

Lee Vining: Character Inventory

Building Character



Metal roof with dormers and a deep porch

Frontage Character



Projecting porch with seating

Signage Character



Historic monument sign with stone base

Public Realm and Open Space



Mono Lake



Stucco false facade with terrace



Terrace with landscaping



Historic vertical yard signs



Gus Hess Community Park



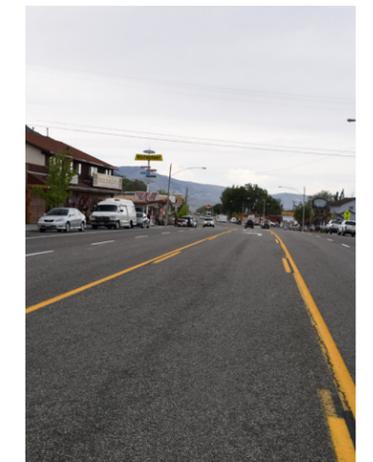
Wood siding with log lintels



Porch and yard offer outdoor seating.



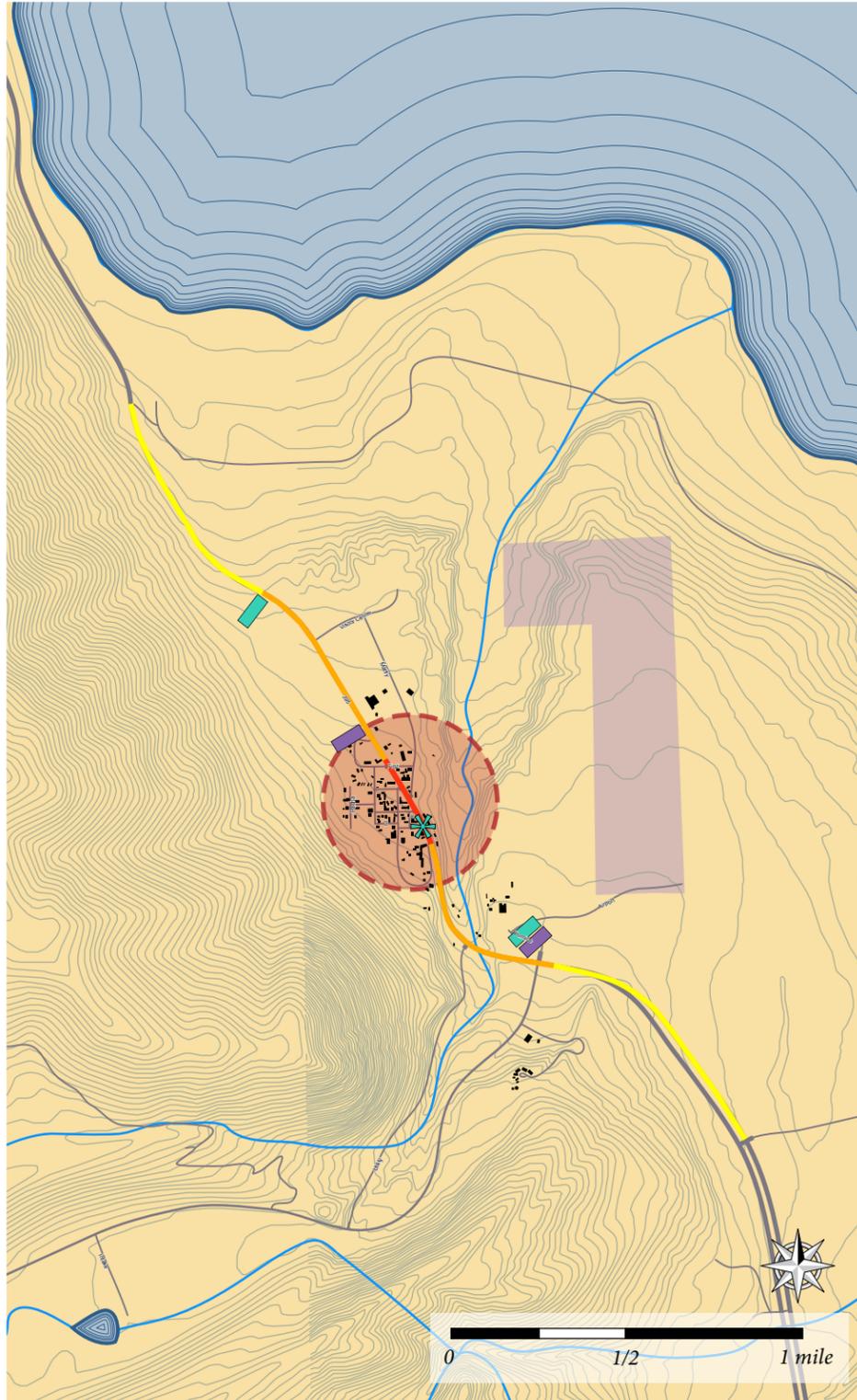
Wood gateway sign with stone base



Recent sidewalk improvements; wide 5-lane right-of-way with no crosswalks

Lee Vining

Context Zone Map



Similar to Bridgeport, Lee Vining has many amenities that promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, including: relatively dense buildings placed close to the right-of-way, ADA-compliant sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of public and semi-public spaces.

