

CHARACTER INVENTORY & DESIGN GUIDELINES

Highway 395 Scenic Byway Corridor Communities
Mono County, CA



Design Idea Book

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Purpose and Intent

The purpose of this document is to provide design recommendations for public and private realm improvements in communities along U.S. Route 395 in the Eastern Sierra. Public realm improvements include recommendations for signage and wayfinding as well as the configuration of the highway, access for pedestrians and bicyclists, and streetscape as it passes through individual communities. Private realm improvements include ways in which private property owners may improve their frontage. Opportunities for public and private improvements should be considered as important components of a strategy to improve and unify the corridor that can support Highway 395's potential designation as a National Scenic Byway.

National Scenic Byways are designated by the United States Department of Transportation with the aim to "recognize, preserve, and enhance" significant roads in the U.S. Roads are designated because of their unique scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, archeological and/or natural intrinsic qualities. A road must apply to be designated, proving the intrinsic quality(ies) that should be celebrated. Designation of Highway 395 as a National Scenic Byway has the potential to attract tourists and visitors to the area; it may also make federal funds available to help make improvements in support of the designation.

A National Scenic Byway application would require a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) describing the County's strategy to improve and maintain the corridor as a scenic byway. This Design Ideas Book is seen as an important step in identifying content and approach for a future CMP.

This document seeks to first, document the unique, and varied, community character along Highway 395, while offering design ideas on how to build upon that character in a thoughtful manner to make every contribution a positive step toward National designation, and Mono County's distinct sense of place.

Introduction



Experiencing the corridor first-hand on a walk audit in Walker



Meeting with the business community in June Lake



Presenting preliminary design ideas at the end of the workshop in Walker



Community members on a walk audit in June Lake

Document Organization

This document presents character inventory and design guidelines for the communities along Highway 395. The design ideas range from creating context zones in the various communities, to detailing improvement ideas in both the public and private realm. The communities are explored north to south, as follows:

- Coleville
- Walker
- Bridgeport
- Lee Vining
- June Lake
- Mammoth Lakes, and
- Crowley Lake and Long Valley

An appendix provides information on gateway signage for the communities along the corridor. The discussion includes preliminary thoughts on branding Highway 395, precedent studies from other National Scenic Byways, and conceptual ideas for various approaches.

Guiding Principles

Three guiding principles informed the ideas presented in this document:

1. **Respect changing contexts along the corridor.** This section of Highway 395 traverses over 100 miles of changing terrain and multiple communities. There are many locations where the relationship between the highway and its context can be improved, in order to increase visitor accessibility, and fully capitalize on its unique places and intrinsic qualities. Special attention should be given to the design of the highway where it approaches and passes through communities.
2. **Promote multi-modal access.** Although the highway is primarily experienced by vehicle drivers, access for public transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians can be improved. Highway 395 is an important route for bicycle touring, and could increase tourism if amenities were added to increase safety and ease of use. Within communities, pedestrian access is important for both locals and visitors to reach daily destinations and services. Improving comfort and designing to increase pedestrian and bicycle activity can increase business activity.
3. **Build upon the existing character within each community.** The seven communities along this section of Highway 395 have distinct qualities that together make up a diverse and varied experience for the visitor. These distinct qualities can be emphasized and built upon, forming a basis for future improvements, including private initiatives (e.g. facade renovations, signage), and public initiatives (e.g. streetscape improvements, gateway and wayfinding signage, landscaping).

Summary of Public Process

During the week of July 28th through August 1st, 2014, the design team conducted a series of design workshops, spending half of the week in the north part of the County in Coleville and Walker, and half of the week in the south in June Lake and Crowley Lake.

In both Walker and June Lake, the design team met with business owners, interested community members, and agency representatives to discuss opportunities and challenges unique to each community. The team also completed a walking audit to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to point out firsthand the more nuanced assets and constraints of their community.

Both workshops ended with presentations to the community members of the team's preliminary design ideas, allowing for immediate feedback and guidance on various public and private improvements.

The week also included touring and documenting the character of each community along Highway 395, hoping to capture the great places and elements that will contribute to a National Scenic Byway.

Project Overview

Communities along Hwy 395

Coleville	pg. I-2	A
Walker	pg. I-3	B
Bridgeport	pg. I-13	C
Lee Vining	pg. I-15	D
June Lake	pg. I-17	E
Mammoth Lakes	pg. I-24	F
Crowley Lake and Long Valley	pg. I-26	G



A Coleville



E June Lake



B Walker



F Mammoth Lakes



C Bridgeport



G Crowley Lake and Long Valley



D Lee Vining



Character Inventory and Community Design Concepts

Coleville: Character Inventory

Building Character



Building with recessed stoop and wood siding



Gable-ended building with wood siding and stone chimney



Gable-ended historic town dance hall

Frontage Character



Yard with retaining pond



Historic drive-through with retaining wall



Undefined, large setback

Signage Character



Yard sign incorporates area history.



Sidewalk sign; yard sign



Old arched entry to Hardy Park

Public Realm and Open Space



Cottonwoods are iconic along Highway 395 in Coleville.



One of two wooden bridges over East Walker River



East Walker River

Walker: Character Inventory

Building Character



Strong geometric shapes and colors

Frontage Character



Outdoor seating beneath shade and porch

Signage Character



Gateway sign to Antelope Valley

Public Realm and Open Space



Fishing at Mountain Gate



Western wood storefront with porch



Landscaping holds the street edge.



Metal details on wood sign; historic neon sign



Community park



Mid-century roof frame with wood siding



Engaged porch with wood-decking seating area



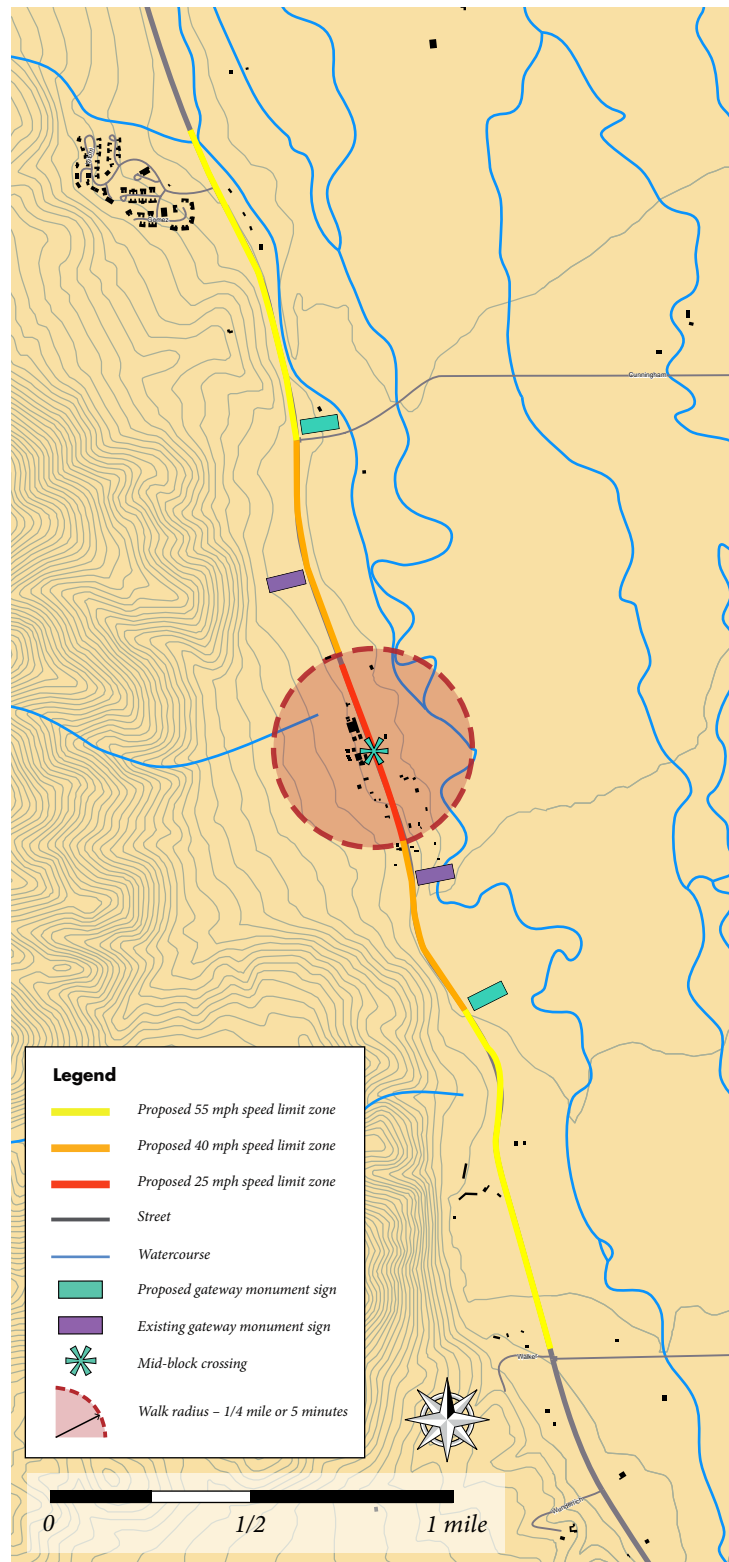
Painted sign with birdhouses



Wide right-of-way encourages high speeds.

Coleville

Context Zone Map



Coleville benefits from Highway 395 remaining just two-lanes wide through town and the location of the school district at the north edge of town, which triggers a 25 mph speed zone.

The 25 mph speed limit should extend a quarter-mile in either direction from the schools, extending a pedestrian-friendly environment through the core of the community. Gateway signage should be placed about a half-mile farther out, creating a physical cue to drivers that they are entering town, coordinated with a speed limit of 40 mph.

