# Williamstown
# Wayfinding
# Signage
# Plan

Stantec

# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

## Liveliness of Williamstown

Williamstown is a vibrant town in the northeast corner of Massachusetts, home to some of the top attractions and institutions in the Commonwealth. Williamstown draws visitors from all over for its arts and culture, educational institution, natural beauty and landscape, and special annual events.

Williamstown is home to top tier institutions, not just within the downtown, but by short driving distances. In the heart of downtown, Williams College, a renowned liberal arts college, is the primary institution. Williamstown Theatre Festival and Williams College Museum of Art are two pillars of the arts and culture scene. Just on the outskirts of downtown is the Clark Art Institute, a world-class art museum that draws visitors into downtown Williamstown.

With the growing number of visitors, downtown Williamstown has become a spot for fine dining and luxury hotels. The Williamstown Chamber of Commerce has started to place informational and gateway signage in the downtown. However, there is generally a lack of overall directional signage pointing visitors to both the College and the arts and culture scene.

Presently, there is no cohesive set 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 This has resulted in an outdated and counter-intuitive system that 1) doesn't capture visitors at the appropriate locations to help them navigate to popular destinations; 2) lacks clarity and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 unique to Williamstown.

Williamstown 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 update the downtown's wayfinding signage system. This plan is intended to provide guidelines about future sign placement and early design concepts with the expectation that a more permanent appoach and more comprehensive planning and public engagement process for signage will take place in the future.

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

- Inventory of all existing signage, and identified "gaps" in existing sign types based on the destinations the signs are intending to direct to

- Investigating how existing signage might be blended to inform one, common brand/style

- List of ecommended signage quantities and locations

- Suite of general sign designs/approximate dimensions for 4 typologies using one preferred design approach

- A designed downtown map with key destinations

At the initiation of this project, the Project Team identified a set of goals that they hoped to achieve throughout the wayfinding plan process. These can be seen on the following page.

# PROJECT GOALS

▶ Better direct visitors to key destinations downtown

▶ Create a sense of arrival for visitors using various modes of travel

▶ Use historical context, visual influences, and community input to inform the development of an authentic Town brand

▶ Create cohesion and consistency of the Town brand in signage and digital formats

▶ Establish an inventory of signage to help inform future wayfinding needs and priorities

▶ Develop a strategy for integrating or improving the unity of existing wayfinding

# Technical Assistance Tasks

✓ **Anticipated Outcomes of this Effort**

- One preferred downtown brand, including a color scheme and motif/font package

- Up to (2) preliminary design options and estimated dimensions 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

- 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

- Develop a sign messaging list

- Develop sign specification drawings for fabrication

- Design complex signage options that incorporate special materials, such as Gateway signage

# Project Timeline

| 2024 | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |

**TASK 1. Project Kick-off**

**TASK 2. Pre-Design and Site Visit**

**TASK 3. Define Signage Typologies and Quantities**

**TASK 4. Wayfinding Advisory Group Workshop / Survey**

**TASK 5. Develop Signage Options**
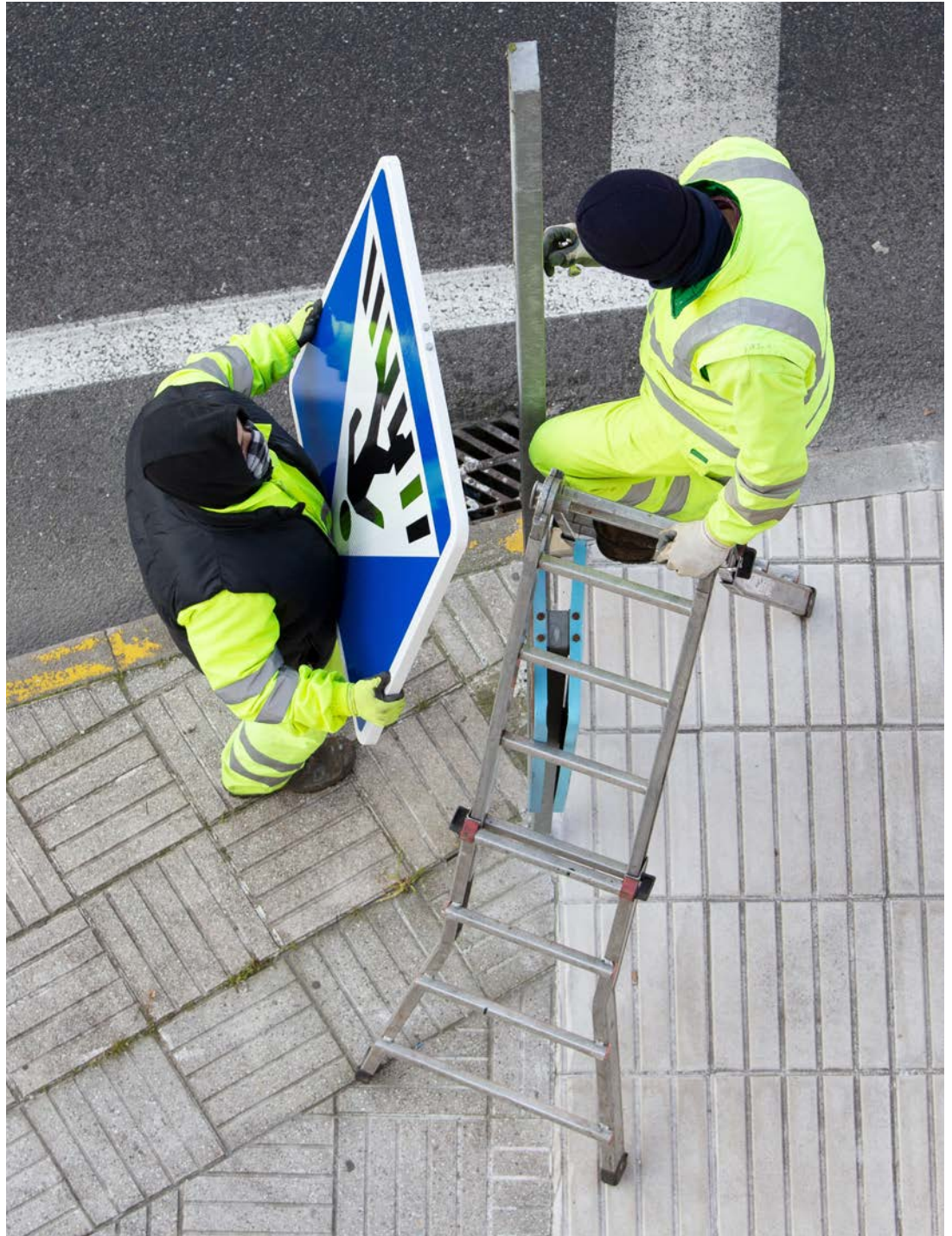
**TASK 6. Branding/Wayfinding Package**
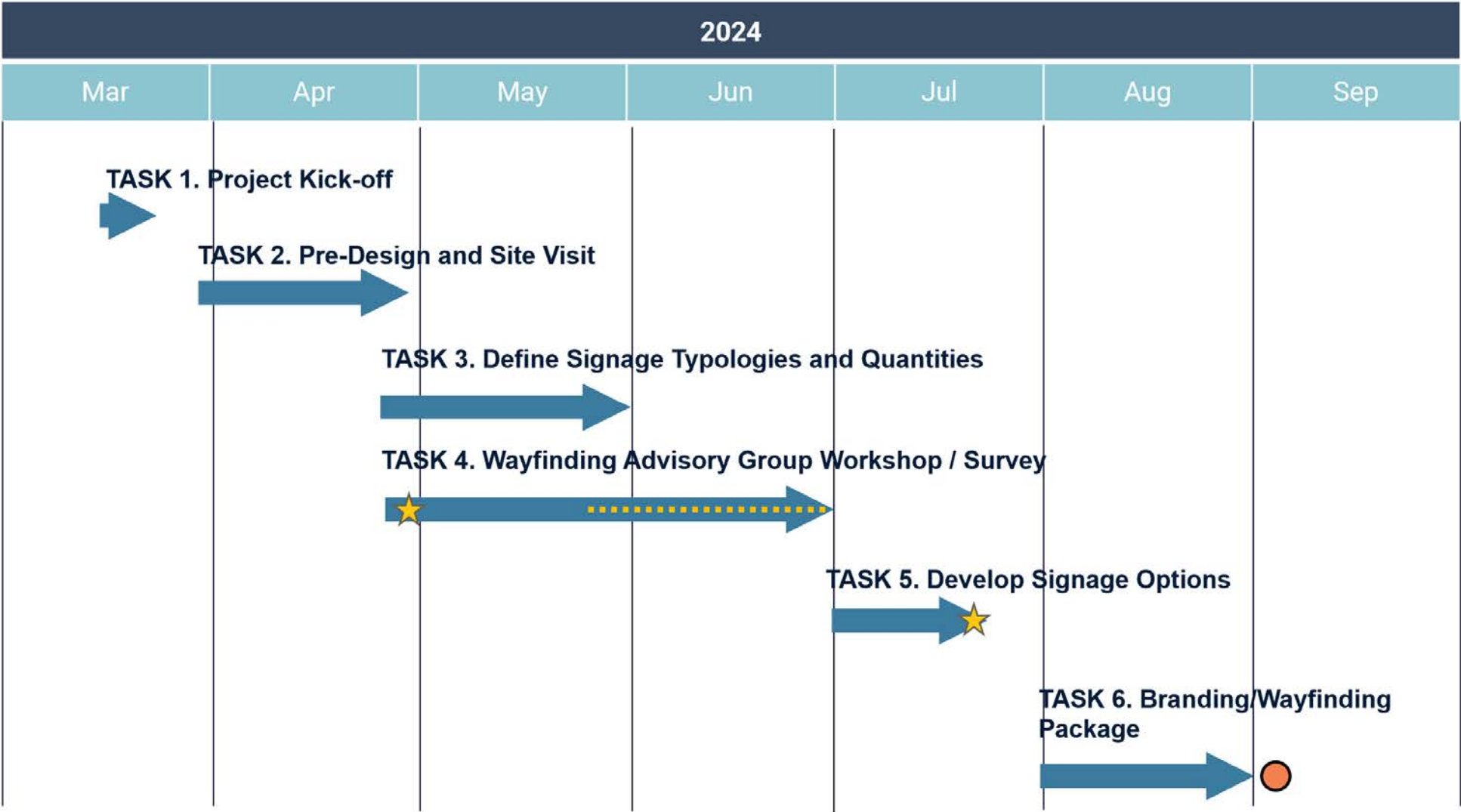
# Project Boundary

The Project Team identified the "Downtown" boundary (in yellow) for the Wayfinding Plan as generally encompassing the areas between Milne Public Library to the west, Cole Avenue to the east, just north of Whitman Street to the north, and Taconic Golf Club to the south. The broader Project boundary (in blue) includes areas which are primarily within walking distance to the downtown core and Williams College but which may have slightly different wayfinding signage needs than downtown.

Although the signage inventory and other analysis was conducted primarily within these two boundaries, the consultants recognized there were some wayfinding needs beyond the to better support navigation towards downtown Williamstown as well as destinations beyond. These have been identified in later sections of analysis and recommendations in this document.

# 2 Branding and Wayfinding Approach

# Developing a Brand

## The Four C's of Effective Branding

Although the Town of Williamstown currently has a designed logo, there isn't a brand or visual identity to define the unique attractions and character of downtown Williamstown, specifically. This study utilized a simple approach of prioritizing the Four C's through the development of a simple brand that could be integrated into potential wayfinding signage and other platforms.



## CLARITY

Are the visual components of the brand clear, simple, and legible?

Does the brand reflect a clear and focused message about "who" Williamstown is, the values they represent, and the uniqueness of the community?



## CONSTANCY

Will the community still like the look of the brand in 5-10 years?

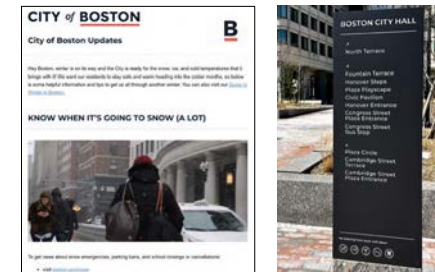Does the brand reflect the trajectory the Town is aiming for in its future?



