



# **INDEPENDENCE PARKS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN**

**SECTION VII:  
WAYFINDING AND  
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**



## SECTION VII : WAYFINDING AND INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

### 7.1 WAYFINDING OVERVIEW

Wayfinding is an important part of any park visitor's experience. Residents and visitors to Independence want to know where a park is located, what services are available and how to find features within a park. A comprehensive wayfinding system can also help park visitors to make connections between parks and extend visits to other parks. Ensuring that a park wayfinding system is integrated with a city-wide system will be important for the visitor experience.

### 7.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in sequential order for developing a wayfinding plan for the City of Independence park system.

#### DEVELOP THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE BRAND AND GRAPHIC STANDARDS

- The city needs to develop graphic standards and a brand as a first step in developing a wayfinding system for the city and its park system. "Branding Your City" ([http://miplace.org/sites/default/files/CEOsforCities\\_BrandingYourCity.pdf](http://miplace.org/sites/default/files/CEOsforCities_BrandingYourCity.pdf)) is an online resource that gives a comprehensive look at how the process of branding a small city might unfold.
- Branding and graphic standards must be designed to be used on signage and other wayfinding tools including on-line usage. The elements developed in this step can then be applied to a city-wide wayfinding plan. Quality branding should also contribute to the emerging tourism development efforts in Independence and Polk County.

#### DEVELOP A CITY-WIDE MASTER WAYFINDING PLAN

- A city-wide master wayfinding plan should be developed next that places an overlay on all city functions for consistency and ease of use by city residents. (The City of Stevenson WA in the Columbia Gorge offers a good example in the region for a city master wayfinding plan.)
- The park system would be called out in a separate chapter and wayfinding considered from a park visitor's perspective. Consideration should be given to the needs of park visitors which may be different than other needs such as for pedestrians, vehicles or bicyclists.
- Specific sign types and sizes should be designated for uses in parks that fit into the overall city's wayfinding system. It should be a seamless process to walk from town to a city park.

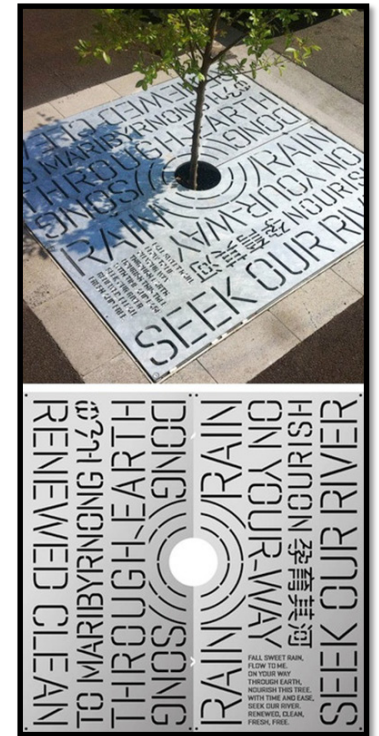
#### DEVELOP A PARK SYSTEM MAP

- A park system-wide map should be developed that can be printed and distributed and posted on the city's website in a PDF format. During the wayfinding planning phase, consideration should be given to future use of technology and GPS for smartphones and other hand held devices. Increasingly different visitor groups are using personal devices for navigation and wayfinding. This technology could also be built out to include the historical district (i.e. walking map of the downtown Independence National Historic District) and interpretation of the park system. Models for the use of technology integrated with wayfinding and interpretation can be found here with the Portland Metro Area Intertwine Alliance app and the Point app from Canogle in the San Francisco Bay area.

#### DEVELOP A PARK NAMING POLICY

- When developing the park system wayfinding component of the overall city wayfinding plan, consideration should be given to develop a park naming policy. Currently the system has one unnamed park and as property is added to the system, more parks will need to be named. A policy should include how, why and when a park might be named such as history (i.e. Pioneer Park) or specific individuals (i.e. John Pfaff Park).

