

Ridgway Main Street & Creative District Signage & Wayfinding Plan

> February 2015



Adopted by the Planning Commission: February 24, 2015 Adopted by the Town Council: March 11, 2015

# **01** Project Overview

#### RIDGWAY MAIN STREET & CREATIVE DISTRICT -SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PLAN

The objective of the Ridgway Signage & Wayfinding Plan is to facilitate a creative consensus-based direction for signage/wayfinding and gateway improvements within Ridgway's Downtown Main Street and Creative District. Variables addressed in the decision-making process included: relationship of the signage/wayfinding to existing signs within the downtown district (including recently installed Highway and Parks signs), coordination with stakeholders, businesses, and community members, aesthetic/financial impacts of proposed signage/wayfinding improvements, and overall relationship of the signage/wayfinding and urban design improvements to the planned Highway 62 and downtown infrastructure improvements.

#### **Project Phases**

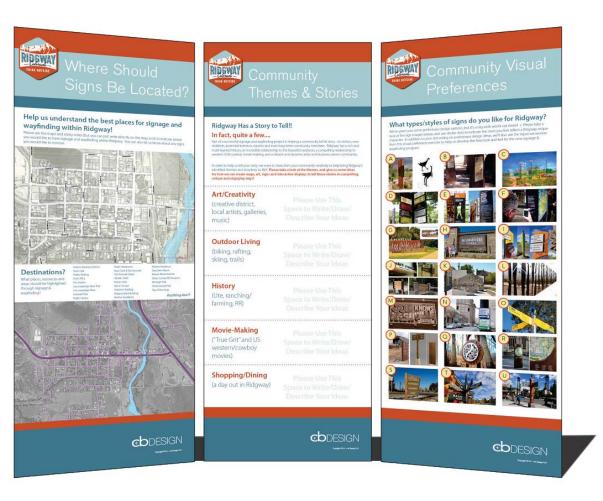
- Phase I: Background Information Gathering
- Phase 2: Stakeholder Outreach/Community Preferences for Preliminary
   Design Options
- Phase 3: Final Design Options

Several graphic design materials were used to communicate different aspects of the project to stakeholders and the public. The project overview banner summarizes the goals, processes and timeline for the Signage & Wayfinding Plan



## **02** Information-Gathering & Stakeholder Outreach

In order to encourage feedback from the community, C+B hosted a feedback booth at an art festival on August 9th and 10th, 2014



#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION GATHERING**

## Task 1: Kick-Off Meeting, Merchant Meeting, Site Walk and Preliminary Goal-Setting Conversation

In order to better understand the project area, C+B facilitated a preliminary kick-off meeting with key Ridgway staff, elected officials, and stakeholders. During the meeting, C+B worked with participants to understand the project background, existing conditions within the downtown and highway corridor, and potential goals/ideas that have been considered. As part of the kick-off meeting, C+B met with the downtown merchant group to collect their thoughts and perspectives regarding the signage/wayfinding project.

#### Merchant Meeting - July 31st, 2014

In order to better understand the project area, C+B facilitated a preliminary kick-off meeting with key Ridgway staff, elected officials, and stakeholders. During the meeting, C+B worked with participants to understand the project background, existing conditions within the downtown and highway corridor, and potential goals/ideas that have been considered. As part of the kick-off meeting, C+B met with the downtown merchant group to collect their thoughts and perspectives regarding the signage/wayfinding project.

#### Merchant Meeting Idea/Comment Summary

#### Signage Design/Aesthetics

- We LOVE our street signs make new signs match!
- Banner vertical information down the sides (like signs at the edge of turn lane adjacent to the new construction area)
- Recycled glass
- Sign posts = art pieces
- Lighting Backlit, internally illuminated signs are too bright for Ridgway
- We need an aesthetic signage design that fits Ridgway
- All town signage should be cohesive, tasteful and not competitive with existing signs
- Crested Butte good signage example

#### Signage Content

- Parking signage very important (especially considering the new parking arrangement after CDOT improvements)
- RV parking there are designated RV parking spaces south of the library (need to direct RV's to this area)
- Orvis Hot Springs need to connect this area to downtown (Ute history is part of the history of this hot springs)
- Ridgway is a bedroom community for Telluride
- Picture-making opportunity with movie history?
- There are some important historic buildings south of Main Street need to include on the historic walking tour
- Public art walking tour map (exists need to daylight)
- History of True Grit and movie-making history important theme in downtown
- Mountain ranges local draw, graphics illustrating the names of the peaks and their elevations have been popular (need to verify accuracy of data regarding names/heights)
- QR codes and maps on signs important
- Having a physical map of downtown illustrating its layout and buildings during the time of settlement would be interesting – interpretive sign with a plan of the town from the past (with historic photos)
- Chamber has a True Grit walking tour
- The County is currently creating digital mountain-biking maps (RAT)
- Need to have more visibility of the creative district (build on the Moonwalk event – artist, studios, map/tour of artistic shops/destinations within downtown)
- Top of the Pines camp, education and event facility

#### **About Your Business**

- What made you decide to locate your business here?
- What are your busiest days? Times?
- What are your hours? Are you open at night? Why or why not?