Coleville Illustrative Plan



Public Realm Improvements

A Colorized Shoulders/Bike Lanes

Along with new gateway signage, colorized bike lanes will signal to drivers that they are in a different context and should slow down and can help connect the community to the elementary and high school.

B High School Parking Lot

Formalize the parking lot for high school students; provide landscaping at the sidewalk to enliven the public realm.

C Wide Sidewalk with Bus Lane

The current bus lane functions well; add a wide sidewalk to provide ample space for bus loading and unloading.

D Mid-block Crossing with Pedestrian Refuge

Repaint the mid-block crosswalk with white, perpendicular lines for high visibility; in the long-term, add an island to serve as a pedestrian refuge and create a safe crossing to a revitalized Hardy Park.

E Revitalization of Hardy Park

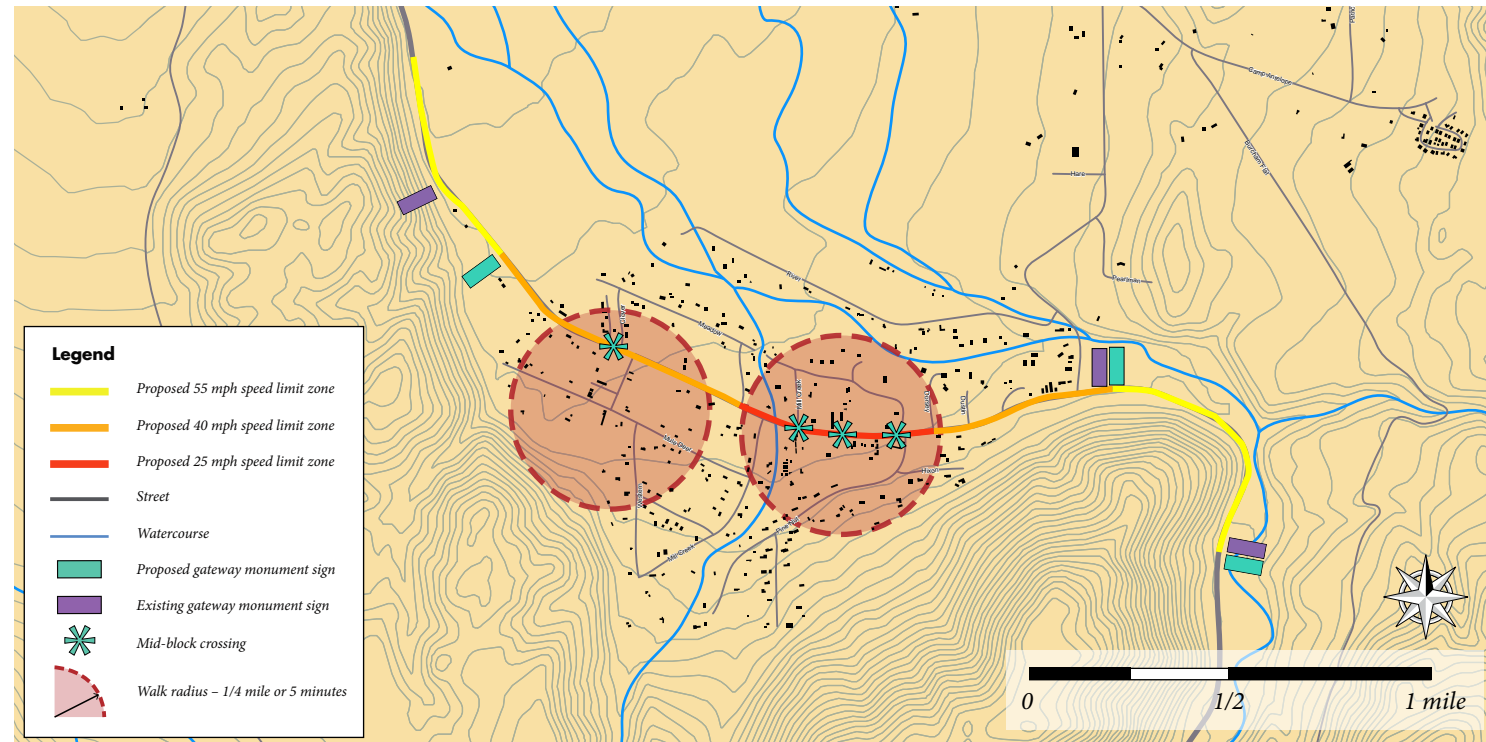
Recreate and/or beautify Hardy Park, including rebuilding the footbridge over the stormwater ditch; this could serve as both an amenity for community members and an image of identity for the community.

F Local Path Connections

Build a path of varying material to join private properties through Coleville and create a continuous path for pedestrians.

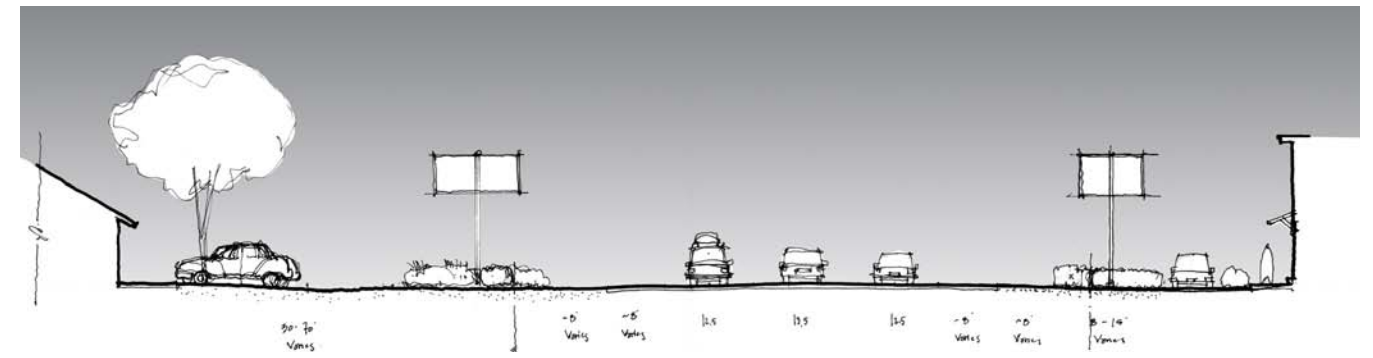
Walker

Context Zone Map

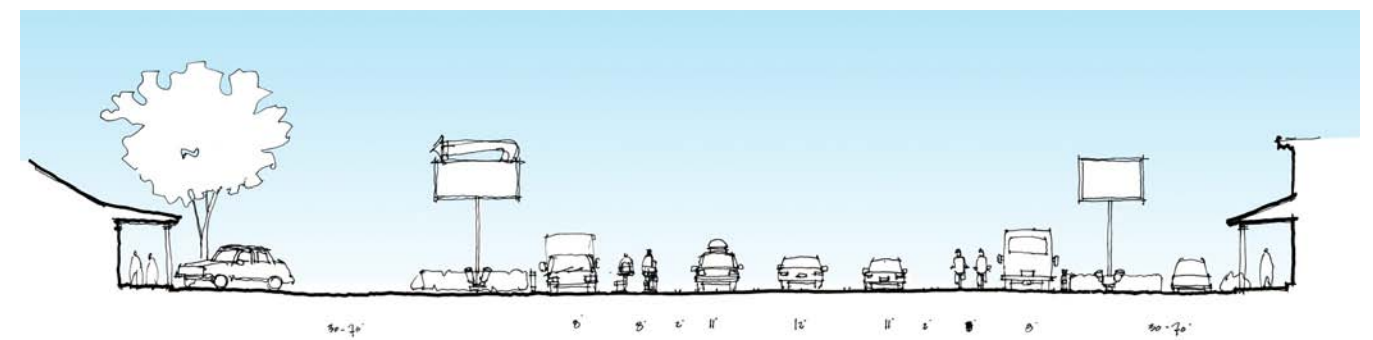


As drivers approach Walker, the speed should reduce gradually from 65 to 55. One half-mile on either side of Walker, a gateway sign could announce to drivers that they are arriving into Walker: for westbound drivers, the gateway sign could coincide with a trailhead to Mountain Gate; for eastbound, the fire fighter memorial could be enhanced to announce the entrance to Walker. The first context zone would have a speed of 40 mph, transitioning to a third context zone in the more commercially dense area of town. This third zone would be pedestrian-oriented, with a max speed of 25 mph, increasing comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists, and encouraging drivers to access local Walker businesses.

