# 5. Comprehensive Wayfinding System


*Branding the Park to Playa Trail will help create an identity that is recognizable and memorable.*

# 5.1 Introduction

Comprehensive and innovative map, marking and signing systems (collectively "wayfinding") make trail and pathway networks outstanding. A good wayfinding system helps users know about, find, follow, and enjoy the trail. A signage and directional system has been developed to inform and educate users about the Park to Playa trail system and to help them find their way. A good wayfinding plan depends on an accurate understanding of the trail system: its routes, features, users, local origins and destinations of users, and the needs and abilities of those who maintain, manage, and provide emergency services for the trail. The benefits of a wayfinding system include:

- A Park to Playa Trail identity that is recognizable and memorable
- Improved awareness of the trail and increased use
- Enhanced legibility for the public to find and follow the trail
- A greater sense of security and comfort
- Increased numbers of bicycle and walking trips
- Better agency and inter-agency planning, coordination and management
- Improved emergency and maintenance access and coordination

The wayfinding plan has four objectives to realize the benefits.

**1. Get people to the Park to Playa Trail.** The wayfinding plan includes the development of user maps that help people plan their trips before arriving at the trail, including how to access trail heads by car, bus or bike. The plan also includes signs at surrounding bus and transit stops that give people confidence that access to the Trail is close and accessible.

**2. Define the Park to Playa Trail within the larger context of trails, bike and pedestrian routes.** The parks and open spaces along the route have many trails. Other trails and park facilities in the region connect or are planned to connect to the Park to Playa system through other projects. Finally, the system of bike routes and sidewalks affords opportunities to connect to the Trail, as well as alternative routes to segments that may not be open to all users (e.g. bikes or dog walkers).

**3. Help users navigate the Trail network.** The sign plan includes custom design and graphics that distinguish the Park to Playa Trail network from other park trails. The signs include information on how to reach surrounding destinations and mile markers that allow people to track their progress and location along the route.

**4. Alert motorists of bicycle and pedestrian crossings.** The plan includes recommendations for on-street signs, pavement markings and crosswalks to help bicyclists and pedestrians find and follow the trail safely and warn motorists there might be bicyclists and pedestrians in the roadway.

# 5.2 Existing Sign Analysis

The existing trail systems in the Park to Playa corridor consist of a series of paved and unpaved trails, pathways, staging areas, and trailheads currently in place, as well as projects that are planned for implementation in the Feasibility Study. Signage on the trails is minimal and inconsistent in style and placement. Critical information at intersections and roadway crossings is not present. Park maps with "You Are Here" information and trail maps are lacking within the parks at trailheads and trail gateways. Furthermore, the existing trails do not clearly support tracking distances with mile markers to help users gauge how far they have traveled.

The majority of existing on-trail signs are located within Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook and Ballona Creek Bike Path. Signs in KHSRA have a rustic feel and include routed wood post trail markers, and metal sign frames. On trail signs are worn and many sign plaques have been removed due to graffiti. BHSO signs have a modern feel with, galvanized brushed metal background and yellow and black graphics. New signs have recently been installed along Ballona Creek.

Two guiding documents have contributed to the Park to Playa Wayfinding plan. The Baldwin Hills Park Lands Signage and Graphics Guidelines who's goal is to unite the park entities into a recognizable destination through a consistent visual identity. The County of Los Angeles Trails Manual which provides guidance on trail signing within County Parks.


*Baldwin Hills Parklands vehicular signs located along major roadways lead to park entrances.*




*The three park entrance signs at the Five Points intersection are varied in size and materials. Gateway signs with common attributes, e.g. base, materials, scale, etc., at contiguous park entrances would unify the intersection and highlight the gateways on the regoinal trail.*





*Where park entrances are not contiguous, a trail medalion can be added to the existing signs to denote the Park to Playa Trail within the park.*



*Posts and signs along existing trails (from left to right): metal trail marker along Stocker Trail, wood post and metal sign frame with graffiti in KHSRA, and a regulation marker in BHSO.*




*Kiosk and signs within the parks (from left to right): unmaintained kiosk at Stocker Corridor, regulations signs in KHSRA, and place maker in KHSRA.*


*Interpetive signs along existing trails (from left to right): two types of interpretive signs in KHSRA, an angled trail wayside with black metal frame containing ecological information and vertical panels designating health and wellness trail; BHSO interpretive signs with silver steel frames; and new interpretive sign along Ballona Creek Path with dark green metal frame.*

# 5.3 Wayfinding and Branding

The P2P wayfinding program provides for identification information, orientation devices, safety and regulatory messages through a unifying identity. This section provides an overview of the components that make trail system wayfinding more effective.

