



V I R G I N I A
MAIN
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Street

Wayfinding Sign System
Tech Sheet
October 2022





Wayfinding Sign System Tech Sheet

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Frazier Associates thanks the following Virginia communities for their participating projects:

- Alleghany County
- Falls Church
- Front Royal
- Harrisonburg
- Portsmouth
- Wytheville

I. What is Wayfinding?

A wayfinding sign system is made of eye-catching, easily identified signs that are comprehensive and unified and direct visitors to key community destinations and attractions. A customized wayfinding sign system reflects a community's unique identity and reinforces a sense of place. For downtown, it gets visitors to destinations, safely parked, and on their way to a satisfying experience. A wayfinding system in general is designed to take visitors "from website to on site" by coordinating visual branding colors and/or graphics online with signs on the ground.



Vehicular wayfinding sign in Front Royal, VA



Back detail on wayfinding sign in Front Royal, VA

II. Why Custom wayfinding?

Sign clutter, confusing entrances, corridors and bypasses, and uncoordinated signs have been common issues in many communities across the country for many years.

As downtowns have revitalized and become key attractions for visitors and residents alike, customized wayfinding sign systems that reflect the community character have become more and more important. This is a needed response to standard utilitarian road signage that does not reflect community character.



Example of standard road sign clutter.

III. Wayfinding Goals

As a community begins to plan a custom wayfinding sign system, the following goals are considered:

- Welcome and orient visitors (arrival);
- Provide sense of place (community character and history, brand);
- Guide to major destinations (a “seamless” experience);
- Support tourism efforts;
- Comprehensive and well-coordinated;
- Cost-effective;
- Easily maintained, and
- Updatable.

IV. Custom Wayfinding Sign Components

A custom system is designed to greet visitors at the Region, City, or Town limits and guide them to key destinations. The components can include the following:

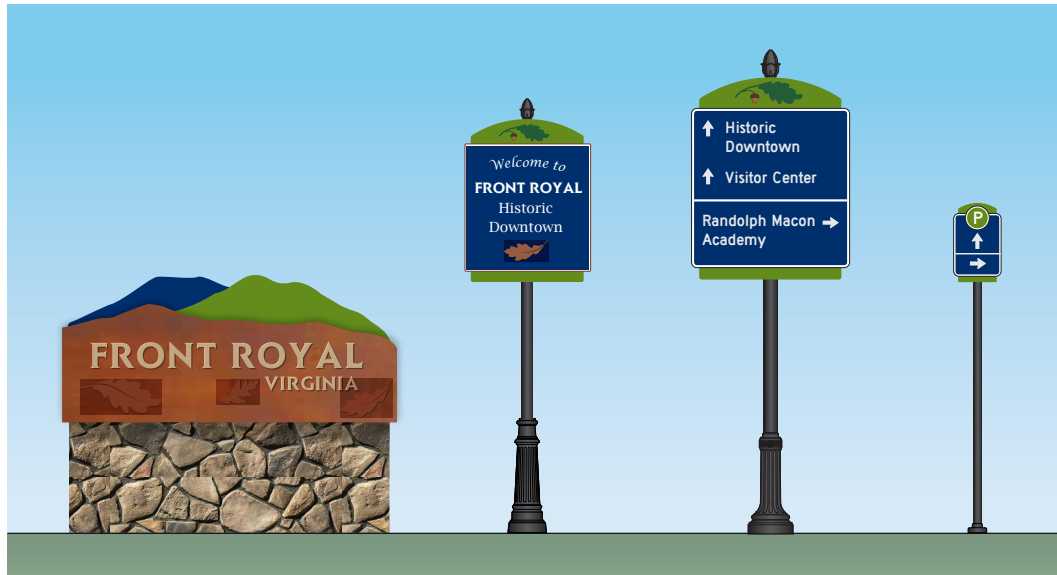
A. Auto-Oriented Signs

- Gateway Signs
- Vehicular Trailblazer Signs to Key Destinations
- Parking Directional and Parking Lot Identification Signs
- Street Signs
- District Identification Signs

