

SAN JOSE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Signage Design Guidelines

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Introduction

Since 2000, San José Public Library (SJPL) has been transforming the way it serves its community by creating buildings and services that are intuitive for customers and emphasize self-sufficiency. A key element has been incorporating library design and layout with a successful package of signage standards and guidelines. This package is presented to architects and interior designers to create environments that are consistent from one branch to another, facilitate intuitive wayfinding, and provide attractive landmarks in helping customers navigate through the buildings.

In 2006 the Silicon Valley Library System (SVLS) and SJPL participated in an LSTA-funded project in which EnviroSell, a national marketing firm, reviewed wayfinding in branches and how customers find their way through a branch and get the information they came for. The grant found that the major branded signs and key signage was very effective, but customers needed more help in finding information about library events and services, actual shelf locations of materials, and specific areas of a branch.

As a follow up to the previous study, SVLS and SJPL participated in a second LSTA funded project that explored new ways to inform customers about library events, programs and services, and improve navigation to materials in collection ranges.

What we discovered:

- Less is more
- Keep it concise for reading while moving
- Keep in-depth signage in wait areas only
- Merchandise materials face out to minimize signage need
- Pictures and graphics speak volumes
- Have consistent use of signage hierarchy
- Language translation is not critical with Primary signage
- Have a recognized “look and feel”
- Staff training to incorporate new principles into practice

This document will provide further explanation of each point in Signage Guidelines, the challenges we all face and the best practices SJPL has found through trial and assessment. The following information will show SJPL’s best practices that have been learned, tried and evaluated.

Self-sufficient wayfinding systems are critical for 40% of new visitors.

Any signage program whether for a new building or a remodel should follow these basic principles of design and purpose:

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1. Wayfinding: how intuitively people move from the entrance and through the building;
 2. Branding: highlighting certain areas within a building to give them a greater identity, especially useful if you are working on a multi-building program;
 3. Primary signage: larger and key signs identifying major areas of a building;
 4. Secondary signage: smaller signs identifying more specific parts of a building
 5. Tertiary signage: less significant signage, such as those identifying restrooms, storage rooms, or legally required signage;
 6. Collateral: temporary signage, flyers, etc that are used to identify special programming, events, or collections or library giveaways;
 7. Technology: use of computers screens, flat-screen monitors, and other technology to direct or offer information to library customers.

All of these will be further discussed below.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is a comprehensive system of signs, space planning, landmarks, art, color, flooring design, lighting, and other architectural elements that assist visitors in self-navigating through an environment. These components, which also shape the idea of place and communicate identity, are referred to as Environmental Graphics.

Wayfinding should be an intuitive experience for customers, allowing them to freely explore the environment while providing information and direction where appropriate.

Signage is part of an environment's wayfinding system. Signage must work in tandem with all the other wayfinding elements by integrating the sign and graphic elements into the architectural and interior design of each library. When integrating a new signage system into an existing facility the following must be taken into account:



- Total signage package must flow from zone to zone seamlessly

- There must be consistent treatment within each zone regarding the overall principles for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary signage

- If implementing a signage package in stages, install all the Primary signage throughout the library, then all the Secondary signage. Refrain from installing your signage zone by zone.

Customers intuitively understand physical spaces designed to focus on one customer group, such as children under the age of 12, or teens, language learners, or the 10-minute visitor. Present the information they need for moving in these spaces to enhance their library experience. These guidelines provide designed signage systems that advance and organize these area experiences such as Marketplace, Children's Area, or Living Room.

Experience = ENVIRONMENT (BRANDED INTERIOR SPACES) + SERVICE (LIBRARY)

Branding

Branding is the process of giving an area a personality or image that a customer is consistently drawn to. Branded elements used consistently in all levels of a signage system, throughout all library facilities in a multi-branch library system, help customers know what to expect when entering any of the libraries.



