclists enter the downtown from East Medford. An important aspect of this gateway location is that it also serves as an entry point into Medford’s Education District, which houses the Library and the RCC/SOU Higher Education Center.

Gateway Point 5 - South Riverside Bear Creek Greenway Exit (Bicycle and Pedestrian)

Exit leads into downtown over a bridge to the education district of downtown.

Downtown Gateway Points

Downtown Gateway Point 4 - South Riverside Avenue and 10th Street (Vehicular and Pedestrian)

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Gateway Point 5 - South Riverside Bear Creek Greenway Exit (Bicycle and Pedestrian)

Exit leads into downtown over a bridge to the education district of downtown.

City Gateway Points
Below are the 17 key destinations that were identified from the exercise.

**Community and Civic Service:**
- City Center (Regional)
- Downtown Historic District (Regional)
- City Hall (City)
- City/County Offices (Regional)
- Parking (City)

**Cultural:**
- Craterian Theatre (City)
- Holly Theatre (City)

**Education:**
- Library (City)
- Rogue Community College (Regional)
- Southern Oregon University (Regional)

**Parks and Recreation:**
- Bear Creek Greenway (Regional)
- Hawthorne Park (City)
- Pear Blossom Park (City)
- US Cellular Community Park (Regional)

**Transportation:**
- Crater Lake Highway (Regional)
- Interstate 5 (Regional)
- RVTD/Front Street Station (City)

**Recommendation:**
1. Agree on key destinations to prioritize.
2. Install signage for key destinations.
8) Formalize Existing Districts

A number of cities including Portland and New York have benefited from the implementation of district-oriented wayfinding systems. District-oriented wayfinding makes use of hierarchical elements such as district branding and color coding that make it easier for visitors to find their way to their desired destinations. Importantly, implementing a district-oriented wayfinding system has the added benefit of allowing travel authorities to sell and market the city from different angles with the hope of increasing tourism to the city.

The CSC with the help of city planning staff identified a number of existing districts in Medford as well as within downtown with their own identity that are yet to be formalized (see map).

City Districts
1. North Medford
2. East Medford
3. South Medford
4. West Medford
5. Regional Shopping District
6. Mantanta
7. Industrial District
8. Medical District (East)
9. Athletic Hub
10. Downtown District
11. Geneva-Minnesota Historic District & Corning Court Ensemble
12. South Oakdale Historic District

Downtown Districts
1. Downtown Historic District
2. Civic District
3. Education District
4. The Commons

Recommendation:
1. Decide on location and install Downtown Gateways.
2. Decide on location and install City Gateways.
9) Maximize Banner System

The implementation of a banner system is one area that the city of Medford along with Metro Medford has made significant progress in recent times. A significant amount of infrastructure, namely historic lampposts have been installed along most major pedestrian routes within downtown. Banners in use right now, identify key institutions including RCC and SOU, and promote agencies such as Metro Medford. In its full capability, a strong banner system can market groups, promote events, identify districts, provide wayfinding directions, and generally improve the aesthetic of downtown Medford. Additionally, it can help reinforce the brand and identity of the city as well as its districts. The city of Medford would benefit from improving the current banner system in the following ways:

- Create uniform branding across banner system and other signs that highlights Medford’s character
- Use banners to more effectively identify and define the downtown area and districts
- Extend banner system to ‘new districts’, for example Civic Center, The Commons, etc.
- Support other wayfinding methods such as including directional arrows and walking times to key destinations
- Promote various events and attractions, such as the Art in Bloom and the Medford Noise and Sound festivals.

Finally, the city should keep continuity with the historic lampposts and install them along the streets of new districts.

10) Standardize Nomenclature

Having consistent place names for destinations is a critical element of a comprehensive wayfinding system. Multiple and conflicting names for some destinations in Medford tend to confuse and disorient visitors. Place names reinforce the brand and identity of each destination, and making them consistent will reflect positively on the City’s efforts to maintain coordination. Currently there are a number of destinations that have a variety of different names, one example is how the downtown areas is referred to on signage as Downtown, Historic Downtown Medford, and City Center. Decisions on nomenclature should be made by the wayfinding committee as different organizations like to promote the downtown area in different manners.