B. Pedestrian Oriented Signs

- Pedestrian Directional Signs
- Information Kiosks

Auto-Oriented Signs



Monumental Gateway Sign

Downtown Gateway Sign

Vehicular Trailblazer Sign

Vehicular Parking Sign

Pedestrian Oriented Signs



Pedestrian Directional Sign

Information Kiosk

Complimentary components to a sign system can include:

C. Other On-site Components

- Banners
- Special Event/Temporary Signs

**D. Web or Print Components
“Website to On-site”**

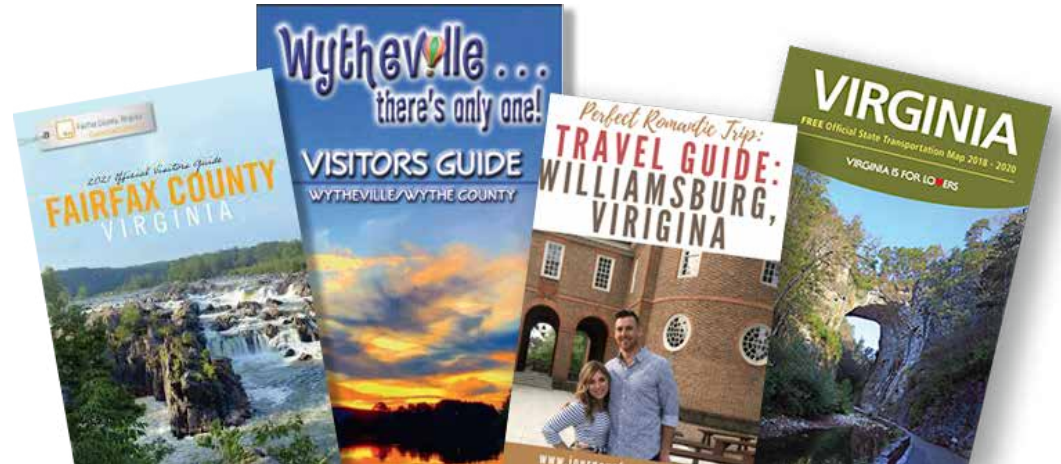
- Websites
- Mobile Apps/GPS
- Brochures & Tear-off Maps



V. Design Considerations

Before embarking on designing a wayfinding system, there are some recommended predesign steps and considerations.

1. Wayfinding Task Group Formation
2. Scope - What does your community actually need?
3. Branding
4. Signing Area
5. Destinations
6. Travel Routes
7. Budget and Funding
8. Hiring a Consultant
9. Coordination with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) as required



1. Wayfinding Task Group

Forming a Wayfinding Task Group with representatives from both the public and private sectors and key community decision makers, guides a wayfinding design process to arrive at a successful system design that reflects the community. Generally, the Task Group should be a manageable size of 10 to 12 individuals. The following organizations, departments, stakeholders, and interest groups can be key players in a wayfinding task group:



- Visitors Center Staff
- Major Tourist Attraction Representatives
- Community Government
 - › Planning
 - › Public Works
 - › Economic Development
- Historic/Design Review Board
- Main Street Organization/Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Transportation (if signs are to be located on VDOT maintained roads).

2. Scope Considerations

If your answer is “yes” to some -or all -of the following questions, planning a wayfinding sign system is likely a step for your community that will garner community support and excitement.

- a. Is tourism an important aspect of the economic vitality of your downtown and community?
- b. Do you have multiple visitor destinations beyond downtown?
- c. Do you have multiple and/or confusing routes to destinations in your community?
- d. Do you have a lot of directional sign clutter?
- e. Would your community benefit from the sense of place and unified image wayfinding can help provide?
- f. Do you have the infrastructure to support planning, implementing, and maintaining a system?
- g. Is your community part of a larger tourism area?
- h. Would joining forces with other communities and the region create economy and synergy?
- i. Is there a catalytic new development in the region or in your community where others in the region could benefit from a unified effort?

3. Branding

Many communities go through a branding process that is used in print and on websites to express community character. Building a wayfinding sign design related to the brand helps to reinforce that sense of place. That said, wayfinding signs are in the ground for many years and brands can evolve and change. However, the new brand can inform the colors and some universal design elements that can remain a reflection of the community even as the brand evolves. Part of the custom wayfinding process can include the brand and if new branding is being planned, the wayfinding sign system design should wait until the branding process is complete.



