

Gateway Sign Survey

A survey to evaluate the City of Osseo's Gateway Sign was administered from April 10-24, 2018. The sign is located at the intersection of County Road 81 and Central Avenue/Jefferson Highway in Osseo, Minnesota. In 2016, Hennepin County reported an annual average daily traffic volume of 13,800 for this section of roadway.

The sign began operations in 2017. Funding came from the Hennepin County Business District Initiative grant, the Osseo Economic Development Authority, and contributions from community organizations and individuals.

A total of 57 survey responses were received, with 20 responses coming from area businesses, organizations, and agencies eligible to post messages to the sign. Results are summarized below.



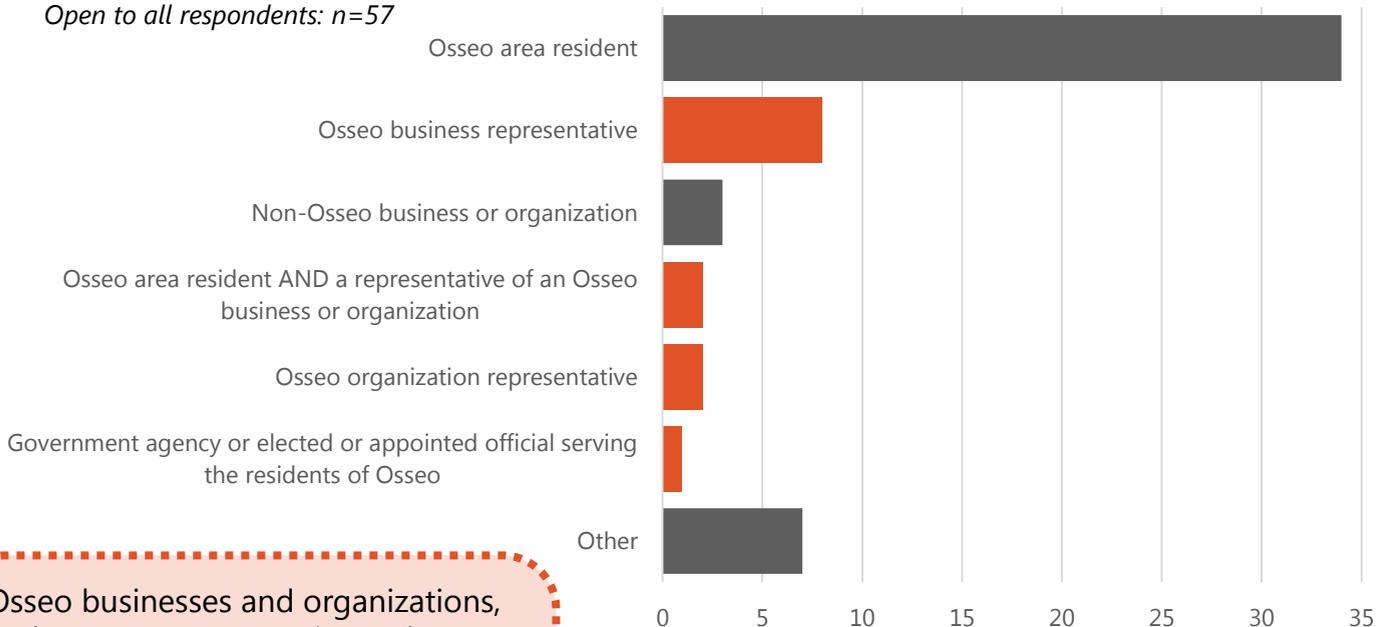
Learn more about the Gateway Sign:
www.discoverosseo.com/blog/gateway-sign-electronic-message-board/

General Awareness

Open to all respondents: n=57

Which best describes you?

Open to all respondents: n=57



Osseo businesses and organizations, and government agencies and officials representing Osseo, are eligible to post messages on the sign. The sign may also be used to promote public events taking place in Osseo.

Osseo area residents & non-Osseo businesses and organizations who completed the survey were able to comment on the information shared on the sign, as well as providing other general feedback.

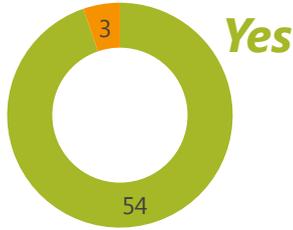
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General Awareness

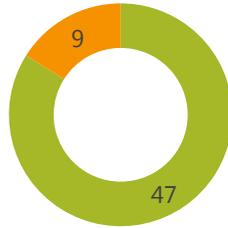
Open to all respondents: n=57

Prior to this survey, were you:

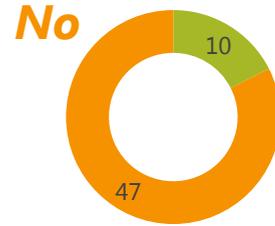
Familiar with the Gateway Sign?



Aware that Osseo businesses, orgs. & gov't reps. may post messages



Aware of Hennepin County's Business District Initiative grant contribution?