As Riverview Park is further developed to the south, discussions should occur about how to name additional units to reduce confusion with residents and visitors and ensure consistent signage. The name "Riverview Park" might be used for the overall location name and the specific unit added to ensure specificity (i.e. Riverview Park – Soccer Fields)



## CONSIDER PUBLIC ART FEATURES AS METHOD FOR WAYFINDING

- As part of the future overall wayfinding planning process, public art pieces should be considered as an alternative method for wayfinding and a means to enhance a visitor experience. In many towns and cities, functional public art can become iconic in a community and add to the cultural fabric. The decision process, however, should be well thought out and transparent to avoid community strife about public art and its purpose.



## 7.3 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

There does not appear to be any city graphic design or branding standards in place at this time. When the overall wayfinding plan for the entire city is developed, a style guide should be developed for publications, web, interpretive and wayfinding signage to guide employees and future contractors in the development of wayfinding solutions.

The 2011 City of Independence Tourism Marketing Plan also mentions the need for branding development to guide tourism development in the city.

The 2009 Ash Creek Trail 90% Submittal Drawings indicates through initial designs the look for trail identity signage, bollards and posts, ADA signage and interpretive signs. These elements should be included in a future city-wide wayfinding plan.

## 7.4 PURPOSE OF THE PARKS WAYFINDING PLAN

A wayfinding plan should strive to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide guidance for developing a wayfinding system (key word – make connections between all of the “parts”) for parks and recreation but also the entire city including regional tourism efforts
- Brands the park system/city in a recognizable manner (“I’m in Independence OR”)
- Helps citizens and visitors to orient themselves to (and within) parks in the city including trails and connector routes (i.e. sidewalk routes to parks)

## 7.5 PRINCIPLES FOR WAYFINDING DEVELOPMENT

Principles can guide the development of a wayfinding system. The following are principles and concepts offered for consideration in the development of a wayfinding plan for the city and park system.

### DEFINE A SENSE OF PLACE

Through comprehensive branding and consistency, a wayfinding plan can give residents and visitors a sense of place and belonging.

### MAKE WAYFINDING INTUITIVE

When designing and developing a new system, think in terms of a new resident or visitor to Independence. Create a system that requires less thinking and more viewing.

- Ease of use – make the process easy to use without confusion or questions
- Use sight lines – link pieces of the wayfinding system visually – can I visually see the next part of the system?
- Limit choices – don’t overwhelm users with details – what are my key choices?
- Provide guidance at intersections – at locations where routes converge, consider a users question – where do I want to go?
- Consistent color and design – the branding process will provide guidance for colors, fonts and design – ensure consistency and use the standards
- Elegant simplicity – during the design process, seek out a simple, clean look that acknowledges the historical roots of Independence but does not restrict it for the future

### INTEGRATE THE PURPOSES AND STAKEHOLDERS

During the planning process, ensure all stakeholders are consulted and all components are included.

- Stakeholders – residents, city government including parks, commercial and retail interests, school district and neighborhoods. Consult with county and state government (ODOT) agencies to ensure compliance with any existing regulations.
- Transportation Modalities – walking, hiking (parks), bicycling, running and driving (possibly even canoeing or kayaking on the Willamette River)
- Tourism Needs – reference the 2011 Tourism Plan and the 2014-2015 Polk County Rural Tourism Studio efforts

## 7.6 COMPONENTS OF A WAYFINDING SYSTEM

The following components of a wayfinding system should be considered.

- Vehicular – how will the system work for vehicles – personal and commercial vehicles?
- Pedestrian – how will the system work for pedestrians and their different methods of travel – walking, running and bicycling?
- Street Identity – how does the look of street signage change – street names and directionals?
- Destination Identity – how does the system incorporate the branding look and feel of Independence as a city?
- Application to a Park System – how does a system also meet the different needs of a park system and incorporate it into a bigger plan?

## 7.7 PROGRAM DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

During the design, development and implementation of the wayfinding plan, the following elements need to be reviewed for the final plan:

- Consider different audiences – who is the audience for the wayfinding system in all its forms? Residents, tourists, park users are a start.
- Use universal design principles – designing a wayfinding system from the beginning by ensuring access for all will eliminate the need to add components later – consider color blindness, size of fonts, English language learners and height of signs.
- Address bilingual signs/symbols – using international symbols and icons will reduce the need for multiple languages in text. However, decisions will need to be made on how to address the need for English and Spanish in the wayfinding system given the changing demographics of Independence.
- Material Selection and Fabrication – What criteria should be used to select specific materials and fabrication costs? Consider the following questions:

### Pictographs



- o Weather Conditions – will the sign and wayfinding materials selected hold up to local weather conditions?
- o Maintenance – will the materials be easy to clean and maintain?
- o Vandalism – will the materials withstand vandalism and can graffiti be cleaned off if needed?
- o Cost – will the wayfinding system materials be able to be maintained over time (10-15 years) given existing budgets?
- o Style, look and feel – do the materials (texture, color, shape, etc.) fit into the brand for Independence?