## Trail Logo

Trail identity can play a key role in defining the trail in the eyes of the community. Logos can help shape the character of the trail and make it instantly recognizable to a broad range of community members. This identity can help trail managers in many ways, ranging from community support and volunteerism to fundraising. The color pallet and design was chosen to complement the existing sign projects in the corridor. The P2P logo has been designed with project partner input. The shield shape was selected to emphasize the trail as a regional transportation route. Furthermore, the logo shape provides the flexibility to be placed within a rectangle or circle for use in other agency signs and publications.

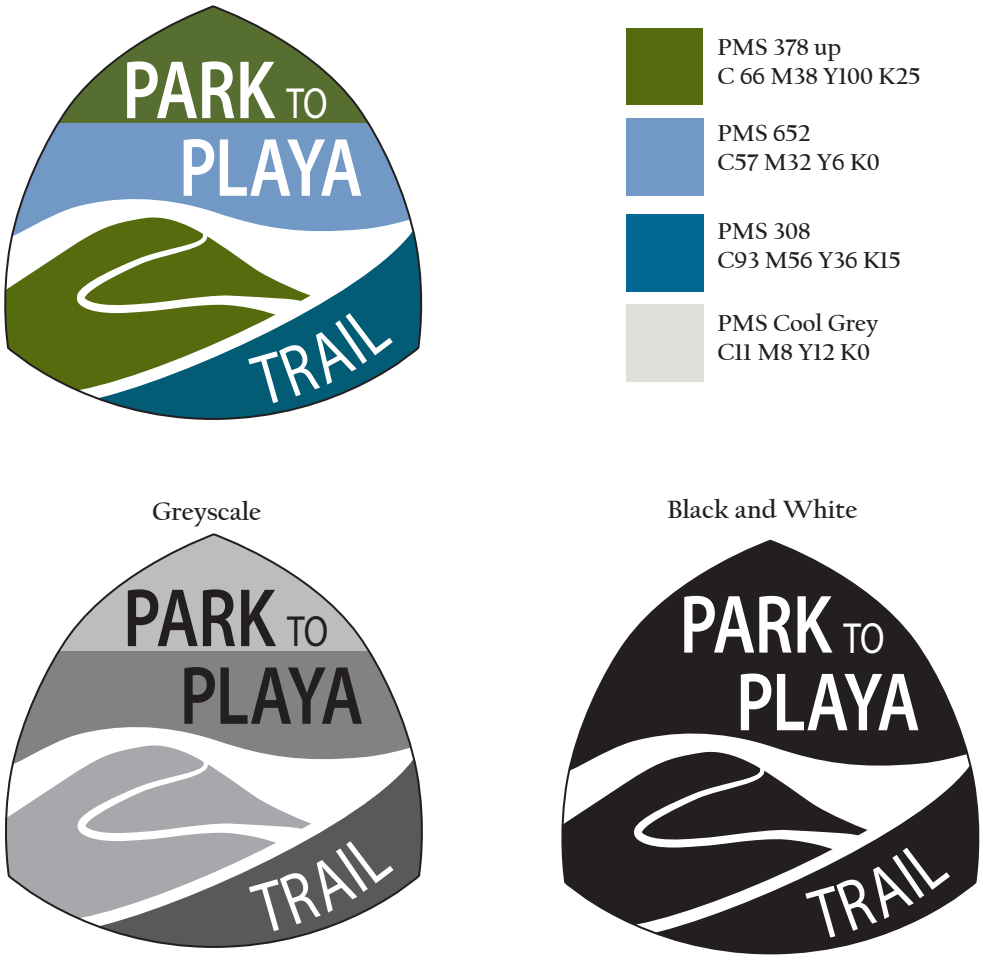



**Figure 5.1 Trail logo options**

## Sign Placement

When placing signs in natural environments, it is important to avoid sign clutter and unnecessary messages. Signs should be located at entrances and intersections, rather than placing sign elements intermittently along the trail. This would concentrate sign locations at trailheads, gateway entrances, and decision points where intersecting trails meet. Exceptions to this rule include confirmation signs and accompanying regulatory information which is designed to be at a small scale on bollard posts to avoid disrupting the trail experience.

