

The following chapter outlines the concept for the Coyote Creek signage program via a narrative description of general signage standards and concept sign illustrations with alternative designs. Three alternative concepts of sign “families” with different character themes are illustrated:

- Simple
- Architectural (Craftsman)
- Thematic

These are conceptual examples of a “vision” of what may be developed for the Coyote Creek Trail signage. Concepts were presented to the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) and the community at Workshop #3. A summary of their comments are included in this chapter.

Four signage types are illustrated with the themes listed above. These include directional, interpretive, gateway with fence, and major gateway with seating and fencing. Regulatory, safety signage, and trail maps would also be included in the gateway features and along the trail as needed. Trail mileage markers will be developed as part of a citywide “milestone” project. All illustrations of these concepts may be found in the Appendix.

Concept designs for logo signage is also illustrated, in the Appendix. This includes a trail identification logo, directional logo, and a directional street sign.

Further design development of signage features and logos, design review, and fund raising would need to be developed and approved before construction.

## *General Signage Standards*

### **Overview**

The general signage standards below outline design guidelines for the signage program illustrated the Appendix. The topics addressed below are a narrative description of measures that should be followed during future sign development.

### **Sign Intent**

Signage along the Coyote Creek Trail should comply with federal, state, County, Caltrans, and local guidelines. Signage concepts illustrated in this chapter are preliminary and would need to be developed in greater detail to verify accessibility accommodation and meet necessary code requirements. These code requirements include following the Santa Clara County Interjurisdictional Trails Committee appendix to the *Countywide Trails Master Plan Update* (1995) entitled *Uniform Interjurisdictional Trail Design, Use and Management Guidelines* (dated April 15, 1999). This County appendix also includes *Trail Design Guidelines* and *Sign Guidelines*.

Where feasible, the trail design should recognize the intent of the American With Disabilities Act (ADA) and should emphasize accessibility for everyone. The Coyote Creek Trail is a Santa Clara County-wide sub-regional trail route and should be identified and designed as such. Signage along the Coyote Creek trail should seek to:

- provide trailhead landmarks or gateway features that identify the trail and encourage trail use
- provide directional, regulatory, interpretive, mileage markers, and allowable user signage for safety and educational outreach for trail users
- be made accessible and readable to persons of special needs (including provisions for improved visual and tactile readability)
- designed and located along the trail to promotes ease of use and not obstruct circulation on the trail

### Sign Readability

Design incorporating large text sizes, addition of Braille text, contrast of text with sign background, and limited height of text on the structure can help assist in the readability of signage.

- **Color.**
  - o A high contrast of lettering with background of sign should be used for ease of readability, either light characters on dark background or vise versa.
  - o Striping on sign posts or banding

on the base of gateway features should be featured to help call attention to the structure, to avoid undesired collisions and help provide visual cues for signage location.

- o Matte or non-glare finish should be used on letter and numerical characters and background for viewing.
- o The following sign type and color combinations are recommended for County trails:
  - o Stop or prohibition: white letters, red background.
  - o General warning: black letters, bicycle yellow background.
  - o Regulatory signs: black letters, white background.
  - o Warning or guidance in construction and maintenance zones: black letters, orange background.
  - o Services information and allowable use signs: white letters, blue background.
  - o Guide and information signs related to points of interest of recreational or cultural interest: white letters, brown background.
  - o Route markers, guide signs, and mileposts: white letters, green background.

- **Text Size and Font Type.**
  - o Larger font sizes (than readable typically by those with 20:20 vision) and simple font styles used be used for ease of readability.
  - o Sans serif or simple serif type is suggested.

- o Letters and numbers on signs shall have a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and a stroke-width-to-height ratio between 1:5 to 1:10.
- o Text characters should be sized according to the distance from being viewed, particularly to interpretive signage and regional maps at trail entries, where more information is being depicted, verses regulatory signage with just text.
- **Height of Text on Structure.**
  - o Text and graphics should be comfortably viewed from a seated or standing vantage point.
  - o Interpretive signage should be a podium style structure, to provide viewing of the sign.
  - o Directional or informational text over 80 in. in height above the floor should be 3 in. in height font size, with uppercase letters.
  - o Braille signage should be included at the bottom edge of rules and regulations, interpretive/ educational, trail maps and safety signage, if feasible.
  - o Optimum vertical clear distance from the ground plane to the base of graphics and text is 1 foot six inches minimum, for a vertically oriented sign or graphics on a bollard. See the *County Interjurisdictional Guidelines, Trail Design Guidelines*.

### Logo Format

The trail logo should be circular in shape, simple in style and relating specifically to the Coyote Creek Trail. Minimal, yet contrasting colors and a visually eye-catching border could help identify the trail with a simple icon or a graphically unique logo.

These graphic rules of thumb should be translated into a relating sign palette including on-street directional street signs and directional logos. Directional street signage could be triangular in shape so that the shape of the sign itself helps illustrate the direction of the trail alignment. A directional logo could be circular with a thematic logo arrow in the center and the name of the landmark (library, restroom, etc.) noted.

