

# DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN



**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
of the **CITY of SAN JOSE**  
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# GOALS a n d ISSUES

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## P U R P O S E

The Downtown San Jose Signage Program is intended to provide visitors, workers, and residents with the cues and information they need to explore, discover and take advantage of Downtown San Jose's breadth of experiences. In keeping with the goals outlined in *Strategy 2000: The Greater Downtown San Jose Strategy for Development (Strategy 2000)* and the updated *San Jose Greater Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (Streetscape Master Plan)*, it seeks to draw people into the streets and to keep them there, to help make walking efficient, wandering easy, and lingering rewarding.

The ongoing efforts of the Redevelopment Agency and the Downtown community have begun to bear significant fruit. Downtown San Jose, by most measures, is thriving. High rents and low vacancy rates, housing construction, cultural institutions, a wealth of transportation options, and a noticeably improved vitality of the streets and public spaces are clearly apparent.

This period of rapid transformation is an excellent opportunity to rework the Downtown's signage program, which has accumulated in several separate efforts over many years. As the Downtown comes into its own, signage can play an important role in supporting the public realm, bringing more of the city to more people, and contributing to a distinctive identity that embodies the city's values.



*San Pedro Square and the weekly farmer's market.*

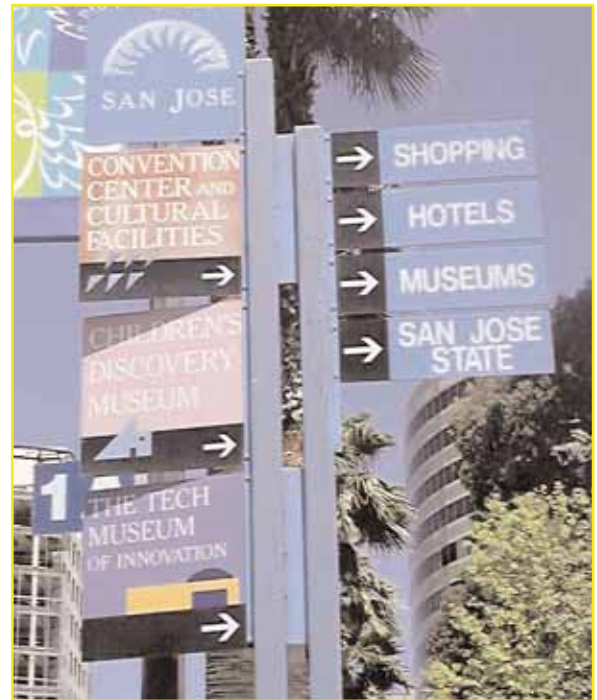


*The transit mall in Downtown San Jose has been one of the catalysts for the city's revival.*

# P R O G R A M O B J E C T I V E S

## Reduce Clutter

A host of different signage efforts have been undertaken over the years, in a somewhat piecemeal fashion. This process has left Downtown San Jose with several layers of signs, lacking a consistent graphic identity or functional integration. Some existing signs are almost illegible, and the design of others feels dated. Along with a great deal of regulatory signage and other streetscape elements, the signage contributes to visual clutter Downtown.



*An example of clutter in the existing signage system.*

## Improve Wayfinding and Legibility

In spite of its small size, Downtown San Jose can be difficult to navigate as a pedestrian. While the fine-grained historic core is quite comfortable, it deteriorates



*The Downtown Core of San Jose looking northeast.*

rates into very large blocks, particularly toward and across Highway 87. These areas are scaled to automobiles, and pedestrian routes often seem longer than they are. In addition, the flat terrain and the rarity of tall landmark structures resulting from FAA height limits can make orientation a challenge. The Downtown Signage Program is intended to clarify wayfinding and bring destinations within more comfortable view of pedestrians.

**Promote the Efficient Use of Parking Resources**

As Downtown San Jose continues to thrive, drawing increasing numbers of workers, residents, and visitors, pressure on its parking resources is mounting. Moreover, a considerable number of spaces are being removed as surface lots are developed. To address the long-term parking needs of the area, the Redevelopment Agency is developing a Parking Management Plan, consistent with the goals of transit ridership and pedestrian orientation. The Downtown Signage Program is intended to complement the Agency's long-term parking management strategies by clarifying locations of, and routes to downtown garages. In addition, this program is intended to complement the Department of Transportation's Parking Guidance System which is geared primarily toward visitors unfamiliar with the Downtown and the locations of parking facilities. The system will also complement the existing Arena Motorist Information System.



*Proposed design for the Department of Transportation's Parking Guidance System. The system will inform motorists of parking locations and real-time space availability using electronic message signs located at Downtown gateways and intermediary points closer to parking facilities.*

## **Mark and Distinguish**

### **Downtown San Jose**

With the rapid pace of change comes a need to help define the city that is emerging, creating a consistent identity that reflects and reinforces its values, energies, and aspirations. Environmental graphics can play an important role in providing Downtown's public face, marking its boundaries, and contributing to its character.

## **Provide Information on**

### **Downtown Resources**

Downtown San Jose has a remarkable wealth of resources--from museum exhibitions to music festivals to sporting events--that visitors or even locals may not be aware of. The Signage Program can play an important role in informing people of the Downtown's offerings, and drawing them into the economic and cultural life of the city.

## **Enhance the Pedestrian Environment**

Improving the walkability of the Greater Downtown is a major goal of the *Strategy 2000* the *Streetscape Master Plan*. Signage can by no means address all of the pressing issues of pedestrian comfort and safety in downtown streets and public spaces. However, it can make important contributions by improving wayfinding, directing pedestrians onto the most comfortable and amenity-rich walking routes, and highlighting sidewalks and other public spaces as places worth lingering and worthy of public investment.



*Lighthearted wayfinding signage for Seattle's waterfront.*



*The existing and beautiful wayfinding mosaics along the Guadalupe River Park.*

## T H E S T U D Y A R E A

The Downtown Signage program encompasses the downtown "core" area and the greater downtown "frame" area (see map next page). The Downtown Core is bounded by Julian Street to the north, Fourth Street to the east, Interstate 280 to the south, and State Route 87 to the west.

The frame area is bounded by Taylor Street to the north, Eleventh Street to the east, Willow Street and Keyes Street to the south, and by Stockton Street, The Alameda and the railroad tracks to the west. The consideration of the frame area was less comprehensive as the key areas of visitor interest are found in the core. As a result, work in this area focused on gateway and freeway exit signs that will lead the visitor to the core.

A comprehensive survey of wayfinding signs in Downtown San Jose was conducted within the entire study area. Wayfinding signs, for the purpose of this master plan, are defined as directional signs for vehicles and/or pedestrians to destinations in the downtown area.



## D O W N T O W N   S I G N A G E   I N V E N T O R Y

Signs were divided into three categories: street signs, automobile wayfinding signs and pedestrian wayfinding signs. These three categories were further divided according to their graphic design.

Several types of signs were not included in the inventory. The San Jose Arena signs have been replaced with Compaq Center signs, according to the City's agreement with the Compaq Center. In addition, Caltrans wayfinding and identification signs were beyond the scope of the inventory.

A total of 380 signs were inventoried, 242 street name signs, 70 automobile wayfinding signs, and 68 pedestrian wayfinding signs. A summary and key of the inventory is presented in tables on the following pages.

Thematic maps for each sign type as well as a sign catalog/visual audit is included in the supplemental document *Downtown Wayfinding Sign Inventory*.



*The new Compaq Center signs (top) and Caltrans wayfinding signs (above) were not included in the inventory process.*

## SIGN INVENTORY RESULTS

| SIGN TYPE                   | NUMBER OF SIGNS |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Street Names                | 242             |
| Automobile Wayfinding       | 70              |
| Pedestrian Wayfinding       | 68              |
| <b>TOTAL SIGNS</b>          | <b>380</b>      |
| <b>SIGN CONTENT</b>         |                 |
| Historic Site               | 45              |
| Convention Center           | 31              |
| Tech Museum                 | 25              |
| Children's Discovery Museum | 24              |
| Arena                       | 18              |
| City of San Jose            | 16              |
| Parking                     | 16              |
| Hotels                      | 15              |
| Shopping                    | 13              |
| Museum of Art               | 10              |
| Center for Performing Arts  | 10              |
| Library                     | 10              |
| San Pedro Square            | 9               |
| Paseo de San Antonio        | 8               |
| Museum of Quilts            | 7               |
| Museums                     | 6               |
| Montgomery Theater          | 5               |
| Parkside Hall               | 4               |
| Japantown                   | 4               |
| San Jose State University   | 2               |
| Exhibit Hall                | 2               |
| Civic Auditorium            | 2               |
| McCabe Hall                 | 2               |
| Downtown                    | 2               |
| St. James Park              | 1               |

# WAYFINDING SIGN INVENTORY KEY

## STREET SIGNS



**S1** Mast Arm Mounted



**S2** Pole Mounted

## AUTO WAYFINDING SIGNS



**A1** Square  
RDA Signs



**A2** Purple



**A3** Brown



**A4** Other

## PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING SIGNS



**P1** History Walk



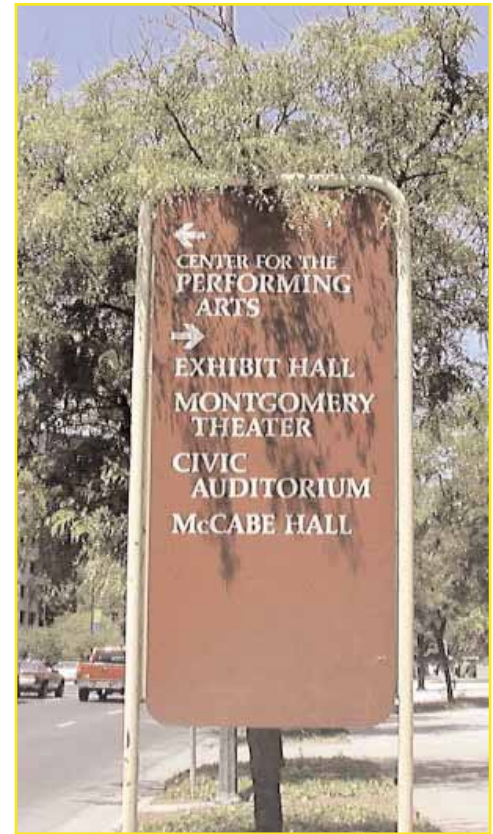
**P2** Pole Mounted

## EXISTING PROGRAM EVALUATION

The existing signage program serves many functions reasonably well. It provides effective wayfinding and identification for some destinations and is visible in many parts of the Downtown core. It represents several efforts over the years to improve the legibility and wayfinding. However, the signage inventory identified a number of issues in the existing signage system that could be significantly improved. These include:

### **Lack of Consistent Graphic Design**

Because the existing system is the result of several efforts over a long period of time, the graphic design language is inconsistent. Not only does this limit the aesthetic impact and hamper the identity-giving function of the system, it has a negative effect on wayfinding functions as well. A consistent look allows visitors see out wayfinding information quickly and easily, rather than scanning every sign for useful information.



*Contrasting signage styles and an ambiguity between automobile and pedestrian signage hampers the current system.*

### **Auto/Pedestrian Ambiguity**

Many of the existing wayfinding signs are ambiguous as to whether they are intended for motorists or pedestrians. Communicating effectively with these two audiences requires two distinct approaches to conveying information. Motorists require a minimum amount of copy and visual simplicity—they cannot absorb much while driving safely. Pedestrians require a scale and orientation that serves their needs and expect a higher level of detail when they approach a sign.

### **Dated Designs**

Some of the signage is clearly from another period of time aesthetically, hindering the ability of Downtown San Jose to project a progressive and forward-looking image.

### **Poor Legibility**

Some existing signage (primarily the freestanding purple signs) is nearly impossible to read, possibly due to poor finishing and UV impact. In addition, some of the existing signage is not designed to a high graphic standard, has wordy or inconsistent copy, and is therefore difficult to read, especially for motorists.



*The faded letters of this wayfinding sign make it dangerous to automobile drivers who attempt to read it.*

### **Visual/Physical Clutter**

In numerous locations, large numbers of signs are clustered together in an effort to include as many destinations as possible, resulting in a visual clutter that detracts from the quality of the public realm. In addition, the proliferation of sign poles has had a negative impact on the streetscape in many areas.

### **Poor Transit Integration**

Although some signs are directed toward pedestrians, few refer to the transit network, an important and growing mode of access to the downtown. Signage should both direct pedestrians toward transit resources and direct transit arrival to Downtown destinations.

### **Insufficient Egress Information**

Signs directing motorists leaving the downtown to nearby freeway on-ramps are insufficient.

# 2.

## DEVELOPING THE RECOMMENDED PROGRAM

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## S I G N A G E N E E D S

A range of issues affect the need for wayfinding signage Downtown. Some of these are easily quantified, such as the number of annual visitors to a particular destination, while other are much more difficult to ascertain, like the role of a signage program in establishing and reinforcing an identity for the Downtown. Among the questions that guided program development were:

- ◆ *Whom is the program intended to reach?*
- ◆ *How comprehensive a program is appropriate?*
- ◆ *How effective is the current system and what might be kept?*
- ◆ *What should the look and feel of the system be?*
- ◆ *Can signage be of help to local workers and residents?*
- ◆ *Which downtown destinations should be referred to by wayfinding signs?*

The project team explored these and many other issues in a series of stakeholder interviews with relevant institutions, organizations, public agencies, and private citizens and has developed a program based on their responses. The issues that have impacted programming decisions include:



*The Signage Program is designed to serve both pedestrians and drivers.*

## DESTINATION TYPE / USER POPULATION

### One-time/Repeat

Where most users come to a destination more than once, the need for wayfinding signage is reduced. This is the case at theaters with high subscription rates, for example. In contrast, certain museums or historic sites may tend to attract visitors only once or quite infrequently, and thus need more comprehensive wayfinding signage.

