

A black and white photograph of a coastal town, likely Seattle, with a dense forest of evergreen trees on a hill in the background. The town is built on a slope, and the foreground shows a body of water.

^{the} Marina District Wayfinding Project

Robert Franco-Tayar
Brian Greer
Kimo Jordan
Mathan Retik

CEP 460 Autumn 2011
University of Washington
Prepared for Des Moines Planning Dept.

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Project Background

[Executive Summary]

Scope

Our project focuses on improving connectivity in Des Moines' Marina District by designing a system of kiosks, directional signs, and pedestrian infrastructure improvements that will enhance the city's unique character while complementing its existing assets. We selected the individual components of the wayfinding system from the Planning Commission's Comprehensive Wayfinding Program (included on following page) based on our skill sets and the limited time available to us. We envision this system as a foundation from which the city can build upon as the downtown area further develops.

Methods

Through GIS, historical research, primary inventory of pedestrian corridors, social ecology mapping, and community interviews, we endeavored to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths and challenges in Des Moines' Marina District and design a wayfinding system accordingly. We designed the system using elements from Gig Harbor's, Edmonds', and Anacortes' respective downtowns for inspiration. When compiling the report, we used ArcGIS to create maps, Adobe Illustrator to prepare the spatial data for visual presentation, and Adobe InDesign to create the report layout, organization, and sequencing.

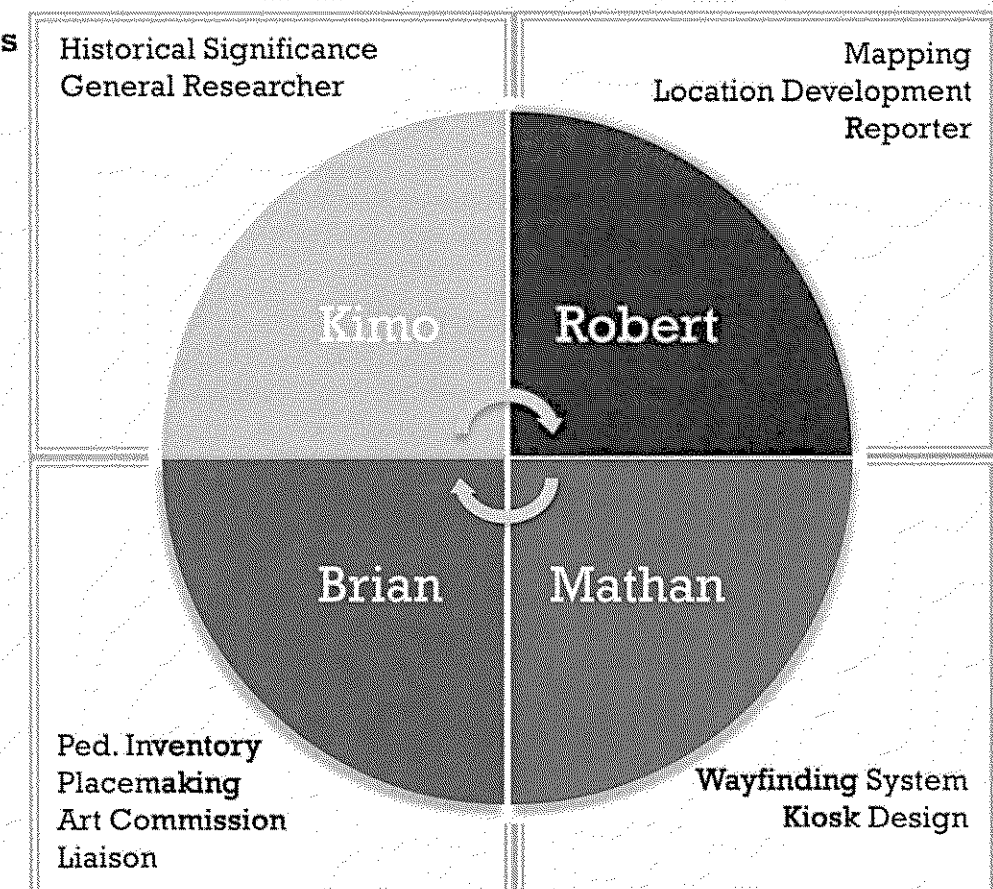
Report Findings

We found that the downtown area contains a crucial connectivity gap between the marina and Marine View Drive. There are a number of different causes, the most critical being a lack of development on 6th and 7th Avenues, ambiguous or inconsistent pedestrian infrastructure, and no direct travel path from Central Downtown to the fishing pier or boardwalk. Our recommendations aim to rectify or mitigate some of these adverse conditions while also complimenting Des Moines' nautical identity.

Report Organization

Our report will begin with an examination of the context of our wayfinding system. We will address the city's vision for its downtown area, taking into account its desire that the Marina District serve as a destination for tourists and residents alike. We will also inventory the area's assets and the challenges that our wayfinding system will encounter. Following this, we will present our recommendations and illustrations of how the system will actually work. Some components include kiosk placement, content, and design concepts, as well as a new downtown business directory. Finally, we will examine our wayfinding system's role in enhancing the downtown area's sense of place and make recommendations regarding infrastructural improvements affecting connectivity, and art placement designed to improve the user experience.

Team Roles



Project Background

[Program Overview]

City of Des Moines Comprehensive Wayfinding Program

Project Overview

The purpose of the project is to develop a comprehensive wayfinding signage system for the City that will be installed following a phased implementation plan.

- Design a clear, attractive wayfinding system that directs people to and through the Marina District and helps them discover new attractions and celebrate Des Moines' cultural heritage and waterfront amenities.
- Work with the Des Moines Arts Commission and community to create a simple theme that enhances the uniqueness of the Marina District identity and diversity.
- Install directional signs, kiosks, banners and gateway signs to guide tourists to the Marina District (Phase 1) and other points of interest in Des Moines (later phases).
- Develop website, tourism map and other marketing materials to promote local activities, businesses and amenities such as waterfront parks, trails, Marina, historic landmarks, specialty shops, restaurants and motels and encourage repeat visitors.

