



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



# Interpretation Strategy

## Media Format

### January 2012

# **Interpretation Strategy**

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January 2012

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*Cover photo: Interpretive sign at Tanner Springs Park*

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*“Probably the most common error in creating interpretive matter of all kinds derives from the fact that the writer has in mind the question: What is it I wish to say? It is of no importance whatever, as yet, what I wish to say. I have not reached that point. The important thing is: What would the prospective reader wish to read? And what can I say in brief, inspiring, and luring terms about this area in language that he will readily comprehend?”*

*~ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage**

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# Introduction



Interpretation is a communication process and management tool designed to inspire action – encouraging people to find meaning and develop relationships with our cultural and natural heritage, as well as reducing visitor impact on the site. Portland Parks & Recreation’s long-range plan, *Parks 2020 Vision*, states:

*“Portland’s parks, public places, natural areas and recreational opportunities give life and beauty to our city. These essential assets connect people to place, self and others. Portland’s residents will treasure and care for this legacy, building on the past to provide for future generations.”*

One way to enhance the connection between people, place, self, and others is through interpretation. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) recognized the importance of developing an interpretation strategy in its *2020 Vision Marketing and Communication Strategy*, which calls for using a broad array of techniques to reach diverse audiences.

PP&R is the steward of 11,000 acres of land in more than 250 locations, historic gardens, Pittock Mansion, and other cultural places. PP&R promotes the stewardship of parks, natural areas, and historic properties through signs, websites, brochures, social media, and guided activities to communicate the value of these unique resources. This interpretation plan lays out objectives, guidelines, general messages, and strategies for signs, telephone, and web-based information. It does not address interpersonal interpretation, such as guided walks and stewardship activities, nor does it address directional or safety signage.

Interpretation is important for many reasons. Interpretation enhances the direct and meaningful connection between the visitor and the landscape, flora, fauna, cultural history, geology, and other unique features in the areas they are visiting. It also offers the opportunity for Friends groups and other park stewards to share their efforts and let visitors know about their partnerships with PP&R in caring for our parks.

Interpretation:

- Allows visitors to discover nature and cultural resources for themselves.
- Has the possibility of providing equity across languages, ages, abilities, and cultures through a variety of media.
- Promotes understanding of historic and evolving human and cultural relationships to the land and water.
- Promotes stewardship by providing opportunities for the visitor to appreciate and understand the ecology and history of parks, waterways, and watersheds.

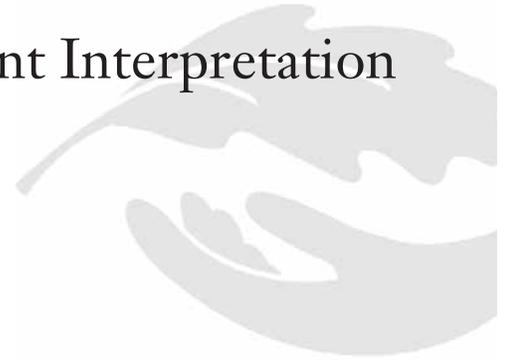
## Introduction

- Encourages visitors to take positive action to minimize park impacts, and to follow the rules.
- Provides enjoyment and elicits curiosity.
- Directs visitors to sources of additional information.



*Columbia Slough habitat improvement sign*

## Current Interpretation



Presently, Portland Parks & Recreation has a scattering of interpretive signs and brochures, and limited web-based information. General PP&R sign guidelines were developed in 1998 which did not address interpretive sign content (Appendix A – Sign Guidelines). A field-based sign inventory of 12 natural area parks completed in the summer of 2010 evaluated 46 signs (Appendix B – Sign Inventory). Using a rubric, the signs were scored on content, appearance, condition, and location. Overall, most signage is of fair to good quality with a few excellent signs. Excellent signs include the ‘Holly Worldwide’ and ‘Holly Portland’ signs at Hoyt Arboretum, and the ‘Wetland Plant Communities’ and ‘Healthy Stream Habitat’ signs at Tideman Johnson Natural Area. The majority of signs reviewed contained too much text which makes them less visually appealing and requires the reader to spend more time with the sign. Many lacked a coherent theme. Most have not been maintained or the information is out-of-date.

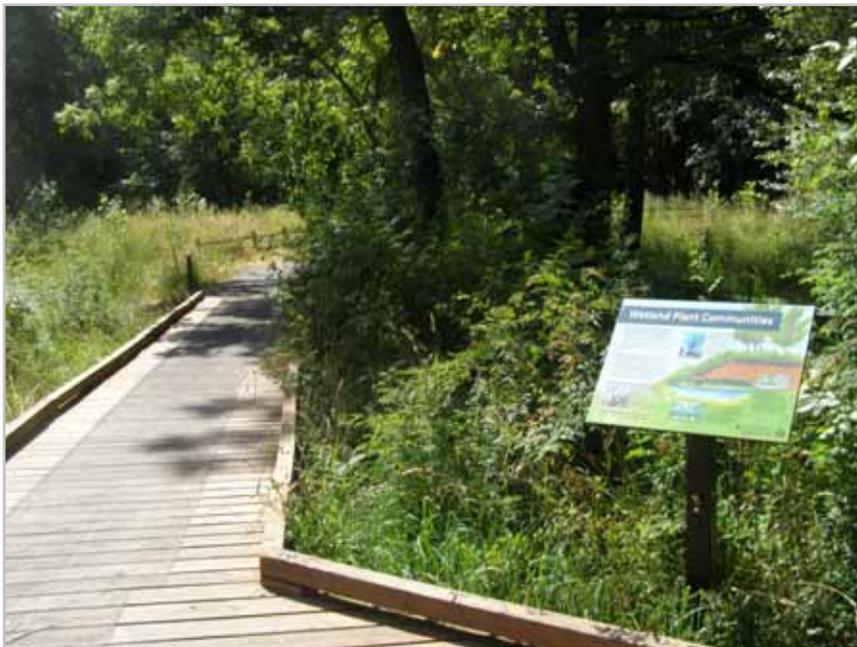
There are a few informational brochures for park sites and buildings, as well as interpretive brochures for nine parks and natural areas, including Hoyt Arboretum and Urban Forestry. Generally, the interpretive brochures include a site map; a short explanation of natural features, history, and activities; rules and regulations; and the PP&R website address. A design template is used so that all PP&R-generated brochures have a similar look. Brochures produced by PP&R’s partners have a variety of appearances and information. The challenge has been to keep all of these various brochures updated to reflect current conditions and information.

PP&R provides interpretation on a variety of web pages. For a few sites, there is a link to a wildlife list. Information can be found on Find a Park, Portland’s Urban Forest, No Ivy League, and Environmental Education web pages. PP&R sends out a few electronic newsletters, such as *Tree Bark*. Facebook postings also include interpretation.

The sign inventory (Appendix B) found that many signs on PP&R properties are paid for, designed, and installed by Friends groups or other City bureaus, such as the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Water Bureau. There is some cooperation, but no standard policy outlining the role of PP&R or others concerning signage. Some non-PP&R signs do not meet PP&R guidelines for materials, design or content, and at times are installed without PP&R input. This can result in lower-quality signs that may not be consistent throughout a site or that are confusing to the public. Sign maintenance responsibilities are often not determined or funded.

## Current Interpretation

In PP&R's *Signage Standards Manual* (Appendix A), the Signage Specification section describes custom sign submittals. The material goes to PP&R's sign liaison in the Capital Projects Group. Currently, content, including graphics and text, are usually reviewed by PP&R's environmental educator or other staff depending on content. The format is to be reviewed by PP&R's graphic designer to ensure consistency with our graphic standards, including PP&R's logo and website address. Heavy workloads, last minute requests, and time constraints often limit staff's ability to review materials initiated by PP&R staff, other agencies or partners.



*Tideman Johnson interpretive sign*

PP&R envisions a set of interpretation materials that encourage understanding, enjoyment, respect, awareness, and ethical behavior designed for a visitor's short attention span. Information will be researched, place-based, and long-lasting.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL FORMATS

*Discovery* – Identify cultural, historic, current, and/or ecological features of the site such as flora, fauna, geology or use by Native Americans.

*Inspiration* – Inspire park users to correlate experience and information to a greater level of appreciation and thinking about the area they are visiting, and to take action to protect and steward the site.

*Stewardship* – Encourage users to actively participate in protecting, restoring, and enhancing the area, and reducing their impact on the site.

*Orientation* – Provide location of sign reader relative to park features and facilities, with a 'You are Here' indicator. Include PP&R logo and website.

*Inclusive and Accessible (Universally Accessible)* – Communicate across languages and culture through a variety of formats. Ensure sign placement meets ADA guidelines.

*Format* – Information is available through a variety of on-site facilities, web-based platforms, podcasts, and social networking site links.

*Standards* – Materials must meet systemwide standards for graphic design and, at a minimum, include:

- PP&R logo
- City of Portland seal
- PP&R web address
- Phone number for additional information

Other bureau logos, Friends groups, partners or other identifiers may also be included and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

*Involvement* – Ensure that target audiences and local stakeholders are involved and participate in interpretive planning as part of the planning activities for the site.

*Review* – PP&R staff will have final review of all materials generated by PP&R and other City bureaus to ensure consistency of message and content, and for adherence to PP&R graphic standards. When working with community partners (e.g., Friends groups), PP&R will include graphic and content review responsibilities in their partnership agreements.

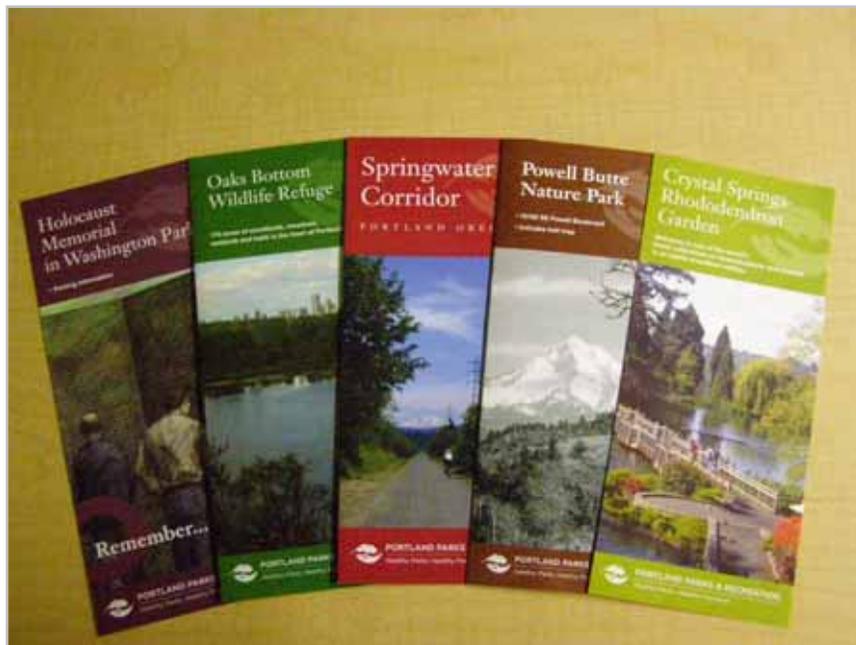
## Strategy

### GENERAL MESSAGES OR THEMES

All materials should have one major theme or message that inspires the user to learn more or take action. The message should resonate with users after they have left the site. The theme should focus visitor attention to a specific feature of the site, and relate to the organizational mission. The five major themes are:

1. Natural resources: Habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants; geology; connection to a watershed/ landscape; and environmental benefits.
2. Cultural history: Native American present and past uses, post-European settlement, and present use.
3. Social: Tranquility of spirit, education, and recreation.
4. Sense of place related to human needs: Connecting people to the site to encourage ownership and understanding why it is unique.
5. Stewardship: Citizens have a responsibility for protecting and enhancing parks in the city through compliance with rules and regulations, volunteering, advocacy, and funding.

Research has shown that the message should be topic specific and have a ‘hook’ that catches the user within the first three seconds. The entire message should be delivered in approximately three minutes (Ostergaard).



*PP&R brochures for park sites*

The plan focuses on three implementation strategies to close the gaps in interpretation:

1. Audience diversity
2. Format and design
3. Review

### ***Strategy 1 – Audience Diversity***

One of our challenges is meeting the diverse needs and abilities of our users, youth to elders, who visit our parks and website. Portland Public Schools reports that there are 100 languages spoken by the children attending K-12 grade schools in the Portland area. Addressing how such a diverse group accesses information requires PP&R to use a variety of methods for interpretation. While an increasing number of users rely on web-based technology such as smart phones to access information, others still want to read signs or brochures, and not all users have access to new technologies. Interpretation needs to address and be accessible to our diverse population.

#### **Actions**

- Provide formats in a variety of languages; target languages by site based on community demographics. This is more difficult to do with signage so decisions need to be made on a site-by-site basis.
- Involve target audiences and local stakeholders in interpretive planning.
- Design signs and materials to meet ADA requirements; include the PP&R Disability Advisory Committee in development and review.
- Provide web-based translations.
- Maintain readability; the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level should be less than 6.0 (easily understood by the average 6th grade student).
- Emphasize visuals to convey messages.

### ***Strategy 2 – Format and Design***

There are a variety of formats that are being used for interpretation to reach diverse audiences, increase ease of updating information, and require less on-site maintenance (Appendix C – Other Interpretive Methods). Again, more park users have access to mobile phones, web-based information from home, and smart phones; this allows them to listen, see images, and read text before visiting or while at the site. PP&R embraces these newer technologies while continuing to provide interpretation at the site. There are other opportunities to explore newer formats such as mobile apps, podcasts, high capacity color barcode, and videos.

## Implementation

Regardless of the format, there should be a visual recognition so that people quickly associate the site with PP&R. The visual format should include City of Portland seal and PP&R logo, PP&R's web address, and a phone number.

In general, all formats should:

- Have a 'hook' – visual, verbal, or both – and must catch attention in three seconds.
- Have an identifiable one-sentence idea or theme for the format. Divide the theme into sub-topics and communicate through prioritized ideas.
- Relate theme to organizational mission.
- Connect content to big picture, story or context.
- Relate to everyday life, use five senses, and make seasonal changes appropriate for year-round use.
- Show a unique viewpoint.
- Focus visitor attention on specific features of the site.
- Use active verbs, colorful language, and short simple sentences. No jargon.
- Don't tell everything; encourage visitors to explore on their own. Direct them to more sources of information.
- Keep materials current by periodic reassessment and referring to online resources.

### **Place-based Signs**

Traditionally, PP&R has used place-based signs for interpretation. These signs assist users in becoming better stewards by providing an understanding the ecology, history or a unique cultural feature of the park. There are many challenges with place-based signs, including maintenance, keeping the information current, and fading. At large sites, there are often many different design formats. The typical lifespan of a sign is 5-10 years depending on construction materials, content, and placement. These guidelines should be followed for all signs:

- Consistent design throughout site.
- Standard rectangular shapes and sizes.
- Big enough to be visible; small enough to be unobtrusive.
- Earth tones or colors that blend with site.
- Dark writing on a light background or vice versa.
- Sustainable, resistant to weather, graffiti, and vandalism, environmentally-friendly materials with at least a 10-year wear guarantee.
- 1/3 visuals, 1/3 text, 1/3 blank space; visually attractive.
- Use graphics for interpretation and photos for historical topics (neither just for decoration).
- Big print, sized hierarchically, with a carefully chosen typeface.
- 75 words, no more than 125, broken into blocks of about 40; time needed to read sign should be less than three minutes.
- Located off major transportation trails; on side trails or pull-offs so as not to distract from the natural area or cultural site and interfere with trail use.

- Low to the ground (low side should be 30 inches from the ground) or in places that are unobtrusive while still being visible.
- Spaced far enough apart that viewers cannot see more than three signs from any area of the site.

### **Publications/Brochures/Written Material**

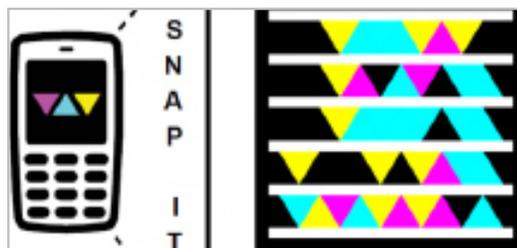
PP&R has very few interpretive brochures or fact sheets. Though they are helpful at the site, there are now other ways to convey the same information to the public. Users have expressed the desire to have a paper trail map or information points at the site for wayfinding, directions, and rules. Paper maps are problematic; it is challenging to get them updated and stocked at the site, and there are limited funds for development and production. PP&R should consider phasing out its brochures, and, instead, add information to each site's Find a Park page on PP&R's website.

### **Web-based Information**

The popularity of smart phones and home computers makes web-based information the ideal format for providing interpretation to visitors. These formats – photographs, apps, podcasts, videos, blogs, Twitter, and high capacity color barcode – would allow PP&R to reach a broad audience of users in multiple languages, keep information current, and eliminate physical maintenance. The challenge will be funding and/or personnel time for development and updating. Some of this information can be developed as open source, but if PP&R prefers a consistent format and message, then web-based information will need to be developed in-house or by a contractor using PP&R's guidelines.

Currently, content can be posted on PP&R's Parkfinder application which generates a web page for each site, or under the topic area Nature on PP&R's home page. However, the limitations of the City's web portal (of which PP&R's website is a part) make it a challenge to post large files or applications. One solution would be to develop an independent website for interpretation and provide a link to it on the PP&R website. In the absence of resources to develop another website, partnering with nonprofit organizations and community groups to develop and post information on their websites could expand access.

PP&R has guidance for setting up and maintaining a Facebook group page (Appendix D – FaceBook Guidelines). Other standards and policies would need to be developed for new web-based information formats. Examples of current web-based materials and formats:



A grid of colored triangles encodes data; a smart phone user clicks an image of this "barcode" and is taken to a web page that provides information specific to each barcode.

### *Videos*

Metro Nature Minutes with Naturalist James Davis: [www.metro-region.org/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=30895](http://www.metro-region.org/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=30895)

### *Apps*

- GoExplore™ Tour Guide Apps: [www.barzadventures.com](http://www.barzadventures.com)
- Heritage Trees: PDX Trees available at the iTunes Store

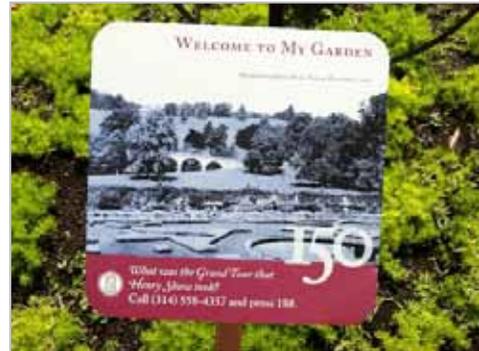
## Implementation

### *Podcasts*

Naturepodcast: <http://www.nature.com/nature/podcast/>

### **Telephone Access**

Information accessed by mobile phone is another newer technique to convey environmental information. A small sign (12" x 18") is displayed at a particular site with a 'headline' sentence or question. A telephone number for additional information is shown. The technology to record the information is simple and relatively inexpensive. Again, the recordings would need to be short and focused. The signs are simple to fabricate and replace if necessary. The challenge will be to maintain the signs and deal with vandalism.



### ***Strategy 3 – Review***

Interpretation design and production for PP&R sites is done by PP&R staff, other bureaus, Friends groups, and partners. To ensure consistency of design, message, and format, the following review procedure is proposed for media format of interpretation until additional staff or a contractor is hired (see Resources). Adequate time needs to be scheduled for review and revisions. A minimum of two months should be allocated for reviews.

### **Process**

1. Development and Content – for natural areas and nature topics, the environmental education coordinator will develop and/or assist with the message, images, content, and design for all media formats. For other interpretation, an appropriate staff person will be assigned.
2. Content Evaluation – the materials will be evaluated by a target audience for readability level, message clarity, understanding of concepts, and effectiveness. Changes and modifications will be made based on their feedback.
3. Design and Content Final Approval – the site supervisor will give final approval.
4. Park Standards – provided and reviewed by the graphic designer to ensure standards are met and logos are correct.
5. Posting – review by web administrator.
6. Sign Construction – material, fabrication, construction, and installation methods should be reviewed by a project manager in the Capital Projects group.
7. Sign Placement – coordinated between the site ecologist and the environmental education coordinator for natural areas. All park sign placement must be approved by the site supervisor. Permanent signs placed within the e-zone may need environmental review.

# Resources & Recommendations



PP&R has very limited resources, both staff time and financial, invested in non-personal interpretation. There is not a specific budget item for developing, producing, and maintaining signs, publications or web-based information. Signs are often funded as part of a project. Web-based information is posted on the website by current staff who have many other responsibilities.

