Urban Trails Wayfinding

Austin

Sidewalks and Urban Trails Division

Bicycle Advisory Council 11/17/2026

Urban Trail Plan Goals & Action Items

- Goal 1 – Provide easy access to urban trails for both transportation and recreation users from all parts of the city
- Goal 2 – Link all urban trails to the on-street bicycle and sidewalk network around them
- **Action Item - Develop and implement a wayfinding plan for all existing and proposed Urban Trails, as outlined in the 2023 Urban Trail Plan.**

Purpose

- Develop a coordinated wayfinding and signage system for Austin's Urban Trails network.
- Support safe and intuitive navigation, improve the user experience, strengthen connections to destinations and transit, and create a more unified Urban Trails identity.
- Establish a lower maintenance system that can be implemented incrementally and evolve as the trail network expands.

Project Overview

Develop an Urban Trail Wayfinding Design Guide

- What's Been Done
  - CoA Internal Technical Advisory Group
  - Consultant has completed Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment Reports
  - Public Engagement Phase 1
  - Narrowed down Initial Concepts to two signage families
- What's happening now
  - Preparation for Public Engagement Phase 2
  - Survey – www.speakupaustin.org/urbantrailswayfinding

CITY OF AUSTIN
Urban Trails
Existing Conditions

June 2026

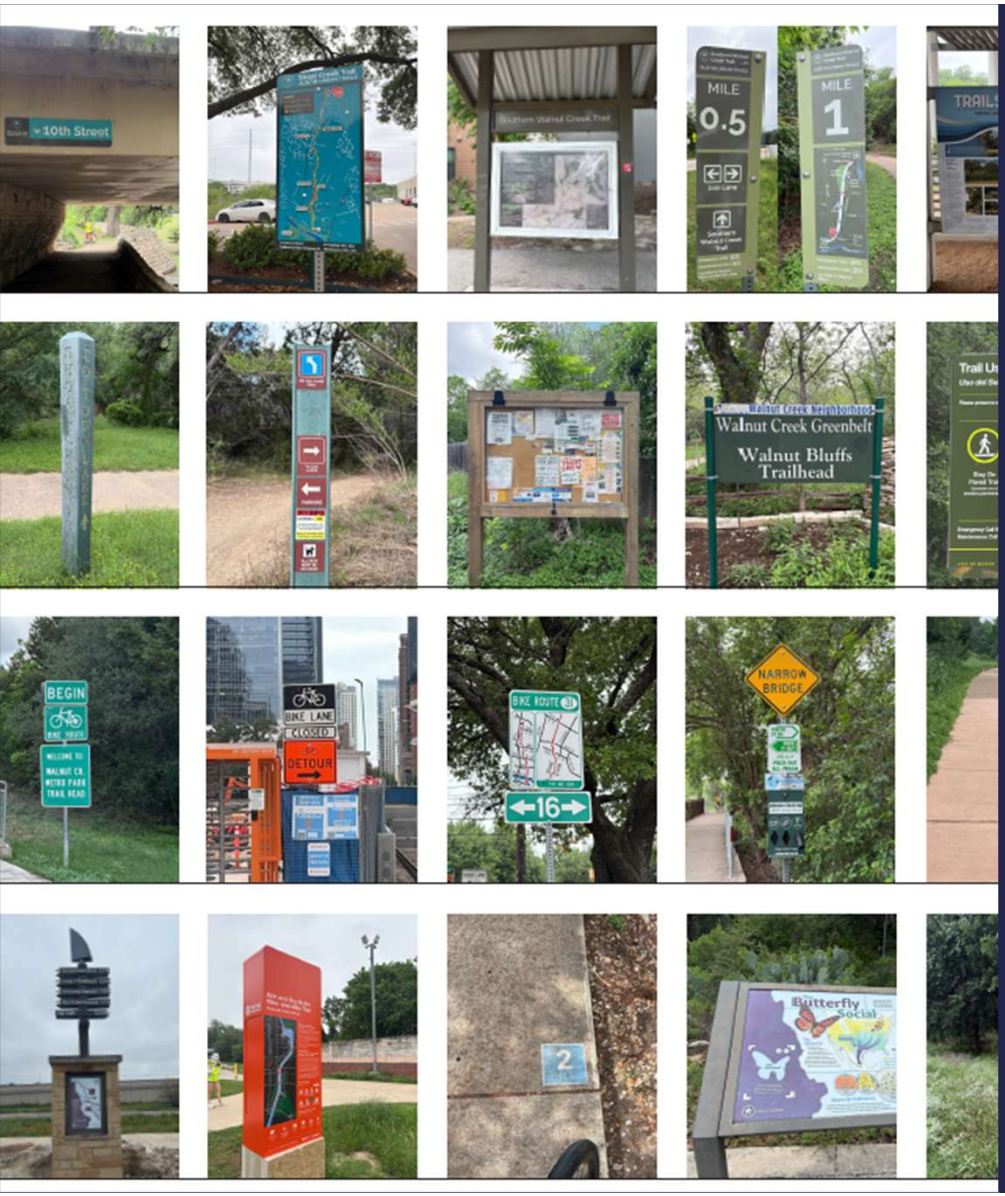
TOOLE DESIGN

Where We Are Today

- Austin's Urban Trails are an extensive and valuable mobility asset, but users often experience them as separate corridors rather than one connected regional network.
- Trails have developed incrementally under different projects and partners, creating variation in naming, signage, facility types, trail character, and user experience.
- Users may move between separated trails, on-street bikeways, sidewalks, park trails, and other facilities with little indication that they remain part of a connected network.
- The existing system places too much responsibility on users to already know where trails are, where they lead, and how they connect.

Existing Conditions Issues

- Inconsistent trail naming and corridor identity.
- Low visibility of trails and access points from surrounding streets.
- Limited guidance beyond trail endpoints.
- Inconsistent signage formats, information hierarchy, and placement.
- Undersigned trail junctions, crossings, and facility transitions.
- Limited integration with bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks.
- Inconsistent maintenance and sign-management practices.