Yet context zones would help improve safety and encourage tourists to stop and explore Lee Vining. Gateway signage should be added approximately one mile outside of town: before the Mono Lake Visitor's Center to the north, and at the intersection of Highways 395 and 120 to the south (i.e. maintain the current location). The center of town would be the most pedestrian-oriented zone, with a speed limit of 25 mph extending to almost the edge of the half-mile pedestrian shed.

Legend

-  Proposed 55 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 40 mph speed limit zone
-  Proposed 25 mph speed limit zone
-  Street
-  Watercourse
-  Proposed gateway monument sign
-  Existing gateway monument sign
-  Mid-block crossing
-  Walk radius - 1/4 mile or 5 minutes

June Lake: Character Inventory

Building Character



Swiss chalet character in form and trim

Frontage Character



Ramped terrace with flower pots

Signage (and Gateway) Character



Wood blade sign

Public Realm and Open Space



View from Oh! Ridge



Swiss chalet wood trim and painted detailing



Stoop with stone terrace



Wood blade signs



Boulder as the gateway into the community



Newly renovated; warm paint palette



Stairs with retaining wall; wood awning with trim



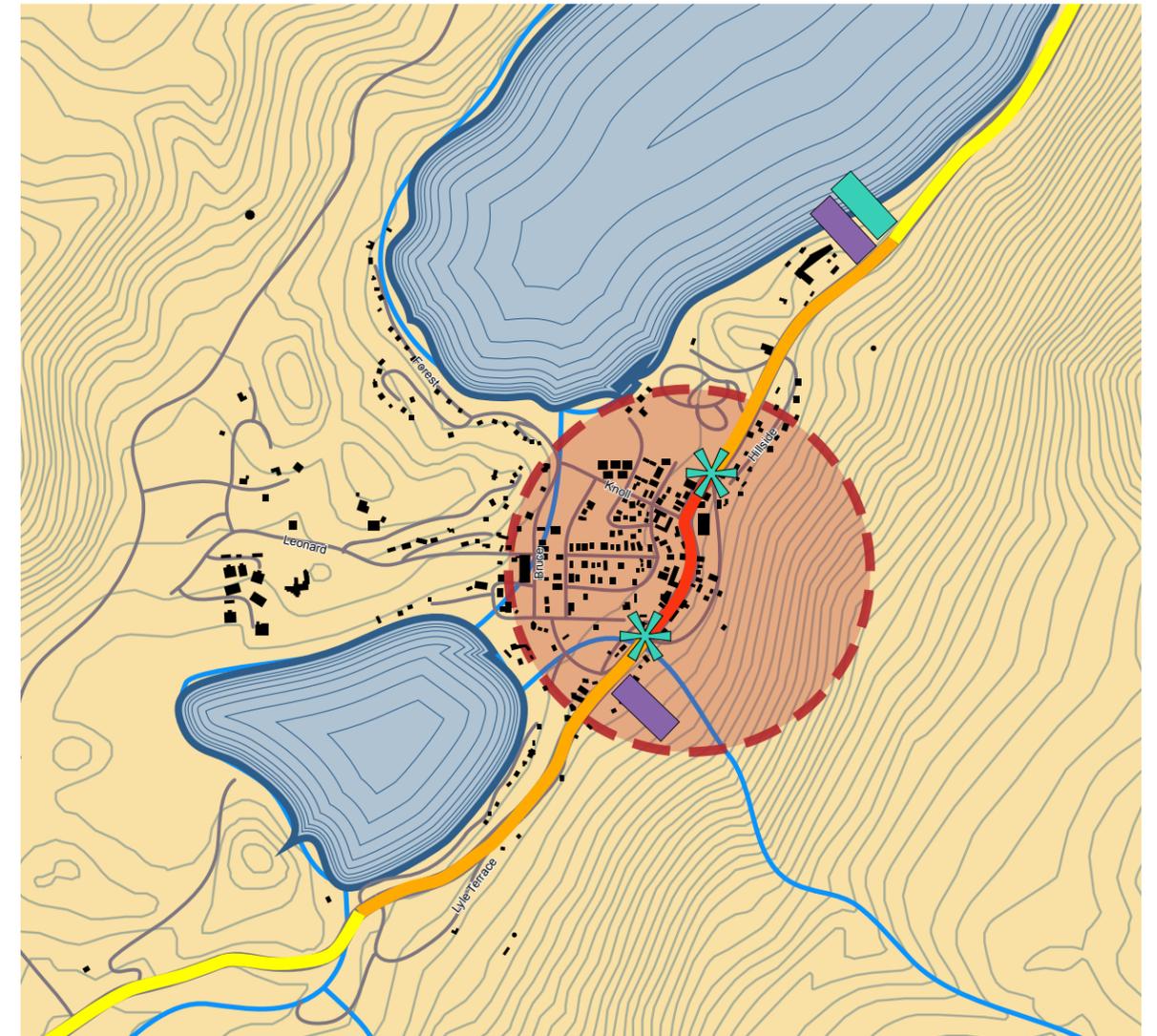
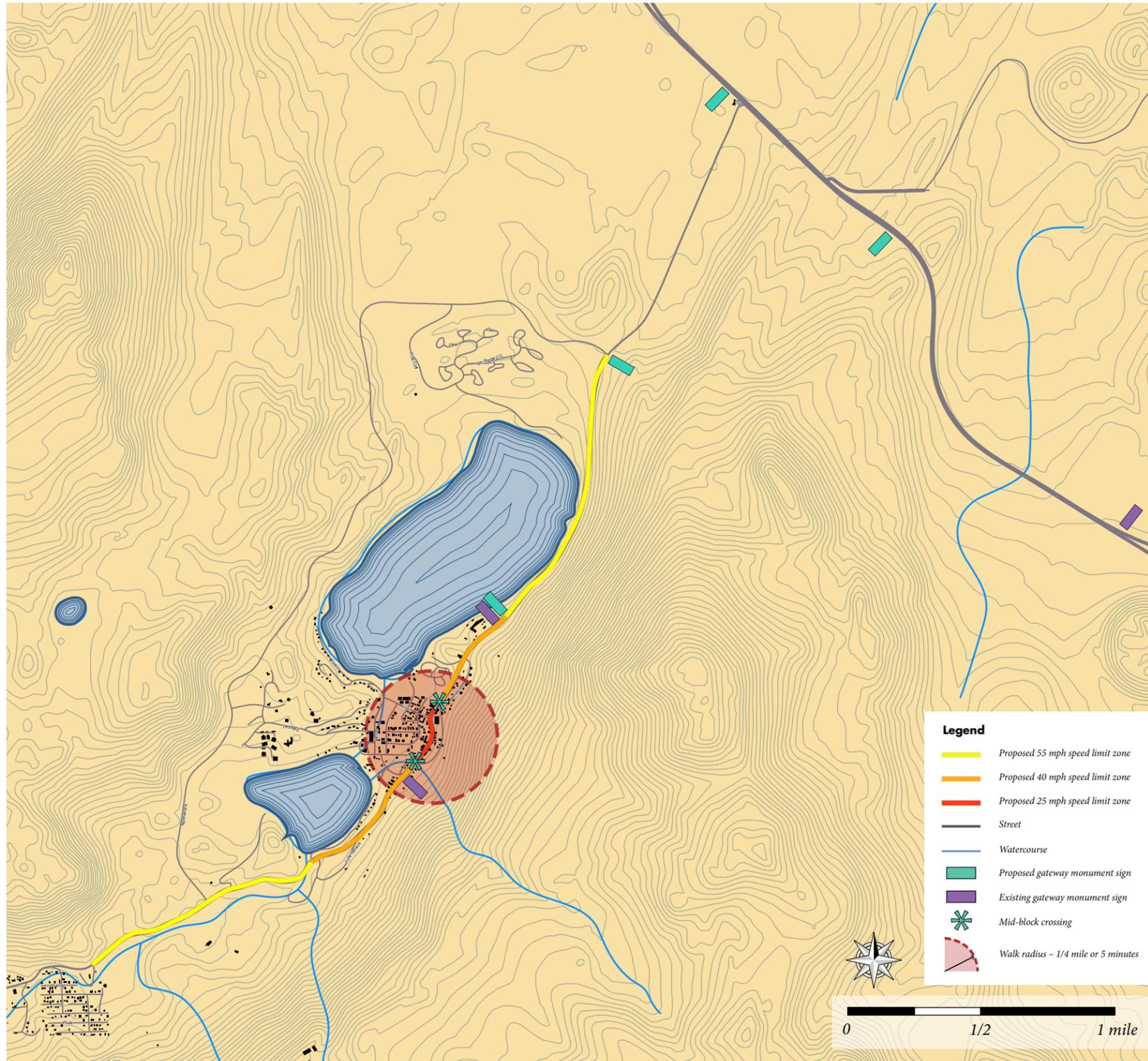
Monument sign two-miles from HWY 158 turn-off