## **Option 1: Dedicated Staff and Budget**

1. To begin, a half-time (.5), permanent staff person or the equivalent provided by a contractor (\$50,000 annually).
2. An annual budget for design, production, and maintenance of interpretation. Budget costs include:
  - Topic, design, production, and maintenance
  - Specific app, bar code, podcast development
  - General social media updating (blog, Facebook, Twitter)
  - Web-based information on *PortlandParks.org*

## **Option 2: Partnerships**

Partner with Friends groups, nonprofit organizations, and/or community groups to develop the interpretation for specific sites, identify grants, and assist with production. PP&R standards would still be implemented with this option.

## **Option 3: Open Source**

Open Source development for apps, barcodes, videos, and podcasts. PP&R could request that our standards are used. PP&R staff would most likely have to work with the developer. There is less control but it would essentially be free.

The advantage of Option 1 (having a permanent staff and/or budget) is that it allows PP&R to research, develop, review, and stay current on interpretation and to build a program. It gives PP&R staff, other bureaus, and Friends groups one contact. Projects in all formats would most likely be completed in a timely manner. The disadvantage is that the position and money are not presently included in the budget and with declining budget funding, this position is most likely not a priority for the bureau.

Options 2 and 3 have the advantage that the majority of the project would be completed outside the bureau. Staff development and review time would still be needed. The disadvantage is that PP&R is dependent on others to fund and develop information for our sites. Development

## Resources & Recommendations

would be ad hoc and possibly inconsistent. It is difficult to maintain accurate, up-to-date information using another organization's resources. PP&R would not be building its own interpretation program.

### RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Only a few strategy components can be phased in prior to full budgeting. Even limited implementation will require reallocation or additional work for staff. It is unrealistic that much more could be done without dedicated funding.

#### *Phase 1 – No additional staff or budget*

- Refine and implement sign design, production, and installation standards.
- Implement the review procedure.
- Additional interpretation information placed on *PortlandParks.org*; information to be developed by staff, schools, interns, community groups, and others.

#### *Phase 2 – Dedicated staff time*

- The bureau's Community Relations group develops open source guidelines, then provides incentives for individuals to design and produce apps, barcodes, videos, and podcasts.
- Encourage users to post photographs to PP&R Facebook wall. Feature a specific area each month. Also, develop an area for park users to post photographs.
- Develop a prioritized list of interpretive opportunities and seek grant funding to implement.

#### *Phase 3 – Dedicated staff and budget*

- Develop and fund an interpretation program.

# Conclusion



Interpretation provides an opportunity for PP&R to engage our diverse park users in learning about our parks, natural areas, gardens, and historic buildings. These five major themes assist visitors' understanding of site features and relate to the organizational mission:

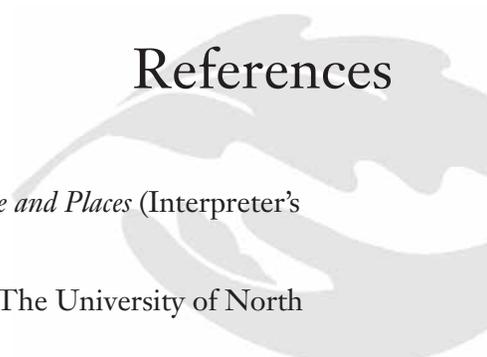
1. Natural History/Science: Habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants; geology; connection to a waterway, watershed or landscape.
2. Cultural history: Native American past and present, post-European settlement, and/or current use.
3. Social: Tranquility of spirit, education, and recreation.
4. Sense of place: Connecting people to the site to encourage ownership and understanding of why it is unique.
5. Stewardship: Citizens have a responsibility for protecting and enhancing parks in the city through complying with rules and regulations, volunteering, advocacy, and funding.

Presently, PP&R uses signs, brochures, and limited web-based information for interpretation. Well-designed and placed signs should continue to be a component of our interpretation strategy. The new direction for interpretation is web-based formats – apps, podcasts, videos, barcodes, and photographs. The first step is to boost the interpretation information on our website, Facebook page, and blog. In the future, PP&R will need to invest resources to develop and implement a program. A budget item for an interpretation program will need to be added. The budget should fund additional staff or provide money to hire a contractor to design, produce, and maintain priority formats.



*Lower Macleay interpretive sign*

# References



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10. Definitions Project: [www.definitionsproject.com](http://www.definitionsproject.com)
11. Podcasts: [www.npca.org/media\\_center/podcasts/](http://www.npca.org/media_center/podcasts/)



*Stephens Creek interpretive kiosk*

# Appendices



Appendix A: *PP&R Park Signage Standards Manual 1998*

Appendix B: *Interpretive Signage and Other Interpretive Methods in Portland Parks & Recreation Natural Areas 2010*

Appendix C: *Interpretive Formats*

Appendix D: *PP&R Facebook Instructions*

# **Portland Parks and Recreation**

## *Signage Standards Manual*

OCTOBER 1998

Owner

**Portland Parks & Recreation**

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Graphic Design Consultant

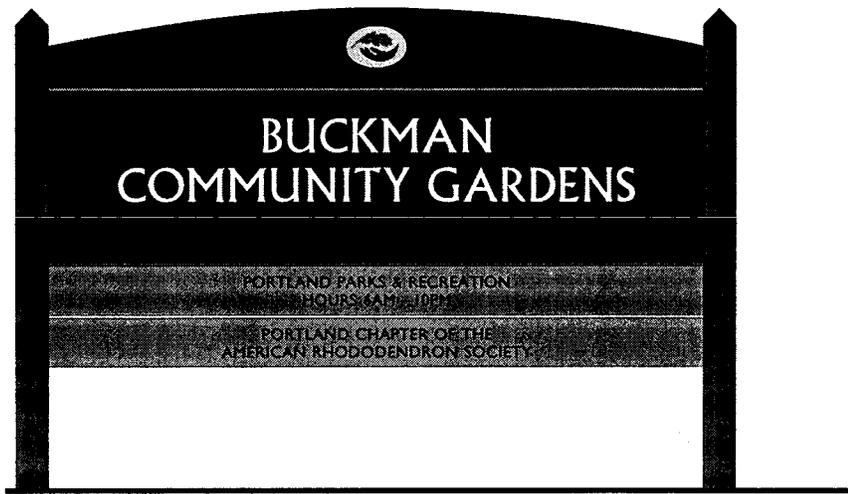
**Mayer/Reed**

319 Southwest Washington Street  
Suite 820  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
Tel 503.223.5953  
Fax 503.223.8076

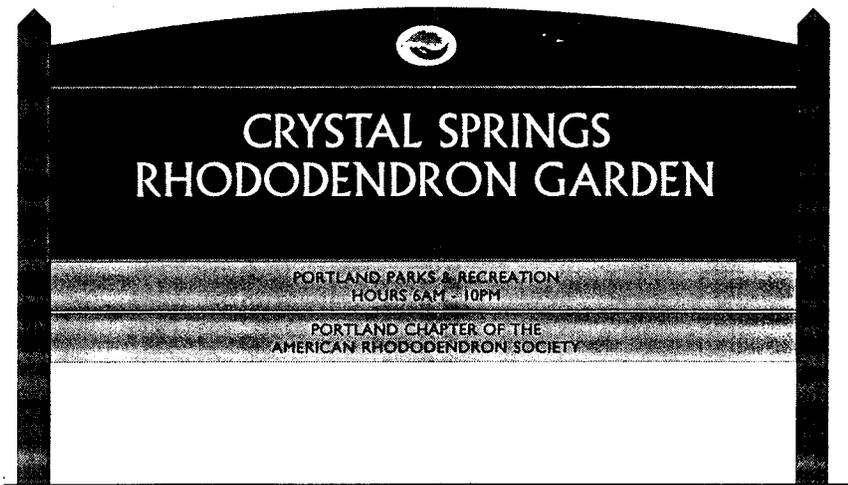
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<b>Sign Type C</b>	BUILDING I.D. SIGNS	<b>3.1 - 3.5</b>
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<b>Color Samples</b>		<b>6.1</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	ENGINEERS" DRAWINGS	



**Sign Type A4:** 7'-0" sign panel width



**Sign Type A5:** 8'-0" sign panel width

## A

### Park I.D. Signs

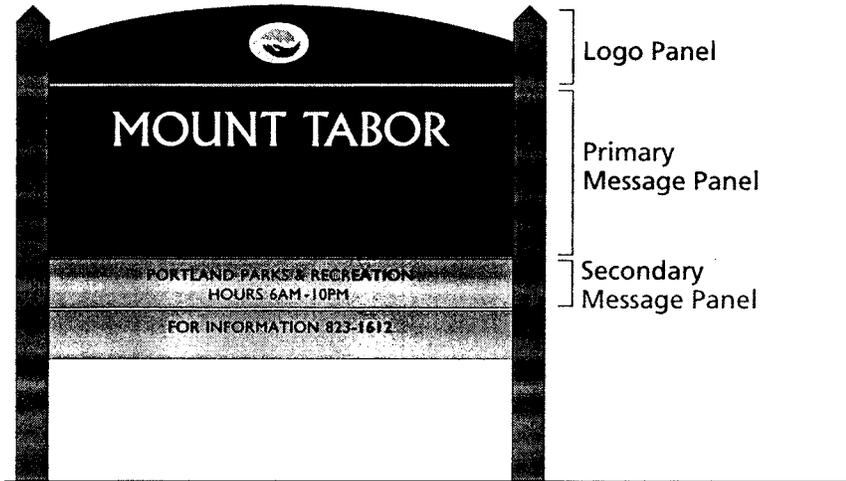
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

Add secondary message panel(s) as needed. Increase post length by 6 1/4" for each additional secondary message panel. Maintain 16" clearance from bottom of sign panel.

Refer to Construction Details page 1.4 for sign type key.



**Sign Type A1:** 4'-0" sign panel width



**Sign Type A2:** 5'-0" sign panel width



**Sign Type A3:** 6'-0" sign panel width

**A**

**Park I.D. Signs**

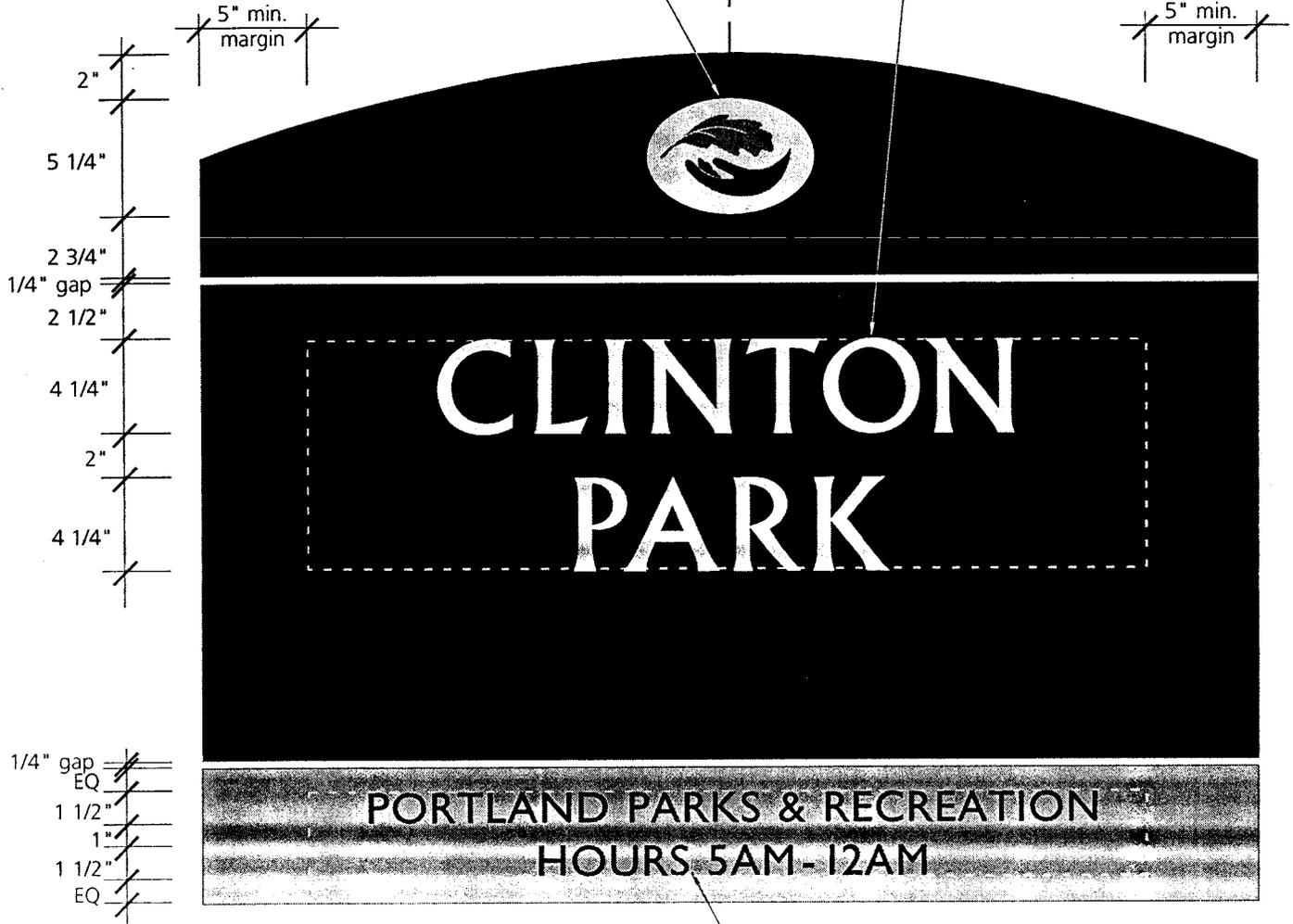
Scale: 1/2"=1'-0"

Add secondary message panel(s) as needed. Increase post length by 6 1/4" for each additional secondary message panel. Maintain 16" clearance from bottom of sign panel.

Refer to Construction Details page 1.4 for sign type key.

Flush inset porcelain logo medallion. Option A: Routed with paint infill. See Detail 2, Page 1.6.

Routed letters with paint infill.  
Color: P4.  
Typeface: Albertus.  
Letterspace as shown.



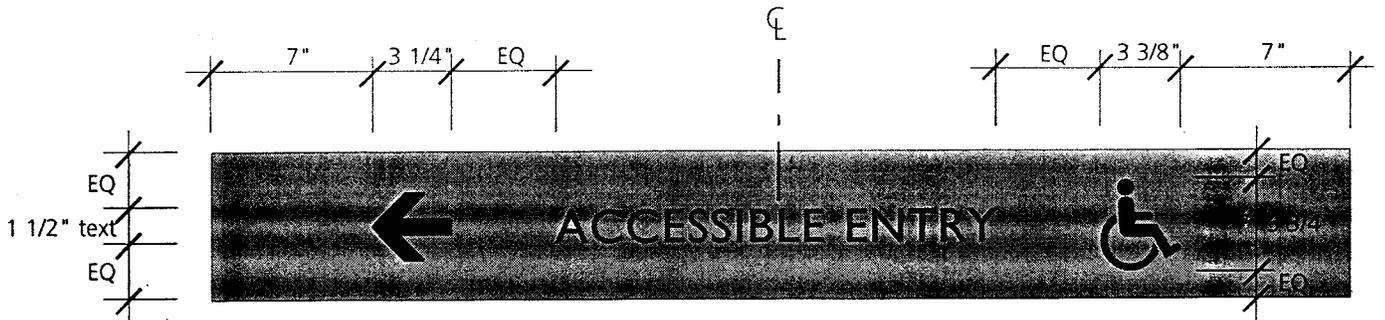
**Typical Layout**

Scale: 1 1/2" = 1" - 0"

Routed letters with paint infill.  
Color: P6.  
Typeface: Gill Sans Regular.

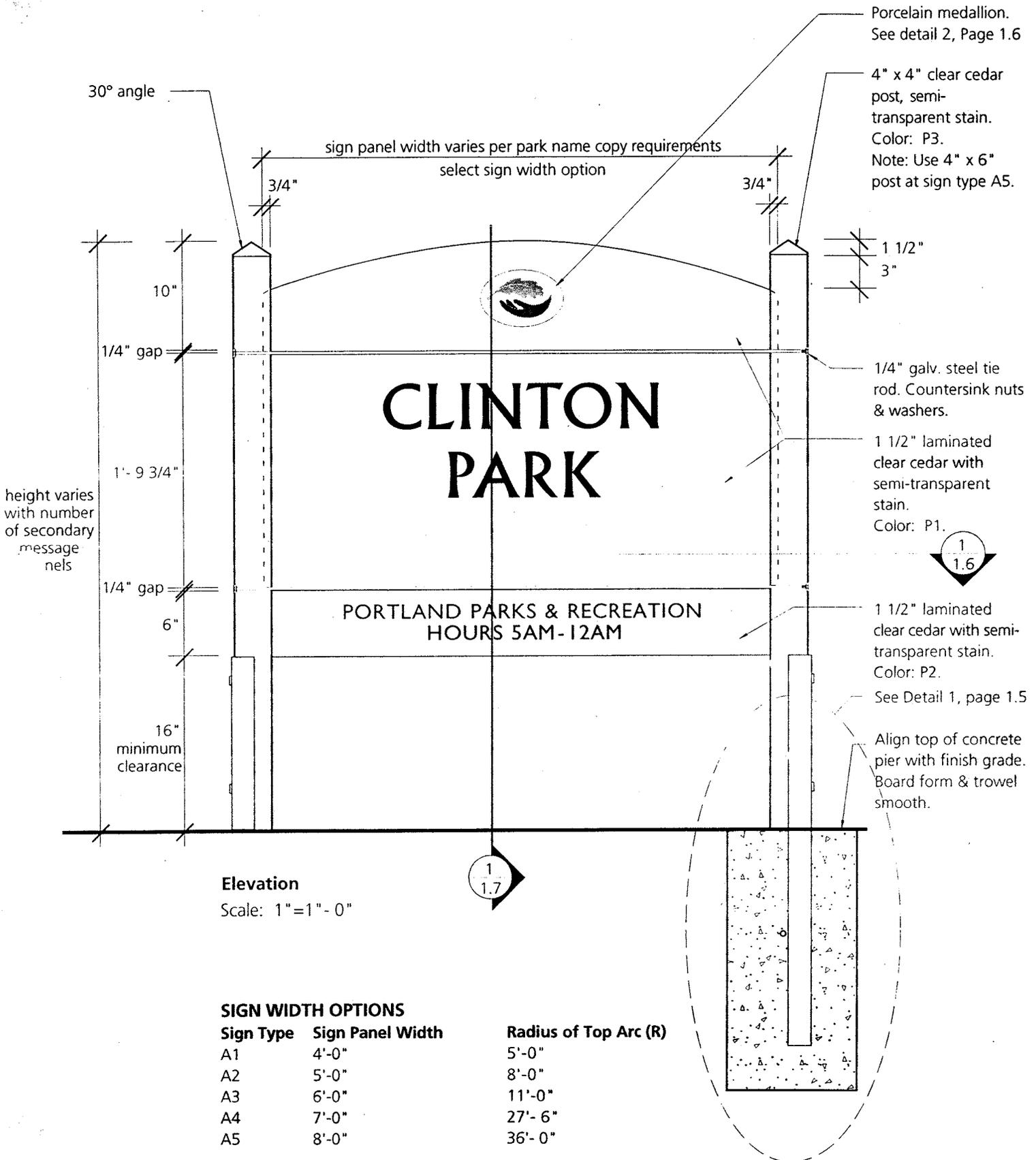
**NOTE:**

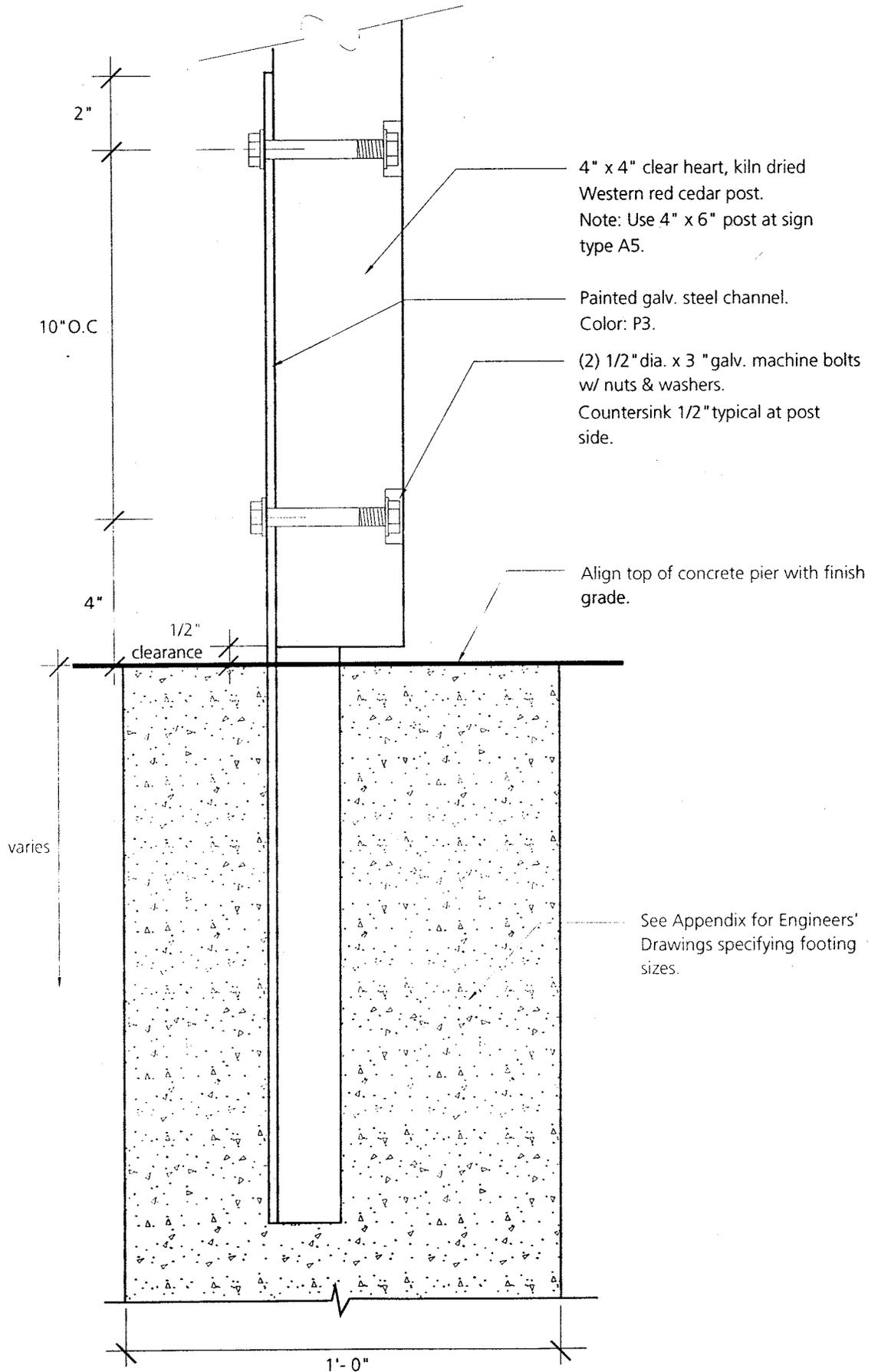
If message exceeds 5" margin allowance, use the next largest sign panel. 2 lines of text maximum.



