

city of milwaukie downtown wayfinding plan

Sea Reach, Ltd. • September 27, 2016

Submitted to
City of Milwaukie
6101 SE Johnson Creek Blvd
Milwaukie, OR 97206
www.milwaukieoregon.gov



Sea Reach, Ltd.
Susan Jurasz
146 NE Yamhill Street
Sheridan, OR 97378
503.843.2005
503.843.2744 (fax)
susan@seareach.com

contents

part:1 downtown milwaukie

- 01** introduction
- what is wayfinding?
- why now?

part:2 research

- 03** process
- observations of existing conditions
- open house, april 18th 2016

part:3 planning

- 09** defining “downtown”
- advanced directional signs
- downtown gateway
- milwaukie MAX stop
- parking
- list of destinations

part:4 concept

- 12** conceptual design
- design options
- public feedback

part:5 final design

- 15** refined designs
- final design, construction documents, & mock-ups
- city adoption of wayfinding plan & design

construction documents

- appendix di*: design intent
- appendix gs*: graphic standards
- appendix lp*: location plan
- appendix ms*: message schedule
- appendix pg*: placement guidelines
- appendix sp*: specifications

part:1

downtown milwaukie

1-1

introduction

Downtown Milwaukie is a hidden gem. It offers a delightful mix of small shops, restaurants, historic buildings, and modern residential options for those willing to wander off established vehicular corridors.

Unfortunately, it is up to the driver, cyclist, or pedestrian to know where Downtown Milwaukie is so they can take advantage of the vibrant and growing scene. Indeed, it is remarkably easy to race passed on Highway 224 without even knowing that there is a historic Downtown with many amenities less than a mile to the west. Similarly, for those traveling via McLoughlin, Downtown is passed in a blink of an eye.

Despite the Downtown's "hidden" nature, it offers many qualities that, from a wayfinding perspective, make the process of developing a wayfinding system for the area manageable. The Downtown has a distinctive "feel" and is relatively constrained by geography, as well as building and traffic patterns. Moreover, the Downtown area is eminently walkable and offers easy connections to the rest of the city and the greater metro area with an array of public transportation—bike paths, bus lines, and MAX service. This alleviates some parking concerns and, since most of these transit options lead to and through Downtown, allows the City of Milwaukie flexibility in designing a wayfinding system that can cater to multimodal transit options.

The relative compactness of the Downtown area offers the city an opportunity to create distinctive "placemaking" elements that serve both as landmarks and as wayfinding elements similar to the "Threshold" art installation at the MAX station. Wayfinding elements can become iconic emblems of Milwaukie's Downtown.

1-2

what is wayfinding?

Put simply, wayfinding is a process that is designed to solve three interrelated questions: Where am I? Where am I going? How do I get from here to there?

Wayfinding systems help orient and direct users to and from destinations using intuitive signage and environmental indicators. A wayfinding system is a network of informational, directional, and identity signs and maps that work in unison to help people of all abilities find their way. Effective wayfinding systems also tap into a user's previous experiences and local understandings of place for greater effect. These strategies allow users to reach their destinations logically

and safely while minimizing confusion whether they travel by car, mass transit, bicycle, or on foot.

Importantly, wayfinding is more than just a series of signs and maps. A consistent and reliable system creates a sense of place—through naming, gateways, identification signs, and site-specific installations—which connects its users to the community it serves. Taken as a whole, wayfinding systems can aid in the promotion of a city’s identity by creating a clear and consistent message to visitors and residents alike.

In addition to enhancing the Downtown’s feel, an effective system gets people into Downtown and out of their cars, gets them interacting whether they are on a bike or riding the MAX, and get them walking through the heart of the city where they can connect with the culture of the city to create a more enjoyable visit.

1-3
why now?

There are a number of reasons as to why it makes sense to undertake a Downtown wayfinding program now. Foremost among them is that, for much of Downtown, the current wayfinding system is either non-existent or does not function properly.

Previous redevelopment projects in the Downtown area have dramatically shifted the look and feel of the urban landscape. New buildings and transportation links, such as the construction of the Orange Line and the Trolley Trail, have altered how people move through and enjoy the Downtown area. As Downtown Milwaukie enters into this new era, wayfinding will be an accessible way for the city to present itself, while assist visitors and residents alike in their every day interactions.

part:2

research

2-1

process

The Sea Reach wayfinding team spent a few days walking, taking public transportation, and driving throughout Milwaukie's Downtown. We took an inventory of current signage as well as Downtown destinations that meet criteria for public wayfinding. This survey included a study of the major gateways, large intersections, and all the major and minor access routes into and out of Downtown. This helped establish the parameters of the wayfinding study by allowing researchers to get a look and feel of what—and where—Downtown is.

