

St. Helens OR – Branding & Wayfinding Master Plan

Finding St. Helens

Preferred Sign Family Outreach Summary

May 2017



Overview

In May 2016, the City of St. Helens conducted a second round of public outreach to gather feedback from the community on a preferred sign family as part of the Branding & Wayfinding Master Plan. This effort was a follow up to the first round of outreach conducted in April 2016, where the City asked for input on three draft wayfinding design concepts.

The team provided members of the public with two opportunities to participate:

- **Open House Meeting:** May 10, 2017 from 6-8pm at Meriwether Place, 1070 Columbia Blvd., St. Helens, OR. 97051
- **Online Survey:** May 11-25, 2017

About 20 people attended the open house meeting, and 177 provided comments through the online survey. This report summarizes outreach activities and public comments.

Notification

The City of St. Helens invited members of the public to participate in the open house meeting and online survey through the following forms of notification:

- Two City e-newsletter announcements
- Announcement on project website
- Announcement on City web pages
- Facebook posts on City Facebook
- Paid advertising on Facebook
- Press release
- Email blast to Open House participants
- Email blast to Wayfinding Advisory Committee members
- Announcement at May 9 Planning Commission meeting

The Chronicle Online wrote an article about the project and open house meeting:
https://www.thechronicleonline.com/out_about/st-helens-branding-wayfinding-open-house/article_4040064a-2b98-11e7-a7ae-13339f031731.html

Executive Summary of Comments

Of the nearly 200 people who participated in the open house and online survey, most gave positive feedback about the preferred sign family and felt that the final design did a good job of incorporating river colors and light feel into the stone concept. People liked the color options, use of district colors, and especially liked the gateway design.

Common responses, suggestions and critiques included:

- Suggestions regarding the color scheme.
 - The majority of those recommended incorporating the blue that is used in the other sign designs.
 - There were a number of responses that requested using a black or dark brown instead of the yellow color.
 - Many felt the brown color could be more distinctive.
- Ensure lettering is readable and illuminated, and uses a consistent font on all the signs.
- Use materials that are durable, and resistant to age and weather.
- Use consistent designs that can easily be incorporated into the existing style.
- It was suggested that individual colors be used to differentiate the districts and locations that are recognizable and easy to interpret.
- A few people felt that specific signs were unnecessary and could be eliminated as options, in order to provide cost savings to the City.

Open House #2 Meeting Summary

1. Format

Members of the public were welcomed and provided with comment forms and project information. Staff made a presentation about the preferred sign family as well as a history of how the team developed draft designs using public input. They reviewed public feedback on the three draft design concepts from the first round of outreach, and how the feedback was used to develop the preferred design concept. They explained the key elements of the preferred concept, and that public input from tonight's meeting and from the online survey would be used to refine the design into a final design concept. Next steps will be to develop design intent drawings which the City will use to raise money through grants and other sources to construct signage.

Participants were invited to visit display boards that detailed the preferred design concept as well as the map that would be included in the Map Kiosk. Staff wrote down input on flipcharts and sticky notes.

2. Attendance

About 20 members of the public attended the event.

3. Comments

What do you like about this concept?

Overall, people said that they like the preferred sign family and that it the signs reflect ideas and suggestions made by the public during the earlier round of outreach.

Comments about the overall design: "Stone: With River Influences"

- I like it overall. Good job of incorporating river colors and light feel into the stone concept.
- The design is pleasing to the eye and easy to look at.
- Simple, predictable, easy to understand
- Appreciate this effort to direct people downtown using signage. This will hopefully help businesses thrive as they get more visitors.
- Like the art deco style of the small arches on each of the signs. This mirrors many buildings in downtown St. Helens.
- Love the use of district colors.
- Like the colors.

- Question about whether the stonework will be true. Staff noted that within city limits and on pedestrian-oriented signs, true basalt will be used. Signs on ODOT Right of Way (along Hwy 30) will not use basalt because of safety restrictions that sign bases must be able to breakaway in the event of a crash.

Comments on Gateway:

- "I've waited all my life for that arch!"
- Like ideas of lighting up the "Welcome to St. Helens" title
- Question about whether it will be possible to hang add-ons onto the gateway for the holidays, such as Christmas lights and other decorations.

Refinements and suggestions for the final design:

- Several people commented that all poles and metal should be powder coated instead of painted. This will reduce maintenance cost because there will not be a need to repaint metal in future years.
- The Welcome Sign should include a band at bottom with non-profit organization logos.
- Finger-blades need to be modular so they can be replaced and updated – to grow with the city.