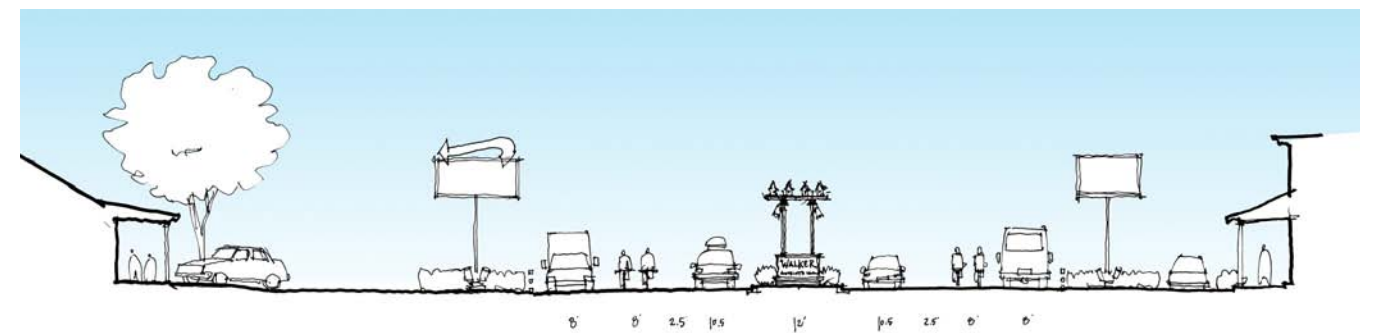
Phased Street Sections



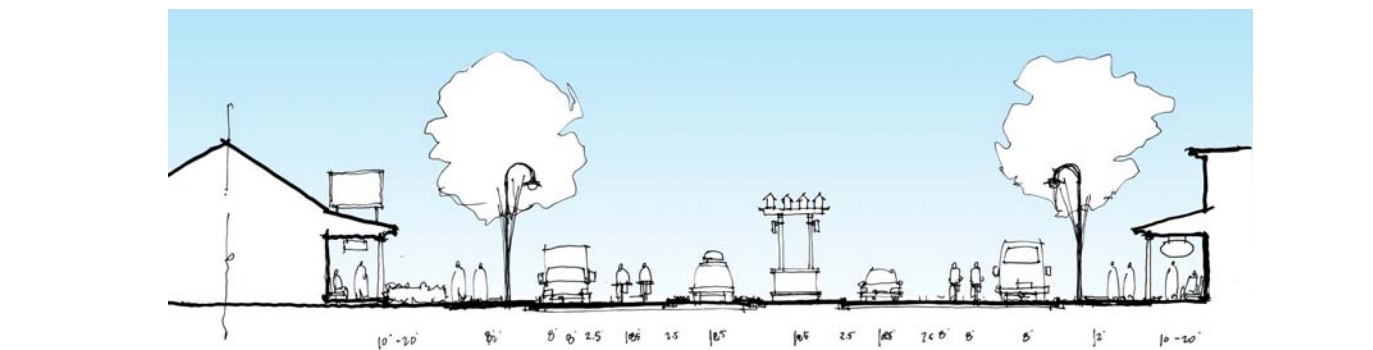
Existing right-of-way



Phase I: Add colored, buffered bike lanes



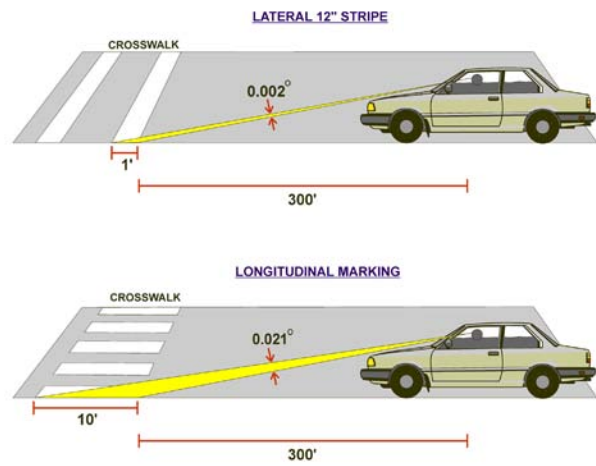
Phase II: Add mid-block crossings with pedestrian refuges; median doubles as a gateway element



Phase III: Street trees and pedestrian-scaled lighting in the core of the community; infill buildings are built closer to the right-of-way to encourage slower traffic

Walker and Coleville: Public Realm

Crosswalks



Crosswalks should be painted with 10 foot longitudinal lines, which are more visible to the driver.

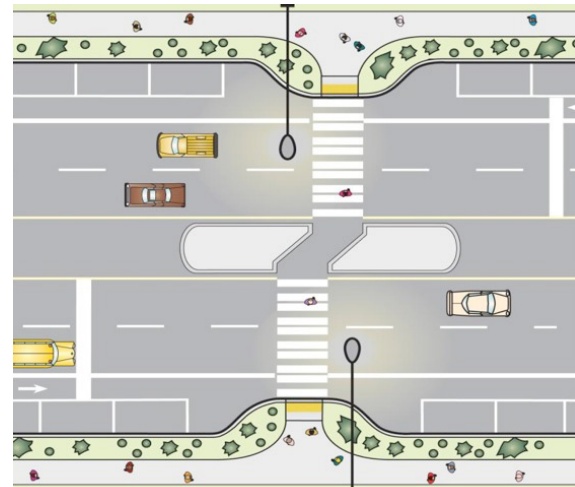


Stamped concrete has the appearance of brick; this both provides a color for visibility and a tactile reminder to drivers to slow down.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon flashes every second to announce that a pedestrian is present at the roadway.
Photo credit: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/resources>

Medians and Pedestrian Refuges



Median islands can provide a pedestrian refuge for crossing wide streets; this would be especially useful in Walker where there is a wide ROW.



Median islands make the travel lane visually seem tighter, which can help reduce speeds and make a community more walkable.



A median island provides landscape and a gateway element into the community of Cloverdale, CA.

Bicycle Lanes



Colorized bicycle lanes are more visible to drivers; color can be integral to the asphalt mixture for increased durability.



Buffered bike lanes add a 2-3 foot space to protect bicyclists from higher-speed traffic that would be present on a state highway.



A traditional bike lane with parallel parking and two lanes of vehicular traffic

Public Gathering Spaces



McGee Creek near Crowley Lake offers access to enjoy the creek.



Pocket plaza in Lee Vining offers a place for pedestrians to stop along Highway 395.



A community park with pavilion in Calistoga

Walker and Coleville: Streetscape Components

Street Trees

American Sweetgum



Photo credit: www.thetreeplantation.com



Photo credit: www.treepicturesonline.com

Raywood Ash



Photo credit: www.bigtreesupply.com



Photo credit: www.orgeonstate.edu

Water Birch



Photo credits: www.bowpointnursery.com



Photo credit: www.calflora.org



Photo credit: www.calflora.org, www.treebrowser.org

Recommended Tree Species

	American Sweetgum	Raywood Ash	Water Birch
Species	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	<i>Fraxinus oxycarpa 'Raywood'</i>	<i>Betula occidentalis</i>
Height	60-70 feet	40-50 feet	20-30 feet
Spread	45 feet	25-30 feet	Multi-trunk
Fall Color	Red	Red/purple	Yellow/Yellow-green
Purpose	Street tree	Street tree	Plant in bunches/Use as infill

Pedestrian-Scaled Lighting

Light Bollards

Walker is proud of its identity as a rural, working community. During the workshop community members discussed whether streetlights would be appropriate. Pedestrian-scaled lighting could be achieved by lining Highway 395 with 36-inch tall lit bollards rather than conventional streetlights. This would provide a downcast light illuminating the ground and create an ambiance unique to Walker.

Bollards could be spaced every 15-25 feet, balancing the priorities of better lighting for safety and dark sky compliance with the expense of frequently placed bollard fixtures.



Traditional/Western LED Bollard: Sternberg Lighting Austin model; Mid-Century Modern LED Bollard: Philips Lumec CALB2 model; Solar-powered Bollard: Reliance Foundry R-9810-FL model



Bollards illuminate town gathering space; solar-powered bollards line rural road



Photo credits: www.archiexpo.com, www.reliance-foundry.com

Path and Sign Lighting

To encourage tourists to stop in Walker, downcast sign lighting would add a lot of visibility to the community's businesses and help for nighttime navigation. These lights could attach to existing walls and monument signs.

Walker might also celebrate its unique identity by providing pedestrian-scaled lighting through simple path lighting along a connected local path network. Each property owner could purchase individual fixtures, or the town could select a standard for purchase and distribution. This can be an identifying element that helps to unify paths as they meander and change character between properties.



Downlighting for wall signage: B-K Lighting SignStar Style A and E; Solar-powered sign light: Carmanah EG series



Path lighting: Philips Hadco Copper Pathlyte CUL2; Path lighting illuminates decomposed gravel walkway

Photo credit: <http://blog.louielighting.com/low-voltage-landscape-lighting/>

Walker: Private Realm Improvements

Slip Lane and Parking



A slip lane gives access to parking at Walker Burger.

Local Path Networks



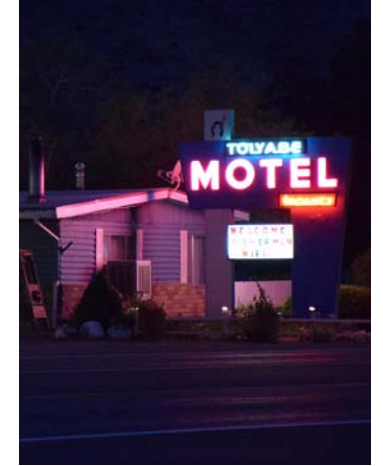
Two businesses are joined by a pedestrian path at the building edge; changes in material could add to the charm of a pedestrian network.

Landscaping



Landscaping adds color and visual interest to the highway; placing landscaping at the ROW will help to slow traffic.

Signage and Sign Lighting



Neon-lit signs are iconic in Walker.



Similarly, a slip lane connects multiple businesses; this could increase foot traffic and facilitate visits to neighboring properties.



A stone walkway in the Toiyabe Motel landscaping provides access for guests to cross to restaurants across HWY 395.



Working landscapes reuse historic machinery as accent pieces in a simple yard; .



Painted sign in Walker; could be lit from above.



In Chico, California, a frontage road connects multiple businesses, and safe parking. Photo credit: www.google.com



Existing wood-slat walkway runs at the building face, and could extend to an adjoining property to create a pedestrian network.



Painted tires serve as flower pots in Lee Vining.



Sign lighting that faces down to reduce light pollution: B-K Lighting Twin SignStar Style A

Walker: Public and Private Realm Improvements

Walker Illustrative Plan



Public Realm Improvements

A West Walker Gateway

Walker's landscape and character have been shaped by fire. The existing memorial to the 2002 crash of a C-130 firefighting tanker can serve as the western gateway into town.

B ESTA Bus Stop

The ESTA bus stop could be formalized with a drive-through lane for buses. This improvement would create frontage to plant landscaping and to beautify the entry-point of various tourists arriving by bus.

C Mill Creek Seating Area

Work with property owner(s) to create a small outdoor gathering space along the river.

