



CHICAGO RIVER

BRAND STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES





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INTRODUCTION



CHICAGO RIVER BRAND STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Chicago River is one of Chicago's most precious and recognized natural resources. Winding its way through the length of the city, it offers a peaceful, natural contrast to the urban environment.

For most of Chicago's history, the river has been an essential working asset, serving as the city's harbor, supplying water for industry, and carrying away wastewater. In the process, the river was neglected and abused. Renewed development and changes in technology have made it possible to reclaim the river as an aesthetic and recreational resource to improve the quality of life for all Chicagoans.

The Chicago River Corridor Development Plan, adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in 1999, provides the framework for the revitalization of the Chicago River. The five goals outlined in this plan are to:

- Create a connected greenway along the river, with continuous multi-use paths along at least one side of the river;
- Increase public access to the river through the creation of overlooks and public parks;
- Restore and protect landscaping and natural habitats along the river, particularly fish habitat;

- Develop the river as a recreational amenity, attracting tourists and enhancing Chicago's image as a desirable place to live, work, and visit;
- Encourage economic development compatible with the river as an environmental and recreational amenity.

Since the implementation of the River Corridor Development Plan, there has been a significant amount of public and private investment that has transformed underutilized riverfront areas into new parks and paths, mixed-use and residential projects, and industry. New riverfront communities have emerged, land values have increased, water quality has improved, and the river has become a prime destination.

ROLE OF THE GUIDELINES

The Chicago River Brand Standards and Guidelines outlines the Riverwalk's visual branding system as well as expectations for signage design, identifying elements, and aesthetics along

the Chicago River and its branches within the city limits. When applied consistently, these principles and elements ensure a unified aesthetic along the river's edge, encourage use of public space, and create a sense of cohesion and place.

This document should be considered an extension of the Chicago River Design Guidelines, which was published in early 2019 and address development expectations along the river, including architectural treatments, building design, fencing, lighting, landscape, materials, publicly accessible amenities, and riverbank treatments.

Applicability

The Chicago Zoning Ordinance (Municipal Code of Chicago, Title 17 Section 8-0509-A) requires that *all new development within one hundred (100) feet of Chicago waterways be processed as Planned Developments*. These Planned Developments are subject to review and approval by the City of Chicago Department of

Planning and Development (DPD), the Chicago Plan Commission, and the Chicago City Council. The ordinance further requires new developments to comply with the general goals of the waterway's guidelines established by the Chicago Plan Commission, including the brand standards and guidelines outlined in this document. These guidelines provide a basis for the review by the DPD of riverfront Planned Development wayfinding proposals.

Exceptions: Per the City of Chicago Zoning Ordinance 17-8-0509-A.1 and A.2, exceptions to the Planned Development review process for properties adjacent to the river include:

- Repair or rehabilitation of any portion of an existing building, structure, or parking area;
- Residential buildings containing three or fewer dwelling units and structures that are accessory or additions thereto;
- Other buildings, structures, or parking areas that are accessory or an addition to an existing building, structure, or use, and are either 500 square feet or less in enclosed floor area or are set back a minimum of 30' from the top of the bank.



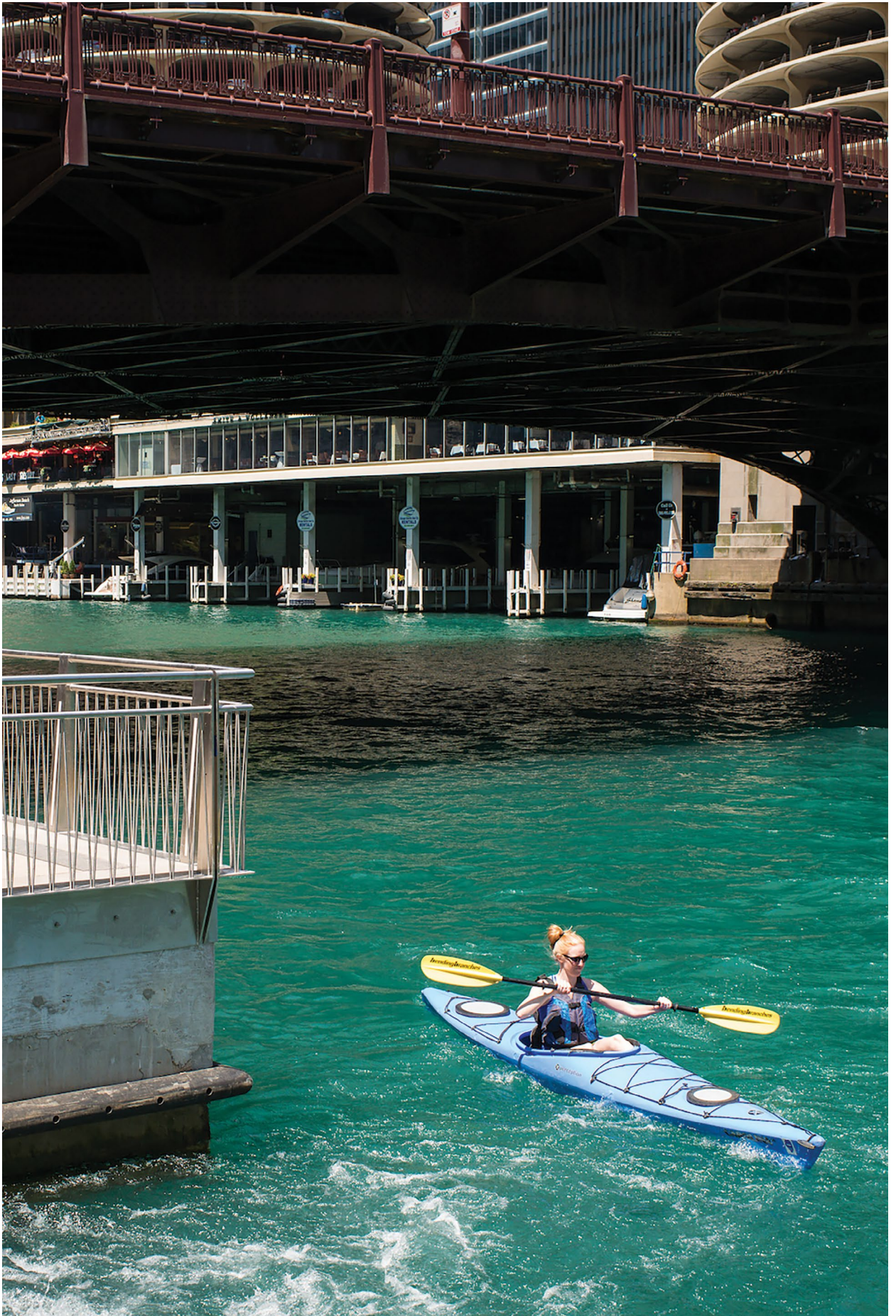
South Branch of the Chicago River at 14th Street in 1900