## 7.8 INTERIM WAYFINDING DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The development of branding and graphic standards and a city-wide wayfinding plan will take some time but the need for wayfinding and signage in the park system in some instances may be immediate. Guidelines for this interim time period are as follows:

- Consistency – Be consistent in the use of materials and designs for signage to reduce confusion or lack of identity for the city
- Alternative Methods – Consider the use of paint on sidewalks or trails that give direction but are not permanent
- Temporary vs. Permanent – Use methods and materials that are less expensive and temporary to avoid developing wayfinding signage that needs to be removed in a year or two when a new system is implemented.
- Testing – If budgets and time permit, test out different materials and methods to get user feedback. For example, does the use of an icon suffice vs. the use of words?
- Experimentation – Is there a design program at a local community college or university that might take on the development of a temporary wayfinding system and test out materials and designs as a class project or a senior project?



## 7.9 INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE OVERVIEW

The National Association for Interpretation defines interpretation as a “mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource”. Interpretation in Independence parks can tell the stories that will connect residents and visitors to the city’s parks and the rich history of the region. Effective interpretation can also build allies for support of the city’s parks and garner cooperation in solving resource management issues.

## 7.10 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

With past efforts in developing quality interpretive panels at the Riverview Park Amphitheater, the City of Independence Parks is poised to further use interpretation as a means to enhance the park visitor experience.

### INTERPRETATION INTEGRATED INTO PARK FUNCTIONS

Integrate interpretation and interpretive elements into a new wayfinding system and any existing or new infrastructure where appropriate. See the following examples:

- Example – use sidebars on wayfinding kiosk orientation maps or tourism walking maps (“Did you know?”)
- Example – use icons of a historical or natural style carved into wooden bollards or posts or in metal castings
- Example – use interpretive panels in common places to encourage cooperation with park rules or tell the story of resource conservation
- Example – appropriate images can be burned, branded or carved into park benches, tables or shelter posts



### GRAPHIC STANDARDS AND A STYLE GUIDE FOR FUTURE INTERPRETIVE PRODUCTS

Standards should be compatible with the graphic look and feel of a new wayfinding system and other city branding efforts in the present and future (i.e. signage, maps, brochures, apps and websites).

## INTERPRETIVE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUAL PARK UNITS

The following classification process should be used to determine what and where interpretive features should be developed in the park system.

- Parks with major historical or natural history stories to tell, consistent visitation, destination or regular use by community or school groups
  - Does the park have significant cultural or historical features to interpret?
  - Does the park have consistent visitation throughout the year?
  - Is the park used regularly used by groups for education purposes?

*Example interpretive elements to consider for installation – Stand-alone kiosk that includes orientation, interpretive sign panels, live programming (guided walks, talks, tours)*

*Example parks – Riverview Park, Pioneer Park, regional trail system*

- Parks with limited natural or cultural history elements/features to interpret
  - Does the park have 1-2 interpretive stories to tell?
  - Is park visitation seasonal in nature?
  - Does the park have less use?

*Example interpretive elements to consider for installation – Interpretive sign panel*

*Example parks – Mt. Fir Park, Wild Fang Park*

- Neighborhood Parks used primarily for play or exercise
  - Is park use primarily for children’s play or exercise?
  - Does the park have any cultural or natural history stories to tell?
  - No specific interpretive elements for installation or development
  - Add interpretive-related “teasers/did you-know” to sidebars of any orientation panels installed

- Develop a Needs Assessment for Park Educational Use  
Develop a short needs assessment or survey for the school district and teachers to determine current level of use and future potential to use the parks for field learning experiences
- Develop a Functional Public Art Program  
If a public art program is developed for use in city parks, consider art pieces that are functional for public use (i.e. a drinking fountain that tells a story, a park bench with branded historical images, a picnic shelter with carved posts using Native American-themed images) and are connected to the interpretive stories in the region.