Wayfinding Goals and Objectives

Wayfinding elements will project a consistent image for the entire city; reduce visual clutter; and promote active living, walking, bicycling, and use of transit. Project objectives include:

- Develop a vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding system for destinations throughout the City with a focus on the Marina District.
- Develop a wayfinding system that will create an overall identity for the City, that is compatible with the desired maritime character, and that will also help to differentiate emerging districts.
- Provide highway tourism signage for I-5, state routes, and primary bicycle trails, and possibly major destinations just outside City boundaries (i.e., Sea-Tac Airport).
- Incorporate elements that promote active living, walking, bicycling, and use of transit.
- Incorporate parks, regional trails, recreation facilities and public buildings and historic sites into City interpretive signage (i.e., Des Moines Activity Center, Steven J. Underwood Park, Des Moines Field House Park, Des Moines Beach Park Historic District/Event Center, Des Moines Creek Trail, Saltwater State Park, Redondo Beach, City Hall, Libraries, Mt. Rainier Pool. Note - a joint parks and trails map is being prepared as part of our HEAL Grant).
- Ensure guide signs are designed consistent with Section 2D.50 Community Wayfinding Signs of the Federal Highway Administration 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) at: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009/part2d.pdf>.
- Address ADA guidelines and considerations in the design of the program.
- Provide signage that will direct visitors to parking lots and garages (as these facilities develop in the future).

The comprehensive wayfinding signage system will consist of the following parts:

- City Gateways (on SR 99 at S 216th St, Kent-Des Moines Rd and S 272nd St)
- Marina District Gateways (at Marine View Dr/S 216th St and KDM/Marine View Dr/S 227th St);
Note - the design should build upon the work completed for the DM Gateway Project
- Destination Identity Signs:
 - I-5, SR-99, S 216th St, Kent-Des Moines Rd (Phase 1)
 - Highline Community College, S 272nd Street and Redondo (Phase 2)
- Destination Directional Signs:
 - Marina District – Shopping, Marina, Farmers Market, Beach Park, DM Creek Trail, Saltwater State Park (Phase 1)
 - Redondo – recreation area/boardwalk/boat launch and MAST Facility (Phase 2)
 - Destination/Active Parks and Recreation Facilities and Public Buildings (Phase 3)
- Pedestrian Directional Signs:
 - Marina District – Marine View Drive, S 223rd St, Cliff Ave, S. and 5th Ave. S, S 227th St. and 7th Ave S, Marina (Phase 1)
 - HCC, Redondo, Saltwater State Park, other points of interest (Phase 2)
- Interpretive Signs:
 - Fishing Pier, Beach Park, DM Creek Trail to include integration of previously developed Beach Park History signage (Phase 1)
 - Redondo pier and boardwalk (Phase 2)
- Interpretive Kiosks (Marina District – programming of kiosk, Marine View Drive S/S 216th, 11th Ave S/S 216th, Pacific Ridge, Highline Community College/S 240th Street, Redondo)
- Parking Identity and Directional Signs (Phase 2)



Indicates Des Moines Planning Commission objectives incorporated into the scope of our project.

Project Background

[Context]

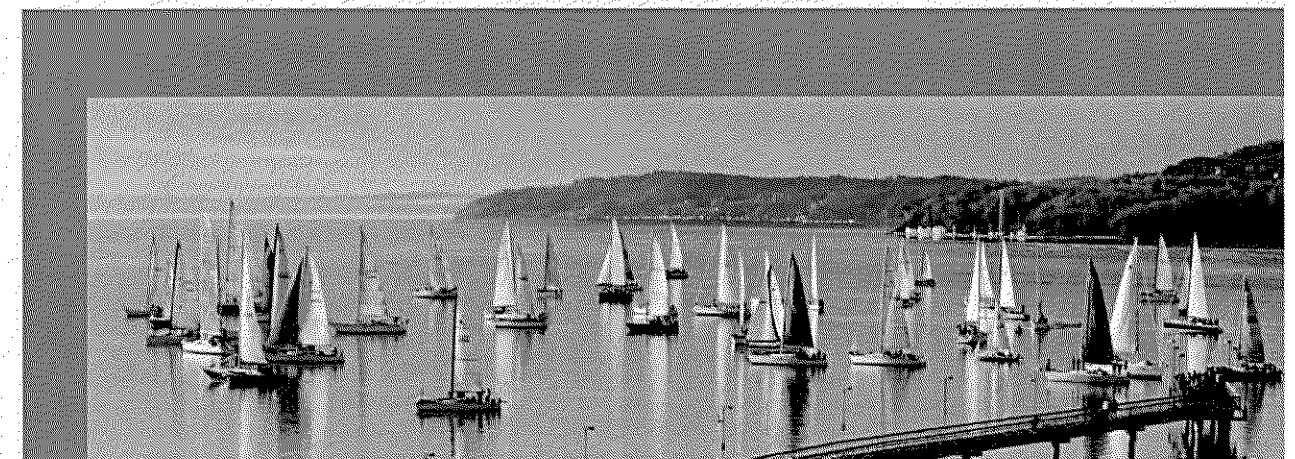
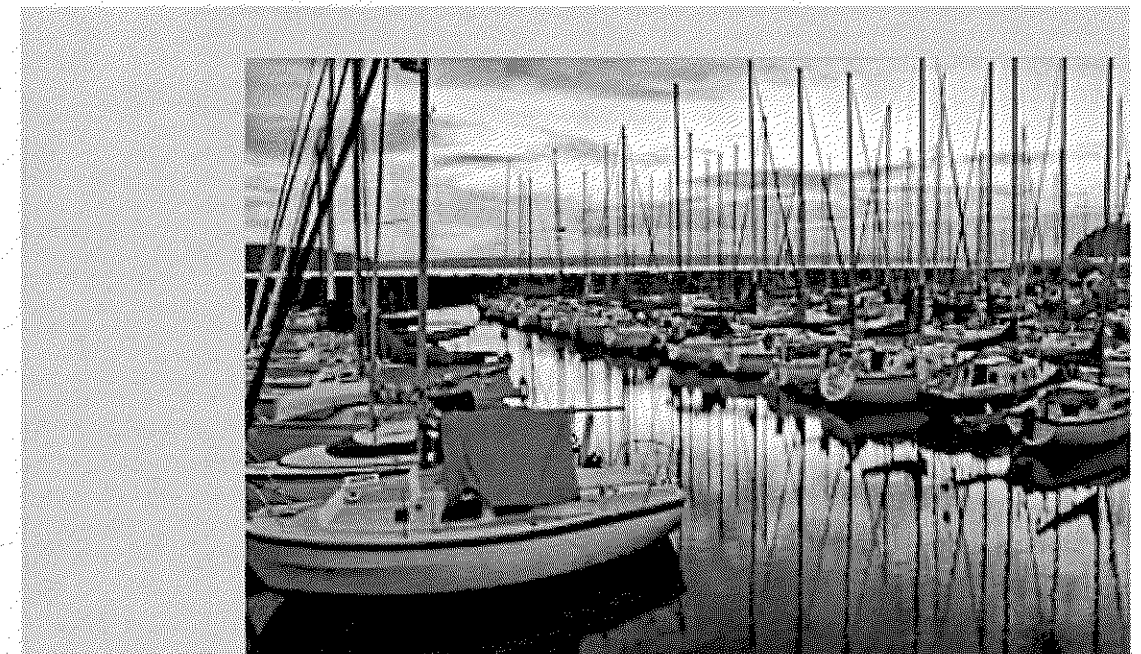
The future of the City's Marina District, formerly known as the downtown, is bright.
-City of Des Moines