Recommendation:

1. Create a process and agree on nomenclature for all key destinations within Medford.
Pedestrian wayfinding is an important aspect of any comprehensive wayfinding system, and pedestrian-friendly wayfinding elements can be implemented in a variety of ways. Arguably the most effective form of pedestrian wayfinding is with the use of pedestrian kiosks. Medford has a number of locations where pedestrian kiosks would ideally be located to reach a large amount of on-foot visitors to downtown.

Pedestrian kiosks are versatile in the way that they can be utilized for a number of different purposes. Varying quantities of information can be displayed on a kiosk depending on the number of panels that are incorporated into the design. For example, a four panelled kiosk could include a map, historical information including walking tours, information on upcoming local events, and advertising businesses for a fee. As Medford benefits from having an active downtown development agency, Medford would ideally benefit from two-panel pedestrian kiosks with one side including a map and the other advertising local events or highlighting local history.

Some infrastructure is currently in place for pedestrian wayfinding in a few locations in downtown. One pedestrian map kiosk stands at Front Street Station, and Pear Blossom Park and The Passage have kiosk infrastructure in place that is currently being used for advertising upcoming events. These kiosks need better utilizing, and in the case of the kiosk at Front Street Station, could be repositioned to better serve pedestrians.

In addition to these kiosks, six additional locations for kiosks have been suggested (See Map). These locations were based on high footfall areas, areas where pedestrians gather, sidewalk space, and key destinations. Kiosks have been prioritized as either first tier or second tier based on their importance and potential contribution to the wayfinding system for the city to consider when planning implementation.

Tier One:
1. Library
2. Bear Creek Greenway Exit (South Riverside Avenue and 9th Street)

Tier Two:
1. Alba Park
2. Vogel Plaza
3. East Main Street (East Gateway to downtown)
4. North Central Avenue and 6th Avenue

The city should phase the implementation of pedestrian kiosks, first making use of current infrastructure at Front Street Station and Pear Blossom Park, and then considering Tier One kiosk locations.

Recommendation:
1. Better utilize existing kiosk infrastructure.
2. Install Tier One kiosks on suggested locations.
3. Install Tier Two kiosks on suggested locations.
12) Strengthen Pedestrian Connection to Pear Blossom Park

An effective comprehensive wayfinding system goes beyond focusing solely on getting people to downtown to work effectively to route pedestrians along the best streets and paths to their desired destinations. Medford’s current wayfinding system lacks pedestrian-oriented wayfinding to public institutions and iconic attractions, such as the Library and the Holly Theatre. In order to unlock the potential of downtown Medford to visitors, pedestrian wayfinding strategies need to be implemented outside of solely implementing pedestrian kiosks.

In recent years, the city has seen development take place to the north of the heart of downtown in the area now known as The Commons. Development of note, includes the Lithia Headquarters and Pear Blossom Park which holds a number of key events in the city, including a regular farmer’s market. Connection between The Commons and the heart of downtown is not the most clear and adequate signage does not exist to direct people between these areas. The Passage, a pathway through a parking garage that connects the two areas is not very noticeable and lacks effective signage. Signage directing people through The Passage and around The Passage connecting the two areas needs to be installed.

Recommendation:
1. Install non-kiosk pedestrian wayfinding signs at key downtown intersections
2. Target pedestrian wayfinding efforts on getting people to and through The Passage improving connectivity between these two key areas.

13) Support Bear Creek Greenway Sign Plan

Arguably Medford’s largest regional draw is the Bear Creek Greenway that not only serves a recreational trail, but also as key piece of infrastructure connecting major cities in the Rogue Valley from Central Point to Ashland. In recent years, there has been an increase of bicycle commuters between cities using the greenway. Currently, a lack of signage has been identified as a weakness of not only Medford’s wayfinding system but the region’s wayfinding system.

The Bear Creek Greenway is managed by The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation who have recently proposed the Bear Creek Greenway Sign Plan which is set to be realized in the coming year. This plan is currently the most mature wayfinding plan in the Medford area. Medford should work with the foundation to help implement the plan and get signage for key destinations at relevant exits. This will help users be aware of the destinations within Medford and will help them find their way more easily hopefully increasing the number of visitors to downtown.

Recommendation:
To work with The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation to:
1. Implement The Bear Creek Greenway Sign Plan; and
2. To get signage for key destinations at exits on Bear Creek Greenway.

