

Downtown West Springfield

Wayfinding



Signage Plan

AUGUST 2024



Funded by MA Downtown Initiative Program of:



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and
Economic Development



Acknowledgements

Town of West Springfield

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This report was prepared on behalf of the Town of West Springfield through a “Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program” competitive grant from the State Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED).

The Town staff of West Springfield provided oversight and review of the wayfinding plan and final report. In addition, city businesses, residents, visitors, and employees provided insight and input into this study through a series of engagement opportunities. On behalf of the EOED and the Town of West Springfield, the study team would like to thank all stakeholders and participants for their constructive inputs to this process.

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Project Introduction

Goals
Scope/Timeline
Study Area



Source: John Phelan, Wikipedia

Introduction

Showing West Springfield the way

With its position adjacent to the Connecticut River and regional arterials carving through the center of downtown, West Springfield is well-positioned to be a vibrant Town that attracts a wide range of visitors. As with many other historic towns throughout the Commonwealth, West Springfield has a unique history that deserves to be celebrated. In fact, this project process overlapped with the Town's 250th year anniversary in early 2024. Although some of the service-related destinations downtown continue to attract a consistent flow of daily visitors, the Town continues to make improvements that increase the navigation, ambiance, and walkability of downtown to improve the attractiveness of Downtown to new visitors. These include the upcoming completion (Summer 2024) of a new roundabout to replace the current signal-controlled intersection of Elm Street and Westfield Street (Route 20), and the installation of attractive landscaping throughout the center. A cohesive and impactful wayfinding system is imperative for informing new visitors of available destinations and amenities, and routing users of different travel modes efficiently. Although people primarily drive to visit West Springfield, visitors by transit or bicycle also have unique needs for navigation both prior to and upon arrival.

Currently, there is a wide range of styles and systems for the Downtown's existing wayfinding signage, which have been layered upon each other over time. This has resulted in an outdated and counter-intuitive system that 1) doesn't entirely capture visitors at the appropriate

locations to help them navigate (particularly regarding public parking facilities), 2) lacks clarity and consistency in which destinations are featured on signage and how they are identified, and 3) doesn't speak to a distinct visual brand or identity that is representative of Downtown West Springfield.

The Town of West Springfield applied for technical assistance provided by Stantec through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative of the State's Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD). The assistance included developing a wayfinding plan to kickstart a longer-term goal of completely overhauling the downtown's wayfinding signage system. This plan is intended to provide guidelines about future sign placement and early design concepts which the Town may use to either pursue fabrication of signage, or pursue a follow-on Town-led process involving further refinement of design options.

With the understanding that the Town intends to completely replace all existing (Town-owned) signage, the tasks for this specific plan included:

- Conducting an **inventory** of all existing signage
- **Identifying "gaps"** in existing sign types based on the destinations the signs are intending to direct to and the logical navigation points of different modal users
- Investigating how existing signage might be blended to inform **one, common brand/style**
- Developing a recommended signage inventory **implementation approach**
- Developing **specification drawings** for a preferred design option that could be fabricated immediately following the plan

At the initiation of this project, the Project Team identified a set of goals that they hoped to achieve throughout the wayfinding plan process.

PROJECT GOALS

- ▶ **Create a brand and signage system that is reflective of the Town's character**
- ▶ **Better direct visitors to key destinations downtown**
- ▶ **Improve connectivity to and between parking areas**
- ▶ **Create a sense of arrival for visitors using various modes of travel**
- ▶ **Develop a strategy for integrating or improving the unity of existing wayfinding**
- ▶ **Establish an inventory of signage to help inform future wayfinding needs and priorities**

Technical Assistance Tasks



Anticipated Outcomes of this Effort

- Develop up to (2) preliminary design options for each of the following sign categories:
 - Directional (for vehicles and pedestrians)
 - Identification
 - Information

which can be further customized or can inform potential future (permanent) sign designs

- Prepare **concept-level** files ready for sign fabricator to develop/finalize/print for standard metal signs on posts
- Identify recommended signage locations to address the navigation needs for prioritized destinations



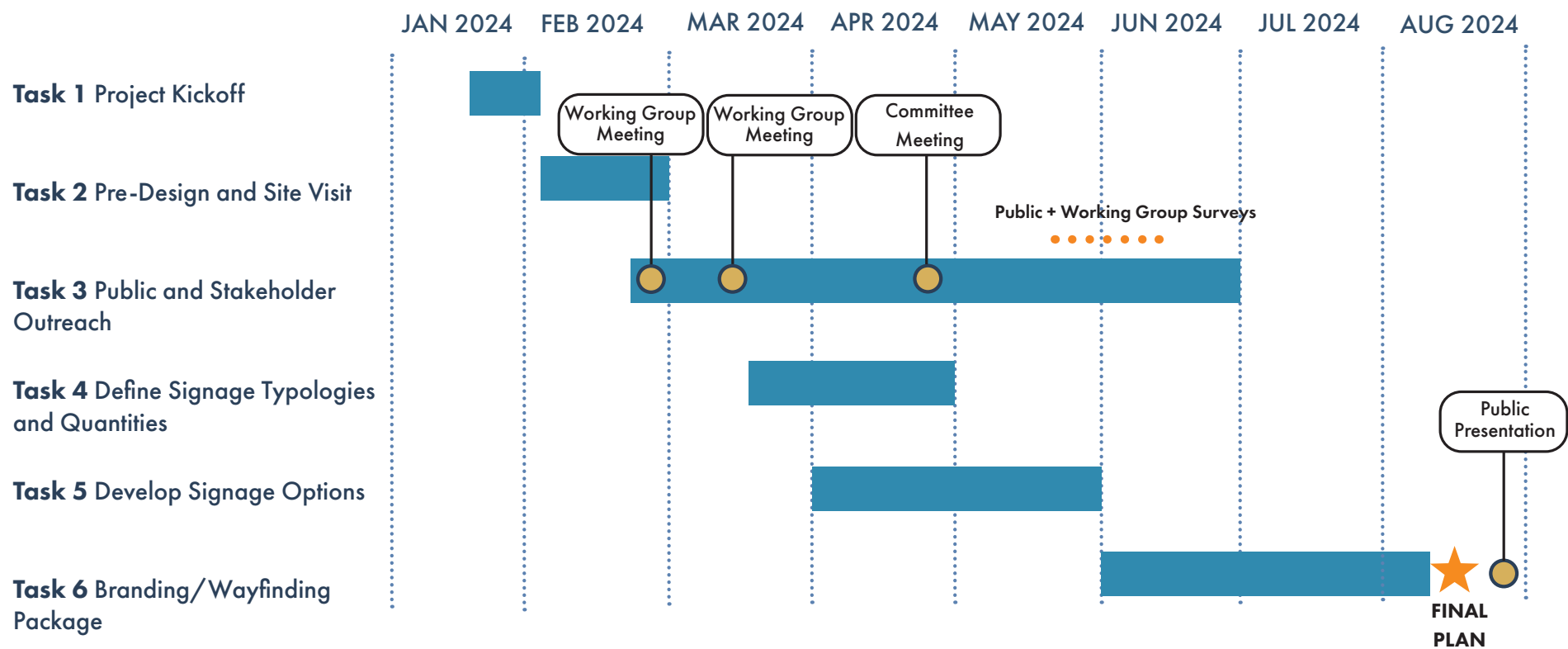
Potential Future Outcomes Beyond this Effort

- Execute a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy or conduct an in-depth public engagement process
- Develop a comprehensive signage suite of many options
- Design complex signage options that incorporate special materials
- Plan and execute a phased fabrication and installation program



Source: Shutterstock

Project Timeline



Project Boundary

The Project Team defined a boundary for the Wayfinding Plan to encompass key destinations and routes to/from the downtown area. This includes the entirety of Park Street, Park Avenue, South Boulevard, Westfield Street to the east, Elm Street up to Neptune Avenue, Southworth Street, and Riverdale Street between Southworth and the roundabout at North End Bridge.

Generally, the study area serves travelers who are primarily driving, although the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTa) R10 and P20 routes provide service with stops in the downtown area. The downtown core is of a walkable scale, providing easy access to businesses, as well as to the attractive Town Common. With the understanding that one of the primary roles of wayfinding signage is to serve driving, biking, and walking visitors unfamiliar with West Springfield, the boundary did not include residential areas near downtown.

Although the signage inventory and other analysis for this study is primarily constrained within this boundary, areas beyond were also found to be in need of improved wayfinding to better support navigation to downtown West Springfield and other commercial, civic and recreational destinations. The principles and guidelines shared in this document are intended to support future efforts by the Town which can be deployed beyond the downtown.





Source: Flickr





2 **Introduction to Wayfinding**

Wayfinding Signage Typologies

Wayfinding Signage Typologies

Different Signs for Different Purposes

Wayfinding signage can typically be categorized within the following four typologies. A few examples have been included for each category, but the options are truly endless for how signage might be designed.

Each typology has a unique function. Ideally, all four are designed to coordinate with each other in their general design as part of a cohesive and recognizable wayfinding system.



GATEWAY

What it does-

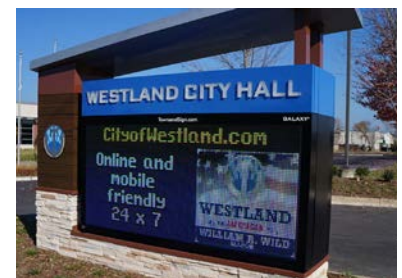
Creates a sense of arrival (usually from a primary access route) and defines the boundary of a district or downtown (e.g., welcome sign)



IDENTIFICATION

What it does-

Identifies landmarks or other points of interest by name or symbol. It might include information about hours of operation, services provided, etc.





DIRECTIONAL

What it does-

Directs you toward a specific area or destination (such as key parking locations), typically with the use of arrows



Principles of Wayfinding Signage

Be memorable-

Visual language should build on brand identity to drive economic growth

Be inclusive-

Stakeholders and the public should take part to create a sense of ownership

Be multimodal-

Improve navigation/safety for all types of travel and expand connections

Be scalable-

Have built-in flexibility as a kit of parts that can be tailored and used as the town grows and other signage needs change

Be planned-

Have a phased approach (including budgeting considerations) to reduce the time to achieving a fully installed and coordinated sign system



INFORMATION

What it does-

Provides information about where you are located in the context of an area (such as with maps in a visitor kiosk), or details about a destination (e.g., seasonal access, only)



Different Scales for Different Users

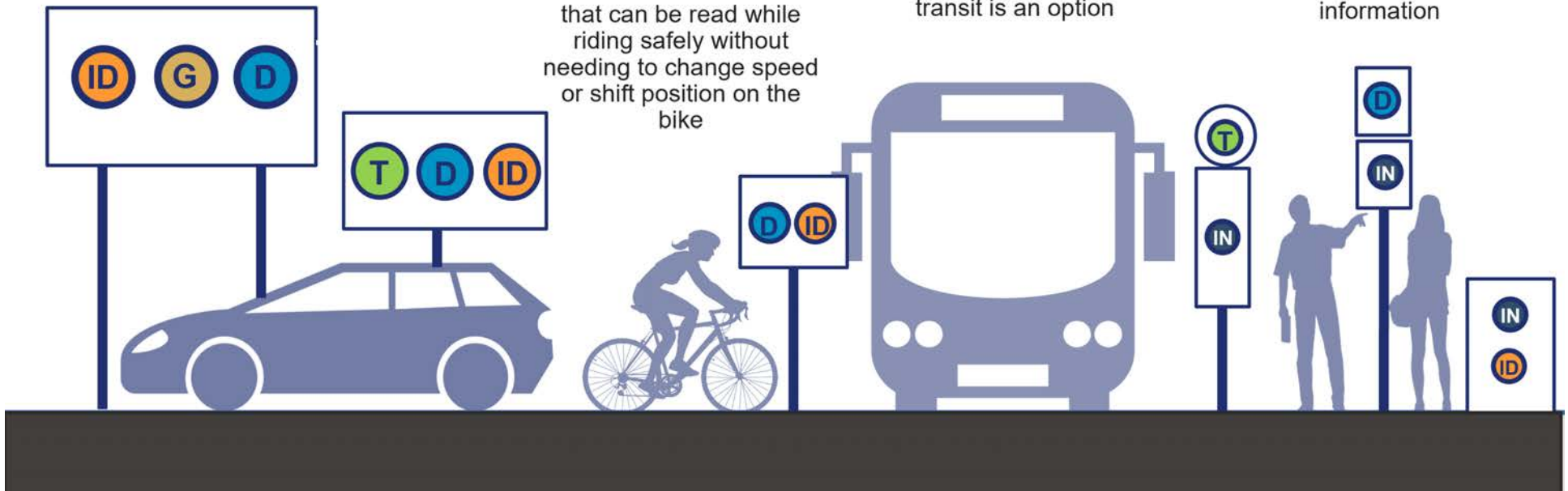
Within each of the four signage typologies, there may be a range of optimal sizes of signs. The graphic below demonstrates how different scales of signs should be used to help users of different modes navigate effectively and safely.

