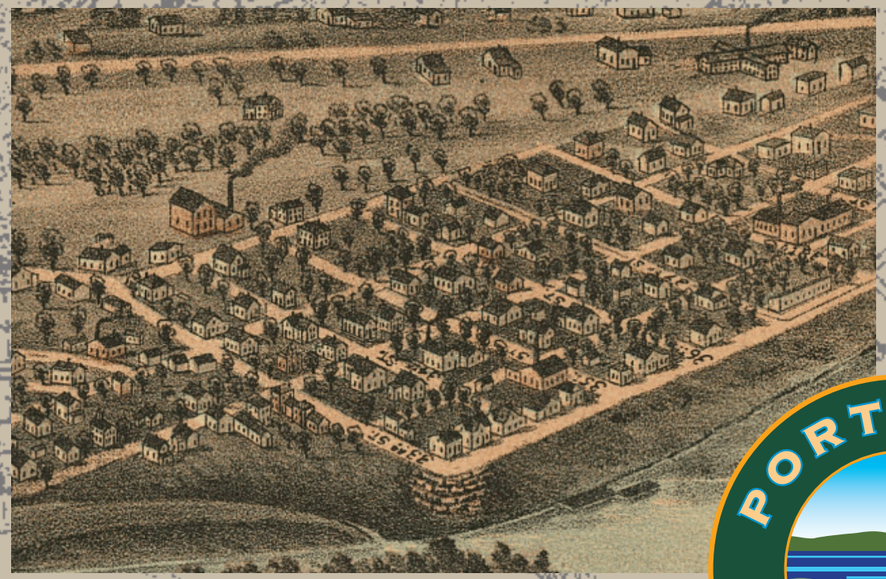

PORTLAND WHARF PARK

# Interpretive Master Plan

July 2008 Louisville, Kentucky

On the cover:

*Birds-eye view of Louisville from the river front and Southern Exposition,* 1883. W. F. Clarke.
Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

Prepared by:

ROWLAND DESIGN

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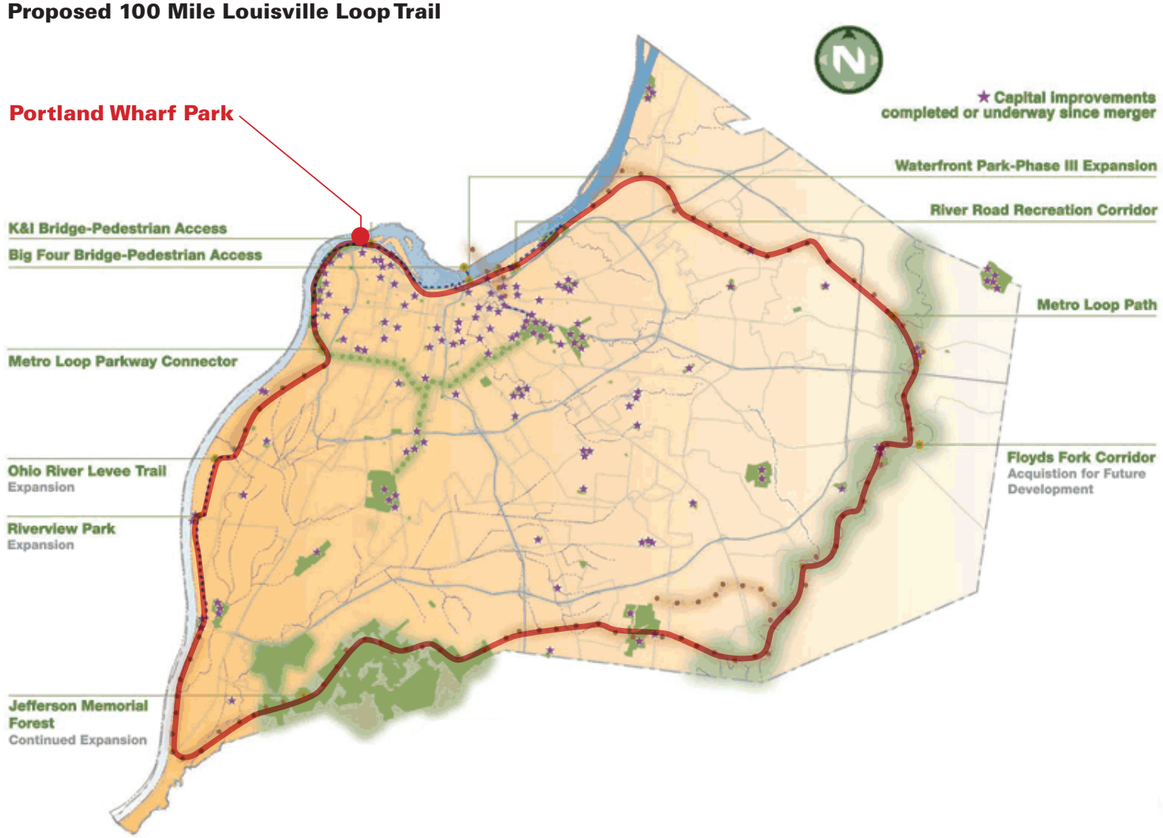
# Portland Wharf Park and the 100 Mile Louisville Loop

Portland Wharf Park plays an important role in the Louisville Loop Trail system. Bikers and walkers using the levee route from the north and the south pass through PWP on their trip along the Ohio River. PWP is the only park in the trail system that offers these visitors interpretation of archeological sites.

The Louisville Loop consists of a paved trail of more than 100 miles around the community. In addition to connecting Louisville's diverse parks and neighborhoods, this path includes planned connections to Southern Indiana and surrounding Kentucky counties, offering significant new opportunities for recreation and alternative transportation.

**Proposed 100 Mile Louisville Loop Trail**



# Introduction

This interpretive Master Plan is the culmination of an intensive four month process sponsored by Portland Museum in partnership with Louisville Metro Parks Department. The project brought together many different groups and organizations, each contributing their unique perspective to the interpretive plan. The exercise began with a meeting organized by the Portland Museum and attended by Metro Parks, members of the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, design consultants, and residents of the Portland Community. The evening was a brainstorming session in which all involved shared ideas regarding interpretation they believe needed to be included in Portland Wharf Park. The list varied, comprised of topics ranging from the Underground Railroad to playing baseball in Portland. Ultimately, these topics were narrowed by the interpretive planning committee into a list representative of the whole. During the subsequent months, frequent meetings occurred between Portland Museum, Metro Parks, and design consultants. The team utilized the Interpretive Program which was established in the Rhodeside and Harwell Master Plan of 2002. In some instances they added, relocated or modified the interpretive "stations" presented in that document. The positive and negative attributes of interpretive design options were explored, discussed and modified. The interpretive master plan which follows highlights this process and indicates key components to be included in future design development.

**Concept Statement**

"When beginning a project, we as designers are often faced with the challenge of creating a memory. At Portland Wharf Park, our challenge was not in creating memories, but rather in allowing the memories of yesterday to be revealed. At this historic site we looked at how the ghostly grid formed the town that once was, and allowed it to form our interpretive plan, guiding us in how and where stories are told. We walked along overgrown paths, and brushed away silt to reveal old paved streets. We uncovered street posts, allowing them to define the town again. Here we created a pavilion, enabling the people of today to sit among the stories of people past. Through interpretation, landscape architecture, and architecture we have redrawn the fabric of Portland Wharf Park to share its story with the Portland Neighborhood, and all who journey to it."

- Rowland Design

# Project Background

**Summary of Area History**
The town of Portland was established in 1811 by General William Lytle. It quickly developed a bustling wharf and became an important river town. Due to the Falls of the Ohio, river travelers had to disembark at Louisville, travel over land, and resume their river travels downstream of the Falls. Portland became an important link to Louisville and was eventually connected by railroad. The increasing popularity of the steamboat in the mid 1800's also aided in Portland's growth.

At the heart of the town, a commercial district extended inland from the wharf. At the height of the town's success, Portland contained many taverns, shops, fine hotels, and large warehouses. A series of archeological digs uncovered a variety of artifacts common to 19th century river cities revealing a wealth of information regarding commerce, maritime activity, and domestic life within Portland.

In the years before the Civil War, Portland was home to a diverse group of people, including immigrants and free and enslaved blacks. With it's location on the Ohio River, Portland became an important crossing point to freedom for fugitive slaves. The most frequent crossing point was located west of Gravier Street.

As time passed on from the settlement of Portland, new methods of navigating the river developed. In the 1830's, a canal was built connecting Louisville and Portland. After many expansions, the canal allowed river traffic to bypass the falls and continue the river journey without stopping. The need for travel over land at the falls diminished, as did Portland's significance on the Ohio.

Although the town had always been prone to flooding, a series of major floods eventually pushed residents out of the town center. The Great Flood of 1937 devastated Portland. After another flood in 1945, the large flood levee was built. All of the structures north of the levee were razed and the original town was separated from the blocks to the south. Today, the levee now divides the community into two National Register Districts–the Portland National Register District in "Portland Proper" and another district of 55 acres of archaeological remains in Portland Wharf Park.

**Project History**
In March of 2006, Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States of America, announced that the Portland Neighborhood was one of five neighborhoods to be awarded a Preserve America Designation. The Advisory Council of Historic Preservation describes the federal program's goals as follows:

"*Preserve America* is a White House initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and national heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the Nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and national heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities."

As part of this designation, Preserve America provided a grant of $150,000 to the Portland Museum to assist in funding a coherent cultural plan for the future. Portland Museum joined with Louisville Metro Parks to spearhead the project. The initiative stated clear goals of incorporating local citizen involvement, and the Portland Community has been strongly dedicated to this effort. Portland residents have attended countless meetings and provided unique insight into their goals for the park's interpretive plan.

**Proposed Program**
During the course of developing this interpretive Master Plan, a number of work sessions were conducted with the purpose of gathering input into the design process. Part of this process involved developing a "program" for the project. This program is essentially a listing of features and qualities that need to be considered in the development of the Portland Wharf Interpretive Master Plan.

A variety of qualities were to be integrated into the development of the interpretive program. Innovative and technologically advanced interpretive methods were to be used to educate the public. The constraints of an outdoor museum along a linear walkway were to be taken into consideration, as well as the urban environment. The levee was to be included in the interpretive design in order to diminish the barrier caused by the levee between the park and the community. This barrier also required that the plan include both visual and physical links between the park and the community. As the park links to the community, the community should be actively engaged in the life of the park to ensure ownership of the park and proper maintenance.

The role of Portland Wharf Park as a natural environment was also to be considered. It was important to protect wildlife habitats and promote awareness of natural resources. The land of the park falls within the Ohio River floodplain. The limitations of working within a floodplain were to be considered while designing. The current archaeological record, as well as on-going field archaeology, were to be incorporated into the park's design.

**Previous reports used as foundation**
The project builds off of earlier plans and studies conducted by Louisville Metro Parks Department, Portland Museum, and Kentucky Archeological Survey.

*Park Master Plan*
Rhodeside & Harwell, 2002
Alexandria, VA

*Floodwall Study*
Tetra Tech, 2002
Louisville, KY

*Portland Tourism Study*
John Milner Associates
Philadelphia PA

*A group of children in the park learning about the park's history*

Opportunities for learning abound within Portland Wharf Park. The Portland Museum currently conducts educational programs for children at its museum, and has developed many possibilities for expanding these activities to the park. Constructing infrastructure and interpretation will enable these valuable natural and historical resources to be utilized. Nathalie Andrews, the director of the Portland Museum, states the following:

> *"Imagine school children on an outing to the park, organized into teams, studying historical documents, maps, and pictures, then using hand-held GPS units to find clues hidden in buried containers. The children race to find their clue destination, plant a flag to mark the spot, and retrieve "artifacts" and clues that will help them determine which set of historical characters and events their team has drawn. The young students bring the clues back to a pavilion where they study the evidence, draw conclusions, and creatively report back to the other groups."*
>
> *"The Portland Museum designed this interactive educational game called "Get a Clue" to demonstrate the potential for young learners at Portland Wharf Park. When the proper infrastructure is in place for children to safely use the park, the Museum can offer this program to elementary and middle school students studying local and national history."*
>
> *Nathalie Andrews*
> *Executive Director of the Portland Museum*

Regarding advanced education, The Department of Anthropology at the University of Louisville currently utilizes the park for field-based training. Archaeological digs have given students the opportunity to work with trained professionals, in many cases learning about a heritage which is their own. The University of Louisville is also developing a Public History program with other cultural institutions throughout Louisville Metro.

As visitors walk along Fulton Street toward the Ohio River, they see an area of land demarcated with rope where digging has recently occurred. This is just one example of investigations which have been led over the past several years by M. Jay Stottman of the Kentucky Archaeological Survey. To date the public has taken a strong interest in these excavation projects. The director of the Portland Museum, Nathalie Andrews, notes that the Portland Community as well as volunteers from outside Portland have assisted archaeologists in their efforts:

> *"During these projects Portland residents and other volunteers helped archaeologists. There have been both formal and informal programs where children, youth, and adults had opportunities to get their hands dirty with history. Schools and YMCA camps scheduled fieldtrips while other volunteers just stopped in while using the Louisville Loop."*
>
> *Nathalie Andrews*
> *Executive Director of the Portland Museum*

The potential for discovery at Portland Wharf Park should not be understated. Archaeologists have thus far uncovered 50,000 artifacts. Pieces of glass, pottery, animal bones, and nails have been discovered. In the future, foundation and structural remains as well as streets, cisterns, and wells can provide a glimpse of what life in a 19th-century river town might have been like. The Rhodeside and Harwell Master Plan notes that this part of the Ohio River also contains high to moderate potential for containing prehistoric (Native American) resources, and artifacts from as far back as the Archaic through Woodland Periods (8,000 B.C. to A.D. 1000) could be uncovered in the future.

The master plan for interpretation makes strong efforts to include archaeology in the park experience. A node dedicated to archaeology, "How Do We Know", is located at the intersection of Florida Alley and Fulton Streets. Visitors come upon this node near the beginning of their journey, allowing them to apply this knowledge as they walk through the park and see archaeological interpretation scattered throughout. On-going archaeological investigation is important to the understanding of the site and therefore to the interpretation.

*A group of children participating in archaeological work at the park*

*Aerial view of the park and surrounding areas. Park boundaries are determined by the Ohio River, Shawnee Golf Course, flood levee (same location as I-64), and the K& I Railroad Bridge.*

*Entrance from Northwestern Street*

*Looking north from flood levee*

*Looking east from Florida Alley*

The site, consisting of approximately 55 acres, is located along the Ohio River in Portland just a few miles from downtown Louisville. It is bound to the north by the Ohio River, to the south by Interstate 64 and the Ohio River levee, to the east by the Kentucky and Indiana Bridge and the west by the Shawnee Park golf course. There are two entry points to the site that can only be made by bicycle or on foot, except for maintenance vehicles. The primary entrance is from Northwestern Parkway and the other entrance is along the Riverwalk from the Shawnee Park golf course at the northwestern portion of the site. Access and visibility to the park are very limited, creating an interesting dynamic in which to design.

During this phase, a wealth of information was obtained regarding the Portland Wharf Park area, including; Portland Wharf Park Master Plan by Rhodeside and Harwell, Alexander, VA, dated November 2002, Existing Conditions Analysis – Floodgate Issues / Constraints – Portland Wharf Floodgate dated November 2002, information from the Portland Museum and from archaeologist Jay Stottman. This sound foundation of information was used as a guide for design decision making.

