



Wayfinding

RAPID RECOVERY
PROGRAM TOOLKIT

This toolkit has been made possible through technical assistance provided by the Baker-Polito Administration's Local Rapid Recovery Planning program.



The Local Rapid Recovery Planning (RRP) program is a key part of the Baker-Polito Administration's Partnerships for Recovery Plan, the strategy established to help communities stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy as a result of the economic impacts brought on by COVID-19. The plan invests \$774 million in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing.

In addition to the planning program, recovery efforts include a Small Business Relief Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. This program, which concluded in May 2021, provided more than \$687.2 million to over 15,000 businesses across the Commonwealth, with a focus on businesses located in Gateway Cities, among demographic priorities, or operating in sectors most impacted by the pandemic. Cities, towns, and non-profit entities are using Regional Pilot Project Grant Program funding for recovery solutions that seek to activate vacant storefronts, support regional supply chain resiliency, and create small business support networks. To promote recovery in the tourism industry and support the ongoing My Local MA marketing initiative encouraging residents to support their local economies by shopping, dining and staying local, another \$1.6 million in grants were awarded through the new Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Pilot Program. Through April 2021, MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program has invested \$26.4 million in municipal Shared Streets projects to support public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

In support of the overall recovery strategy, the Administration made \$9.5 million in awards for 125 communities to create Local Rapid Recovery Plans, through the MA Downtown Initiative Program. These plans address the impacts of COVID-19 on local downtowns and small businesses by partnering with Plan Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts to pursue locally-driven, actionable strategies.

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Why This Toolkit?

Why This Toolkit?

The Importance of Signage & Wayfinding

A properly designed **Wayfinding Signage Program** is an important tool that cities and towns can use to **welcome and direct** residents and visitors, make a **positive impression**, and help **encourage exploration** and **create awareness** about the resources you have available.

This toolkit will outline the design process relevant to Signage & Wayfinding and instruct on best practices in the industry. This document will also cover how to prepare for a signage/wayfinding design effort, navigating the design phase, and how to partner with designers and fabricators to complete the signage.

This is a "How-to-Guide" intended to support implementation of RRP programs. It will offer practical advice and guidance for communities as they navigate Massachusetts-specific issues associated with project implementation.

Not just signs anymore

Signage is often applied without a system in place, which can cause confusion and clutter. The system is what we call "wayfinding design" and the outcome is called a "wayfinding signage program".

A clear and comprehensive Wayfinding Signage Program will create a memorable, easy to use, maintainable/updatable system that builds excitement and encourages exploration while helping users navigate in an efficient manner.

People often wayfind using landmarks so a successful system will not just be words on signs but will include a logical use of shapes, symbols, color, patterns, font size, etc. to help you know where you are and how to get where you want to go. We also advocate for unique artistic elements that can be remembered easily and referred to – "meet me at the..."

The problem facing most municipalities isn't a lack of signage, but a lack of wayfinding design. A properly designed system provides a stronger foundation for signage, especially as Cities/Towns grow. Ad-hock wayfinding leads to an abundance of signage that is cluttered, outdated, and confusing. If signage represents the physical result of the process, wayfinding represents the ideology that supports the design of these systems.



Getting Started

Getting Started

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit can help your team develop an understanding of the elements that create a successful wayfinding signage program and how to get started. It is intended to guide you through the steps to determine what wayfinding system will work best, who to hire, and steer the team through the design process, bid the job to fabricators and implement the signage as designed.

Pre-Design Checklist

Whether it is a refresh or total redesign, **the following items should be gathered prior to** or at the beginning of a Wayfinding or Signage project to inform the process:

- Sign Standards and ordinances
- Maps of your City/Town
- GIS data on traffic volume, crashes, etc.
- Previous research
- Master Plans
- Pictures of City/Town signage
- Goals for the wayfinding program
- Common complaints
- Brand Guidelines or examples of logo/seal use



What type of help do I need?

Typically, a request for proposals (RFP) is released to solicit designers but if your project is not clearly defined, you may not get the right people to apply. We will go through scope items in more detail but here is a snapshot of different project types:

- **Master Plan** – tease out issues to be addressed, analyze circulation, and identify locations
- **Signage Refresh** – if you feel that your signage is in the right location but just feels tired
- **District Wayfinding** – focus on defining/revitalizing a particular neighborhood
- **Citywide Wayfinding Program** – rethink all locations and sign types to direct to key destinations, express your City/Town identity, and replace existing signs
- **Tactical Wayfinding** – temporary signage or markings to test ideas and change behavior
- **Urban Planning** – study of traffic patterns to effect street/path design and improve safety

What is Wayfinding?