"It is also a city shaped by its geography. Bordering Puget Sound, the city and its inhabitants have always had a maritime orientation."
- One Hundred Years of the "Waterland" Community

"Creates a destination that will support tourism by linking business areas flanking Marine View Drive and 7th Avenue South with City assets and amenities found and planned for within the Des Moines Marina and Beach Park."
-City of Des Moines

"Des Moines, Washington is a city of pioneers."
- One Hundred Years of the "Waterland" Community

"An old fashioned waterfront village; home to restaurants, a major grocery store and unique shops to explore in this pedestrian friendly neighborhood."
- destinationdesmoineswa.org



Project Background

[Social Ecology Map]

Nodes denote:

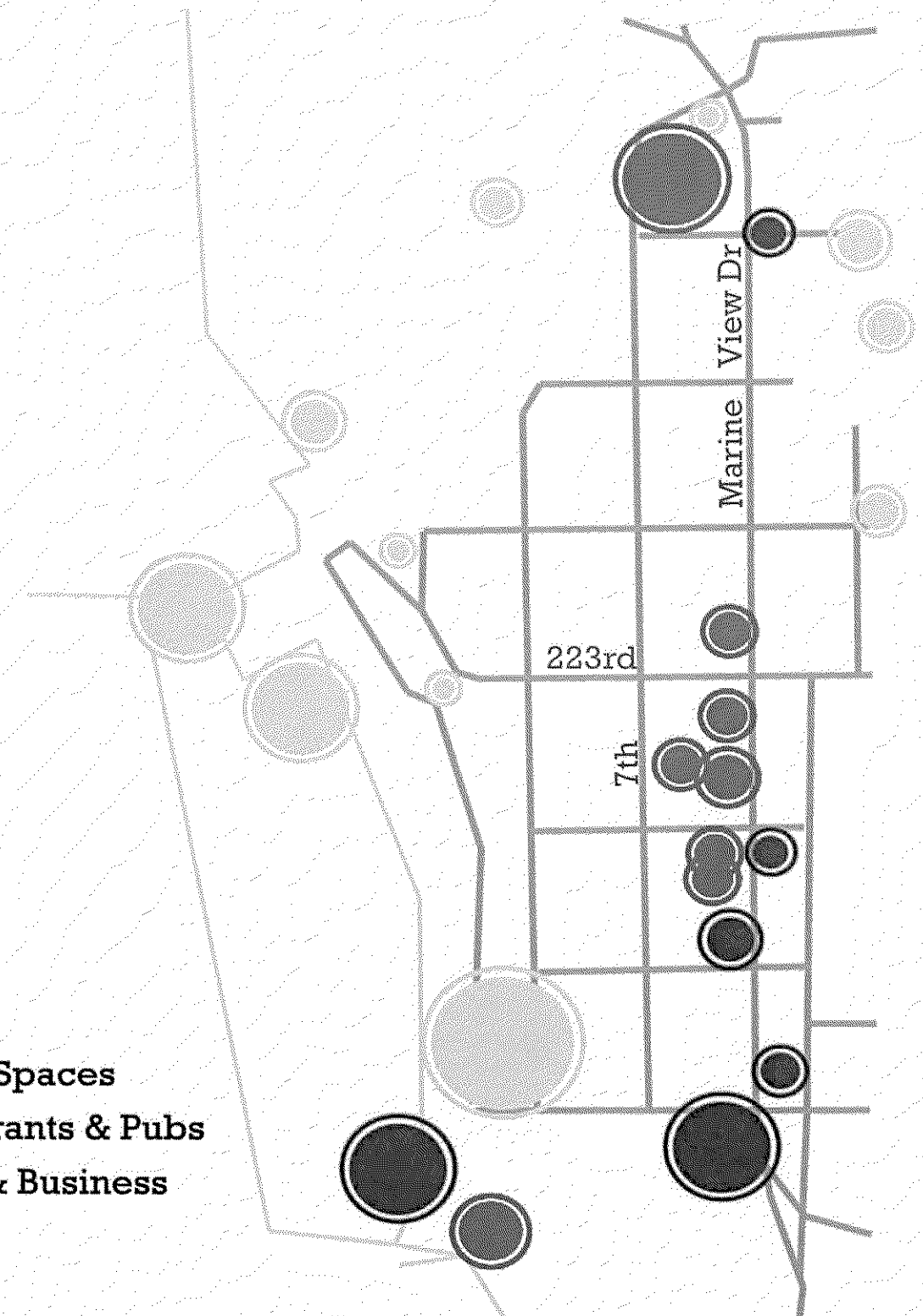
- Places of interest
- Social gathering
- Public assets
- Restaurants and pubs

Node size accounts for:

- Social impacts
- Frequency of use
- Historical significance

The social ecology map illustrates the chasm that exists between Marine View Drive and the waterfront, as well as the lack of amenities along 223rd (the main access point to the Marina for North and Central Downtown).

- Public Spaces
- Restaurants & Pubs
- Retail & Business



the **Pedestrian** experience

[Overview]

The Pedestrian Experience is a catalog of the existing conditions pedestrians will experience as they move throughout the Marina District. Four designations were chosen that relate to how a pedestrian might feel in a given location. For the purpose of this exercise lighting was not a consideration but certainly could be explored to enhance the understanding of the pedestrian corridors.

Pedestrian Friendly designation represents paths that have been clearly defined for pedestrian use. Characteristics present in this designation include: sidewalks, crosswalks and markings that separate auto use from pedestrian use.

Undefined Path designation represents areas along travel corridors that don't clearly define a space for the pedestrian user to travel. Characteristics present in this designation include: no crosswalks, no sidewalks and no markings that separate auto use from pedestrian use.