D Mid-block Crossings

The right-of-way in Walker is wide with few locations to provide crossings. Midblock crossings with medians for pedestrian refuge would increase safety and encourage more pedestrian traffic.

E Colorized Bike Lanes

Many bicyclists tour along Highway 395 using the shoulder. A bike lane should be formalized. Colorized bike lanes will signal to drivers that they are in a different context and should slow down.

F East Walker Trailhead and Gateway Sign

Construct a trail connecting Walker to the amenities at Mountain Gate. The trailhead could serve as a gateway into Walker from the south where the roadway context can change.

Mountain Gate Trailhead and Fishing Platform (not pictured)

The new fishing platform is a community asset that should be made accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Walker: Public and Private Realm Improvements (Continued)



Walker Illustrative Plan: Zoom in of Commercial Core



Walker Illustrative Plan: Zoom in of Western Portion of the Corridor



Walker Illustrative Plan: Zoom in of East Walker Trail Head

Public Realm Improvements (zoomed in)

- B** ESTA Bus Stop
(See previous page for description)
- C** Mill Creek Seating Area
(See previous page for description)
- D** Mid-block Crossings
(See previous page for description)
- E** Colorized Bike Lanes
(See previous page for description)
- F** East Walker Trailhead and Gateway Sign
(See previous page for description)

Private Realm Improvements

- G** Slip Lane with Parking
Slip lanes provide safer access to parking and reduce curb cuts; slip lanes providing access to multiple businesses encourage foot traffic.
- H** Local Connected Paths
Adjoining properties should build a path for pedestrians near the building face; pedestrian paths can provide increased connectivity without jeopardizing the rural character of Walker.
- I** Landscaping at the Public Right-of-Way
Use street trees and other vegetation to landscape at the street's edge, visually unifying the streetscape, enclosing the highway, and encouraging drivers to slow down.

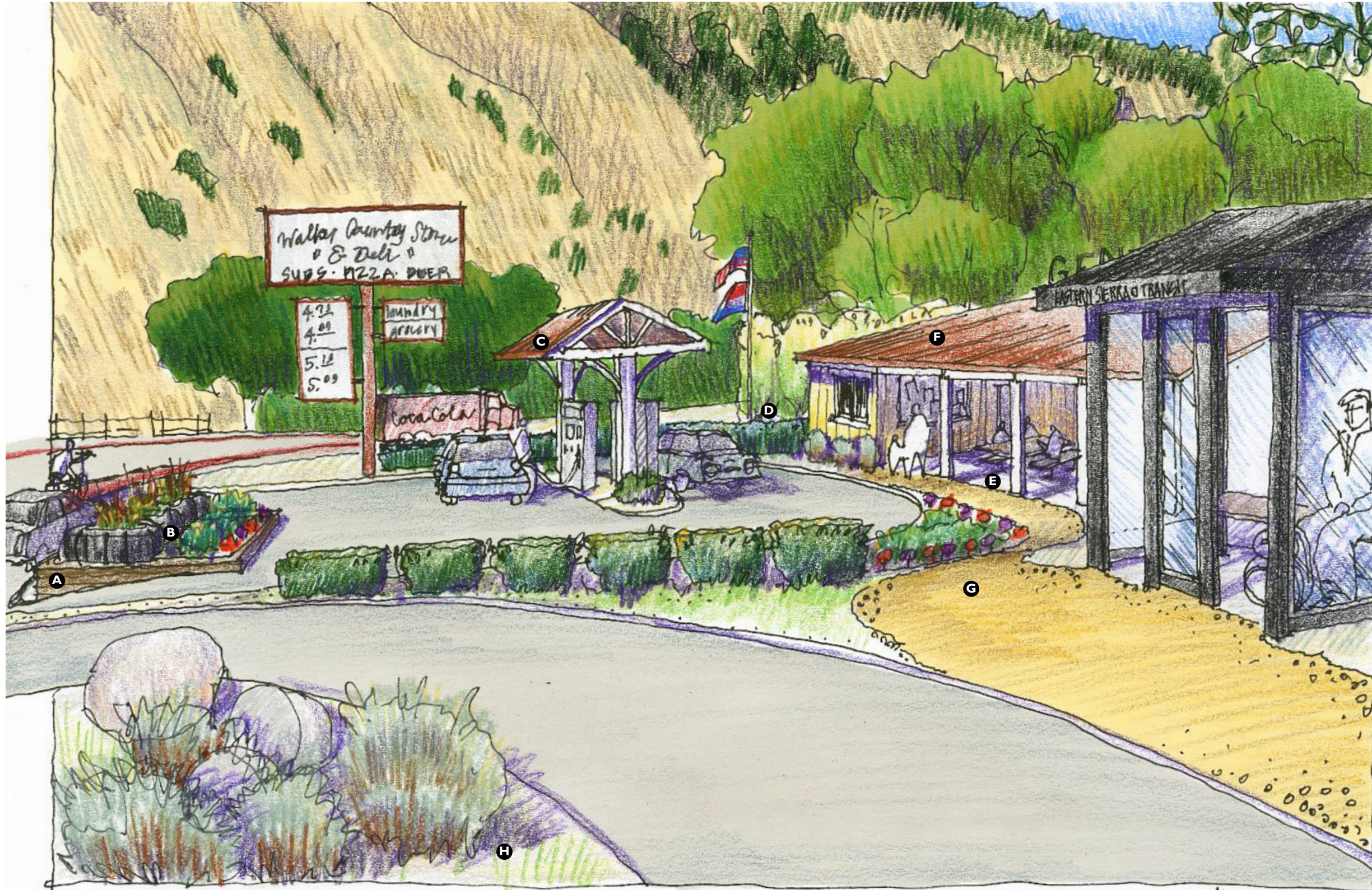
Building Frontage Improvements: Example 1 (Coleville Antiques)



Example 1

- Flower box at right-of-way **A**
- Renovated porch with new handrail **B**
- Slip lane with diagonal parking **C**
- Local path at face of building **D**
- Landscaping against the fence **E**

Building Frontage Improvements: Example 2 (Walker Country Store)



Example 2

- Landscaping at street **A**
- Re-use of rubber tires for flower pots **B**
- New gas canopy **C**
- Landscaping to hide clutter **D**
- Engaged porch provides outdoor seating **E**
- New roof with signage **F**
- Local path of decomposed gravel between parcels **G**
- Local vegetation of sagebrush **H**

Bridgeport: Character Inventory

Building Character



Historic courthouse

Frontage Character



Storefront with canopy

Signage Character



Blade sign on historic hotel; entry signage from the south



Public Realm and Open Space



Three-lane road diet with bike lanes and back-in angle parking



False facades; contiguous buildings along Main Street



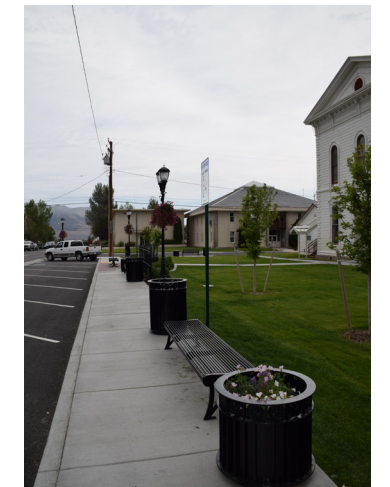
Deep setback with paved walkway and fence



Wall sign



Wide sidewalks for strolling; newly built School St. Plaza



White shingle siding, green trim



Dooryard with outdoor seating and bench



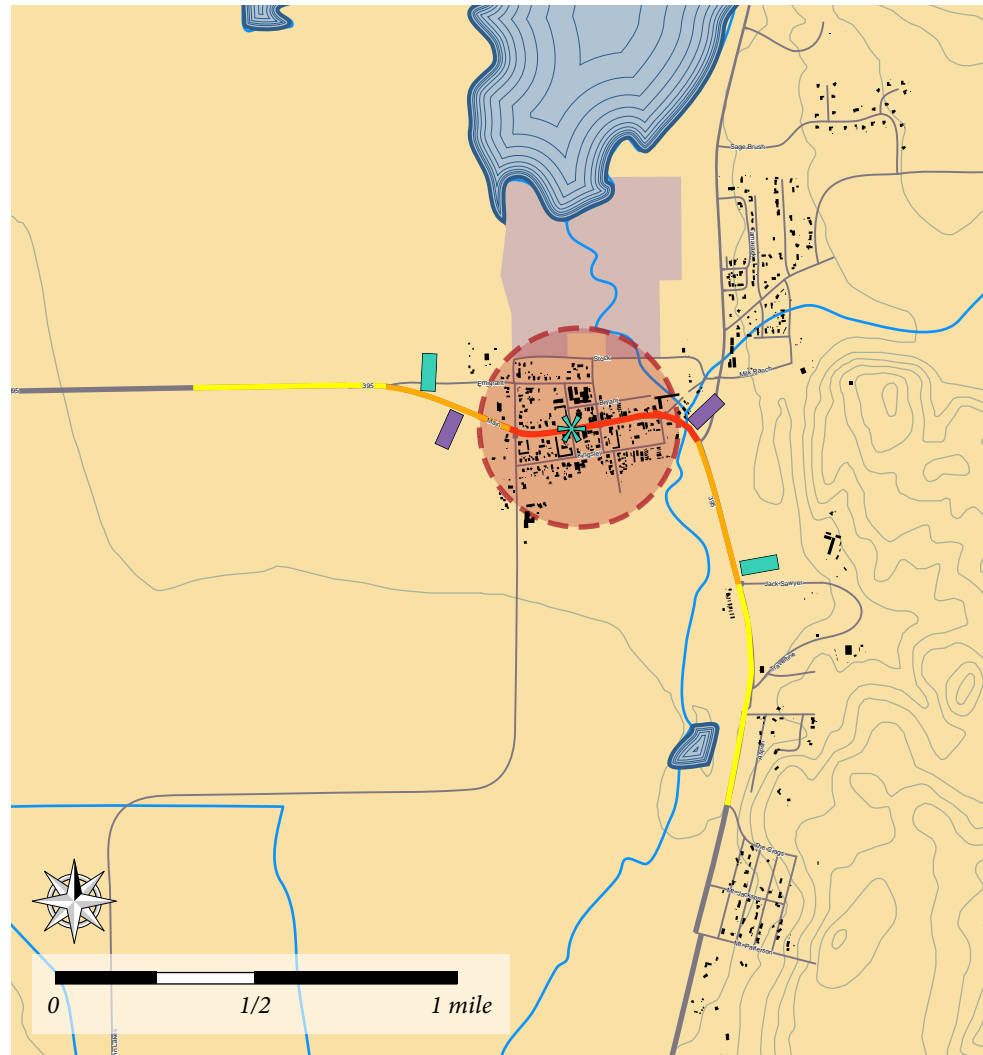
Historic neon signs



Bridgeport Valley

Bridgeport







Context Zone Map



Recent changes to Bridgeport's Main Street have helped to reduce traffic speeds and provide more space for pedestrians and bicyclists. More can be done to reduce speed and increase multi-modal access.