2-2

observations of existing conditions

- Little to no signage using “Downtown Milwaukie” or similar phrases.
 - Bike signs direct to Downtown
- Downtown has a visual look and “feel” that is eclectic but readily recognizable as a downtown.
 - Mix of early 20th century (mainly brick) and mid-modern architecture, along with some contemporary designs
 - High concentration of professional services and locally owned businesses
 - Trees and landscaping
 - Parking options
 - Mostly commercial, ringed by residential neighborhoods.
 - Streetlamps
 - Concentration of restaurants and bars
- The Willamette River, Hwy 224, Kellogg Creek, and rail lines confine Downtown into a manageable area, creating easily-recognizable borders
- Geography defines Downtown. When traveling from east to west on Harrison, Monroe, and Washington streets, traffic “descends” noticeably (~40 foot drop from Hwy 224). This mostly follows where Spring Creek runs.
- All of Downtown is walkable. The longest stretch is along Main Street which is about a half mile.
- The two major thoroughfares (Hwy 224 and Hwy 99/McLoughlin) lack signs directing vehicular traffic to Downtown.
- Heading southbound on Hwy 99 (5 lanes) the Downtown rushes by pretty quickly.
- Renovated areas with new streetlights are iconic and give a sense of place.
- Schools ring Downtown and separate it from the residential areas.
 - Request from business owners to “direct” students and staff to Downtown
- Riverfront Park is accessible via signalized intersections, although McLoughlin is a large street (5 lanes).
- Main Street is the heart of Downtown and there are 6 blocks of great walking with a lot of variety of cafes, restaurants, and stores.

- Public parking lots are poorly signed. Street parking is abundant—but it may get more crowded on weekends/event/market days.
- Tree-lined streets add to a charming Downtown feel.
- MAX station provides a big opportunity for wayfinding and celebrating Milwaukie. Great Kiosk location.
- Repaint crosswalk treatments along Hwy 99.
- Downtown is entirely within the “Historic Milwaukie” neighborhood (existing street toppers).
- City should emphasize more Harrison Street as the main east-west connection from Hwy 224 for vehicle traffic. Monroe Street is currently planned as a Neighborhood Greenway meant to retain the neighborhood feel of the area and improve pedestrian and biking opportunities.
- Downtown Wayfinding will help to unify many recent and ongoing public and private projects that have reshaped the Downtown area.
 - Central Milwaukie Land Use and Transportation Plan (2015)
 - Monroe Street Neighborhood Greenway Concept Plan (2015)
 - Opening of Orange Line
 - Transportation System Plan (2013 update)

2-3

open house
april 18th. 2016

On April 18, 2016, a public open house was held at the historic Masonic Lodge in Downtown Milwaukie. The open house was an opportunity to take the pulse of the community’s ideas and feelings towards major destinations, what and where visitors and residents consider Downtown to be, and what qualities the area wants to cultivate and improve.

Five stations at the open house were set up to solicit feedback or provide some insight into the following:

What is wayfinding?

This station introduced the public to wayfinding principles and gave them an overview of the process.

- Participants wanted the wayfinding plan to incorporate businesses in some way and help visitors find parking.

Defining downtown

Feedback was taken to determine when one “feels” like they are in Downtown Milwaukie. A map of Milwaukie was printed out and the public was encouraged to

place dots where they felt they've reached downtown.

- Nearly all participants believed that the Willamette River, Kellogg Creek, an area slightly north of the McLoughlin/SE 17th intersection, and Lake Rd/21st Ave intersection provided most of Downtown's area. For Washington Street, most believed that Downtown began just east of the railroad tracks while Monroe and Harrison were to the west of the tracks.
- Participants generally agreed that the schools near Downtown are separate from the Downtown.

Who are we?

Station participants were asked to view a list of adjectives that could be used to describe a Downtown. They were then given three stickers, a green, yellow, and a red. Yellow and green stickers signified what qualities participants liked to emphasize about Downtown. Red stickers were used to indicate that they would prefer that Milwaukie not be associated with that quality.