Vehicles need signage that can be seen from a greater distance, directing them to popular driving destinations to be able to give drivers time to navigate safely or adjust a route, as needed

Bicyclists need signage that can be seen from a distance and at a level that can be read while riding safely without needing to change speed or shift position on the bike

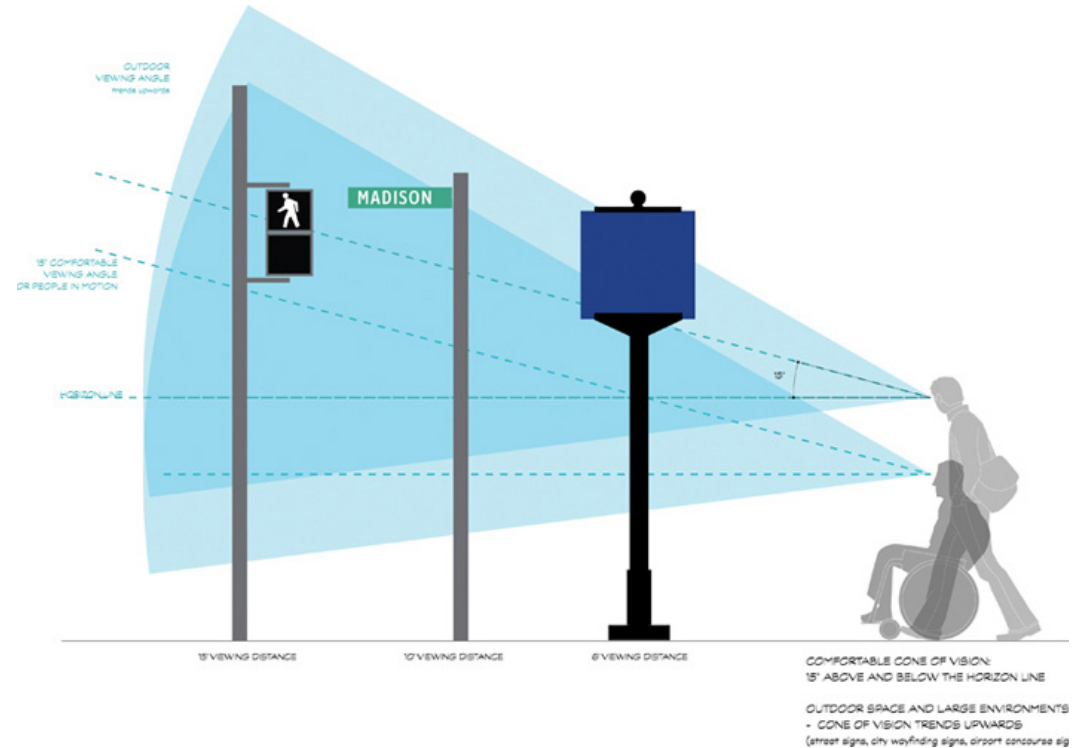
Transit-riders need signage that can be seen both while riding/driving, and also while walking to help them better plan trips and understand where transit is an option

Pedestrians need signage that is visible both from a distance to be able to adjust walking routes to/from parking (or other areas), and also visible at eye level to offer more detailed information



Making Signage Accessible for All

The size of wayfinding signage is important for increasing its visibility, but other considerations such as sign placement (height, positioning on a sidewalk, proximity to other street elements that might obstruct signs when viewed from a distance, etc.) should be considered as well to make sure that visitors of all abilities have clear views of the signs.







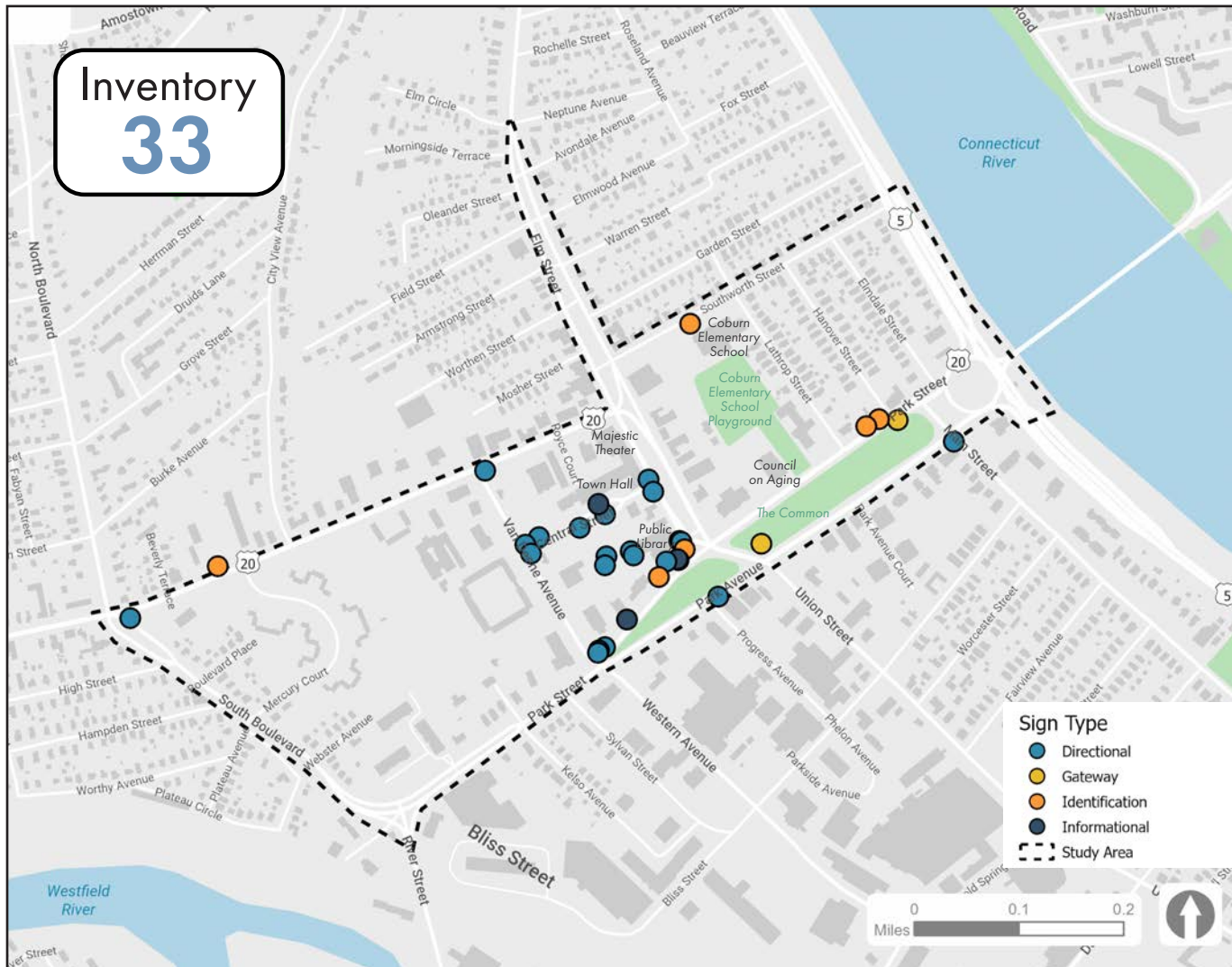
3

Existing Sign Inventory

- Overall Inventory
- Gateway Signs
- Directional Signs
- Identification Signs
- Information Signs



Existing Signs - Overall Inventory



General Observations

- Signs are most densely clustered in the downtown core area near Town Hall where there is a higher concentration of visitor destinations
- Signs directing towards downtown West Springfield at key vehicle entry points at the perimeter of the study area are limited or absent, most notably when heading towards downtown either from Elm Street traveling southbound or from entry points heading northbound, including River Street and Union Street
- There is also a lack of signage at the roundabout once entering the West Springfield boundary from across the Connecticut River



Existing Signs - Gateway



West Springfield Examples

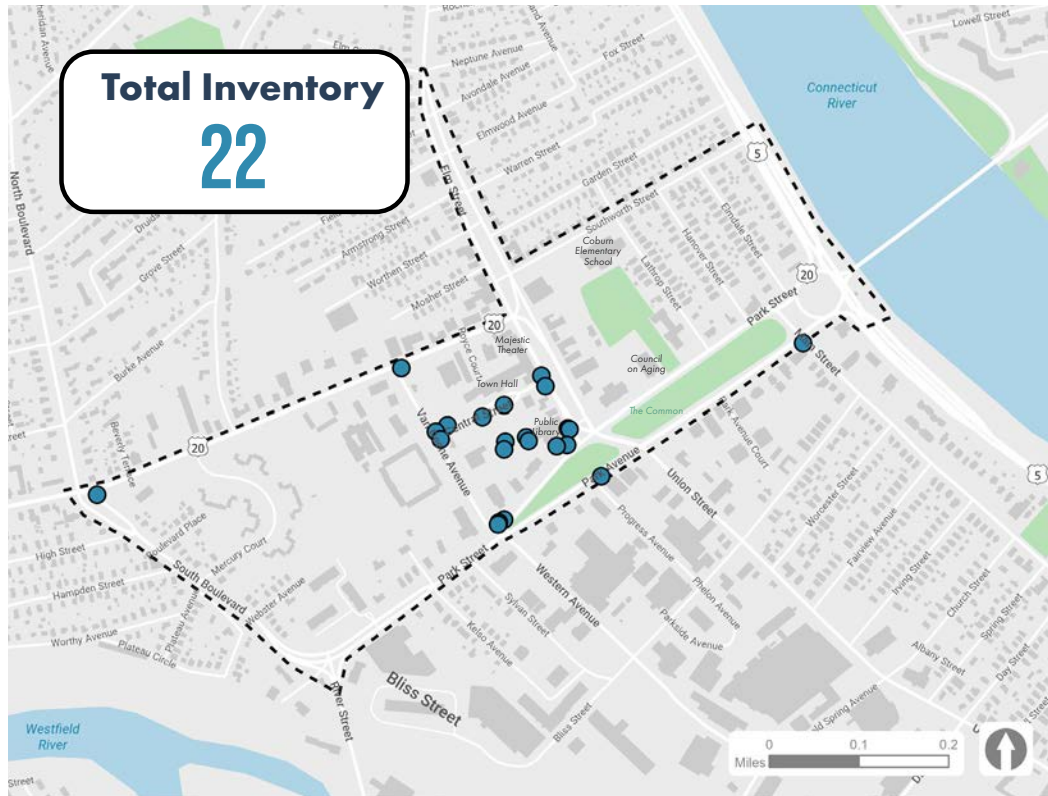


Observations

- The gateway sign serving the highest volume of incoming travelers is located right off of the North End Bridge roundabout, for southwest-bound vehicles
- The two gateway signs are not visually cohesive and are different in style and colors
- There is no gateway sign from the western or northern approaches into downtown
- Information on digital signage below the gateway signage can be customized and informative, but may also be distracting to drivers