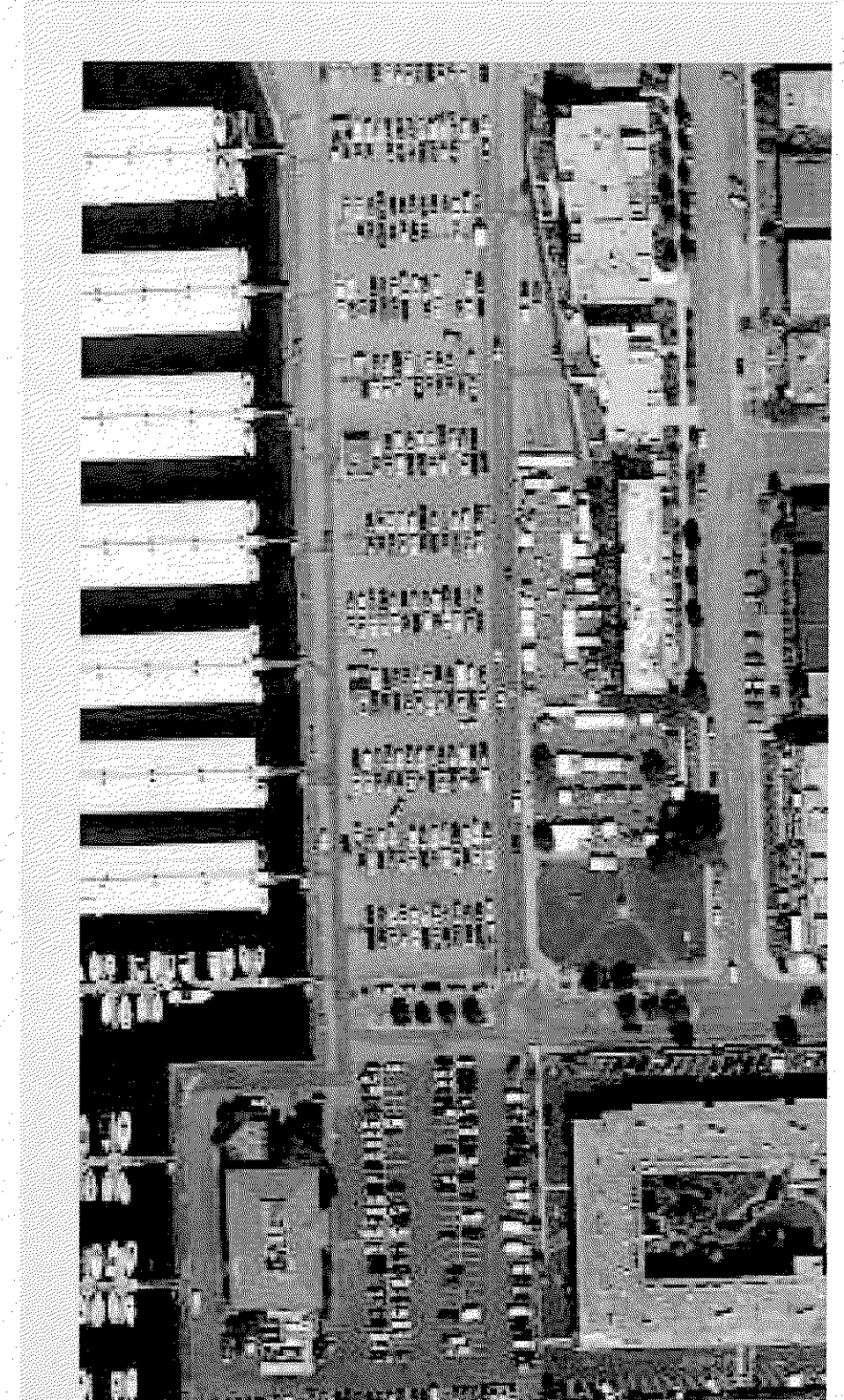
Parking Lot designation represents space that separates a pedestrian user from directly accessing the Marina Boardwalk area of interest from the business core or vice versa.

Marina Boardwalk designation represents the Marina Boardwalk which acts as a point of interest and a corridor for pedestrian travel along the waterfront.



the Pedestrian experience

[Examples]



the Pedestrian experience

[Corridors | North]



- Pedestrian Friendly
- Undefined Path
- Parking Lot
- Marina Boardwalk

north marina district

The north side of the Marina District has adequate sidewalks and crosswalks that enhance the pedestrian experience. It is also characterized by the Des Moines Creek Trail which allows for in city hiking and connectivity to the SeaTac area.

the Pedestrian experience

[Corridors | Central]



