



# REPORT

## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

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DATE ISSUED: October 3, 2023

REPORT NO.: 101

ATTENTION: Parks and Recreation Board  
Agenda of October 19, 2023

SUBJECT: Balboa Park Natural History Museum Gardens Donor Acknowledgement  
and Interpretive Signage Program

### SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Parks and Recreation Board recommend approval of the proposed Donor Acknowledgement and interpretive signage program for the Natural History Museum demonstration gardens?

Department Recommendation – Recommend approval of the proposed Donor Acknowledgement and interpretive signage program.

Other Recommendations – The Balboa Park Committee reviewed and considered the proposed project. Actions taken and recommendations made by the Balboa Park Committee are listed under Discussion below.

Fiscal Impact –

None with this action. The Natural History Museum will be responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of all donor acknowledgement media and interpretive signage.

Water and Energy Conservation Status – The proposed donor acknowledgement media and interpretive signage comply with all water and energy conservation guidelines contained in Council Policy 200-14.

Climate Action Plan (CAP) Impact – The proposed donor acknowledgement media and interpretive signage comply with the City's Climate Action Plan.

Strategic/Tactical Equity Plan Impact – The proposed donor acknowledgement media and interpretive signage has no impact on the Strategic/Tactical Equity Plan.

Environmental – Pursuant to CEQA Section 15352(a), this action Requesting a Recommendation to the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department for the NAT Museum Donor Acknowledgement program and signage does not constitute approval of a "project" as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Approval of the Balboa Park Botanical Building and Garden's Restoration project will occur once an

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application is submitted for review in accordance with the provisions of CEQA Section 15004 which provides direction to lead agencies on the appropriate timing for environmental review, and the City's Land Development Code (LDC). Therefore, the proposed action is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to the "common sense" exemption set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), which states the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects having the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action will not foreclose review of alternatives or mitigation measures by the public as part of the future CEQA process.

## BACKGROUND

The Balboa Park Master Plan was adopted by City Council on July 25, 1989, and guides overall development of Balboa Park. That document also recommends the preparation of Precise Plans for areas of Balboa Park that require a greater level of detail. To that end, the Central Mesa Precise plan was prepared, and subsequently adopted by City Council on October 20, 1992.

The Central Mesa Precise Plan is divided into sections that address the various geographic regions of the Central Mesa. These areas include the West Prado, East Prado, North Prado, War Memorial & Zoo Parking Lot, Pepper Grove, and Palisades. The Natural History Museum is in the East Prado area of Balboa Park.

The Balboa Park Sign Manual was adopted by City Council as a part of the Appendices for the Central Mesa Precise Plan. The Sign Manual was updated by the Balboa Park Conservancy (now Forever Balboa Park) and adopted by the Balboa Park Committee on September 5, 2019. The minor revisions to the Sign Manual were found to be consistent with the intent of the original Sign Manual and no further approvals were required. The Sign Manual can be found at:

[bpsignmanualupdate.pdf \(sandiego.gov\)](https://www.sandiego.gov/signmanualupdate.pdf)

On October 21, 2021, the Parks and Recreation Board voted to recommend approval of the proposed General Development Plan (GDP) to re-landscape the areas around the Natural History Museum (NAT) to a drought tolerant native plant garden for educational purposes. The NAT has been raising funds to complete design and construction of the project and wishes to implement a donor acknowledgement program in the garden areas. They would also like to include signage for plant identification as well as garden interpretation.

## DISCUSSION

The NAT proposes to install interpretive signage for the newly planted gardens. Signage proposed includes plant identification signs and overall garden interpretive signs.

Interpretive Signage – The Sign Manual does not have signage directly comparable to the intent of the garden interpretive signs. Staff advised, and the Balboa Park Committee agreed, that application of the Sign Manual is not apt for this situation. Seven interpretive signs are proposed to be located throughout the new gardens. The proposed signs would be 40 inches wide and 20 inches high. The signs would have an oval top similar to other signage identified in the Sign Manual. The signs would be mounted on tubular steel posts, bronze in color, and mounted at a height of 30 inches. See Attachment A, page 14 for locations, and pages 15 and 16 for the design. The interpretive signs also include a donor recognition component; see below for additional information.

Plant Identification Signage – The Sign Manual does not contemplate plant identification signage. The NAT Museum proposes a total of 28 plant identification signs located throughout the gardens. The proposed signage will be nine inches wide by six inches high (9" x 6"). The signs would be located on a tubular steel post, bronze in color, and mounted at a height of approximately twelve inches. See Attachment A, page 17 for approximate locations and page 18 for the design.

The NAT has embarked on a capital campaign to raise funds for the implementation of the native plant demonstration and education garden. As with many privately funded projects, donor acknowledgement is a component. Donor recognition would take three forms: brass plaques mounted to interpretive signage, large (6" diameter) brass markers, and small (3" diameter) brass markers.

Interpretive Signage Plaques – The proposal is to attach brass plaques to garden interpretive signage at seven locations. These plaques would be approximately 40 inches wide and two inches tall. See Attachment A, page 20 for locations and page 21 for the design.