Context zones should be encouraged through physical cues to the driver. Gateway signs would act as the physical reminder to slow to a 40 mph speed limit, while Main Street from Twin Lakes Road to the West Walker River bridge should be a pedestrian zone of 25 mph.

Legend

-  Proposed 55 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 40 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 25 mph speed limit zone
-  Street
-  Watercourse
-  Proposed gateway monument sign
-  Existing gateway monument sign
-  Mid-block crossing
-  Walk radius - 1/4 mile or 5 minutes

Lee Vining: Character Inventory

Building Character



Metal roof with dormers and a deep porch



Stucco false facade with terrace



Wood siding with log lintels

Frontage Character



Projecting porch with seating



Terrace with landscaping



Porch and yard offer outdoor seating.

Signage Character



Historic monument sign with stone base



Historic vertical yard signs



Wood gateway sign with stone base

Public Realm and Open Space



Mono Lake



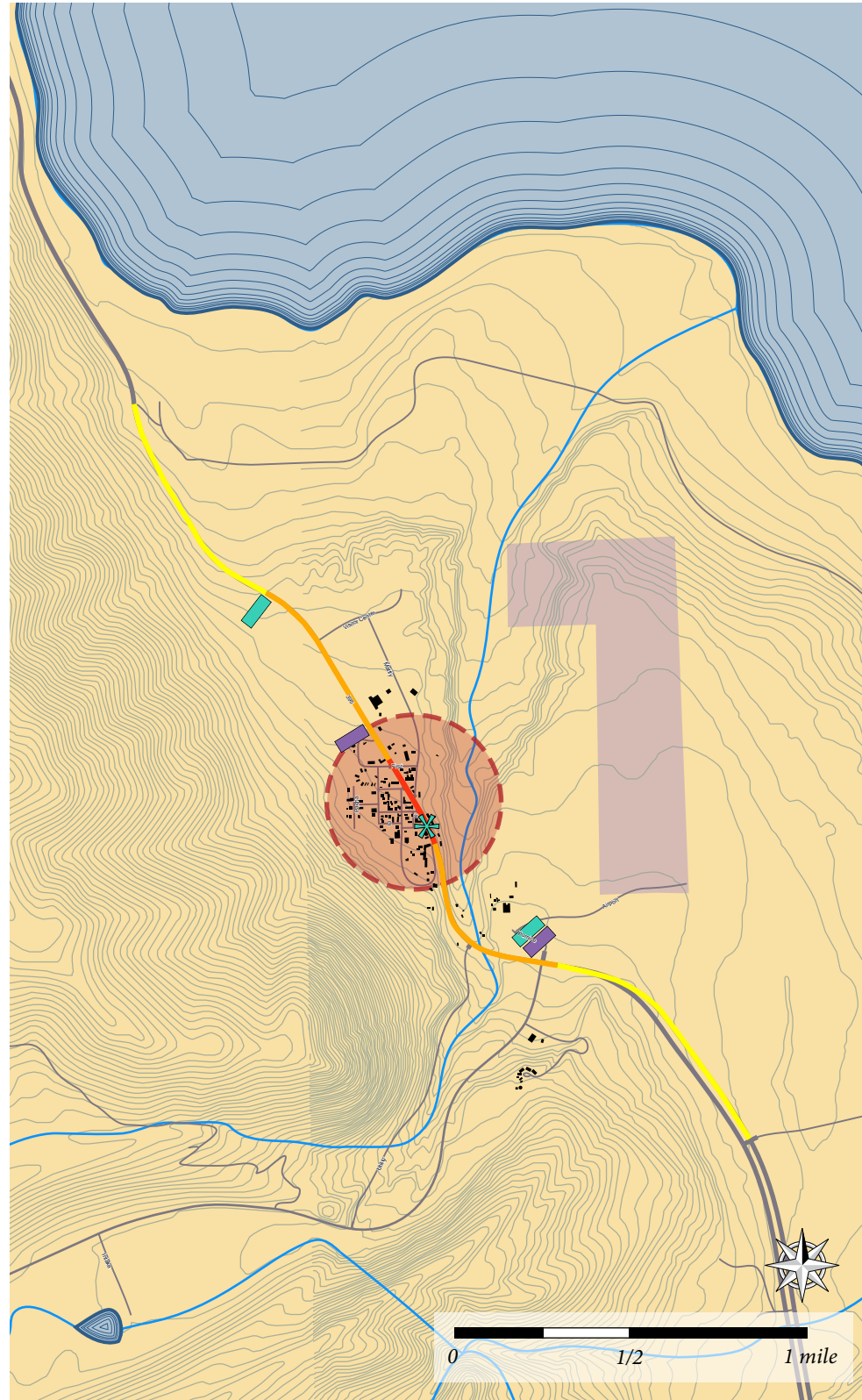
Gus Hess Community Park



Recent sidewalk improvements; wide 5-lane right-of-way with no crosswalks

Lee Vining










Context Zone Map



Similar to Bridgeport, Lee Vining has many amenities that promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, including: relatively dense buildings placed close to the right-of-way, ADA-compliant sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of public and semi-public spaces.

Yet context zones would help improve safety and encourage tourists to stop and explore Lee Vining. Gateway signage should be added approximately one mile outside of town: before the Mono Lake Visitor's Center to the north, and at the intersection of Highways 395 and 120 to the south (i.e. maintain the current location). The center of town would be the most pedestrian-oriented zone, with a speed limit of 25 mph extending to almost the edge of the half-mile pedestrian shed.

Legend

-  Proposed 55 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 40 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 25 mph speed limit zone
-  Street
-  Watercourse
-  Proposed gateway monument sign
-  Existing gateway monument sign
-  Mid-block crossing
-  Walk radius - 1/4 mile or 5 minutes

June Lake: Character Inventory

Building Character



Swiss chalet character in form and trim

Frontage Character



Ramped terrace with flower pots

Signage (and Gateway) Character



Wood blade sign

Public Realm and Open Space



View from Oh! Ridge



Swiss chalet wood trim and painted detailing



Stoop with stone terrace



Wood blade signs



Boulder as the gateway into the community



Newly renovated; warm paint palette



Stairs with retaining wall; wood awning with trim



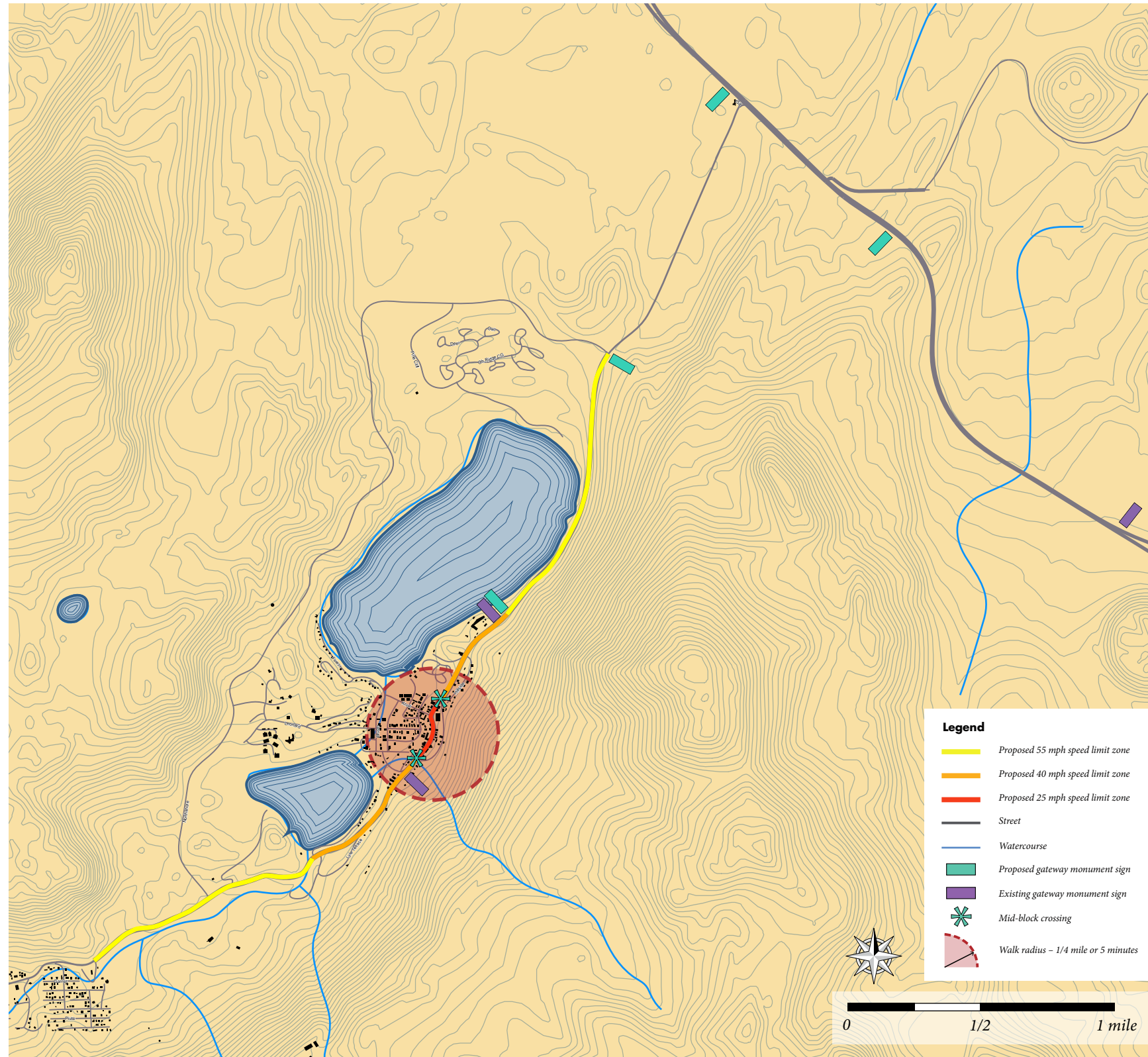
Monument sign two-miles from HWY 158 turn-off



