GATEWAY & WAYFINDING

Signage Plan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Cleveland Heights' proposal for this Gateways & Wayfinding Plan was one of several winning projects selected as part of a competitive Community Planning Grant Application process completed in January 2024.

Conducted in partnership between the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and the City of Cleveland Heights, this Gateway & Wayfinding Signage Plan set out to accomplish a number of goals:

1) Identify existing signage typologies, conditions, and locations within the community.
2) Outline current best practices surrounding gateways and wayfinding.
3) Showcase recommended locations and signage typologies that would have the largest impact on travelers through the City of Cleveland Heights.

Overall, this Plan is a tool for the city to carry forward and apply to its future work with the design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance of new signage.

INTRODUCTION

Cleveland Heights is a dynamic inner-ring suburb that sees many travelers crossing into the community everyday—each person being an opportunity to encourage further exploration and discovery within the community's eleven business districts, historic properties and neighborhoods, and recreational assets.

Officially earning the status of a city in 1921, Cleveland Heights has seen dynamic changes over its 103 year history. When compared to all 59 municipalities located in Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland Heights ranks as the 14th largest community in terms of total area—covering an impressive 8.1 square miles. Additionally, there are approximately 107 road segments that either cross or dead end at the city's municipal boundary—with 90 of those road segments being points of entry, which can populate trips that originate from outside the community. Currently, only about 15 of these entrance areas contain a community gateway sign welcoming visitors into the city.

Signage located at gateways and throughout key areas within the community are important wayfinding elements that not only help guide visitors to destinations, but also communicate the city's overall identity and values.

The City of Cleveland Heights partnered with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to undertake this study to inform gateway and wayfinding signage. An important first step for implementing a successful signage program is documenting where existing signs are located—including details on each sign's condition, typology and mounting style, and messaging. This helps community leaders understand where deficits are in their signage network and helps inform the plans for any future gateways or wayfinding. The partners conducted a multi-day inventory of existing gateway and wayfinding signage throughout the community and its 11 business districts.

This Gateways & Wayfinding Signage Plan is a summary of findings from the inventory, as well as later steps including a review of best practices, recommended locations and typologies of new signs, and an outline of signage management and funding opportunities. This Plan will set the city up for success in its next phases for design and engineering services—where professional services will be solicited for the creation and installation of new signage.

WHY IS BRANDED WAYFINDING IMPORTANT?

Branded wayfinding not only helps people navigate spaces, it creates memorable places and experiences. Effective wayfinding will integrate the city's brand into its messaging and design elements, which should be both inspiring and functional.

According to *Main Street America (MSA)*—an organization focused on strengthening older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts through place-based economic development and community preservation—branded wayfinding systems are not a one size fits all approach. Depending on a community's goals, geographic size, and density, wayfinding systems can range from a few guide signs to a full comprehensive program.

Regardless of the wayfinding system's scale, message delivery introduces visitors to the area and helps them make a deeper connection with the community—encouraging them to visit again.

MAIN STREET AMERICA®

SIGNAGE INVENTORY

This Gateway & Wayfinding Signage Plan's (the "Plan's") signage inventory consisted of both walking and driving audits along the City of Cleveland Heights' main corridors, within its 11 business districts, and around the community's key city-owned amenities—such as Cain Park and City Hall. Field work was conducted over several days in the fall of 2024 and utilized a customized instrument developed by County Planning staff and built on ESRI's Survey123 platform. The inventory documented the typologies, mounting styles, conditions, and geolocation of each sign along with a photograph taken during the field work days. The results of this inventory are discussed in this section, and can also be accessed through the following online map dashboard: https://countyplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/956decd8b4c5435f842c687302a707ab

SIGNAGE BRANDING IN CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

Within Cleveland Heights there are six distinct brands that are represented on signage throughout the city. This includes the city's own branding, as well as the five business districts that already have an established brand: Cedar Fairmount, Cedar Lee, Cedar Taylor, Coventry Village, and Severance Town Center. These branded signs are noted specifically in the inventory as they are unique to Cleveland Heights and help currently evoke a sense of identity or place in the community or area they are located.

Cleveland Heights City Branding

Cedar Fairmount Business District Branding

Cedar Lee Business District Branding

Cedar Taylor Business District Branding

Coventry Village Business District Branding

Severance Town Center Business District Branding

SIGNAGE TYPOLOGIES

Signage typologies refer to the type and function of a sign. As seen below, inventoried signs were categorized into eight specific categories. A ninth "Other" category was included if signs did not fall under one of these specific typologies for additional staff review.

CITY GATEWAYS

These are prominent signs that welcome visitors into the city. These signs are often the first thing visitors see when entering the city and can help establish a sense of place.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

These signs show the significance of a historic site, building, or district. This inventory included signs from the National Register of Historic Places and Ohio Historical Marker program.

DIRECTIONAL WAYFINDING

These signs help guide visitors in the direction of important facilities, institutions, or other destinations. These signs often use arrows and symbols to provide clear directions.

DISTRICT GATEWAYS

These signs welcome visitors into a business district or neighborhood, and often carry their own unique branding.

PARKING SIGNS

Parking signs help guide visitors to public parking and are most commonly used within business districts.

BANNERS

Banners can help add vibrancy and improve cohesion within business districts. They are interchangeable and can be utilized for marketing.

DECORATIVE STREET SIGNS

Decorative street signs can help bring consistency to a business district or neighborhood and help reinforce a sense of place. Only decorative or district street signs were inventoried.

CITY AMENITY/FACILITY GATEWAYS

These signs welcome visitors into city owned amenities or facilities. They often include city branding and may have information on city regulations for the space.

OTHER

These signs do not fall into any distinct typology; however, they still play an important role in presenting information or reinforcing a sense of place.

INVENTORY ROUTES & METHODOLOGY

In order to complete an accurate inventory of current signage within Cleveland Heights, County Planning and city staff completed a combination of walking and driving audits of Cleveland Heights' business districts and main corridors.

The City of Cleveland Heights staff completed driving inventories of all roads that cross over the city's boundary, as well as all city-owned facilities and amenities. In general, city staff were looking to identify all gateway signage into the community—some of which were located on residential side streets, off the primary corridors.

County Planning staff completed walking inventories of Cleveland Heights' 11 business districts. This included walking both sides of each street and recording every city-owned sign's typology, mounting style, and overall condition.

Additionally, County Planning staff also completed driving inventories of the 10 major corridors within the city, driving both directions on the following streets:

- Cedar Road
- Euclid Heights Boulevard
- Fairmount Boulevard
- Lee Road
- Mayfield Road
- Monticello Boulevard/Cumberland Road
- Noble Road
- Northvale Road/Forest Hills Boulevard
- Superior Road
- Taylor Road

SIGNAGE INVENTORIED

- Branded and unbranded business district signs
- City banners/banner mounting locations
- Historic identification signs
- City-owned/branded signs

SIGNAGE NOT INVENTORIED

- Public right-of-way signs i.e. Hospital wayfinding, crosswalks, etc.
- Independent business or institution signs
- Temporary signs
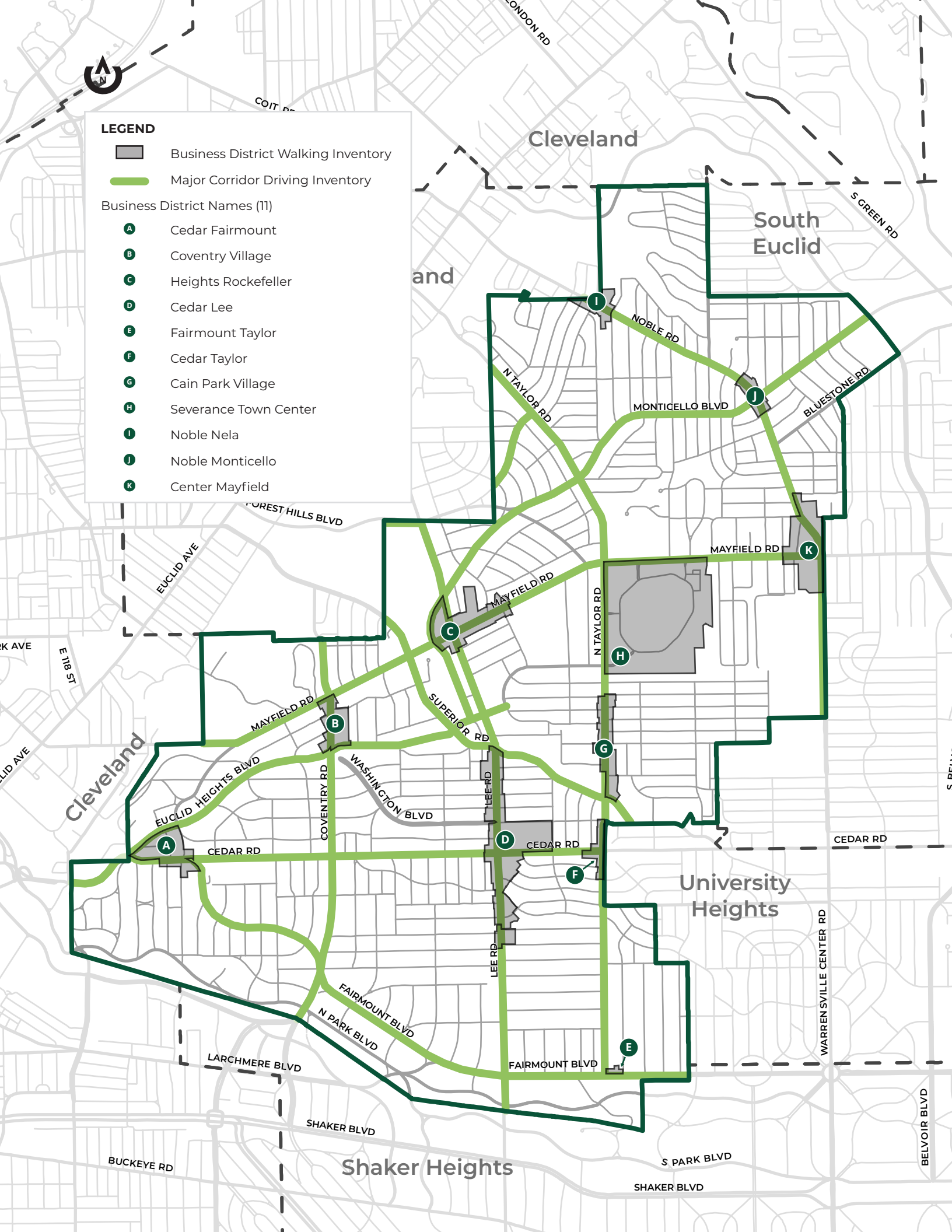
LEGEND

▢ Business District Walking Inventory

━━ Major Corridor Driving Inventory

Business District Names (11)

Ⓐ Cedar Fairmount

Ⓑ Coventry Village

Ⓒ Heights Rockefeller

Ⓓ Cedar Lee

Ⓔ Fairmount Taylor

Ⓕ Cedar Taylor

Ⓖ Cain Park Village

Ⓗ Severance Town Center

Ⓘ Noble Nela

Ⓙ Noble Monticello

Ⓚ Center Mayfield

SIGNAGE CONDITION RATINGS

Cleveland Heights has a total of 240 existing signs that were inventoried during this study. The majority of these signs are either in Excellent or Good condition (68.7%, 164 signs). Of Cleveland Heights' 40 signs in Very Poor condition, 36 of these are banners—which are predominantly located within or adjacent to business districts and the banner itself is either missing, removed, or illegible from being out in the elements. A breakdown of signage condition can be seen in the diagrams below and map on the next page.

OVERALL SIGNAGE CONDITION

Good
46.7%
112

240 SIGNS

15%
36
Poor

21.7%
52
Excellent

16.7%
40
Very Poor

OVERALL SIGNAGE CONDITION BY TYPOLOGY

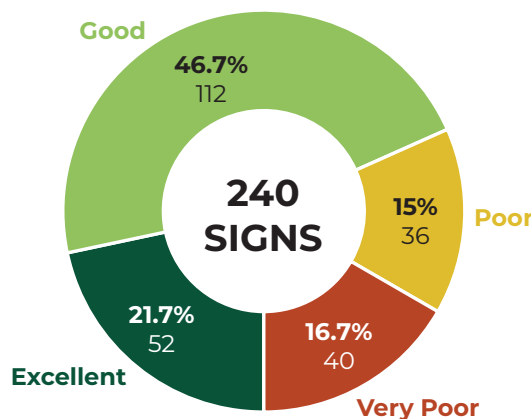| Typology				
Banner		9	7	36
Street Sign	22	17	9	1
Historic Marker	4	34	2	
Parking	10	10	6	2
City Amenity	8	9	5	
City Gateway	3	9	2	
Other	1	12	1	
District Gateway	1	8	4	
Wayfinding	3	4	1	
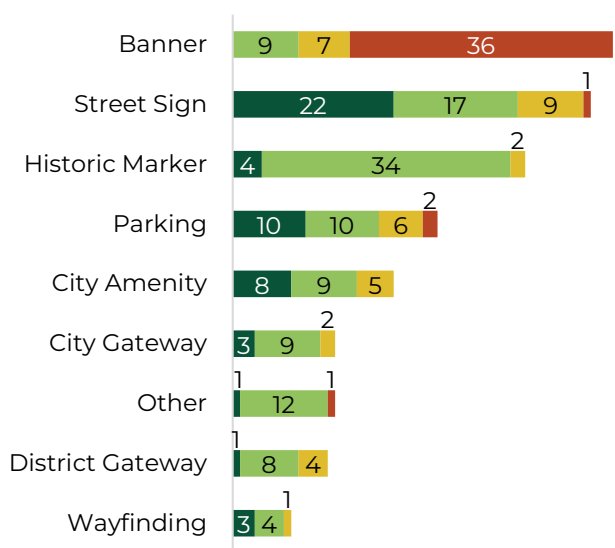
EXCELLENT

No visual signs of deterioration, vibrant colors/paint or materials. Is generally well-maintained.

GOOD

Minor visual signs of deterioration. Slightly damaged materials, slightly faded colors or paint. Might be slightly unkempt.

POOR

Clear visual signs of deterioration. Cracked or chipping materials, deeply faded colors or paint but the content is still understandable. Might be moderately unkempt.

VERY POOR

Clear visual signs of failure. Portions of the sign are damaged or missing. Might be moderately to severely unkempt.

