Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan

April 2020
Introduction

Ajo, Arizona sits at the heart of one of the most biodiverse deserts in the world, a landscape that’s recognized as a World Biosphere Reserve. It serves as crossroads for three nations: the United States of America, the Tohono O’Odham Nation and the Republic of Mexico.

The community is fostering a tourism economy based on local food, culture and its impressive natural environment. Helping visitors and locals alike discover the community and learn about its heritage is the driving motivation for the creation and implementation of the Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan.

As the gateway to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Ajo both serves as a destination itself and a jumping off point. Unfortunately, many pass through Ajo quickly en route to the beaches and mountains beyond without stopping to appreciate Ajo. We hope that the projects recommended in this plan do their small part to help them stop and take a moment to discover its unique charms.

Working Group Participants
Bo Johnson - Ajo District Chamber of Commerce and Kickstart Ajo
Lupe Alvarez - Western Pima Community Council and American Citizens Social Club
Lorraine Eiler - Hia C-ed O’odham Alliance and ISDA
Scott Stonum and Frank Torres - Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
Alfredo Soto and Joseph Barnett - Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge
Mike MacFarlane - Ajo Historical Society
Jose Castillo - Ajo Historical Society
Emily Siegel - Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center
Caitlyn Allen - Caitlyn Allen, LLC
Jovita Wallace - Being in Balance and Kickstart Ajo
Lance Bell - Ajo Council for the Fine Arts
Lily Williams - Desert Senita Community Health Center
Mari Zimmerman - Ajo Realty
Vicki Tapp - Curley School Artisan Apartments and ISDA
Bobby Narcho - Curley School Resident Artist and ISDA
Jim Reiman - Active Community Resident
Adrian Vega - Active Community Resident

Project Lead
Aaron Cooper - International Sonoran Desert Alliance

Technical Assistance, Design & Layout
Adam Milnor - National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
Jon Choi

Financial Assistance
Pima County Attractions and Tourism
Purpose

*Improve visitor circulation and experience in Ajo by developing a cohesive system of wayfinding and signage in the walkable, historic town center.*

Desired Outcomes

- Enhanced sense of place
- Instill appreciation for Ajo’s history, culture and environment
- Improved connectivity between points of interest and attractions
- Improved pedestrian safety
- Increased visitor traffic to trails and areas of interest
- Increased conversion rates of pass-through traffic to day and overnight visitors
- Increased sales at local businesses
- Improved community health outcomes from a more intuitively walkable town center
How the Plan was Developed

The International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA) formed a community working group of interested residents, businesses owners and local organizations to craft the plan. The National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program provided technical support for ISDA and the team throughout the plan development process.

Several guiding principles were identified at the first working group meeting:

**Guiding Principles**

- **Collaboration and co-creation**
  The plan should be crafted through the direct input of community partners and local residents. Collaborative principles such as representative participation, active dialogue and a shared vision should be pursued throughout all project phases.

- **A reflection of local character**
  Signs and interpretive materials should reflect Ajo’s “funky’ and artistic character. To do this, local skills and materials should be used where possible. Vivid color should be emphasized as a powerful tool that can underscore local aesthetics.

- **Respect for shared history**
  Interpretation of local heritage should proceed carefully. Messages should be grounded in a deep respect for the diversity of lived experiences and perspectives.

- **Effective and replicable**
  A desire for unique signs and materials should be balanced with the need to ensure signs are readable and can be replaced in cases of damage or wear.

- **Integration with the Sonoran Desert**
  Ajo’s connection to the surrounding landscape should be celebrated. Visitors should be encouraged to explore and appreciate what makes the area a World Biosphere Reserve.
How the Plan was Developed

**Project Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2019</td>
<td>Project awarded Pima County Tourism and Attractions funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10, 2019</td>
<td>Project selected for National Park Service RTCA assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 3, 2019</td>
<td>Working group kick off meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation to the Western Pima County Community Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21, 2019</td>
<td>Working group design review meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2019</td>
<td>Preliminary sign design standards and sign locations prepared for working group review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14 to March 5, 2020</td>
<td>Test signs installed in Ajo Plaza with opportunity for public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 29, 2020</td>
<td>Draft plan available for ISDA Board Membership Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5, 2020</td>
<td>Presentation to the Ajo Community Partnership Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12, 2020</td>
<td>Presentation to the Western Pima County Community Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30, 2020</td>
<td>Completion of Final Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2020</td>
<td>Target date for installation of initial wayfinding and interpretation signs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context