The Industrial History of the Chicago River

Chicago's growth into a major urban center is due, in large part, to its strategic location on the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. When the City was incorporated in 1836, the river was a desirable location for industrial development. Chicago's first meatpacking plant opened in 1829 and the first lumber mill in 1833. Both were located just north of Wolf Point at the confluence of the North and South Branches of the river. The completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in 1848 linked Lake Michigan with the Mississippi River, dramatically increasing river traffic; by the 1860s, the river had become a hub of industrial development.

In the city's early history, the river was also used as a sewage outlet, resulting in frequent outbreaks of water-borne diseases. In 1900, the Sanitary and Ship Canal was built both to protect the water supply and to provide greater shipping capacity. The canal reversed the flow of the river, sending pollution away from Lake Michigan, and became the main materials transportation artery, replacing the obsolete Illinois and Michigan Canal.

Chicago's industrial legacy will likely remain a strong feature of development along the Chicago River, particularly along the South Branch and the Sanitary and Ship Canal. However, public demand for access and recreational amenities continues to grow, ensuring future development will include a diverse mix of industrial, commercial, residential, and recreational uses.



BRAND FOUNDATION

The Riverwalk brand was developed to embody the essence and character of the Chicago River today while honoring its history. The brand's personality is *clean, timeless, and dynamic* and takes into consideration the river's visitors, use, and location.

CLEAN

Fresh, natural

The brand represents the natural elements with which it is associated, namely water. Further, the brand reinforces the city's priority to improve and maintain the water quality of the Chicago River.

TIMELESS

Approachable, long-lasting

The Riverwalk brand will be relevant long into the future. It takes into consideration the river's historical significance, as well as its future use, innovation, and connections.

DYNAMIC

Active, fun

From kayaking to commuting, the Chicago River is a space of vibrant energy. The Riverwalk brand reflects this spirit.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

A diverse population of visitors

As the most accessible waterway in an international city, the Riverwalk brand must be welcoming to a variety of users.

The river's varied physical landscape and use

The brand accounts for the diverse landscapes alongside the river. While maintaining cohesion is essential, what is appropriate downtown may not be suitable for other areas.

Chicago's unique aesthetics, values, and personality

The brand is uniquely representative of Chicago and the role the river plays in this city.



VISUAL BRANDING SYSTEM



LOGO

The brand's logo contains a modern expression of the Municipal Device, a symbol of civic pride and the three branches of the Chicago River. In the tri-color version, a light blue represents the river and the green represents the Riverwalk path.



FIGURE 2.1: LOGO ANATOMY

The Riverwalk logo is made up of the stamp encircled by the logotype.



The Municipal Device

The first iteration of the Municipal Device was designed for an 1892 Chicago Tribune contest. Danish immigrant A.J. Roewad submitted the winning design, featuring an inverted Y. In 1917, the City Council adopted the emblem and designated it a city symbol along with the Chicago flag and seal. It is one of the oldest symbols for the city. Today, this historic device can be found in various forms throughout the city, from the marquee of the Chicago Theatre to public libraries and bridges.



LOGO VARIATIONS

There are several logo variations available, including the primary tri-color and reversed logos. Additionally, there is a one-color black logo that may be used *only* in rare instances of black-and-white printing.



Primary tri-color logo



Primary reversed logo



Limited use one-color logo for black-and-white printing

USE SPECIFICATIONS

Ensure the logo is large enough to be legible and that it has ample clear space.

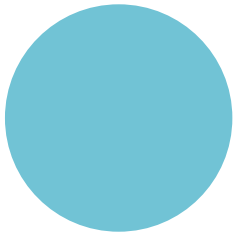


BRAND ELEMENTS

COLORS

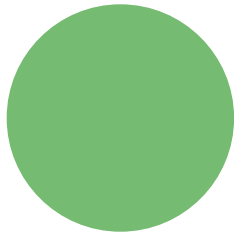
The brand's blues, greens, and blue-greys evoke the colors of the river and cityscape. Combined, they create a fresh energy that reflects the unique aesthetics along the Chicago River.

Primary colors



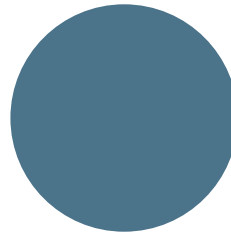
Chicago Blue

PMS 630
CMYK 52, 5, 14, 0
RGB 115, 195, 213
Hex #73C3D5



Natural Green

PMS 2464
CMYK 57, 4, 73, 0
RGB 118, 187, 114
Hex #76BB72



Blue Grey

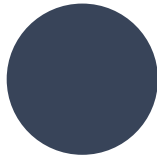
PMS 5405
CMYK 74, 47, 33, 7
RGB 78, 115, 138
Hex #4E738A

Secondary neutrals



Light Grey

PMS 9102
CMYK 14, 10, 14, 0
RGB 217, 218, 211
Hex #D9DAD3



Dark Blue

PMS 2379
CMYK 80, 69, 44, 32
RGB 57, 68, 89
Hex #394459

Tertiary accents



Purple

PMS 667
CMYK 58, 63, 22, 3
RGB 122, 104, 145
Hex #7A6891



Teal Green

PMS 326
CMYK 86, 2, 41, 0
RGB 0, 175, 170
Hex #00AFAA



Gold

PMS 7767
CMYK 36, 30, 100, 4
RGB 169, 156, 48
Hex #A99C30

TYPOGRAPHY

The primary brand typeface is Houschka Pro, a timeless and humanist sans serif font that is legible and clean. Proxima Nova is used for paragraph body copy. Both fonts are available from Adobe Typekit.