Existing Signs - Directional



West Springfield Examples



Observations

- Existing directional signs are at scales both appropriate for either vehicles or pedestrians, however few destinations are identified
- Older and newer signage is not cohesive in style or reflective of a single Town brand
- Most directional signs point to either the library, municipal offices, or parking signage
- Directional signs, excluding the public library, municipal parking, and municipal offices, are not well maintained, and some may be irrelevant or inaccurate



Existing Signs - Identification



West Springfield Example



Observations

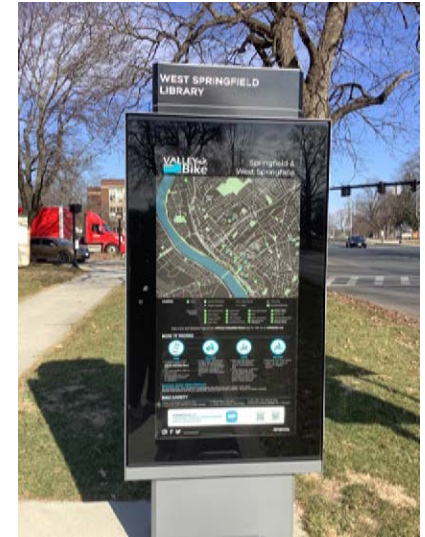
- There is variation in the amount of information that is included on the signs for different destinations
- All identification signs are different in style. There is a range of materials and varying level of design detail and quality of signage
- Some identification signage is of a similar size and appearance to street signage so does not particularly stand out as being a different sign type
- The DPW sign in particular appears especially outdated and does not correlate with other signage associated with the Town



Existing Signs - Information



West Springfield Example



Observations

- There is limited informational signage to guide pedestrians. Only one is available by the public library.
- Information signs relating to historic sites are too small and not located where pedestrians would easily access.



A wide range of sign types and styles observed throughout the downtown.





4 **Community Engagement**

Wayfinding Committee
Targeted Survey

Wayfinding Committee

Balancing Best Practices and Preferences

To gather a diverse range of feedback from key organizations and departments that provide services to West Springfield, and to maintain transparency throughout the planning process, a **Wayfinding Committee** was established for this effort.

The Wayfinding Committee was comprised of individuals representing:

- Town of West Springfield
 - Commission on Disabilities
 - Planning Board
 - Historical Commission
 - Department of Public Works
 - Mayor
 - Planning Department
- Majestic Theater

Two virtual meetings were held with the Committee with the following goals:

MEETING #1 - February 27, 2024

Share the sign inventory and educate about signage typologies

- Identify priorities for which destinations should be included on signage
- Understand general preferences regarding design components of existing signage in West Springfield

MEETING #2- April 24, 2024

- Present and gather feedback on initial options for West Springfield's wayfinding signage color palette, motifs, and font

Key Comments from the Wayfinding Committee



- Sign colors should stand out and should not blend with the background or with the sky.
- Lighting is critical for sign visibility. Potentially add overhead lighting on key signage.
- Street lighting on Elm Street would enhance sign visibility.
- Signs should be big and visible for drivers
- Add icons to symbolize general locations
- Glass signage material can be easily damaged and is costly for replacement.

Committee members were asked for their ideas about the words, symbols, or features they feel best represent downtown West Springfield. These were shared with the understanding that they would be used for inspiration in the development of potential sign design options.

Features or Characteristics that Represent West Springfield

- The Big E
- Crossroads
- Diverse
- Sense of community
- White church
- Mittineague Park
- Fountain
- The Common
- Bear Hole
- Morgan Horse
- Friendly



General Public

Identifying Preferences

As part of the Wayfinding Committee Meeting #2 process, preferred draft design options for the color palette, design motif, and font to potentially be included on wayfinding signage were selected from a larger range of options. The refined options were then presented to the public in an online survey for comment and voting. The survey was also developed to better understand general perceptions regarding the effectiveness and designs of existing signage, and to identify any other strong associations with characteristics or features representative of the Town which had not been identified by the Wayfinding Committee.

The survey was advertised through the Town newsletter and Town social media and was kept open for two weeks. Although the level of responses was low, the feedback shared provided useful insights and further helped refine preferred design options.

25
participants



West Springfield Wayfinding Study

Public Survey!

What do you think about wayfinding signage in West Springfield?

The Town has been developing a wayfinding study in downtown West Springfield to:

- Establish an inventory of existing signage
- Ensure signs serve various types of users
- Identify locations for new signage to better direct visitors to downtown and nearby destinations
- Use signage to improve visibility of parking and access to parking
- Create a sense of arrival with a distinct sign style that reflects the character of Downtown

Tell us about your experience when visiting West Springfield, your thoughts on the current signs, and other input that will directly inform where new signs should be located and how they might be designed. You may see these new signs on the street in the near future!

WHEN? May 20- June 3, 2024



Scan the QR code or visit this website link-
<https://tinyurl.com/WestSpringfieldSigns>

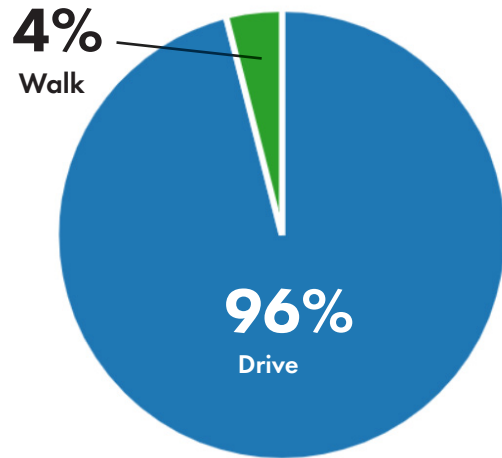
HOW?

Contact **Allyson Manuel**
Planning Director
amanuel@westspringfield.gov

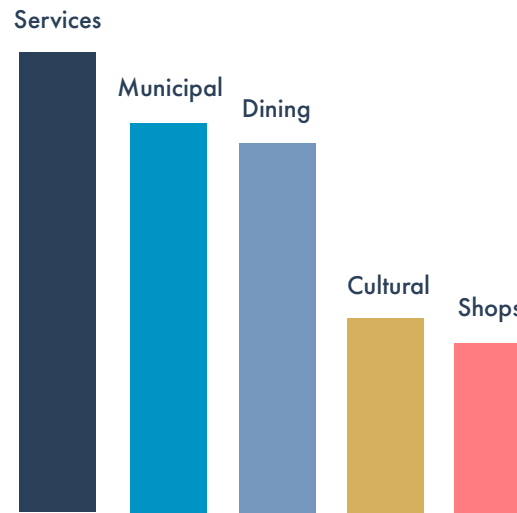
QUESTIONS?

Public Survey Data Summary

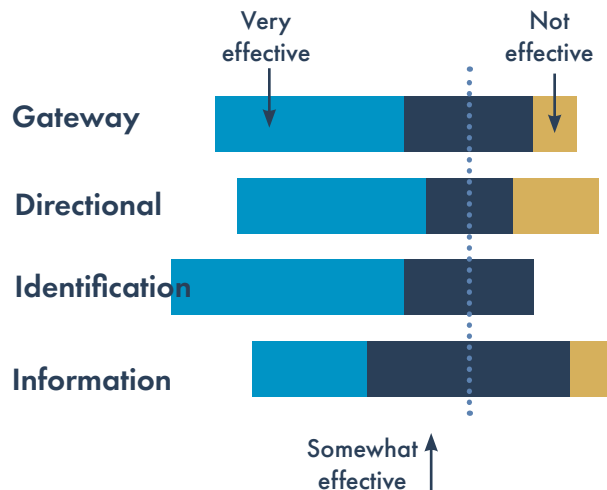
When you visit Downtown West Springfield, which transportation mode do you usually take?



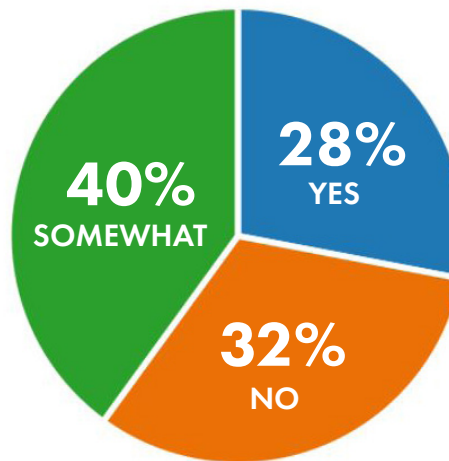
These are the top 5 types of destination that customers/visitors visit in Downtown West Springfield.



How effective do you generally think the existing wayfinding signs in West Springfield are in serving their purpose?



Do you think the existing signage in West Springfield is reflective of the Town's character?



Recurring Themes from Survey Comments

Existing Signage

- Gateway signage has too much information and is distracting to drivers
- Fonts are small and it's hard to see when driving
- Signage lacks visual and stylistic cohesion
- Signs are cluttered

Future Signage

- Make signs easy to read
- Make signs simple and minimal

Other Ideas Shared

- Add signage to direct visitors to places like parks and religious buildings
- No need for additional parking signage
- Gateway signage needs improvement





5

Design Options

Design Development

Design Components

Other Design Considerations

Design Development

The Core Components of Wayfinding Signage Design

One of the primary tasks for this plan was to develop early design concepts and potential design options for future wayfinding signage. The Town intends to manufacture signs in the near future based on the guidance provided from this study. The Town may wish to pursue a more comprehensive and collaborative effort in the future but a simple process of narrowing down the options for the five core design components of a wayfinding sign was developed for this plan.

1. Color
2. Motif
3. Font
4. Size
5. Shape

These will be described in greater detail in this section.



Source: Masslocal

1.
Color

2.
Motif

3.
Font

4.
Shape

5.
Size

Design Consideration- Existing Signage

The following pages identifies some of the features of the Town and characteristics that inspired the project team's design component options.

Discussions with the Project Team and Wayfinding Committee revealed that there were not many particularly strong attachments to the various design components evident in the existing signage in downtown today.

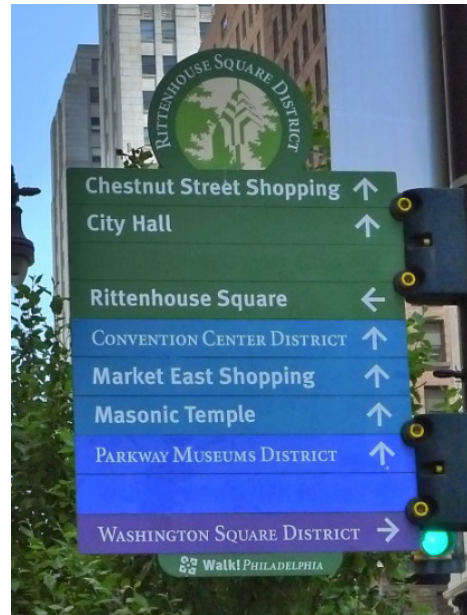


1. Color

Design Components

Colors are often used as a tool in wayfinding signage design to help users quickly differentiate between different types of destinations, services, or geographic areas. The examples to the right demonstrate some of the many effective approaches that could be utilized.

With inspiration found throughout the planning process, a selection of color palettes were developed for potential signage. For each palette, a dominant color is featured along with secondary colors which could potentially represent different destination categories.



BEST PRACTICE- Principles of Wayfinding Signage

Multiple Colors

If using more than one color, there should be enough contrast between them so that people with varying levels of colorblindness are able to differentiate

Functionality

Deeper colors help white text pop out more and be highly visible



The following color palette options were shared with the Wayfinding Committee.