Wayfinding sign system using elements of the brand to create a system that promotes the overall region's sense of place.



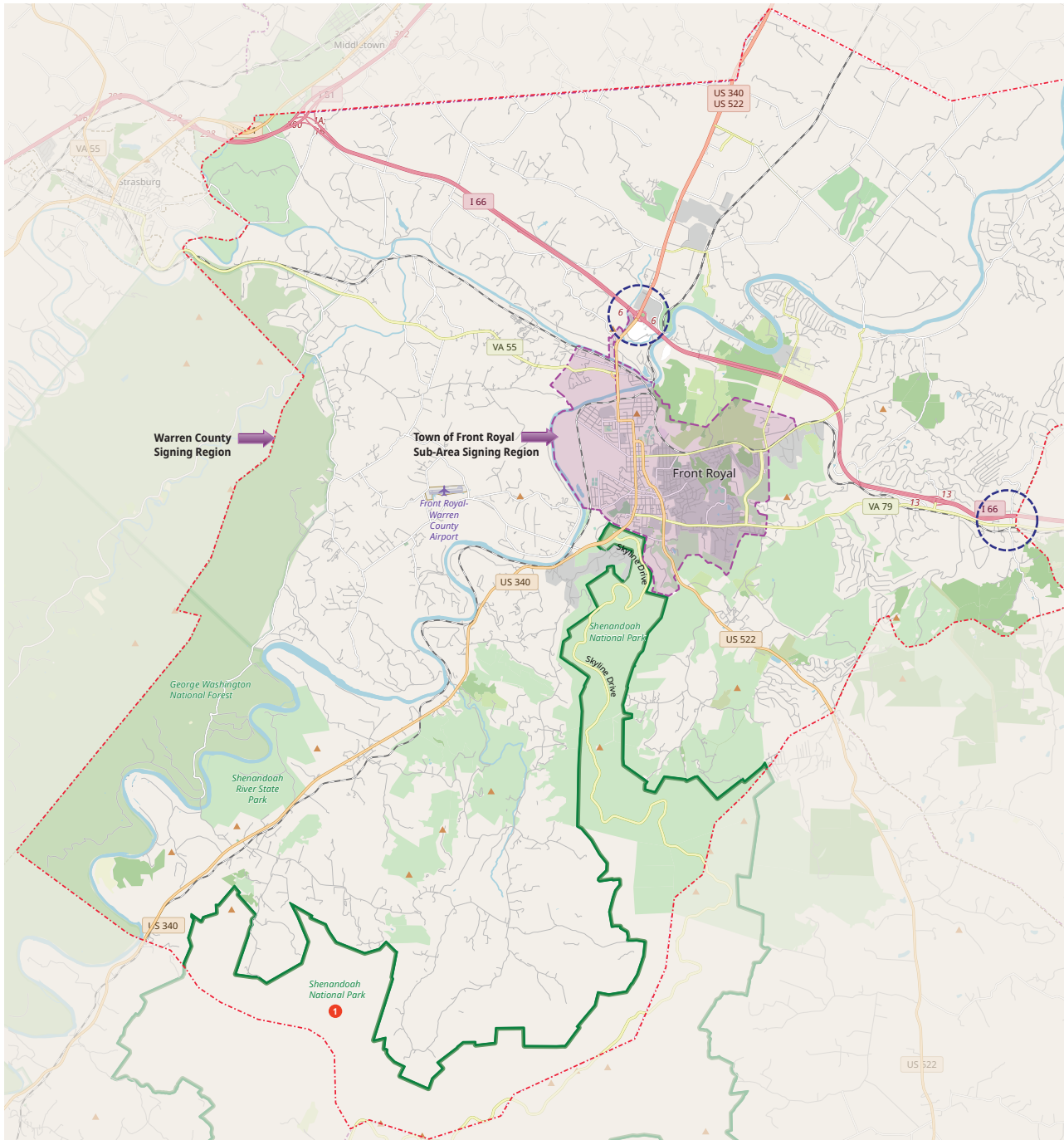
County Gateway Sign



Community Gateway Sign based on brand.