The way we make decisions and move through space is based on many things—words, landmarks, color, light, and other cues—which could be visual, tactile, auditory, or olfactory. Many of these decisions are subconscious, tapping into a primal part of our brain. Our species has evolved strong instincts about how to get places, where we feel safe (or not), and how we remember the way.

So, what is wayfinding anyway? The [Society for Experiential Graphics](#) (SEGD) defines it as, **“information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space.”** Experiential or Environmental Graphic Designers specialize in wayfinding systems, signage design, branded environments, digital applications, and environmental graphics. We collaborate with architects, landscape architects, cities/towns, organizations, and private developers to enhance the public’s experience.

A few things to note:

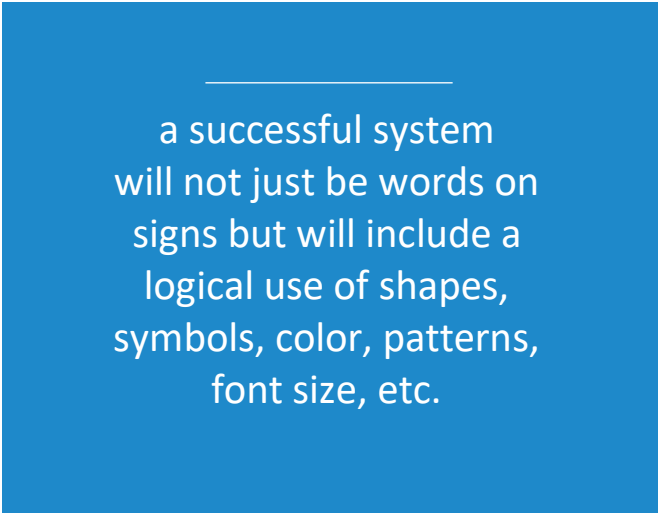
Sign types are roughly organized into categories:

- **Landmark** - large unique visual cues serve as a beacon and can lend a sense of place
- **Identity** - has brand/name of where you are
- **Directional** - points to key destinations
- **Informational** - directories, interpretive
- **Code** - mainly interior ADA, etc.

Scale and hierarchy of information are important to consider, especially for vehicular or pedestrian signage. The hierarchy of messaging follows this logic with more detailed information being those you can walk/roll up to.

Gateways welcome visitors at main entrances to your City/Town. These can provide your City/Town name and identity and be a memorable sculptural landmark.

District / Neighborhood Identifiers act as an arrival point. Each district can have its own color, symbol, or other way to distinguish where you are.



a successful system
will not just be words on
signs but will include a
logical use of shapes,
symbols, color, patterns,
font size, etc.

Figure 1: Toolkit Checklist

Action	Page
<input type="checkbox"/> We need to develop a budget.	11
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to define our project team and goals.	12
<input type="checkbox"/> We need to define our project scope.	13
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to understand best practices.	16
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to evaluate our existing signage.	17
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to start a signage and wayfinding plan.	17
<input type="checkbox"/> We want to determine what sign types makes sense to add to our wayfinding plan.	20
<input type="checkbox"/> We need help designing signage.	22
<input type="checkbox"/> We need help bidding the job out to fabricators.	24

Getting It Done

Getting it Done

Developing a Budget

Budgets for signage and wayfinding have a wide range in cost, largely reflecting the quality and complexity of sign types desired. The design budget will fluctuate based on the experience of the design firm, level of community engagement, number of sign types, size of project area, and schedule for deliverables. The cost of fabrication and installation is typically bid out to qualified vendors once a design is solidified. Here is a quick overview of what to expect:

Wayfinding Design \$25,000 - \$150,000 +

- Stakeholder engagement (interviews) \$5 – 15K
- Public Engagement (survey – online or in person) \$10K – \$20K
- Wayfinding Analysis (Circulation Plans, Sign Location Plans, etc.) \$8K – \$18K
- Signage Standards or Master Plan Document (plus above services) \$10K – \$25K
- Concept Design \$15K - \$30K
- Design Development \$15K - \$30K
- Design Intent \$10K - \$20K
- Bidding + Negotiation \$5K – \$10K
- Construction Administration \$10K – \$25K

Custom Signage Fabrication \$75,000 – \$500,000 +

- Simple metal or vinyl signage \$5k – \$20K
- Illuminated pylons/gateways \$50K - \$200K each
- Non-illuminated, freestanding signage \$25K- \$50K (each)
- General Conditions and Installation \$20 – 175K
- Digital directories \$25K- \$100K
- Mapping \$5K - \$25K

Developing an Internal Team

First, establish who will lead the project on the municipal side. For large cities and towns, the planning/transportation departments typically work best. For smaller cities and towns, a single point of contact will work. Typically, a person who handles most of the communication will be a great resource as well as a point of contact for the project. Integration with other departments like DPW and Communications is important to gain buy-in

Think about who your champions are. These are the people who will advocate for you at the highest level and may have power to allocate funding. It's important to involve them in the process along the way so they understand the process.