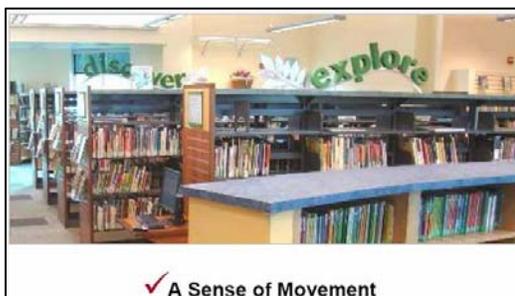
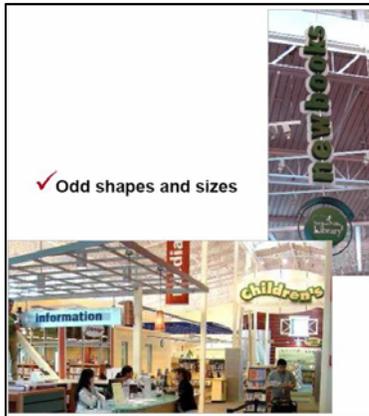
Signage Program

The signage program provides written directions, information, or precautionary messages in a clear and concise graphic manner. The program should include all signage elements, including donor and art elements, where they should be located, and what messages they should indicate or use to inform the visitor.

A goal of an effective program is to eliminate all extraneous signage throughout the facility. Developing a hierarchy for signage based on the informational needs of customers will provide better self-navigating spaces for the user.

Signage Principles

A Signage Program must be based on signage principles that are adhered to at design and implementation, and for future changes and replacements. All principles should be aimed at helping customers intuitively self-navigate through the library.



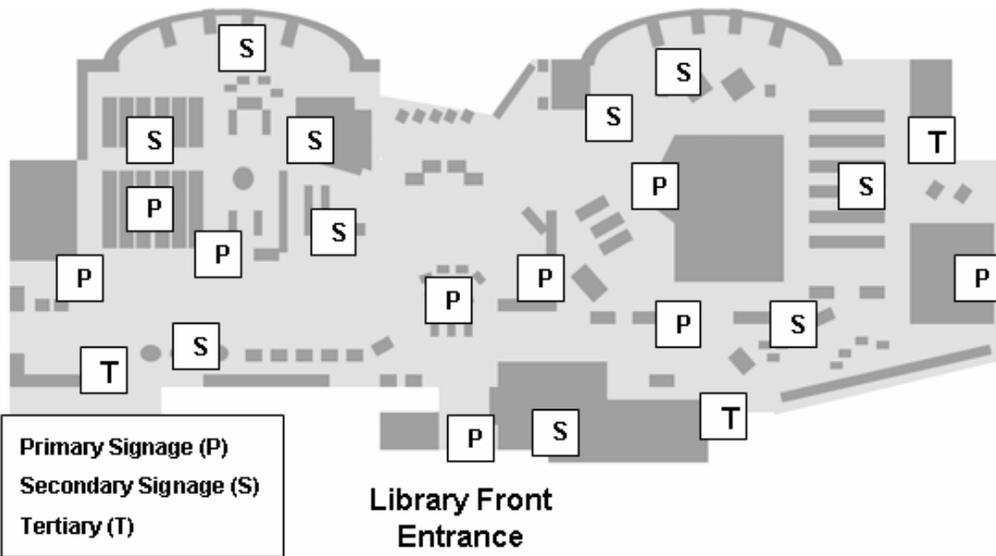
Create a Signage Hierarchy

Primary signs direct the customer to the basic or major areas of the library. These areas often serve major customer groups as designated “P” in the image below.

Secondary signs in each of those sections like End of Range signs are noted “S” below. Sign scale and information should be reflective of signage importance.

Tertiary signs, such as utility or ADA designation for room use, are placed minimally and are noted with “T” below.

Collateral signs, such as program flyers, calendars, and brochures, are often categorized as Secondary signs and are temporary in nature. They are often made available for take home within these environments.



Signage Principles in Action

Introduction

These guiding principles will articulate the various challenges there are when selecting a customer-driven signage system. As customer needs change in time, the necessity for flexible modification of existing signage must be folded in as well.

Be Consistent with Nomenclature

Names for departments, destinations, and collections should always be consistent on signage and graphic elements both within a building and between buildings in the same library system, e.g. consistently using “Teens” rather than “Young Adult” in some places and “Teens” in others.

Less is More

Customers will not pay attention to too many messages in one area or signs that take too long to read, or require too much time to understand. Be concise! Instead of 20 program flyers, choose 3 to highlight today or this week. Place them in areas the target market frequents.

