seattlecenter

Century 21
Signage
Guidelines

Century 21 Signage Guidelines

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INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the Seattle Center Campus Signage Plan is to establish a logical and legible system of signs that informs and directs visitors, identifies key sites of interest, and serves to enhance the aesthetic and experiential qualities of the site. This comprehensive plan addresses the existing site as well as phased implementation of new signage over the next 20 years to align with the vision of the Century 21 Master Plan.

Seattle Center has a wide spectrum of architecture and open spaces, large and small, loud and quiet, and everything in between. Signage is one of several design elements that can visually unify the site and create greater consistency within the environment. Decongesting and de-cluttering the site by removing outdated signage will help deliver a simpler, cleaner, and greener message about the campus. We can create a more welcoming campus and make the edges and entrances of the site more porous by providing event information at key locations and in creative ways at campus entries and around the perimeter. The signage system will be a key contributor to promoting the brand, contributing to a sense of safety and security, and enhancing the experience of visiting Seattle Center.

PROCESS and TIMELINE

The new Century 21 Master Plan creates the opportunity for a comprehensive approach to campus signage.

The initial diagnostic process started with inventorying existing signage to determine what works and what does not work currently on the campus. The signage inventory process, between August 2008 and December 2008, resulted in signage recommendations that take both an additive and subtractive approach. Ultimately, Seattle Center will locate the “right” number of signs and type of signs across our campus in order to lead the visitor through the site in a comfortable and informed way.

The signage program will be implemented incrementally in phases over a span of years, as funding allows. When a sign type is being replaced by a new design, the old signs will be removed.

Campus plans and maps developed in early 2009 address the specific sign types to be prioritized in each phase in order to make the overall Seattle Center campus signage system ever more coherent. Three maps were developed as diagrammatic and planning tools and can be found on the following pages:

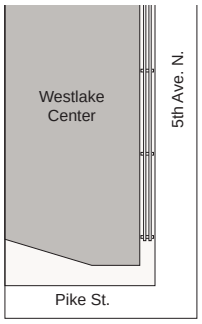
1. Existing Sign Locations - this shows the locations of all major signage types currently on campus.
2. Century 21 Plan (20 years) - indicates all proposed signage types and locations after the full campus build-out envisioned in the Century 21 Master Plan, as the final goal.
3. Early Implementation Plan (2009-2010) – this shows the location of sign types currently funded for design and implementation.