Comments and suggestions on map and destinations to sign

- Include Nob Hill Nature Park in the kiosk map.
- Use some signs to direct people to Nob Hill Nature Park
- The St. Helens Bike/Pedestrian Advisory Committee is dreaming up some walking trails along the river and in the historic district. Possibility to sign these for connectivity?
- Is there a route that would allow for cranes, boats and houses to bypass [the arch]?

Open House #2 Survey Summary

Format

Participants were given an overview of the project background and purpose, and were asked whether they had participated in the April Open House or the first online survey. They were then given a brief review of the initial community feedback and how it was incorporated into the preferred sign family. The survey provided opportunities for participants to suggest modifications to each of the different signs, color palette, and kiosk map that would be used to help refine and develop the sign designs for the engineering phase of work.

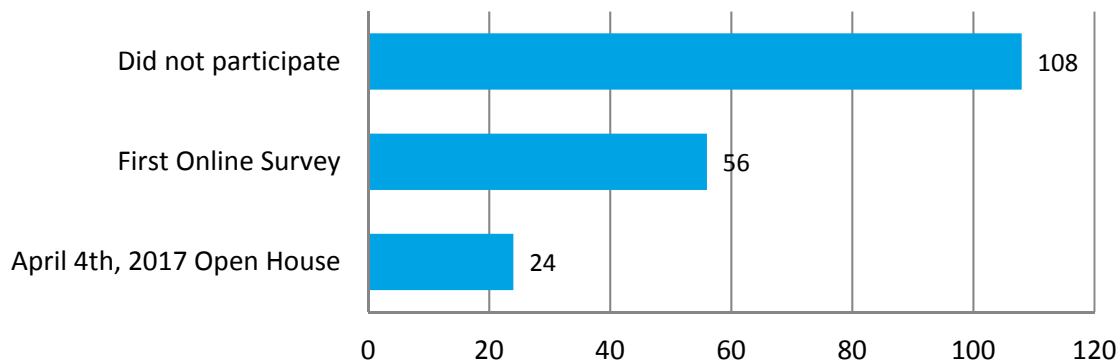
Participation

A total of 177 people participated in the online survey.

Survey Results

1. *Did you participate in the first open house or online survey?*

Participants were asked what, if any, of the previous outreach they had participated in and could select as many as applied. A total of 174 people responded to this question. Most did not participate in the first round of outreach.



2. What elements would suggest modifying about the gateway design?

Of the 46 participants who responded to this question, only seven were overtly opposed to the gateway design. The majority had positive reactions with varying suggestions and critiques. Below are the suggestions listed from most to least common.

- Many had suggestions regarding the color scheme.
 - The majority of those recommended incorporating the blue that is used in the other sign designs.
 - There were a number of responses that requested using a black or dark brown instead of the yellow color.
- The design is too bulky and imposing. Consider making it more stylized.
- Ensure that the lettering is illuminated.
- Ensure materials are durable.
- Consider making the metal look more rustic.
- Make sure the lettering is readable; consider a bolder font that is more spaced out.

3. What elements would you suggest modifying about the highway identity sign?

Of the 42 people who responded to this question, the majority gave positive feedback, with only three reacting negatively. Below are the suggestions listed from most to least common.

- Consider using a black or dark brown instead of the yellow color.
- Ensure that the lettering is illuminated.
- There were several participants who had suggestions regarding the proportions of the sign.
 - The base pillars seem too small relative to the size of the sign.
 - Consider making the sign wider.
- Make sure the lettering is readable; consider a bolder font that is more spaced out.
- The style is not consistent with the existing obelisks on the highway.
- Ensure font style is consistent on all the signs.
- Consider attaching planters for season flowers and greenery.
- Add the year St. Helens was established.
- Enhance and highlight the elements that are meant to represent the character of the community.

4. *What elements would you suggest modifying about the vehicle directional sign?*

There were 35 people who responded to this question, the majority of which approved of the design with only two giving negative feedback. Below are the responses listed from most to least common.

- Either spell out the word “district” or add a period.
- There was confusion as to why the signs were directing to the locations used in the example. It was noted that both were in need of serious maintenance to be useable, and that Dalton Lake doesn’t have parking.
- The bases seem too small relative to the size of the signs.
- It was suggested that individual color schemes be used to differentiate and identify the districts.

5. *What elements would you suggest modifying about the on-street pedestrian directional sign?*

Of the 35 people who gave feedback to this question, only three were explicitly opposed to the design. The majority had positive reactions with varying suggestions and critiques. Below are the responses listed from most to least common.

- It was suggested that individual colors be used to differentiate the districts and locations that are recognizable and easy to interpret.
- The signs don’t explicitly direct people to a location. Consider adding arrows or naming the destinations they are guiding people to.
- Consider using black or dark brown instead of yellow.
- The style of the post doesn’t seem consistent, make it look for rustic/rusty or use wood.