Furthermore to:
3. Identify an east-west bike route and implement a similar wayfinding program as the Bear Creek Greenway.
14) Reduce Sign Clutter

With the introduction of new signage for key destinations, consideration is needed in signage design and placement to ensure that key intersections do not become too cluttered with signs. The CSC has highlighted the most important intersections where signage design needs to be intelligent to ensure they do not become cluttered (see map).

The city should identify thresholds or limits for how many signs can be at intersections to establish a standard for key intersections in the city. It is important to note that too much signage can be counterproductive to good wayfinding, making it more confusing and thus difficult for visitors and residents to find their way to their intended destination. Additionally, the city will be aided by a district-oriented approach to its wayfinding system discussed above.

A noteworthy example are the city’s key civic institutions, such as City Hall and the Jackson County Courthouse. Medford’s civic institutions are ideally clustered forming a Civic District. The city could reduce sign clutter by having signage further out from civic buildings that read “Civic District” and can individually sign for civic buildings as visitors get closer to where they want to go. This would reduce the need to have individual signs or bigger signs that list all civic buildings in the district further out and would thus reduce signage at intersections.

15) Implement a Phased Approach

With the number of Target Action Areas identified above, the City of Medford would benefit from implementing a phased approach in which they can prioritize their wayfinding needs based on the goals established by a wayfinding committee. An implemented approach is beneficial in order to meet highest priority goals and to effectively budget a wayfinding system.

Recommendation:
1. Implement a phased approach which targets highest priority goals first.
V. Roadmap: Process of Implementing Recommendations

Implementation Timeline

The CSC has developed an implementation timeline based on our understanding of Medford's wayfinding priorities and of the experiences of other cities around the nation. The implementation timeline is divided into four phases:

**Phase 1**

1. Form a Collaborative Wayfinding Committee
2. Prioritize Wayfinding Goals
3. Explore Design Concepts with SCYP

   1. The logical starting point in this project is to identify key stakeholders to form a collaborative wayfinding committee. Stakeholders should be identified based on their importance and ability to drive the process forward.
   2. The first task of the committee should be to focus on establishing wayfinding goals that best serve the interests of the community and the partners involved.
   3. Design concepts should be explored with the SCYP class to understand realistic routes to go down and achievable concepts for Medford.

**Phase 2**

4. Develop a Citywide Brand and Style Guidelines
5. Implement Greenway Sign Plan

   4. A number of efforts undertaken by Travel Medford, Metro Medford, and The Commons have developed branding for tourism and various areas in downtown Medford. The committee needs to establish guidelines for future signage that seeks to tie these existing efforts together to create a more cohesive image for the city. Additionally, the committee should explore options for branding the wider city to further enhance Medford’s image and marketability.
   5. The first step to implementing signage improvements should be to implement the Bear Creek Greenway Sign Plan. The committee should work with the the Bear Creek Greenway Foundation to implement signage that enhances connectivity between Bear Creek Greenway and downtown by including key destinations on signs at exits on the Bear Creek Greenway.

**Phase 3**

6. Install City and Downtown Gateways
7. Install Directional Signage for Regional Destinations
8. Build District Identities
9. Maximize Banner Program

   6. The committee should determine preferred locations for downtown and city gateways based on the analyses conducted by the CSC. The committee should determine whether downtown gateways or city gateways should be implemented first.
   7. Signage for regional destinations should be prioritized as they are determined by the committee as they draw the largest number of visitors to the city from furthest away. Regional-scaled destinations should be included on signage located on major freeways.
   8. Downtown and city districts should be agreed and formalized and an identity should be developed for each downtown district decided by the committee. Banners should be considered for delineating districts and helping with branding efforts.
   9. A new banner program should be developed by the committee that better utilizes the potential uses of the system. The program should extend the banner system to promote local events and attractions, delineate and brand districts, and provide traditional wayfinding services such as including directional arrows and walking distances in minutes to destinations.

**Phase 4**

10. Update Parking Signage
11. Install Pedestrian Kiosks
12. Develop Pedestrian Directional Sign Program
13. Improve Pear Blossom Park Pedestrian Connection

10. A good number of parking signage currently exists in Medford. However, parking signage is not cohesive. The committee should work to update parking signage to make it more cohesive, so that visitors to downtown can better identify where to park.