Existing Signage

CITY OF AUSTIN
Urban Trails Needs Assessment

July 2026

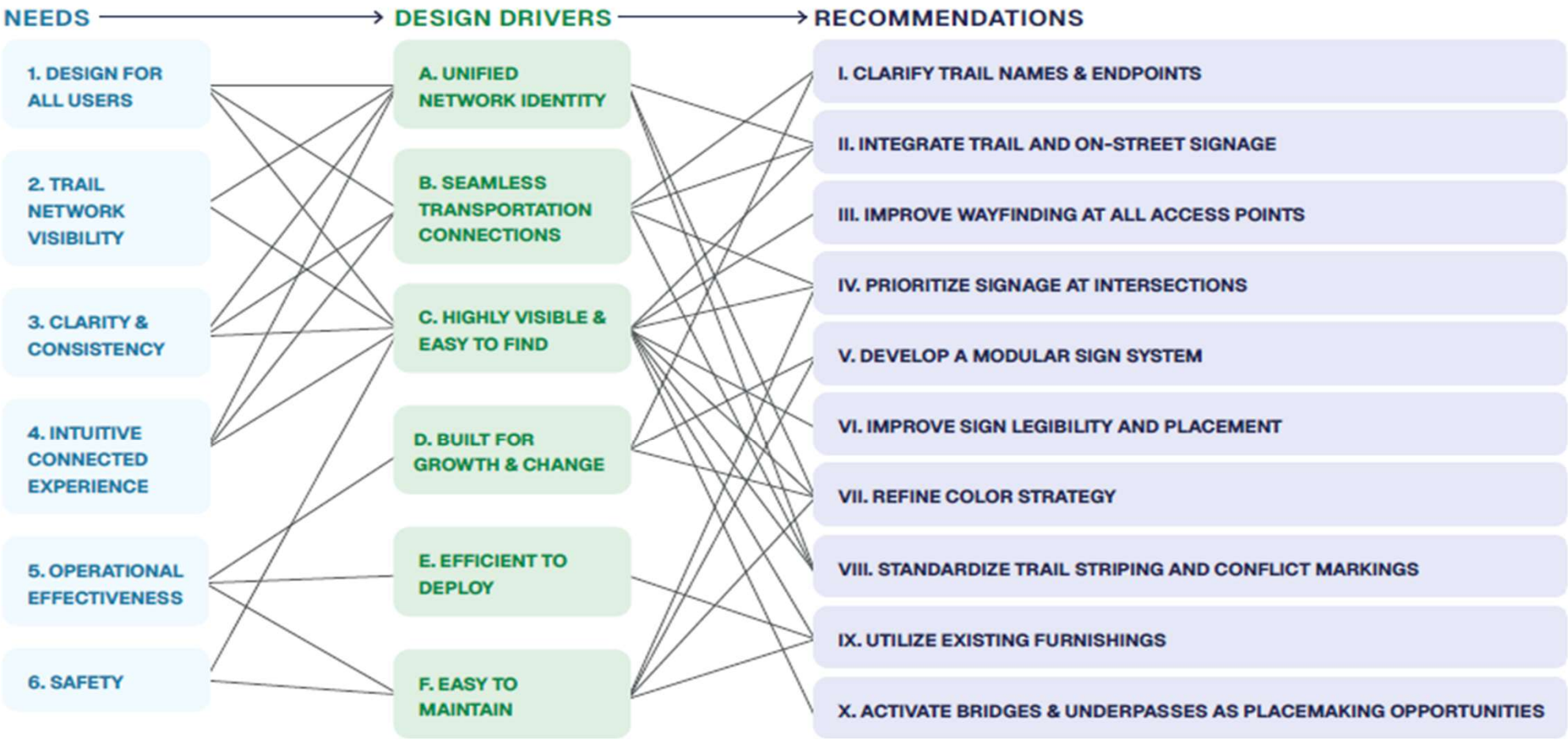
TOOLE DESIGN

Austin

Needs Assessment Summary

Hover over a NEED to see the DESIGN DRIVERS and RECOMMENDATIONS it informed. Hover over a RECOMMENDATION to trace it back to the DESIGN DRIVERS and NEEDS that support it.

