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I, Teal Horsman, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Community Planning in Community Planning.

It is entitled:
Developing Sign Design Guidelines for Sense of Place: A Practical Application for Interpreting Bidwell Park

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Developing Sign Design Guidelines for Sense of Place: A Practical Application for Interpreting Bidwell Park

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Community Planning

In the School of Design, Architecture, Arts and Planning by

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Abstract

Signs are an incredible tool to enhance and convey a place’s expression, uniqueness, form and function. Given how often signs are used and how frequently they are seen in people’s lives, they often go unnoticed and unrecognized for their ability to enhance a place’s sense of place. Almost every sign is either positioned in place or it is referring to a place through the message. Given the complexity of sense of place, it has been limiting for this concept to provide a formula for sign design guidelines to move from theory to practical application.

This research argues that a sign is an important contributor to people forming sense of place by enhancing the user’s experience of a particular place or setting. By reviewing the theory of sense of place and locating attributes that go into the creation of sense of place, there can be a better understanding of developing and planning clear and practical design criteria that can be applied. Using Bidwell Park in Chico, California as the project site the aims of this research therefor are to (1) to understand how signs have been vital to people’s experience of place, (2) explore how people begin to experience place then building a relational dimension and (3) and understand what makes up sense of place for this particular site.

Using a multi-method qualitative analysis approach was followed and conducted. Final sign design guidelines were formulated, based on these. This research has contributed to provide Municipal Management and Planning Staff with information on signs potential to enhance and protect sense of place by providing the dimensions between people and places as well as to develop appropriate methods for finding out “what” makes up each particular place’s sense of place, so one can obtain insight into the significance of the area.
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Context

In 2011, a new sign system with applicable design guidelines was to be developed for a municipal park in the City of Chico, located in Northern California. The new 2030 General Plan “Plan” and the Bidwell Park Management Plan (2008) both called for new signage and wayfinding systems for the City of Chico and Bidwell Park. The Plan is described to be what the community highlights as the most significant guide to the public decision-making process (General Plan, 2011). The Plan contains the guiding principles, goals and policies to assist with reaching the main priorities of the community.

The emphasis on “sense of place” is one of the reoccurring concepts used in the document.

*Goal CD-1: Strengthen Chico’s image and sense of place by reinforcing the desired form and character of the community.*
Strengthening Chico’s sense of place was to be included in community design; however, it was clear through meetings with the City’s staff that there was confusion surrounding the concept itself. Would signs apply under community design that would require sense of place to be considered? If so, how does one go about designing a new sign system with this as the motivation?

There was a divide between the researcher/project consultant and the municipal staff on signs role in the park and a sign’s ability to convey sense of place. The researcher in order to create a set of design guidelines for the park set out to clarify the importance of signs in a person’s experience of place and in creating a sense of place. The researcher’s belief that signs are an important part of place and deserve acknowledgement for their role in creating a sense of place has shaped this study. Through careful planning and designing signs and understanding the sense of place, criteria for design guidelines can be established.

This researcher explored signs role in human’s lives and their contribution to the development of place by revealing their functions, their meaning, and their link to the surrounding form. Although signs may be small in comparison to the landscape and other physical features, they are a critical resource in providing information in the environment and delivering meaning more effectively. This thesis explores a variety of techniques to understand sense of place and signage, which are described in Section 4 and 5. These techniques were chosen because the influence of such notable contributors on the subject, Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, Robert Venturi. There have been a few scholars that have been interested in how
signs organize and enable one to make sense of the environment that could lead to viewing signs as contributors to sense of place. Jakle and Shulle (2004) in *Signs in America's Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place* explored how signs aid those in understanding built environment for meaning. They felt that “signs are used to announce and give meaning to virtually every sort of place” (2004). Signs are important to sense of place because they have the ability to either enhance it or take away from it.

Planners, designers, resource managers, city officials and others that work on or with community plans and designs will find that sense of place is a concept and often described as a “buzz-word” has become a part of many conversations, workshops, charrettes, strategies and official documents. However, research on sense of place is not clear and does not present clear guidelines or methods for practical application in the field. It is necessary to delve into sense of place, what it actually means and what it is made of before we can design for sense of place. Probing deeper into signs relationship with sense of place and the areas that they inhabit, we realize humans have a process when experiencing place and the variety of physical features that make a place. Understanding how people experience place can lead to creating field methods of design and planning that enhance sense of place. This study will investigate and describe the relationship between signs and sense of place through field examples to help guide compatible and respectful guidelines for signs.

1.2 Drawn to Place

It has been described that place can draw people to it, as if it had reached out to them or even spoke to them (Wilke, 2003). This was the experience of one early explorer by the name of
John Bidwell, whom had gone searching for his fortune in the early 1840’s, leaving Ohio making his way west (Bidwell, 1840). It is the discovery of a particular place that he was drawn to during this trip that has led others to desire to understand how a person can feel such a deep connection to a specific “place”. This connection to a specific place is so inspiring that it has been recognized as an important concept included in official planning documents for many communities in respect to design and planning (Hague & Jenkins, 2005). The concept of place has evolved from just a word to much more, a “whole phenomenon” as Edward Relph (1993) referred to it.

In Echoes of the Past of California (1928), Bidwell writes an intimate account of what years later became to be known as Chico, California:

To me one of the loveliest of places. The plains were covered with groves of spreading oaks; there were wild grasses and clover, two, three and four feet high and most luxuriant. The fertility of the soil was beyond question, and the waters of Chico Creek were clear, cold, and sparkling; the mountains were lovely and flower-covered, a beautiful scene. In a word, this was the means of locating me for life…I never was permanently located till I afterward located here.

Arturo Escobar (2001) asks the questions, “How do people encounter places, perceive them, and then endow with significance?” The excerpt used from John Bidwell’s book describes a personal connection that he made to a particular place due to the variety of visual and physical characteristics that made it unique for him. He makes mention of the natural elements such as the clover, oaks and wild grasses that he witnessed in the landscape. It is this particular experience that John Bidwell described in his connection to this particular place that has become a popular topic in recent years. This is because researchers have noticed that people’s lives are centered on
place (Cresswell, 2004; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Steele, 1981; Casey, 1993; Buttimer, 1980). In *People and Places* (2006), John and Margaret Myer suggest humans can feel a particular way about “one place and dislike another place” depending on the individual but there is no option of not having “any place at all”. We are planted in place as earth’s surface is consumed by it.

The meaning of place is complex, as it has different meanings depending on the context, but it is said that landscapes becomes place when meaning is associated with it (Tuan, 1977). It is apparent from John Bidwell’s account that a particular physical landscape had drawn him to the area but the sense of place he felt once he arrived ignited an emotional connection for him causing him to relocate there permanently. The visual stimuli comes from the physical components of a place combining together giving the place a voice; speaking to us and creating what is often referred to as sense of place. This is a certain encounter that a person has in a specific setting. Fritz Steele (1981) describes it as “feeling stimulated, excited, joyous, expansive and so forth”.

The concept of sense of place has been primarily researched in the academic world and there is little framework or research in application to “real world”. Although the different disciplines have made extensions to sense of place and have attempted to apply it to their particular work in the field, this has created confusion around the definition or concept of sense of place. This confusion about sense of place could potentially be affecting peoples’ approach for designing and planning the physical features erected in our community.

1.3 Consensus on Sense of Place

The packing and unpacking of place has led researchers to develop other concepts, adding to the different conceptualization of place (Shami & Ilatov, 2005). Sense of place theory
emerged out of this process as well as several other concepts. Theoretically sense of place is thought to be a complex (Shami & Ilatov, 2005) influenced over the years by a range of different disciplines attempting to understand people’s relationships with their surroundings, only adding more confusion.

Sense of place has become a term that has been called idiomatic when working with the environment and our American culture (Lang, 1999). There is no one single definition for sense of place, although there have been many that have contributed to its meaning. It is because there is no universal definition that “sense of place” is often referred to as an intangible concept (Jiven & Larkham, 2003; Shamai & Ilatov, 2005; Barker, 1979). As Barker states, “understanding what goes into sense of place is a complex task.” Many disciplines of people have become very interested in the concept including geographers, sociologists, architects, landscape architects and psychologists. All of these disciplines have provided several different paradigms to the body of research around sense of place including: place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992), place identity (Proshasky, 1978), Topophilia (Tuan, 1974).

The different conceptualizations of sense of place developed because of the difference in the researcher’s approach and whether it was explored through quantitative or qualitative measure (Jorgensen & Stedman 2001; Smaldone, 2002; Manzo 2003; Shamai & Ilatov, 2005). All of the terms that have evolved from the sense of place concept have people’s relationship with place and the meaning of that place as the underlying principle. As Faruam, Hall and Kruger (2005) point out, “many terms have been used to refer to these human connections to place, and most would probably agree that sense of place is the most encompassing term, referring to the entire group of cognitions and affective sentiments held regarding a particular
geographic locale.” Shamari (1991) agrees that sense of place can be looked at as representing the other concepts that have come about of place.

1.4 Who Makes Sense of Place?

Yi-Fu Tuan (1997) said that “place may be said to have a spirit or personality but only human beings can have a sense of place.” Sense of place is a uniquely human experience that is given to place by humans. This is further supported by Steele (1981) who said, “in other words, to some degree we create our own places; they do not exist independent of us.” People are creators of place and it is the process of this development that gives a place a sense of place. Sense of place can simply be thought of in practical terms. For example, when people decide to take their out-of-town guest to particular places in their community; they are often taking them to the places that they feel will capture the essence of their community for their guest. It is these unique features that build an identity of the area or in others words, its sense of place.

This example seems simple enough but a review of the literature still shows considerable amount of uncertainty around the concept of sense of place. For one, this example makes mention of unique features, giving the assumption we are dealing with a physical setting with physical features. However, the evolution of the research on place and sense of place theory have moved away from physical objects being the only influence on sense of place It has expanded to include other elements including social, cultural and emotional experiences, resulting in making sense of place more dynamic. Thus, sense of place has been defined as “the collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals and groups associate with a particular locality” (Williams & Stewart, 1998), but Stedman (2002) states that sense of place consists of the meanings and attachments to a setting held by an individual or group (Stedman,
2002), while Stokowski (2002) posits as an individual’s ability to develop feelings of attachment to a particular setting based on a combination of use, attentiveness and emotion. Sense of place can also be conceived as a multidimensional construct representing beliefs, emotions, and behavioral commitments concerning a particular geographic setting (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006).

1.5 Aspects of Place

The term sense of place sometimes referred to as “genius loci,” or as spirit of place, can be divided into two main parts. These are the combination of the physical and the natural elements that make up earth’s surface. These are the elements where experiences are happened. The second part of sense of place is around that experience that those people have. It draws from the phenomenology paradigm which is “understanding environmental experience as an integral part of establishing a phenomenology of place and place-making” (Seamon, 1987). This approach, according to Relph (1976), should be evaluated “by the examining the links between place and the phenomenological foundations of geography.”

Adopting Steele’s (1981) definition of sense of place, (Figure 1.1) for this research, sense of place is defined as the “pattern of reaction that a setting stimulates for a person. These reactions are a product of both features of the setting and aspects the person brings to it:”
1.6 The Value of Sense of Place

The value of place and sense of place, whether it applies to a natural, rural, or urban environment, is recognized to be important to planning, managing and designing. In urban environments, having thoughtful physical planning and people-friendly designed places has been a priority for many communities and professionals looking to reinvent and revitalize places that have been struggling (Chapman, 2011; Gehl, 2011; Whyte, 1980, Cullen, 1961). For natural environments, there have been studies on sense of place being adopted by natural resource managers (Williams & Stewart, 1998), as well as how people connected with places that are managed as public land (Cheng, Kruger & Daniels, 2003; Smaldone, 2002). An example is a technical report on recreation and tourism that was produced by the Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture about sense of place:

Today, resource managers, planners, and researchers are beginning to view sense of place as a critical concept both in understanding
how to provide optimal recreation experiences and in understanding the public’s reaction to and proper role in management decisions. (Farnum, Hall & Kruger, 2005)

There have been a number of plans that have included sense of place as a guiding factor when developing their guidelines or manuals. The National Park Service prepared *A Sense of Place: Design Guidelines for Yosemite Valley* (2004), calling for the importance that design work should reflect Yosemite’s sense of place. Another insightful plan is the American Planning Association’s *Community Character* (Soule, Hodgson, & Beavers, 2011), a guide in “how arts and cultural strategies create, reinforce, and enhance sense of place.” A handbook dealing directly with signage and sense of place is, *A Sense of Place: An Interpretive Planning Handbook* (2001) that was produced by the Scottish Natural Heritage Association, which viewed sense of place as an economic incentive and a way to enhance the visitor’s experience leading to a greater number of tourism dollars.

Therefore, it can be said that sense of place is a valuable tool for many planners, urban designers (Ouf, 2001), resource managers (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006), and community leaders when developing official documents for a community or a particular place. As it applies to place, it is often used as a guide in many cities or towns in western countries for community leaders as a way to communicate the expectations to designers and developers of the physical structures and features within the community.

1.7 Sense of Place to Guide Design

Fast forward from the time of John Bidwell had first located in the area. Chico is now home to a population of approximately 100,000 people in its urban core (City of Chico). In 2011,
the City of Chico with the help of outside consultants completed the 2030 General Plan (2011) which included the term sense of place in their overall vision:

**Overall Vision for Chico in 2030**

Chico, in the year 2030, is a livable, healthy, and sustainable community that offers a high quality of life with a strong sense of community and place. Chico maintains its small-town character while providing opportunities for future generations to thrive.

A chapter in the general plan, titled Community Design, discussed the motivation of utilizing sense of place as a guide for those developing or designing within the community.

The Community Design Element focuses on the visual quality of the physical elements and spaces that shape Chico.

The Community Design Element includes goals, policies, and actions to (1) address community-wide investment for improved urban design, (2) ensure appropriate design continuity between existing and future development and (3) celebrate cultural and historic re-sources in Chico. (General Plan, 2011)

**Sense of Place**

Chico residents place a high value on maintaining the community’s sense of place. However, this requires a common understanding of the characteristics which define that sense.

Some of the examples provided in the *Yosemite Valley Design Guidelines* offer insight on the relationship of signage and sense of place, through architectural and landscape design guidelines that were developed through a cooperative effort of architects, landscape architects
and park staff. One can gather from their work that the intent was to retain the quality and original charm while imparting the history and natural significance of Yosemite. For example the Yosemite Valley Design Guidelines communicates: “You must ‘buy into’ the idea that you are important to Yosemite only insofar as your work deeply and honestly reflects what Yosemite is itself. Your design will affect millions of visitors who come to experience Yosemite.” Due to the wide range of influence that this concept has received over the last several decades, it could be the reason that there is a limited amount of attempts to examine the current state of knowledge regarding designing for sense of place and an even narrower exploration as it applies to signs.

Sense of place, as Steele (1981) points out is used “as both an object of people’s interest, concern, influence, attention, alternation, and enjoyment and a cause of people’s feelings, moods, responses, constraints, achievements, survival, and pleasure.” If this is so, then place is more forceful then a location or a coordinate on a map; it is tied to humans activities and emotions. Designing for such has great benefit, but understanding the geographical area, the site, and the people that use it as a part of their life is a key part of the process. Also, understanding what is considered a feature of a place requires a more in-depth design and planning process that is focused on a location’s sense of place. To do this, one must understand what makes up sense of place and what creates a bond between signs and sense of place.

1.8 Signifiers of Place

In order to design for place, we must understand that people experience it through their dominant senses. E.O. Wilson (2006) in the National Geographic said the, “human mind has evolved to search for meaning” (as cited in Gross, Zimmerman & Buchholz, 2006). We seek to
understand the relevance and the meaning of the places and the objects that make them (Gross et. al. 2006). It is part of our basic function to seek and gather information (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1998) when attempting to understand a new place. Interpreting the landscape is an important form of communication to us (Jakle & Sculle, 2004).

1.8.1 Seeking Visual Cues

How do we know where “here” is? What is “here?” Often the first thing one does to determine where “here” is, is to survey one’s surrounding area through the use of vision (Golledge, 1992), looking for visual cues that will help make sense of their location. Our need to comprehend the landscape is part of our human nature according to Gygory Kepes in the Language of Vision (1944). He indicates in order for man to survive, he must orient himself (Kepes, 1944). Yi-Fu Tuan writes, “Eyes explore the visual field and abstract certain objects, points of focus, and perspectives” (Tuan, 1997). We look for recognizable visual cues or elements that we can organize mentally and then translate into a message, giving the area meaning. We often look for things that stand out through their form, color, or shape (Golledge, 1992) in comparison to the surrounding area; something that we can register in our memory to use again. It is said that signs function as a vital part of the “human cognitive life, they allow humans to remember the world” (Beasley & Danesi, 2002).

Kevin Lynch (1976) explained, “any inhabited landscape is a medium of communication.” Landscape, if one looks closely, is made up of elements or a variety of visual cues or signs that are communicating. John Bidwell described meadows of grass, oak trees and clovers as signs that he saw. These can be considered natural signs, one that is a product of nature (Beasley & Danesi, 2002). However, humans have been molding and shaping places for
many years. Through doing so, humans have developed what some call (Beasley & Danesi, 2002) conventional signs, which are human produced signs invented by people in “cultural settings for conventional purposes” (2002).

Humans seek information and communicate by a sign or signifier, which allows them to make sense of the surroundings and to collect information about a place. Without signs or signifiers, humans would experience a place as “anew each time we come across them” states Beasley and Danesi (2002). A sign is one of the most relied upon communication mediums of the visual landscape (Claus & Claus, 1988).

At a signage forum, Richard Macias (1967) presented that “signs have become a way of life”. Signs often can be the first impression one gets when they arrive at a new place. They are important communicators on how to read the places we visit and they play an important role in people’s lives by contributing to the meaning of the environment. A sign conveys a message about a place; in essence they are quite simply a communication device (Claus & Claus, 1988).