Upon arrival at the park, the Ohio River takes center stage and the dramatic views of the K&I Bridge draw the eye across the river to Indiana. As one pans across this landscape, the next most noticeable attributes of the park are the visual cues that remain from when Portland was a bustling town – the ghosted streets. The ghost streets have also been cleared of vegetation and make wonderful lineal clearings through the wooded section of the park to the west. Dotted throughout the ghosted streets are large sandstone blocks placed at regular intervals. As part of the interpretive Master Plan, it is proposed that these stones get relocated along the base of the levee, replacing the trees which currently prevent access to the face of the levee. The wooded vegetation is primarily invasive except along most of the banks of the Ohio River. Here can be found an established riparian forest of predominantly cottonwoods. The Riverwalk that runs parallel to the Ohio River on top of the embankment overlooking the river winds its way through the cottonwoods as it passes through Portland Wharf Park.

The site is predominantly flat and is within the limits of the Ohio River floodplain, except the main entry from Northwestern Parkway which leads the user gradually up and over the levee. The levee, rising up sharply along the south side of the park separates this place from dry side of the levee, The Portland neighborhood. The two most predominant constraints of this site are flooding and the barrier effect that the levee creates as well as the overhead I64 Expressway. By no means are these obstacles insurmountable, but they do create significant issues for safety, visibility and accessibility.

# Interpretive Nodes and Themes

At the onset of this project, a focus group meeting was held with Portland Museum, MetroParks, the design team, and members of the Portland Community. The desired outcome of this meeting was to develop a list of subject matter which could be interpreted at Portland Wharf Park. The resulting list included topics of historical, archaeological, geological, and personal significance; and in order to bring clarity, a framework of interpretive thematic nodes was developed. This framework includes 15 interpretive nodes which each have a predominant theme. Included in each of these nodes is a subset list of topics, all of which support the predominant theme.

**1**

### Time and the River: Portland at the Crossroads of America

Node 1 is intended to be located at the east entrance into Portland Wharf Park. Node 1 provides an introduction to the park, inviting visitors to "explore its rich heritage". This node will also include topics on prehistory, the founding of Portland, flooding, Metro Parks's acquisition, and the reason why Portland is located near the Falls of the Ohio.

**2**

### Rudd Avenue

Node 2 occurs approximately halfway between the Northwestern Parkway entrance and the point at which visitors descend from the levee into the Park. This location was chosen because one has the opportunity to see original elements of the old town of Portland. A map identifying the two Portland areas listed on the National Historic Register will also be included at this node.

**3**

### K&I Bridge

Node 3 occurs directly after Node 2 at the same approximate half-way point between the entrance and the top of the levee. Interpretation to be included as part of the K & I Bridge thematic node includes information regarding Portland and Louisville, how the railroad takes over boats, strap rails and rail technology, and the tenuous relationship Portland had with Louisville over the railroad.

4

### The River was not Always a Friend

From its vantage point at the top of the levee, Node 4 is located where visitors gain expansive views of the Ohio River to the north, the Portland Neighborhood to the south, and the face of the floodwall below them. Interpretation to be included here includes information on the 1937 Flood, a flood zones map, and floodwall history. Stories which give special insight into the aftermath of the flood, including lives lost, a resilient community, and how the construction of the floodwall dramatically changed Portland's community, will also be shared here.

5

### Famous People and Unsung Heroes

Interpretive Node 5 occurs at the intersection of Florida Alley and Commercial (now 34th) Street. This node is treated somewhat differently than other nodes in that interpretation here will occur inside the pavilion on a larger format panel. Given the multitude of stories which can be told here, it is appropriate that a larger venue for interpretive presentation exists. Stories of famous people who helped shape Portland's history, such as Lytle, Lafayette, and Shreve will be shared here. The stories of the people who made up the fabric of 19th-Century Portland – the farmers, the ferryman, and the families – will also be told at this node. Due to its placement, Node 5 will include interpretation of the historic Saint Charles Hotel. As one stands at the southern end of the pavilion, there is the opportunity to look through a transparent panel onto which an artist has rendered the hotel's original façade, and see its reconstructed foundation walls in the distance.

6

### How Do We Know?

Archaeological investigation has been, and will continue to be, an integral feature of the Portland Wharf Park experience. Node 6, which is located at the juncture of Florida Alley and Fulton (now 33rd) Street, will give both the casual visitor and the trained historian compelling information about the archaeological history of the park. As stated in the Master Plan, this area of the park "will afford views of ongoing and interpreted archaeological sites". Interpretation which will occur here includes an explanation of archaeology, methods and techniques of digging up the past, artifacts including photographs, historical research, and oral histories.

7

### Never the Same River

Node 7 is located at the northeastern edge of the park, right along the water's edge. This is the ideal location at which to tell this story in that viewers can stand on solid ground and imagine the flooding waters surrounding them. Interpretation here will also include a visual showing how the water's edge has advanced over time.

8

### A Town Takes Root

At Node 8, visitors get their first long view down Water Street to the west side of the park. Nodes along Water Street occur at the intersections of the original street grid, and a strong use of original paving materials such as stone block is an important part of the interpretation. Node 8 occurs at the juncture of Water and Commercial Streets. Street corner signs highlighting the grand scale of the original streets will be used. The interpretive theme here, "A Town Takes Route", introduces visitors to the experience of life in Portland when it was a bustling wharf town during the 19th century. Topics to be included are the wharf, the commercial district, transport, paved streets, types of businesses, names of business owners, and drug stores. The story of Jim Porter, the Kentucky giant, will also be told here.

9

### A Bustling Wharf

Node 9, "A Bustling Wharf", takes people off of the beaten path to a beautiful location where Commercial Street meets the Ohio River. The interpretive theme here will provide information on the Portland Wharf and its role in the 19th century river transport system. Physical elements such as mooring rings will assist in telling the story of how riverboats were docked at shore. Interpretation on mooring, loading/unloading, fees, omnibus, hack services, fishing goods, shipping, the New Orleans Run, and portaging will be included.

10

### The Iron Horse

"The Iron Horse" theme at the intersection of Water and Grove Streets continues the interpretive pattern established at Node 10. Here, extensive amounts of brick paving material will be used to broaden visitors' understanding of 19th century material palettes. At this particular node, railway ties will be incorporated into paving patterns as an indicator of the railway's mark on Portland. Metro Parks has indicated that railway ties are available to be salvaged from a different location in Louisville, and this opportunity should not be missed. Interpretation to be included as part of the Iron Horse thematic node includes information regarding Portland and Louisville, how the railroad takes over boats, jeepney services, strap rails and rail technology, and the tenuous relationship Portland had with Louisville over the railroad.

11

### The Landing

Node 11, "The Landing", occurs at the intersection of Water and Ferry Streets. As stated in the Master Plan, this location "will afford a panorama of both the Ohio River and the former location of the New Albany and Portland Ferry". Either a three-dimensional reconstruction or a full-size etching of the plan view of the ferry will lend additional richness to this node. Stories to be told here include ferries and ferry improvements; the importance of ferries before bridges; trade, transport and making a living; riverfront property value; and competition.

12

### Crossing to Freedom

Research has indicated that a significant Underground Railroad crossing occurred along the Ohio River west of the intersection of Water and Gravier Streets. Although this area is not currently included in Portland Wharf Park, there has been discussion that this land could potentially be annexed for future inclusion. Given that the interpretive planning team is so strongly committed to this effort, the Interpretive Master Plan is designed with this "Crossing to Freedom" node included. A monument commemorating this historic site is included in the plan, as can be seen by the square drawn in the middle of this intersection. Interpretation to be included as a subset of this theme includes the Underground Railroad, methods of escape, laws regarding enslavement, and emancipation.

13

### Living Off the Land

As visitors walk south from Node 12, they look through a wooded clearing and see the intersection of Gravier Street and Florida Alley. This intersection is the location of Node 13, "Living off the Land", and it establishes a different treatment of the intersections which occur along Florida Alley, as parkgoers begin their walk back toward the pavilion. While Water Street is designed to convey the more urban aspects of historic Portland Wharf, Florida Alley conveys an experience of what bucolic life in Portland might have been like.

14

### Portland Spirits

Node 14, "Portland Spirits" occurs at the intersection of Ferry Street and Florida Alley near the remains of the Rugby Distillery, as it functioned during the 19th century. Interpretation here includes discussing how distilling was a major commodity for Kentucky and Portland, access to shipping, local uses (bottling), and Laws – Volstead Act, Prohibition, etc. Feed lots were located adjacent to the distillery; additional interpretation will discuss how mash from the distillery was used to fatten cows.

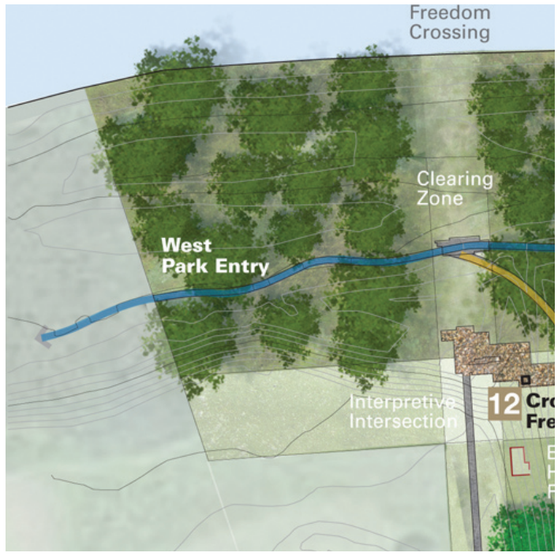
15

### Our Great Western Garden

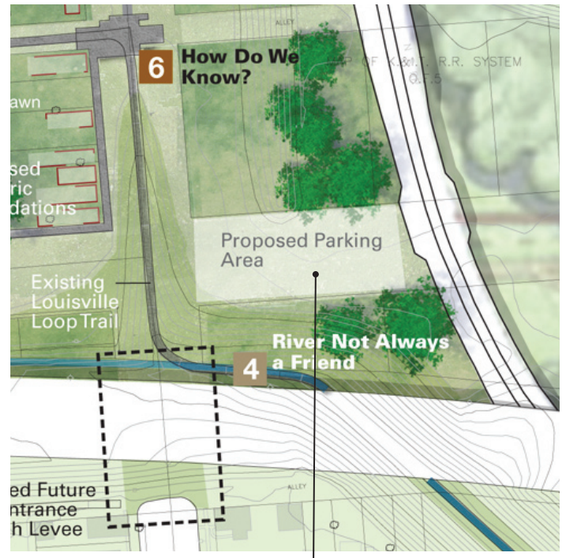
This node is located at the crossroads of Grove Street, Florida Alley, and the Audubon Trail. It is placed at an intersection near the pavilion so that many visitors will encounter it, discovering an entirely different attribute of the park. It is also located in between the open lawn area and woodland Savannah because it addresses these two landscape settings. Interpretation at this node includes the nature trail, native species guide to flora and fauna, the bird walk, and Audubon quotes and images.

# Overall Site Plan

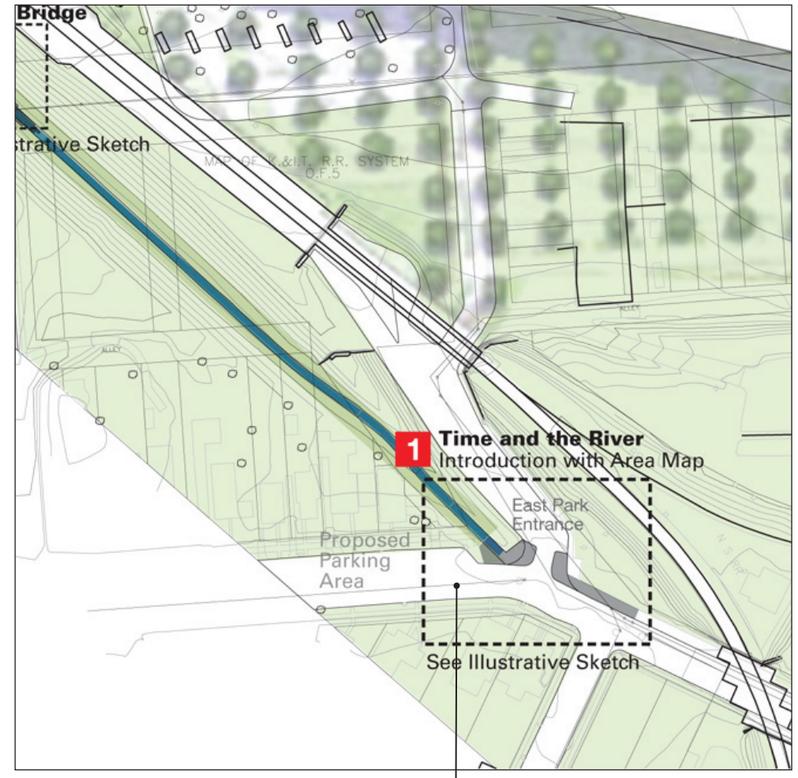
# Park Entry Points



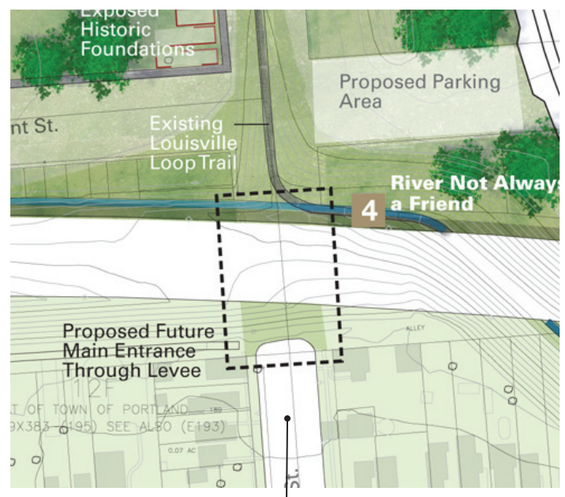

Existing west park entry on Riverwalk




Future parking area on Front Street between Fulton Street and the K&I bridge




Existing east park entry from Northwestern Parkway

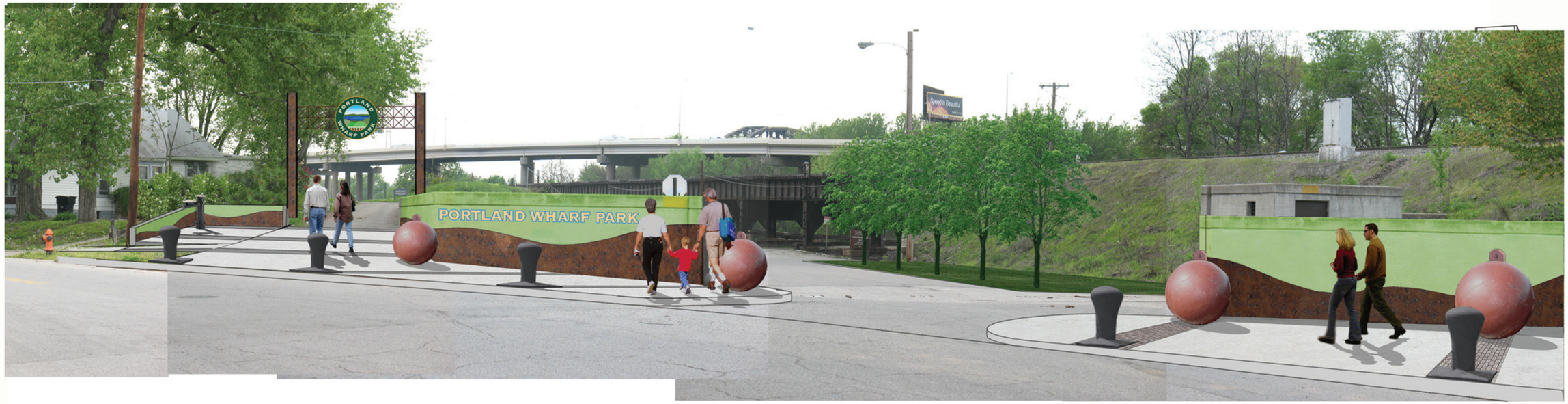



Future main entrance through levee at 33rd Street

Currently access to the park is difficult, and one can only enter from the east or west side of the Riverwalk. Two new entry points into the park will be an addition to the two current park entries. The western park entry from the Shawnee Golf Course will remain the same. The entrance through 33rd Street will go through the levee and continue the line created by 33rd Street onto Fulton St.