The Audience

The wayfinding working group met twice in late 2019 to discuss the challenges posed by the current system of wayfinding and opportunities for improvement. During the discussion, the group identified several segments that comprise the target audience:

- Visitors on their way to Rocky Point, Mexico from the Phoenix (primary) or Tucson (secondary) metropolitan areas
- Day trippers to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Ajo
- Local residents including youth, those interested in health/fitness
  Those returning to Ajo after time away
- Overnight guests, often staying at the Sonoran Desert Inn or Guest House
- Long term, repeat winter residents staying for most of the winter season
- Shorter term, winter residents often visiting in recreational vehicles and staying for a period of days or weeks

Current Challenges

Visitor Unfamiliarity with Ajo and Its Attractions

Just 5% of visitors identify Ajo as their primary destination. Creating a favorable first impression for the thousands of travellers that travel into Ajo on Highway 85 each day is a key area of opportunity for local organizations and businesses.

Multiple Jurisdictions

Ajo is an unincorporated community in western Pima County. Installation of signs and other improvements requires coordination among a variety of agencies and landowners. The International Sonoran Desert Alliance is the owner and manager of plaza, Curley School and Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center. State Highway 85 includes an Arizona Department of Transportation right of way. Sidewalks and roadways outside of these two areas is under the jurisdiction for the Pima County Department of Transportation.

Mismatched and Aging Signage

Current wayfinding signage does not utilize a single standard. The end result is a mix of sign sizes, fonts, colors and installation locations. A sizable portion of the existing sign inventory would benefit from replacement.
**Context**

**Historic Townsite Destinations and Attractions**

**Historic Plaza**
A beautiful example of Spanish-Colonial Revival style architecture that serves as the center of the historic townsite. The plaza includes a visitor center, library, cafe, shops, galleries and a restaurant. The plaza was purchased by ISDA in 2008 and is in the midst of a multi-year process of restoration and revitalization.

**Curley School**
A historic school built in 1919 that has been renovated into housing, artist studios and event space.

**Artists Alley**
A series of bold murals on the southern side of the historic plaza serve as a statement about the community’s artist talents.

**Ajo’s Historic Churches and Homes**
Whitewashed churches and period bungalows greet first-time visitors with graceful architecture: the Immaculate Conception Church (pictured) was built in 1924 while its neighbor the Federated Church two years later in 1926.

**Triangle Park - Ajo Memory Project**
Just off the plaza, a small grassy park contains the history of Ajo as told by those who lived it. The Ajo Memory Project reflects the community’s past in a series of panels and art exhibits.
Context

Historic Townsite Destinations and Attractions (contd)

Ajo Historical Society Museum

Located in the old St. Catherine's Indian Mission, the museum houses artifacts and mementos that tell the story of Ajo’s past.

New Cornelia Mine Lookout

A panoramic view across nearly two miles of open pit mine is available from the Mine Lookout on Indian Village Road.

Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center

Housed in a portion of the Curley School campus, the Inn and Conference Center showcases local craftsmanship while hosting groups of all sizes.

Old Phelps Dodge Hospital

The town’s original hospital enjoys a commanding view. The nearly 30,000 square foot structure is only open to the public via guided tour.

Scenic Loop/Darby Well Road

A trip through the distinctive cacti and geology of the Sonoran Desert is easily accessible from town.

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

The Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument represents an exceptional example of an intact Sonoran Desert ecosystem. It was recognized as a first generation World Biosphere Reserve in 1976.
“Only in Ajo” Branding Campaign

The International Sonoran Desert Alliance secured the assistance of Local First Arizona Foundation’s Rural Development Council to unify Ajo under one message that would apply to living, visiting and doing business locally.

