



MT. VERNON INTERURBAN RAILWAY MARKER DESIGN

Sheila Grant  
Art & Design

Submitted  
August 2021



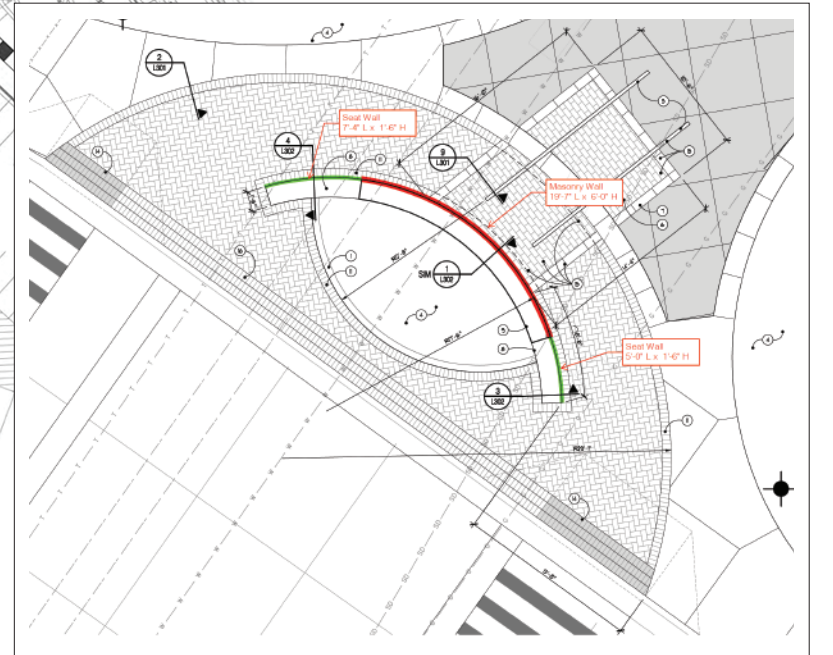
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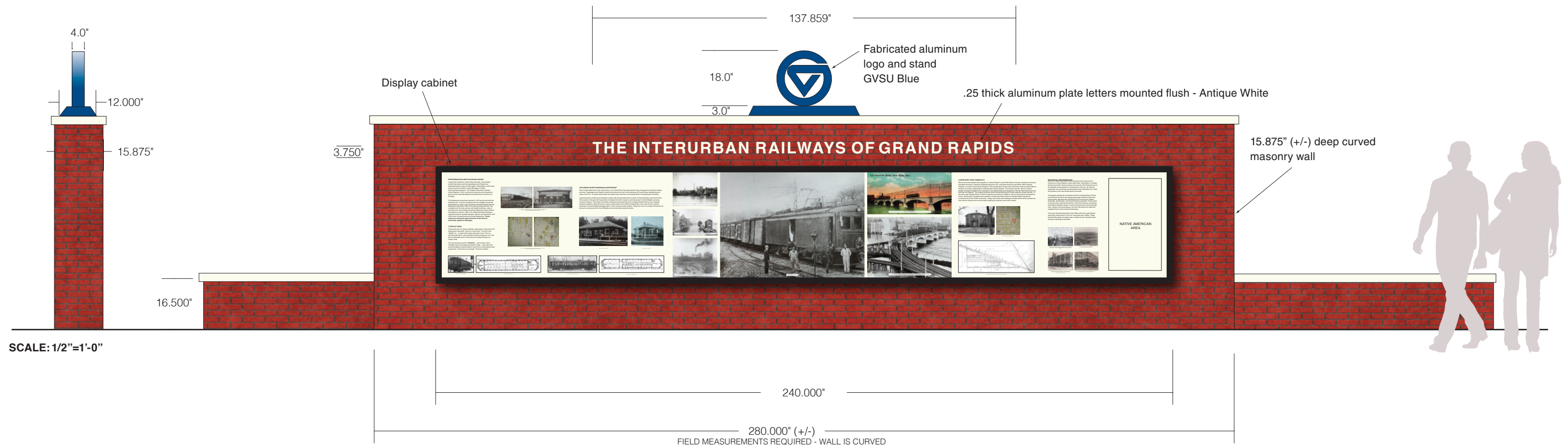
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LOCATION / PLACEMENT



- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. GVSU Sign / Mt. Vernon Identity    | 19. Laker Line Bus Stop                                       |
| 2. Clay Brick Pavers                  | 20. Tables with Blue Umbrellas                                |
| 3. Sculptural Icon                    | 21. Benches   |
| 4. Seat Wall with Plantings           | 22. Decorative Bollards                                       |
| 5. New Concrete Pavement              | 23. Bike Racks  |
| 6. Colored Concrete Pavement          | 24. Existing Traffic Pole to Remain                           |
| 7. Lawn                               | 25. Reinforced Turf Billboard Access Drive                    |
| 8. Existing Deciduous Trees           | 26. New Concrete Entry Drive                                  |
| 9. Deciduous Trees                    | 27. Boulevard Island with GVSU Identity Sign                  |
| 10. Multi-Stemmed Trees               | 28. Relocated Dumpster & Recycling Enclosure                  |
| 11. Ornamental Grasses - 24" -36" ht. | 29. Modified Concrete Sidewalks with Barrier Free Ramps       |
| 12. Ornamental Trees                  | 30. 10' Wide Crosswalk and Sidewalk for Designated Bike Route |
| 13. Ornamental Metal Fence            | 31. Artwall with GVSU / Mt. Vernon Identity                   |
| 14. Existing Ornamental Metal Fence   | 32. New Parking Lot Exit Drive                                |
| 15. Existing Parking Lot Entrance     | 33. Existing Billboard  |
| 16. Existing Cooling Tower Enclosure  | 34. Event Tent (80' x 120')                                   |
| 17. Pedestrian Light Poles            | 35. Rock Monument   |
| 18. Delivery Vehicle Access           |   |





**RAILWAY MARKER DESIGN - OPTION 1**

- Fabricated non-illuminated cabinet
- Face material to be determined
- High quality digital print graphics
- Exterior quality paints & materials
- GVSU logo to support GVSU brand color - PMS 301C
- Display mounted flush, center on masonry wall
- All color specifications to be determined
- All digital image resolutions to be approved before final production
- **Field measurements required (curved wall). Cabinet size and graphic layouts may require adjustment prior to fabrication**

240.000"

38.250"

**INTERURBAN RAILWAYS IN GRAND RAPIDS**

Larger than streetcars, electrically powered, and primarily owned by investors, interurbans carried passengers and freight over dedicated right-of-way at high speed. Passenger routes passed across much of southern Lower Michigan on these interconnected systems. The Holland Interurban reached Grand Rapids in 1917 running to the resorts and amusement parks around Lake Michigan and establishing connections to Chicago.

The Kalamazoo Interurban opened in 1915 and joined with the Holland route. The new company built two bridges across the Grand River to meet these interurban terminal stops with the Muskegon Interurban. Next to the tracks presented here, the company built its main service and freight buildings. Lines of business from automobiles bridged the Kalamazoo and Holland Interurbans in 1926. The United Suburban Railway used the tracks to operate between Jackson and downtown until 1922 when it closed during the Great Depression. These tracks are among the last remnants of the electric interurban system in Michigan.

**TYPES OF CARS**

There were five car types available, especially on the pre-1915 Kalamazoo Interurban, that ran on the line. The first is the "Road" car - it made more stops along the route. The car served small towns, lots of people coming and going, so it was less comfortable and not built out for people being on a longer route.

The second type was the "Parlor" - and as their name indicates they occupied an specific above - they had nicer accommodations and provided a much more comfortable travel experience. Text shown as example. Final text needed.

**THE GRAND RIVER'S WORKING WATERFRONT**

Since white settlement in the 19th century, the Grand River has experienced many changes to its physical shape and use. Passengers and freight moved up and down the river from downtown to Grand Haven bypassing poor roads until 1917. To make travel easier the rapids were removed, and islands that in reshaping the structure.

Logs during the lumbering era floated in large rafts through downtown to mills in Grand Rapids and Grand Haven. Two canals on the east and west sides redirected the flow of water to provide power to Grand Rapids' growing furniture industry. The waste from these companies along with the city's sewage flowed into the river creating pollution problems. Near downtown, dams constructed in the 1920s combined the flow a race of flow, and the opening of a Grand Rapids sewage plant in 1931 improved water quality. Today the river is no longer industrial and serves as a focal point for Grand Rapids and communities along its banks.