The trail logo should also include the County of Santa Clara logo band, a circular blue band with white text. This states “Santa Clara County – Countywide Trail System” and the name of the trail. In the center of the blue band is the trail specific logo. Dimensions and guidelines are outlined in the County Interjurisdictional Guidelines.

### Location of Sign Structures

Mounting sign posts and bollards for mile markers, directional signs, allowable use signs and other single sign regulatory or safety signs should be optimum 3 feet six inches from the edge of the trail.

The trail shoulder should have an optimum 8 foot height vertical clearance, without encroachment from signage.

Mounting location for Major Gateway with Bench, Gateway, and Interpretive signage should be accessible so that a person may approach within 3 in. of sign without encountering protruding objects or standing within the swing of a gate.

Trail signs should be in clear view from an optimum 100 feet. For sight lines less than 100 feet on curves, densely vegetated areas, or around buildings or hills safety signs and reduced speed signs should be considered.

Trail nodes off of the main trail should be accessible (including benches, signage gateway structures, and interpretive signage) without encroaching on the width of the trail.

At trail segments meeting accessibility guidelines, an International Symbol of Accessibility (ADA) should be identified at the primary entrance and every major junction of the accessible route. Distances of this route should also be labeled. (Trail accessible route definitions and guidelines are outlined in the County Interjurisdictional Guidelines.)

### Detectable Warnings and Paving Cues

*On the Trail.* Awareness strips outlined by the Santa Clara Valley Water District *Coyote Aesthetic Guidelines*, dated December 23, 2000, (a 6 in. wide concrete band with imprinted text across the full width of a paved trail) should be utilized at approaches to trail intersections, trail staging areas, street intersections, and at areas of trail interpretive and gateway signage. Strips are typically located 16 feet from the location being identified. This item is a visual and textural cue for a change in the path.

*At Trail Heads and Staging Areas.* Special paving and textural cues should be used to identify plaza areas, help to guide trail users to the start of the trail alignment itself and enhance to overall appearance and character. Regulatory signs and signs in the pavement should also be utilized to provide visual cues to trail users that the trail is ending at the street. A concept plan of this trailhead concept is illustrated later in the chapter.

### Vandalism Deterrent and Ease of Repair/ Preventative Maintenance

“All trail structures should be designed to be as vandal-proof as possible. Rounded framing members and recessed bolt heads and other hardware should be used for safety.” (p 24, *Uniform Interjurisdictional Trail Design, Use and Management Guidelines*, dated April 15, 1999)

To help deter the potential for vandalism to sign structures, high quality materials; detailed, sturdy construction methods; and long-lasting materials should be used. This will help ensure stability of the structure and help prevent frequent repair in the long-term.

Porous materials such as rock, stone, brick, concrete, and wood should be painted with several coats of sealant or epoxy to help with preventative maintenance to stop the penetration of spray paint. These clear coats of sealant can often enhance the appearance of the natural materials, such as wood or stone.

The City's anti-graffiti program should be contacted for input on final sign structures before final design.

Strategic planting could serve as a deterrent to vandalism but will have a higher cost of maintenance. Plantings, if provided, should not impede or encroach upon the accessibility to persons of special need.

- *Please note that minimal horizontal clearing width should not be less than 3 feet 6 inches from the outer edge of the trail. Minimum vertical distance from overhanging branches or bridge under crossings should be 12 feet.*

### Opportunities for Public Art

The City's public art program should seek out opportunities for custom pieces, including signage, along the trail. This might include the following features:

- design of a coyote sculpture on a gateway podium
- decorative signage panels on the sides and backs of and gateway structures
- ground plane map at trail head and staging areas
- feature near the confluence junction of Coyote Creek and Lower Silver Creek
- a mosaic of the river system under the Highway 280 underpass
- interpretive signage themes, layout, and illustrations
- graphic design of signage panels, trail maps, brochures, and educational material for school groups.

## *Sign Themes and Community Input*

### **Overview**

The three themes presented to the DAC and the community have common design elements within that thematic "family". These common elements are outlined as follows:

#### **Simple**

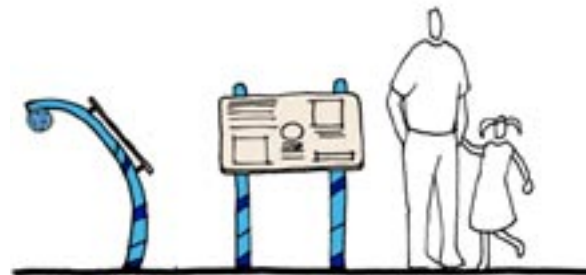
- bent metal posts with one curve
- painted striping with multi-color banding on posts
- curved edges on cantilever signs
- logo emblem near the top of all sign posts
- gateway structures related; single post and double post design