## CONSISTENCY

Is the brand integrated consistently and recognizable in all of the places hosting the Town's identity? (e.g., website, signage, social media, physical printed materials, newsletters, digital signs)



## CREATIVITY

Does the brand incorporate creative shapes, colors, clever mottos that are likely to be memorable?
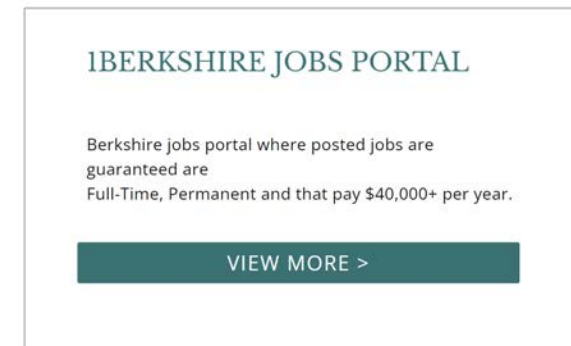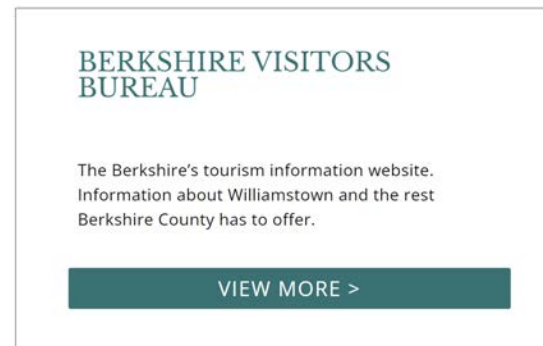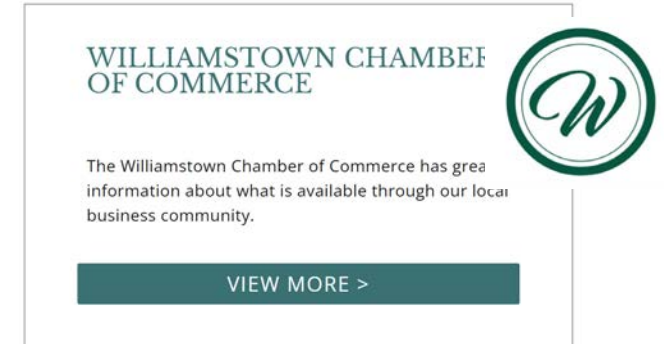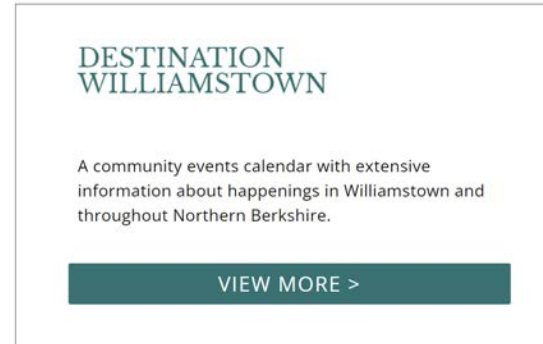
# Summary of Branding

## Challenges Today

Town branding should evoke a sense of authenticity and pride. Today, there is little attachment to the current logo design and colors, which lends to the opportunity to "start from scratch." In addition, the Town's website creates more complication than clarity about what consitutes the downtown, and what is offered. There is no current map hosted on the site, and visitors are rather directed to the websites of four other organizations/agencies to find out more information about visiting Williamstown. This leads to the perception of a lack of unity and clarity.



Williamstown is a fantastic place to live, work, and play. We're happy you are planning to visit. Whether you're staying for only a day or perhaps longer you will find that there's much to do in our community. See the links below for helpful tourism information from our partner organizations.

THANK YOU FOR VISITING US!

### DESTINATION WILLIAMSTOWN

A community events calendar with extensive information about happenings in Williamstown and throughout Northern Berkshire.

VIEW MORE >

### WILLIAMSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Williamstown Chamber of Commerce has great information about what is available through our local business community.

VIEW MORE >

### BERKSHIRE VISITORS BUREAU

The Berkshire's tourism information website. Information about Williamstown and the rest Berkshire County has to offer.

VIEW MORE >

### 1BERKSHIRE JOBS PORTAL

Berkshire jobs portal where posted jobs are guaranteed are
Full-Time, Permanent and that pay $40,000+ per year.

VIEW MORE >



*Screenshot from the Town's website*
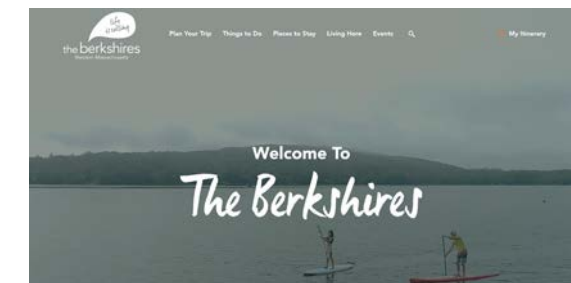
# Wayfinding Signage Typologies

## Different Signs for Different Purposes

Wayfinding signage can typically be categorized within the following four, general 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 overall 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.
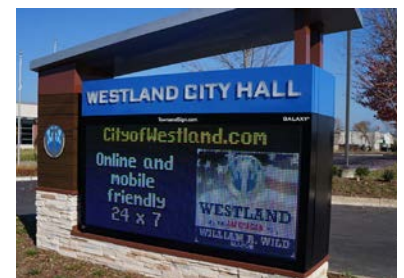
# DIRECTIONAL

## What it does-

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

# 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 wide range of different 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 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 that is also visible at eye level to offer more detailed information
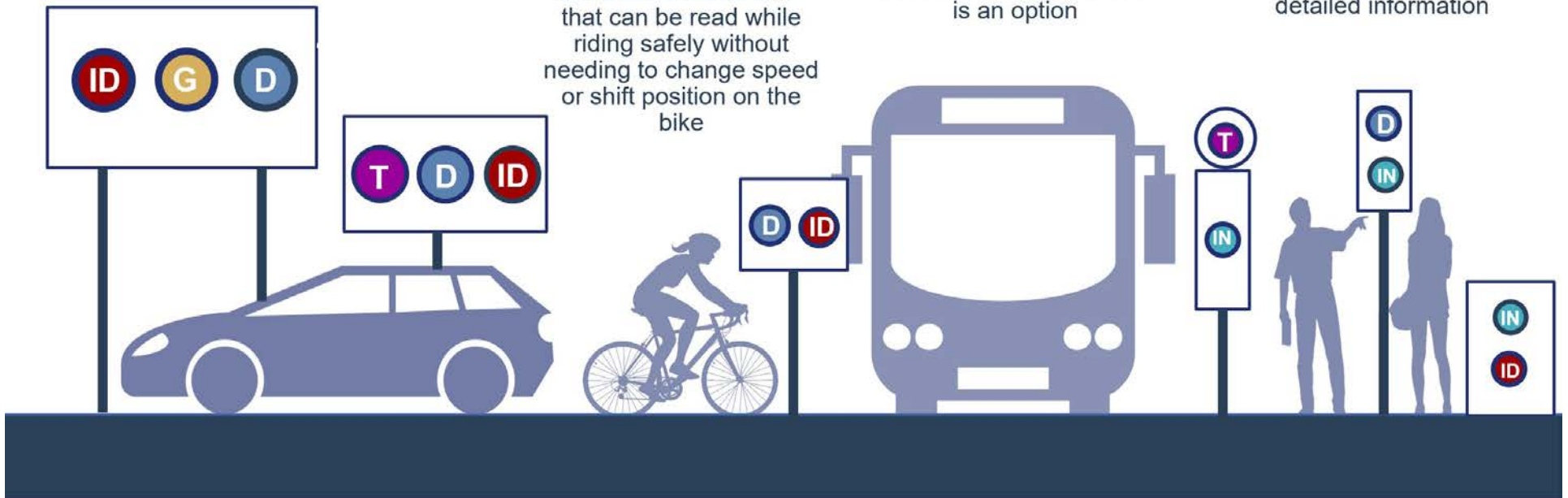
# Making Signage Accessible for All

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) should be considered as well to make sure that visitors of all mobility levels have clear sightlines of the signs.
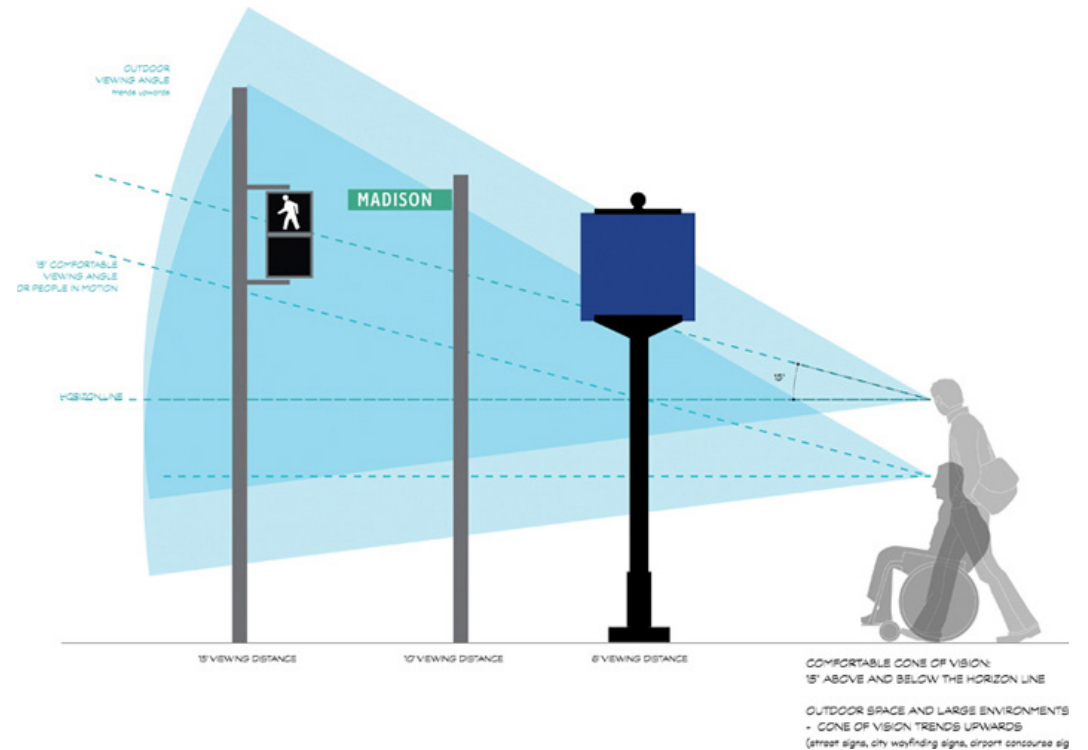
# 3
# Existing Sign Inventory

Overall Inventory
Gateway Signs
Directional Signs
Identification Signs
Information Signs
Summary

**Legend:**
- Directional
- Gateway
- Identification
- Informational
- Downtown Study Area
- Wayfinding Study Area

**Total Inventory**
# 46
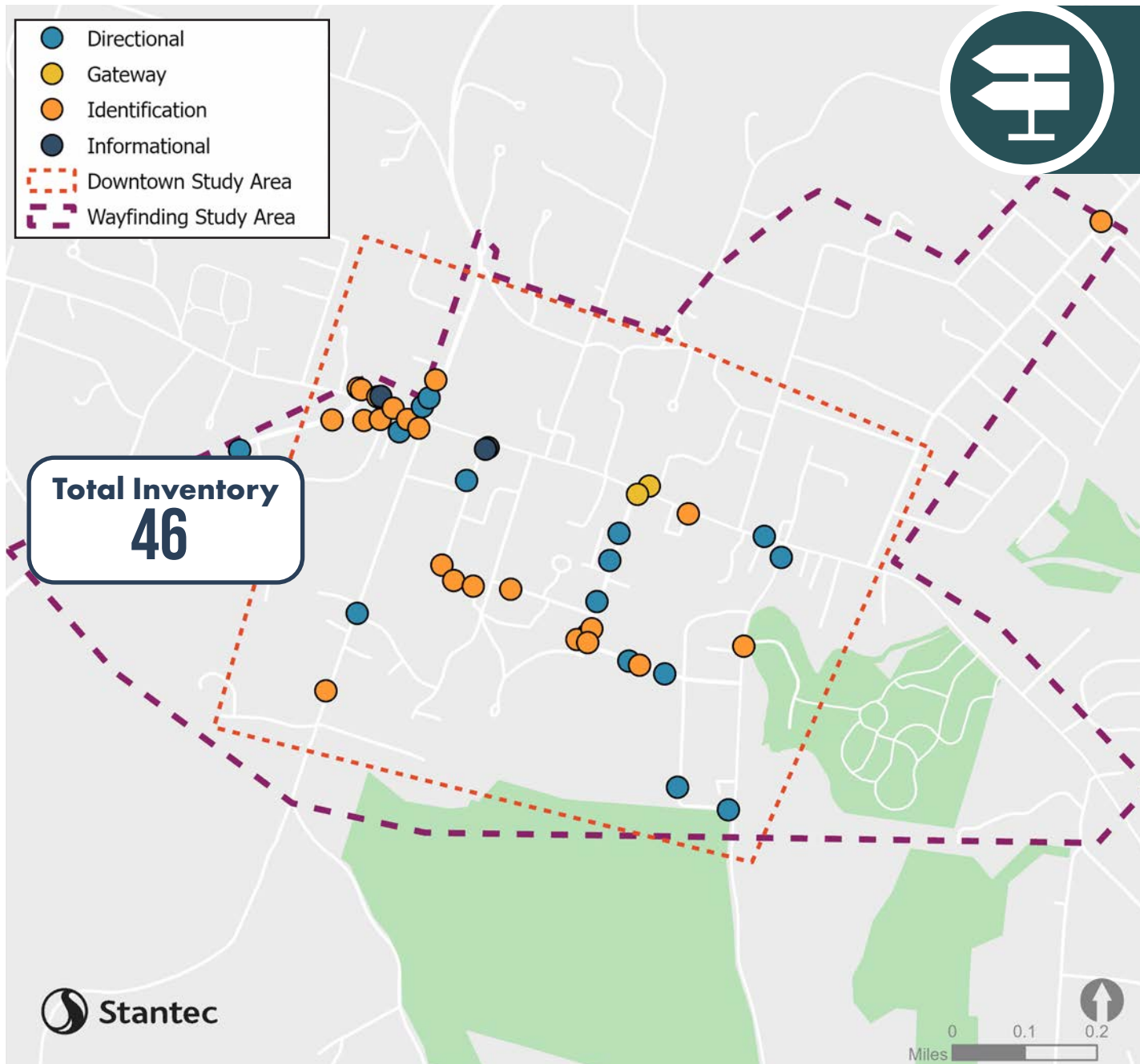
## Observations

- The amount of signage is lacking overall (specifically at key intersections), with few signs directing people to specific destinations
- There is no presence of a distinct Town brand or district boundary in the core downtown area
- Vehicle level signage is only present for cultural institutions
- which have their own branding and leads to a lack of downtown signage unity and cohesion
- There are many instances where the font size of a sign is too small for the user it is intending to target
- Some parking directional signs are too simple and require further clarification about the type of parking available