List of words:

historic	accessible	unique
modern	renewed	neighborly
hip	revived	environmental
casual	hidden gem	cosmopolitan
small town	welcoming	lively
quaint	sophisticated	emerging
suburb	transitional	diverse
eclectic	a destination	treasured
innovative	quiet	charming
artsy	young	approachable
gentrified	family-friendly	relaxed
trendy	fun	the dogwood city of
funky	happening	the west
compact	vibrant	
ecological	semi-residential	
walkable	tucked away	

- Two words that elicited the most red dots were the words gentrified [3] and “dogwood city of the west” [2].
- The phrase “small town” received one red and one green sticker.
- The observer manning the station noted that some participants used green stickers to indicate what they would like to see in the future; yellow stickers seemed to indicate how they perceive downtown to be now.
- “Welcoming” and “Charming” each received one green and one yellow sticker.
- “Artsy” received two yellow stickers.

What brings people to downtown?

Participants were presented with a list of destinations, parks, schools, and nearby destinations and then asked to place three stickers next to the things that bring people to the downtown area.

- The Farmers Market and the MAX station were the most popular words, with each receiving five votes.
- Downtown/Main Street [4], riverfront park [3], and working [3] rounded out the top answers.

What city images are iconic?

Forty-two photographs of Milwaukie were placed on a board. Participants were asked to select which image they most associate with Downtown.

- Riverfront park and Main Street business received four votes each as an iconic image for Downtown.



historic:
city hall



historic:
business learning center



historic:
masonic lodge



icon:
dogwood flower



icon:
sidewalk inlay



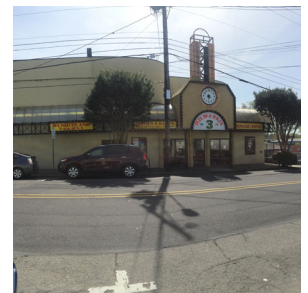
icon:
ledding library



icon:
st. john the baptist church



icon:
kellogg bowl



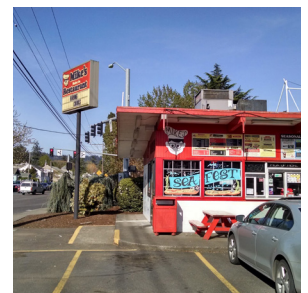
icon:
wunderland



icon:
wunderland



icon:
the little store



icon:
mike's drive thru



icon:
milwaukie lumber co.



icon:
dark horse comics



existing signage:
blue star memorial hwy



existing signage:
street lamp banner



existing signage:
library directional



existing signage:
bike directional



existing signage:
ncprd sign - dogwood park



existing signage:
trimet - park & ride



art:
fence detail



art:
city hall sculpture garden



art:
city hall sculpture garden



art:
city hall sculpture garden



art:
m.h.s mural



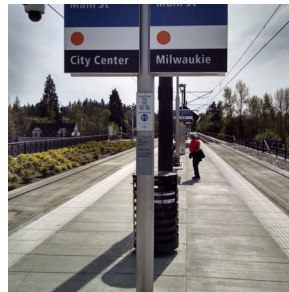
art:
sidewalk poetry



art:
MAX station sculpture



public transportation:
bus transit mall



public transportation:
orange mall



businesses:
main street store fronts



school:
st. john the baptist



school:
portland waldorf



school:
milwaukie high school



businesses:
main street store fronts



natural areas:
dogwood park



natural areas:
scott park



natural area:
riverfront park



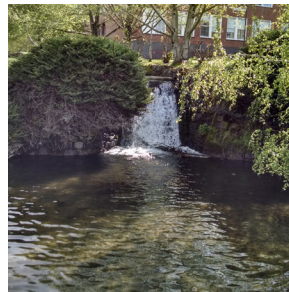
natural area:
riverfront boat ramp



natural area:
kellogg creek park



natural area:
johnson creek



natural area:
spring creek

part:3

planning

3-1

defining “downtown”

Based on observations and results from the public open house there seems to be a general consensus that Milwaukie’s downtown is fairly well-contained and easy to navigate. Its northern, southern, and western boundaries are all easy to identify. Downtown’s western edge, it seems, should not include the schools that are east of the railroad tracks. Many open house participants believed that the schools are more identifiable as within residential areas or peripheral to Downtown. *See map for more detail.*

The next phase of the wayfinding plan will refine the Downtown’s western area.

3-2

advanced directional signs

Two thoroughfares, Hwy 224 and Hwy 99, move large amounts of vehicular traffic around the Downtown area. From the perspective of a vehicular traveler, especially traveling along Hwy 224, it is not apparent that there is a historic Downtown Milwaukie. Directional signs signal the three main east-west connectors to Downtown (Harrison, Monroe, and Washington), but there are no vehicular signs notifying that those streets will take one to Downtown. Traffic moving on Hwy 99 is more aware of the existence of Downtown as it skirts the area, but even then, the lack of advanced notice gives drivers little warning that they are in the heart of Milwaukie.