### Planned/Drop-in

Similarly, planned visits depend on signage less than spontaneous ones, which may be greatly facilitated by wayfinding or marketing efforts.

### Visitors/Residents/Workers

The very existence and location of some destinations may be news to out-of-town visitors, while residents or workers may be more interested in upcoming events or current exhibitions. Signage efforts should be sensitive to these differences.

### Static Destination/Single Events/Ongoing Exhibitions

Some destinations remain unchanged from year to year, and locating them in the city may be all that is required of a signage program. Others, such as museums or theaters, may have a current exhibition or run that lasts for several months and could benefit from ongoing support with signage. Still others, such as concerts, public festivals, or conventions, may occur only once, and may benefit from a marketing campaign that builds to a single date and ends.



*The Tech and the Diridon Station are two downtown elements that will benefit from the Signage Program.*



*Signs with swappable panels like this one at the American Museum of Natural History in New York could be adopted for outdoor use and would benefit San Jose institutions with changing schedules and events.*

## C R I T E R I A

Determining which destinations play a prominent part in the signage program requires a careful balancing of these criteria. In addition to the nature of a destination and its user population, several factors must be considered.

Sheer numbers of visitors is of course a major criterion for inclusion in the signage program, but it is far from the only one. The perceived importance or “public value” of a destination for Downtown San Jose's identity also figures in the decision to include it in the signage program.

# L I S T O F K E Y D E S T I N A T I O N S

The following is a list of important destinations that forms the basis of the recommended signage program. The selection is based on visitor numbers as well as discussions with the Agency, stakeholder interviews, and the consideration of programming needs by the consultant team, and may evolve further over time.

## **Cultural**

*Tech Museum*  
*SJ Repertory Theatre*  
*SJ Museum of Art*  
*Center for Performing Arts*  
*Civic Auditorium*  
*Parkside Hall*  
*Montgomery Theater*  
*Museum of Quilts and Textiles*  
*Opera San Jose/Fox California Theater*  
*Children's Discovery Museum*  
*San Jose State University*  
*Mexican Heritage Plaza*

## **Convention/Visitors**

*McEnery Convention Center*  
*Hotels (tbd)*

## **Entertainment/Sports**

*Compaq Center*  
*SJSU Events Center*  
*Restaurants*  
*Spartan Stadium*  
*Municipal Stadium*  
*House of Blues*  
*The Improv Comedy Club*

## **Civic/Historic**

*City Hall*  
*Library*  
*Fallon House/Peralta Adobe*

## **Transit**

*VTA Light Rail*  
*VTA Bus hubs*  
*Diridon Station*  
*Greyhound*

## **Parks**

*Plaza de Cesar Chavez*  
*St. James Park*  
*Guadalupe River Parks:*  
*Discovery Meadow*  
*Arena Green & Carousel*  
*McEnery Childrens' Park*

## **Districts**

*SoFA*  
*San Pedro Square*  
*Civic Center*  
*Historic Retail District*  
*Japantown*

## **Parking**

*Major Public Owned Garages*



# 3.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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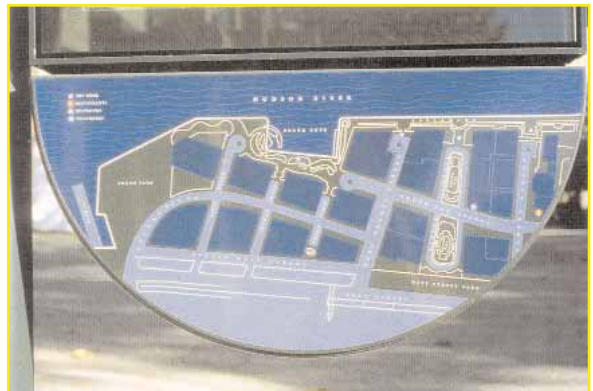
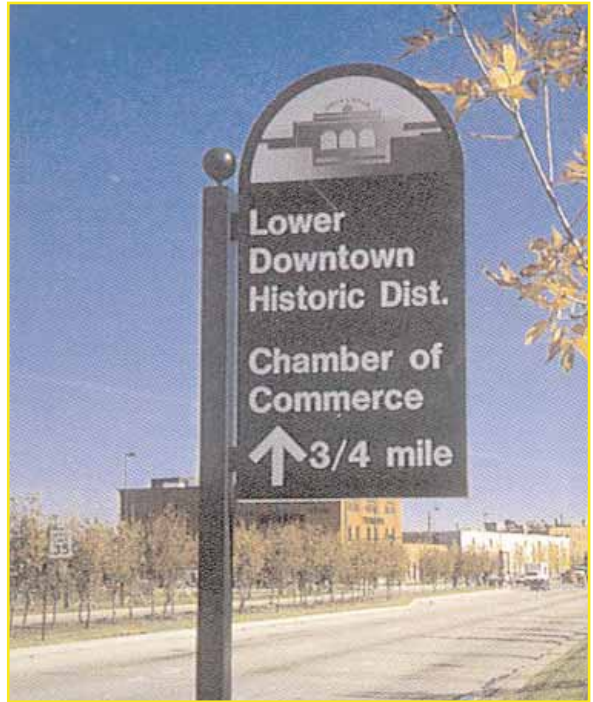
# I N T R O D U C T I O N

The recommended signage program detailed below has emerged from a *user scenario* approach. This approach imagines a series of “typical” users and their movements through the city, considering their destination, direction, mode of arrival, and critical decision points. Of course, the actual trajectories of visitors, residents, and workers are as varied as the individuals, but by imagining the most common sequences of movement, it is possible to develop a system that will serve many people efficiently and conveniently.

The recommended wayfinding signage network is presented hierarchically, in a series of levels corresponding to the sequence of arrival and movement in the Greater Downtown.

The first series of sign types is geared toward motorists driving into the Downtown area. It is designed to guide motorists from freeways or major surface arteries into a network of auto-oriented wayfinding signs, and into the garage most appropriate to their destination.

The subsequent levels begin at Downtown’s major points of arrival—the garages and transit hubs—and guide pedestrians into a network of wayfinding signs and to their destination. This system also includes informational kiosks and maps intended to convey a richer level of information on downtown services and events.



*The Signage Program is designed to work at several levels starting with simple directional cues for drivers and ending with more detailed maps and informational signage for the pedestrian. Top: Automobile wayfinding signage. Above: Pedestrian wayfinding map for the Hudson River Park in New York.*

sign types

### Downtown San Jose - Arrival by Freeways

Caltrans highway signs direct motorists to appropriate exits, major approaches.

### Downtown San Jose - Major Approaches

Arrows (F) direct motorists to major Downtown approaches. Gateway signs (G) identify Downtown as a distinct and definable district.

### Guiding Motorists to Arrival Points

Directional signs (DA) direct motorists from Designated Circulation Corridors to Major Destinations. Parking signs (P) direct motorists from Major Destinations to designated garages, identified by garage identification signs (ID).

### Guiding Pedestrians from Arrival Points to Key Destinations

Garage exit (E) and Directional kiosk (KD) signs direct people from arrival points (auto or transit) onto pedestrian corridors. Pedestrian directional (DP) and map signs (M) direct pedestrian to destinations.

### Map/Information Kiosk

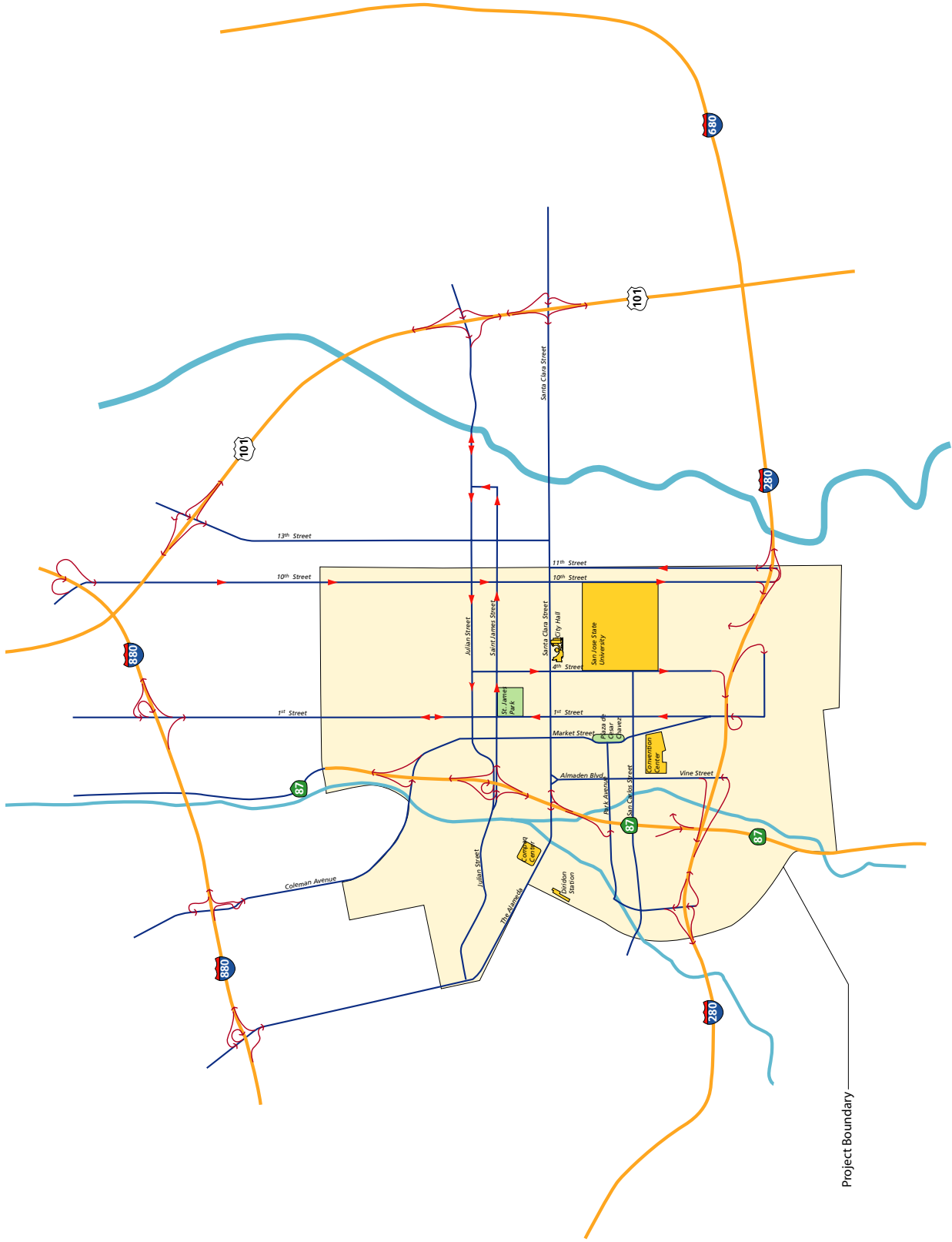
Staffed kiosk at a central location (K) provides detailed information on downtown destinations and events.

Destination



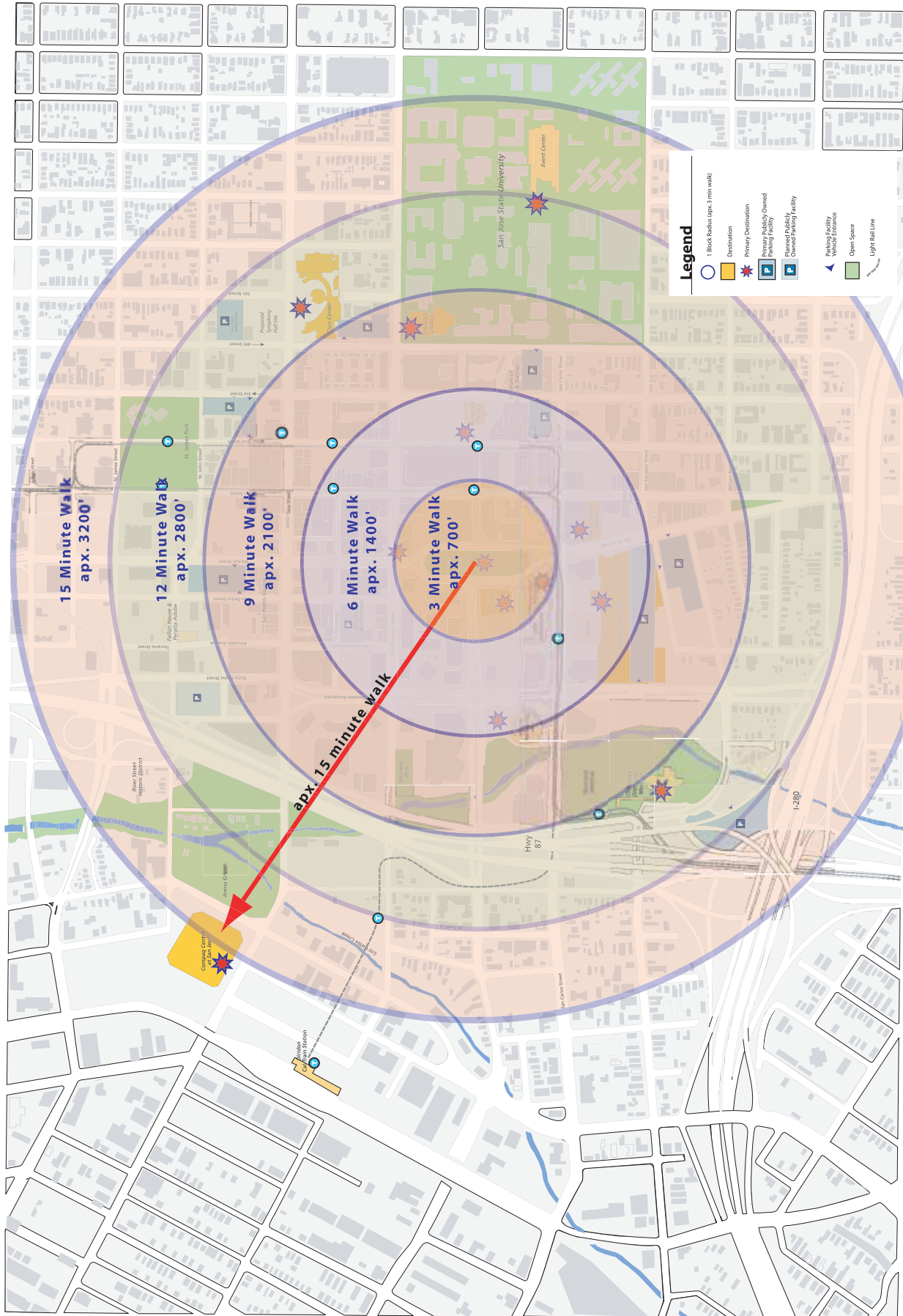
| SIGN TYPE                | KEY | SYMBOL |
|--------------------------|-----|--------|
| <b>AUTOMOBILE SIGNS</b>  |     |        |
| Cal Trans Exit ID        |     | ●      |
| Freeway Exit Directional |     | ●      |
| Downtown Egress          |     | ●      |
| Gateway Identification   |     | ●      |
| Destination Directional  |     | ●      |
| Parking Directional      |     | ●      |
| Parking Entrance ID      |     | ●      |
| Street Signs             |     | ●      |
| <b>PEDESTRIAN SIGNS</b>  |     |        |
| Informational Kiosk      |     | ●      |
| Directional Kiosk        |     | ●      |
| Parking Pedestrian Exit  |     | ●      |
| Intermediate Orientation |     | ●      |
| Destination Directional  |     | ●      |