**Accessible Entry Layout**

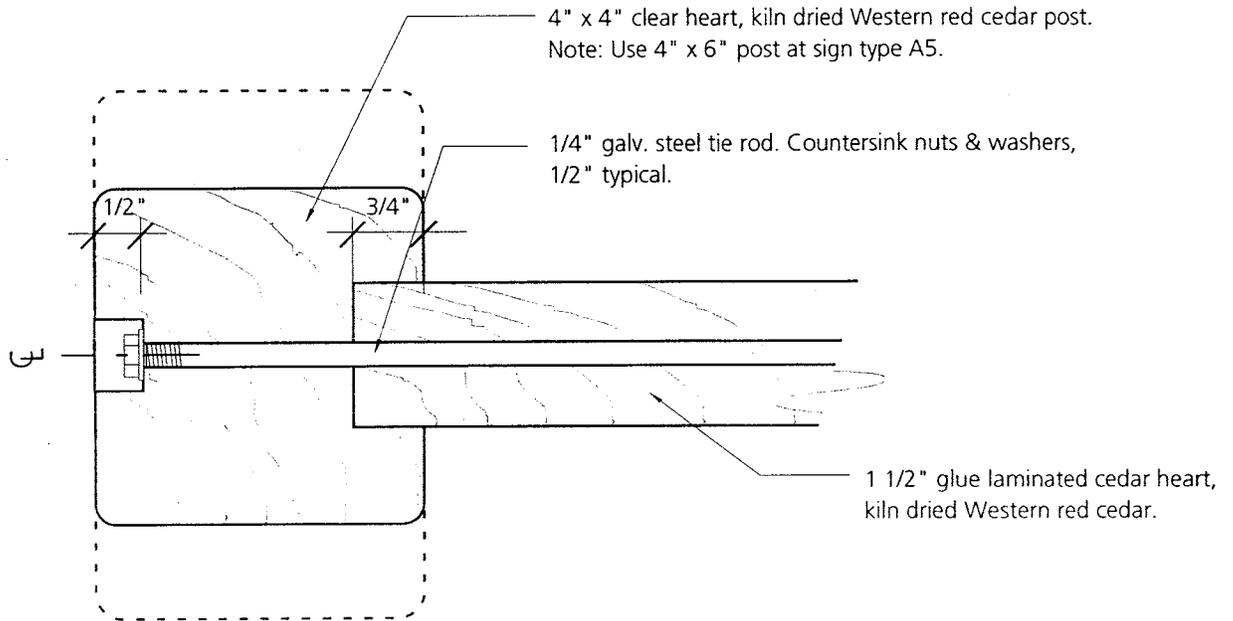
Scale: 1 1/2" = 1" - 0"





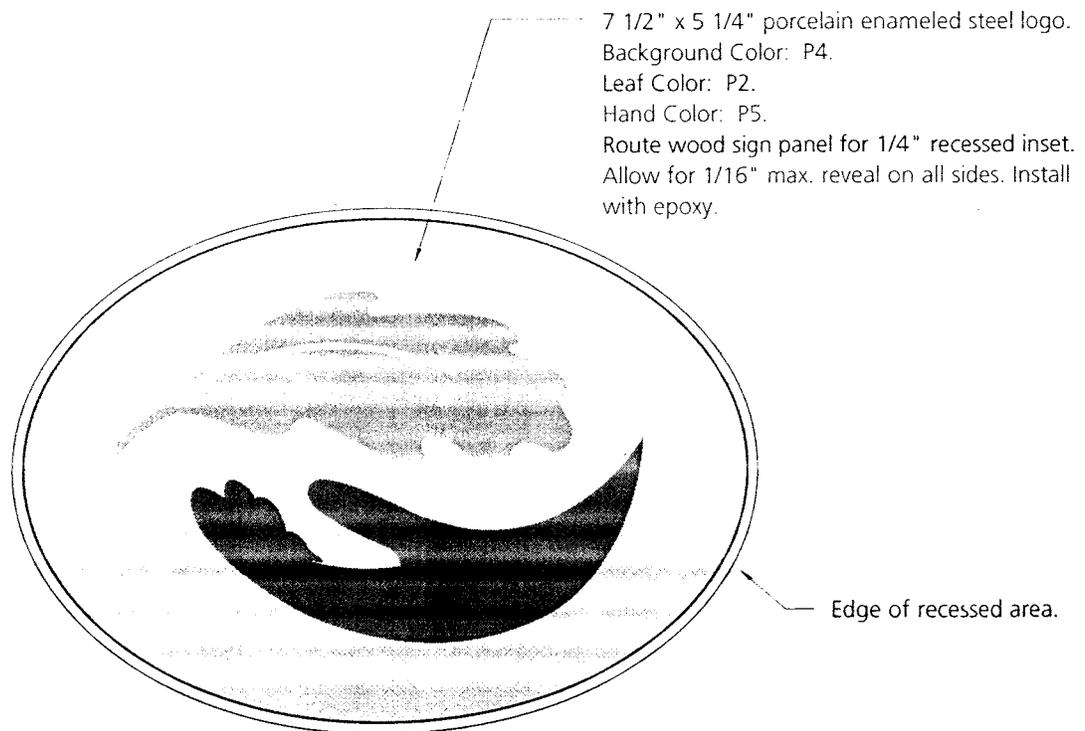
**1 Base & Footing Detail**

Scale: 3" = 1' - 0"



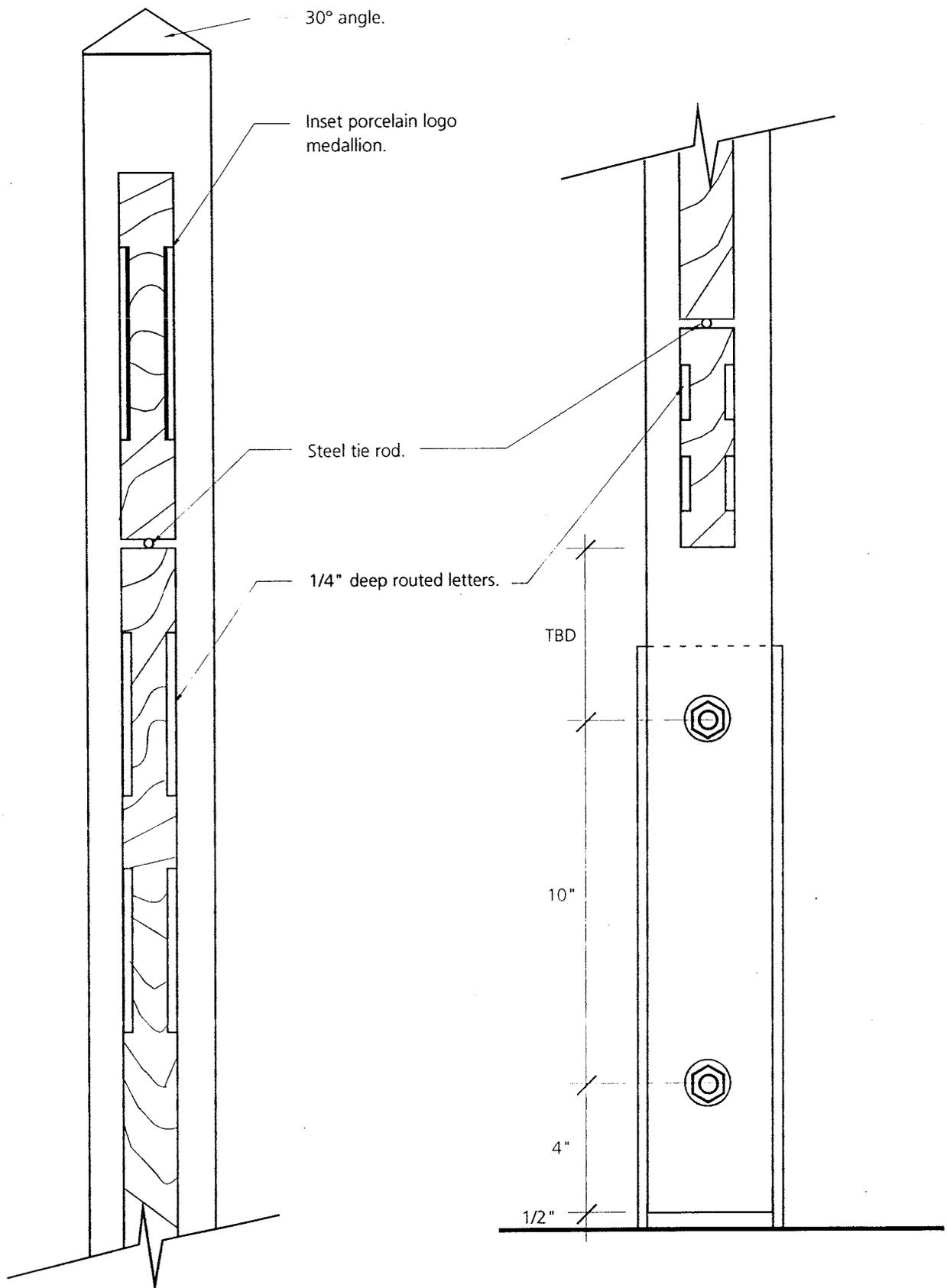
**1 Post/Panel Connection Detail**

Scale: Half Full Size



**2 Porcelain Medallion**

Scale: Half Full

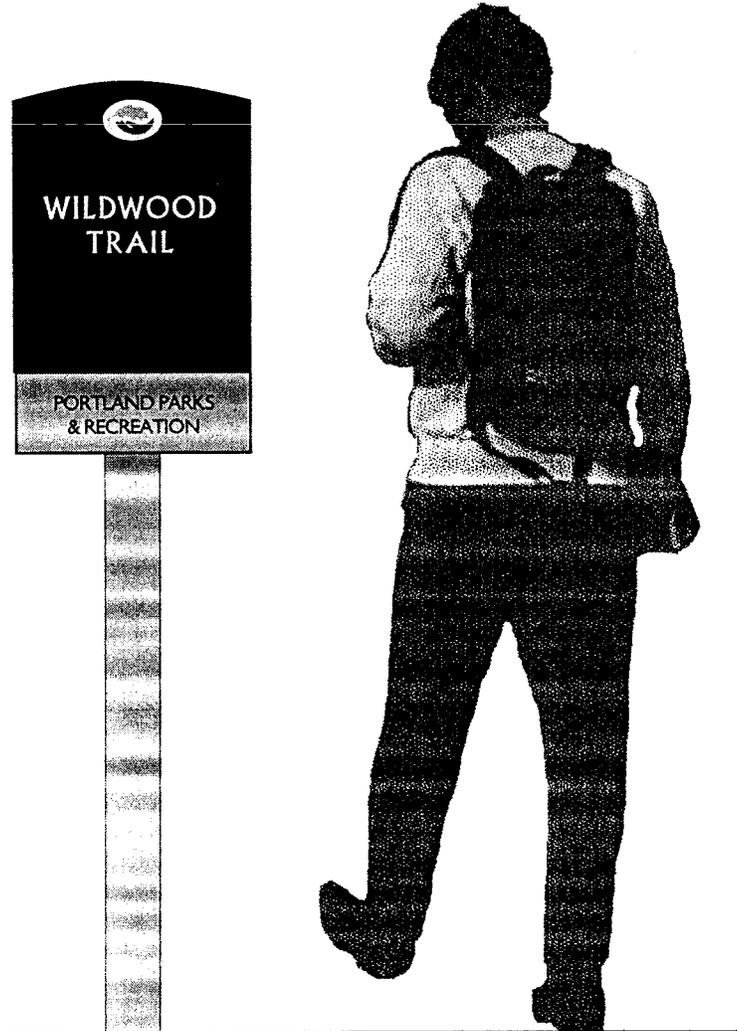


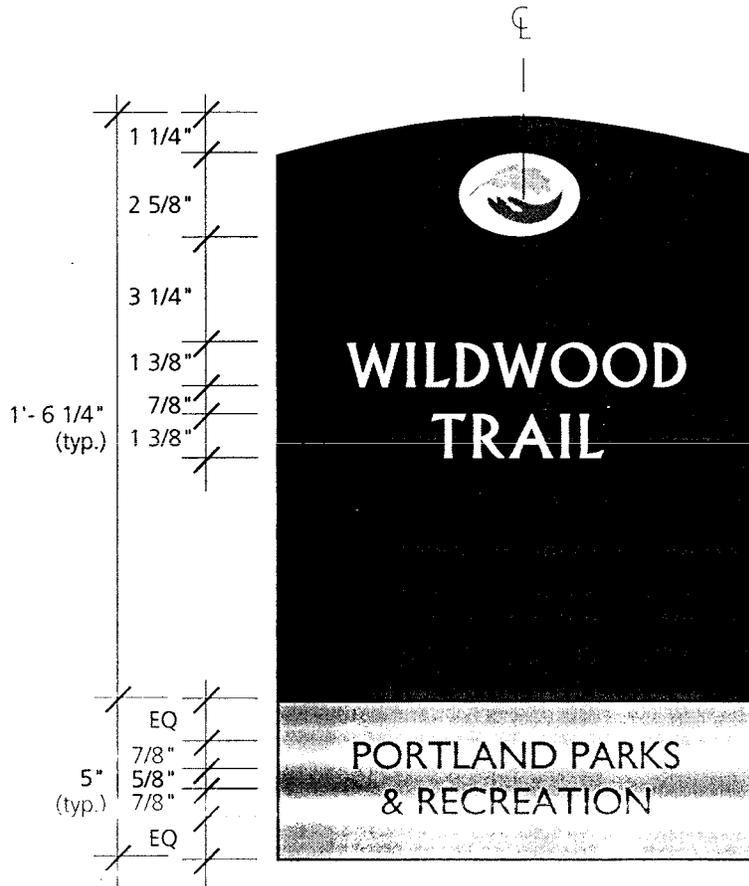
**1 Section At Top Of Post**

Scale: 3"=1'-0"

**Section At Bottom Of Post**

**B**  
Trail I.D. Signs

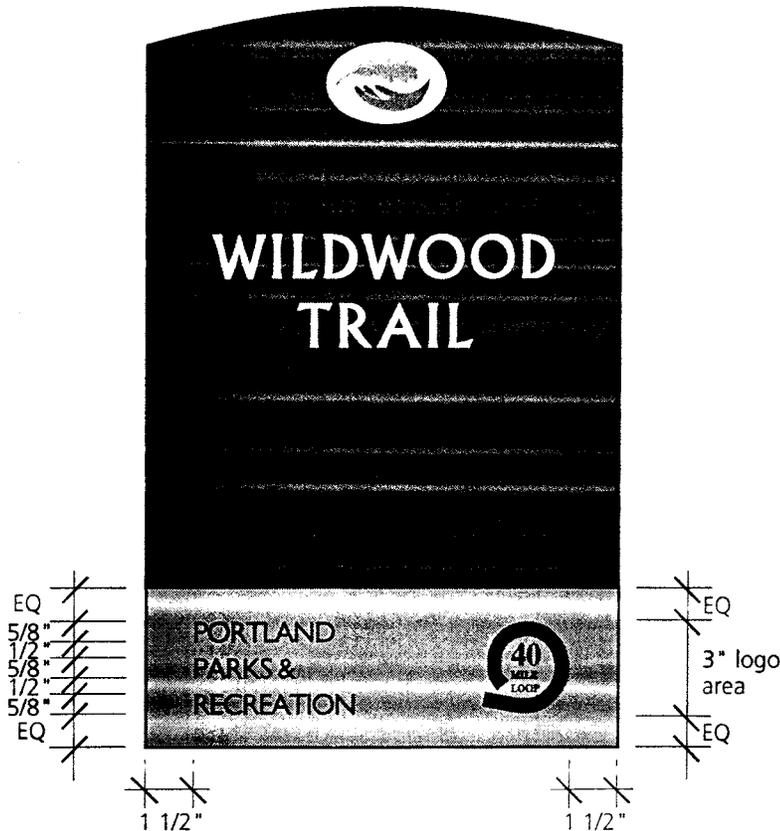


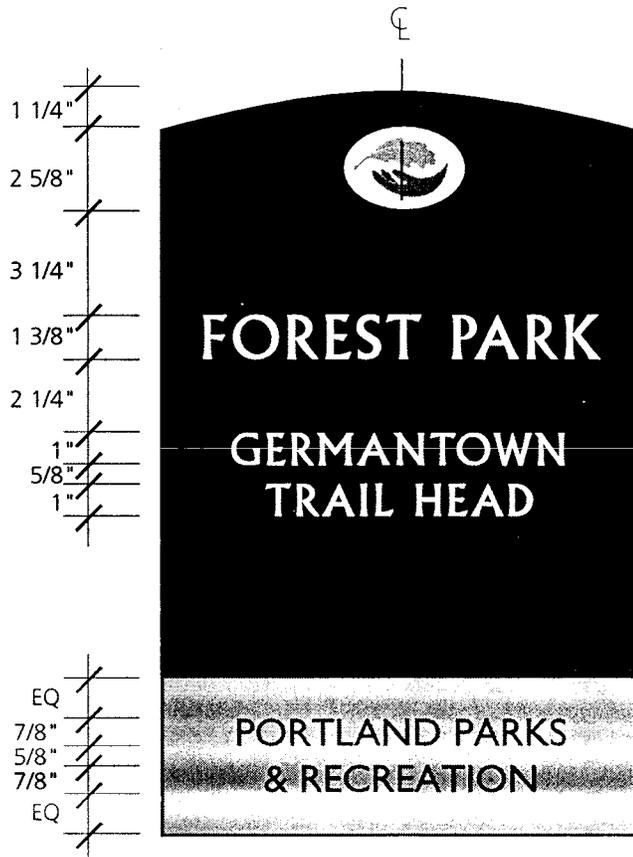


**B**  
Trail I.D. Signs  
Scale: 2"=1'-0"

Background Color: P1.  
Text Color: P4.  
Logo Colors: P2,P4,P5.  
Typeface: Albertus.

Background Color: P2.  
Text Color: P1.  
Typeface: Gill Sans Regular.