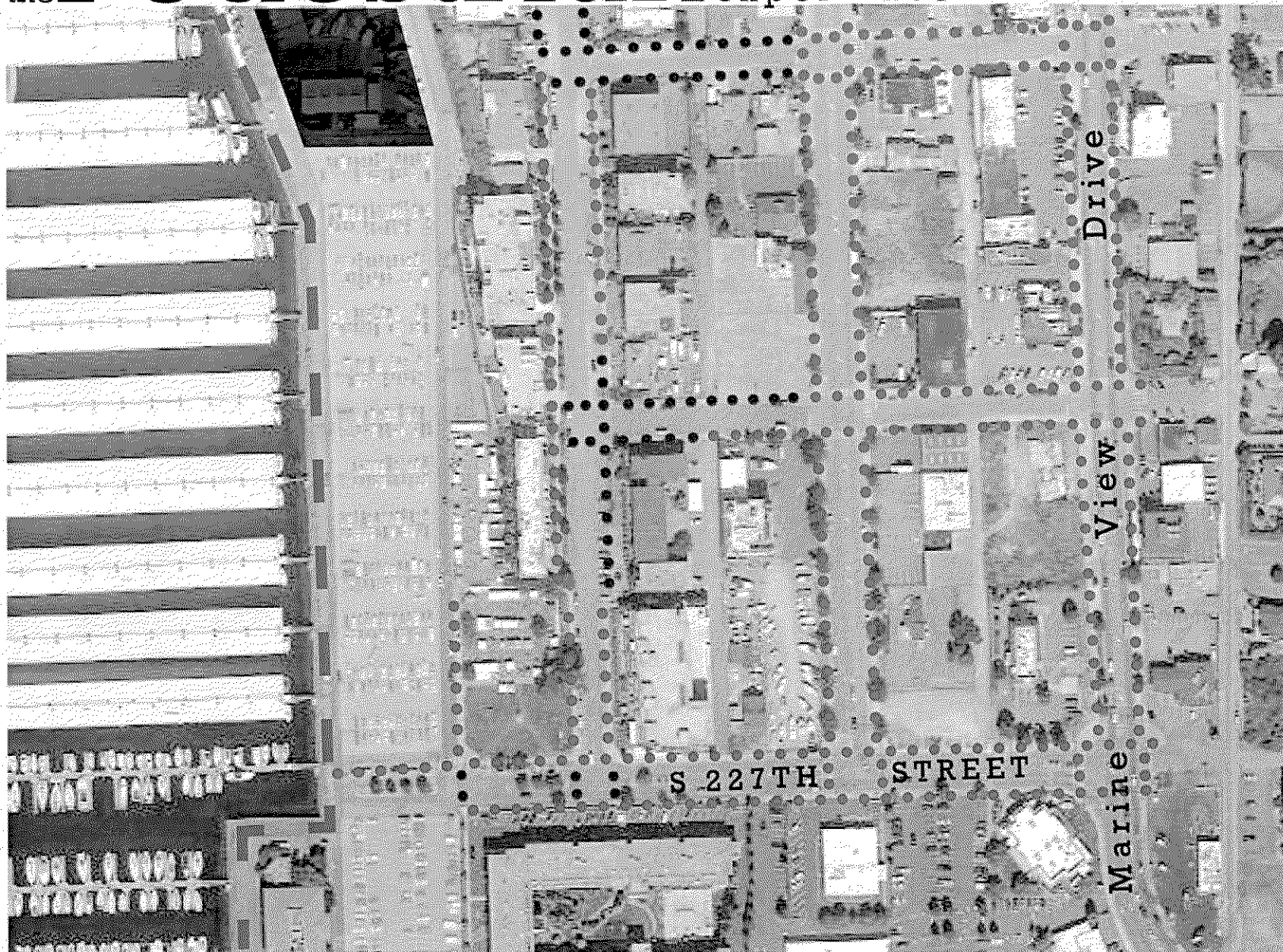
central marina district

The central zone in the marina district has the highest concentration of pedestrian unfriendly corridors. This zone also features terrain that is more challenging for pedestrian travel from the business core to marina floor. This zone may have the highest influence over the pedestrian experience given its central location.

- Pedestrian Friendly
- Undefined Path
- Parking Lot
- Marina Boardwalk

the Pedestrian experience

[Corridors | South]



south marina district

The southern end of the Marina District boasts an easy pedestrian access way on south 227th to the marina floor. The 227th corridor has adequate sidewalks and crosswalks all the way from Marine View Drive to the marina boardwalk, especially so when using the north side of the road. The challenge in this zone is directing users from Marine View Drive or 7th when their trip starts north of 226th. One might be tempted to direct pedestrians to the staircase down to the marina floor just south of 225th; however, this route crosses undefined paths and presents a less desirable experience.

- Pedestrian Friendly
- Undefined Path
- Parking Lot
- Marina Boardwalk

the Wayfinding system

[Overview]

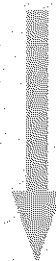
Three Goals:

The Wayfinding System aims to connect the the core business strip on Marine View Drive with the isolated waterfront Marina and Beach Park.

Vehicle Signs direct incoming vehicles to the largely invisible Marina and Beach Park, and make new visitors aware of their existence.

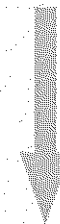
Pedestrian Kiosks advertise activities, events, businesses and heritage while providing direction between the waterfront and business strip.

Direct Vehicles
to Marina



**Vehicle
Signs**

Direct Pedestrians
to and from Marina



Map

Promote Activites
and Heritage



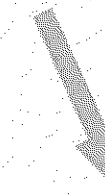
Directory

History
Activities
Calendar

Pedestrian Kiosks



Directory
+
Map



Information:
History,
Activities,
Calendar

the Wayfinding system

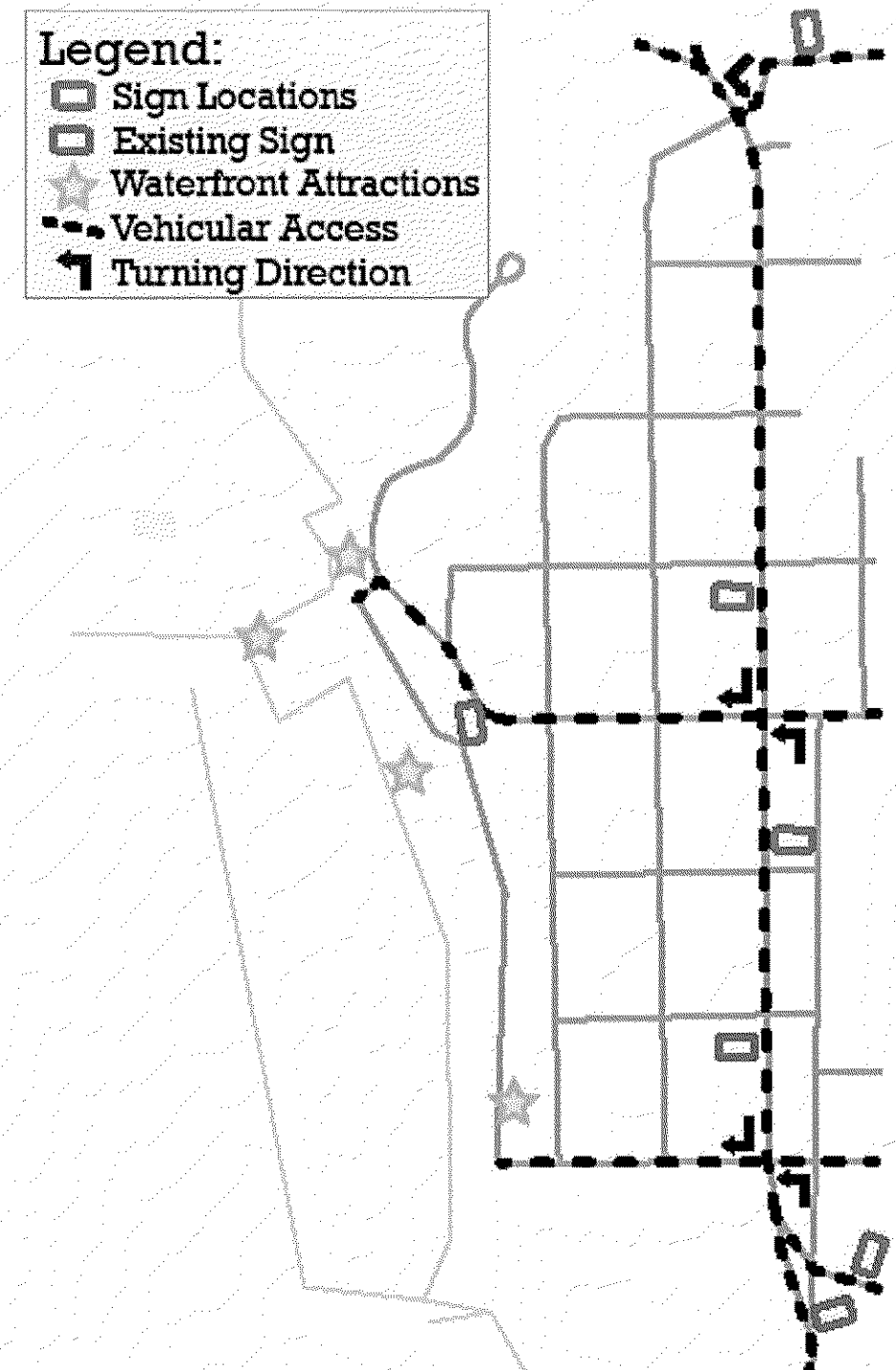
[Vehicle Sign Placement]