**Freeway Exits and Entrances**





### Walking Distances



# P R O G R A M E L E M E N T S

## Designated Circulation Corridors

It is not feasible or desirable to put directional signs on every downtown corner, but the system must still cover a broad range of destinations. To make the most efficient use of program resources and ensure an effective wayfinding network, the wayfinding signage system is concentrated on two sets of designated circulation corridors--one vehicular and one pedestrian. While not every sign is located on a designated circulation corridor, the corridors provide the organizing framework or "skeleton" for the system.

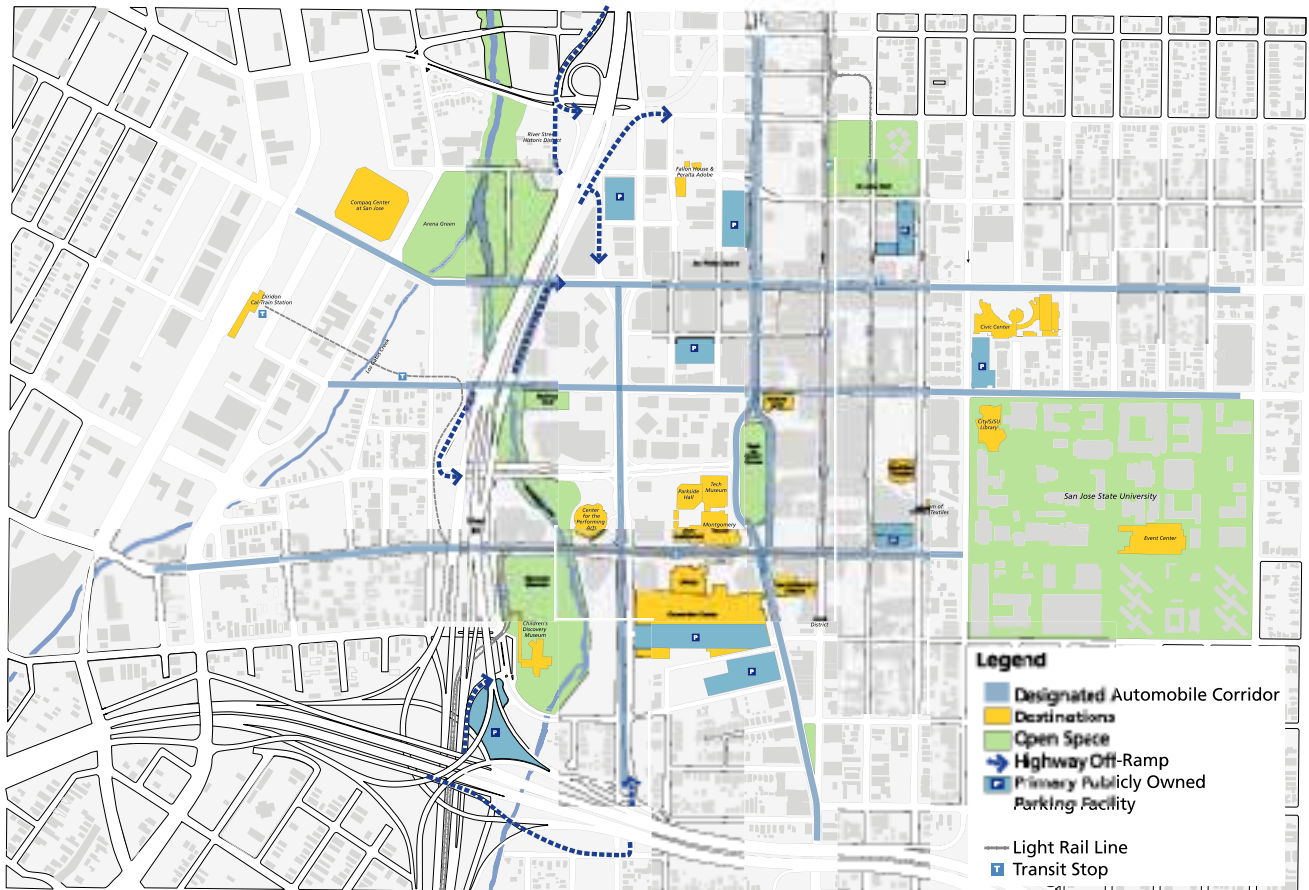


*Santa Clara Street is a designated circulation corridor for both pedestrians and automobiles Downtown.*

These networks are selected to take advantage of existing circulation patterns and bring motorists and pedestrians as close as possible to their destinations. The pedestrian network also serves to guide pedestrians to the most comfortable, vital, and amenity-rich streets, in support of *Strategy 2000* and *Streetscape Master Plan* walkability goals. The designated circulation corridors are illustrated on the following page.

| SIGN TYPE KEY            |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| SIGN TYPE                | SYMBOL |
| <b>AUTOMOBILE SIGNS</b>  |        |
| Cal Trans Exit ID        |        |
| Freeway Exit Directional | F      |
| Downtown Egress          | DE     |
| Gateway Identification   | G      |
| Destination Directional  | DA     |
| Parking Directional      | P      |
| Parking Entrance ID      | ID     |
| Street Signs             |        |
| <b>PEDESTRIAN SIGNS</b>  |        |
| Informational Kiosk      | KI     |
| Directional Kiosk        | KD     |
| Parking Pedestrian Exit  | E      |
| Intermediate Orientation | M      |
| Destination Directional  | DP     |

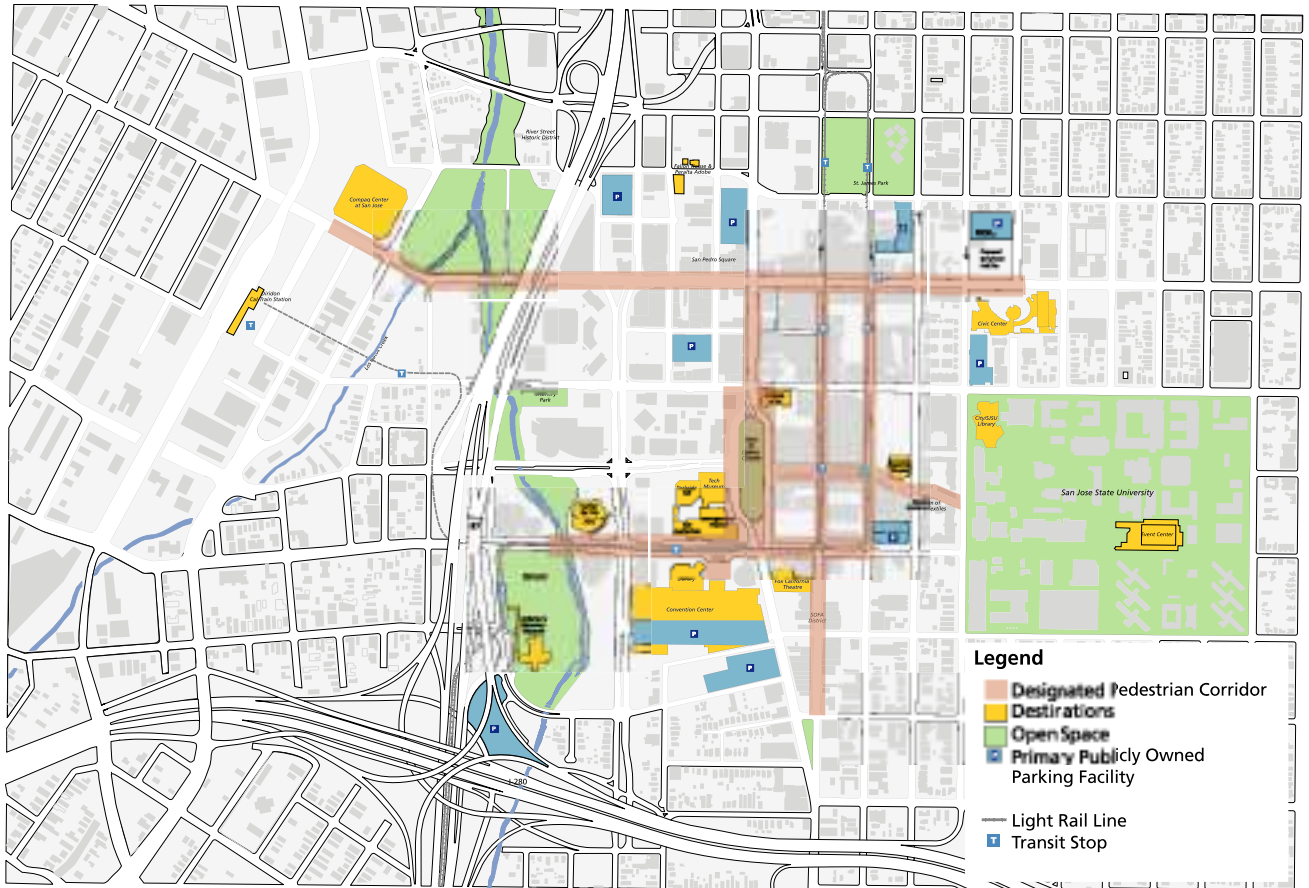
*Each sign type in the proposed system is given a graphical symbol that identifies its type on the corridor maps which follow as well as on the program and scenario maps in chapter 4. A detailed explanation of each sign type starts on page 29.*



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**Automobile Corridors**

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**Pedestrian Corridors**

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## **Vehicle Wayfinding**

The vehicular wayfinding system directs motorists into the Downtown core from freeways and major surface arterials. The system is structured around the network of major circulation corridors shown on the previous page and described in Chapter 4. Freeway and Gateway signs draw motorists onto the corridors. Directional signs are placed at key decision points within the network and direct motorists to their destinations, where parking signs direct them to the most appropriate parking garage.

### *Caltrans Freeway Signs*

These signs direct motorists to appropriate freeway exits for the Downtown and the largest destinations such as the Arena (These are largely existing).

### *Freeway Directional Signs*      type:

Simple arrow signs at major freeway exits direct motorists toward the Downtown as necessary. Selected routes bring drivers into the network of designated auto circulation corridors where further directional signage is concentrated.

### *Downtown Egress Signs*      type:

Egress signs direct traffic from major routes out of the downtown to freeway entrances. Locations are recommended for green, Caltrans-designed signs to identify freeway connections.

*Downtown Gateways* type: **G**

Gateway elements mark the points where major auto routes enter the Downtown area. These may be pedestal signs, low elements in medians, or actual physical gateways spanning the roadway. Existing overpasses may also be modified to create a gateway effect. Where possible they are placed in locations with clear views of the downtown skyline.

*Distinctive Street Signs*

Inside the Downtown area (likely the "Downtown Core" with expansion into areas such as Arena/Diridon and North Gateway) Street signs are replaced with a design specific to the Downtown to provide a constant reinforcement of its distinct identity. These should be designed to be clearly legible and use a graphic design language related to the rest of the wayfinding program.

*Auto Directional Signs* type: **DA**

As motorists enter the network of designated circulation corridors they are directed toward major destinations by Directional signs. These signs recur at all important decision points, providing a continuous path toward each destination along the corridors. Directional signs may be pole-mounted independently or on existing structures. They should be graphically consistent and designed with a minimum of copy to be read easily from moving vehicles. If destinations are not immediately on a designated corridor, a Directional sign directs motorists off the network at the appropriate point.



*Example of a gateway sign from a prefecture in Japan.*



*Santa Monica has a system of distinctive street signs that clearly distinguishes the downtown district from the rest of the city. This system also integrates publicly-owned garages, the downtown transit system and other wayfinding signs to further mark and distinguish the area for out-of-town visitors.*

Where possible, parking information (below) is consolidated into auto directional signs.