Large Brass Markers – Large brass markers with a diameter of six inches will be attached flush into natural boulders at ten locations. Due to the material these markers will patina over time and blend in with the boulders. See Attachment A, page 20 for locations and page 22 for the design.

Small Brass Markers – Small brass markers with a diameter of three inches will be attached flush into natural boulders at 15 locations. Due to the material these markers will patina over time and blend in with the boulders. See Attachment A, page 20 for locations and page 23 for the design.

On September 7, 2023 the Balboa Park Committee voted unanimously (7-0-0) to recommend approval of the proposed donor acknowledgement and interpretive signage program with the condition that the NAT consider increasing the height of the plant identification signs from 12 inches to 24 inches. The NAT has agreed to increase the sign height to 18 inches.

The City's Sustainability and Mobility Department has reviewed this proposal for compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and has no issues.

The Development Services Department's Historical Resources staff have reviewed the proposal for consistency with historic preservation standards and have taken no issues.

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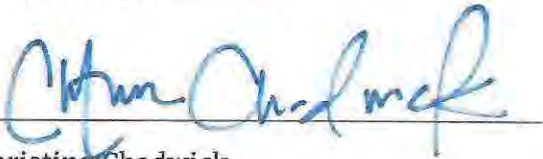
CONCLUSION

The proposed donor acknowledgement and interpretive signage program has been found to be consistent with preservation standards and ADA requirements. The Balboa Park Committee has advised the proposed donor acknowledgement and signage program is consistent with the Balboa Park Sign Manual and has recommended approval with one condition as previously noted. This condition has been incorporated by the NAT. For these reasons the Department recommends approval of the proposed donor acknowledgement and interpretive signage program as presented.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the proposed donor acknowledgement program and interpretive signage with conditions;
2. Do not recommend approval of the proposed donor acknowledgement program and interpretive signage.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina Chadwick  
Acting Deputy Director  
Developed Regional Parks Division



Prepared by: Charles Daniels  
Project Officer II  
Administrative Services Division

CC/cd

Attachment: Slide Presentation

cc: Council District 3 Office

Parks and Recreation Department

# Natural History Museum Gardens Donor Acknowledgement and Interpretive Signage Program

Action Item #101  
Parks and Recreation Board  
Agenda of October 19, 2023

## Requested Action

- Should the Parks and Recreation Board recommend approval of the proposed Donor Acknowledgement and interpretive signage program for the Natural History Museum demonstration gardens?

