



TAUNTON

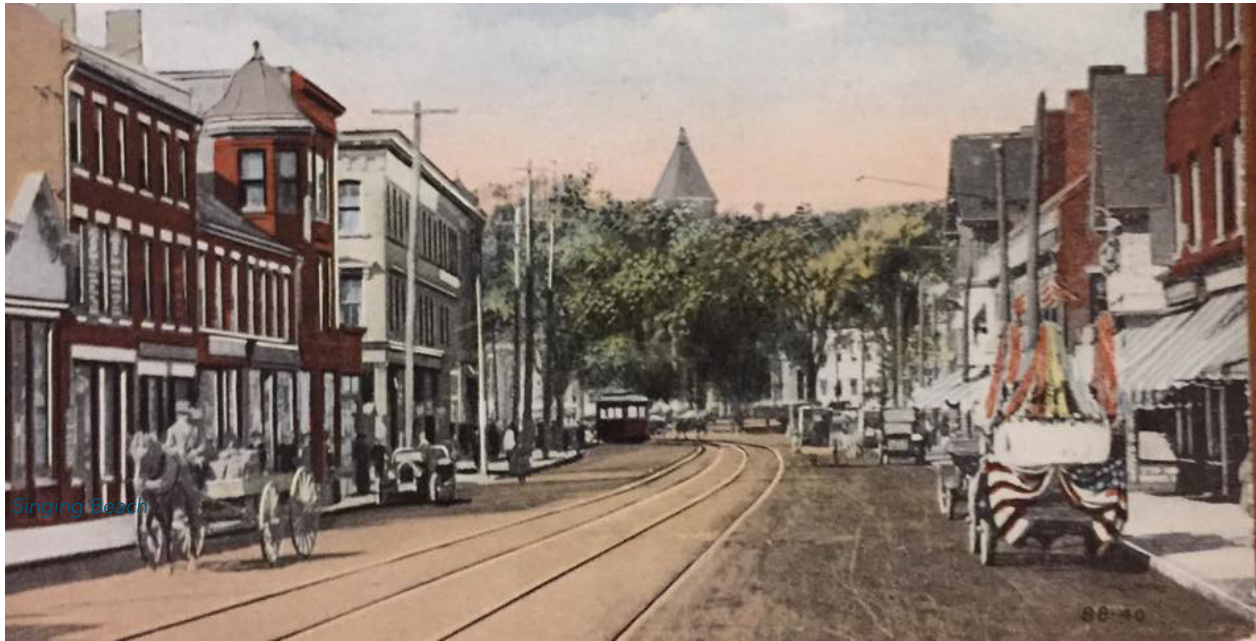
COMMUNITY BRANDING & WAYFINDING PROJECT FINAL REPORT 2024

Prepared by Favermann Design

Funded by MA Downtown Initiative Program of:



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of
Economic Development



BACKGROUND

Taunton is a city in Bristol County, Massachusetts, that is located approximately 40 miles south of Boston, 18 miles east of Providence, 10 miles north of Fall River, 20 miles north of New Bedford, and 25 miles west of Plymouth. The seat of Bristol County, Taunton is located on the Taunton River which winds its way through the city. The city uses a Mayor-Council form of government. As of 2023, the city had a total population of 60,412.



Elizabeth Poole

One of the oldest settled communities in America, the City of Taunton has a fascinating history reflecting its location, geology, and the changes in American industry. It was founded. In 1637 by a group of Plymouth colonists purchased land from Massasoit, the leader of the Wampanoag tribe. Previously, Native Americans called the region Tetiquet before the arrival of English settlers. The settlement that the colonists established became known as Taunton, named after the town of Taunton in Somersetshire, England. It soon grew into a prosperous trading center due to its location on the Taunton River.

A unique individual associated with Taunton was Elizabeth Poole or Pole (25 August 1588 – 21 May 1654). She was a wealthy English settler in the Plymouth Colony who literally established the town of Taunton, MA. She was the first woman known to have founded a town in the Americas.