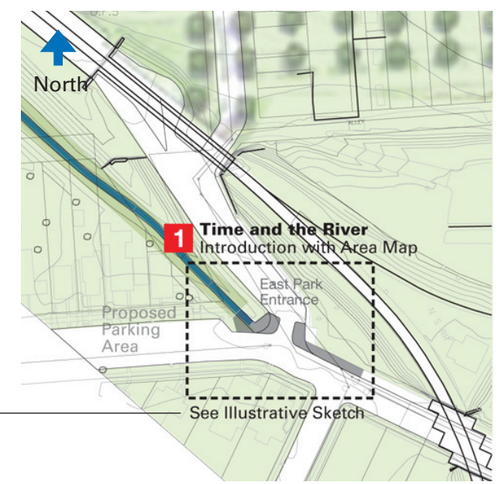
A future parking area is proposed along Front Street between Fulton Street and the K&I Bridge. Both of the new entrances are near the location where visitors descend from the levee into the park. At every entry point, there will be an park identifier that signals the visitors entrance to a special place.

# East Entry Sequence




*East entrance to park looking north towards freeway*

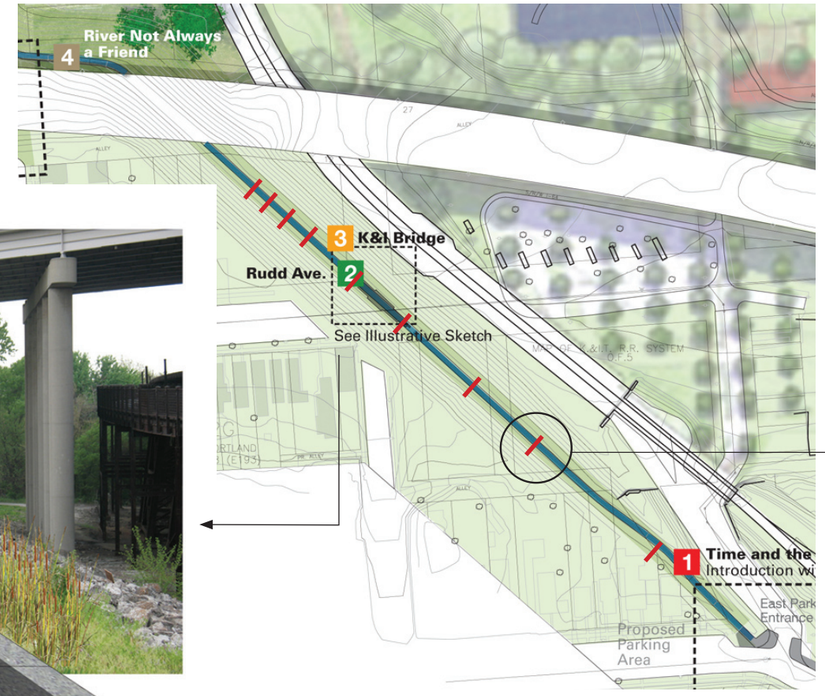
*Alternate design for East entry sequence*




Of the two existing entrances, the one at Northwestern Parkway is the most visible entrance to Portland residents. Great improvements are needed to this entry sequence as visitors enter from the east and make the long ascent to the park proper. This entry experience occurs along a path that is the only piece of the park visible to the neighborhood on the 'dry side' of the levee, so it plays a significant part in attracting visitors to the park. The ideas expressed in the renderings convey information about Portland Wharf without being too directly nostalgic. The design calls attention to the entrance and establishes a presence for the park within the context of the 'living' neighborhood, while giving cues as to what the visitor might expect to see once they arrive in the park proper.

The other aspect of this entry sequence is that is continues in a linear fashion until one finally reaches the top of the levee and dramatic views of the park are revealed. There are interpretive moments along this path that break up this long linear experience and make the walk more interesting and inviting.

# East Entry Sequence – time line and rest stop along the flood wall walk to park




*Time line in stone*

The time line concept is to lay engraved stones into the walkway from the entrance to the park to the first "You Are Here" location map. This would be a time line of events from pre-historic times to the present. Stones would get progressively closer to each other as events speeded up in time.

*Alternate Design for Rudd Avenue rest stop*

Due to the long walk from the entrance to the park and the start of the actual park the second interpretive node incorporates seating for visitors to stop and rest. An interpretive sign sits at the site and includes a map of the park as well as Portland which can be seen below.

**10,000-8,000 B.C. PALEOINDIAN PERIOD**

**1811 PORTLAND FOUNDED**

*Examples of time line facts*

# Intersections and the Ghostly Grid

*Typical intersection*

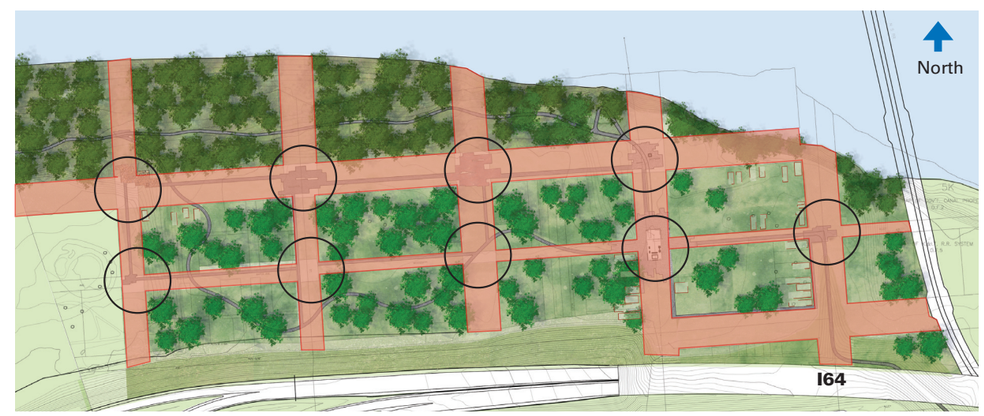
*Present conditions*

## Intersections

Intersections are locations within the park that have become places for a concentration of things to occur, just as they would have been in the nineteenth century when the Wharf was in its prime. This is where a lot of the interpretation within the park takes place, both direct and indirect. Intersections become a placeholder for the insertion of signage, sculpture, and seating and other means of communicating the history of Portland Wharf. They also are spaced throughout the park at ideal intervals to invite visitors to continue along a linear path from one intersection to the next, each with their own unique theme and stories to tell.

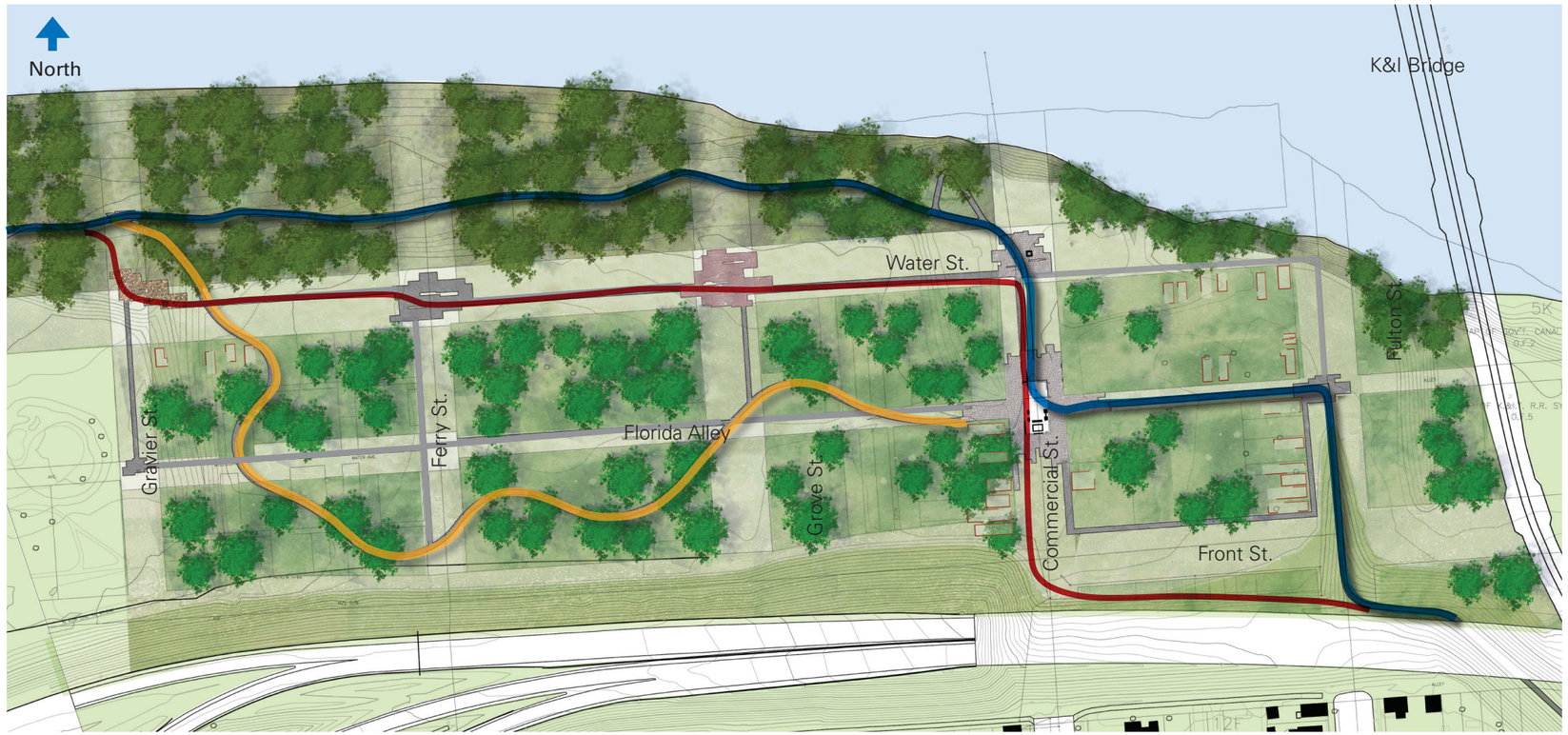
## The Grid

The ghosted street grid has the biggest overall impact in conveying to park users that this place was a town. The grid is used not only to convey where the streets were once located, but is also used as the location for the predominant network of paths. The grid is expressed in the landscape by elimination and more frequent mowing of the public rights of way. Further detailed design will be needed in subsequent phases of the park design in order to interpret the streets to their fullest potential.




*Intersections within the ghostly grid*

# Trail Systems




*Current Louisville Loop Trail - asphalt surface*

*Proposed Audubon Trail - cleared mowed surface*

*Proposed Grid Trail - asphalt and various pavers*

*Realignment of Louisville Loop Trail*

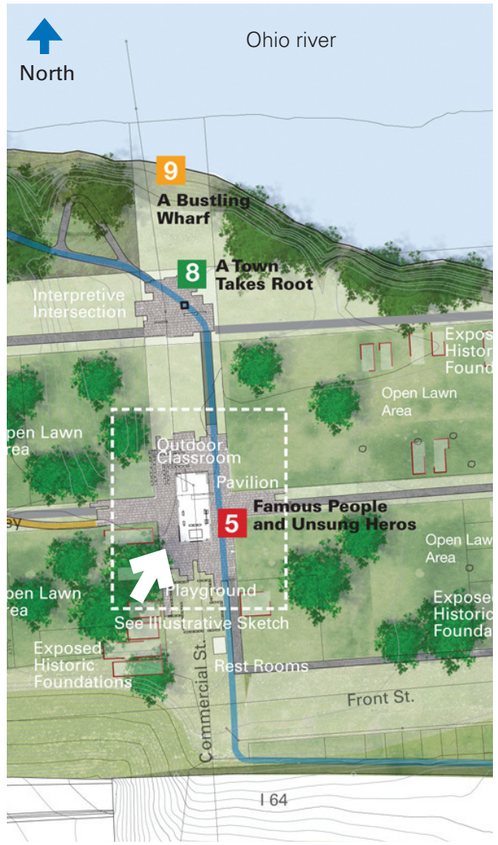
The plan provides several paths that one can take to experience the park; the Louisville Loop, Water Street, the proposed Audubon Trail and the soft paths located in the old street bed. The objective is to promote access to the majority of the site each with its own unique character.

There was discussion about a realignment of the Louisville Loop as it descends into the park. This new path alignment would go parallel to the levee within the Front Street right of way and end up at the intersection of Front and Commercial Streets, closer to the pavilion location.

The proposed Audubon Trail is named for John James Audubon, the famous American naturalist who did work in the area in 1808 and 1848. The trail should include pictures and names of birds seen in the area. Beautiful signage and native plant life should line the trail, making the path inviting to visitors. The wealth of information regarding local plant and bird life along the trail provides numerous educational opportunities. In addition to native species, the trail should tell the story of Audubon and celebrate his bicentennial.

*Sidewalk paving crew in 1906*

# The Pavilion at Intersection of Florida Alley and Commercial Street




*Plan view of Pavilion*

*Plan view of Pavilion*

Foundations of the St. Charles Hotel

Rendering showing the east facade of the Saint Charles Hotel Sign Type G

Interpretive panels Sign Type F

*Existing conditions: Looking down from the levee towards pavilion site*

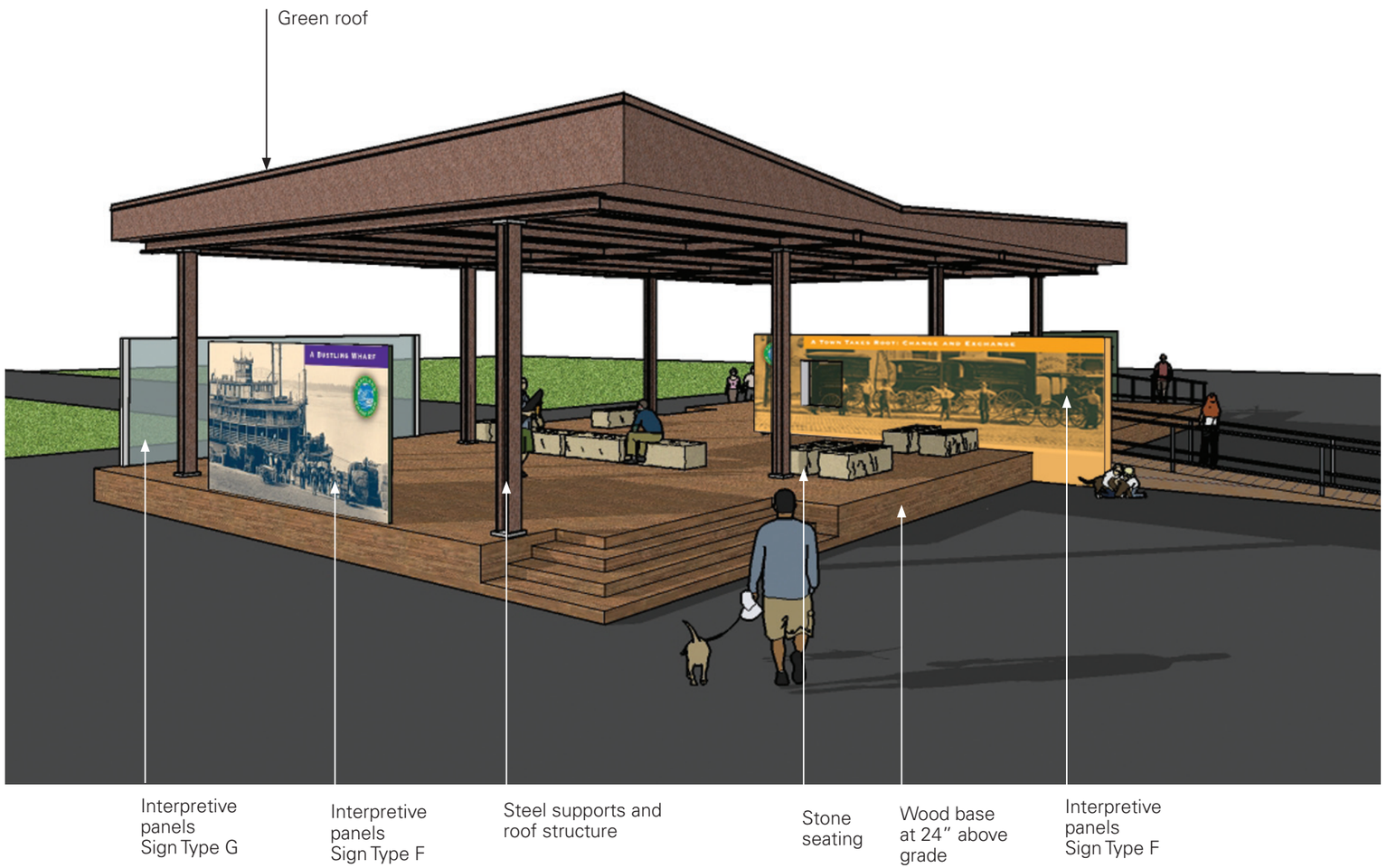
The Pavilion is located at the intersection of Commercial Street and Florida Alley. It provides a place for interpretation, a sheltered classroom, and a stage for community events. This location was chosen because it is central to the site, visible from the main entry through the levee, and visible as one descends down the face of the levee from the park's east entry. It is an ideal stopping point for those bicycling along the Louisville Loop (Riverwalk), as this is approximately the 3 mile marker if one begins the ride downtown. The pavilion is located at an elevation on the site which will provide additional protection from flooding.