Seattle Center Campus Signage Plan • Sign Location Plan

Existing Sign Locations

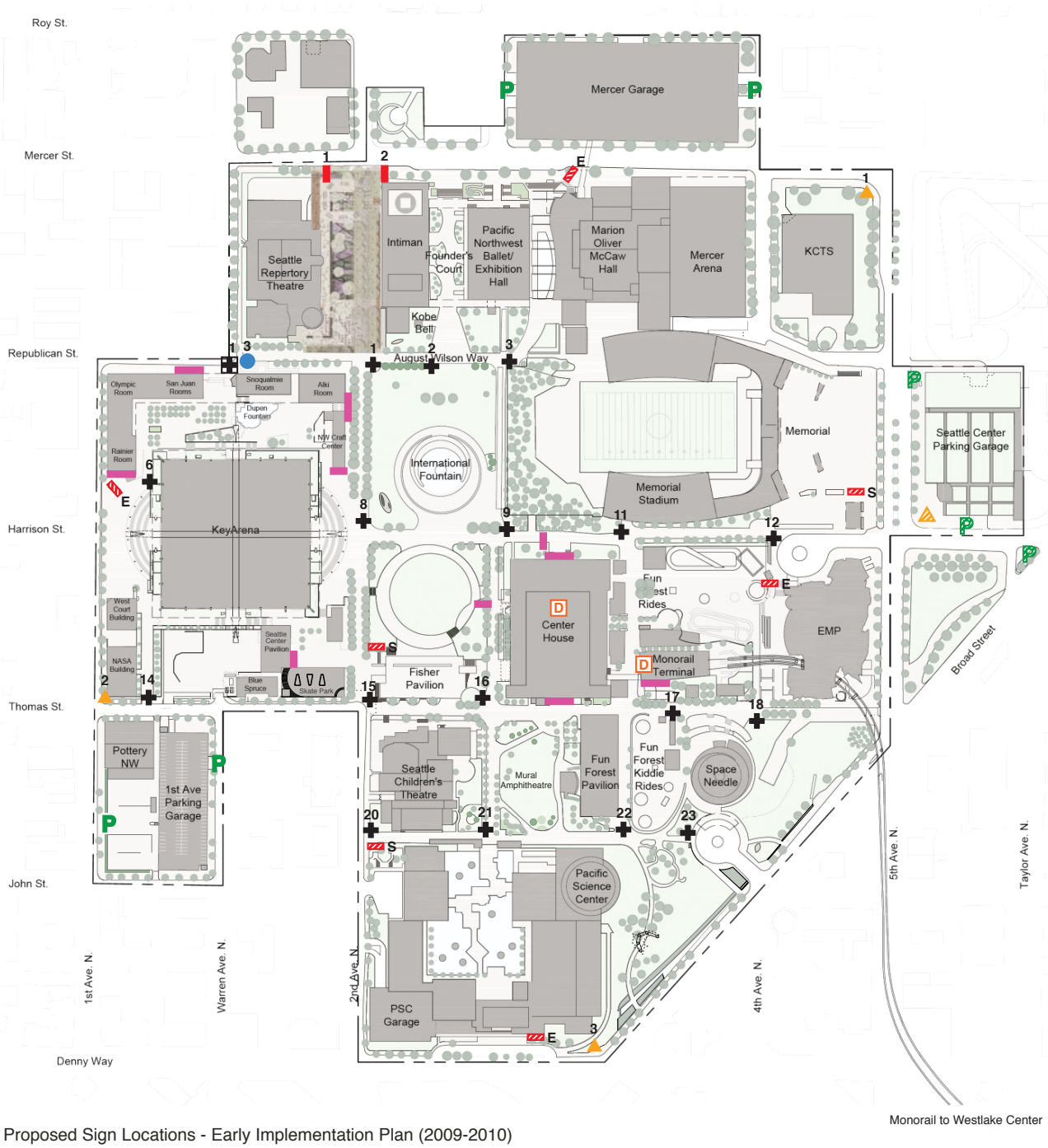
KEY

- S Seattle Center Readerboard (static)
- E Seattle Center Readerboard (electronic)
- S Facility Readerboard (static)
- E Facility Readerboard (electronic)
- Directory / Map
- Directional
- Northwest Rooms, Center House, Monorail Building ID
- Parking ID



Westlake Center Monorail Station Detail

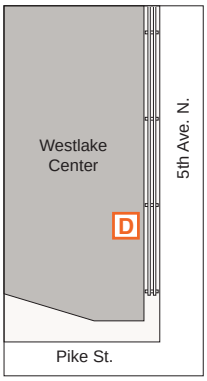
Seattle Center Campus Signage Plan • Sign Location Plan



Proposed Sign Locations - Early Implementation Plan (2009-2010)

