



WAYFINDING +
PLACEMAKING

Gavilan College

Wayfinding Master Plan Report

25 May 2021

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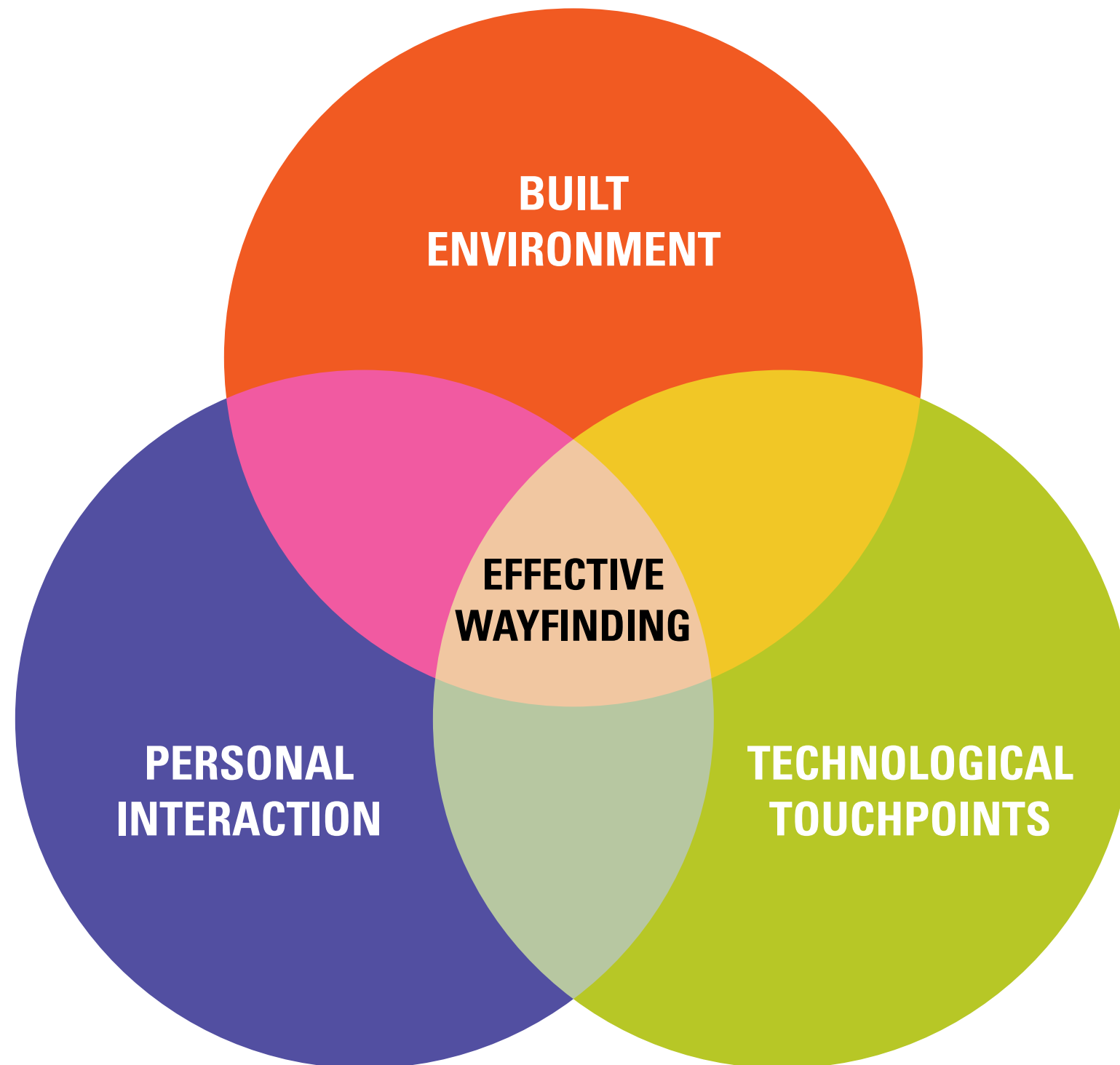
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INTRODUCTION

This Signage Master Plan Report concludes the first step in creating a new wayfinding program for Gavilan College's Gilroy Campus. It is an analysis of existing signage, wayfinding conditions, and future signage opportunities at the Campus and includes recommendations and conceptual designs. These will be the basis for the development of new exterior sign program and implementation plan for the Campus.

The information in this report was gathered through site visit observations, review of the College website; and review of auxiliary sources such as Google and Apple Maps. Most importantly, the process was guided by multiple workshops and meetings with the College Master Plan Task Force and a Signage Sub-Committee of stakeholders that was assembled specifically for this process.



ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is a continuous exercise in spatial problem solving, done while in motion and requiring decision making skills. It starts at home when the visitor researches the route to their destination. It includes the entire journey to their destination, both in transit and on foot, and is not completed until the visitor leaves Campus.

There are three major systems that can be employed to optimize the wayfinding experience. These systems work in concert for a cohesive and seamless wayfinding experience.

Built Environment

Signage, landmarks, architecture, campus plan.