Notable, during King Philip's War in 1675-1676, Taunton played a strategic role in defending colonial interests against Native American attacks. Local militia under Captain Benjamin Church were involved in successful raids against enemy forces and helped secure victory for the colonists. But this conflict also resulted in a significant loss of life and destruction throughout the region.

Taunton thrived economically throughout the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Its major industries were shipbuilding and ironworking. It was such a commercial, industrial and trade center that it was one of only four colonial towns authorized by King William III to mint its own silver coins in the 17th Century.

Because of its strong economic position and independence of its leading citizens, Taunton was able to play a key role in America's fight for independence. In the early 1770s, the town became an important

center for revolutionary activity. The Taunton Flag was created then. First adopted on 21 October 1774 after the local Sons of Liberty had forced out American Loyalists from the town, it was a strong symbol of opposition to the British Crown and support for American independence, it is also known as the Taunton Flag or the Liberty and Union Flag. It was one of the first revolutionary flags of the 13 Colonies. It consists of a red ensign, the flag of Great Britain, and the words "Liberty and Union" across its lower portion. Today, it is the official flag of the City of Taunton.



Monument

When news of the battles of Lexington and Concord reached Taunton in 1775, local militias were immediately mobilized to support their fellow patriots. Taunton served as a key hub for supplying American troops with needed provisions. In fact, many of the cannons used by George Washington's army were forged in Taunton at the Old Colony Iron Works.

Taunton received high praise from notable Founding Fathers such as John Hancock and Samuel Adams who recognized its important contributions in securing America's freedom. Following the Revolutionary War, Taunton continued to thrive and would soon become an industrial powerhouse during the Industrial Revolution.

That post-War era saw the town have an unprecedented economic prosperity. A key fact was its availability of waterpower and an abundance of natural resources. This allowed for the development of numerous industries. Among them, were iron works, textiles, locomotive fabrication, brickmaking, and shoe manufacturing. One of the earliest and most significant industries in Taunton was iron production. The town's location near bogs that contained high-quality bog iron ore made it an ideal site for smelting and forging

operations. By 1800, there were several major iron works in Taunton that produced everything from nails to train parts to plows to cannonballs. The first of many iron production plants in the region, the Taunton Iron Works operated for over 200 years until 1876.

Like many other places in New England, Taunton experienced a boom in textile manufacturing during the early 19th century. Cotton mills sprang up along the banks of the Mill River, which provided ample waterpower for spinning machines and looms. By mid-century, Taunton had become one of the leading producers of cotton goods in New England. Another industry that flourished during this time was shoemaking. Early on, Taunton contained several large factories that produced shoes using machinery rather than hand-sewn methods. It was a significant part of the Massachusetts leather and shoe manufacturing industries.

Reflecting this industrial growth, Taunton's population and economy also grew. Besides providing jobs and producing goods for local consumption, businesses began to increasingly export products nationally and internationally. This wealth resulted in the construction of public buildings, schools, and churches.

During the 19th century, Taunton was a major shipping point for grain from the inland rural farm areas of



Green Fountain

Massachusetts to the rest of the nation via the Taunton River. Additionally, with the introduction of the railroad, Taunton became an important transportation hub because of its central location.

Beginning in the 19th century, Taunton became known as the Silver City. Taunton was home to a large number of high-quality silversmiths. It was the historic center of America's silver industry with companies like the once huge Reed and Barton, F. B. Rogers, Poole Silver, and others produced fine-quality silver goods in the city. Reed & Barton was the oldest silversmith

manufacturer based in the City of Taunton. It operated between 1824 and 2015. Its products included sterling silver and silverplate flatware, swords for the Union Army, pieces for the White House, and medals for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.