Human-scaled street section

June Lake

Context Zone Map



Currently, monument signs announcing Highway 158 and June Lake are two miles from the turn-off. This is too far for visitors to remember or correlate the signs to the intersection, leaving the junction to seem unannounced. New gateway signage should be moved closer to the intersection of 395 and 158, about one mile from the turn for those heading northwest, and even closer for travelers headed southeast. An additional monument sign should be placed along Highway 158 to assure visitors of their nearby destination.

A gateway sign should be added on the westside, for visitors coming from the Canyon. These gateway signs will alert drivers that they have entered a new context zone, and should reduce their speed. In town, a mid-block crossing at either edge of the commercial core would act as another physical cue to drivers that they should behave appropriately for a pedestrian-oriented zone.

In June Lake, the boulder already is a natural and unique gateway into the village; signage around the boulder should be reduced and/or consolidated to reduce visual clutter.

June Lake: Private Realm Improvements

Terrace



A short but deep terrace provides public space and flower boxes.



Terraces are useful where there is topography because of their ability to elegantly solve a difference in elevation.



A terrace in Lee Vining provides public space and space for landscaping.

Landscaping



A small space between two businesses in June Lake is reclaimed with a low wall bench and landscaping.



Wooden flower pots add color to the streetscape, and take eyes off a large parking lot.



In McGee Creek, space between the sidewalk and porch is landscaped and trimmed with river rock.

Murals on Retaining Walls



An empty wall in Exeter, California becomes the focal point of a community park.



An eye sore becomes an opportunity for local art as a mural helps to mask a power plant's walled yard.



An empty canvas in June Lake could become a real focal point along Highway 158.

June Lake: Public Realm Improvements



Short-term improvements to the Highway 158 turn-off and The Junction



Long-term improvements to the Highway 158 turn-off and The Junction



Public Realm Improvements

A Highway 158 Turnoff

Short Term: Tighten and beautify the entrance to The Junction's parking lot by adding landscaping and a monument sign to attract drivers to June Lake.