Downtown Gateway Sign



4. Signing Area

As mentioned in Item 2 - Scope Considerations there are some key questions relating to the signing area to consider when planning a wayfinding sign system.

- Is your signing area a town or city, or is it part of a larger tourism area such as a county or region?
- Would joining forces with other communities and the region create economy and synergy?
- Is there a catalytic new/existing development in the region or in your community where others in the region could benefit from a unified wayfinding sign effort?

Overview map showing a county wayfinding sign system that includes a town sub-region within the signing area.



5. Destinations

Deciding destinations is a key factor in planning a sign system. Generally, vehicular directional signs have a maximum of three destinations per sign except in low speed areas such as a dense downtown where there could be four destinations.

There are typically three categories of destination types:

- Cultural
- Historical
- Recreational

Other things to consider regarding destinations when planning a system include:

- Size of attraction;
- Number of visitors that the destination draws from outside of the signing area;
- Hours and season of operation; and
- Destinations where visitors can get more information.

Destinations typically *not* signed in a custom system include:

- Individual businesses;
- Hospitals;
- Libraries; and
- Airports.

(Hospitals, Libraries and Airports typically have their own directional signs.)

Sample destinations include the following.

Primary Destinations that are signed on all major corridors entering the city:

- Historic Downtown;
- Visitors Center;
- Other major visitor attraction with a regional or national draw.

Secondary destinations that are signed when the traveler is in close proximity to the destination:

- Museums
- Cultural Attractions
- Parks
- Farmers Market
- Government Centers
- Higher Education Institutions

LEGEND	
	Gateway Sign
	Sub-Area Gateway Sign
	Large Vehicular Trailblazer
	Small Vehicular Trailblazer
	Primary Destinations
	Proximity Destinations
	Signing Region Boundary
	Sub-Area Boundary
	Parks
	Interstate
	US State Highways (Primary Wayfinding Corridors)
	State Routes (Destination Routes)
	Water
	Railroad
	Interstate Exits

DESTINATIONS	
	PRIMARY DESTINATIONS:
	1 Historic Downtown
	2 Visitor Center
	3 River Access & Park
	PROXIMITY DESTINATIONS:
	4 Strasburg Museum
	5 Hotel Strasburg
	6 Emporium
	7 Strasburg Square
	8 First Bank Park (Baseball Fields)

6. Travel Routes

One way to better understand how visitors approach key destinations that will be signed in a wayfinding sign system is to experience your community like a first-time visitor. For example, follow existing signs, google maps, and/or printed maps to experience your community. Engage volunteers to help with the experience such as taking pictures and making notes on maps. This way, a better understanding of the key travel routes is developed. Questions to consider include:

- Is there a welcoming, direct route to your key destinations, such as downtown, or is the route confusing and convoluted?
- How are apps bringing your visitors to your destinations? Many times they calculate the quickest route, but perhaps not the most tourist oriented route, to your destinations.

7. Budget and Funding for Design and Implementation

Design and implementation costs depend on the size of the community and the number of destinations. The number of destinations will then inform the number of needed signs. Cost will also depend on the different types of wayfinding components desired for the system.

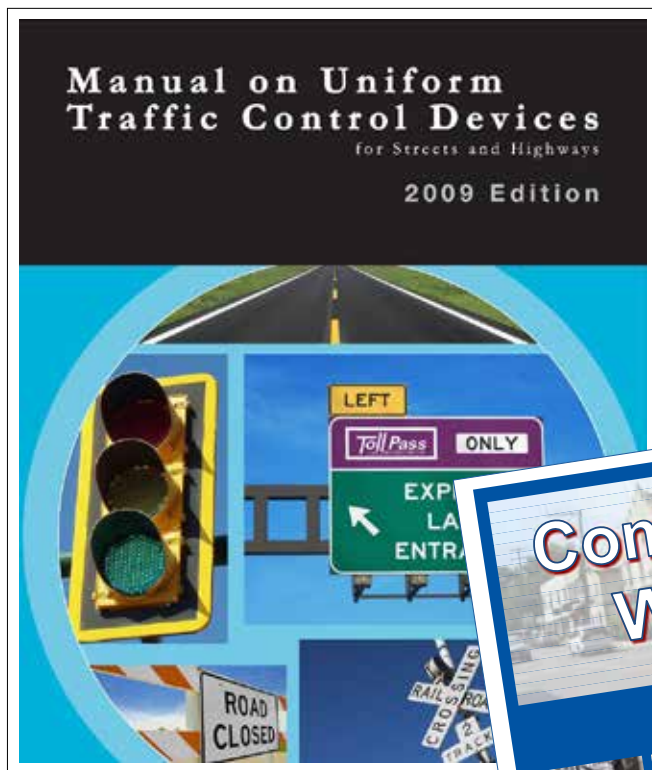
Over the years, wayfinding signs have been funded by many different sources, from transportation funds, to bond funds and special tax districts. There are also many different sources of grant funds. Many communities have tourism related tax revenues that help raise funds for tourism related projects such as wayfinding.