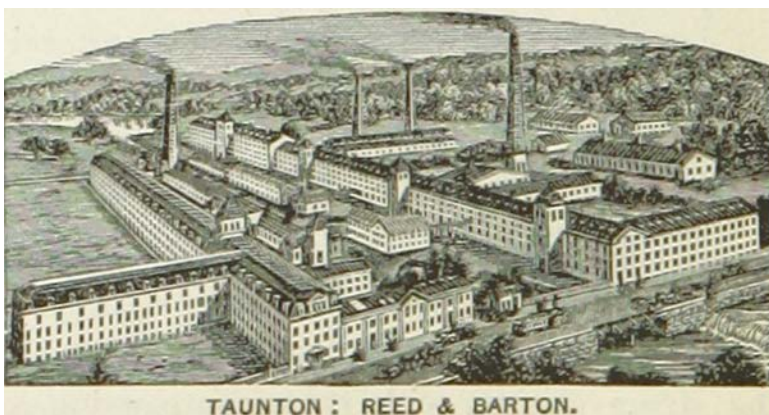
Silver Teapot

In the 20th Century, Taunton's economy started to diversify undergoing significant economic changes. The post-WWII saw a slide in Taunton's industrial activity. Traditional Taunton companies began to close or move out of town. Many of the

textile mills closed down as did much of the shoe manufacturing industry. Today, in 21st Century Taunton is involved with a variety of services and manufacturing. Companies are smaller than the past large mills and massive manufacturing facilities. Today, Taunton's companies are made up of electronic equipment, silverware, aircraft components, metal products, and office equipment.



1996 Olympic Medal



Today, Taunton's historic mill buildings including Whittenton Mills (1805) or Reed & Barton's silver factory complex are vestiges of the city's past. These structures also helped shape Taunton's contemporary downtown with its distinctive brick industrial structures mixed with Art Deco-era commercial buildings distinctive architecture. They and other old mills are part of the city's development recycling plans.

The City of Taunton is also a Gateway City. Massachusetts gateway cities are midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies around the state, that have face stubborn social and economic challenges while retaining many assets with unrealized potential. These communities, after having a legacy of economic success, have struggled as the state's economy shifted toward skills-centered knowledge sectors. Taunton has a large and diverse workforce that can easily access Boston or Providence, established commercial clusters that include Myles Standish Industrial Park, healthcare services, residential development, and minority-owned and small businesses.



Bristol Superior Court

The city has a wide array of architecture styles ranging from the colonial period to 19th century structures to modern buildings. There are several pre-Revolutionary War private homes located in the city. The oldest is the Joseph Willis House located on Worcester Street, dating to about 1688. The city has over one hundred buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

One of the most impressive structures in the city is the towering, copper domed Bristol County Superior Courthouse built in 1894 and was designed by Frank Irving Cooper. Other significant local buildings include three elegant stone churches-- the First Parish Church (1830), the Pilgrim Congregational Church (1851) and St. Mary's Church (1868).

Additionally, Downtown Taunton has a number of historic commercial blocks that were built during the period from about 1840 to 1920. Several large homes built by the wealthy industrialists and merchants of the late 19th and early 20th century along Rt 44 near the city center. The city is mostly occupied by more modest wood-framed single and multi-family homes. Many of these are over 100 years old. Existing on the outskirts of town are modern single-family subdivisions that were built in the 50s and 60s. Notably, the Central Fire Station on School Street is the oldest functioning Fire Station in the United States.

Taunton Green is the city's central square. Laid out in the 1740s, "The Green" was used as a training ground for militias during the Revolutionary War. Since the early 20th century, Taunton Green has temporarily been transformed during the Winter holidays into an appealing display of holiday lights, scenes, and sometimes extravagant events. This is where and how the city earned its unofficial nickname in the

surrounding areas as the "Christmas City." The Green continues to provide a centralized location for citywide other holidays, special events, and parades as well. A formal fountain is located at the center of the Green, and nearby the "Liberty & Union" flag and the U.S. Flag fly on a tall flagpole.