Human-scaled street section

June Lake

Context Zone Map



Currently, monument signs announcing Highway 158 and June Lake are two miles from the turn-off. This is too far for visitors to remember or correlate the signs to the intersection, leaving the junction to seem unannounced. New gateway signage should be moved closer to the intersection of 395 and 158, about one mile from the turn for those heading northwest, and even closer for travelers headed southeast. An additional monument sign should be placed along Highway 158 to assure visitors of their nearby destination.

A gateway sign should be added on the westside, for visitors coming from the Canyon. These gateway signs will alert drivers that they have entered a new context zone, and should reduce their speed. In town, a mid-block crossing at either edge of the commercial core would act as another physical cue to drivers that they should behave appropriately for a pedestrian-oriented zone.

In June Lake, the boulder already is a natural and unique gateway into the village; signage around the boulder should be reduced and/or consolidated to reduce visual clutter.

June Lake: Private Realm Improvements

Terrace



A short but deep terrace provides public space and flower boxes.



Terraces are useful where there is topography because of their ability to elegantly solve a difference in elevation.



A terrace in Lee Vining provides public space and space for landscaping.

Landscaping



A small space between two businesses in June Lake is reclaimed with a low wall bench and landscaping.



Wooden flower pots add color to the streetscape, and take eyes off a large parking lot.



In McGee Creek, space between the sidewalk and porch is landscaped and trimmed with river rock.

Murals on Retaining Walls



An empty wall in Exeter, California becomes the focal point of a community park.



An eye sore becomes an opportunity for local art as a mural helps to mask a power plant's walled yard.



An empty canvas in June Lake could become a real focal point along Highway 158.

June Lake: Public Realm Improvements



Short-term improvements to the Highway 158 turn-off and The Junction



Long-term improvements to the Highway 158 turn-off and The Junction



Public Realm Improvements

A Highway 158 Turnoff

Short Term: Tighten and beautify the entrance to The Junction's parking lot by adding landscaping and a monument sign to attract drivers to June Lake.

Long Term: Improve the intersection of Highways 395 and 158 by removing the free right-turn; this will improve safety entering The Junction's parking.

B Gateway signage on Highway 158

Place gateway signage for June Lake shortly after the Highway 158 turn-off to reassure drivers of their desired destination.

C Oh! Ridge Improvements (not pictured)

Clean up the Oh! Ridge overlook, including trimming treetops that have grown to impede the views of June Lake.

D Boulder and Trail Parking

Short Term: Consolidate the various Caltrans signage that clutters the Boulder.

Long Term: Consider ways to make the Boulder a more picturesque (and safe) photo-op; may include minor improvements such as pavers, landscaping, or small informational signage about the Boulder's geology. Likewise, formalize the trailhead across the street; a parking lot could provide a place for tourists to stop and explore.

E East Gateway into Village

Where Lakeview Drive and Highway 158 intersect, create a monument to act as an additional gateway into the Village, signaling to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian zone. The monument could be an additional gateway sign, or a tree to be used for winter festivities.

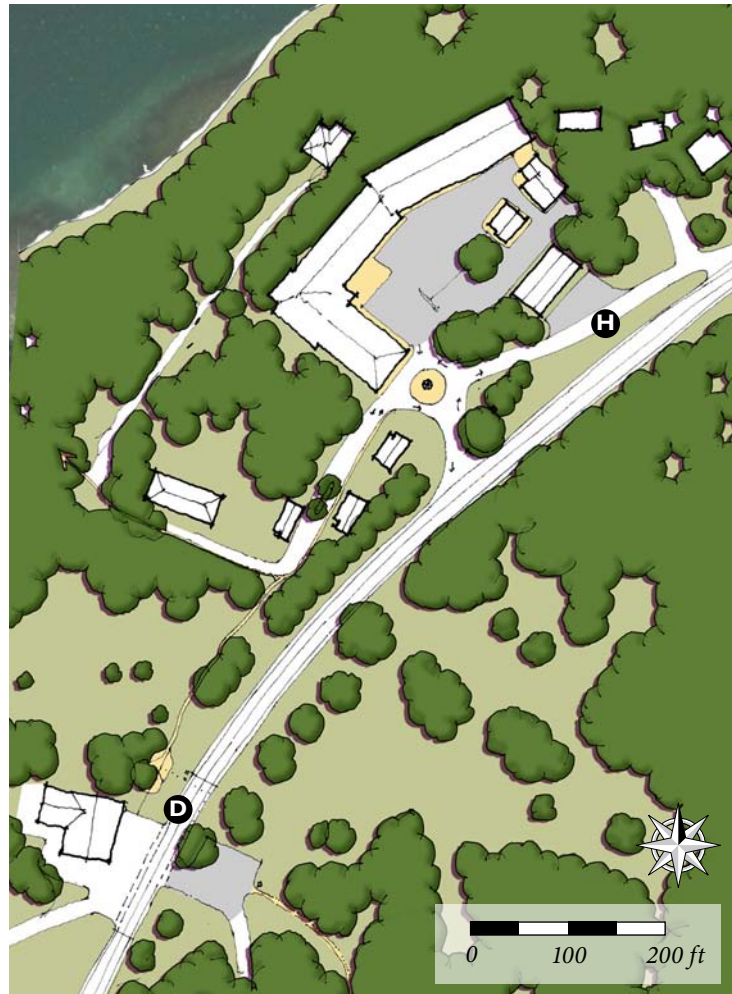
F West Gateway into Village

Add a monument sign to signal to drivers that they are entering the Village and should slow down; visitors arriving from the Canyon will have a sense of arrival.

G Stripe Lakefront Access Routes

Stripe a shared vehicular lane with bike lanes to promote multimodal access to June and Gull Lakes.

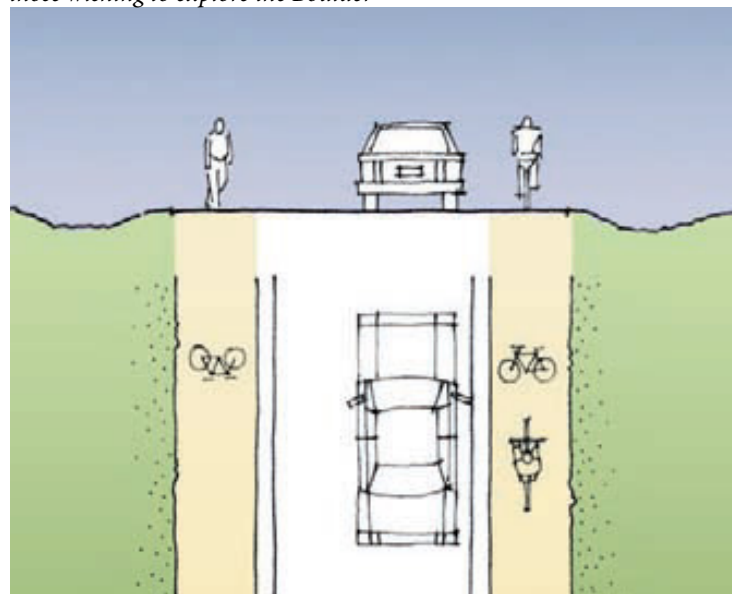
June Lake: Public Realm Improvements (continued)



Short-term improvements to the Boulder Lodge frontage; parking for those wishing to explore the Boulder