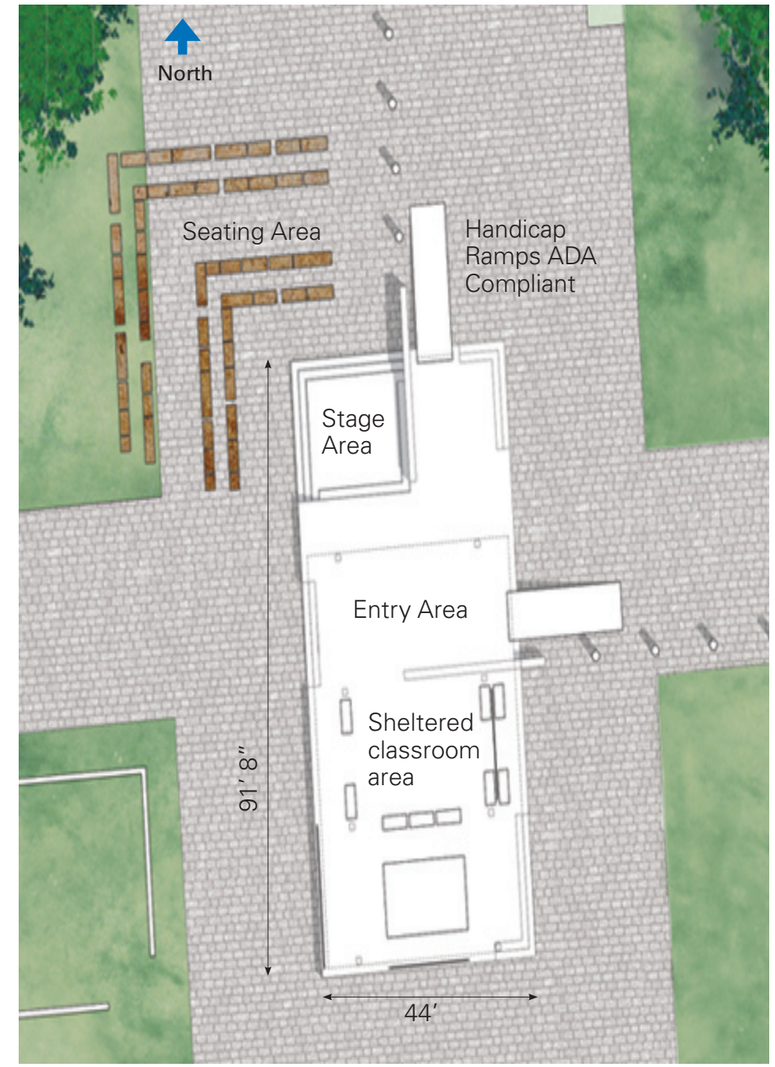
The pavilion is oriented toward the river and is placed in the center of the intersection. One might initially find this placement as counter intuitive. Why not locate the structure in the footprint of a building that once was a part of Portland? The planning objectives were to avoid conflicts with surrounding archaeological sites and to respond to the incongruity of constructing a new structure on the footprint of a historic building. This location also creates a strong axial focal point as one walks along the primary path system.

The pavilion is an iconic modern interpretation of a flat boat. In keeping with the material palette of flatboats, the pavilion will sit upon a simple wood plinth base at a height which does not require railings. The eight columns which support the roof are to be constructed of either galvanized steel or wood which would highlight historic joinery details. Sustainable features such as a green roof should be considered. Large format interpretive panels will be used as vertical dividers of programmatic spaces. In some instances there will be punched window openings through the panels to provide a visual connection. The panels will be devoid of intricate mounting details.

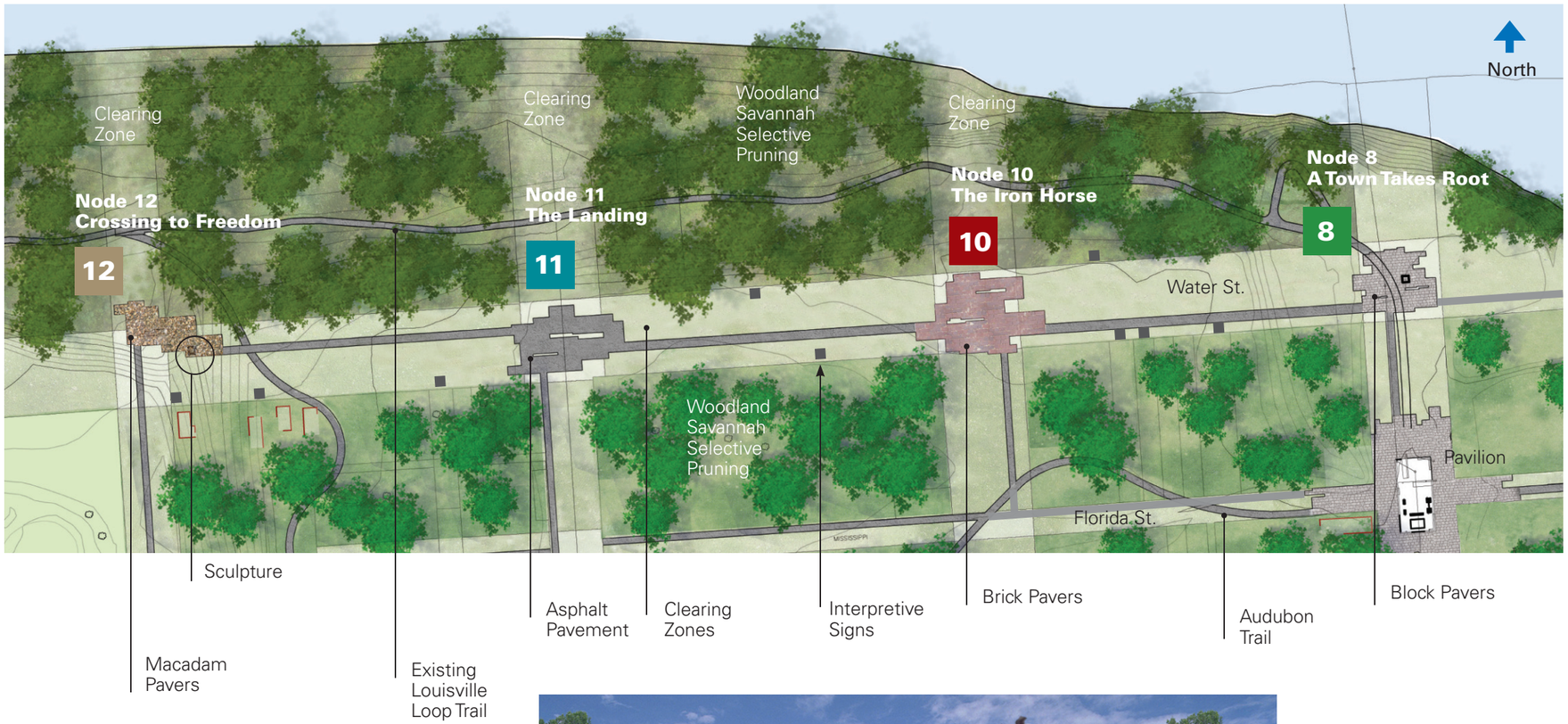
A playground has been proposed south of the intersection. The playground will create an experience for a child that is fun, interactive and reflective of the history and archaeology of the park. Prefabricated playground equipment will not be used. Other elements such as bike parking and restrooms will be in the near vicinity.

# The Pavilion at Intersection of Florida Alley and Commercial Street



# Water Street



*Intersection along Water Street*

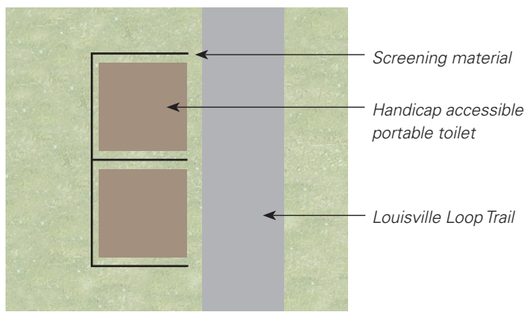
Water Street was once a hub for activity along the Wharf. Great emphasis is placed on Water Street as a place for telling stories and bringing people closer to the river. As one walks along Water, a sense of what the street widths were like is evoked abstractly by 'breaking up' the vast widths of pavement that once were there. The historic paving materials will be used as one goes from intersection to intersection. It is important to note that this will serve as an alternate route for those passing though on their ride along the Louisville Loop, both in times when the Ohio River has flooded the path that winds through the cottonwoods, or if they simply prefer to take in the experience of Water Street.

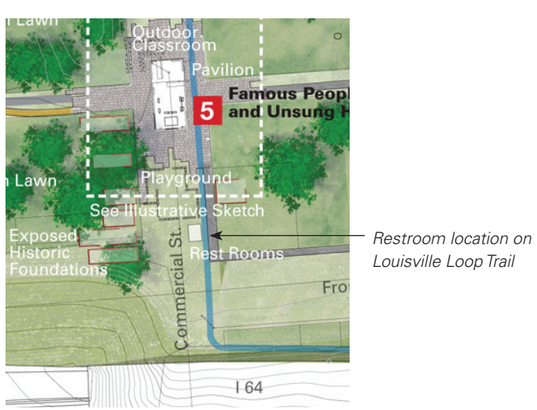
Water Street is an interpretive spine that draws the visitor from one intersection experience to the next, thus taking them further into the park and providing the opportunity for distribution of the many stories this place has to tell. There are also interpretive signs between the intersections. The terminus of Water Street at its western most edge is the location for the interpretation of The Freedom Crossing. This is an ideal place for a sculptural element that is visible from a great distance. Once visitors have arrived at this point, they may choose the route along the Louisville Loop, take the curvilinear Audubon trail that winds through the more natural portion of the park, or simply turn back and walk along Water Street once more.

# Amenities

### Restroom Facility

Water and sewer lines do not currently extend to Portland Wharf Park - however the Rhodeside and Harwell Master Plan notes access to sewer and water lines in the near vicinity. To enhance the interpretive experience, the preference is to install utilities for fully operational restrooms. If economic constraints prevent this, an acceptable alternative for sanitary facilities would be to locate seasonal, portable toilets in the park. The preferred location for the facilities is in the southeast corner of the intersection of Commercial and Front Streets. This location is an appropriate distance from the pavilion, playground, and parking to be accessible but not disruptive. A concrete pad, paved sidewalk access routes, and screening wood walls will be permanently installed to house the portable toilets.




### Vegetation

Most of the deciduous vegetation in the park is invasive and should over time be removed and replaced with more appropriate species native to this environment. This could be accomplished by establishing a volunteer program to assist in invasive species removal as well as having volunteers do some of the native species plantings. Combining volunteerism with capitol improvement projects for more intensive efforts to restore the park can have a significant impact over a relatively short period of time.

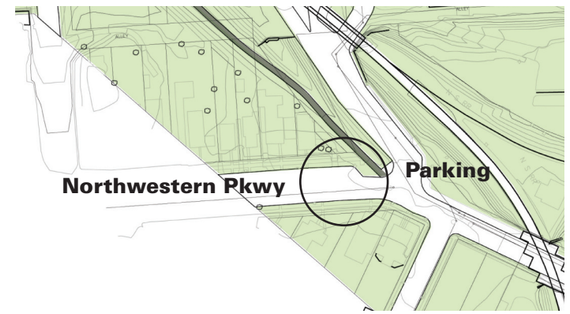
The highest priority for invasive species removal and restoration is the two block area between Commercial and Grove Streets, and then the removal program would migrate westward into the park on a phased basis. This program will need to be ongoing as the invasive plants will continue to return over time.

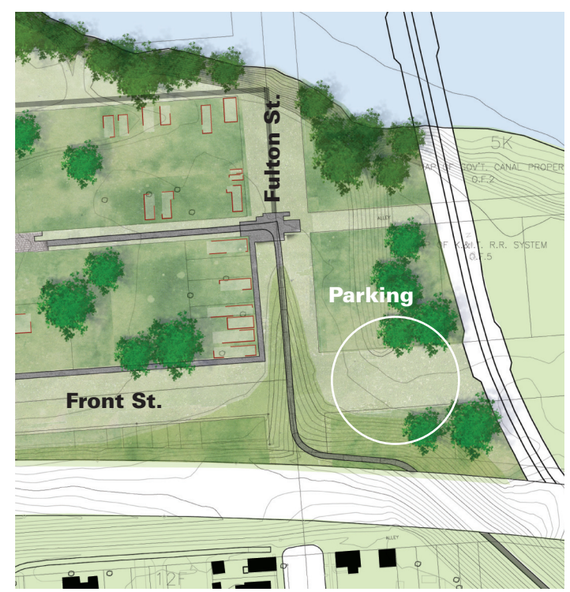
The vegetation within the blocks plays an important role in defining the street edges and should be reinforced through new plantings of deciduous trees, especially at intersections. This could occur in tandem with the invasive species removal in a similar phased approach. Careful consideration of tree placement is necessary to avoid compromising areas with archaeological significance. Volunteer groups can play a role in the planting of native species in addition to the invasive plant removal.

In areas of the park where there are open fields, the street grid pattern will need to be reinforced in different ways. Mowing the street grid on a more consistent basis will help to define the grid. The introduction of a combination of built and vegetative elements at the intersections can further reinforce the street grid pattern.

### Parking and Accessibility

Ideally, parking should be located just to the east of the primary entrance on Northwestern Parkway within the existing right of way. Another option to explore would be the area within the park proper to the east of the east of Fulton Street within the Front Street right-of way, but wayfinding would need to be introduced in order to direct visitors to this location.




### Maintenance and Utilities

Maintenance will have a significant impact on the outcome of this park's development. Materials should be selected based on their durability and ease of maintenance. Additionally, as design development and construction documents are developed, it will be necessary to have a clear understanding of the level of care and maintenance this park will receive, in order to spend funds wisely on the built environment of this park.