Middle Pond at Massasoit State Park

Two very special prominent natural areas are part of the City of Taunton. The city is home to two beautiful state parks overseen by the DCR—The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation: Massasoit State Park in East Taunton and Watson Pond State Park in the northern section of the city. Massasoit State Park contains more than



The Library

1200 heavily wooded acres including six lakes and ponds (Lake Rico, Furnace Pond, King's Pond, Middle Pond, Little Bearhole Pond, and Big Bearhole Pond) and several cranberry bogs.

This park has an extensive trail system for walking, hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing as well as equestrian paths. A launch for non-motorized boats is located at the north end of Lake Rico. A fisherman's landing is found on Big Bearhole Pond. Restricted hunting is seasonally available.

Watson Pond State Park is a family-oriented seasonal public recreation area occupying ten acres. This state park includes a 300-foot swimming beach, picnic area, bathhouse, and pavilion. Fishing and non-motorized boating are also available. It is a favorite of kayakers.

With the many special characteristics of natural beauty, many notable historical structures, special celebrations, and events, as well as centuries of the remnants of the American Industrial Revolution, the City of Taunton is an attractive regional magnet for visitors. But it could certainly be much more. Because it currently has very limited ease of orientation, its visitor and tourist potential is significantly lessened. Because the city applied for and was awarded this MDI Branding and Wayfinding grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), the resulting designs will now allow Taunton to be more of a strategic and vibrant destination rather just another urban location.

An energetic civic advisory committee and city staff members worked for about seven months with the consultants to create a Taunton Branding and Wayfinding program.



Taunton Map

OUR PROCESS

At the beginning of the project, Heather Rios, Taunton's staff Project Coordinator, worked with the consultant to develop a clear Scope of Work. It was drafted in early December 2023. The Scope included the following:

Scope of Services for MDI Community Branding and Wayfinding

To be provided by Consultants Favermann Design for the City of Taunton, MA

ACTIONS

1. A preliminary meeting/conversation with Project Coordinator and designated individuals to develop strategy and goals.
2. Site visit and Analysis.
3. Three to five Wayfinding Advisory Working Group meetings with advisory committee to discuss historical context and visual influences as well as individual wayfinding elements and placements.
4. Design of a brand theme, logo and optional slogan or tagline including color, font, placement, etc. to be approved by the City of Taunton Mayor, City Council and Wayfinding Advisory Working Group.
5. Creation of as many as three (3) brand option designs for application to all wayfinding elements.
6. Incorporation of existing designs and concepts as outlined in the City of Taunton's 2021 Rapid Recovery Plan and Downtown Taunton Plan into the design process.
7. The focus of the project will be on Downtown Taunton.
8. An Intermediate and final design review and discussion by the Wayfinding Advisory Working Group.
9. Creation of a "hierarchical family" of individual signs and other elements to illustrate design elements.
10. Refinement of a final logo/logotype and potential optional slogan as a community brand.
11. Recommendations for placement and use of city brand on wayfinding elements and other social media and town communications applications (website, Facebook, etc.).
12. Using city maps, creation of sign element site placement by working with and led by the Wayfinding Advisory Working Group members.
13. Development of a final wayfinding sign and element hierarchy to be approved by City Council at a public meeting.
14. Once approved by the City of Taunton Mayor and City Council, Favermann Design will create a full set of specifications that can be used for pricing and fabrication by appropriate vendors.
15. QR codes will be developed and integrated into appropriate signs and markers.
16. A Final Report will be submitted to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)

Note: Site visits will take place as necessary by Consultant.

Schedule

There will be monthly Wayfinding Advisory Working Group meetings to be scheduled every three to four weeks whether in person or virtual by January 2024. Dates will be developed. The City Council approval presentation will take place in late May or early June 2024.

Note: Images and refinements will also be circulated to the Wayfinding Advisory Working Group digitally outside meetings for review and comments.