#### **Getting to Your Business**

- How much do you rely on your storefront to attract customers? Do you find that most of your customers are 'drop in', or are they coming to downtown Ridgway specifically to visit your shop? (what percentage do you feel are 'drop in' customers versus 'destination' customers?)
- Do customers express difficulty in finding your business?
   If so, why?
- How do you think most customers get to your shop (walk, bike, drive)? If people drive, where do they park? Have customers expressed any issues with finding parking near your business?

#### Signage & Wayfinding – Preferences & Goals

- Are there any specific types of signage and wayfinding you feel would help your business?
- Do you have any worries or concerns about adding signage and wayfinding in the downtown area?

#### Signage & Wayfinding – Preferences & Goals

 Do you have any additional ideas for how to improve signage and wayfinding within or around the downtown core? Is there another downtown area you've visited whose signage and wayfinding you found attractive or compelling, and if so, what do you feel made it successful?

Overview of questions asked during the merchant and stakeholder meetings

#### Merchant Meeting Idea/Comment Summary (continued)

#### Signage Locations

- State Park could there be a Ridgway sign/information here?
- Competition of signs Montrose has too many signs and they are too big
- Sherman concern that there will be too many signs
- Dog Swim Beach needs a sign at the beach area, but it is partially on private property (agreement needed)
- Commercial District East of Highway (What is the brand? "East Ridgway"
   "Trailtown" "The Distillary")
- Top of the Pines camp, education and event facility
- Need business advertising signs (like the existing multi-business sign) along Main Street coordinate with CDOT

#### Themes to Celebrate in Downtown Ridgway

- Art/Creativity (creative district map)
- Outdoor Living (biking, rafting, skiing, trails)
- History (Ute, Ranching/Farming, RR "Town That Refused to Die" D. Gregory)
- Movie-Making
- Shopping/Dining (perfect for a QR-updated or paper map)
- Michael at Firehouse Gallery local expert on history of Ridgway area
- Re-release of True Grit "Aspen Gold" tells story of Ridgway then-andnow

#### **Reasons for Opening/Operating a Business in Ridgway**

- Beauty/Lifestyle
- Cost/Affordability
- Proximity to Wilderness
- Proximity to Skiing
- Natural/Cultural Amenities

**Town of Ridgway Creative District** Signage

- Economics NOT a Factor Businesses in Ridgway need to make their own economics
- Spring/Fall slow time
- Summer/Winter busy time
- Businesses next to restaurants tend to stay open longer, since they get more after-dinner foot traffic
- · Visibility key aspect of what draws people to your business
- · Hotels in town are open 365; restaurants also open year-round

#### Urban Design of Downtown Spaces

- · Walkways connecting businesses will increase visibility
- More amenities south of Main Street would like the north and south areas of town
- Need to unite/promote both South and North portions of town oneway on Lena points people away from businesses south of Main (need to unify N & S)

#### **Events/Celebrations**

- Moonwalk once a month, businesses are open late provides good community/tourist awareness of what businesses are located in downtown Ridgway
- Chamber could they sponsor an educational event for state park camp hosts (designed to help them promote amenities within downtown Ridgway)?
- 8pm in winter no walkers after 8pm (and no reason to stay open)
- All events in the park attract large crowds, and are very good for Ridgway businesses – more events would be welcome! (movies in the park, bands, etc)
- Ouray ice park winter draw to the area
- Free music concerts these are a big tourist draw

Overall, merchants and business owners in downtown Ridgway have located to the area because they love the downtown and community. **There is a strong and tangible emotional connection to Ridgway in the business community**, most of whom chose Ridgway for its sense of place and special, unique character.