Long Term: Improve the intersection of Highways 395 and 158 by removing the free right-turn; this will improve safety entering The Junction's parking.

B Gateway signage on Highway 158

Place gateway signage for June Lake shortly after the Highway 158 turn-off to reassure drivers of their desired destination.

C Oh! Ridge Improvements (not pictured)

Clean up the Oh! Ridge overlook, including trimming treetops that have grown to impede the views of June Lake.

D Boulder and Trail Parking

Short Term: Consolidate the various Caltrans signage that clutters the Boulder.

Long Term: Consider ways to make the Boulder a more picturesque (and safe) photo-op; may include minor improvements such as pavers, landscaping, or small informational signage about the Boulder's geology. Likewise, formalize the trailhead across the street; a parking lot could provide a place for tourists to stop and explore.

E East Gateway into Village

Where Lakeview Drive and Highway 158 intersect, create a monument to act as an additional gateway into the Village, signaling to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian zone. The monument could be an additional gateway sign, or a tree to be used for winter festivities.

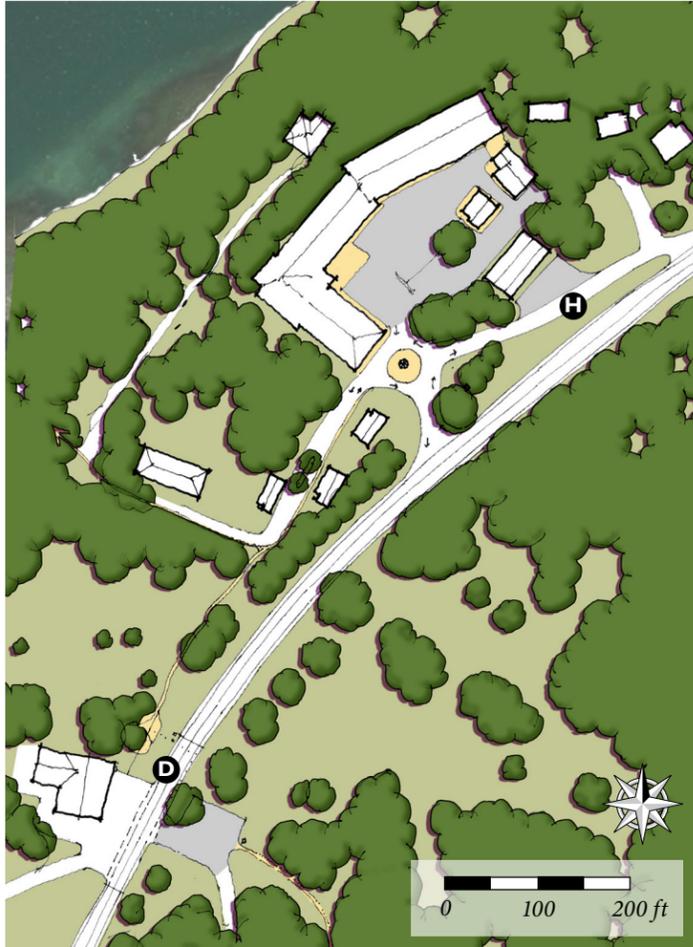
F West Gateway into Village

Add a monument sign to signal to drivers that they are entering the Village and should slow down; visitors arriving from the Canyon will have a sense of arrival.

G Stripe Lakefront Access Routes

Stripe a shared vehicular lane with bike lanes to promote multimodal access to June and Gull Lakes.

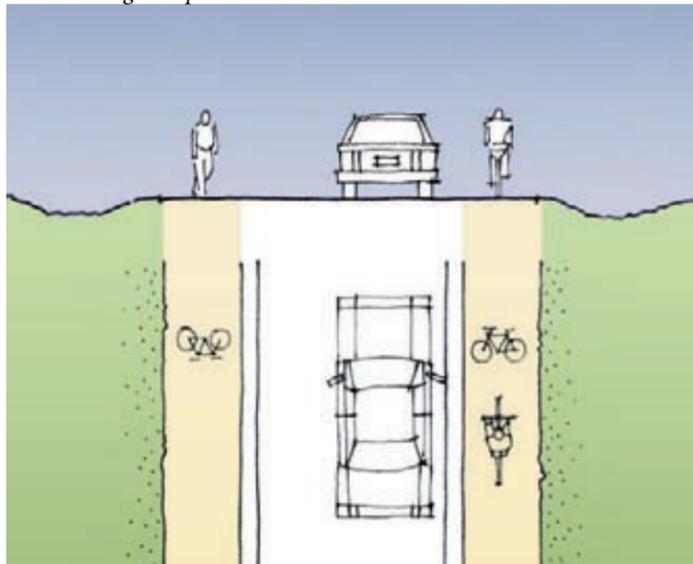
June Lake: Public Realm Improvements (continued)



Short-term improvements to the Boulder Lodge frontage; parking for those wishing to explore the Boulder