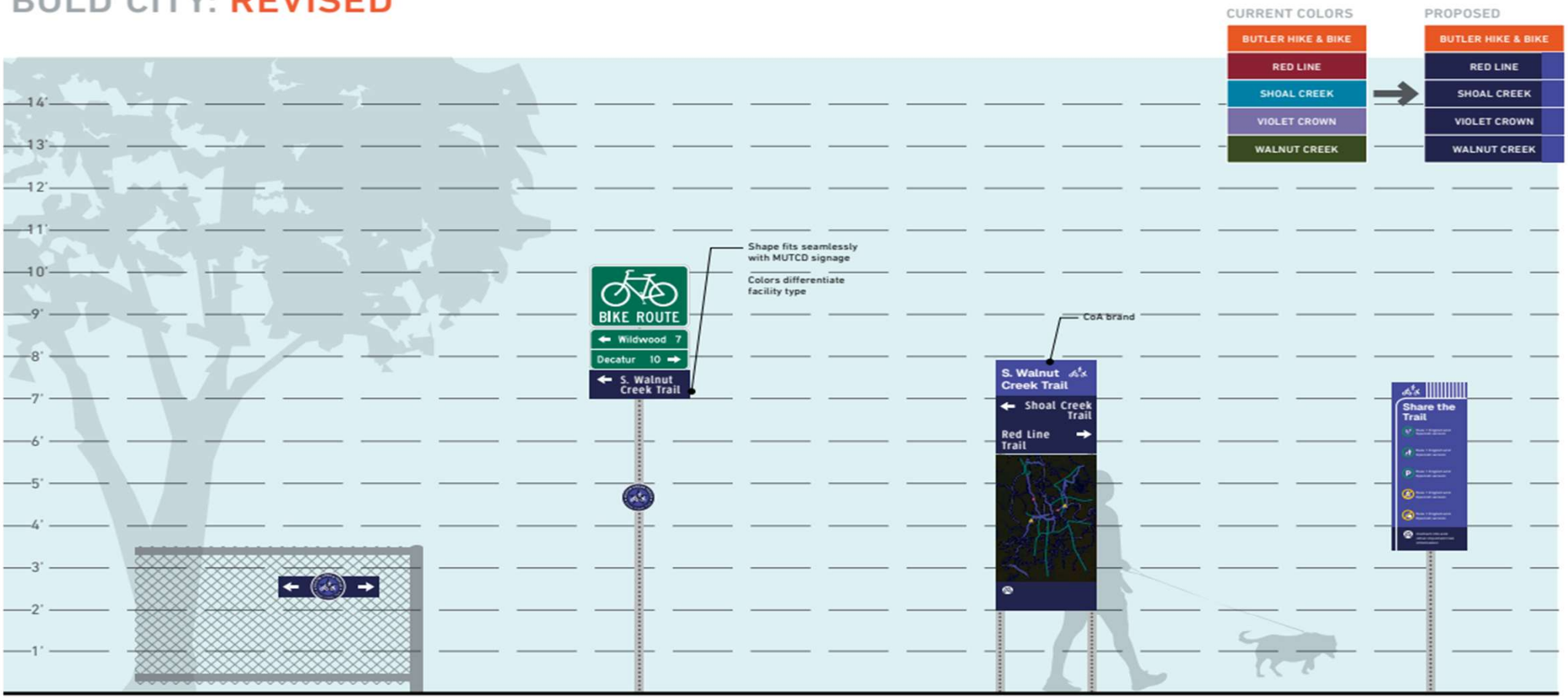
Notice how some recommendations are arrived at through multiple pathways, while others originate directly from a single need.



