



SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

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3558 PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

3559 **Navigating Downtown.** Many people who
3560 visit Downtown may not be familiar with all
3561 that it has to offer. In spite of large numbers
3562 of signs, many destinations remain difficult
3563 to find. Necessary signage is either miss-
3564 ing, poorly located, or difficult to understand.
3565 “Wayfinding” signage helps visitors – and any-
3566 one who is less familiar with Downtown – find
3567 major destinations, parking garages, and plac-
3568 es of interest. At a minimum, wayfinding sig-
3569 nage should clearly communicate Downtown’s
3570 street network and principal paths. To be most
3571 effective, wayfinding signage should be:

- 3572 • legible – make signs easy to understand;
- 3573 • consistent – limit sign types and commu-
3574 nicate information in simple ways; and
- 3575 • logical – place signs and use content
3576 that is meaningful and sequential.

3577 **Accumulated Complexity.** Signage systems
3578 support multiple transportation, economic, so-
3579 cial, and environmental goals. Through a pro-
3580 cess of “accumulated complexity,” Downtown
3581 has acquired an enormous variety of sign
3582 types and numerous applications. Signs have
3583 a wide range of shapes, heights, and styles,
3584 which gives a sense of visual dissonance or
3585 “clutter.” For example, there are four graphic
3586 conventions for bicyclists, and five for motor-

Facing Page: Wayfinding Signage at BART.
Wayfinding signs offer maps and directions on how to get
somewhere – as is illustrated by a visitor-oriented sign in
BART Plaza.

3587 ists. In addition, abutting signs are mounted
3588 on separate posts, and signs often hide other
3589 signs. As a consequence, signs often make
3590 navigating Downtown confusing rather than
3591 welcoming and accessible.

3592 **User Groups.** People arrive with different itin-
3593 eraries and needs, but can be thought of fall-
3594 ing into a few simple categories. Wayfinding
3595 signage should serve:

- 3596 a. visitors to Berkeley (retail & restaurant pa-
3597 trons, theater-/cinema-goers, farmers mar-
3598 ket-goers, tourists, business people, etc.);
- 3599 b. visitors to UC Berkeley (event-goers, aca-
3600 demics, parents, potential students, etc.);
- 3601 c. students attending a range of institutions
3602 (UCB, BCC, and the many other significant
3603 institutions in Downtown);
- 3604 d. Downtown’s residents and workforce (all
3605 types); and
- 3606 e. Berkeleyans who might like to become
3607 more familiar with Downtown (all Berkeley
3608 residents but especially parents, children,
3609 and seniors).

3610 **Placemaking.** Signs can give deeper under-
3611 standing and appreciation for Downtown, and
3612 can be used to reveal Downtown’s heritage
3613 and Berkeley’s commitment to sustainability
3614 and social equity.

3615 **International Icons.** Signs can use sim-
3616 ple icons (i.e., symbolic images) rather than
3617 words. Icons overcome language barriers and
3618 are used throughout the world, both of which
3619 make icons appropriate to Downtown. Icons
3620 also take up less space.



Figure k.1. Clear Information. A simple and legible palette of signs can help people navigate urban areas more easily. Color and icons can be used to communicate information without words.



Figure k.2. Transit Information. Route, schedule, and fare information promote transit use, and should be provided near BART and well-used bus stops.



Figure k.3. Parking Facilities. Some Downtown parking garages are under-used. Signs should guide motorists and encourage the use of garages – and help make on-street parking more available.

3621 POLICIES AND ACTIONS

3622 Policy 8.1, Finding Destinations & Points of Interest.

3623 Signs should make the geography of
3624 Downtown more obvious, by guiding pedestri-
3625 ans, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users to
3626 major destinations, parking garages, points of
3627 interest, and transit nodes. In addition, signs
3628 should highlight community assets and val-
3629 ues, such as Berkeley’s history, educational
3630 institutions, and commitment to environmental
3631 sustainability. Signage should help people find
3632 special Downtown subdistricts, such as the
3633 Arts District, the cinema district, and the Civic
3634 Center district. Different sidewalk treatments
3635 should be used to help people with vision im-
3636 pairments navigate Downtown.

3637 a. Meet with Downtown stakeholders to iden-
3638 tify simple ways to improve signage in the
3639 near term, such as by identifying the loca-
3640 tion of confusing or missing signage – es-
3641 pecially as it relates to parking. Make such
3642 improvements, and continue to evaluate
3643 signage needs.

3644 b. Work with Downtown stakeholders to iden-
3645 tify destinations (like museums) and places
3646 of interest (like Strawberry Creek). Also
3647 work with UC Berkeley to make connec-
3648 tions between “town and gown” more trans-
3649 parent, not only within Downtown but also
3650 on the UC campus.