Default fonts

Arial is also used in documents and digital communications when the primary fonts are not available. When using the default font, do not mix Arial with Proxima Nova. Arial is not to be used on signage.

ABC123

a b c : ! ,

Houschka Pro Bold

ABC123

a b c : ! ,

Houschka Pro Medium

ABC123

a b c : ! ,

Proxima Nova



PATTERNS

The Riverwalk's patterns are abstract expressions of flowing water. There are two color variations. The patterns can also be used as a monochromatic feature in concrete or perforated into metal.



THE STAMP

The stamp may be used on its own as a dynamic design element. In brand signage, the stamp should be laser cut into the steel panel.





ICONS

The brand icons are line-based and open to create an accessible and inviting feeling. Solid icons should never be used in the Riverwalk brand. Additional icons created for site-specific needs must be reviewed and approved by the Chicago Department of Planning & Development prior to their use.

Activities



Lifebuoy



Bike / Cycling



Running



Rollerblading



Swimming



Boating



Kayaking



Fishing



Photography

Amenities and Access



Information



Public Telephone



All Gender Restroom



Female Restroom



Male Restroom



*Water Fountain,
Hydration Station*



First Aid



Accessible Entrance



Elevator



Stairs



Boat Launch



Water



Marina



Parking

Transportation



Metra Stop



'L'



Taxi Stand



Bus



Water Taxi

Destinations and Attractions



Restaurant



Fast Food,
Street Vendor



Bar



Theater



Cultural Attraction



Playground



Dog Park



Garden



Natural Habitat



Bird Sanctuary



Picnic

Regulations



No Diving



No Swimming



No Wake



Do Not Feed Birds



No Fishing

SUB-BRANDING

In order to generate public interest, the city or its developers may draw attention to key sections of the Riverwalk through a unique name or brand.



SUB-BRAND REQUIREMENTS

All sub-brands must adhere to the guidelines in Figure 2.2 to the right and those listed below to ensure consistency and easy navigation along the river's edge.

Sub-brand logo The lockup for sub-brand logos includes a logo mark set above logotype.

Sub-brand system Sub-brands may only use the Riverwalk brand colors and must follow the typographic standards of the Riverwalk brand.

Use and application Sub-brand logos can be used for independent promotion (i.e. on website) and on Riverwalk signage within the sub-branded section. For additional information on sub-brand signage, see page 34.

FIGURE 2.2: SUB-BRAND REQUIREMENTS

Sub-brand logo

Logo mark

- 'Chicago Blue' color
- 3x max height
- 5x max width



Logotype

- 'Blue Grey' color
- Houschka Bold, uppercase
- 1x height
- Set below the logo mark at a distance of 1.5x

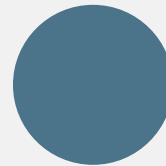
Sub-brand colors See page 15 for color values.



Chicago Blue



Natural Green



Blue Grey

Sub-brand fonts See page 16 for additional guidance.

ABC123
abc:!,

Houschka Pro Bold

ABC123
abc:!,

Houschka Pro Medium

ABC123
abc:!,

Proxima Nova



3

**WAYFINDING
AND SIGNAGE**



↑ WOLF POINT

→ CTA

↓ LAKE MICHIGAN

- 1 Floating Garden
- 2 Frost Gelato
- 3 Fountain
- 4 Chicago Water Taxi
- 5 Tiny Tapp & Café
- 6 Downtown Docks
- 7 City Winery
- 8 Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- 9 Chicago Brewhouse
- 10 O'Briens Riverwalk Café
- 11 Wendella Sightseeing
- 12 McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum
- 13 Chicago's First Lady Cruises—Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline
- 14 The Northman
- 15 Island Party Hut & Boat Charters
- 16 Nicholas J. Melas Centennial Fountain
- 17 Urban Kayaks & Urban Cantina

! The east Franklin stairway between Upper Wacker Drive and the Chicago Riverwalk is not available.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Signage, wayfinding, and environmental elements are essential to enhancing the functionality, beauty, and character of the river.

Placement and orientation

Signage located along a multi-use trail, within the riverfront, should be located on the development side of the trail, and oriented perpendicular to the trail or adjacent hardscape. The curved edge should face the multi-use trail and river, while the lighted edge should face the development side.

For signs located outside of the riverfront, placement and orientation are dictated by the context and surroundings. These placements should be reviewed and approved by Chicago Department of Planning & Development.

Materials

Signs should be constructed of durable materials. Signs should be a steel frame structure clad in blackened, oxidized stainless steel. Steel should be sealed to protect the material's intrinsic aesthetics and provide a maintainable surface.