Initial Concepts

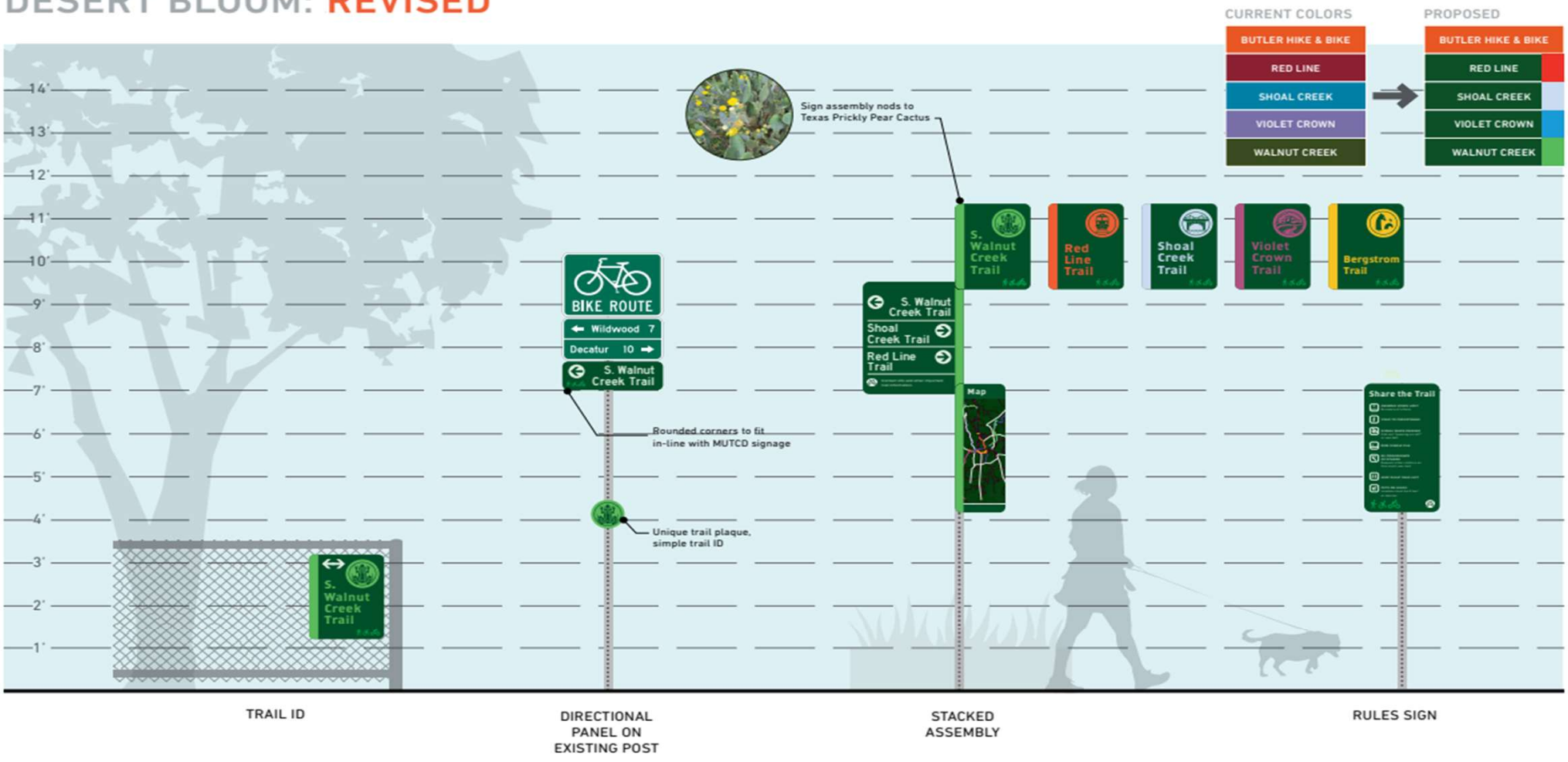
Bold City

BOLD CITY: REVISED



Desert Bloom

DESERT BLOOM: REVISED



CONCEPT COMPARISON





1. Bold City

Rooted in Austin's new brand, this concept uses bold color-blocking to unify the Urban Trails under a recognizable citywide identity. Urban Trails are represented in Austin's brand blue (Trail IDs lighter, directional information darker), and trail conditions in terracotta. This works in tandem with the standard green MUTCD signage and will use green to represent the on-street network in maps. All signs are made up of modular panels in two different widths that can be assembled in different combinations in response to trail conditions.

This concept is the most literal, top-down expression of the new City of Austin brand.

3. Desert Bloom

Like the Texas prickly pear cactus growing lobe by lobe, this flexible sign system is designed to grow organically with Austin's trails over time. The graphic layout evolves the current Urban Trails signage system, building on familiar forms. Less panelized than the other options, this concept requires less effort to assemble initially.

This option is organized around trail brands (whether individual, or by category as shown) to preserve the uniqueness of the different trails. With a green palette as a base that sits comfortably within the natural environment and allows the trail experience to remain primary, the highlighted edge is retained for visibility and further trail customization.

What's Next

- Public Feedback Phase II **– Oct through Nov 2026**
  - Survey - www.speakupaustin.org/urbantrailswayfinding
- Develop Draft Wayfinding Guide - **Nov/Dec 2026**
- Draft Guide and Pilot Sites – **Early 2027**
- Final Wayfinding Guide Published - **May 2027**

Questions & Feedback