8. Wayfinding Design Team

A wayfinding design team can generally be composed of environmental graphic designers, architects, and structural engineers. More and more design firms and sign manufacturers are offering design assistance for custom wayfinding systems.



Travel routes to community downtown core.



9. Coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

Standard DOT signs are found on all DOT maintained roads and follow the Federal Highway Administration standards manual known as the Manual for Uniform Traffic Controls, or MUTCD Standards.

In Virginia, most cities and many towns maintain their own roads so VDOT is not involved with a wayfinding sign project. However, in some towns and smaller communities, VDOT maintains the roads and therefore needs to be a part of the wayfinding sign design and implementation process from start to finish. To make that process easier for these communities, VDOT has published a Community Wayfinding Sign Manual that can be found on their website.

To access the manual go to https://www.virginiadot.org/programs/community_wayfinding_sign_program_manual.asp

VI. The Design and Implementation Process

This is intended as a general outline of the design process. As noted above, if the community roads are maintained by VDOT, they will be involved in all steps of the process.

Task 1: Information Gathering - The typical scope of work begins with an information gathering phase including gathering information on destinations and locations, travel routes, branding, and any other information that would inform the design. Interviews with representatives from tourism, city planning, the Main Street organization, and key destinations should be a part of the process to get input on wayfinding goals and design ideas. A Wayfinding Task Group of 10 -12 individuals representing the various interest groups and government is formed to guide the project from start to finish.

Task 2: Schematic Design - After gathering information about the community and brand, design options are created. The options are presented to the Task Group for initial feedback on design direction. Usually a preferred design approach is determined by the end of this Task. The preferred approach, with possible alternates, is sometimes presented to larger groups for feedback. Many times this generates community excitement and engagement with the project. In some communities, the design is taken to City or Town Council for review and approval.



Schematic Design Option 1



Schematic Design Option 2



Schematic Design Option 3

The final wayfinding design is often a hybrid of elements from the different schematic design options.

Final Wayfinding Sign System Design Concept.