Lawn mowing is imperative even now. The basic interpretive framework of Portland Wharf Park is the ghostly street grid. It is important that this grid is well kept and precise.

Utility lines do not currently serve Portland Wharf Park. The Master Plan developed by Rhodeside and Harwell underwent utility investigation, and confirmed the outlying locations of stormwater management structures, electrical service, and water and sewer lines. Public safety and interpretation would be enhanced greatly by the addition of utilities, as full service restrooms, drinking fountains, and lighting could be incorporated. Further exploration should be undertaken before proceeding with development of structures that could be greatly enhanced by advanced utilities.

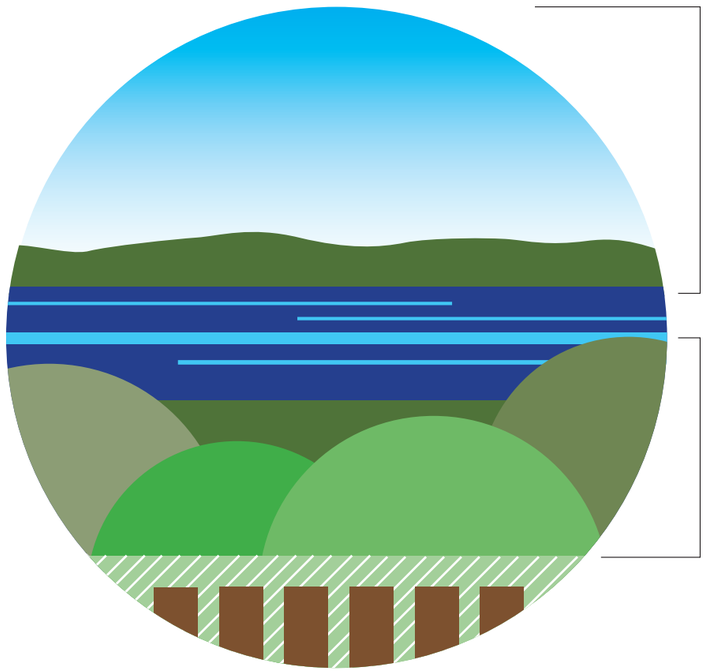
### Park Volunteer Programs for Maintenance

There are several examples of successful park volunteer programs within our community. Metro Parks has The Mayor's Adopt-a-Park Program and Olmsted Parks has a Park Champions volunteer program. There are opportunities for groups or individuals to participate and information for each of these programs can be found online. These volunteer groups do more than just plant maintenance. They also can be tasked with graffiti removal, painting of structures, general cleanup, and trail maintenance. The internet is a powerful tool in educating the public about volunteer opportunities. Cleanup events can be organized around other community or park based events to help boost their exposure.

Volunteer benefits are numerous; the community becomes physically engaged with the park, they claim a sense of ownership in the park, they become educated in proper maintenance, they learn various plant species, and it is amazing how much a volunteer group can accomplish in a relatively short period of time. In addition to these benefits, volunteers can learn about the park's rich history and archaeological significance while working. It is a great way for individuals and community groups to get involved and make a significant impact on Portland Wharf Park.

# Park Identity

It is proposed that a brand for the park be developed and implemented. The icon enclosed by the park name is an interpretation of some of the parks features, while the use of the font "Copperplate Gothic" for the park name reflects the historic and archeological nature of the environment. This graphic icon would be used on various communications applications to identify the park and to reinforce the parks unique environment.



*Graphic representation of scenic opportunities available from shores of the park*

*Graphic representation of the Ohio River, the lifeline of the park*

*Greenery representing the natural environment available in the park*

*Graphic representing the archeological opportunities and historic context of the park.*

*Icon surrounded by the name of the park.*

*Font to be used is Copperplate Gothic all caps. Copperplate Gothic chosen for its historic look and legibility in the environment.*

Sign Type A –
Park Identification

Sign Type C –
Entry Gateway

Sign Type B –
Secondary Park
Identification

Sign Type D –
Post and Panel
Site Map

Sign Type E –
Post and Panel
Interpretive

Sign Type I –
Interpretive Bronze
Plaques

Sign Type J –
Restroom
Identifications




Sign Type M –
Incised Stone
Markers

Sign Type F –
Freestanding Pavilion
Graphic Panels

Sign Type G –
Freestanding Pavilion
Ghost Panel

Sign Type H –
Pedestal Interpretive

Sign Type J –
Regulatory Signs

Sign Type K –
Street Markers

# Sign Type A – Park Identification

An entry structure is proposed to create an entry gateway for visitors to pass through and to announce the park boundary. It incorporates steel beams that mimic the steal beams from the K&I bridge seen in the background. The steel beams are repeated in the supports for the interpretive signs and in the park pavilion, giving the park a unifying material.

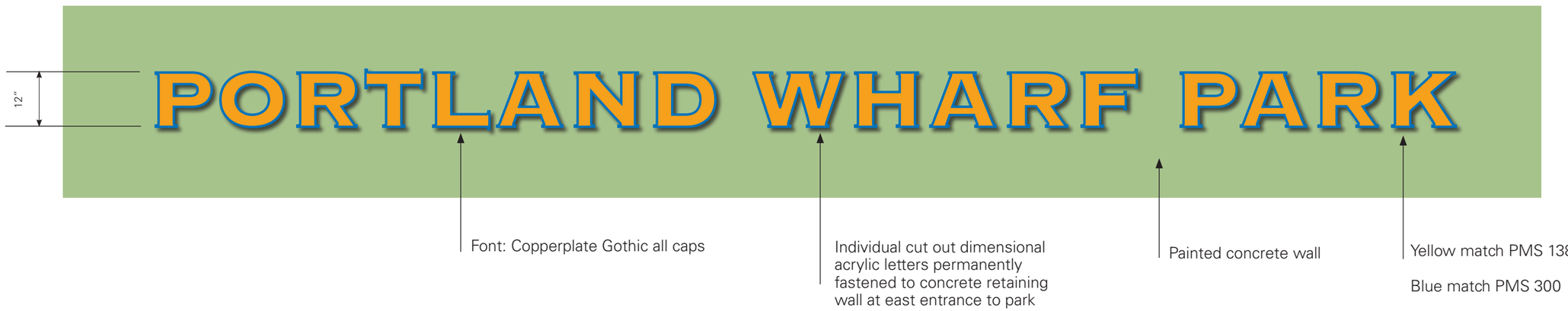
The park brand identity is introduced for the first time overhead. It is repeated on the back side for viewing by visitors leaving the east entrance.

# Sign Type B – Secondary Park Identification

Sign Type B is to be used at secondary entrances where a more subdued identity statement is necessary. This sign type would occur at the west entrance and at the proposed parking lot near the K&I bridge. The park identity with the historic Ohio river image in the background is used again here for continuity.

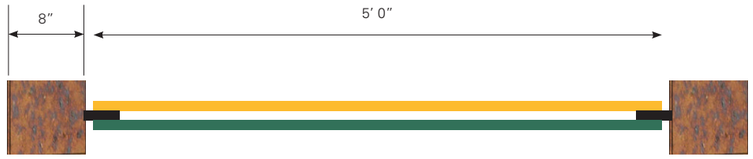
## Sign Type C – Wall Mounted Park Identification

Sign Type C is the main identifier for vehicular traffic flowing along Portland Avenue and Northwestern Parkway. Letters are to be mounted on existing wall with the Copperplate Gothic font from the park identity

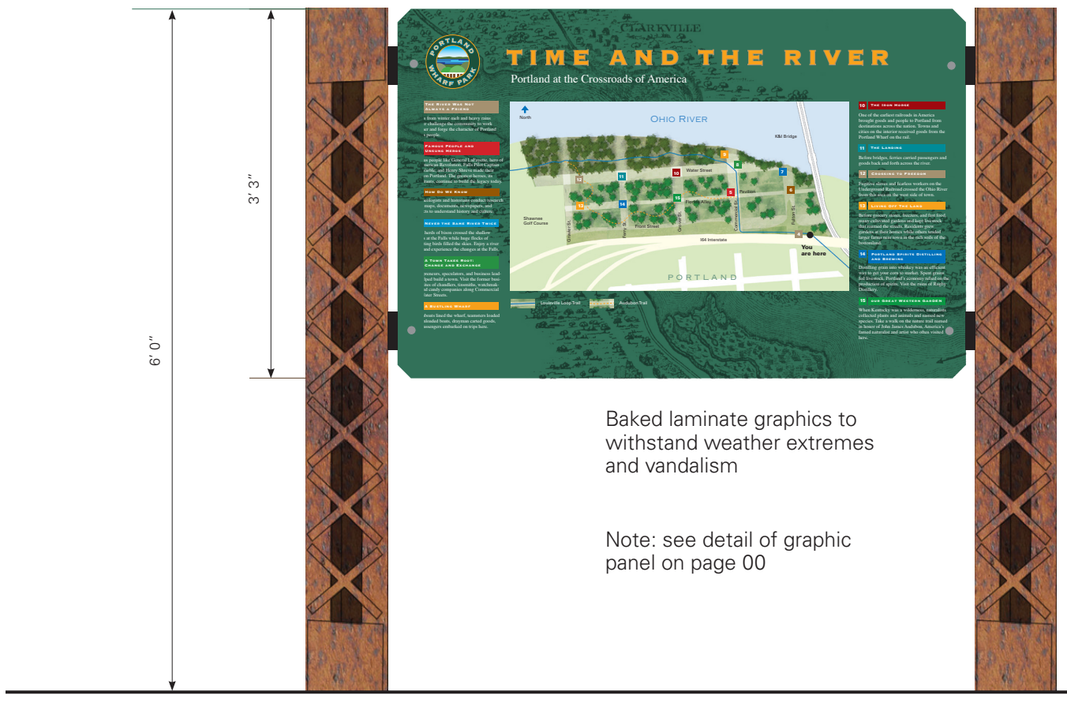


# Sign Type D – Post and Panel Site Map

Sign Types D and E are the primary signs to be used in the park to communicate interpretive information and will appear at 14 of the 15 interpretive nodes throughout the park. Node 5, which is the node with the pavilion, will not include either one of these sign types. Interpretive information at Node 5 will be incorporated into sign type F within the pavilion.




Steel beams mimicking the steel structure of the K&I bridge




Baked laminate graphics to withstand weather extremes and vandalism

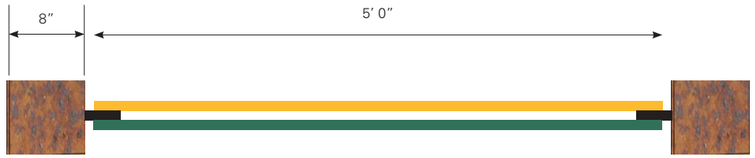
Note: see detail of graphic panel on page 00

*Front*

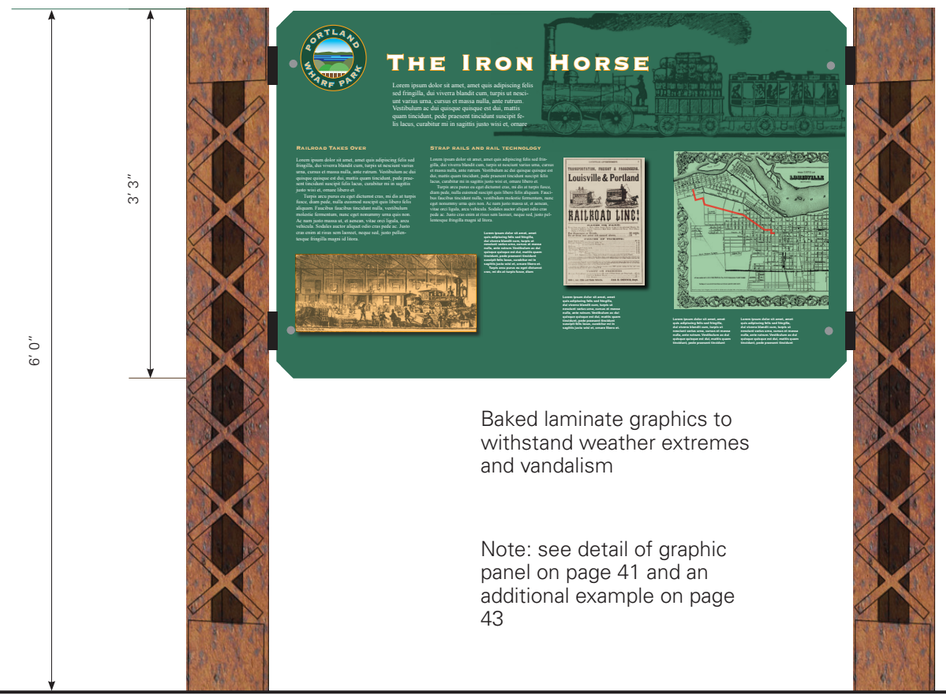
Depending on budget and/or sign orientation in the park back side may repeat map, repeat park identity or be blank.

*Back*

# Sign Type E – Post and Panel Interpretive



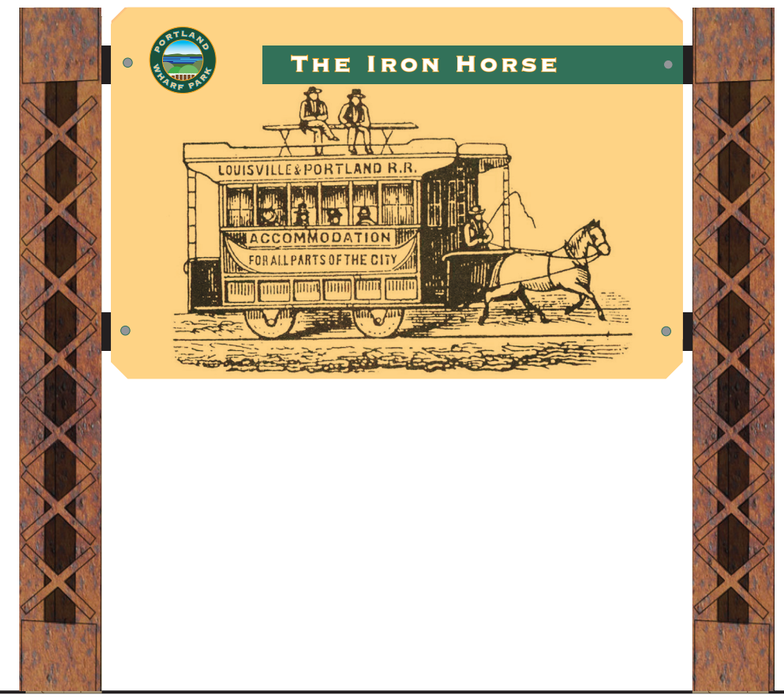

Steel beams mimicking the steel structure of the K&I bridge




Baked laminate graphics to withstand weather extremes and vandalism

Note: see detail of graphic panel on page 41 and an additional example on page 43