## Symbols

Through the P2P corridor trail use information, recreational opportunities, amenities, regulatory messages and safety warnings must be conveyed. Symbols provide a universal vocabulary to convey much of this information. The following provides a list of symbols to be included on the signs.

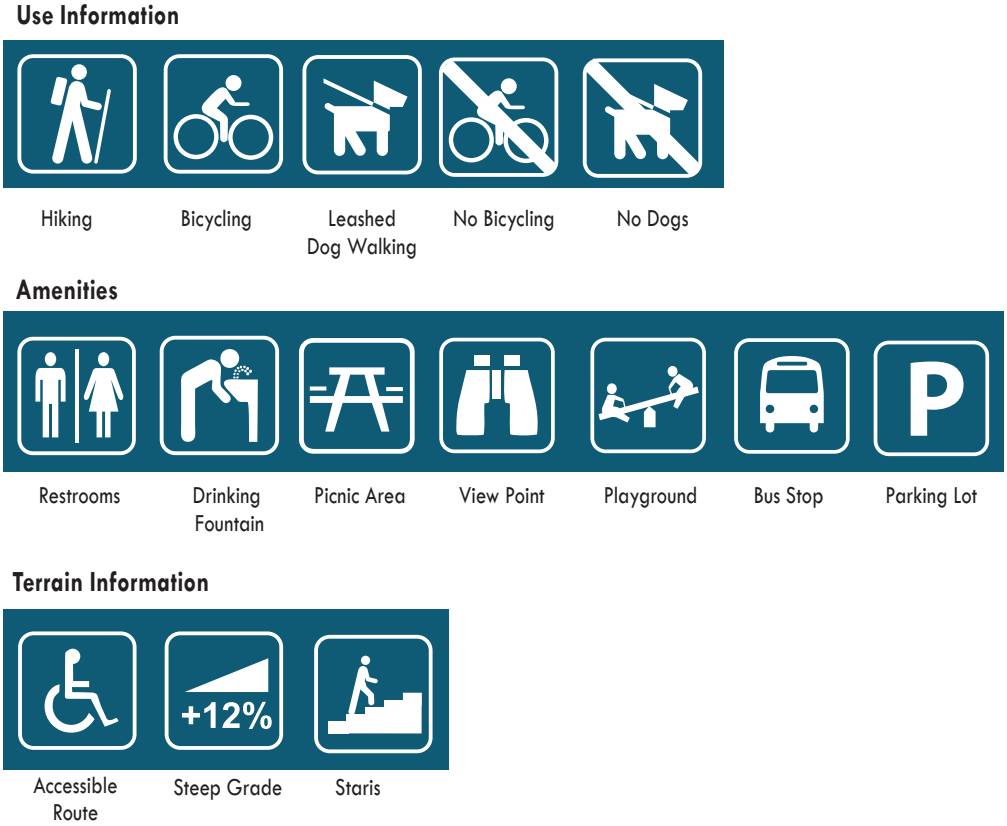



**Figure 5.2 Standardized Symbols**

## Americans with Disabilities Act

An accessible route that meets ADA standards for recreational trails will be provided along the P2P regional trail. A component of meeting the ADA standards is to provide advanced notice and label trails that are not accessible. A user map of the trail system should identify accessible trailheads, allowing people with disabilities with information to plan their visit to the Trail. Advanced labeling on signs are particularly important

in areas where there may be steep slopes along sections of trail, or terrain that may be impassible for users with limited physical abilities, such as stairs.

### Agency Logos

Signs within each of the park jurisdictions will display the logo from the owning and managing agencies.

### QR Tags

Quick response codes, called QR codes, are a smart phone technology that dynamically connect mobile users with digital content by taking a picture of a two dimensional square bar code. Incorporating QR tags into wayfinding signs allow people to access digital information for the trail such as trail maps, park information or interpretive information. For example, if a person scans a QR tag on a P2P sign at the Metro Expo line station, their phone could launch a map to help direct them to a trail gateway. QR tags along the trail route could provide interpretive information on site history or geology, provide seasonal information on plant in bloom, describe restoration efforts in progress, or provide fitness information.