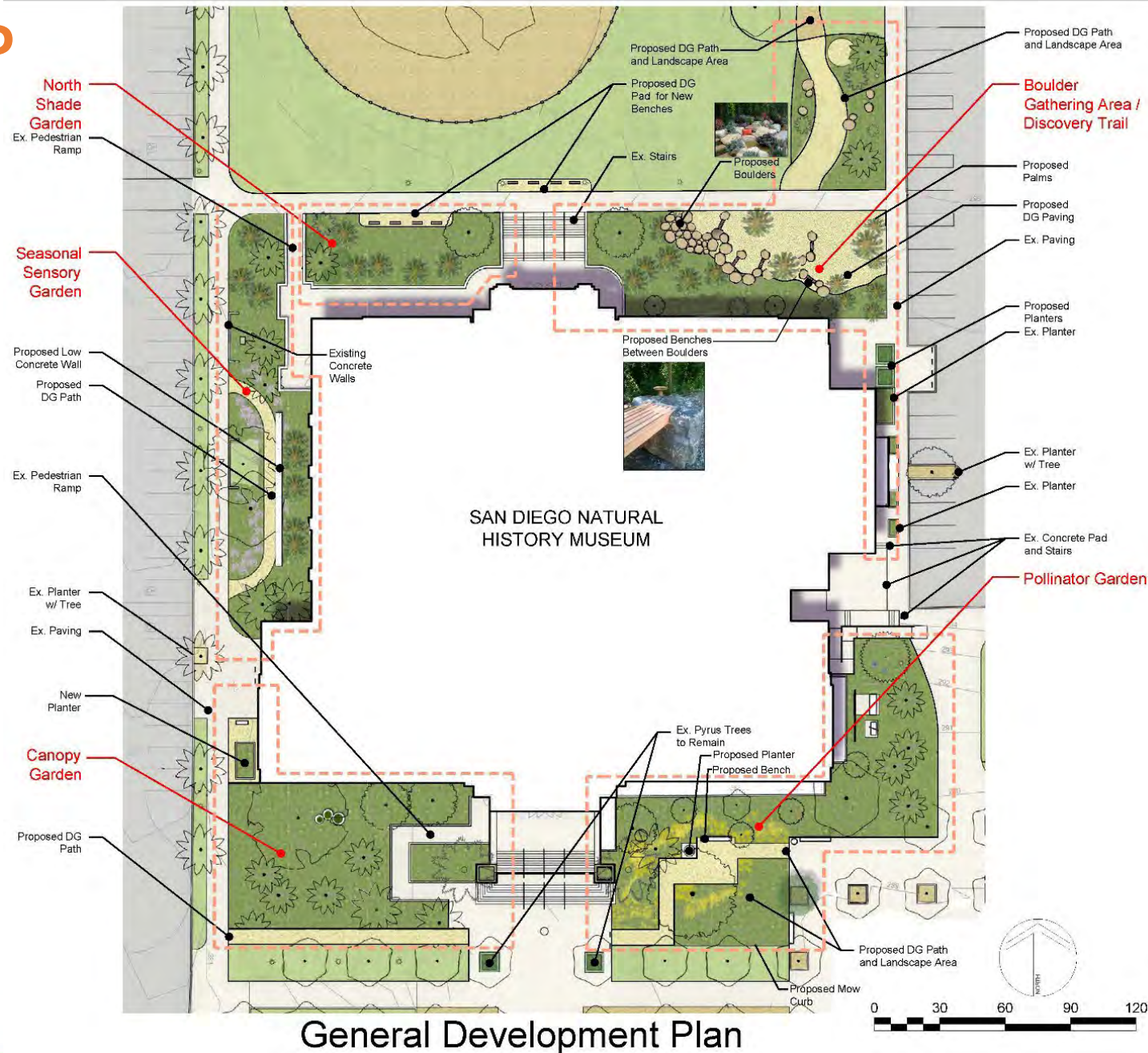
## Department Recommendation

- Recommend approval of the proposed Donor Acknowledgement and interpretive signage program.



# Approved GDP

- Approved by Board on October 21, 2021
- Five Gardens:
- Boulder Gathering Area/Discovery Trail
- Pollinator Garden
- North Shade Garden
- Seasonal Sensory Garden
- Canopy Garden



## Project Status

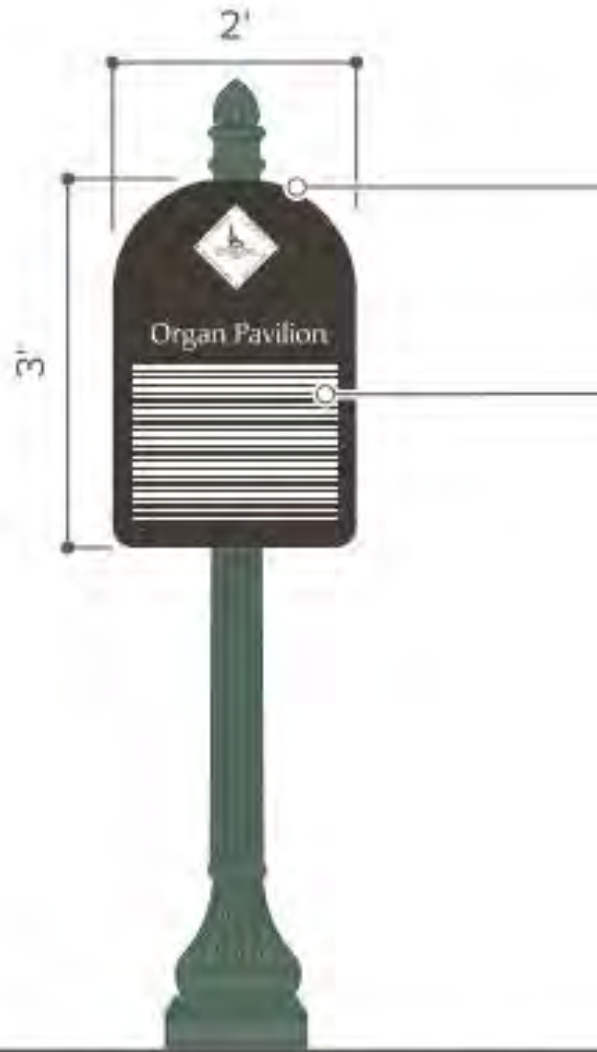
- Construction documents nearing completion
- Signage program was not included in the original GDP
  - Garden Interpretive Signage
  - Plant Identification Signage
  - Donor Recognition Signage/Markers



## Other Recommendations

- Reviewed by Sustainability and Mobility for ADA compliance
- Reviewed by Historic Resources staff for consistency with preservation standards
- On September 7, 2023, the Balboa Park Committee voted unanimously (7-0-0) to recommend approval of the donor acknowledgement and interpretive signage with the recommendation to raise the height of the plant identification signs. The NAT has agreed to raise the signs to 18" height.