**215--Dunbar's Bridge, Grand Rapids, Mich.**

**LOWER WEST SIDE COMMUNITY**

Work and home existed close together on Grand Rapids' Lower West Side in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Industries operated along the river, and these workers lived either within walking distance or a short commute by elevated. Surrounding their homes were churches, fraternal organizations, schools, and other organizations reflecting their ethnic identity. The houses near St. Warren Avenue initially housed immigrants from Cleveland in the 1870s and expanded on the 1890s followed Church at Delaware and Watson. The original business district along Suburban Street catered to these families. To the west, east Chicago Street, Polish immigrants arrived in the 1890s to work in the factories and garment mills. Social halls, immigrant aid societies, and Sacred Heart Parish on Starke Street served as companions for the Polish community. Today, the homes and buildings of these earlier ethnic groups are now home to diverse new communities shaping the space to serve their needs.

**INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD**

Since the 1870s, the Grand River served as the focal point for multiple industries on Grand Rapids' Lower West Side. Extending for multiple blocks around St. Warren Avenue, the area by 1915 featured one of the greatest concentrations of companies in the city. As industry expanded, the remaining houses became less desirable from noise and pollution with new homes built to the west.

The largest companies produced lumber including Stone & Clark and Phoenix Furniture occupying large areas with their plant and lumberyards. Between the market and Front Avenue, leather, harness, warehouses, and barrel factories operated. To the south, a railroad yard, metal working firms, and more furniture companies extended to Wealthy Street. A web of railroad tracks heading freight cars, adding to the businesses, and the Interurban line made the neighborhood a fully industrial landscape.

The area's factories declined in the 1950s with many demolished during the construction of I-96 in the early 1960s. Today, Grand Valley State University sits on these former industrial sites and their nearby townhomes.

**NATIVE AMERICAN AREA**

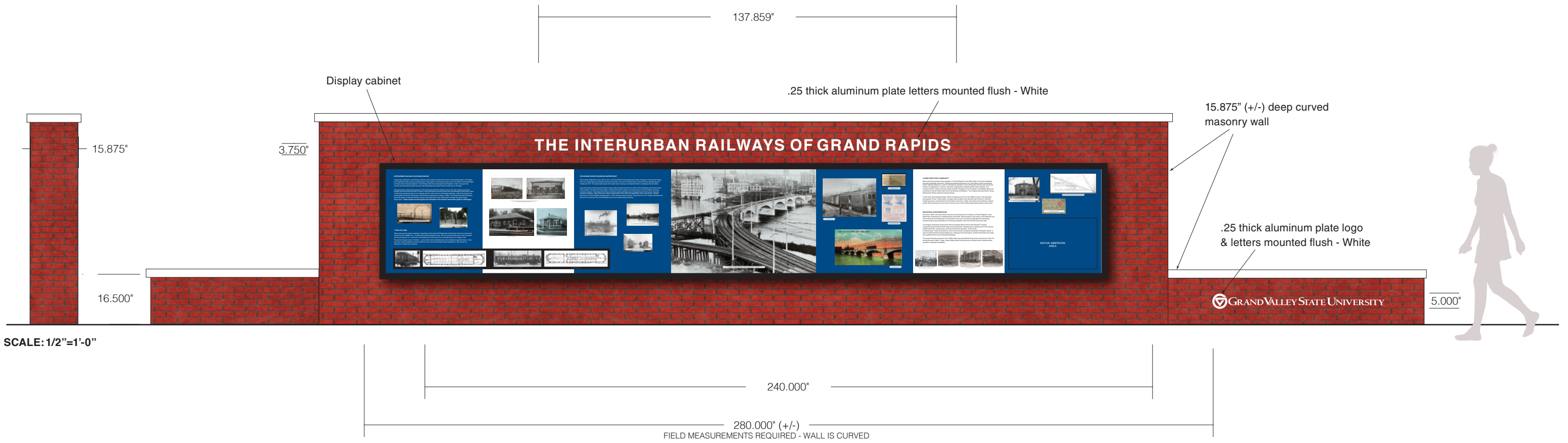
OPTION 1 DISPLAY ONLY - COLOR OPTION A  
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"