Long-term improvements to the Boulder Lodge



Singular shared vehicular lane with bike lanes in either direction

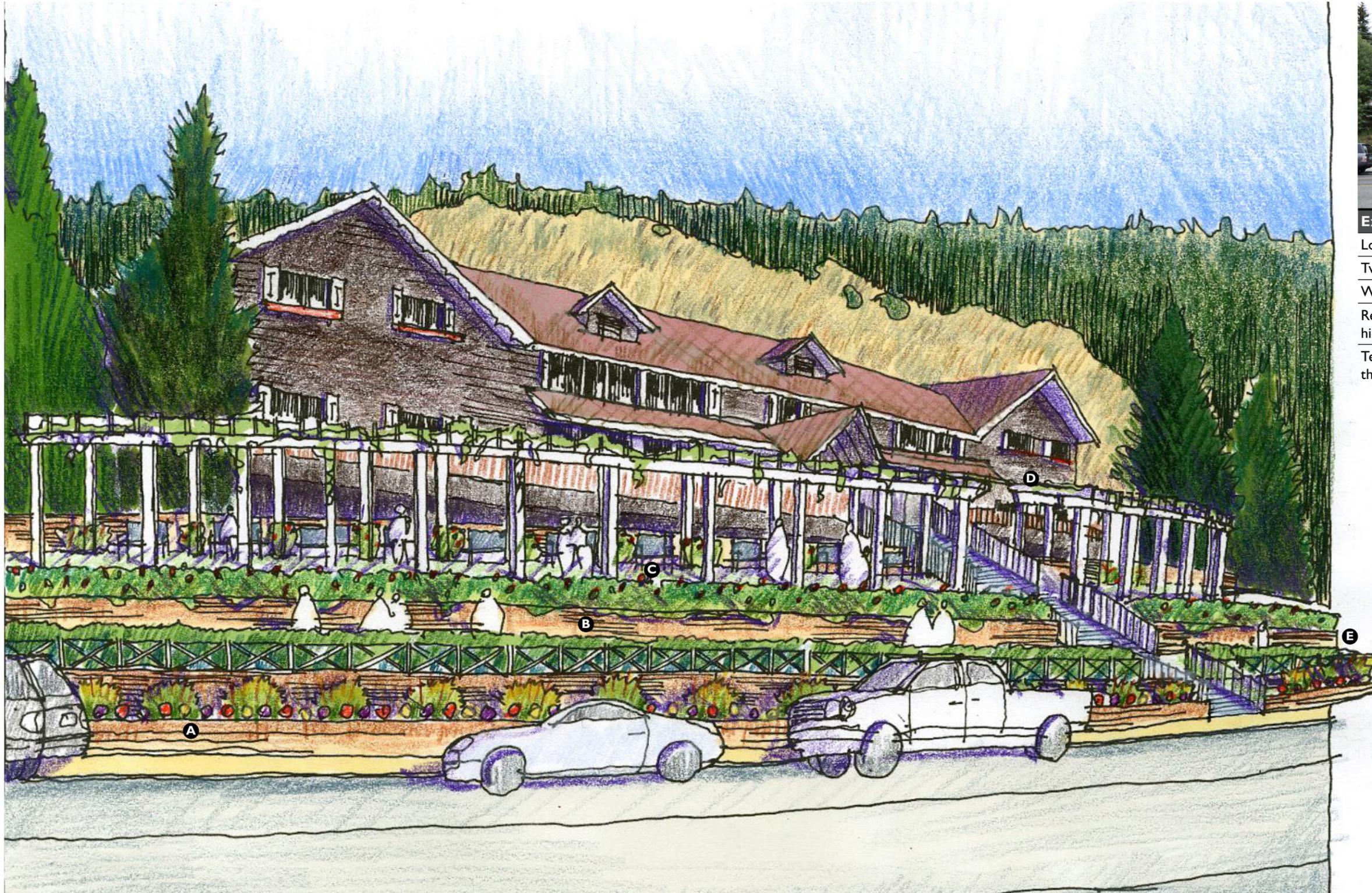
Public Realm Improvements

- D Boulder and Trail Parking**
(See previous page for description)
- E East Gateway into Village**
(See previous page for description)
- G Stripe Lakefront Access**
(See previous page for description)

Private Realm Improvements

- H Boulder Lodge Improvements and Roadside Cafe**
Short term: Transform the existing asphalt into a drive with landscaping at the Highway.
Long term: Add a porch to the units along Highway 158. Consider converting one of the units into a café.
- I Shared Parking Lot**
Behind the buildings along Highway 158, unused land can become a shared parking lot for the businesses along 158 and Crawford Ave. This will encourage drivers to patronize multiple businesses.
- J Frontage Improvements**
Various improvements to frontages along 158 would enhance the pedestrian experience in June Lake, including landscaping and terracing.

Building Frontage Improvements: Example 3



- Example 3**
- Low wall with landscaping at the sidewalk **(A)**
 - Two-tier terrace provides semi-public space **(B)**
 - Wood loggia with rose garden **(C)**
 - Remove foliage that obstructs views to the historic Heidelberg Inn **(D)**
 - Terracing continues along the street frontage that is beyond the Heidelberg Inn **(E)**

Building Frontage Improvements: Example 4



- Example 4**
- Landscaping at HWY 158 A
 - Slip lane with diagonal and parallel parking B
 - Landscaped driveway to main office C
 - Local path to other hotel units D
 - Renovated roof with dormers allowing more light to enter hotel units E
 - Porch protects room entrances from the elements, especially heavy snowfall F
 - Future uses could incorporate a cafe at HWY 158 in an end unit, with a wrap-around porch and views to the Lake G

Mammoth Lakes: Character Inventory

Building Character



Stone base with ganged windows; subtle color palette



New construction



White-washed base with dark wood siding

Frontage Character



Recessed entry



Stoop of Heavy timber construction



Outdoor seating at the Village

Signage Character



New gateway sign



Informational signage at Twin Lakes



Monument sign at airport

Public Realm and Open Space



Twin Lakes



Mammoth Creek Park



Hiking trail

Mammoth Lakes

Context Zone Map



The community of Mammoth Lakes has developed a robust signage and wayfinding program, including new gateway signage at Sierra Park Road. Along Highway 395, the signage announcing the turn-off for Highway 203 is one-mile from the turn-off to the north, and three-quarters mile to the south; the sign to the south should be moved to also announce the turn-off for Mammoth Lakes one-mile in advance.