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0    0.1    0.2
Miles

**Total Inventory**
**2**
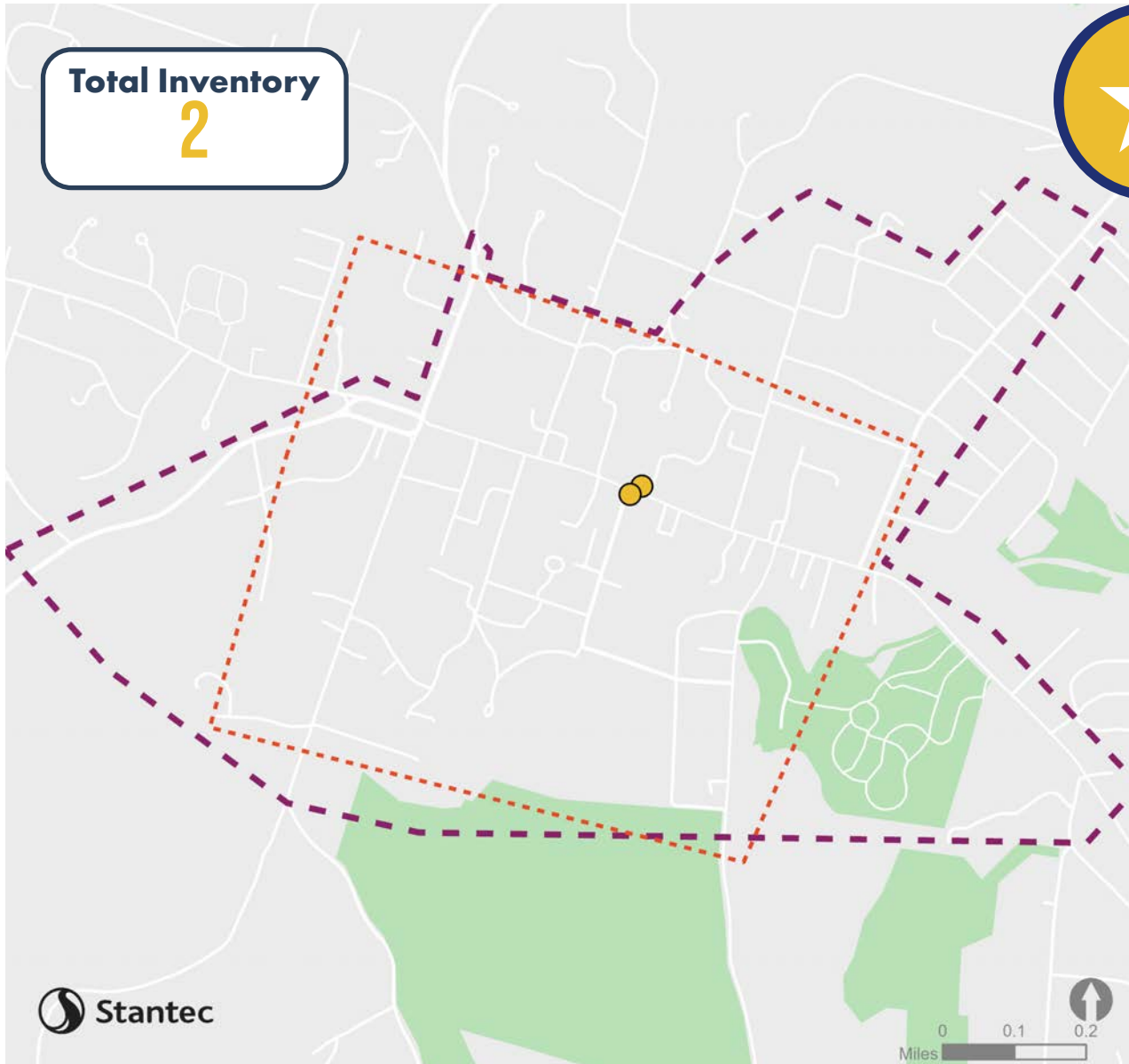
## Williamstown Example



### Observations

- Although this sign is visible at its location near the center of downtown, it doesn't provide a sense of arrival for drivers at the perceived boundaries of the downtown area along primary road
- The sign is performing multiple functions primarily as a directional sign, so is lacking distinction as a gateway sign
- There are no other wayfinding signs with this same sign shape or color scheme



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# Existing Signs-
## Directional

## Williamstown Example



## Observations

- There is only one sign directing vehicles to the downtown shops and restaurants (above) and is small in scale

- Directional signs are primarily owned by private institutions (such as The Clark and Williams College)

- There is a significant lack of pedestrian-level directional signage throughout downtown

- All directional signage in downtown is functional only, with no recognizable Town brand

**Total Inventory**

**24**

## Williamstown Example



## Observations

- Many of the identification signs in downtown are College-owned

- Privately-owned destinations utilize their own identity/branding on signage, with no clear indication of being associated with a defined downtown identity

- There is a range of materials and varying level of design detail and quality of signage

- Several signs in the downtown are poorly maintained and/or concealed by vegetation overgrowth

**Total Inventory**

**5**



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0   0.1   0.2
Miles

## Williamstown Example



## Observations

- There is limited informational signage to guide pedestrians, particularly at public parking lots

- Most information signs do not feature a lighting element to ensure visibility at night

- There are recently installed information signs in Williamstown, but the locations are not optimal for the greatest pedestrian reach

- Informational signage should be at eye level

# Summary of Wayfinding System

## Challenges Today

Lack of distinct identity associated with signage (differing colors, symbols, etc.)





This cultural district sign is obscured by foliage

Lack of signage, broadly (there is only one general directional wayfinding sign in downtown)



Lack of clarity for signage of common public amenities, like public parking and public restrooms



No cohesive signage or level of information detail and sign maintenance for historical sites

•

# 4

## Design Options

Design Components
Other Design Considerations

# Design Components

## Color

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.

Discussions with the Williamstown Wayfinding Advisory Committee revealed general openness to using color to differentiate between types of destinations, such as 'Municipal Services', 'Cultural Attraction', and 'Shopping/Dining.'
With this in mind, and other 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.
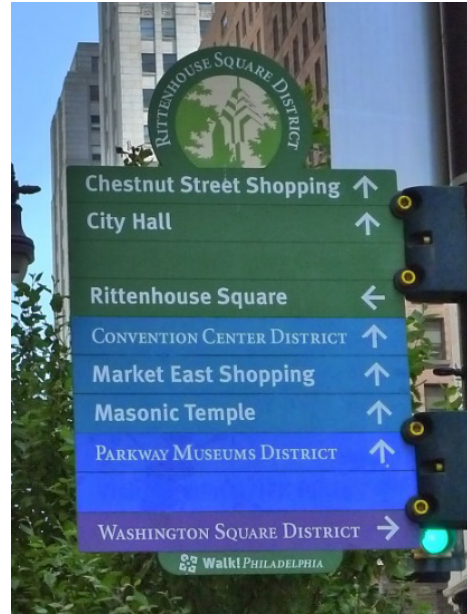








### BEST PRACTICE-
#### Principles of Wayfinding Signage

**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- Destination Williamstown Colors

**Inspiration:** Colors found in the current and recognizable branding of Destination Williamstown to reinforce and build upon the Town's primary resource for visitor information

Dominant Sign Color

Secondary Colors
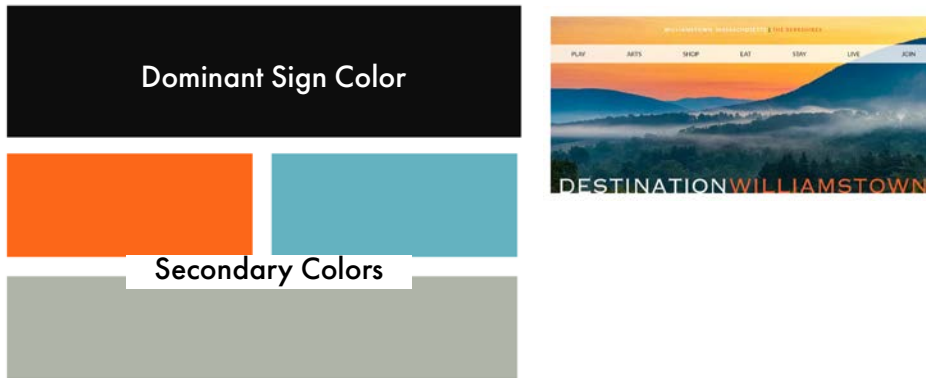


## Option 2- Natural Features

**Inspiration:** Water, greenery, and the sky from the natural surrounding environment as well as compatibility with existing recognizable branding in Williamstown

Dominant Sign Color

Secondary Colors



## Option 3- Historic Reference

**Inspiration:** Colors similar to those found in the Williamstown Historic Colonial Plan and geologic bedrock maps to represent the literal physical foundations and history of the Town

Dominant Sign Color

Secondary Colors



## Option 4- Cultural Reference

**Inspiration:** Colors from and compatible with the Mohican symbol, with recognition of the important role of the Native American community in the Town's history and culture

Dominant Sign Color

Secondary Colors

## Motif

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 (rough) design concepts of motifs were developed for this wayfinding plan which the Town may wish to further refine through future efforts. The concepts were informed by various sources regarding the character of Downtown Williamstown. The four key concepts which were shared with the Advisory Committee are identified on the opposite page. A monochrome and multi-colored version are included for context as to how a motif might be used for different formats.



### 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

## Option 1.

**Inspiration:** Distinct presence of local mountain ranges. Also depicts an open book with its pages revealing distinct histories and ideals that have built the foundation of Williamstown. The book also symbolizes higher learning as the core of the Town's identity.



## Option 2.

**Inspiration:** Inspired by the Mohican symbology for campfires, Williamstown is similarly a host of many congregational "campfires" where people share stores and develop ideas. Also symbolizes a chain link and diverse people/paths intersecting.



## Option 3.

**Inspiration:** The diversity of architectural styles and uses of Williamstown's built landscape together creating a unique and distinct downtown. Also symbolizes springs running beneath the town.



## Option 4.

**Inspiration:** Overlapping of three W's to represent the past, present, and future of Williamstown. Bottom of shape also alludes to springs running beneath the town.