OPTION 1 DISPLAY ONLY - COLOR OPTION B  
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"



OPTION 1 DISPLAY ONLY - COLOR OPTION C  
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"



**RAILWAY MARKER DESIGN - OPTION 2**

- Fabricated non-illuminated cabinet
- Face material to be determined
- High quality digital print graphics
- Exterior quality paints & materials
- GVSU logo to support GVSU brand color - white
- Display mounted flush, center on masonry wall
- All color specifications to be determined
- All digital image resolutions to be approved before final production
- Field measurements required (curved wall). Cabinet size and graphic layouts may require adjustment prior to fabrication



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240.000"

38.250"

**INTERURBAN RAILWAYS IN GRAND RAPIDS**

Large blue section with text and images detailing the history of interurban railroads in Grand Rapids, Michigan, including the Kalamazoo Interurban and the Grand Rapids and Holland roads.

**THE GRAND RIVER'S WORKING WATERFRONT**

Large blue section with text and images detailing the Grand River's role in the lumbering industry and the construction of the Grand Rapids and Holland roads.

**LOWER WEST SIDE COMMUNITY**

Large blue section with text and images detailing the history of the Lower West Side community, including the construction of the Grand Rapids and Holland roads.

**INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD**

Large blue section with text and images detailing the history of the industrial neighborhood, including the construction of the Grand Rapids and Holland roads.

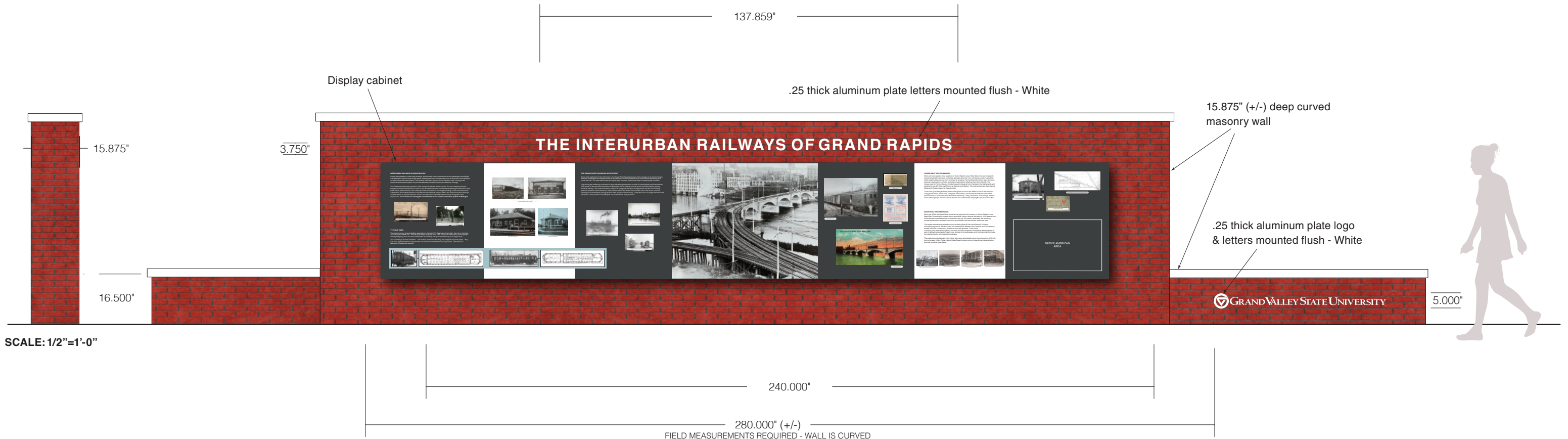
**NATIVE AMERICAN AREA**

Large blue section with text and images detailing the history of the Native American area, including the construction of the Grand Rapids and Holland roads.

**TYPES OF CARS**

Section with text and images detailing the various types of rail cars used in the Grand Rapids area, including passenger cars, freight cars, and specialized cars.