Be Consistent

Sign types handled in a consistent manner throughout a facility or system allow visitors to trust the information they are presented with and better predict where the next piece of information will be located. Visitors feel more secure and comfortable in an environment that offers some predictability, e.g. the Library Directory is placed within 10 feet of the entrance, an intuitive placement of a building directory.

Ensure Signs are Easy to Read While Moving

Use clean fonts and short messages, e.g. easy to scan end of range signs. Customers are able to scan the ends of range signage when walking through an area.

Keep Signs Along Customer Sightlines

Signs should appear “naturally” in your viewers’ sightlines, rather than having to search for them. Customers are intuitively given important finding cues.

In-depth Signage in Wait Areas

Placing the 24” X 36” Monthly Event Calendar in a wait area, such as by the Checkout, gives customers an opportunity to focus on learning about library events. An 8.5” X 11” version is available for customers to take with them.

Merchandise Materials Face-Out

Place popular library materials face-out to help customers find the section and materials that they are seeking. Material covers are a more user-friendly navigational tool than end-of-range signs, and add to the customer experience.

Use Odd Shapes and Sizes

Catch attention using this type of signage as the eye quickly scans the environment for cues. Odd shapes and sizes tend to stand out.

Convey a Sense of Movement

Simple perceived movement invites curiosity and fun. Three dimensional lettering is effective for this type of signage.

Signage should be placed so that users see an appropriate sign at the moment they are in need of further wayfinding information.

Basic Signage Program at San José Public Library

General Spaces

Example signage shown for non branded spaces within a library

WINDOW INSERT HOLDER

This is an entrance window mounted letter size sign holder that can be viewed from both sides. It is for the OPEN hours.



OPEN NEON SIGN

This neon sign is located at or near the entrance where it can easily be seen either from the parking lot or by a passing motorist.

OPEN

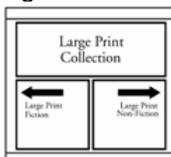
BANNERS

These signs identify major adult collections: Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Languages in branches with high ceilings.



END OF RANGE INSERT HOLDER

This is a staff changeable sign that identifies collection information for each range. An insert with the needed text is made on a transparency so that the background color of the sign shows through.



INSERT HOLDER GROUP

Cluster window mounted sign holders into blocks of 3 to 6 depending on window space. Each 8.5" x 11" holder displays flyers back to back. Library staff displays changeable information for visitors. This is located at the entrance to the Library and viewable from the interior and exterior of building for after hours viewing. The ideal configuration is 3 over 3; however, this can vary depending on the size of the glazing.



INFORMATION SIGN 16" X 36"

Select double-sided or single-sided depending on customer flow in the service area. Horizontal or vertical treatment may also be considered to enhance the service point layout and the overall interior building design. The sign is pole mounted with or without internal illumination LEDs.



FLAT SCREEN MONITOR SIGN

This monitor is mounted within 10 feet of entry. Placed within a high traffic area and providing a looped slide show catches the visitor passing through at a quick pace.



Marketplace Area

Example signage shown for a branded space within a library.

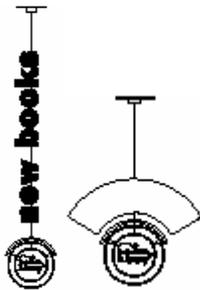
INTERNET CAFE

This is a combination of brushed aluminum and NEON.



NEW BOOKS SIGN

This sign hangs in the middle of the Marketplace.



MARKETPLACE GONDOLA SIGN

This sign is placed on top of each gondola or group of gondolas in the marketplace. It differs from the other gondola sign type by the longer, more elegant base.



DIRECTORY AND CALENDAR

Select double-sided or single-sided slatwall stands that hold a poster-sized directory of the customer floor and poster-sized calendar of events. Place in high traffic area near or at entry.



Children's Area

Example signage shown for a branded space within a library.

CHILDREN'S

This sign "brands" the entrance to the Children's Area. The designer will use this signage as part of an exciting "gateway." Providing lighting to illuminate from within may be necessary.



FAMILY PLACE

This sign identifies the Family Place section of the Children's Area.



STORY TIME

If needed, this sign identifies the story-telling area.



DISCOVER & EXPLORE

These are dimensional letters mounted on top of the Children's 66" high ranges. These are not wayfinding signs but are experiential.



Teens Area

Example signage shown for a branded space within a library

TEENS

This sign can be airbrushed with multi-colors to identify the Teen Room. The sign combines experiential with informational.