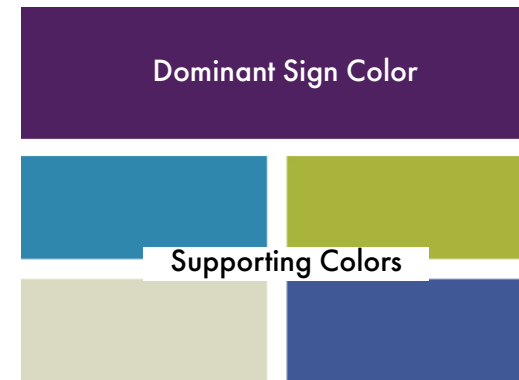
Option 1 - Existing Branding

Inspiration: Builds from existing Town website branding. Compatible with Town seal, West of the River Chamber of Commerce (WRC) logo, and the 250th year anniversary logo.



Option 2- Something New

Inspiration: Fresh, different colors than currently used in West Springfield and also very distinct from the adjacent City of Springfield's branding colors.



Option 3- Nod to History

Inspiration: Historic postcards of the town, details of built materials (brick and pavers). Inspiration from the current gateway sign, which is more historic in its design



Option 4- Patriotic

Inspiration: Evidence of patriotic flags/symbols and values throughout downtown



2. Color

When wayfinding signage is used to define a district or municipality, a motif/logo is often incorporated to reinforce that a visitor is still within (or heading towards) the boundaries of an area. A motif may use a symbol that is representative of a unique feature of the built or natural environment, may reflect the general character, or reference other local symbology, such as a government seal. There are endless possibilities

for how a motif could be integrated, in terms of scale and proportion. A few simple examples are shown on this page.

Several early design concepts of motifs were developed for this wayfinding plan which are intended to be further developed through future efforts. The concepts were informed by various sources regarding the character of Downtown West Springfield. The five concepts which were shared with the Wayfinding Committee are identified on the following pages.



BEST PRACTICE- Principles of Wayfinding Signage

Level of Detail

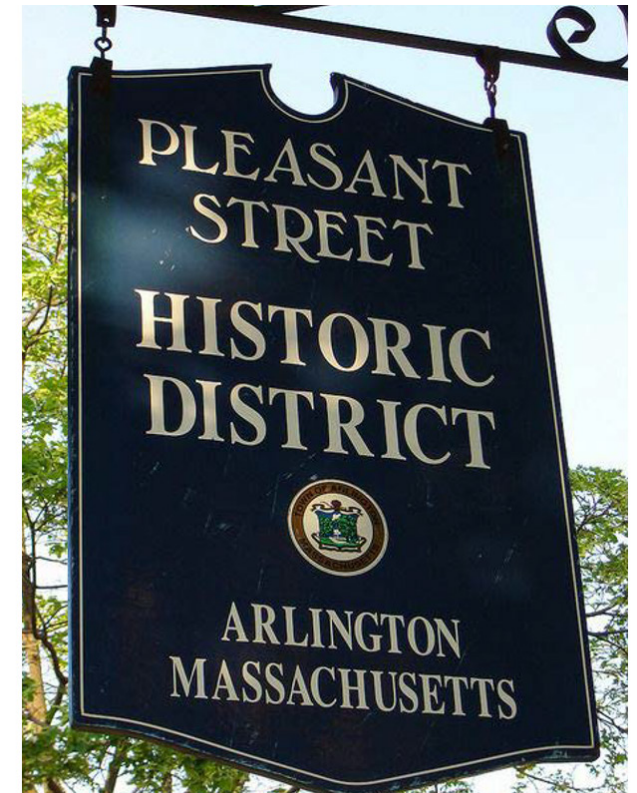
Motifs should be simple and not overly detailed so they can be scaled easily to different sizes

Functionality

The motif should be recognizable from a distance but not distract from the information on the sign

Timelessness

The design should avoid techniques or styles that are distinctly "of the moment" so that it is still appealing years later

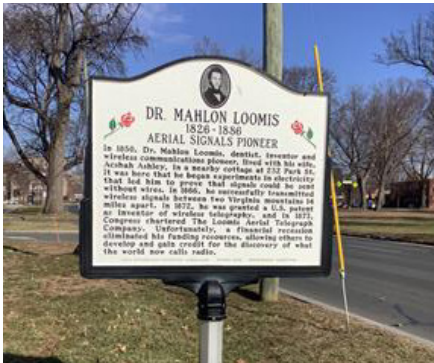


The following early motif/symbol concepts were presented to the Wayfinding Committee for feedback. For easier comparison, all options were created using the Color Palette Option #1 and a blue/white option.

Option 1- Radio Signal & Beacon

Inspiration: Highlights unique history of Mahlon Loomis' contribution to discovering radio signals.

- Features white church spire acting as a recognizable beacon
- Depicts energy and spreading growth
- Translates well to black and white (on paper marketing materials, etc)
- Easily customized with other colors



Option 2- The White Church

Inspiration: Features White Church as a distinct and recognizable gateway to the downtown.

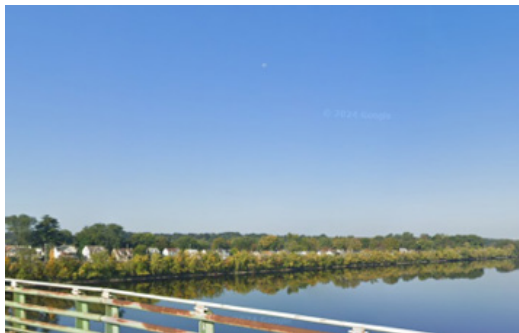
- Modern representation of building on town seal
- Translates well to black and white (on paper marketing materials, etc)
- Easily customized with other colors



Option 3- Mayflower

Inspiration: Reference to the natural environment, the town's connection to the river, the flowers which are and will be integrated into downtown's landscape.

- Represents the Mayflower (state flower) as a sense of pride and also welcoming
- Translates well to black and white (on paper marketing materials, etc.)
- Easily customized with other colors



Source: WWLP

Option 4- Morgan Horse

Inspiration: Simplified, modern reinterpretation of Morgan horse featured on current gateway sign.

- Integration of feature clock downtown
- Translates well to black and white (on paper marketing materials, etc.)
- Easily customized with other colors



Source: Masslive.com

Option 5- Terrier

Inspiration: Reference to terrier statues which are predominant through the town.

- Represents friendliness and approachability
- Translates well to black and white (on paper marketing materials, etc.)
- Easily customized with other colors



Usage of Icons

Although a range of options weren't developed or defined through this study process, there was general consensus shared through the Wayfinding Committee that the use of simple icons would be beneficial on signage to direct towards general amenities, such as those shown below. The use of universally-recognizable symbols can help reduce the amount of text required on signage and improve legibility.

Parking



Recreation



Shopping



Dining



3. Font

The single most important purpose of a wayfinding sign is to **clearly communicate information**. As such, the font used on signage is one of the most important aspects of its design. Best practice guidance recommends that signage lettering incorporates a sans-serif font for optimal clarity/legibility. There are many options of sans-serif fonts, each with slightly different characteristics.

Several sans-serif fonts were selected for consideration for a potential Downtown West Springfield wayfinding system because they offered some combination of the following characteristics:

- **Clean**
- **Crisp**
- **Timeless**
- **Friendly**
- **Confident**
- **Flexible** (look good with different motifs)

The fonts were shared with stakeholders and through the public survey using the same language and against the same color background for comparison purposes.



BEST PRACTICE-

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Guidance

Legibility

Sign legibility is a direct function of letter size and spacing. Legibility distance has to be sufficient to give road users enough time to read and comprehend the sign. Under optimal conditions, a guide sign message can be read and understood in a brief glance. The legibility distance takes into account factors such as inattention, blocking of view by other vehicles, unfavorable weather, poor eyesight, or other causes for delayed or slow reading. Where conditions permit, repetition of guide information on successive signs gives the road user more than one opportunity to obtain the information needed.

(From the MassDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the Standard Municipal Traffic Code)

Principles of Wayfinding Signage Lettering

Font Family

Sans-serif fonts are the most legible (see sample below) as the "feet" and other details of serif fonts can skew or distort lettering as the distance from the sign increases. Unusual or "zany" fonts should not be used but those which are "universal," meaning they can be read quickly and easily by anyone.

Lettering Size

Recommended font size should be 1 inch for every 10 feet of viewing distance (important to consider for signs that are intended for different modes)



The following (non-proprietary) font options were shared with the Wayfinding Committee for feedback.

Option 1.

DOWNTOWN WEST SPRINGFIELD
Parking straight ahead

Option 2.

DOWNTOWN WEST SPRINGFIELD
Parking straight ahead

Option 3.

DOWNTOWN WEST SPRINGFIELD
Parking straight ahead

Option 4.

DOWNTOWN WEST SPRINGFIELD
Parking straight ahead

Option 5.

**DOWNTOWN WEST
SPRINGFIELD**

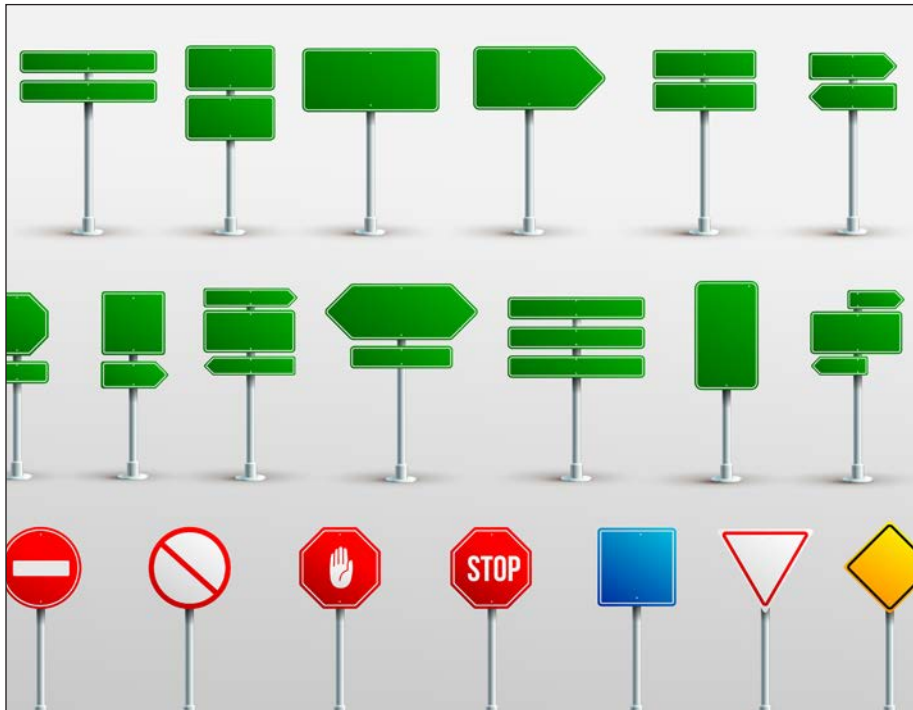
Option 6.

DOWNTOWN WEST SPRINGFIELD
Parking straight ahead

4. Shape

Wayfinding signage systems can sometimes benefit from incorporating a distinct shape to distinguish it from other signage on the road. There are a few things to consider with sign shapes:

- Clarity-**
 Non-rectangular shapes should not be similar to those of State-owned roadway signage to reduce potential confusion about regulations associated with signs of particular shapes (such as a STOP sign or others shown in the last row below).
- Fabrication-**
 The complexity of the shape will have an impact on both the ease of the fabrication process and the cost of producing the sign.



5. Size

As demonstrated earlier in this document, the size of wayfinding signage is not one-size-fits-all and should be determined based on the type of user the sign is intended for (motorist, bicyclist, pedestrian). The size of a sign should also be informed by the speed limit of a road it is placed on (i.e., the speed of travel when a visitor passes a sign) and with consideration of the amount of lettering needed on the sign and best practice for lettering size.

An example from TXDOT's guidance on road sign sizes (based on the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices- MUTCD) is shown below for reference of general best practice.