1.9 Conventional Signs

Although many things can fall under a definition of a sign or a signifier, this research focuses on conventional, or material signs; important communication tools that are heavily relied upon as one moves about our environment and contributors as physical features to our landscape. A sign conveys a message about a place, whether it is done through an individual sign or a system of signs. Since signs can be considered anything that provides visual cues to a user, including natural signs, as in the example of John Bidwell’s encounter with oak trees, we will focus on the following signs, defined for this research as:
A sign is a material, communicative device that operates independently or as a system in the landscape, publically identifying and providing information to a user as it relates to place.

Signs have many different facets: providing wayfinding (Kaplan et al., 1998; Passini, 1984), keeping people safe, stating rules and regulations, pronouncing territorial claims (Bower, 1980) or acting as a symbol or an extension of an individual or culture (Nassauer, 1995). Jakle and Shulle felt that signs are a vital method for communication and that people “assert themselves in what might be termed symbolic interaction” (2004). However, the importance of signs and their design is often overlooked. Claus and Claus (1988) felt that the reason signs are overlooked is because they are used so often and are commonplace in our environment.

1.10 Sign as a Planning Tool

Signs are viewed as an important feature in the “myriad of the built environment” (Morris, Hinshaw, Mace & Weistien, 2001) because of their physical status and communication of place. Context-Sensitive Sign Design (Morris et al., 2001) states that planning and designing for policies that would affect signage should be the result of a planning process that considers:

- Assessment of the overall visual character of the community and then setting goals;
- Involvement of citizens to determine their concerns and preferences in balancing economic, social, and cultural values;
- Promotion of the positive contribution signs that can create a sense of place in a district and in a community.
It is recognized that signs can play a role in contributing and enhancing to sense of place; however, there is a shortage of guidelines for dealing with signage issues in the design planning process (Morris et al., 2001). This is apparent from the small amount of research and the lack of “critical thought by planners, architects, or designers on the role of signs in the built environment” (Morris et al., 2001) with the exception of commerce related sign issues.

The acknowledgement that signs can contribute to sense of place (Morris et al., 2001; Jakle & Shulle, 2004) is important; however, there is still a lack of research or examples that provides insight on signs’ abilities to enhance or contribute to sense of place and a lack of practical approaches to designing signs to enhance sense of place. With the disorganized understanding of the concept of “sense of place,” it is limiting and difficult to provide a practical approach to developing design guidelines. Jorgensen and Stedman observe that “the disorganization that has characterized much of the sense of place literature has been a barrier to its effective integration with ongoing concerns” (2006). This study will utilize sense of place in community design, specifically in a sign system and design guidelines for a 3,740 acre park with urban and natural influence in Northern California.

1.11 Aim of Research

Although there is no major study which directly links signage and sense of place or provides steps of applying this concept to an actual physical feature as a sign or sign system, there are some promising links between visual attributes of physical features and one’s developed image of their surroundings place. This study and research has three functions: to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of sense of place, to gather comprehensive
attributes of sense of place from the literature, and to produce a set of concise guidelines for practical application of sense of place. Academically, this research poses some interesting questions for subsequent researchers, and provides a solid foundation from which to build future studies.

This research is set out to review signs’ role in our landscape and their role in the development of sense of place. Through a literature review, knowledge is gathered to provide insight on signs importance in our human-environment interaction and the relationship that signs play in our culture and in the understanding of places. Through understanding their role in our landscape, it is intended to show that signs are a meaningful visual and physical feature and contribute to the character of places.

Combining that with understanding how people experience places, through vision and motion, these tools that people possess allow them to build a place’s character. Items in the visual environment can work together to activate a particular feeling for a person. Understanding this can give insight on sense of place. Through the knowledge revealed in the literature review on sense of place, the elements that create a sense of place, and what elements to include in the design guidelines for signs, are determined.

A mixed-methods approach for the research that can be easily replicated in the field is utilized. These methods are applied to the physical design elements and systems using signs as a practical approach, ultimately providing insight and a process that can be used by others. This leads to providing recommendations for a municipality on a new sign system that has included a sense of place as a guiding factor.
1.12 Statement of the Problem

Signs are a valuable communicator of the places that humans encounter, and they should be considered an important visual and physical feature in our lives. Signs carry an ability to add and enhance the sense of place and deserve to be recognized and included as a contributor when designing for a specific location. When working with sense of place as a motivation for design, the unique patterns, characteristics and scale required for that specific location should be considered when designing signage. The desired design outcome for a sign would be to contribute, retain or reestablish sense of place. To do this it requires customizing the design guidelines to the localities and identity of the area. This becomes the challenge to develop appealing themes and style that exude the culture, history, environment, and the social make-up. A thoughtful process to unearth themes that share the identity of the location’s sense of place is vital to ensure that signage enhances and does not detract from a sense of place.

There is confusion on defining sense of place and how to apply it to design. With a recent project surrounding a new sign system to be designed for a particular place, there was a lack of understanding on the importance of signs to the environment and the user and if signs should fall under the community design recommendations of sense of place.

1.13 Research Questions

1. How are signs vital to the human experience of place?

2. Can a review of sense of place theory uncover comprehensive attributes of sense of place to guide a practical application in community design of a sign system?
3. How can sign design principles be developed utilizing the “sense of place” concept?

4. How can signs be incorporated into a physical environment to effectively communicate and add to sense of place?

5. How is a common understanding of the characteristics that define a community’s sense of place reached?

1.14 Organization of Thesis

Chapter Two, Background provides information on the project by providing a brief description of the project site (Bidwell Park). This includes the description of the park, regional information, the influences and amenities of the park, the park’s management, and the meeting “take-away” that occurred between consultant and park staff prior to starting the project.

Chapter Three addresses the first two research questions by looking at how signs are important features in humans’ lives, and how they have been integrated into humans’ experience of place. It includes historical information about signs and how they evolved within our culture, communicating to us, about us, and our inventions. It is shown that signs and sense of place happen on both a macro-level and a micro-level. Through a basic review of semiotics, a further breakdown of signs on their function and elements that people connect with, giving them the ability to add to the experience of their surroundings is accomplished. Semiotics helps demonstrate the way in which the human cognitive process works. We will then make a link between signage and sense of place by understanding how people experience the physical and visual elements of place. Here, a review of the relevant literature uncovers two important factors
to consider when designing for place: movement and vision. Through a review of past research and concepts these two factors are seen as contributors to how sense of place can be formed by someone. Through a review of sense of place literature, attributes are located in order to determine “what” makes up sense of place for the project site of this thesis. By comparing the work of several researchers (Steele, 1981; Tuan, 1974; Stedman, 2002, 2003) sense of place is defined as:

…a pattern of reaction that a setting stimulates for a person. These reactions are a product of both features of the setting and aspects the person brings to it: (Steele, 1980).

This exploration of the literature is focused on themes that show up in order to find particular attributes of sense of place that go into the making of sense of place.

The fourth and fifth research questions are answered by combining the Literature Review (Chapter Three) with a Methodology section (Chapter Four) that is linked to some of the reviewed research and scholarly work that was included (Lynch, 1960; Cullen, 1971). Chapter Five also addresses the fourth and fifth research question by presenting the findings of the mixed-methods analysis that was employed. Finally, in Chapter Six, the significance of this study is considered, including both practical and research implications. This project presents an opportunity to apply principles/techniques of design and planning to enhance a place’s sense of place. As a “real project,” it could provide insight on practical approaches that could be used by others.
Figure 1.2: Signs with Place and Sense of Place

Source: Author

Chapter Two: Background

*I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in* (Muir, 1938)

2.1 City Parks

There is widespread public interest in areas that offer rural or natural characteristics for recreation and a reprieve from busy urban life. Industrialization and commerce have devoured
our landscapes, changing the character of places as urbanization spreads. Many national forests, wetlands, state parks, and city parks lay at the doorstep of thousands and millions of urban residents (Carr & Williams, 1993). Studies show that these “urban wild lands” are now accessible to much denser populations (Carr & Williams, 1993) and much a broader diversity of groups and sub-cultures.

At national, state and city levels throughout America and other places in the world, offering public spaces for people to gather can be found through public land such as the development of parks. Parks have become an important part of regions or cities amenities to attract people to live in communities, and they cater to people’s need for space for different activities. Parks come in many different sizes and have many different management systems, ecological systems, natural settings, physical influences, and offer a variety of amenities. Because parks play such a central role in our communities and our country, it is important to consider how they are used by the community when applying new design features.

2.2 Site

The City of Chico (City), located in Northern California, is home to Bidwell Park (Park). The Park offers the Chico community and visitors a sanctuary from a fast-paced life, a place to reflect and a place to enjoy activities. Its unique size and topography offers the community an experience to connect with nature at different levels. Bidwell Park is the ninth largest municipal park (Trust of Public Land, 2011) in the country, and is the twenty-sixth largest park within city limits located in the United States. In comparison to other communities, Chico also has the most park land per capita within city limits in the country.
2.2.1 Historical

In 1905, Annie Bidwell (John Bidwell’s wife) donated 1,902 acres of land to the City of Chico to be used by the public. Annie gave an additional 301 acres in 1911, which were granted to the City of Chico, to the Upper Park Area of Bidwell Park. The City of Chico purchased additional land in 1922, adding another 37 acres. This is where the Chico Creek Nature Center rests today, as well as the Oak Grove. In the 1930’s, Kennedy Estate Field was added, and, in 1995, the City purchased an additional 1,420 acres around Big Chico Creek in the Upper Park Area from the US Bureau of Land Management (Figure 2.2).
2.2.2 Regional Context

Located in Northern California, Bidwell Park lies within the City of Chico, located 172 miles from the City of San Francisco and two and half hours from the San Francisco Bay Area, two hours from Napa Valley and 92 miles north of Sacramento, an hour and half drive (Figure 2.3).
2.3 Site Description

Bidwell Park covers 3,670 acres of land (BPMP, 2011), and is almost 11 miles in length, stretching along ten miles of Big Chico Creek (Figure 2.4). It extends northeast from downtown Chico, located in the Sacramento Valley floor up to the Sierra Nevada Foothills, creating a diverse and important corridor, with a linkage of Big Chico Creek to the Sacramento River. The topography, elevation, and surrounding use and zoning outside of the Park, such as downtown and residential neighborhoods, correspond with the characteristics that are found inside the Park. Therefore, Bidwell Park adopted names for these zones, referring to them as Lower Park, Middle
Park and Upper Park, (Friends of Bidwell) all connected by trails and the riparian corridor of Big Chico Creek.

Figure 2.4: Bidwell Park Surrounded by the City of Chico
Source: Bruce King and Author

2.3.1 Lower Park

Beginning in Downtown Chico, Lower Park encompasses the historic Bidwell Mansion, and offers a variety of feature areas in this section, including: Lost Park, Annie’s Glenn, Nature Center, Cedar Grove, Caper Acre, World of Trees and the Sycamore Pool - known to locals as One-Mile. The BPMP (2011) described Lower Park as “made up of woodlands, alluvial meadows, multiple-use trails, and turf areas. One of the most popular and most active locations is
the One-Mile Pool in Figure 2.5. One-Mile is considered the prime attraction with a huge swimming pool and a location close to Caper Acres Playground. Lower Park has a relatively flat topography and offers more shade from the oak tree canopies that cover the trails and paths following Big Chico Creek.

![Image of Lower Park and Downtown Chico](image-url)

Figure 2.5: One Mile Swimming Pool Located in Lower Park of Bidwell Park

Source: Bruce King

Surrounding Lower Park is Downtown Chico, California State University, Chico, the “Chico Charmers,” and the houses that make up the neighborhood that abuts the Park in Figure 2.6. The land uses are zoned residential, urban, commercial and institutional. The residential neighborhood has some of the highest prices per square foot in Chico, when the houses go on the market for sale. The houses include Tudor, California Mission, Bungalow and Cottage style homes. With its location within the City of Chico and the flat terrain, there is easy access for
vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. For many, this area is considered the “backyard” of the community.

Figure 2.6: Start of Bidwell Park Next to Downtown Chico
Source: Bruce King and Author

2.3.2 Middle Park

Middle Park offers a different terrain than Lower Park. It begins to transition from the Sacramento Valley floor to rolling foothills, offering a transition from the higher density use patterns of Lower Park to the lower density patterns of Upper Park. The Middle Park zone starts east of Manzanita Avenue and extends up to the golf course and the ridge just east of the Horseshoe Lake Area. This area also includes places within the park that have their own identity, including: the Hooker Oak Recreation Area, Five-Mile Recreation Area, the Observatory, Horseshoe Lake, Chico Equestrian Association Arena, Chico Rod and Gun Club and the Bidwell
Municipal Golf Course. Surrounding Middle Park are land uses that are zoned low density residential and ranch land.

2.3.3 Upper Park

Upper Park is physically very different from the other zones of the Park. As one follows Big Chico Creek upstream, the creek has created a natural and gradual incision into the rocks, eventually creating steep canyon walls with changing elevations up to 1,000 feet from the creek bed to the canyon rim, providing excellent hiking and mountain biking trails with views of the foothills and the City of Chico down below. The roads, trails and pathways are limited by the slopes, decreasing the amount of vehicle traffic and users of Upper Park. This undeveloped, open space offers many different activities and more undisturbed conditions. Such opportunities include the ability to see more wildlife, such as mountain lions, bears and birds of prey. The trail systems are narrower and provide different experiences as they spread out over rims and the creek. The Yahi Trail, named after a local non-profit that took its name from the Indian Tribe that was located East of Bidwell Park, is known as the tribe that Ishi came from. Ishi was the last Native American found to be living in nature in the United States. This foot path is the only trail that runs along Big Chico Creek and is used solely for foot traffic.

2.3.4 Viewshed

Bidwell Park’s landscape is a beautiful mix of natural and physical characteristics that can be seen from many vantage points. The landscape offers far-reaching views and the intimacy of a single optical experience of a large oak tree or a winding path, or many glimpses of the creek as one walks alongside it. The park offers a network of trails, bike paths and paved or
gravel roads that snake throughout the park, and, in some cases, run alongside of the Park. The trails and the topography of the land offer vantage points and access to explore further from the North Rim in Upper Park, which provides views of the canyon, to the lower trails of Yahi Trail that run alongside Big Chico Creek.

2.4 Management

This unique Park is managed by the City of Chico’s Park Division. There are four major functions that fall under the Park Division’s responsibility: (1) maintenance of Bidwell Park, (2) maintenance of other City parks, (3) maintenance of City street trees (approximately 37,000 trees) and (4) management of the many maintenance districts within Chico. The City's Park Rangers, Urban Forest Manager, and Volunteer Coordinator all work within the Park Division.

The Park is overseen by the Bidwell Park Playground Commission (BPPC), a seven member commission that acts as the guiding force. Its role is to provide feedback to the City regarding the management of playgrounds and parks.

2.5 Client Meeting

The Park Division initially was using the US Army Corps of Engineers Sign Manual and Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Handbook, produced by the Federal Highway Administration, as the primary sources in putting together a sign manual and the design guidelines for Bidwell Park. Through discussion with the Chico Park Division staff, it was discovered that this direction was chosen for the following reasons: (1) signs are needed to keep
people safe, (2) signs are needed to protect the park from its users and (3) it allowed for staff to replicate a sign manual that already existed. Following the US Army Corps of Engineers and MUTCD would allow them to replicate these desired needs for Bidwell Park.

This can be linked to the Park Division’s role and how it saw itself as protecting a place of conservation and a place to keep people safe. This outlook could cause a disconnection between the new sign system and the users of the Park, if the Park Division itself were disconnected from the real users of the park. Although both desired goals for signage were important, the Park Division was not considering the possibility that signs as a physical feature that would be applied to an existing park could potentially be taking away from someone’s visual experience of the Park. Furthermore, it was ignoring some of the goals that were laid out surrounding sense of place in the General Plan.

Developing signs through the MUTCD and the US Army Corps of Engineers Sign Manual would mean using guides that are heavily focused on the car and not the human being. In the end, the sign manual would take the approach that a one-size-fits-all, leaving Bidwell Park with signs with no personality or themes that reflected the City of Chico or Bidwell Park. The majority of users of the Park are accessing it and moving through it by foot, bike or horseback and not by car (BPMP, 2011). Through further research of the guiding documents developed by the City of Chico, the recent General Plan: 2030 Vision Study and Bidwell Park Management Plan, both completed in 2011, had mentioned the need for signage and the consideration of “place-making” and “sense of place” in the community design features; something that the Park Division was not considering.
Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Everything is a Sign

Signs play an important and daily role in people’s lives, acting as communicative devices (Claus & Claus, 1988). In *Sign Users Guide* (Claus & Claus, 1988) state that signs are used so often that people don’t give them a second thought and inadvertently overlook how important they are to our everyday lives. One might forget the role that signs play in our lives until one is lost in an unfamiliar city; locating a bathroom in a foreign airport, or trying to find food during a road trip. We look for recognizable wayfinding guides, symbols, and images, such as the golden arches of McDonald’s, that let the driver know that food is located at the upcoming exit. We look for visual landmarks or symbols that allow us to orient ourselves to the area, such as a statue, a mailbox, or a mural. As Lekies and Whitworth (2011) state, it is hard to conceive of any form of human meaning that does not involve the use of signs of different kinds at various levels of abstraction. Signs can exist outside of what we commonly think of, such as business signs or road signs. They can be visual cues, words, images (Lekies & Whitworth, 2011) or objects that can attract our attention and represent a sense of location (Golledge, 1992).

This can apply to a location such as a neighborhood or a park; all we need to do is consider Chinatown in San Francisco, Portland, Vancouver B.C. One knows when she has entered Chinatown because of the entry arch, Chinese lanterns and Chinese writing on the signs, giving a sense of place. The same can be said when entering a gay district or neighborhood, such
as Castro Street in San Francisco, University Street in San Diego or Church Street in Toronto. The high flying rainbow flags perched on the street poles in the Castro gives one cues that one has arrived in the district. The street signs in Toronto have a rainbow border (Figure 3.1) communicating that one is in a gay neighborhood. These examples are visual communicators that allow the user to collect information and establish meaning, making a connection to the place.