Content panels

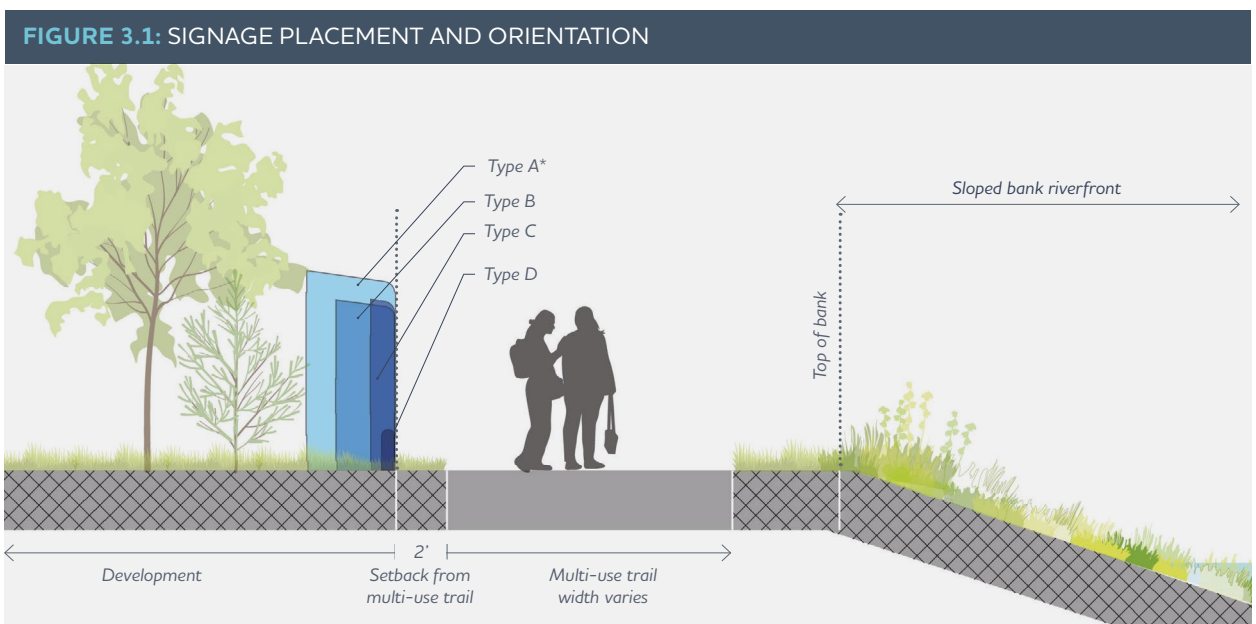
Panels for content should be no less than 1/16" and no more than 1/4" thick, corrosion-resistant, powder-coated steel or aluminum with high-resolution graphics fused into the panel using UV-resistant inks. Content imagery should be a seamless, continuous image.

LED light panel

Light panels should be a white, translucent polycarbonate lens or similar, formulated for exterior applications. Panel should be inset into the overall sign, and should not protrude past the edge of the metal. LED should have controllable full-spectrum RGB capabilities, be wet rated and UL listed.

Mounting

Signs should be surface mounted to a concrete foundation using durable, corrosion-resistant fittings.



* See Figure 3.4 on page 31 for more detail

SIGNAGE FAMILY

Type A: Informational

Provides information to users about the Riverwalk's features and destinations. The sign content may include maps, directional guidance, and educational messages on the river's history and ecology.

Type B: Identity

Provides navigation help and reassurance for visitors along the path and at key destinations. Identity signage includes orientation and destination signage.

Type C: Directional

Provides users with information about where a path or roadway goes and how far it is to a destination.

Type D: Mile markers

Allows users to gauge distances and identify how far they are from Madison Street, which is where the north and south addresses start.

General: Regulatory

Reinforces traffic laws, regulations, or requirements. Some common regulatory signs include stop, yield, do not enter, speed limit, and one-way signs. Regulatory signs maintain the desired flow of the path or roadway. Regulatory signage should be located at all public access points, as well as at large gathering spaces along the river.

FIGURE 3.2: SIGNAGE TYPES





Logo stamp
5¼" diameter

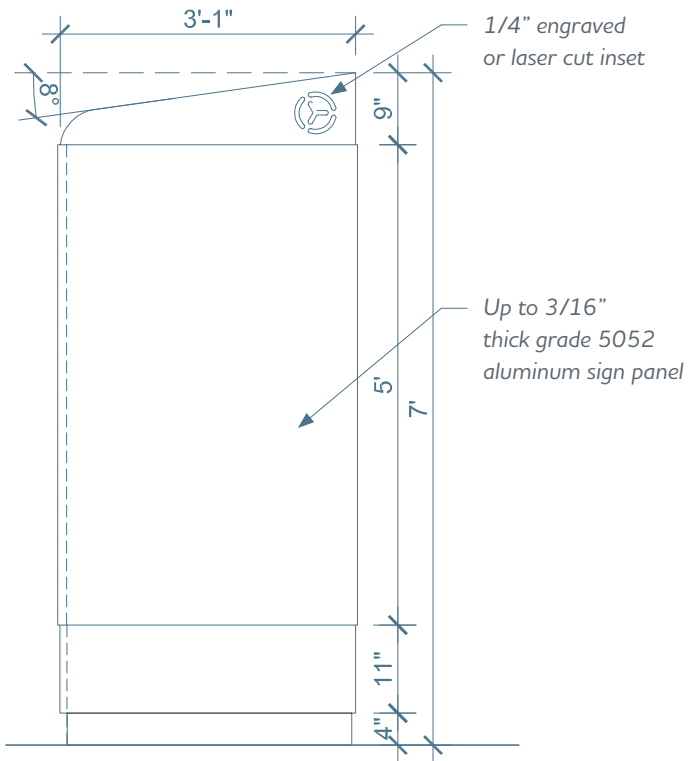
Content panel
Contains destination wayfinding, an overview map, a branch map, and a directory of key destinations. See page 30 for additional information on the content panel.

TYPE A: INFORMATIONAL

Provides a diagrammatic representation of the area and destination wayfinding.

Placement and orientation

Informational signage should be placed along the multi-use path at major Riverwalk access points. These signs should, at a minimum, be located every three to four standard blocks, or an approximate five- to ten-minute walk between signs. There should be a minimum five feet (5') of clearance around all sides of the sign, with the exception of the front edge facing the multi-use trail. Any and all benches, tables and chairs, or other objects in the landscape should be located outside of the five-foot clearance. On this side, there should be a minimum two feet (2') between the edge of the multi-use trail and the sign. See Figure 3.4 on page 31.