6. *What elements would you suggest modifying about the off-street map kiosk?*

There were 31 responses to this question with only one person that expressed opposition. Below are the common suggestions listed from most to least common.

- There were several suggestions for additions to the map kiosk including:
 - Website and phone number of the City
 - Racks to provide brochures, pamphlets, and physical maps.
 - QR codes that would provide more information
 - Locations of public restrooms
 - “You are Here” markers to identify the location of the person reading the map

- Instructions for dialing 911 in the case of emergencies
- Ensure the pane on the map is age and weather resistant.

7. What elements would you suggest modifying about the on-street bike direction, confirmation, and turn signs?

A total of 32 people gave responses to this question with only three giving explicitly negative feedback. Below are the suggestions and critiques listed from most to least common.

- The top emblems seem arbitrary and unnecessary.
- It was suggested that individual colors be used to differentiate the districts and locations that are recognizable and easy to interpret.
- Keep the style of the poles consistent with the style throughout the rest of the city.
- Consider signs that either direct to or identify where there are public bike racks.
- Some felt the signs themselves were unnecessary and shouldn't be added until the city's infrastructure supports safe riding.
- Consider creating signs for other wheeled transport such as skateboards and motorized bikes.

8. What elements would you suggest modifying about the off-street trailhead sign and directional kiosk?

Of the 28 people who responded to this question, only one gave a negative response. Below are the suggestions and critiques listed from most to least common.

- There was concern about the condition of these areas and whether they were usable.
- It was suggested that the signs allow space for updates regarding weather-related and maintenance closures.
- Provide information about ADA accessibility.
- Consider providing a map of the trails.
- Center the names on the signs.
- Provide information about restrooms, picnic areas, whether campfires are permitted, etc.
- Consider using a different shade of green for the arrows.
- Add a space after the period in "St. Helens."

9. What elements would you suggest modifying about the mile marker?

A total of 35 people responded to this question. Of the proposed designs, the mile marker received the most opposition with 8 people giving negative feedback. Below are the responses listed from most to least common.

- There was concern about vandalism and whether the top would be easy to replace.
- Consider labeling from which direction the miles are being counted.
- Several participants had concerns about the design of the base.
 - Some thought the bulkiness of the base was unattractive and imposing.
 - Ensure the base doesn't create an obstruction for strollers or people in wheelchairs.
 - Consider changing the design to be more consistent with the rest of the designs.
- Some felt it seemed unnecessary and would be too expensive to manufacture, and thought the money would be better spent elsewhere.
- Consider adding kilometers to the markers.

10. Do you agree with the color choices? Why or why not?

There were 64 people who responded to the first half of the question and 39 who responded to the second half. Only seven responses were opposed to the color choices. Below are the suggestions and comments listed from most to least common.

- Several participants were not pleased with the brown.
 - Some felt it should be a more distinctive shade of brown.
 - Consider changing it to a slate gray or beige.
- Ensure color blind people are able to differentiate the colors.
- Consider changing the shade of green to something more subtle or natural.
- Ensure the colors will remain vibrant and be resistant to age and weather.
- Adding silver or stainless accents would help make the colors appear more vibrant.
- Using different colors on the map will make it easier to distinguish.
- Consider incorporating the high school colors.

11. How did you hear about this event?

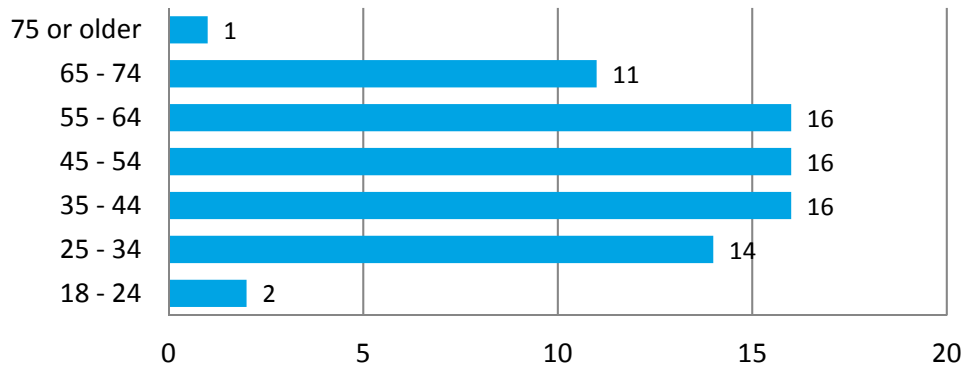
A total of 78 people responded to this question. Participants were asked to select all the options that applied. The majority (34) heard about it through the City's eNewsletter, 28 on the City's Facebook, 16 through social media advertising, 13 at the second open house, 11 through a

friend or neighbor, and nine saw the project’s announcement. There were 11 people who responded “other.”