Recommendations:

- Directional signs at Lake Road
- Directional sign at Harrison Street
- Pedestrian and Bike directional sign at Monroe St and Hwy 224
- Directional sign at Washington St

3-3

downtown gateways

Gateways allow the traveler to recognize that they have arrived in the Downtown. Different from advanced directional signs, gateways use geography and the built environment to offer a clear indication that one is in a distinct neighborhood. In addition, gateways offer an opportunity to create a recognizable look and feel, to use monumental art pieces, to establish sign landmarks—or all of the above.

Recommendations:

- Major gateways include: McLoughlin and 17th, McLoughlin and just north of Kellogg Creek, Harrison and roughly 23rd Ave, and Lake Road and 21st
- Minor gateways include Monroe Street, Washington Street, and north Main St.

milwaukie MAX stop

On September 12, 2015, TriMet opened its long-awaited MAX Orange Line. At 7.3 miles long, the line's second stop from its southern terminus is in Milwaukie.

The Milwaukie station, called “Milwaukie—Main Street” (also “Milwaukie/Main”) by TriMet, is located along Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way on a site bounded by Lake Road, SE 21st Avenue, and Adams Street near the city's post office. Amenities at the station include bike parking, public art, and connections to TriMet bus routes 29, 32, 33, and 34. Nearby there is a Park and Ride at the Milwaukie Presbyterian Church (2416 SE Lake Rd).

The Orange Line and the Milwaukie station serve as an entry point into Milwaukie and as a gateway into the Downtown area. Several opportunities exist in directing pedestrian traffic into Downtown.

In addition, the station has several large pieces of public art that serve as landmarks. One set of sculptures, called “Threshold”, double as wayfinding guides. The large carved millstones, which pay homage to a flourmill formerly on Kellogg Creek, have a relief map of Downtown Milwaukie carved into them.

Recommendations:

- Create pedestrian directional signs to and from MAX station
- Place kiosk or other wayfinding device at station

parking

Currently, Downtown Milwaukie has a good supply of on-street parking and a wide variety of public parking lots for residents and visitors to use. Nonetheless, there is a perception that public parking lots are hard to find or are confusing. Although occasional events, such as the Sunday Farmers Market, may give the perception that public parking is limited, in reality parking just needs to be more visible.

Street parking

Street parking in Downtown is free, but generally limited to 2 or 4 hour blocks of time. In total there are 270 on-street spaces available with another 14 available for handicapped parking. Additionally there are 69 spaces for on-street parking by permit only. In addition to these spaces, some private businesses offer lot parking for their patrons.

Recommendations: None at this time.

Lot parking

There are two public parking lots operated by the city with a total of 195 spaces, most of which are devoted to permit parking during the week. One, located directly across from City Hall, houses a small lot for non-permit holders. The other lot is located at the corner of SE Jackson and McLoughlin Boulevard. Both lots occupy central locations within Downtown. Currently, the lots lack adequate signage that is easy to spot from afar—especially as one drives south on HWY 99/ McLoughlin.

Recommendations:

- Install easily recognizable parking signage, such as a blue “P” symbol
- Install directional signage directing vehicular traffic to public parking lots along McLoughlin
- Parking lots that are permit only (M-F) should utilize larger sign legends that state when public parking is allowed

Park and Ride

There are two Park and Ride lots located in Milwaukie. One is within walking distance of the new Orange Line’s Milwaukie/Main St Max Station located at the Milwaukie Presbyterian Church, 2416 SE Lake Rd., and the other is located just north of Downtown Milwaukie at, 9600 SE Main, with buses 34 and 99 services.

Recommendations:

- None at this time

Future plans

While future plans, such as developing the public/permitted lot across from City Hall, may remove some parking inventory and increase the number of people trying to park Downtown, there will likely remain adequate parking options for the foreseeable future. Future parking solutions that may be developed by the city should prioritize visibility.

list of destinations

- City Hall
 - Milwaukie High School
 - Milwaukie Main Street Orange Line MAX Station
 - Ledding Library
 - Riverfront Park
 - Downtown/Historic Milwaukie/Historic Main Street
 - Post Office
 - Farmers Market
 - Hospital*
 - McLoughlin Industrial Area*
 - Milwaukie Museum*
 - Public Parking Lots
 - Trolley Trail
- [* Denotes out of area]

Parks:

- Dogwood Park
- Kronberg Park
- Scott Park
- Johnson Creek
- Riverfront Park

Schools:

- Portland Waldorf School
- St. John the Baptist Catholic School
- Black Box Theater: Milwaukie High School
- Milwaukie High School
- Rowe Middle School

part:4

concept

4-1

conceptual design

After the analysis of Downtown Milwaukie's existing wayfinding conditions and the development of a list of potential destinations, three conceptual designs for a new wayfinding system were produced. Each design drew inspiration from the city's history, identity, and the existing built environment in different ways. While conceptual in nature, each design family was intended to function as a full system with wayfinding elements for vehicular traffic, bicycles, pedestrians, and those taking public transportation while at the same time contributing to an identity for Milwaukie's Downtown.