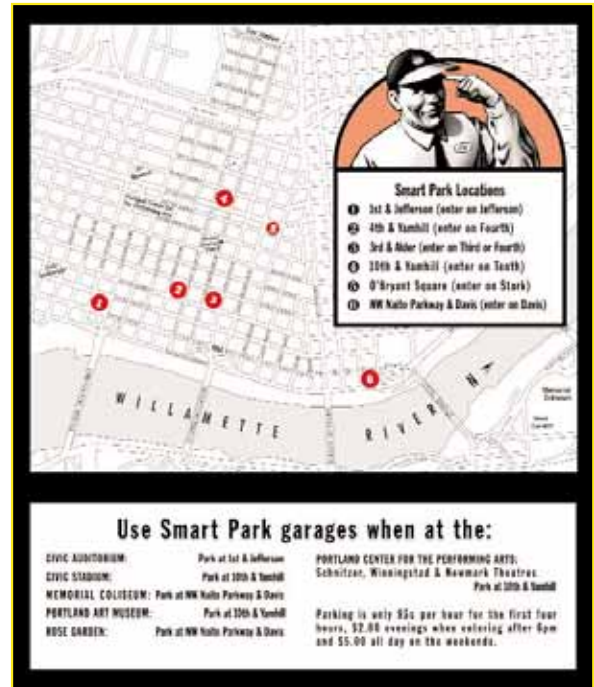
*Parking Directional* type: **P**  
and

*Parking Garage ID* type: **ID**

Parking Directional Signs direct drivers from designated corridors and key destinations to garage entrances. Where possible, motorists are directed past their final destination en route to parking garages, helping them to locate the destination on foot after parking. Parking signs also aid visitors in returning to garages from their destinations.

Where Parking Guidance System (PGS) signs are planned, Parking Directional signs may not be necessary as the PGS sign will provide the information. The design of parking directional signs should incorporate graphic elements from the PGS system to reinforce their interrelation.

Parking ID signs identify vehicular garage entrances with a consistent graphic design language.



*In Portland, the city and the downtown association has initiated the Smart Park identity program for their downtown garages. Central to the program is having a clear and memorable graphic system that makes all publicly owned garages in the downtown easily identifiable from the street. The Smart Park logo and look is then used in promotional pieces highlighting the shopping opportunities close to parking in Portland's downtown.*

## Pedestrian Wayfinding

The pedestrian wayfinding system guides pedestrians from important arrival points downtown and provides more detailed information about downtown points of interest, events, activities and services.

The system is structured around a network of designated pedestrian corridors through the downtown, focusing particular attention to the needs and likely routes of downtown visitors, as well as the quality of the pedestrian environment and the priorities outlined in *Strategy 2000*.

*Freestanding Directional Kiosks* type: **KD**

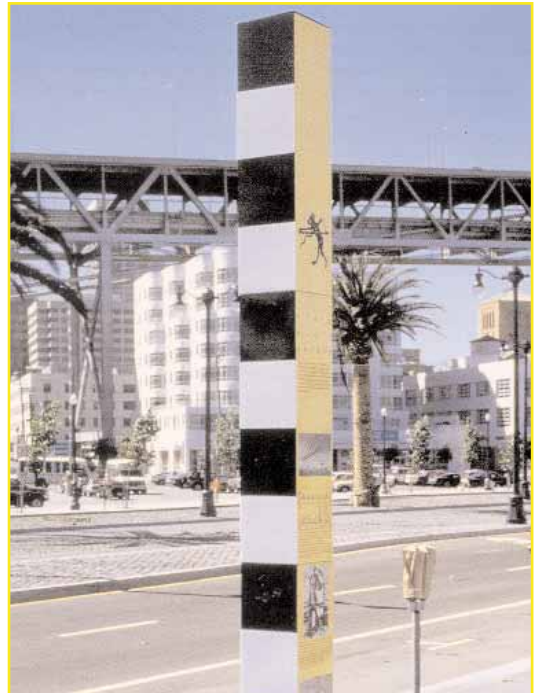
*Parking Garage Exit Maps* type: **E**

Freestanding kiosk or pylon signs featuring detailed maps of Downtown destinations and services are placed at arrival points, including important transit hubs, as well as major destinations, such as the convention center and City Hall. Wall mounted maps are placed at the pedestrian exits from the major garages. Together, these are the points where many visitors to Downtown San Jose enter the pedestrian environment. These signs direct arrivals into the network of pedestrian wayfinding signs. They are important entry points for visitors and should be lit to support night-time activity.

*Pedestrian Directional* type: **DP**

*Intermediate Orientation* type: **M**

Pedestrian wayfinding signs are placed along the network of major pedestrian corridors, directing pedestrians to major destinations. Key downtown destinations will be referred to throughout the net-



*Freestanding kiosks can take on a number of different sizes and forms depending on the program, available space and budget. Top: Granada rest stop kiosk, England. Above: Interpretive pylon kiosk, San Francisco.*

work, while minor destinations will be referred to by signs in their general vicinity.

Simple arrow signs (DP) direct pedestrians onto the wayfinding system and to reference major destinations. Intermediate orientation signs (M) consolidate information into simple diagrammatic maps oriented to the pedestrian's direction of travel.

Sign designs should be kept as clear and simple as possible and may be mounted on new or existing poles or light standards, or integrated into street furniture. Sign locations and clearly targeted graphic design should avoid confusion of pedestrian and auto signage.

*Major Informational Kiosk type:* **KI**  
Complementing the hierarchical network presented above, is a staffed information kiosk at a location in the downtown core where pedestrians can access detailed information. While this location may not correspond directly to a decision point in a wayfinding user scenario, it is an important gathering place, event location, and symbolic center of the city.

The design of the kiosk should relate to the graphic language used throughout the signage program, but with a distinctive, adventurous, and high-quality design--making it both a giver of identity and a useful source of a wide range of information. It should be made of durable and high-quality materials. While the design spirit of much of the wayfinding program is to be simple, elegant, and clear, this key location is an opportunity to do something



*In Downtown Philadelphia, a series of simple orientation maps have been placed on existing light poles throughout the downtown to help visitors find key destinations. These signs are designed to show a five minute walking radius and are orientated in the direction the pedestrian is walking. Additionally the maps change on every block to reflect the exact location of the pedestrian. This system is the prototype for Intermediate Orientation (M) signs proposed for San Jose's Signage Program.*

bold, original, and artistic, in addition to providing an exceptional richness of information, such as:

- ◆ Detailed wayfinding and informational maps
- ◆ Changeable display/poster panels
- ◆ Detailed information about city events, exhibitions, and institutions
- ◆ Restaurant, entertainment, and shopping guides
- ◆ Centralized ticket sales for cultural activities
- ◆ Interpretive information about historic and natural features, and access to the existing History Walk or other thematic trails.

The design of this kiosk (and other freestanding signs, including the PGS signs, as appropriate) should consider innovative ways of distributing information, in an effort to bring the technology for which San Jose is known into the city's public spaces. These innovations might include an interactive city guide, multimedia interpretive displays, and downloadable ("beam-able") material for handheld devices.

While designing and placing such a kiosk is a relatively simple matter, it is the programming and management of information, staffing, and services that will determine whether it serves as an effective and innovative information source for downtown visitors. The close cooperation of several interested parties will be required to do so. These may include:



*The Fashion Center Information Kiosk in New York City is a good example of a staffed kiosk that is both functional and an identity marker for its district.*

- ◆ *The San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau*
- ◆ *San Jose Convention and Cultural Facilities Department*
- ◆ *The San Jose Arts Roundtable*
- ◆ *The San Jose Downtown Association*
- ◆ *The San Jose/Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce*
- ◆ *The Redevelopment Agency*
- ◆ *The City of San Jose*

These entities will need to work closely together to develop an effective management plan that can keep information updated, staff the kiosk as necessary, coordinate branding and identity strategies, and maintain the kiosk to a high standard.

## P R O G R A M I S S U E S

### **Identity and Branding**

The signage program will play an important role in the public awareness of Downtown San Jose's identity, and a consistent graphic design language should be developed to do so. In general, an elegant and understated look is recommended, putting clarity and effectiveness above assertive branding.

Concern emerged in several stakeholder meetings about trying to “reinvent the wheel” or asserting an identity for Downtown San Jose from the top down. It is recommended that designers look to previous efforts, especially the “sunburst” logo widely used by the City, and elements of the City and Valley themselves, for design cues. There was also some



*The official City of San Jose logo.*

support for the "Capital of Silicon Valley" as a component of Downtown's identity, but this may better be expressed through the system's design aesthetic or through innovative ways of bringing information to visitors.

In a few locations, more dramatic gestures are recommended in the form of gateway signs, free-standing pylons and a custom-designed informational kiosk. At these points, the identity-building role of the Signage program is considerably more prominent than elsewhere, although some common design language is required to establish the visual continuity of the entire program. These locations are an opportunity for excellent design, creating distinctive sculptural elements that also provide useful information, mark and decorate important points in the cityscape, and provide meeting and gathering spots. They should be both sophisticated and accessible, so as to become both popular and enduring features.

### **Day and Night**

Increasing the vitality of San Jose's nightlife is an important *Strategy 2000* goal. Key pedestrian signs serving evening visitors should be lit. These would most likely include the directional and informational kiosks (KD/KI). Other pedestrian signs will be lit ambiently and should be given consideration in the lighting element of the *Streetscape Master Plan*.

### **Interpretive Signage**

There is currently a strong interpretive signage program in Downtown San Jose, chiefly in the form of the History Walk system. There are also several artworks of an interpretive nature, particularly near the Guadalupe River Park system. Further interpretive and public art elements may be appropriate in Downtown San Jose.

Within the Downtown Signage Program, interpretive components may be appropriate for the proposed directional and informational kiosks. These may serve as starting points for interpretive trails like the History Walk, as well as providing multimedia interpretive information, if appropriate.

Further thematic trails should be considered over time, possibly including a "Kids and Families" circuit through the Downtown and an Art Walk as public art programs and special events are developed.

### **Banner Program**

While not a focus of the recommended Signage Program, the banner program emerged as a concern in the stakeholder interviews. The system by which the banners are programmed, rented, maintained and removed is complex and decentralized and should be streamlined to facilitate effective and timely banner campaigns in support of Downtown events and institutions.



*The existing History Walk interpretive signs downtown are considered very successful. Additional interpretive signage may have a place in San Jose, especially on the proposed directional and informational kiosks proposed for downtown.*



*Banners for the World Cup played an important role in promoting this event at Vail Colorado.*

## Technology

Making the technology for which San Jose and the Silicon Valley is famous manifest on the street was identified as a goal in the *Strategy 2000*. The signage program is an ideal opportunity to explore innovative means of bringing information technology into the public realm. As with all technologies, it is important to consider carefully whether these options contribute meaningfully to program goals (including establishing Downtown's identity) as well as to consider issues of maintenance and obsolescence.

### *Parking Guidance System*

The Department of Transportation's Parking Guidance System (PGS) is being developed to display real-time information about available parking in Downtown garages on signs at Downtown Gateways and on major streets. These wired signs will also include a swappable panel at a height suitable for pedestrians that can be used to display information, possibly including interactive electronic information.

### *Real-Time Transit Information*

VTA is investigating several systems capable of displaying real time transit arrival information at bus and rail stops. These systems use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to track vehicles and capacity for displaying this information should be included in signage near transit hubs.



*Proposed design of the the Parking Guidance System.*



*Real time transit information for bus riders in London, England.*

### *Interactive Event/Wayfinding/ Information*

At Major Informational kiosks, it is recommended that interactive terminals be used to deliver information about the City, provided that a reliable technology can be utilized and a system is put in place to maintain current information. Valuable information might include interactive maps, locations and schedules of cultural institutions and public events, shopping and restaurant guides, and multimedia interpretive exhibits. Such a system might draw on the resources of the Downtown Association, the major cultural institutions, and the Convention and Visitors' Bureau.



*The Street Beam system which downloads information directly onto a handheld device in use on commercial signage for the San Francisco Opera.*

### *Handheld Devices*

Information can also be “beamed” to handheld devices through small infrared ports on streetscape elements; a technology that has already been used on public streets in other cities. A few of these ports, placed around the city could serve as an innovative experiment in public “informatics”, as this kind of location-specific information system is known. Transit, restaurant, and event information, as well as wayfinding maps could be delivered.

### **Transit Integration**

VTA has expressed its openness to integrating its signage at downtown transit hubs with the Downtown Signage Program, particularly where new platforms are being installed Downtown. Designers should work closely with VTA staff to determine opportunities for combined signage, including wayfinding, transit schedules, and real-time arrival information.

## Maintenance

An effective maintenance program is essential if the Agency's investments in signage are to make a lasting contribution to Downtown San Jose. This is particularly important with respect to interactive or high-tech signage, for which content must be maintained, physical maintenance is more complex, and obsolescence comes quickly.

Because the Downtown Signage Program is designed to present a seamless series of messages to the user, its maintenance crosses some conventional boundaries of jurisdiction and responsibility. The following responsibilities are recommended, and should be formalized through inter-agency coordination:

- ◆ An annual drive-through review of sign conditions will be conducted. This review should ideally be conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOT) by arrangement with Redevelopment Agency staff, and may also include the participation of a future Downtown Association Property Business Improvement District (PBID).
- ◆ Manufacture, repair and replacement of non-standard custom signs should be the responsibility of the Redevelopment Agency working with specialty contractors.
- ◆ Maintenance, repair and replacement of static Parking Guidance System signs will be the responsibility of DOT Parking Guidance System program.
- ◆ Minor repairs based on annual review or incidental reporting should be the responsibility of DOT by arrangement with Redevelopment Agency staff.
- ◆ The updating of sign content, as well as the long-term expansion of the Signage Program should be the responsibility of Redevelopment Agency staff, in conjunction with DOT, the Downtown Association and possibly its forthcoming PBID.
- ◆ The maintenance of signage within garages should be the responsibility of DOT's facilities maintenance group.
- ◆ The maintenance, repair, and replacement of distinctive street signs downtown should be the responsibility of the DOT and should be handled by their sign shop or a specialty contractor in arrangement with the Redevelopment Agency.