Deliverables

1. Meetings:
 - A. Four (4) Project or Wayfinding Advisory Advisory Group Meetings
 - B. A Family of elements mapping session
 - C. A public forum and City Council approval presentation.
2. Branding materials, preliminary report, and final report
3. Brand/logo design in digital format
4. Optional tagline or slogan
5. A hierarchical family of sign and wayfinding elements
6. QR codes will be integrated into signs.
7. Social media brand recommendations.
8. A map of individual wayfinding element placement at the downtown area and strategically throughout the City of Taunton.
9. General cost estimates for wayfinding and sign elements.
10. A full set of specifications for vendor cost estimations, fabrication, and installation of wayfinding and sign elements.
11. Final Report for EOED



Following the creation of the Scope of Services, the first step was to have the Mayor's Office appoint an Advisory Committee. This group was organized by early January of 2024. The City of Taunton's Branding and Wayfinding Advisory Committee was made up of the following members:

City of Taunton Branding and Wayfinding Advisory Working Group

Colleen Simmons
Executive Director
Taunton Business Improvement District &
Downtown Taunton Foundation

Eileen Kelleher
Program Manager
Downtown Taunton Foundation

Katie MacDonald
Executive Director
Old Colony History Museum



Post Office, Taunton, Mass.

Misha Thomas

Taunton Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Fellow
MassDevelopment

Heather Rios

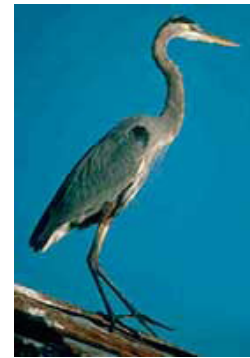
Coordinator
Grant Manager
Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD)
City of Taunton

To bring everyone to a similar knowledge level, the first Advisory Committee meeting included an extensive presentation by the consultant Mark Favermann that reviewed a variety of forms of community branding tools and elements. This set of images and discussions underscored the notions of sense of place and sense of arrival interpreted nationally and internationally. The follow-up second meeting included a presentation of Case Studies drawn from completed projects from all over Massachusetts. These projects varied from abstract to symbolic to realistic imaging and evidenced how each of the communities' branding and wayfinding interpreted their unique history, essence, personality, and character. The third meeting was an Ideation Workshop.

This ideation exercise session began with a short, illustrated presentation showing images that were significant to the City of Taunton followed by word description steps. Additionally, questions were asked about phrases or taglines, colors, symbols & landmarks, public art, street furniture and future aspirations. There were no wrong answers: just some better than others. From these "word pictures," the consultant team visually interpreted brand options shared with the Advisory Committee at the following meeting.



Old Colony Historic Museum



Blue Heron

How would you describe Taunton using one word?

Historic	Heritage	Downtown
Silver	Spirited	Brickyard
Neighborhood	Riverfront	Proud
Big	Tigers	Fountain
Festive	Athletic	Patriotic
Villages	Railroad	Statues
Diverse	Brick	
Opportunistic	Connected	

How would you describe Taunton using two words?

Christmas City	Leading City	Public Parks
Civic Center	Hometown Vibe	River Festival
Industrial Park	Filming Location	
Silver City	Old Colony	
Community Centered	Urban Center	

How would you describe Taunton with three words or a phrase?

Liberty and Union	Wild and Scenic River
Up and Coming	Between the Cape and Boston
Where Tradition Meets Tomorrow	Big City with Small Town Vibe
A Sterling Place	History Happens Here
Past is Always Present	All Here and All Near

What color or colors do you associate with Taunton ?

Orange and Black

Silver

Oxidized Copper (Green)

Red and Blue

Brick Red



Pilgrim Church

What symbol or symbols or landmark(s) do you associate Taunton?