PRIMARY GATEWAY



DOWNTOWN GATEWAY



LARGE TRAILBLAZER



DOWNTOWN TRAILBLAZER



STAND-ALONE PARKING DIRECTIONAL



PARKING IDENTIFICATION



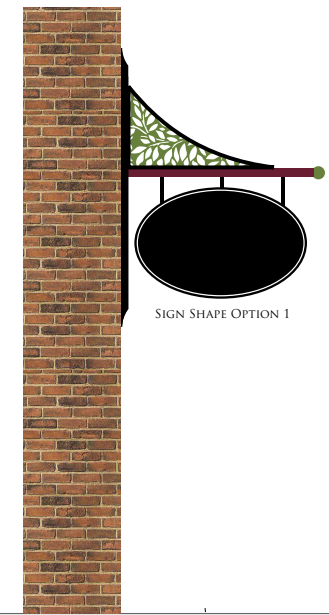
INFORMATION KIOSK PROTO-TYPE



CIVIC SITE SIGN

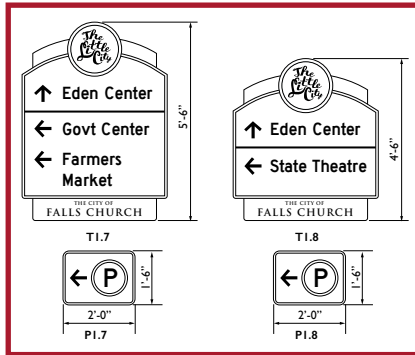
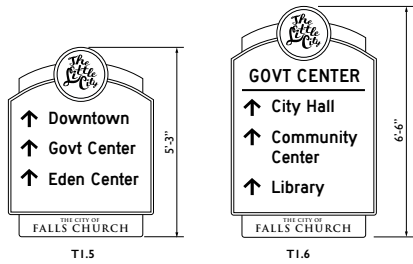


CIVIC PARK SIGN

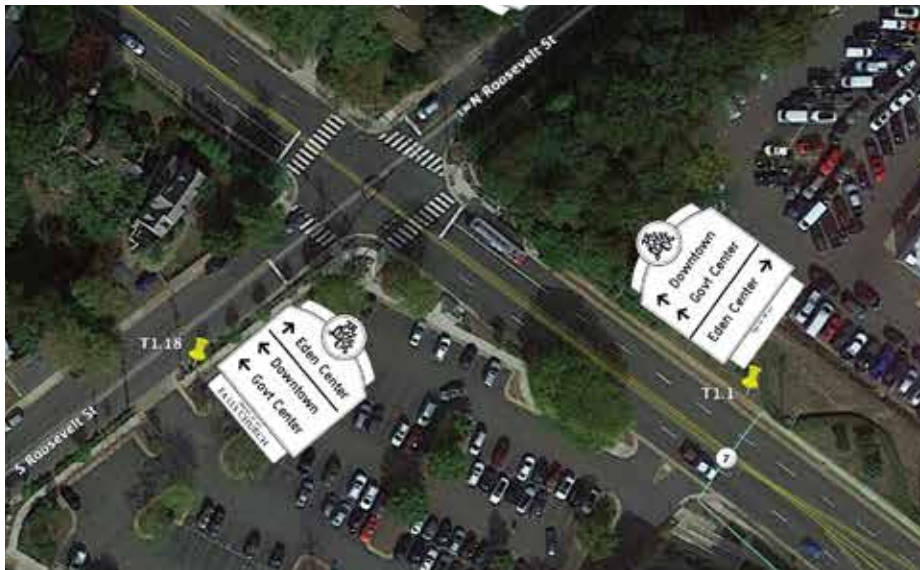


CIVIC PROJECTING SIGN

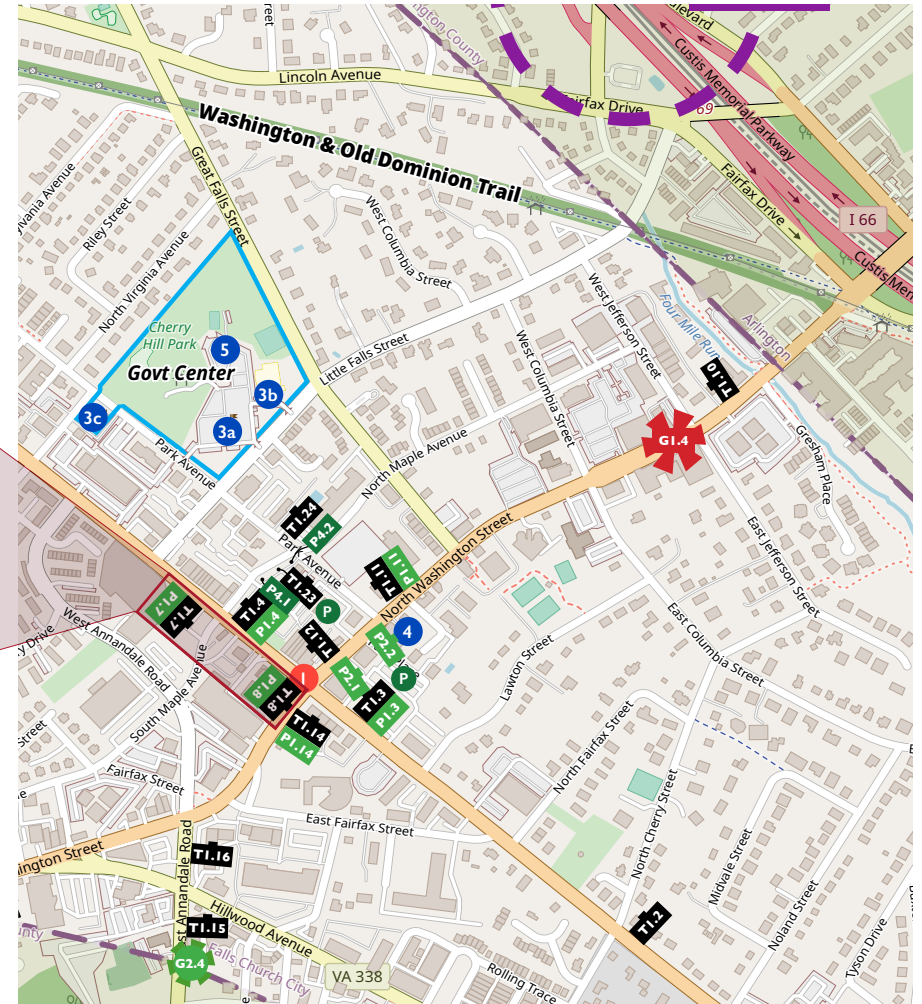
Task 3: Sign Programming: Vehicular Sign Types, Content, and Placement - Once the destinations are finalized, the signs are designed with the destinations and programmed onto street maps. This phase is reviewed by public works and/or planning departments to confirm general locations and content.