Cleveland Heights Business Districts

Signage Condition

- Excellent
- Good
- Poor
- Very Poor

SIGNAGE TYPOLOGY CLASSIFICATIONS

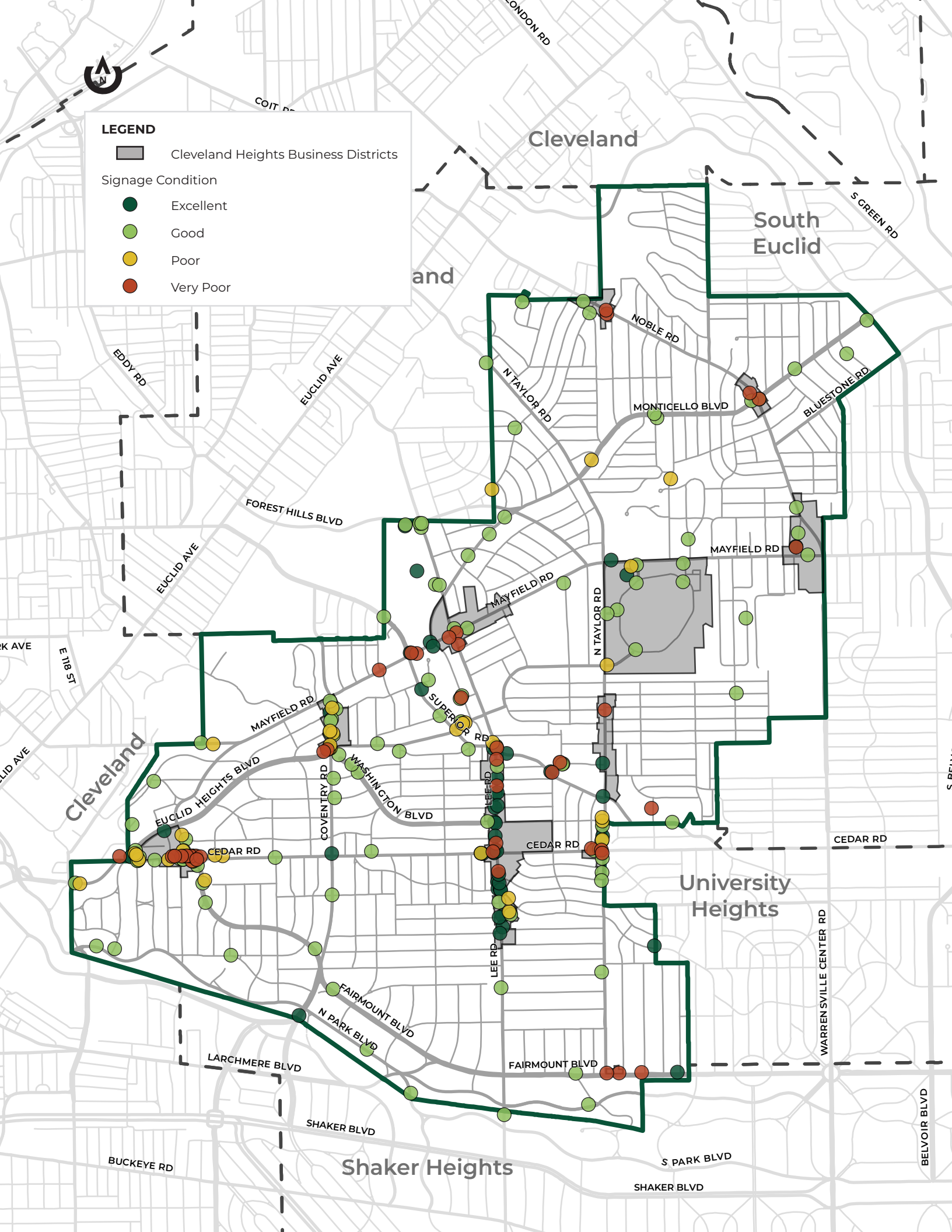Of Cleveland Heights' inventoried signs, banners and street signs are the two most prevalent typologies. Cleveland Heights also has 40 historic markers for its 16 historic districts and nine properties on the National Register of Historic Places—which are predominantly located just outside of business districts and along main corridors. Cleveland Heights' amenity and gateway signs all include city branding. However, these city signs can differ in terms of style and color pallet as can be seen in the examples to the right. Additionally, the city only has eight total directional wayfinding signs, only two of which are branded.

EXISTING CLEVELAND HEIGHTS GATEWAY SIGNS

PRESENCE OF BRANDED SIGNAGE BY TYPOLOGY

Typology	Branded (Business District or City)	Not Branded	Total
Banner	18	34	52
Street Sign*	49		49
Historic Marker**		40	40
Parking	11	17	28
City Amenity	22		22
City Gateway	14		14
Other		14	14
District Gateway	13		13
Wayfinding	2	6	8

■ Branded (Business District or City)
■ Not Branded
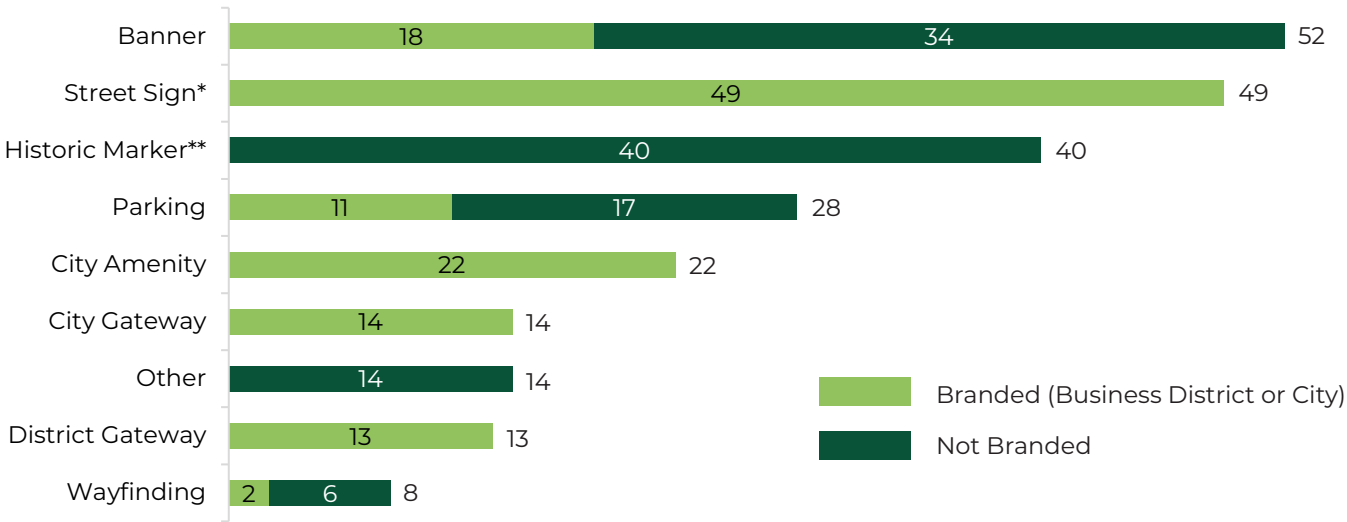
*Only decorative street signs were inventoried. As such, all street signs are branded.
**All historic markers are listed as unbranded as they are standardized through the National Register of Historic Places or the Ohio History Connection and are not unique to Cleveland Heights.

LEGEND

▨ Cleveland Heights Business Districts

Signage Typology
- 🟢 Banner
- 🔵 Street Sign
- 🔴 Historic Marker
- 🟠 Parking
- 🟣 City Amenity
- 🩷 City Gateway
- 🟤 District Gateway
- 🟢 Wayfinding
- 🟡 Other

Cleveland

South Euclid

University Heights

Shaker Heights

COIT RD
LONDON RD
S GREEN RD
NOBLE RD
BLUESTONE RD
MONTICELLO BLVD
N TAYLOR RD
FOREST HILLS BLVD
EUCLID AVE
MAYFIELD RD
N TAYLOR RD
MAYFIELD RD
E 118 ST
PARK AVE
CLID AVE
MAYFIELD RD
EUCLID HEIGHTS BLVD
COVENTRY RD
WASHINGTON BLVD
SUPERIOR RD
LEE RD
CEDAR RD
CEDAR RD
CEDAR RD
WARRENSVILLE CENTER RD
S BEL
LEE RD
FAIRMOUNT BLVD
N PARK BLVD
LARCHMERE BLVD
FAIRMOUNT BLVD
S PARK BLVD
BUCKEYE RD
SHAKER BLVD
SHAKER BLVD
BELVOIR BLVD

BUSINESS DISTRICT SIGNAGE

The business districts in Cleveland Heights account for 61.3% of all inventoried signs (147 out of 240 total signs). The three business districts that have operational Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) have a total of 102 signs—compared to only 45 a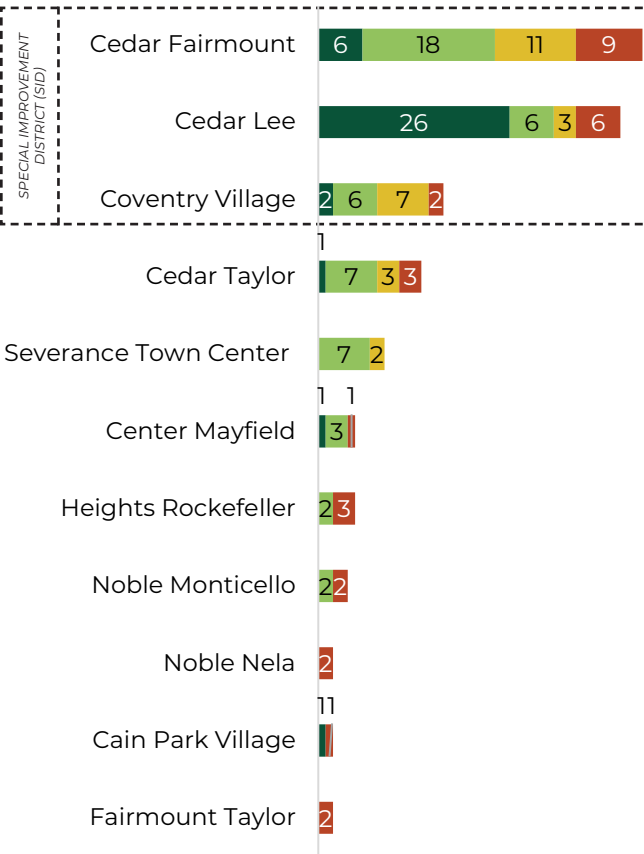cross all other business districts without a SID combined. One of the three SIDs, Cedar Fairmount, alone has 44 signs. In addition to the difference in the quantity

of signs, all three SIDs have at least five different signage typologies—while all other business districts without a SID have three or fewer typologies. In general, the distribution of signs within Cleveland Heights' business districts varies. Those with a SID tend to have a higher quantity of signs and diversity in typologies, while those without a SID tend to have fewer signs and typologies overall.

SIGNAGE **CONDITION** BY BUSINESS DISTRICT

SIGNAGE **TYPOLOGY** BY BUSINESS DISTRICT
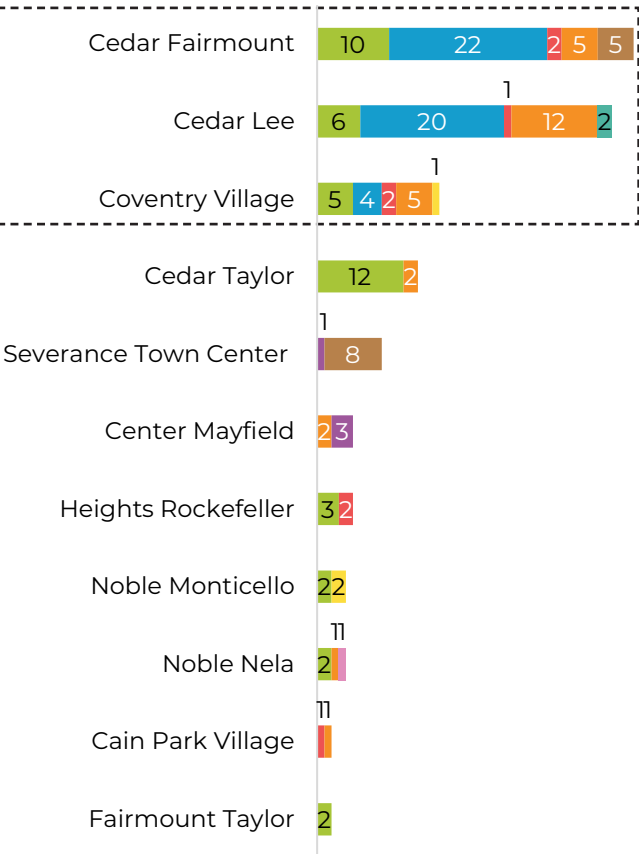
LEGEND

Business District Walking Inventory

Business District Names

- Ⓐ Cedar Fairmount
- Ⓑ Coventry Village
- Ⓒ Heights Rockefeller
- Ⓓ Cedar Lee
- Ⓔ Fairmount Taylor
- Ⓕ Cedar Taylor
- Ⓖ Cain Park Village
- Ⓗ Severance Town Center
- Ⓘ Noble Nela
- Ⓙ Noble Monticello

Signage Typology

- ● Banner
- ● Street Sign
- ● Historic Marker
- ● Parking
- ● City Amenity
- ● City Gateway
- ● District Gateway
- ● Wayfinding
- ● Other
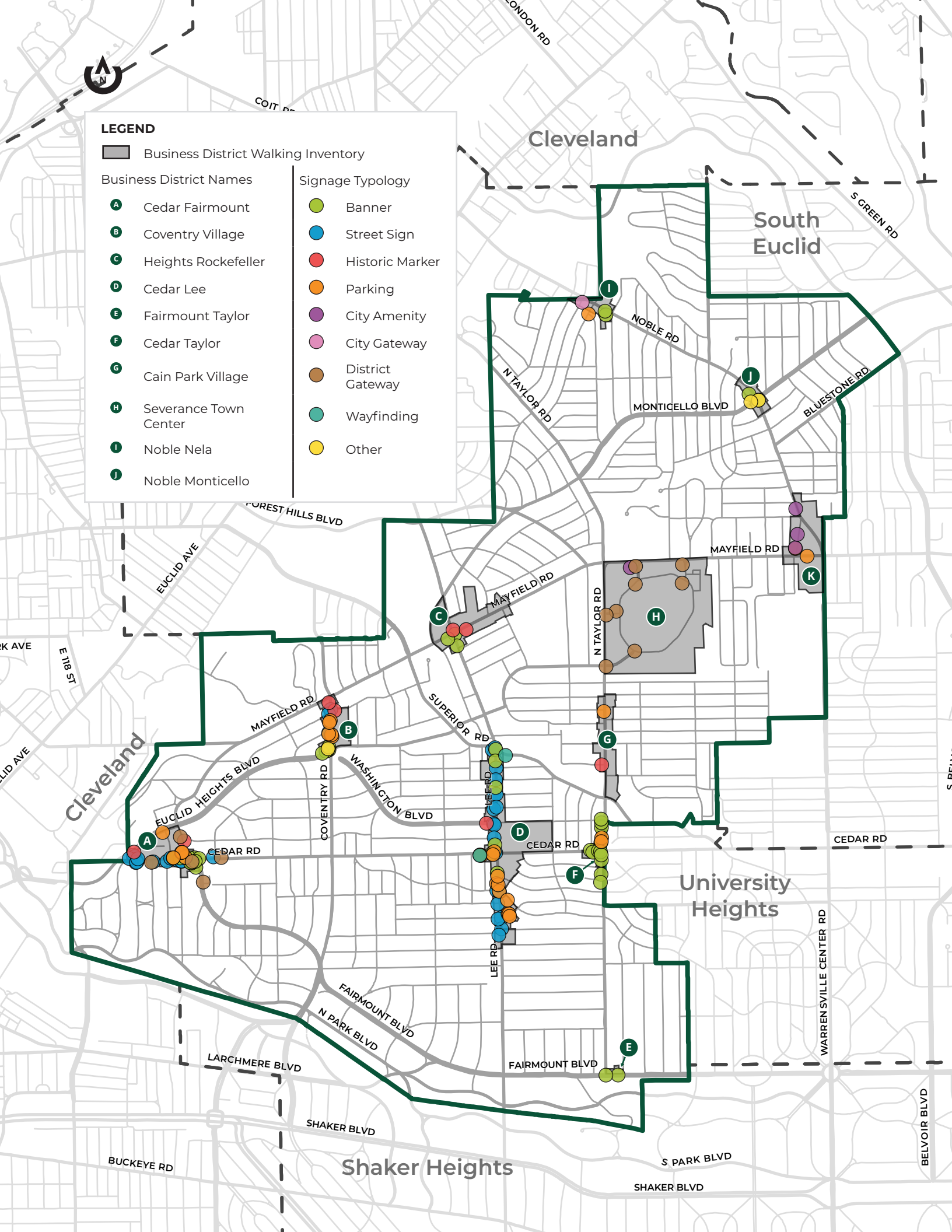
INVENTORY KEY FINDINGS

68.3%
of all signage inventoried are in Good or Excellent condition.