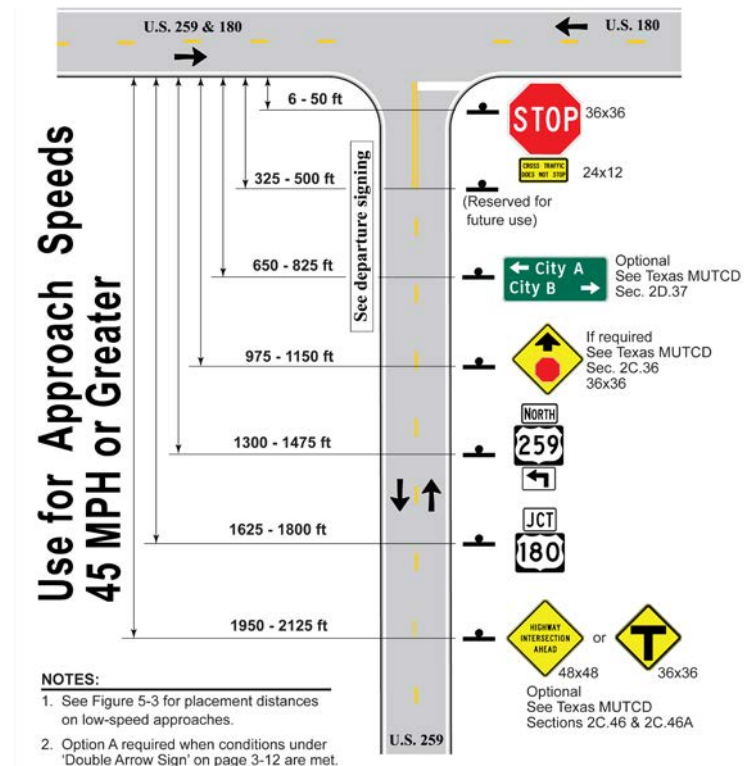


Figure 5-2. Convention for Sign Placement Distances on High-Speed Approach

Other Design Considerations

Town Ordinances

When identifying where a new sign might be located, its size, how it is installed, and other details, local ordinances should be consulted first to confirm what is permitted in the zoned area of the potential sign. Downtown West Springfield has specific requirements for different districts.

All of these parameters influence the amount of signage present in West Springfield, the level of "sign clutter," and the ease of establishing a streamlined and consistent downtown signage system. The excerpt below notes their purposes and applicability of public and private signs in West Springfield.

☐ § 300-9.2 **Signs.**

A. Purpose. The purpose of the sign regulations as set forth in this section shall be the following:

- (1) To protect public and private investments in buildings and open spaces;
- (2) To encourage signs which, by their location and design, are harmonious to the buildings and sites which they occupy, and which eliminate excessive and confusing sign display;
- (3) To promote more effective visual identification of commercial, industrial and other activities within the Town;
- (4) To maintain and enhance the Town's ability to attract sources of economic development and growth;
- (5) To eliminate potential hazards to motorists and pedestrians;
- (6) To promote the public health, safety, and general welfare;
- (7) To regulate on-premises signs in a legal and reasonable manner; and
- (8) To ensure compliance with constitutionally protected First Amendment rights.

B. Applicability.

- (1) The provisions of this section shall apply to the construction, erection, alteration, use, location, and maintenance of all on-premises signs located out-of-doors, to those signs affixed on any part of a building or freestanding for the express purpose of being visible from the exterior of the building.
- (2) No sign larger than one square foot related to a residential and/or commercial use shall be erected, altered, displayed, relocated, enlarged or created without first obtaining a permit from the Building Inspector. At minimum, all applications shall include a scale drawing specifying dimensions, illumination, materials and location on land or buildings.

C. Definitions. As used in this section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Excerpt from West Springfield's Town Zoning Ordinance (last amended September 5, 2023)





6 Recommended Wayfinding System

Process Summary

Sign Design Options and Recommended Locations

Further Considerations

Process Summary

1

Refine what we know about existing conditions (details of signage and other considerations)

2

Identify key decision points when navigating to destinations (vehicles and pedestrians)

3

Determine optimal locations for new signage by typology

4

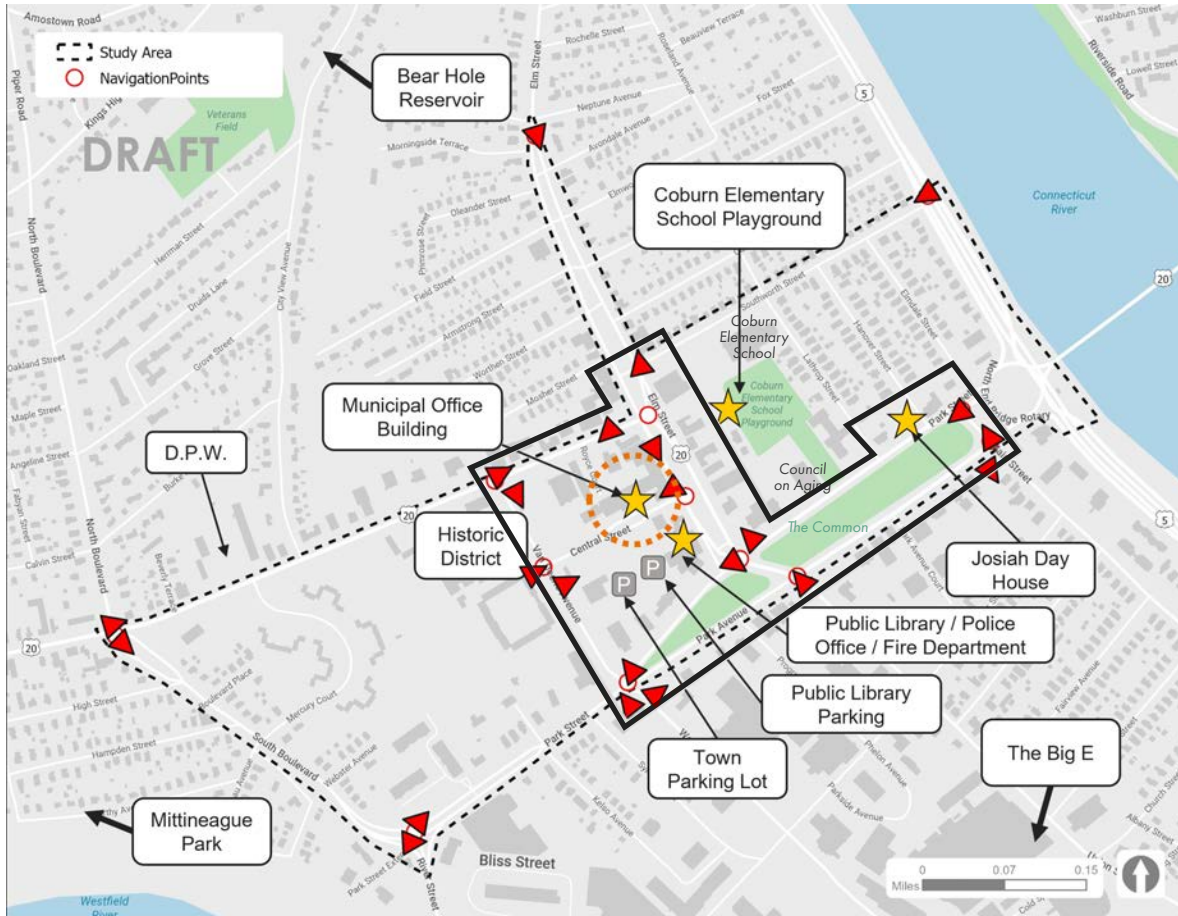
Design final signs language and arrows



1. Understand the details of existing signage

EXISTING DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE LANGUAGE

Beyond capturing a general inventory of where signs are located, this process included identifying the language on each of the existing **directional** signs in the Downtown West Springfield area and determining which way the arrows on the signage were pointing. This was a critical exercise to understand how a driver is being directed to specific destinations, if the destination is being reinforced through sequential signage, and if there are gaps in the directional signage system for where a sign *should* be guiding a driver to specific destinations. For example, there are no signs along Elm Street pointing towards the Historic White Church, or signs directing to dining destinations, generally.



2a. Identify optimal navigation locations throughout the Downtown

PRIMARY DECISION POINTS

When a motorist is arriving into Downtown West Springfield from various directions, there are key navigation points where signage is generally recommended for capturing their attention. This is particularly important for first-time or less-familiar visitors to West Springfield. Primary destination navigation points are those areas (typically intersections) where a driver could potentially be diverted in a different direction than they intended. Navigation points also occur at less critical intersections but continue to reinforce the driver is still heading towards their desired destination.

This exercise also helps inform where pedestrian-level signage navigation could be beneficial, with the understanding that most visitors "become" pedestrians after arriving in West Springfield via a car or by transit. The map identifies the key public parking facilities in West Springfield. These are shown in relation to the orange dotted lines which indicate an approximate 5-minute walking distances from the Town Hall. This information adds an extra layer of understanding the time associated with navigating between potential destinations.



2b. Identify destinations to be included on signage

DOWNTOWN DESTINATIONS

Following several discussions, the Project Team and Wayfinding Committee identified the destinations that should be included on the new directional signage based on a general hierarchy. These are shown in relation to public parking facilities.

SIGNIFICANT DESTINATION ★

- Downtown West Springfield
- Public Library
- Town Hall
- Police Department
- Public Parking
- Interstate 91

NOTABLE DESTINATION ★

- Coburn Elementary School Playground
- School Administration Office
- Historic District
- Baystate Hospital

GENERAL DESTINATION

- Municipal Services
- Dining

Other destinations associated with West Springfield beyond the downtown (such as White Church or Mittineague Park) were also identified and could also be considered for inclusion on signs on an individual basis.

3. Use a sample journey experience to visualize where which types of signage should generally steer a visitor towards a downtown destination

These images depict a general visualization of how a motorist could better benefit from increased wayfinding signage when arriving into Downtown West Springfield from an example journey between **Point A (North End Bridge)** and **Point B (West Springfield Public Library)**. The map demonstrates that signage should occur at a regular frequency that reinforces a driver as they arrive closer to their destination.



Source: Google maps





Source: Colliers Project Leaders



4a. Specific sign needs

With an understanding of the general locations needed for new signage across the entire downtown, the next step requires investigating each sign location/intersection to understand specific signage needs. The intersection to the left (Westfield Street/US-20 and Van Deene Avenue) is a sample of this process. The downtown destinations that are logical for being included on wayfinding signage at this particular location are identified in bold text below. To direct people to the destinations below who may be arriving to the intersection from different approaches, the direction of the arrows for each destination has been broken down, more specifically.



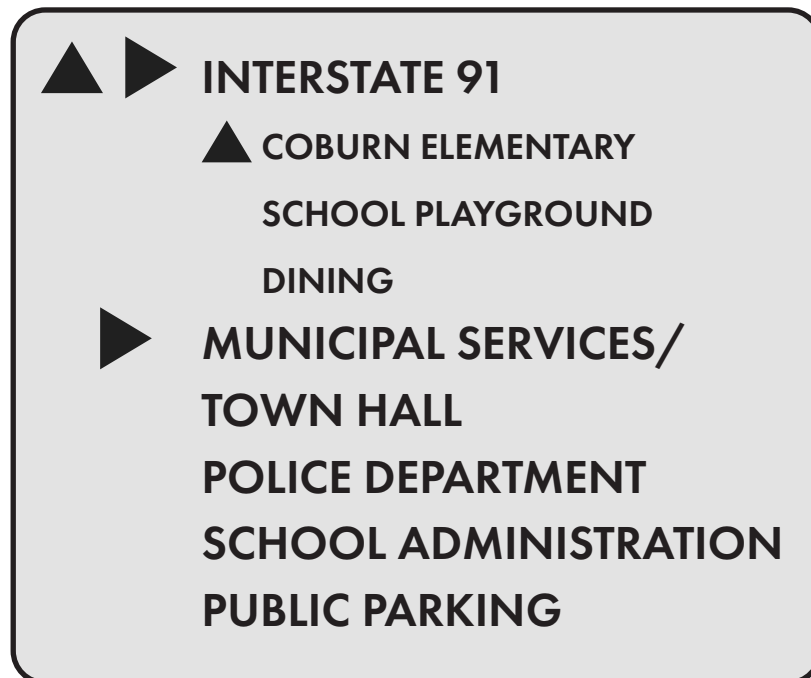
- **Coburn Elementary School Playground**
- **Dining**
 - Arrow pointing straight from US-20
 - Arrow pointing right from Van Deene St
- **Interstate 91**
 - Arrow pointing straight and right from US-20
- **Municipal Services/Town Hall**
- **Police Department**
- **Public Parking**
 - Arrow pointing right from US-20



4b. Sign-specific language

Going into even further detail, this step involves isolating the destinations and arrow direction needs applicable to one vehicle approach (eastbound, in this case) from Westfield Street/US-20. By eliminating the details below which are relevant to the other intersection approaches, this results in understanding specifically what information would potentially be included on one specific proposed sign for eastbound drivers. The graphic on the bottom left demonstrates at a very general level the destinations/information that would be needed on this particular sign.