3651 c. Downtown maps should appear more fre-
3652 quently, especially where pedestrians of-
3653 ten have to make decisions on “how to get
3654 there,” such as near transit stops, parking
3655 garages, and the bike station. Target these
3656 same decision-making locations for way-
3657 finding signage. Signage should address
3658 all travel modes.

3659 d. Use signage to encourage drivers to park
3660 in parking garages, and to experience
3661 Downtown on foot. Make signage to find
3662 Downtown parking easy to see and un-
3663 derstand. Encourage dynamic signs for
3664 parking facilities that announce how many
3665 parking spaces remain in a parking garage
3666 and, if fully occupied, direct motorists to
3667 other alternatives.

3668 e. Near BART and other major arrival points,
3669 consider using electronic signs and free-
3670 standing kiosks with dynamic presenta-
3671 tions. Monitors might be placed in vacant
3672 storefronts or be incorporated as public art.

3673 f. Develop a consistent, legible, and logical pal-
3674 ette of directional signs and icons to provide
3675 ways to find major destinations more easily.
3676 Develop wayfinding for people of all abilities,
3677 including people with limited eyesight.

3678 g. Consider alternatives to conventional
3679 signs, such as metal plaques, sidewalk
3680 metal inlays, and terrazzo designs to de-
3681 scribe Downtown destinations, historic re-
3682 sources, notable geographic features, and
3683 other community assets. Such features
3684 should reinforce Downtown’s identity as a
3685 center for culture and the arts.

3686 h. Where possible, take advantage of vistas
3687 or “directed views” by placing signs along
3688 common paths of travel.

3689 i. Create a prominent visitors information
3690 center in or near BART Plaza, and possi-
3691 bly near the east end of University Avenue
3692 because of its direct access to Interstate
3693 80 and the UC campus.

3694 j. Work with Downtown organizations to
 3695 develop walking tours and maps that de-
 3696 scribe places of interest.

3697 **Policy 8.2, Visual Harmony.** Signage should
 3698 be aesthetically consistent and maintain visual
 3699 harmony, to the extent possible.

3700 a. Develop a consistent palette for signage
 3701 and consolidate signage by using fewer
 3702 signs and using the same post/pole to
 3703 mount multiple signs. Develop the con-
 3704 sistent palette through a collaborative
 3705 process that involves City departments,
 3706 the Downtown Berkeley Association, inter-
 3707 ested Commissions, and other interested
 3708 parties. Categories of signs include:

- 3709 • traffic & parking operations;
- 3710 • transit signs (BART, buses, shuttles);
- 3711 • bicycle network;
- 3712 • destination & information for all modes;
- 3713 • public services (e.g., restrooms);
- 3714 • banners; and
- 3715 • historic and other interpretive signage.

3716 b. Signage should be easy to understand.
 3717 When taken as a whole, information should
 3718 not exceed users' capacity to absorb it.

3719 c. Consider a "hierarchy" of sign sizes and
 3720 treatments that correspond with the rela-
 3721 tive importance of information being com-
 3722 municated. Use color to differentiate dif-

3723 ferent types of information. Limit signage
 3724 sizes and shapes.

3725 d. Use international icons to the extent pos-
 3726 sible, because Berkeley is an international
 3727 city in many respects.

3728 e. In unique locations, consider incorporating
 3729 one-of-a-kind signs within public art.

3730 **Policy 8.3, Placement & Visibility.** Signs
 3731 should be easy to see and should be posi-
 3732 tioned to promote safety.

3733 a. Signs should meet requirements in the Mu-
 3734 nicipal Code. These requirements should
 3735 be reviewed from the perspective of the
 3736 SOSIP to identify beneficial revisions.

3737 b. Signs should be well-lighted. External
 3738 sources of light should generally be used,
 3739 and internally illuminated signs should be
 3740 avoided because of their visual intensity.

3741 **Policy 8.4, Maintaining Quality.** Signs
 3742 should be long-lasting and well maintained.

3743 a. Material and paint selections should be du-
 3744 rable and graffiti resistant.

3745 b. Where information may change over time, give
 3746 consideration to how signs might be updated.

3747 c. Provide adequate resources for the on-go-
 3748 ing management and maintenance of signs
 3749 (see Operations & Maintenance chapter).



Figure k.4. International Signs. International icons are easy to understand and provide a simple consistent look. Icons are available for almost every application (above), and can be part of directional signs (below).



Figure k.5. Accumulated Complexity. Signs often detract from Downtown's beauty because of too many styles and "visual clutter." Signs can also be needlessly redundant.