A series of community workshops were held in 2018 and 2019 during which participants were asked reflect on what the community has been and where it’s heading. The discussion guided the creation of several alternative logos and color schemes.

The processes developed a distinctive look and feel, color palette, set of recommended fonts and an “Only in Ajo” tagline and logo. Key design elements include:

- **Vivid colors** that employ community creativity and desert surroundings
- A **Spanish archway** that captures the local architectural style
- An **organ pipe cactus** that recognizes outdoor recreation and the sonoran desert
- The **deep purple sky and silhouette of hat mountain** to recognize the area as the ancestral lands of the Tohono O’odham and Hia C-ed O’dham

The branding guidelines are applied in the *Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan* and included as an appendix for reference.
Sign Types and Installation Phases

Sign Types
The plan recommends a family of signs that includes five types. The following section includes details on the function of each type, along with detailed information in sizes and materials.

*Pedestrian Waysides* - (W#)
*Triangular Kiosk* (TK-#)
*Wall Wayside* (WW-#)
*Wall Mountain Directional/Informational* (WD-#)
*Post Mountain Directional* (PMD-#)

Phasing
Signs will be installed in the historic town center before proceeding outwards. This approach recognizes the density of attractions, frequency of foot traffic and current approach to destination promotion. Improvements outside the town center, while important, have reduced impact without a system of coherent signs and wayfinding first being established at destination locations. Broadly, the phases are as follows:

A. Wall mounted directionals and interpretive waysides in the plaza
B. Post mounted directionals and waysides with visitor maps in the historic town center
C. Waysides with interpretive information at key attractions in the historic center (e.g. Artists Alley, Curley School)
D. Waysides with interpretive information and/or maps at outlying locations

Timing and order of installation will be strongly influenced by the availability of funding. The phasing of individual signs is reflected in tables on the following pages.

This plan does not call for the removal and replacement of existing signs. However, individual attractions are encouraged to consider this step if signs are damaged, faded or illegible. If possible, replacement signs should apply Only in Ajo branding guidelines.

After completion of the signs in this plan, additioinal locations and signs can be considered. Other opportunities identified by the working group include directionsto/from Bud Walker Park and visitor information or maps at additional gas stations or community business.
Ajo Interpretive and Wayfinding Final Concept

Pedestrian Wayside - Low profile waysides tell a compelling, succinct story. Instead of competing with the view, the information on the panels serve as “a caption on the landscape”. The content on each wayside is easily accessible and readable. In Ajo, waysides will be installed at key attractions and historical features such as the plaza and Curley School. The materials of the wayside base and frame serve as a reflection of Ajo’s mining and architectural history.

**Sign panel dimensions**
- **Material**: Gel Coat Laminate or comparable
- **Frame materials**: 2” square steel tubing (outer frame) 1” square steel tubing (inner frame)
- **Detailing**: Wrought iron, steel strap, post caps
- **Sign base**: Mine tailings, mortar

Pedestrian Wayside - Low profile waysides tell a compelling, succinct story. Instead of competing with the view, the information on the panels serve as “a caption on the landscape”. The content on each wayside is easily accessible and readable. In Ajo, waysides will be installed at key attractions and historical features such as the plaza and Curley School. The materials of the wayside base and frame serve as a reflection of Ajo’s mining and architectural history.

Pedestrian Wayside - Low profile waysides tell a compelling, succinct story. Instead of competing with the view, the information on the panels serve as “a caption on the landscape”. The content on each wayside is easily accessible and readable. In Ajo, waysides will be installed at key attractions and historical features such as the plaza and Curley School. The materials of the wayside base and frame serve as a reflection of Ajo’s mining and architectural history.

**Triangular Kiosk** - Upright orientation kiosks convey information about the surrounding area rather than direct the viewer’s attention to a specific feature. The upright triangular kiosks will feature maps of the town center and surrounding region, business listings and other useful information for visitors. These kiosks area used less frequently due to their size and cost.