*Front*

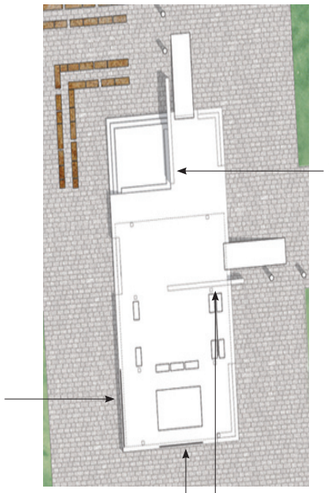


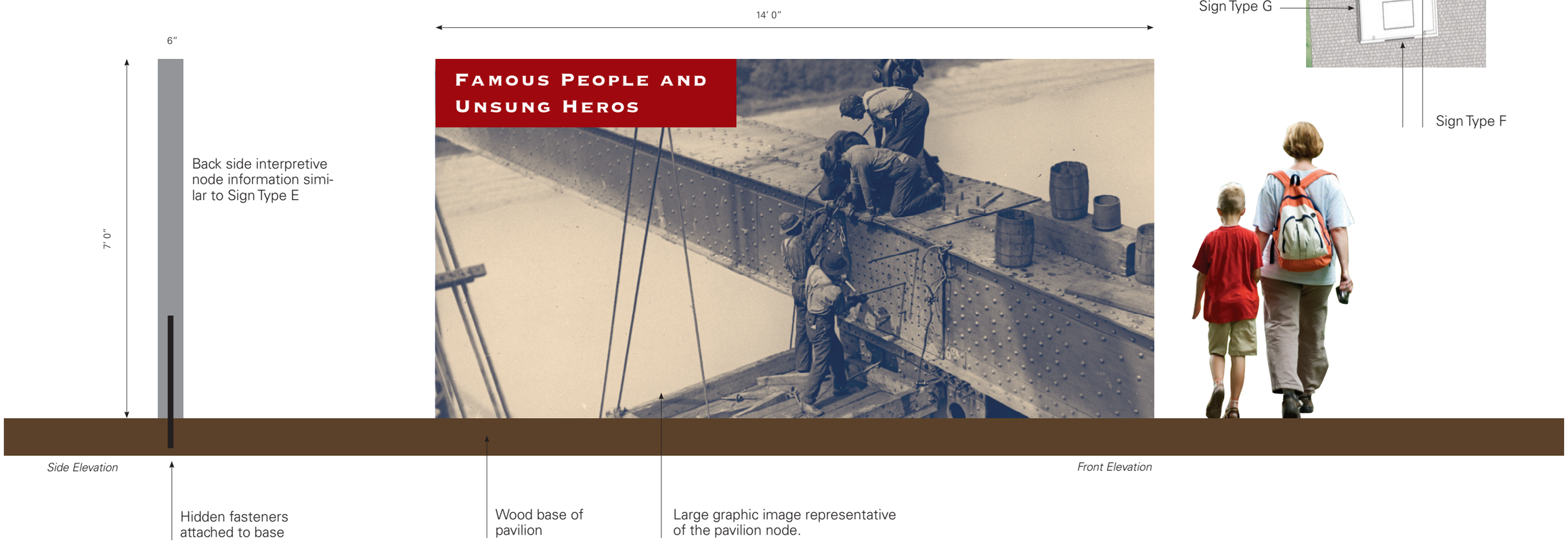

*Back*

This is an example of the structural approach for the interpretive signs at the 14 nodes. A simple post and panel system is proposed with steel support fixtures. The panels would need to be baked laminate process to withstand the extreme environmental conditions and potential vandalism.

# Sign Type F – Freestanding Pavilion Graphic Panels

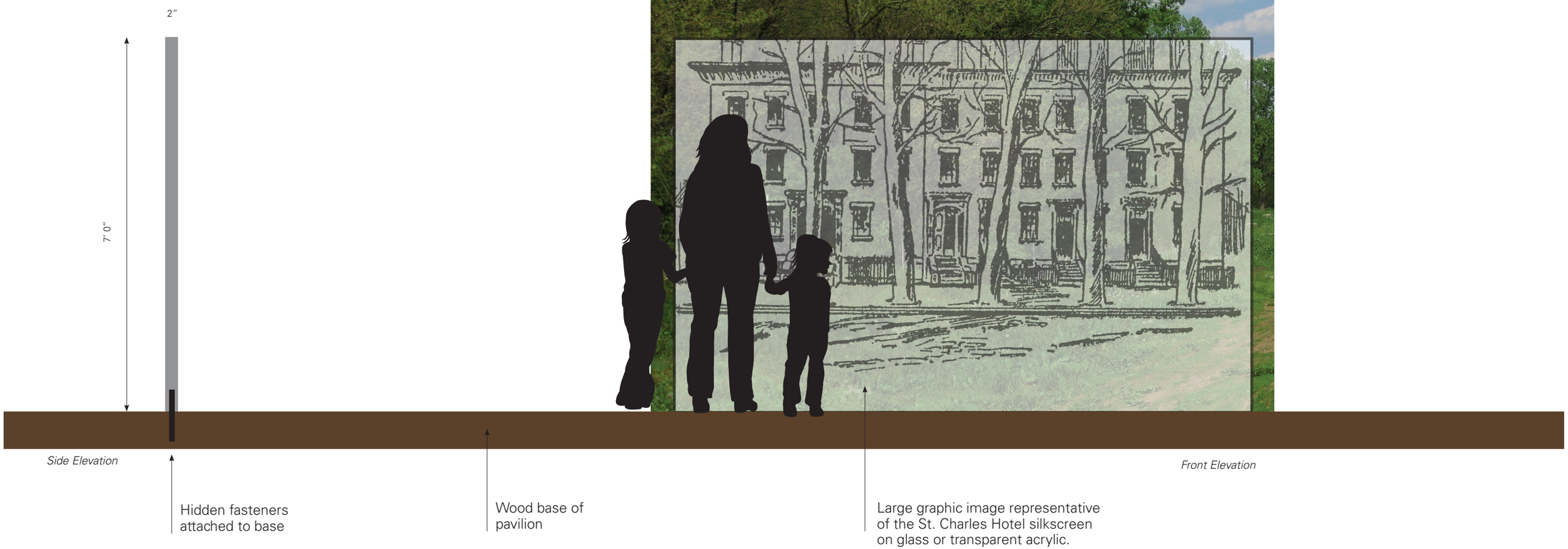
The pavilion is the focal point of the park, therefore more surfaces for graphic images and interpretive information have been incorporated into the design. Surfaces facing out into the park that can be seen from various viewpoints in the park are to incorporate large historical images that are representative of the pavilion node theme (Unsung Heros). Other images relative to the area around the pavilion can be used as well.



# Sign Type G – Freestanding Pavilion Ghost Panel

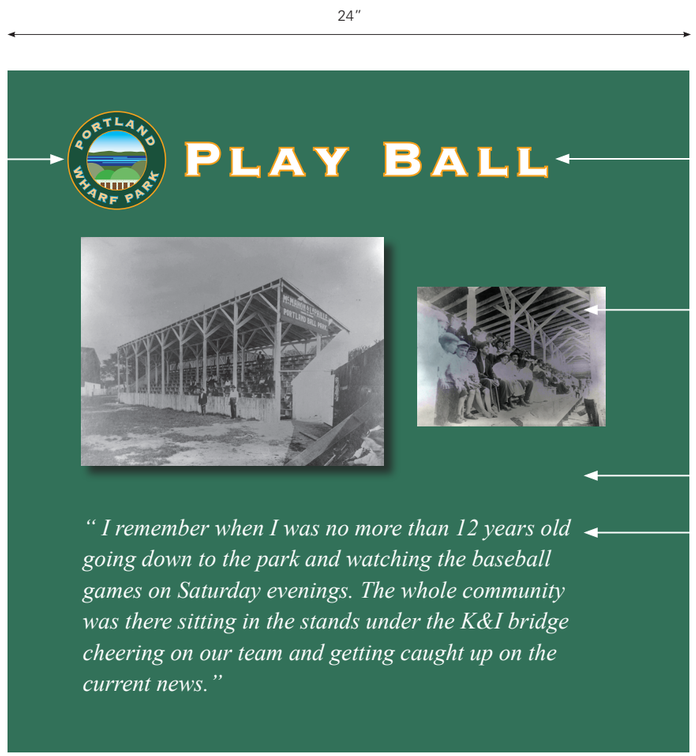
This sign type is meant to superimpose the image of the St. Charles Hotel from the 1880's over the existing landscape in order to communicate how the town of Portland and the hotel appeared before the flood of 1937. Images are silkscreened onto a transparent surface so the viewer can see the building and the park beyond.



# Sign Type H – Pedestal Interpretive

Sign Type F are narrative interpretive signs used to tell a more personal story of life in Portland in the 1800's. Quotes of residents and visitors are used with coinciding historic photos or drawings when available. Limestone bases are introduced here to accompany the existing rectangular stones now on site and proposed to be used as seating at the pavilion.

The PWP identity appears on all Sign Type F signs at the top left corner as shown in this example.



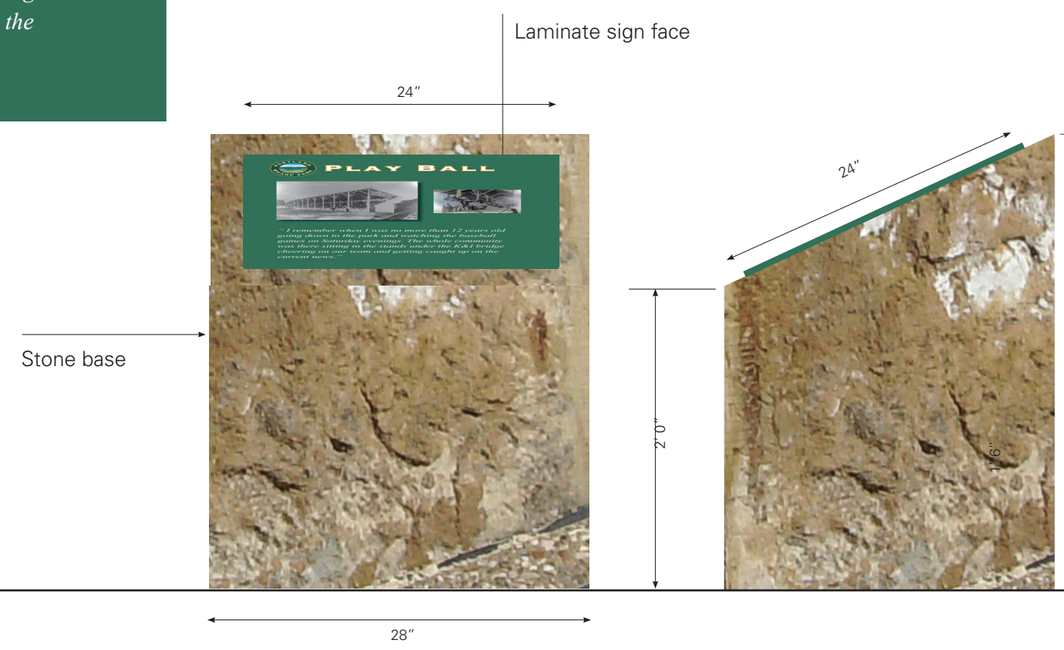

*Flattened Elevation*

Narrative headline: Copperplate Gothic in white with PMS 138 yellow outline. The heading appears to the right of the identity on all narrative signs as shown in this example.

Historic images available at Portland Museum

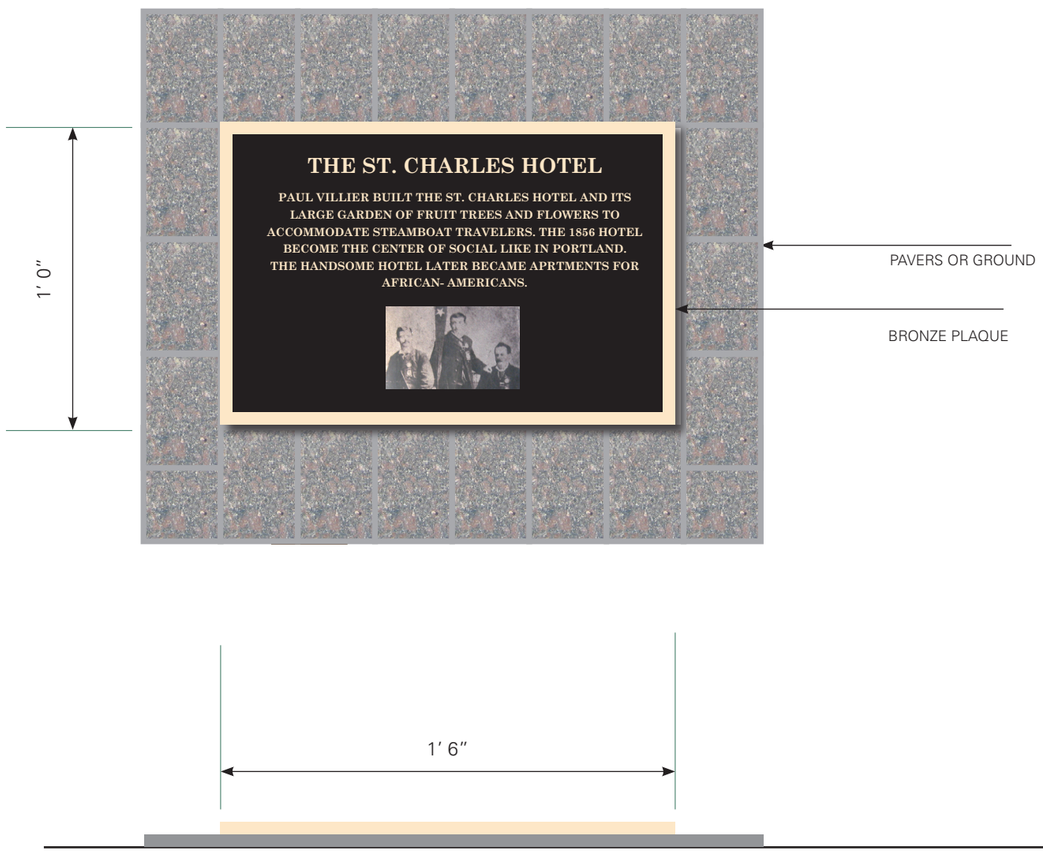
Background match PMS 5545

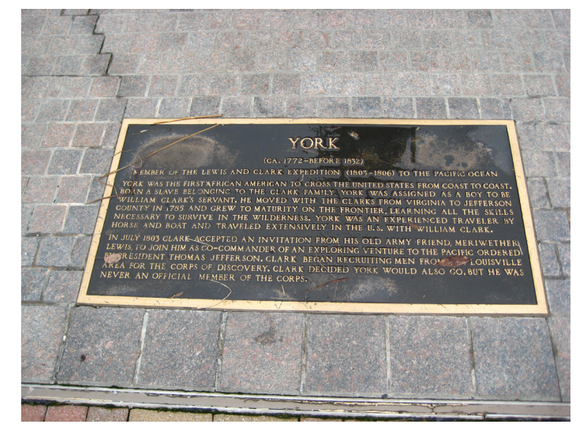
Quotation: Times Roman Regular Italic.