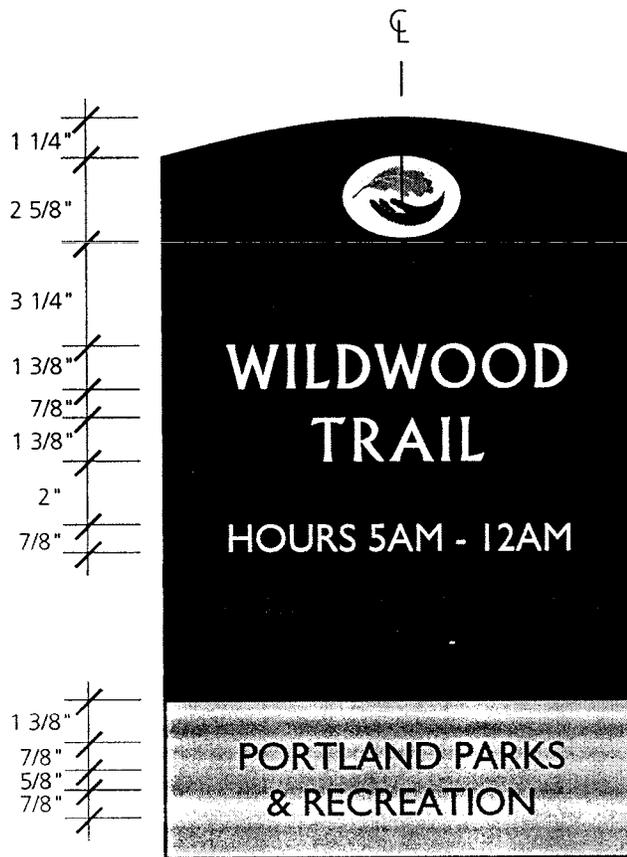


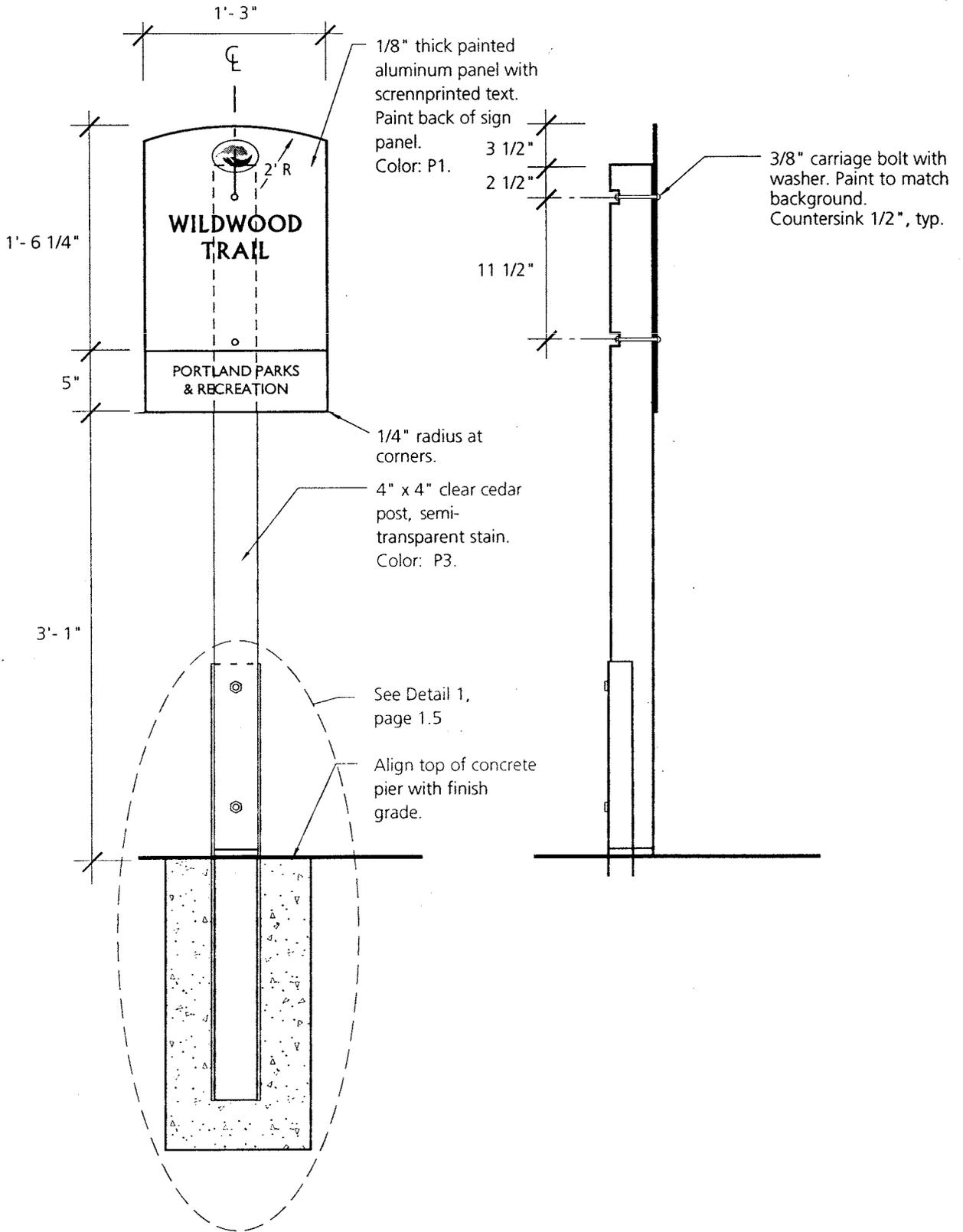


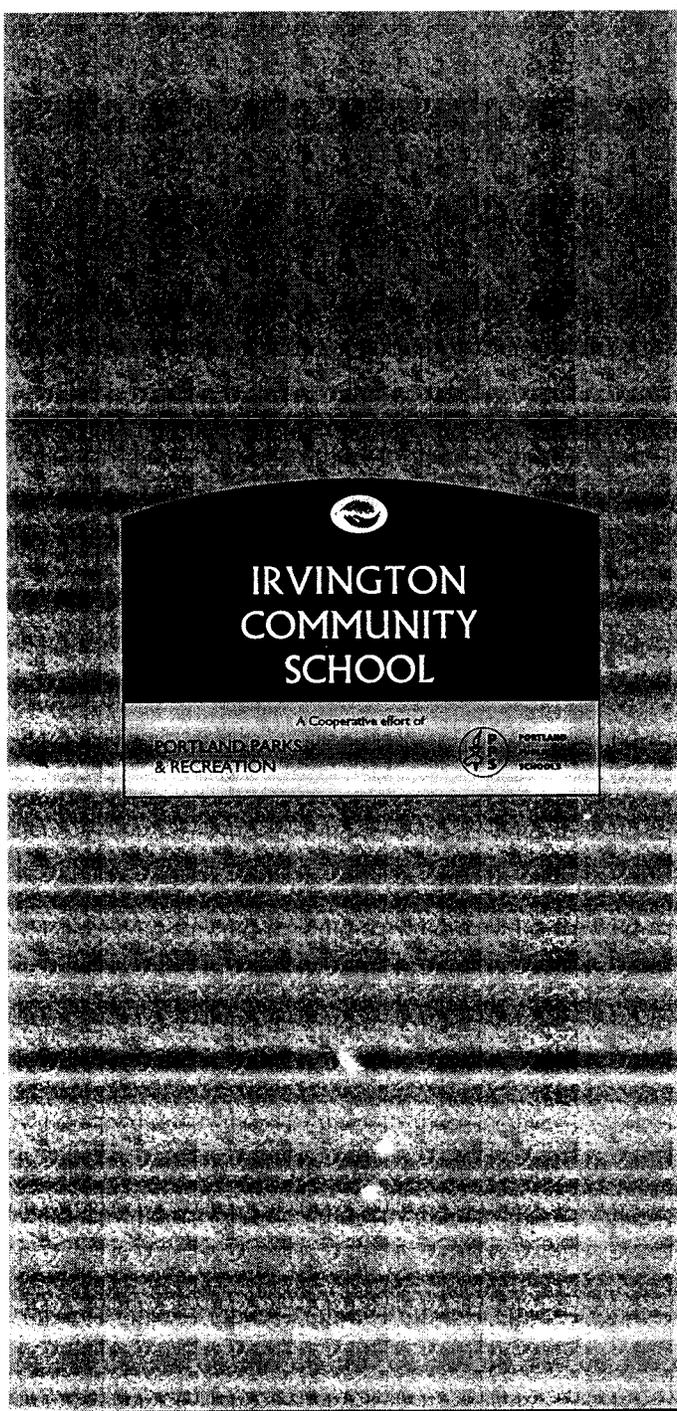
**B**  
Trail I.D. Signs  
Scale: 2"=1'-0"



**B**  
Trail I.D. Signs  
Scale: 2" = 1'-0"

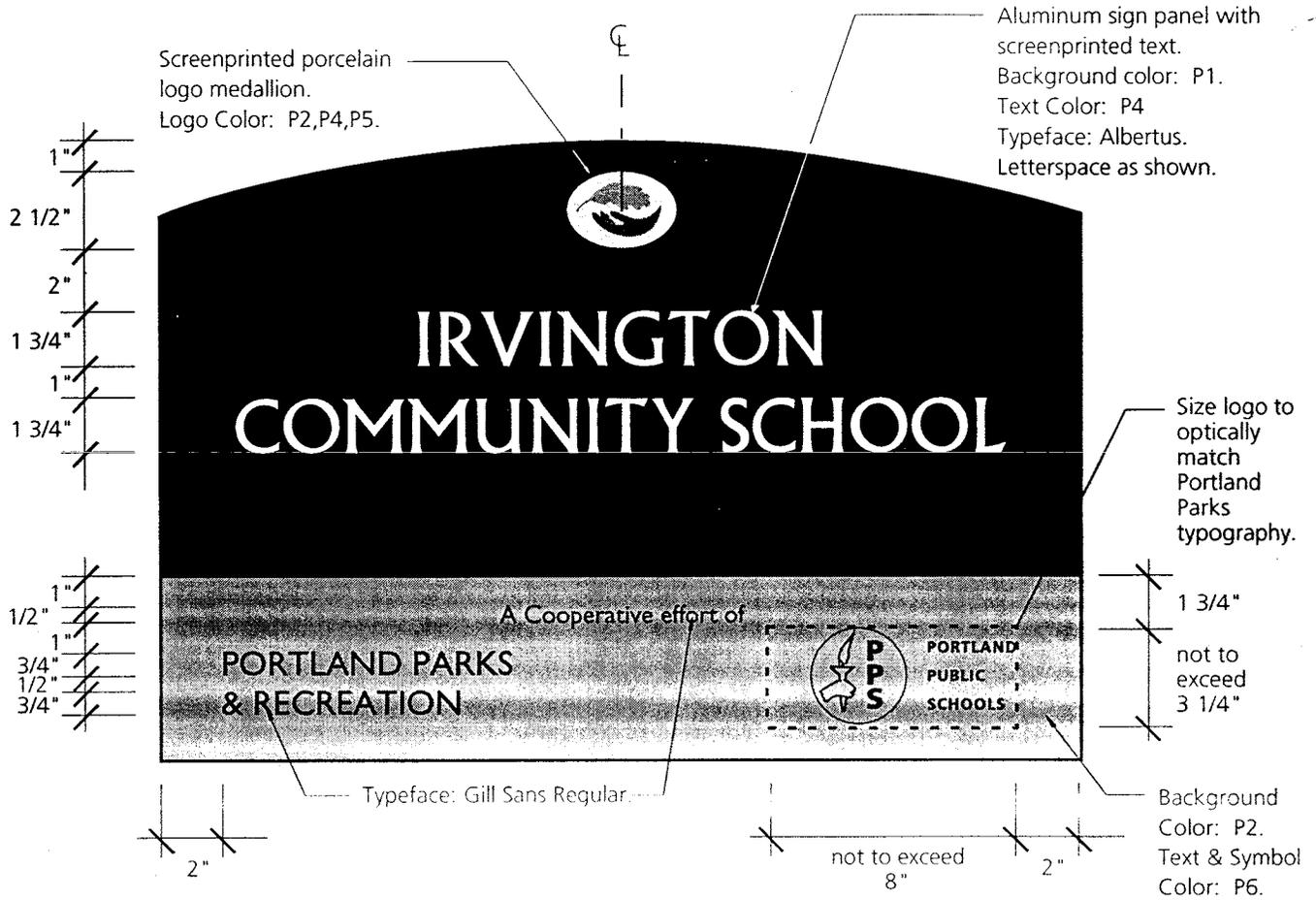




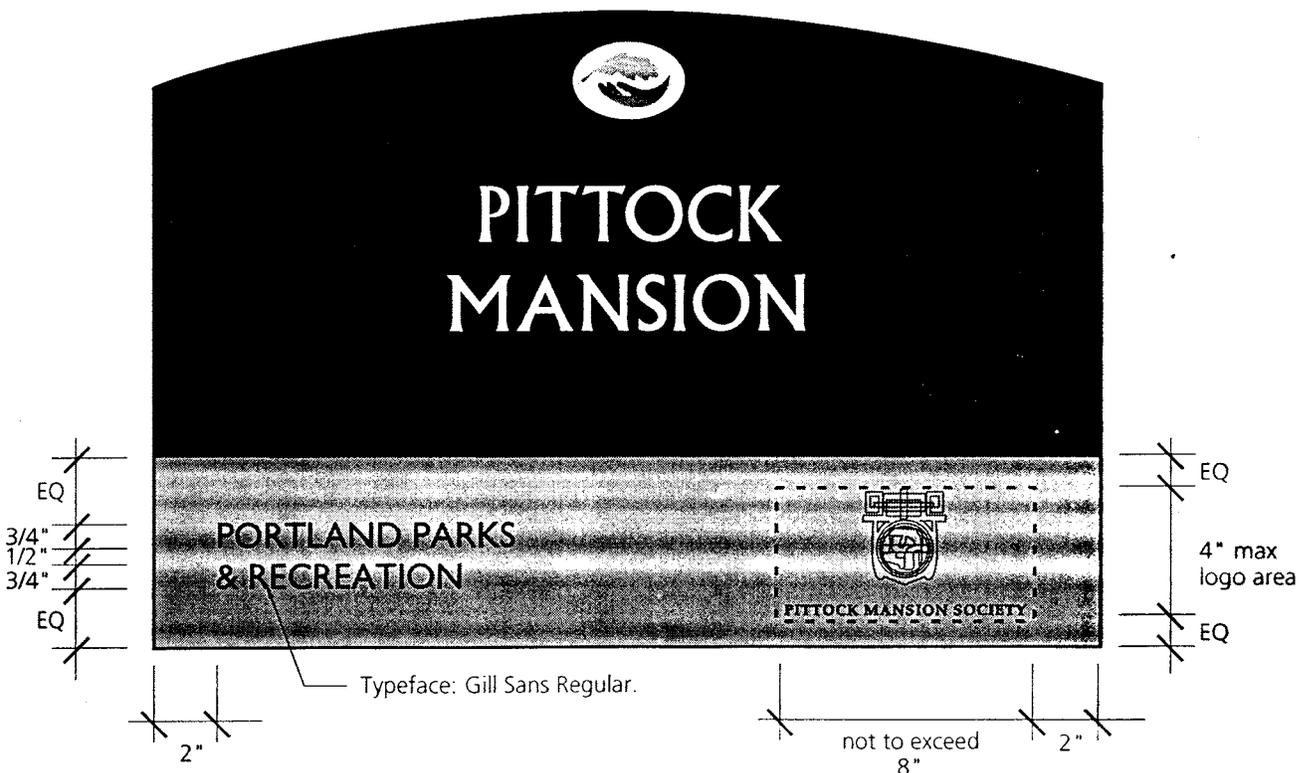


**C**  
**Building I.D. Signs**

Mount sign at 6'-0" from top of sign to adjacent finish grade.



**Sign C1:** Special Attraction / Community School Signs  
Scale: 2"=1"- 0"



**Sign C2:** Special Attraction / Community School Signs  
Scale: 2"=1"- 0"



Sign C3: Recreation Facility Signs  
Scale: 2"=1" - 0"



Background Color: Black.  
Text Color: White.

Sign C4: Recreation Facility Signs - Neutral Color  
Scale: 2"=1" - 0"

Background Color: White.  
Text Color: Black.

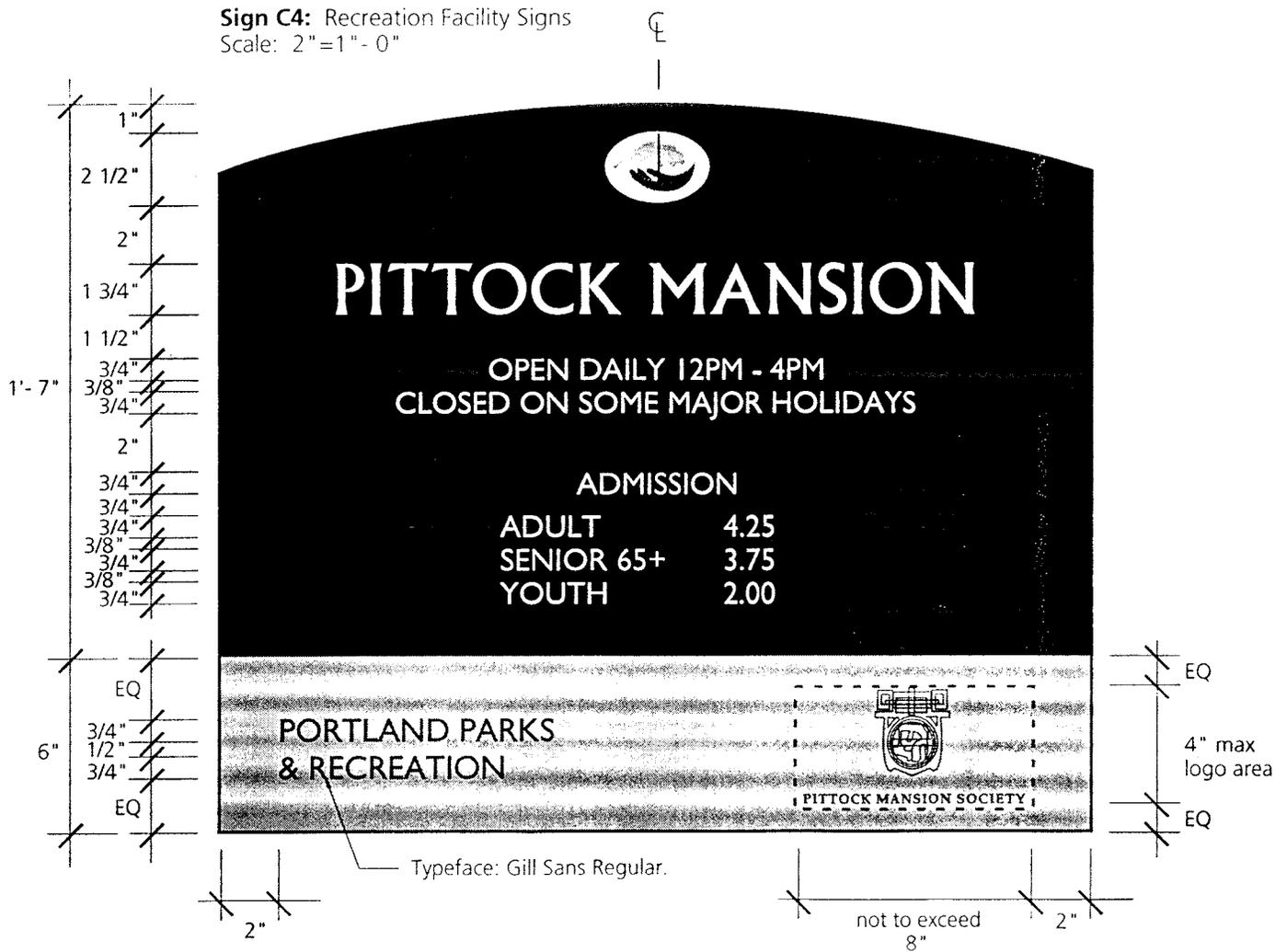
Note: For use only where standard colors conflict with building colors.