## 7.11 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Existing interpretive resources in the park system include:

- Riverview Park – Series of interpretive panels mounted on pillars at the street entrance to the amphitheater; condition is good; regular maintenance is needed to maintain these signs
- Mountain Fir Park – A series (2-3) of interpretive signs were previously developed by partners as part of mitigation plan. These signs should be removed and professionally replaced in the future when the park is scheduled for any future renovation or construction.

Existing interpretive resources in the community include:

- Independence Heritage Museum – The museum contains historic archives and photographs that would be useful for future interpretive publications, panels or website information
- Downtown Historic District Walking Tour brochure – In future printings, this resource could direct visitors to city parks with interpretive features and stories and vice versa – park visitors should be made aware of the region’s history.



## 7.12 PURPOSE OF THE PARKS INTERPRETIVE THEMES

- Provides guidance for future development of interpretation in the park system
- Offers a means to integrate interpretation into existing or future park features (i.e. wayfinding signage, building features, railings, ground covers)
- Develops potential concepts to pursue with potential future partners (i.e. developer/hotelier/restaurateur) on the Valley Concrete Site

## 7.13 PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- Define Your Audience – Define the audience for any interpretive product, program or feature and plan for that audience’s needs. A target audience is more than “the general public” or all visitors.

- Focus the Message – Interpretation should focus on the story, feature or landscape that the public can see in front of them or nearby. For example, interpretive signs on the Willamette River at Riverview Park should tell the story of the river and not the forest at Pioneer Park.
- More than Information – Interpretation is more than sharing information. We have (too) much information today. Park visitors want to KNOW—FEEL—DO. What interpretive experiences can we design that provide this?
- Pictures Tell A Thousand Words – Any kind of interpretive media that uses text (panels, brochures, guidebooks or web, etc.) should limit the amount of words used and instead think about images that convey the message. We are a visual culture today that reads less and less text.

## 7.14 INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretation is guided by themes (complete sentences that convey the “who, what, why and so what” of the interpretive focus). The following themes can guide the development of the telling the stories in Independence Parks:

- The Willamette River originally provided a means of transportation via ferries and river boats but also brought fear and foreboding with its historic spring flooding. The river today is the backdrop for the renaissance of a new Independence.
- Native peoples, such as the Kalapuya (now recognized as the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde) lived in the Willamette Valley for similar reasons as today’s residents – abundant food sources, a mild climate and resources for daily living.
- Trees and forests enhance Independence Parks by providing a myriad of services such as wildlife habitat, shade, clean air, watershed protection and a respite for park visitors.
- The fertile soil, mild weather conditions and long growing season of the Willamette River Valley has made agriculture and specifically the growing of hops, a major influence in the growth and settlement of Independence as a town.





- Originally arriving to work in agriculture, Hispanic families continue to make contributions to the Independence community.