Example of the Construction Intent Document (CID) sign schedule programming that is correlated to the community map signing area.



Construction Intent Document (CID) example of sign programming showing general sign locations, orientation, and directional messages.



Example of the signing area map used to identify destinations, key routes, and sign types' general locations.

Task 4: Construction Intent Documents & Bid Documents -

Once the sign programming and design are finalized, construction intent documents including construction details and specifications are prepared for bidding. Usually structural engineering is included in this phase.

COLOR PALETTE

SIGN SYSTEM COLORS

- Pantone 375C
- Pantone 742 C
- Pantone 7550 C
- Pantone 122 C
- Black-PP4135-Satin Finish

REFLECTIVE SHEETING

- 3M Diamond Grade Reflective Sheeting #400

ADDITIONAL GATEWAY COLORS

- Pantone 7457 C
- Pantone 2985 C
- Pantone 300 C
- Pantone 539 C
- Pantone 371 C
- Pantone 3435 C

ADDITIONAL HOT AIR BALLOON COLORS

- Pantone 7491 C
- Pantone 7452 C
- Pantone 2985 C
- Rust-Oleum-Raonic Umber Multi-Colored Textured Paint

FONTS

FHWA SERIES C2000EX

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp
Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1234567890

FHWA SERIES Q2000EX

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz
1234567890

Iowan OM Style - Black

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll
Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww
Xx Yy Zz
1234567890

Iowan OM Style - Bold

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm
Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy
Zz 1234567890

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TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE WAYFINDING SIGN SYSTEM
Wytheville, Virginia

REVISION DATE

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PROJECT NO. 2016-0052
SCALE: AS SHOWN
PROJECT MANAGER: SH
CHECKED BY: SH
DRAWN BY: SH
DATE: May 2018

GRAPHIC STANDARDS: COLORS AND FONTS

Sheet I.3.1

Examples of construction intent document content.

FRONT ELEVATION
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

NOTES:

G1: SIGN MOUNTING:

M1: Sign panel to be mounted to masonry sign base, refer to sheets 3.1.2-3.1.5 for masonry base details and specifications.

M2: Decorative leaf motif panels to be flush-mounted to masonry base as indicated.

M3: Architectural precast concrete (APC) to be used for the masonry base, edge details, caps and keystone.

M4: Sign fabricator shall coordinate with masonry contractor as necessary for the mounting of the sign panel to the masonry base.

M5: Gateway sign to be illuminated with surface light fixture. Fixture and locations to be determined by fabricator and approved by Town.