## Program Expansion

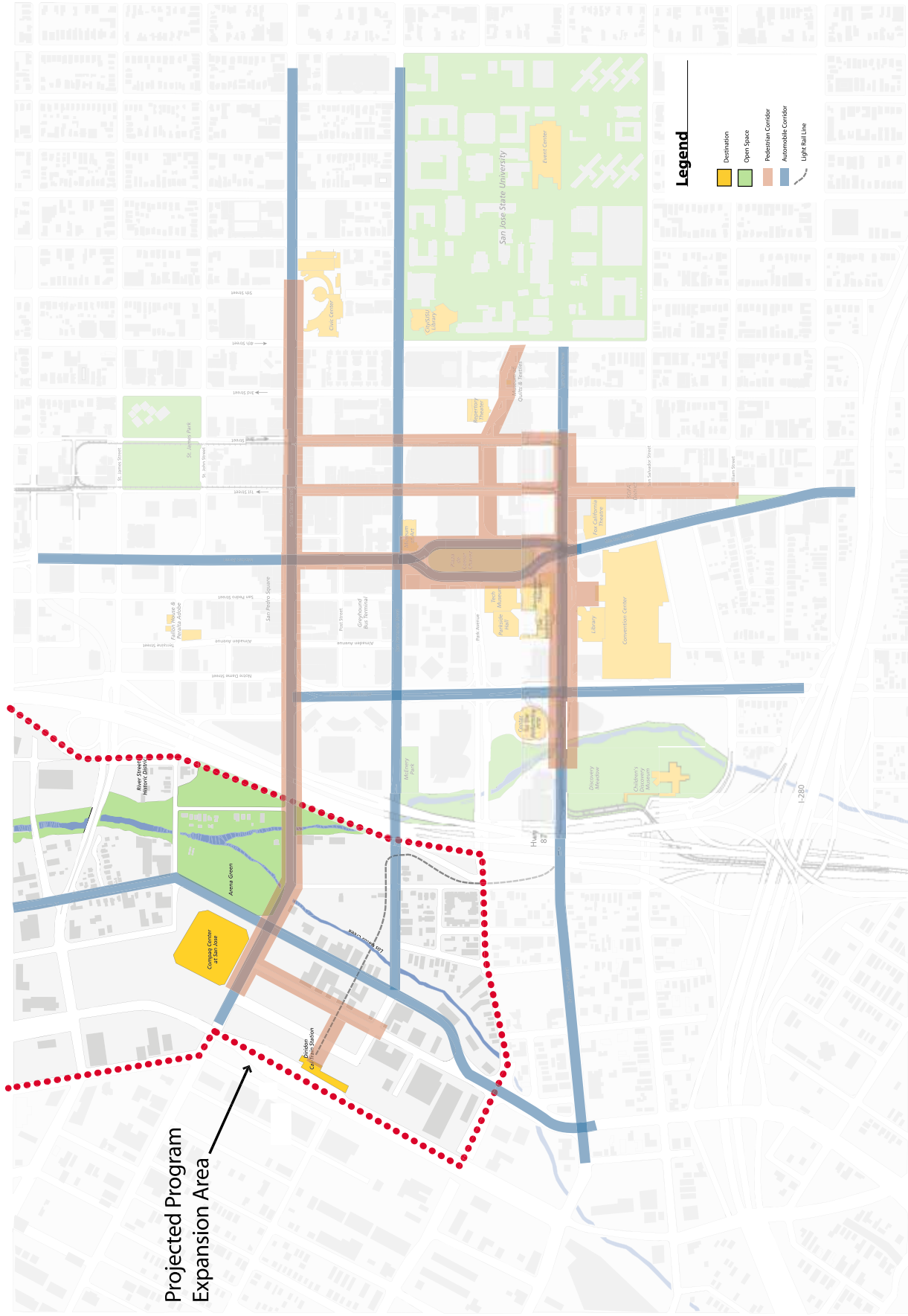
As the city continues to grow, transit options increase, and new districts emerge and become part of the Downtown Core, the Signage Program will need to expand into them to address and reinforce their connections to the Downtown Core. It is important that the signage program maintains its underlying logic as it expands so it continues to function as a single, interconnected system. The expansion process should take into consideration:

- ◆ Augment new light rail lines that are projected to run through the Downtown Core (currently planned to run on either Santa Clara Street or San Fernando Street) with wayfinding signage

that connects pedestrians to the rest of the system. Directional Kiosks, Intermediate Orientation "map" signs, and Destination Directional signs as well as the possible designation of new Pedestrian Corridor(s) (e.g. San Fernando Street) will likely all be required to fully integrate the new transit line into the system.

- ◆ Designating circulation corridors for pedestrians and motorists according to the urban design vision for the new district. These corridors should integrate seamlessly into the existing system of designated circulation corridors.
- ◆ Selection of important destinations according to the criteria outlined in Chapter 2 of this document. Stakeholders in new districts may be able to assist in the selection process.
- ◆ Placement of signs according to the user scenario model presented in Chapter 3, in which signs are placed at major decision points on designated corridors.
- ◆ Wayfinding between old and new portions of the system. Each should pick up where the other leaves off to prevent confusion and wayfinding "dead ends".
- ◆ Use of the same sign types designated in this document. New sign types may be considered based on the experience of the current program in the ground, but careful consideration should be given to their integration into the existing program.

The *Proposed System Expansion* map on the following page suggests a structure of designated circulation corridors for the areas to the west of Highway 87 that are likely to be developed first.



# 4.

## RECOMMENDED PROGRAM

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# S I G N L O C A T I O N A N D N U M B E R S

The following table summarizes the recommended Downtown Signage Program by sign type. The maps starting on page 47 highlight the designated auto and pedestrian corridors, and show the recommended locations of signs in the wayfinding hierarchy, first for automobiles and then for pedestrians.

These program summaries are followed by several exemplary user scenarios. These user scenarios are not meant to be exhaustive. They simply show how the wayfinding system might direct people arriving from a selected direction (for example, Southbound on Market Street in Automobile Scenario 1) to the major downtown destinations. Only those signs that might come into play in each scenario are shown.

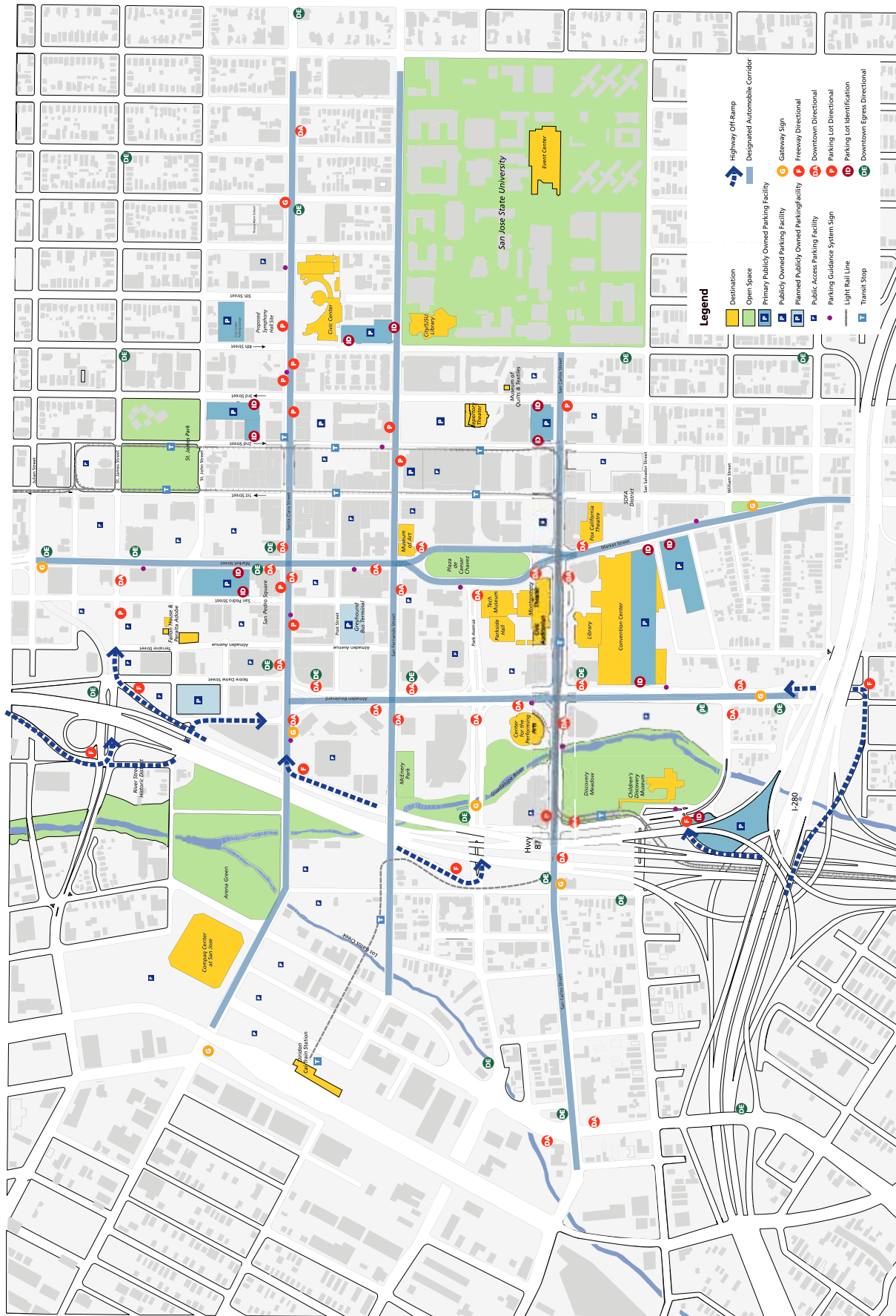
| PROGRAM SUMMARY  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>AUTOMOBILE SIGNS</b>  |            |
| SIGN TYPE  | Quantity   |
| Cal Trans Exit ID  | 12         |
|  Freeway Exit Directional  | 22         |
|  Downtown Egress          | 30         |
|  Gateway Identification   | 07         |
|  Destination Directional  | 29         |
|  Parking Directional      | 12         |
|  Parking Entrance ID      | 12         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>124</b> |
| <b>PEDESTRIAN SIGNS</b>  |            |
| SIGN TYPE  | Quantity   |
|  Informational Kiosk      | 01         |
|  Directional Kiosk        | 09         |
|  Parking Pedestrian Exit  | 14         |
|  Intermediate Orientation | 10         |
|  Destination Directional  | 24         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>58</b>  |
| <b>STREET SIGNS</b>  |            |
| Pole and Mast Arm Signs  | 240        |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   | <b>422</b> |

# SIGN MATRIX

| Map Symbol       | Quantity | Sign Type                  | Sign Locations  | Sign Function   | Sign Content  |
|------------------|----------|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Not shown on map | 12       | Caltrans Exit ID           | Downtown exits from I-280<br>Downtown exits from 87<br>Downtown exits from I-880<br>Downtown exits from US 101  | To identify Downtown exits<br><br>To identify specific exits for major Downtown destinations  | Downtown San Jose<br><br>Compaq Center<br>McEnery Convention Center<br>San Jose State University  |
| F                | 22       | Freeway Exit Directional   | At first intersection encountered when exiting above freeways   | To direct automobiles toward the program routes<br><br>To direct vehicles toward specific, major Downtown destinations  | Left Arrow or Right Arrow<br>Downtown San Jose<br><br>Left Arrow or Right Arrow<br>Compaq Center<br>McEnery Convention Center<br>San Jose State University                                  |
| DE               | 30       | Downtown Egress            | At major intersections exiting the Downtown   | To direct automobiles from the program routes to Freeway on-ramps   | Left Arrow or Right Arrow or Ahead Arrow<br>To I-280<br>To Highway 87<br>To I-880<br>To US 101  |
| G                | 7        | Gateway Identification     | North Gateway on Market Street at Julian<br><br>West Gateways on Santa Clara Street; on Park Avenue near Highway 87; on San Carlos Street near Highway 87; and, on Santa Clara just west of CalTrain tracks<br><br>East Gateway on Santa Clara Street at 6th<br><br>South Gateways on Market Street just south of William and on Almaden Blvd just north of I-280 | To identify the entrance Downtown area<br><br>To graphically define the Downtown area   | City of San Jose  |
| Not shown on map | 240      | Street Name Identification | At intersections within the Downtown  | To further identify the Downtown area   | City of San Jose<br>Street names  |
| DA               | 29       | Destination Directional    | On major thoroughfares approaching program identified automobile route system<br><br>On program identified automobile routes approaching intersections within system  | To direct automobiles within the program routes to all Downtown destinations  | Left Arrow and/or Right Arrow and/or Ahead Arrow<br><br>Program identified Downtown destinations at appropriate for individual sign locations   |
| P                | 12       | Parking Directional        | In front of program identified destinations   | To direct automobiles within the program routes from each Downtown destination to an adjoining City Parking Facility<br><br>To re-direct pedestrians exiting Downtown destinations to their parked automobile           | Left Arrow or Right Arrow or Ahead Arrow<br><br>City of San Jose Parking  |
| ID               | 12       | Parking Entrance ID        | At automobile entrances to eight (8) City Parking facilities  | To consistently identify City Parking Facilities within system<br><br>To make City Parking Facilities more visible from intersections of program routes   | P (in a circle)<br><br>City of San Jose Parking<br>Garage Name<br><br>Entrance / Exit<br><br>Garage Clearance<br><br>Parking Hours<br>Parking Rates<br>Policies and Limitation of Liability |
| KI               | 1        | Informational Kiosk        | On west side of Plaza de Cesar Chavez near intersection of Park Avenue and Market Streets   | To promote and distribute information about event, activities and festivals in San Jose<br><br>A centralized ticket sales location<br><br>A launching point for self-guided or docent led walking tours of the Downtown | Convention & Visitor's Bureau representative<br><br>Event and exhibition ticket sales<br><br>Self guided walking tours information<br><br>Rack card displays                                |