#### **Architectural (Craftsman)**

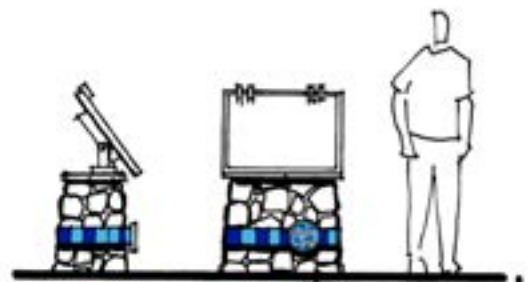
- materials to reflect the Craftsman architecture of the neighborhood, including stone base, wood columns, and decorative trellis
- banding with logo at the base
- tapering shapes to celebrate the ground and the sky, similar to Craftsman style, i.e. wider at the base and at the skyline
- layered trellis features with tapered ends

#### **Thematic**

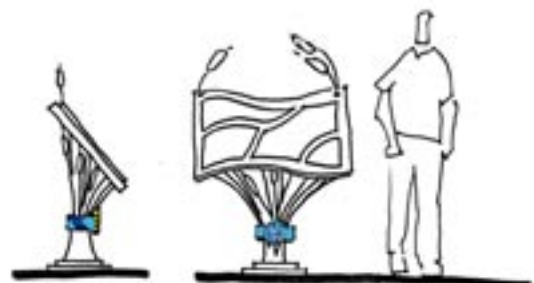
- custom, organic "reed" sign base from metal to reflect riparian habitat
- colored banding around the base
- logo graphic at base
- opportunity for other "theme" pieces, i.e. tree stump, industrial base, etc.
- three dimensional sculptural element



*Simple: Interpretive Sign*



*Architectural (Craftsman): Interpretive Sign*



*Thematic: Interpretive Sign*

### **Overview of Committee and Community Insight**

Concept designs for logos, major and minor gateways, gateway with fence, gateway with fence and seating, directional, and interpretive signs were presented at the DAC and the public. These are found in the Appendix. The DAC desired additional accessibility features and textual cues. The community sought more organic, natural signage pieces that should be implemented from a "grassroots" effort in collaboration with the City.

### **DAC Committee Insight**

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) added insight for accessibility and readability for persons with varying needs. Tactile elements, visual elements, and textural changes in the pavement and on signage are desirable. Fencing crossing halfway (one trail lane width) across the trail at intersections of roads or trail heads are a positive element. This provided added warning, to trail users, to a change in circulation and slows speeds.

Pavement additions of warning strips or "awareness" strips across the trail at trail intersections, interpretive nodes, or approaching trail heads would help provide a visual and tactile cue for a change in the trail, i.e. pavement striping, color variation, textured score marks or material change. Trail, directional, and user logos on bollards and gateway fencing across the trail are an asset, as well as a curved directional post adjacent the trail shoulder; a visible feature as a distinctive shape.

In addition to a vertical landmark feature, such as a podium with an animal sculpture, a similar feature in the pavement should be considered adjacent to it to provide a tactile experience if the landmark is not approachable. A bronze plaque or mosaic in the pavement are a few examples. Also, lighting of trail signage, i.e. at trail heads, should be considered on a case-by-case basis to help aid the visually impaired.

### **Community Insight**

Community input provided a new perspective on the signage palette presented at the workshop. Future sign program development should incorporate the following insight.

The signage themes were redefined. The "Architectural (Craftsman)" theme was desirable, but should only be utilized in distinctively urban areas that related to this architectural palette. The signs could be more refined beyond the "Craftsman" signs illustrated and include County signage and a common element, i.e. banding, logo placement, for signage along Coyote Creek Trail beyond this reach. The "Thematic" sign is a great opportunity for varied designs, such as a sign on a boulder, but should be carefully reviewed by a City authority before implementing. This is to help ensure a high quality piece, that could be enjoyed for future generations. Organic and natural pieces in the open space should help celebrate the "wilder" habitat. One sign theme for the whole trail reach does not seem appropriate, i.e. neighborhood, Watson Park, creekside open space, the signs should change to reflect the segment and its environs.

Community involvement, "grassroots" efforts, and opportunities for public art are desired by the community. These efforts could help encourage community pride and express the uniqueness of the trail, while creating opportunities for multiple generations and varied talented people to collaborate. Getting the children involved, telling community stories, respecting and celebrating the creek habitat, and creating trail amenities that are unique and aesthetically pleasing are a desired goal.

Public art should not be limited to trail signage, but also occur along the trail, i.e. in trail head plazas, trail nodes, or bridges. Partnership with the community for a signage program and public art should be sought. This might help to focus funding towards getting more of the trail built, as well.

### **Summary**

Signage along Coyote Creek should help celebrate the area's unique character, educate people of its history, identity, safety guidelines, blend with the context of the neighborhoods, respect the natural environment, be designed for long-term longevity and ease of maintenance, and be accessible to people of all special needs, where feasible.

A signage program will be developed in greater detail during the master planing and design development of the Coyote

Creek Trail. The signage and logo concepts described and illustrated in this Feasibility Study are a springboard for future signage designs.