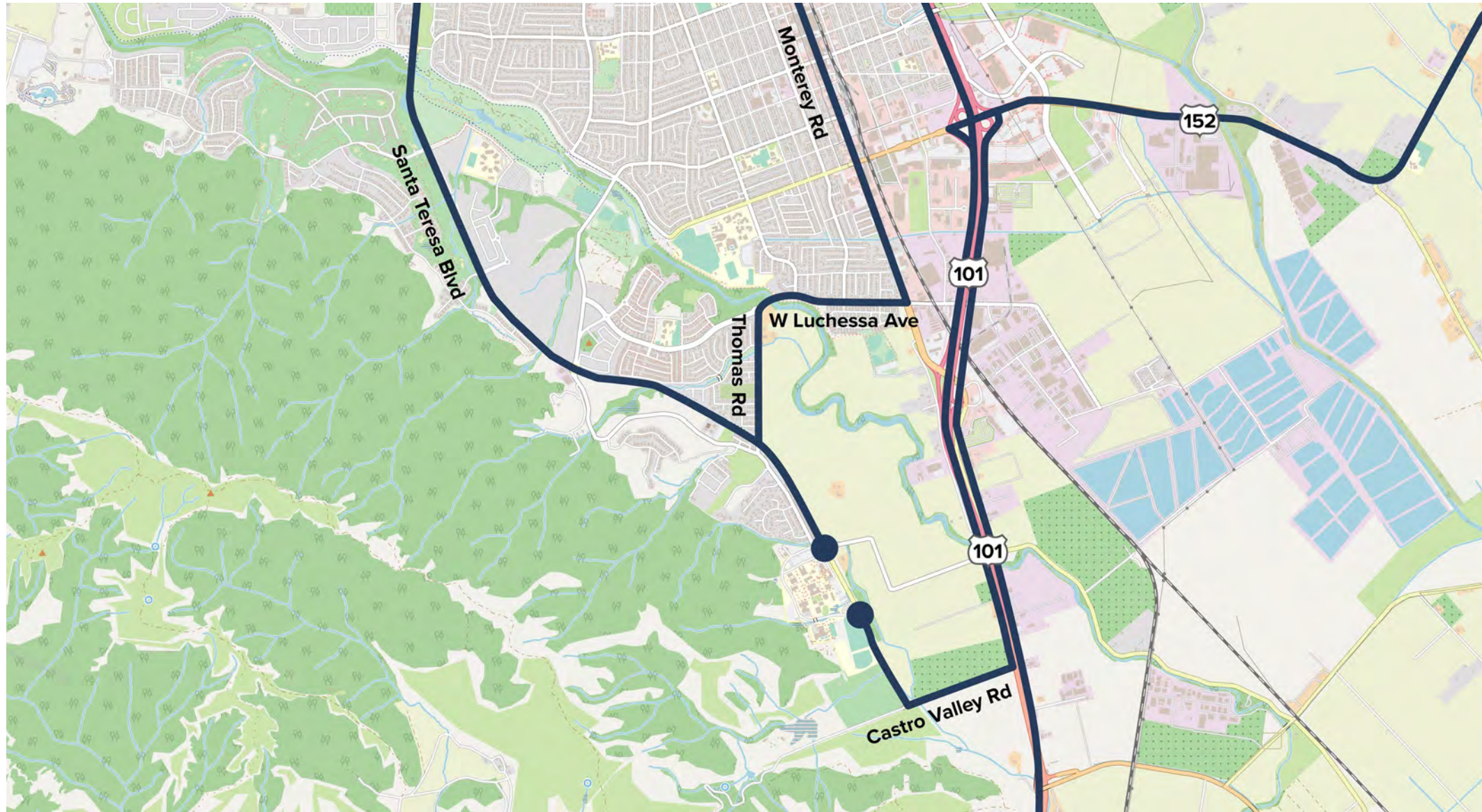
Technological Touchpoints

Websites, search engines, online maps, GPS, digital signage.

Personal Interaction

Students, staff, faculty, security, word of mouth.

The focus of this report is the Built Environment. However, the Technological Touchpoints and Personal Interaction systems must also be analyzed in order to support solutions for the Built Environment. The College will need to consider improvements to these other systems in order to comprehensively address the wayfinding needs of the Campus.



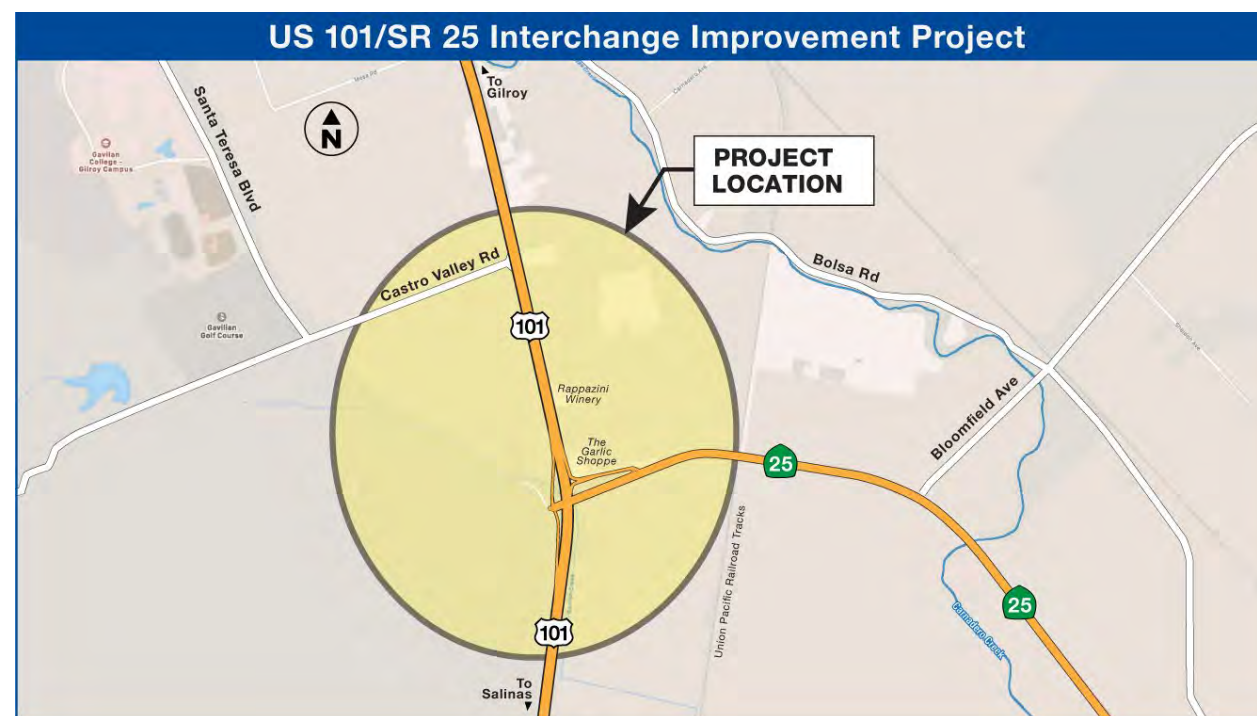
GETTING TO CAMPUS

ROUTES TO CAMPUS

The Gilroy Campus is located on Santa Teresa Boulevard and is accessible from both directions. Access via Mesa Road from Route 101 South is also possible, but the lack of any off-ramp makes it both difficult and dangerous. Municipal signage on 101 and in Gilroy is adequate and does not need to be modified.

US 101/SR 25 INTERCHANGE

The Valley Transportation Authority is currently working on improvements to the interchange between Routes 101 and 25. Once complete, the College will be more directly accessible from 101 North and 25. Necessary detours will guide traffic onto routes already signed for the College and once complete, it is recommended the VTA will provide the same level of signage as currently exists to direct traffic. During construction, the number of people that utilize the south entrance of the Campus will temporarily decrease.





GATEWAYS



North Entry



South Entry

GATEWAYS

PRIORITIES

The Campus is situated in a semi-rural setting along Santa Theresa Boulevard on the south side of Gilroy. Santa Theresa is a fast moving road, with a 45 mph speed limit that is regularly surpassed. In addition, the campus buildings and grounds do not have a direct, visual connection to the road. The result is that the Campus does not have adequate presence and identity at it’s entrances and along the frontage. The College’s front door needs to reflect the values and commitment the school has to the community. It is important that the College clearly identify both entries with gateway experiences.

The inclusion of a digital readerboard, either integrated into the monument gateways or freestanding along Santa Teresa Blvd between the two entrances, was explored. While publicizing sporting events, theater productions, and student notices is important, the location along Santa Theresa was determined to be unsuitable for the following reasons:

- The speed of the road would require the sign to be very large.
- There is little non-College-related traffic that passes by.
- It was agreed readerboards are functional but rarely elevate the arrival experience of a new visitor.

It is recommended that smaller, pedestrian-scale reader-boards be studied at other locations on Campus and no reader boards be implemented along the frontage.



GATEWAYS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The college currently has a large, static notice board facing southbound traffic at the north entrance and two smaller signs for the Sports Complex and Golf Course facing the same direction at the south entrance. There is no signage addressing northbound traffic.

The north entrance is set back from Santa Teresa Blvd and is framed by a ceremonial gateway. However, it is too small to be functional as true gateway and is a bit worn. Therefore, larger monuments along Santa Theresa are recommended.