**Sign panel dimensions**
- **Material**: Gel Coat Laminate or comparable
- **Frame materials**: 3” square steel tubing (outer frame) 1” square steel tubing (inner frame)
- **Detailing**: Post caps
- **Sign base**: Mine tailings, mortar

Precedents - Colors, Textures and Materials

- Mining heritage
- Mine tailings for sign base
- Historic lamp post base
- Local wrought iron details

NOTES:
1. All dimensions provided are approximate and based on pre-manufactured sign frames from Pannier graphics.
2. Final material selections are to be determined by contractor or individuals responsible for fabrication.

PROJECT: Ajo Wayfinding
Ajo, Arizona
National Park Service RTCA

SHEET: 01
Wayfinding Final
**Ajo Interpretive and Wayfinding Final Concept**

### Wall Wayside and Small Wall Mounted Directional/Informational

Not all signs included in the plan will be freestanding. In some locations a wall mounting may be more appropriate. The wall wayside includes the same information as a pedestrian low profile wayside, while the small informational signs serve as historic markers with short snippets of relevant information about a particular building. The wall directional signs are intended for use in the breezeway of the Ajo plaza.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign panel dimensions</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Frame materials</th>
<th>Detailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48&quot;w x 24&quot;h x .125 w/GCL (Wall Wayside)</td>
<td>Gel Coat Laminate or comparable</td>
<td>1&quot; square steel tubing (Wall Wayside)</td>
<td>Post caps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16&quot;w x 10&quot;h x .125 (Small Wall Mounted)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/2&quot; square steel (Small Wall Mounted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall Wayside and Small Wall Mounted Directional/Informational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>48&quot;w x 24&quot;h x .125 w/GCL (Wall Wayside)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>16&quot;w x 10&quot;h x .125 (Small Wall Mounted)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gel Coat Laminate or comparable</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>1&quot; square steel tubing (Wall Wayside)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>1/2&quot; square steel (Small Wall Mounted)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Post caps</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Precedents - Colors, Textures and Materials**

- mining heritage
- mine tailings for sign base
- historic lamp post base
- local wrought iron details
- local wrought iron details

**NOTES:**
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**PROJECT:** Ajo Wayfinding
Ajo, Arizona
National Park Service RTCA

**SHEET:** 02
Wayfinding Final
Sign Locations

Legend
- Pedestrian Wayside
- Wall Wayside
- Post-Mounted Directional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-1</td>
<td>Plaza East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-2</td>
<td>Plaza East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-3</td>
<td>Plaza West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-4</td>
<td>Plaza West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW-1</td>
<td>Artists Alley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW-2</td>
<td>Railroad Depot Breezeway north of Visitor Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-1</td>
<td>Highway 85 &amp; Lomita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-2</td>
<td>Highway 85 &amp; Triangle Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-6</td>
<td>Plaza &amp; Pajarano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-7</td>
<td>La Mina &amp; Orrilla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan
## Sign Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-5</td>
<td>Curley School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-6</td>
<td>Sonoran Desert Inn &amp; Conference Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-4</td>
<td>Vananda - 5 way intersection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-5</td>
<td>Esperanza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-6</td>
<td>Vananda &amp; Orrila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-7</td>
<td>La Mina &amp; Orrilla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sign Locations