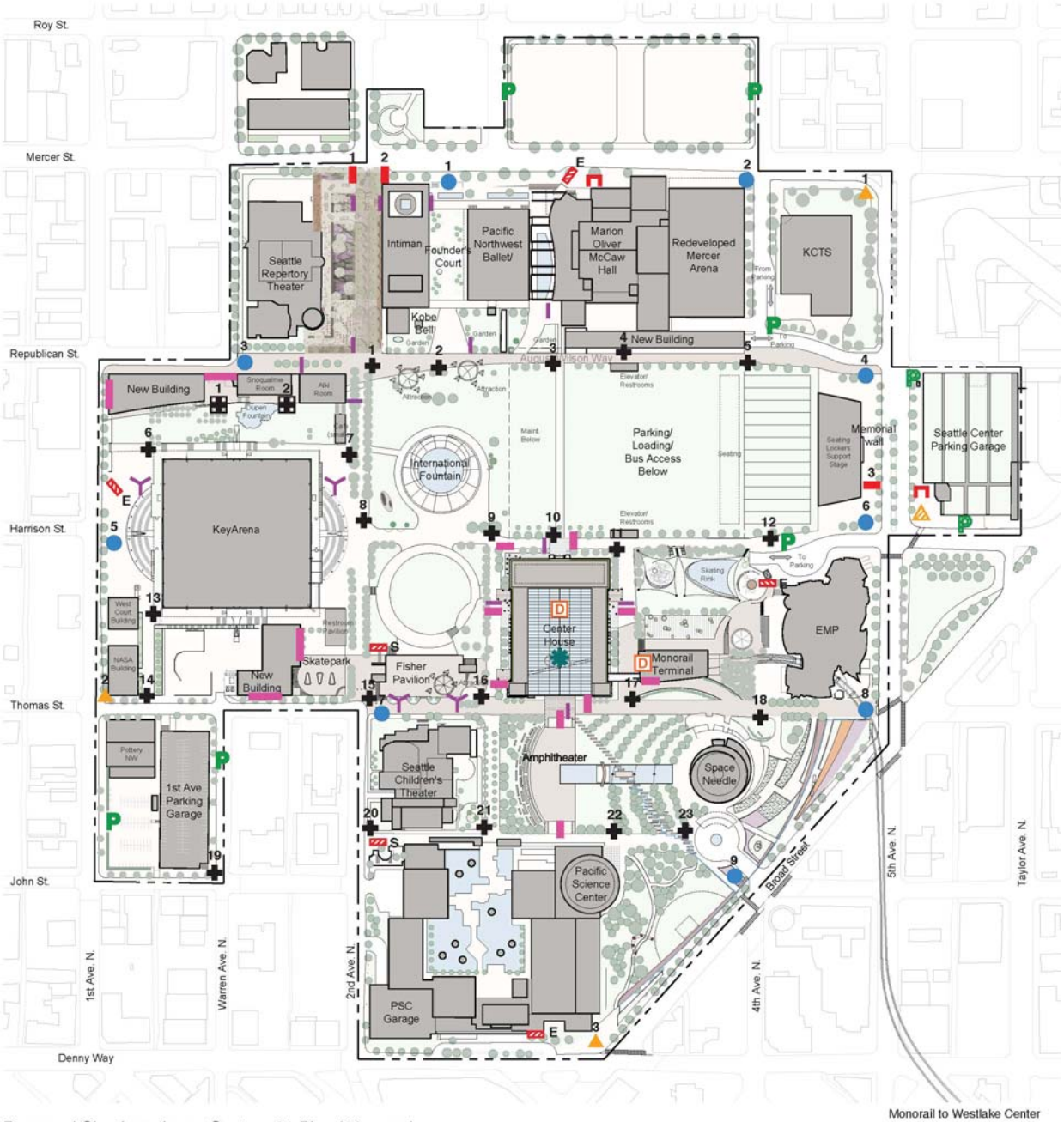
KEY

- Entry Marker
- Seattle Center Readerboard
- Seattle Center Readerboard (existing)
- Facility Readerboard
- S Facility Readerboard (existing; static)
- E Facility Readerboard (existing; electronic)
- Northwest Rooms, Center House, Seattle Center Pavilion, Monorail Building ID
- Directional (with campus map)
- Northwest Rooms Orientation Map / Directional (with campus map)
- P Parking ID
- P Parking ID (existing)
- Temporary Event Signage (various locations across site)
- D Digital Marketing Display