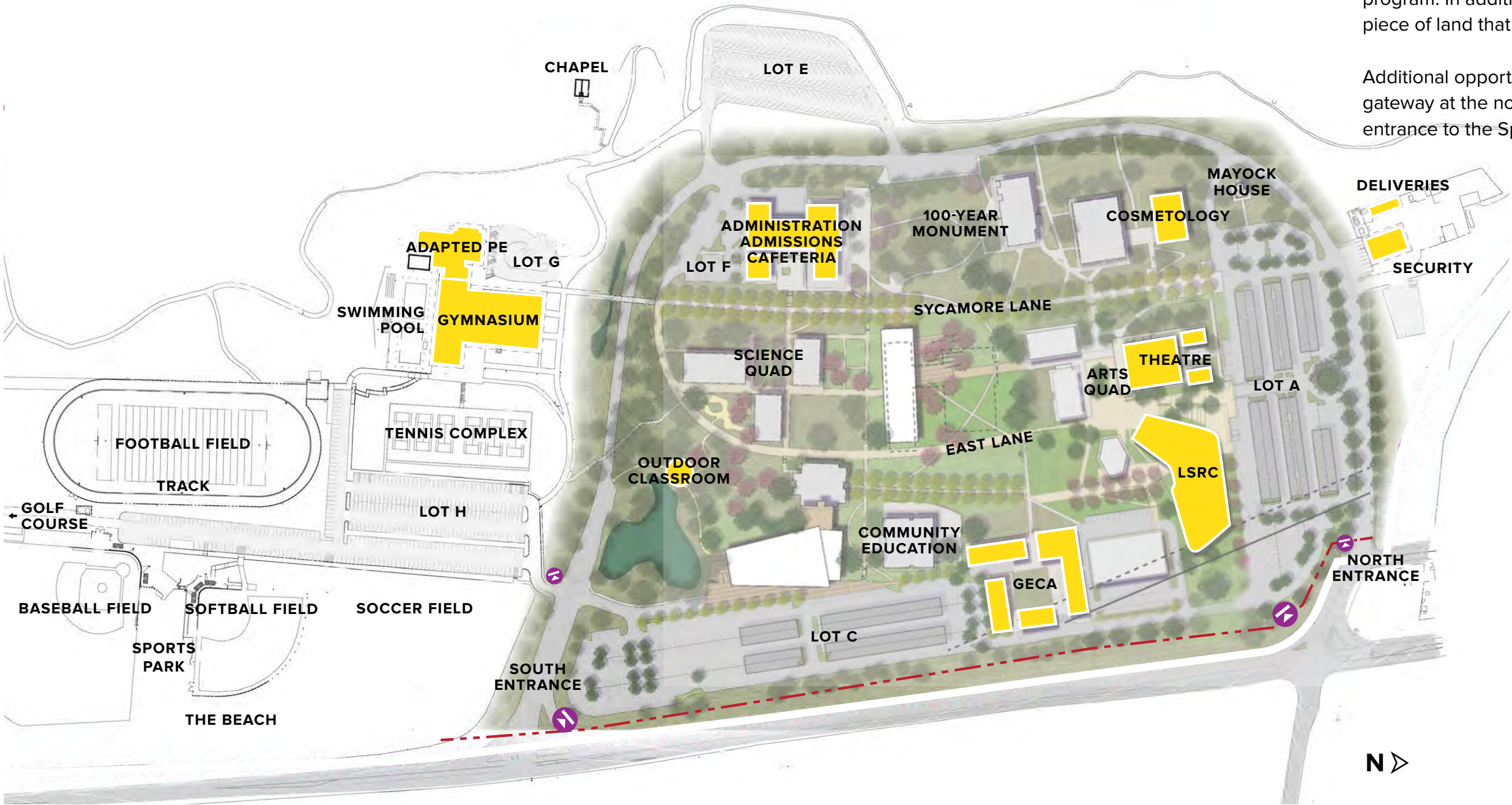
GATEWAYS

LOCATIONS

Two prominent gateways are proposed, one for the southwest corner of Santa Teresa and Mesa, and one for the northwest corner of the south entrance. This allows the entrances to be identified for both north- and southbound traffic. The plan stops short of identifying each entrance from both directions, or “framing” each entrance on both sides. The selected approach achieves the goal of clear arrival experience and manages the overall expense of the program. In addition, the College does not own the north piece of land that would frame that entrance.

Additional opportunities include refreshing the existing gateway at the north entrance and a new gateway at the entrance to the Sports Complex off of Campus Loop Road.

Campus Gateway





GATEWAYS

NEW CAMPUS GATEWAY DESIGN

Given the long viewing distances and wide angles of the entries, the monument design employs a long horizontal form to create a prominent and welcoming gateway in the landscape. A gently curved concrete wall makes a timeless statement and is rooted in the natural landscape. The large modern dimensional letterforms will be uplit with external ground lights. Trees and other plantings will be considered and designed to frame the monument and amplify the gateway experience.



Campus Gateway at North Entry



VEHICULAR SIGNAGE



VEHICULAR SIGNAGE

PRIORITIES

Vehicular signage needs to safely direct visitors to the most appropriate parking efficiently. It is important for the messages to be clear, concise, and legible. The information on the signs prioritize destinations that are frequented by first-time visitors. The colors and finishes will be durable and UV-resistant.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing vehicular signage is functional, but sparse, aged, and too small in scale. Many visitors miss the signage entirely and instead stop in at Security upon arrival because they see a campus map there.

Signs direct traffic left and right off of the loop road, but do little to reassure visitors of destinations ahead, often saying simply, 'All Others' with an up arrow. Secondary directionals are present, but are not always visible.

In the morning and afternoon, heavy traffic for GECA using the north entrance creates congestion. The College should consider other traffic flow options and devices to mitigate this problem. For example, changing the first entrance to Lot A to be 'Exit Only' and training parents to use the south entrance.