Criteria for Locations:

- Gateways from major arterials
- Affixed to light poles
- On same side of street as vehicle
- Does not duplicate existing sign
- Capture drivers who miss initial sign
- Allow drivers time to prepare to turn

Possible Issues:

- State route codes limit visual appeal
- May divert drivers from businesses
- Does not advertise activities



the Wayfinding system

[Kiosk Design Concepts]

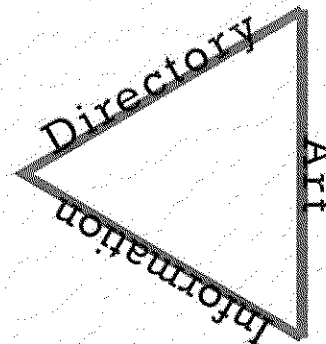
Footprints

Compact



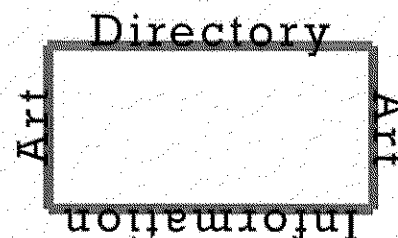
Maintains minimum passage on narrow sidewalk. Allows passers-by to read without obstructing foot traffic. Lacks additional space for art.

Triangle



Provides appealing volume with opportunity for art facing street, while allowing non-obstructive placement. Content visible from all directions except for street.

Rectangle



Combines maximum presence in larger areas, with multiple decorative surfaces. May only take up marginally more space than other options.

Inspiration



the Wayfinding system

[Kiosk Content | Directory]

Elements

Map with footprints color-coded and cross-referenced with directory. Text on map only to name roads.

Goals

Make pedestrians aware of waterfront activities, downtown businesses, and key services. Enhance connectivity by directing exploration. Advertise and Publicize.

Criteria

Activities and Services should be comprehensive. Inclusion of businesses in other categories may be selected by committee or selected on a sponsorship basis.

Methods

All businesses are colored according to key. Businesses included in directory are indicated on map with corresponding numbers. Recommended pedestrian pathways from Marine View Drive are darker.

Issues

In the interest of visual clarity and ease of use, information on map should be limited to absolute essentials. Which information is most important?

Des Moines Marina District Directory



Activities & Services

- (1) Marine Beachwalk & Fishing Pier
- (2) Des Moines Clock Tower
- (3) Marine Hardware Store's Office
- (4) Des Moines Beach Park Amphitheater
- (5) Farmers' Market Square
- (6) Marine Inn Hotel
- (7) Des Moines Cinema
- (8) CSR Marine South

Parks & Plazas

- (1) Des Moines Beach Park
- (2) Big Catch Plaza
- (3) South Marine Park
- (4) Overlook Park

Drinks & Snacks

- (1) Marine View Espresso
- (2) The Scratch & Vine
- (3) Des Moines Dog House
- (4) All Star Sports Bar
- (5) Auntie Anne's Ice Cream Shoppe
- (6) Voodoo Pub
- (7) Reuben
- (8) Lighthouse Bar
- (9) Blue Vanilla Bakery
- (10) Biscuits

Restaurants

- (1) Anthony's HomePort
- (2) Wally's Chowder House & Bar
- (3) Red Rabbit
- (4) Anthony's Thai Restaurant & Bar
- (5) Mandala Kitchen
- (6) Spicy's Gyro & Etc.
- (7) New Tokyo Teppan
- (8) Athens Pies & Pops
- (9) Kalliope

Shopping & Other

- (1) B & B Meats and Seafood
- (2) Carby Collins
- (3) Zenith Holland Gardens
- (4) Des Moines Yacht Club
- (5) Quality Food Center
- (6) Marine View Market

See Back for Info & Events

Des Moines Beach Park Activities

Des Moines Beach Park, formerly known as Covenant Beach Bible Camp, is a 20 acre site located in a wooded valley featuring 635 of beach on Puget Sound.

Explore all 15 miles of the Des Moines Creek Trail, a paved trail, great for walking, running and biking that wind through a lush valley.

Our 200 foot fishing pier includes a washing station with cleaning instructions for flounder

Piece of History:

In 1909 the "Daring" was built and launched by a local company Crawford and Reid in Tacoma - she served her days as part of the "Mosquito Fleet" serving communities up and down the coast of Puget Sound transporting both people and freight.



This December in Des Moines

- 3rd - Lighted Boat Parade at Des Moines Yacht Club
- 5th - Tree Lighting at Big Catch Plaza
- 6th - Christmas Ships Bonfires at Redondo 8:50-9:10pm
- 10th - Boeing Employees Choir Sings at United Methodist Church
- 15th - Christmas Ships Bonfires at Des Moines Beach Park 7:10-7:30pm
- 17th - Breakfast with Santa at the Senior Center, 9am & 10:45am seating times

Des Moines Creek Trail

Explore all 15 miles of the Des Moines Creek Trail, a paved trail, great for walking, running and biking that wind through a lush valley.

Des Moines Beach Park

Des Moines Beach Park, formerly known as Covenant Beach Bible Camp, is a 20 acre site located in a wooded valley featuring 635 of beach on Puget Sound.

During the 1970's the Des Moines City council enlisted the help of Jean-Michel Cousteau to construct an artificial reef around the marina. 500 lbs. of quarry rock, 36,000 tires, 30 loads of concrete, and over 200 porcelain items ranging from toilets to bathtubs and sinks made for a good home for developing sea life.