# Sign Manual



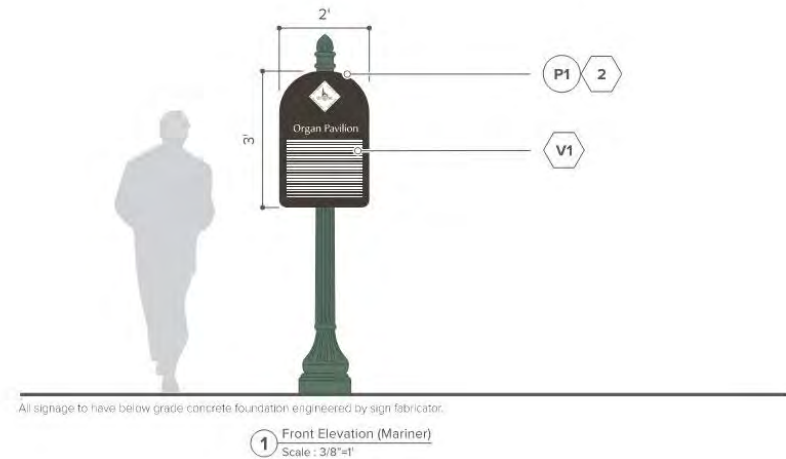
Have below grade concrete foundation engineered by sign fabricator.

**FIGURE 26**  
**1-SIDED HISTORICAL LANDMARK**

The following freestanding sign is to be used to identify historical landmarks throughout the park. It uses the historic seal and is for buildings or landmarks such as the organ pavilion that were created for the Exposition.

**NOTES**

The following sign has a unique pole due to the location being within the historical area of the park and the requirements specified within in the Masterplan. Sign to be 3" thick and manufactured of painted aluminum with a 60° arch top and 1-1/2" radius bottom corners.



All signage to have below grade concrete foundation engineered by sign fabricator.