Westlake Center Monorail Station Detail

Seattle Center Campus Signage Plan • Sign Location Plan



Proposed Sign Locations - Century 21 Plan (20 years)

KEY

- Entry Marker (with campus map)
- Seattle Center Readerboard
- Seattle Center Readerboard (existing)
- Facility Readerboard
- S Facility Readerboard (existing; static)
- E Facility Readerboard (existing; electronic)
- Northwest Rooms, Center House, Mural Amphitheatre, Seattle Center Pavilion Building / Area ID
- Directional (with campus map)
- Northwest Rooms Orientation Map / Directional (with campus map)
- Parking ID
- Parking ID (existing)
- Seattle Center Poster Vitrine
- Facility Poster Vitrine
- Temporary Event Signage (various locations across site)
- Accessible Signage (various locations across site)
- Regulatory Signage (various locations across site)
- Interpretive Signage (various locations across site)
- Electronic Kiosk
- Digital Icon
- Digital Marketing Display

Westlake Center Monorail Station Detail

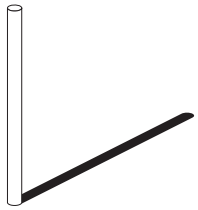
SIGN SYSTEM

Seattle Center has an inventory of signage from many different eras that lacks clarity of purpose, function or design. To improve the legibility of the sign system on campus, a new signage hierarchy is needed. Proposed new signage can be categorized by sign type, location and function, as follows:

Perimeter Campus Signage

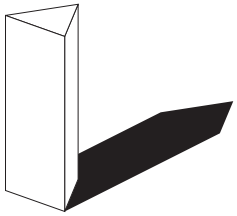
These signs are located around the perimeter of the campus and make the most visible impression on the public. They need to attract and orient visitors to the campus appropriately and positively. The City's Sign Code applies to signage in or near any public Right of Way, and added constraints based on the Code may factor into the design of any of these signage types.

1. Entry Marker - This object will mark significant campus entries. The scale is large enough to be seen from a distance and its form is welcoming when walking by or through it. It will enhance the Seattle Center brand in a highly visible way and create the sensation of crossing a threshold into a unique and special place.



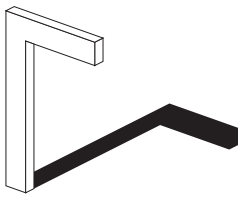
Entry Marker (with campus map)

2. Campus Readerboard - The function of this sign type is to communicate information about the activities and events occurring at Seattle Center to vehicular traffic and pedestrians. In addition, this sign type provides the prime opportunity to extend the Seattle Center brand. Placement will be at several strategic and highly visible locations with sufficient dwell time to allow a full reading of information displayed on the sign. It will have a distinct presence and be large in scale. Traditional static readerboards will be replaced over time with new digital technology, displaying a unique mix of text and graphics.



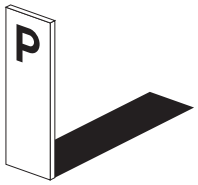
Seattle Center Readerboard

3. Facility Readerboard – This sign type, located adjacent to specific facilities, communicates the events at that facility, and are typically on the perimeter of the campus. These signs are smaller in scale than campus readerboards and feature text and limited graphics only. Over time, static signs will be replaced with digital readerboards, allowing some campus messaging in addition to facility information. With the McCaw Hall readerboard as a precedent, new digital readerboards for the Intiman and Seattle Repertory Theatres will be installed in 2010. They will provide enhanced visibility for the resident arts organizations and Seattle Center on Mercer Street, one of the key goals of the Theater District plan. It is anticipated that the Seattle Opera construction at the former Mercer Arena will also add a unique facility readerboard to the Theatre District.



Facility Readerboard

4. Parking Identity - The goal for this signage element is to provide clear identification for the entrances to Seattle Center's garages, making a distinction between other privately operated parking facilities and extending the Seattle Center brand. Using the new parking identity at the 5th Ave N garage as a precedent, new signage for the Mercer Street and 1st Avenue North garages will be installed in 2010.