Long-term improvements to the Boulder Lodge



Singular shared vehicular lane with bike lanes in either direction

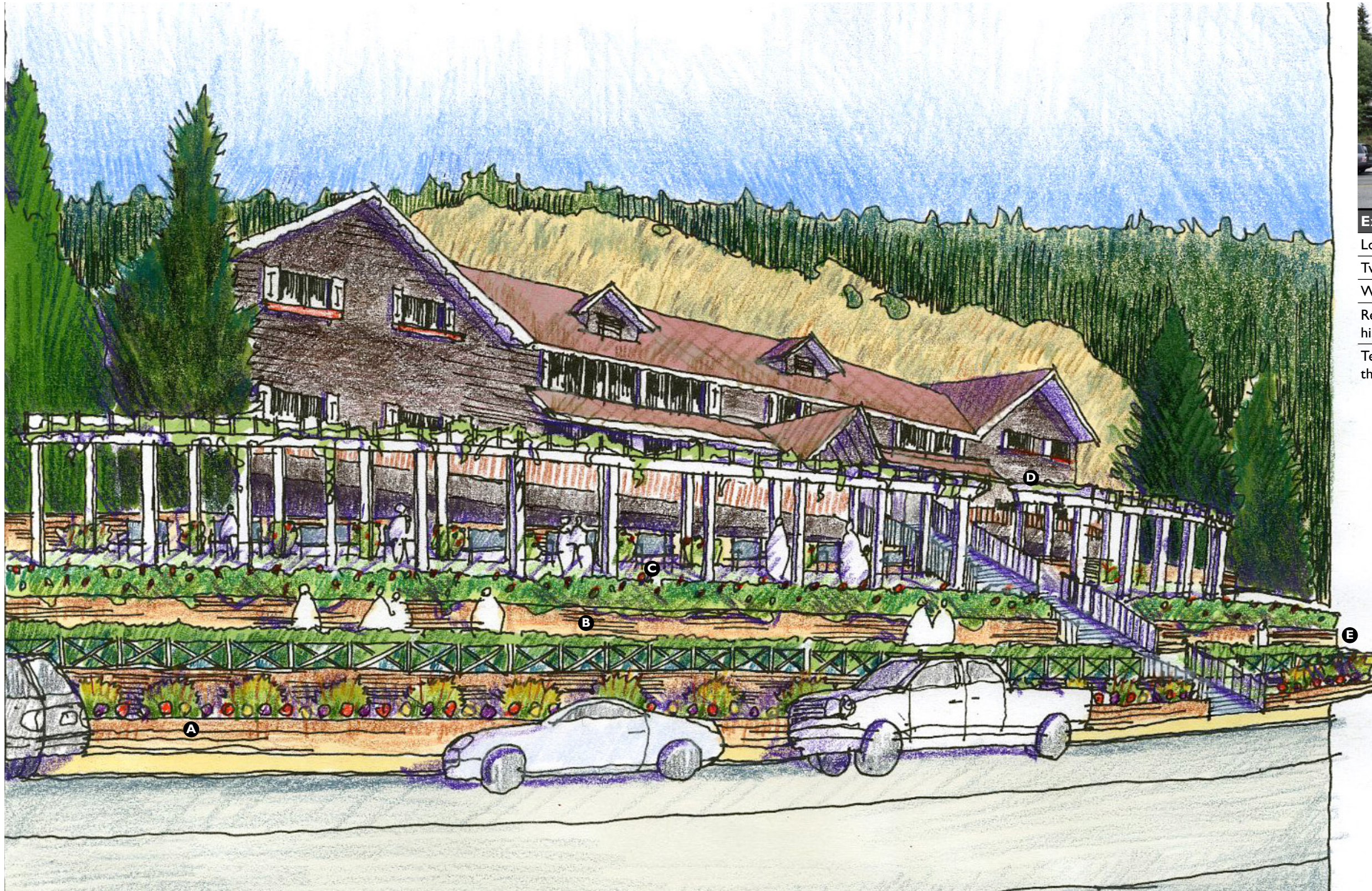
Public Realm Improvements

- D Boulder and Trail Parking**
(See previous page for description)
- E East Gateway into Village**
(See previous page for description)
- G Stripe Lakefront Access**
(See previous page for description)

Private Realm Improvements

- H Boulder Lodge Improvements and Roadside Cafe**
Short term: Transform the existing asphalt into a drive with landscaping at the Highway.
Long term: Add a porch to the units along Highway 158. Consider converting one of the units into a café.
- I Shared Parking Lot**
Behind the buildings along Highway 158, unused land can become a shared parking lot for the businesses along 158 and Crawford Ave. This will encourage drivers to patronize multiple businesses.
- J Frontage Improvements**
Various improvements to frontages along 158 would enhance the pedestrian experience in June Lake, including landscaping and terracing.

Building Frontage Improvements: Example 3



- Example 3**
- Low wall with landscaping at the sidewalk **A**
 - Two-tier terrace provides semi-public space **B**
 - Wood loggia with rose garden **C**
 - Remove foliage that obstructs views to the historic Heidelberg Inn **D**
 - Terracing continues along the street frontage that is beyond the Heidelberg Inn **E**

Building Frontage Improvements: Example 4



- Example 4**
- Landscaping at HWY 158 A
 - Slip lane with diagonal and parallel parking B
 - Landscaped driveway to main office C
 - Local path to other hotel units D
 - Renovated roof with dormers allowing more light to enter hotel units E
 - Porch protects room entrances from the elements, especially heavy snowfall F
 - Future uses could incorporate a cafe at HWY 158 in an end unit, with a wrap-around porch and views to the Lake G

Mammoth Lakes: Character Inventory

Building Character



Stone base with ganged windows; subtle color palette



New construction



White-washed base with dark wood siding

Frontage Character



Recessed entry



Stoop of Heavy timber construction



Outdoor seating at the Village

Signage Character



New gateway sign



Informational signage at Twin Lakes



Monument sign at airport

Public Realm and Open Space



Twin Lakes



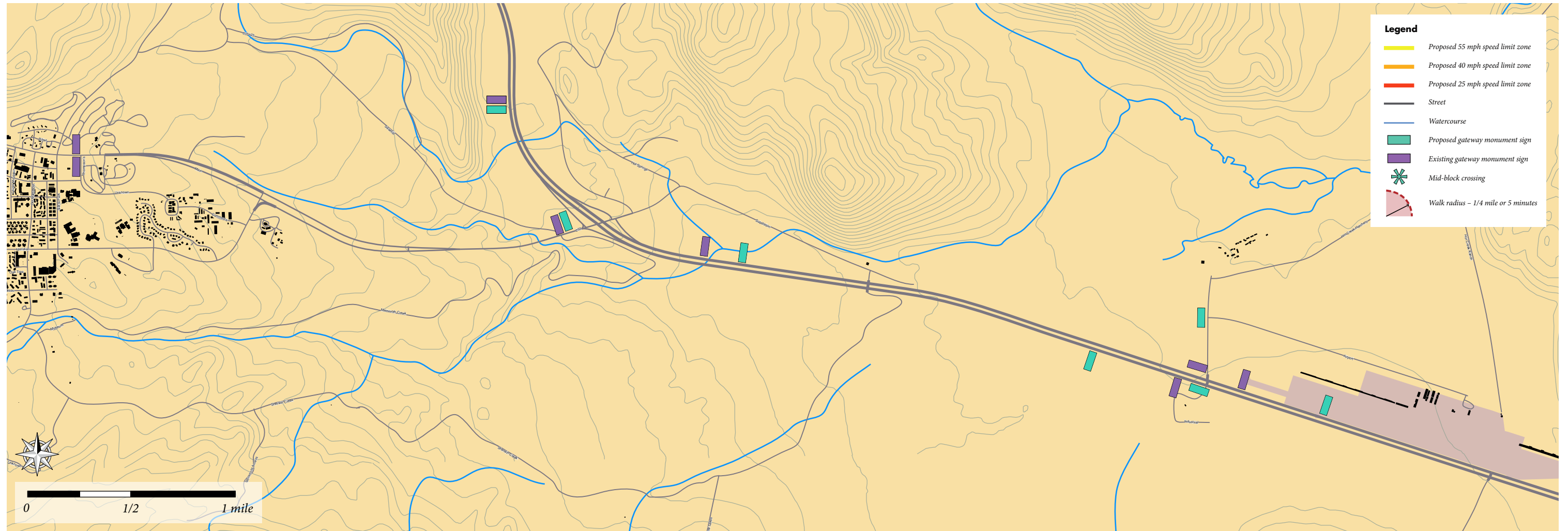
Mammoth Creek Park



Hiking trail

Mammoth Lakes

Context Zone Map



The community of Mammoth Lakes has developed a robust signage and wayfinding program, including new gateway signage at Sierra Park Road. Along Highway 395, the signage announcing the turn-off for Highway 203 is one-mile from the turn-off to the north, and three-quarters mile to the south; the sign to the south should be moved to also announce the turn-off for Mammoth Lakes one-mile in advance.

The existing signage should be replaced when the County develops the branding for the National Scenic Byway, to unite Mammoth Lakes to the other communities along the corridor.

Surrounding the Mammoth Lakes airport, the signage is sparse, both to signal to drivers of their exit, and the signage directing newly arrived visitors which direction to drive toward Mammoth and nearby amenities. An effort should be made to design wayfinding signage that will use the same branding efforts as the gateway signage along 395.