## 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 generally suggests 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 Williamstown 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 the Adcisory Committee 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)



Serif font
(not generally recommended)

Sans-serif font

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

**Option 1-** Century Schoolbook

DOWNTOWN WILLIAMSTOWN
Parking straight ahead

**Option 2-** Mangal Pro

Downtown Williamstown
Parking straight ahead

**Option 3-** Aptos Pro

DOWNTOWN WILLIAMSTOWN
Parking straight ahead

**Option 4-** Oswald

Downtown Williamstown
Parking straight ahead

**Option 5-** Proxima Nova Medium

Downtown Williamstown
Parking straight ahead

**Option 6-** Gill Sans MT

Downtown Williamstown
Parking straight ahead

## 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.
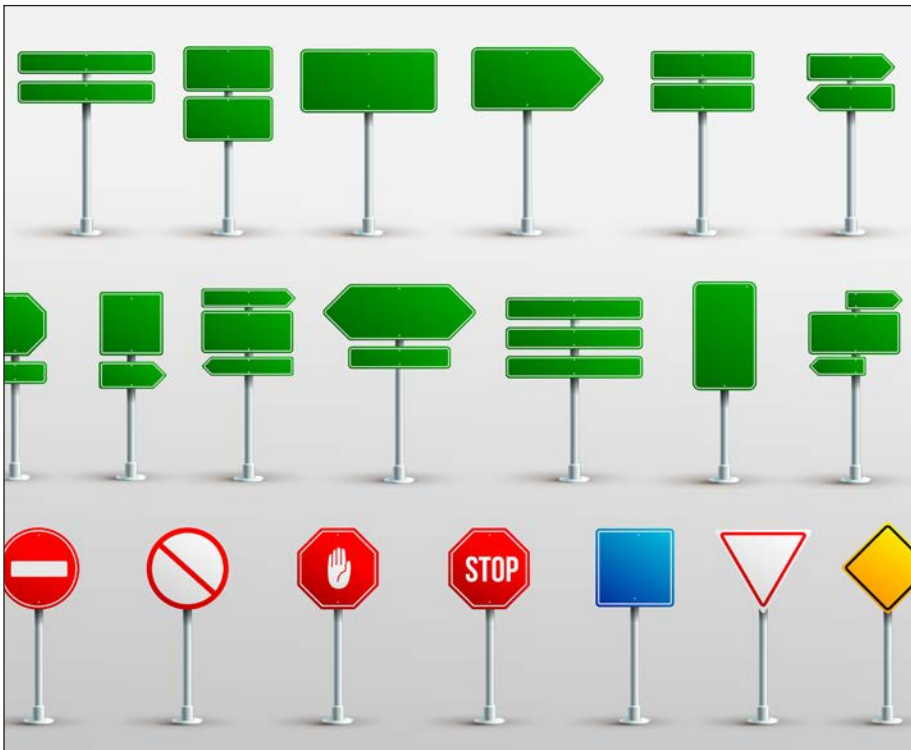
## Size

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.

Some of the standard MassDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) road sign sizes are shown below for reference of general practice.
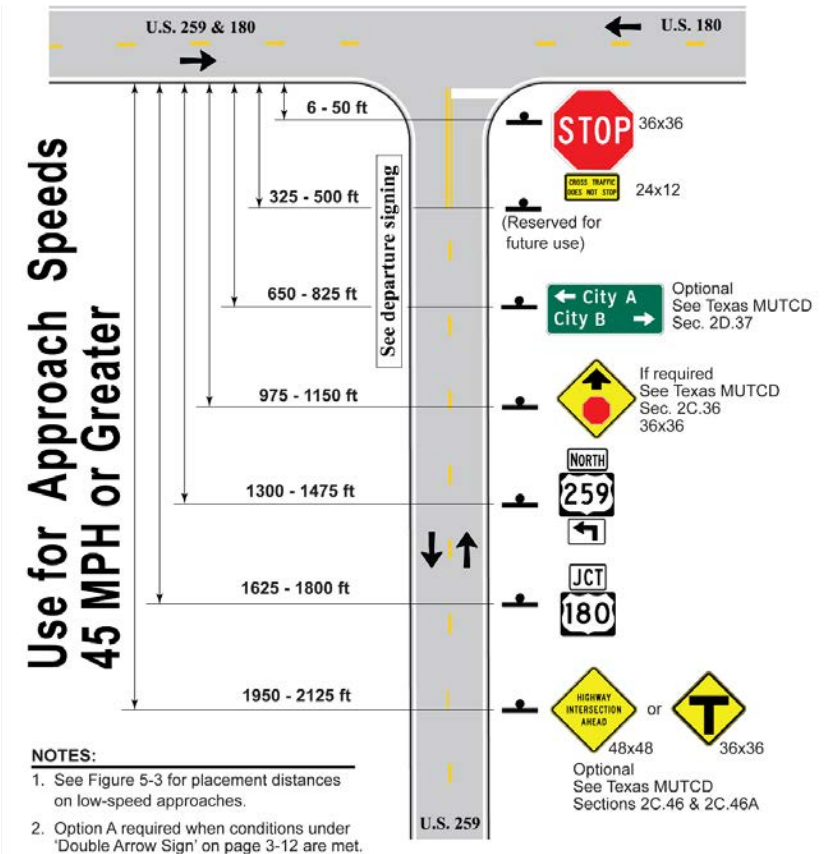
Figure 5-2. Convention for Sign Placement Distances on High-Speed Approach

# Other Design Considerations

## Town Code

When identifying where a 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. All of these parameters influence the amount of signage present in Williamstown, the level of "sign clutter," and general guidelines pertaining to their design.

B. Economic growth appropriate to Williamstown's character is actively sought, not as an end to itself, but as a means of broadening the diversity of opportunity in Williamstown, in turn supporting a rich and diverse community life and population. There is room enough for all the development which realistically the Town can expect to experience without the defacing of its special assets and places, including both natural and manufactured features, rural vistas and historic monuments.

C. The basic form of Williamstown is that of a classic New England town, with a strong central village sharply contrasting with and benefiting from the openness of the surrounding lands. The present arrangement works well for almost everyone. It provides wonderful living possibilities within easy walk of both central services and open lands. It organizes development in an easily serviced way. It creates a visually rich and satisfying community character.

D. There is little doubt Williamstown residents intend the policies of the Sign Commission to enhance these qualities. Such conflicts within the community as the Sign Commission may encounter should be reconciled with this public vision in mind. It is instructed to use incentives and rewards wherever possible, as a way of implementing sign policy. However, the following guidelines are intended to be as clear and unambiguous as possible:

(1) The primary function of on-premise signs is to index the environment to tell people where they can find what. Selling is a subordinate purpose.

(2) Signs should be expressive of the individual proprietors identity.

(3) Signs should be appropriate to the type of activity to which they pertain.

(4) Signs should be compatible with the visual character of the area surrounding them. Carved signs are compatible in all areas, and this chapter encourages their use.

(5) Signs should be legible in the circumstances in which they are seen.

(4) Directional signs. Directional signs are subject to Sign Commission approval, in accordance with this Article VI. Directional signs shall not be larger than 36 inches long and 18 inches wide. A directional arrow may be permitted as part of the sign and within its perimeter. The lettering shall be limited to the name of the premises to which the public is being directed.

*Excerpt from Williamstown's Code (last amended July 2023)*

# 5 Community Engagement

Wayfinding Committee
Targeted Survey

# Targeted Survey

## Balancing Best Practices and Preferences

Discussions with stakeholders were important for identifying preferences towards early design concepts. With the understanding that the Town may wish to install interim signage until a longer-term approach is pursued, the Project Team determined they would solicit further feedback from the public (flyer for the survey shown to the right). The results from this survey will be used to inform the direction of a future, more comprehensive public engagement process regarding the brand/identiy of Downtown Williamstown and the design of long-term signage.

The survey was designed to better understand the types of destinations of visitors to Williamstown and to gather general feedback about early design components of potential sign design options that were narrowed down by the Wayfinding Advisory Committee and project team.

### Recurring Themes from Survey Comments

**Existing Signage**

- Signs are neither consistent nor cohesive
- Gateway signage is confusing and conflicts with institutional signage
- Informational signs are located in areas that are not highly frequented
- Signage is not accessible to people with visual impairments

**Future Signage**

- Improve legibility and visibility for all signs
- Simple designs are generally preferred
- Show a distinction between Town and College signage
- Add more directional signage to institutions and landmarks
- Move away from purple/gold colors



**102 participants**

**Whatcha lookin' for, Williamstown?**

**We want to hear what you think about wayfinding signage and the places you visit in Downtown Williamstown!**

The Town is currently developing a wayfinding study in downtown Williamstown to:

- Establish an inventory of existing signage
- Ensure signs serve various types of users
- Identify where new signs should go to better direct visitors to destinations
- Create a sense of arrival with sign styles that reflect the Town's character
- Design a sign and Town brand that reflects community pride

Tell us about your experience when visiting Williamstown, 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 in the future!

**WHEN?** From May 21st, 2024

**HOW?** Scan the QR code or visit this website- https://tinyurl.com/WilliamstownWayfinding

**QUESTIONS?**

Susan Briggs
Executive Director, Williamstown Chamber of Commerce
info@williamstownchamber.com

Andrew Groff
Director, Williamstown Community Development
agroff@williamstownma.gov

## Survey Data Summary

### Other Ideas Shared

- Less is more for signage

- Direct people to non-centralized locations such as Cole Street and parks

- Focus on pedestrian and bicycle signage, not just vehicle signs

- Direct people to public parking lots

- Signage should be ADA compliant and easy to read

- Signs should reflect Williamstown's history and diversity

- Signs should be bold and classic

*Do you think the existing signage is reflective of the Town's character?*

21% YES
29% NO
50% SOMEWHAT

*These are the top 5 types of destination that customers/visitors identified as typically visiting when they are in Downtown Williamstown.*

- Dining/Restaurants
- Shops
- Services
- Cultural
- Place of Work

*Generally, how would you rank the design of existing signage in downtown for each of the 4 sign type categories?*

Effective — Not effective

- Gateway
- Directional
- Identification
- Information

Neutral

*Rank the following words in order of how important you feel they should be in informing potential sign designs:*

- Natural Landscape
- Arts & Culture
- Architecture
- All three
- Other

# Wayfinding Advisory Committee

## Balancing Needs, Best Practice, and Preferences

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

The Wayfinding Advisory Committee was comprised of individuals representing:

- Chamber of Commerce
- The Clark
- DestinationWilliamstown.org
- Provisions
- Public Library
- Select Board
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians
- Town of Williamstown
- Williamstown Department of Public Works
- Williamstown Police Department
- Williamstown Theatre Festival
- Williamstown Rural Lands
- Williams College
- Williams College Museum of Art

Two meetings were held with the Committee during the project process:
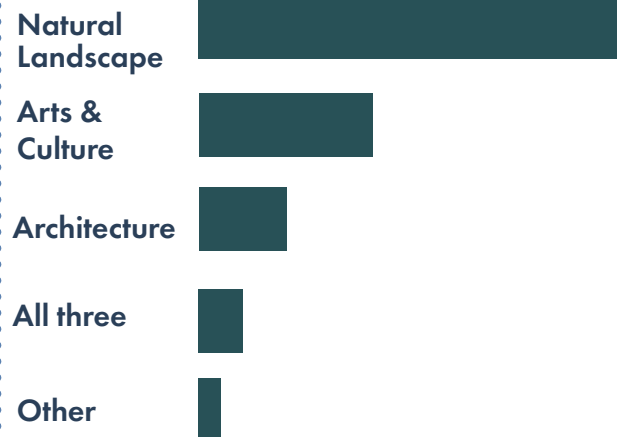
**MEETING #1- April 30, 2024 (IN-PERSON)**

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the approach for analyzing branding and wayfinding needs, identify priorities for which destinations should be included on signage, and develop preliminary suggestions for updated Town branding graphic components

### Key Comments Shared

- The branding should be cohesive
- It is important to visually differentiate between the College and the Town branding (with colors and fonts)
- Identifying sub-districts of downtown could potentially be useful (such as Downtown Core, Mill Business District, Hoosic River District)
- Town motif today doesn't best reflect Williamstown (e.g., pointed mountains are inaccurate for actual landscape, purple is not preferred)
- The word 'hoosic' has origins with reference to a rounded pot, which also informs the name of the Hoosac Mountains, which are rounded
- Digital signs are not desired for pedestrian information kiosks/signs
- The team should consider the the desire for updated recreational signs through DPW and opportunities to have downtown wayfinding signs direct to these areas based on their eventual branding
- Flexibility to address seasonal destinations on signs may not be necessary due to institution's own signs (e.g., Theater Festival)

**MEETING #2- July 22, 2024 (VIRTUAL)**

The purpose of this meeting was to review the public survey results, review the existing wayfinding signage inventory, review and vote on preferences of branding design components (color palette, motif, and font), and identify a preferred design style for a downtown destination map. The options shared were generally well-received, with various comments and preferences regarding specific elements of the motif options. While consensus was generally achieved for Motif Option #1, the Committee requested to see it in a few slightly adjusted color options. The options were shared by email following the meeting, and comments received revealed a general preference for Color Option #3.

**Key Comments Shared**

- Confirm that the color variations can be recognized by people with visual impairments (i.e., colorblindness)

- Associations with different colors should be considered (e.g., orange potentially being associated with trespassing, aggression)

- The motifs should avoid similarities with other nearby brands (e.g., GFCU, the Chamber)

- Fonts should also avoid similarities with other nearby brands (e.g., Clark, the college, WMFA, etc.)