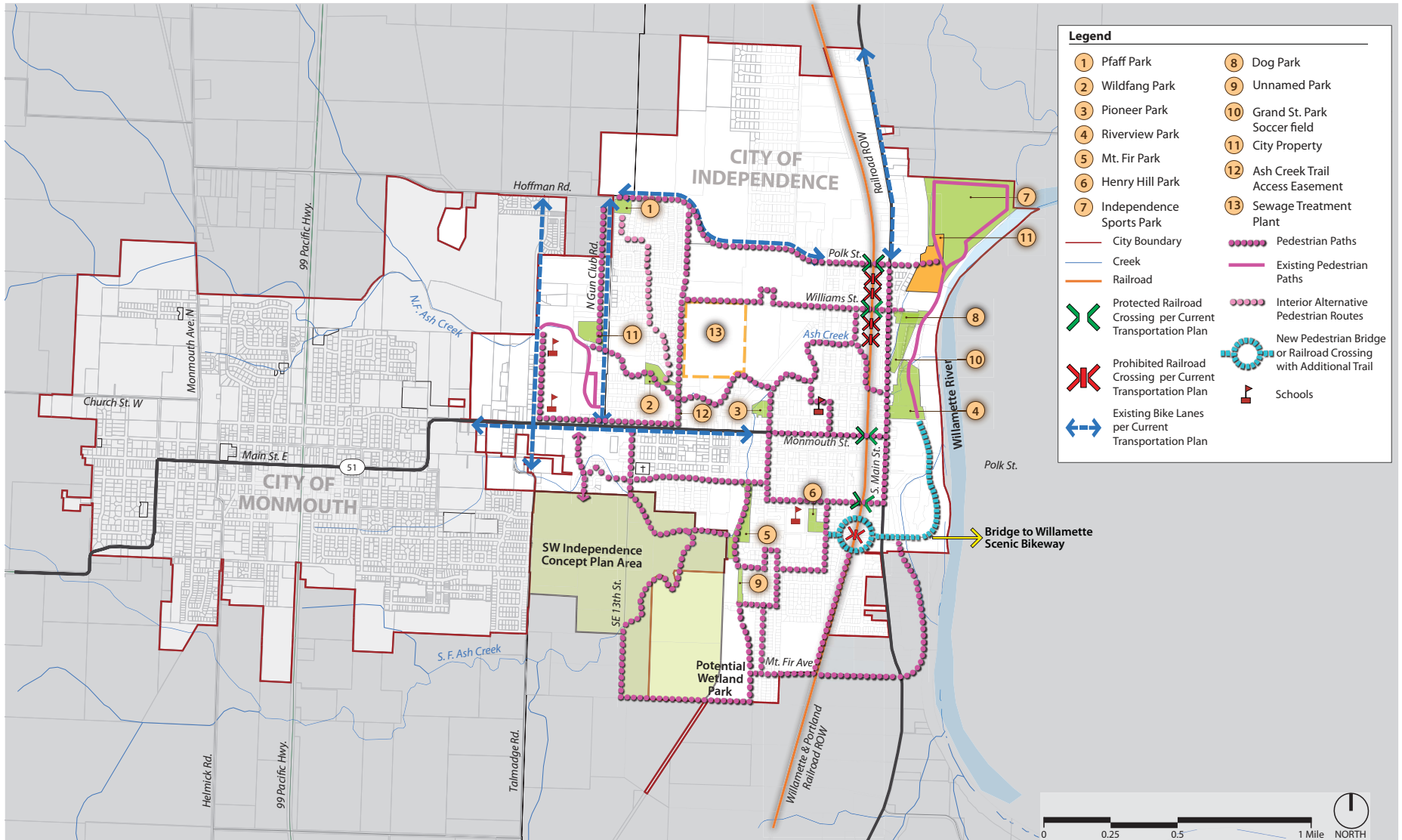
## 7.15 PROGRAM DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION – PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

Development of future interpretive resources (panels, printed media, programming, special events) should consider developing partnerships to leverage resources and integrate into existing efforts. The following ideas are included for future consideration:

- New Hotel Development (Valley Concrete Site) – work with any new developer and designers to tell the story of Independence and the region through interpretive features. Example – Overall hotel design, interpretive art work in the building and guest rooms, room details and historical photography.
- Future Park Concessions – require any future park concession offering related services to park visitors to include interpretation (i.e. guided kayak or canoe trips) in their business plans. Example – Concession employees could be required to be National Association for Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guides to ensure quality interpretive experiences.
- Tourism – Plans for a Park Interpretive Program should be coordinated with emerging tourism planning efforts (City of Independence Tourism Plan 2011, Polk County Rural Tourism Studio 2014-15) Interpretation can enhance the experience for visitors to the region as well as city residents. Example – Develop interpretive signs downtown in the historical district using the existing Riverview Park panels as a starting point and the historical walking tour