## Task 2: Existing Conditions Summary - Physical Conditions of the Project Area

Understanding the unique physical conditions within the project area was critical to the overall design process. During July and August of 2014, C+B spent time in Ridgway documenting the following:

- Existing Signage & Wayfinding
- Opportunities for Reduction of Signage in the Downtown and Along
  Highway Corridors
- Community History & Character
- Potential Locations for Types of Community Signage
- Condition/Location of Important Nodes within the Downtown Core

#### Existing Signage & Wayfinding

As is typical of many downtown districts, Ridgway's existing signage and wayfinding elements reflect the organic growth of the community, and a gradual accumulation of signage for different purposes. In order to understand the context of specific sign types, C+B analyzed the overall community signage, and grouped signs into the following categories:

#### Signage Types (public):

- Regulatory
- Directional
- Informational
- Temporary/Celebratory
- 'Placemaking'

#### Signage Types (private):

- Informational
- Temporary/Celebratory
- 'Placemaking'

#### **REGULATORY SIGNAGE**











#### DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE











#### INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE



#### TEMPORARY/CELEBRATORY SIGNAGE



#### 'PLACEMAKING' SIGNAGE



#### The New Signage Palette

With the new highway and downtown auto navigation signage, Ridgway has begun the process of beginning to make destinations within the downtown core more legible and accessible. For this next stage of the process, the existing auto signs formed the starting point for additional discussions about how to add other signage elements that would help accomplish the following:

- Make the downtown more walkable
- Let visitors passing through or stopping in town know there is more to the downtown core than just the establishments adjacent to the state highway
- Reinforce the fonts, colors and style of the new highway signs
- Communicate the Ridgway community brand, history and sense of place
- Announce arrival into Ridgway
- Make connections to trails and the river
- Help organize temporary, seasonal and celebratory messages
- Reduce sign clutter by using fewer signs to communicate regulatory and directional information
- Daylight community history, stories and special destinations within the downtown



#### PRIVATE SIGNAGE

#### The Role and Impacts of Private Signage within the Downtown Core

As a tourist community, Ridgway supports a number of private shops, restaurants and businesses that not only support local commerce, but also rely on attracting tourist interest and dollars. In order to make themselves legible, many private businesses have installed very visible signage and wayfinding. Scaled to reflect both location within the downtown core (businesses along the state highway have much larger signs than those along main street) and relative location to the street (businesses set back from the street tend to have larger signs), private signage has a huge impact on the look and feel of downtown Ridgway.

One of the unique characteristics of private business signage within the downtown is the propensity of multibusiness signs, which are often large and located adjacent to the street, and advertise a number of businesses located within the same building or area. Although privately owned, it would be beneficial for Ridgway to continue to improve upon the existing sign standards and regulations for these private partner signs, so they are in keeping with the larger Ridgway brand and messaging program.















#### STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING SIGN CLUTTER

#### Strategy #1 - Work with CDOT to remove excess signage

Although many of the CDOT signs related to speed limits and regulatory information are critical, there are other CDOT signs that are not needed and which create confusion and add to the visual sign clutter within Ridgway's downtown. During the planned CDOT streetscape renovation project, there is an opportunity to remove the extra signage, and streamline the CDOT signage to focus on needed regulatory messages, and remove the extraneous CDOT signs.

## Strategy #3 - Replace multiple/individual signs with the new signage maps and auto-directional information

Many of the small, individual signs within the downtown help point visitors to amenities like lodging and parking. The new signage palette incorporates this type of visitor information into the sign messaging, which makes the existing individual signs unnecessary. As the new signs are installed, these existing parking and amenity signs should be removed.

Note: Some of these signs were installed by CDOT, and will require permission from CDOT to be removed.

### Strategy #4 - Limit event advertisements to the available area within the new signage palette

Currently, Ridgway community event banners are displayed in several areas (the tennis court fence, at the community entrance, on freestanding banners within the park and along the roadways). As part of the new signage palette, a banner display sign was developed, and this new sign is meant to be a central feature where temporary event banners are located and displayed.

NOTE: In order to effectively utilize the new banner display sign, the dimensions and scale of banners will need to be sized to fit the sign dimensions, and these measurements shared with non-profits and organizations who use banners to advertise their events.



## Strategy #2 - Work with merchants to limit the number and size of sandwich board-type signage in the sidewalk areas

The new signage palette allows space for private businesses to advertise their establishments, which should be a great help to shops, galleries and restaurants located within the downtown core. Wherever possible, merchants should be encouraged to use the new signage as a way to promote their businesses, rather than using sandwich boards. However, where sandwich boards are still deemed necessary, the number and style should be limited to one sandwich board per property, with multiple businesses advertised on the same board (as needed). Where space permits, these individual sandwich boards should be placed out of the public right-of-way, in planters or other non-sidewalk areas.







## **03** Preliminary Design Options

## COMMUNITY DESIGN PREFERENCES FOR PRELIMINARY DESIGN OPTIONS

#### Task 1: Project Advertisement & Promotion

In order to advertise the public outreach opportunities, C+B developed a series of posters and flyers that helped promote the outreach events, and solicit community participation in the preliminary design roll-out.