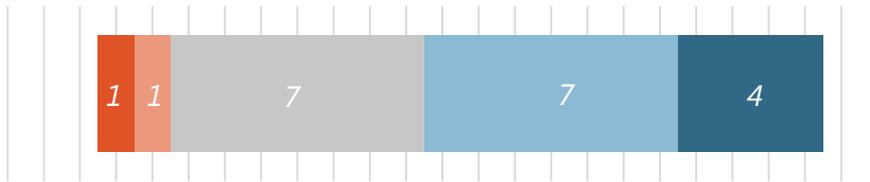


Effectiveness

Open to eligible users of the Gateway Sign: n=20

How effective is the Gateway Sign for the following purposes?

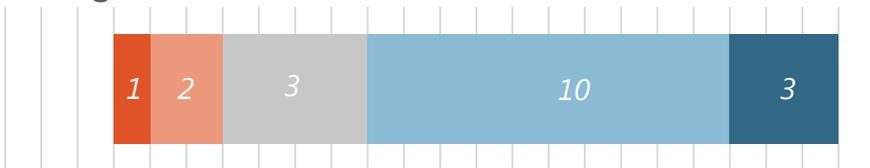
Communicating with my target audience



Ratings

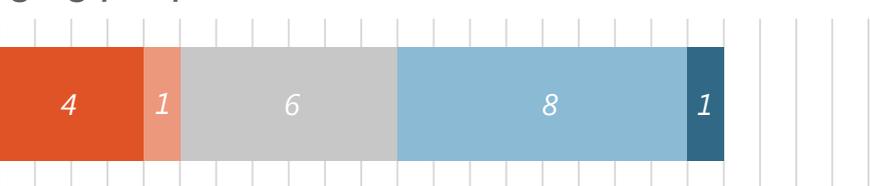
- Not at all effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Neutral
- Somewhat effective
- Extremely effective

Reaching new audiences



Respondents generally believed the sign was "somewhat" or "extremely" effective at reaching customers (55 percent) or new audiences (65 percent),

Bringing people to Osseo



However, some respondents doubted the sign's effectiveness for bringing new visitors and customers to the City. Twenty-five percent of respondents rated the sign "minimally" or "not at all" effective in this area. This may be because the sign reaches people already driving through Osseo.

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General Impressions

Open to all respondents. 43 comments received.

What do you think about the messages and graphics you have seen displayed on the Gateway Sign?

Approximately 47 percent of the comments received remarked positively on the sign. Examples include:

"I have found out about community events through this sign when I have been sitting at red lights. I like it!"

"Great stuff. It does not distract drivers which is great and is big enough to display a nice ad."

Approximately 19 percent of the comments offered negative feedback. Examples include:

"Graphics could use some work. They are a bit bright at times. Other times they can be hard to read. Overall, I think they are somewhat distracting at that intersection. "

"They are distracting and disrupt traffic, creating an even more dangerous intersection. It is too big to read when stopped at the light."

An additional 35 percent of comments offered mixed or neutral feedback.

Within the Negative, Mixed, and Neutral comment types, 23 percent of the comments offered constructive feedback regarding the design, timing, and content of the messages on the sign. Examples include:

"Not seeing as much community info[rmation] as I expected. [It's] mostly city info."

"It may be worth looking into upgrading to better screen."

"Many messages are difficult to read due to low resolution of the screens, the choice of colors and small sizes of text used. Most screens have too much information...Maybe limit the number of screens to what can fit in 30-40 seconds and still be read/absorbed."

Additionally, several representatives from area nonprofit groups questioned the charge for posting messages on the sign. Just prior to releasing the survey, the City Council changed the sign policy to allow community groups and events to request a fee waiver for the sign.

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Appendix I: Comments received

What do you think about the messages and graphics you have seen displayed on the Gateway Sign?

- Fantastic
- Gives good info about what is happening!
- Good (3x)
- Graphics could use some work. They are a bit bright at times. Other times they can be hard to read. Overall, I think they are somewhat distracting at that intersection.
- Graphics, colors, lights, gateway sign is blindingly bright, and does not match the look and feel of historic Osseo. Osseo already uses several messaging modalities. Money for gateway sign would have been better spent on two-way communication opportunities. City council voted to spend tax money on the sign without input from residents.
- Great stuff. It does not distract drivers which is great and is big enough to display a nice ad.
- I do not have an issue with the messages on the sign
- I have found out about community events through this sign when I have been sitting at red lights. I like it! I like to see the city benefit from all of the new construction and new activity.
- I like it! Great source of information. It's really cool looking!
- I like it. I like the local information
- I think the sign is eye catching!
- I think they are great and informative
- I've never really noticed the messages.
- Informative and easy to read.
- it is a great idea but haven't really seen anything exciting yet
- It's too busy
- Looks good
- Looks good. Nice size and location. Graphics and color are great
- Love it!!
- Many messages are difficult to read due to low resolution of the screens, the choice of colors and small sizes of text used. Most screens have too much information. Also, if the stoplight on 81 is green, I don't have time to look at it and if the light is red, it's not long enough to see a message come back around that I only partially saw. Maybe limit the number of screens to what can fit in 30-40 seconds and still be read/absorbed.
- Messages are good. It's a bummer the lighted graphics aren't crisper & clearer. It looks blurry from a distance.
- Most of them are good. Some have too much information. I didn't have time to read them while I was in my car.
- Mostly good, some have had too much copy
- Never
- Nice
- non usefull
- Not seeing as much community info as I expected. Mostly city info
- Only one I remember I think was for a pancake breakfast I believe.
- Some are hard to read...to bright
- Some of the colors are difficult to see / read
- They have evolved nicely
- The messages are fine.
- They are distracting and disrupt traffic, creating an even more dangerous intersection. It is too big to read when stopped at the light.
- They are evolving!
- They are good. Sometimes hard to read, but I think that is the nature of these signs.
- They are ok
- They look great! Clear and eye-catching
- They look nice
- They looked great
- Too busy, hard to read.
- Very good and colorful
- Wonder if there's a way to do a little video instead of just a static picture.