1 Front Elevation (Mariner)  
Scale : 3/8"=1"





# Sign Manual



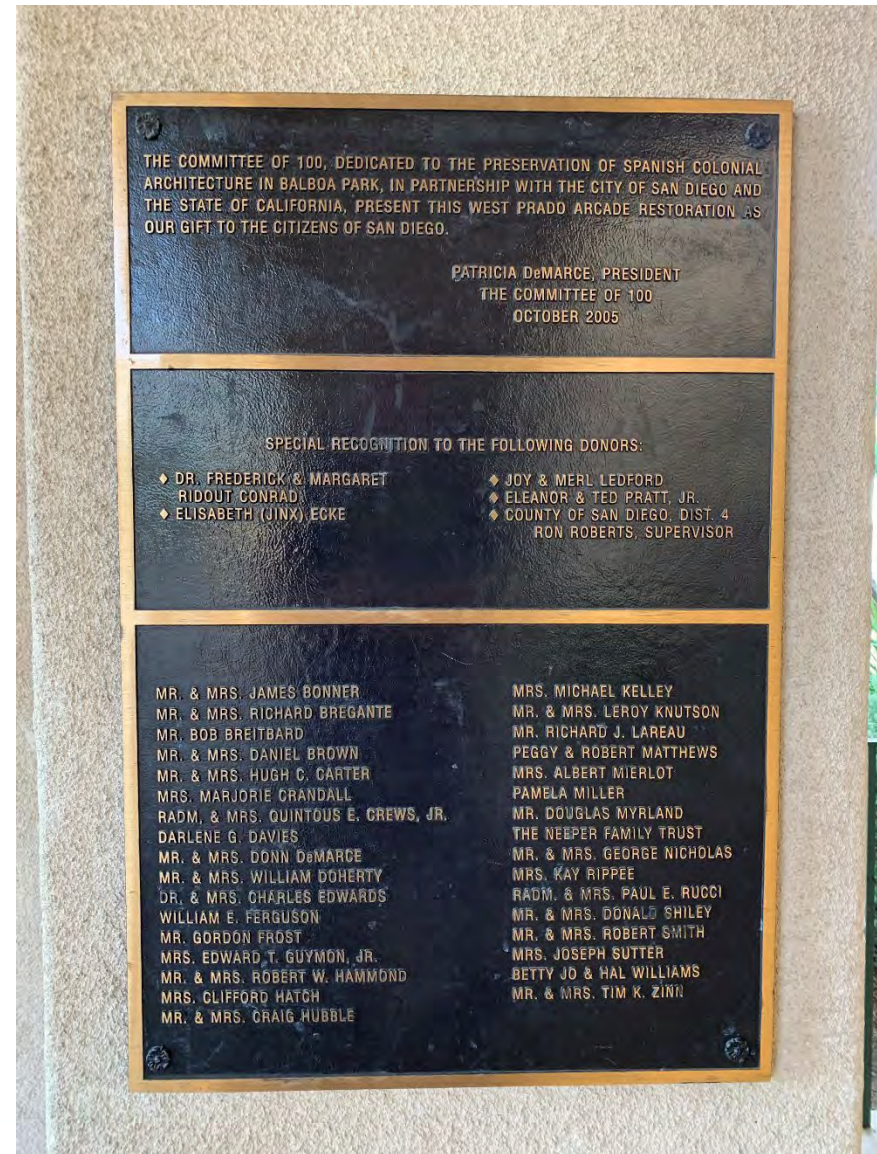


# Donor Recognition Examples





# Donor Recognition Examples



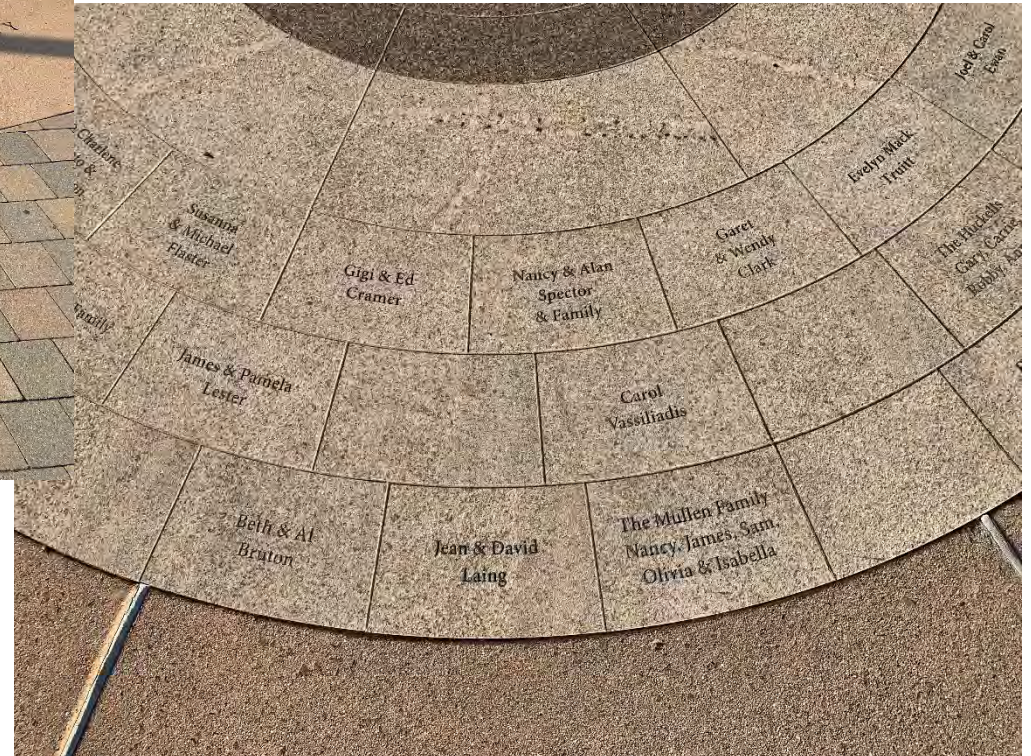


# Donor Recognition Examples





# Donor Recognition Examples





# Donor Recognition Examples



Justin Canty  
Senior Director of Education  
San Diego Natural History Museum



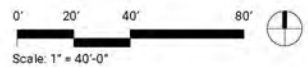
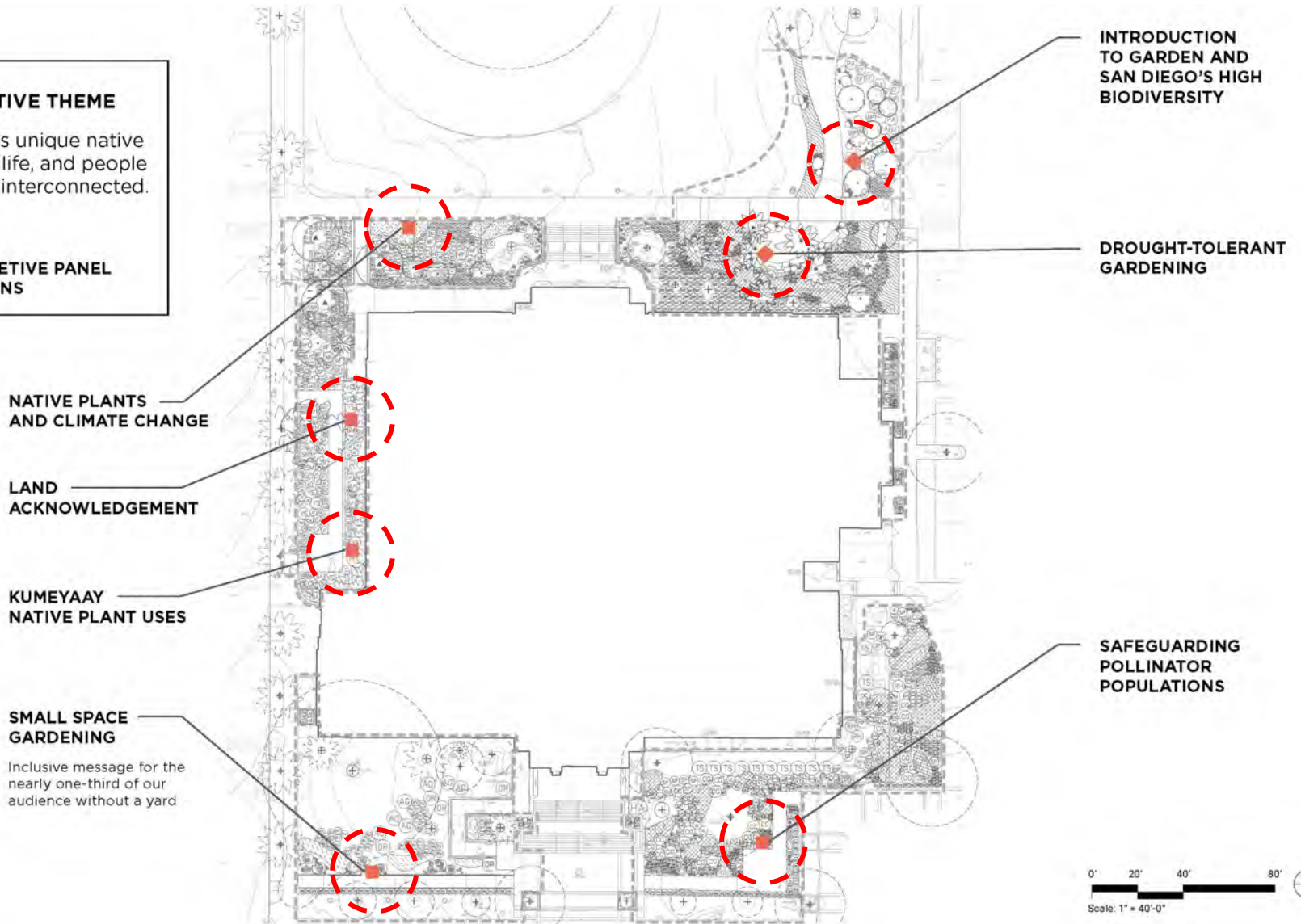
# Interpretive Signage