OPTION 2 DISPLAY ONLY  
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"



**RAILWAY MARKER DESIGN - OPTION 3**

- Fabricated non-illuminated cabinet
- Face material to be determined
- High quality digital print graphics (bleed)
- Exterior quality paints & materials
- GVSU logo to support GVSU brand colors - white
- Display mounted flush, center on masonry wall
- All color specifications to be determined
- All digital image resolutions to be approved before final production
- Field measurements required (curved wall). Cabinet size and graphic layouts may require adjustment prior to fabrication



240.000"

38.250"

**INTERURBAN RAILWAYS IN GRAND RAPIDS**

Larger Pullman electrically powered, and privately owned interurbans carried passengers and freight and delivered 1000-1500 lbs of freight at high speeds. Passengers could travel across much of Michigan. Lower Michigan on these interurban systems. The interurbans reached Grand Rapids in 1901 turning to the right and following parks around Lake Michigan and eventually connecting to Chicago.

The Kalamazoo Interurban arrived in 1903 and joined with the Holland road. The new company built two bridges across the Grand River to reach a new downtown terminal shared with the Muskegon Interurban. Next to the bridge preserved here. The company built its main offices and freight buildings. Lines of business from automobiles forced the Kalamazoo and Holland interurbans to close in 1928. The United Suburban Railways used the tracks to operate between downtown and downtown until 1922 when it closed during the Great Depression. These tracks are among the last remnants of the electric interurban system in Michigan.




**TYPES OF CARS**

There were two car types available, especially on the post-1915 Kalamazoo Interurban. One car on the lines. The first is the "local" car - it made more stops along the route. This car served small towns, lots of people coming and going, and it was less comfortable and not safe for people being on a longer route. The second type was the "through" - and as their name indicates they only stopped at specific stops - they had four compartments and provided a much more comfortable travel experience. See above for reference. Finalist text required.






**THE GRAND RIVER'S WORKING WATERFRONT**

Since white settlement in the 19th century, the Grand River has experienced many changes to its physical shape and use. Pioneers and freight moved up and down the river from downtown to Grand Haven bypassing poor roads and 1917. To make travel easier, the locks were removed, and Grand Haven - replacing the shoreline.

Logs during the lumbering era floated in large rafts through downtown to mills in Grand Rapids and Grand Haven. The canal on the east and steel dams increased the flow of water to generate power in Grand Rapids growing furniture industry. The waste from these companies along with the city's sewage flowed into the river creating pollution problems. Two dams, built in 1920s, increased the river's flow of flow and the opening of a Grand Rapids sewage plant in 1931 improved water quality. Today the river is no longer industrial and serves as a focal point for Grand Rapids and communities along its banks.







**LOWER WEST SIDE COMMUNITY**

Work and home existed close together on Grand Rapids' Lower West Side in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Industries operated along the river, and these workers lived either within walking distance or a short commute by streetcar. Surrounding their homes were churches, fraternal organizations, schools, and other organizations reflecting their ethnic identity. The houses near Mt. Vernon Avenue initially housed immigrants from Overijssel in the Netherlands and centered on the 18th Reformed Church at Calhoun and Nelson. The original business district along Butlerworth Street related to these families.

To the west, past Straight Street, Polish immigrants arrived in the 1890s to work in the factories and garment areas. Social halls, immigrant aid societies, and Sacred Heart Parish on Garfield Street served as centers for the Polish community. Today, the homes and buildings of these earlier ethnic groups are now home to diverse new communities shaping the space to serve their needs.






**INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD**

Since the 1870s, the Grand River served as the focal point for industry on Grand Rapids' Lower West Side. Clustering in multiple blocks around Mt. Vernon Avenue, the area by 1910 had become one of the densest concentrations of companies in the city. As industry expanded, the remaining business became less desirable from noise and pollution with few homes built in the area.

The largest companies produced furniture including Shaw & Davis and Phoenix Furniture occupying large areas with their plant and lumber yards. Between the market and Front Avenue, leather saddles, workbenches, and barrel factories operated. To the south, a railroad yard, metal working firms, and more furniture companies extended to Wealthy Street. A web of railroad tracks housing freight cars, siding to the businesses, and the interurban line made the neighborhood a fully industrial landscape.

The area's factories declined in the 1950s with many demolished during the construction of US-131 during the early 1960s. Today, Grand Valley State University sits on these former industrial sites and their resulting brownfields.






**NATIVE AMERICAN AREA**





OPTION 3 DISPLAY ONLY  
SCALE: 3/4"=1'-0"