G1: INSTALLATION NOTES:

- Sign fabricator shall be responsible for all site engineering. This shall include verifying the mounting conditions and providing a detail drawing for each mounting condition.
- Sign fabricator shall provide fully engineered drawings including, but not limited to, foundation, electrical and structural for wind loads for all sign types to Owner for review and approval prior to sign fabrication.
- For general sign locations, see Wytheville Sign Location Map, sheet 6.1.

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G1: PRIMARY MONUMENTAL GATEWAY SIGN: MASONRY DETAILS

Sheet 3.1.2

MASONRY BASE SIGN DETAILS
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

POST AND PANEL SIGN DETAILS
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

CS1: MOUNTING:

M1: POST & PANEL OPTION: Post to be 5" aluminum with 1/2" wall thickness. Mechanically attach Main Sign panel to posts. Posts to use powder in black concrete footer.

M2: STONE BASE OPTION: Main sign panel to be mechanically attached to 5" aluminum posts (with 1/2" wall thickness). Posts to be anchored in masonry base with a 4" diameter cast cap. Stone veneer to be limestone and approved by Client prior to construction.

M3: LEAF MOTIF PANEL: Center-mounted and mechanically attached to posts directly below Main Sign panel. Leaf Panel to be provided as a scalable digital file.

M4: Any reinforcement, fasteners, or fittings shall be painted as to be inconspicuous. All exposed fasteners shall be tamper-resistant, non-corrosive fasteners. The size and quantity to be determined by fabricator's structural engineer.

M5: METAL PROTECTION: Where dissimilar metals contact each other or where metal contact other composite substrates, protect against galvanic action or corrosion by painting contact surfaces with bituminous coating or by other permanent separation as recommended by metal manufacturer or other metal standards.

CS2: INSTALLATION:

- Fully engineered shop drawings shall be provided by the sign fabricator/contractor. Virginia registered professional structural engineer is required to sign and seal the submitted shop drawings.
- The fabricator/contractor shall be familiar with all site conditions and shall be responsible for all underground utility checks.
- Exact sign locations to be determined and approved by Town of Wytheville representative prior to sign fabrication.

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CS1: PARK CIVIC SIGN DETAILS

Sheet 4.2.1

SMALL VEHICULAR TRAILBLAZER SIGN
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"

NOTES:

T2: SMALL TRAILBLAZER SIGN BLADES:

S1: MAIN PANEL FABRICATION: 25" decorative cut, aluminum, single-sided sign panel. Panel to be painted to match Pantone 375 C. Back of panel to have leaf motif painted to match Pantone 371C. Graphics will be provided digitally.

S2: SIGN BLADE FABRICATION: 25" aluminum, single-sided sign panel painted to match Pantone 742C.

S3: SIGN BLADE FACE: Shall use digital printing process by 3M manufacturer only or 3M screen printing using MCS (Patch Component System) process color to 3M Diamond Grade DGI reflective sheeting, electronically cut and applied to face of sign blade. Process colors shall match Pantone color specified.

S4: PAINT COLORS: All exposed surfaces (sides and back of panels) shall be primed and painted using Matthews acrylic polyurethane paint color matched to Pantone color specified. Sign panels shall have a UV protective coat of Matthews Paint #422285P-Satin Clear Topcoat, or approved equal, applied to painted surfaces only.

S5: No through-bolts visible on sign face.

S6: FONT: Shall be FHWA Series C2000EX, 4" capitals.

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TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE WAYFINDING SIGN SYSTEM
Wytheville, Virginia

COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone 375 C
- Pantone 742 C
- Pantone 7550 C
- Pantone 122 C
- 3M Diamond Grade Reflective Sheeting #400
- Black-PP4135-Satin Finish
- Pantone 371 C

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T2: SMALL TRAILBLAZER SIGN DETAILS

T2: SMALL VEHICULAR TRAILBLAZER	QUANTITY
TOTALS	21

Sheet 4.2.1

Task 5: Implementation – A sign fabricator is selected to implement the system including fabricating the signs, establishing actual locations of the signs to ensure visibility and avoiding any utilities, and installation of the signs.



Final community wayfinding sign system.



Installed park site identification sign.



Installed post & panel gateway sign.



Installed vehicular trailblazer signs.



Installed parking site identification sign.