# Sign Type I – Interpretive Bronze Plaques

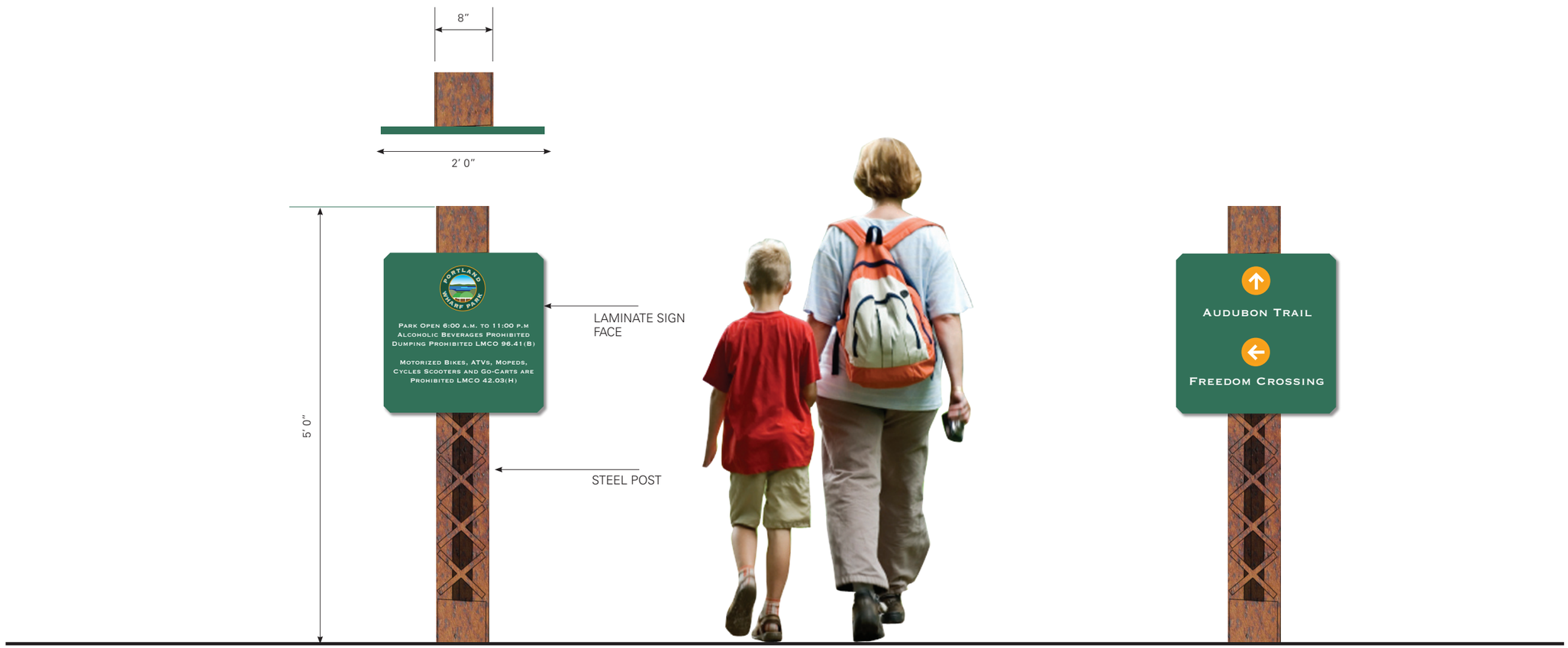
A final interpretive sign type may be used to mark historic locations throughout the park. These would be located on the ground and reproduced in traditional cast bronze. To the left is an example of a bronze plaque.



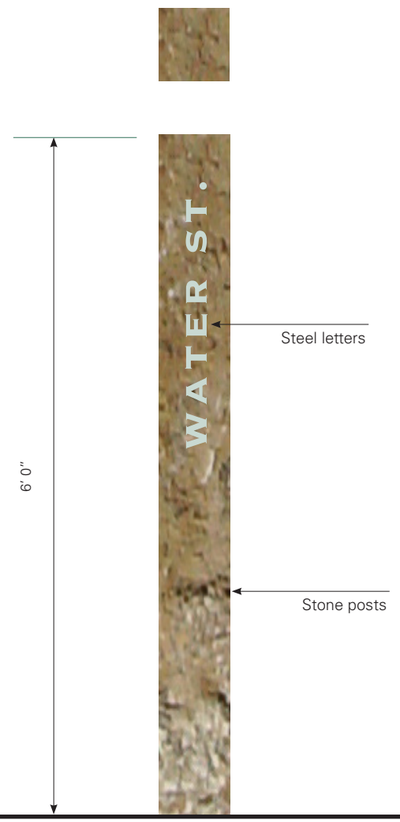
# Sign Type J – Regulatory Signs

These simple posts with baked laminate panels would be used to instruct visitors of the regulations of the park and to direct them to various points within the park.



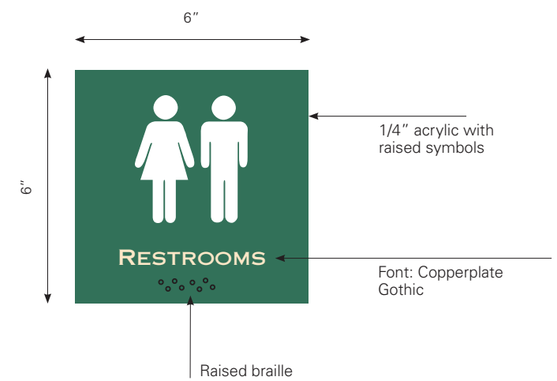
## Sign Type K – Street Markers

As the old streets of the town are now mostly hidden from view, these street signs would be used for visitors to locate streets at the intersections. The upright format would give definition to the intersection and would be seen from a distance.




## Sign Type L – Rest Room Identification

Rest Room signs have designed to correspond with other park signage. Background color should be PMS 5545 with text in the Copperplate Gothic. Signs can be used to identify permanent or temporary restrooms.



## Sign Type M – Incised Stone Markers

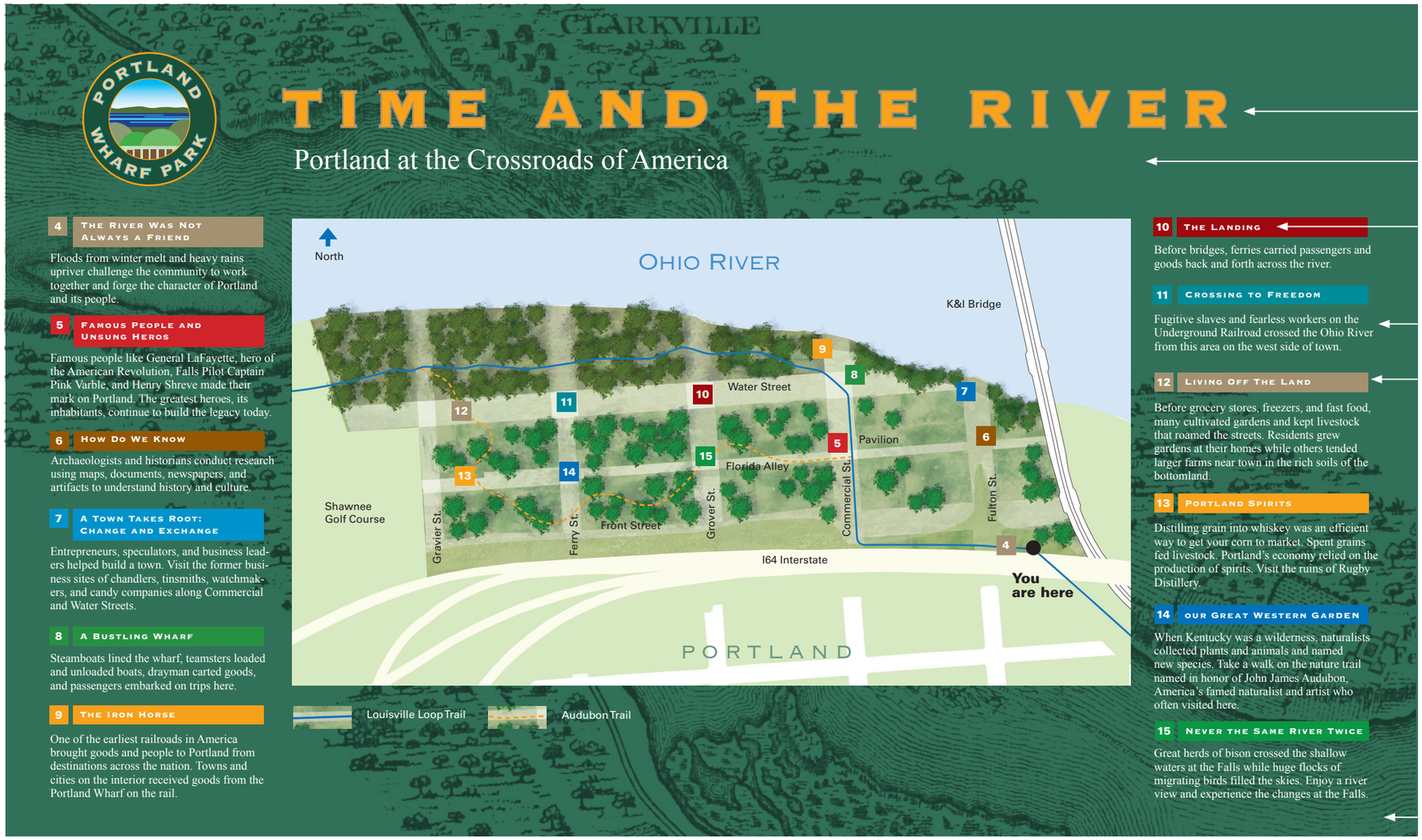
Sign types M are used to create a time line along the walkway from the current entrance along Northwestern Parkway to the top of the flood levee where visitors descend in to the park. Stones should match similar stones placed along the existing River Walk. The stone makers should be placed in the walkway.

10,000-8,000 B.C. PALEOINDIAN PERIOD

1811 PORTLAND FOUNDED

*Examples of time line facts*

# Sign Type D – Post and Panel Interpretive Front Detail




*Theme headline: Copperplate Gothic*

*Introductory text: Times Roman Regular*

*Theme heads: Copperplate Gothic in white*

*Text: Times Roman Regular*

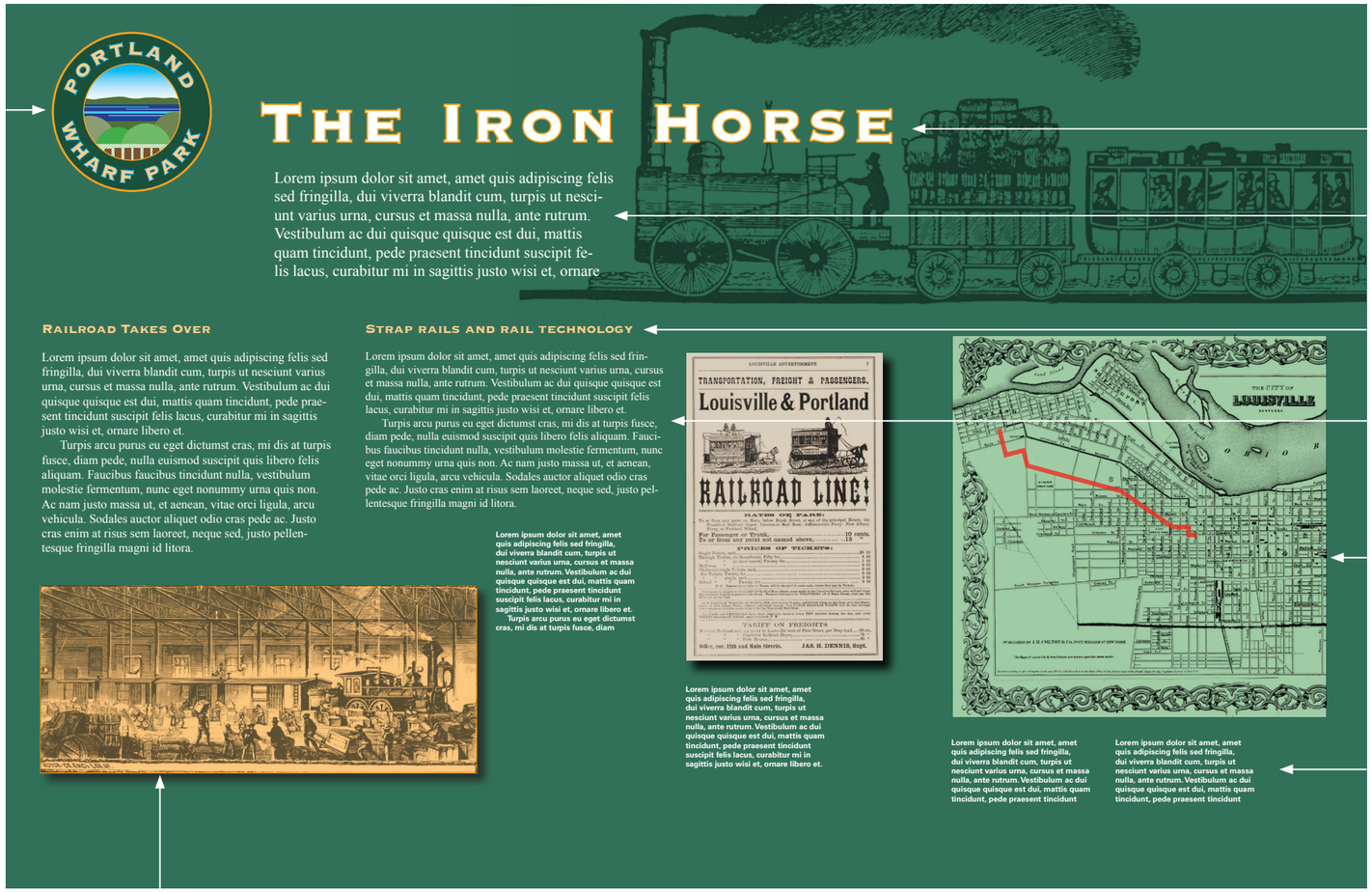
*Numbers and colors to correspond to ones on map.*

*Historic diagram of Ohio River for background image*

Proposed at various locations throughout the park, site maps orient the visitor and introduce the 15 node themes. This is an example of a map that would appear at the top of the levee overlooking the park below. All the nodes would be located on the map with a short introductory paragraph for each. The Portland Wharf Park icon appears at the top left with the theme in Copperplate Gothic at the top as shown. Green PMS 5545 is used as the background.

# Sign Type E – Post and Panel Interpretive Front Detail

*The PWP Icon appears on all interpretive signs at the top left corner as shown in this example. By repeating the icon the brand becomes recognizable and memorable for park visitors.*




*Theme headline: Copperplate Gothic in white with PMS 1235 yellow outline. The them heading appears to the right of the icon on all interpretive signs as shown in this example.*

*Introductory text: Times Roman Regular. This introductory theme text appears below the headline flush to the left.*

*Sub heads: Copperplate Gothic in 50% PMS 1235 yellow*

*Text: Times Roman Regular*

*Vary the background colors of renderings, maps and line drawings to add color.*

*Captions: Univers Bold 65*

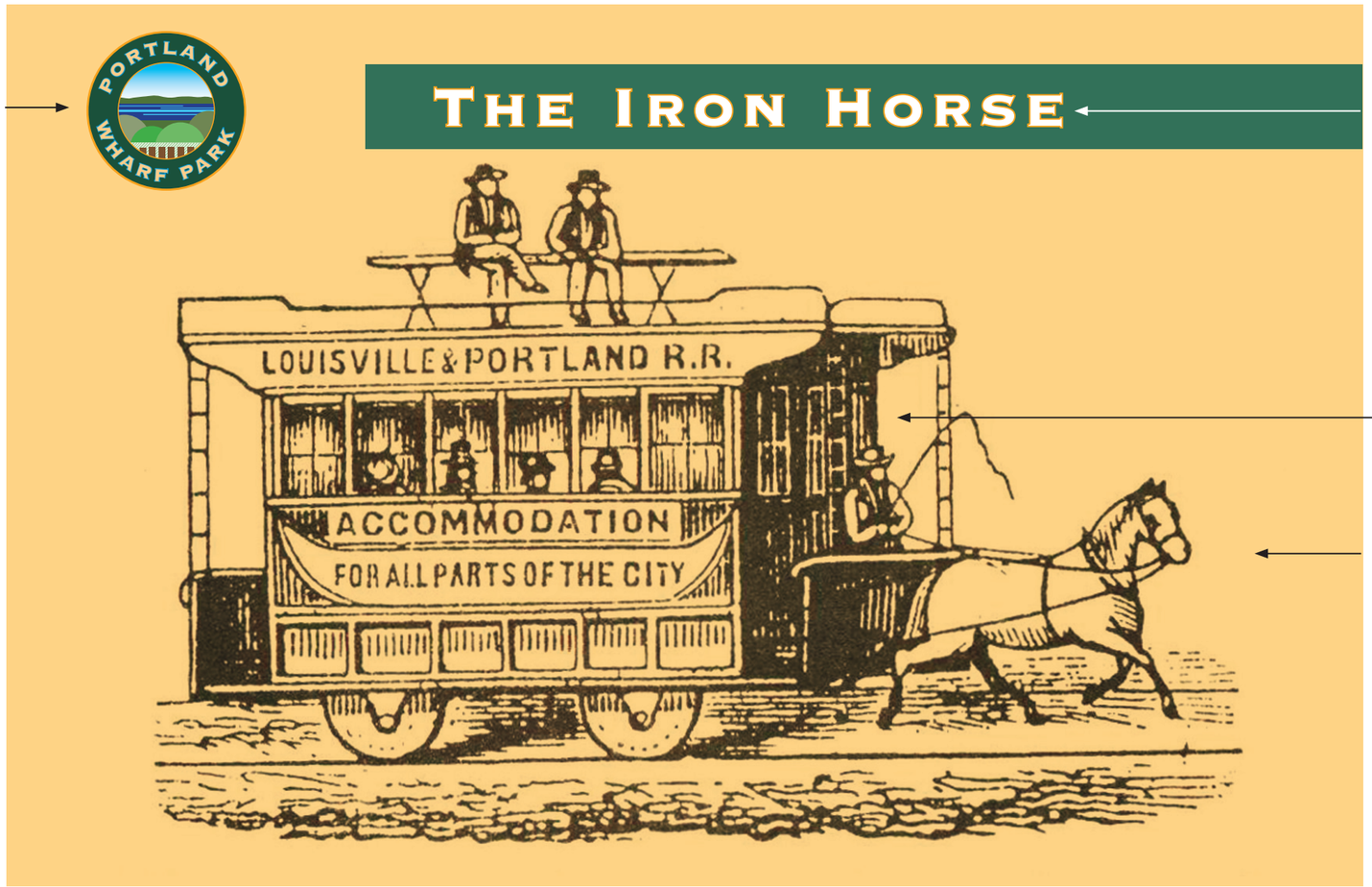
*Use drop shadows intermittently to add dimension to layout*

This is an example of the design approach for the front face of the interpretive panels at the 15 nodes. The graphic images should be a good mix of historic line drawings, renderings and vintage photographs when available. The Portland Wharf Park icon is to be on each panel at the top left with theme in Copperplate Gothic at the top as shown. All front panels would have the green PMS 5545 as the background.