VEHICULAR SIGNAGE

WAYFINDING

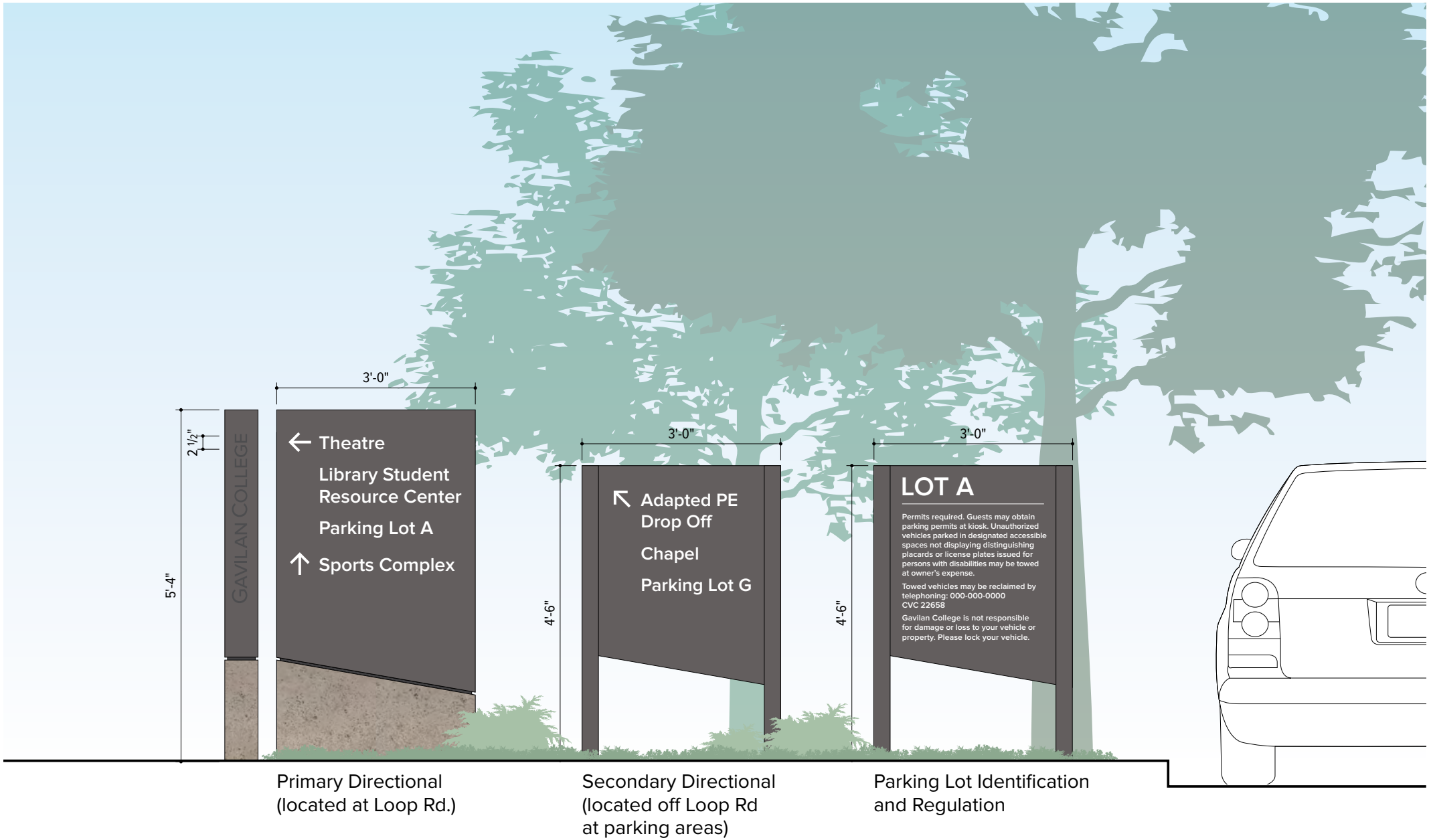
The goal is to effortlessly guide visitors to parking that is nearest to their desired destination. It is critical for both safety and a positive visitor experience that vehicular signage is clear, easy to read, and uncluttered. For that reason, the text is appropriately scaled and the number of messages on each sign is limited.

Parking lot identification signs are used to identify lots and display parking restrictions, permitting, etc. These signs are to be clearly visible immediately inside parking lot entries.

DESIGN

The sign family design is inspired by the natural environment and hillside setting of Campus. The angle of the concrete bases and sign faces will be placed in alignment with the slope of the Campus. The concrete will have a color mix that will ground the signs in the site. The upper part of the signs will be durably-finished aluminum and will be designed for ease of updating and replacement.

The typeface family used for the wayfinding program is Proxima Nova. It is a very well-designed and versatile family that is highly legible and will stand the test of time.



VEHICULAR SIGNAGE

PROPOSED SIGN LOCATIONS

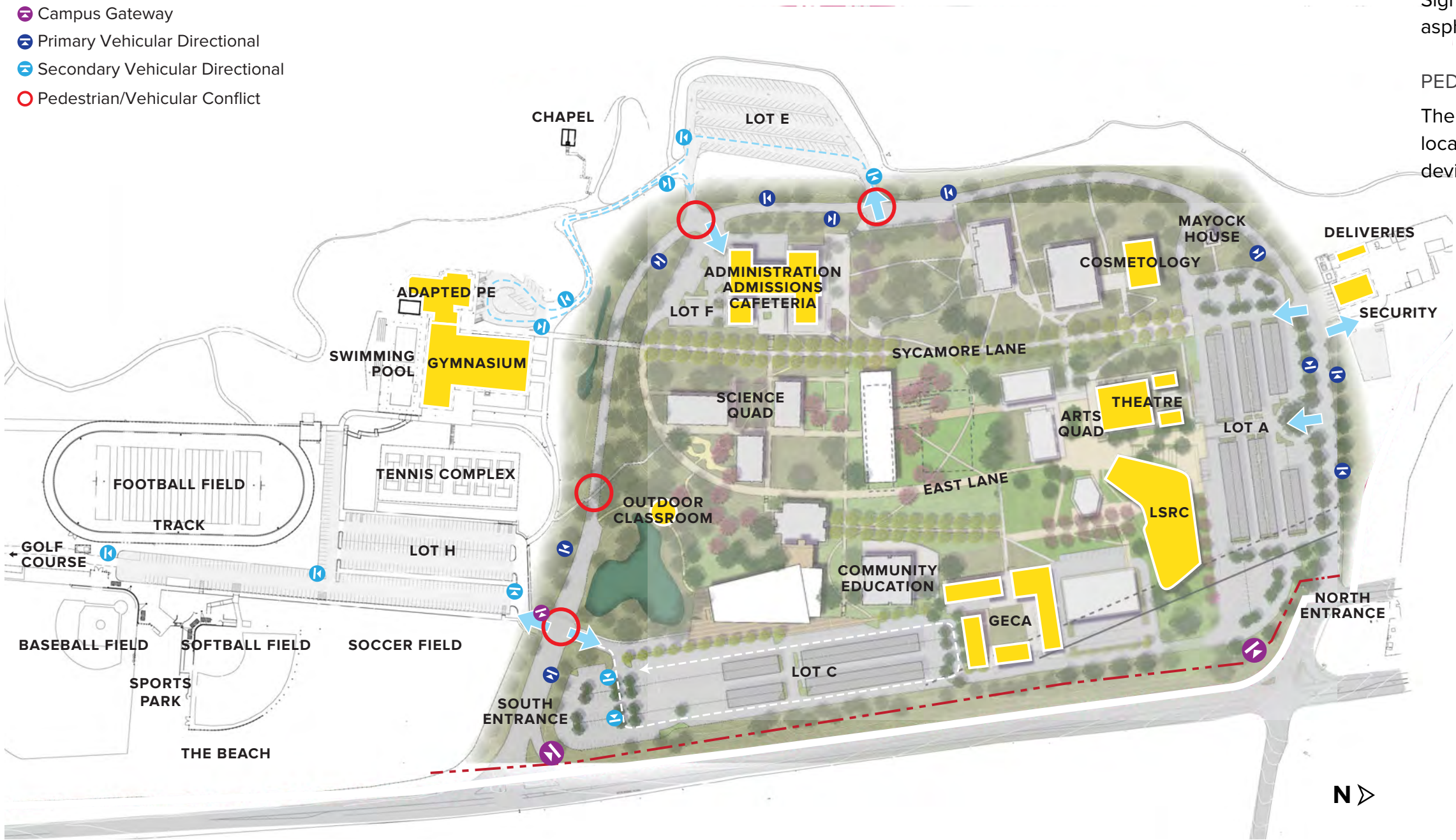
The campus loop road is fairly wide, so there will be a signs on each side of the road addressing traffic in each direction. Vehicular directional signs are programmed, near each parking lot entry. The destinations listed on each sign will be limited to the destinations closest to that parking lot. If there is remaining space on the sign, major destinations that are still ahead, such as Sports Complex, will be included.