**INTERPRETIVE THEME**

Our region's unique native plants, wildlife, and people are closely interconnected.

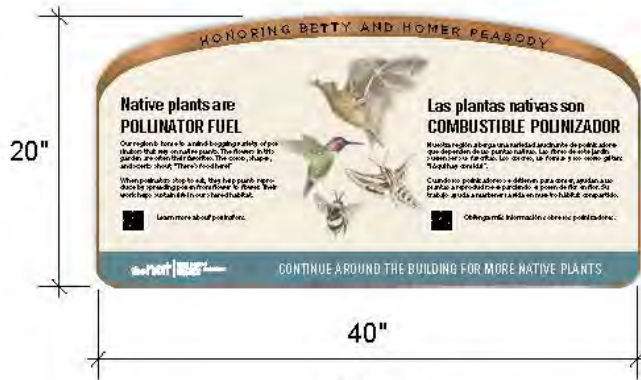
7 panels

**■ INTERPRETIVE PANEL LOCATIONS**





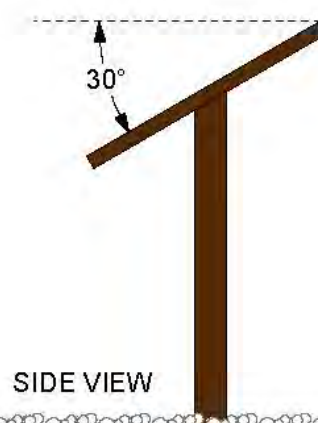
# Interpretive Signage



TOP VIEW  
SURFACE AREA FOR GRAPHICS

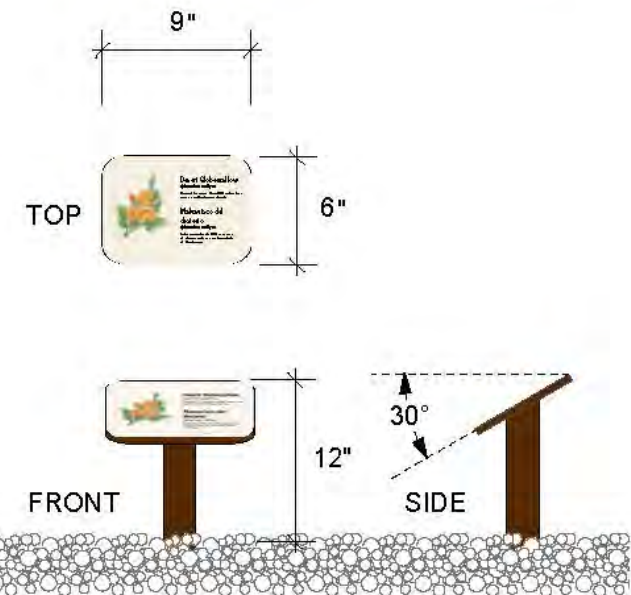


FRONT VIEW



SIDE VIEW

INTERPRETIVE PANELS



PLANT ID LABELS

# Interpretive Signage



## INTERPRETIVE PANELS

### Content:

Communicate primary interpretive messages  
QR codes for more detailed information

### Layout:

English and Spanish copy with center illustration

#### • Color:

Background PMS 7500

Color Bar PMS 5493 (similar to Matthews MP11228 Great Falls from BP Sign Manual)

#### • Typography:

Headline- Trade Gothic Condensed 96 pt (1.9 inches)