Electronic'e-card' notices promoting public outreach events were sent out to the Ridgway merchant, property owner and resident community

## **Task 2:** Preliminary Design Options & Community Feedback

During Task 2, C+B developed a series of preliminary design options, and then took these options to the Ridgway community for feedback and direction. During the feedback events, a series of interactive banner displays were used to convey the following information:

- Types and Styles of Signage
- Best Practice Signage Design (visual preference image selection banner)
- Potential Signage Locations
- Three (3) Design Options for the New Signage Palette
- Interpretive Themes & Ideas

Community feedback events were designed to piggy-back on existing community-wide celebrations, and create a open and dynamic dialogue with the Ridgway community. Vibrant and interactive graphic materials helped draw stakeholders into the feedback booth, where members of C+B were on hand to help answer questions and solicit participation and recording of thoughts and ideas.





#### Feedback Summary: Visual Preferences

An important component of clarifying the community signage vision was presenting best practice signage design options. C+B created a series of graphic displays that illustrated different types of signage, and asked stakeholders to use colored sticker dots to choose the signage types they felt were most appropriate for Ridgway.



Visual preference banner display allowed stakeholders to choose the types and styles of signage appropriate to Ridgway











Overall, the preferred images reflected a natural palette of steel, rock and aluminum. Strong preferences existed for signage that could help advertise private, side-street or off-main-street businesses, and gateway signage that was grand and artistic. For interpretive-type signage, stakeholders selected artistic pieces that integrated historic photos into the overall design.





## Feedback Summary: Interpretive Themes & Map-Based Comments

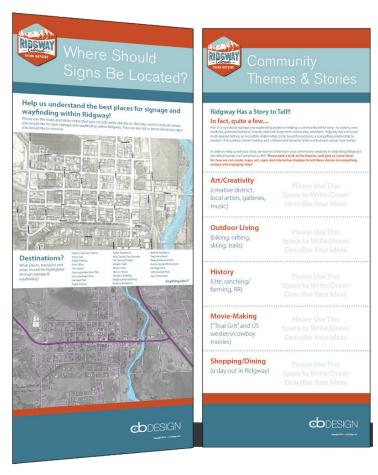
To encourage stakeholders to think creatively about signage locations and themes for potential interpretive pieces, C+B created mock-up banner graphics that listed the destinations and themes of potential signage within the downtown project area. Participants were asked to review the existing themes, and add any additional ideas. A map-based banner asked people to indicate potential locations for new signs.

Summary of Written Banner Comments from the Theme & Map-Based Banner Display

- Historic photos and sustainability even historic movie photos
- Photos (historic) Colorado Historical Society, Library Collection, Local Museums
- Plays on historic buildings that are accessible or at the road for main public spaces, with the history written on the signs
- Alley poetry signs with interactive bar codes
- Link all paths so strollers don't have to be in road
- A Ridgway perimeter trail (yes!)
- Healthy
- The bike trails are our key to attracting a very valuable demographic. Allocate \$\$ to develop the system. (4 stars added to this comment)
- Environmental sustainability (bridge these 2 concepts)
- Earthships, solar, leed
- Local production of the signs very important
- Health and wellness holistic medicine "healthy living"
- Fenced dog park (south end of the park by the Chipeta south of the backstop)
- Continue attempts to create a paved bike path all the way to Ouray
- Exercise stations along bike trail like Ouray's river trail
- Use student involvement wherever possible!
- State Park & Reservoir
- Historic images for each of these themes
- Walking tours QR codes & maps (yes!)
- "Jazz up" or "Dress up" new bridge on 62. The river under the bridge looks great. Take the "Blaw Bridge" to another level. Thanks – appreciate what u are doing.
- Hot springs & river!!
- All the below! (green dot added to this comment)

#### **Destinations New Signage Should Highlight**

- Historic Business District
- Town Hall
- Public Parking
- Post Office
- Fire Station
- Uncompany RiverWay Trail
- Uncompany River
- Hartwell Park
- Public Library
- Public Restrooms
- Race Track & Fairgrounds
- Old Railroad Depot
- Athletic Field
- Rollans Park
- Herran House
- Sherbino Building
- Ridgway Bank Building
- Walther Residence
- Dog Swim Beach
- Weaver Memorial Park
- Visitor Center/RR Museum
- Heritage Park
- Cottonwood Park



Interpretive and map-based comment banners were

new signage, and reflect back the interpretive themes

and ideas that came out of talking with downtown

merchants and property owners

used to help stakeholders envision the location of

#### Feedback Summary: Preliminary Design Options

The three (3) preliminary design options were all grounded in materials, designs and themes already present in downtown Ridgway. Each design was developed to illustrate a different look and feel, and also different ways of displaying information.