ONLY 8
of the 240 inventoried signs are wayfinding—only two are branded.

36
out of the 40 signs determined to be in Very Poor condition are banners.

ONLY 14
city gateway signs exist—which includes four different styles.
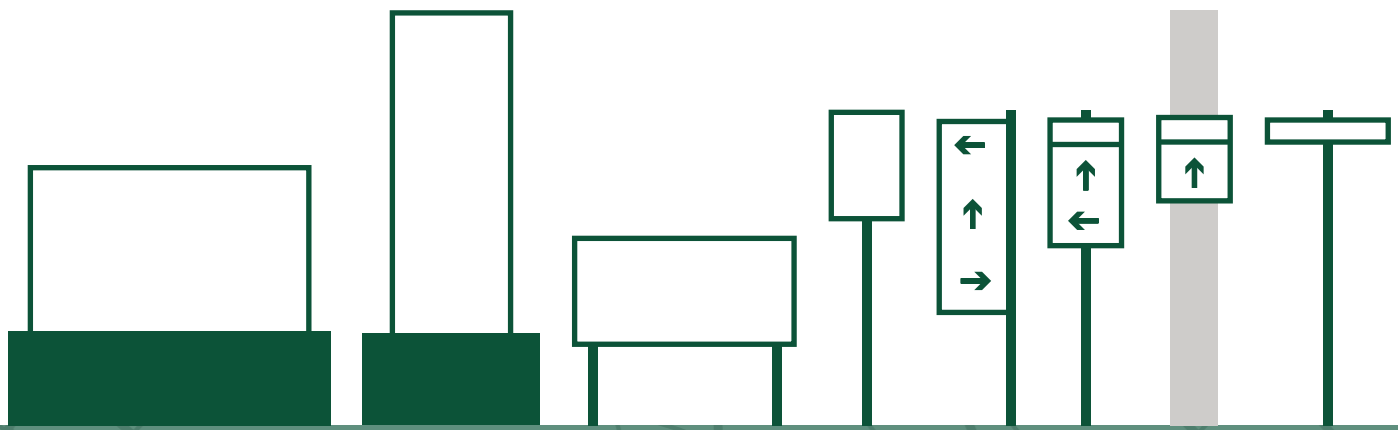
42.3%

of all inventoried signs are located in three business districts with SIDs.

6 of 11

Cleveland Heights business districts have five or fewer signs total.

53.7%

of all inventoried signs are either city or business district branded.

44 of 147

inventoried business district signs are within Cedar Fairmount alone.

WAYFINDING BEST PRACTICES

Wayfinding signs not only help visitors navigate and explore new places, but also create a welcoming and memorable experience. Consistency, inclusion, design, messaging, and placement are all important elements for effective wayfinding.

COMMUNITY WAYFINDING

Currently, the City of Cleveland Heights does not have a signage or wayfinding guide. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides guidance regarding signage through the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which establishes uniform national criteria for traffic control devices and signs that support the needs and expectations of all roadway users—including guidelines for community wayfinding signs. Administered by the FHWA since 1971, the MUTCD provides uniformity to traffic control devices to improve the efficiency of transportation networks.

The MUTCD outlines guidance on the types of elements community wayfinding systems should include—such as standards for design, colors, messaging, placement, and other similar regulations to ensure readability and consistency across the community. Several key regulatory factors include:

- **Colors:** red, orange, purple, fluorescent yellow-green, and fluorescent pink should be avoided to minimize potential confusion with emergency or warning signage
- **Contrast:** a minimum contrast value of 70% should be used between the legend and background sign color

- **Reflectivity:** all messages, borders, legends, and backgrounds for guide signs should not be retroreflective— when light is reflected back the same direction in which it was produced (i.e. light produced by vehicular headlights)
- **Shapes:** wayfinding should largely be rectangular in shape, with the exception of an identification marker unique to a specific destination or area—which should be limited to 1/5 the area of the primary wayfinding sign it is located on
- **Layout:** high-contrast lines should be used to separate groups of information, which should be short and practical
- **Words & Lettering:** abbreviations and punctuations should be limited, and signs should have no more than three destinations listed per sign—which should include both lower- and upper-case letters where lower-case letters are 3/4 the height of upper-case letters
- **Pictographs:** symbols should not be any larger than twice the height of the upper-case letters used on a sign, and should not include any form of advertisement—such as those for a business or similar commercial graphics
- **Location:** community wayfinding should not be located on freeway or expressways, and should be limited to more conventional, lower speed roads— and not in the way of higher-priority traffic control devices

In addition to these standards, the MUTCD also suggests integrating community wayfinding guide signs at its boundaries to inform road users about its destinations or other points of interest. This can be done through various color-coding or

pictographs to identify specific subareas and districts throughout the community. Additionally, supplemental guide signs can be installed on expressway ramps. However, these are limited in their messaging and must be designed in accordance with State policy.

BEST PRACTICES EXAMPLE | GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Grand Rapids, Michigan is a city that has nearly 200,000 residents and is continuing to see an increasing number of visitors annually to its thriving downtown. Kicking off in the fall of 2020, Grand Rapids underwent a complete redesign of its wayfinding system. This included organizing the system into four districts, developing a series of color-coded symbols to help guide road users to their destinations, and smaller-scaled maps for pedestrians to navigate walkable areas.

PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING

Typically smaller in scale, wayfinding designated for pedestrians is intended to help users navigate sidewalks and other walkable areas. It is important that this specific type of signage is designed and located to minimize any interference with required roadway devices and vehicular traffic—so as to not be distracting to drivers. According to the MUTCD, pedestrian wayfinding should be inconspicuous to vehicles. This can usually be achieved through a number of methods:

- Locate signs away from high-priority traffic control devices, with special attention to avoid intersections
- Face the message of the sign towards the sidewalk and away from the street
- Avoid placing pedestrian signs within the line of sight in a sequence of vehicular road signs
- Avoid reflectivity so as to not draw the eyes of drivers at night—pedestrian wayfinding should not be retroreflective

WHY DOES RETROREFLECTIVITY MATTER?
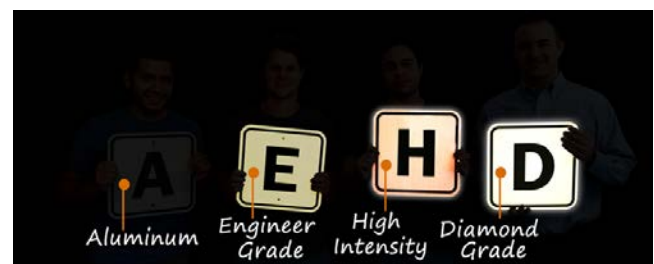
Reflectivity is an important consideration for road signs and their illumination capabilities by vehicles at night. Higher-grade reflective sign films, such as the diamond grade film applied in the image above on sign "D," can be more easily illuminated by headlights from a much further distance than more traditional engineer grade sign films.

Modern road signs are largely retroreflective—meaning light bounces back in the same direction in which it came. This makes these signs more easily discernible to road users at night and can quickly draw the eyes of drivers. Therefore, it is important that wayfinding signs play a secondary role to more critical signage typologies and not have a high reflectivity value.

WAYFINDING STANDARDS

Wayfinding is an integral component to not only navigation, but also many other imperative functions—such as branding, placemaking, and safety. The following is an overview of four critical components to take into consideration when developing a comprehensive wayfinding system.

1) KEEP IT SIMPLE

The messages displayed on any wayfinding signs should be concise and to the point. Wayfinding signs should be simple and avoid complex content. Familiar shapes, universal symbols, iconography, and basic language should be used to help bridge any language barriers.

2) BE CONSISTENT

Wayfinding programs should be consistent across all signs and their overall design profiles—such as colors, fonts, symbols, etc. This consistency will facilitate a united, coherent, and recognizable system. A standardized format for wayfinding signs will help with quick recognition by readers and provide information more quickly to roadway users.

3) PRIORITIZE ACCESSIBILITY

Wayfinding signs should be available, accessible, and address the needs of all readers. Not only should a wayfinding system take into consideration any requirements through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—such as any visual, auditory, or physical deficits—they should also take into account the general readability of signage. Font choice and size, contrast, content height, and lighting are all important factors when designing wayfinding signs.

It is important that signs do not impede pedestrian travel and/or those with disabilities. According to the Standards for Accessible Design, signs intended for overhanging a pathway should be at least 80 inches above the ground. Mounted signs, such as on poles or walls, should not protrude more than four inches into walking paths and should be at least 27 inches from the ground.

EXAMPLE OF ACCESSIBLE WAYFINDING DESIGNS
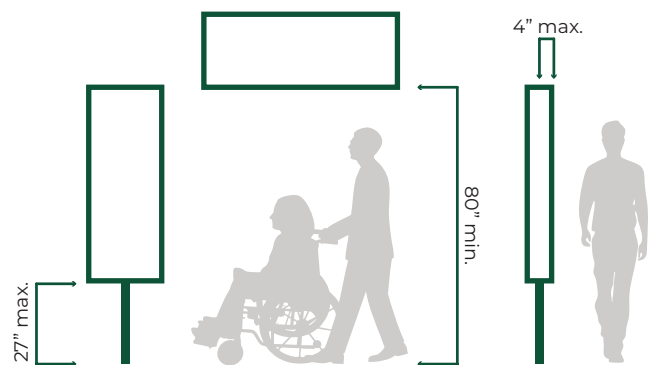
4) CONSIDER CONTEXT

Where wayfinding signs are located is just as important as the content being displayed on them. Signs should be strategically placed in areas where decisions need to be made—such as near intersections or the entrances of businesses. It is important to note that there is no one size fits all approach or ideal size when it comes to wayfinding. The overall size of each sign is context specific and should be appropriately sized based on its surroundings, its purpose, and other signs in the area. However, it is common for the face of most wayfinding signs to range in size from 36 to 42 inches wide and 60 to 66 inches tall.

WAYFINDING CASE STUDY
CUYAHOGA GREENWAYS

Completed in 2019, the Cuyahoga Greenways Vision Plan was a countywide initiative that identified over 800 miles of potential bicycle routes throughout the county as a whole. The Plan analyzed eight core factors that helped identify the selected network.

After the successful completion of the Greenways Plan, a wayfinding system was standardized in 2022—providing specific guidance on fonts, symbols and arrows, materials, content, and maps. These standards provide a consistent and uniform presentation of information that not only supports comfort and safety but also encourages the exploration of different communities. Additionally, there is an opportunity for customization by selecting signage colors to match a community's unique character and routes.

As seen in the images to the right, this comprehensive wayfinding system is organized, easily recognizable, and flexible to accommodate customized options. These standards help create consistency in sign content, as well as an information hierarchy for people visiting Cuyahoga County and its communities via trails and bikeways. This wayfinding system creates a truly connected experience for users and supports the comfortable and safe exploration of our region.

OFF-ROAD TRAIL SIGN

MAP OFF-ROAD TRAIL SIGN

DIRECTIONAL OFF-ROAD TRAIL SIGN

CUYAHOGA greenways

MOBILE WAYFINDING

Effective wayfinding is more than simply the signs you can see from the street or sidewalk. Mobile wayfinding, or digital navigation, from electronic devices and cell phones is an important component to overall messaging because an online presence can reach a much broader audience.

Younger demographics, those that might speak a different language, or individuals that simply prefer using their phones could be overlooked in the larger wayfinding picture. Digital navigation can help accommodate the needs of more users and different demographics—making for more effective wayfinding.

KEY COMPONENTS OF MOBILE WAYFINDING PLATFORMS

Digital navigation utilizes technology to make navigating complex or new places much easier. Some of the key components associated with mobile wayfinding platforms could include:

- **User-Friendly Navigation:** customizable options and interactive solutions to make navigation more intuitive can help eliminate wayfinding confusion
- **Efficiency:** searchable options can help minimize travel time and reduce the reliance on physical signs and/or other users to reach a destination—saving both time and effort by the user
- **Accessibility & Inclusiveness:** interactive features and tools to support a wide range of languages and those with any auditory or visual disabilities/ preferences
- **Real-Time Updates:** provides live updates and alerts to give users information about delays or other disruptions in their route to help them make real-time, informed decisions
- **Sustainability:** reduced reliance on paper or other physical wayfinding mediums can significantly reduce waste and create a greener, more eco-friendly approach to wayfinding
- **Smart & Flexible:** data-driven insights from user behaviors, preferences, and travel patterns can help optimize the wayfinding experience and adapt more quickly to changes than physical signage alone
- **Marketing & Branding:** integrates a cohesive look and feel that creates a comfortable user experience, and reflects branding seen throughout the community, neighborhoods, or similar districts

In general, mobile wayfinding platforms should be user-friendly, approachable for all users, inclusive, accessible, flexible, and provide real-time information. Poor layouts or lack of clear instructions in mobile applications can leave users feeling frustrated and overwhelmed.

It is important that these digital navigation applications foster trust and create a seamless user experience for visitors. Overall, mobile wayfinding applications are a great supplemental tool that can foster further community exploration by users. The City of Cleveland Heights should consider an online or mobile application to support physical wayfinding throughout the community.

MOBILE WAYFINDING CASE STUDY
HUMBER COLLEGE | TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

Founded in 1967, Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning serves more than 86,000 students across three main campuses in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. As a way to better help students and visitors navigate its North Campus area—nearly three million square feet of space—a wayfinding app was developed for IOS and Android smart devices.

Originally launched in 2018 and completely redesigned in 2020, the *Campus Compass* app makes navigating the North Campus area stress free and provides opportunities for discovery and exploration. The app provides a detailed, user-friendly, real-time navigation experience and includes:

- Guided navigation to points of interest
- AODA accessibility features to simplify travel for those who use wheel chairs or other mobility devices
- Real-time transit schedules for its campus commuters
- Live "Tech Talk" for immediate technical assistance

In addition to these useful features, the app also has a Find my Friend option to connect with friends, as well as locating important campus features, such as: classrooms, parking areas and pay machines, ATMs, restaurants, and much more. The app continues to be a success for Humber College. The College's Information Technology Services Department (ITS) was recognized with Humber's 2022 Innovation of the Year Award for its Campus Compass mobile wayfinding app. As of 2022, the app has been downloaded over 33,000 times, which included over 28,000 individual map searches and 34,000 direction requests.

GATEWAY SIGNAGE BEST PRACTICES

Gateway signs are important branding elements for any community. These signs set the tone for visitors and quickly convey a community's values, branding, and pride.