### Legend

- Pedestrian Wayside

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-7</td>
<td>View of Old Phelps Dodge Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-8</td>
<td>Former Location of Tortilla Flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-9 (or WW)</td>
<td>New Cornelia Mine Overlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-10 (or WW)</td>
<td>Ajo Historical Society Museum/St Catherine’s Indian School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sign Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shell Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert Senita Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabeza Prieta NWR HQ and Visitor Center</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Legend
- Wall Wayside
## Interpretive and Map Wayside Locations and Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Themes &amp; Theme Statement</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-1</td>
<td>Plaza - east</td>
<td><strong>Deep Indigenous History and Ajo's Cultural Crossroads</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ajo is a mix of three cultures: Mexican, Tohono O’odham, and Anglo. The community’s history, food and artistic expression are a reflection of shared heritage.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-2</td>
<td>Plaza - east</td>
<td><strong>A Company Town Designed in Style</strong>&lt;br&gt;In contrast to the haphazard construction of other early mining towns, Ajo was built from a formal, master-planned vision. The plan created elegant public spaces, but also reinforced the physical segregation the community.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-3</td>
<td>Plaza - west</td>
<td><strong>From the New Cornelia to Modern Day Resilience</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ajo was a company town for over 70 years. It is now undergoing a transformation that embodies new life, growth, and peace. This change is accompanied by a humility and authenticity that honors community origins.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-4</td>
<td>Plaza - west</td>
<td><strong>Ajo's Spanish Colonial Revival Heart - Like a Bird Opening its Wings</strong>&lt;br&gt;The graceful symmetry of Ajo’s town center is front center from the west end of the plaza, where a pair of historic churches frame the Curley School and Camelback Mountain. The community’s central gathering places is a showcase of Spanish Colonial Revival architectural detail.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW-1</td>
<td>Artists Alley and North Side of Plaza Building in Triangle Park</td>
<td><strong>The Arts are Alive and Well</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ajo’s eclectic nature and diversity are expressed in wonderful displays of public and community art, often with an outsider bent, in Artists Alley and throughout town.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-5</td>
<td>Curley School</td>
<td><strong>Curley School: A Treasure Saved</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Curley School is an architectural masterpiece that dates to 1919. The school faced an uncertain future until the community and International Sonoran Desert Alliance completed a multi-million dollar renovation and transformation in 2007.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sign Numbering System**
- Pedestrian Waysides - (W#)
- Triangular Kiosk (TK-#)
- Wall Wayside (WW-#)
- Wall Mountain Directional/Informational (WD-#)
- Post Mountain Directional (PMD-#)
## Interpretive and Map Wayside Locations and Themes (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Themes &amp; Theme Statement</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| W-6 | Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center courtyard                       | Generous Desert Hospitality  
Overnight visitors to the Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference center are greeted with a restoration that blends the heritage of the former schoolhouse with the spirit of the Sonoran Desert region. | 2     |
| W-7 | View of Old Phelps Dodge Hospital                                         | A Company Hospital for a Company Town  
The New Cornelia Copper Company erected a hospital for their employees that featured cutting edge equipment including an operating room and x-ray machine.            | 3     |
| W-8 | Former location of Tortilla Flats                                        | to be developed                                                                        | 3     |
| W-9 | New Cornelia Mine Overlook                                               | to be developed                                                                        | 3     |
| W-10| St. Catherine’s Indian School/ Ajo Historical Society Museum             | to be developed                                                                        | 3     |
| WW-2 or TK-1 | Railroad Depot Breezeway north of Visitor Center | Local and regional maps and information about Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and other destinations along with information about the World Biosphere Reserve program | 1     |
| WW-3 | Highway 85 Shell Station                                                 | Local and regional maps and information about Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and other destinations | 2     |
| WW-4 | Desert Senita Clinic                                                     | Information about the history of the building housing the clinic; small pedestrian map and encouragement for walking | 3     |
| WW-5 | Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters and Visitor Center   | Local and regional maps and information about Ajo, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and other destinations along with information about the World Biosphere Reserve program | 3     |
## Directional Sign Installation Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WD1 to 9</td>
<td>Plaza - Under the Archway, numerous locations</td>
<td>Orientation to destinations within the historic plaza</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-1</td>
<td>Highway 85 &amp; Lomita - Immaculate Conception Church</td>
<td>Orientation to/from the plaza and Curley School complex</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-2</td>
<td>Highway 85 &amp; Triangle Park</td>
<td>Orientation to Triangle Park/Ajo Memory Park from plaza</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-3</td>
<td>Plaza &amp; Pajaro - eastside Plaza Rd</td>
<td>Connection between plaza and clinic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-4</td>
<td>Vanada @ 5 way intersection - Curley School</td>
<td>Orientation in front of Curley School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-5</td>
<td>Esperanza</td>
<td>Orientation between Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center and Plaza</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-6</td>
<td>Venada &amp; Orilla</td>
<td>Orientation towards Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMD-7</td>
<td>La Mina &amp; Orilla</td>
<td>Orientation towards attractions along La Mina/Indian School Road</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sign Numbering System
- Pedestrian Waysides - (W#)
- Triangular Kiosk (TK-#)
- Wall Wayside (WW-#)
- Wall Mountain Directional/Informational (WD-#)
- Post Mountain Directional (PMD-#)
Estimated Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Sign Type</th>
<th>Pedestrian Wayside</th>
<th>Triangular Kiosk</th>
<th>Wall Wayside</th>
<th>Small Wall Mounted Directional</th>
<th>Post Mounted Directional</th>
<th>total with 20% contingency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Panel(s)</td>
<td>$200-$250</td>
<td>$250-$300 per panel</td>
<td>$200-$250</td>
<td>$30-$50</td>
<td>$60-$90 per sign</td>
<td>$240 - $720 per post**</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>$900-$1100</td>
<td>$1000 - $1500</td>
<td>$250-$400</td>
<td>$150 - $250</td>
<td>$700 - $1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Per Sign</td>
<td>$1100 - $1350</td>
<td>$1,750 - $2,400</td>
<td>$450 - $650</td>
<td>$180 - $300</td>
<td>$940 - $1,720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimated Quantity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>$11,000 - $13,500</td>
<td>$1,750 - $2,400</td>
<td>$2,250 - $3,250</td>
<td>$1,800 - $3,00</td>
<td>$6,580 - $12,040</td>
<td>$28,060 - $41,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject to change. Panel costs include shipping. Costs dependent on quantities and shipping order size. Panel costs for waysides do not include costs of layout or design. Installation costs are included in frame costs, but may change from estimate obtained in March 2020.