Fabrication specifications

Signage should be fabricated to the following dimensions:

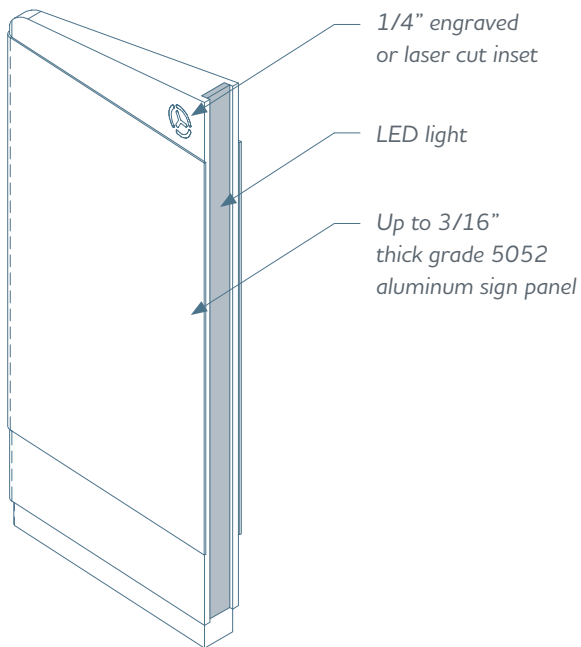
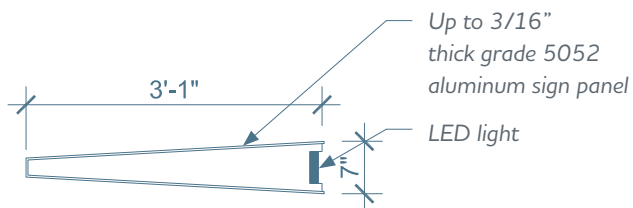
Overall sign: 3'-1" wide by 7'-0" tall by 7" deep on the lighted side. The interior edge has a 1" radius.

Content panel: 3'-1" wide by 5'-0" tall. The bottom of the content panel should be located 1'-3" from finish grade.

Logo stamp: 5 1/4" in outside diameter, engraved or laser cut 1/4" into the steel panel.

Content

The signage should contain destination wayfinding, an overview map, a branch map, and a directory of key destinations displayed on the branch map.



Three to five destinations should be included in the destination wayfinding portion of the informational sign. Appropriate destinations to consider include transit stops, parks and open space, Lake Michigan, and neighborhoods. Directional arrows should be placed on the left-hand side of the item, and should be oriented at one of the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, or west). The directional arrow should not be oriented to the true direction of the item, but simply up, right, down, or left.

The overview map should include a plan view of the Chicago River that also shows Lake Michigan, the street grid, rail lines, parks and open spaces, major arterial street names, and labels for each branch of the river. The branch of the river, on which the sign is located, should be highlighted on the map. Color scheme and style should follow the style set forth in this document.



Branch map

Depicting a two-mile stretch of the river near the location the sign is placed

Content (continued)

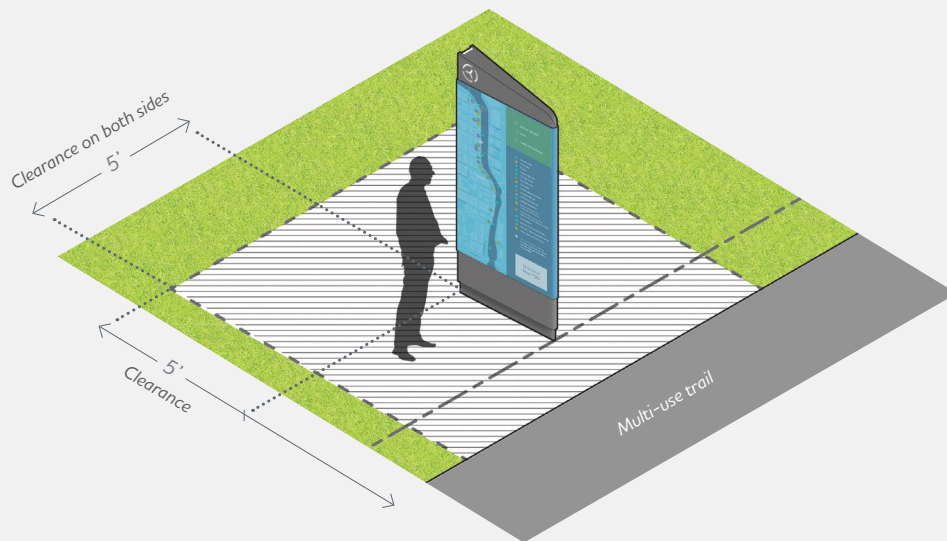
The branch map should illustrate a two-mile stretch of the river near the location the sign is placed. The map should illustrate the Chicago River, street grid and street names, parks and open spaces, building footprints, rail lines, and major indicators. Indicators to be included are:

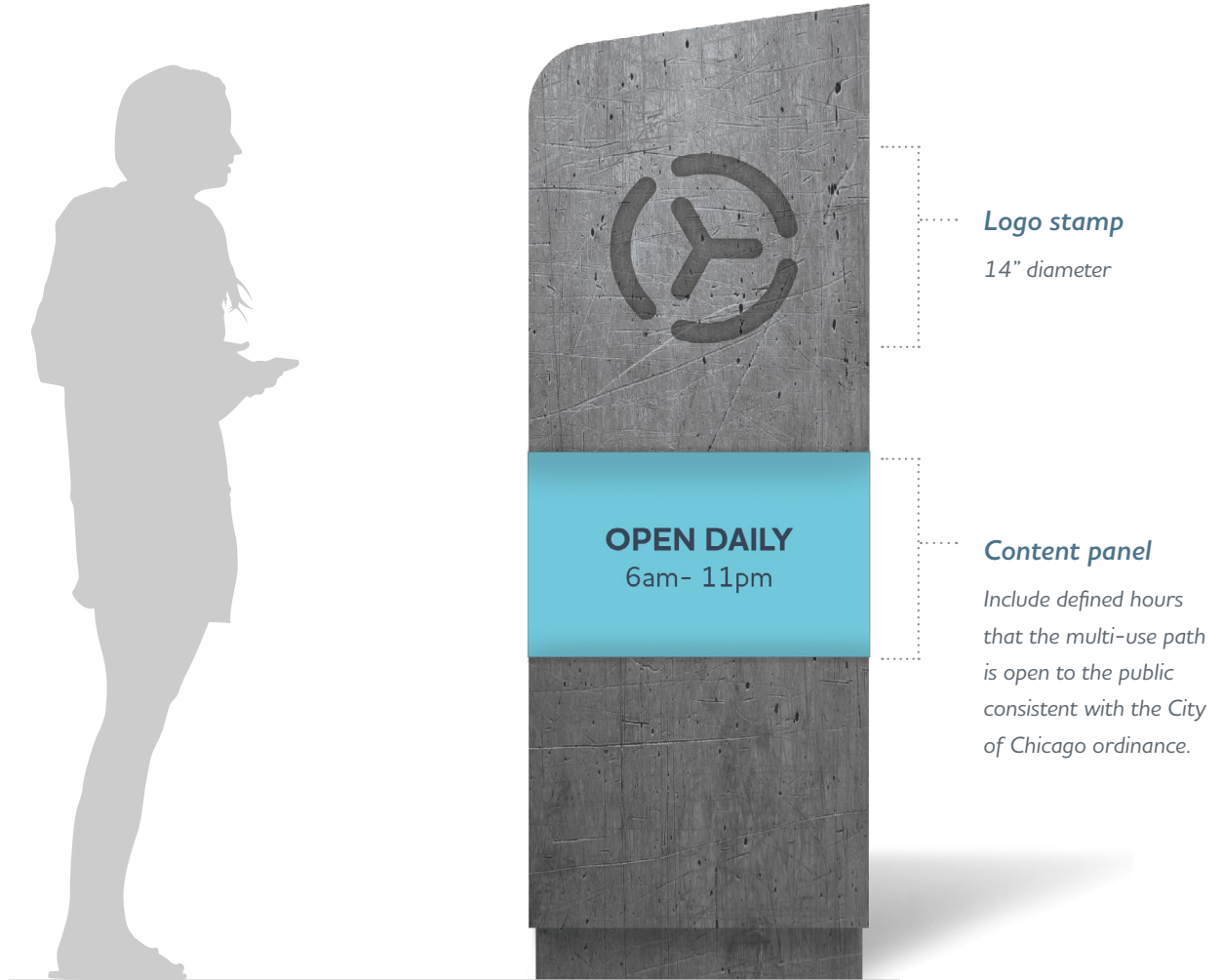
a “you are here” identifier, a five-minute walking radius, local transit identifiers, and major destinations such as amenities, attractions, public restrooms, public parking, transportation, ADA points of access, and emergency services. Color scheme and style should follow what’s been set forth in this document.