Software to deliver information from a QR tag can be set up two ways. The first alternative is to develop a custom Park to Playa Trail Application (P2P App) which would enable use without the internet. The second alternative is to link users to the Park to Playa website, or existing park website, by launching an internet browser. Before launching a QR tag program it is important that it be designed to be easy to use and add value to the trail user's experience.

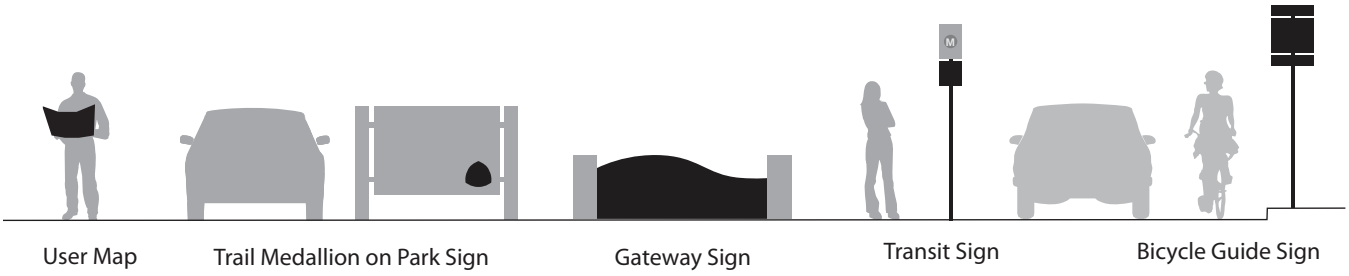

*QR tags along the Centennial Trail in Snohomish County, Washington create a multi-media platform to provide historical information along the trail. (Photo by Snohomish Times).*

## 5.4 Wayfinding Elements

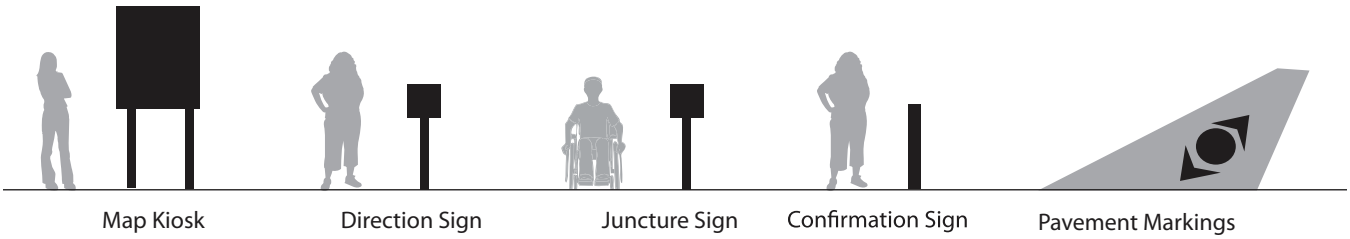
The wayfinding program is divided into two parts, off site elements and on trail elements. Off-trail elements help people get to the trail. The on-trail elements help users navigate the Trail. Each wayfinding element will serve a specific function, but will be visually integrated to present a seamless system to users.