![Figure 3.1 Church-Wellesly Street, Toronto's Gay District](source: Richard Lautens of the Toronto Star)

The connection to place gives identity to the observer’s surroundings, formulating and communicating the image of the place. Reading the images of a place is part of the cognitive processing tying humans to their settings (Noble & Bestley, 2005).

3.2 Sign Context
Defining a sign is not easy, since everything that we come across in our visual world can be considered a sign. Man-made signs and natural signs share some similarities, according to Beasley and Dansei (2002). They offer the similarities through two dimensions of signs:

1) A physical dimension: e.g., the sounds or letters that make up a word such as cat; the configuration made by the fingers in hand gesturing etc.

2) The entity, object, being, event etc.: that the physical part has been created to stand for whether it is real or imagined.

To understand the physical dimensions that they provide, a further look into the field of semiotics is needed, an important part of understanding signs and our cogitative process that will be discussed later on in this paper. However, for the purpose of this research, a more narrow definition of sign is used as it applies to the actual problem that is to be solved for the project site:

A sign is a material, communicative device that operates independently or as a system in the landscape, publically identifying and providing information to a user as it relates to place.

There are several researchers that influenced this definition of a sign by providing their own definitions that were then borrowed from to develop the definition to be used for the project. Zelinsky (1994) describes signs as fixed, material objects presenting explicit verbal or graphic messages to the general public. In You Are Here (1999), Gail Finke defines signs as something that gives identity to a place, as well as informs, directs, educates and entertains people. In Sign’s User Guide: A Marketing Aid (1988), Karen Claus and James Claus, describe a sign as a communication device. Acknowledging this as a narrow definition, they recognize the following as key attributes of a sign: (1) a sign is public and (2) a sign is part of the environment. John
Jakle and Keith Sculley offer an option in *Signs in America's Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place* (2004) stating signs 1) identify, 2) persuade, 3) orientate and 4) regulate.

### 3.3 Evolution of Signs

Even with the addition of the internet and access to maps through the use of cell phones, signs remain relevant today. It is said that someone with sight “in this culture reads and relies upon signs on a daily basis” (Claus & Claus, 1978). Our culture has come to depend on signs to help identify things we want and places we want to go. Signs have historically been a way to communicate messages in the physical environment, advancing from carved signs and painted signs, to the use of electricity that led to a variety of different sign displays using screens and the most recent idea of a robotic directional street signs that are activated by movement, displaying directions on the LED screen.

Signs have been used by people for thousands of years as wayfinding tools, allowing early civilization to explore beyond their familiar surroundings (Morris et al., 2001). Early Egyptians and the Mayans developed the technology to sketch visual images and messages in stone. Records indicate that advertising through signs was occurring as early as 3000 BC. In the Middle East (Beasley & Danesi, 2003), merchants would locate outdoor signs to advertise their shops. The Greeks and Roman of ancient time also identified their shops with signs, often using recognizable visual symbols carved in stone or clay, since few people could read during this time (Beasley & Danesi, 2003). Signs were discovered on stone and on brick during the excavation of Pompeii (Anthony, 1976). Into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England’s signboards became the extension of shops, and were displayed along the narrow streets (Anthony, 1976), a
more elaborate form of advertising in order to draw attention to the uniqueness of the store (Nystrom, 1978).

American consumerism brought significant changes to signs; they made a huge physical and visual leap in appearance by their sheer size and the use of electricity. A trade journal *Signs of the Times*, had one of their journalists say in 1909, “The electric sign is the one object of attraction that people cannot and do not want to avoid. It is a democratic institution. It is admired by the saint and the sinner, the aristocrat and the plebian, the culture and vulgar, the scholar and the illiterate” (as cited in Jakle & Shulle, 2004). In the early 1920’s, neon signs were introduced, and, in 1924, Time Square received its first neon sign. In addition to the already lit signs, Time Square’s Broadway became a unique place earning the nickname “The Great White Way.” This came from the brightness of all the lights one would experience from the signs. In the 1940’s, the popularity of neon signs grew as they filled bars and merchants’ storefronts and were often connections to the image of Main Street America. Rudi Stern (1979) describes, “Neon signs and symbols as the light of the American Dream. On highways, in center cities, along desolate stretches of our landscape, neon was the electric pen with which we traditionally signed our identity.” In 1949, Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles had gas stations, hotels, parking lots, eating establishments and vacant lots that catered to many nonlocal residents. In a need to attract the motorist, huge billboards were used. A billboard became a part of the urban and rural experience that still exists today. Through the last several decades, signs have evolved with technology and urban form, integrating into a complex communication system.

3.4 Sign is a Cultural Expression
Although these examples are associated with commerce, signs are also a reflection of our culture, dating back to the earliest of times. Signs have become a way of life (Flemming, 1977) and in a sense a metaphor for our culture. In the book *The Medium is the Massage* (1967), Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore felt that our society was shaped through the make-up of the media by which people communicate through rather the actual message that is being communicated. Jakle and Schulle (2004) share this view, feeling that signs are uniquely American’s contribution to the landscape when considering how the landscape has been shaped by them.

The story of signs is essentially the parable of human consumerism and movement but place is at the heart. It was Joan Nassauer that said that, “culture changes landscape and culture is embodied by landscape” (1995). Although signs have been found to be in other countries and other cultures throughout history, the introduction of the automobile gave American society mobility, changing signs and the landscape and, essentially, place. To paraphrase Jakle and Sculle (2004), “signs are likely to be the most frequented encountered feature in the United States landscape.” Culture allows us to make sense and explain how our landscape became littered with signs. Joan Nassauer felt it, “helps to suggest the enormous array of possible human actions and construction in the landscape” to comprehend it (1995).

Signs are located and configured to be noticed and to contribute to the functioning of landscape as a place (Jakle & Shulle, 2004). As people begin to understand their environment, by molding it and shaping it to their advantage, it takes on the character of the culture. Through physical form, we create cultural meaning, transforming the environment to reflect these meanings and the character of the place. The design of physical elements in the environment, such as signs, becomes the “place-expression.” One particular example is the “welcome sign”
that is used throughout cities in America. Grady Clay (1994) refers to it as the “arrival zone,” a place that is believed to have physiological impact on those who are arriving. The arrival sign gives the community it is representing an opportunity to project its identity and sense of place onto the newcomer. Wilber Zelinsky (1992) in research on welcome signs has said, “what makes the welcoming sign distinctive is the community it purveys: the image of the partial locality.”

3.5 Communication through Landscape

The concept of “landscape” was of particular interest to geographer J.B. Jackson in The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscape (1997). Long gone are the days that John Bidwell experienced coming across untouched land; our American landscape shares a much different story now, one that Jackson describes as “evocative, memorable and penetrating vignettes which are visually acute and yet receptive to meaning of the milieu for those who occupy it” (Crosgrove, 1984). Our human life is secured in landscape and in place, “it is not something to look at but to live in, and to live in socially,” Dennis Cosgrove (1984) feels; therefore, the landscape has become our culture’s expression. It is much more telling and visually noticeable than that of the people that are participating in it (Lamme, 1989).

It seems humans are the only species that continually shape and reshape the landscape; the reason for this is to, as Tony Hiss (1990) notes, “stretch our capacity of understanding and provoke new accomplishments.” One of these accomplishments has been reaching viewers through a sign (Claus & Claus, 1988). Perhaps the introduction of the automobile led to such a drastic change in our landscape, seeing signs make their way out to the vast space along highways (Venturi et al., 1977). Agricultural land or open space can be seen with large billboards
among the crops, angled at the vehicles to grab the attention of their driver. It is perhaps our consumerism and mobility combined with companies branding themselves to a mobile population that we see brands competing with brands through signs. Brook and Dunn (2011) give insight, explaining that the “nature of the sign” is a “predominant physical manifestation of brand, is relentlessly applied across our urban landscape.”

This led to the change in signage with the size, design, and location combined with “social functions” (Brook & Dunn, 2011) and commercial environments (Venturi et al., 1977) often giving many cities the same image. American culture saw communication moving faster than it had before. With consumerism increasing, merchants could reach their clients through signs. Signs now tell us who has the best happy hour prices, lunch specials or low interest rates. Soon corporations increased their visual branding efforts, with trademark logos, such as the famous golden arches of McDonald’s, a symbol of American culture.

Outdoor advertisement gives the population the most significant everyday visual experience (Gosling & Maitland, 1984). Research of the Las Vegas Strip had examined the sheer size of two towering hotel signs, determining that the competition between the two for the attention of the person driving by in a car (Venturi et al, 1977) had led to its towering figure. Carr (1977) remarked about how privately owned signs were designed, first to grab the attention of the observer, and, second, to inform them. It was Claus and Claus (2004) who observed how the automobile contributed to the way retailers adapted their marketing strategy to meet the needs of a consumer that was now in motion. As Richard Macias (1977) presented at The Urban Signage Forum, “we have come to shop through signs.” Brook and Dunn (2011) had a name for this; they called this shift to focus on brand value the sign.
3.6 Semiotics of Place

A branch of anthropology, called semiology, was developed in the 1800’s (Noble & Bestley, 2005), originating from the Greek word *semeion* meaning “mark, sign” (Beasley & Danesi 2002). Originally, this applied to a natural sign, not a man-made one. However, over time, this has changed. Semiotics investigates how one produces and comprehends signs and how one uses signs to communicate messages and meaning.

In short, semiology or semiotics is the study of signs. In the 1950’s, a French semiotician named Roland Barthes brought popularity to the value of the study of signs through his work *Mythologies* (Barthes, 1972). In another one of his earlier writings, *Elements of Semiology* (1967), Roland Barthes wrote:

Semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification (Barthes 1967, 9).

Prior to Roland Barthes’s work, Charles Pierce was influential in the field of semiotics. Pierce was interested in the formulation of words and symbols as elements of a communication system. He stated that each sign had three principle parts: (1) The iconic image that conveys the idea of the object they are representing, i.e. a photograph or the golden arches of McDonald’s, (2) indexical signs that conveys the information by indicating their physical connection with the
object they represent and (3) symbolic signs that have been associated by their meaning that was
determined by the interpretive process.

The description of the sign typology, offered by Pierce, allows us to look at each part
individually to understand the organization of the sign’s ability to communicate. Whether we use
a color, an icon, or a particular typeface and style, it is the positioning of these that can construct
a message and act as a signifier. Jakle and Shulle (2004) feel that a human’s emotional
characteristics, such as attitude or belief, will be intentionally attached to physical objects in the
landscape, which they referred to as icons or things that symbolize. For example, a typeface that
uses a particular theme can deliver a message not only through the words that are written, but the
colors and the context of the sign. This then translates into a semiotic reading of a type image
(Noble & Bestley, 2005) providing the meaning to the reader; ultimately, semiotics, “allows us
to filter the implicit meanings an images that swarm and flow through us every day. By
understanding the images, the situation is changed, and we become active interpreters of signs”
(Beasley & Danesi, 2002).

People are continually shaping and reshaping the semiotic process, as Peirce believes
(Bakker, 2005), making further significations. Our response to a sign may come in a physical
change in position (e.g., turning left) a behavioral movement (e.g., recycling a plastic bottle), but
almost always in an interpretation that one processes cognitively. Therefore, it could be said that,
intentionally or unintentionally, meaning is being created through the signs or symbols that are
being observed through the observer’s analysis of the sign’s elements. Bartha (1967) indicated
that models of the signifier could be used to cast a cultural expression, which was not apparent in
“linguistic” nature (Jenks, 1980). How does the use of semiotics through signs and symbols
contribute to experience in our daily lives?
3.7 Sign Systems and Functions

By examining signs and their use in the environment, we can become more aware of their presence. We learn from semiotics that we live in a world of signs (Chandler, 2002), and their elements work together to perform functions. As people, we look to our surrounding environment for information; it provides rich feedback that we rely on all the time. (Claus & Claus, 1988). Kaplan et al. (1998) described one of the human characteristics as being obsessed with gathering information; “we crave it.” This information comes in many forms, some urgent and some not, determined by the actions that are required.

Public information systems show up in vast quantities in cities, towns, neighborhoods and public parks or land. They are there to serve the individuals that make up a place to ensure that essential information is provided to them to bring meaning, safety, and pleasure to their experience (Carr & Williams, 1993). These larger systems often are public information systems that provide guidance and understanding by orientating one and providing the functionality of it (Carr, 1977). In order to do this, there are several different sign types and functions that have been given classifications within a system. Not of great importance for the purpose of this research, but worth mentioning, are the different types of signs. Using Michael Gross’s categories (2006), they are dived into two: (1) information signs and (2) interpretive signs. Under each category, there are several sub-categories; for example the following can be consider informational signs: regulatory signs, warning signs, wayfinding signs and identification signs.

The classification of signs functions in some significant ways. These include, but are certainly not limited to, the following: assisting visitors and travelers; deciphering different parts
of cities (e.g., Airport, Museums, CBD, Historic District, Universities); identifying businesses, providing direction or informing people and sharing regulation of the area. London offers a prime example of how signage was considered to be an important tool for people in the city. The project, *Legible London*, assumed that people who travel around the city acknowledge that improvement of the urban environment will always be a constant need, and new signage was one way to enable this:

London is unique… It’s jam-packed full of landmarks and places of interest, but it’s notoriously hard to find your way around when you’re walking. The sheer volume of signs adds to the problem…32 separate wayfinding systems for pedestrians in the central Congestion Charging Zone alone… These systems come with sharp differences in information, design and quality. Destination names are inconsistent. So are indications of distance. Designs vary in color, shape, typeface, materials and branding. Some aren’t maintained properly, leading to graffiti and vandalism (Transport for London, 2007).

This was a major undertaking but signs were seen as a way to reach London’s goal of becoming a more walkable city. If a place provides a strong system of visible characteristic features, it offers a much greater incentive to begin to explore. As noted by Lynch (1960), “If strategic links in communication (such as museums or libraries or meeting places) are clearly set forth, then those who might otherwise neglect them may be tempted to enter.”

Besides these general functions, there is more substance to what signs offer. Claus (1976) presented that, “if we are going to make a town or place or space work it is normally going to be done with our communication system.” Returning to an earlier discussion about mobility and the American population, signs have been used to restore some neighborhoods or places that were affected by urban sprawl. Even though it has been recognized that signs also contributed to urban sprawl (Claus & Claus, 1978) with the relocation of business from the city’s core areas to the
suburbs, signs followed the businesses. However, signs have been a tool that has been used to return some life back to these core areas. With new façade programs or a focus around place-making comes a desire to give areas a face-lift; a new signage program offers an option. Claus and Claus (1978) point out that signs can be a “shot in the arm that a business needs to encourage it to remain in a location.”

3.8 Unique Character

Communities throughout world seek ways they can attend to the “form and quality of the built environment” (Morris et al., 2001), and signs can offer a solution. Signs help signify a unique character of a particular area or a special interest zone through the development of signs that show the special historical or cultural relevance of that area.

On a larger level, one can look at the province of Quebec and its use of signage as a way to retain its identity and signify its pride in French heritage. Daniel Gade’s (2003) research on Quebec provides an example of a sign policy and design guides that were to be put in place to protect the sense of place. Gade discusses the power of signs as “placed in a temporal respective, the scriptorial landscape of a given place offers away to understand permutations in language use, the ethnic identification to which that is related, and historic claims to uniqueness” (2003). In the province of Quebec, French is spoken by 81 percent of its 7.4 million people (Gade, 2003). A law in place around outdoor signage, states that “French words must dominate…. This requirement is legally achieved by allotting French twice the amount of space of lettering and size of characters as that of ‘the other’ languages” (Gade, 2003). As a visitor to this area, one might find this visual experience quite exciting and unique, providing a powerful image of Quebec.
Another example is Little Italy in San Diego, where a business improvement district was formed giving the area a makeover in hopes of creating a unique and vibrant district. Some of the elements that were added were branding efforts using signs as a way to compliment other street improvements. Another example comes from surveying done by college students that explored signs in Tucson. By looking at dominant local symbols, they found themes such as “desert, mountain, sun, Spanish/Mexican and cowboy/western” located on signs, or they were names of businesses (Peterson & Saarinen, 1986). These similarities in theme that were found throughout the town were acting to bolster Tucson’s local sense of place. Peterson and Saarinen (1986) found that “signs are rich, multifaceted source of local imagery incorporating many symbols at once in the form of picture, logos and names.”

Signs have been described as something that works on their own or that can be organized into a larger system working together to give identity to a place (Finke, 1999). When they work on their own, they can be private signs that can be used to enhance a business’s visibility, or act as a person’s self-expression; these examples are typically a single sign and a form of private identity. However, this can still influence the visual character of the environment, such as the earlier example used of Chinatown. Take Stockton Street in San Francisco’s Chinatown; there are many different individual signs that have Chinese characters representing the individual businesses. For a visitor, these individual and private signs provide a larger character of the place. James Claus (1977) presented that “distinct cultural theme such as ethnic emphasis in Chinatown comes in great part from the appearance of its signs.” Another example given by Michael Hough’s in Out of Place (1990) is that one of Toronto’s “street signs in the Greek quarter or in Chinatown give a stamp to these neighborhoods that defines and reinforces their identity within the city”.

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A study done in Amarillo, Texas (Evans-Cowley & Nasar, 2003) looked at signs in a community as art. When a field survey was completed, it showed that residents saw signs as an extension of themselves. These were a broad range of signs, inspired by road signs that were installed in residents’ yards in a particular neighborhood giving character to the place. It even gave those that were non-residents who viewed the signs a perception of the occupants that lived there (Evans-Cowley & Nasar, 2003). This can be considered a form of public art or a form of a person’s self-expression, which, when combined together, give the neighborhood a unique identity through its collective participation in displaying signs. Barbara Weightman (1988) felt that local identity or a particular place show signs frequently to serve as a visual element that can reflect and enhance it (as cited in Evans-Cowley & Nasar, 2003).