Demographics

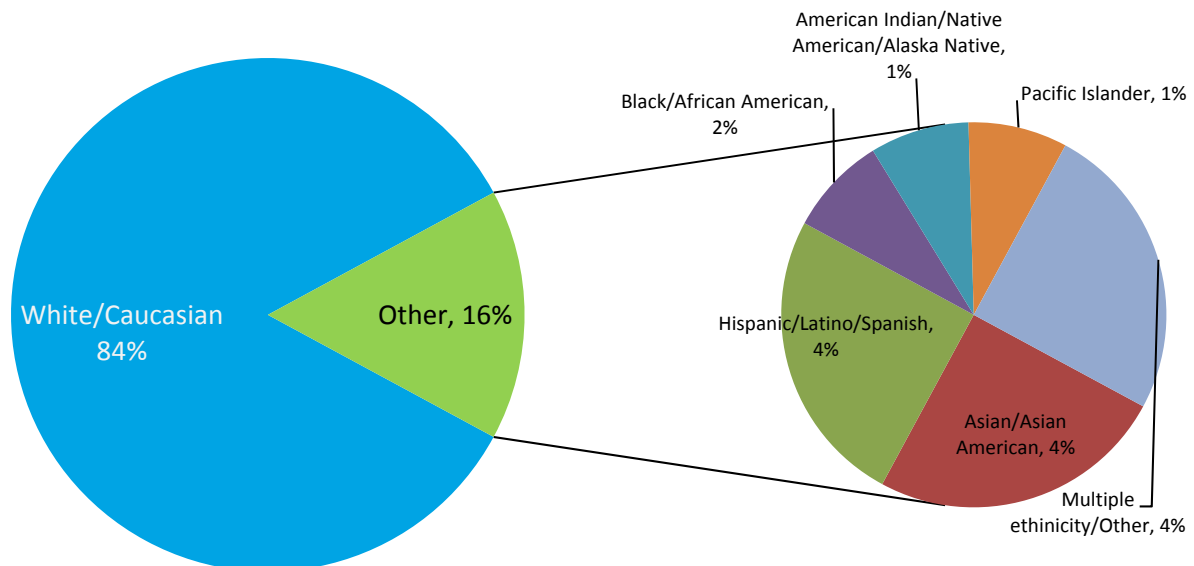
12. What is your age?

A total of 76 people responded to this question.



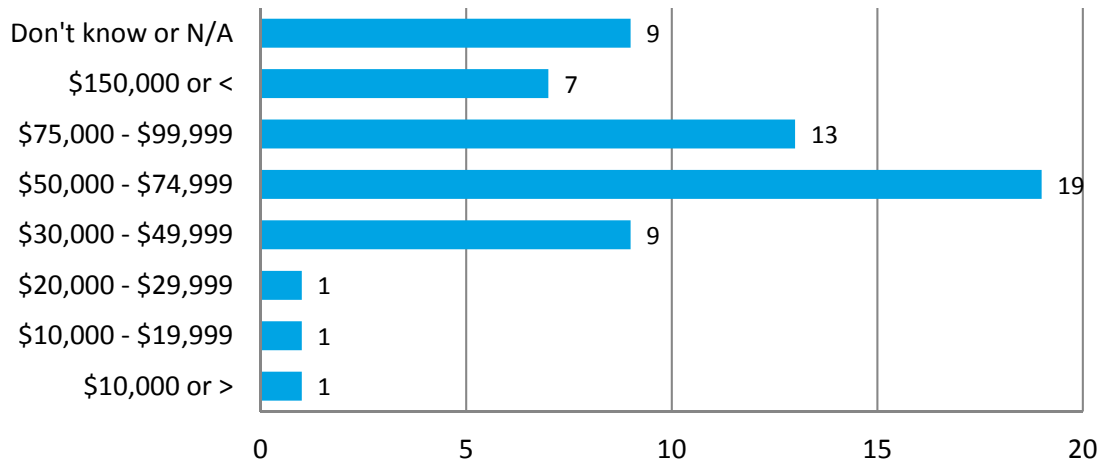
13. When asked to identify your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?

A total of 70 people responded to this question.



14. Which of the following best represents the annual income of your household before taxes?

A total of 76 people responded to this question.



15. Do you live with a disability?

A total of 71 people responded to this question. Of the responses a majority (67) answered that they did not live with a disability or that they preferred not to answer. Four participants indicated that they have difficulty hearing, and two said they have ambulatory difficulty.