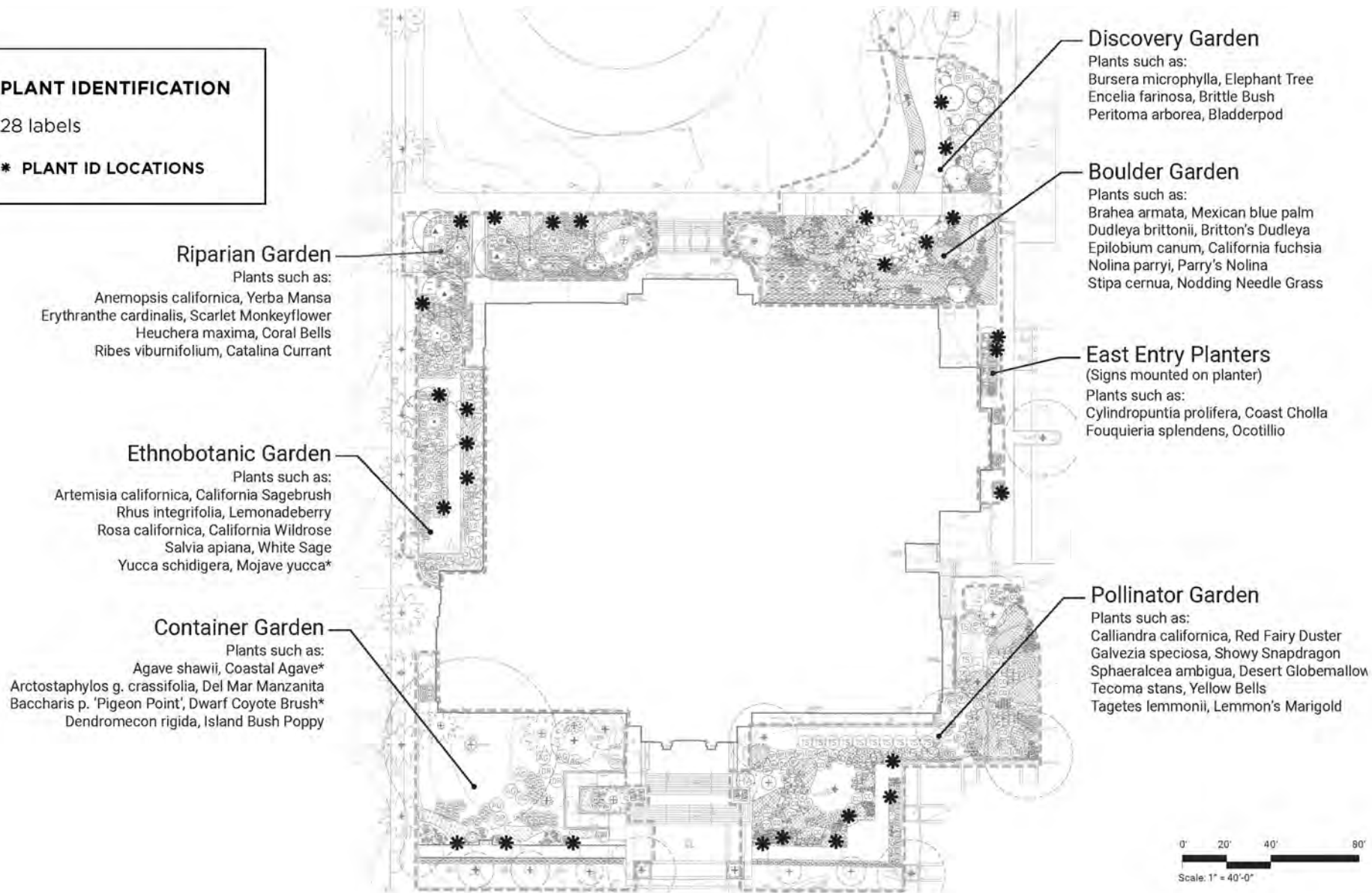
Body Copy- Gotham Book 32 pt (0.34 inches)

Call-to-Action- Gotham Bold 32 pt



# Plant Identification Signage

**PLANT IDENTIFICATION**  
28 labels  
\* PLANT ID LOCATIONS



# Plant I.D. Signage



## PLANT ID LABELS

### Content:

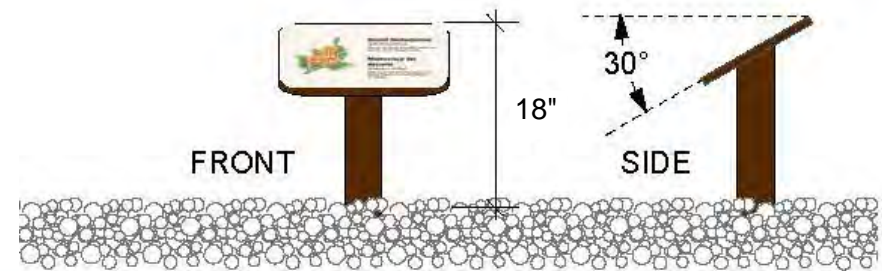
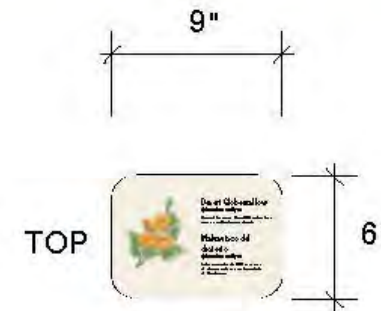
Field note-inspired descriptions of plant adaptations and features to support main messages.