*Dependent on whether fabricated panels are included on 2 or 3 kiosk sides.

**Dependent on number of unique fabricated panels, which ranges from 4 to 8.

Potential Grants and Funding Sources

The following grants could be used to implement the wayfinding plan:

1. Pima County Attractions & Tourism - Tourism-Related Outside Agency Program
2. Freeport-McMoRan - Community Investment Grants
3. Arizona Historical Society Grants
4. Arizona Humanities Project and Mini-Grants
5. Community Foundation of Southern Arizona-administered Grants
Principles for Effective Wayfinding and Orientation

Create a Logical and Predictable Set of Connections
Directional signs connect physical places. They should be installed so that the next directional sign, or the attraction itself, is obvious to the pedestrian. Sight lines should be double checked prior to installation and maintained; vegetation or other visual obstacles should be removed or prevented to ensure these sightlines stay intact.

Use a Unique and Straightforward Set of Names
Each attraction or destination should have a single name or title. The simple name chosen for each place should be repeated throughout the sign system and on visitor maps.

Utilize Universal Design
Signs should follow the principles of universal design and consider users of all ability levels. Specific applications of universal design in this plan include the use of high contrast backgrounds, appropriate sizes for wayside exhibits and the use of non capital block lettering.

Principles of Effective Interpretive and Outdoor Exhibits

Adapted from “Wayside Exhibits: A Guide to Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits”

Meet the Challenge of the 3/30/3 Rule
Visitors have a short attention span and lots of choices. Research suggests a sign has just three seconds to catch a person’s attention. They then make a decision to read the sign in thirty seconds or less. If they decide to read it, they’ll do so in less than three minutes.

Use Compelling Images and Titles
Photographs, illustrations and diagrams are often more effective at telling a story than text.

Caption the Landscape, Don’t Compete with It
Outdoor waysides should interpret a place in its context, complimenting and illuminating what the viewer is seeing.

Make Choices and Don’t Go Overboard
There will always be more stories than available space to tell them. Being selective about the most important themes and topics for educational waysides is critical.
**Visitor Maps**

To support the goals of the wayfinding plan, a series of visitor maps have been created that highlight attractions at three scales: the Ajo Historic Townsite and immediate area; the entirety of Ajo; and lastly, the Sonoran Desert region along Highway 85. The primary use of these maps will be in physical installations listed above. The maps could also be used in future printed or digital materials.
Installation Considerations

- Permission and approval of the landowner must be secured before sign installation.
- All signs within Pima County Department of Transportation or Arizona Department of Transportation rights-of-way need to be installed after obtaining the relevant permits and approval.
- Wayside bases should be constructed to allow sufficient space for wayside panel removal replacement.
- The vertical directional signs need have breakaway capability in the event of a vehicle crash.