**Layouts**

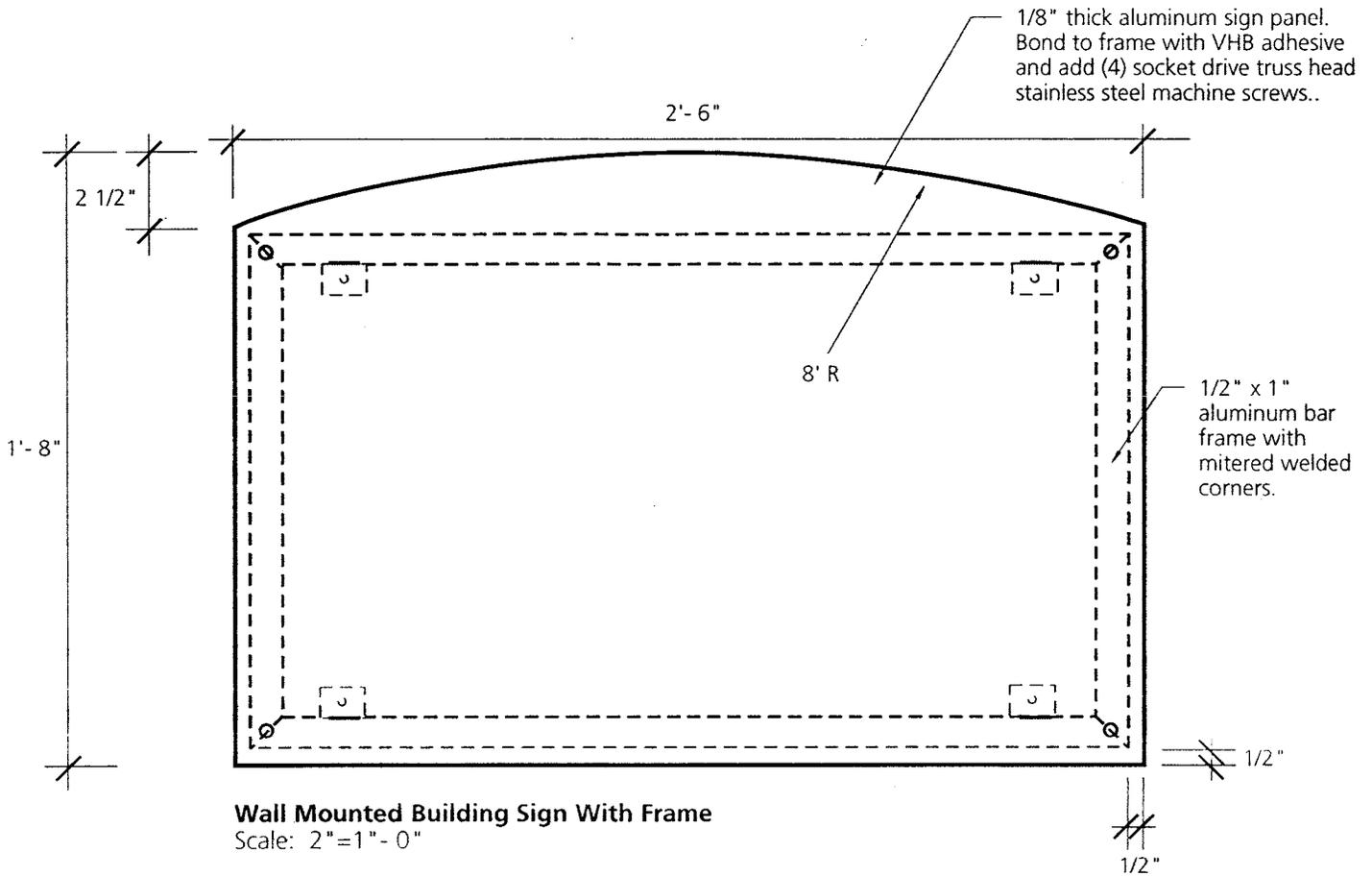
Scale: 2"=1" - 0"



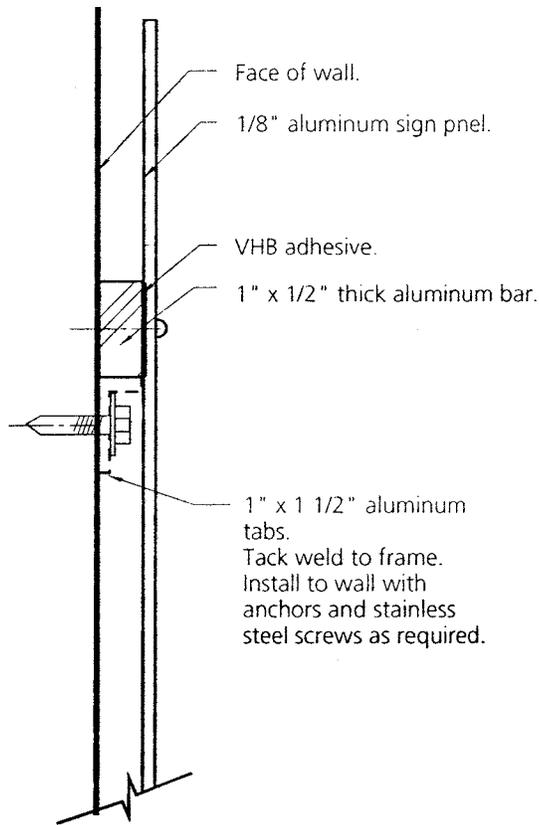
**Sign C4:** Recreation Facility Signs  
Scale: 2"=1'-0"



**Sign C5:** Special Attraction Sign with Admission Information  
Scale: 2"=1'-0"



**Wall Mounted Building Sign With Frame**  
Scale: 2"=1'-0"



**Section**  
Scale: Half Full Size

**SIGNAGE SPECIFICATION****PART 1 - GENERAL**

## 1.1 DESCRIPTION

- A. This Section describes the fabrication and installation of custom signage as scheduled and indicated in the Drawings.
- B. Design Requirements: Signage to be fabricated to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines.

## 1.2 SUBMITTALS

- A. Product Data:
  - 1. Submit manufacturer's product specifications, anchor details and installation instructions for products used in sign fabrication, including paint products.
  - 2. Submit qualification data for firms and persons specified in "Quality Assurance" article to demonstrate their capabilities and experience. Include list of completed projects with project names, addresses, names of Designers and Owners.
- B. Shop Drawings: Submit complete shop drawings for fabrication and installation of signs and related work including plans, elevations and details of components and attachments to other units of Work. Indicate materials and profiles of each member, fitting, joinery, finishes, fasteners, anchorages and accessory items.
- C. Typefaces: Submit photocopy of full typographic alphabets for each typeface and weight specified indicating origin of typeface.
- D. Artwork: Submit photocopy of artwork for special graphics including arrows, symbols and logos.
- E. Samples: Submit samples of each sign component material showing finishes, colors, surface textures and qualities of manufacture and design including graphics. Size of samples shall be at least 3" x 5", but not larger than 8-1/2" x 11".
- F. Typographic Layouts: Submit full size paper typical typographic layout for each text configuration showing letter, word and line spacing.

## 1.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- A. Manufacturer Qualifications: For each sign form and graphic image process indicated furnish products from manufacturers regularly engaged in work of this magnitude and scope for minimum of five years.
- B. Uniformity of Manufacturers: For each sign form and graphic image process indicated furnish products of a single manufacturer.
- C. Fabrication Observation: Notify Owner 15 days prior to 90 percent completion of the shop fabrication, so that the work may be observed prior to delivery to the job site.
- D. Conform to federal, state and local regulatory requirements for finishes.

#### 1.4 PROJECT CONDITIONS

- A. Field Measurements: Take field measurements prior to preparation of shop drawings and fabrication, where possible, to insure proper fitting of work. Verify site conditions, i.e., uneven terrain, conflicts, etc.

#### 1.5 DELIVERY, STORAGE AND HANDLING

- A. Delivery of Materials: Deliver work to project site under this section when adjacent finishes are complete and actually ready for immediate installation.
- B. Handling Materials and Equipment: Handle finished product in careful manner in order not to damage or mar surfaces of finished product or adjacent finished surfaces.

### PART 2 - PRODUCTS

#### 2.1 MANUFACTURERS

- A. Other manufacturer's products of equal or greater quality than those specified in this Section may be used. Submit substitution request including product specification.

#### 2.2 METALS

##### A. General:

- 1. Provide metalwork composed of metals of the forms and types which comply with requirements of referenced standards and which are free from surface blemishes where exposed to view in the finished unit. Exposed-to-view surfaces exhibiting pitting, seam marks, roller marks, "oil canning", stains, discolorations or other imperfections on finished units will not be accepted.

##### B. Steel: Provide Steel & Iron in the form indicated complying with the following requirements:

- 1. Plates, Shapes and Bars: ASTM A36.

##### C. Aluminum: Provide aluminum in the form indicated complying with the following requirements:

- 1. Sheets: ASTM B 209, 5052-H32.
- 2. Extruded Bar and Shapes: 6063-T6

#### 2.3 MISCELLANEOUS PRODUCTS AND MATERIALS

- A. Fasteners: Of same basic metal and alloy as fastened metal, unless otherwise indicated. Do not use metals which are corrosive or otherwise incompatible with metals joined.
  - 1. Fastening devices between dissimilar materials shall be 300 Series non-magnetic stainless steel or steel bolts with cadmium plating per ASTM A165.
  - 2. Material: Galvanically compatible with adjacent materials.
  - 3. Finish: Where exposed to view match adjacent material.
  - 4. Provide socket flat-head machine screws or bolts for exposed fasteners, unless otherwise indicated.
- B. Welding Electrodes and Filler Metal: Type and alloy of filler metal and electrodes as recommended by producer of metal to be welded, complying with applicable AWS specifications, and as required for color match, strength and compatibility in the fabricated items.

## C. Adhesives:

1. Very High Bond (VHB) Adhesive: 3M Company, product as recommended by manufacturer for type of use, materials and fabrication; or equal.
2. Epoxy: Epoxy shall be two-component thermosetting epoxy adhesive with 100% solids content. Acceptable products include #NP-428, Miracle Adhesives Corporation; Chemlok #304, Hughson Chemical Division of Lord Corporation; or equal.

## 2.4 GRAPHIC COMPONENTS AND PROCESSES

## A. Pressure Sensitive Vinyl Graphics:

1. Provide pressure sensitive vinyl messages installed at finished surfaces in the sizes, mounting heights, letter spacing and alignment indicated on Drawings.
2. Sign messages shall be provided pre-spaced. All lettering shall be executed in such a manner that all edges and corners of letter forms are true, clean, photographically precise and must accurately reproduce the typeface. Messages shall be smooth and free of air bubbles, open cuts, bulging and foreign matter between message and application surface.
3. Material: 3-M high performance vinyl sheeting; or equal, matte finish.

## B. Screen Printing

1. Provide screen printed artwork at finished surfaces in the sizes, mounting heights, letter spacing and alignment indicated on Drawings.
2. There shall be 100% fidelity between film positives and screen. Provide 100% film positives, emulsion side down and clean.
3. Double strikes of screened artwork which show as double images, faint or fuzzy line and edge quality will not be accepted if visible when viewed from 3 feet or the normal viewing distance, whichever is closer. The fabricator shall determine the optimum mesh size for screen printing. Disposition of color shall be even and opaque.
4. Inks: Epoxy type inks as manufactured by NAZ-DAR Company; Wornow Products Department, Dexter Corporation; Colonial Printing Ink Company; or approved equal.

## C. Routed and Infilled Graphics:

1. CAD/CAM rout text and artwork in the sizes, mounting heights, letter spacing and alignment indicated on Drawings. Match Owner's control sample.
2. Colors: Infill with matte gloss paint as indicated on drawings.

## D. Graphics:

1. General: All graphics, including text, symbols and arrows shall be executed in such a manner that all edges and corners are true and clean.
2. Type Sizes: As indicated on Drawings for particular units.
3. Typefaces: All work to precisely replicate the typefaces as indicated on Drawings.
4. Typographic Spacing: Match letter, word and line spacing as indicated on Drawings for all text configurations.
5. Symbols and Arrows: Match artwork as indicated on the Drawings.

## 2.5 METAL FABRICATION

## A. General:

1. Use materials of size and thickness indicated or, if not indicated, as required to produce strength and durability in finished product for use intended. Work to dimensions shown or accepted on shop drawings, using proven details of fabrication and support. Use type of materials shown or specified for various components of work.
2. For exposed work fabricate true to line and level with accurate angles and surfaces and straight sharp edges. Exposed edges shall be sharp and square unless otherwise shown. Form bent-metal corners to smallest radius possible without causing grain separation or otherwise impairing work.
3. Provide metal work composed of metals of the forms and types which comply with requirements of referenced standards and which are free from surface blemishes where exposed to view in the finished unit. Exposed-to-view surfaces exhibiting pitting, seam marks, roller marks, "oil canning", stains, discolorations or other imperfections on finished units will not be accepted.
4. Cut, reinforce, drill and tap miscellaneous metal work as indicated to receive finish hardware and similar items. For porcelain enamel signs perform in advance of enameling.

## B. Metal Protection:

1. Where aluminum will contact dissimilar metals, protect against galvanic action by painting contact surfaces with primer or by applying sealant or tape recommended by manufacturer for this purpose. Where aluminum will contact concrete or masonry, protect against corrosion by painting contact surfaces with bituminous paint.

## C. Surface Preparation:

1. After inspection and before finishing, clean metal work to be painted. Clean metal by "wheel abrader" process or other method to achieve results defined by SSPC for "SP-6 Commercial Blast Cleaning".

## D. Galvanizing: Provide a zinc coating for steel fabrications, as follows:

1. ASTM A123 for galvanizing iron and steel products made from rolled, pressed and forged steel shapes, castings, plates, bars and strips.
2. Where subject to human contact, remove projections after galvanizing as required for smooth surface. Where zinc coating is reduced below average thickness required by applicable standard referenced above, apply galvanizing repair paint as specified.
3. Preparation for Shop Finishing: After galvanizing, thoroughly clean ornamental metalwork of grease, dirt, oil, flux and other foreign matter, and treat with metallic phosphate process.

## E. Preparation for Shipping and Handling:

1. Provide strippable protective coating or wrapping.

## 2.6 PORCELAIN ENAMELING

- A. Ground Coat: A porcelain enamel ground coat shall be applied to all areas of each unit, including backside and flanges, by spraying methods recognized by PEI and VEDC. At least one additional separately fired cover-coating shall be applied to the face side and flanges of each unit. For corrosion protection and flatness, one additional coating shall be applied to the backside of each panel and to be fired simultaneously with the finish coat for panels over 3 sq. feet in surface area.

- B. Continuity of Coating: Visual inspection of each unit shall reveal no visible breaks, gas bubbles, scumming, hairlines, stress lines or surface defects in the cover coat.

- C. Finish and Background Color Control: The color and finish shall match a color sample previously submitted by supplier and approved by architect/designer within 1 NBS unit (1-2 NBS unit variation is barely perceptible to the human eye.)
- D. Ground and Covercoat Thickness: Ground and covercoat thickness shall be applied in accordance with PEI recommendations to a thickness range between 0.004 to 0.020" as required by the manufacturer to suit the intended use.
- E. Firing: Panels shall be fired in a furnace custom designed for the purpose, at temperatures above 1400°F. After firing, every panel is submitted to a visual inspection for color consistency against the control panel as approved by the architect/designer.

## 2.7 WOOD

- A. Acceptable Products: Kiln dried straight grain cedar or redwood.

## 2.8 FINISHES, GENERAL

- A. General: Complete cutting, fitting, forming, drilling and grinding of metal work prior to cleaning, finishing, surface treatment and application of finishes.
- B. Comply with MAAMM "Metal Finishes Manual" for finish designations and application recommendations to match sheet finish specified above, except where more stringent requirements are indicated.
- C. Finish all joints, bends, abrasions, and other surface blemishes to match the sheet finish. Finish free of tool or construction marks, or dents.
- D. Protect mechanical finishes on exposed surfaces from damage by application of removable temporary protective covering prior to shipment.

## 2.9 PAINT COATINGS FOR METAL & WOOD

- A. Acceptable Manufacturers and Products: Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane low VOC, or equal.
- B. Recommended System:
  - 1. Aluminum: Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane, 1 coat, Low VOC 74-734 & 74-735 metal pretreat at .25 mils DFT or 1 coat 74-793 Spray Bond at .15 to .25 mils DFT and 1 coat Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane 1 mil DFT (min.). Match colors and gloss as indicated.
  - 2. Steel: Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane, 1 coat Low VOC 74-734 & 74-735 metal pretreat at .25 mils DFT. Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane 1 mil DFT (min.). Match colors and gloss as indicated.
  - 3. Galvanized Metal: 1 coat 74-793 Spray Bond at .15 to .25 mils DFT. 1 coat Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane 1 mil DFT (min.).
  - 4. Wood: 1 coat Epoxy Primer 274-908 & 274-909 system 1.5 to 3.0 mils DFT. 1 or 2 coats Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane 1 mil DFT (min.) each coat.
- C. Field Repair: Provide system recommended by manufacturer for field repair by untrained applicators employed by Port.
- D. Application:
  - 1. The number of coats and paint film thickness required is the same regardless of the application method. Do not apply succeeding coats until previous coat has cured as recommended by coating manufacturer. Sand between coat applications where required to produce an even, smooth surface in accordance with coating manufacturer's directions.

2. Apply additional coats when undercoats or other conditions show through final coat until the cured film is of uniform finish, color and appearance.
  3. Minimum Coating Thickness: Apply each material at not thinner than manufacturer's recommended spreading rate, as listed above. Provide a total dry film thickness of entire coating system as recommended by manufacturer, unless otherwise indicated.
  4. Apply an even film, free of cloudiness, spotting, holidays, laps, brush marks, runs, sags, ropiness, or other surface imperfections.
  5. Completed Work: Match approved samples for color, gloss, texture and coverage. Remove, refinish, or recoat work not in compliance with specified requirements.
- E. Color Schedule: Match colors as indicated on the Drawings.

#### 2.10 STAIN COATINGS FOR WOOD

- A. Acceptable Manufacturers: Cabot semi-solid oil stain or equal.
- B. Recommended System:
1. Exterior Stain: Semi-Solid Stain, #0100 or #6100, as manufactured by Samuel Cabot, Inc. Newburyport, Massachusetts.
  2. Wood Cleaning Agent: Cabot Problem-Solver Wood Cleaner, #8002, as manufactured by Samuel Cabot, Inc. Newburyport, Massachusetts.
  3. Tannin Bleed Discoloration and Rust Remover: Cabot Problem-Solver Wood Brightener, #8003, as manufactured by Samuel Cabot, Inc. Newburyport, Massachusetts.
- C. Surface Preparation:
1. Apply to dry surfaces. Do not apply to wood with a moisture content exceeding 15 percent. Test using an electronic moisture meter within 24 hours of first application. Apply to wood surfaces that have been properly weathered.
  2. Prepare substrate in accordance with Manufacturer's printed instructions.
- D. Application:
1. Apply in strict accordance with Manufacturer's application instructions. Allow surfaces to dry between coats. Apply two coats of stain. Back prime surfaces of exterior woodwork with stain.
  2. Apply evenly with brush. When rolling or spraying, backbrush immediately after each section to ensure proper penetration.
  3. Allow 24 to 48 hours drying time between coats. Do not apply additional coats to wet or damp surfaces.
  4. Completed work: Match: Match approved samples for color, Glass, texture and coverage. remove, refinish or recoat work not in compliance with specified requirements.

---

**PART 3 - EXECUTION**

## 3.1 EXAMINATION

- A. Verify that mounting surfaces to receive Work of this Section are properly prepared. Do not start work until conditions are satisfactory.

## 3.2 PREPARATION

- A. Protect against damage and discoloration caused by work in this Section.

## 3.3 INSTALLATION

- A. General: Locate sign units and accessories where shown or scheduled, using mounting methods of the type described and in compliance with the manufacturers instructions. Install sign units level, plumb and at the height indicated, with sign surfaces free from distortion or other defects in appearance. Notify Owner of installation conflicts.

## 3.4 PROTECTION

- A. Protect finishes from damage during construction period by use of temporary protective coverings approved by Port. Remove protective covering at time of substantial completion. Protect adjacent surfaces from damage during field fabrication and installation.
- B. Restore finishes damaged during installation and construction period so that no evidence remains of correction work. Return items which cannot be refinished in the field to the shop; make required alterations and refinish entire unit, or provide new units as required.

## 3.5 CLEANING

- A. Clean all exposed surfaces just prior to date of substantial completion in accord with manufacturer's written cleaning instructions. Protect units from damage until acceptance.