*No details related to size, growing conditions, etc.*

### Layout:

English and Spanish with illustration (current illustration is for placement only)

- **Color:**  
Background PMS 7500
- **Typography:**  
Headline- Trade Gothic Condensed 36 pt (0.35 inches)  
Body Copy- Gotham 19 pt (0.25 inches)



## PLANT ID LABELS

## Donor Recognition Signage

- Three forms of donor recognition:
  - Garden Interpretive Signage
  - Larger donor recognition markers (6" diameter)
  - Smaller donor recognition markers (3" diameter)



# Donor Recognition Signage

- DONOR RECOGNITION**
- 7 Brass Plaques on Interpretive Panels
  - 10 6-inch Survey Markers
  - 15 3-inch Survey Markers



# Donor Recognition Signage

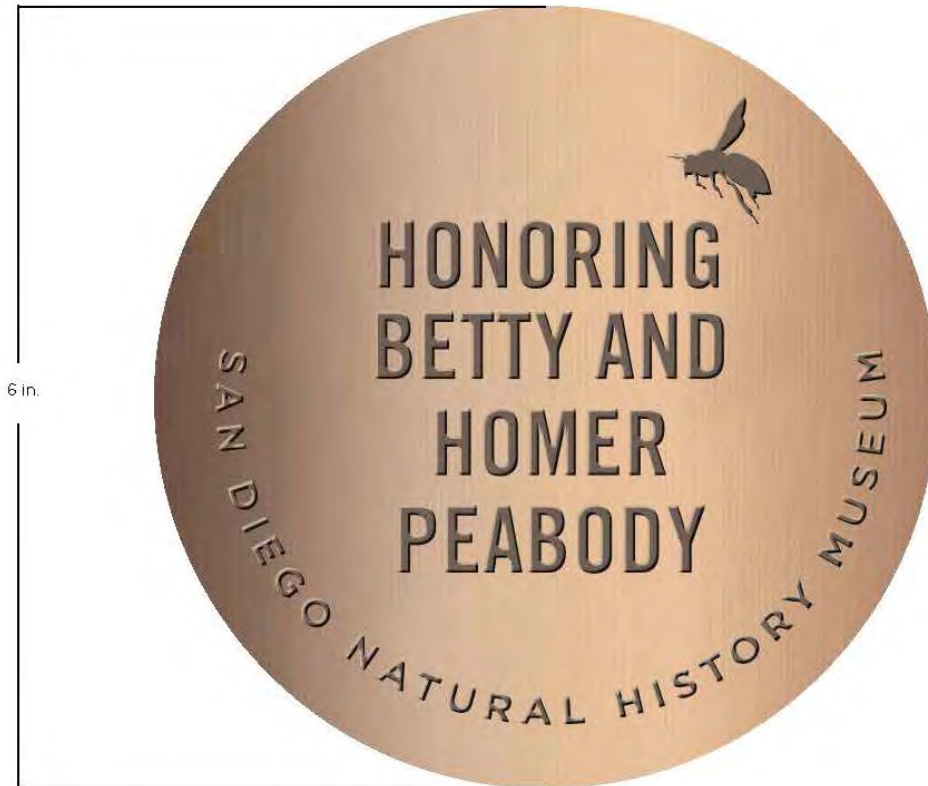


## Donor Recognition Plaque

Brass mounted to the underside of each Interpretive Panel.  
Seven possible plaques



# Donor Recognition Signage

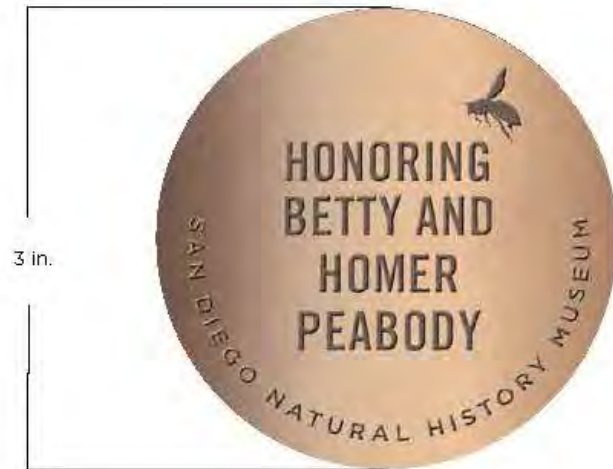


**Donor Recognition 6-inch Survey Marker**

Brass mounted to garden elements.  
Ten possible markers including bird bath, split boulder benches,  
and site boulders



# Donor Recognition Signage



## Donor Recognition 3-inch Survey Marker

Brass mounted to garden elements.  
15 possible markers including natural planters and site boulders



# Discussion

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