GATEWAY SIGNS IN ODOT RIGHTS-OF-WAY

If gateway signs are located within any Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) rights-of-way, specific parameters must be adhered to. ODOT has a number of guidelines for community gateway signs located within their rights-of-way. Generally, the following must be met:

- Must be a monument style sign that is a freestanding structure, decorative sign, retaining wall, etc., that displays the name of a city, village, township, or county
- Gateway signs located at or near freeway or expressway exits shall not be directed toward the mainline of the major highway but rather are intended to be viewed after drivers have exited the mainline

- Gateway signs must be located outside of the clear zone and not on required engineered highway features—such as retaining walls, noise walls, bridge abutments, etc.
  - However, visual, graphic, or sculptural representations of a community's identity, including its history, resources, or other defining characteristics may be permitted
- Only one community gateway sign will be permitted, per local entity, on an ODOT-owned route in each direction of the traveled roadway
- The gateway sign and landscaping shall be kept clean, free of graffiti, and in good repair with a regular maintenance schedule
- Gateway signs must be ground mounted, require minimal maintenance, and have a maximum width of 25 feet and 10 feet of height
- Gateway signs shall be made of durable materials and placed in a manner to minimize the likelihood of being struck by an errant vehicle

EXAMPLE OF A COMMUNITY GATEWAY SIGN LOCATED WITHIN ODOT RIGHT-OF-WAY

25' max.

10' max.
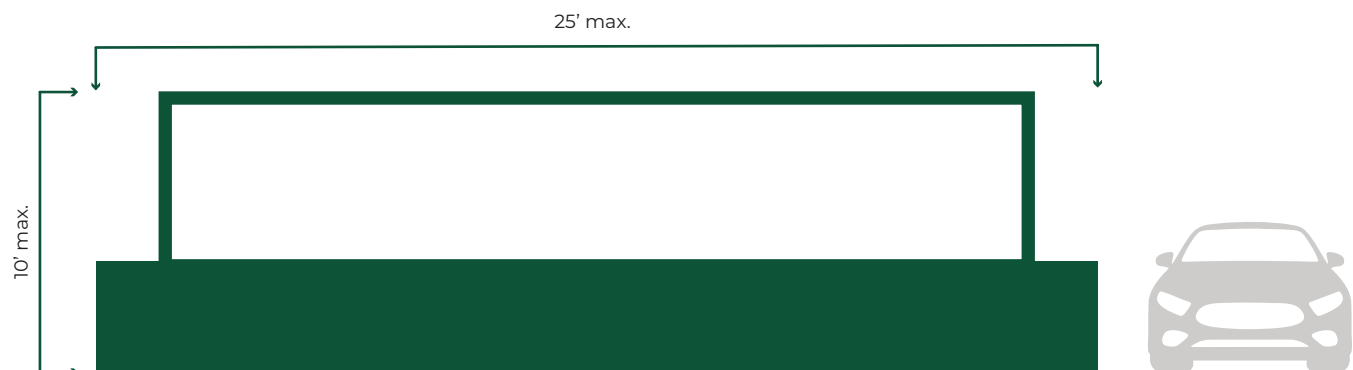
GATEWAY STANDARDS

How and where community gateway signs are constructed is largely dependent on local regulations and goals of the individual community. Maintenance and ease of replacement are important factors to consider when choosing the right materials and typology.

MATERIALS & TYPOLOGY

In general, community gateway signs will vary across every individual municipality. However, there are some common characteristics that should be carefully evaluated when choosing materials, typologies, and locations.

- Signs should be constructed with durable materials that can withstand seasonal weather, sun, collisions, etc.

- Some locations may warrant signs that break away easily should they be located in higher-crash areas with the potential to be struck by vehicles—making them easier to replace

- Monument style is encouraged at key prominent gateways for their highly-visible character and robust use of strong materials—such as brick, stone, or metal—landscaping, and lighting

- Considerations for alternative locations—such as bridges and overpasses—should also be evaluated in locations that could benefit from a gateway signs and where ground space might be limited

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY, NEIGHBORHOOD, & DISTRICT GATEWAYS

Halsted Street (Chicago, IL)

Short North District (Columbus, OH)

City of Parma Heights, OH

Tremont Neighborhood (Cleveland, OH)

Lorain on Broadway (Lorain, OH)

BENEFITS OF GATEWAYS

Community and district gateways are an important indicator to inform people that they have arrived at their destination. This type of signage is often the very first impression for visitors and can be a direct reflection of how residents view their own community. Gateways should be welcoming, set the tone for what visitors can expect, and serve as a visual representation of the area's identity.

For gateway signs in particular, placement matters. These signs should be located along key routes, in highly visible locations, and where the best first impression can be made—which in many cases may not be directly at a community or district boundary.

GATEWAY SIGN EXAMPLE | UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

In 2018, the City of University Heights underwent a complete rebranding to "refresh" the city's look and feel. The overall signage plan calls for two primary gateway signs, 10 secondary gateway signs, and five pole-mounted tertiary gateway signs.

The city's new branding and "U-shaped" logo takes on the form of a shield to signify safety, and its colors symbolize a mosaic, representing the city's churches and institutions. This combination of stylistic and signage choices has created an iconic and memorable experience for visitors for many years to come.

Community gateway signs should be well-maintained and share common visual elements—such as colors, materials, messaging, landscaping, etc. Community and district branded gateways have many benefits, including:

- **Fostering Pride:** unique character, charm, identity, history, and values are just some of the characteristics used to facilitate gateway designs—which contribute to the feeling visitors get when entering a new area

- **Improved Navigation:** clear and accessible gateway signage creates a safe and welcoming experience for visitors by conveying information in a strategic, meaningful, and vibrant manner—enriching their experiences

- **Economic Enhancements:** the visual appeal and attractiveness of gateways can create a level of desirability for an area by reinforcing the attention of detail and pride of residents—with the potential to strengthen property values.

Lastly, gateway signs are often the first and last thing visitors see as they travel through a community or district. These transitional areas in particular are an opportunity to stand out from others and enhance the value of local transportation networks and neighborhoods.

In general, gateway signage can have a large impact on the community, making them integral investments for the future.

YOU ONLY GET ONE FIRST IMPRESSION SO MAKE IT COUNT!

GATEWAYS & WAYFINDING CASE STUDY
CITY OF BROOKLYN, OHIO

Beginning in 2023, the City of Brooklyn not only underwent a complete re-branding and completion of a new city center, but also a total replacement of city signage throughout the community.

As a direct result of the city's recently completed Master Plan, the new community signs help convey the city's unique characteristics and integrate thoughtful marketing elements into its messaging.

According to the City of Brooklyn's Economic Development & Planning Director Jeremy Rowan:

"Implementing consistent design and signage at gateways to Brooklyn and along major corridors will help define the boundaries of the city and provide an impressive welcome to residents and visitors."

With an estimated $249,000 dedicated to the replacement of city signs, the newly installed signage are more uniform, modern, and have a more professional presence.

As seen in the images to the right, not only are the city's new signs contemporary and cohesive, they share similar elements that are consistent across each typology. This consistency displays the community's attention to detail and creates a welcoming environment for visitors.

CITY GATEWAY SIGN

DESTINATION SIGN

WAYFINDING SIGNS

RECOMMENDED LOCATIONS & TYPOLOGIES

Where signs are located and the form they take are just as important as the messages written on them. Visitors rely on different types of information depending on where they are in terms of their journey. When determining where and what to put on signage, it is important to evaluate the four key components of a travel path:

1) <u>Approach:</u> Areas located just outside of destinations that should include wayfinding and guide visitors to those points of interest. As visitors access these area signs should offer clear directions to help provide visitors with easily understood information.

2) <u>Decide:</u> Areas or decision points, such as intersections, where a decision to continue in a certain direction or to turn occurs. These areas in particular are of critical importance and wayfinding should provide exceptional directional guidance to best inform decisions.

3) <u>Arrive:</u> Areas that indicate visitors have arrived at their destination. This could include jurisdictional or district boundaries, and set the tone for how visitors perceive and interact throughout destinations. These areas should include signage that makes a memorable impact for visitors, as well as identify destinations.

4) <u>Depart:</u> Similar to arrival areas, departure areas should be located at key decision points and include clear guidance to help visitors navigate out of a destination, and back to primary corridors, highways, etc.

When considered together, these four components of a travel path make for a strategic, and seamless experience for visitors. The end goal is simple: make navigation so simple through good wayfinding that visitors can begin to navigate spaces and destination without having to rely on anything but their past experiences and memories from previous visits. This will create familiarity within the city's various destinations and encourage visitors to come back.

WAYFINDING SHOULD BE INTUITIVE
VISIBLE, BUT NOT INTRUSIVE
AND FUNCTION SEAMLESSLY
WITH THE AREA AROUND IT.

WHY DO LOCATION & TYPOLOGY MATTER?

When exploring new destinations, the feeling of being lost in an unfamiliar area can often be a frustrating and unsettling experience. Good wayfinding should go unnoticed, give visitors a positive experience, and instill the confidence for visitors to return with the knowledge of how to navigate the space.

At it's core, wayfinding signage informs people where their trips will begin and end. So it is important that these wayfinding signs are both in the optimal location to guide visitors to their destinations, and are the correct typology for the target audience.

High-quality wayfinding is more than just a sign on a pole. Where a sign is located and how its message is designed are just as important as the sign typology. In other words, wayfinding should be located at intuitive locations, visible, but not intrusive, and function seamlessly with the area around it.

COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

Community gateways are an important welcoming element for any community. Currently, the City of Cleveland Heights has 14 community gateway signs that vary in type and general condition. This plan identified a total of 18 locations that should be considered for community gateway signs. Each of these locations are at key entry points into the city and were selected based on their overall importance. As indicated below, the higher the overall score of a sign location, the higher the priority for replacement or installation.
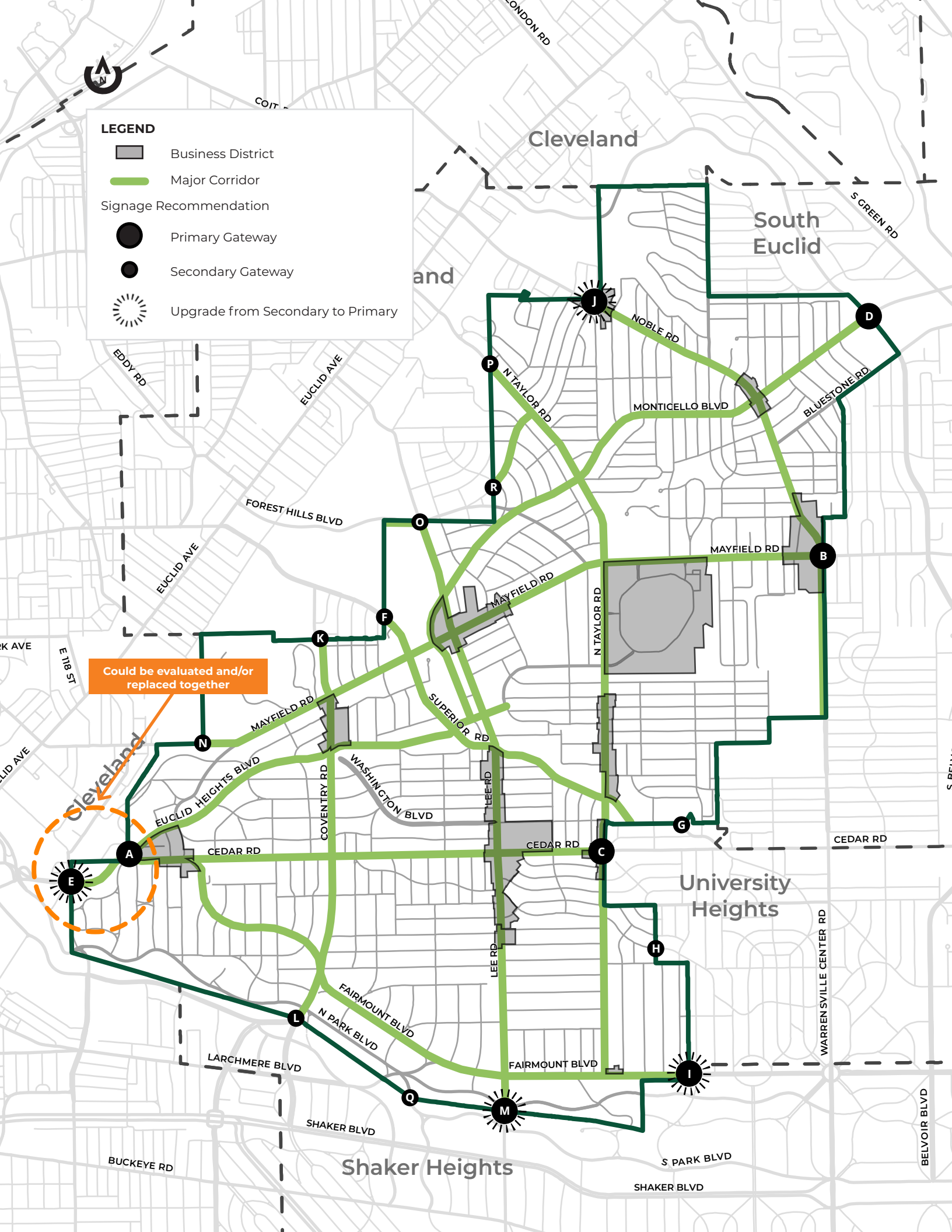
This was based on the cumulation of scores for whether the sign is existing or new, located on a primary or secondary roadway, the condition of the sign—new signs were all given an average Condition Rating score of 3—and the traffic volumes located at the sign area. New signs located on primary roadways with higher traffic volumes are the highest priority for installation. Existing signs located on secondary roadways with lower traffic volumes are a lower priority for replacement.