Crowley Lake & Long Valley: Character Inventory

Building Character



Wood siding and tree trunks for columns

Frontage Character



Wood fence and sagebrush

Signage Character



Metal sculpture is gateway signage

Public Realm and Open Space



View toward McGee Mountain



Stucco with heavy wood detailing



Porch with wine barrel flower pots



Historic wagon incorporates signage



McGee Creek



Storefront with parapet and canopy



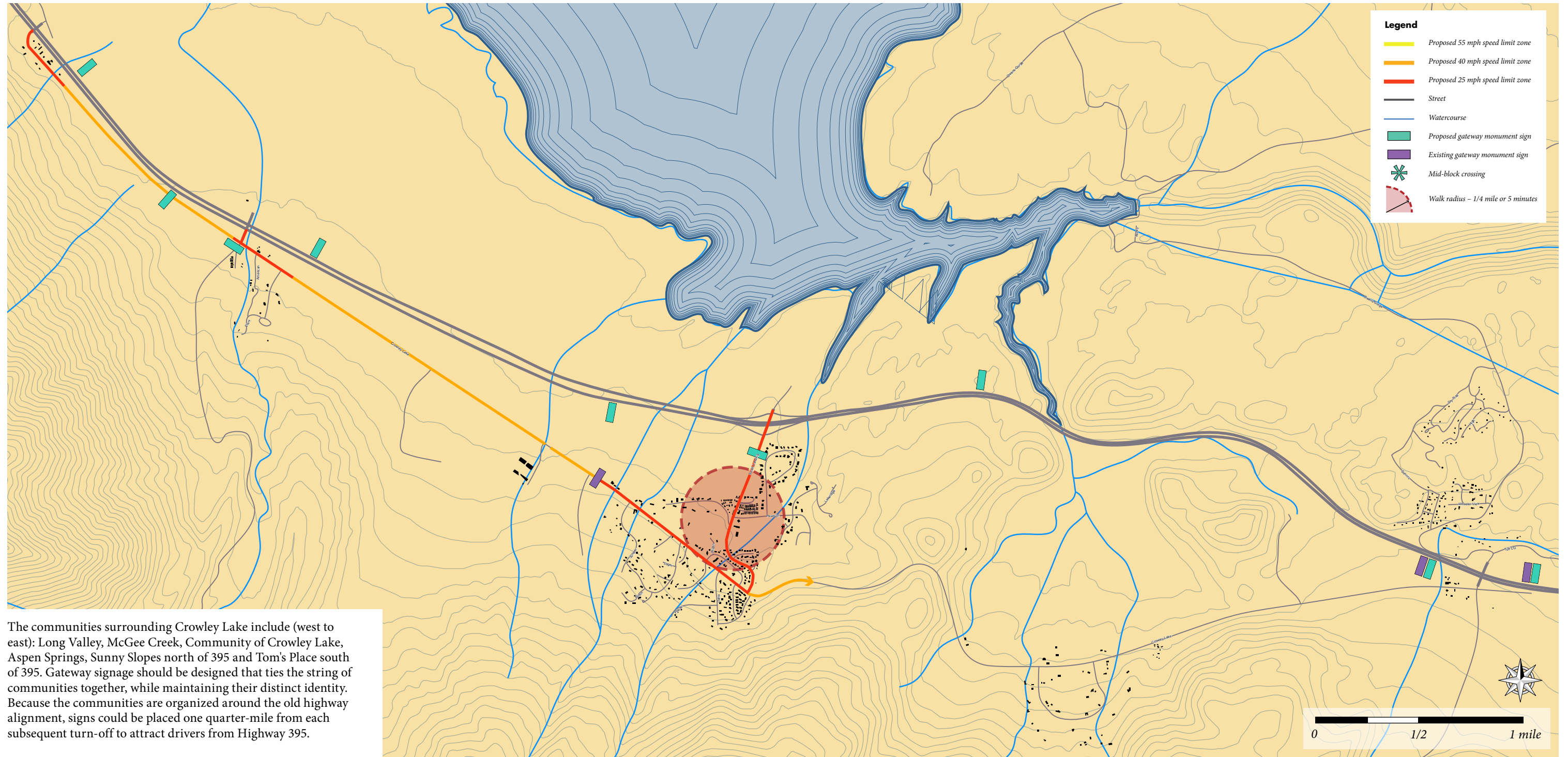
Porch with outdoor seating



Wood monument sign

Crowley Lake & Long Valley

Context Zone Map



The communities surrounding Crowley Lake include (west to east): Long Valley, McGee Creek, Community of Crowley Lake, Aspen Springs, Sunny Slopes north of 395 and Tom's Place south of 395. Gateway signage should be designed that ties the string of communities together, while maintaining their distinct identity. Because the communities are organized around the old highway alignment, signs could be placed one quarter-mile from each subsequent turn-off to attract drivers from Highway 395.

Each community should exist as a pedestrian-oriented context zone, with a 25 mph speed limit; corridor connecting the communities would reach a speed of 40 mph.



Gateway Signage and Corridor Branding

Highway 395 Corridor Branding

Scenic Byway Branding and Signage

Criteria for Designation

The National Scenic Byways Program sets forth criteria for the designation of roads as National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads based on their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural intrinsic qualities. Highways must significantly meet at least one of the six intrinsic qualities; those meeting criteria for at least two of the intrinsic qualities may be designated as an All-American Road. A summary of these intrinsic qualities is provided below, copied from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s interim policy:

- 1. Scenic Quality** is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development—contribute to the quality of the corridor's visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities.
- 2. Natural Quality** applies to those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geological formations, fossils, landform, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances.
- 3. Historic Quality** encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.
- 4. Cultural Quality** is evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features including, but not limited to, crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, vernacular architecture, etc., are currently practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor could highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions.
- 5. Archeological Quality** involves those characteristics of the scenic byways corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The scenic byway corridor's archeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past.
- 6. Recreational Quality** involves outdoor recreational activities directly association with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include, but are not limited to, downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized.

Scenic Byway Characteristics of Highway 395 Communities					
Walker and Coleville	Bridgeport	Lee Vining	June Lake	Mammoth Lakes	Crowley Lake
					
					
Physical or Iconic Characteristics					
White Wood Bridge	Historic Courthouse	Mono Lake	Alpine Lakes	Mountain range, Lava Domes	Long Valley Caldera
Canyon/Cliff walls	Contiguous main street	Tufa	Boulder	Skiing, Culture	Crowley Lake and fishing
West Walker River in Antelope valley	Grazing land in Bridgeport Valley	Connection to Yosemite Nat'l Park	Oh! Ridge	Ski resort / 'Village'	
Effect of fire on landscape	Fishing, Hot Springs	Long Vistas	Mountain and skiing, Fishing	Twin Lakes	
Sagebrush, Cottonwood	Twin Lakes Recreation		Old resort town/ European Mountain Village	Coniferous, Bristlecone	
Working landscapes - Ranching	Bodie ghost town		Pedestrian Scale	Granite	
River Rock	Sandstone		Granite		
Descriptive Adjectives					
Self-sufficient/ "Western"	Historic	Cosmopolitan, International	Quaint/Charming, Nordic	Destination	Rural villages
Authentic, Roadside	Roadside		Hidden gem	Modern	Rustic
Wood, Neon	Painted Wood, Neon				
Primary Intrinsic Quality*					
Scenic	Historic	Scenic	Recreational/Scenic	Recreational/Scenic	Scenic/Natural

*The six intrinsic qualities of a National Scenic Byway are: (1) Scenic, (2) Natural, (3) Historic, (4) Cultural, (5) Archeological, (6) Recreational.

Highway 395 Corridor Branding (continued)

Translating Intrinsic Qualities into a Brand

Highway 395 can clearly meet the criteria for a number of intrinsic qualities listed above. The Corridor Management Plan, a required component of the program, will need to assess and discuss the intrinsic qualities and their context, and lay out a plan to conserve and enhance these qualities and promote tourism and economic development.

This document provides an initial assessment of the highway's intrinsic qualities in order to establish some preliminary direction for the CMP. In many ways the County will need to conduct a "branding" exercise to best communicate the special quality of Highway 395 and share it with others.

While past documents, such as the *Mono County Highway 395 Visual Resource Assessment* (1998) have documented scenic resources in between communities along the highway, the table on the preceding page lists some of the key defining characteristics with particular attention to the communities and their immediate environs. The information listed includes items identified by community members during the process as well as those documented by the design team. The goal is to identify what should be celebrated and preserved, as well as what items might need improvement if they are to become part of the corridor "story."

While this document and the table focus on the communities along the corridor, the County should consider how the corridor is organized and defined by its geographical/geological, scenic, recreational, and historic frameworks, and to what extent the "story" extends and connects to destinations off of the primary corridor, such as the June Lake Loop (Highway 158), Mammoth Lakes (Highway 203), and Crowley Lake Drive (Old Highway 395). Questions include: what is the overall organization of the corridor? Should the corridor be considered as a linear "string of pearls" or as a varied "fish's skeleton" of attributes?

Visual branding should also be considered. New signage and wayfinding elements, for example, could provide some visual components that can help to visually unify the corridor while providing much-needed wayfinding and identification of context. These could include repetitive graphic elements, color palettes, materials, etc. A signage program could be highly unified with little variance – bringing the whole corridor into a unified experience. Signage could be also be a set of diverse signs, with a controlled set of similar elements to tie the brand together (font, color, material, etc) – allowing an eclectic group of places to operate with a more common language.

Precedent for a Uniform Identity:

Golden Gate National Recreation Areas



Photo credit: www.sftourismtips.com



Photo credit: www.fortwiki.com



Photo credit: www.sanfranciscodays.com

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area signage uses the same steel sign with different support materials to express the variety of places within the GGNRA.

Iowa's National and State Scenic Byways



Photo credit: www.iowadot.gov

The State of Iowa has unified all of their scenic byways under one brand, giving a strong identity to the varied locations and themes of each corridor. Notice the same sign shape, material, typefont. Only the identifying image is unique from place to place.

Precedent for Unique/Diverse Identity:

National Scenic Byway Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina



Photo credit: wayfindersnotebook.blogspot.com; www.blueridgeparkway.org



Photo credit: www.bbsci.com

Photo credit: www.nps.gov



Photo credit: gonehikin.blogspot.com; www.takemytrip.com

In contrast, the Blue Ridge Parkway has a variety of signs along the corridor, with little unifying them into a strong iconic brand. No single element is the same across the board: no sign is the same shape; a majority use wood; monument signs use navy and gray, with the same typefont wayfinding signs use brown with similar font; half use the corridor icon.

Gateway Signage Design Concepts

Uniform Identity between Communities

Depending on how the County wants to brand Highway 395, gateway signage between communities could unify the corridor with signs that are the same shape, materials, and typefont, and with a small icon or image that gives identity to unique stops along the corridor.

Unique Identity between Communities

If the County wants to accentuate the diverse communities that make up, and add to, the experience of Highway 395, they could use a few unifying elements, while allowing the communities to each express their sense of place. The conceptual sketches below use abstracted geographic or architectural icons associated with each community as the anchor of an identical sign. While unique, the signs are unified by the use of three materials: stone, river rock, and wood.