Signs within parking lots will be not be placed directly in the asphalt surface to prevent damage from vehicles.

PEDESTRIAN CONFLICTS

There are pedestrian conflicts with vehicular traffic at four locations along the loop road. Additional traffic calming devices should be considered for these areas.

- ⦿ Campus Gateway
- ➡ Primary Vehicular Directional
- ➡ Secondary Vehicular Directional
- Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflict





PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE



PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

PRIORITIES

The goal of the pedestrian sign program is to provide necessary wayfinding information for first time and infrequent visitors. The challenge of pedestrian signage is balancing the needs of these visitors with the beauty of a campus that the students, faculty, and staff enjoy. While it is important for wayfinding signs to be as helpful as possible, the visual character of a campus also needs to be respected.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Current pedestrian signage is small and inconsistently placed, and does little to elevate the Campus experience.



PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

WAYFINDING

Solid pedestrian wayfinding information is key to a positive visitor and new student experience on a campus. In addition, good wayfinding empowers people to self-navigate and helps them find their appointments and classes on time.

There are three main components of pedestrian wayfinding:

Directional signage consists of a destination listed with an arrow, often grouped with several other destinations. The content of this component will focus on destinations that receive a high volume of new students and first time visitors.

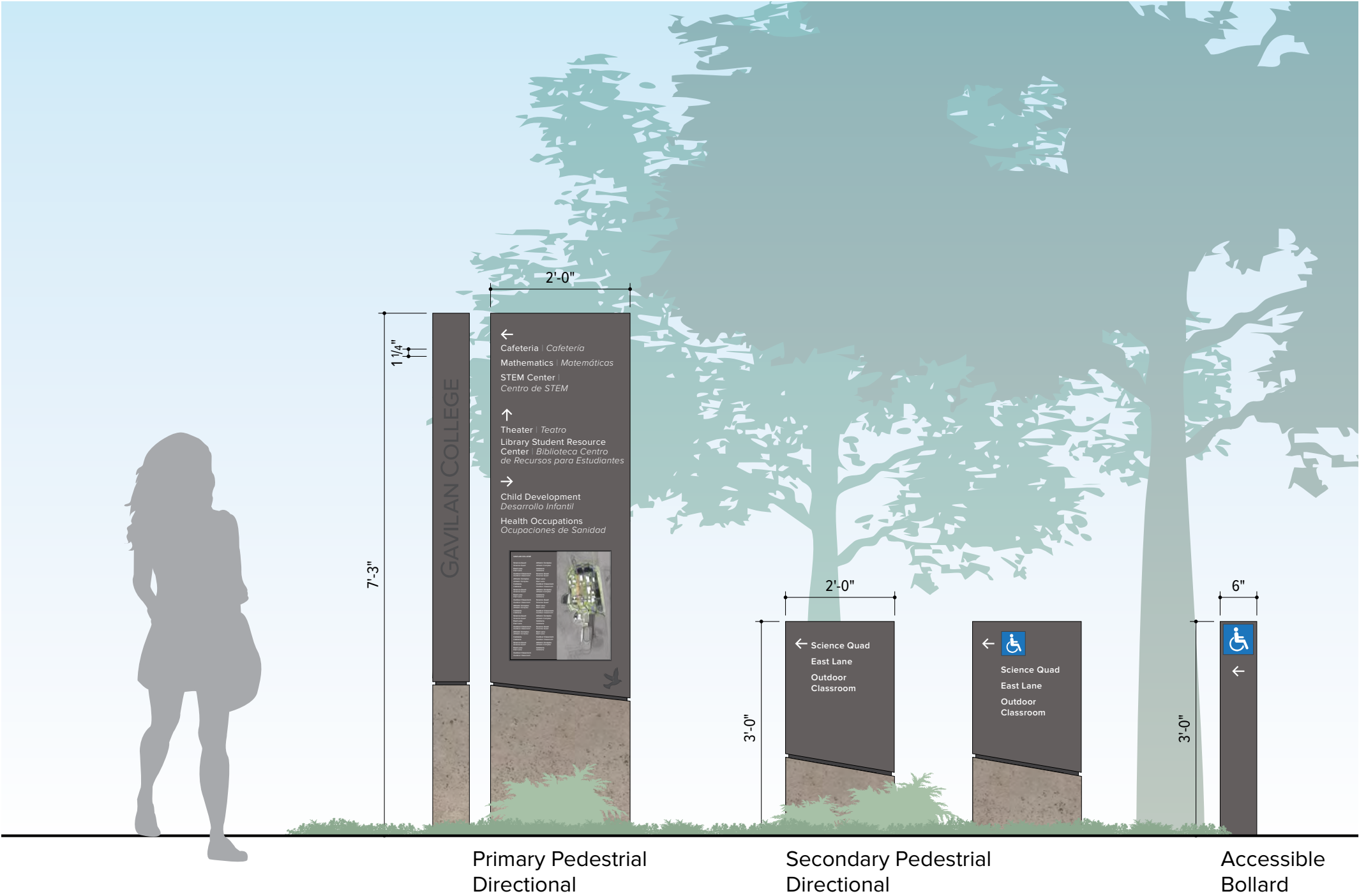
Campus maps are a powerful tool for visitors and are often the backbone of a successful campus wayfinding program. Maps convey wayfinding information for a large number of destinations and can address a multitude wayfinding needs for many users.

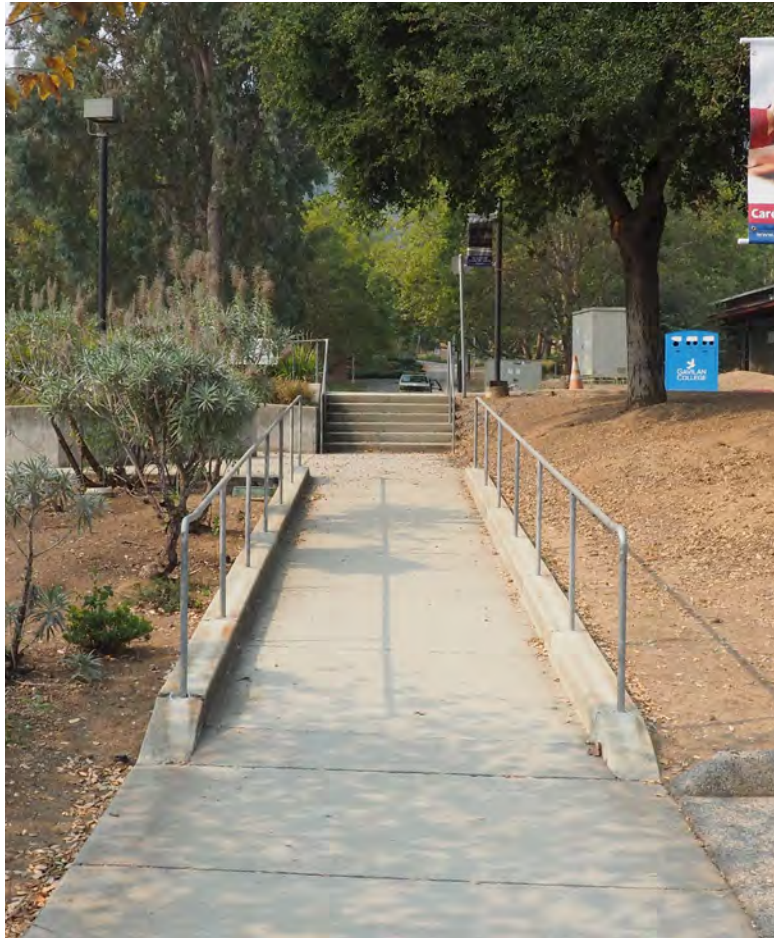
Building identification marks buildings and destinations, while also functioning as an orientation device in combination with a map. Building identification is further discussed in the next section.