Liberty and Union Flag

Silver Tea Kettle

Tiger Paw

The Green

Robert T. Paine

Elizabeth Poole

The Fountain

Taunton River

Orange "T"

Old Courthouse

Downtown Clock

Silhouette of The Green

Aspirationally, what do you envision for Taunton's Future?

Tourism

Increased Park Use

More Tree Canopies

Increased Lodging (Hotels, etc.)

More Historic Preservation

More Affordable Housing

Water-based Recreation

Improved Schools

More Welcoming

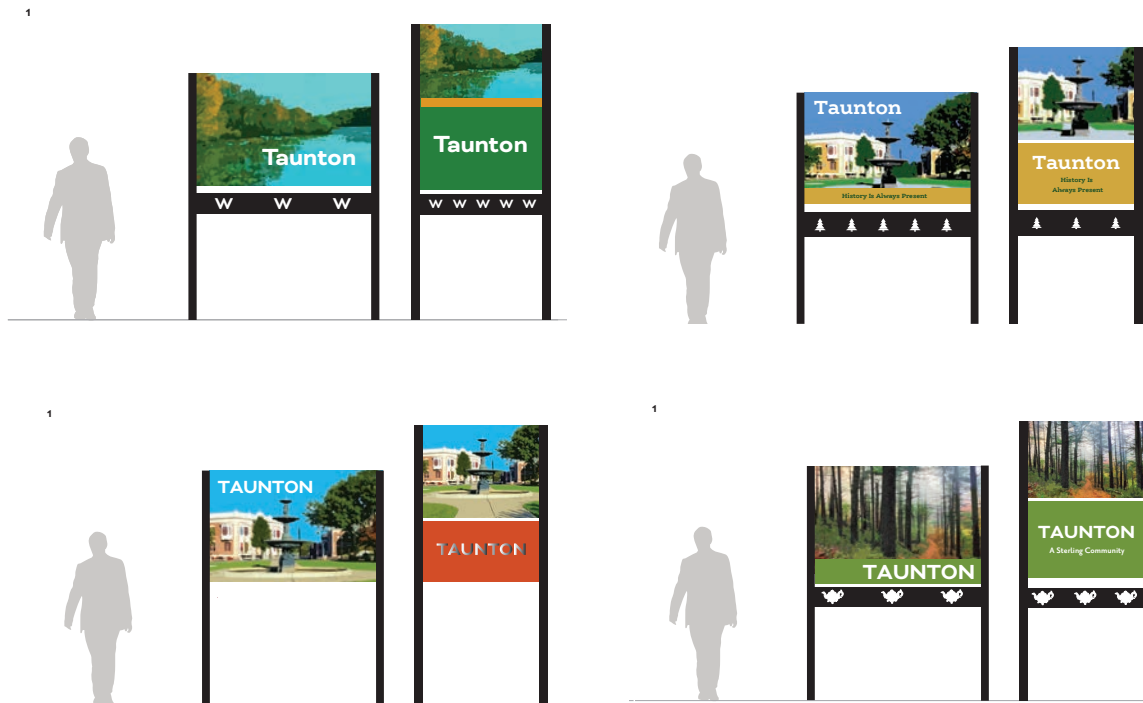
Varied & Better Shopping

Increased Restaurants

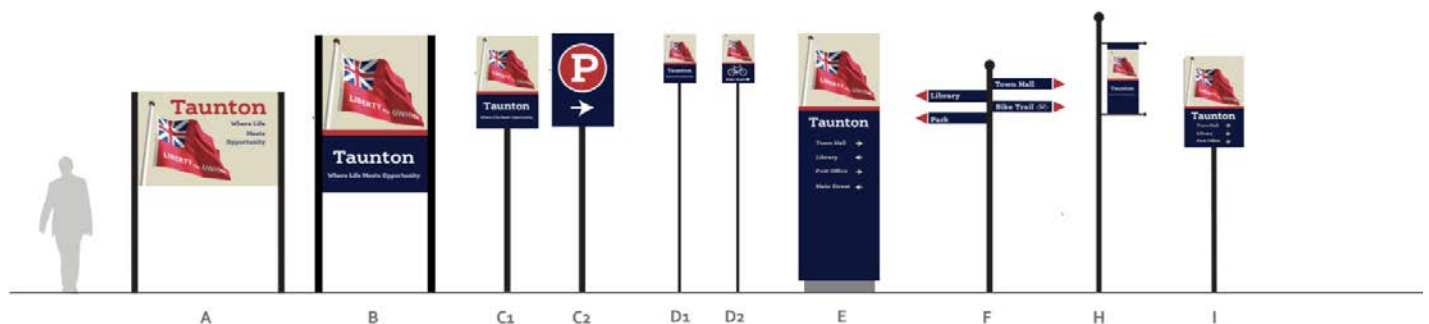
Capital Improvements