| Map Symbol   | Quantity | Sign Type                | Sign Locations  | Sign Function  | Sign Content   |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>KD</b>    | 9        | Directional Kiosk        | <p>On San Carlos Street in front of Convention Center</p> <p>On 1st and 2nd Streets at Santa Clara Street</p> <p>On 1st and 2nd Streets between San Fernando and San Carlos Streets (at Paseo de San Antonio)</p> <p>At Diridon CalTrain Station</p> <p>On Santa Clara in front of Compaq Center</p> <p>On San Carlos Street in front of Civic Center</p> <p>At transit stop on San Carlos between Market and Almaden</p> | <p>Primary orientation and information for visitors arriving in Downtown area via public transportation</p> <p>Primary orientation and information for visitors attending large events in or near the Downtown area</p> <p>A pedestrian gateway that defines Downtown pedestrian destinations and routes</p> | <p>Downtown overview map including main walking routes</p> <p>List of Downtown destinations</p> <p>Current Downtown event and exhibition information</p> <p>Current Downtown dining guide</p> <p>Current retail shopping guide</p> |
| <b>E</b>     | 14       | Parking Pedestrian Exit  | Located at all pedestrian exits from eight (8) City Parking facilities  | <p>Primary orientation for pedestrians arriving in the Downtown by automobile</p> <p>To define Downtown pedestrian destinations and routes</p>   | <p>Downtown overview map including main walking routes</p> <p>List of Downtown destinations</p>  |
| <b>M</b>     | 10       | Intermediate Orientation | <p>Located mid-block on north/south streets where destination sightlines are limited</p> <p>Located at either side of Plaza de Cesar Chavez at Park Avenue its continuation Paseo de San Antonio</p>  | In transit orientation for visitors following directional system   | <p>Downtown overview map detail corresponding to location of each sign</p> <p>Left Arrow and/or Right Arrow and/or Ahead Arrow to Downtown destinations outside of detail map</p>  |
| <b>DP</b>    | 24       | Destination Directional  | <p>Located at intersections of east/west streets to confirm directions to outlying destinations</p> <p>*Located at pedestrian entrance points to the Guadalupe River Park.</p>  | <p>Destination confirmation for visitors following directional system.</p> <p>Guide visitors to the Guadalupe River Park</p>   | <p>Left Arrow or Right Arrow or Ahead Arrow</p> <p>Appropriate destination name</p>  |
| <b>Total</b> | 422      |                          |   |  |  |

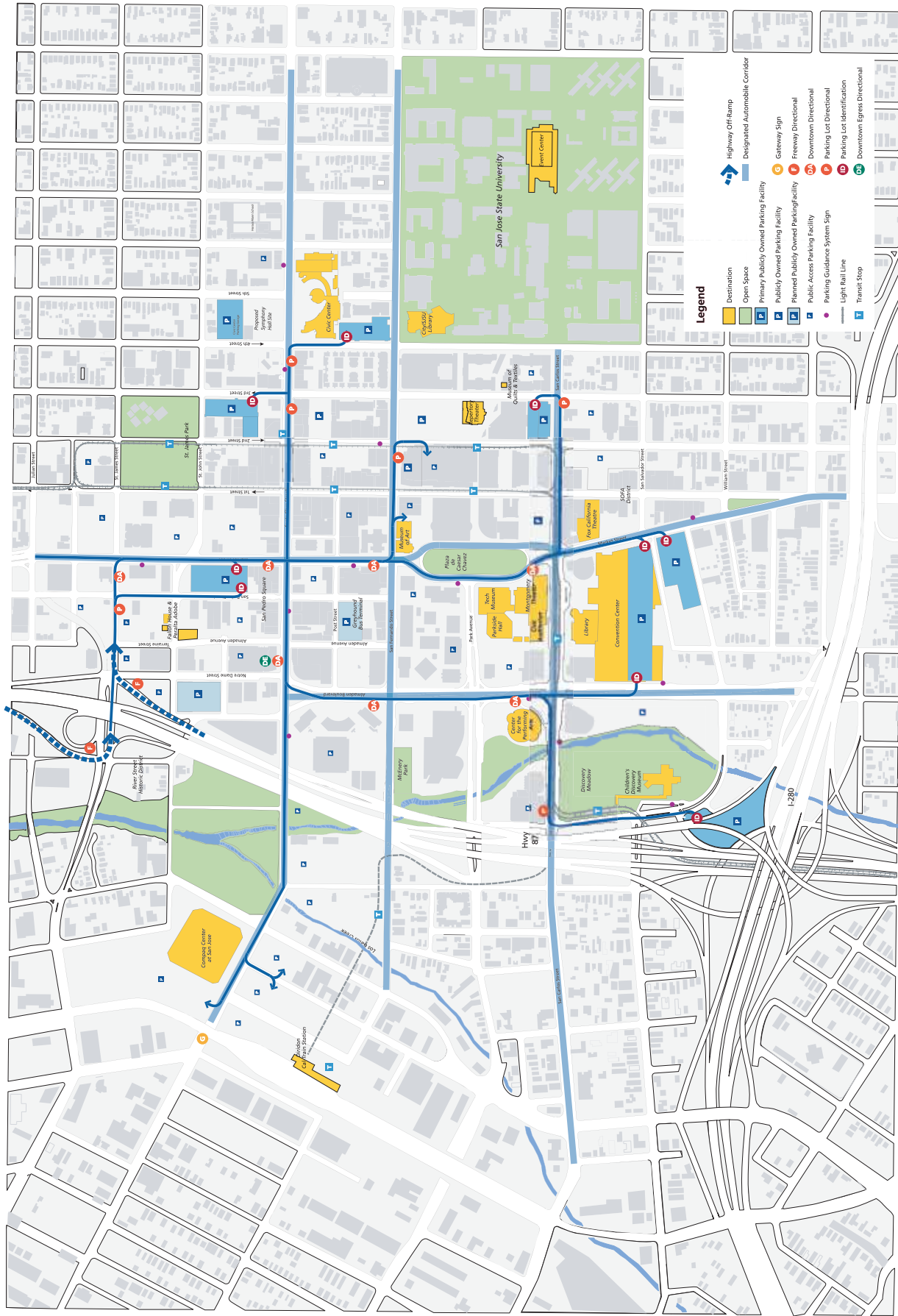
\* Up to 15 additional signs may be required to provide special access signage to the Guadalupe River Park



**SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN | REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE**

**Automobile Wayfinding System – Sign Locations**

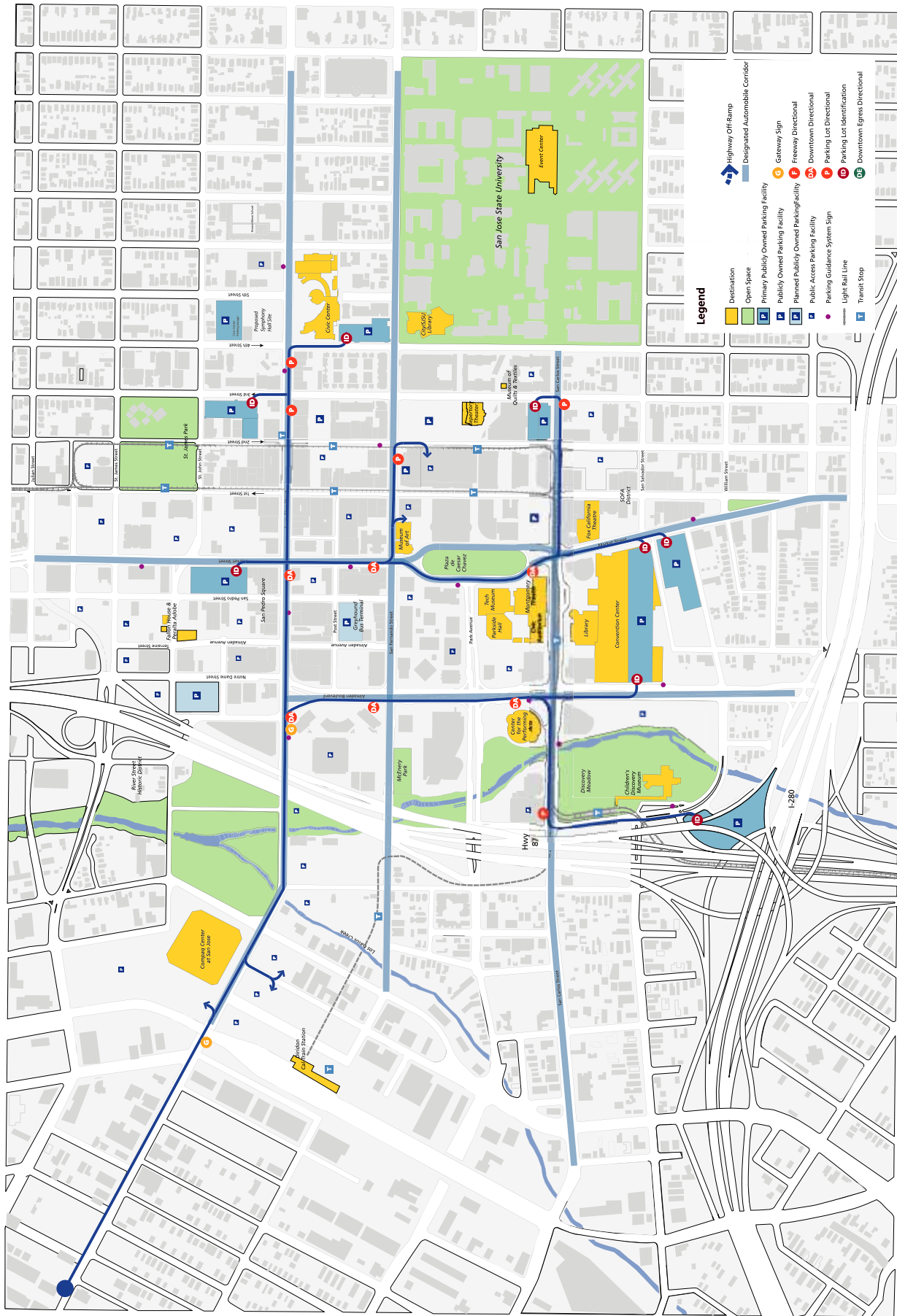




**Scenario 1 - Arriving Southbound, Market Street**

**SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN** | REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE

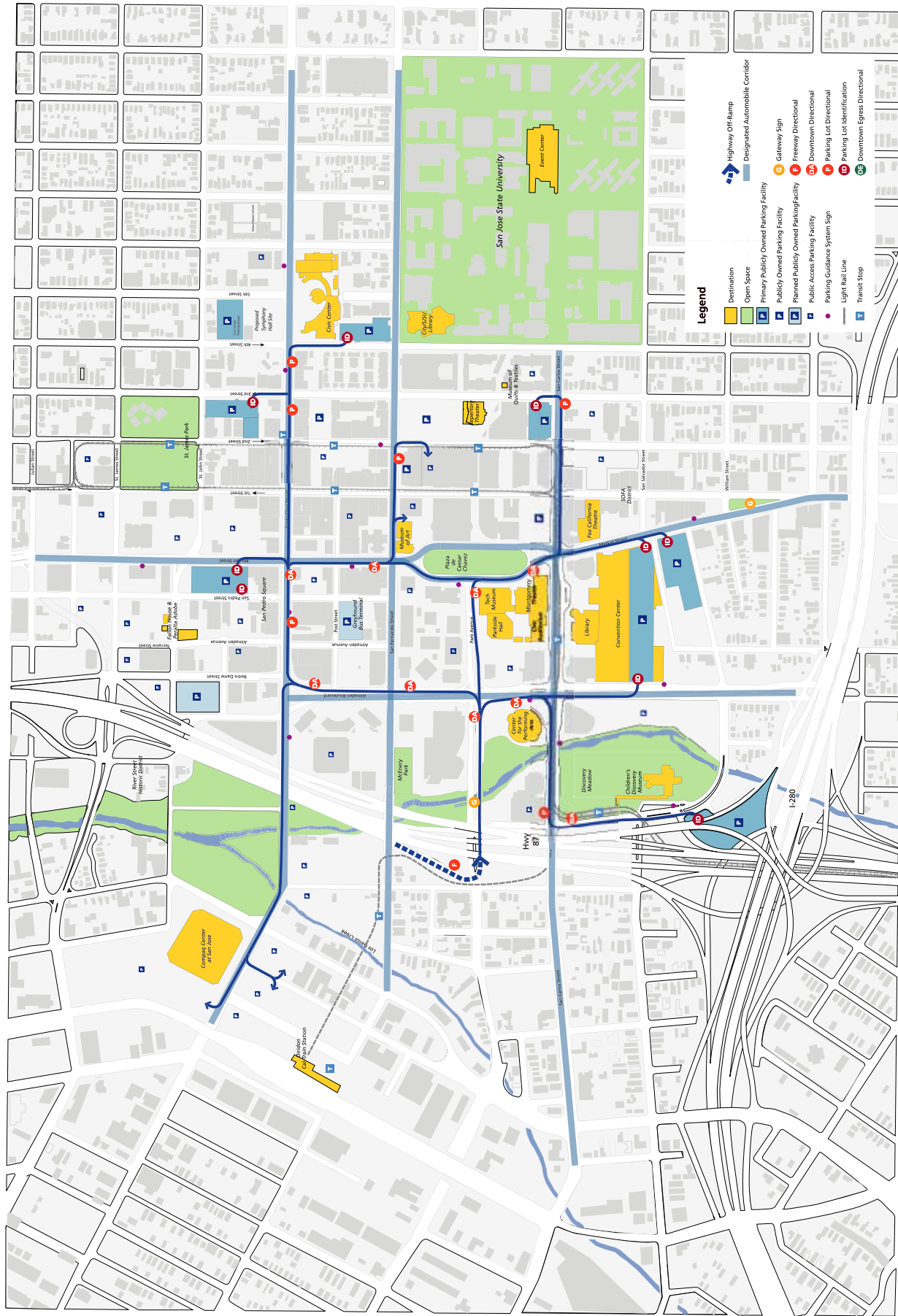




### Scenario 2 - Arriving Eastbound, Santa Clara St.

**SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN** | REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE



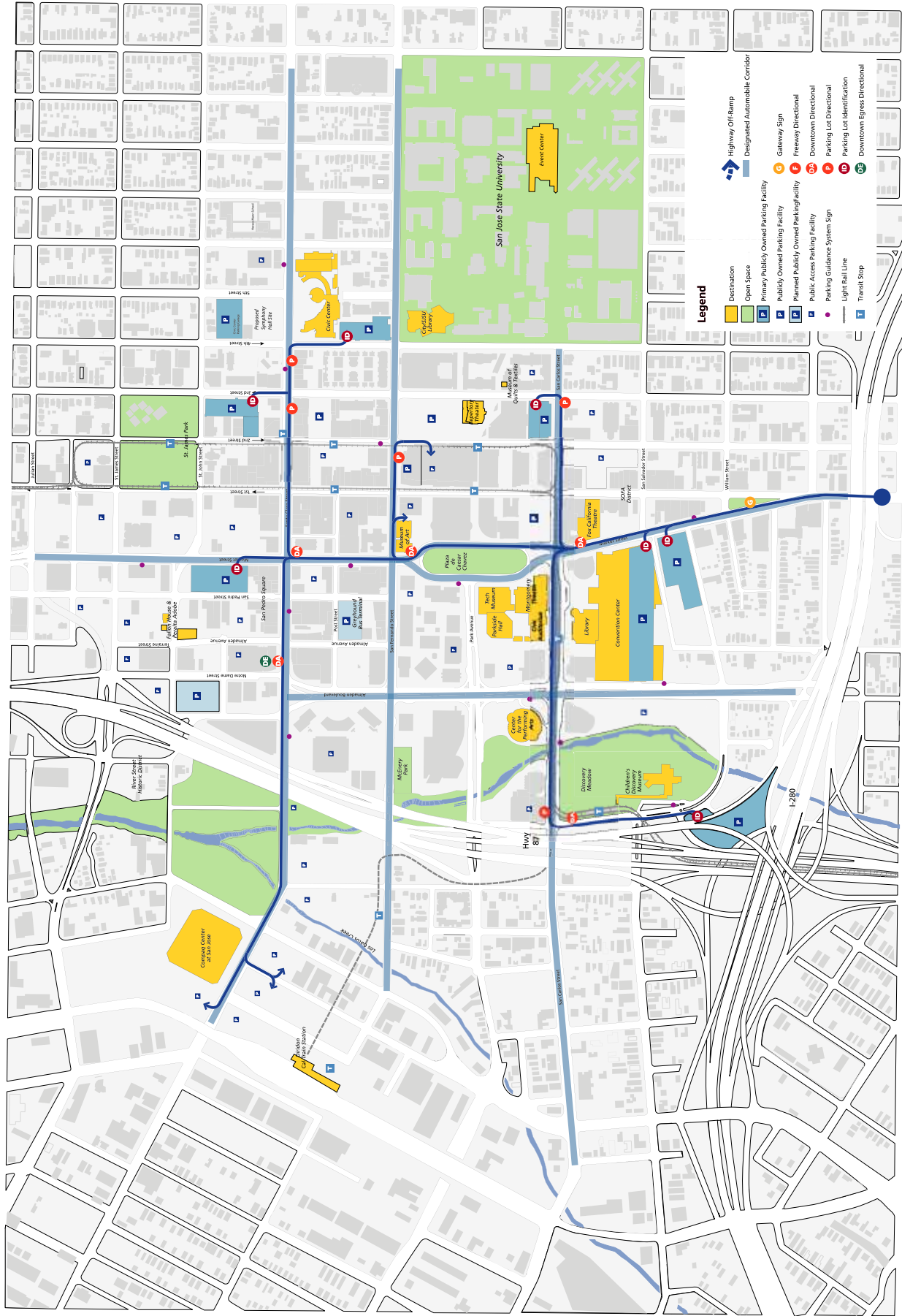


### Scenario 3 - Arriving Southbound, Highway 87

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE

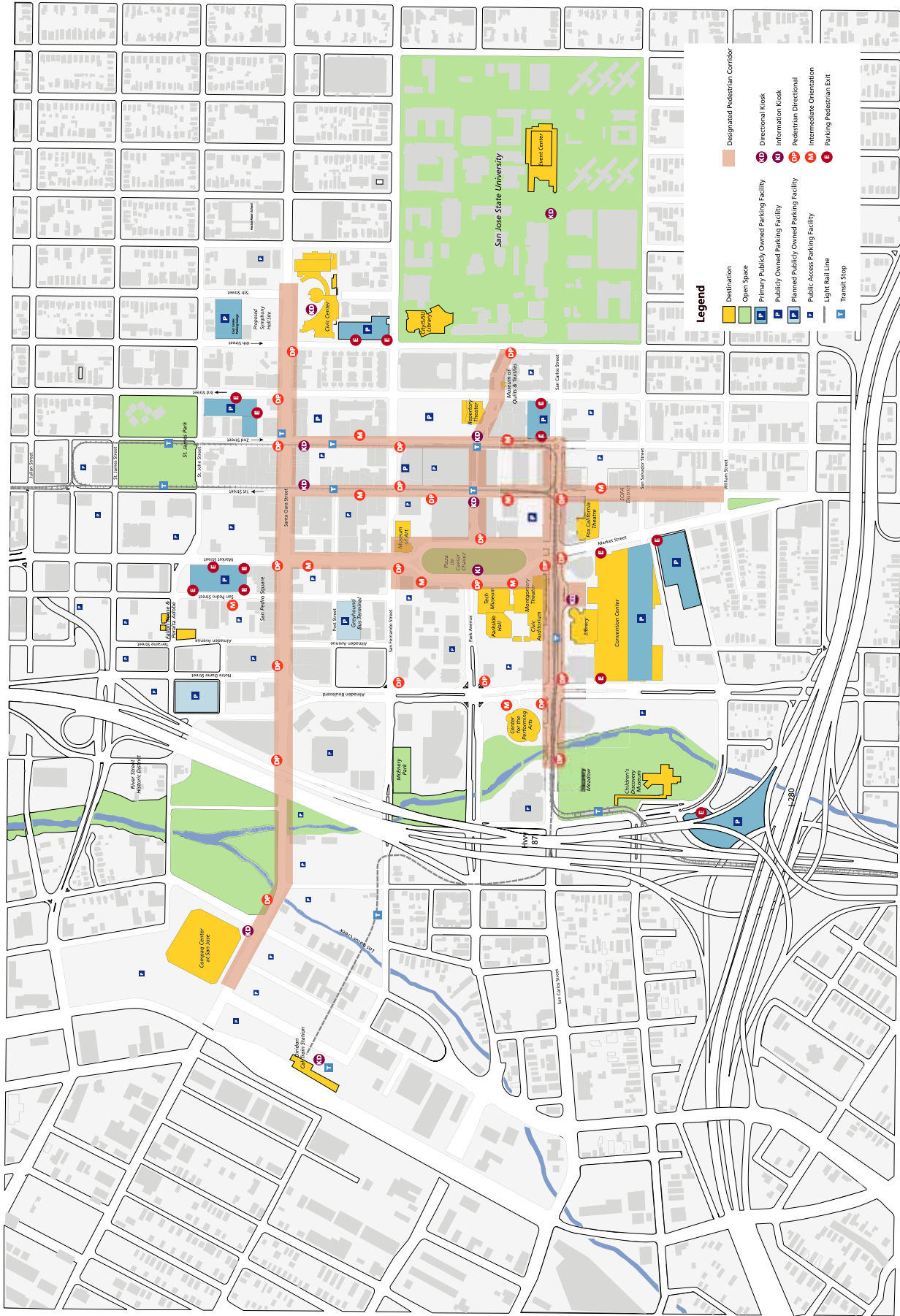
# SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN