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Waterfront [Location Specific]

Downtown [Generic]

the Wayfinding system

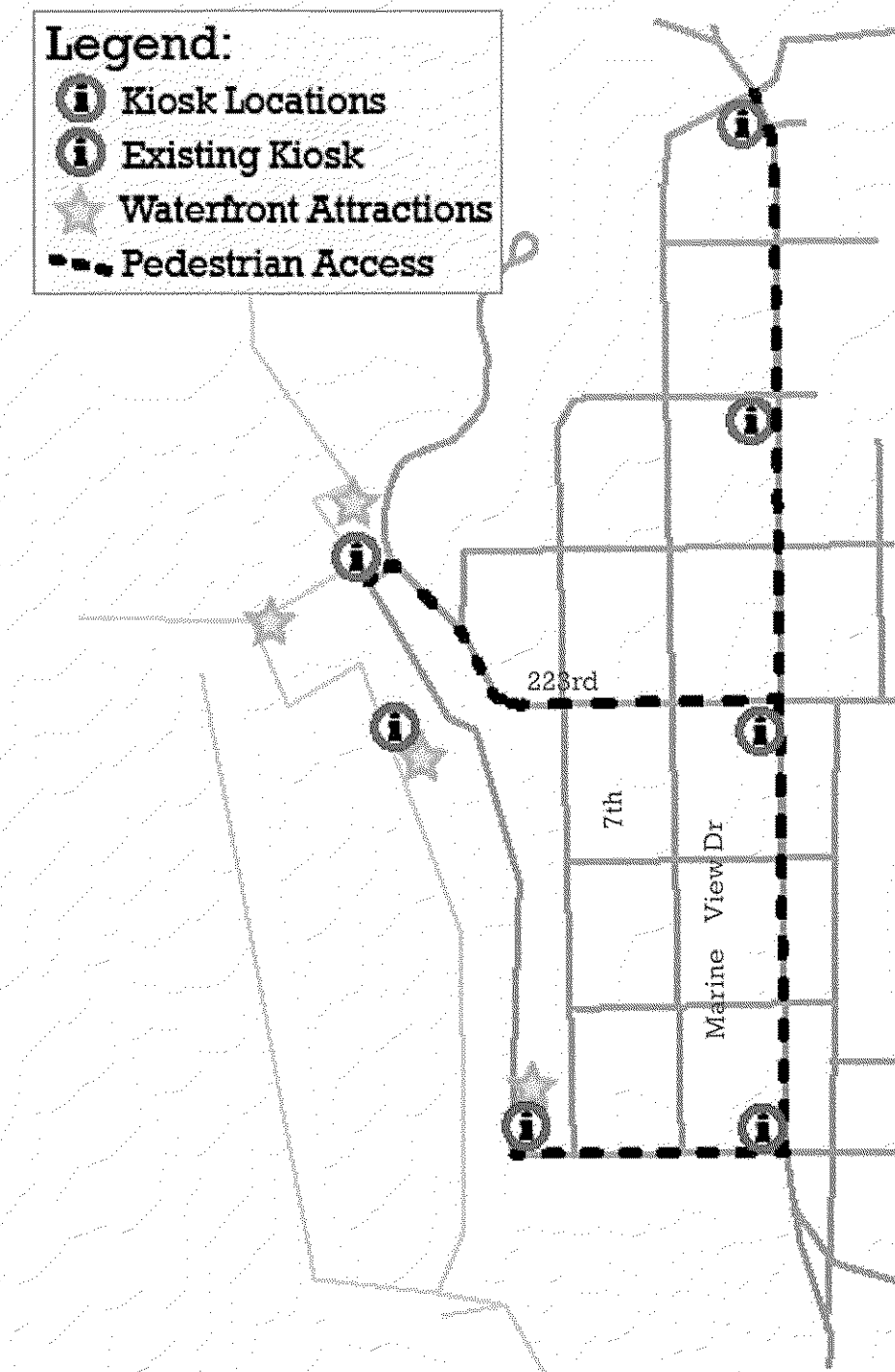
[Kiosk Placement]

Criteria for Locations:

- Nodes of activity or gathering
- High visibility
- Bus stops
- Intersections of paths
- Intercept pedestrians entering waterfront
- Existing kiosk at Marina: duplicate information

Issues:

- Redundancy/Exact placement
- Catering to present vs. future
- Puts peds on busy street
- Lack of public space near businesses



experiencing Place

[Purpose]

We have conducted this project with the understanding that signs and kiosks are not a complete solution for navigating a district. A legible streetscape and strong sense of place can be powerful tools for attracting visitors and guiding them through the urban fabric.

Throughout the duration of the project our team made observations about the character of the Des Moines Marina District, its assets and challenges as we envisioned them. This section is devoted to identifying elements that could add to and enhance the user experience. We have identified infrastructure improvements that will promote connectivity and add to public space. Also identified are existing artistic expressions and potential future placement of art installations.



experiencing Place

“Marina Way” Renaming

Currently, the name of 223rd street provides no indication that this street is different to any other, yet it leads to the Marina and Beach Park. Changing the name of this street to Marina Way would mark it as the center of town, while informing passers-by of the Marina hidden nearby and complementing the district’s nautical heritage.