- A map option that integrates natural landscape in a visual way is desirable

- Although the downtown boundary is defined, the map should include the Clark and direct to other destinations to the north and south

- Labels of "Recreational use paths and trails" should also refer to the Mohican Path

**QUESTION 1:** *Which one do you prefer?*
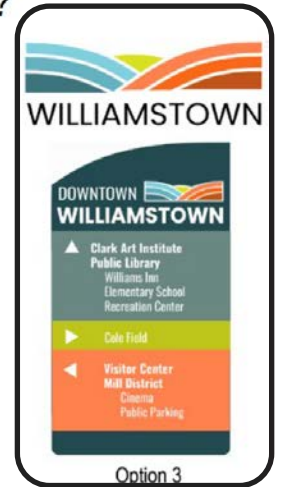


Option 1    Option 2    Option 3

Although there was general preference for identifying sub-districts through signage, a definitive approach for naming them wasn't finalized. Some of the ideas proposed for district names included:

- "Cole Avenue District" or "Mill District"
- "Williamstown Plaza" or "Five Corners"
- "Old Mill Area"
- "Historic Mill Neighborhood"
- "Cole Avenue Neighborhood"

# 6 Recommended Wayfinding System

Process for Identifying New Sign Locations
Recommended Signs by Typology
Further Considerations

# Process for Identifying New Sign Locations

## 1. Identify necessary navigation points specific to priority destinations

### DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Following several discussions, the Project Team and Wayfinding Committee identified the locations that should be included on the new directional signage based on a general hierarchy.

### SIGNIFICANT (Primary)
- Clark Art Institute
- Williams College Admissions
- Milne Public Library
- Williamstown Visitor's Center
- Mill District

### NOTABLE (Secondary)
- Sand Springs Pool/Recreation Center
- Williamstown Elementary School
- Williams Inn
- Images Cinema
- Cole Field

### SUPPORTIVE (Tertiary)
- Taconic Golf Course
- Westin Field
- 62 Center for Theater and Dance
- Oakley Center



Destination
- Primary
- Seasonal
- Secondary
- Tertiary
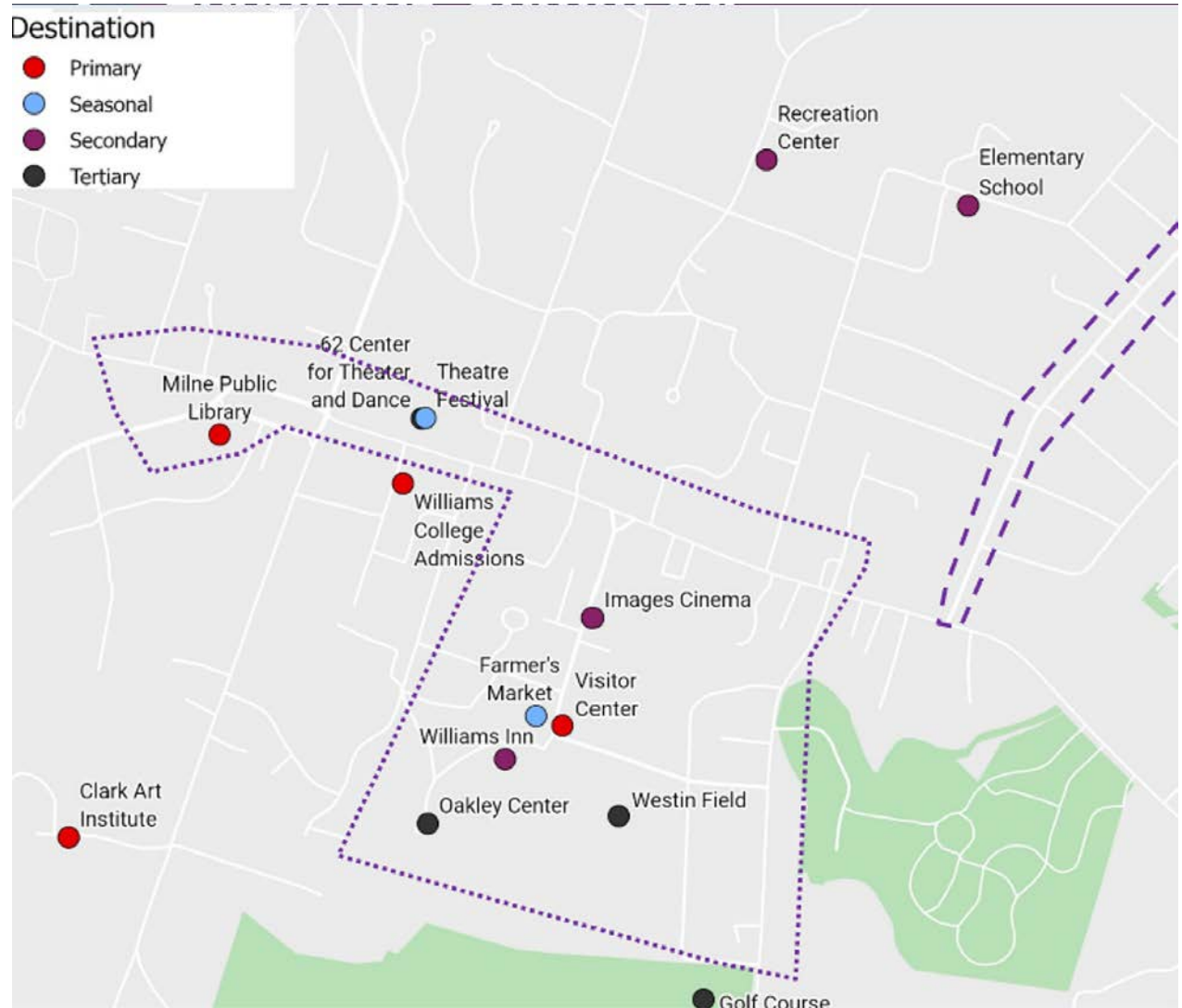
## 2a. Identify optimal navigation locations throughout the Downtown for vehicles

When a motorist is arriving into Downtown Williamstown from various directions, there are key navigation points where signage is generally recommended for capturing their attention. Primary destination navigation points are those areas (typically intersections) where a driver could potentially be diverted in a different direction than they intended. These also typically occur along larger arterials, as opposed to local-only roads. The red arrows indicate which direction a driver is most likely in need of direction or directional reinforcement through signage to reach key destinations in Williamstown.

## 2a. 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 very general visualization of how a motorist could better benefit from increased wayfinding signage when arriving into Downtown Williamstown from an example journey between **Point A (Route 2)** and **Point B (Water Street and Waterman Pl intersection)**. The map on the bottom of the page demonstrates that signage should occur at a regular frequency that reinforces a driver as they arrive closer to their destination.
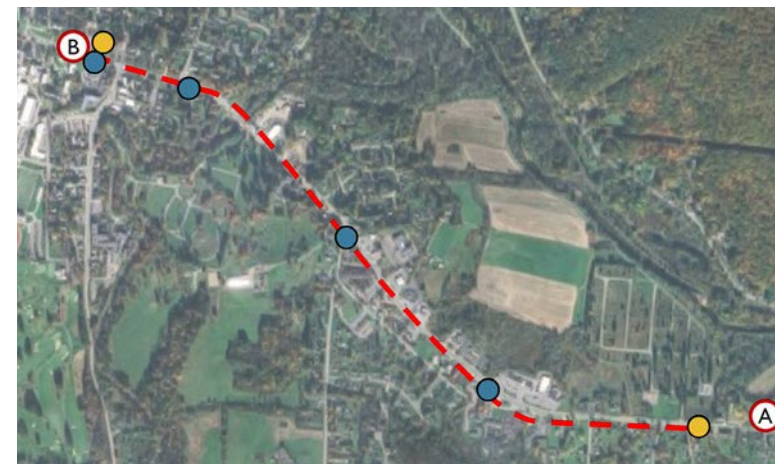
## 2b. Identify optimal navigation locations throughout the Downtown for pedestrians

Williamstown is a very walkable community and this exercise was also essential to identify where pedestrians are typically navigating from once they arrive downtown. Most visitors "become" pedestrians after arriving in Williamstown via a different mode. The map identifies the key navigation arrows in yellow where a pedestrian is likely to rely on signage for direction to key, walkable destinations in Williamstown. This information adds an extra layer of understanding of the time it might take to travel between potential destinations, since travel time is particularly useful to include on pedestrian-scale signage.
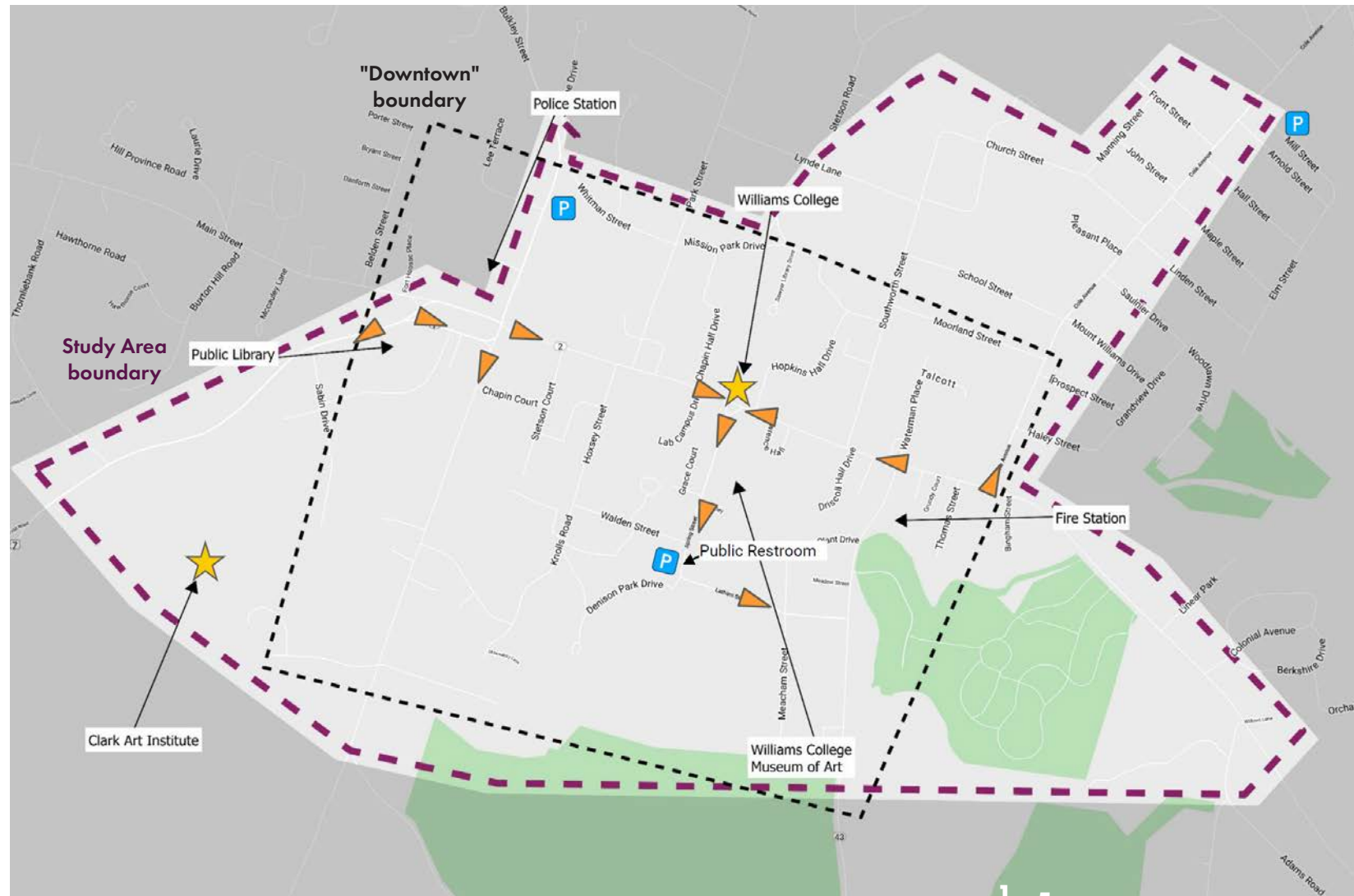
# Recommended Signs by Typology

All signs in this section have been assigned an identification number for easy reference. They are also designed to indicate the facing direction, where relevant (i.e., the dots indicates the back of the sign)

## Proposed Signs- **Gateway**

**Total Inventory**
**3**



Based on various factors, including an understanding of where sppecific destinations need to be reinforced, and addressing areas where the highest volume of visitors are entering the Downtown area, this map recommends the locations of three Gateway signs. Signs G1 and G3 are intended to help define the outer boundaries of the downtown area and create a sense of transition or arrival. Sign G2 is intended to reinforce the other two signs and indicate "the core" of downtown, similar to the existing gateway signs, today.

All of these signs are recommended to be the largest in size of all sign typologies and to be designed through a future process.