3.9 Sign Elements

Signs and a system of signs can adopt a particular theme that can become a dominant feature in the landscape. For example, signs that serve the general public often follow a system and guidelines, creating a very systematic theme. The use of a general visual hierarchy and graphic standards (Carr, 1973), such as color or shape, can begin to organize public signs into systems or sub systems by type and context. *In You Are Here* (1999), Finke feels signs identify a place with not only with the words “You are Here” but through the design, scale, images, graphics and colors. These elements are chosen to work together to unleash a mental image for viewers, giving them a sense of what “here” is, essentially the place’s personality. If we look at them from the point of view of being a stranger in a new community, signs can tell us about the
life and culture of the community, and they define the community geographically (Carroll, 1976). They essentially are the vocabulary of the place (Carroll, 1976).

Those responsible with forming visual communication need to be aware of how their messages will relate to their user. There are both external position and internal positions to consider. A helpful approach for designers is using what is known as the Gestalt Theory (Noble & Bestley, 2005), which can be applied through design principles and by understanding the perceptions of viewers. This psychological theory considers how the different mechanisms of the human mind work as a “holistic process that strives to self-organize” (O’Grady & O’Grady, 2008). The organization of a sign in its wholeness is more than the sum of its elements, creating the visual hierarchy and meaning for the viewer. The sign elements suggest meaning is being communicated through its parts and images. The intended target audience for a sign or visual cue will have a denotation and connotation meaning. This is something that graphic designers will need to incorporate into signs and a system of signs. Understanding visual stimuli and their relationship to graphic design is not included in this research. However, it is recognized that there are some basic design concepts that are important elements known as graphics (National Park Services) these are color, typeface and images. They are discussed below.

*Color* is a powerful visual stimulus, a dictator of mood (Jakle, 1987) and a very useful communication tool. Understanding how the viewer reacts to colors is an important feature for a sign. For this reason, designers have paid special attention to color as a mechanism for human perception of color, and believe it is a universal mechanism. In *Design Elements* (2007), Timothy Samara says, “color carries an abundance of psychological and emotional meaning, and this meaning can vary tremendously between cultural groups and even individuals.” There are colors that have been determined to create certain emotions within people, such as those that can
make one feel calm (Samara, 2007). With color being used as part of our daily lives, Philip Theil feels color could be used much more extensively to make us feel at home (1981).

*Typeface* is an important part of a sign and should not be left to chance, says Michael Gross (Gross et al., 2006). Each typeface is unique, speaking its “own language” and portraying its own “personality” (Gross et al., 2006). They can have a historical or cultural context that is wrapped up in a particular style, and can be used in signs that want to reflect this meaning (Samara, 2007). For example, the National Park Service developed its own typeface for many of the signs throughout its parks; the purpose was to communicate that “parks are places for leisure activity not a speedway” (Gross et al., 2006). In comparison, the fonts for highway signs are made for clarity and high speed, with very little personality.

*Images* and graphics can have more impact than words (Gross et al, 2006). They can create powerful experiences for the observer acting as a symbolic and emotional connector that replaces the physical experience or the memory of it. Symbols are often used as a mediated form, drawing on common understanding of cultural contexts that evaluate them beyond more representation. Universal symbols are images that are used instead of words; Gross et al. (2006) notes symbols and objects are more identifiable than words.

3.10 Recognizing Signs as the Built-Environment

Discussed earlier, but further supported by Umberto Eco’s work as an architect, is the field of semiotics. Eco felt that semiotics can be broken down to a simple form of
communication of cultural arrangements. Charles Jenks (1980), also interested in semiotics, was an architectural theorist who evaluated architecture and the built environment by applying the theory of semiotics. Jenks followed Ferdinand De Swanssa beliefs that “a sign in a sense being anything which can stand for something else,” he applied this by exploring communication and meaning through design (1980). Howett (1987) called the recent work around semiotics, inspiring through a “fresh understanding of expressive meaning of the built form” a working relationship of semiotics and architecture. These designers and other scholars have made significant impact on the study of signage. Although not their sole focus, their contributions provided a new way to look at the communication of signs in our physical environment. Signs became objects to give meaning to a place, reinforcing an area’s identity.

There were several studies that have been significant in the study of signs and the study of signs in place. However, research hasn’t solely focused on signs, stopping short of making a link with signs and sense of place, but through the work of physical features in the landscape and place, the connection can be understood. Robert Venturi, Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard and Gordon Cullen provided insight on physical elements and their role in enhancing place or sense of place, which is extended to include signs. They also contribute to the understanding of how one processes place.

3.11 Establishing Meaning

Scholar Robert Venturi, an architect, explored the significance of signs in the landscape of Las Vegas. Venturi and partners Denise Scott Brown, Steve Izenour and his students did research on the Las Vegas Strip to understand the existing form and the spatial relationships of
signage. The work was published in *Learning from Las Vegas* (1977). This was a revolutionary project for Venturi and partners, who “took signs as architecture” (Izenour, 1977), an element of the physical environment that had received little discussion until the 1970’s (Starr & Hayman, 1988). This was echoed in Carr’s work with the City of Boston (1973), where it was noted that sign designers ignored the buildings in the landscape, and the architects of buildings ignored signs.

Las Vegas is certainly an extreme example, as it boasts more miles of neon and square footage of neon than anywhere else in the world, but it provides insight on a perception of a place and a place-expression through signs. Venturi and partners found that their visual experience was stimulated by the sure brightness and size of the signs and symbols of the Strip. Starr and Hayman (1998) describes how one might encounter Las Vegas on a trip to the city in 1930’s, pointing out that one might experience a 80 foot tall neon cowboy sign towering over the town. Decades later, Las Vegas would develop into a city full of “neon-encrusted” signs working together to form an identity for this place. Las Vegas was not used to showcase a “one-of-kind” experience, but the study aimed to demonstrate through research that the underlying interest is in “meaning.” The character of the sign was significant to the purpose of the sign furthering development of a distinct and memorable place.

By considering a sign as a physical form, much like Venturi et al. (1977) discovered, sign designs can perhaps be more ingrained and scaled to their surrounding area. For Las Vegas, it has become more-or-less a part of the character or meaning of that place. To replicate large neon signs through State Street in Santa Barbara, California, on the other hand, would be devastating and unappealing to the style and identity of that city, which is heavily influenced by honoring its Spanish Colonial heritage.
3.11.1 Signs Organize

The result of this analysis was the acceptance of signs offering meaning through a visual experience that assisted in comprehension of cities spatially and their urban form. Signs, as Venturi et al. (1977) found, combine to provide our “commercial” vernacular landscape with a pattern and form that allow residents and visitors to understand. The physical environment bears our historical and cultural relationship with the land and our lifestyle (Carr, 1973).

A trip to Bologna, Italy presents one with a very pedestrian centered lifestyle. One can walk the entire central city under 25 miles of particos. The building façades above the particos are free from any signs or advertisements; it is only when one walks in front of the merchant storefront that a sign is visible. The signs in this landscape were scaled for a lifestyle of people who move through the city on foot, giving form and activities that provide cultural meaning. There is no
need for large signs to attract the attention of a driver that have been considered “visual pollution” (Brook & Dunn, 2011) in the American urban landscape. The Bologna experience combines the meaning of the city’s history and culture with its architectural elements and arcades. These places don’t just feel safe, but provide a beautiful and comfortable environment for people to be in (Carr, 1973), creating an image and feel of what Bologna’s sense of place is.

3.12 Place Language through Vision

How people perceive and create connections with their environment has been a neglected topic by those who were designing and planning place, calling for great concern among many researchers (Cullen, 1961; Appleyard, 1979; Lynch, 1960; Wapner, Kaplan & Cohen, 1980). Given the nature of signs to inform, orient and persuade, they do so with a certain place being implied (Morris et al., 2001). They begin to provide cues for the meaning of a particular place that is being implied through the sign. As Jakle and Shulle (2004) state, “signs contribute forcefully to the reading of landscape as a kind of visual text.” It seems essential to the process of designing and delivering a physical feature such as a sign, that an understanding of how one visually experiences place and then comprehends the place is important to this research. It has been recognized that how one scans his environment is by “the speed and mode of travel which influence perception as well as cognition” (Rapoport, 1977). Referred to as place-based (Arefi, 1999; Chapman, 2011), analysis and appraisal analysis (Lynch, 1960; Cullen, 1961; Appleyard, 1969) have emerged as potential practical applications through the use of analytical tools in reaching planning and design goals (Chapman, 2011).
3.12.1 Part of Larger Environment

Kevin Lynch, like Robert Venturi, has contributed significant work in support of signage. In a work around policy, *Signs in the City*, a study was conducted in order to comprehend a sign’s function in the image, appearance and design of the city (as cited in Morris et al., 2001). From this study, the following recommendation was made:

> In order to be able to plan the improvement of communication flow in the city, it is necessary that the sign policy be coordinated with any plan which may exist for improving the physical design of the environment. The objectives of a sign policy should reflect the objectives of the comprehensive plan. (Lynch)

This recognized signs as a part of the larger environment that should be considered when designing and planning for place. Kevin Lynch was influential in his work to link how one could understand the environment by decoding it with the use of the visual elements that are embedded in the landscape. Lynch’s best known work in the field of environmental perception was his book, *Image of the City* (1960), where he provided a method to critique and extract information on how a person reads the city. To understand how people view their city, he developed one of the first mapping systems. As one explored the city, a human was experiencing visual dominance; “every citizen has had a long association with some parts of his city and his image is soaked in memories and meaning” (Lynch, 1960). Lynch gives an account of a research project carried out in three American cities (Los Angeles, Boston and Jersey City, with comparisons to Florence and Venice) resulting in the evolution of the concept of legibility of the city depending on the people’s “mental maps”. What was it about these cities’ landscapes that were “imageable” or memorable for their citizens? A few terms were developed in this study that are used throughout the planning and urban design professions today. They are discussed below.
**Legibility** is a term used to describe the ease with which people can understand the layout of a place. By making questionnaire surveys, Lynch defined a method of analyzing legibility based on five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. It is the place’s legibility that would form the image of the experience for the user. Lynch highlighted that “a good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security.” This is something that signs have been very helpful with acting as a guidance device for the cities’ users, allowing them to navigate in unfamiliar places (Taylor, 2003).

This mental map that one is left with due to the physical qualities of the area is what is called *imageability*. Lynch defined it as, “that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer.” He continues by describing it by saying it is the “shape, color, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment” (Lynch, 1960). As research provides insight into how signs play a role in the visual landscape, an individual sign or a system of signs and its elements contribute to one’s image of the environment or of a particular place. Some designs have the ability to make the user’s experience more harmonious with the intended outcome that the designer was seeking through the placement and the sign’s elements.

3.12.2 Relating to the Environment

Kevin Lynch worked closely with Donald Appleyard, an important researcher who contributed work on showing how signs play a role in our lives and the places that we move through. His interest was on how one perceives their environment building on some of Lynch’s work. His work can be related back to signs, with the study that assisted in planning Venezuela’s
Ciudad Guayana, later described in *Why Buildings are Known: A Predictive Tool for Architects and Planners* (Appleyard, 1969). In this study, he wanted to understand how buildings or physical structures were remembered and received attention by the viewer. Appleyard (1969) was curious about people’s perception of the environment and how they gathered meaning from it, finding that “we are compelled to understand the nature of our relationship to place.” In his writings, he began to discuss the environment as a design tool, stating planners and architects needed to go beyond Kevin Lynch’s (1960). It was the layers underneath Lynch’s five elements that attracted his curiosity, and he wanted to determine “why” these elements were known to people.

Reviewing the responses of the 75 participants, he found that the attributes of buildings that contributed to one’s imageability were the “intensity and singularity of their apparent movement, contour, size, shape, surface, quality and signs” (Appleyard, 1969), that is, physical attributes in that location that would allow the observer to seize the experience and form a mental image of that area. Christian Norberg-Schulz (1979) made reference to this process as “gathering,” which he defines as, “things are brought together, that is, they are moved from one place to another.” This can be done in two ways, Norberg-Schulz explained, (1) one that involves physical force of moving physical elements at a particular location, or (2) what he calls “symbolization,” meaning that one captures the physical elements, processes them internally and then combines them in a creative way internally (1979).

In comparing villages, towns, cities or natural areas in the world, we can visualize the characteristics of each in our mind. We have developed a perception of what the image would be. If one were to dissect that image and break it up into the features that best represent that setting visually, we begin to form its character. In *The Aesthetics of the Environment* (1992), Berlant
asks the question, “How can features be shaped in ways that will create an environment rich in aesthetic interest and value?” This is similar to the same question that drove the planning of Appleyard’s Venezuelan project. How can elements of the experience be coordinated to produce productive awareness, curiosity, interest, exploration, discovery and wonder? Gordon Cullen attempts to answer this question in his research and shares some crossover with the other mentioned studies.

3.12.3 Gathering Meaning

Decades before both Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard, Gordon Cullen’s work revolved around the meaning that one gathers from the various items that make up one’s visual environment. In some of his work, he made reference, through his sketches and writings, *Language of Gestures* to the semiotics of the landscape. He noted, according to David Gosling (1996), “communication between people and the towns they live in is primary effected by signalization,” further supporting the major role that signs play in our lives, and how signs are part of the character of a place. A foundation of his work was his interest in the relationship that people had with their surrounding landscape. Cullen offered a simple approach to analyzing the elements in a built environment as it related to the individual, seeing great benefit in recognizing that the environment is made up of various components that relate to each other, providing the character of that place. This analysis or theory has developed into what is called Townscape Theory.

In 1950, Gordon Cullen’s *The Concise Townscape* presented this simple method. The urban experience was explored frame by frame through a pedestrian’s eyes, seeking to establish
the essential components of that experience. He writes, “We may walk through and past the buildings, and as a corner is turned an unsuspected building is suddenly revealed.” Ultimately, he provided a design approach for developers and architects in determining “interesting, pristique” parts that make them so (Marling, 2008).

In order to better understand how one perceives place and how the various elements contribute to the experience, Cullen offers three distinct dimensions:

1. **Optic “Serial Vision”** - A human is using his vision as he walks through an area. The scenes that are revealed to one are done through a sequence of pictures that one is existing in and emerging into.

2. **Place “Here and There”** - This is concerned with how one’s body is positioned in the surrounding environment, providing feelings of “here” and “there” as one leaves or enters a place, and how one might feel “exposed” or “enclosed” in the environment depending on what elements were surrounding her.

3. **Content “This and That”** - This is concerned with the “fabric” of the area that is affected by the variety of richness that comes from the characteristics of place.

*Optic* was considered by David Gosling as “the most significant because until then, the dynamic (as opposed to static) experience of viewing a town was barely recognized.” In what Cullen called *Place*, he explores a person’s continuous need to relate herself to the surrounding landscape. There is a search for the character of place, as the user looks beneath the layers of landscape to look at particular elements of a scene, in what he called “seeing in detail.” This is the third category *Content*, and it addresses the fabric of a town; color, texture, scale, style, character, personality and uniqueness.
For example, “see in detail,” Cullen discusses training the eye to see in detail, “the man-made world starts to grow in interest and quality. A sign is used as an example to describe the distinctive parts of that sign, secured above a business. The sign’s lettering and mounting frame are somewhat unusual and could “be thought of as out of place,” but the sign represents a metalworker’s shop directly relating to the business. This self-expression that a sign displays among other signs on the street is noticed because of its content.

3.13 Meaning through Movement

Robert Venturi, Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard and Gordon Cullen also considered how one experiences place both with vision but also through movement; to paraphrase Kevin Lynch, it plays a primary role in the making and interpretation of the city image. It is crucial to recognize this interaction between the “body, place, and motion” (Casey, 1993). It is an important factor that contributes to how we perceive and organize place. Thus, it seems important to consider not only signs as communicators and connectors, but also how people move through the environment that helps shape place and the designing for such. How people may move through the environment will also determine how they will experience and perceive meaning of the area and the signs or other features. One example was offered by Amos Rapport (1977) about the predictability of the pedestrian who is on foot versus the motorist in having very different ways in which they will comprehend their surroundings.

In order for humans to gain place knowledge, we must experience it; this usually involves our sensory perceptions (Taylor, 2003), with the visual being the most dominant (Thiel, 1961). Acknowledged by (Gollege, 1992), information that is collected about any given environment is obtained by traveling through it visual experience had been recognized to varying degrees (Thiel
prior to Venturi’s study of Las Vegas. Geoth wrote, “Only when we walk around a building, move through it, can we share in its life” (as cited in Thiel, 1961). In designing signs, we acknowledge that one can perceive their environment during locomotion (Gibson, 1979).

For Kevin Lynch, locomotion was critical to theory of legibility (Nassauer, 1995), as he developed this concept in *Image of the City* (1960). Lynch had significant influence on how we look at cities and the relationships people have with them. He introduced the concept of looking at cities through the human experience and how we relate to our environment. People move through a city (or anywhere else) with the purpose of getting somewhere (Taylor, 2003). We naturally decide with what appears to make the most sense to enable us to arrive at our intended destination; signs play a large role in helping one make decision on the arrival process.

To understand how people view their city, Lynch accepted that the human experience is through movement. In his work *Go Take a Walk Round the Block*, he asked the question, “What does an ordinary person perceive in the landscape?” (Lynch & Rivkin, 1959) A walking tour was conducted with participants around downtown Boston. The participants were to record the scenes that were the most remarkable, providing feedback on “everything and anything you notice” (Gosling, 1996). The feedback provided insight on what order of experience they had. Most mentioned objects that were the most significant for the participant. It was noted that 78 different signs (Lynch & Rivkin, 1959) were seen, making signage an object that received significance from the participants. As Lynch illustrates in this work and his later work in the *Image of the City*, participants acquire knowledge of their environment and then ascribe meaning to the environment (Rapoport, 1995) as they experience it.
3.14 Speed as Experience

In *View from the Road* (1966), Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John Meyer attempted to understand how a driver and the passenger experience the landscape in an automobile. Much like the earlier studies of Lynch in downtown Boston, these researchers applied a similar approach to traveling in a car on the highway. By recording their findings, they were able to claim that a highway experience is a series of scenes led through vision, i.e., sequential vision. Their research is another extreme example similar to Las Vegas, but with the focus on speed in relation to experience. Recognizing our cultural norm of being an auto dependent society as we travel through the landscape, it is essential to understand our aesthetic experience of a place and the design functions of signs.