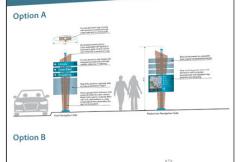
#### **Community Feedback Regarding Design Options**

In order to illustrate the preliminary signage design options, C+B created a series of banner-type graphics that encouraged members of the Ridgway community to comment on each design, and select their preferred alternative through dot voting.

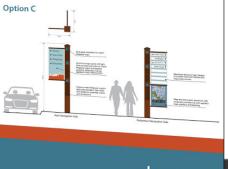
#### Summary of Written Banner Comments from the Design **Options Banner**

- Options A & B are much too metro. Looks like they belong in the big city
- Use signage that catches the eye of vehicles passing through town keep western/ . ranching feeling for Town – signage should inform guickly with (drawing of an arrow) to points of interest
- Red or too light is hard to read .
- Too contemporary (in reference to Option A) .
- Sheer bolts at base (for when people hit it) •
- Use student involvement wherever possible .
- Solar-powered lights (panel on the signs) .
- Copper or green (rather than blue) •
- Ridgway should maintain a rustic, western feel .
- Select an alternative that directs readers to specific businesses. Disagree with making Ridgway an old west town, those days are gone forever.
- Add river rock at bottom of the sign (written under Option A) .
- Snow considerations (with arrow pointing to the B sign base) .
- Like the stacked glass, could it be on C? .
- The ped map needs to be separated from the auto or people will stop in the road to try to . read it (in reference to the sign on Option B)
- Design Option C is VERY nice. I prefer the look of the Town logo and motto. Also I like the • lack of lights (I like to see the stars at night!)
- Want rustic old west style (more wood or equal wood to metal) .
- Medalians are okay. NO logo. It's too busy, esp. for a small location .
- This one with the map & merchant directory (referring to option C) .
- "Think Outside" on the side (referring to option C) .
- Really like the mountains on this sign (rather than the whole logo) referring to option C .
- . Under the auto info – rotating banner area (referring to option C)









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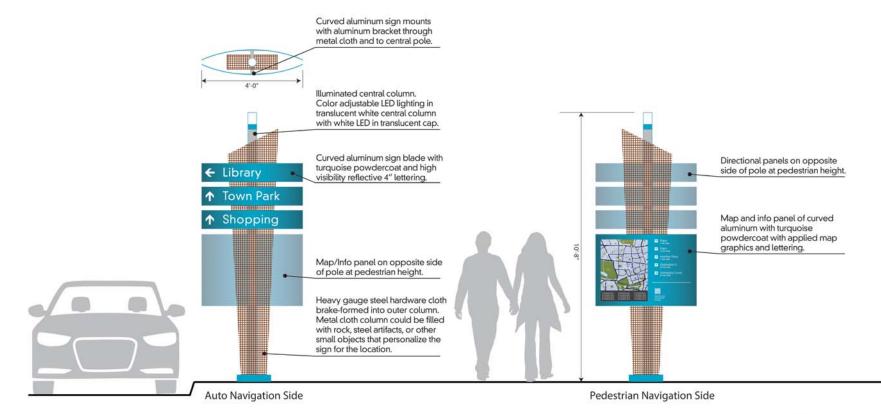
### **Dot Voting Results:**

Option A: 12 Votes Option B: 7 Votes **Option C: 60 Votes** 



Ridgway Downtown Creative District Signage and Wayfinding Signage Concept A



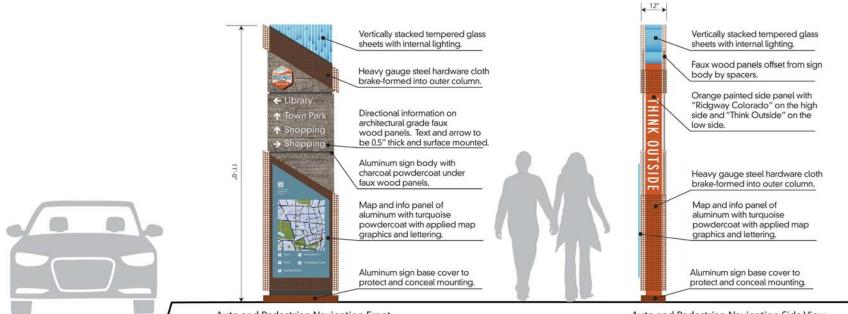


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Ridgway Downtown Creative District Signage and Wayfinding Signage Concept B Draft Version - 07 August 2014