Maps should be oriented in a heads-up direction and include a north arrow.

The directory should list all items shown on the branch map. Any advisory notices, such as road or access path closures, should be included within the directory area of the sign.

FIGURE 3.4: “TYPE A” SETBACKS AND CLEARANCE



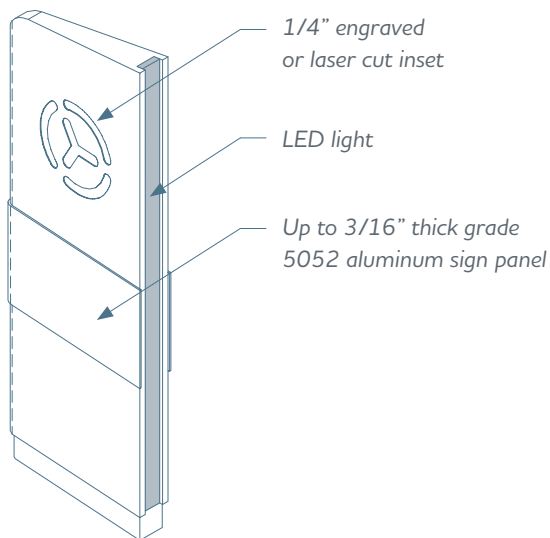
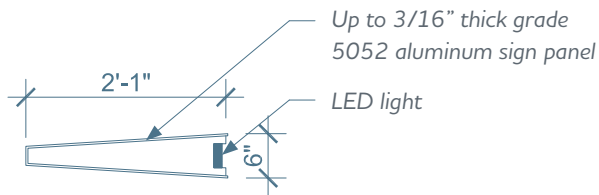
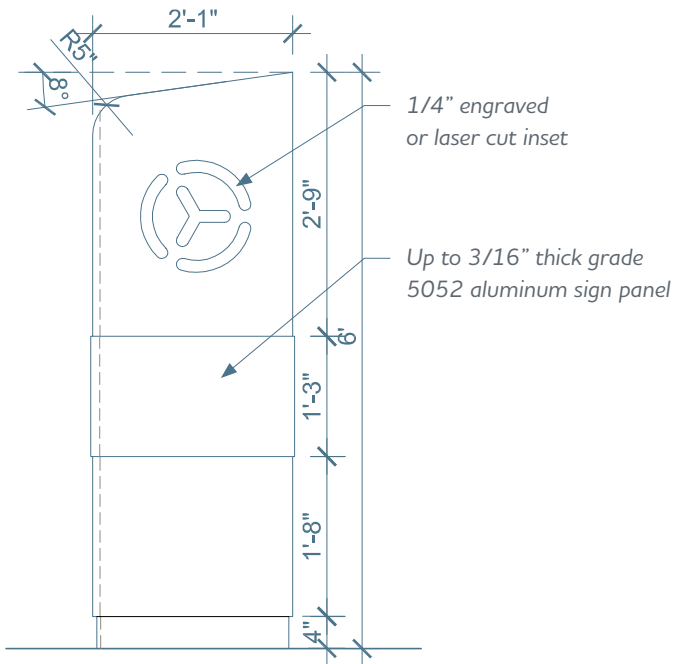


TYPE B: IDENTITY LARGE

Draws users into the riverfront and assists in establishing a sense of place.

Placement and orientation

The signs should be provided where the multi-use path intersects with streets or other public access points. At points where the Riverwalk path is lower than the street level, signs should be located at the street level, adjacent to the direct point of access to the multi-use pathway. Signs should be located in the landscape, two feet (2') from the sidewalk or adjacent hardscape.



Fabrication specifications

Signage should be fabricated to the following dimensions:

Overall sign: 2'-1" wide by 6'-0" tall by 6" deep on the lighted side. The interior edge has a 1" radius.

Content panel: 2'-1" wide by 1'-3" tall. The bottom of the content panel should be located 2'-0" from finish grade.

Logo stamp: 14" in outside diameter, engraved or laser cut 1/4" into the steel panel.

Content

The primary feature of the sign should be the logo stamp, which will be 14" in diameter and laser cut through steel panel at the top, center of the sign. The signage should state the multi-use path is open to the public during defined hours consistent with the City of Chicago ordinance.