The *View from the Road* (1966) is about the experience that is being shaped by the object’s form, function and design, as drivers and passengers travel down the road. It was found that driving potentially limits the point of focus for the driver, as his primary concern is about avoiding danger and orientation (Rapoport & Kantor, 1967). Driving on an expressway limits the driver to a view in a set box, highly restricting the freedom to look around. As Jakle and Shulle (2004) point out from Appleyard’s work, that vision is framed as a forward view; the landscape is experienced by watching objects show themselves “welling up and falling behind, back in two as they pass overhead, slip sidewise, or rotate (Appleyard et al., 1966). Although at times there could be periods of wide scanning (Appleyard et al., 1966, Jakle & Shulle, 2004), this was done very quickly in order to redirect their focus to the road. Appleyard et al. (1966) concluded, “As speed increases, attention is confined to a narrower forward angle, since coming events must be
predicted further ahead. As near objects rush past more rapidly, they are harder to perceive, and attention may shift to more distant and relatively more stable elements. ”

The traveler’s ability to establish meaning happens with those objects that are visible. When traveling at a speed of 60 mph, one drives under an overpass, offering the sensation of formlessness compared to traveling the same route at 3 miles mph, at which that form then takes on a vastness (Appleyard et al., 1966). The ability to travel by automobile has reduced the physical scale of the environment (Hough, 1990), but if one were to travel by foot, the case would be quite the opposite. We would find that perhaps designers have ignored the natural features and scale of the surrounding landscapes and solely focused on the user.

3.15 Rate of Movement

In order to consider the design and scale of signs, we must understand that a user’s perception is influenced by her rate of movement. A group walking around downtown Boston is traveling at a slow pace in comparison to one driving on the highway. Appleyard’s contribution is important, as he acknowledges that we spend most of our time in cars (1965). Many areas of the globe now consist of car-only environments (Shelly & Urry, 2000; Taylor, 2003), and this increase in motor traffic has led to a “scene of forest of road signs” (Taylor, 2003) in our landscape. It is recognized that the main source of visibility is our circulation system (Appleyard, 1976) such as highways, roads, paths, and bike lanes. It is believed, as cities grew and cars and highways allowed us to go further, faster; we saw the need to design for motion. After all, the “ultimate goal of all this mobility and technology is speed and convenience” (Hough, 1990). The opportunity to travel allows us new experiences and perceptions (Hough, 1990).
For these reasons, it seems obvious that our increase in mobility and the rate of speed a car allows us to go require signs to be clearly visible to the driver. Highway signs are designed with the rate of the observer in mind; the socio-economic on signs are to attract and communicate a message quickly in hopes to attract the user in making a decision. The addition of flashing lights, colors and images to signs were meant to attract attention. As Venturi wrote:

An architecture of communication over space; communication dominates space as an element in the architecture and the landscape. It is the highway signs, through their particular positions in space, their inflected shapes and their graphic meanings, that identify and unify the mega texture. They make verbal and symbolic connections through space communicating a complex of meaning through hundreds of associations in a few seconds from far ways. Symbol dominates space…The sign is more important that the architecture (1977).

This work shows how the design of lights and sign systems are greatly affected by the speed of the user that in-turn effect the designs of all the other spaces that make up Vegas. This car and speed-dominated society has brought on what potentially could be misinforming and influential in designing signs with cars being the dominant factor. Mahyar Arefi (1999) stresses that most of the design decisions are made by viewing the car as the dominant user, giving “priority to cars” resulting in “less attention to issues such as sense of enclosure, proportions, view sheds, pedestrian access and so on.”

A deeper understanding of the expectations for the place and experience should help the design and planning process to either protect or design around the pedestrian as the dominant user. A deeper understanding of the sites we plan and design is needed, stepping away from guiding documents that operate on a national or state level around the notion of cars being the dominant users when designing or planning.
3.16 Movement on Foot

As Lynch describes in *What Time is This Place* (1976), our lives are full of delights and displeasures of motion. We are in spaces that constantly change, whether we are experiencing them by highway or on foot. The aesthetic experience of the city might provide one of commerce, but as one slows down, humans are able to take more control over their surroundings. Pedestrians are open to a wider range of sensory stimulation (Jakle & Shulle, 2004), providing a more meaningful semiotic experience. Gordon Cullen described this in *Townscape* (1961), almost two decades before Venturi and Appleyard’s contribution to signs in our physical environment, with a similar focus on analyzing the physical environment. Through a sequential experience, the observer moves through the physical environment perceiving it in terms of the changing relationship of its parts (Gosling, 1996). Cullen embraced the concept of our experience as seen from walking; it is thus essential to relate the design of complexity to the speed of motion. A great deal more complexity is needed for a pedestrian, or for low speeds, than at the high speeds of the automobile.

Gordon Cullen’s *Townscape* presented a simple method to experience the surrounding area and locate the qualities of that experience, and both Cullen and Lynch accepted movement as part of our experience in developing and reinforcing an observer’s visual image of his surroundings. As one experiences her surroundings, the eye is moving back and forth through a series of scenes as one moves through the physical environment, providing a variety of emotions and attractiveness. It is the relationship of these visual objects that can combine to make up the
landscape as a memorable one, or one that can be forgotten altogether. This is what Gordon Cullen prescribed as *Art of the Relationship*:

In fact, there is an art of relationship just as there is an art of architecture. Its purpose is to take all the elements that go to create the environment: buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic, advertisements and so on, and to weave them together in such a way that drama is released. For the city is a dramatic event in the environment (1961).

People seem to naturally gravitate to environments which provide enhancing and interesting feedback (Kaplan et.al, 1988). The relationships that the objects have in the environment provide information in many ways. As Kaplan states, the “immediate environment is rich in information that we rely on all the time.” A scene for a user consists of information or signs that signify to that person a message, which can then be categorized into what the object means. Signs can be categorized for a user giving her a course of action that she might find compelling obligated to or that could be experienced passively.

3.17 Origin of Sense of Place in Planning

“There is no there, there,” Gertrude Stein (1973) once said when she revisited her old home in Oakland, California. She was referring to the rapid suburban expansion and look-a-like houses, apartment communities, shopping malls and office complexes that have all been factors in transforming hundreds of communities to look the same. It should be noted that signage is no exception; it has played a part in the creation of look-a-like places. These developments have placed more importance on other values, forgetting about culture, character and authenticity of
place and community design. The results have been one community looking like another
community throughout America; you can be in California or in Texas, and you wouldn’t know.

Robert Fleming, through a presentation at the National Sign Forum (1977), called for
concern for the visual conservation of America; his point is that visual communication has
changed with our “socioeconomic system.” A sign’s placement, shape, and scale related to its
surrounding environment follow our urban form for the worse, adding to the visual pollution
(Fleming, 1977), often overloading the user with competing messages for his attention (Carr,
1973). Cities and landscapes will continue to be our canvas for cultural expression. As David
Gosling reminds us, the city itself is a cultural invention (Gosling & Maitland, 1984). We have
imbedded it with meaning, and our environment acts as an entire language of communication.
“We can link it to language and seek insights from disciplines of linguistics either in terms of
syntatic structure or else through the study of signs in semiotics” (Gosling & Maitland, 1984).

3.18 Losing Sense of Place

Cullen stressed the importance of research and for experts to cooperate so that the result
would not be “dull, uninteresting and soulless” (Marling, 2008) places. Cullen recognized this
and called for the difference between places’ “genius loci” to heighten sense impressions and
orchestrate them rather than dull them in such a measure that all places look alike (Rapoport and
Kantor, 1967). At the Urban Signage Forum of 1977, Robert Fleming stated “Americans are
very evidently hungering and thirsting for a ‘sense of place,’ seeking the romance of this quality
in restored farmhouses, European vacations, even in day trips to Disneyland, while all around
them the major decision-makers in the environment — State and local government and
automobile related corporate American — have evidenced through carelessness or deliberate design a lack of respect for the integrity of our landscape and townscape.”

The recent interest over the last two decades in preserving this distinction of places has found popularity in a wide range of disciplines. Appleyard (1979) points out that we have created a concept of what home is, and that this can be extended to include our community and city. The identity of these places depends on the character or meaning with which one is endowed. “We develop a sense of what this character is intuitively; it is the identity of the place. When alien characteristics invade it we experience a sense of loss” (Appleyard, 1979). This loss has been referred to as “placelessness” (Arefi, 1999) or losing a sense of place (Hough, 1990). This drew concern from geographers of the 1970’s and 1980’s, where they saw an increase of a sense of placelessness invading our environment (Relph 1976; Tuan 1974). This is a loss that Chapman (2011) believes does not seem to be the consequence of a lack of shared views of the appealing qualities that make up and maintain the “genius loci” of places; it might stem from the difficulties that surround the actual production and maintenance of them in practice.

3.19 Planning Efforts

In an effort to preserve what decades of suburban growth and mobility have threatened, there is now a greater focus on the concept of place and “sense of place,” sometimes referred to as “genius loci.” Those responsible for our landscapes have been active in finding ways to protect it under labels such as sense of place; conservation, revitalization (Appleyard, 1979) and preservation. Appleyard (1979;1981) has acknowledged that people’s awareness and attitudes towards place and place meaning have helped inform the planning process (Manzo & Perkins,
In order to reinforce a “sense of place,” many planning documents or official documents have been using this term as a guide for design principles. In the 1980’s, design was significant enough that it became a familiar part of the regulatory planning system (Abbott, 1991). The existence of architectural design controls or design review systems show up in different cities. These are typically where a variety of proposals are evaluated by review committees (Habe, 1989) that evaluate a design, a plan of development or physical improvement elements in the built or natural environment. In order to reinforce a “sense of place,” many planning documents or official documents have been using this term as a guide for design principles. Important work of Conzen (1960) has examined ways of interpreting an area’s “genus loci of a place,” in order to write helpful guidelines for practical application (Champan, 2011). We now see this term in planning documents for cities throughout Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the United States.

3.20 Stemming from Place

Sense of place is not impossible to research due to the lack of an agreed upon definition. However, it doesn’t help that the notion of place has been surrounded by confusion (Arefi, 1999). Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1997) writes, “We live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time we seem to have a meager understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them,” although exploring the work of Lynch, Appleyard and Cullen begins to help us understand this.

3.20 A Place to Feel
It was Michael Hough in *Out of Place* who stated “understanding places begins with feelings” (1990). Going beyond just “location” or “landscape” (Tuan, 1977), it has been influenced by a phenomenological approach (Tuan, 1977; Malpas, 1999, Seamon 1997), a concept that sees places beyond a physical location but rather as experiences that happen at a location on the earth’s surface (Schneekloth & Shibley, 2000). Some researchers have concluded that these places are defined by boundaries (Williams & Carr, 1993), but even so, humans have put place at the focus of our attention and purpose (Relph, 1976) in our everyday lives. The common theme that links many researchers’ work is the acceptance that people establish and attach meaning to a particular location.

We can see places as unique living and breathing things that, much like humans and our uniqueness (Smaldone, 2003), are changing and being branded with an evolving meaning. The places that we experience can be comprehended as scenes. This can happen through our sensory capacities as we begin to explore, perceive and shape physical objects into a meaningful place. Lamme (1989) offers examples of these experiences with meaning in our lives, as they show-up through our homes, community, social interactions and activities. It is said that this physical space becomes place when we attach meaning to it (Carr & Williams, 1993). People begin to develop emotions surrounding places that trigger or give a desired experience. As Yi-fu Tuan (1977) observed, “undifferentiated spaces becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. Place, then, is not only physical, but it is about the meaning and experience one has in it; it is bound to our existence in it, therefore, becoming the center of our lives (Norberg-Shultz, 1979).
3.21 What Makes Up Sense of Place?

Others have offered some potential insight on applying it to physical design, by evaluating several different characteristics of sense of place and to what special attention should be paid. As we gather from the earlier mentioned research, physical features exist in the realities of the landscape and are a part of place and sense of place; they also provide meaning. Gordon Cullen stressed in *Townscape* (1961), “how the various characteristics act as a visual expression ‘contributing’ to giving a feeling of a sense of place” (as cited in Gehl, 2011). Perhaps, it was Keith Basso’s (1996) words, “for any sense of place, the pivotal question is not where it comes from, or even how it gets formed, but what, so to speak, it is made with,” that should be considered for a practical project in the field.

This question gives direction to establishing a framework for locating unique qualities of a place’s sense of place. First each place is a certain fixed location, which is uniquely different from any other place. John Agnew (1987) provided three fundamental facets of place as a “meaningful location”:

1. Location
2. Locale
3. Sense of place

We need a place that has a location as a coordinate on the earth’s surface, which seems to be straightforward; the second, locale, is what Agnew (1987) is referring to as the a place in which there are actual participants conducting their everyday lives. As Edward Casey (1996) points out, “there is no knowing or sensing a place except by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be
in a position to perceive it.” The third facet, sense of place, is created through an emotional attachment. It is when people have an entire group of cognitions and affection for a particular locale (Altman & Low, 1992). “The manner in which humans relate to, or feel about the environments in which they live” as Nanzar (2004) defines sense of place.

In an attempt to answer Basso’s question of “what” makes up a sense of place, there are several components mentioned throughout this literature review that seem to be main contributions to the concept. It is useful, then, to establish here a set of characteristics and patterns from the literature review that could be categories in the field to be further developed.

3. 22 What Goes into Sense of Place?

This multi-dimensional theory is dependent on many factors. Researchers have found that people become attached or connected to place for various reasons that heighten one’s sense of place. These can be people that are long-time residents of places (Hay, 1998), that have local knowledge (Lynch, 1960; Fiske & Taylor, 1991), also referred to as ‘insideness’ (Relph, 1976), or “rooted” in place (Tuan, 1977); or it can be physical attributes (Norberg-Shulz, Cullen), social relations (Cantrill & Senecha, 2001; Hay 1998; Stedman et al., 2004) and activities; cultural (Cozen, 1966; Rapoport, 1986), historical (Cozen, 1966) and ancestry ties (Hay, 1998); or natural attributes (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

These are a few of the characteristics that have continued to appear, but it is recognized (Relph, 1976) that we can’t identify all. Edward Relph also recognizes that patterns of the social relationships are some of the ingredients of place, but are not precisely fixed or clear. There is a
link between us and the places of our lived experiences by these patterns of activities, but we cannot unearth all, since they will vary and be very subtle.

1) Physical

Often people think of place as a location that can be identified by physical features. (Steele, 1981) People conceptualize the surrounding areas, paying special attention to the built-environment (Jakle & Schulle, 2004; Lynch, 1960). When we enter somewhere, we look for features, like a sign; these objects could influence us (Steele, 1981). Other features could be park benches, the intensity of the sunlight, a vending cart. This can be found under Cullen’s “Content,” providing the categories that bring quality to an environment, such as “significant objects.”

Christopher Norberg-Shulz (1979) used place as the center for many of his works. He describes place as “totally made up of concrete things having material substance, shape, texture, color which determines an environmental character.” As Tuan notes, “Place is whatever stable object catches our attention.” (1977). Wherever one goes we can find various characteristics that capture the essence of that experience. Hough (1990) recounts his travels through Portugal describing the relationship of the country’s physical features, “white buildings, ceramic tiled façades and red tile roofs; its squares, churches and fishing ports; its people sitting in doorways.” It was these relationships that formed a “sense of place” for him.

It is these objects that work together to connect people to a physical place within a landscape or the environment, giving it a particular image or identity. This could include the people, animals, trees, churches, storefronts and signs that one might come across in a physical
place, adding to the character and identity of a particular place. This has been described as a “special ensemble” (Luckermenn, 1964) or the already mentioned concept, “art of the relationship” (Cullen, 1961).

2) Social

Human beings are social creatures and are active in our landscape; we use places for our social needs every day. Place serves as a social gathering environment for some, as Jane Jacobs has described in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961), where she emphasized the importance of streets and sidewalks as places where people venture out to in order to leave their house and find interactions with each other. Lynch stressed that “wherever people are moving, there are social and esthetic effects to be considered.”

Low and Altman (1992) noted places included social relations of people. They are where “interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just the place qua place, to which people are attached.” In 1998, Hay analyzed a local community in New Zealand. From this study, he suggested that sense of place has elements of “the social and geographical context of place bonds and the sensing of places, such as aesthetics and a feeling of dwelling” (Hay, 1998).

3) Cultural

The physical context of place is “a social, cultural world” (2001) advises Cantrill and Senecah. It was Rapoport (1986) who stated that, “if all landscapes are at the very least modified
through human action, are lived in and have meaning; this makes them cultural, since culture defines all human beings while at the same time dividing them in groups.” This can be seen in the work of Manzo and Perkins (2006), as they point out on a community level that these cultural groups have shared identity or place attachments.

An experience of place can be gained by “one’s culture, subculture and family” states as Kaplan, et al. (1998). It can be said that sense of place can also been seen as having some historical or cultural relevance; it was mentioned that through culture meanings are established through shared histories or experiences (Lynch, 1976; Cullen, 1961; Appleyard, 1979 Rapoport, 1977). If we look at Manzo and Perkins (2006), where they point out that neighborhoods are shaped by an array of cultures, the residents express their identity spatially through the creation of culturally-sensitive, locally-based architecture and through their use of space.

Denis Conzen mentioned both cultural and historical components being factors in the character of place. “The course of time, the landscape, whether that of a large region like a country or of a small locality like a market town, acquires its specific genius loci, its culture and history - conditioned character, which commonly reflects not only the work and aspiration of the society at present in occupancy, but also that of its precursors in the area.” (Conzen,1966)

4) Historical

Some evidence or research linking historical significance and sense of place has used concepts that would fall under the sense of place umbrella. The practice of place-making, heritage, preservation and character distinctiveness are all factors that find the value of our history in the built environment or its patterns. Smith (2006) felt that “heritage” is “a complex
cultural interaction between people, place and memory that both centers on and is the process of the maintenance and creation of community identity and cohesion.” A study by Kltenborn & Williams (2002) examined the meaning of places between tourists and locals. They found that local history was a prominent element of sense of place. Tuan (1974) believed that “awareness of the past is an important element in the love of place. A historical environment contributes towards a distinctive sense of place. Taking in all the physical evidence of our past history and associating it with place or place names can bring and understanding and closeness to those that are present in our modern world.”