While the icon, headline and introductory text are to appear in the same location on all interpretive signs, the layout of the other content elements can vary as to location, size and graphic technique to add interest to the PWP story. See appendix for two other examples of layout versions.

## Sign Type E – Post and Panel Interpretive Back Detail

*The PWP Icon appears on all interpretive signs at the top left corner as shown in this example.*



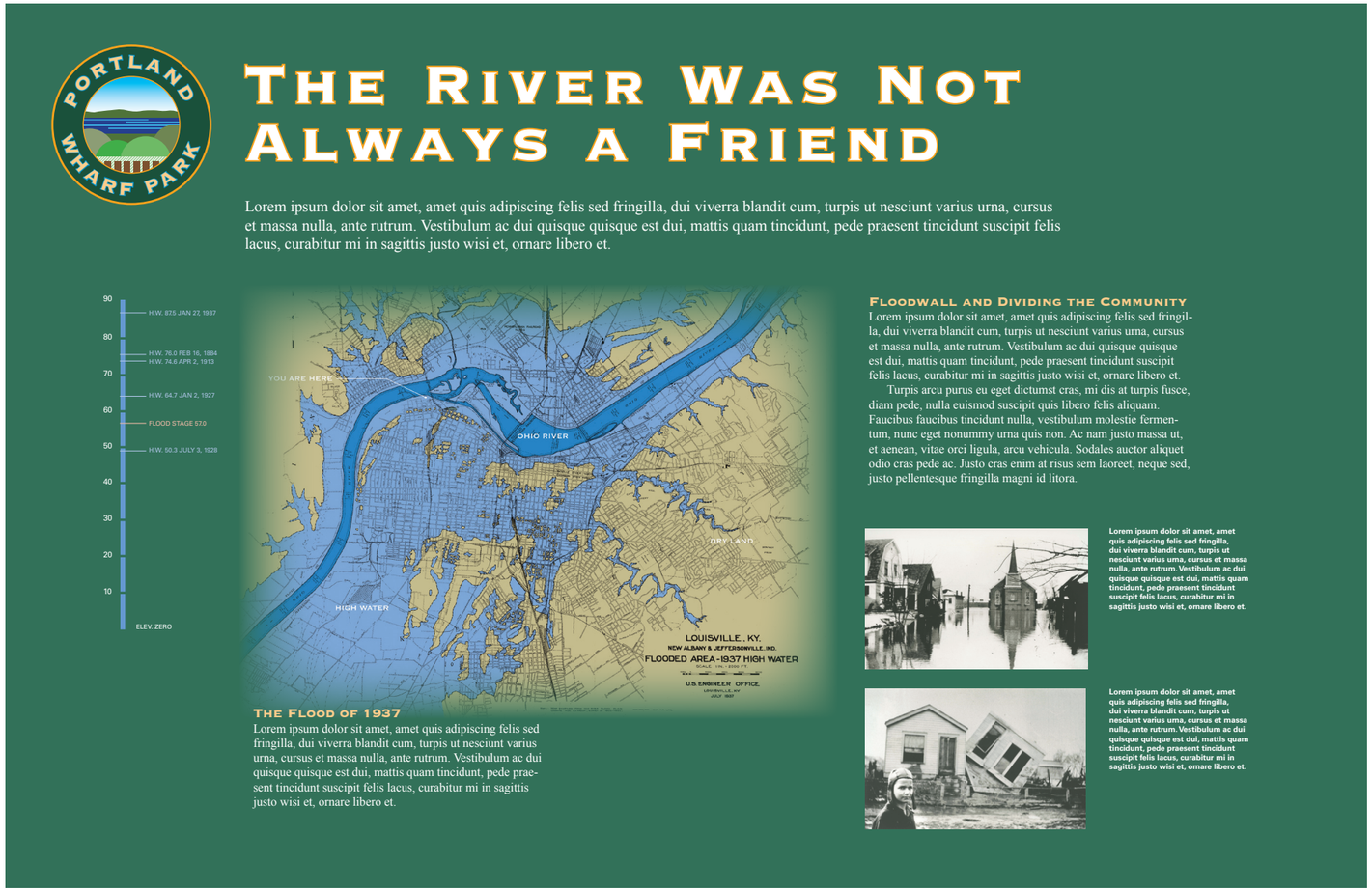

*Theme headline: Copperplate Gothic in white with PMS 1235 yellow outline A green band is used behind the theme title for legibility and visual effect.*

*Large graphic image representative of the theme*

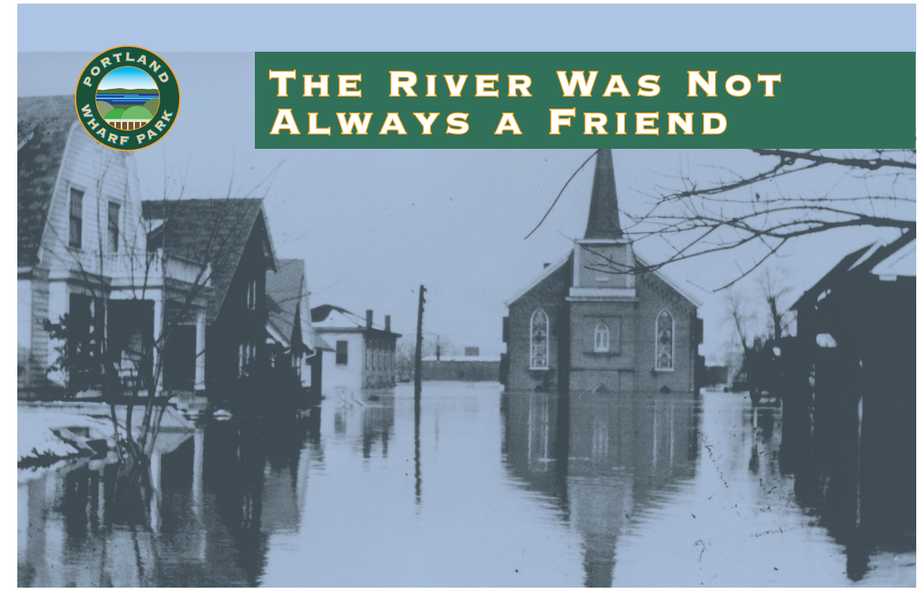
*Vary the background color to add interest to visitors' experience*

This is a example of the design approach for the back face of the interpretive panels at the 15 nodes. One large graphic image is used that would be representative of the theme on the front side. The image used should be simple and easily recognizable from a distance. The color background needs to be light enough for the image to be read. The theme from the front side is repeated as well as the park icon.

# Sign Type E – Additional Example at Node 4

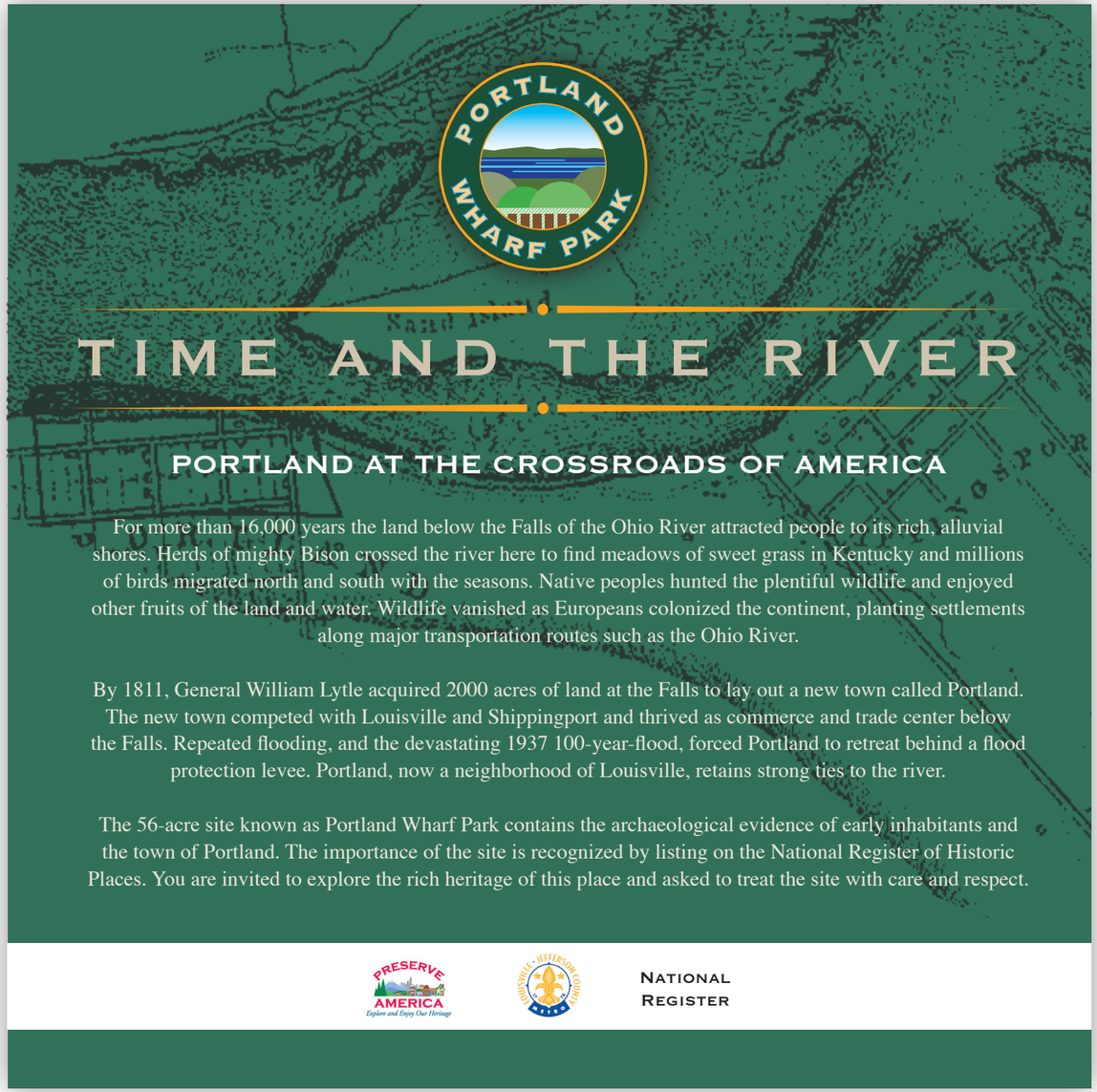



*Front Panel*




*Back Panel*

## Sign Type J – Example



# Phasing Recommendations

## Short Range Plan Recommendations

**Archaeological Research Budget**
It will be beneficial to establish an archaeological research budget early in the park's development. Ongoing archaeological study will lead to a better understanding of the site which in turn will enhance future interpretation. This program will provide educational opportunities for school children, the public, and university students, thus building support and ownership in the park.

**Main Entrances**
Successful interpretation of the park depends greatly on attracting more visitors to the site. An important first step is to convey to the public that a culturally and physically rich area occurs within the 55-acre park boundary. Therefore, our first recommendation is to develop the new main entry through the flood protection levee, as previously recommended by Rhodeside and Harwell. Primary park identification signage will be installed at the new main entry as well as at the east entrance from Northwestern Parkway. Secondary park identification signage will be installed at the west entrance from the Shawnee Golf Course as well as at the proposed parking area near the K & I Bridge.

**Pavilion Interpretive Node and Pavilion Structure**
The pavilion interpretive node is located at the intersection of Commercial Street and Florida Alley. Developing the pavilion and related site enhancements is critical to the success of the park, and with the entrance should be the top priority. The covered structure provides shade and a destination point for people of all ages. This intersection is alive with archaeology and history, and has the opportunity to become an educational classroom for students as well as a gathering spot for community and academic groups. Four interpretive panels are included inside the pavilion. An outdoor classroom, reconstructed historic foundation walls, an interpretive playground, and restrooms in the near vicinity add to the experience. The restroom facilities will be built as soon as possible to increase Portland Wharf Park's usability.

## Medium Range Plan Recommendations

**Limited infrastructure development along Water Street**
The current Riverwalk floods at regular intervals, thus Water Street will become the primary route for visitors moving along the east-west access of the park. The first step in the development of this street will be infrastructure work required to provide a walkable path. A major component is addressing grading and stormwater collection in the area of an existing culvert where water is currently collecting.

**High-priority interpretive nodes**
Node 2, "Rudd Avenue", includes a resting place as well as an area map which demarcates the two Portland districts listed on the National Register. Node 12, "Crossing to Freedom", provides an extraordinary opportunity for interpretation. Historically, the area around Node 12 was low-lying, wet, and swampy and this node will retain that experience. An estimate for a significant sculptural piece is included for Node 12. These two particular nodes are given priority due to their ability to attract regional and national tourism to the site.

**Water Street – East interpretive nodes followed by Water Street – West interpretive nodes**
Water Street is the primary route of travel, and nodes there will be given priority. Similar to the two nodes above, they include brick or stone pavers to define the interpretive area, street markers on four corners, interpretive signage, and stone seating. Artifacts as available will be included. Reconstructed foundations of 19th-century commercial buildings occur at the Water Street nodes to show scale and materials.

## Long Range Plan Recommendations

**Woodland clearing**

**Additional interpretive node development**
Interpretive nodes along Florida Alley are included in the final phases of interpretive development. Florida Alley nodes convey an experience of what bucolic life in Portland would have been like. The asphalt path will continue, but paver units will not be used to define the interpretive area. Mown grass with stone, brick, or railway tie edge delineation defines the space. Street markers on four corners, interpretive signage, and stone seating are included. Reconstructed foundations of 19th-century residences and cisterns will be seen. The remaining interpretive nodes 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9 will each be developed according to the specific needs of the location.

**Riverbank Stabilization**
As noted in the Rhodeside and Harwell masterplan, allow for shoreline stabilization using both plants and gabions.