DESIGN

The sign family design is inspired by the natural environment and hillside setting of Campus. The angle of the concrete bases and sign faces will be placed in alignment with the slope of the Campus. The concrete will be have a color mix that will ground the signs in the site. The upper part of the signs will be durably-finished aluminum and will be designed for ease of updating and replacement. The map panels will be developed to be removable independently of other components due to the more frequent updates required of the maps.

The typeface family used for the wayfinding program is Proxima Nova. It is a very well-designed and versatile family that is highly legible and will stand the test of time.





PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

ACCESSIBILITY

The primary wayfinding challenge is the hillside nature of the Campus. Steps and ramps pepper the landscape, with a bridge or elevator to assist when necessary. While Sycamore Lane, the main spine of Campus, is flat, most destinations accessed from it require a significant grade change to reach.

In order to provide a unified, inclusive experience for all visitors, wayfinding information will direct to the accessible route, allowing all visitors to follow the same guidance regardless of ability. Students and staff who know the Campus can then use alternate paths (with stairs and steep grades) if they so choose. Where a unified path is not an option, secondary wayfinding messages will be included to direct to the accessible paths for given destination.





PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

MULTILINGUAL SIGNAGE AND MESSAGING

Spanish is the primary language for a large portion of Gavilan College’s student population. Many students are the first in their families to pursue higher education so it is critical to the College’s work to help these students feel both welcome and supported on Campus. To that end, pedestrian wayfinding signage—both directionals and maps—will be bilingual.

The challenge of this method is that signs need to be larger to contain the additional copy, as well as limited in the number destinations displayed on the signs. Only major destinations for first-time students and visitors will be listed. If more specificity is needed, directing to quads can replace listing multiple buildings individually.

Note: Due to safety concerns about too many messages, vehicular signage will remain English-only.

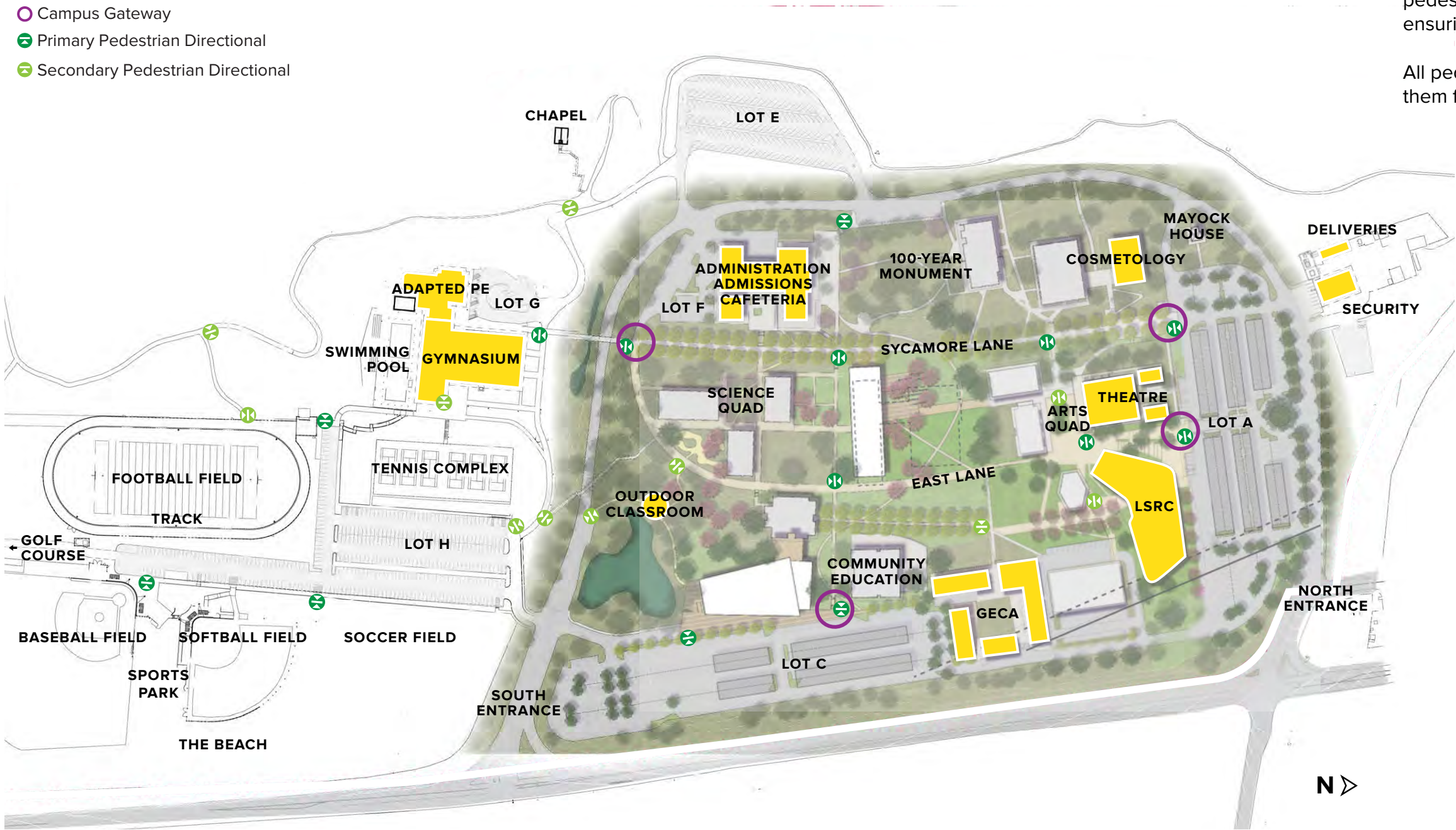
PEDESTRIAN SIGNAGE

PROPOSED SIGN LOCATIONS

This diagram shows the major pedestrian entrances into Campus and indicates the high volume of destinations. Primary directionals are located at the campus entry points from parking lots and at primary decision points. It is important that pedestrians are greeted with maps because they offer an overview of all Campus destinations and are the best tool to orient a visitor to the whole Campus.

Further along the pathways at secondary intersections, pedestrians are supported by smaller directional signs, ensuring first time visitors reach their destination.

All pedestrian directional signs are double-sided, making them functional for people walking in both directions.





BUILDING IDENTIFICATION



BUILDING IDENTIFICATION

PRIORITIES

A critical component of pedestrian wayfinding is clear and legible building identification. Building identification not only assists with finding a destination, it is also an orientation device. After a visitor has read a map, they look up and scan the environment. Clear building identification allows the visitor to translate the two-dimensional map into the three-dimensional environment and orient in relation to the direction of their route.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently most buildings are identified. However, there are some confusing entries and difficult areas on Campus, as well as some outdated information that needs to be addressed.