5) Natural

The natural environment or “nature” is perceived as a place with wildlife and brings images of forests, mountains, plants and animals and other living creatures (Lekies & Whitworth, 2011). For many users that seek nature, this place is seen as a space that is “protected,” to be “explored” and something to be “conquered” (Lekies & Whitworth, 2011) or which is “sacred” (Venturi et al., 1977); a place that offers individual experience, such as recreation or personal reflection (Lekies & Whitworth, 2011).

Riegner (1993) provides a holistic understanding of place by looking at the elements of flora and fauna in the landscape. He uses these living elements as inspiration, “its plants and animals-provide focal points through which the character of a place becomes present.”(1993). He goes on to say that, “every plant bears the signature of the place where it is found. Conversely, the individuality of a place comes to expression in every plant present.” (1993). There is an ever changing tide of flora and fauna with the seasons that changes what they bring to the
environment. Giving a viewer a variety of visual stimuli (Bigley, 2003) through the years, such as the changes in the color of leaves, differs from the built environment. This has been known to have healing and psychological effects on people (Kaplan, 1988; Gesler, 1993)

3. 23 Conclusion

From a review of the literature it can be said that signs seem to be the most obvious form of the human stamp on the land; however they are also the most overlooked. They are very much a part of our everyday lives offering a visual experience in way of a physical feature in the environment. They provide a significant link to the places they are located in by their design, their message and their function. Signs are a cultural expression and offer a narrative to understanding how a particular place expresses its identity. It sets up the expectation of the experience. There have been several studies of the history of signs, or books around signs design, and economic studies on signs link to successful business but few have looked how this landscape phenomena has expressed concepts like sense of place. The amount of signs in America and the amount of signs dedicated to commerce can be seen to give America a sense of place for an outsider. Signs have incredible potential by taking on the characteristics and express the place’s identity and the people within.

They offer tremendous potential to express the identities of those that use them, whether it is a community or an individual. Daniel Cade (2003) referred to exterior signs as “the most numerous and consistently visible elements of the scriptorial landscape in most places.” Their role naturally locates them in a place that almost always uses them to express a message that represents a specific place. Historically, they have been seen as a cultural symbol that represents
our changes and inventions as humans. This relationship between signs and people “contributes to the structuring and functioning of landscape as place” (Jakle & Shulle, 2004), and helps to form meaning for the area.

Our relationship between places and how we make sense of our environment and the emotional responses that are evoked from a scene can be seen as cognitive, connotative and effective processing. Necessary to the fundamental design and characteristics of the place which we encounter is the consideration of our movement through the environment and our use of vision. Several researchers have laid important groundwork on better understanding how one may use their environment and experience place.

Semiotics and Gestalt Theory help us to understand how signs and their elements can work together to provide meaning, not only of the sign, but of the place in which the sign is situated, or the place to which the sign is referring. Signs and their elements can be seen as having an impact on how we read our landscape, providing guidance and legibility. In Brazil, researchers described how signs formed not only their image of the place, but added to their sense of place. “When wandering around a city such as São Paulo, we are surrounded by letters, numbers and symbols. These elements form part of an environment full of signs in many shapes and sizes that compete for our attention. Our perception of these elements contributes towards our spatial guidance and sense of place” (Gouveia et al. 2009).

Signs and sense of place have formed a relationship. Planners and designers have seen not only signs as a way to breathe new life into a place, but they have helped move us away from the “sameness of America” (Casey, 1993). They act as a tool that can be very effective in creating a unique personality and distinctive character for an individual, business, community
and a city. Businesses and communities are beginning to realize that signage can be a tool according to *Signlines (2002)*, a publication of the *International Sign Association*, which mentioned that more and more communities are learning to use signage as a tool that creates a unique “sense of place;” providing as one example, the national food chain McDonald’s store in Chicago that adapted to the neighborhood by manipulating its typical sign to be unique to the identity of the neighborhood.

In an attempt to understand sense of place to guide design and planning for guidelines, a subsequent literature discusses some themes that showed up in the research. Allowing us to focus on elements such as cultural, physical, natural, social and historical attributes should take away some of the hindering limits when attempting to define sense of place. Any practical application of a design guideline, therefore, can focus is on “what” makes up a sense of place. This chapter set out to seek concepts that were repeated in some of the additional terminology, and these were called patterns or characteristics of “what” makes up sense of place. These five factors lay the foundation for the methodological framework that follows.

**Chapter Four: Methodology**

4.1 Introduction

In order to understand how to plan and design guidelines for a sign system with the motivation of sense of place as it relates to a specific place, and to make general findings, a mixed-methods approach was selected as a research method. These methods were selected to
resolve research questions three, four and five which were presented in Chapter One:

Introduction.

3. How do you develop sign design guideline principles utilizing the “sense of place” concept?

4. How can signs be incorporated into a physical environment to effectively communicate and add to sense of place?

5. How do we gather a common understanding of the characteristics that define a community’s sense of place?

The methodology section is sub-divided into four parts. This first section (4.2) outlines the strategy for the approach to the design process, which includes the data collection process. This will share the information that was gathered about the general context of the site; this can be done through data collection of baseline information. Second (4.3), an on ground site analysis is required that will provide for an opportunity to visually experience the site through locomotion, gathering further information by using a Place-based analysis used by Gordon Cullen: serial vision. The third section (4.4) builds on the prior steps by integrating the findings of a data collection and serial vision into a SWOT analysis, using the categories that were found through the Literature Review on attributes of the sense of place concept. The categories include the following: Physical, Natural, Cultural, Social and Historical. The last section (4.5) looks at those that use place and go beyond where Cullen’s serial vision and SWOT analysis fall short, when attempting to unfold a sense of place. Being that sense of place is an emotional experience, a non-qualitative approach is used here, which is a photo-based analysis taking the elements of
“what” makes up sense of place for the “Locale” by gathering meaning and significance of the area for the users, mixed with a photo log journal. A small sample group allows the researcher to obtain and identify some of Bidwell Park’s characteristics and patterns. This method delves below the surface to probe the individual’s sense of place, looking for similarities among the individuals that could provide the community’s perception. It is explored by asking the users how they think, feel and why.

4.2 Approach

When dealing with a “real world” project that is applied to a location, one must go through the steps of a project/design process. Kevin Lynch’s influential work in Site Planning (1984) stated that “every site, natural or man-made, is to some degree unique, a web of things and activities. That web must be understood: it imposes limitations; it contains new possibilities.” Knowing and understanding the project site or place is crucial to the establishment of design recommendations.

As was discussed in the Literature Review, a place is taken in both visually and through locomotion. Considering those two functions requires a method that would allow the researcher to do a site analysis by using a process that would include those factors. It was also decided to involve a method that could answer, “What makes up Bidwell Park’s sense of place?” It was not an easy task to take this challenging concept that was derived from and been influenced by a flux of disciplines, and to begin to apply it to explore the ways that planning and design conveys the sense of place. It is necessary to understand the biophysical context of social, cultural and
historical, characteristics and patterns contained in the place that makes up the genius loci or sense of place.

4.2.1 Design Process

This research starts by using basic questions that Amundsen (2001) recommends. When getting to know a site, Amundsen suggests simply asking five basic questions: What, Who, Where, How and Why? Adding on to Amundsen’s suggestion, the question of “When” is also applied to Bidwell Park. When one thinks about design and placement of the sign we must gather information on the user and how the site is used (Figure 4.1).
Prior to a site visit, determining a strategic approach to survey the area is one of the initial steps in design consideration. Rowley et al. (1997) stated that “strategic planning requires an understanding of the nature of the issue, and then of an appropriate response or an outside-mind set.” If this study is to use a strategic approach, it is to identify what is available at the site by the qualities it possesses and how it can be enhanced or preserved. The strategy is represented through the chosen methods, which are also seen as building blocks to reach sense of place and design recommendation.
In a research report produced by the American Planning Association, titled *Sensitive Signage Design* (2011), it listed a site analysis as one of the steps taken in the process to designing a sign or a system of signs. Ideally, the sign designer will visit the site, which will help him or her determine the appropriate size, placement, and overall appearance of the signs to be produced (Morris et al., 2011)

When discussing the implementation of interpretive signage in a park and on the park’s trails Hough (1990) calls for a number of principles when exploring the site. One primary factor is to “give meaning and significance…sensitive site design involves revealing the inherent quality of the site-its genius loci.” In order to do this, a process was created that would build on the layers of information that could be unearthed about the site, bringing a better understanding of the sense of place of Bidwell Park.

4.2.2 Data Collection

The data collection stage focuses on items that contribute to the better understanding of the area that may enhance the design process becoming more connected to Bidwell Park’s voice. As Setha Low (1981) explains, “identification is the enumeration and description of the kinds of people, i.e., their social, cultural and demographic characteristics, living on or near the project site” and, in this case, the people that visit Bidwell Park. A variety of sampling techniques and methods can be employed to collect data. For example, a demographic analysis of any census data or historic documents that provide information on the users of the Park and the surrounding area that would most likely be influential. However, what is to be included here is taken from the recommendation of Kevin Lynch (1984) on some of the general information that one should
establish of a study area. These are: (1) geographic location, adjacent land use patterns, access system, nearby destination and facilities, stability and change; (2) political authority, social structure of locality; (3) ecological and hydrographic systems of the region; and (4) nature of the area, proposals or projects nearby and their effects on the site.

Census Data

The total population within the City of Chico’s city limits is 86,900 people, and it is the largest City in Butte County. The regional population within Butte County is 221,388 people. The local economy is stimulated by the California State University, Chico (CSUC) with a population of 15,920 people and Butte College with a student population of (BC). CSUC is also a large contributor to employment, as is Enloe Medical Center. Some other important demographic information is summarized in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Race and Ethnicity

Source: Bidwell Park Management Plan and Author
The average household income is $52,000.00

**Historic Documents**

*Bidwell Park Management Plan*

The plan provides some information regarding the visitors, their point of entry and estimated number of visits. Currently the estimate of visitors to Bidwell Park each year is over 1 million. Several charts were created to summarize the findings in the BPMP shown in Figures 4.4 and 4.5.
Figure 4.4: Estimated Visits to Bidwell Park

Source: City of Chico Survey 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/ Point of Entry (Transportation)</th>
<th>Estimate Daily Visits</th>
<th>Estimated Daily Visits Oct.-March</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Visits by Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Mile (non-auto)</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>383,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Mile (auto)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>109,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Park other (non-auto)</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>127,900</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,000</td>
<td>621,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper/Middle Park</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Park Rd. (Auto)</td>
<td>1,193</td>
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<td>392,492</td>
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<td>Hooker Oak and Five Mi. (all)</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>26,128</td>
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<td>Upper/Middle Park (non-auto)</td>
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<td>36,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Sub Total</td>
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<td>Estimated Total Daily Visits</td>
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<td>Estimated Total Annual Visits</td>
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<td>Like Best</td>
<td>Mail-in Percentage of Respondents</td>
<td>On-Site Percentage of Respondents</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Natural Resources</td>
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<td>Natural Area/Wilderness Area</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space Area</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy Access</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs Off-Leash</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Resources/Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose Activities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking/Hiking</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming/Tubing</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disc Golfing</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails and Roads (for activities)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback Riding</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and Family</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Watching</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5: What Users Like Best About Park

Source: City of Chico Survey 2011

Ecological and Hydrographic System

Big Chico Creek has a 72-square mile watershed and flows a distance of 45 miles from its origin, crossing portions of Butte and Tehama Counties, to its confluence with the Sacramento River, west of the City of Chico. The creek is perennial, and is mainly a low elevation rain-fed stream with summer flows sustained largely by accretions from the volcanic geology in the watershed. As is true with most California streams, its flow is highly erratic, running high in the winter and spring and low in the late summer and fall. The watershed also encompasses three smaller drainages flowing from the north: Sycamore, Mud, and Rock Creeks. All of these tributaries
flow into Big Chico Creek between the City of Chico and the confluence of the Sacramento River.

Geographic Location

This background information is integrated into the thesis on-site analysis which follows.

4.3 Serial Vision Site Analysis

For the site analysis, the method selected is serial vision analysis. Gordon Cullen addresses this process of analyzing an area when considering future design in a method he called Optic (Serial Vision). Cullen’s Optic category provides an example of walking through a town in comparison to walking along a long straight road. This is significant. As he sees it, “the pedestrian walks through the town at a uniform speed. The scenery of the town is often revealed in a series of jerks or revelations.” (Cullen, 1971)

This is what he refers to as the Serial Vision, sometimes referred to as Sequential Vision, experience. Sequential Vision has been described as a string of attached experiences that gradually change through the experience. Theil (1981) described the sequence experience as one where “the progressive interplay of forms, distances, spaces, lighting, and observer position — can enrich appreciation of the landscape.”
Serial Vision is a method, which David Gosling considered to be “the most significant because until then the dynamic (as opposed to static) experience of viewing a town was barely recognized” (Gosling, 1996). Through a visual survey, the intention is to become a user of Bidwell Park, considering the speed at which one moves through it and the elements that make up the Park through a visual survey. Recognizing this, Rapoport and Kantor (1967) saw that an essential part of design, understanding the “visual variety within a pattern, corresponding as this does with the concept of perceptual rate falling between the extremes of monotony and chaos.”

As someone’s pace slows, signs can take on more complexity (Gross et al., 2006); our surrounding environment becomes more complex, rich with visual features. Rapoport and Kantor (1967) feel that our environments will become more and more designed, and it is essential to research the need to design for this kind of complexity. It seems essential to place oneself into Bidwell Park by experiencing it as a user in order to understand how one could view the project site. Tony Hiss discusses a comparable experience in Brooklyn, as he describes entering a city park from a street and leaving the noises of the city behind. He explains his journey, giving a vivid encounter as if we were experiencing it with him. One can feel the interplay of the “forms, distances, space, and lighting and observer position”:

I found I was walking a little faster, and as I followed the first curve of the path at this new pace, the scenery on either side of me seemed to swinging slowly around itself and around me in an orderly sequence...The cave-which I now thought might possibly be man-made-disappeared as the beech tree moved in front of me to eclipse it...A few more paths I could see the path did lead to the cave-and it lead to another path, which wound its way up a long hill to the left and vanished into some trees at the top (Hiss, 1990)
It is through the “faculty of sight” (Cullen, 1961) that we experience and understand our environment, since the information that is presented to us as we move through place is also dependent on the mode and speed by which we travel. The optimal perpetual rate enables the user to explore, as the environment unfolds gradually, to see, to give meaning to the environment. To determine the best rate to experience the park is to determine the majority of users in the environment, catering to their rate of travel. This information can be found in the Bidwell Park Management Plan’s Appendix, where results of a survey are located.

4.3.1 Design of Serial Vision

By following a Serial Vision Analysis, the two elements included are: the existing view as one moves through the park, and the emerging view as one moves through the park. By moving through, the user is exposed to the various different elements and events that take place through the constant change of scenery.

A cooperative study between R. Burton Litton, a professor at University of California, Berkeley and the U.S. Forest Service produced a guide, *Forest Landscape and Inventories: A Basis for Land Planning and Design* in 1968. There are several objectives in their study that have similarities to this research: (1) to devise a means of recording and expressing the landscape resources, and (2) to consider the relationships between resource management and the visual resource. The study used a method similar to a Serial Vision Analysis called a View Shed Analysis to consider the landscape. This further supports the use of the Serial Vision method as the one to be used in this study of Bidwell Park.
A variety of means were used to collect original field data in *Forest Landscape and Inventories: A Basis for Land Planning and Design* (1968). One specific process was black and white and color photographs, and plotting in $7^{1/2}$ and 15 minute increments according to a U. S. Geological Survey topographic map. In creating and planning the sign system for Bidwell Park, a map of the park will show curving pathways, roads, trails, a creek and various sites throughout. This method provides a tool to use for surveying, analyzing and designing the sign system and supporting manual. By using it, it is acknowledged that the user’s vision of “place” is centered on the notion of activity and the human experience (Golledge, 1992).

In order to perform a Serial Vision Analysis, the Park was divided into three zones, reflecting the natural breaks due to topography and transition changes due to breaks from roads. These are the Lower Park, Middle Park and Upper Park zones shown in Figure 4.6. As one passes through the Park, this series of images contribute to how one perceives the different places in the Park, building a character and an identity for it. As one walks through on paths or trails, one may find mystery or a sense of peace because of the different elements that are found at that location.
4.3.1 Instruments

The Serial Vision research is conducted using an iPhone application called “360 Panorama” and a stopwatch located on the same cell phone, which monitors predetermined times to take photos. The appropriate time between photos varies depending on the park zone or sequence zones in which the researcher is located, as shown in Figure 4.7. For circulation roads within the Park that are paved, time is analyzed traveling by foot as well as bicycle. At each chosen time interval, a picture of the surrounding area is taken to capture the existing view and the emerging view. The “360 Panorama” application stores each photo and geocodes it to a map,
developing a record in terms of photographic sampling. This is similar to the work that Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, John Meyer, Philip Theil and Gordon Cullen performed.

Sequence Zones:

The sequence zones of Lower Park, Middle Park and Upper Park consider routes that are paved roads, gravel roads and dirt trails, each plotted on separate trips. The paved roads and gravel roads are shared between cars, pedestrians and bikes, and the dirt trails are open to pedestrians, bikes and horses. The paved road is experienced by riding a bike; while the trails are experienced on foot with the following predetermined times as shown in Figure 4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Predetermined Time</th>
<th>Mode of Travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Park</td>
<td>Paved</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
<td>Bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dirt</td>
<td>2 min</td>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Park</td>
<td>Paved</td>
<td>30 seconds</td>
<td>Bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dirt</td>
<td>2 min</td>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Park</td>
<td>Dirt</td>
<td>1 min and 5 min</td>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7: Sequence Zones and Plotting Times
Source: Compiled by author.