11. The wayfinding committee should agree on the number and location of new pedestrian kiosks to be installed based on the analysis conducted by the CSC. Additionally, the committee needs to explore options for the form of the kiosks in terms of information to be displayed and how many panels they will consist of. Initial focus should be on utilizing existing infrastructure before installing new kiosks based on the committees priorities.

12. To complement the pedestrian kiosk system, additional pedestrian directional signage needs to be installed at key intersections for guiding visitors on foot to their desired destinations.

13. Ideas and options need to be explored in order to target improvements to pedestrian connectivity between downtown and Pear Blossom Park.
Funding Sources

The following funding sources and information are examples of potential funding sources for wayfinding programs.

State Historic Preservation Office Grants

The State Historic Preservation Office grants a number of grants, notably the Heritage Grant Program, which provides matching grants to local governments for projects that conserve, develop, or interpret Oregon’s heritage. A wayfinding system that promotes historic features in downtown Medford, such as historic buildings qualifies for this grant as it associated with the human experience in Oregon. Up to $200,000 per biennium is available, although awards are commonly $3000-$12,000. Applications for these are Fall, 2015.

Partnerships

The importance of building partnerships is not to be understated in implementing a cohesive comprehensive wayfinding, particularly when considered that a number of efforts by Metro Medford and The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation have been completed or are underway. Partnerships should be formed with the following organizations whether or not they are intended to be part of the wayfinding committee:

- Metro Medford
- The Bear Creek Greenway Foundation
- The Commons
- Travel Medford
- Medford Convention and Visitor Bureau
- Rogue Valley Transportation District
- Medford Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- Historic District
- Arts Council
- Economic Development Agency

Other Potential Funding Sources

- State Historic Preservation Office Grants
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- General Fund
- Federal Transportation Funds
- State Departments
- Capital Improvement Grants
- Federal Highway Department Grants
- Business Improvement Grants
- Bond Funds from Commercial Development
- Hotel Room Tax
- Flat Tax
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Transportation Development Districts (TDD)
- Special Business District (SBD)
- Community Improvement District (CID)
- The Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act
- Efficient Transportation Equity Act
- Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax

Pay to Play

Madison, WI funded its program with funds from the city together with a charge to the destinations on a “per mention” basis. At the time, there were only four destinations in the system: the airport, downtown, the UW campus, and the Expo Center. Thus, if the university was mentioned on 20 signs and the assessment per sign was $500, the university paid $10,000. (Not the actual costs.) Interestingly, there was also a maintenance assessment annually as well, 15% of the original assessment to cover the cost of maintenance and additional signage through the years. This was a Corbin Design recommendation.

The City of Charlotte integrated a pay to play model after an initial pilot year of the wayfinding program. Following the pilot, large sport complexes, conventions center, or other visitor attractions were responsible for fees associated with maintaining the signage. This business or organization was locked on. While the pay to play mention could be controversial, it could potentially be used for expensive pedestrian kiosks within Springfield’s districts.
The cohesive design of the signs take advantage and enhance traditional and historic elements of city. From the use of weathered brick, to the color and design elements that distinctly yet subtly call out the towns primary draw, the Master’s Tournament, the city successful tells a story of its character and assets. Emphasis was put on creating gateways, downtown trailblazing signs, and pedestrian wayfinding signs around the downtown to effectively draw people to the downtown area and encourage them to explore as pedestrians.

**Augusta, GA**

Augusta, Georgia is a historical city that draws in 1.5 million visitors annually, primarily for the Master’s Golf Tournament. The City wanted to create a wayfinding system that encourages visitors to discover its downtown in all of its historic, southern charm.

http://www.mar-jodesign.com/places_augusta.html

**Charlotte, NC**

The City of Charlotte wayfinding system prioritizes moving traffic into City Center efficiently and getting motorists to their parking destination. In doing so, this minimizes downtown vehicular traffic and allows streets to be more pedestrian oriented. To maximize the efficiency of vehicular parking, the City brought in dynamic parking signage. Dynamic parking signage gives real time feedback to drivers to indicate how many spots are available for each parking lot. Thus, drivers can easily get parked and out of their cars to explore the downtown as a pedestrian.

http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/_Pages/FindYourWayCharlotte.aspx