The existing signage should be replaced when the County develops the branding for the National Scenic Byway, to unite Mammoth Lakes to the other communities along the corridor.

Surrounding the Mammoth Lakes airport, the signage is sparse, both to signal to drivers of their exit, and the signage directing newly arrived visitors which direction to drive toward Mammoth and nearby amenities. An effort should be made to design wayfinding signage that will use the same branding efforts as the gateway signage along 395.

Crowley Lake & Long Valley: Character Inventory

Building Character



Wood siding and tree trunks for columns

Frontage Character



Wood fence and sagebrush

Signage Character



Metal sculpture is gateway signage

Public Realm and Open Space



View toward McGee Mountain



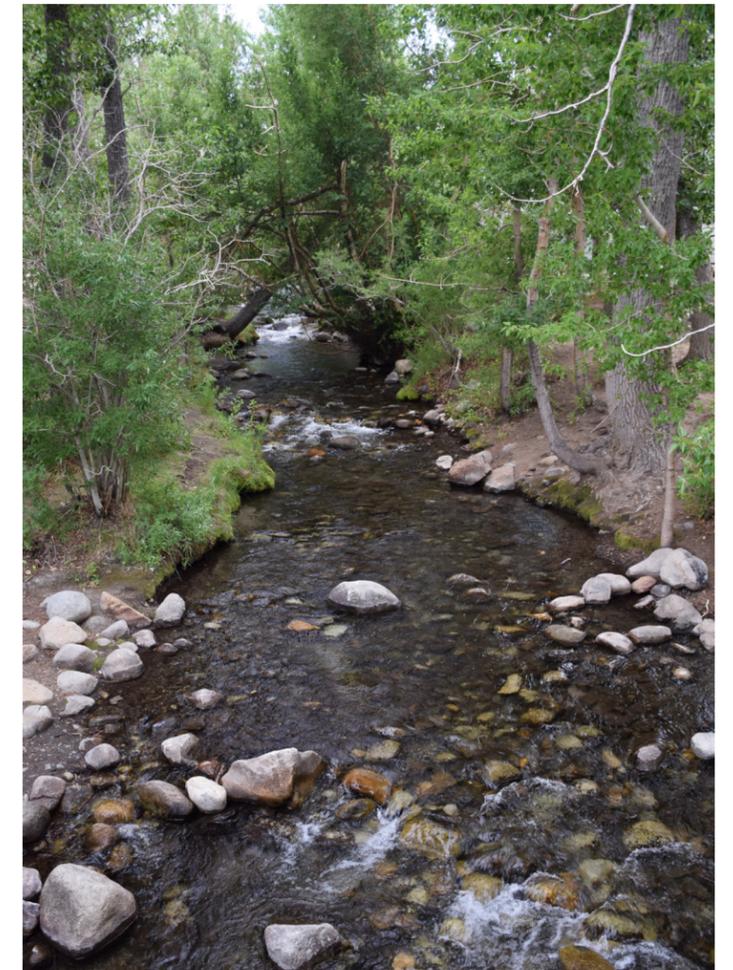
Stucco with heavy wood detailing



Porch with wine barrel flower pots



Historic wagon incorporates signage



McGee Creek



Storefront with parapet and canopy



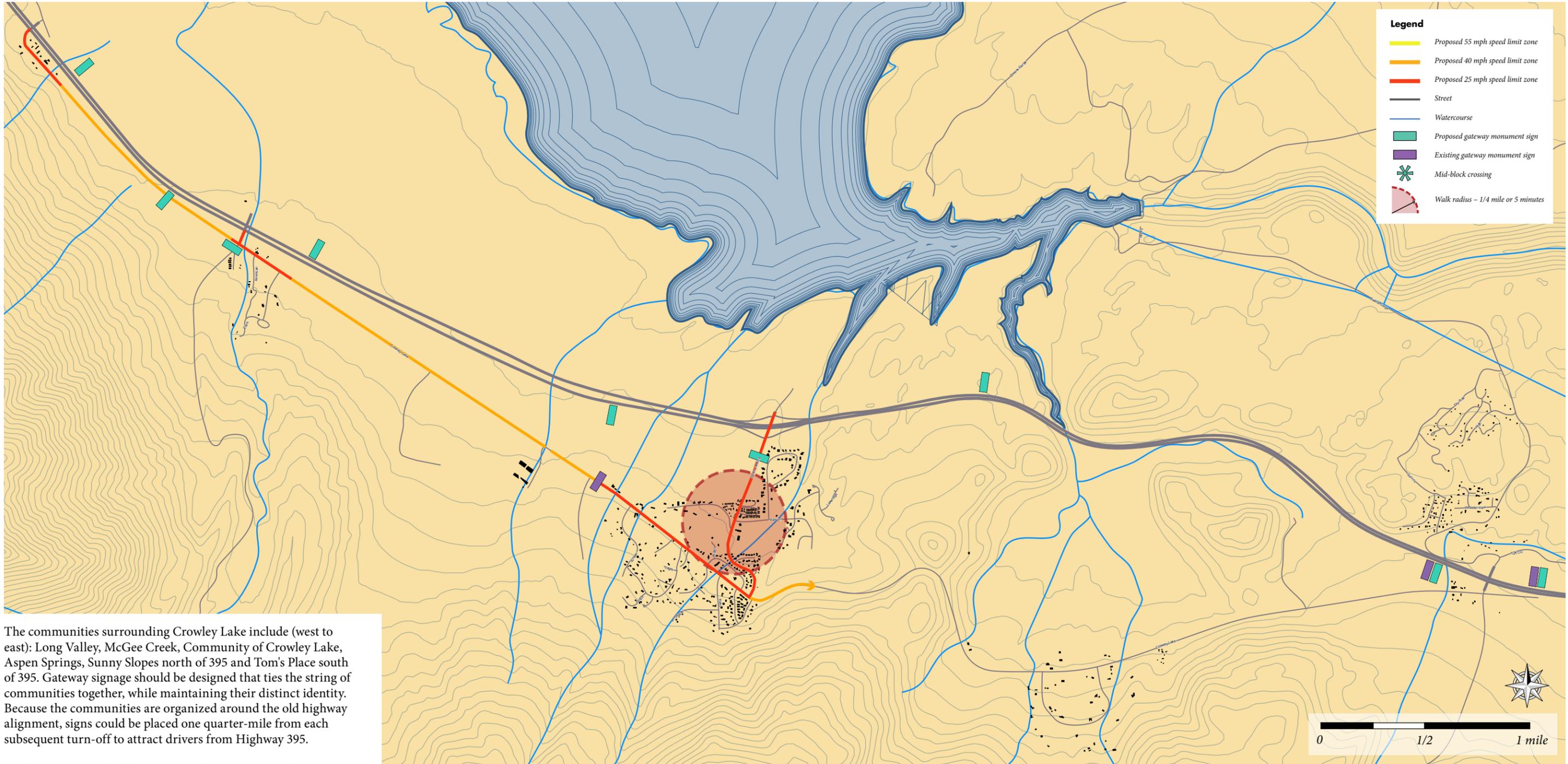
Porch with outdoor seating



Wood monument sign

Crowley Lake & Long Valley

Context Zone Map



The communities surrounding Crowley Lake include (west to east): Long Valley, McGee Creek, Community of Crowley Lake, Aspen Springs, Sunny Slopes north of 395 and Tom's Place south of 395. Gateway signage should be designed that ties the string of communities together, while maintaining their distinct identity. Because the communities are organized around the old highway alignment, signs could be placed one quarter-mile from each subsequent turn-off to attract drivers from Highway 395.

Each community should exist as a pedestrian-oriented context zone, with a 25 mph speed limit; corridor connecting the communities would reach a speed of 40 mph.



Gateway Signage and Corridor Branding

Highway 395 Corridor Branding

Scenic Byway Branding and Signage

Criteria for Designation

The National Scenic Byways Program sets forth criteria for the designation of roads as National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads based on their scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural intrinsic qualities. Highways must significantly meet at least one of the six intrinsic qualities; those meeting criteria for at least two of the intrinsic qualities may be designated as an All-American Road. A summary of these intrinsic qualities is provided below, copied from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s interim policy:

- 1. Scenic Quality** is the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and manmade elements of the visual environment of the scenic byway corridor. The characteristics of the landscape are strikingly distinct and offer a pleasing and most memorable visual experience. All elements of the landscape—landform, water, vegetation, and manmade development—contribute to the quality of the corridor's visual environment. Everything present is in harmony and shares in the intrinsic qualities.
- 2. Natural Quality** applies to those features in the visual environment that are in a relatively undisturbed state. These features predate the arrival of human populations and may include geological formations, fossils, landform, water bodies, vegetation, and wildlife. There may be evidence of human activity, but the natural features reveal minimal disturbances.
- 3. Historic Quality** encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past. The historic elements reflect the actions of people and may include buildings, settlement patterns, and other examples of human activity. Historic features can be inventoried, mapped, and interpreted. They possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association.
- 4. Cultural Quality** is evidence and expressions of the customs or traditions of a distinct group of people. Cultural features including, but not limited to, crafts, music, dance, rituals, festivals, speech, food, special events, vernacular architecture, etc., are currently practiced. The cultural qualities of the corridor could highlight one or more significant communities and/or ethnic traditions.
- 5. Archeological Quality** involves those characteristics of the scenic byways corridor that are physical evidence of historic or prehistoric human life or activity that are visible and capable of being inventoried and interpreted. The scenic byway corridor's archeological interest, as identified through ruins, artifacts, structural remains, and other physical evidence have scientific significance that educate the viewer and stir an appreciation for the past.
- 6. Recreational Quality** involves outdoor recreational activities directly association with and dependent upon the natural and cultural elements of the corridor's landscape. The recreational activities provide opportunities for active and passive recreational experiences. They include, but are not limited to, downhill skiing, rafting, boating, fishing, and hiking. Driving the road itself may qualify as a pleasurable recreational experience. The recreational activities may be seasonal, but the quality and importance of the recreational activities as seasonal operations must be well recognized.