More Accessible Walking and Biking

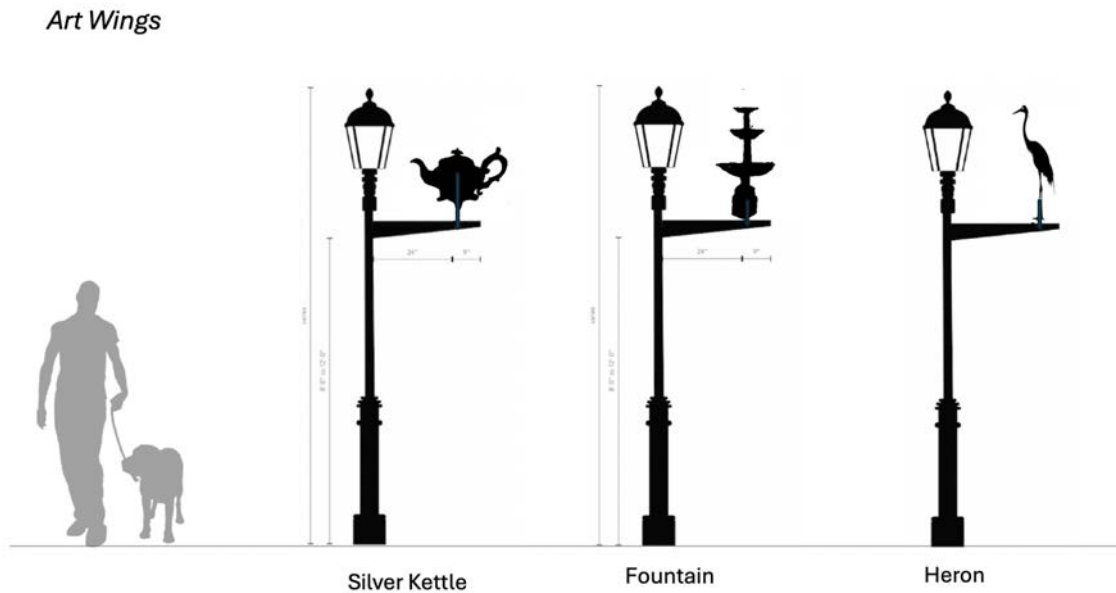
A series of design options were created based on Taunton's various points of interest. Several alternative choices were presented to the Advisory Group. They were drawn from the Taunton Green, natural areas along the Taunton River, images of Massasoit State Park and Watson Pond State Park, images of silver products, and the Taunton Flag. Several revisions were made to various design options after the initial Advisory Group review. These were thoughtfully discussed and rated as capturing the essence of the City of Taunton's residents and businesses.