Stantec went through this exercise for priority recommended signage areas/intersections in the downtown core as part of developing an overall recommended signage inventory approach for the Town to continue with in future signing efforts.

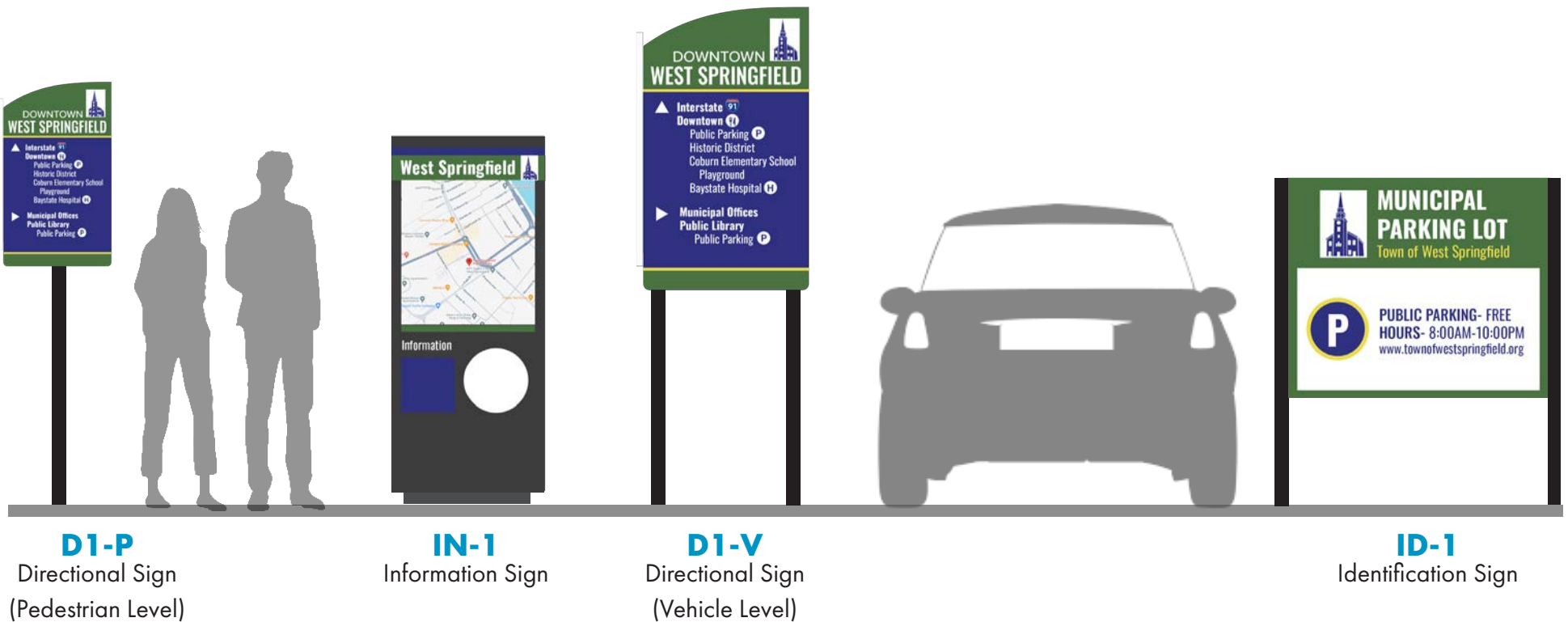


- **Coburn Elementary School Playground**
- **Dining**
 - Arrow pointing straight from US-20
 - Arrow pointing right from Van Deene St
- **Interstate 91**
 - Arrow pointing straight and right from US-20
- **Municipal Services/Town Hall**
- **Police Department**
- **Public Parking**
 - Arrow pointing right from US-20

Sign Design Options and Recommended Locations

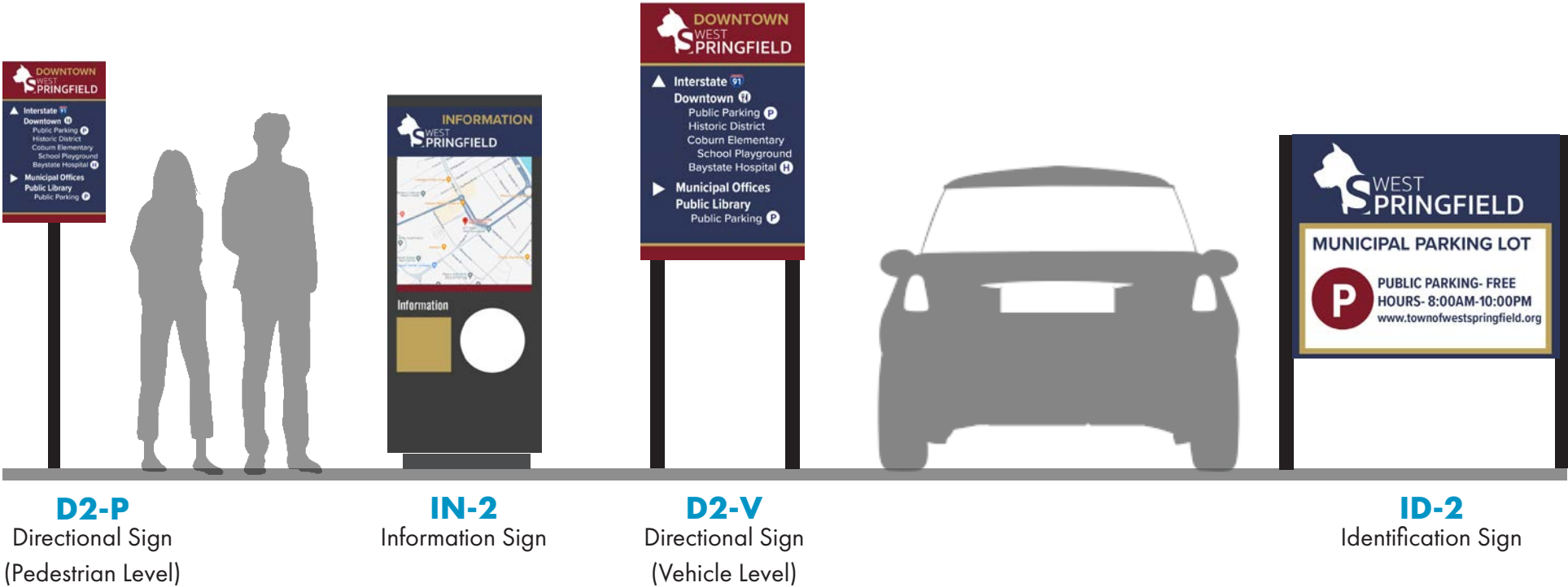
Preferred Design Suite

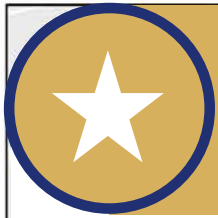
Based on input from the project team, the Wayfinding Committee, and the broader public, this design was identified as the preferred option, incorporating the preferred color palette, motif, and font design components. These illustrate examples of simple designs for three of the four different signage typologies. The scale, customization, and less standard materials of potential gateway signage for the town would likely require these design components to be further developed and integrated through a process separate from this study. Information Signage may also typically utilize either pre-existing or slightly customized designs through a manufacturer specializing in pedestrian wayfinding infokiosks, however a generalization of how it might fit in the overall suite of sign types is shown below. With directional signage being identified as one of the priority needs from this analysis, detailed specifications for the preferred design have been included in the appendix to aid the town in the pursuit of fabricating directional signs in the near future.



Alternative Design Suite

This design incorporates a combination of other top design options considered for color palette, motif, and font, and illustrates an example of simple designs for different signage typologies.





Proposed Signs-Gateway

With consideration that downtown West Springfield is primarily accessed by visitors arriving from multiple directions, this plan recommends gateway signs placed at the primary entry points towards the downtown core area. Although these recommended locations are the most logical areas for welcoming visitors, the condition of nearby infrastructure and the types of adjacent uses may influence whether a different location is better suited to highlighting the downtown area in its best light.



Total Inventory
3

Note: The placement of all recommended signs takes into account the roundabout currently under construction at one of the primary downtown intersections. The design plans (as of February 2024) are overlaid on the map for reference, as well as this image of the construction completion as of June 2024. (Source: Google)





Proposed Signs- Information

Based on the understanding that pedestrians (including those who use wheelchairs and other assisted mobility devices) are the target user for information signage, four priority areas have been identified for recommended signs. The core commercial area of downtown is walkable, and centrally-located signs can provide locally-relevant information to visitors who may not be aware of other nearby destinations in the downtown. These signs take into consideration the location of recommended pedestrian directional signs.

An identification number has been included with each sign, for reference.



Preferred Design Option

The following renderings illustrate (generally and in approximate scale) how the sign typologies recommended as part of the preferred design option might be viewed by a motorist during a journey.



- ◀ This image depicts how a directional sign might be incorporated from beyond the downtown, arriving via southbound Elm Street.



- ◀ This image depicts how signage might be incorporated in the downtown with both a directional and information sign.

Further Considerations for Implementation

Essential steps in working towards an effective, long-term downtown wayfinding strategy

In addition to best practice guidance shared throughout this report, the following steps are recommended to the Town of West Springfield to support the short-term implementation of wayfinding signage and to reinforce the effectiveness of a future, longer-term approach:

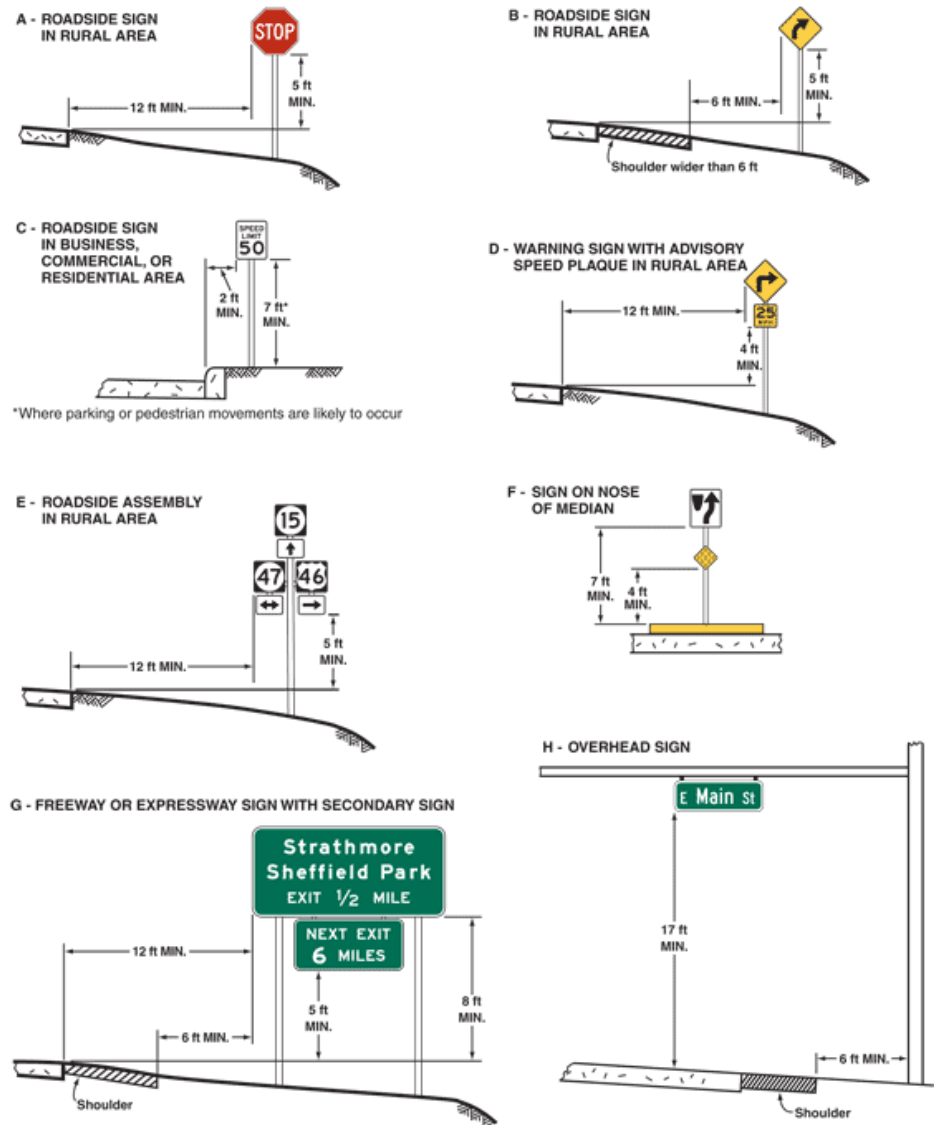
- Identify **potential funding sources** for the development of Gateway signage (taking into consideration the need to fund potential phases)
- Formalize a list and map of final **defined sign locations**
- Engage DPW and other relevant parties to **check compliance prior to installation** e.g., ADA clearance, height above grade, conflicts with regulatory signage, the potential utilization of breakaway bases, etc.
- Consider how to prioritize and **integrate technology** into a longer-term, more user-friendly wayfinding system (e.g., lighting elements, digital travel information, interactive features, etc.)
- **Develop a maintenance plan** to support the long-term upkeep and re-evaluation of the wayfinding system, periodic cleaning and replacements due to wear, system expansion, etc.
- Consider how **other visitor platforms** can support and "speak to" the wayfinding system (e.g., web, social media, printed materials)
- Think of the improved physical components of wayfinding as part of a **broader wayfinding and destination strategy** for Downtown West Springfield (e.g. tourism programs, restaurant promotion, special event advertising, etc.)

Sign Installation Considerations

This plan also takes into account how a sign might be installed, asking questions like: "What fixtures exist now and are they usable?" "What other street furniture or fixtures are nearby?" "What is the surface material and its condition?" "Are there any slopes to be aware of?"



Figure 2A-2. Examples of Heights and Lateral Locations of Sign Installations



Note:

See Section 2A.19 for reduced lateral offset distances that may be used in areas where lateral offsets are limited, and in business, commercial, or residential areas where sidewalk width is limited or where existing poles are close to the curb.

Developing a Signage Inventory

By applying these key considerations to the directional signing process and other non-directional wayfinding needs, a sample West Springfield Wayfinding Inventory Matrix was developed. This matrix outlines information about the recommended signs in detail, such as the recommended positioning of the sign, the destinations to be identified on the signage (as informed by the planning process, to date), and the likely method of installation required. This has been developed as a valuable tool/template for the Town to utilize when pursuing fabrication.

| WEST SPRINGFIELD PROPOSED WAYFINDING SIGNAGE INVENTORY MATRIX | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------|---|
| DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE - VEHICLES | | | | |
| Loc ID | Road(s) / Intersection | Positioning / Traveler Direction | Arrow Direction(s) | Arrow Language |
| D1 | Westfield Street @ South Boulevard | EB on Westfield St by the SW corner of the intersection | ↑ | Municipal Services Downtown West Springfield |
| D2 | Westfield Street @ South Boulevard | NB on South Blvd on small island in East part of intersection. Left side of vehicles making RH turn. | → | Municipal Services Downtown West Springfield |
| D3 | South Boulevard @ Webster Avenue | SB on South Blvd, just after the Webster Ave turn | ← | Baystate Hospital Interstate 91 |
| D4 | River Street @ Park Street | NB on River St on small island in East part of intersection. Left side of vehicles making RH turn | → | Downtown West Springfield Baystate Hospital |
| D5 | Park Street @ Sylvan Street | EB on Park Street on the southern corner of the intersection | ← | Interstate 91 Islamic Center Historic District |
| D6 | Park Avenue @ Progress Avenue | EB on Park Avenue on the eastern corner of the intersection | → | Public Parking West Springfield Public Library Police Department |
| D7 | Westfield Street @ Van Deene Avenue | EB on Westfield St on the southwestern corner of the intersection | → | Municipal Services Public Parking Municipal Services |
| D8 | Westfield Street @ Van Deene Avenue | WB on Westfield St on the northeastern corner of the intersection | ← | Public Parking Municipal Services Interstate 91 |
| D9 | Elm Street @ Southworth Street | SB on Elm St, western side of intersection along the curbside/walk | ↑ | Public Library Public Parking Municipal Services Coburn Elementary School Playground |
| D10 | Southworth Street @ Elm Street | WB on Southworth St, northeastern side of intersection | ← | Public Library Municipal Services Public Library |
| D11 | Westfield Street @ Elm Street | EB on Westfield St, southeastern side of intersection | → | Public Parking Public Hall |
| D12 | Elm Street @ 110 Elm St (BFP Associates) | NB on Elm Street, in front of BFP Associates business before roundabout | ← | Historic District Coburn Elementary School Playground |
| D13 | Elm Street @ Central Street | SB on Elm St, just after the roundabout, on northwestern side of intersection | → | Public Library Public Parking Town Hall Police Department School Administration Office |
| D14 | Elm Street @ Park Street | SB on Elm St, on the western side of the intersection near the library | → | Public Library Interstate 91 Baystate Hospital Public Library |
| D15 | Park Street @ Elm Street | WB on Park St, north corner of intersection | ↑ | Town Hall Police Department Public Parking |
| D16 | Park Avenue @ Progress Avenue | EB on Park Ave, east corner of intersection | → | Municipal Services Public Parking Interstate 91 Baystate Hospital Downtown West Springfield |
| D17 | Union Street @ Park Avenue | NB on Union St on east side of intersection | → | Interstate 91 Baystate Hospital Municipal Services |
| D18 | Main Street @ Park Venue | NB on Main St, on the northeast corner of intersection | → | Interstate 91 Baystate Hospital Downtown West Springfield |
| D19 | North End Bridge Rotary @ Park Street | WB on North End Bridge Rotary before Park Street turn | ↑ | Municipal Services Downtown West Springfield |
| D20 | Riverdale Street @ Southworth Street | NB on Riverdale St | ← | Municipal Services Coburn Elementary School Playground Historic District |

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE - PEDESTRIANS

| | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| PD1 | Elm Street @ Worthen Street | SB on Elm Street, on southwestern corner of intersection | ↑ | Downtown West Springfield Public Library |
| PD2 | Westfield Street @ Elm Street | EB on Westfield Street, on west corner of intersection | ↑ | Coburn Elementary School Playground |
| PD3 | Elm Street @ Westfield Street | SB on Elm Street against traffic, in front of CVS crosswalk across Elm St | → | Town Hall Public Library |
| PD4 | Central Street @ Elm Street | SB on Elm Street against traffic, in front of BFP Associates | ↑ | Public Library Historic District Town Hall |
| PD5 | Park Street @ Elm Street | SB on Park Street, in front of library | ← | Dining Town Common Josiah Day House Museum |
| PD6 | Elm Street @ Park Street | NB on Elm Street in northeast corner | → | Town Hall Public Library Islamic Center Town Common Josiah Day House Museum |

IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE

| Loc ID | Location Name and Address | General Position on Property | Other Features (if relevant) | Sign Language |
|------------|--|---|------------------------------|---------------|
| ID1 | Westfield Street @ Mercury Court; West Springfield DPW | WB on Westfield Street, near lot entry point | | |
| ID2 | Central Street; West Springfield City Hall | WB on Central St by the City Hall (left side of median) | | |
| ID3 | Central Street; West Springfield Public Parking Lot | EB on Central St in front of lot (right side of median) | | |
| ID4 | Parking access road off Park Street; West Springfield Public Library | NB on access road off of Park Street near library | | |
| ID5 | Central Street; West Springfield Public Schools | EB on Central Street, after median and in front of building | | |
| ID6 | Elm Street @ Park Street; on Town Common | EB on Elm Street, on Town Common near street | | |

INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE

| Loc ID | Nearest Address/Property Name | General Position | Other Features (if relevant) | Sign Language |
|------------|--|--|------------------------------|---------------|
| IN1 | Central Street; West Springfield City Hall | EB on Central St on the median | | |
| IN2 | Elm Street @ Central Street | NB on Elm Street, in front of Post Office on Northwest corner of lot | | |
| IN3 | Park Street @ Elm Street; library side | WB on Park Street; South corner of Public Library property | | |
| IN4 | Park Street @ Elm Street; Town Common side | EB on Elm Street, on Western tip off Eastern portion of Town Common | | |

GATEWAY SIGNAGE

| Loc ID | Location Name and Address | General Position on Property | Other Features (if relevant) | Sign Language |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------|
| G1 | Westfield St @ Town/Vest Apartments | Northeastern part of Town/Vest Apartments near the street | | |
| G2 | Elm Street @ Avondale Avenue | Northern tip of Elm Street grassy median | | |
| G3 | Park Street @ Hanover Street | On West Springfield Town Common, adjacent to Park Street | | |

Dependent on whether kiosks are secured through a fabricator as ready-made or through a process of customization.

To be further detailed through future planning process (e.g., level of interactivity, digital components, etc.)

To be further detailed through future planning process (e.g., scale of design, materials, etc.)

To be further detailed through future planning process

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7

Appendices

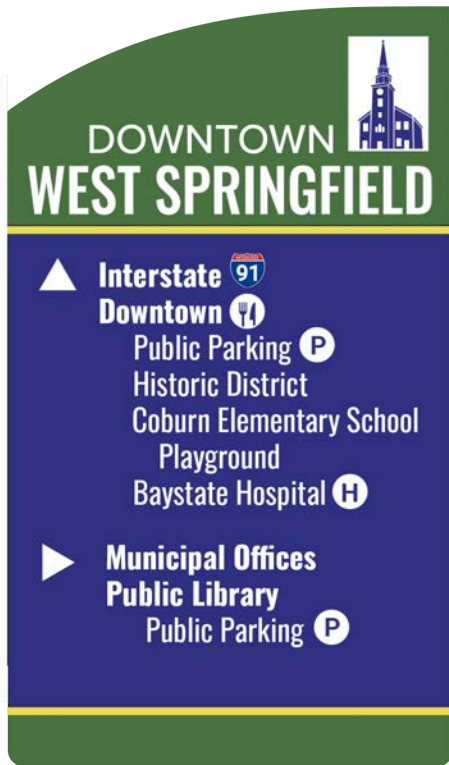
Brand Options Summary
Fabrication Drawing
Public Survey Results

Brand Options Summary

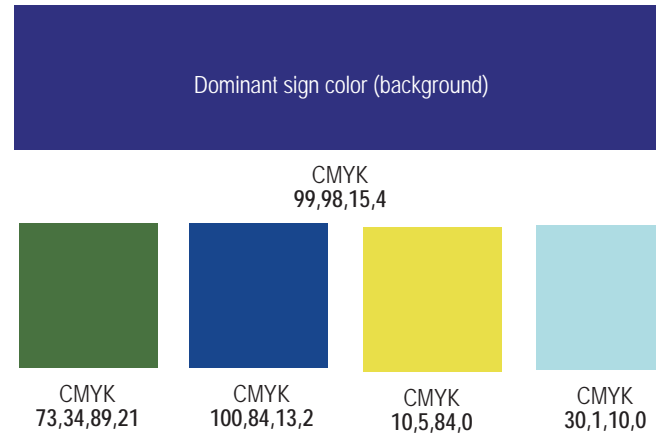
Preferred Design Option

This outlines the specifications for each of the design components used for the preferred signage design option. These details can be used for fabrication or other printing and media purposes.