Direction	Route	Intersection	Major Destinations
From West	University (from I-80)	Milvia	Theater & Art, civic uses
		Shattuck	Bldv Comml, Theater & Art
		Oxford	UC campus directional sign/map
	Dwight	Shattuck	Bldv, cinema
From East	Bancroft	Shattuck	Bldv, cinema
		Milvia	Civic uses
	Haste	Shattuck	Bldv
From South	Shattuck	Durant	Telegraph Ave., UC Admin, UC Professional Schools
		Allston	Civic
		Addison	Theater & Art
		University	UC, University Visitors Facil.
		Hearst	UC, Northside Euclid District
	MLK	Dwight	Telegraph Ave.
		Allston	Civic
		Addison	Theatre and Art
		University	UC Visitors Facilities, Blvd. Commercial
	From North	Shattuck	Hearst
University			UC Visitors Facilities, University Blvd
Addison			Theatre & Art
Allston			Civic
MLK		Hearst	Northside, UC Engineering
		University	UC Visitors Facilities, University Blvd
		Addison	Theatre & Art
		Allston	Civic
Transit	BART		Multiple Destinations
	Bus Stops		Multiple Destinations

Table k.1. Wayfinding Decision Locations.

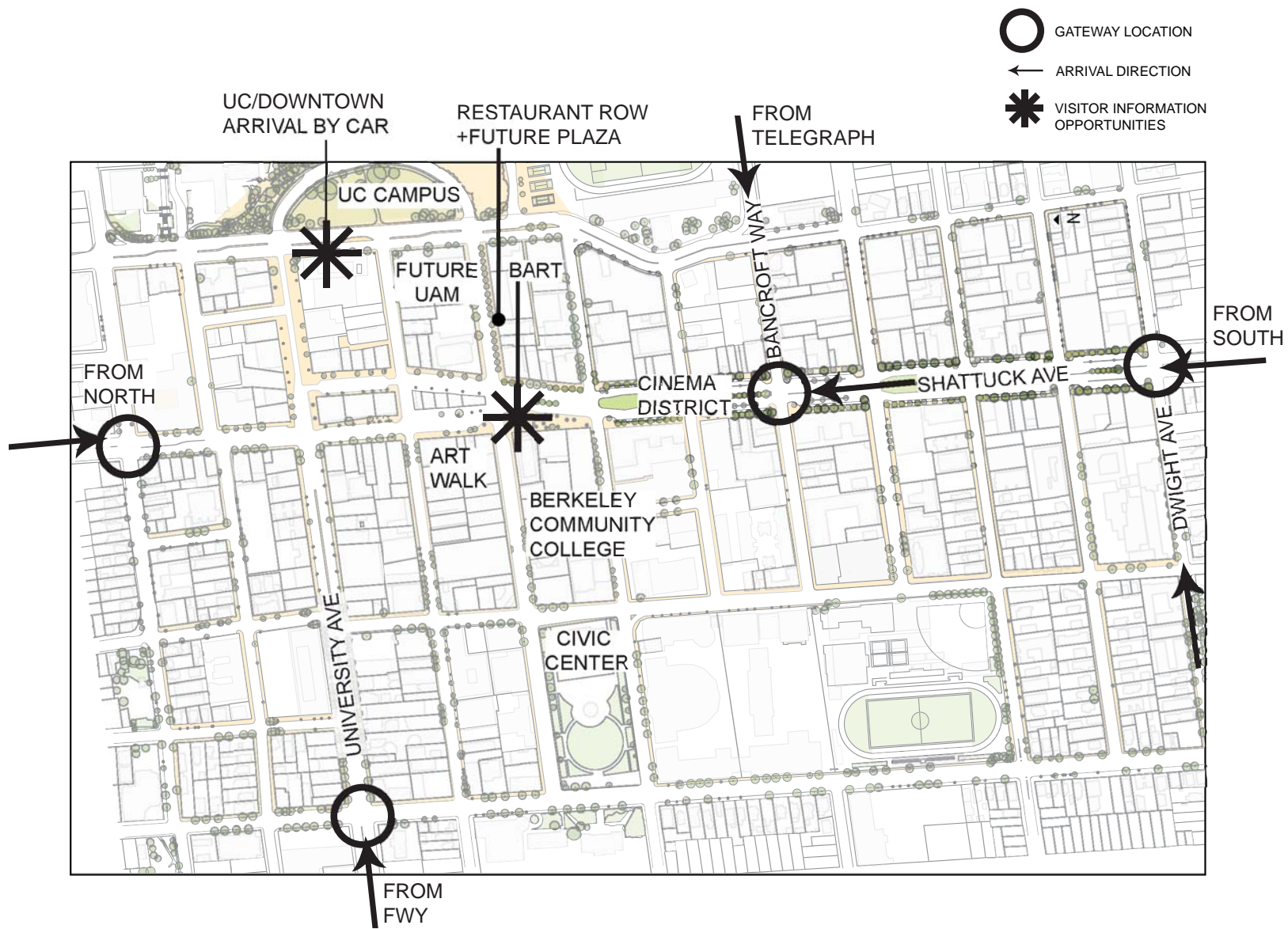


Figure k.6. Major Wayfinding Signage Opportunities. Signage can announce arrival to the Downtown at BART Plaza and along major streets, especially at “gateway” locations where motorists pass and may need guidance.