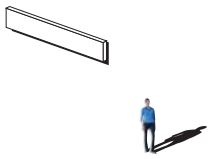


Parking ID

Internal Signage

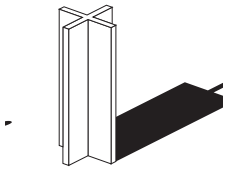
Several types of signs are needed to help orient visitors on foot through the campus once they arrive. Generally, these are smaller in scale than perimeter signage, but should convey a similar vocabulary to reflect the campus' brand.

5. Building Identity - The primary function is to provide a clear identity for each building from all primary approaches to that building. The identity may be attached to the building itself, either flush or as a blade sign, or be freestanding alongside the building.



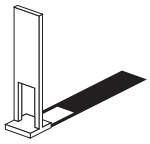
Northwest Rooms, Center House, Seattle Center Pavilion Building ID

6. Directional/Directory - The primary function is to guide patrons to a destination. This sign type will include both directional signage to aid in wayfinding and a campus directory map. The campus map will educate the user about the entire site as well as nearby attractions and amenities in surrounding neighborhoods. A sub-set of this sign type may also be used for orientation within a suite of facilities, such as the Northwest Rooms.



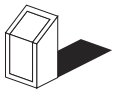
Directional (with campus map)

7. Event Signage - These moveable structures are used to announce daily events around the campus. They need to be durable, weather proof and vandal resistant and easy for clients and staff to attach and remove announcements.



Temporary Event Signage

8. Electronic Kiosk - These free standing pedestals, utilizing digital technology, will provide patrons detailed and real time event information. They may be thought of as an "electronic brochure" that is accessible at key sites around campus, starting with the parking garages to provide information before patrons cross onto the campus.



Electronic Kiosk

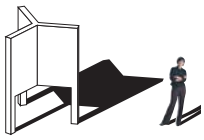
9. Digital Media Network Displays – This is a digital message system displaying a mix of campus information, entertainment and advertising on screens and monitors at strategic locations. Early demonstration sites have been targeted for the Monorail stations and Center House.

Digital Marketing Display

Other Signage

A collection of smaller and incidental signs throughout the campus provide additional information, communicating more detailed information including: upcoming events, project details, safety protocols and universal access.

10. Poster Vitrine - This sign type will be used to promote all campus events and will give opportunities to both resident organizations and event promoters to display their posters throughout the campus.



Seattle Center Poster Vitrine

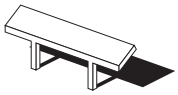
11. Accessible Signage - This sign type directs patrons with mobility challenges, including wheelchair users, to accessible building and campus entrances. This sign type addresses the federal accessibility standards mandated by the American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) established in 1994.

Accessible Signage

12. Regulatory Signage - This sign type regulates people's behavior or prohibit certain activities within the campus, Content is a combination of rules established by Seattle Center and regulatory authorities such as the City of Seattle.