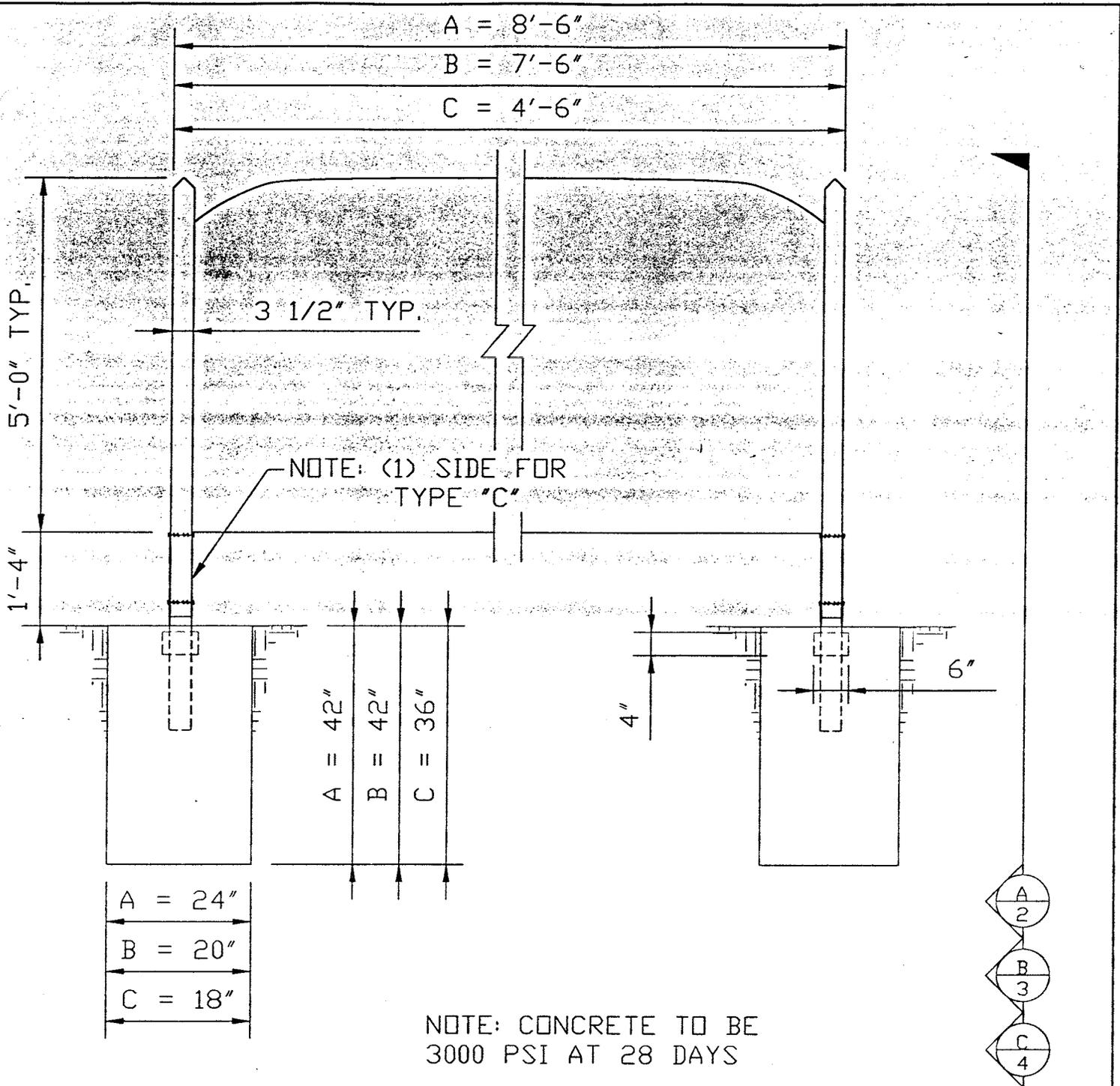
END OF SECTION

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890!?

Albertus Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890!?

Gill Sans Regular



NOTE: CONCRETE TO BE 3000 PSI AT 28 DAYS



MILLER  
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ENGINEERS

9570 SW Barbur Blvd.  
Suite One Hundred  
Portland, OR 97219-5412

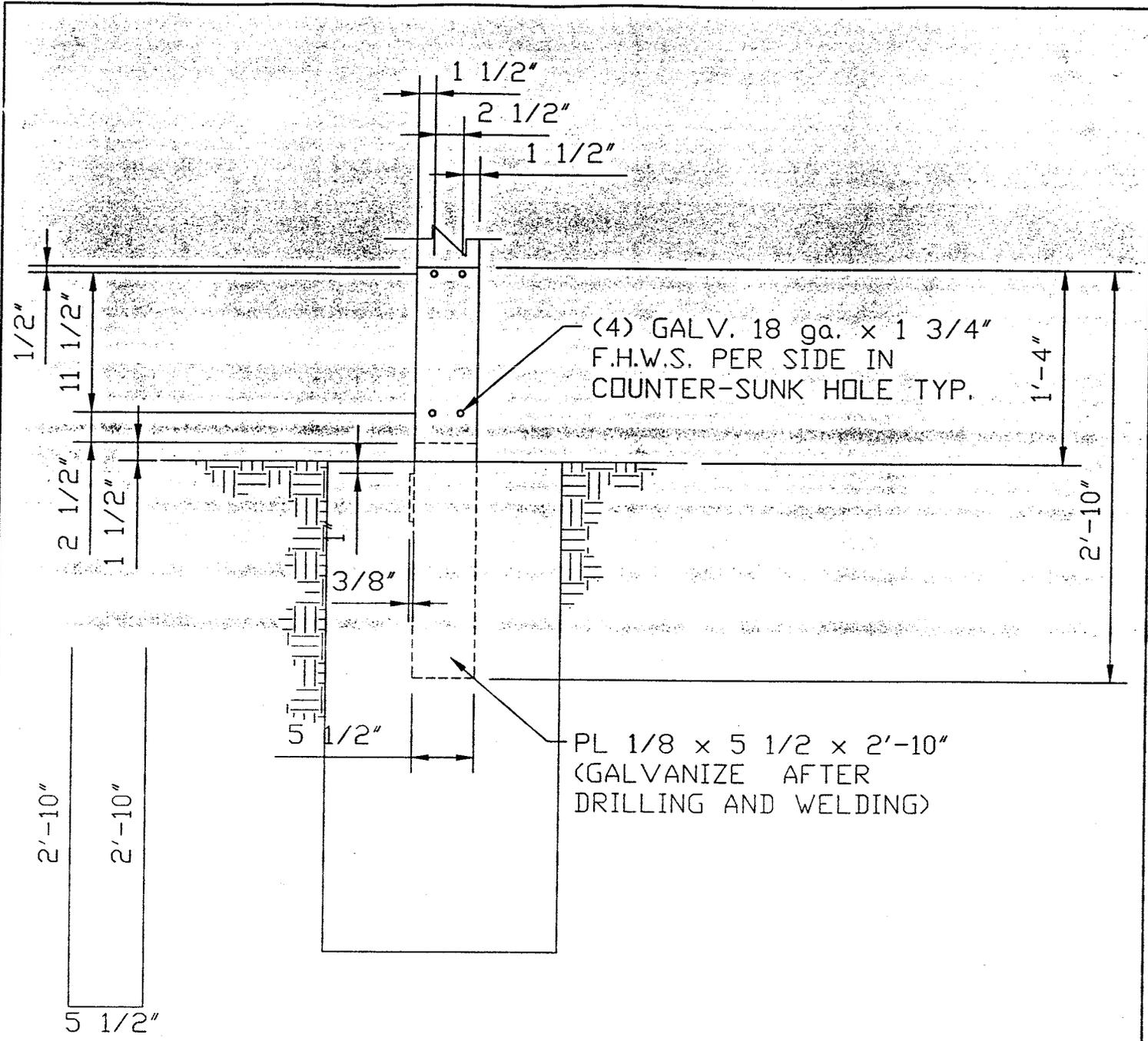
(503) 246-1250  
FAX: 246-1395

Project Name SIGN FOOTING Project # 980391

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Client MAYER/REED

By JSF ck'd TEF Date 06/30/98 Page 1 of 4



B  
S-2

TYPE "B"

N.T.S.



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FAX: 246-1395

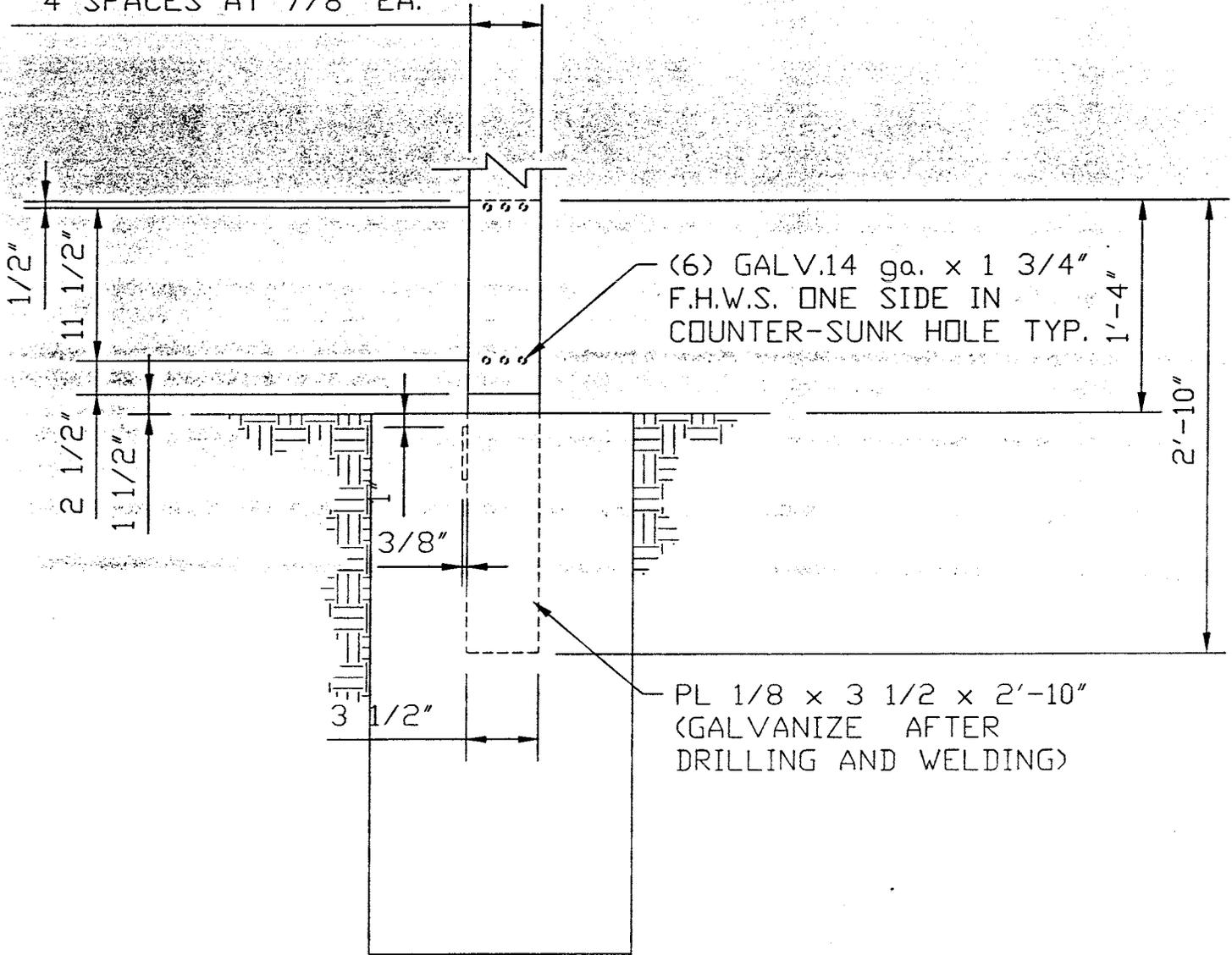
Project Name SIGN FOOTING Project # 980391

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Client MAYER/REED

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4 SPACES AT 7/8" EA.



C
S-2
 TYPE "C"

N.T.S.



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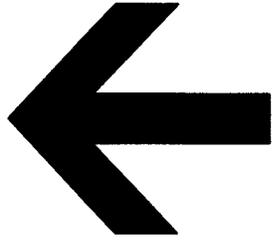
(503) 246-1250  
FAX: 246-1395

Project Name SIGN FOOTING Project # 980391

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Client MAYER/REED

By JSF Ck'd TEF Date 06/30/98 Page 4 of 4



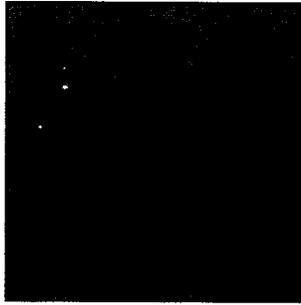
Arrow Symbol



Accesibility Symbol

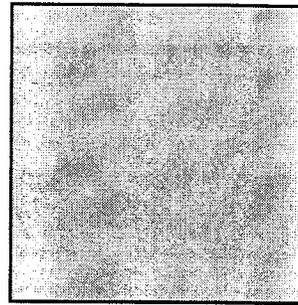


Portland Parks & Recreation Symbol

**P1 Dark Gray**

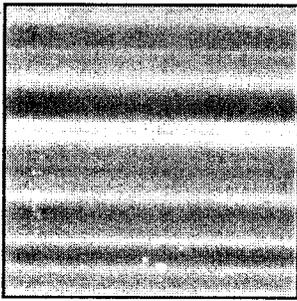
Paint: Matthews Cumberland 13A-1A

Stain: Cabot Stain Semi-Solid Slate Gray 0145

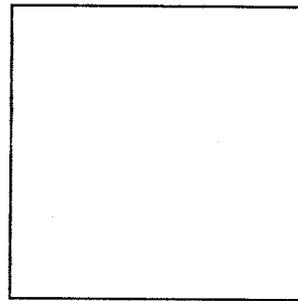
**P2 Light Green**

Paint: Match PMS 5845

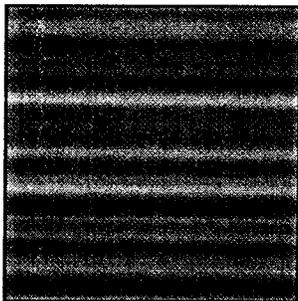
Stain: Cabot Stain Semi-Transparent Sagebrush 0351

**P3 Gray for Post**

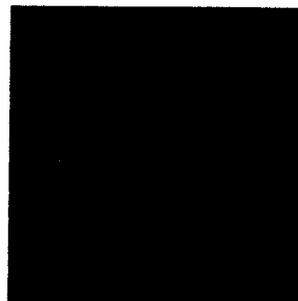
Stain: Cabot Stain Semi-Solid Pewter 0141

**P4 Cream**

Paint: Match Sherwin Williams 2347 Cottage Cream

**P5 Blue-Green**

Paint: Match PMS 625

**P6 Black**

Paint: Matthews Signal Jet Black 41-306

# Interpretive Signage

## And Other Interpretive Methods in Portland Parks and Recreation Natural Areas



August 6, 2010

Prepared by Lisa Frank  
under the supervision of Emily Roth

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# Introduction

## Purpose

The Portland Parks & Recreation 2020 Vision says:

“Portland’s parks, public places, natural areas, and recreational opportunities give life and beauty to our city. These essential assets connect people to place, self, and others. Portland’s residents will treasure and care for this legacy, building on the past to provide for future generations.”

One way to enhance the connection between people, place, self, and others is through interpretation. As defined by the National Parks Service, “Interpretation is the process of providing each visitor with the opportunity to personally connect with a place.”<sup>1</sup> Interpretive materials and activities, such as signs, reenactments, and podcasts, help visitors to parks and other spaces form emotional and intellectual connections with a site.<sup>2</sup> PP&R uses signs, websites, brochures, and other interpretive tools to communicate the value of Portland’s unique resources and spaces.

This report focuses on interpretive signage in natural areas, but explores other methods as well. These signs assist users in becoming better stewards by providing opportunities for understanding the ecology of parks and watersheds. In addition, this project updates our interpretive system and helps it become more sustainable and directed.

## Process

This project began with internet research of interpretive definitions, guidelines, and data-based best practices. Key sources included the National Parks Service, the National Association for Interpretation, and a Forest Service report entitled *Sign Sense*.<sup>3</sup> The research resulted in the definitions contained on the next page and a set of signage principles that were later used to judge PP&R signs.

Next, an inventory was done of the current interpretive signs in PP&R natural areas, plus Smith and Bybee Wetlands which is a Metro property. The twelve parks that were known or suspected to have interpretive signage as of July 2010 were surveyed in the field and photographed. In these twelve parks, forty-six signs were found. Information was collected on each sign’s content, appearance, information, condition, location, size, and shape. After the inventory was completed, City of Portland employees whose work relates to interpretation weighed in on the results. This report contains the findings and recommendations regarding existing and future signs, as well as other interpretive methods.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/learn>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.interpnet.com>

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of references can be found at the end of this report.

# Standards

Before conducting the inventory, definitions of key terms and standards were needed. These terms and principles are discussed below and are used throughout the report.

## Definitions

Interpretation: the process of providing each visitor with the opportunity to personally connect with a place.<sup>4</sup>

Interpretive signage: inscribed surfaces or spaces<sup>5</sup> used for interpretive purposes (see Interpretation).

Interpretive activities: using other forms of personal and nonpersonal media, including presentations, role plays, scavenger hunts, and more, to accomplish interpretive goals.

## Principles

The following list is a synthesis of the many suggestions and guidelines contained in reports on interpretation and signage. A full list of sources can be found at the end of this report. These principles are grouped into five categories: purpose, content, strategies, design, and location. They form the basis for the rubric used to judge each sign (see page 5), which is organized by content, appearance, condition, and location. Statements with an asterix (\*) closely correspond to strategies mentioned on page 10.

1. Purpose
  - Encourage understanding, respect, awareness, and ethical behavior
  - Answer questions visitors have
  - Increase visitor enjoyment and appreciation
2. Content
  - Cultural significance
  - Ecology/geography/biology
  - Identification of site, features, flora, fauna
  - NOT agency propaganda
  - NOT “near here” (just what’s right at the site)
  - NOT conflicting, redundant, or inadequate information
3. Strategies
  - \*Have a hook- visual, verbal, or both, must catch attention in 3 seconds
  - \*Have an identifiable 1-sentence idea or theme for site
  - Relate theme to organizational mission
  - Connect sign content to big picture, story, context
  - Relate to everyday life

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<sup>4</sup> From the National Park Service, <http://www.nps.gov/learn>. Another accepted definition can be found at the National Association for Interpretation, <http://www.interpnet.com>.

<sup>5</sup> *Sign Sense*.

- Show a unique viewpoint
- \*Focus visitor attention on specific features of site
- Communicate across languages and cultures
- Use active verbs, colorful language, short simple sentences, no jargon
- Don't tell everything
- \*Involve target audiences and local stakeholders in interpretive planning
- \*Keep materials well-maintained and current
- \*Evaluate effectiveness of interpretive materials

#### 4. Design

- Consistent design throughout site
- Standard rectangular shapes and sizes
- \*Include City logo, Parks logo, and watershed identifier
- \*Big enough to be visible, small enough to be unobtrusive
- Earth tones or ones that blend with site
- Dark writing on a light background or vice versa
- Sustainable, resistant, environmentally friendly materials
- 1/3 visuals, 1/3 text, 1/3 blank space
- Use graphics for interpretation, and photos for historical topics (neither just for decoration)
- Big print, sized hierarchically, with a carefully chosen typeface
- \*75 words, no more than 125, broken into blocks of about 40; or, time needed to read sign should be less than 3 minutes

#### 5. Location

- \*Off major transportation trails; on side trails or pull-offs
- \*Low to the ground or in places that are unobtrusive while still visible
- Spaced far enough apart that viewers cannot see more than three signs from any area of the site

## Rubric

The following rubric was developed from the signage principles and used to score each sign. All scores are contained in the appendix, and a summary appears in the next section.

<b>Points:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Content</b>	The sign has an appropriate amount of information. Information is tied to a clear, simple, theme and is accurate, current, and interesting. The title catches viewer's attention.	The information is interesting and/or appropriate in length and tied to a theme. Information is accurate but may not be the most current. The title may catch the viewer's attention.	Information is not interesting or tied to a theme, and content is too long or too short. There may be inaccurate or outdated information. The title does not catch viewer's attention.
<b>Appearance</b>	The visual elements of the sign are well-balanced, relevant to the subject matter, and attractive, drawing the viewer in. Colors, graphics, and photos are appropriate for the site. Design enhances the overall impact and catches viewer's attention.	The visual elements of the sign do not distract from the subject matter but may not be perfectly balanced. Some elements may not be appropriate for the content or the site. Visual elements may catch the viewer's attention.	The visual elements of the sign distract from the subject matter and/or appear awkward or out of place. The sign as a whole is boring or ugly, and no element catches the viewer's attention.
<b>Points:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Condition</b>	The sign is easily legible, with only minor signs of wear and tear.	The sign has some noticeable markings, fading, or glare, but is still legible.	The sign is seriously faded, dirty, defaced, obscured, and/or illegible.
<b>Location</b>	The sign is clearly visible, to visitors, an appropriate size for the site, and does not present an obstacle.	The sign is visible for some users, may or may not be a good size for the site, and might be on a main path where readers are in the way.	The sign is not clearly visible or of appropriate size, and visitors must block the path in order to read it.