Section VII: Figure 1 - Pedestrian Routes



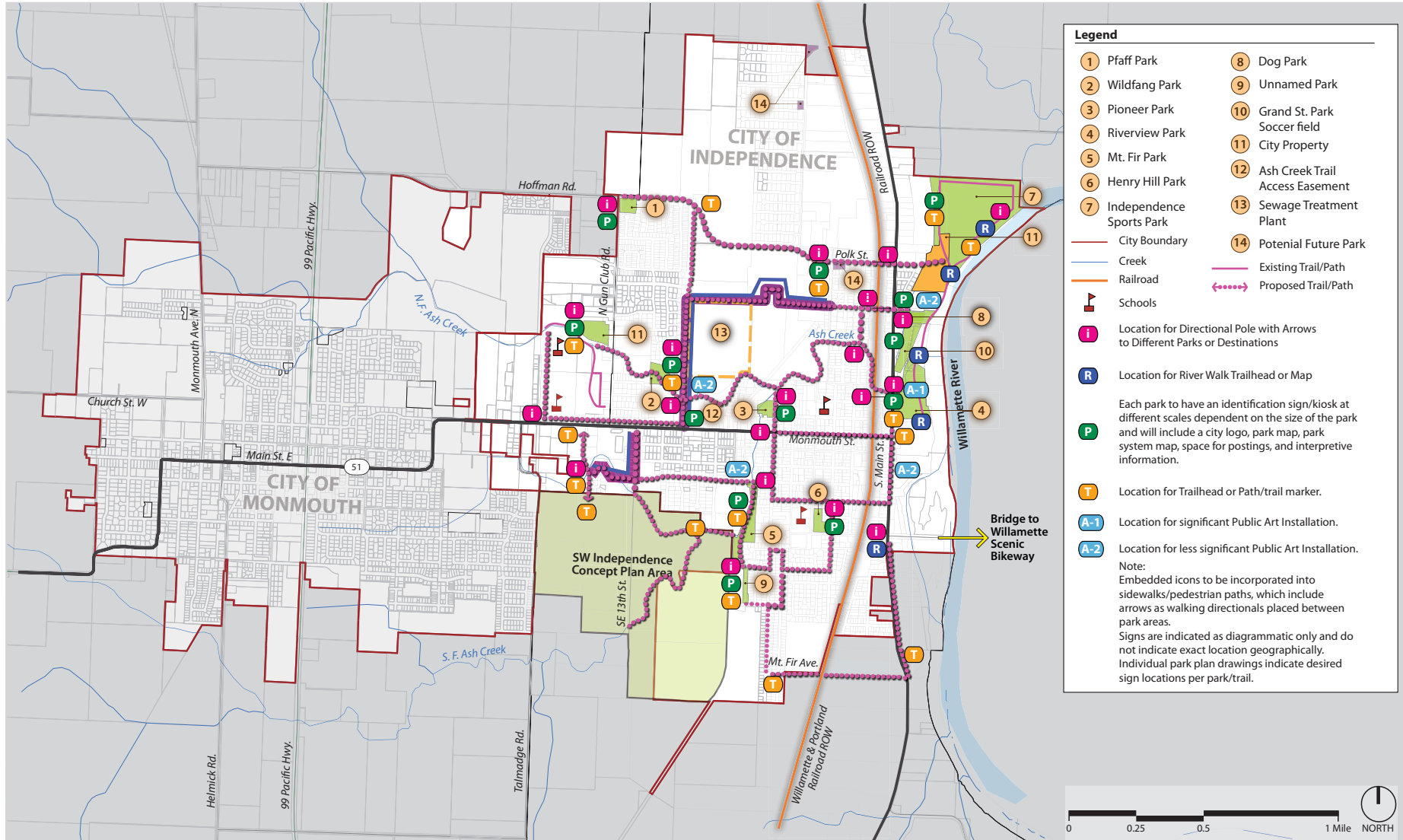
**Legend**

1 Pfaff Park	8 Dog Park
2 Wildfang Park	9 Unnamed Park
3 Pioneer Park	10 Grand St. Park Soccer field
4 Riverview Park	11 City Property
5 Mt. Fir Park	12 Ash Creek Trail Access Easement
6 Henry Hill Park	13 Sewage Treatment Plant
7 Independence Sports Park	

— City Boundary	●●●●● Pedestrian Paths
— Creek	— Existing Pedestrian Paths
— Railroad	●●●●● Interior Alternative Pedestrian Routes
➤ Protected Railroad Crossing per Current Transportation Plan	⊕ New Pedestrian Bridge or Railroad Crossing with Additional Trail
⊗ Prohibited Railroad Crossing per Current Transportation Plan	🏫 Schools
↔ Existing Bike Lanes per Current Transportation Plan	

Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: **Pedestrian Routes**  
 CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section VII: Figure 2 - Wayfinding Signage Locations



Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: **Wayfinding Signage Locations**

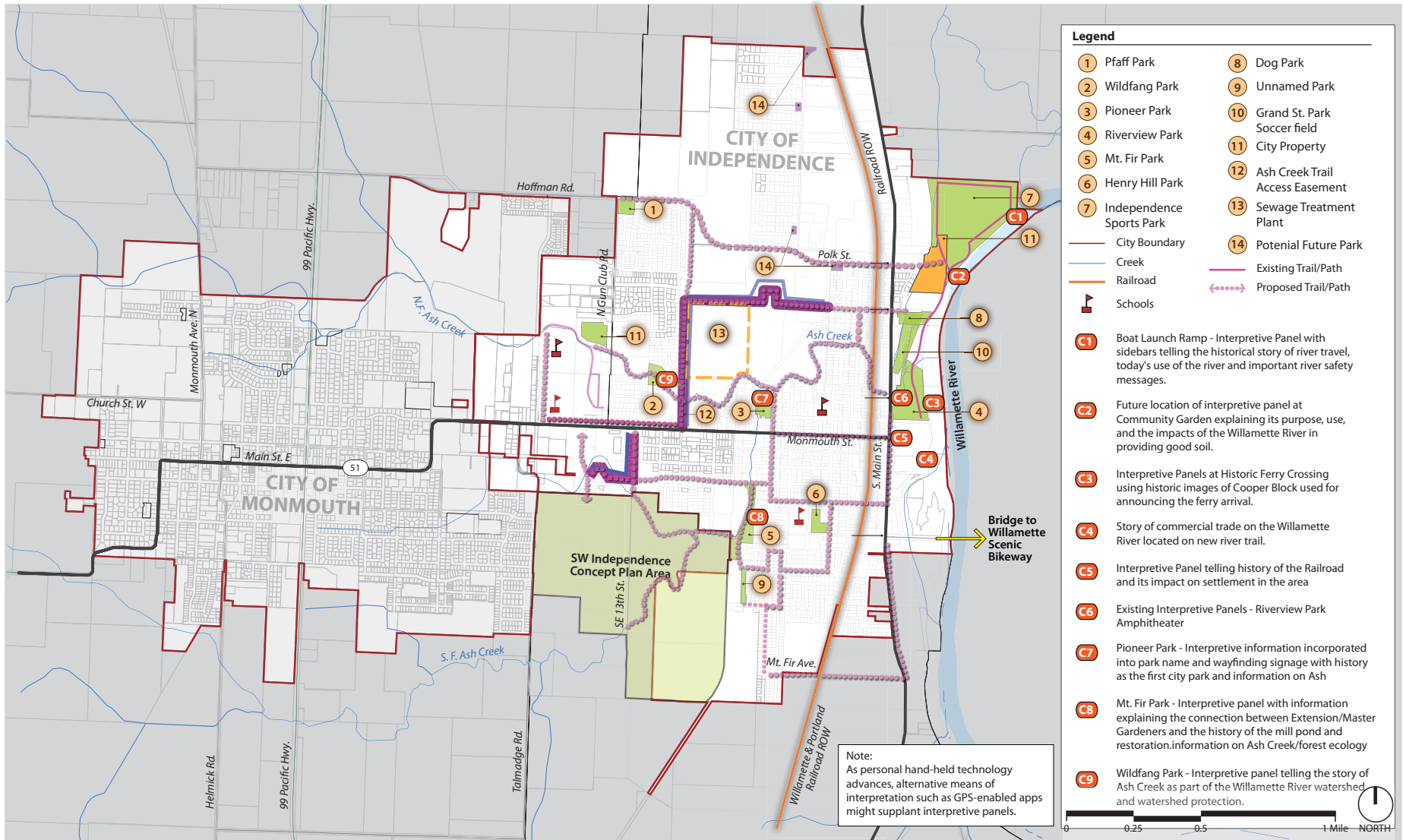
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