4.4 SWOT Analysis
In the merging of the data and Serial Vision Analysis, a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is undertaken. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method that was first used in the business world, centered on company management, but has now been widely used in other fields of strategic planning, including the planning and design professions. Lozano and Valles (2007) state that, “SWOT analysis is widely recognized and it constitutes an important basis for learning about the situation and for designing future procedures which can be seen necessary for thinking in a strategic way.”

Kevin Lynch asserts that, “the principle concern of a physical planner is to understand the physical environment and to help shape it to serve the community” (Lynch, 1970). A SWOT analysis is one of the most common methods of strategic planning. It offers a simple framework, allowing it to be comprehended and performed in the field by people at many different levels, and it is fast to execute and cost efficient. Doratli (1980) state, "The underlying intension of a strategic approach is to identity what is available in a historic site, qualities that should be protected and enhanced; and along with identifying these, to determine where negative factors could be removed or mitigated and to identify where the opportunities for enhancement lie." The results of a SWOT analysis are basic to formulate strategies and are used in the beginning phase of strategy formulation, giving key guidance of the strategies that should be selected.

Undertaking an analysis that summarizes data gathering process provides a window to observe several factors that may currently influence the site. Using selected themes of sense of place, the SWOT analysis attempts to unearth several characteristics and patterns of Bidwell Park. These include aspects that are cultural, historical, physical, social and natural.
4.5 Photo-Based Photography

Since humans are seen as active participants in their environments they gain knowledge of a place (Lynch, 1960) and establish themselves as users of certain places. Often we become concerned with the physical properties of the places that are centered around our lives (Rapport, 1977). As Rapport explains, “people pick settings with characteristics which they value highly and avoid environments which they regard negatively” (Rapport, 1997). For this reason, the research attempts to understand the significance of the research site for the people that use it and what sense of place it holds for them.

In order to design guidelines for a place that captures the sense of place, the perspective of those who use it is essential to the process. It is argued by Graham et.al (2009) that rather than predetermine what sense of place is through the use of scales or indicators, people should be allowed to define it themselves. This requires a user-participant who will be active in using the project site during the study that captures the multiple ways in which place is interacted with and experienced in daily life both consciously and unconsciously. It has been suggested one should not be careless with presuming that we already know what counts as local or “my place” for people and groups (Graham et al., 2009). Thiel supports this:

Because the experiences and responses of those who will in fact actually use the environment are our proper ultimate concern and because significant differences may exist between these users, the sponsors, and ourselves the designers, we recognize a pressing need to contextually identify, experientially characterize, and operationally integrate them in the programming, design, and management process (Thiel, 105, 1997).
Since this thesis has established that movement and sight are a part of how one experiences place, locating a visual method that can capture how the viewers see the Park is essential, as is getting verbal feedback from them. A multi-method approach was adopted for this particular part with the use of photography and field logs (photo logs) that involve questionnaires. Visual representation of landscape is one method that is rather popular (Smardon, Palmer & Felleman, 1986), and one technique that has been chosen for this research is a photo-based analysis, also known as Volunteer or Visitor Employed Photography (VEP). This technique gives participants a camera and response forms for a particular study area. This technique has been used to understand the perception of landscape, of outdoor recreation experience and of community planning (Chenowith 1984; Cherem and Driver 1983; Hull & Stewart 1992; Taylor, Czarnowski, & Flick 1995).

Chenoweth and Niemen (1972) employed this technique by asking users to photograph features that they experienced as either “adding to, or detracting from” the scenic beauty of the area by rating the items. Credit has been given to Cherem (1972) for the origins of VEP and applying VEP as a technique to capture the variety of public images of the landscape, much like the concept that was originally coined by Kevin Lynch (1960). As explained earlier, Lynch had explored the cities of Jersey City, Boston and Los Angeles to understand how people see their cities. Lynch had relied on the verbal feedback from his participants, whereas Cherem’s study took place in a natural area relying on feedback in the form of photos that were taken from the cameras that were distributed to the hikers. Both researchers’ approaches seem valuable for this particular research, and both concepts are applied.

Richard Stedman offers insight from his work with seeking to understand residents’ “place attachment” to Jasper National Park, located in Canada. Until Stedman’s work, sense of
place research had employed different methods, but not that of photo-based analysis (Stedman, 2002). Stedman (2002) discussed that, “such methods have not been used to understand sense of place, even though they seem positioned to make a strong contribution.” A study by Eisenhower et al. (2000) asked participants in southern Utah to identify spaces on public lands and to give the reasons they were connected to those spaces. Additional research from Dorwart et al. (2006) provides another use of VEP; in this case, it was used due to its potential for assessing what visitors’ perceptions and experiences were on a segment of the Appalachian Trail.

This method involves the choice between verbal and visual means to both describe and represent those items that have meaning and significance and what contributes to one’s sense of place. Both of these systems could potentially aid designers in detailing spatial qualities and other properties of the landscape, but the systems themselves offer little community between designers and non-designers or the general public. An improvement over abstract visual approaches is the use of photographs and sketches to describe and represent landscapes (Cullen, 1961; Nassaer, 1995, Shuttleworth, 1980; Chenoweth, 1984).

This method provides access to how the users view, connect, and experience Bidwell Park. First, photographs are a way to record what one views. In Going Visual, it is stated that, “images provide an information-rich visual record of people, places and things at a specific time” (Gerard & Goldstien, 2005). These work together to ignite emotions and memories, allowing someone to capture a place’s sense of place that can be revisited again through the photos. Rose (2000) described photographs as “cultural documents offering evidence of historically, culturally and socially specific ways of seeing the world.” Aside from the benefit of documentation, the VEP method has other advantages. Haywood (1990) points out, “photography is an enjoyable and familiar activity.” In this case, photography becomes an alternative form of description for
“words, a subjective experience, a communication of interpretation, that is much more a conversation than an authoritative statement” says (Ritchin, 1999). There was a call to researchers to look beyond regarding photos as being “supportive” of the collected data and instead to view them as “images or expressions of the ideas themselves,” as Stedman (2004) suggests.

How, then, should the photos be interpreted? Photographs can be considered representations (Tuan, 2004) of the reality in which one experiences the physical place. Tuan (2004) feels that “photographs thus promote our sensitivity to place-our sense of place.” Stedman makes the recommendation when looking to understand how an individual bestows meaning on place, is to ask one, “what does this place mean to me, rather than how much does it mean?” (2002) The person, whom is embedded into a place will, most likely, respond based on behaviors, attitudes, and emotions that are dependent on the physical, social and cultural happenings of the place (Hull & Stewart, 1992).

4.6 Research Question and Setting

The Chico Creek Nature Center (CCNC), which also acts as Bidwell Park’s Information Center, is located in Lower Park, with access both from within the Park and from a public street. The CCNC will work with the researcher to create a meet-up event that is then to be marketed through their Constant Contact e-mail list, Facebook, and the local weekly newspaper with the time, date and location to meet to participate in the hike.

The day of the meet-up event a representative from CCNC is to meet with the participants that show up, stating that the event would involve disposable cameras and a field log
book that had questionnaires to be filled out during the hike. Instructions are to be read to the
group before leaving. The first part of the instructions asks them to fill out a few questions about
themselves: age, gender and how many times a week they visit the Park. The second part asks
them to: “write down three things in Bidwell Park that are the most significant to you.” This is to
be done because the sheer size of the Park might not allow someone enough time to walk the 11
mile stretch of the Park to take photos that are most significant to the user.

4.7 User-Participants (Sample)

There are 15 participants in the hike: 5 males and 11 females shown in Figure 4.8. The
average age of the 15 participants is 40.5 years old, with the youngest age 8 and the oldest age
80. Participants have the option of using a disposable camera that is to be offered to them by the
researcher or to use their own smart phone.
The disposable cameras contain 24 exposures each and participants are given instructions to take two photos of each object or feature they chose. This is done because one photo might be of poor quality and having a second one ensures the likelihood of receiving a legible photo. Participants are asked to take 12 photos of their choosing of objects, activities, features or particular settings that capture Bidwell Park’s sense of place from their personal perspective. Each camera is marked with a different number prior to distribution. The participants that choose disposable cameras write on their field log book the number that corresponds to their camera number. This way the field log book could be matched up with the photos during the analysis phase. Those that choose cell phones are given numbers that identify them and then asked to write that on their field log and to use the reference number when they e-mail the photos.
The survey and instructions were developed to leave room for the photographer to interpret what sense of place is for them and leaves out instructions of where or of what they should be taking photos. By doing this, the hope is to avoid affecting their experience during the hike and to encourage them that anything that they want to take a picture of is appropriate. Each photo is to be marked on a map that is located on the left of the field log pages; the right page has a space to write down what picture numbers in the camera film provide the answer to specific questions. Then they are to answer the following questions that correspond to the mark on the map and the photos:

1) What were you capturing in this photo?

2) What emotion do you receive from the feature you photographed?

3) Why did you choose to take this photo?

4) How does this contribute to Bidwell Park’s “sense of place” for you personally?

The hike allows the users to walk through Lower Park at their speed, meeting at specified points at different set times, giving users time to take photos and to fill out their field log. The hike is to last over three hours, and participants are to be given the option at the last meeting spot to take their time in returning back to the CCNC where they will drop off their field log and hand over the disposable camera or e-mail the photos to the given e-mail address.
Chapter Five: Findings

5.1 Introduction

To review, the objectives of this research aim to design signs with a sense of place; the questions the researcher set forth in the Methodology section include the following:

- How are sign design principles developed utilizing the “sense of place” concept?
- How can signs be incorporated into a physical environment to effectively communicate and add to sense of place?
- How is a common understanding of the characteristics that define a community’s sense of place reached?

To answer the third question, an important design criteria was established through the use of a serial vision analysis. The third research question was answered through both a SWOT analysis and through a photo-based analysis called Visitor Employed Photography. This provided the researcher with park users’ insight through recorded features of their choosing of Bidwell Park that provided a particular emotion, was meaningful to them, and was included in their sense of place. In this section, the analysis findings will be discussed by the researcher’s self-interpretation.

5.2 Serial Vision Analysis

The qualitative, place-based analysis led to the identification of several significant values of the environment that should lead to a design that will be protective and enhancing of Bidwell Park’s sense of place. The serial vision analysis assessed the physical, natural, and
cultural/historical dimensions (Figure 5.1) of the Park through a visual analysis that was performed while in motion.

Figure 5.1: Serial Vision Assessment Layers
Source: Author

This analysis relied on the quality of the researcher’s visual experience by acting as a tool to identify visual characteristics of the environment. In summary, it assessed the following:

- Scale Appropriateness
- Valuable Visual Resources
- Characteristics
• Access of Views
• Rate of Speed of Views

These were found to be the delicate and influencing factors of the visual experience, something Cullen discusses in “art of a relationship”, that can impact the user psychologically and emotionally. As photos were taken and further reviewed with the support of a plotting map, as shown in Figure 5.2, they were analyzed for some important elements, as listed below.

![Serial Vision Analysis Photos and Map](image_url)

**Figure 5.2: Serial Vision Analysis Photos and Map**

*Source: Author and Fei Xi*

**Visual**

The visual experience in Lower Bidwell Park is more confined due to the flat terrain, presence of the built environment and the dense vegetation. The quality of the Lower Park sequence route offers some of the riparian vegetation and dramatic presence of the mature oak
trees. It is also here that the photos had the largest number of people in them due to the proximity to Chico’s urban core.

Middle Park provided a visual experience of both of the more pristine areas of vegetation; however, the route’s proximity to the boundary of the park provided the most urban exposure.

Upper Park offers more widespread scanning with the exception of the Yahi Trail that runs along Big Chico Creek. Even along this trail there are more opportunities to see the background of the rolling hills and steep slopes of the canyons that increase in scale the further east one walks into Upper Park. The choice of trails that run along the south side of the Upper Park allow views of the grasslands, eventually leading to a canyon rim, offering views of the Sacramento Valley, Chico, Sutter Buttes, Cascade Mountains and other distant locations.

*Physical Environment*

Lower Park has very flat terrain in comparison with the other zones of the park. The trees and their understory offer a dramatic sense of their height in comparison to a human’s height. The Oak trees tower above with wide reaching limbs that provide shade and protection from the sun.

Middle Park is a transition zone. As the creek winds through the Park towards the Sacramento Valley floor, the terrain features change from the steeper surroundings to flat terrain or gently sloping alluvial fans with elevations ranging between 60 and 200 feet.

Upper Park is dominated by the rolling foothills and a steady incision that Big Chico Creek has created over time in the Basaltic Love Joy rock. The creek runs downhill toward
Downtown Chico, creating a dramatic view of the steep canyons, rock outcrops, water bodies, rocky canyon rims, and cliffs. It offers several trails, including South Rim that runs alongside the canyon, and a trail that runs alongside Big Chico Creek (Figure 5.3).

![Figure 5.3: Upper Park](source: Bruce King)

**Natural Environment**

Much of the study area is comprised of natural vegetation which changes significantly with the topography as one moves through the different sequence zones of Lower, Middle, and Upper Park.

At the western most part of Lower Park is a landscaped area reflecting urban influences. The park vegetation begins to get denser the further east one travels. A large section of Great Valley Oak trees gradually mix in with other trees to create incredible canopies over both the paved
paths and dirt trails (Figure 5.4), blocking sun into some the sections of the trail; the vegetation creates a sense of mystery and refuge from the urban community that lays only feet away.

![Figure 5.4: Lower Park Oak Trees](image)

Source: Author

There were several landscaped areas that were discovered during this analysis which catered to picnicking and recreational activities. Remains of an orchard on the east side of Lower Park were found before the zone’s transition into Middle Park.

At the west end of Lower Park, flows Big Chico Creek, through an area known as Lost Park, nestled between Camellia Way and Main Street. Following the creek upstream is a fish ladder and One-Mile Dam, emerging from one side of a concrete pool constructed directly in the channel of the creek. One-Mile Dam creates the Sycamore Swimming pool, also known as One-Mile Pool. Big Chico creek enters the City of Chico, flowing through Lower Bidwell Park,
reaching the One Mile Dam, located just east of the Vallombrosa and Mangrove/Pine Street intersection.

Middle Park had a large amount of land dedicated to facilities, with more managed landscapes (e.g., Hooker Oak Fields, Five Mile Recreation Area, and Bidwell Golf Course) than natural ones. This area also seemed to have more visual interaction with the built environment of the park’s exterior, rather than with natural elements in the interior of the park.

Moving upstream into Middle Park is the point where Big Chico Creek runs into Five-Mile Dam. It is here that Big Chico Creek’s flow is partially diverted into Lindo Channel (historically known as Sandy Gulch).

Upper Park had natural vegetation comprised of wildflowers, grasslands, and some wooded areas along Chico Creek and along the canyon rims.

Upstream from Five-Mile Dam, Big Chico Creek’s waters run in a free-flowing stream through Upper Park. Continuing east along the creek is Iron Canyon, characterized by classic wild land swimming holes, such as Salmon Hole, Browns Hole, and Bear Hole. The pool and drop morphology is due to the steeper gradient, following the creek upstream to the point of entrance at the east end of Upper Bidwell Park, through the deep, wide-topped canyon, emerging just North of Forest Ranch as it enters the valley.

Historical/Cultural Features

Lower Park is the zone most densely filled with people. Although many come here on foot or on bike, many cars also enter the park at this location to take a peaceful drive through the park, or
go to the picnic and recreation areas. Pedestrians, at times, have to share the road with drivers. The demographic tends to be more diverse. There are some interesting historical sites that were located through the data collection process and then noticed during the serial vision analysis. This included the location of the original filming for Robin Hood and John and Annie Bidwell’s home.

Middle Park is a destination location with facilities or picnic areas, and most people come here for a specific event or they are simply passing through.

Upper Park has visitors who are looking for more adventure with its options for mountain biking, longer and more difficult hiking trails, and swimming holes of which many jump into from the canyon’s large rocks and steep rims.

5.2 Recommendations

Above all of the other characteristics that were gathered from this approach, it was found that evaluating for scale is the most valuable as it is the way users appropriate their environment and the affective values of the environment are key. They provided scale:

5.2.1 Scale Principle #1: Appropriateness

The scale of the sign must be appropriate to the surrounding form and must consider the user’s desired experience. A location in Upper Park or along trails that offers winding routes through the park can add to the intimacy and refuge one is seeking. The scale of signs becomes
essential in not taking away the already established sense of place. Carr stressed this when he said, “call on one hand for sufficient order in the environment to facilitate comprehension and on the other for sufficient complexity and change to stimulate curiosity and exploration” (1970).

5.2.2 Scale Principle #2: Affection

The use of local material and sign types on the different trails can celebrate the emotions that people feel towards a particular area. For example, on some trails the requirement of trailblazing signs might be necessary. However, the sign should be scaled to fit-in with the surrounding area as much as possible, with the use of wood stakes or ground signs that blend in with the natural elements of the environment in which it is to be located.

5.2.3 Scale Principle #3: Specific properties of a place

A highly legible environment allows us the comfort to move without doubt or burden, giving one fond memories of an experience. This adds to the connection and depth that one person will remember about a place (Lynch, 1960). The signs should be scaled to the other properties of that particular scene.

5.2.4 Practical Application

Movement was also found to be an important factor in the relationships between the properties of place with the paths, roads, and trails. The recommendations are to divide the circulation roads, paths and hiking trails into three categories: (1) Primary (2) Secondary and (3) Tertiary. This is based on three contributing factors that were found to influence the visual experience. These are the materials of the route (i.e., dirt versus pavement), its width, the
proximity of the vegetation or other physical elements, and the scale of the vegetation or physical element to the human.