Brand in Sample Context



Color Palette and Usage



Font Family and Usage

'Downtown West Springfield' Text-

Proxima Nova- Medium

Oswald-Medium

Significant Destinations Signage Text-

Oswald- Bold

Notable Destinations Signage Text-

Oswald- Regular

Motif and Usage

Full color



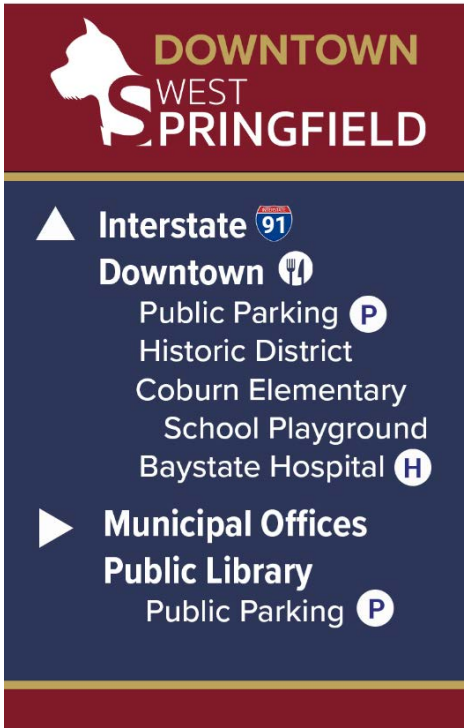
Black and white (grayscale) for reference for other applications



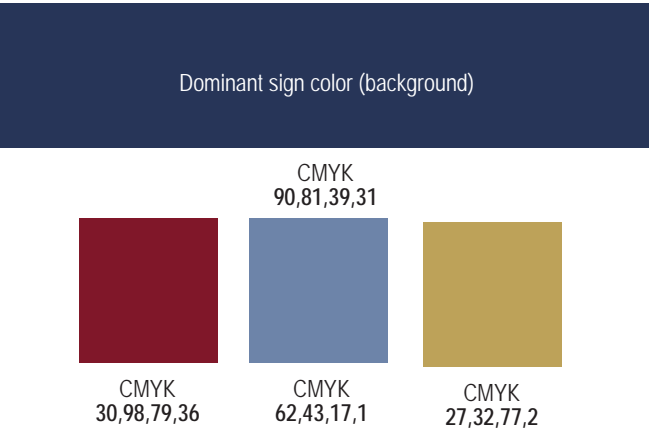
Alternate Design Option

This outlines the specifications for each of the design components used for the alternate signage design option. These details can be used for fabrication or other printing and media purposes.

Brand in Sample Context



Color Palette and Usage



Font Family and Usage

'Downtown West Springfield' Text-
Oracle Sans- Light and Semi Bold
Primary Destinations Signage Text-
Proxima Nova- Bold
Secondary Destinations Signage Text-
Proxima Nova- Medium

Motif and Usage

Full color



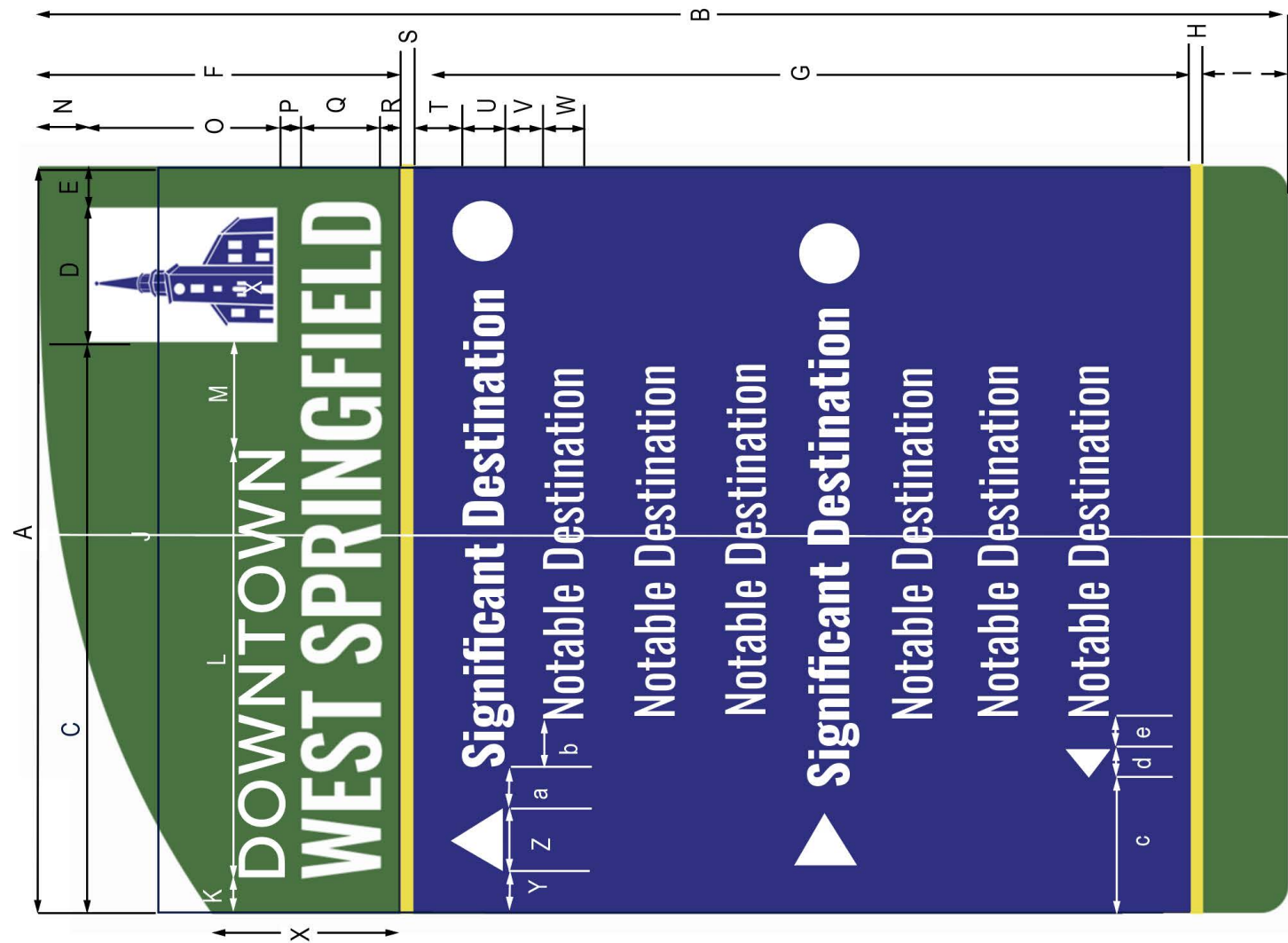
Black and white (grayscale) for reference
for other applications



Fabrication Drawing

Directional Signage Option 2- Vehicle

This outlines the specifications for the . These details can be used for fabrication or other printing and media purposes.



D1-V
(Directional Sign for Vehicles- Typical)

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| 36" | 60.8' | 27.8' | 6.5" | 1.9" | 17.5" | 37.5" | 0.6" | 4.1" | 60.4" | 1.5" |
| L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V |
| 1.6" | 5.1" | 2.4" | 9.2" | 1.0" | 3.9" | 1.0" | 0.6" | 2.3" | 2.0" | 1.9" |
| W | X | Y | Z | a | b | c | d | e | | |
| 1.9" | 11.7" | 1.9" | 2.9" | 1.9" | 2.3" | 6.6" | 1.5" | 1.5" | | |

Public Survey Results

1. Which of the following applies to you?

[More Details](#)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| I am a resident in West Springfi... | 25 |
| I am an employee in West Sprin... | 0 |
| I am a business owner in West S... | 0 |
| I am a student in West Springfield | 0 |
| I am a visitor in West Springfield | 0 |
| Other | 0 |



3. When you visit Downtown West Springfield, which transportation mode do you usually take?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| I drive. | 24 |
| I ride a bus. | 0 |
| I walk. | 1 |
| I ride a bicycle. | 0 |
| Other | 0 |



2. How often do you visit Downtown West Springfield?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

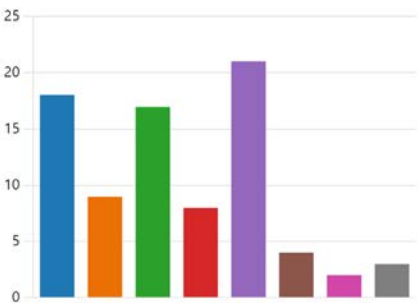
| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Daily | 6 |
| Weekly | 14 |
| Monthly | 2 |
| For Special Events | 3 |
| Other | 0 |



4. Which of the following types of destinations do you typically visit while in downtown West Springfield?
Select all that apply.

[More Details](#)

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Municipal (e.g. Town Hall) | 18 |
| Cultural | 9 |
| Dining/Restaurants | 17 |
| Shops | 8 |
| Services (e.g. Bank) | 21 |
| Institutions | 4 |
| Recreational | 2 |
| Other | 3 |



5. What are the streets/intersections/other landmarks that you perceive as the informal boundaries of Downtown West Springfield?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

18
Responses

Latest Responses

"The greens separating Park St and the median that was on Elm St"

"Elm St. Park St "

"Park and Elm and Southworth and Elm"

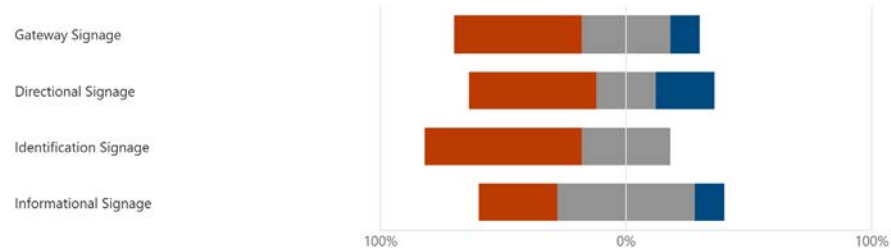
12 respondents (67%) answered **Park** for this question.



6. How effective do you generally think the existing wayfinding signs in West Springfield are in serving their purpose?

[More Details](#)

Very effective Neither effective nor ineffective Very ineffective



7. Do you think the existing signage in West Springfield is reflective of the town's character?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

Yes 7
No 8
Somewhat 10



8. Please share any other thoughts you have about existing signage in Downtown West Springfield.

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

14
Responses

Latest Responses

"Seems fine currently but during the Big E signs need to be put up to prevent ..."

"I think with the revitalization of downtown it is the time to add more signag..."

"I think the Town is cluttered with signage lately which doesn't portray a goo..."

8 respondents (57%) answered **signage** for this question.



9. Colors are integrated into signage to ensure they are visible from the surrounding environment, and recognizable to aid in easy navigation for different users.

Considering that future signs may incorporate some combination of dominant or accent colors to help efficiently display information, which of these potential color palettes do you most prefer?

[More Details](#)



10. Which of these potential motifs do you most prefer?

[More Details](#)



11. Which of these potential fonts do you most prefer?

[More Details](#)



12. Please share any other comments you would like us to consider about future signage in Downtown West Springfield.

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

12
Responses

Latest Responses

"The signs should be go with the area and not be the standard big green ones"
"I don't think we need more parking signs, people know where to park and it..."

4 respondents (33%) answered **signs** for this question.

Downtown West font options West Springfield
signage**signs** Motif parks
color people terrier
S is hard