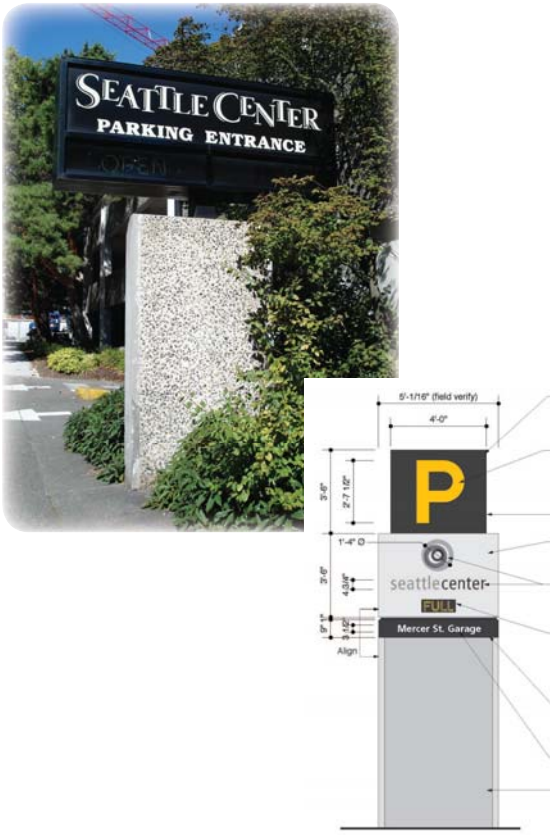
Regulatory Signage

13. Interpretative Signage - This sign type provides patrons with information to help them interpret the meaning of specific projects or the entire campus environment. The content could be historical information and/or information about how green technology is used on the site.



Interpretive Signage

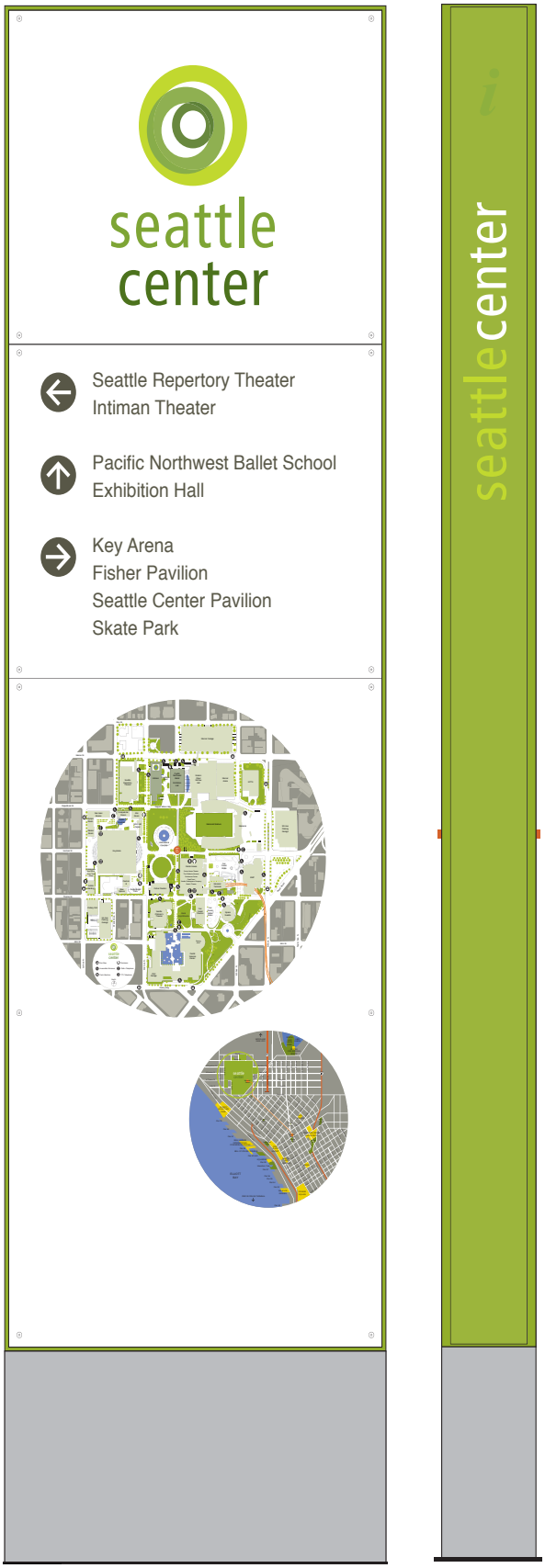
Existing /New -- Mercer St Garage



Existing /New -- 1st Ave N Garage

Existing -- 5th Ave N Garage

Parking identity signage for all garages on campus will be modeled after the signage design of the new 5th Ave N Garage, opened in July 2008. Automated PARC systems have been installed in two of three garages on campus: Mercer and 5th Ave N. When installed at the 1st Ave N Garage in the future, Seattle Center will look at automated or wireless real-time parking status messaging. Actively managing campus parking can help ease traffic congestion around the Center.