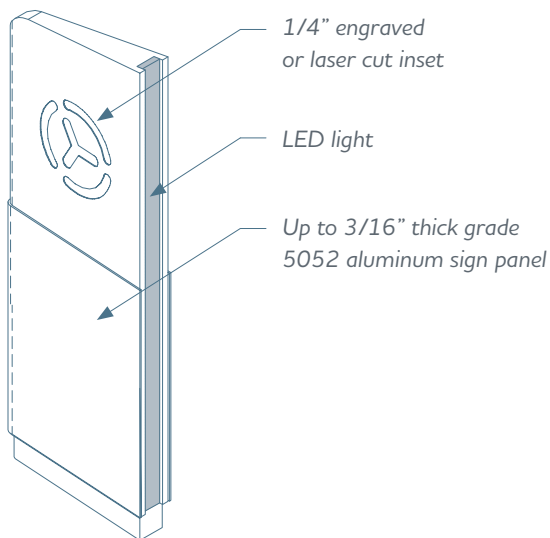
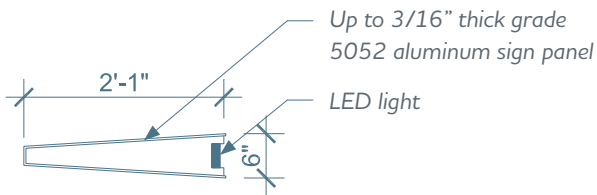
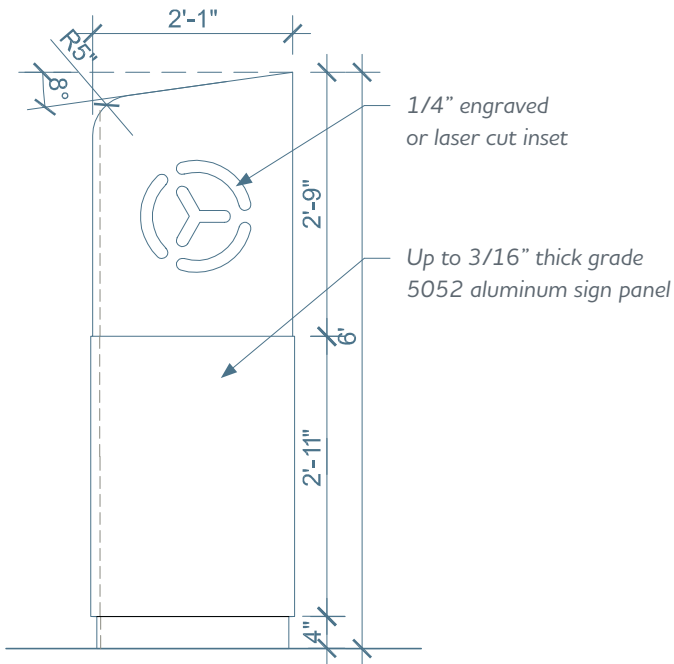


TYPE B: IDENTITY LARGE WITH SUB-BRAND

Identifies specialty branded sections of the river.

Placement and orientation

The signs should be utilized within the specialty branded sections of the river only. Sub-brand logos are only allowed on sign Type B. Refer to the guidelines laid out for Type B signage on the previous page for all other placement and orientations requirements.



Fabrication specifications

Follow the fabrication guidelines laid out for Type B signage on the previous page, with the exception of the content panel which should be 2'-11" tall.

Content

The primary feature of the sign should be the logo stamp, which will be 14" in diameter and laser cut through steel panel at the top, center of the sign. The signage should include the sub-brand logo at a width of 12" or less and state the multi-use path is open to the public during defined hours consistent with the City of Chicago ordinance.



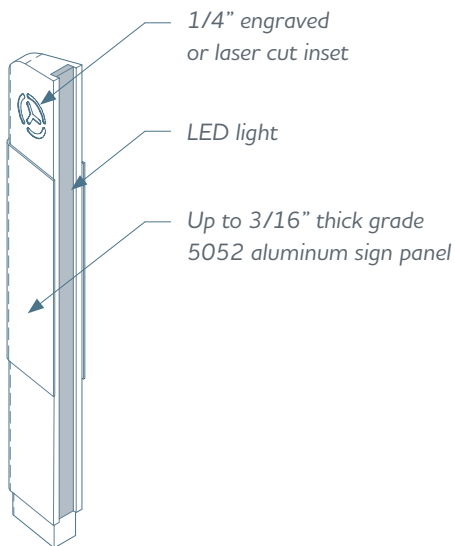
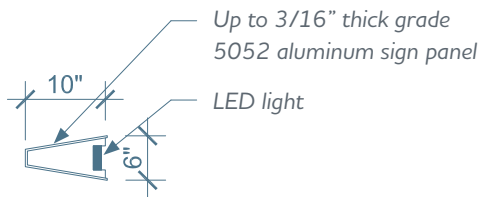
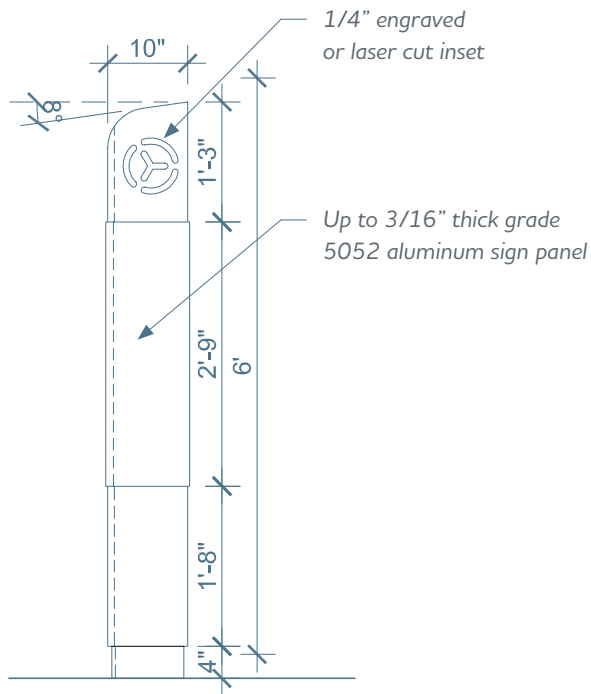
TYPE C: DIRECTIONAL

Used to provide people with information about where a path or roadway goes and how far it is to a destination.