The primary physical challenge with the existing buildings is the large aggregate concrete that is used on most buildings on Campus. The large stone aggregate prohibits the use of individual pin-mounted letters directly on the building.



BUILDING IDENTIFICATION

PANEL MOUNTED LETTERS

The building identification signage will include a system of letterforms mounted to panels that can easily be fixed to the large aggregate material that is pervasive on many Campus buildings. The system will include options for donor recognition to create a uniform approach as future donors grant gifts.

The location should be optimized for site lines and visibility. The building identification signage should be located no lower than, and about the height of the front door.



SOCIAL SCIENCE

6”–10” dimensional letters,
depending on mounting height



Bud & Jean Ottmar Memorial
GYMNASIUM

4”–6” donor name

BUILDING IDENTIFICATION

PIN-MOUNTED LETTERS

As new buildings are designed for the Campus, it is important the new facades are developed with a location for building identification. The location should be optimized for site lines and visibility, and appropriate cap heights should be employed. The building identification locations should be no lower than the height of the front door and no higher than floor plate of a second floor. Depending on the size of the building, the capital height could be as small as five inches for smaller building and as much as ten inches for a very large building, such as the new Library Student Resource Center currently being planned.



These building facades were developed with generous areas for the placement of building identification.



LIBRARY STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER



LANDMARKS AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE



LANDMARKS AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

INTERPRETATION

Two of the most exceptional features of the Campus are the natural, park-like setting and the diversity of tree species within the campus's arboretum. The campus is also home to two significant historical buildings: the Mayock House and the Chapel. These features present opportunities for visitors and students to connect to the campus through interpretive and didactic information about these features.

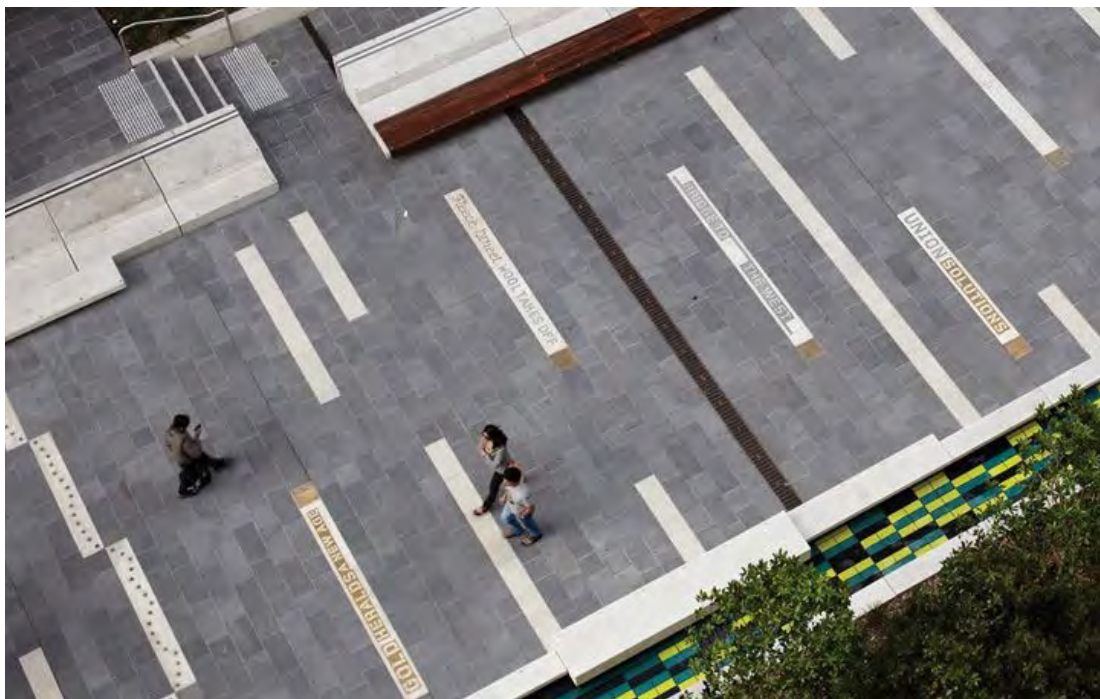
The sign family includes the opportunity to develop markers and waysides that will provide information about these unique features.

The existing memorials and species markers throughout the Campus serve to both educate and narrate the cultural and environmental history, but are mostly one-offs and are often worn. There is an opportunity to develop markers and waysides that will provide information about these unique features in a cohesive system to reinforce the Campus experience and identity.

MEMORIALS

The college has been fortunate to receive financial gifts (large and small) from community members that are committed to the College's future. While donor signage was not specifically a part of the signage master Plan process, it is recommended that in the future a family of site features are developed to honor these individuals in an appropriate and equitable way—campus wide. Having the design of the recognition in-hand will facilitate the discussion and streamline the process of recognizing gifts.

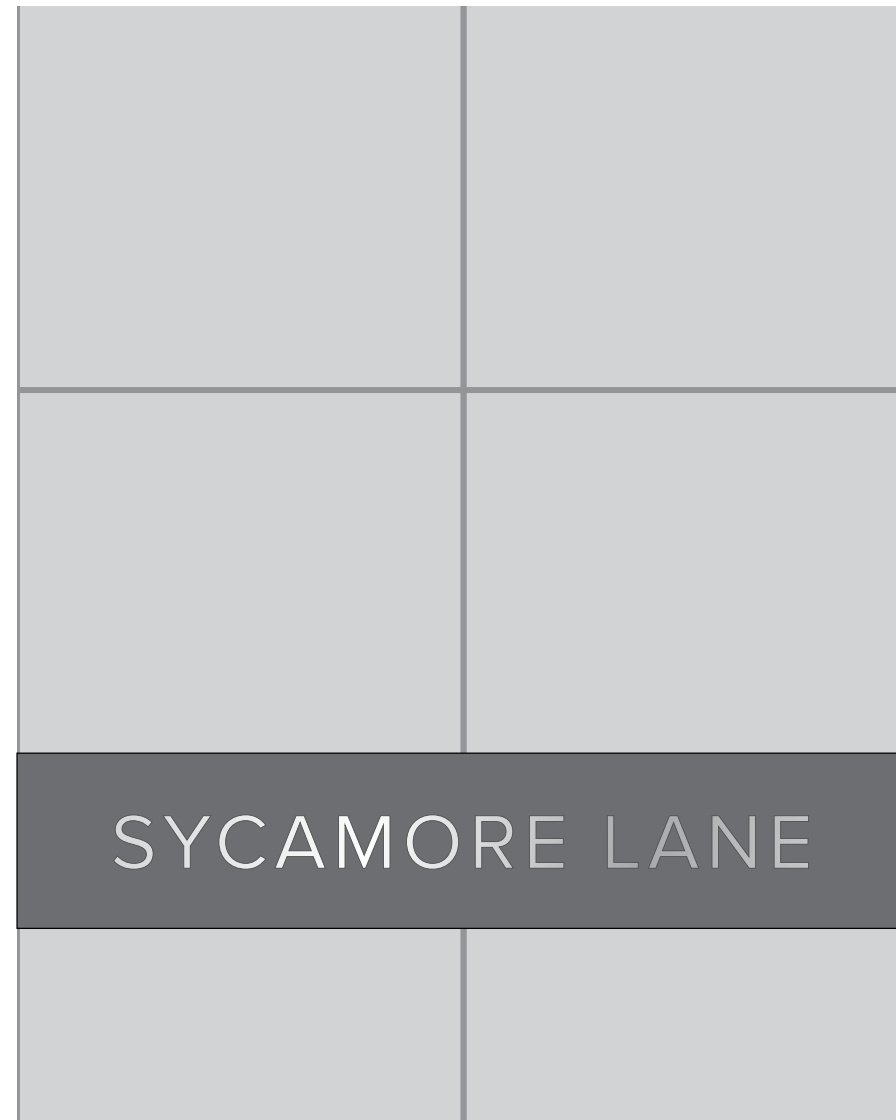
Examples of potential sign forms.