**Figure 5.3 Wayfinding Elements**

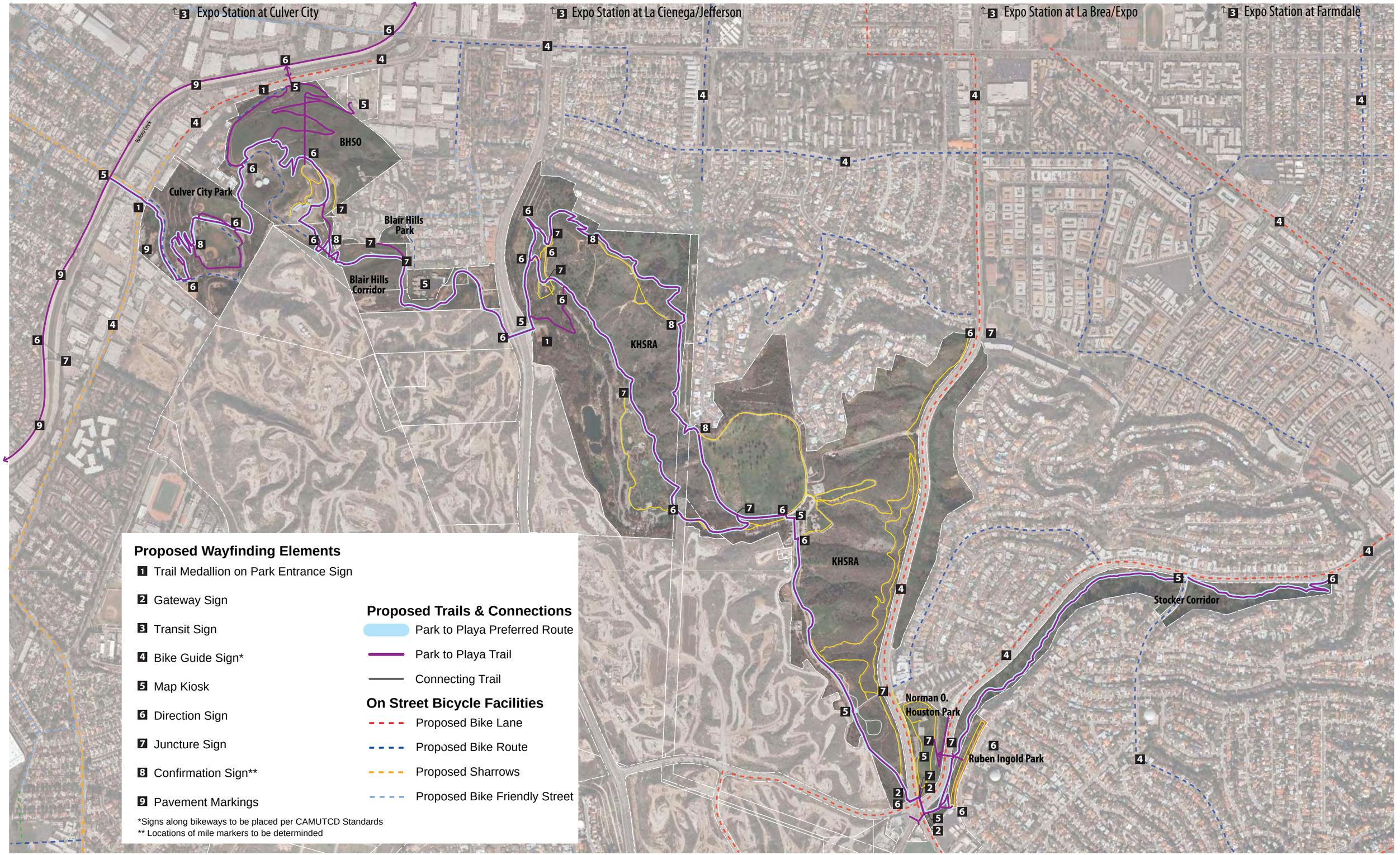
## OFF SITE ELEMENTS




## ON TRAIL ELEMENTS




| Table 5.1 Wayfinding Elements | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Description | Application/Location |
| Off Trail Elements | | |
| User Map | Paper or digital map with trail route and amenities. | Visitors center or online |
| Trail Medallion on Park Sign | Trail medallion on vehicular scale park identification sign | Park entrances |
| Gateway Sign | Vehicular scale park identification sign | Park entrances at the Five Points intersection |
| Transit Sign | Small directional plaque to direct transit riders to adjacent P2P gateway entrance. | Bus stops and Metro transit stations. |
| Bicycle Guide Sign | MUTCD Bicycle Guide Sign with Park to Playa supplemental plaque. | Along on-street bicycle facilities. |
| Warning Sign | MUTCD vehicular warning signs. | Road crossings. |
| On Trail Elements | | |
| Map Kiosks | Large displays to orient users through maps, educational and guidance information. | Trailheads, trail gateways and other nearby major destinations |
| Direction Signs | Guide users to destinations along trail. Destination information (name, distance and direction). | At trail decision points. |
| Juncture Signs | Guide users to trail. Inform users of use restriction or trail conditions. | Intersecting trail juncture points. |
| Confirmation Signs | Guide users along trail and provide mile marker information. | Mile markers every half mile and minor trail junctures. |
| Pavement Markings | Mark paved portions of the path. | Paved trail segments, city sidewalks, Ballona Creek Path, on-street bicycle routes. |




## Map 5-1 Proposed Wayfinding Elements

Source Data: LA County, Bing Maps 11/2/11