Auto and Pedestrian Navigation Front

Auto and Pedestrian Navigation Side View

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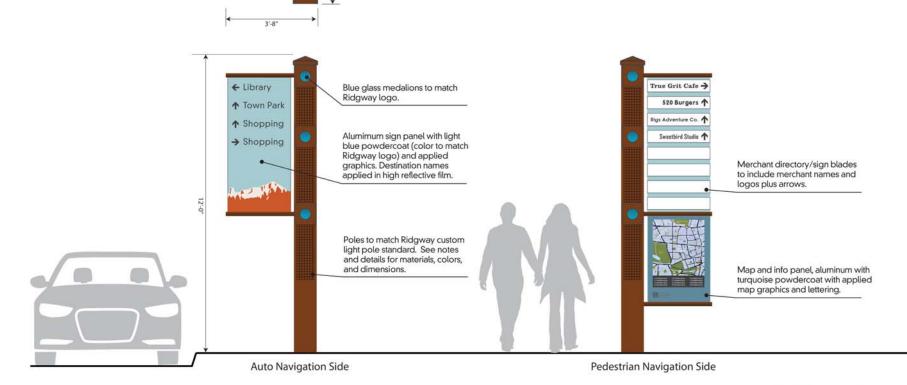


Ridgway Downtown Creative District Signage and Wayfinding Signage Concept C

#### Draft Version ~ 07 August 2014

### Option C

Strongly preferred option per community vote - basis for final design direction



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# **04** Final Design Options

#### **FINAL SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING PALETTE**

#### Signage Palette: Recommended Signage Types

In order to build on the preferred signage (Option C), C+B took the preliminary design direction and created an expanded palette of signage types. The following signs comprise the recommended Ridgway signage palette:

- Gateway/Entry Signage
- Auto-Ped Navigation Signage
- Auto-Ped Navigation Signage: Merchant Advertisements
- Informational Sign
- Bridge Enhancements
- Temporary Banner Displays

NOTE: It is recommended that new 'destination' signage reflect the existing Town of Ridgway destination signage palette. It is also recommended that the new highway signage installed in 2014 remain - the proposed signage builds on this palette.



#### Gateway Inspirational Imagery & Design Intent

As the main entrance into Ridgway, the eastern gateway design was developed to be a signature branding piece that not only helps daylight downtown Ridgway from the highway, but also reflects the community character and sense of place.

Designed to be fabricated from steel, part of the gateway is naturally weathering, while the mesh areas are powdercoated a dark brown, so that the naturally weathering steel in front of the mesh structure stands out. On either side of the primary sign, smaller narrow column features stretch out into the landscape, and offer opportunities for local artists to develop custom steel cut panel designs. The multiple panel design also helps physically integrate the gateway into the adjacent sidewalk, making the pedestrian experience here more inviting and friendly.

NOTE: The final design of the gateways will be integrated with the monument planned for the intersection of Lena Street and Highway 62. The artwork on the Highway 62 bridge will also reflect the materials and character of the new gateway.