Additional comments:

- [The following comments were offered as a numbered list:]
 1. Please report statistical outcomes from the gateway sign such as percent of increased business for companies that purchase gateway ads.
 2. Allow Osseo businesses to receive free advertising on the sign to increase profitability and success.
 3. Implement a comprehensive city-wide survey that covers more than just the gateway sign.
 4. Merge Osseo and Maple Grove to lower taxes, increase the level of professionalism and innovation in the city council, increase diversity in the city, move Osseo leadership ideology beyond its "good old boys club" into a future of gender equity.
 5. Address the residential blight that affects certain areas of town: limit / reduce percent of homes that may be rentals, strengthen landlord regulations and monitoring, and tear down the garbage homes and replace with affordable single family homes financed with government grants/program funding.
- Another Osseo City project NOT thought out BEFORE constructing. Why don't you spend our tax dollars on something more useful like the park. Update the playground equipment that is going into disrepair before someone gets hurt. Put a sidewalk along the park, where it actually would get used. So we don't have to walk in the middle of the street when there are games being played at the park and cars parked all around it.
- Can you get the school district involved too? Post names of honor roll students?
- city maintenance snow removal all winter was poorly performed
- Community event info should be free. They should not need to pay for an advertisement
- I believe civic groups should have a reduced cost or free use of the sign for their events. I know some of the groups donate monies back to the city and within the community.
- I do understand that the City of Osseo must make the process fair for everyone. I personally do not share the same belief as some of my peers in that it should be free for our organization. I get we do a lot for the city and community but that is not a reasonable excuse. I would however like to see some type of process that reduced the expense for non-profit organizations pending city staff or council review. For example: Halloween, Lunch with Santa and Lions Roar are free and community driven events. I would also like to mention that Osseo Lions and other organizations in Osseo contributed money to the original Gateway Sign project when it was being proposed for the SE corner of Hwy 81 and Jefferson. I do feel it would be appropriate for the city to recognize these organizations in some way. Even a letter or mention somewhere would go a long way with the members of these organizations. Thank you for your consideration.
- I think it's a nice asset to the community
- It is over priced
- It may be worth looking into upgrading to better screen.
- Nice add to the city. Location is great!
- Sign itself is a bit garish.
- So far all great. Thanks
- Staff was super helpful
- The construction is monstrous and a bit of an eyesore. I like having a sign there, just would have appreciated a better design.
- Waste of money
- "waste of taxpayer money so politicians can pat themselves on the back"
- Why does it cost \$100 a week to put a message on the sign? I can see it for a business, but for community organizations too? It looks like a money grab for the city. I've also noticed that most of the messages are from the city. I don't think many people want to pay \$100 a week to advertise on an led sign. The payment to put a message on the sign is a disgrace. The sign should post community events for free. Such as Breakfast with Santa, Car Show, Lions Roar, Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Event, should I continue?

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Appendix II: Summary of sign use

In the "Additional comments" section, some respondents asked for more information on the use and financial statistics of the sign.

	2017	2018
Dates of Operation	6/13-12/31	1/1-8/13
Weeks in Operation	29	33
Unique users of the sign	11	17
Average Paid messages / week	1.31	1.91

The sign has not yet been fully operational for a calendar year. However, average per-week costs exceed average per-week revenues for the times the sign was active in 2017 and 2018.

Revenues	2017	2018 YTD
Total	\$4,528.57	\$6,875.00
Per operational week	\$156.16	\$208.33

Expenses	2017	2018 YTD
Operational Costs (Utilities, insurance, etc)	\$1,602.00	\$3,025.41
Staffing	<i>Not calculated</i>	
Maintenance (budgeted)	\$0	\$1,000
Electronic Display replacement (per year cost with 15 year amortization)	\$6,000	\$6,000
Total	\$7,602.00	\$11,525.41
Per operational week	\$262.14	\$303.80

Net Revenue – Cost	2017	2018 YTD
Overall	-\$3,073.43	-\$3,150.41
Revenue/operational week – cost/operational week	-\$105.98	-\$95.47

No cost is assigned to the time used to administer the sign & create messages.

The sign vendor predicts a lifetime of 11-15 years for the electronic readerboard and a replacement cost of \$90-100,000. An annual service call budget of \$1,000 is also recommended.