**Total Inventory**

**19** Vehicle
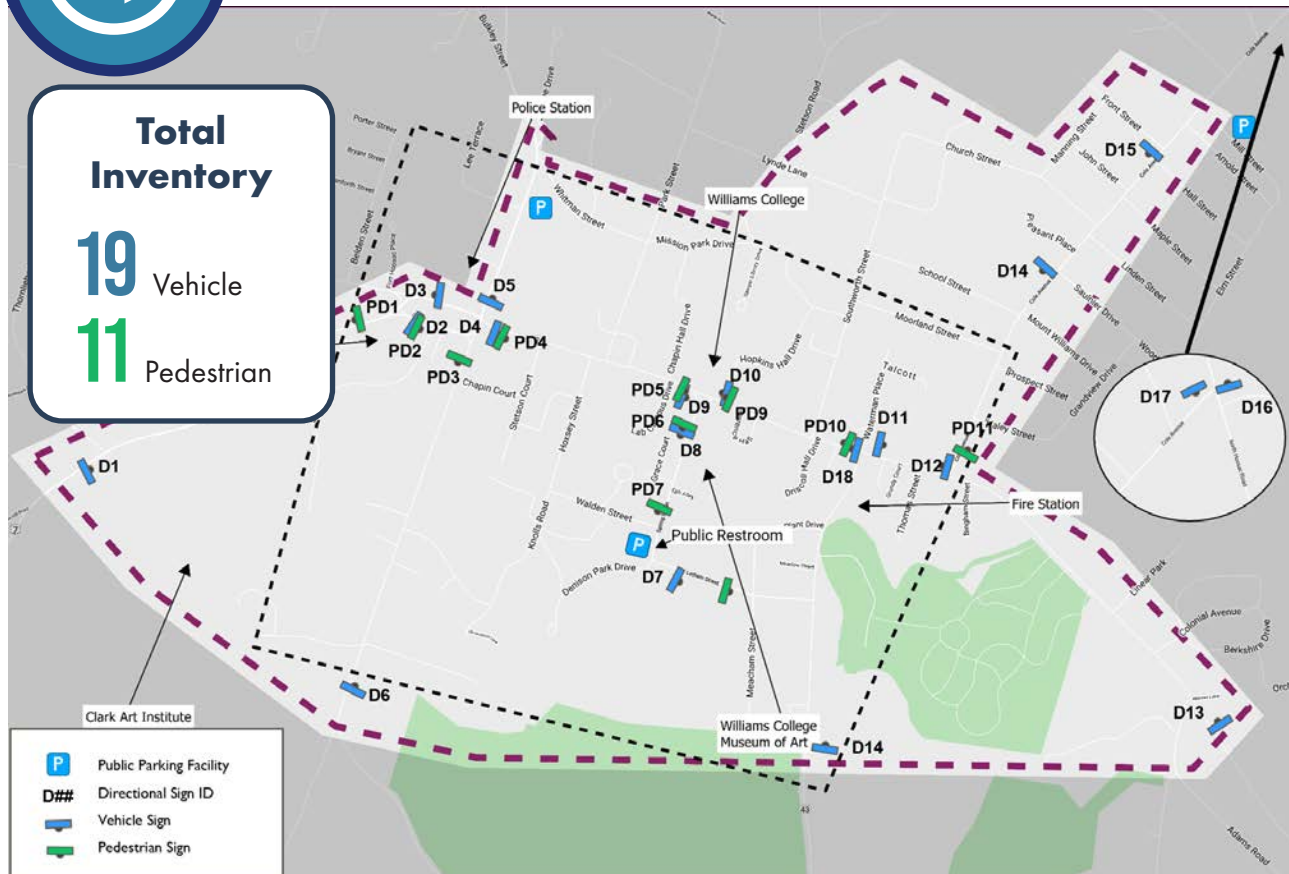
**11** Pedestrian

## Downtown Area

As demonstrated earlier, directional signage should be targeted to aid both drivers and pedestrians in finding key destinations, easily. These recommended sign locations take into account the natural routes towards destinations and opportunities for reinforcement to improve awareness of destinations for less familiar visitors, in particular.

Although vehicle and pedestrian directional signs may occur at similar locations to each other in a few instances, the size of the signs are of different scales to best accommodate their different sightlines.

## Beyond Downtown

Although this study is focused on the immediate downtown area, a need for directional signs to downtown from farther away was also identified during the planning process. These locations are necessary for drawing in visitors from regional roadways. Additional signage locations beyond the downtown could be investigated further by the Town.

# Proposed Signs- **Identification**

**Total Inventory**
**6**
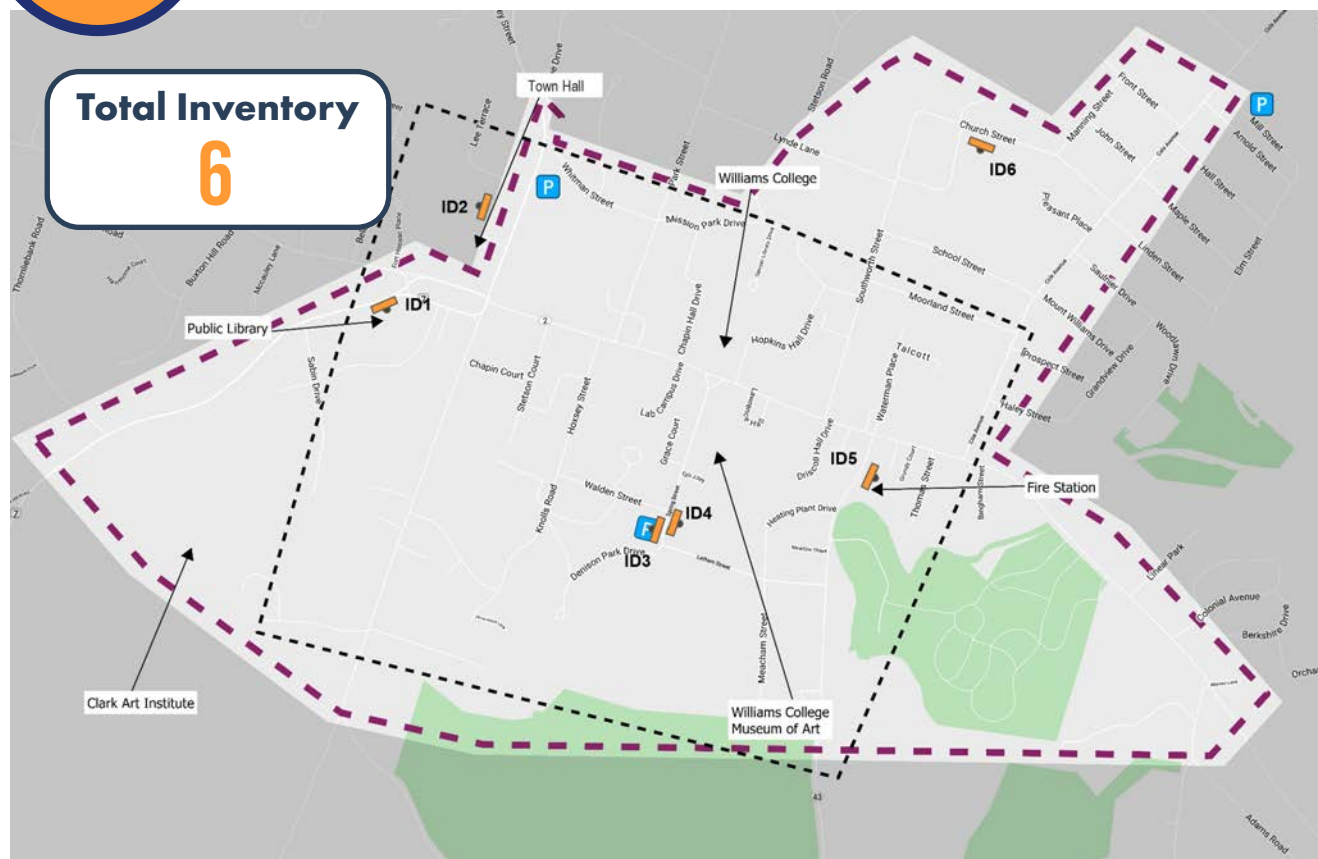


This plan recommends that municipal facilities and public parking lots include a branded and recognizable identification sign. The signs should clearly indicate the name of the destination; parking lots in particular should be named using a consistent system (e.g., parking lots named using the nearest street or landmark, or Municipal Parking Lot #1). Identification signs should also ideally host information relevant to the services, operational hours, or other essential information about the destination. The signs should be placed in a highly visible place in front of the location or near the vehicle entrance.

# Proposed Signs- **Information**

**Total Inventory**
## 6
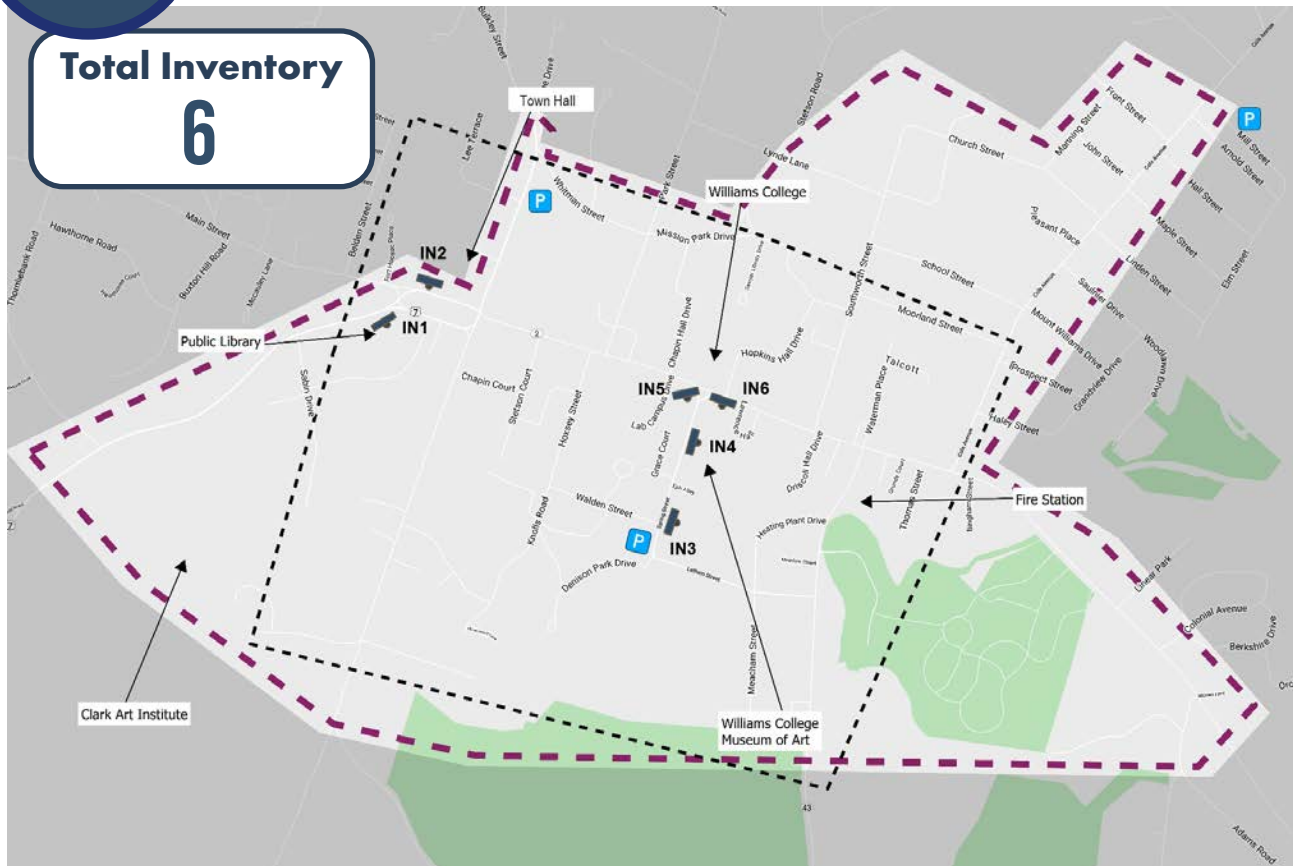


Based on the understanding that pedestrians (including those who use wheelchairs and other assisted mobility devices) are the target user for information signage, these destinations have been selected based on their proximity to key pedestrian navigation points as seen in earlier maps. They have been placed at a frequency to allow for more interaction between visitors and the downtown, whether a person walks from one end of downtown to another, or just the distance of one block. As shown in earlier best practice examples, the purpose of these signs is best achieved through a kiosk approach. As there are many kiosk manufactures with many variables about how they can be designed (including multiple-sided designs), this map shows the primary recommended position/facing of the signs.