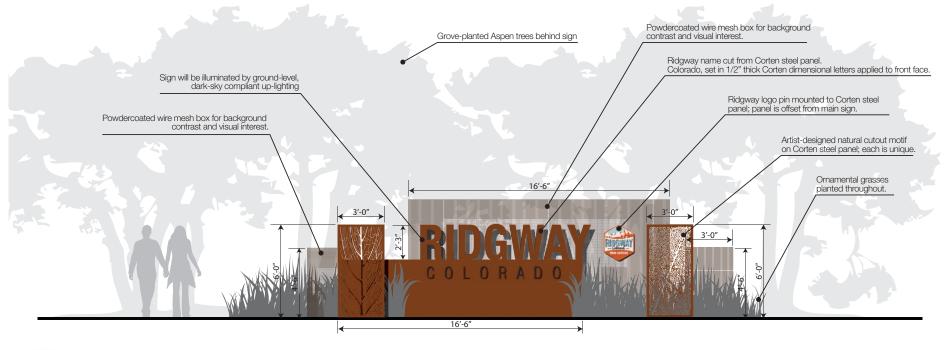






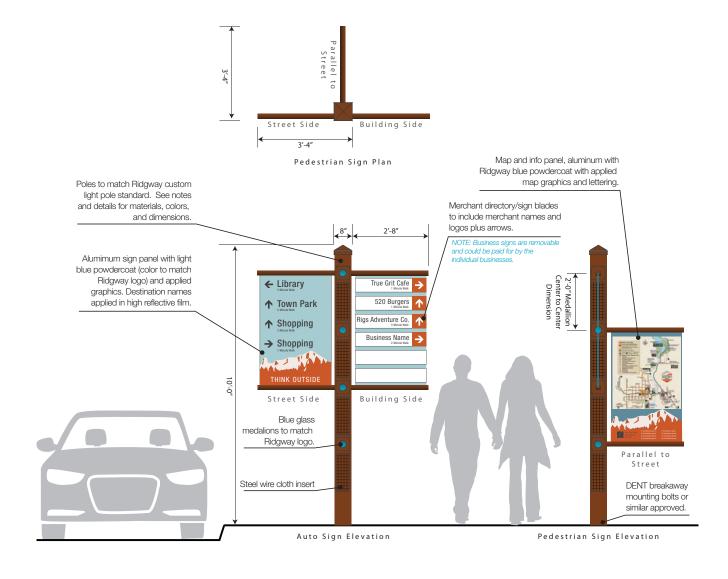


#### **GATEWAY/ENTRY SIGNAGE**





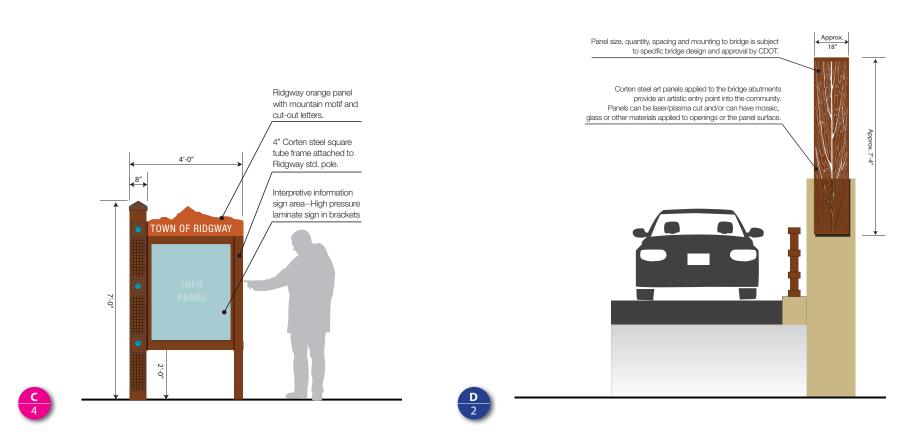
#### **AUTO-PED NAVIGATION SIGNAGE**





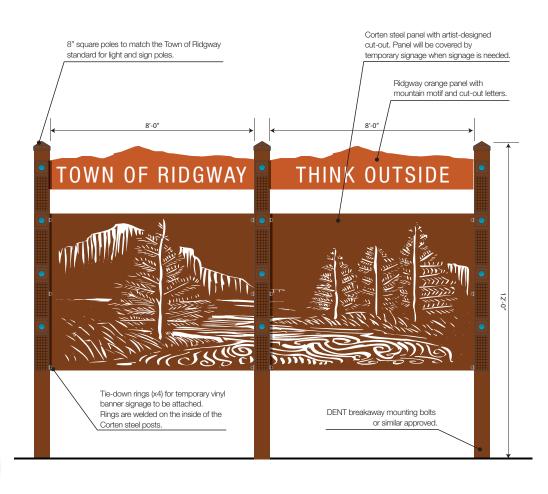
#### **INFORMATIONAL SIGN**

#### **BRIDGE ENHANCEMENTS**





#### **TEMPORARY BANNER DISPLAYS**



**E** 3

#### SIGNAGE LOCATIONS, QUANTITES AND COSTS

Recommended Locations and Quantities for Each Sign Type



#### Gateway/Entry Signage



Auto-Ped Navigation Signage



Auto-Ped Navigation Signage: Merchant Advertisements



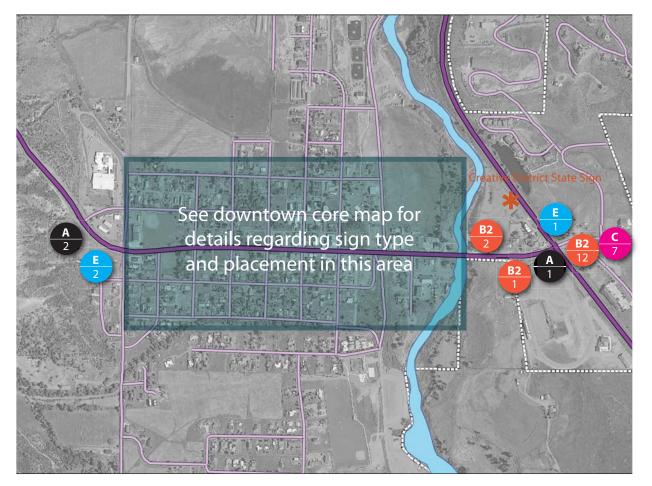
Informational Sign

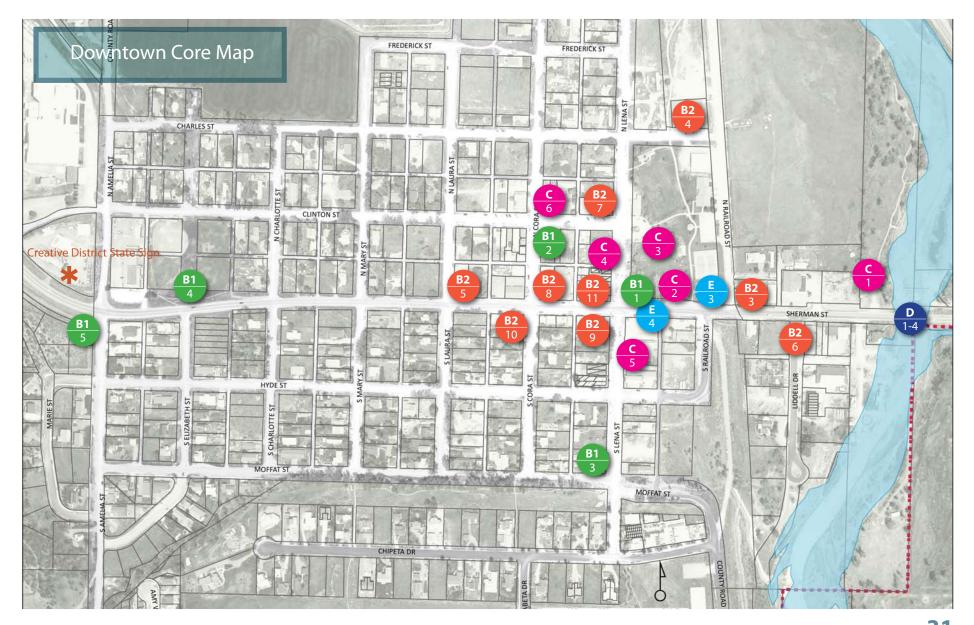


**Bridge Enhancements** 



**Temporary Banner Displays** 





#### PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE

#### **PROJECT PHASING**

#### A Phased Approach to Implementation

Phasing the implementation and construction of the signage and wayfinding palette ensures the overall costs are not encumbered within one fiscal year, while also providing opportunities to apply for grants and ouside funding opportunities that can offset the overall project costs.

Benefits of a Multi-Year Signage & Wayfinding Roll-Out:

- → Reduces the cost burden of a one-time CIP fund allocation
- → Allows for the system to be tested at each phase
- Provides an opportunity to work with different local artists for each sign type (gateway, autoped navigation, etc)
- Provides the ability to observe the fabrication and installation process (and recommend potential adjustments)
- Ensures adequate timeframes for alternate financing opportunities (grant applications, creation of special districts, potential development impact fees, etc)
- Builds community enthusiasm for the project and desire to see additional signage installed

Phase 1 - 2015	Temporary Banner Displays Bridge Enhancements and Lena Street informational Sign	
Phase 2 - 2016		
Phase 3 - 2017	Gateway Entry Sign	