COMMUNITY GATEWAY REPLACEMENT PRIORITIZATION MATRIX*					
Gateway Location	**Existing/ New**	**Primary/ Secondary**	**Condition Rating**	**Traffic Volume**	**Overall Score**
A) Euclid Heights Blvd at Cedar Rd	2	2	3	4	**11**
B) Mayfield Rd at Warrensville Center Rd	2	2	3	4	**11**
C) Cedar Rd at S. Taylor Rd	2	2	3	4	**11**
D) Monticello Blvd at S. Belvoir Blvd	1	2	3	4	**10**
E) Cedar Glen Pkwy	1	2	2	4	**9**
F) Superior Rd at Ridgefield Rd	1	1	3	4	**9**
G) Washington Blvd near Raymont Blvd	1	1	3	4	**9**
H) Meadowbrook Blvd near Rinard Rd	1	1	4	3	**9**
I) Fairmount Blvd at Canterbury Rd	1	1	4	3	**9**
J) Noble Rd at Nela View Rd	1	1	3	3	**8**
K) Coventry Rd near Avondale Ave	2	1	3	2	**8**
L) Coventry Rd at N. Park Blvd	1	1	4	2	**8**
M) Lee Rd at N. Park Blvd	1	1	3	3	**7**
N) Mayfield Rd at Lewis Manor Apartments	1	1	3	2	**7**
O) Lee Blvd at Forest Hill Blvd	1	1	3	2	**7**
P) N. Taylor Rd at Bayreuth Rd	1	1	3	2	**7**
Q) S. Park Blvd near Nature Center at Shaker Lakes	1	1	3	1	**6**
R) Northvale Blvd at Mt. Vernon Blvd	1	1	2	1	**5**

↑ Higher Priority

Prioritization Matrix Summary
New Sign = 2; Existing Sign = 1; Located on a Primary Roadway = 2; Located on a Secondary Roadway = 1; Condition Ratings were based on the initial signage inventory (4 = Very Poor; 3 = Poor; 2 = Good; 1 = Excellent); Traffic Volumes were gathered from ODOT TIMS data (AADT, 2023) (4 = 11,000+; 3 = 9,001 - 11,000; 2 = 7,001 - 9,000; 1 = <7,000)

LEGEND

- Business District
- Major Corridor

Signage Recommendation
- Primary Gateway
- Secondary Gateway
- Upgrade from Secondary to Primary

Could be evaluated and/or replaced together

Cleveland

South Euclid

Shaker Heights

University Heights
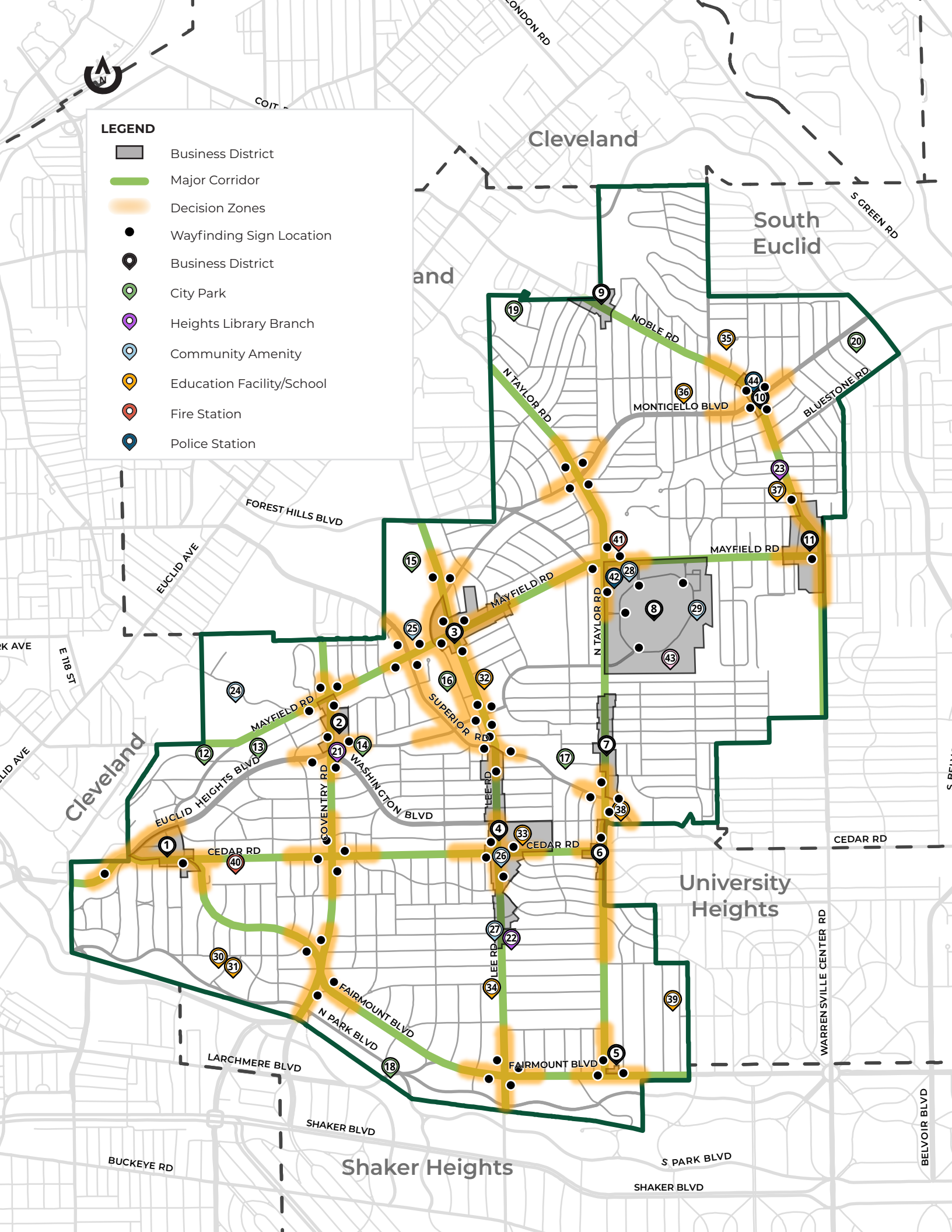
CITYWIDE WAYFINDING

A citywide wayfinding system can significantly improve the visitor experience and allow for easier access to a community's many assets and destinations. Currently, Cleveland Heights only has 8 wayfinding signs, with different designs and condition.

To determine the potential locations of vehicular wayfinding signs, decision zones were identified at the intersections of Cleveland Heights' major corridors. Because motorists need time to read the sign and make a decision, it is important that vehicular wayfinding signs be located at least 200 feet from the intersection before the turn lane.

The map on the next page shows the potential locations for city-wide vehicular wayfinding signs, as well as potential destinations residents and visitors may frequent. These destinations are broken down into seven categories: Business Districts, City Parks, Libraries, Community Amenities, Education Facilities, Fire, and Police Stations.

It is important to note that pedestrian scale wayfinding signs are not included on this map. The locations of these pedestrian scale wayfinding can be found in the business district maps on pages 40-47. The destinations each wayfinding sign should include can be found in the appendix.

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS DESTINATIONS

#	Destination	#	Destination	#	Destination
1	Cedar Fairmount	16	Cumberland Park	30	Roxboro Middle School
2	Coventry Village	17	Cain Park	31	Roxboro Elementary School
3	Heights Rockefeller	18	Nature Center & Shaker Lakes	32	Boulevard Elementary School
4	Cedar Lee	19	Barbra H. Boyd Park	33	Cleveland Heights High School
5	Fairmount Taylor	20	Denison Park	34	Fairfax Elementary School
6	Cedar Taylor	21	Coventry Branch Library	35	Oxford Elementary School
7	Cain Park Village	22	Lee Rd Branch Library	36	Baumgardner Middle School
8	Severance Town Center	23	Noble Neighborhoods Library	37	Noble Elementary School
9	Noble Nela	24	Lake View Cemetery	38	Delisle Options Center
10	Noble Monticello	25	Cleveland Heights Community Center	39	Canterbury Elementary School
11	Center Mayfield	26	Cedar Lee Theatre	40	Cleveland Heights Fire Station 2
12	Kenilworth Park	27	Dobama Theatre	41	Cleveland Heights Fire Station 1
13	Turtle Park Tot Lot	28	Cleveland Heights City Hall	42	Cleveland Heights Police Dept
14	Coventry PEACE Park	29	US Postal Service	43	Metro Health Cleveland Heights Medical Center
15	Forest Hills Park				

LEGEND

- Business District
- Major Corridor
- Decision Zones
- Wayfinding Sign Location
- Business District
- City Park
- Heights Library Branch
- Community Amenity
- Education Facility/School
- Fire Station
- Police Station

DESTINATION TIERS

Space on directional signage is limited. In order to prioritize which destinations should appear on wayfinding signs, each destination was assigned a tier, based on the following criteria.

TIER 1 BUSINESS DISTRICTS

These destinations include all Business Districts identified by the city. These districts typically include several destinations within their borders or nearby which together generate traffic, and/or are key centers of activity.

Tier 1 Destinations should receive first priority on wayfinding signs and should typically be included on signs up to 1 mile away from the destinations.

TIER 2 LANDMARKS & CITY AMENITIES

These are destinations that generate a high amount of interest and travel for visitors and residents alike. These include key community amenities such as major parks, libraries, and community amenities.

Tier 2 Destinations should receive second priority after Tier 1, and should typically be included on signs under ½ mile away from the destination.

TIER 3 LOCAL DESTINATIONS

These destinations are locally important places and receive a tertiary level of priority. These are typically smaller neighborhood parks or community amenities found within Business Districts or neighborhood public schools located outside of high traffic corridors.

Tier 3 Destinations should receive last priority on wayfinding signs and be included when other destinations are not present to fill available slots on a sign. They should typically be included on signs under ½ mile away from the destination.

Tier 1 – Business Districts	
Destination Name	**Signage Text**
Cain Park Village Business District	Cain Park Village
Cedar Fairmount Business District	Cedar Fairmount
Cedar Lee Business District	Cedar Lee
Cedar Taylor Business District	Cedar Taylor
Center Mayfield Business District	Center Mayfield
Coventry Village Business District	Coventry Village
Fairmount Taylor Business District	Fairmount Taylor
Heights Rockefeller Business District	Heights Rockefeller
Noble Nela Business District	Noble Nela
Noble Monticello Business District	Noble Monticello
Severance Town Center Business District	Severance Town Center

Tier 2 – Landmarks and City Amenities

Destination Name	Signage Text
Forest Hill Park	Forest Hill Park
Cumberland Park	Cumberland Park
Cain Park	Cain Park
Nature Center at Shaker Lakes	Nature Center at Shaker Lakes
Denison Park	Denison Park
Heights Library Coventry Village Branch	Coventry Village Library
Heights Library Lee Rd Branch	Lee Road Library
Heights Library Noble Neighborhood Branch	Noble Neighborhood Library
Lake View Cemetery Mayfield Gate	Lake View Cemetery
Cleveland Heights Community Center	Community Center
Cleveland Heights City Hall	City Hall
Cleveland Heights High School	Cleveland Heights High School

Tier 3 – Local Destinations

Destination Name	Signage Text
Kenilworth Park	Kenilworth Park
Turtle Park - Tot Lot	Turtle Park
Coventry PEACE Park	Coventry PEACE Park
Barbara H Boyd Park	Barbra H Boyd Park
Cedar Lee Theatre	Cedar Lee Theatre
Dobama Theatre	Dobama Theatre
US Postal Service	Post Office
Roxboro Middle School	Roxboro Schools
Roxboro Elementary School	Roxboro Schools
Boulevard Elementary School	Boulevard Elementary School
Fairfax Elementary School	Fairfax Elementary School
Oxford Elementary School	Oxford Elementary School
Baumgardner Middle School	Baumgardner Middle School
Noble Elementary School	Noble Elementary School
Delisle Options Center	Delisle Options Center
Canterbury Elementary School	Canterbury Elementary School
Cleveland Heights Fire Station 2	Fire Station 2
Cleveland Heights Fire Station 1	Fire Station 1
Cleveland Heights Police Department	Police Department
MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Medical Center	MetroHealth

COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

In order to better understand current opinions on existing gateway and wayfinding signage in Cleveland Heights, a public, online survey was made available between December 4 and December 30, 2024. This survey was taken by 574 respondents and was comprised of 19 questions, which covered a variety of topics and issues:

- Respondent demographics;

- Understanding which roadways respondents frequently travel on to reach destinations;

- Feedback on the effectiveness of existing signs in the city; and

- Design preferences regarding potential future signage in Cleveland Heights.

PREFERENCES: FUTURE GATEWAYS

Respondents were asked to select the types of features they would like to see in future gateway signage throughout Cleveland Heights. According to respondents, current gateways are not noticeable, lack consistency, are dull, and need a refresh.

Of the nine images to choose from, the top three selections can be seen below. Respondents' reasons for choosing these images include their historic and classic feel, artistic elements, their simplicity, ease of readability, and have a comfortable feel to them.

PREFERENCES: FUTURE WAYFINDING

Respondents were asked to select the types of features they would like to see in future wayfinding throughout Cleveland Heights. Of the nine images to choose from, the top three selections can be seen below. Respondents' reasons for choosing these images include the ease of readability, their simplicity, easy to notice, and the signs are informative without being overwhelming.

ADDITIONAL KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Cedar Lee Business District, Lee Road Branch Heights Library, and the Coventry Village Business District are the most visited areas in the city as identified by respondents—the least visited places include Kenilworth Park, the Noble Nela Business District, and Turtle Park.

- Cedar, Lee, and Mayfield Roads are the most commonly traversed roads used to navigate the city as identified by survey respondents—while the majority of respondents drive on these roadways (97.5%), 61.4% say they walk and nearly a quarter say they bike (24.5%)

- Respondents highlighted public parking, parks, neighborhoods north of Mayfield Road, and areas within Severance Circle as the most challenging destinations to locate

BUSINESS DISTRICT SIGNAGE

Signage specifically tailored to the city's 11 unique business districts not only helps visitors and residents navigate these areas, this type of signage also helps foster a strong community identity. The signage typologies—shown on pages 38 and 39—were designed to incorporate Cleveland Heights' city branding throughout, while still allowing for business districts to incorporate individual branding elements such as unique logos and colors.

For each signage typology a set of criteria was developed to inform a sign's location. This location criteria can be found in the chart below. Pages 40-47 show individual maps for each of the city's 11 business districts with approximate locations for all associated signage. Also displayed on these maps are existing historic markers, community amenity signs, and community destination markers.

SYMBOL	TYPOLOGY NAME	LOCATION CRITERIA
⬤	City Gateway	Located at primary and secondary entrances into Cleveland Heights. They should be located on the right side of the street unless a median is present.
⬤	Pedestrian Scale Wayfinding	Located where current or future pedestrian or bicycle routes enter business districts.
⬤	Pedestrian Information Kiosk	Located at central locations within business districts in areas with high pedestrian activity such as plazas, pocket parks, or key intersections, that are typically adjacent to main public parking lots or garages.
⬤	Business District Gateway	Located at the primary entrances to Cleveland Heights business districts, these signs should be located on identified primary or secondary corridors, rather than side streets.
⬤	Vehicular Wayfinding	Located on each approach to identified major decision points. Located at least 200 feet from the intersection before the turn lane. Intended primarily for motorists, these signs should be located on the right side of the street, unless a median is present.
⬤	Parking	Located near the entrance of public parking lots or garages in business districts. Intended to both direct drivers to parking as well as confirm the entrance to the parking lot or garage.
⬤	Business District Gateway/Vehicular Wayfinding	Located in areas that meet the criteria for both Business District Gateways and Vehicular Wayfinding.
⬤	Business District Gateway/Parking	Located in areas that meet the criteria for both Business District Gateways and Parking.
⬤	Vehicular Wayfinding/Parking	Located in Areas that meet the criteria for both Vehicular Wayfinding and Parking.
⬤	Business District Gateway/Vehicular Wayfinding/Parking	Located in areas that meet the criteria for Business District Gateways, Vehicular Wayfinding, and Parking.

EXISTING SIGNS & SYMBOLOGY DISPLAYED ON BUSINESS DISTRICT MAPS

⬤	Historic District/Building Marker	⬙	Community Amenity
⬤	Community Amenity /Facility Marker	▭	Business Districts
– – –	Future Active Transportation Route	Ⓟ	Public Parking Lots/Decks
——	Existing Trail		

SIGNAGE TYPOLOGIES

The signage graphics displayed below and on the following page are illustrative examples of what signs could look like. These help visualize the recommended typologies identified within this plan. These were derived from the public, online survey, as well as feedback from the project team and well-informed best practices. Any final designs should be coordinated with a qualified manufacturer to ensure feasibility and that the desired aesthetic is achieved.