## Preferred Design Suite

This design incorporates the preferred design options for color palette, motif, and font, and illustrates an example of simple designs for different signage typologies. While future further refinement of the signs will have impact on the actual final sign designs, this illustration demonstrates generally how a cohesive wayfinding system with different typologies and sizes would function to create a recognizable Town sign identity.



**D1-P**
Directional Sign
(Pedestrian Level)
Example Size-
18"x24"

**IN-1**
Information Sign
Example Size-
32"x84" Depends on
manufacturer and style
pursued.

**D1-V**
Directional Sign
(Vehicle Level)
Example Size-
36"x60"

**ID-1**
Identification Sign
Example Size-
54"x48"

# 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 Williamstown to support the short-term implementation of wayfinding signage and to reinforce the effectiveness of a future, longer-term approach:

- **Secure consensus** through further public engagement to progress towards refined signage designs

- Finalize the language and details for new each sign as shown in the sample inventory matrix on p.59

- **Contact sign fabricators** to discuss opportunities for customization and flexibility of sign designs (i.e., whether a non-standard shape is the preferred approach considering cost and fabrication effort)

- Identify **potential funding sources** (taking into consideration the need to fund potential phases)

- Formalize a list and map of final **defined sign locations**

- For consistency, collaborate and **re-use the information from this study** when efforts for defining and designing Town signs for recreational destinations is pursued

- 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**
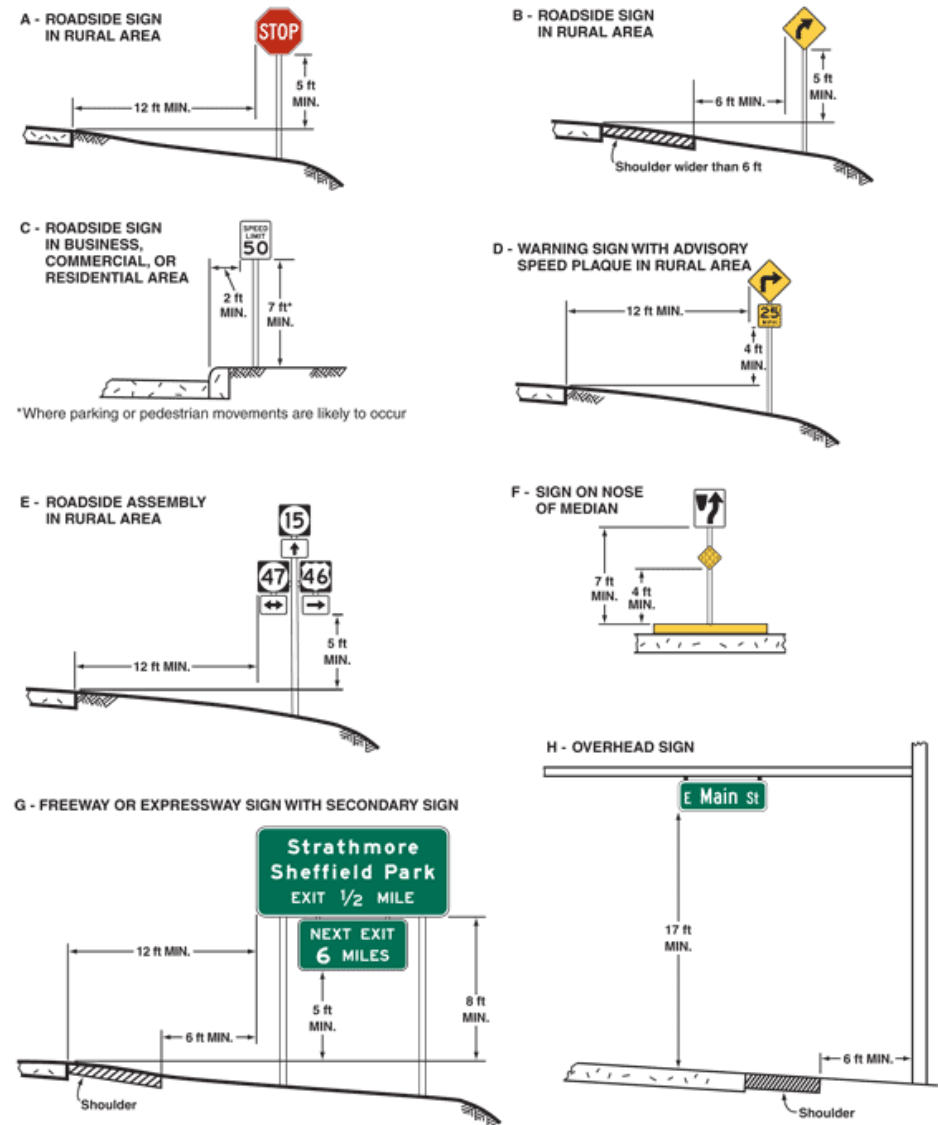
# Developing a Wayfinding Signage Inventory

A wayfinding signage inventory will be an essential next step for Williamstown. In accompaniment to the recommended wayfinding maps with Sign ID numbers, this list will outline the specific sign locations, their positioning, destination language to be included on each sign with relevant arrow directions, and other details useful to streamlining the installation process. The size of each sign should also be included, once defined. This matrix will also be shared with fabricators to help the fabrication process. A sample from an Inventory Matrix developed for the City of Attleboro has been included below for reference. Through developing this list, the Town may identify which signs are the highest priority to help inform the implementation process if the signs cannot be created or installed all at one time. This is a valuable tool/template for the Town to further expand upon as the next phase of establishing a long-term wayfinding signage program is pursued.

**ATTLEBORO WAYFINDING SIGNAGE INVENTORY MATRIX (SAMPLE)**

**DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE - VEHICLES**

| Loc ID | Road(s) / Intersection | Positioning / Traveler Direction | Typology (Which user/ design?) | Existing Sign to Remove/Replace? | Size | Language (Bold indicates primary destination) | Arrow Direction(s) | Installation Method | Priority? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D15 | Park Street @ Union St | Eastbound on Park Street, on the existing light post adjacent to 63 Park Street | D1 | No | 36x54 | **Sturdy Memorial Hospital** | ↑ | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | **Town Hall/Government Center** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Arts Museum | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Area Industrial Museum | → | | |
| | | | | | | National Shrine of our Lady of La Salette | ↑ | | |
| D9 | Pleasant Street @ Holman St | South/Southwest-bound on Pleasant Street, on the existing light post directly opposite Holman Street | D1 | No | 36x54 | **Town Hall/Government Center** | ↑ | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Area Industrial Museum | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | **Attleboro Main Street** | → | | |
| | | | | | | **Intermodal Transportation Center** | → | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro District Court | → | | |
| | | | | | | Sanford Parking Garage | → | | |
| D7 | Park St @ North Main Street | Westbound on Park Street, on the existing light post directly adjacent to 2 Park Street | D1 | No | 36x54 | **Intermodal Transportation Center** | ← | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | Attleboro District Court | → | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Public Library | → | | |
| | | | | | | Sanford Parking Garage | → | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Senior Center | ↖ | | |
| | | | | | | Public Parks | ↖ | | |
| | | | | | | Capron Park Zoo | ↖ | | |
| D8 | Park St @ Bank St | Westbound on Park Street, on the existing light post directly adjacent to 40 Park Street | D1 | Yes | 36x54 | Attleboro Norton YMCA Downtown Branch | → | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | Sanford Parking Garage | → | | |
| | | | | | | **Intermodal Transportation Center** | ← | | |
| | | | | | | Public Parks | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Capron Park Zoo | ↑ | | |
| D11 | North Main St @ County St | Eastbound on N Main Street, on the existing light post directly east of the North Main Bronson Building parking lot | D1 | No | 36x54 | **Sturdy Memorial Hospital** | ↑ | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | **Town Hall/Government Center** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | National Shrine of our Lady of La Salette | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Museums | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Senior Center | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | **Intermodal Transportation Center** | → | | |
| | | | | | | Public Parks | → | | |
| D12 | South Main St @ County St | Northbound on S Main Street, on the existing light post at the apex of the South Main St and County St | D1 | No | 36x54 | **Sturdy Memorial Hospital** | ↗ | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | Town Hall/Government Center | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | National Shrine of our Lady of La Salette | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | Museums | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | Public Parking | ↗ | | |
| D13 | South Main St @ Park St | Northbound on S Main Street, on the existing light post at 16 S Main St | D1 | No | 36x54 | Attleboro District Court | ↖ | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Public Library | ↖ | | |
| | | | | | | Attleboro Norton YMCA Downtown Branch | ↖ | | |
| | | | | | | Sanford Parking Garage | ↖ | | |
| | | | | | | **Town Hall/Government Center** | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | National Shrine of our Lady of La Salette | ↗ | | |
| | | | | | | Museums | ↗ | | |
| D14 | Park St @ Railroad Ave | Eastbound on Park Street, on the existing light post adjacent to 27 Park Place Building | D1 | Yes | 36x54 | Attleboro Norton YMCA Downtown Branch | ← | Stainless steel band | Y |
| | | | | | | Sanford Parking Garage | ← | | |
| | | | | | | **Attleboro Intermodal Center** | → | | |
| | | | | | | **Sturdy Memorial Hospital** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | **Attleboro Town Hall/Government Center** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | **RMV** | ↑ | | |
| | | | | | | Museums | ↑ | | |

# Installing Wayfinding Signage

Once wayfinding signs have eventually been fabricated, the Department of Public Works will likely be responsible with leading or executing their installation. Representatives from DPW should meet with the Town to review the recommended sign location maps and conduct on-site assessments to identify any potential challenges with the proposed locations before they are finalized. There may be opportunities to re-use existing utility poles, vehicle signtlines will need to be double-checked, particularly with consideration of foliage growth, and other factors may arise that may impact the ease of approach of installation. Examples of height considerations relating to standard street signs is shown to the right for other general reference.



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

A - ROADSIDE SIGN IN RURAL AREA

B - ROADSIDE SIGN IN RURAL AREA
Shoulder wider than 6 ft

C - ROADSIDE SIGN IN BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, OR RESIDENTIAL AREA
*Where parking or pedestrian movements are likely to occur

D - WARNING SIGN WITH ADVISORY SPEED PLAQUE IN RURAL AREA

E - ROADSIDE ASSEMBLY IN RURAL AREA

F - SIGN ON NOSE OF MEDIAN

G - FREEWAY OR EXPRESSWAY SIGN WITH SECONDARY SIGN
Strathmore Sheffield Park EXIT ½ MILE
NEXT EXIT 6 MILES

H - OVERHEAD SIGN
E Main St

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.
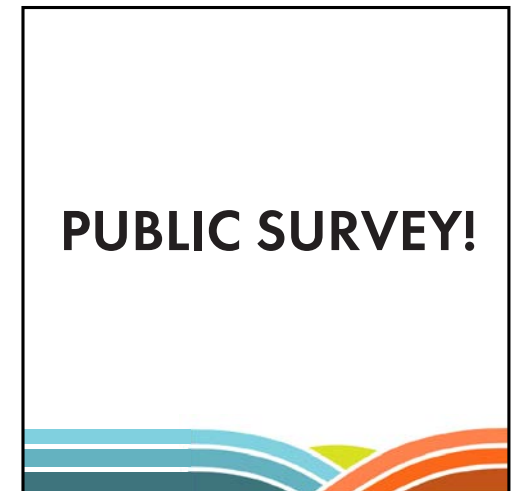
# Key Branding System Components

## Sample Social Media and Website Templates

One of the key goals of this study was to incorporate a new downtown brand not just for wayfinding signage, but other relevant platforms. Using the preferred design components identified through this study process, the examples below show at a basic level how the colors, logo, and fonts may be used in different ways to reinforce the brand through social media usage.
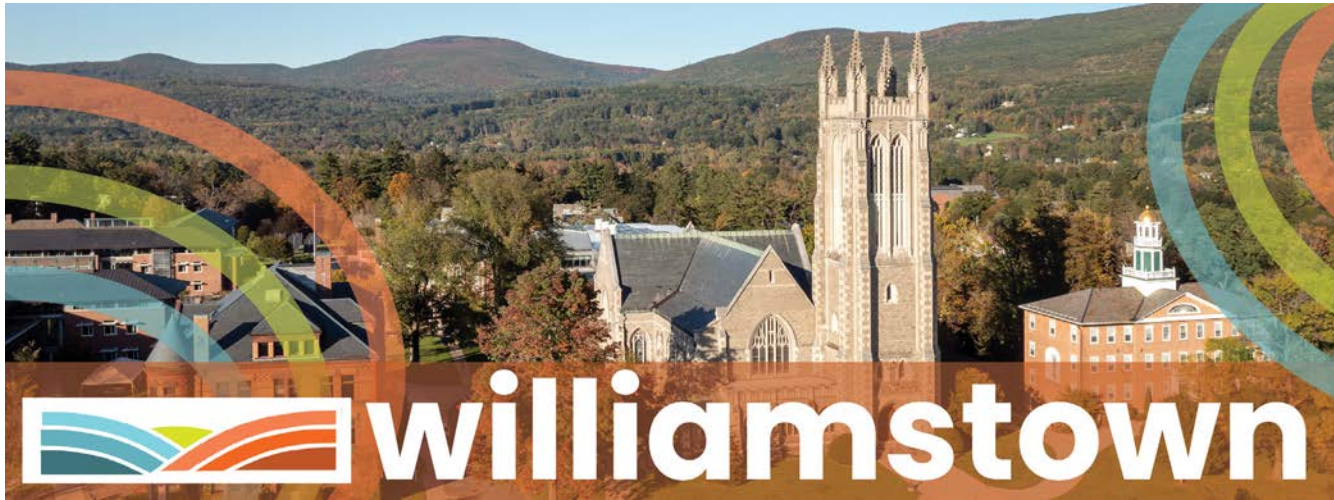