Additional Recommendations

The projects and actions below were identified during the collaborative process of creating the Ajo Wayfinding Improvement Plan. While out of the scope of pedestrian wayfinding improvement, they are captured here as items of consideration for Pima County Department of Transportation, Arizona Department of Transportation and other local partners (indicated in parenthesis).

1. Improved visitor information at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument campgrounds and visitor information centers that highlights the importance of the World Biosphere Reserve Program (NPS, ISDA)
2. Improvement, replacement and standardization of vehicular directional signs along La Mina, Indian School and Sahuaro Roads (PDOT consideration)
3. Modification of the ADOT-installed visitor center directional sign from Highway 85 southbound to reflect a lag time in the left turn (ADOT Consideration)
4. Installation of a promotional sign/billboard alongside Highway 85 southbound just north of Ajo (ISDA)
5. Installation of a promotional sign/billboard at the intersection of Highways 85 and 86 in Why (ISDA)
Visitor Center
Post Office
Cafe
Ajo Memory Project
Murals
Visitor Center
Post Office
Across the Plaza
Library
Shops/Galleries
Restaurant
Artists Alley
Visitor Center
Artists Alley
Library
Shops/Galleries
Restaurant
Artists Alley
Post Office
Cafe
Visitor Center
Artists Alley
Library
Restaurant
Artists Alley
Visitor Center
Cornelia and Gila Bend Railroad Depot

At the beginning of large scale mining activities in Ajo, the Phelps-Dodge Copper Company sought to link Ajo with smelter facilities in Tucson. This depot and a new 43-mile rail line was constructed to connect with the nearest rail service in Gila Bend. The depot hosted freight and passenger service for 71 years until closing in 1985.

An extensive restoration completed in 2013 adapted the depot for reuse as the Ajo Visitor Center. The Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission bestowed its Historic Preservation Award to the project “for the sensitive, masterful restoration of this historically significant building for adaptive reuse.”
Plaza
Visitor Center
Mine Overlook
History Museum
→ Artists Alley
**A Company Town Designed in Style**

*In contrast to the haphazard construction of early mining towns in the American West, Ajo was built from a formal, master-planned vision. The plan created elegant public spaces, but also reinforced the physical segregation the community.*

*En contraste con la construcción fortuita de las primeras ciudades mineras en el oeste americano, Ajo se construyó desde una visión formal y planificada. El plan creó elegantes espacios públicos, pero también reforzó la segregación física de la comunidad.*

**Like a Bird Opening Its Wings**

Today’s view from the railroad depot hasn’t changed much from the 1920’s: a lush plaza aligned with the grand Curley School, churches and desert mountains beyond. Harmony and symmetry were hallmarks of the town’s 1917 master plan. The Plaza and boulevards that radiate from it evoke the image of a bird opening its wings. The vision came from New Cornelia Mine founder John Greenway, who wanted to design a community that would attract workers and investment.

**A Place of Pride, Comfort and Care**

Ajo is preserved as the only fully-realized City Beautiful town center in Arizona. Purposeful design and urban beauty were at the core of the short-lived City Beautiful movement. Supporters believed that towns should be places for physical and spiritual health rather than simply business and industry. The plaza was meant to instill pride among mine workers who chose to make Ajo home.

**Separate and Unequal**

Not everyone shared equally in Ajo’s grand design. Housing was segregated by ethnicity and status. Anglo-Americans who oversaw mine operations were offered numerous housing options, while mainly Mexican laborers had a single choice in the “Mexican Townsite.” Native American mine workers were left to find their own housing outside the town center. Despite this separation, the plaza served as Ajo’s “front yard” where all residents could relax, socialize and celebrate together.

*In recognition of its significance, the Ajo historic town center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

*Only in Ajo*