Exterior

LIBRARY

These are large dimensional letters placed above the Front entrance to identify the building and “brand” the building as a San Jose Branch Library.



REGULATION SIGNAGE

These are small Tertiary signs placed where appropriate.



Color & Materials Palette

A well designed color and materials palette is critical to self-navigation because it enhances customer-focused spaces and gives a “look and feel” to the library. The color and materials palette for the signage and graphic elements is derived from the colors and materials chosen for the interiors from the Standard and Branded color palettes developed by your interior designer.

For the purposes of signage, a small, medium or large library can be divided into Standard and Branded Spaces, as shown below. Signage in standard spaces differs from signage in branded spaces. Further, signage also differs between branded spaces. (For example: signs in the Marketplace are different from signs in the Children's Area.)

When choosing colors and materials, carefully consider the proximity of branded spaces and standard spaces and how the signage in the branded spaces integrates with the signage in the standard spaces.

Standard Spaces

- General Library

- Library Entrance and Lobby

- Program Rooms

- Adult Area

- Non-Public Areas

- Exterior

Branded Spaces

- Marketplace and New Books Area

- Children's Area

- Teen Area

Standard Spaces

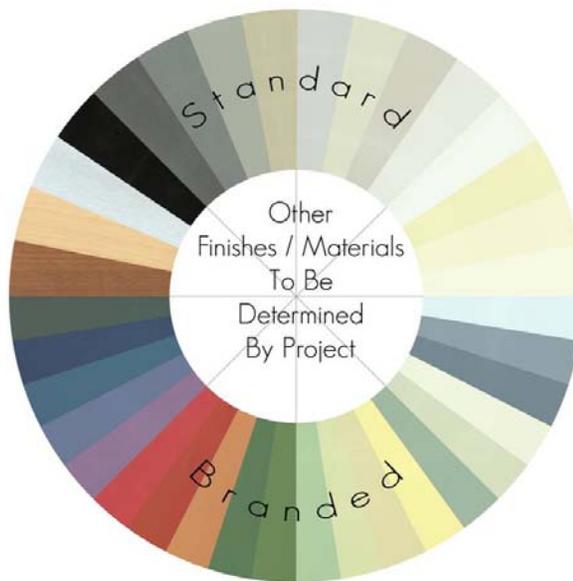
Color: Based on the dominant color way chosen, each standard space has one standard dark color and one standard light color. These two colors will be repeated on the majority of the signs in the standard spaces.

Materials: Based on the dominant material selections for the standard spaces, signs are made out of two standard materials. In San José, there is a standard metal and a standard wood. These materials will repeat on the signs, in both the standard and branded spaces.

Branded Spaces

Color: Based on the dominant color way chosen for each branded space, up to eight branded colors are selected for the signage occurring in the library. The branded colors may repeat between branded spaces, but must be chosen from the branded color palette and must relate to the interior colors and finishes selected.

Materials: Use the materials selected for the standard spaces in the branded spaces.



Complete Palette
9.30.02

Please note: Color shown is a representative only and does not necessarily represent the true color of specified material.



Signage Text Colors

The text colors will be used on both standard and branded signs. Two colors should be selected; a light neutral for use on a dark background, and a dark neutral for use on a light background. It is important that the two colors provide enough contrast from their respective backgrounds for optimal readability.

The following should be kept in mind when assigning colors to the signage:

Copy Color will always be Black, since many of signs for insert holders are designed to be printed from standard library printers.

Specific finishes, coatings and other treatments of the materials and colors should be indicated in the specifications.

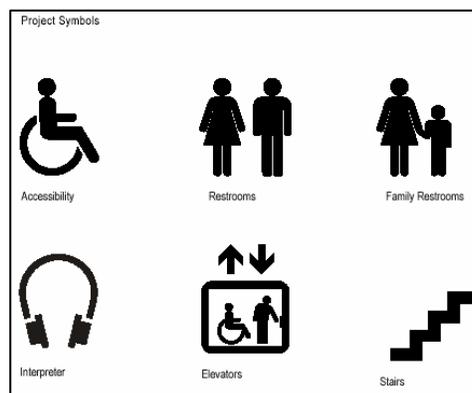
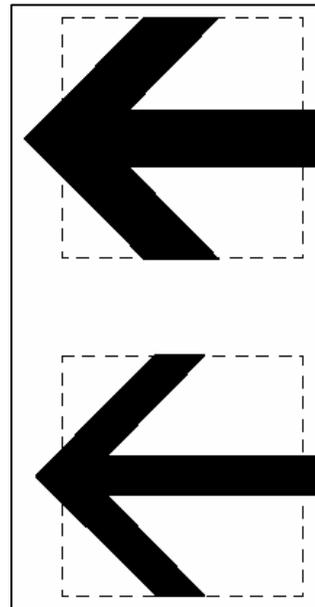
Indicate when finishes, colors and/or materials are selected to exactly match architectural or interior selections.