MARCH, 2015



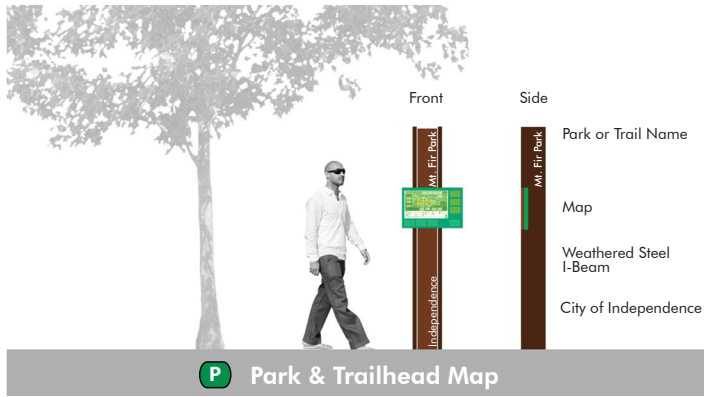
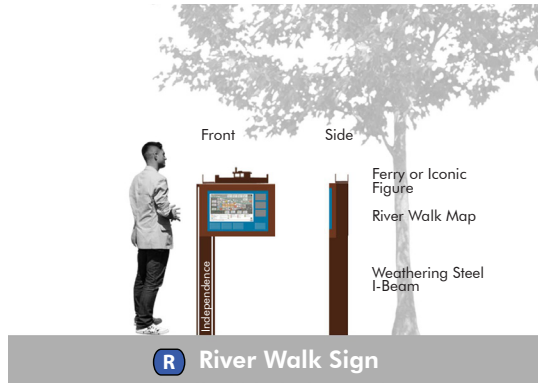
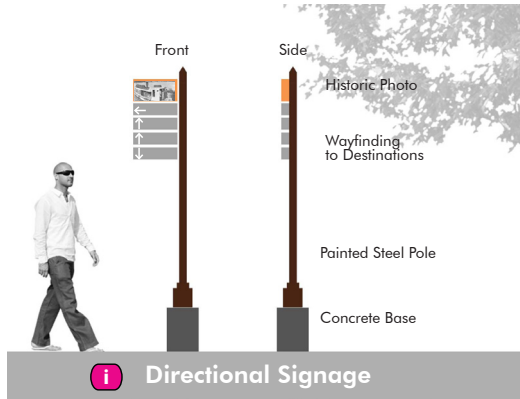


Section VII: Figure 3 - Interpretive and Cultural Signage Locations



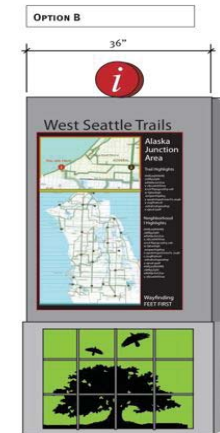
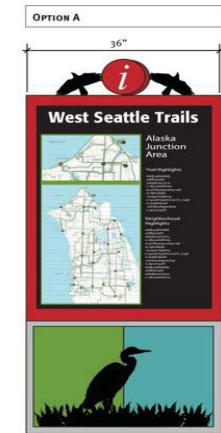
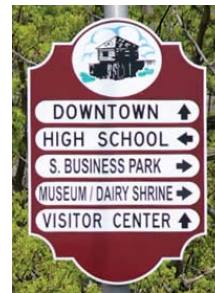
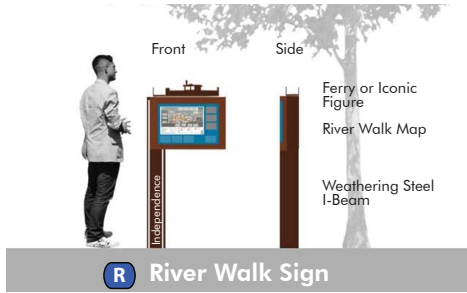
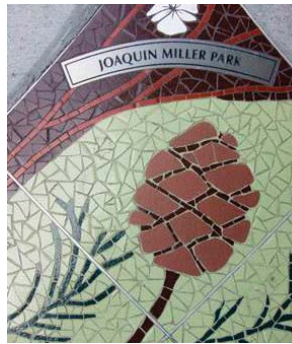
Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Interpretive and Cultural Signage Locations  
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section VII: Figure 4 - Wayfinding Sign Typologies





Section VII: Figure 5 - Precedent Images





Section VII: Figure 6 - Short Term Wayfinding Solutions: Precedent Images