4-2

design options

Series A

The design of this series uses clean lines and simple forms to provide wayfinding information. The arch and dogwood flower are featured prominently in this family. Inspiration for the design came from a few of the mid-century buildings that exist (or existed) in the Downtown. As many of the signs will be located along busy intersections with existing street features (such as benches and garbage cans), this design allows for the possibility to incorporate these components.



Series B

This family incorporates wood accent pieces into the pole design in order to provide a warmer, more natural feel. The wood also pays homage to Milwaukie’s early history as a mill town. A space for artistic elements (metal cutouts, vinyl graphics, or other media) is provided at the top of the poles. These can be repeated in certain areas to give a block, a street, or other grouping a consistent feel—or they can all be unique. Large icons allow users to quickly orient themselves and navigate to Downtown and Waterfront destinations.



Series C

This fun and modern design celebrates Downtown’s architectural, demographic, and historical diversity with bursts of colors set against weathering steel. The weathering steel (or painted aluminum designed to resemble it) provides a neutral pallet as well as evokes many of the historic brick structures and rail line that are in Downtown. This series uses bold gateways to alert users they arrived in Downtown. The color strips and backers can be coordinated to identify zones or types of features. This series also uses large, centrally located kiosks as opposed to smaller dispersed maps.



4-3
public feedback

The three conceptual designs were presented to the public to solicit feedback in the form of surveys. The survey asked basic demographic questions, presented each of the three design families with a brief explanation, and asked which option was preferred. Additional comments were also taken. The results were tallied and analyzed to determine which design the public preferred and helped to identify design elements that should be refined in future stages. All methods of soliciting design preference were proceeded with email alerts, Facebook notices, and official notices on the City website in order to notify the public.

The conceptual designs were first unveiled in public at a booth at the Milwaukee Farmers Market on May 8, 2016. A printed poster was used to display the design options and representatives from both the City and the contractor were there to talk people through the process and answer any questions about the design and function of the wayfinding system.

The second method for soliciting feedback on the designs was through a static display posted at Milwaukee City Hall. The same poster used at the Farmers Market was set up with blank surveys and a ballot box. The display was set out for two weeks.

Finally, a web survey hosted by the contractor was established. This digital survey

was linked to the City’s main webpage and promoted through social media. This allowed people who could not attend the Farmers Market or physically visit the design display at City Hall to provide comment on the designs.

A total of 240 people offered feedback in the form of completed surveys, with Design A being the preferred choice with 58% of the votes, followed by Design B (32%) and Design C (8%). A full tally of the votes is listed here:

Design	Count	Percent
A	140	58%
B	77	32%
C	19	8%
A and B	1	0.4%
A and C	2	1%
None (no signs needed)	1	0.4%
Total	240	100%

part:5

final design

5-1

refined designs

Once the City selected to proceed with Design Option A, a refined design of the sign family was created. This included slight changes to the structures, colors, and layout of the signs, along with the addition of new elements, such as banners, garbage bin options, and dedicated public parking identity signs. On June 7, 2016, the contractor and City officials presented these design changes to the Milwaukie City Council in order to bring the elected body up to speed on the progress on the project.

The Refined Design package also included a general location map of key decision points (e.g., intersections) that the wayfinding system addresses and a message schedule of the signs (what they say and how they say it).

5-2

final design, construction documents & mock-ups

A third and final round of design changes were incorporated into the overall design of the wayfinding system. These changes included incorporating comments from ODOT on sign design and placement along HWY 99 and HWY 224 and refining the dogwood flower design, among other technical changes.

The contractor created construction documents for the purpose of building out the system. Finally, mock-ups of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian directionals were presented to the City to confirm size, shape, and color of the wayfinding system in real-world conditions.

5-3

city adoption of wayfinding plan & design

On September 20, 2016 the City formally adopted the Wayfinding Design and Plan, noted in Resolution 104-2016.