# Findings

This section of the report presents generalized findings from the inventory and scoring of signs. Further documentation can be found in the appendix which contains the data collected on site visits, photos of all signs, and the scores each sign received. The signs discussed here are representative of the forty-six signs inventoried and illustrate how the rubric was used to score each sign. Sign names used in this section correspond to the rubric, and are usually shortened versions of the sign's title.<sup>6</sup>

## Overview

The overall impression of PP&R signage is that it is decent. The average score was 12.7 out of 16, with a four signs getting perfect marks and four signs below 10. Few signs are in terrible condition or are blatantly incorrect or outdated. At the same time, many signs failed to stand out as excellent.

One of the main reasons for this is that signs tend to have too much text. This makes them less visually appealing and requires the reader to spend more time with the sign. Some interpreters recommend keeping sign text to 75 words or 125 at the most.<sup>7</sup> Not a single sign had less than 125 words. For some topics, a longer text may be necessary and still be engaging, but far too many signs lacked a coherent theme that could help focus the sign and keep the text shorter.



1. This Forest Park sign at Lower Macleay is visually attractive and offers interesting information, but has too much text for a casual reader. Individual sections are manageable but few would take the time to read the entire sign.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, “Holly Worldwide” refers to Hoyt Arboretum sign 4, whose full title is “Holly Around the World.”

<sup>7</sup> *Sign Sense*.

Consistency was a prevalent issue in Hoyt Arboretum, Oaks Bottom, and Whitaker Ponds. These sites all had multiple signs that had been designed by different agencies at different times. While each series (such as the Lewis and Clark signs at Whitaker Ponds) was coherent visually and thematically, they failed to offer a uniform appearance in conjunction with earlier signs.



2. The sign on the right is part of a coherent series, but the left sign is not. A third EcoRoof sign is also at Whitaker Ponds in site of the left sign and some of the Lewis and Clark signs, making the site seem cluttered with inconsistent signage.

## Excellent Signs

The “Holly Worldwide” sign at the Hoyt Arboretum was one of four out of forty-six signs that received perfect marks.<sup>8</sup> The other three are “Holly Portland” (Hoyt Arboretum) and “Wetland Plant Communities” and “Healthy Stream Habitat” (Tideman Johnson Natural Area). These signs are all relatively new and are parts of series. “Holly Worldwide” about 1.5’ X 2’, as are the other top scorers. This small size and focused theme allow the sign to have an easily readable amount of text. The central text block, “Diversity Breeds Success,” is the longest and most important message of the sign, as it should be. To the side is a related note, “Conserving Diversity.” At the bottom of all three holly signs are examples of holly plant, highlighting the features of each plant that are relevant to the sign. This adds visual appeal and consistency while reinforcing the message of the sign. “Holly Worldwide” also contains a diagram of holly leaves illustrating differences mentioned in the sign text. The central graphic is a world map of where holly is located, so visitors can recognize the sign theme instantly from either the visual or the title. The sign is in good condition and in close proximity to the parking lot and other holly signs, where they are easily visible. The trail at this point is wide enough to allow people to stop and read. All in all, an excellent sign!

<sup>8</sup> Six signs (from Hoyt Arboretum, Oaks Bottom, and Smith and Bybee Wetlands) got 15’s.



3. Coloring of this excellent arboretum sign is not as blue as in this picture.

### Average Signs

The average score for a sign was 12.7 out of 16, or 3.9 for content, 3.7 for appearance, 2.5 for condition, and 2.7 for location.<sup>9</sup> Most signs received similar scores in both content and appearance because these are connected- design can reinforce content and both need to be good to hook the viewer. A notable exception is the “Timeline” sign at Marquam Nature Park, which received a 13 overall. This sign scored a 5 on content but only a 2 on appearance. More common is a sign like the “Entry” sign at Oaks Bottom. This rather large sign (3’ X 4.5’ plus a thick frame) is in good condition and in a very accessible, logical location near the parking lot, drinking fountain, and bike rack. Images are well-placed, but there is too much text. Subject headings are small, so they serve no purpose in drawing in a reader, and the title of the sign is simply “Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge” rather than hinting at a theme, posing a question, or otherwise grabbing the attention of visitors. The sign also repeats some ideas expressed in the other Oaks Bottom signs, so the text could easily have been made shorter and less redundant.



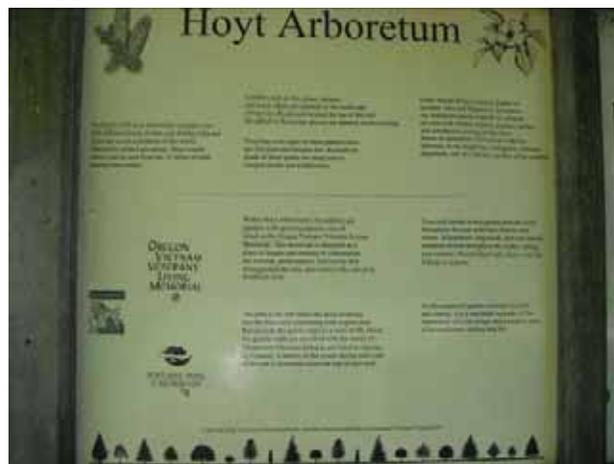
4. This sign at Oaks Bottom lost points on content and appearance due to the length and redundancy of text.

<sup>9</sup> Discrepancy in added values due to rounding.

## Poor Signs

Some signs received exceptionally low ratings due to one or two very serious problems or because they were below average in all categories. The signs that scored below 10 overall were the “Standard” sign at Butterfly Park (8), the “Old Standard” sign at Hoyt Arboretum (8), the “Kiosk” at Stephens Creek Nature Park (7), and the “Old Standard” at Tideman Johnson Natural Area (6). All of these signs appeared to be old and all were general in nature, rather than having a specific theme or topic. Aside from that, they faced different issues.

The sign at Butterfly Park has relevant content but, like most signs, too much of it. Where it differed from the average signs was in its low appearance score (a 2, due to the imbalance of text and graphics and the inability of graphics to catch the viewer’s attention). It also is in worse condition than all but three other signs. Debris from cottonwoods and overgrown branches obscure the surface, and the sign is very hard to spot from the main path. Similarly, the Tideman Johnson sign is very drab and hard to read, and as it is an upright sign parallel to the Springwater Corridor, it is easy to miss. Even if one does notice it, the sign is in such bad condition and lacking any attractive visuals that it could deter visitors.



5. The left face of this sign is drab, containing small text with no headings and graphics that serve no purpose other than filling space.

By contrast, Hoyt Arboretum’s old sign was easy to see and in good condition, but was not at all visually appealing or particularly interesting. Unlike the Forest Park signs which are large and full of good content (albeit too much of it), this sign was just large. The appearance was drab, especially the tan left frame with small black decorative graphics, and the information was not worth reading, especially when compared to the newer standard signs in the arboretum. Stephens Creek also has a variety of signs but they are all located at an entry kiosk. The most visible faces are the EcoRoof sign like the one found at Whitaker Park and a large map of Southwest Portland. On sides rendered almost inaccessible by overgrown plants, there are newspaper articles about a man building trails in the area and lists of species found in the natural area. Neither of these are signs at all, simply taped and stapled pieces of paper.

## Recommendations

These recommendations highlight specific steps that could be taken or are already being taken to solve current wide-spread problems related to signage. Strategies are listed in no particular order.

**Goal: Interpretive materials enhance the experiences of park visitors. For this to occur, the following outcomes must be met.**

### Outcome 1: Signs are maintained.

Strategy 1\*: Clean sign faces and clear surrounding areas of obstructions yearly.

Strategy 2: Remove signs that are illegible or outdated.

Strategy 3: Determine maintenance needs and responsibilities of involved agencies before installing a sign.

### Outcome 2: Signs are engaging.

Strategy 1: Test various sign designs with volunteers or PP&R staff to determine which options best grab their attention.

Strategy 2\*: Write a 1-sentence idea or theme that a visitor can easily gain from a sign. The general topic should be clear with a 3-second glance. For sites with multiple signs, their themes should relate to each other and the site as a whole.

Strategy 3: Use questions and instruct visitors to find, count, and observe things around the sign, or throughout their visit.

Strategy 4: Aim for text that can be read in 3 minutes or less.

### Outcome 3: Interpretive information is accessible.

Strategy 1: Locate signs where they are easy to see from main entrances and trailheads, without blocking views or paths.

Strategy 2: Bring interpretive materials in line with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Strategy 3: For parks with signs, note this on that park's webpage through Find A Park.

Strategy 4\*: On all signs, direct visitors to the PP&R website or other websites and resources containing more information about the park. A temporary marker or sticker could be used on existing signs that do not list the PP&R web address.

### Outcome 4: Interpretation is well-planned.

Strategy 1: Evaluate effectiveness of interpretive materials through surveys at parks, documenting what percentage of visitors utilize materials and what they learn from them.

Strategy 2: Discuss signage as part of public involvement processes, such as master plan development.

Strategy 3\*: Develop policies addressing the production of signs in PP&R properties by other agencies, including City bureaus and Friends groups.

Strategy 4: Complete an interpretive plan encompassing the entire Parks system and multiple methods of interpretation.

\* Indicates the strategy is a high priority or a first step towards achieving the outcome.

## High Priority Recommendations

On the previous page, one strategy per outcome is marked with an asterix to indicate that it is a high priority or a first step towards achieving that outcome. Outcome 1 – Strategy 1, Outcome 2 – Strategy 2, Outcome 3 – Strategy 4, and Outcome 4 – Strategy 3 are all high priority recommendations.

### Outcome 1: Signs are maintained.

Strategy 1\*: Clean sign faces and clear surrounding areas of obstructions yearly.



6. This great sign at Whitaker Park is covered by overgrown plants.

Of the forty-six signs inventoried, five were found to have serious maintenance issues that made them wholly or partially illegible. Many more were impacted to a lesser degree by plant debris or dirt. Most of these issues, and an additional location issue that rendered parts of the Stephens Creek kiosk inaccessible, could be addressed by regular cleaning and clearing away overgrown plants. Very few signs had serious permanent damage (such as deep scratches in the surface), so the condition, attractiveness, and readability of virtually all signs could be improved through basic yearly maintenance. In some cases, Strategy 3 (Determine maintenance needs and responsibilities) may need to be implemented first.

### Outcome 2: Signs are engaging.

Strategy 2\*: Write a 1-sentence idea or theme that a visitor can easily gain from a sign. The general topic should be clear with a 3-second glance. For sites with multiple signs, their themes should relate to each other and the site as a whole.

Most visitors only glance at a sign for about three seconds, so in that period of time they should be able to determine the theme or topic of the sign. If they are able to easily discern the theme they can then decide whether or not to read the sign. Only five signs received the top score on content. To receive this score, signs needed to have interesting information tied to a theme, and a title that indicated that theme and caught the viewer's attention. Many signs suffer from too much content because their theme is "anything you ever might want to know about \_\_\_\_\_ park." Instead, signs should address specific issues, like the Tideman Johnson sign "Wetland Plant Communities." A visitor can glance at the sign and quickly see the title, as well as emphasized portions of the text that are all

connected to this topic. Even the background design of the sign reinforces the theme, since it portrays an area similar to that described.



7. Smaller, newer signs with a strong relationship between appearance and content received high scores.

Some sites, like Hoyt Arboretum and Whitaker Ponds, have multiple signs. In these areas it is helpful to have signs that are part of a sequence or broader idea, while still having distinct themes. For example, the broader theme for a series of Hoyt Arboretum signs is “trees in the Arboretum” and there are individual signs titled “Conifers,” “Dogwoods,” and “Holly.” These signs each have sub-headings too, such as “A Fir in the Pine Family?” on the “Conifers” sign.

Outcome 3: Interpretive information is accessible.

Strategy 4\*: On all signs, direct visitors to the PP&R website or other websites and resources containing more information about the park. A temporary marker or sticker could be used on existing signs that do not list the PP&R web address.

All recommendations in this category could be implemented in a relatively short amount of time, unless some signs need to be replaced, but Strategy 4 is the most effective way to increase accessibility. A wealth of information about many parks already exists on the Portlandparks.org website, as well as on the websites of Friends groups and in brochures that can be downloaded from the internet. Directing people to these resources is simple. Newer signs include the PP&R web address and should continue to do so. This information could be supplemented with suggestions of what to look for online- bird sightings at Oaks Bottom (through Oregon Birders Online, or OBOL), information about the trail challenges in Forest Park, or maps of the Springwater Corridor. For older signs that do not list the web address, a temporary sticker could be used, although it should not detract from the overall quality of the sign.

Furthermore, future interpretive materials are likely to be web-based, such as podcasts and webcams. Visitors who are already accustomed to checking the Find A Park site for maps and information may also utilize interpretive materials that can be accessed online.

Outcome 4: Interpretation is well-planned.

Strategy 3\*: Develop policies addressing the production of signs in PP&R properties by other agencies, including City bureaus and Friends groups.



8. This sign was made by the Bureau of Environmental Services.

While all strategies related to this outcome are fairly long-term in scope, Strategy 3 is of the most immediate concern. Many signs in PP&R property are paid for, designed, and installed by Friends groups like the Forest Park Conservancy or other City agencies like the Bureau of Environmental Services. There is some cooperation but no standard policy outlining the role of PP&R or other agencies in regards to signage. Sue Thomas, PP&R Education Specialist, is involved in determining where signs are needed and does much of the research for PP&R signs. She says some non-PP&R signs do not meet PP&R standards for materials, design, or content, and are sometimes installed without any PP&R input at all. This results in lower-quality signs that may not be consistent throughout a site. Maintenance responsibilities are also an issue (see Outcome 1 – Strategy 3). These problems can be addressed by working with Friends groups and City bureaus to develop an acceptable process for sign design, installation, funding, and maintenance.

Once a comprehensive interpretive plan<sup>10</sup> is finished (Strategy 4), it can provide further guidance for agencies wanting to make signs. Creating this plan is necessary, but Strategy 3 is a more pressing need and is easier to address.

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html](http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html) for more information about interpretive planning.

## Other Interpretive Methods

When a comprehensive interpretive plan is developed, more methods of interpretation will need to be considered in addition to signage. PP&R already utilizes other forms of interpretation but can do more in this area to improve quality, variety, and accessibility of interpretive materials. Following are very general suggestions regarding forms of interpretation that PP&R may explore in the future.

### Introduction to Interpretive Methods

#### 1. Apps

- What: short for application, an app is a piece of software that can run on a computer, the internet, or a smart phone. Apps serve many different purposes and come in a variety of designs and levels of complexity.
- Good for: tech-savvy park users, such as teens. An app could play bird songs, show an interactive map, quiz you on wilderness knowledge, and more.
- Challenge: users would need to know where and how to download the apps, and would need appropriate technology such as an iPhone.

#### 2. Brochures/handouts

- What: brochures are folded pieces of paper containing information.
- Good for: areas prone to vandalism since they are single-use and inexpensive. The benefit of a brochure over other visual material is that a visitor can carry it with them through a park, and take it home afterwards. Brochures are used by PP&R to share information about events or seasonal issues like mosquitoes, and Friends groups have made brochures about their parks.
- Challenge: brochures are difficult to maintain because they must continually be restocked at sites. Online brochures mitigate this but many people do not know to check the PP&R site for brochures.

#### 3. Podcasts (webcasts)

- What: a podcast is a digital audio or video file that is episodic, downloadable, program-driven, and convenient (usually via an automated feed with computer software).<sup>11</sup>
- Good for: telling stories, sharing audio and video material automatically with users, engaging tech-savvy park users and those unable to visit parks themselves.
- Challenge: requires extensive planning and effort to create podcasts on a regular basis. Users need to know where to access them and have the appropriate technology.

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<sup>11</sup> Definition proposed by the Community, Journalism, and Communications Research group from the University of Texas at Austin.

#### 4. Self-guided tours

- What: a way for visitors to have a structured learning experience in a park without the need for a professional guide or interpreter. Maps, routes, and information can be available at visitor's centers or online.
- Good for: large sites like Hoyt Arboretum in which people may want to see specific things throughout the site, people who like to explore on their own while learning, and parks with multiple distinct habitats.
- Challenge: keeping maps/guides available, only appropriate for larger sites with trails, avoiding crowding along the route.

#### 5. Signs

- What: inscribed surfaces or spaces (see page 3).
- Good for: welcoming people to a site, labels, on-site interpretation, visual learners, readers. Signs can convey information related to a huge variety of topics and issues, and have the advantage of being close to their subject matter.
- Challenge: many signs have too much text or maintenance issues, or are not attractive. Signs are not flexible as an interpretive material so accuracy and currency are issues.

#### 6. Social networking sites

- What: online places where individuals, agencies, and ideas can interact in a variety of ways including photo sharing, messaging, event notification, and more. Examples include FaceBook and LinkedIn.
- Good for: teens, professionals. Social networking sites can be useful for posting photos and letting people know about events. An advantage over regular websites is that people can interact. PP&R can come to them, rather than them having to visit PP&R's site for information.
- Challenge: sites need to be updated very regularly without flooding users with information. It can be difficult to generate users or followers. Many people do not use these sites at all.

#### 7. Tape recorders/audio equipment

- What: visitors would check out a headset and listen to stories, birdcalls, or other audio materials while they are onsite.
- Good for: sharing audio data, self-guided tours, sites in which signs may have a detrimental visual effect.
- Challenges: someone would need to be on site to check out equipment and make sure it is returned. Using this type of technology onsite could detract from experiencing nature firsthand.

#### 8. Twitter

- What: online and phone program allowing broadcasts of 140-character-long messages, and other networking capabilities like photo sharing.
- Good for: brief updates, breaking news, posing questions to followers. Twitter is used by many young adults and professionals.

- Challenges: demographically limited, must be updated very regularly, can only share very small amounts of information at a time.

#### 9. Volunteers

- What: unpaid people who can assist in park interpretation by leading tours, staffing visitor's centers, answering questions, overseeing materials, and more.
- Good for: sites with re-usable interpretive materials, large sites in which people may require a guide, social learners, children and others who do not read.
- Challenge: volunteers must be very knowledgeable, personable, and reliable. To have a successful volunteer program, staff must have time for recruitment, training, and supervision on an on-going basis.

#### 10. Webcams

- What: live audiovisual feed that can be viewed online or in another location such as a visitor's center.
- Good for: sites that are inaccessible or could be easily disturbed, such as birds' nests or underwater areas.
- Challenge: can be very expensive or difficult to set-up, especially if there is a viewing location near the site. Webcams accessible from personal computers are less costly but may not be used as much.

#### 11. Webpages

- What: a forum in which information, photos, video, and more can be posted online and accessed through the internet.
- Good for: helping visitors prepare for a trip to a park or learn more afterwards, audiovisual materials, accessible for many people. PP&R currently operates webpages on [Portlandparks.org](http://Portlandparks.org). Webpages and websites can be utilized in many innovative ways as well as serve basic functions like giving directions to parks.
- Challenge: web material is already extensive and requires frequent maintenance and updates. Users must be directed to the proper websites and be able to find what they are looking for easily.

### **Further Resources**

National Association for Interpretation – NAI offers many resources for interpreters on their website, [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com), including blogs, events, publications, and training tools. Some materials are only accessible to members. One very useful tool is the Definitions Project ([www.definitionsproject.com](http://www.definitionsproject.com)), which is a collection of standard terminology related to interpretation.

National Park Service – NPS is a leader in using and researching interpretive methods. Their site for interpretation and education ([www.nps.gov/learn](http://www.nps.gov/learn)) provides materials for teachers and students. Director's Order #6 ([www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html](http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html)) addresses interpretation and education. Sections of particular relevance to PP&R are: 4) Interpretive and Educational Programs; 5) Interpretive Planning; 6) Personal and Non-Personal Services; and 8) Requirements for All Interpretive and Educational Services.

National Parks Conservation Association – NPCA’s mission is “To protect and enhance America’s National Parks for present and future generations.”<sup>12</sup> They are involved in many interpretive efforts in national parks, including the Park Stories podcast which can be accessed here: [www.npca.org/media\\_center/podcasts/](http://www.npca.org/media_center/podcasts/).