Other Branded
Signage Options

City Gateway

STADIUM

FIRE STATION 2

HIGH SCHOOL

Pedestrian
Scale
Wayfinding

EXPLORE
CEDAR LEE

Pedestrian
Information
Kiosk

EXPLORE
CEDAR LEE

Pedestrian
Information
Kiosk
(electronic)

Cedar Lee
Business District

All are Welcome

Business
District
Gateway

CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS

← AREA 1
→ AREA 2
↑ AREA 3

Vehicular
Wayfinding

P
→

Parking

CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS

Cedar Lee
Business District

← AREA 1
→ AREA 2
↑ AREA 3

Business
District
Gateway/
Vehicular
Wayfinding

Cedar Lee
Business District

All are Welcome

P
→

Business
District
Gateway/
Parking

CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS

← AREA 1
→ AREA 2
↑ AREA 3

P
→

Vehicular
Wayfinding/
Parking

CLEVELAND
HEIGHTS

Cedar Lee
Business District

← AREA 1
→ AREA 2
↑ AREA 3

P
→

Business
District
Gateway/
Vehicular
Wayfinding/
Parking

CAIN PARK VILLAGE

CPV 1
CPV 2
CPV 3
CPV 4
Cain Park
CPV 5
CPV 6
Delisle Options Center
CPV 7

CEDAR TAYLOR

Cain Park
Delisle Options Center
CT 1
CT 2
CT 3
CT 4
CT 5
CT 6

COVENTRY VILLAGE

Lakeview Cemetery

CV 3

CV 4

CV 5

CV 2

CV 1

CV 6

CV 7

CV 8

CV 12

CV 9

CV 10

CV 11

CV 13

CV 17

Coventry PEACE Park

CV 16

Heights Libraries Coventry Village Branch

CV 14

CV 15

CEDAR FAIRMOUNT

CF 14
CF 15
CF 9
CF 8
CF 4
CF 5
CF 10
CF 16
CF 11
CF 3
CF 7
CF 6
CF 17
CF 12
CF 2
CF 1
CF 18
CF 13
CF 19

CEDAR LEE

CL 1

CL 2

CL 3

Cain Park

CL 4

CL 5

CL 6

Cleveland Heights High School

CL 7

CL 8

CL 9

CL 10

Cedar Lee Theatre

Heights Arts

CL 11

CL 12

CL 13

CL 14

CL 15

CL 16

CL 17

CL 18

Dobama Theatre

Heights Libraries Lee Road Branch

CL 19

Fairfax Elementary School

HEIGHTS ROCKEFELLER

HR 2
HR 1
Forest Hill Park
HR 9
HR 3
HR 8
HR 6
Cleveland Heights Community Center
HR 5
HR 4
HR 7
Cumberland Park

SEVERENCE TOWN CENTER

STC 1

Cleveland Heights Fire Department

STC 3

STC 2

Cleveland Heights City Hall

STC 4

Cleveland Heights Police Department

STC 5

United States Postal Service

STC 6

MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Medical Center

NOBLE: NOBLE NELA

East Cleveland

NN 1
NN 2
NN 3
NN 4

FAIRMOUNT TAYLOR

FT 1
FT 2
FT 3
FT 4

NOBLE: NOBLE MONTICELLO

NOBLE: CENTER MAYFIELD

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & SIGNAGE MANAGEMENT

Large, community-wide projects, such as an entirely new gateway and wayfinding system, takes careful coordination and collaboration—often requiring multiple partners across more than one funding source. It is estimated that the City of Cleveland Heights' new signage network will include approximately 33 gateway signs (15 business district gateways and 18 community gateways) and 66 wayfinding signs.

As seen in the table below, estimated costs have been provided on a low to high spectrum. The estimated cost per sign is based on a range of typical prices associated with gateways and wayfinding sign typologies. Prices will vary based on a number of factors—such as overall design, materials, illumination, and scale or size of the sign. It is estimated that gateway signs can generally range from $5,000 to over $18,000 apiece. Wayfinding signs can typically be produced more easily and are not as robust in character. These signs generally range from $2,500 to over $4,500 apiece. Combined, all 99 gateway and wayfinding signs will approximately cost between $330,000 and $891,000.

Funding for such an expansive project will likely need to be secured through multiple sources. As seen in the table on the next page, there are six tiers of funding that could be good candidates when planning for the design, installation, and future maintenance of signs.

Funding from competitive grant programs at the federal and state levels are not guaranteed. However, these opportunities could help secure a larger portion of the funds necessary for implementation. The majority of funding is likely to come from more traditional mechanisms—the city's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), General Fund, or the creation of a fund specifically for signage. These sources could be shared with established Special Improvement Districts (SIDs), especially for the ongoing maintenance of installed signs. Lastly, philanthropic or private donations could be another alternative that helps fill any minor gaps in funding. In general, implementation of Cleveland Heights signage program will need to take a multifaceted approach to both partners and funding to ensure its successful implementation.

SAMPLE COSTS			
Signage Types Generally	Estimated Cost per Sign*	Quantity	Estimated Total
Gateways	$5,000 - $18,000+	33	$165,000 - $594,000+
Wayfinding	$2,500 - $4,500+	66	$165,000 - $297,000+
			$330,000 - $891,000+

*The Estimated Cost per Sign is based on a range of typical prices associated with gateways and wayfinding signs. Prices will vary based on a number of factors—such as inflation, overall design, materials, illumination, and scale or size of the sign.

Guide Studio, Inc. 2019. "Wayfinding Analysis Report." https://www.strongsville.org/CityOfStrongsville/media/StrongsvilleMedia/Documents/Economic%20Development/STR1570_WayfindingReport-R1.pdf. August 2025.

Worksafe Traffic Control Industries, Inc. 2025. "How Much Do Road Signs Cost?." https://worksafetci.com/2020/06/how-much-do-road-signs-cost/. August 2025.

POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Type	Name	Source/Partners	Description
Federal Aid/ Grant	Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT); Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)	Provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge and tunnel projects on any public road, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects, including intercity bus terminals.
State Aid/ Grant	Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)	Provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects.
Public Funds	City of Cleveland Heights; Cuyahoga County	General Fund; Capital Improvement Program (CIP); New Signage Fund; Municipal Grant Program; Community Development Supplemental Grant Program(CDSG)	Funds could be allocated as a line item in the city's general fund, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), or funds could be designated solely for the fabrication, installation, and ongoing maintenance of signs. The County's Municipal Grant and CDSG Programs can support the following activities: master plans, housing and commercial demolition, infrastructure, public safety, streetscapes, parks and playgrounds, and community or senior centers.
Cost-Sharing	Special Improvement Districts (SIDs): Business Associations	Cedar Fairmount; Cedar Lee; Coventry Village, Noble Area Business Association	These business districts are well-organized with already established SIDs and business associations. Cost-sharing could be a more immediate option within these areas.
Philanthropic/ Non-Profit	N/A	The Cleveland Foundation; The George Gund Foundation; Future Heights; KeyBank Foundation; MetroHealth Foundation; Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland; etc.	While this is not an exhaustive list, numerous non-profit and philanthropic groups exist in northeast Ohio and Cuyahoga County alone that could help fund or fill funding gaps.
Private Donation	N/A	Private Citizens; Businesses; Organizations; etc.	Outreach, communication, and showcasing the immense benefits of community gateways and wayfinding could be instrumental in capturing interest from private entities.

PARTNER COLLABORATION

The implementation of an entirely new gateway and wayfinding system throughout the City of Cleveland Heights will be a robust undertaking—highlighting the importance of having strong partnerships during this process. Implementation and fundraising could be done simultaneously. However, a phased approach may give the city more funding options and opportunities.

This Gateway & Wayfinding Signage Plan has outlined various signage locations and typologies to help Cleveland Heights prioritize the design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance of all recommended signs. With nearly 150 overall recommended signage locations, partner collaboration will be important. Within the city itself, there are 11 business districts—three that have active Special Improvement Districts (SID) that can help with implementation and future maintenance of installed signage.

The Cedar Lee, Cedar Fairmount, and Coventry Village SIDs will be critical partners for the successful implementation of the signage program across these prominent business districts, as well as for easing the maintenance burden on the city itself. Similar to the other functions of SIDs, adding a signage maintenance component to existing duties would be a relatively easy transition for these organizations. However, it will be equally as important to collaborate on the design and potential cost-sharing opportunities within each of these districts as well—slight customization may be an option to highlight these unique destinations in Cleveland Heights.

In general, there are a number of important partners and funders within and around the City of Cleveland Heights that can help make the implementation of a new signage program a success.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS & FUNDERS

IMPLEMENTATION & FUNDING CASE STUDY
## PITTSBURGH PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING PROJECT

Initially beginning in 2014, the Pittsburgh Pedestrian Wayfinding Project is a robust example of why strong partnerships and collaboration are important when implementing broadly scaled projects. This particular project included seven large project partners, as well as, 10 philanthropic and private funders.

Spanning a decade, this project was the first pedestrian wayfinding system ever to be installed across the City of Pittsburgh. Covering 98 destinations, this world-class navigation system improves accessibility, strengthens connections between neighborhoods, and warmly welcomes visitors.

Collectively, the wayfinding network will include 150 signs, is easily scalable, and designed with the flexibility to be further expanded in the future. Additionally, multiple funding sources were utilized to make these plans a reality, with a total project cost of approximately $2,080,180.

- Fundraised $700k from philanthropies, institutions, and partner organizations to fund preliminary design and community engagement (2016)

- Accepted $1.4 million for fabrication and installation through a reimbursement agreement with PennDOT District 11 for funding provided by the SPC Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (2021)

Today, the city continues to work with the manufacturers to install the remaining signs and kiosks. It is anticipated that the full network of currently planned signs will be completely installed by the end of Summer 2025.
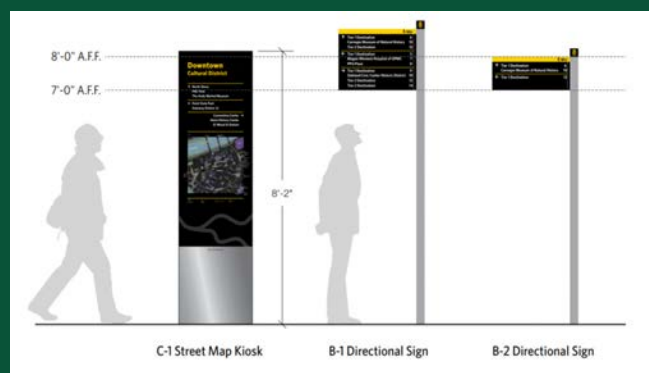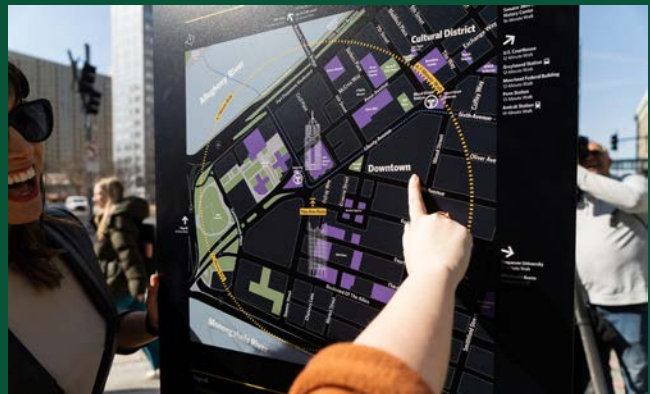
FUTURE MAINTENANCE

Signage maintenance might look different depending on where, how, and what type of sign is being installed—each a key consideration in terms of how signs will be regularly maintained. When installing outdoor gateways and wayfinding signs, the city should consider the following:

- All of the city's gateway and wayfinding signs will be outside, exposed to the elements 24/7. Weather and Ultraviolet (UV) protection will be important. Examples of weather and sun resistant materials include High-Density Polyurethane (HDU), concrete, stone, or metal. These four materials in particular are great at resisting UV rays, rain, wind, and temperature fluctuations without deteriorating—additional sealants or coatings can help extend the life of signs as well.

- Depending on a sign's location and city preferences, signs that can be easily broken at the base from a collision may be the preferred alternative instead of more impact-resistant designs. Signs that are designed to break easily at strategic points can then be quickly replaced in a more cost-effective manner. Impact-resistant designs that include more robust materials, such as reinforced concrete, may be able withstand a collision. However, repairs and general maintenance could be more costly than a simplified design.

- Maintaining signs includes more than just the physical sign itself, it also includes the immediate area surrounding the sign. Landscaping, general ground care, and trash removal should be included in any future maintenance schedule. Additionally, this could be an opportunity to engage and involve local business districts, SIDs, schools, and other groups throughout the community—elevating community pride and appreciation.

- General cleaning should be included as part of the planned maintenance schedule. High-pressure water hoses should be avoided, and only gentle cleansers should be used so as to not damage the sign's finish. Additionally, sprinkler systems should be pointed away from signs when possible to avoid hard water damage.

In addition to a regular maintenance schedule, the city should also consider quarterly sign inspections. Frequent inspections and documentation help identify any issues—such as sun fading, cracks, chips, or other similar structural damage—that could become much larger concerns in the future. Staying ahead of these issues will be paramount for extending the lifespan of signs in the City of Cleveland Heights.

PREFERRED MATERIALS (WEATHER RESISTANT)
High-Density Polyurethane (HDU)
Concrete
Stone
Metal

STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS
Break-Away Design
Impact-Resistant Design

| MAINTENANCE & INSPECTION SCHEDULES |
| --- |
| Quarterly Inspections/Documentation |
| Make repairs/conduct maintenance as necessary |

MAINTENANCE & REPLACEMENT CASE STUDY
CITY OF PARMA HEIGHTS

With efforts beginning in 2019, the City of Parma Heights has undergone a community-wide transformation of its branding and wayfinding. Covering multiple phases and costing approximately $200,000, Parma Heights now has 35, city-branded signs that act as gateways, wayfinding, or a combination of these two typologies.

The new signs are constructed of durable materials, including aluminum surfaces, and poles that can be easily broken at their bases in the event a vehicle collision—potentially saving the sign face itself in the process, with only the need to replace the pole.

Additionally, these flat, aluminum sign faces have allowed the city to take advantage of new methods for message application. Vinyl stickers—sometimes with a slight level of reflectivity—are used to display each sign's message. These vinyl stickers are not only a great option that gives the city maximum flexibility in terms of signage content, they also improve the ease of regular maintenance. In most instances, the vinyl stickers can be changed on-site without the need for taking the sign faces off-site for application.

Overall, the City of Parma Heights is embracing modern signage and application techniques to maximize each sign's flexibility in terms of messaging, maintenance, and replacement. When considering a community-wide signage program, it is important to account for the longterm care and general upkeep of these signs. Gateways and wayfinding are more than just a sign, they're also a first impression to visitors.
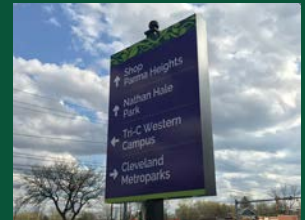
IMAGES & SOURCES

The following is a list of images and their source organizations used or referenced throughout this document.

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland: page 50
- Cedar Fairmount Business District: page 50
- Cedar Lee District: page 50
- City of Brooklyn, Ohio: page 27
- City of Cleveland Heights, Ohio: page 4
- City of Grand Rapids, Michigan: page 19
- City of Parma Heights, Ohio: page 25, 53
- City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: page 51
- City of University Heights, Ohio: page 26
- Cleveland Foundation: page 50
- Cuyahoga County: page 21, 27, 28, 36
- Cuyahoga County Planning Commission: page 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16, 17, 21, 28, 29, 55
- FutureHeights: page 50
- Google Earth: page 25, 26
- Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning: page 23
- Key Bank Foundation: page 50
- Main Street America: page 5
- MetroHealth Foundation: page 50
- RoadTrafficSigns.com: page 19
- The George Gund Foundation: page 50

THANK YOU TO THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, ITS RESIDENTS, AND STAKEHOLDERS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AND CONTINUED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THIS PROJECT.