Charlotte prioritizes wayfinding for pedestrians users in the city center. Pedestrian wayfinding elements can (1) provide improved linkage between amenities, (2) encourage people to walk between destinations by creating a more pedestrian friendly environment, and (3) serve as educational or interpretive tools. Nodes, or districts, with clusters of retail businesses, commercial services, or recreational amenities are ideal locations for pedestrian wayfinding, such as kiosks. Charlotte uses 4-sided, color-coded pedestrian kiosks and banners that orient the visitor by district. Each district is associated with a specific color code, which is reflected in the design elements of the signs. Amenities and local events are also highlighted on each kiosk. Charlotte, NC wayfinding signs for Uptown divide the area based on cardinal directions. Each section is associated with a color making it easy to link specific attractions (restaurants, shopping, hotels, etc.) to the corresponding section.
In creating a coherent wayfinding system, the City of Frederick's goal was to design a wayfinding program that reflects the historic character of its downtown.

Downtown Frederick truly is the heart of the City of Frederick, and the City wanted to create a wayfinding system that welcomes, orients, directs and informs visitors and residents. Elements that were included to achieve these goals include gateways, directional signage for vehicles and pedestrians, as well as parking garage identification, maps, interpretive panels and kiosks. Furthermore, to highlight the historical and cultural elements of the community, the City developed a series of 10 interpretive panels placed throughout the downtown that tell the story of Frederick and reinforce its character.

Frederick's unified and cohesive wayfinding system very successfully brands the community, highlights its historical character, creates a sense of place, and effectively draws in visitors and encourages them to stay and explore.

Asheville, NC – Regional Wayfinding Program

The Asheville region of North Carolina is often described as a vibrant, artsy, and eclectic area. To embody its diversity, Asheville's wayfinding system simultaneously sets a consistent brand for the region, while allowing for the individuality of each district, town, and place to present its own unique character.

The primary value of good design is that it functions well: travelers can clearly identify the destinations noted and can immediately interpret the directions provided. The usability of signs is dependent on having legible, high contrast text, good visual hierarchy, clear alignment, and obvious association between directional arrows and destinations. Such elements and design features were put into Asheville's signage; what's more, they go beyond this. Gateways for the region and each district incorporate sculptural elements and create artful landmarks, which work to both orient visitors and relay a message of Asheville's character. Additionally, effective incorporation and design of kiosks and post details feature local artists' designs, capturing the funkiness of downtown Asheville. Unique design elements, locally-produced artisan elements, and historical and literary allusions were incorporated into the signage to reflect the local culture. More than anything, Asheville's wayfinding program effectively brands its region, its towns, and its districts, giving visitors a clear sense of place.

Images courtesy of merje design

Images courtesy of Erik Steiner

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Images courtesy of Erik Steiner
Wayfinding Technology

Many cities are now incorporating smart phone applications into their wayfinding and branding efforts. At their best, mobile applications can provide location- and time-aware information that helps people navigate public transportation, locate landmarks or businesses, browse local events, and check hours for museums. App designs, if commissioned by the City, should be a natural extension of the look and feel of signage and other branding.

Philadelphia's city center is divided into color-coded districts, with each district having a unique name and icon.

Design for WalkBrighton by London-based developers

Applied Information Group

The University of Oregon is a leader in mobile application development for campus wayfinding, including features such as "Find a Book" and Campus Tours.

The UO also has one of the finest examples of interactive web-based campus maps.

Philadelphia's city center is divided into color-coded districts, with each district having a unique name and icon.

RESOURCE

Check out: “Will iPhone apps change the future of city wayfinding?”

http://www.designworkplan.com/wayfinding/iphone-navigation.htm

The UO also has one of the finest examples of interactive web-based campus maps.

National Park Service Wayfinding

Park or city bench as a medium for city mottoes, sayings, or facts about the city.

Alternative Wayfinding

Victoria, BC took advantage of existing infrastructure (utility boxes) by placing wayfinding maps on them. This not only adds functionality to existing infrastructure but also reduces sign clutter and beautifies the utility box.

http://www.canadianresource.ca/officialgallery/graphics/city-maps/

Use of whimsical design elements to help guide visitors to destinations.

http://westsideaction.wordpress.com/page/3/

Ground plane wayfinding that guides or informs visitors of nearby amenities or the city’s unique character.

http://www.alexblock.net/blog/?p=289

Asheville, NC maintains a robust and engaging website that focuses on providing visitors and residents fresh ideas and information about experiencing the city.

www.exploreasheville.com

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