Portland Parks and Recreation – Examples of interpretation utilized by PP&R can be found through [www.portlandonline.com/parks/finder](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/finder). Every park inventoried in this report has some interpretive information online, with the exception of Cottonwood Bay. Many, such as Forest Park and Hoyt Arboretum, offer additional online resources either through PP&R or by links to websites of Friends groups.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.npca.org/who\\_we\\_are/](http://www.npca.org/who_we_are/)

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### Visit Data

Park	Sign Information	Condition	Location	Size/Shape	Aesthetics
Butterfly Park	Willamette Greenway, butterflies, flora/fauna, changes	good but dirty (cotton from trees)	pullout, not visible from main path, at angle	3.5' X 6'	nice graphics & text boxes but too much text, some glare, natural colors
Cottonwood Bay	Willamette Greenway, restoration, native plants, BES/PPR	minor scratches & rust, some plants in front	right off path & parallel to it, vertical, 2' off ground	3' X 4'	natural colors, graphic not clear unless you stop, balanced, legible
Forest Park (Pittock)	left: FP special history, impact, regulations. Right: relationship to landscape, trails/hiking, protecting the park, NW temperate rainforest, map	excellent	at trailhead, very visible when approaching from parking lot, vertical, 2' off ground	left: 3' X 3.5', right: 3' X 5'	predominant color is green, attractive photos, maps, good balance but maybe too much text, headings clear from a distance
Forest Park (Leif Erikson)	left: FP special history, impact, regulations. Right: multi-use, trails, map, logging & disturbance, invasive plants, volunteers, original purpose of LE.	good, some marks on wood	trailhead past gate at angle to trail on right, near drinking fountain	left: 3' X 3.5', right: 3' X 5'	mostly green, very attractive, lots of components, good visibility, a little overwhelming (so much info)
Hoyt Arboretum (std sign, 7 locations)	map, things to see in different seasons, plants, "living museum"	good except graffiti on sign post at intersection of Overlook Trail and road	zoo entrance near Vietnam memorial (right pullout near ID sign parallel to path, tilted 2.5' up); visitor's center by restrooms; Overlook trailhead; other end of Overlook; intersection of Wildwood and Walnut; intersection of Wildwood and Magnolia; intersection of Wildwood and Creek	2.5' X 3'	mostly green, easy to read, map on right illustrates text on left, small graphics
Hoyt Arboretum (Conifers)	conifer ID, info, interactive (ie "look for..."), Doug Fir mistaken identity	some dirt, faded	parallel to path near picnic shelter	2.5' X 3'	background and some text very pale, photos and graphics for ID, multiple sections, readable
Hoyt Arboretum (Dogwoods)	"showing their true colors," plant family, attractiveness, different varieties and characteristics, "flower fraud," map	some dirt, slightly bent	parallel to path at top of Vietnam Memorial	2.5' X 3'	multiple sections, readable, photos and graphics for ID
Hoyt Arboretum (Holly- 3 signs together)	1) worldwide adaptations and diversity. 2) history in Portland, invasive. 3) decorative hollies, gardening	good	near start of Holly trail on raised part, wide intersection close to parking lot, on rock wall 2' up, tilted	1.5' X 2' each	blue/tan/black/pink. 1) leaf diagram, ID graphics, map, 2 text boxes. 2) photos. 3) graphics. All attractive.

Hoyt Arboretum (older std)	left: species, areas of park. Right: about Wildwood, map of HA trails and FP	good, some marks on wood	start of Wildwood from road, beyond memorial	left: 3.5' X 3.5' right: 3.5' X 5' plus thick wood frame	left: tan and black, not very attractive, a few small graphics on edges just for decoration. Right: map, text box, more attractive but a lot of fairly small text
Macleay Park	left: FP special history, impact, regulations. Right: LM accessible fragile beauty, trails, Balch Creek, flora & fauna, threats, history	great, minor scratches in wood	trailhead- large paved pullout on right, upright on grass by curb, 3' up	left: 3' X 3.5', right: 3' X 5'	mostly green, very attractive, lots of components, good visibility, a little overwhelming (so much info)
Marquam Nature Park	1) welcome- maps, development, Friends of Marquam, dogs. 2) donors (not interpretive). 3) history timeline, very interesting. 4) springs & seeps, slipping & sliding, ravines & ridges (good amt of info).	1) wrinkled. All- glare, some marks on plexiglass.	in Marquam shelter, upright but oriented at angles, frame 2' up, sign 3' up	all 4.5' X 3.5' including black border, not including wood frame	1) mostly green, maps, pics- nice layout, not tons of text. 3) historical photos, lots of white space, boring/unhelpful layout. 4) background is pink and seems out of place, too much open space, graphics are clear and simple.
Marquam Nature Park (seasons)	1) animals and plants in spring and summer. 2) animals and plants in fall and winter.	glare, some marks on plexiglass	in Marquam shelter, upright but oriented at angles, frame 2' up, sign 3' up	all 4.5' X 3.5' including black border, not including wood frame	nice watercolors and graphics with labels, consistent, but type is a little small on diagrams. Too high up for little kids to read.
Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge	1) railroads and urbanization, history. 2) Oaks Bottom info- importance, flora and fauna, uniqueness of site. 3) Willamette River floodplain, past and present.	1) major scratches on sign face that make parts illegible. 2) good. 3) some scratches, dirt, cottonwoods.	1) parallel to Springwater on Willamette path near side path to Oaks Park, facing towards refuge, tilted, 2' up. 2) start of path at parking lot/drinking fountain/bikerack, at angle to path, next to regulatory and bulletin sign board, upright, 2' up. 3) parallel to Springwater path, across from bike entrance to Oaks Bottom and next to footpath to river, tilted, 2' up.	shape: rectangle with rounded top for logo. 1) 2' X 3'. 2) 3' X 4.5' not including thick wood frame. 3) 2' X 3'.	1) color scheme dark blue, tan, gray. Good placement of historic photos but too much text. 2) same color scheme, photos, map, & historic photo, balanced but too much text. 3) similar to 1 but some photos, maps.
Oaks Bottom (Tadpole Pond)	1) amphibians in the pond- ID, "unwanted" poster for bullfrog. 2) destruction and restoration of habitat, life cycle of frog, seasons.	both some dirt	1) 1/3 along path going counter-clockwise, tilted, 3' up, at angle to path. 2) 2/3 along path.	both 2' X 2.5'	1) colorful, attractive, nice graphics. Too much text altogether but the info about each species is a good length. 2) attractive, interesting design with circular sections/flow. Design reinforces content. Could have less text but not too bad.
Smith and Bybee Wetlands (Signs 1 & 2)	1) Metro project info, map, activities, rules. 2) wildlife, seasons, restoration.	good with minor scratches/fading	near restrooms/parking lot, tilted, 1' off ground	3' X 5'	blue/orange scheme, photos & map on 1, graphics on 2, good layout, some glare from further away

Smith and Bybee Wetlands (Sign 3)	trails, map, labels plants & animals	dirt on sign face, moss on wood frame	about 20' into trail, upright, 2' off ground	3' X 5' not including thick wood frame	white background w/ plant/animal graphics, text on either side of map
Springwater Willamette/E splanade	riverfront- what's going on, why are riverbanks important, what can you do	large graffiti bat on sign face	grassy area a few feet off paved path, at slight angle to trail, tilted, 2' above ground	2' X 2.5' ?	white background, nice simple graphics, perfect amount of text
Stephens Creek Nature Park	kiosk with 4 side: ecoroof sign, map (of whole SW) & trails, articles about Werner Raz' trail, brief history & plants/birds	some scratches and dirt, area around signs overgrown, maps fading	entrance off Bertha Blvd near drinking fountains, 3.5' off ground	each face about 4' X 4' not including thick wood frame	see Whitaker for ecoroof description, map mostly blue with small print, other faces printed 8 X 11" sheets
Tanner Springs (3, all the same)	Willamette Valley habitat, park materials, rainwater, regulations, interesting	great	11th & Marshall on side of path tilted 2' up; 11th & Northrup: by water towards center of park	2+ X 3'	grayscale image background, mix of graphics, photos, old map- catchy but not consistent
Tideman Johnson Natural Area (old sign)	watershed, quiet retreat, wildlife, history, preservation, Springwater map- too much info	very faded/discolored, orange and brown spots, streaks	on main corridor just west of bench and trail into Tideman Johnson, parallel to path, upright, 2.5' up, easy to miss if biking	3.5' X 5.5' not including thick wood frame	drab, way too much text, some graphics and map, a few old photos- too faded and marked up to be very legible
Tideman Johnson Natural Area (new signs)	1) wetland plant communities- native and invasive, volunteer, seasonal wetland. 2) healthy stream habitat- flooding, beaver	1) small bird dropping. 2) good.	1) on Tideman Johnson wood pathway pullout, tilted, 2.5' up. 2) parallel to path near east intersection with main corridor, tilted, 3.5' up	1.5' X 2' each	1) colorful, good size blocks of text, emphasis, photos on graphic background. 2) same layout but stream in background.
Whitaker Ponds Nature Park	1) welcome- history, ecology, restoration, map. 2) ecoroof- benefits, reason, examples (photos), diagram.	1) dirt, bubbling, pink smear. 2) dirt, bird scat, marks.	1) by bike rack looking at pond from main entrance, tilted, 2' up. 2) in front of ecoroof at path intersection, tilted, 2' up.	both 2' X 3'	1) cute background/layout, coherent, simple, blue & green. 2) white and green, lots of open space, text mostly all on left side, center text too spaced.
Whitaker Ponds (Lewis & Clark)	1) Lewis & Clark Garden- quotes, map, photos, history. 2) botanical legacy- Lewisia & Clarkia, purpose of garden, Native American names, various plants. 3) mixed woodland- berry confusing, some plants, journal. 4) lowland riparian forest- western red cedar, plants, journal. 5) prairie- bounty, disappearing, camas, journal.	1-2) some dirt and berry stains, glare. 3) overgrown, dirt. 4) dirt. 6) glare, some marks.	1-2) between entry sign and ecoroof, tilted, 2' up. 3-4) edge of side paths down to lake. 5) paved path near ecoroof.	1-2) 2' X 2.5'. 3-5) 1.5' X 2'	1) pale green/tan, multiple components but mostly text. 2) more colorful, graphics & photos, attractive but too much text. 3) attractive but Doug Fir and journal components don't really fit in, berry text is long. 4) same layout, attractive, very well-balanced. 5) see 4.

## Sign Scores

Park	Sign ID	Scores				
		Content (5)	Appearance (5)	Condition (3)	Location (3)	Total (16)
Butterfly Park	1- Standard	3	2	1	2	8
Cottonwood Bay	1- Standard	3	2	3	2	10
Forest Park	1- Pittock	3	5	3	3	14
	2- Leif Erikson	3	5	3	3	14
	3- Lower Macleay	3	5	3	3	14
Hoyt Arboretum	1- Welcome	4	4	3	2	13
	2- Old Standard	1	1	3	3	8
	3- Conifers	5	4	3	3	15
	4- Holly Worldwide	5	5	3	3	16
	5- Holly Portland	5	5	3	3	16
	6- Holly Garden	5	4	3	3	15
	7- Dogwoods	5	4	3	3	15
Marquam Nature Park	1- Welcome	3	3	2	3	11
	2- Timeline	5	2	3	3	13
	3- Spring	4	3	3	3	13
	4- Fall	4	3	3	3	13
	5- Land	3	2	3	3	11
Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge	1- Entry	3	4	3	3	13
	2- Floodplain	4	3	2	3	12
	3- Railroads	4	4	1	3	12
	4- Tadpole Pond Amphibians	5	5	3	2	15
	5- Tadpole Pond Habitat	5	5	3	2	15
Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area	1- Welcome	3	4	3	3	13
	2- Seasons	4	5	3	3	15
	3- Trails	3	2	3	2	10
Springwater Corridor	1- Riverbank	3	4	1	3	11
Stephens Creek Nature Park	1- Kiosk (4 faces: map, EcoRoof, articles, wildlife lists)	2	2	2	1	7
Tanner Springs	1- Standard	5	4	3	2	14
Tideman Johnson Natural Area	1- Old Standard	2	1	1	2	6
	2- Wetland Plant Communities	5	5	3	3	16
	3- Healthy Stream Habitat	5	5	3	3	16
Whitaker Ponds Nature Park	1- Welcome	3	4	2	3	12
	2- Ecoroof	4	3	2	3	12
	3- Lewis and Clark Garden	4	2	2	3	11
	4- Botanical Legacy	5	4	2	3	14
	5- Mixed Woodland	5	5	1	2	13
	6- Lowland Riparian Forest	5	5	2	2	14
	7- Prairie	5	4	2	3	14
Average Score	N/A	3.894737	3.657894737	2.5	2.684211	12.7368



## Interpretive Formats

A comprehensive interpretive plan includes a variety of interpretation formats. PP&R already utilizes a few forms of interpretation but has the opportunity to improve quality, variety, and accessibility of interpretive materials. Following are general guidelines regarding forms of interpretation.

### Introduction to Interpretive Methods

#### 1. Apps

- What: short for application, an app is a piece of software that can run on a computer, the internet or a smart phone. Apps serve many different purposes and come in a variety of designs and levels of complexity.
- Benefits: tech-savvy park users. An app could play bird songs, show an interactive map, quiz you on wilderness knowledge, show your location on a park map, and more.
- Challenge: development. Users would need to know where and how to download the apps, and would need appropriate technology such as a smart phone.

#### 2. Brochures/handouts

- What: brochures are folded pieces of paper containing information.
- Benefits: single-use and can be produced in a variety of languages. The benefit of a brochure over other visual material is that visitors can carry it with them through a park, and take it home afterwards. Brochures are used by PP&R to share information about events or seasonal issues. Friends groups have partnered with PP&R to produce brochures about their organization and the park.
- Challenge: restocking, keeping current, and production costs. Online brochures mitigate this but people would need to check the PP&R website for brochures.

#### 3. Podcasts (webcasts)

- What: a podcast is a digital audio or video file that is episodic, downloadable, program-driven, and convenient (usually via an automated feed with computer software).<sup>1</sup>
- Benefits: telling stories, sharing audio and video material automatically with users, engaging tech-savvy park users and those unable to visit parks themselves, and easier to update.
- Challenge: requires planning and production efforts to create podcasts on a regular basis. Could possibly be costly. Users need to know where to access them and have the appropriate technology.

#### 4. Signs

- What: inscribed surfaces or spaces that are placed in parks and natural areas.
- Benefits: welcoming people to a site, labels, on-site interpretation, supports visual learners. Signs can convey information related on a large variety of topics and issues, and have the advantage of being physically close to their subject matter.
- Challenge: design and layout, maintenance, and keeping current. Signs are not flexible as an interpretive material so accuracy and currency are issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition proposed by the Community, Journalism, and Communications Research group from the University of Texas at Austin.

## 5. Social networking sites

- What: online places where individuals, agencies, and groups can interact in a variety of ways including photo sharing, messaging, event notification, and information. Examples include FaceBook and LinkedIn.
- Benefits: range of ages and professions. An advantage over regular websites is that people can interact. PP&R can come to them, rather than their having to visit PP&R's site for information.
- Challenge: sites need to be updated very regularly without flooding users with information. It can be difficult to generate users or followers. Many people do not use these sites at all.

## 6. Twitter

- What: online and phone program allowing broadcasts of 140-character-long messages, and other networking capabilities like photo sharing.
- Benefits: brief updates, breaking news, sightings, posing questions to followers. Twitter is used by many young adults and professionals.
- Challenges: demographically limited, must be updated often, can only share very small amounts of information at a time.

## 7. Website

- What: a forum in which information, photos, video, and more can be posted online and accessed through the internet.
- Benefits: helping visitors prepare for a trip to a park or learn more afterwards, audiovisual materials, accessible for many people. PP&R currently operates *www.Portlandparks.org*. Websites can be utilized in many innovative ways for environmental interpretation as well as serve basic functions such as giving directions to sites.
- Challenge: web material is already extensive and requires frequent maintenance and updates. Users must be directed to the proper websites and be able to find what they are looking for easily.

## 8. High Capacity Color Barcode

- What: a tag of encoding data in a two-dimensional barcode using clusters of colored triangles to increase data density. The user downloads the tag application then scans the barcode with a smart phone camera to connect to a website.
- Benefits: gives smart phone users the ability to easily access detailed information by being directed to a website or online media. The reader application is free.
- Challenges: cost of barcode development and placement. Information would not be available for users without smart phones. Thus, this information can be seen as supplemental to interpretive material on site. However, nearly 24% of all mobile phones sold in the first quarter of 2011 were smart phones with growing market acceptance. Introduction of tablets with camera capability will also expand the opportunities for high-density web content accessed through barcodes.

## 9. Telephone Access

- What: a number to call to receive detailed information.
- Benefits: gives mobile phone users the ability to easily access detailed information by dialing a telephone number shown on a small sign.
- Challenges: keeping the information short and current, and maintaining the small signs.

## Additional Resources

National Association for Interpretation (NAI) – NAI offers many resources for interpreters on their website, [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com), including blogs, events, publications, and training tools. Some materials are only accessible to members. One very useful tool is the Definitions Project ([www.definitionsproject.com](http://www.definitionsproject.com)), which is a collection of standard terminology related to interpretation.

National Park Service (NPS) – NPS is a leader in using and researching interpretive methods. Their site for interpretation and education ([www.nps.gov/learn](http://www.nps.gov/learn)) provides materials for teachers and students. Director's Order #6 ([www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html](http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html)) addresses interpretation and education. Sections of particular relevance to PP&R are: 4) Interpretive and Educational Programs; 5) Interpretive Planning; 6) Personal and Non-Personal Services; and 8) Requirements for All Interpretive and Educational Services.

National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) – NPCA's mission is "To protect and enhance America's National Parks for present and future generations."<sup>2</sup> They are involved in many interpretive efforts in national parks, including the Park Stories podcast which can be accessed here: [www.npca.org/media\\_center/podcasts/](http://www.npca.org/media_center/podcasts/).

Portland Parks and Recreation – Examples of interpretation utilized by PP&R can be found through [www.portlandonline.com/parks/finder](http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/finder). Many parks, such as Forest Park and Hoyt Arboretum, offer additional online resources either through PP&R or by links to websites of Friends groups.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.npca.org/who\\_we\\_are/](http://www.npca.org/who_we_are/)



## How to host a PP&R Facebook group page

### 1. Facebook business pages must be attached to a personal Facebook profile.

- Before creating a Facebook page, contact Joan Hallquist in the Community Relations Group to talk and walk through the process.
- You may create a Facebook business or group page, associated with your personal email account, and profile page. You do not need to set up a phony profile in order to create a PP&R Facebook group page.
- PP&R Facebook pages **MUST** be titled appropriately. For example: Portland Parks Environmental Education. Or, Hillside Community Center - PP&R. Don't pick an obscure name. Remember, you want to be found through the Facebook Search feature.
- Once a page is created, you must immediately assign multiple page administrators.
- Joan Hallquist in the PP&R Community Relations Group **MUST** be alerted to all new Facebook pages and must be designated as an Administrator.

### 2. Updates

- If you commit to having a Facebook page, commit to posting to the page and keeping it current.
- Encourage staff to post to the wall. Come up with fun ideas and bits of information to post. Photos are great.
- Learn to use Facebook mobile. Activate your ability to use your smart phone to make immediate posts to your page wall via a text message (see Profile info below).

### 3. Photos

Because Facebook is a marketing/communication tool, we are covered by our PP&R photo policy and have been given approval from the City Attorney's office to post photos of people to our Facebook pages. If you have a public site (center or pool), you must make the PP&R photo policy visible to the public several times in different locations.

### 4. Profile

- Edit the Profile of your page if you want to allow fan access to your wall so they may add wall posts and photos.
- To edit your Profile go to "Ads and Pages" located on the left side navigation bar on your personal Facebook Home page. Then click "Edit Page." Here you can establish your settings, wall setting, mobile connections, and all the rest.

### 5. Marketing

- Use the Facebook logo on all your communications! Facebook has strict rules of use on how this should be done. Logos are available on the Facebook site. If you have any questions, please email Joan Hallquist.
- Publish your Facebook address, or tell people how to search for you. These are different!
- You will have a Facebook URL address and a searchable Facebook title that you create when initially setting up your Facebook business page.
- Choosing a good page title is very important and your title should include the words "Portland Parks" or "Portland Parks & Recreation."

- Shortcut or “vanity” your Facebook URL address. Facebook requires you to have at least 26 fans or “Likes” on your page.
- Go to *www.facebook.com/username*. In the lower box titled “Each page can have a Vanity URL username,” select your page from the drop down box, then type in your desired shortcut. Facebook will check availability of that name. Walk through the rest of the process designated by Facebook and you are done.

#### 6. Edit

Editing the profile of your page allows you to edit:

- Basic Settings
- Wall Settings
- Mobile (connecting your smart phone)

#### 7. Add and Remove Administrators

You can also add and remove administrators through the “See All” People who Like this section on the Facebook home page. Scroll through the list and click the button next to a name that says “Make Admin” or “Remove Admin”

Facebook Questions?

Joan Hallquist, 503-823-6190

Joan.hallquist@portlandoregon.gov