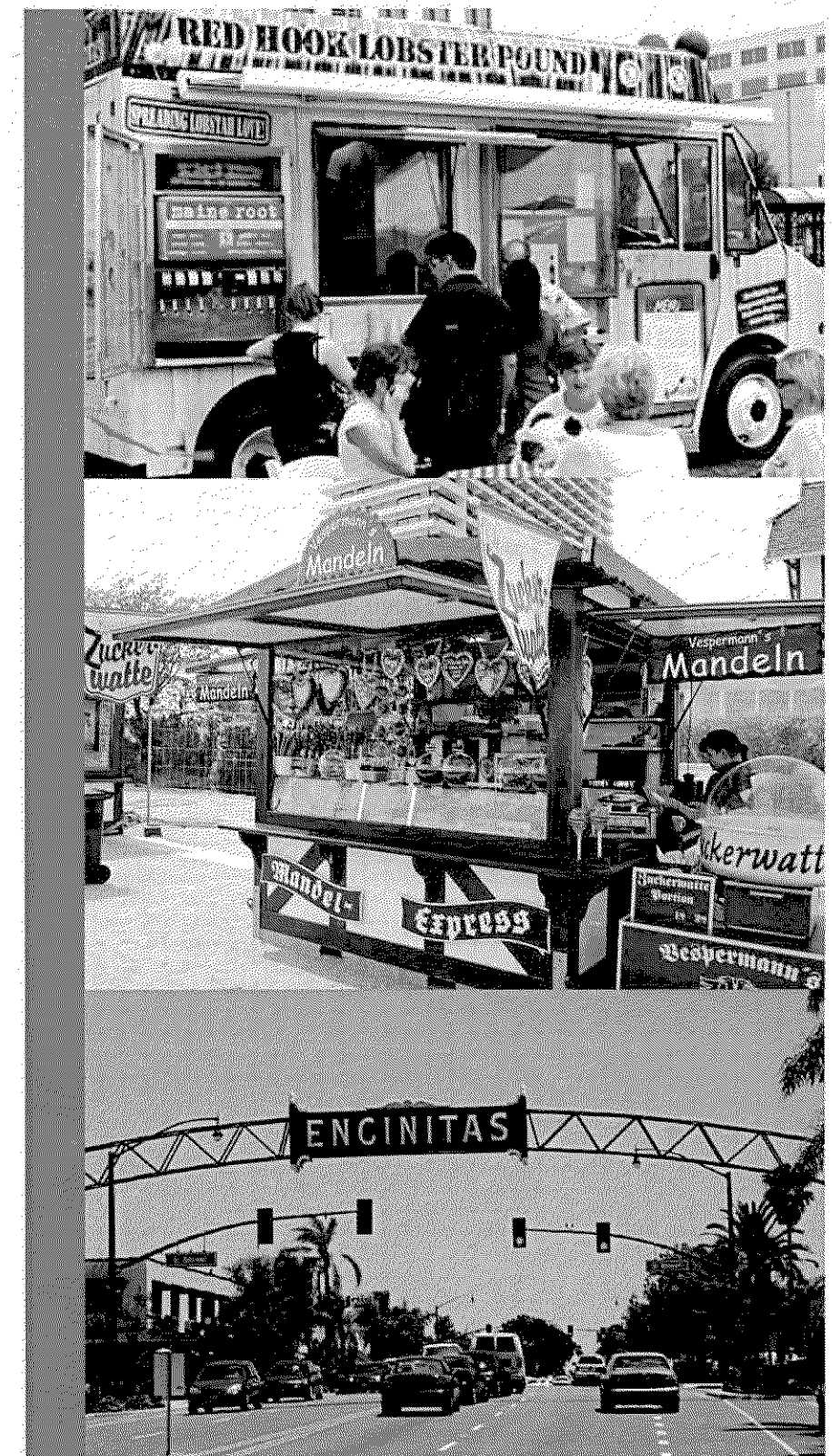
Trucks and Stalls

Food trucks and stalls have proven to be a cheap, effective and flexible way to activate and enliven under-utilized spaces. Their presence on the Marina floor could add to year-round appeal and local culture.

Gateways and Landmarks

By defining and marking its center and its limits, a previously underdefined district can assert itself and take form in the visitor’s mind.

[Recommendations | Identity+Culture]



experiencing Place

Marina Stairwalk

The current northern path to the Marina veers to the right down Cliff Avenue, while a city-owned right of way continues west down a steep escarpment to the Marina. Though it now lies below a hidden lookout, this location used to allow direct access to the Marina down a stairwalk.

Re-establishment of a staircase from top of Cliff Avenue and South 223rd down to the Marina floor could serve to establish a main pedestrian corridor and act as the most centrally located public space in the Marina District. By simplifying access to the heart of the Marina with a visually striking but appropriately scaled staircase, a memorable new landmark could help to form a local identity while vastly improving connectivity.



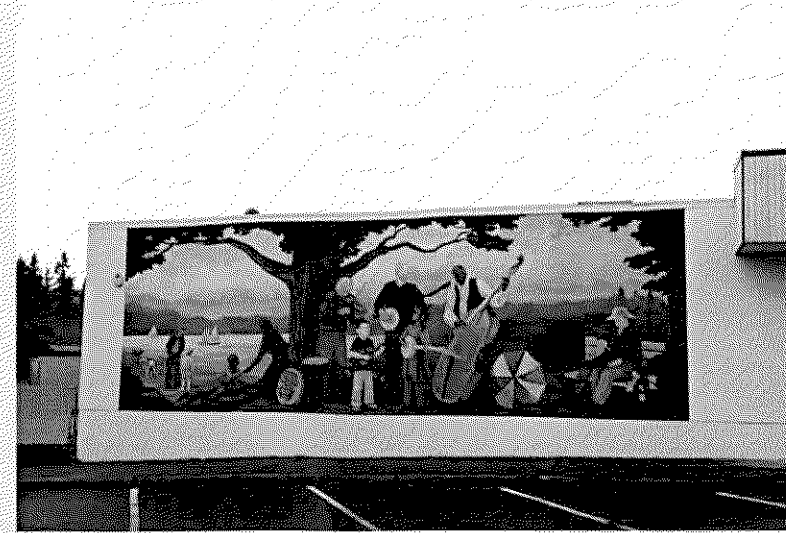
[Recommendations | Connectivity]



experiencing Place

The Marina District has a blend of artistic elements and existing infrastructure that highlight its unique history and relationship to the Puget Sound. During our time in the Marina District we noticed many of these features were located in obscure locations, reducing visibility to visitors. A turtle sculpture is located in the library complex but not adjacent to paths or entry to the building; the Des Moines Shop and Save sign is located in an alley between 7th and Marine View Drive; and the recently completed mural honoring the aging process is located on the south side of the QFC complex. Placement of art accords significance to its setting, and so siting art in poorly-traveled locations can create confusion in the visitor's mind. The future placement of art should focus on locations with higher levels of activity and visibility.

[Recommendations | Art+Context]



Acknowledgements

Denise Lathrop has guided the project throughout its phases, as the team's key contact at the Des Moines Planning Department. She played a major role in defining this project while providing valuable feedback and background materials, and connecting the team to other city resources.

Marty Curry, as Affiliate Assistant Professor of Urban Design & Planning at UW, instructed, selected, and mentored the project team, checking in frequently and providing feedback and advice on content and interim presentations.

Des Moines Planning Dept. provided the team with key GIS data through **Steve Schunzel**, as well as providing valuable input and criticism in developing the product.

Des Moines Arts Commission shared its vision for the future of Des Moines and provided guidance and background on local character and culture.

Des Moines Historical Society connected the project team with historical resources that revealed the nautical and frontier heritage of Des Moines, greatly influencing the content of this report.

About the Authors

Robert Franco-Tayar is studying Political Science at UW in addition to CEP. He is currently interning at People for Puget Sound as a Carlson Civic Fellow.

Brian Greer is studying CEP and Geography at UW. Brian has a professional background in real estate and landscape and is currently working on starting a community garden.

Kimo Jordan is studying CEP at UW. He is deeply interested in the world of co-working and believes in the good that collaboration can do for the world.

Mathan Retik is studying Civil Engineering at UW in addition to CEP. He recently completed an internship at the Washington State Department of Transportation.