Campus directories (above) and blade directional signs (below) will be replaced with new combined directional/directory signage (right) at key interior intersections and campus entries. The new signs will both de-clutter and streamline signage on campus, and highlight Seattle Center's new logo and sense of place.

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Digital Signage and Graphic Capabilities: With the advent of digital readerboards and video displays and the introduction of this technology to Seattle Center in the mid-1990s, new opportunities have been created to convey the Seattle Center brand, and guidelines and policies are needed to guide digital signage design.

Electronic technology and a digital media network:

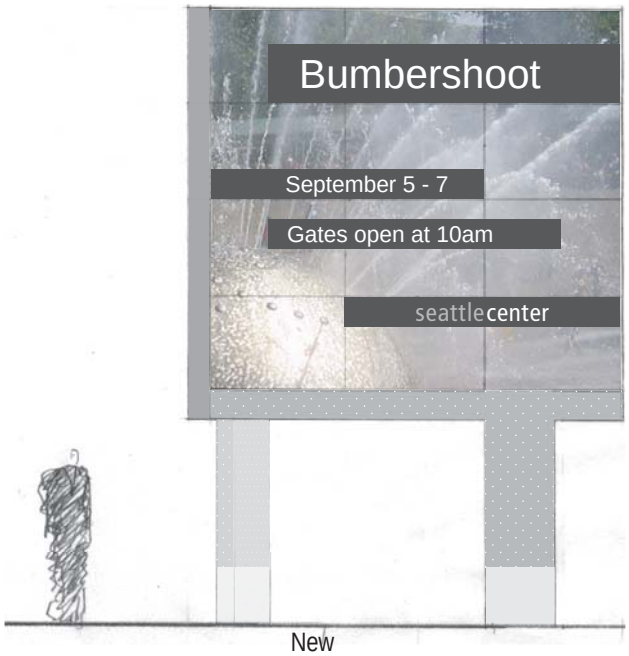
- Provide the maximum flexibility for changeable messages and for the scope of messaging capability (announce multiple events occurring that day, with times and places; announce coming events; thank sponsors; provide ticket information; make public information announcements, etc).
- Allow for variety in the presentation of the message and possible use of images, animation and program content to reinforce the Seattle Center brand and cohesion of the Seattle Center campus.
- Can be programmed and controlled remotely, significantly reducing the labor and time for changing manual signage, and can support an integrated hierarchy of digital displays, from large format LED's to plasma or LCD displays.
- Can distribute real-time event information, programming content and advertising to multiple locations enabling the Center to showcase the programming of the resident organizations.

A few key and fundamental tenets for integrating electronic technology and a digital media network at the Seattle Center campus include:

- Large LED displays will be used at the perimeter of Seattle Center and include both campus-wide and facility specific readerboards. LED displays will not be used internally to the campus so as to preserve the sense of place and expanse of open spaces.
- Campus readerboards will have 4-color or 8-color LED capability. This technology will allow both event information and iconic images of the campus to be presented to vehicular traffic at the perimeter, bringing a sense of the "Center of the Center" to the edges.
- Facility Readerboards will be smaller than campus readerboards and will be a single color LED for text and limited graphic displays only.
- The goal is an integrated system where campus-wide messages can appear on facility readerboards and specific facility information can appear on the campus readerboards to create a cohesive sense of Seattle Center and its resident organizations.
- Through the use of color, materials or shape, the design of the structure and enclosure for campus readerboards shall have a consistent appearance.
- Facility readerboards may share unique design characteristics with the building they promote, or have a distinctive use of materials or color.
- The Seattle Center full logo or the logotype treatment alone will be consistently displayed on the structure of both campus and facility readerboards.
- The Digital Media Network will be an integrated system of small screen digital displays (plasma or LCD) and electronic kiosks mounted in areas with sufficient patron density and dwell time, such as the monorail stations, Center House Food Court, and/or Seattle Center parking garages, and include real-time event information, programming content and outside advertising to provide service to patrons, enhance the Seattle Center brand and contribute revenue to support the system costs.