APPENDIX: FULL SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

RESPONSES: 570

Age	%	Count
18-24	1.4%	8
25-34	10.0%	57
35-44	15.8%	90
45-54	12.3%	70
55-64	16.7%	95
65+	43.9%	250
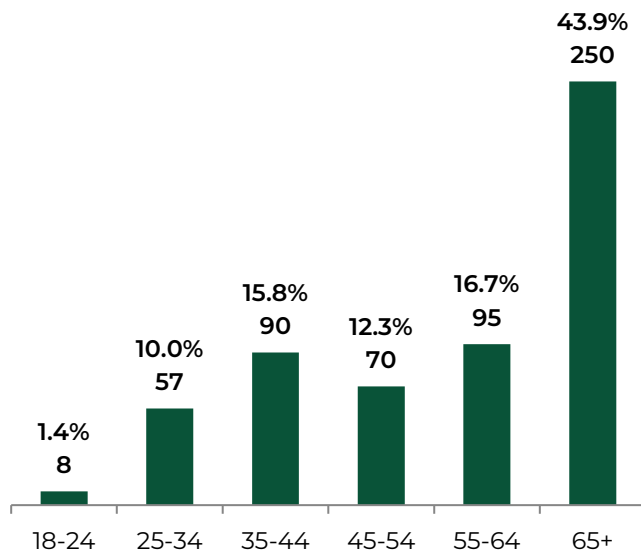
ARE YOU CURRENTLY A RESIDENT OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS?

RESPONSES: 574

- Resident: 94.1% / 540
- Non Resident: 5.9% / 34
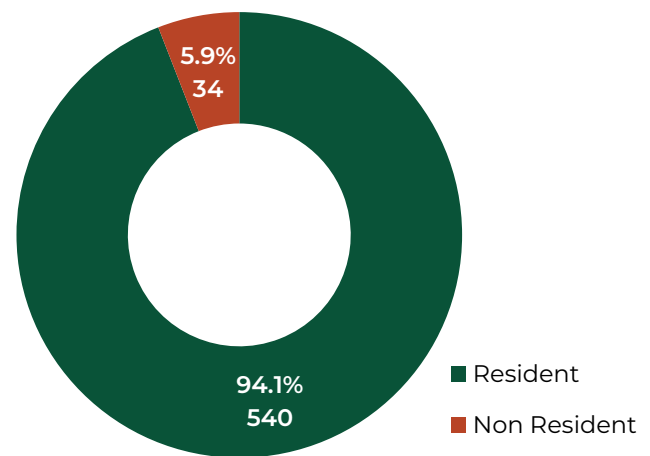
FOR DEMOGRAPHIC PURPOSES, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST REPRESENTS YOUR GENDER IDENTITY? YOUR SELECTIONS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

RESPONSES: 570

Gender	%	Count
Male	30.5%	174
Female	62.1%	354
Nonbinary	1.9%	11
Prefer not to answer	4.7%	27
Prefer to self describe	0.7%	4
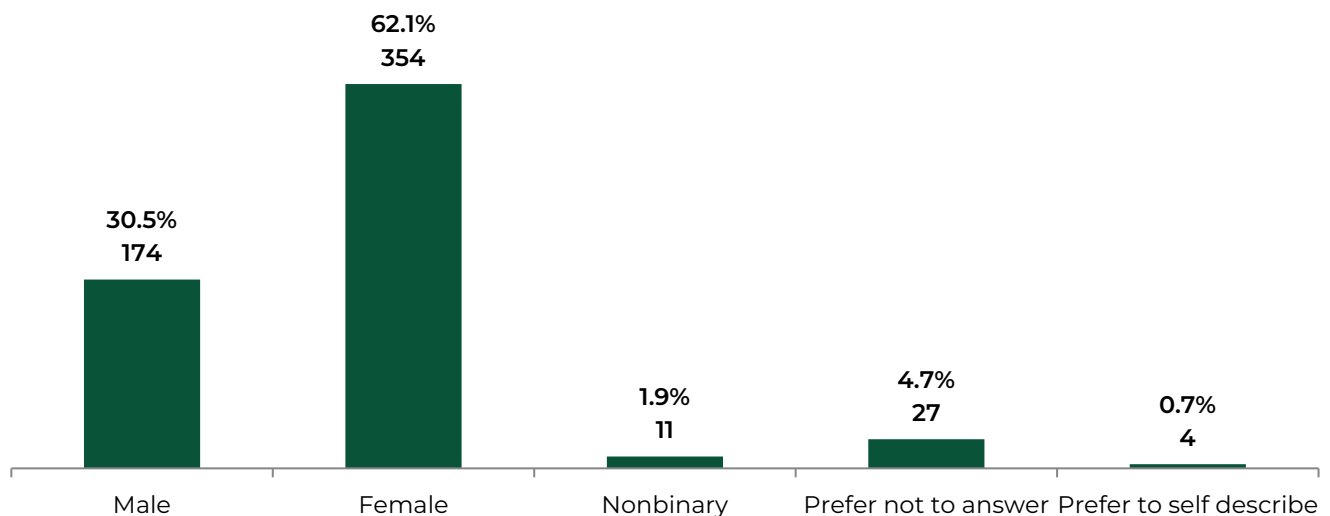
WHAT IS THE NEAREST INTERSECTION TO YOUR HOME?

RESPONSES: 479
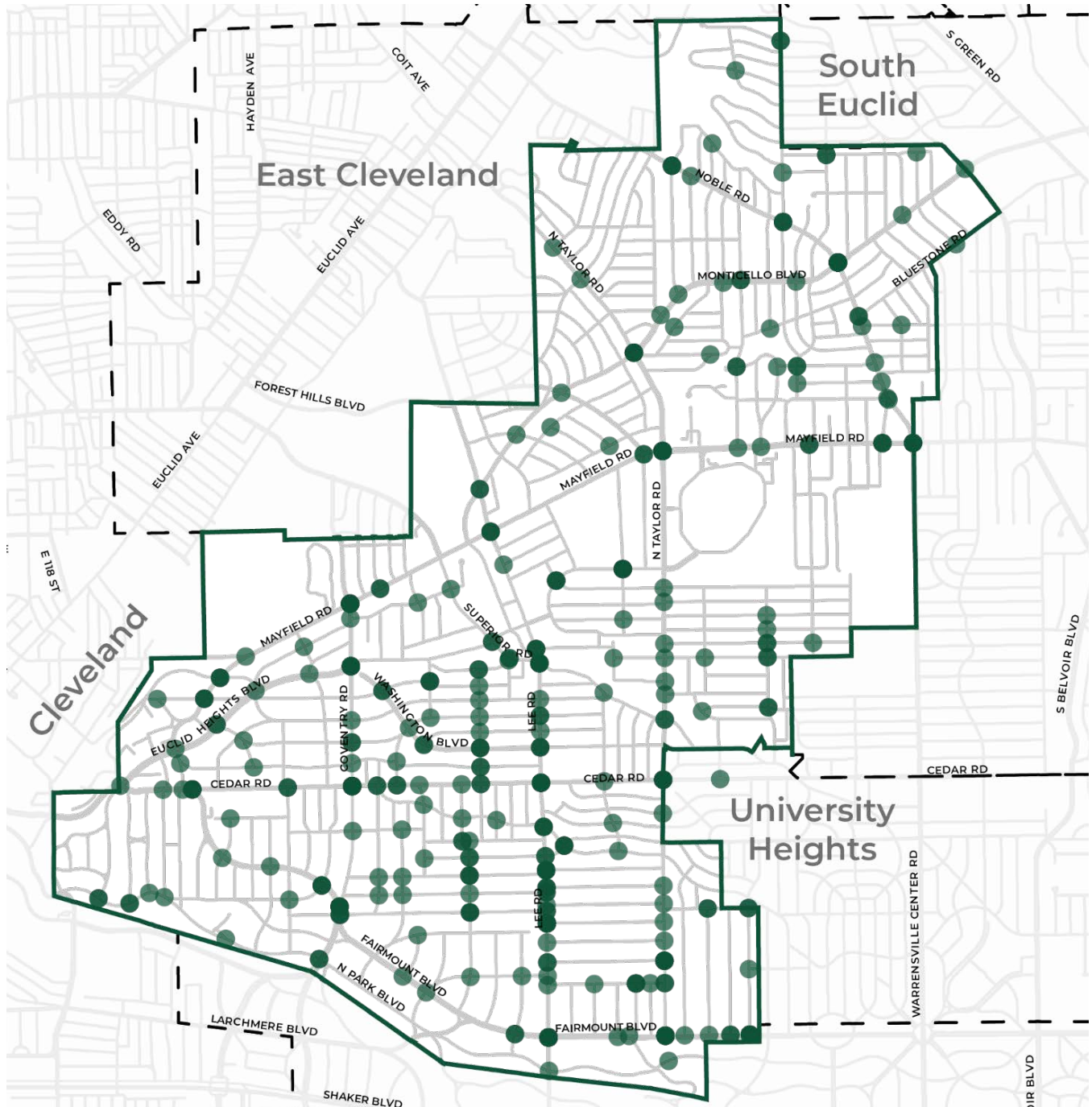
HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN CLEVELAND HEIGHTS?

RESPONSES: 496 (RESIDENTS)

Category	Percentage	Count
Under 2 years	5.0%	25
2-5 years	12.1%	60
6-10 years	9.7%	48
11-20 years	11.5%	57
21-30 years	18.6%	92
30+ years	43.2%	214
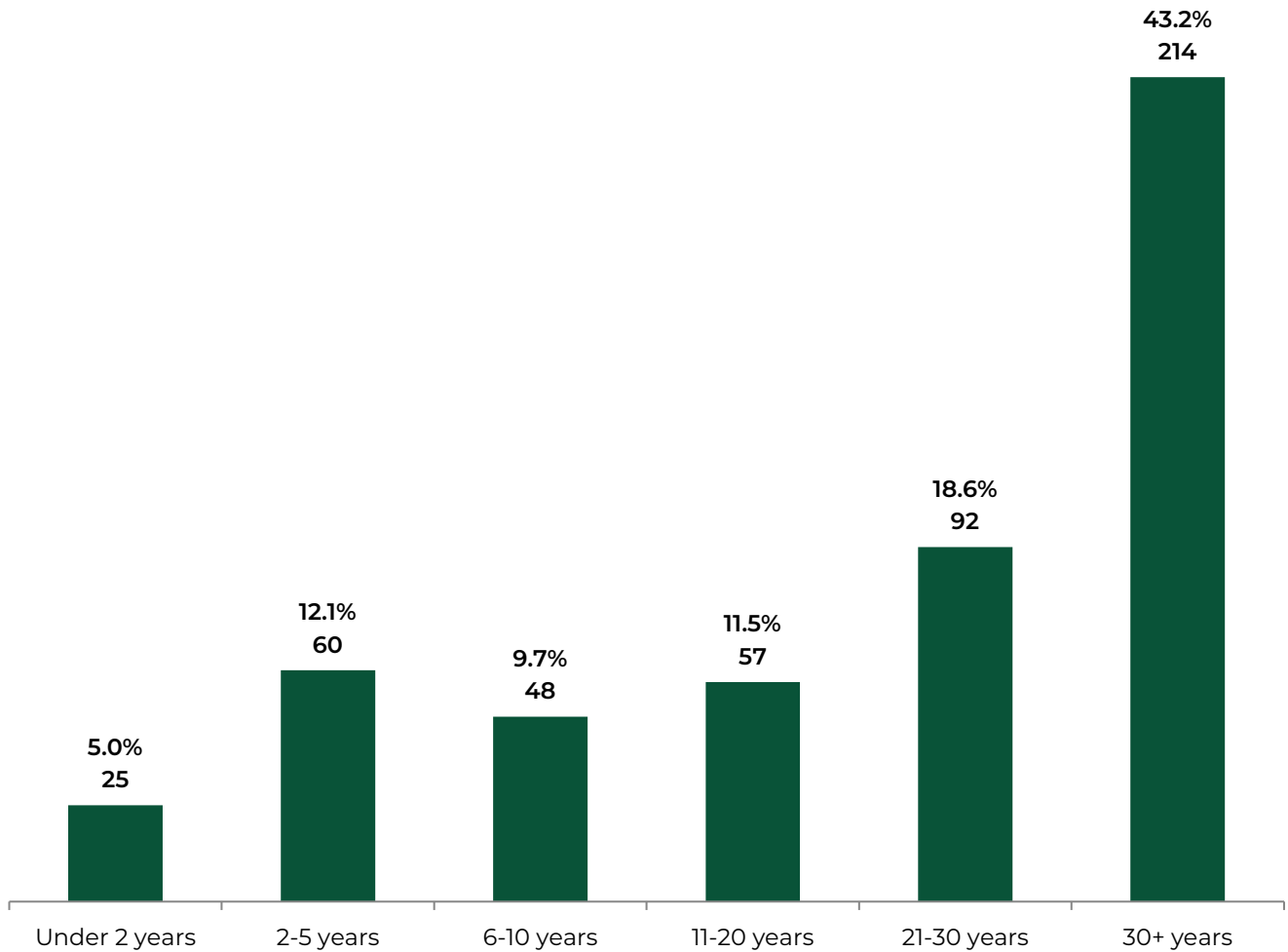
HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS?

RESPONSES: 33 (NON-RESIDENTS)

Category	Percentage	Count
Every day	39.4%	13
A few times a week	12.1%	4
A few times a month	24.2%	8
A few times a year	21.2%	7
Never	3.0%	1
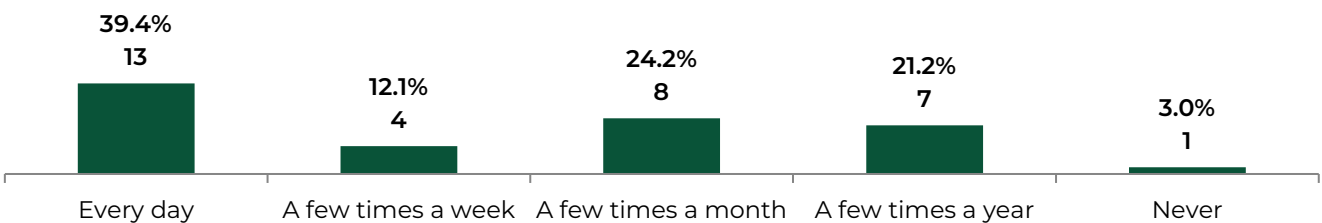
PLEASE PROVIDE THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT YOU VALUE THE MOST ABOUT CLEVELAND HEIGHTS TODAY.