Typestyles, Symbols & Arrows

Signs and graphic elements in the library should use consistent typestyles, symbols and arrows. To support the Branding Concept, SJPL uses type consistently on signage in the standard spaces and with more variety on signage in the branded spaces.

Various styles within a single type family, such as condensed, bold, etc. have been used. It is not acceptable to apply these styles to a single typestyle; the entire typestyle family should be used exactly as indicated as shown in the Type Style Family below.

When using a family of graphic symbols, consistent treatment is important.



Collateral Signage Basics

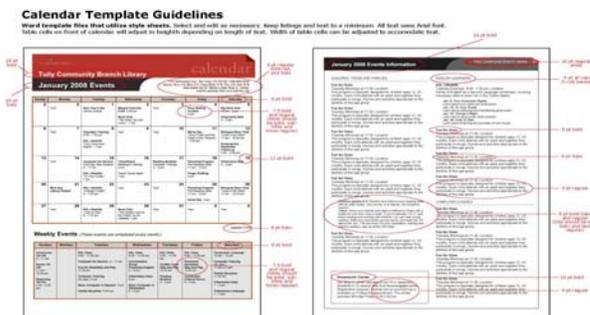
It is very easy to clutter the customer environment with a cacophony of information. These key tips focus on the most important points to remember when utilizing these tools.

When designing Collateral Signage review the facility's Branding goals. Utilize branding elements to reduce signage clutter. To test a facility's branding, develop a list of descriptors that customers want in an environment; is it current, welcoming, friendly, and high-tech? Beyond branding various other design elements give each library its own unique look and feel even when using collateral signage.

Calendar

This monthly calendar is a snapshot of all events and programs for the library. Some programs, events, or classes may not be featured in a flyer, which makes the calendar an important piece of communication. The calendar is produced as a poster-size, 24" X 36", and displayed prominently in an acrylic holder, of the same size (slatwall kiosk), stand in a "wait area" such as Check Out.

To provide take-aways for the customer, an 8.5"X11" b/w copy of the calendar is available in a brochure pocket holder below the poster-size calendar with the verso side providing a little more information. Key uses for this template provide library website, hours, and ongoing weekly events highlighted from the rest of the events listed. There is a sparseness to each entry to increase fast and easy reading.



Directory

In the spirit of the Mall directory, the library directory helps new or infrequent customers navigate quickly to their destination. Clearly organized with very little text is the aim. Be sure the directory:

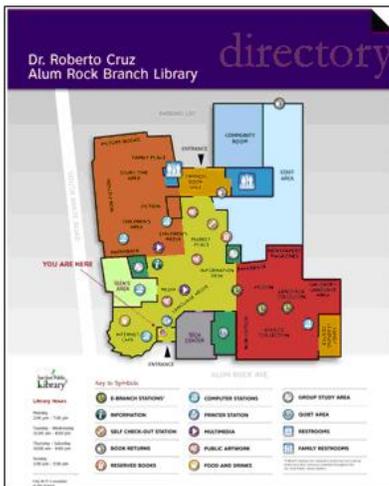
Matches the shape of the floor plan

Uses colors and popular icons to denote services

Is oriented from the front door or major entry

Shows landmarks such as the street or parking lot

To provide take-aways for the customer, a 8"X11" b/w copy of the directory may be made available in a brochure pocket holder right below the poster-size directory.