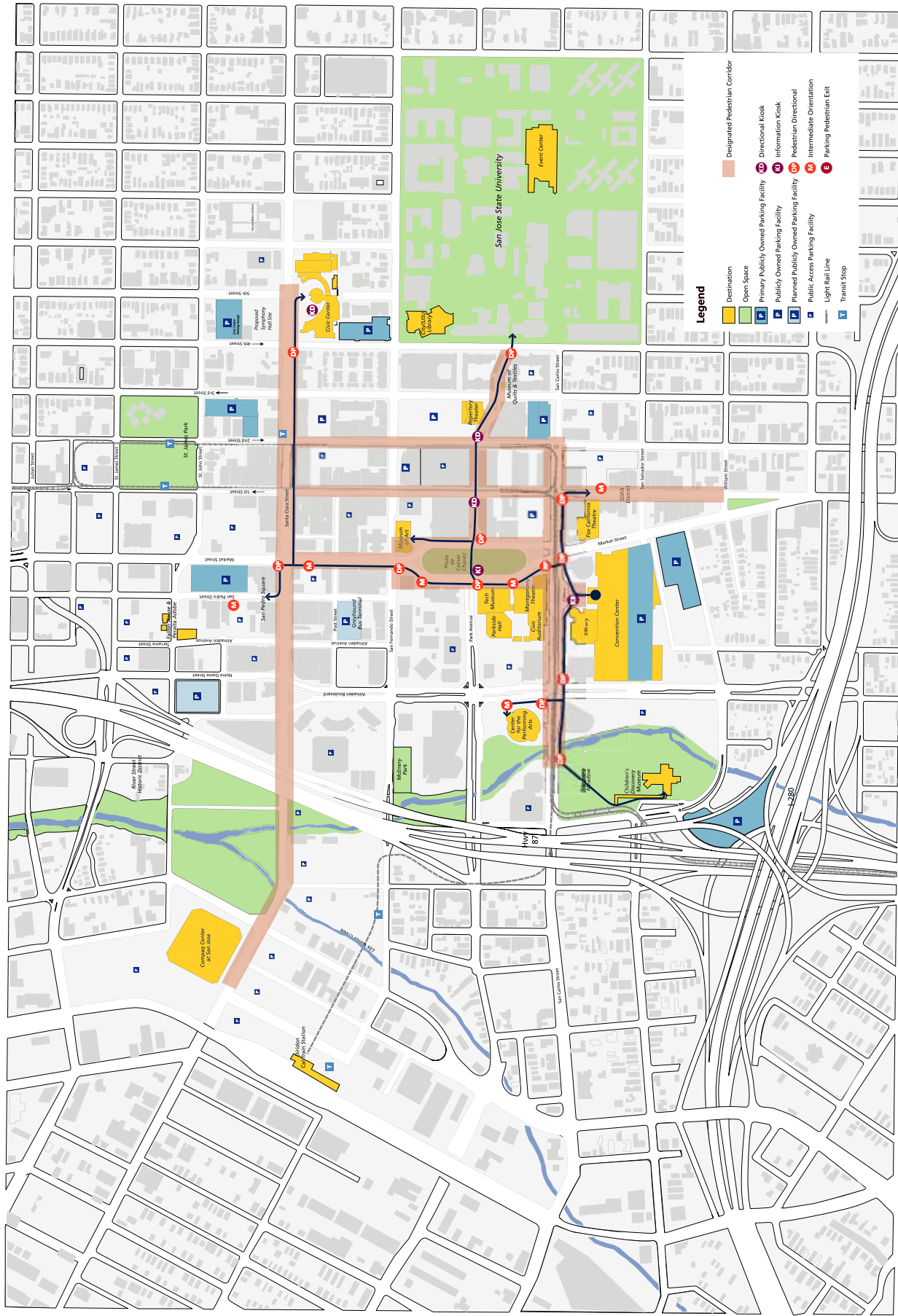


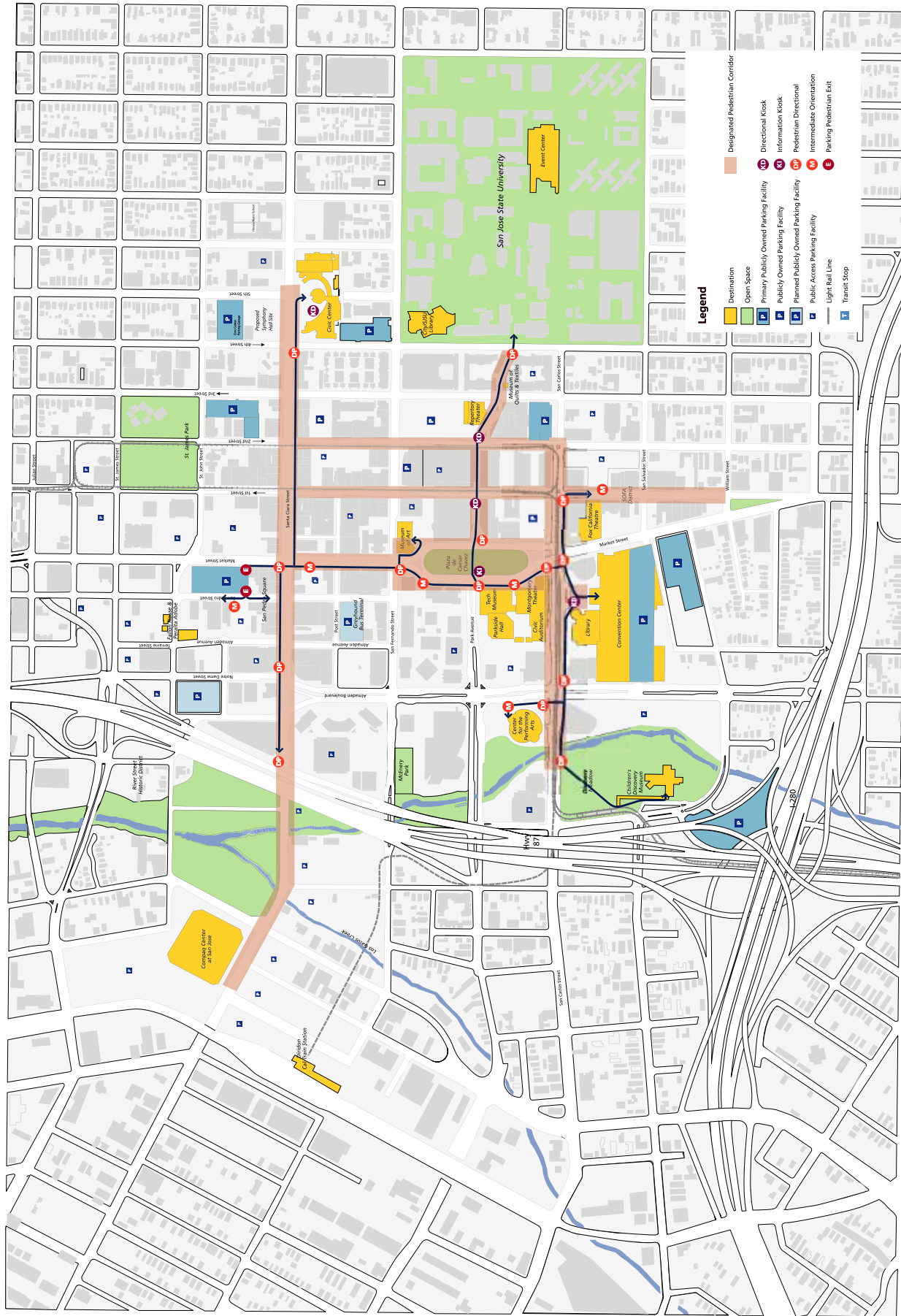


**Scenario 4 - Arriving Northbound, Market St.**

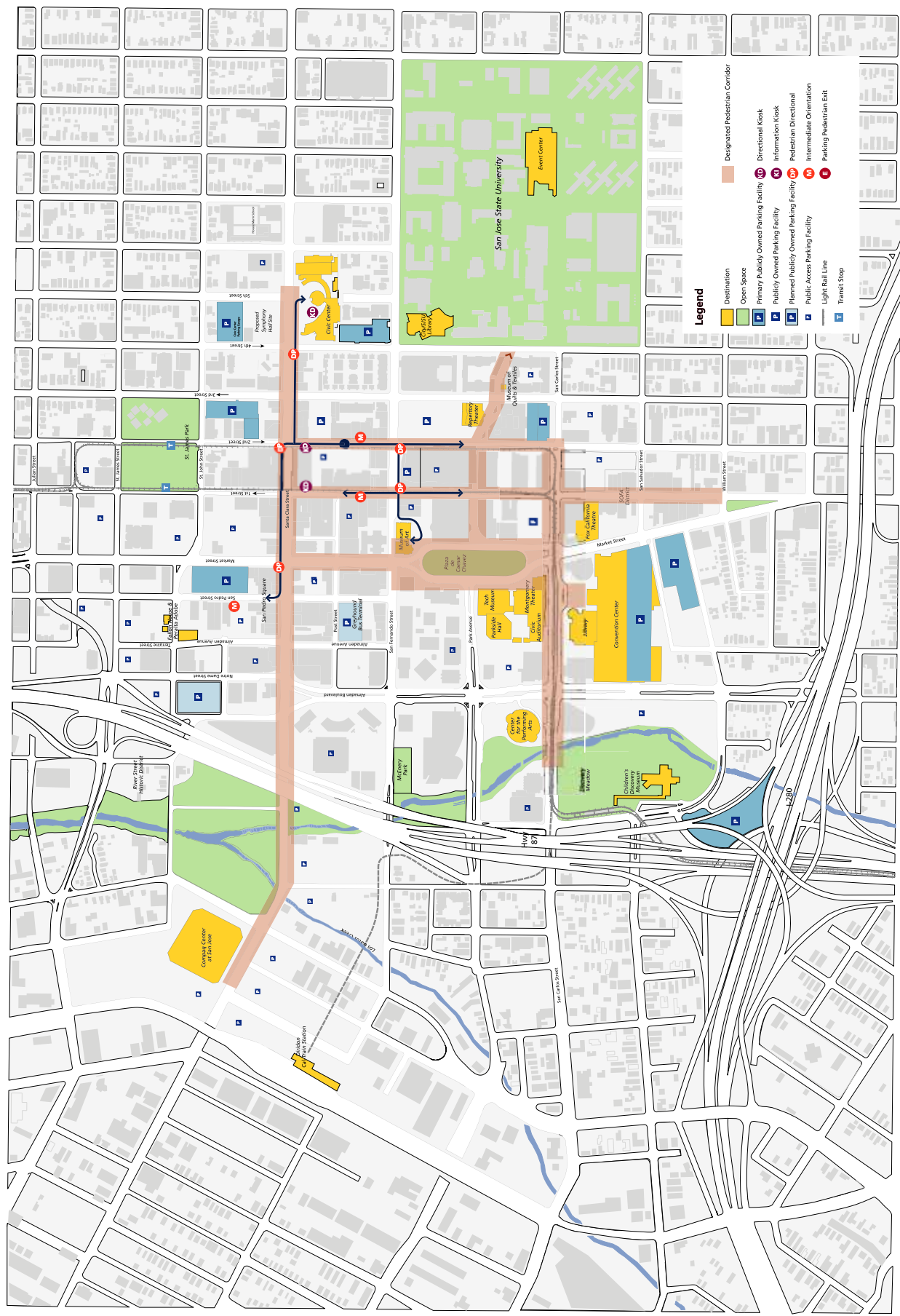
**SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN** | REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE







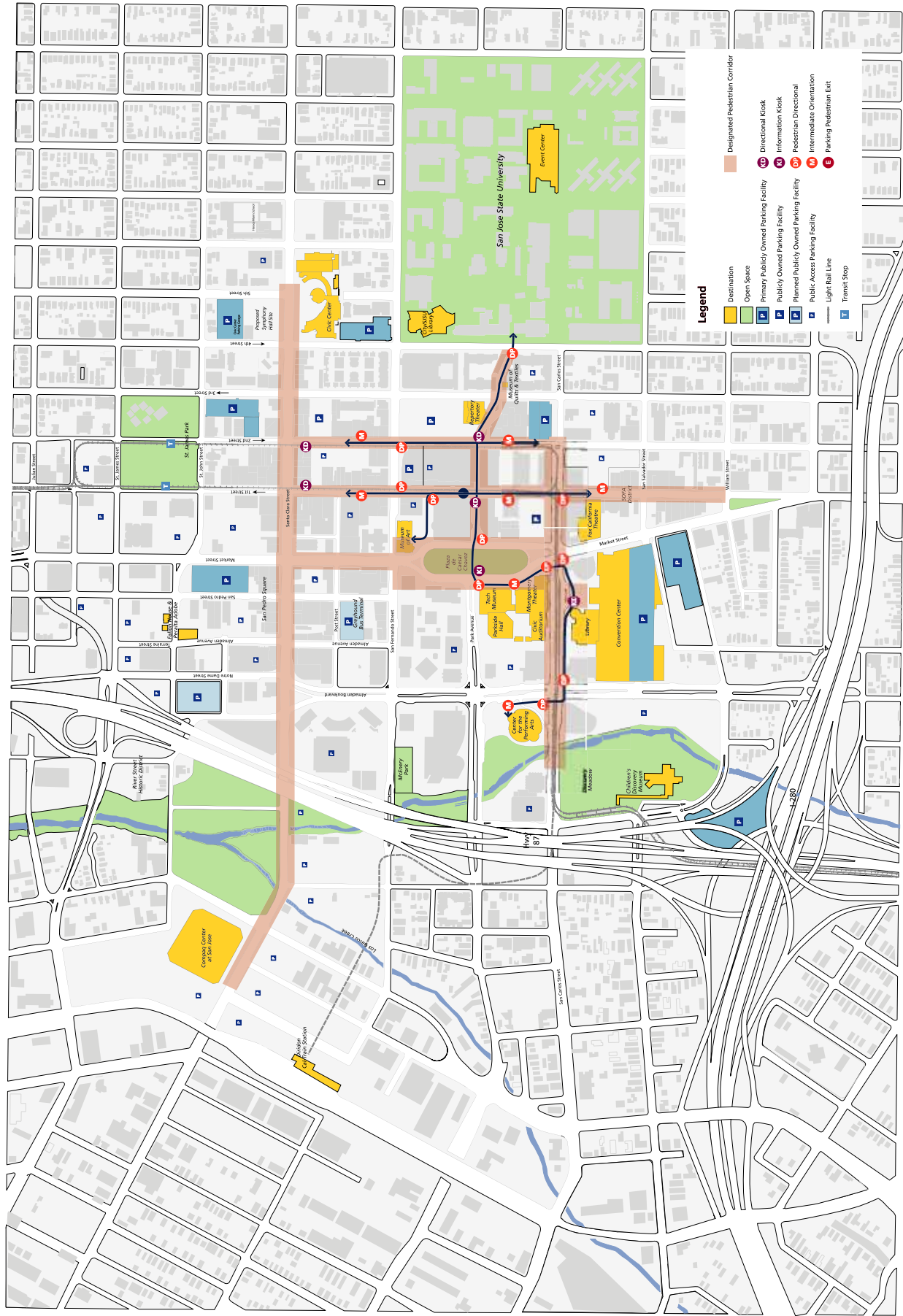
**Scenario 2 - From the Market/San Pedro St. Garage**



**Scenario 3 - From the 2nd St. Guadalupe Line LRT**

**SAN JOSE SIGNAGE MASTER PLAN** | REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE





**Scenario 4 - From the 1st St. Guadalupe Line LRT**

# 5.

## OTHER ISSUES

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Several issues emerged from the stakeholder interview process which, while not directly within the purview of the Downtown Signage Program to address directly, bear mentioning:

### **Garage Names**

There is currently no consistent system for the naming of parking garages in Downtown San Jose.

While this may seem a minor concern, a consistent approach can be one of the subtle cues that speed the orientation of Downtown visitors. For example, a simple intersection name, already in use for some garages (e.g.- 3rd and San Fernando) is quick and clear.

### **Commercial Signage**

Many stakeholders expressed concerns about perceived restrictions of commercial signage. While it is beyond the scope of this program to consider this issue in detail, the role of commercial signage in expressing the cultural and economic vitality of the city should not be overlooked. There have been efforts to address this issue, and discussion of the appropriate role of commercial signage should continue.

### **Public Toilets and Advertising Kiosks**

The Redevelopment Agency is considering entering an agreement with a private company, which would assume responsibility for the maintenance of the city's Public Pay Toilets (PPT's) in exchange for the right to place advertising kiosks at various locations downtown. In addition to ensuring that both the design and placement of such kiosks support the goals of *Strategy 2000* and the forthcoming *Streetscape Master Plan Update*, the Agency should



*JC Decaux public toilet like the ones in use in San Jose.*

consider using a kiosk design that can incorporate elements of the pedestrian wayfinding program. This would integrate the kiosks more effectively into the fabric of the city and reduce the number of additional support structures required of the Signage Program.

Advertising kiosks can in many cases also serve as newsstands, phone booths, or other small services, contributing more to the public realm than advertising. Finally, it should be determined whether, as is sometimes the case, the desirable “eyes” for these kiosks are primarily those of motorists, and if so, whether the sidewalk side can be used for public information purposes.

### **Satellite Locations**

While it is beyond the scope of this program, the Agency may wish to consider the placement of signage at satellite locations, such as the San Jose International Airport, or at business hotels on North 1st Street. These could direct visitors toward the Downtown using the same design language as the Downtown wayfinding system.

### **Cultural District/Resources**

There has been some discussion of designating a "Cultural District" in Downtown San Jose to better coordinate marketing, ticketing, and complementary programming among the various downtown cultural institutions.

Because of the small size of the Downtown, delineating a discreet cultural district may prove difficult, but the Downtown Signage Program may be able to contribute to these goals by providing a graphic design treatment that unites cultural institutions, consolidates event and exhibition information, and possibly centralizes ticketing at a key informational kiosk.

# 6.

## COORDINATION EFFORTS

A host of efforts are underway to improve different aspects of Downtown San Jose. Communication with relevant agencies and stakeholders has been ongoing and should continue to coordinate as closely as possible with these programs, avoid wasted effort, find points of confluence, and support the broader vision of the city.

These related efforts include:

- ◆ *Parking Guidance System*
- ◆ *Public Building Signage Program*
- ◆ *JCDecaux advertising kiosks*
- ◆ *Streetscape Master Plan Update*
- ◆ *Civic Center urban design*
- ◆ *Palladium Retail Project*
- ◆ *VTA downtown LRT platform retrofit*
- ◆ *Downtown Cultural District*
- ◆ *Convention Center Expansion*
- ◆ *Future transportation enhancements*  
*(VTA/BART/other rail)*