RESPONSES: 479

WHICH DESTINATIONS DO YOU VISIT THE MOST IN CLEVELAND HEIGHTS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

RESPONSES: 510

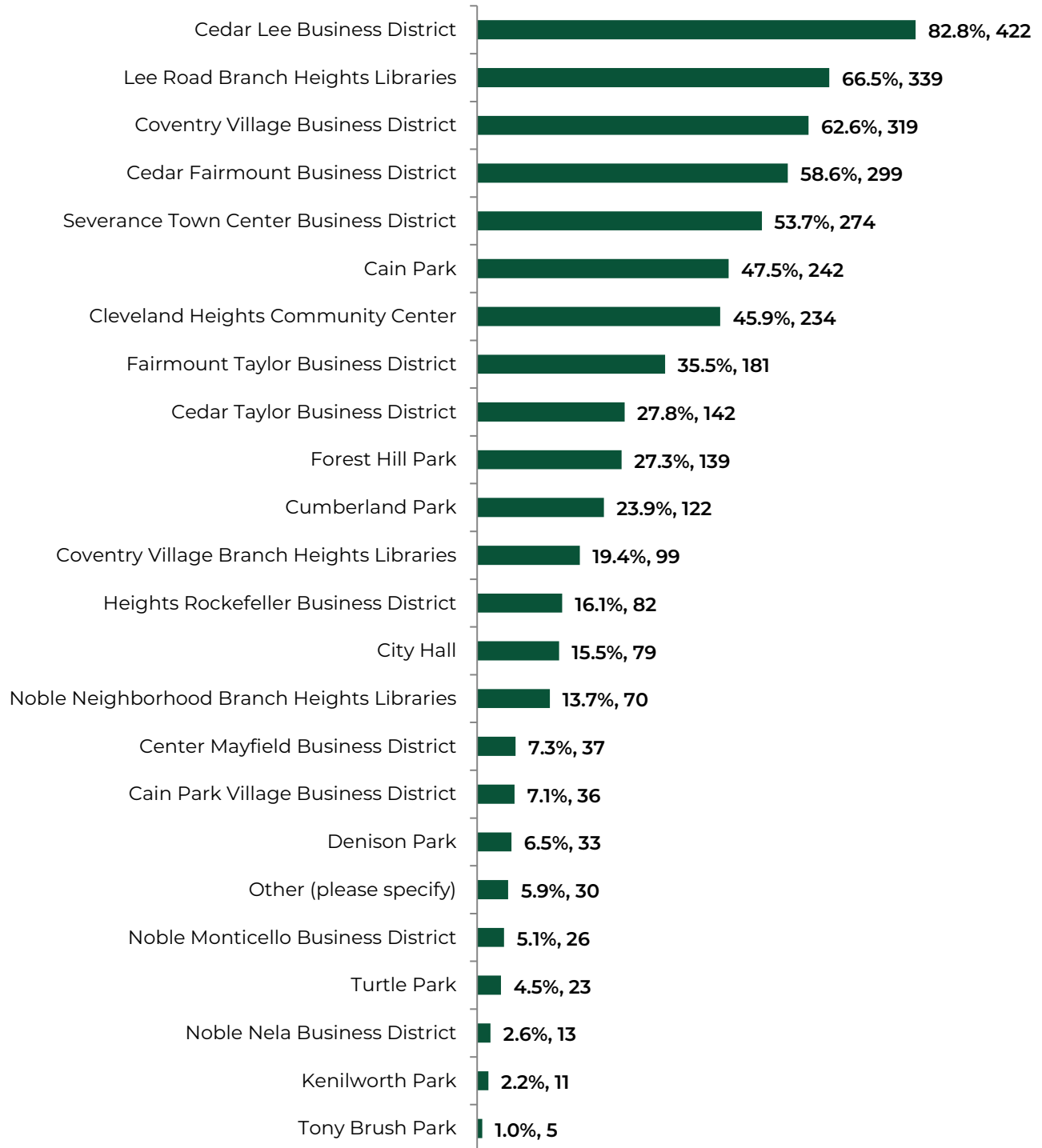| Destination	
Cedar Lee Business District	82.8%, 422
Lee Road Branch Heights Libraries	66.5%, 339
Coventry Village Business District	62.6%, 319
Cedar Fairmount Business District	58.6%, 299
Severance Town Center Business District	53.7%, 274
Cain Park	47.5%, 242
Cleveland Heights Community Center	45.9%, 234
Fairmount Taylor Business District	35.5%, 181
Cedar Taylor Business District	27.8%, 142
Forest Hill Park	27.3%, 139
Cumberland Park	23.9%, 122
Coventry Village Branch Heights Libraries	19.4%, 99
Heights Rockefeller Business District	16.1%, 82
City Hall	15.5%, 79
Noble Neighborhood Branch Heights Libraries	13.7%, 70
Center Mayfield Business District	7.3%, 37
Cain Park Village Business District	7.1%, 36
Denison Park	6.5%, 33
Other (please specify)	5.9%, 30
Noble Monticello Business District	5.1%, 26
Turtle Park	4.5%, 23
Noble Nela Business District	2.6%, 13
Kenilworth Park	2.2%, 11
Tony Brush Park	1.0%, 5

ARE THERE ANY DESTINATIONS WITHIN THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS YOU FEEL ARE CHALLENGING TO GET TO OR FIND?

RESPONSES: 488

- 22.3% 109 Yes
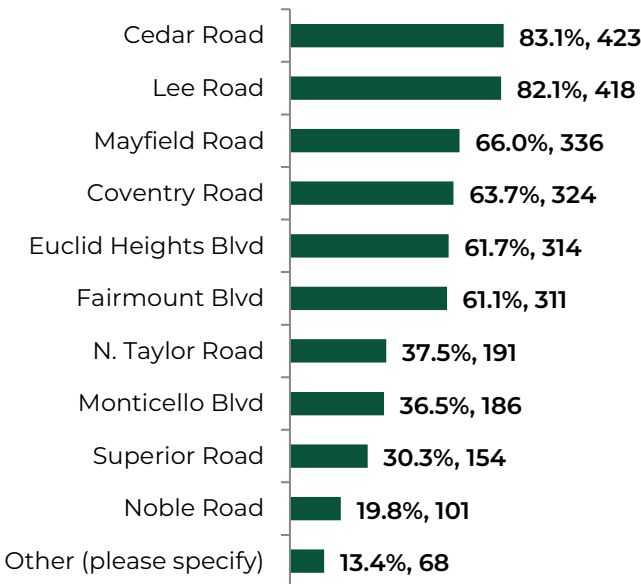- 77.7% 379 No
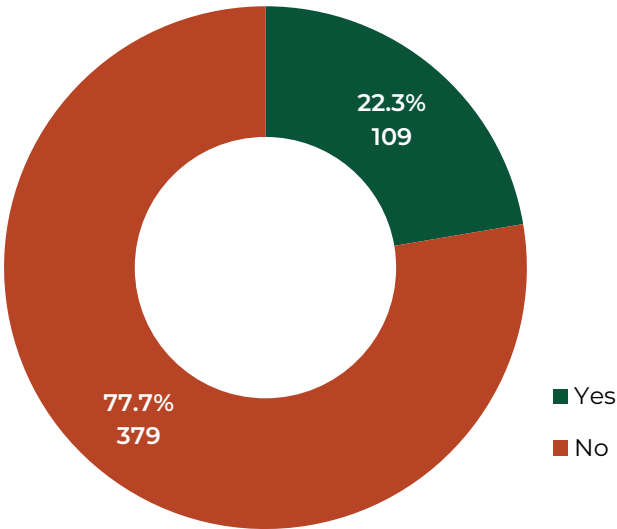
MOST CHALLENGING DESTINATIONS TO FIND	
Public Parking (General)	24
Public Parks (General)	19
Neighborhoods north of Mayfield Road	16
Locations within Severance Circle	15
Cedar Fairmount Parking	8
Cain Park	7
Cumberland Pool	6
Forest Hills Park	6
Cedar Lee Parking	6

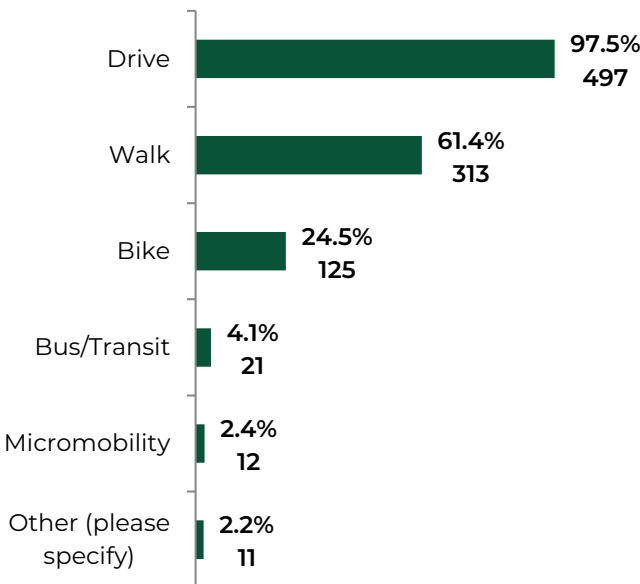## WHICH ROADS DO YOU TYPICALLY TAKE TO GET TO YOUR SELECTED DESTINATIONS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

RESPONSES: 509

Road	%	Count
Cedar Road	83.1%	423
Lee Road	82.1%	418
Mayfield Road	66.0%	336
Coventry Road	63.7%	324
Euclid Heights Blvd	61.7%	314
Fairmount Blvd	61.1%	311
N. Taylor Road	37.5%	191
Monticello Blvd	36.5%	186
Superior Road	30.3%	154
Noble Road	19.8%	101
Other (please specify)	13.4%	68

WHAT MODES OF DO YOU USE WHEN YOU TRAVEL TO YOUR SELECTED DESTINATIONS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

RESPONSES: 510

| Mode	%	Count
Drive	97.5%	497
Walk	61.4%	313
Bike	24.5%	125
Bus/Transit	4.1%	21
Micromobility	2.4%	12
Other (please specify)	2.2%	11

CONSIDERING EXISTING PUBLIC WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE, HOW EASY DO YOU FEEL IT IS TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND CLEVELAND HEIGHTS?

RESPONSES: 504

| 17.3% 87 | 29.8% 150 | 47.0% 237 | 6.0% 30 |

■ Very easy ■ Easy ■ Average ■ Difficult
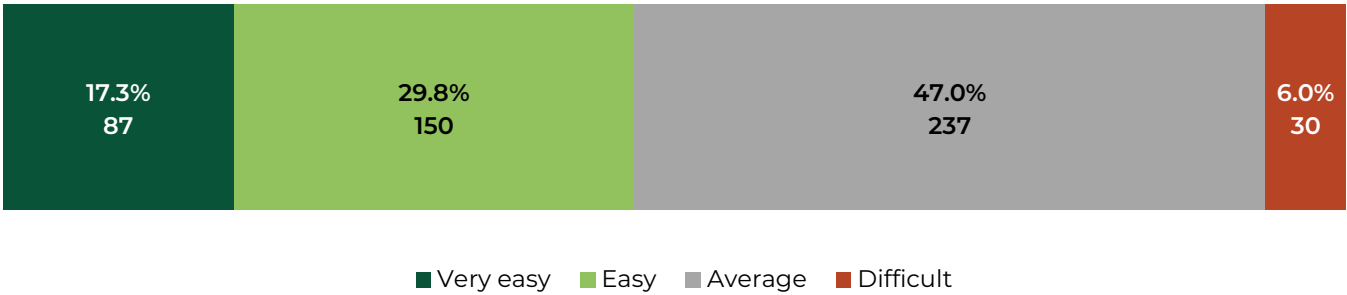
IF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS WERE TO UPDATE ITS WAYFINDING SIGNS, WHICH IMAGES DO YOU FEEL BEST REPRESENT THE FEATURES IN SIGNS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS? CONSIDER ELEMENTS LIKE MATERIALS, STYLE, AND THE OVERALL FEEL OF THE SIGNS. PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

RESPONSES: 446

61.2% 273 — 47.1% 210 — 37.2% 166 — 27.6% 123 — 21.1% 94 — 19.3% 86 — 15.5% 69 — 14.4% 64 — 10.1% 45
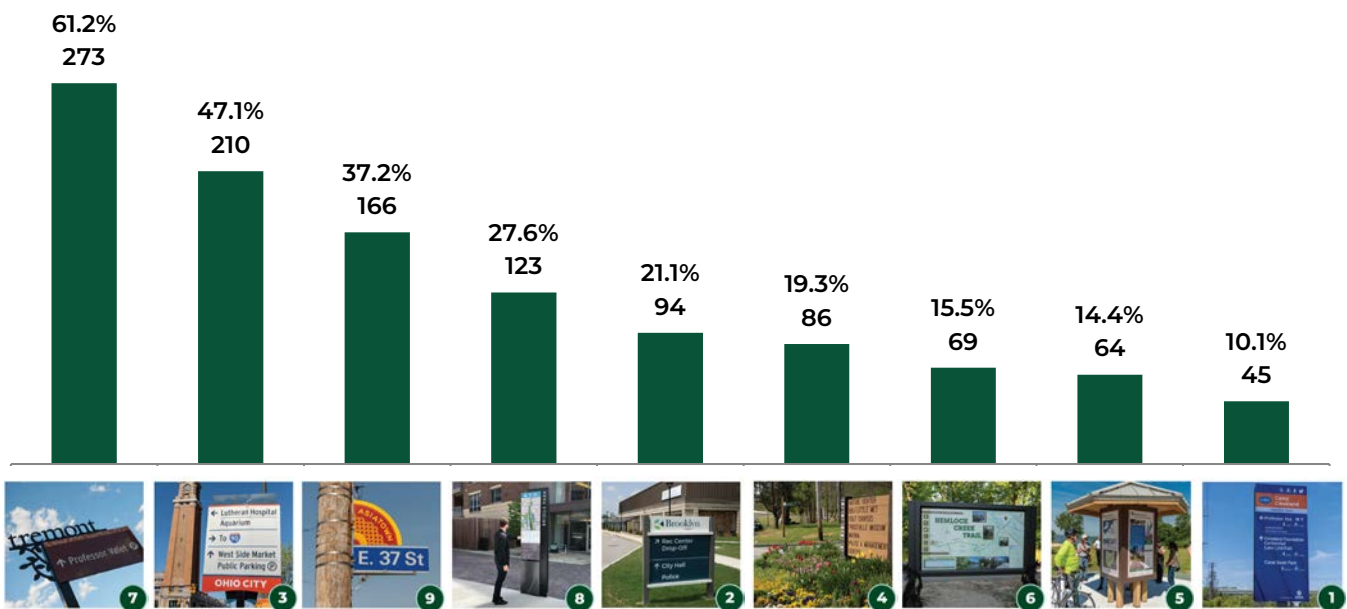
DO YOU FEEL EXISTING CITY GATEWAY SIGNS PROVIDE A WARM WELCOME INTO THE COMMUNITY?

RESPONSES: 466

25.8%
120

74.3%
346

- Yes
- No
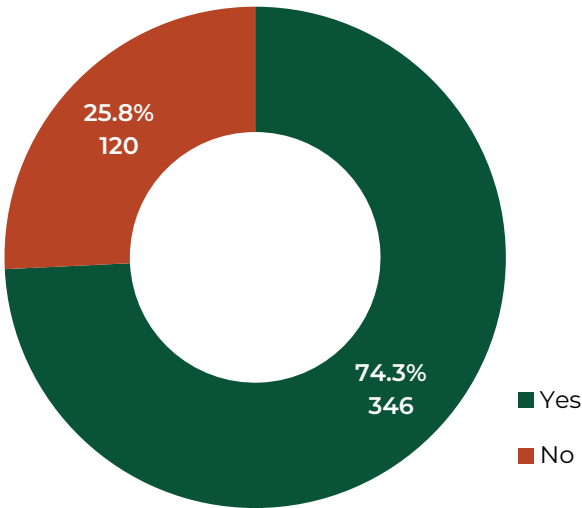
TOP 10 THEMES	
Gateways should be more noticeable	66
Current gateways lack consistency	54
Current gateways are adequate	34
Gateways are dated and need a refresh	25
Gateways are easy to read	24
Like that the City logo is incorporated	15
Like the font that is used	13
Like existing landscaping	12
Signs are attractive	12
Current gateways are dull/boring	11

IF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS WERE TO UPDATE ITS GATEWAY SIGNS, WHICH IMAGES DO YOU FEEL BEST REPRESENT THE FEATURES IN SIGNS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS? CONSIDER ELEMENTS LIKE MATERIALS, STYLE, AND THE OVERALL FEEL OF THE SIGNS. PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. GATEWAY SIGN EXAMPLES

RESPONSES: 439

60.8%
267

46.5%
204

41.0%
180

28.5%
125

23.0%
101

12.5%
55

11.4%
50

10.0%
44

9.1%
40