Scenic Byway Characteristics of Highway 395 Communities					
Walker and Coleville	Bridgeport	Lee Vining	June Lake	Mammoth Lakes	Crowley Lake
					
					
Physical or Iconic Characteristics					
White Wood Bridge	Historic Courthouse	Mono Lake	Alpine Lakes	Mountain range, Lava Domes	Long Valley Caldera
Canyon/Cliff walls	Contiguous main street	Tufa	Boulder	Skiing, Culture	Crowley Lake and fishing
West Walker River in Antelope valley	Grazing land in Bridgeport Valley	Connection to Yosemite Nat'l Park	Oh! Ridge	Ski resort / 'Village'	
Effect of fire on landscape	Fishing, Hot Springs	Long Vistas	Mountain and skiing, Fishing	Twin Lakes	
Sagebrush, Cottonwood	Twin Lakes Recreation		Old resort town/ European Mountain Village	Coniferous, Bristlecone	
Working landscapes - Ranching	Bodie ghost town		Pedestrian Scale	Granite	
River Rock	Sandstone		Granite		
Descriptive Adjectives					
Self-sufficient/ "Western"	Historic	Cosmopolitan, International	Quaint/Charming, Nordic	Destination	Rural villages
Authentic, Roadside	Roadside		Hidden gem	Modern	Rustic
Wood, Neon	Painted Wood, Neon				
Primary Intrinsic Quality*					
Scenic	Historic	Scenic	Recreational/Scenic	Recreational/Scenic	Scenic/Natural

*The six intrinsic qualities of a National Scenic Byway are: (1) Scenic, (2) Natural, (3) Historic, (4) Cultural, (5) Archeological, (6) Recreational.

Highway 395 Corridor Branding (continued)

Translating Intrinsic Qualities into a Brand

Highway 395 can clearly meet the criteria for a number of intrinsic qualities listed above. The Corridor Management Plan, a required component of the program, will need to assess and discuss the intrinsic qualities and their context, and lay out a plan to conserve and enhance these qualities and promote tourism and economic development.

This document provides an initial assessment of the highway's intrinsic qualities in order to establish some preliminary direction for the CMP. In many ways the County will need to conduct a "branding" exercise to best communicate the special quality of Highway 395 and share it with others.

While past documents, such as the *Mono County Highway 395 Visual Resource Assessment* (1998) have documented scenic resources in between communities along the highway, the table on the preceding page lists some of the key defining characteristics with particular attention to the communities and their immediate environs. The information listed includes items identified by community members during the process as well as those documented by the design team. The goal is to identify what should be celebrated and preserved, as well as what items might need improvement if they are to become part of the corridor "story."

While this document and the table focus on the communities along the corridor, the County should consider how the corridor is organized and defined by its geographical/geological, scenic, recreational, and historic frameworks, and to what extent the "story" extends and connects to destinations off of the primary corridor, such as the June Lake Loop (Highway 158), Mammoth Lakes (Highway 203), and Crowley Lake Drive (Old Highway 395). Questions include: what is the overall organization of the corridor? Should the corridor be considered as a linear "string of pearls" or as a varied "fish's skeleton" of attributes?

Visual branding should also be considered. New signage and wayfinding elements, for example, could provide some visual components that can help to visually unify the corridor while providing much-needed wayfinding and identification of context. These could include repetitive graphic elements, color palettes, materials, etc. A signage program could be highly unified with little variance – bringing the whole corridor into a unified experience. Signage could be also be a set of diverse signs, with a controlled set of similar elements to tie the brand together (font, color, material, etc) – allowing an eclectic group of places to operate with a more common language.

Precedent for a Uniform Identity:

Golden Gate National Recreation Areas



Photo credit: www.sftourismtips.com



Photo credit: www.fortwiki.com



Photo credit: www.sanfranciscodays.com

The Golden Gate National Recreation Area signage uses the same steel sign with different support materials to express the variety of places within the GGNRA.

Iowa's National and State Scenic Byways



Photo credit: www.iowadot.gov

The State of Iowa has unified all of their scenic byways under one brand, giving a strong identity to the varied locations and themes of each corridor. Notice the same sign shape, material, typefont. Only the identifying image is unique from place to place.

Precedent for Unique/Diverse Identity:

National Scenic Byway Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and North Carolina



Photo credit: wayfindersnotebook.blogspot.com; www.blueridgeparkway.org



Photo credit: www.bbsci.com

Photo credit: www.nps.gov



Photo credit: gonehikin.blogspot.com; www.takemytrip.com

In contrast, the Blue Ridge Parkway has a variety of signs along the corridor, with little unifying them into a strong iconic brand. No single element is the same across the board: no sign is the same shape; a majority use wood; monument signs use navy and gray, with the same typefont wayfinding signs use brown with similar font; half use the corridor icon.

Gateway Signage Design Concepts

Uniform Identity between Communities

Depending on how the County wants to brand Highway 395, gateway signage between communities could unify the corridor with signs that are the same shape, materials, and typefont, and with a small icon or image that gives identity to unique stops along the corridor.

Unique Identity between Communities

If the County wants to accentuate the diverse communities that make up, and add to, the experience of Highway 395, they could use a few unifying elements, while allowing the communities to each express their sense of place. The conceptual sketches below use abstracted geographic or architectural icons associated with each community as the anchor of an identical sign. While unique, the signs are unified by the use of three materials: stone, river rock, and wood.