Placement and orientation

Destination signage should be placed along the multi-use path, within one mile of the identified destination, but should not be located within 500 feet of another larger sign (e.g. Identity or Information).

Type C: Directional



Fabrication specifications

Signage should be fabricated to the following dimensions:

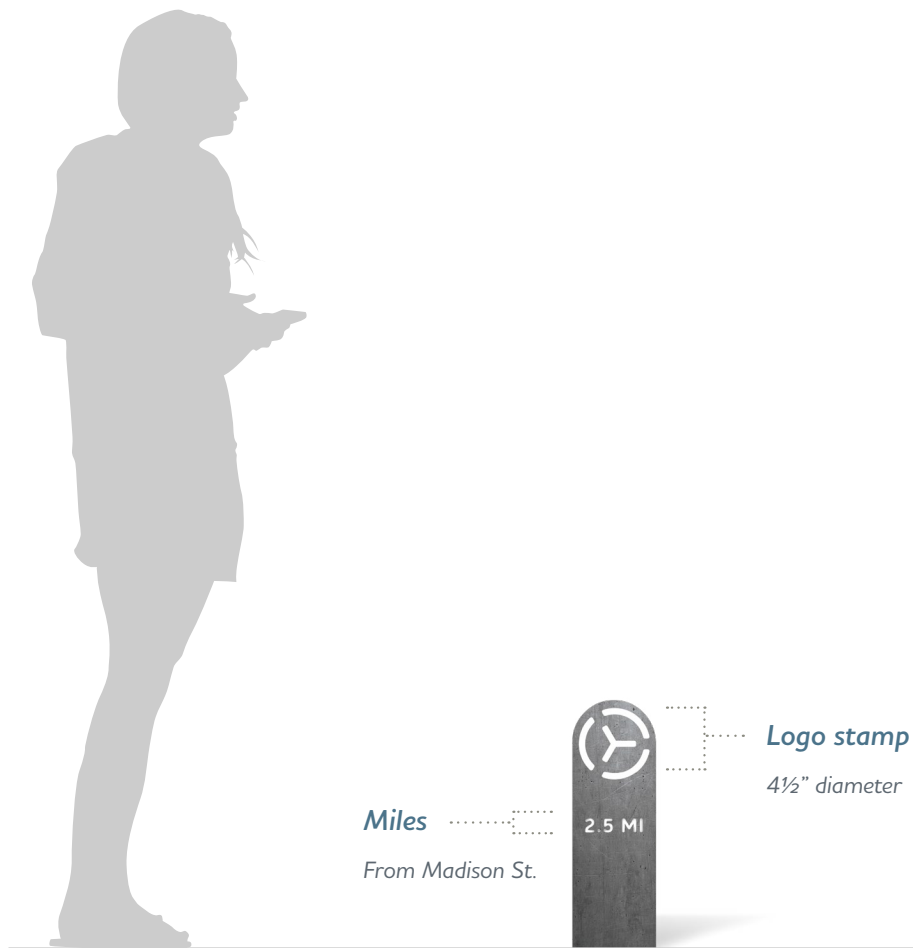
Overall sign: 10" wide by 6'-0" tall by 6" deep on the lighted side. The interior edge has a 1" radius.

Content panel: 10" wide by 2'-9" tall. The bottom of the content panel should be located 2'-0" from finish grade.

Logo stamp: 8" in outside diameter, engraved or laser cut 1/4" into the steel panel.

Content

Directional signs should contain one destination per sign, such as a key park or open space like Ping Tom Park. The names of specific developments are not considered neighborhood destinations, and should not be included in the directional sign.



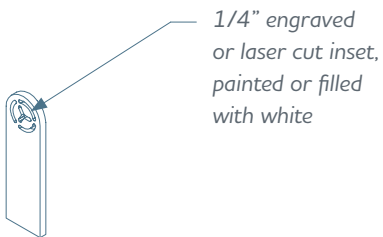
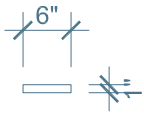
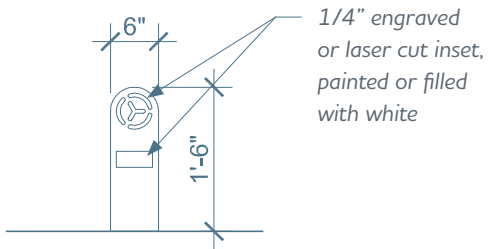
TYPE D: MILE MARKERS

Allows users to know where they are along the path.

Placement and orientation

Mile markers should be located along the multi-use path every quarter mile.

Type D: Mile Markers



Fabrication specifications

Signage should be fabricated to the following dimensions:

Overall sign: 6" wide by 1'-6" tall by 1" deep.

Logo stamp: 4 1/2" in outside diameter, engraved or laser cut 1/4" into the steel panel and painted or filled with white.

Content

Markers should identify the distance from Madison Street, where the north-south addresses start. Text should be painted or filled with white.

SIGNAGE TYPOGRAPHY

To ensure optimum viewing at a distance critical text should be set at the minimum cap height listed in the table below. The cap height can be found by measuring the distance from the text's baseline to the top of the flat capital letters (such as M or T).



Sign Type	Text	Minimum Cap Height	Approximate Viewing Distance
Identity	Primary Text	1.5"	36'
	Supporting text	1"	25'
Information	Destination wayfinding	1"	25'
	Directory	1/2"	12'
	Map titles	5/16"	7'
Directional	Destination Name	2"	49'
	Miles	2"	49'
Mile Marker	Miles	2"	49'



REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

As part of the planned development process, developers should prepare an overall wayfinding plan that outlines the following:

- *Identify locations and types of existing signage and wayfinding*, including but not limited to identity signs, directional signage, informational signage, mile markers, and regulatory signage.
- *Identify locations and types of proposed signage* and indicate the distance between existing signs of the same type.
- *For informational signs (Type A), the developer should provide an outline and mock-up of content* for each proposed sign. Content should follow the guidelines set forth in this document.