Flyers and Wall Sign Holders

Due to the variety and high volume of programs and services offered:

Choose only a handful to feature at any one time

Less is more

Flyer templates punch up the visibility

Color-code to assist with navigation between Classes, Services, or Events

Use a photo or graphic feature that uses all the space given for this pictorial highlight

Main Title section should use short, popular words to target customer groups

If a subtitle is needed keep it less than 8 words

Date and time needs to be easily understood and consistent from flyer to flyer

Description area of the flyer is not meant to “sell” the customer, but to clarify questions they may have

Keep all unnecessary information, repeat information, or lengthy background off the flyer

Keep description paragraph to four lines or less to enhance overall flyer presentation, providing target audience with a “teaser.”

The smaller text box at the bottom is used for required ADA notice.



Flat Screen Monitor

This screen presentation provides a snapshot of a highly selected set of events, classes, or services the library is offering. Seen on entry, it is displayed to help customers experience through their visual senses. Because of the location, color, and quick movement it is a key tool for communicating. The number of slides is kept to a minimum of 7 and maximum of 13. The screen is mounted high enough so as not to be blocked by passers-by, and approximately within 10 feet of entry or in the Marketplace.

The PowerPoint template has standard slide template pages found to be effective with customers. When updating a slide they are saved as jpeg files, loaded on a memory stick and placed in the DVD player to provide a “looped” viewing.

The standard 3 slides shown and that are never switched out are:

Name of the library

Hours

Website

Add to the slideshow events, classes, or services that you wish to highlight. There is a sparseness to each slide to reduce “clutter” and the timing is set for 3 to 4 seconds per slide per the recommendations in the study. The quick viewing

time is to provide a “teaser” or quick look. The goal of this secondary sign is to show movement, variety, fun highlights presented in a crisp, immediate and technological way. Not all customers will watch the whole presentation. The show is to catch them “on their way through,” to tell them about a couple things happening right now or in the near future. This slide presentation may be used in conjunction with flyers to saturate the customer’s exposure to the topic.

End of Range Signs

Usually called collection location signs, they are insert-holder signs located at the top center of metal range or millwork shelving range endcaps. The insert-holder manufacture styled maximizes flexibility for updates over time just by removing and inserting the updated copy. The Word template organizes the use of a consistent font and font size for each of the specific sections of the sign.

These guidelines have been improved through trial and error and have become SJPL’s “Best Practices”.

This template highlights broad subject types such as Fiction, Non Fiction, and Children’s Fiction, Children’s Non Fiction in the major text box at the template top.

Do not number ranges to minimize customer confusion OR Numbering ranges are seen as superfluous in searching for an item

Use arrows to designate range side OR use an arrow to indicate side designation. Using “A” or “B” compounds the level of library lingo and actually makes the information more confusing

Drop decimal and all numbering after decimal (e.g. 641 not 641.5)

Use popular language subjects (Cookbooks, not Cookery)

Clean and consistent font and font size

Place a space on either side of “— “ to improve visibility between numbers

Place a space between categories when changing large collections mid range. (Mystery (first line) (empty line) Science Fiction (third line))

Utilize merchandising of face-out collections

Monthly Event Calendar

Collapse monthly communication into a single event calendar to avoid paper clutter. Reinforce your branding, website address, and hours. Pull out ongoing weekly events and display separately as shown here at the bottom of the calendar. Additional information on events is placed on the back of the calendar.

Calendar Template Guidelines

Word template files that utilize style sheets. Select and edit as necessary. Keep listings and text to a minimum. All text uses Arial font. Table cells on front of calendar will adjust in height depending on length of text. Width of table cells can be adjusted to accommodate text.