LANDMARKS AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

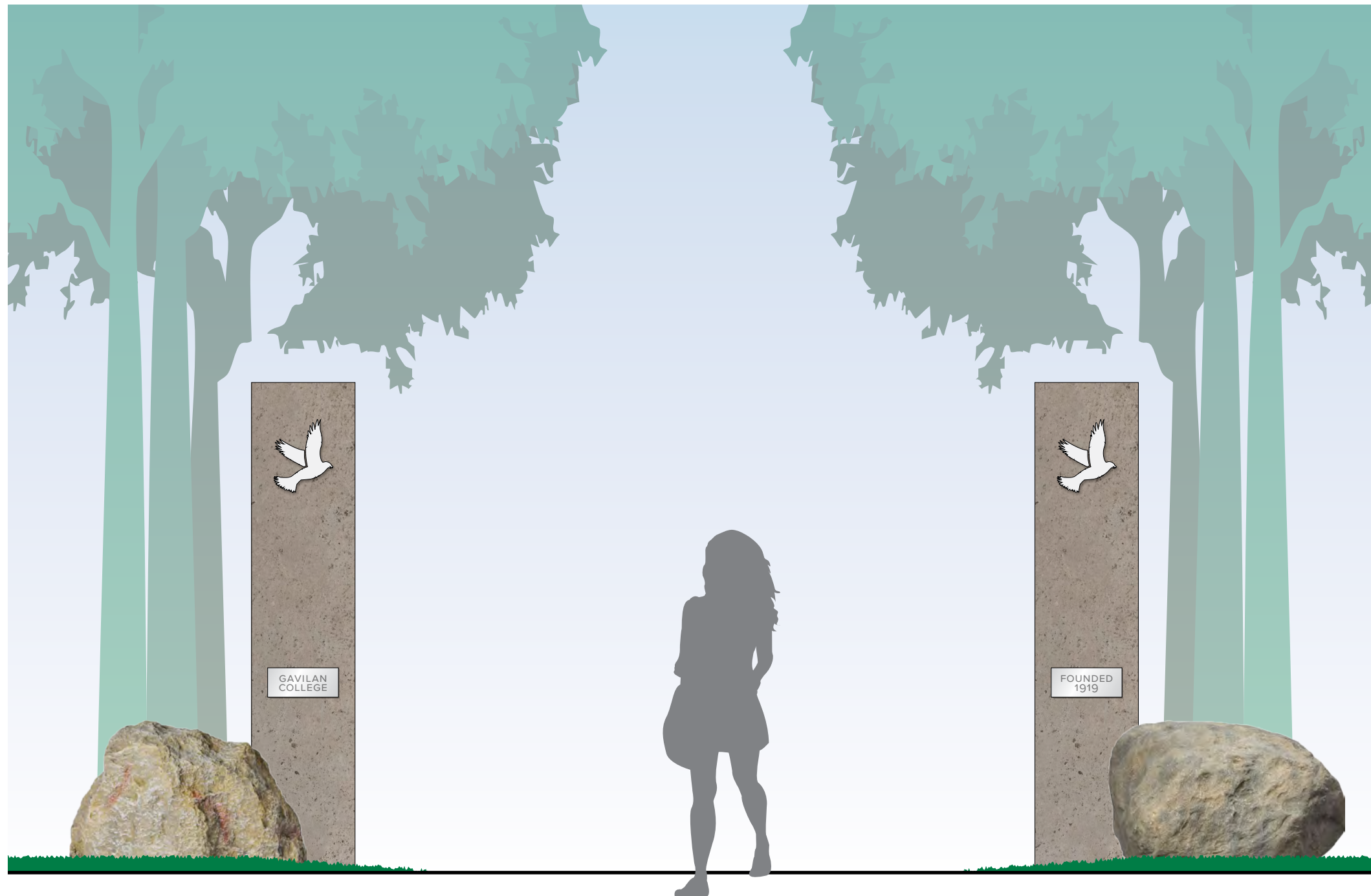
SPECIALIZED PAVING

The ground plane is a remarkable opportunity to tell stories and create another dimension to the identity of the Campus. The major pedestrian paths through campus, such as Sycamore Lane and the future path to the east, are opportunities to tell stories about the college, the area's heritage, the natural landscape, or to recognize donors. The paving can incorporate donor recognition, memorials, historical narrative, or less factual and more artistic patterns. The impression the unique paving leaves is a memorable experience that doubles as wayfinding.





Plan View



LANDMARKS AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

NEW PEDESTRIAN GATEWAY

The Master Plan Taskforces thought the addition of pedestrian gateways would elevate the campus experience and give wayfinding cues.

Gateways serve as ceremonial entrances that communicate to visitors and the community where the “front door” is. The master plan includes four pedestrian gateways: one on each end of Sycamore Lane, one by the Theater, and one leading into campus from Parking Lot C.

The design of the gateways is in keeping with the language of the campus gateway and wayfinding sign family. The concrete columns frame the entrances and the ceremonial identity of Gavilan is displayed on the columns. As these features are developed further, other landscape elements such as lighting, special paving, and planting will need to be considered.



SUB-COMMITTEE DESIGN SURVEY RESULTS



Option 1

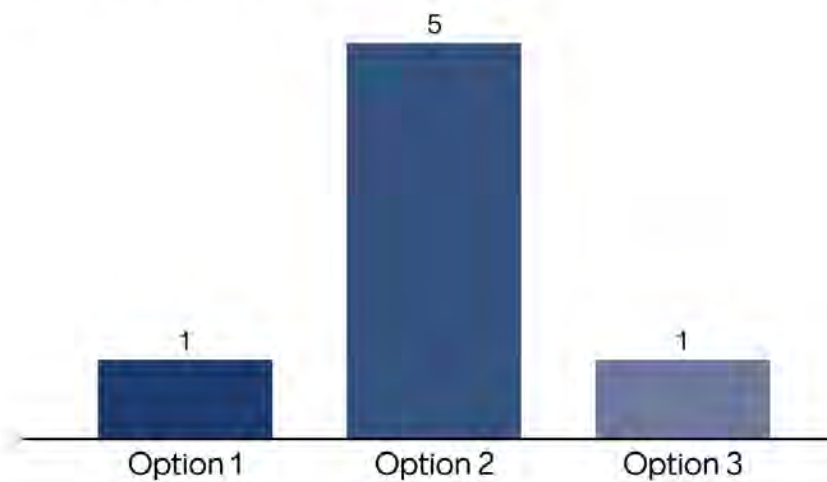


Option 2



Option 3

Vehicular Gateway Options





Wayfinding Signage