Lynch (1960) felt that paths that are designed correctly can be organized to express a particular order. Signs that are specifically scaled for the variety of route options, in addition to incorporating carefully selected materials and colors, can bring coherence to the park sign system; enhancing sense of place. Kaplan et al (1988) included color and material as one way that could be used to distinguish paths; this would assist in people understanding the place’s qualities more quickly. If the size of the sign designer does not consider the surrounding physical elements that would balance the sign’s size, the sign seems out-of-place and intrusive (Figure 5.5). A smaller, human-scaled sign, versus the vehicle-scaled sign, is more appropriate in keeping in-line with the natural sense of place.
Primary, Secondary and Tertiary routes (Figure 5.6) were located in the sequence zones of Lower, Middle and Upper Park based on the scale appropriateness to the surrounding natural and physical elements. Design criteria can be established to cater to each of these zones and routes.
5.4 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis allowed for a better understanding of the existing assets and was a combination of the data collection process and the serial vision analysis. This combination begins to shape the design vision for sense of place.

5.4.1 Results

The results of the SWOT analysis are summarized in Figure 5.7.
5.4.2 Recommendation

The recommendations focus on opportunities. When applying a new sign system, it is important to consider some of the opportunities that the sign system could potentially have an impact on. These recommendations were found to be:

- Interpretive signage for natural, cultural and historical elements
- Celebrate the rich past of the local Indian Tribe with design elements or use the Native language on some signs with English translation

- Signs should not be designed around the car as the dominant user. This would most likely increase the speed of the vehicle traffic. Taking away from the experience one is seeking

- The facilities on site should not be allowed to display “open” signs that use electricity. There should be clear guidelines included in the design manual for those that are lessees or concessionaires on allowable sign displays.

- Although wood deteriorates at a quicker rate and could be considered more expensive it would aesthetically be more pleasing. Finding a sustainable alternative is important.

5.4 Photo-Based Analysis

There were a total of 10 disposal cameras distributed and 6 cell phones used and a total of 16 field logs were distributed. Out of these, all individuals participated with the exception of one, who lost his field log book on his way back to CCNC. This brought the number of respondents down to 15, for an effective return rate of 94%. This produced a total of 160 photographs not including the doubles, 120 from the disposable cameras and 60 from the cellphones (Appendix B), of which all were successfully developed and e-mailed to the researcher in order for the photos to be further analyzed.

To analyze the photographs and the field log, the researcher needed to match each field log with its referenced photographs. Each photograph was marked with a number based on the ID number of the field log and disposable camera and the order in which the photographs were taken to match the answers in their field log. Next, each field log was entered into an Excel
spreadsheet recording the gender, age and the average number of times the participant visits the park in a week (Figure 5.8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency/days a week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 F</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6 out 7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 F</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 M</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 F</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 M</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3 out of 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.8: Gender, Age, and Frequency of Visits

Source: Author

Second, each field log asked the user to provide what they considered to be the most significant things about Bidwell Park. The responses are presented in Figure 5.9.
Three categories emerged from the sampled responses to be most significant and which all response data could be categorized under (Figure 5.10). First, “natural elements” consisted of responses that had listed a specific natural feature in the Park. The second was “place”. This consisted of responses that mentioned a specific place within Bidwell Park that was significant to the participant. The third was “use”, which consisted of subject matter that described a particular activity.
Categories were established from analyzing the responses and then interpreting them for the remaining questions in the field log book. It was based on the similarities in the responses. These categories are representatives of the characteristics of what the participants defined to be Bidwell Park’s sense of place (Figure 5.11). This information can be used in the creation of themes that can be communicated through signs. The following provide those established categories with an example of the respondents answer.
Question #2: What were you capturing in this photo?

Review of the responses and photos revealed the reoccurring categories below:

- **Natural environment**
  
  "One flower amongst colorless grass and dirt"

- **Physical environment**
  
  "Entrance into Bidwell Park - the one I use most often"

- **Social environment**
  
  "Photo of myself and a friend biking in the park"
Question #3: What emotion do you receive from the feature you photographed?

From a review of the responses and photos, theme categories were developed into:

- Past
  
  “Nostalgic about childhood”

- Active
  
  “The anxiousness of anticipation for the pool to be ready to swim in”

- Spirit
  
  “Amazement and a little sad for the tree, but it’s nature”

Question #4: Why did you choose to take this photo?

This question was closely related to establishing a “meaning” of the photo. As Stedman (2002) stressed that the word “sense” in the concept sense of place, is ultimately the meaning in it. These were some key categories, or the “glue” as Stedman (2002) referred to it:

- Relationship
  
  “Water signifies life and here you see people, trees, water, life”

- Arrangement
  
  “Love the trees and pool”

- Zest
  
  “One of my favorite”
Question #5: How does this contribute to Bidwell Park’s “sense of place” for you personally?

The reoccurring themes fell naturally into the categories that are discussed in much of the literature review of sense of place. These being:

- **Affective**
  
  “I like that the bridge, although man made, blends in to the "nature" surrounding it.”

- **Conative**
  
  “A place where we have spent many hours walking, running, biking, and at one time, swimming”

- **Cognitive**
  
  “My favorite times in the park are when there are no automobiles... I like that this is an option”

5.6 Recommendations

There seems to be an intimate and strong sentiment around Bidwell Park for the sampled participants. Since sense of place has been considered to create emotional behavior and attachment to places, the larger community is likely going to share a strong appreciation for the Park. It should be recommended that designing for sense of place should include the larger community in the process, in order to gather input on “what” sense of place is made-up of according to the locals. There will inevitably be a higher interest and concern around natural land that is a sanctuary for its users, which showed up in some of the responses from the field log.
Management efforts should be applied in the future to tailor features to the local characteristics of the place.

To determine “what” makes up sense of place, the literature review mixed with the mixed-methodology were helpful in establishing a better understanding of the local community. The user’s reasoning (conations) for visiting the Park can assist in making several recommendations around the dimensions of affective and cognitive principles that can go into sign design criteria.

- **Design Principle #1: Cognitive**
  - Creating a physically functional place
  - Include maps at most populated places

- **Design Principle #2: Affective**
  - Name places on signs and celebrate them with unique icons.
  - Encourage experiences and direct experiences with places. Signs should be limited on negative messages.
  - Create particular color representation for the different zones in the park to create their own special image.
  - Find colors that represent some of the emotional significance of the park
  - Use local and historic material that best represents the past setting of the park.

Changing to modern signage could take away from sense of place.

5.5 Conclusion
The data collection phase, serial vision analysis, SWOT Analysis and place-based analysis, mixed with the literature review around one’s visual experience and movement was extremely helpful in understanding how one experiences the Park. Some important information came out of these analyses that allowed the researcher to unearth some of the raw experiences of the park, such as the trails or paths that are chosen to escape the more urban and cultural influences to seek more solitude. Although the Park staff is keen on safety and having well marked trails, over signing these places would take away from Bidwell Park’s sense of place. Careful and sensitive design is needed to account for those people that seek refugee or mystery, as Kaplan et al. (1988) stated.

The SWOT Analysis provided an opportunity to do a wider analysis, moving beyond signs and visual elements to look closely at patterns and influences. The Park staff is seeing more pressure from the increasing number of people moving to the area and their desire to use Bidwell Park. The sign guidelines should provide flexibility for these changes; however, looking at the possible opportunities that were established in the SWOT analysis might create a better culture of users taking more pride and ownership in the Park.

The use of the survey data from the photo-based analysis in this research has enabled an interpretive analysis that has not been seen in other sense of place studies. More specifically, it offers an interpretive analysis that has the potential to be used in a real life application by providing a common understanding of the important features, characteristics and qualities of a place that can be incorporated into design criteria.

The analysis of understanding “what” makes up sense of place can provide key management practices within the City to better evaluate physical elements that will be applied to
Chapter Six: General Conclusion

6.1 General Conclusion

Researchers and several publications all strongly emphasized the importance of the role physical features play in someone’s experience of their environment. Since signs are a physical feature of the landscape and can be found throughout the United States and other countries, they become a part of a place and how one understands it. When one understands place, one can begin to form the sense of place for that place. The landscape is rich with signs that are experienced by people all the time, so much so that signs are often overlooked. Then it-is-no great surprise that Bidwell Park Management failed to acknowledge signs’ contribution beyond providing Park users safety and regulation messages. However, through the literature review it was established
just how much signs are relied upon by users when experiencing place. When looking at signs and reflecting upon their evolution, history and connection with our culture, we can see that they are a narrative to our own lives. Their ability to project an image, provide organization, introduce a meaning, and express an identity all add up to how a person establishes a sense of place.

Signs have tremendous potential to express and organize through their elements and placement, providing a mix of cognitive and affective response. When signs work in a way that helps provide those responses, places are remembered and sought out. When one integrates design dimension around the user’s experience, vision and movement are an important starting place. This offers a truer representation of how the sign is to fit-in with the other properties of that place. When designing signs for the potential relationships they will have with a moving user and influence of the other characteristics in the area, better judgment can be made when incorporating them into a physical environment to effectively communicate a sense of place. Without consideration of these dimensions and factors, inappropriate design is bound to happen.

Bidwell Park offered an important project opportunity that took place in the field, having potential for real world application. The sense of place concept is intensely explored academically, but unclear when approaching it for real world application. The literature review on sense of place provided several attributes that go into what makes-up sense of place. Using these attributes as a foundation during the photo-based analysis, it offered great insight on identifying reoccurring themes that data could be categorized under. These categories are representative of the attributes of place that could be incorporated into design suggestions for the locale.
When applying signs to a particular place, the most important offering from the literature review and interpretive analysis was that sense of place is associated with memories of place or is significantly a part of the person’s daily life. Therefore it is essential - prior to the establishment of sign design guidelines - that the community is provided an opportunity to give input. A poem that the Bidwell Park Citizens Advisory Committee (2008) organized is telling of the feelings that people have towards this park:

...We can’t help but feel this is a cathedral, a sanctuary from the daily rush of life, and a place to marvel at, learn from, play in, ... and to protect. Bidwell Park is the core of our being; a vein that runs through our community, that connects the broad valley to the rolling foothills and the past to the present. The whole park feels sacred ... it fills us physically, mentally, and spiritually. We feel calm and we are renewed here. We can escape the relentless hustle of work and the frenzies of city life and of modern technology. We can connect with the past, enjoy the present, and ponder the future. We can find solitude - or share this special place with family and friends. We can run and see no one for miles.

The unique spirit of place depends on a combination of the particular elements of the place and not just the physical elements. From the topography, vegetation, circulation or human patterns, to the variety of place properties and the materials that are seen; it is also about moving away from the credit that physical elements have received. Although signs are physical features, they exist as much more, contributing to experiences of the user. When designing for signs it is important to understand all aspects of what comprises sense of place. It should move to include some of the findings from the photo-based analysis, those which sense of place centers on our relationships and the ability to use place in a way that fits our needs. Design should consider how “…people-individuals and society-… integrate these features, through their value systems, to form a sense of place” (Jiven & Larkman, 2003).
It is also about relationships that can be celebrated at these places, whether it is the relationship one has with themselves or with a group of people. The relationship with others and the memories that are created are important to sense of place. Keith Basso (1996) felt that dialogue with the community or stakeholders about their lived experiences is important to making of place; allowing them to express themselves about something they are familiar with is how one can understand “what” sense of place is made of.

Chapter Seven: General Recommendations

7.1 General Recommendations

The following recommendations aim to offer design criteria and a process that will assist future efforts of the Park Management, Playground Commission and Design Review Committee as they replace or create new man-made physical features in Bidwell Park. It should also assist professional planners or designers in reminding them to be cognizant of the significance of the elements that work together to provide a visually stimulating experience for the user. Awareness of place is vital when working with an urban setting, a wilderness setting or a setting that has both influences. Sensitivity is required for all of these. When the time comes that the park management, planners and designers are asked to change a certain place with incorporation of a new feature by design, a review process that will help define significant and meaningful design that exudes the authentic character of the place is an absolute.
This is only to act as a recommended framework and flexibility should be allowed as our places and generations continue to change and influence sense of place. A review of the relevant literature and the applied methodology distilled a number of important principles in creating design criteria around sense of place, as well as the specific design techniques. The data collected from qualitative analysis enhanced the design criteria with four important focus categories. These design criteria principles and techniques are as follows:

7.1.1 Principle # 1 Scale

**Technique #1.1 Primary, Secondary, Tertiary**

- A trail in Middle Park currently has two large signs that are scaled for vehicles; however, this path is 24 inches wide. For paths this small that cater to horseback riders, hikers, and bikers, the signage should be scaled appropriately.
- Trails that offer mystery and limit one from seeing the emerging view should consider not adding signs.

7.1.2 Principle # 2 Characteristics

**Technique #1 Cultural form**

- The supporting poles, primary colors, can be chosen from a classic standpoint. The brown color has been used in the Park for many years and is considered to be a part of the Park’s history.

**Technique #2 Iconic elements**
• Bidwell Park has many places within it which are very important to both individuals and groups. The design pays homage to these places by developing images that can be applied to the sign face and the wayfinding system. This will build an image for the park.

Technique #3 Historical

• Historical elements relevant to the region are implemented whenever possible.

7.1.3 Principle #3 Patterns

Technique #1 Groupings

• The category of signs should work on a unified system and provided obvious feedback at a glance.

Technique #2 Hierarchy

• Signs that were found to be repeated by participants could be considered special places. Giving special attention to these signs by allowing them more flexibility to support the connection and the local pride. These signs represent location in the park that the community has a special connection with. These will have opportunities for local artist to participate in the design of the supporting image alongside the community.

• If a route is experienced through a sequence, we can begin to diagram the messages needed along this route. Although trips are often random this helps to undertake the mental process one might go through. A hierarchy of signs then is shown from one
journey from one location to another location. The trip involves navigating one to another site by providing relevant information along the way.

*Technique #3 Wayfinding*

- Identification signs can be placed where there are major nodes in activity and in traffic or parking lots. Include maps and important place icons.

*Technique #4 Delivery*

- As a user approaches a specific destination, they should be receiving messages through a series of signs with images representing facilities, trail heads, and other areas within the park. This will prime the user for making instant decisions upon the arrival at the sight.

*Technique #5 Natural environmental systems*

- The natural environment within the park is an inspiration for the colors and the scaling of the signs. The different vegetation, topography and physical elements in Upper, Middle, and Lower Park can lead to creating signs that represent different zones.

7.1.4 Principle #4 Appearance

*Technique #4.1 Color*

- Sign colors have been chosen with two principles:
  1) Provide maximum readability and to provide a graphic indication of the sign's purpose.
  2) Reflect characteristics and a “sense of place” for park and park zones.
- Upper Park is represented by a rust-pink color, mimicking the dominate soil color in this area. Middle Park is represented by the color gold; Lower Park is represented with green,
using the inspiration from the dense canopy of trees that are part of the experience in this area.

*Technique #4.2 Double Bar Layout*

- Double bar creates a cohesive design that can be applied throughout a sign system. A double bar format provides the structure for “zone” signs. The standard layout includes a wide top color bar that indicates the purpose of the sign and most usages will also include a narrower bottom color bar with a district logo and allows for incorporation of additional information when needed. In some cases this style will be reversed.

7.2 Final Considerations

One of the mistakes that management and planners often make is projecting their own objectives and connections to a place. Although their insight is valuable for the process, they should never assume that they understand what makes up a community’s sense of place. Lynch (1960) adopted this, believing that the user should be consulted and their needs and thoughts should be incorporated in the design of the city. This should be expanded to incorporate any place that the community uses for public purposes. This is the only way to preserve, enhance and reinforce what sense of place is made of. The priorities of the local inhabitants need to be included and appreciated when it comes to designing and planning for sense of place. Bidwell Park’s sense of place does not exist independently of the users; in fact, it would seize to exist without them.

A combined method of analysis can be replicated by others who are doing similar field research around the planning and designing for sense of place. However, each will need to be
shaped around the client and the community. Clients often times may seem overwhelmed by the idea of managing or organizing a way to receive community feedback on design recommendations. However, from this study, it should show that there was work done at a low cost that could be easily replicated in the field. The photo-based analysis provided great insight and should be built upon to be implemented and assessed at a much larger scale.
References


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SUNY Press.


Appendices

A.
B. 

**Bidwell Park**

*Visit Explorers* Photographic

**Instructions:**
During your visit to Bidwell Park today, you will be taking photos and keeping a photolog of your visit. Please use the assigned cameras to take (2) photos. You will take 1 of the upper photos of an object, activity, feature or a particular setting that captures Bidwell Park's "Sense of Place" from your personal perspective. This is because one photo might not turn out and a second one will help ensure getting a good photo.

The photos may be taken up close or far away, they may include people, activities, wildlife, man-made or natural objects that contribute to something you feel drew you to Bidwell Park.

In addition to taking photos, you will make field notes, answering the questions for each of the different photographs (2) in the field notebook provided, then marking the location the photo was taken on the corresponding map.

**Step 1:** Without consulting with other members on the hike, take a photograph of some feature along the hike that captures Bidwell Park's "Sense of Place" for you. You do not need to take two identical photos of each feature.

**Step 2:** Go to the Field Notebook page 1 and record your question by marking it with an "X" on the accompanying map.

**Step 3:** To the right of the map, answer each of the questions that are asked without consulting other members of the group.

**Step 4:** Request the maps above for each of the 12 different photographs.

You have (2) Photographs. At the end of the trip please, return the camera to the hike leader.

**Brief Participant Info:**
1. Gender: 
2. Age: 
3. Briefly, if you would like copies of your photos: 
4. How many times a week do you find yourself in the park?

Since today you are visiting only a small part of the park, some of these features that capture Bidwell Park's Sense of Place might not be on your hike today. Because you have to hike to these two (2) things in Bidwell Park that are the most significant to you.

1.
2.
3.
BIDWELL PARK FIELD LOG

PHOTO NUMBER

1) Mark the location the photo was taken on the adjacent map.

2) What were you capturing in this photo?

3) What emotion do you receive from the feature you photographed?

4) Why did you choose to take this photo?

5) How does this contribute to Bidwell Park's "sense of place" for you personally?