San Jose Public Library
calendar

Tully Community Branch Library

January 2008 Events

1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose, CA 95125 • 408-808-3090
 Hours: Sun 1-5; Mon 2-7; Tues-Wed 11-8; Thu, Fri, Sat 10-6
 Also check out Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library events calendar and www.sjlibrary.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
0 Text	0 Text	1 New Year's Day Library Closed	2 Magnet Calendar Craft 3:30 pm Book Club "The Giver" by Lois Lowry - 7 am	3 Text	4 Rose Making Contest 4 pm	5 Big Book Sale 10 am - 2 pm Citizenship Q&A 3 - 5 pm
6 Text	7 Text	8 Volunteer Training 6:30 - 7:30 pm ESL Lifeskills "Your Consumer Rights" - 7 pm	9 Text	10 Text	11 Movie Day "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" - 3:30 pm	12 Bilingual Story Time "Lotus in the West" 11 am - 12:30 pm Kindergarten Readiness Follow-up 3:30 - 5:30 pm
13 Text	14 Text	15 Computer for Seniors First Day, New Session 9 - 11 am ESL Lifeskills "To Your Credit" 7 pm	16 TeensReach Meeting & Training 6 pm Teens' Social Night 7 pm	17 Reading Buddies Volunteer Training 3 - 5 pm	18 Parenting Program Pre-Reading Skills 11 am - 12 pm Finger Knitting 4 pm	19 Citizenship Q&A 3 - 5 pm
20 Text	21 MLK Day Library Closed	22 ESL Lifeskills "Change It Right" 6 - 7:30 pm	23 Text	24 Text	25 Parenting Program Pre-Reading Skills 11 am - 12 pm Game Day 4 pm	26 Bilingual Story Time "Lotus in the West" 11 am - 12:30 pm
27 Text	28 Text	29 ESL Lifeskills "Loan to Own" 6 - 7:30 pm	30 Book Club "The Distant Land of My Father" by Bo Caldwell 7 pm	31 Text	0 Text	0 Text

Updated 1/1/08

Weekly Events (These events are scheduled every month.)

Sundays	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
Advanced Tai Chi 9 - 11 am		ESL Class 8:50 - 11:50 am	ESL Class 8:30 - 11:50 am	ESL Class 8:50 - 11:50 am	ESL Class 8:50 - 11:50 am	Cambodian Language 10 am - 12 pm
Senior Tai Chi 11 am - 12:30 pm		Computer for Seniors 9 - 11 am	Conversation Group Practicing English 5 - 6 pm	Toddler Time/ Stay and Play 10:30 am	Preschool Storytime/ Stay and Play 10:30 am	Computer Tutoring (by appt.) 11 am or 2 pm
Beginning Tai Chi 2:30 - 4:30 pm		Fun for Ones/Stay and Play 11:30 am	Citizenship Class 6 pm	Reading Buddies 4 - 5 pm	Cambodian Cultural Dance 4 - 5 pm	Family Storytime 11:30 am
		Computer Tutoring (by appt.) 5 pm	Citizenship Class 6 pm			Citizenship Class 1 - 3 pm
		Basic Computer in Spanish 6 pm	Basic Computer in Vietnamese 6 - 8 pm			Vietnamese Language 1 - 3 pm
		Family Storytime 6:45 pm				

Kiosk Screen

Provide quick access to services and information by making them just a click away. Make sure default screen refreshes back to “home” and the first best step to providing self-navigation for visitors.



Working with Consultants

Whether assessing or developing a signage system for a new building or a redesign of an existing library, various challenges will present themselves. Determining the successful definition, development, specifications, fabrication, installation, and ultimate maintenance decisions will be your task. Consultants can help ease the process.

Architects & Interior Designers

Your architects and interior designers will use your signage guidelines in conjunction with your library's Building Program. These guidelines contain all of the sign types that are currently being used in the new San José Branch Libraries. However, it is expected that not all of the signs will be used in each facility. In consideration of the varied architecture and interior designs that will be developed for the branches, many of the sign types in the branded areas have been designed to offer possibilities for embellishment and enhancement. This will allow the architect or interior designer to integrate in a seamless way the signage with the design concepts developed for each branch.

For instance, the Primary Children's Area Identification, may be used in conjunction with additional elements, such as kites or animals, to support the architectural or interior design concept of the branch. In a large system however, it is important to maintain the shape, form and overall design intention of the sign, since this is the element that will repeat throughout the branches in support of the branding concept. The scale of signage and graphic elements, as well as their mounting conditions will undoubtedly vary between branches.

Your architectural team will provide programming information for the signage, such as exact copy, quantities, locations, and fabrication instructions. This information will be provided by the Architect, Interior Designer or other person developing the signage specifications. Signage Fabricators will use the signage guidelines to fabricate and install the necessary signage and graphic elements in a library.

Design Drawings are available upon request

Design drawings indicate methods of fabrication including construction details, colors, materials, connection details, type and symbol specifications, and copy layouts. These design drawings indicate size, shape, color, material for all of the sign and graphic elements, as well as the fabrication and installation methods.

[The San Jose Public Library website URL](#)

[The San Jose Way website URL](#)

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