Example brand usage for Facebook profile cover image (left) or profile photo (right)
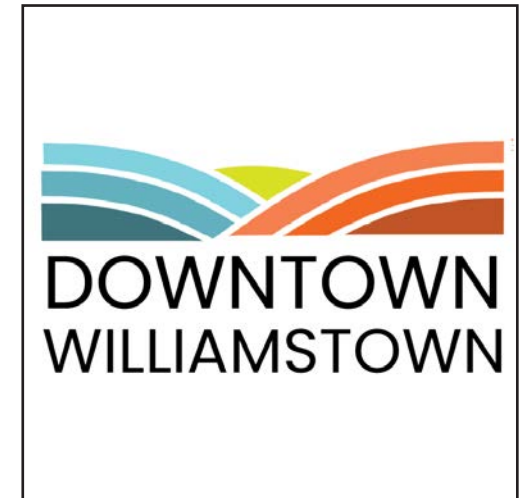


Example of brand usage for Instagram post image

## Downtown Map

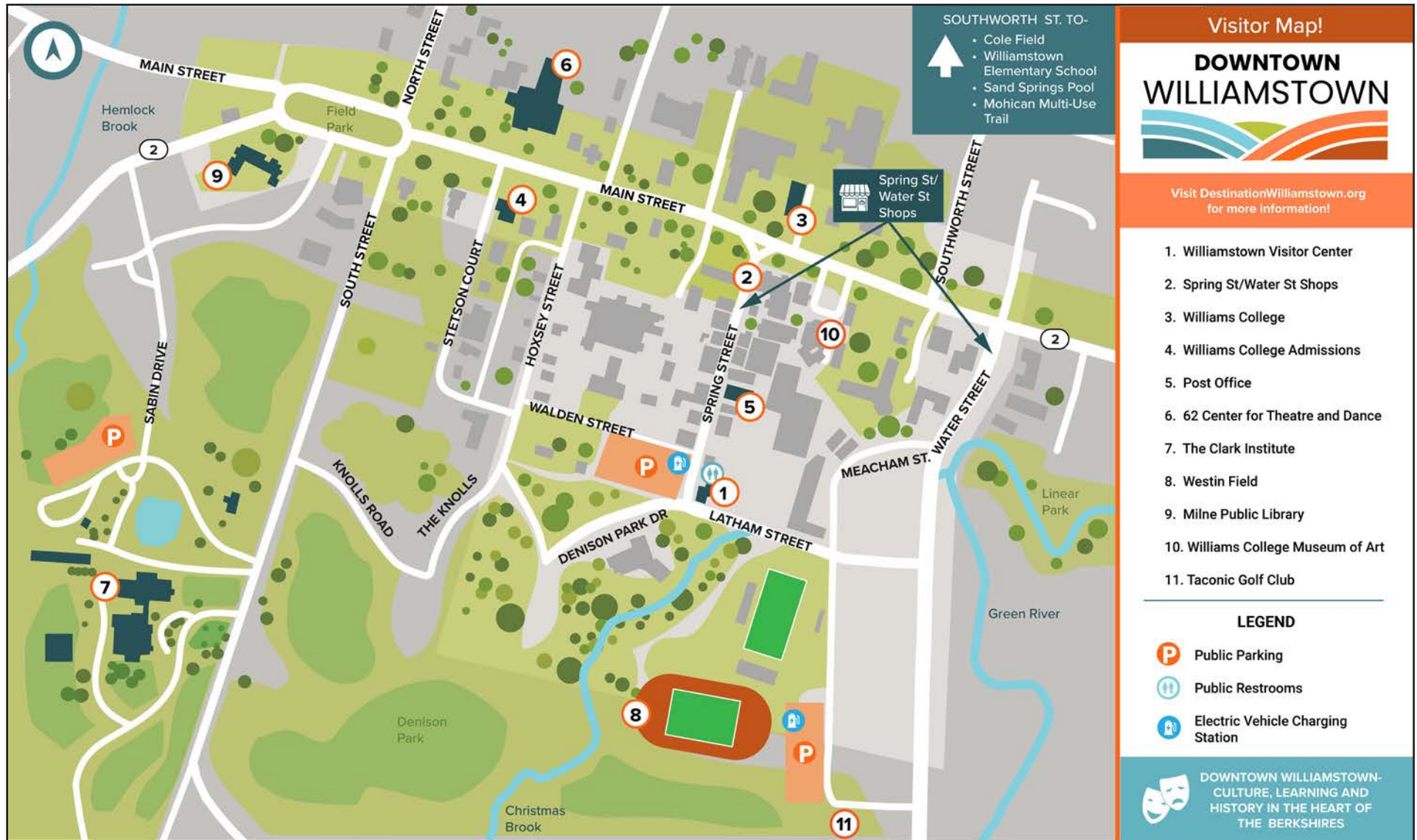Using the preferred brand components, a downtown map was designed as a critical companion piece to the Town's wayfinding system. With a distinct identity matching the sign designs, this map can be used as an easy first step in introducing the new brand to visitors while signs are being finalized.



SOUTHWORTH ST. TO-
- Cole Field
- Williamstown Elementary School
- Sand Springs Pool
- Mohican Multi-Use Trail

Spring St/ Water St Shops

**Visitor Map!**

**DOWNTOWN WILLIAMSTOWN**

Visit DestinationWilliamstown.org for more information!

1. Williamstown Visitor Center
2. Spring St/Water St Shops
3. Williams College
4. Williams College Admissions
5. Post Office
6. 62 Center for Theatre and Dance
7. The Clark Institute
8. Westin Field
9. Milne Public Library
10. Williams College Museum of Art
11. Taconic Golf Club

**LEGEND**

P  Public Parking

Public Restrooms

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

DOWNTOWN WILLIAMSTOWN- CULTURE, LEARNING AND HISTORY IN THE HEART OF THE BERKSHIRES

# 8 Appendices

a. Brand Summary
b. Public Survey Results
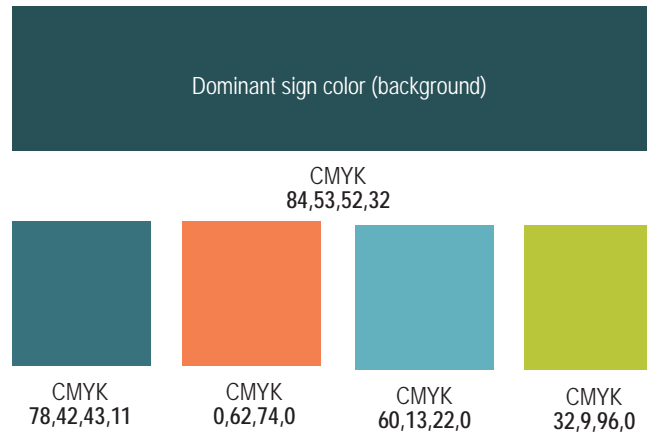
# Brand Summary

## 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



Dominant sign color (background)

CMYK
84,53,52,32

CMYK
78,42,43,11

CMYK
0,62,74,0

CMYK
60,13,22,0

CMYK
32,9,96,0

### Motif and Usage

Full color for signage



Black and white (grayscale) for reference for other applications



### Font Family and Usage

'Williamstown' Text-

Poppins Medium (Logo)

**Poppins Bold** (Sign)

Significant (Primary) Destinations Signage Text-

**Oswald Bold**

Notable (Secondary) Destinations Signage Text-

Oswald Regular

# Public Survey Results

1. Which of the following applies to you?

More Details

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 | I am a resident in Williamstown | 81 |
| 🟠 | I am an employee in Williamsto... | 9 |
| 🟢 | I am a business owner in Willia... | 3 |
| 🔴 | I am a student in Williamstown | 1 |
| 🟣 | Other | 7 |

2. How often do you visit Downtown Williamstown?

More Details

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 | Daily | 63 |
| 🟠 | Weekly | 36 |
| 🟢 | Monthly | 2 |
| 🔴 | For special events | 0 |

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

More Details

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 | I drive | 73 |
| 🟠 | I ride a bus | 0 |
| 🟢 | I walk | 25 |
| 🔴 | I ride a bicycle | 4 |
| 🟣 | Other | 0 |

4. Which of the following types of destinations do you typically visit while in Downtown Williamstown? Select all that apply.
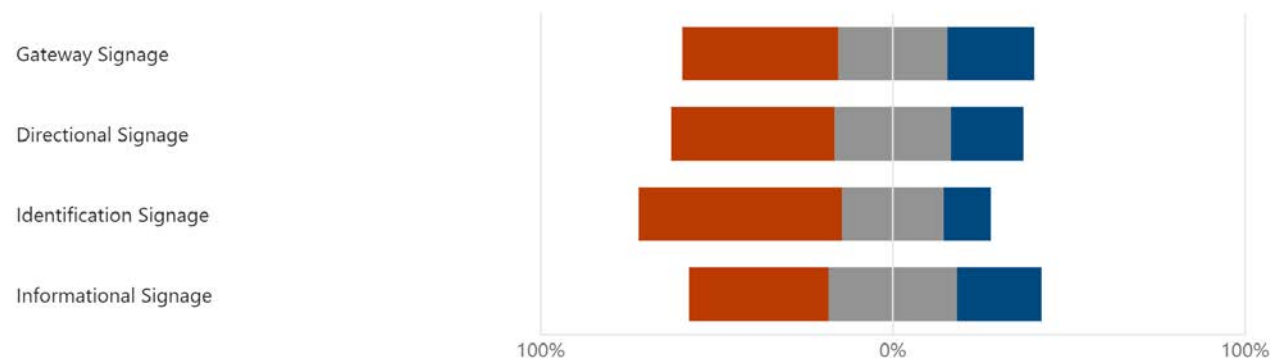
More Details

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 🔵 Municipal (e.g. City Hall) | | 23 |
| 🟠 Cultural (e.g. Art Museums) | | 51 |
| 🟢 Dining/Restaurants | | 89 |
| 🔴 Shops | | 72 |
| 🟣 Services (e.g. Bank) | | 60 |
| 🟤 Place of Work | | 33 |
| 🟣 Institutions (e.g. Chamber of Co... | | 9 |
| ⚫ Recreational (e.g. Golf Course) | | 22 |
| 🟡 Other | | 12 |
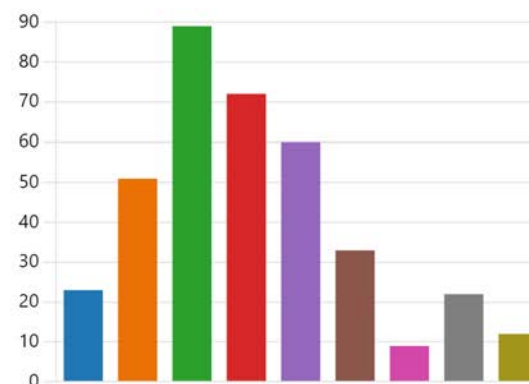


6. How effective do you generally think the existing wayfinding signs in Williamstown are in serving their purpose?

More Details



Legend: ■ Effective   ■ Neither effective nor ineffective   ■ Ineffective

Gateway Signage
Directional Signage
Identification Signage
Informational Signage

7. Do you think the existing signage in Williamstown is reflective of the Town's character?

More Details

- Yes — 21
- No — 28
- Somewhat — 49

9. The three mountains have been used to symbolize Williamstown in current or previous platforms. However, there are other natural features, cultural institutions, and architectural buildings that may also be appropriate to symbolizing the downtown.

Considering that options for a potential symbol to be included on future signage will be designed/refined following this survey process, which of the following categories do you think best represents Williamstown?

More Details

- Arts & Culture (i.e. museums an... — 18
- Natural Landscape (i.e. trees, m... — 54
- Architecture — 12
- Other — 17

10. The words below are some of the ways that Downtown Williamstown has been described. Considering the character of Williamstown and how you would like it to be perceived in the future, please rank the following words in order of how important you feel they should be in informing potential sign designs.

More Details

1. Nature
2. Cultural
3. Historic
4. Mountainous
5. Diverse
6. Generational