Digital readerboards already exist at the new 5th Ave N Garage, KeyArena and McCaw Hall. These early signs will be used as the design precedent for future digital readerboard designs.

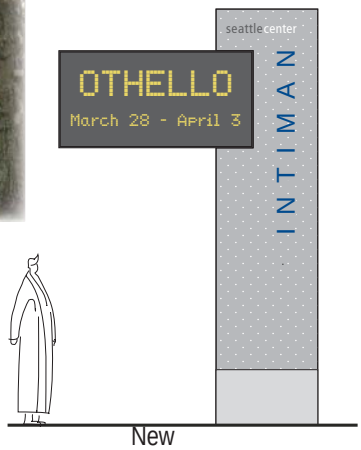
Existing



New

Seattle Center is currently scheduled to replace the static perimeter readerboards as part of the first phase of Campus Signage Improvements in 2009-2010. Three static facility readerboards along Mercer St. (Seattle Rep, Intiman and Exhibition Hall) are scheduled for replacement with two new digital facility readerboards (Seattle Rep and Intiman with the Exhibition Hall sharing time on both as needed) in spring 2010 and replacement of the campus readerboards at Broad/Denny, 5th Ave N/Mercer St and 1st Ave N/Thomas St will follow in late 2010.

Existing



New

Existing

New

Shown here are both existing Intiman Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre readerboards, along with the Theater Commons facility digital readerboards proposed to replace them in 2010 (Graphics by WPA)

As new digital readerboards are phased in and static readerboards are phased out, these design guidelines may need to be revisited and updated. All new Seattle Center perimeter readerboards will need to comply with the City of Seattle Sign Code, be sensitive to and minimize any impacts on neighbors, and be mindful of a spare and uncluttered design aesthetic for perimeter streets that surround Seattle Center.

Readerboard Content, Use and Operational Guidelines – will be established by the Seattle Center Marketing staff and Seattle Center Director and revisited, as needed. They will address technical, formatting and shared signage protocols, among other issues. Current practice allows for sponsorship fulfillment on readerboards, subject to the conditions of the campus sponsorship policy. The aesthetics of the content, presentation, use of images, and use of color, movement, and symbols can and should be addressed in these guidelines. At a minimum, they will address font, type size, number of lines of text, use of color, use of animation, speed of changing messages, brightness of the messages, allowable purposes of messages, and extent of resident organization participation. All decisions regarding size of typeface, color or use of animation in the programming of perimeter readerboards must comply with existing codes and ordinances and general graphic principles for display to the motoring public. They must also conform to Seattle Center Logo Guidelines, issued in July 2009.

Digital Media Network & Electronic Kiosk Guidelines – as these sign types are developed and brought on-line, the Seattle Center Marketing staff and Seattle Center Director will develop specific guidelines for this system. It is envisioned that advertising and program content provided by Seattle Center clients and resident organizations will be appropriate to these small-scale displays. Proportional division of event information, programming content and advertising are yet to be finalized and policies and procedures for resident organizations' participation in both the benefits and costs of these systems are still to be determined.

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WORLD'S FAIR
SEATTLE, U.S.A. 1962

Seattle Center has identified a new logo (above left) that will be incorporated into campus signage. Iconic Century 21 World's Fair logo (right) will continue to be an inspiration for Seattle Center's 50th Anniversary planning efforts as they unfold.