Phase 4 - 2017-2018	Auto Ped Navigation Signage	

Costs include sign technical design, engineering, fabrication and installation

Quantity	Symbol	Description	Unit Cost	Total Cost
2	<b>A</b> 2	Gateway/Entry Signage	\$30,000-\$50,000	\$60,000-\$100,000
8	<b>B1</b> 5	Auto-Ped Navigation Signage	\$8,000-\$10,000	\$40,000-\$50,000
8	<b>B2</b> 12	Auto-Ped Navigation Signage - Merchant Advertisement	\$10,000-\$13,000	\$120,000-\$156,000
4	<b>C</b> 7	Informational Sign	\$6,000-\$8,000	\$42,000-\$56,000
2	<b>D</b> 4	Bridge Enhancements	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$60,000-\$80,000
3	E 4	Temporary Banner Displays	\$15,000-\$20,000	\$60,000-\$80,000

NOTE: Cost estimate assumes fabrication from Denver. Working with local fabricators and artists would significantly reduce the overall costs of both fabrication and installation.

#### \$382,000-\$522,000

#### **PROJECT FUNDING**

#### **Potential Funding Mechanisms**

#### Local and State Grant Programs

- → Special Districts (BID, URA, DDA, etc)
- → Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs DOLA (offers technical assistance to local governments for the establishment ofcapital improvements)
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CBDG administered through DOLA in Colorado)
- → Development Impact Fees
- → Transportation Equity Act (TEA-LU)
- ➔ Division of Local Government Grants
- → Office of Economic Development and International Trade Grants
- ➔ Governors Energy Office (GEO) and USDA Rural Development (RD) Energy Programs (to fund energyefficient new lighting)

#### Public-Private Partnerships

- Side street signage costs can be offset through the sale of sign blades
- Crowd-funding campaigns can be used to raise funds for historic walking tour signs and trail signage

#### Tax Assistance from General Funds

→ Allocate specific funds for the signage and wayfinding improvements (2015-2017)

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