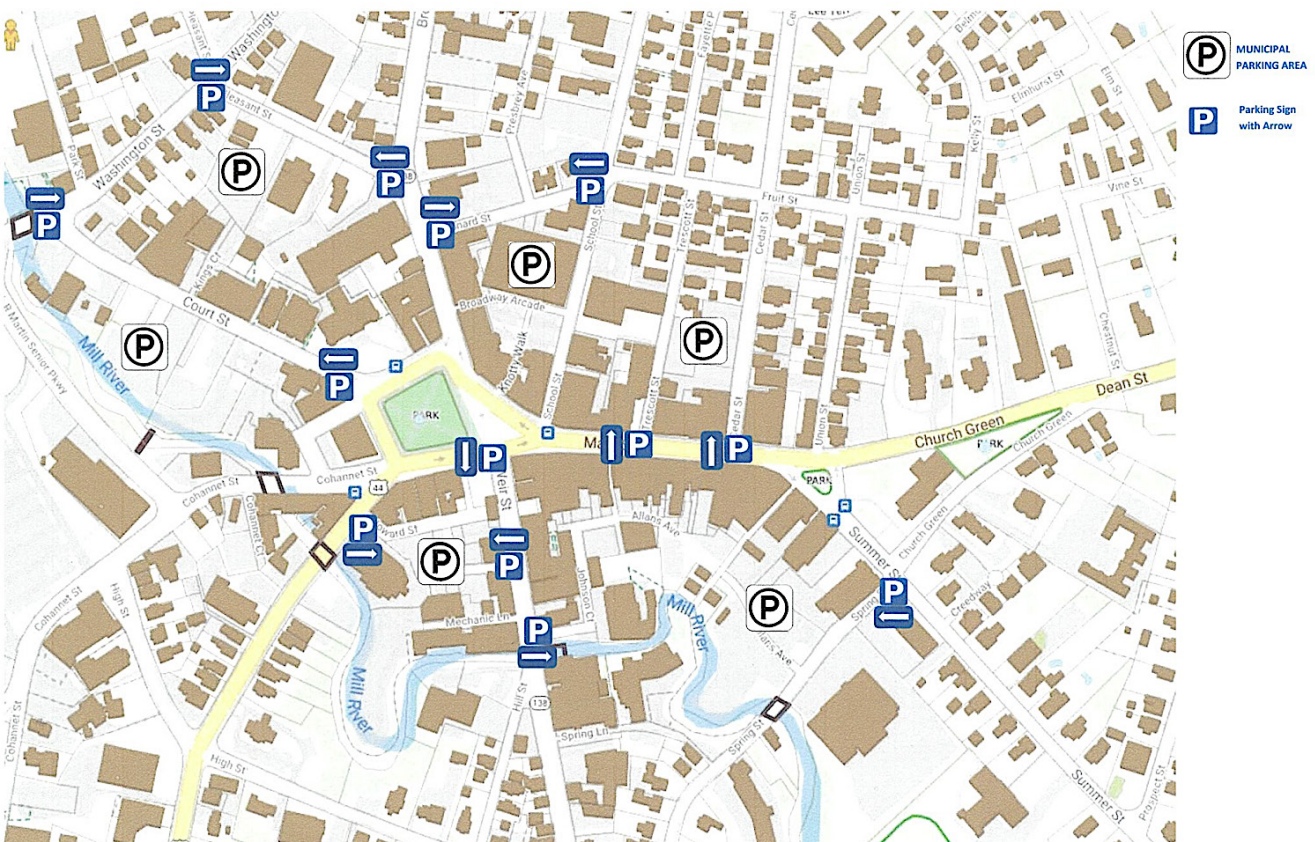
The advisory committee chose the final decision with the support of Mayor Shaunna O'Connell. All parties felt that the strongest, most universally accepted Taunton symbol was the Taunton Flag. The final designs and Family of Elements include:



As a potential added visual element to the Downtown Taunton streetscape, Artwings were created by Favermann Design as kinetic sculpture attached to light poles to be placed throughout downtown. These could be phased in or done all at once



The Advisory Working Group recommended that the clear identification of "Parking" facilities was a major need that the wayfinding should clearly address.



TAUNTON

FAMILY OF ELEMENTS