At minimum, a hired design agency will need a main point of contact (POC) and an understanding of **what group or individual(s) can make final decisions.**

Defining Project Goals

The first step in any project is to define the goals and objectives you are trying to reach and from that you can define the scope of the project. A successful wayfinding project will create connectivity, welcome visitors to your City/Town and invite people to explore. A comprehensive wayfinding plan, especially if it reinforces your identity/brand, is a great investment to attract visitors, new businesses and residents, and bolster awareness and sense of pride.

Some common issues you may be trying to resolve are:

- People don't know when they are entering or leaving our City/Town
- Visitors don't know how to get downtown, or what's there
- The different districts/neighborhoods are not well connected
- People don't know where to park
- People repark because they don't know how far it is to walk
- Old/outdated messaging and signage clutter is confusing
- Our signage doesn't reflect the vibrancy/culture of our community

Defining Your Project Scope

As you start to define your project, and potentially prepare a request for proposals (RFP) you will need to define the scope, so designers know what to bid on. Here are sample scopes for different types of projects:

Master Plan

If you are not sure where to start, a master plan or feasibility study can be a good way to tease out issues to be addressed and define what needs to be done. This typically includes:

- Sign Audit
- Circulation Analysis (multimodal)
- District Naming/Definition
- Preliminary Sign Location Plan (SLP)
- Updated Signage Guidelines
- Opportunities and Recommendations

Signage Refresh

If you feel that your signage is in the right location but just feels tired, it can be updated with a new design. This may be especially useful for those who have recently rebranded and need to implement quickly, using banners and other quick-build methods. Sometimes, existing infrastructure can be utilized to keep costs down.

- Brand Audit
- Concept Design
- Design Development
- Design Intent
- Bid Process
- Construction Administration

City/Town-wide Wayfinding Program

If you are ready to replace existing signs and want to rethink locations and sign types to better direct people to key destinations and express your City/Town identity, a comprehensive approach is in order. This will begin with many of the items in the Master Plan process but follow the design process through to completion.

- Sign Audit
- Circulation Analysis (multimodal)
- Preliminary Sign Location Plan (SLP)
- Community/Stakeholder Engagement
- Opportunities and Recommendations
- Concept Design
- Preliminary Pricing
- Design Development
- Prototypes and Material Samples
- Final SLP keyed to Sign Types
- Design Intent Drawings
- Bid Process
- Value Engineering Process
- Construction Administration
- Punch List
- Celebrate!



A map sign installed in Wheeling National Heritage Area, VA.

District Wayfinding

If you are revitalizing a particular district or neighborhood or have a very specific issue you are trying to solve (such as connecting public parking to pedestrian areas) you may want to conduct a district-specific wayfinding project. This is also a good way to pilot a new program if you do not have funds to implement your program City/Town-wide just yet.

Trail Signage

Walking and biking paths can have their own look and identity. Connecting trails to areas with shops and restaurants should be a key consideration when planning wayfinding programs. Maps that can be used in print and digital form are often part of these projects. Interpretive signage is often required and can present interesting storytelling opportunities.

Tactical Wayfinding

Temporary signage such as banners, vinyl, and/or pavement markings are a low-cost way to test our ideas, gather input, and start to change behavior and paths of travel. Tactical wayfinding can be incorporated into any of the above as part of a testing/prototype phase or a stand-alone project.

Urban Planning

If your project requires a more intensive study of traffic patterns to effect street/path design and improve safety, you may need a transportation planner to assist you. This can be a preliminary study to inform the wayfinding program.



An informational trail sign installed in Boston MA for the South Bay Harbor Trail.

Best Practices

Engaging with a qualified design firm should ensure that you have a smooth process from concept to completion, improved functionality, and community/stakeholder buy-in. There are different levels of scope, which we will get into in the next section but here are a few Best Practices you should insist on, no matter the size of the project:

- **Be Memorable** – A unique visual language builds on your brand identity and drives economic growth. If you do not have a brand that reflects your community, you can refer to our other Toolkit on municipal branding, sometimes called Place Branding.
- **Be Inclusive** – Engage stakeholders and the public to create ownership of the new brand.
- **Be Multimodal** – Be sure to improve navigation for all modes of travel, establishing improved connections, especially for public transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. Include the time it takes to walk or bike from place to place, rather than just the distance.
- **Be Scalable** – Your design should act as a flexible “kit-of-parts” that is easily maintained and expandable to grow with you.
- **Be Prepared** – Take time to update budgets and a phased schedule for implementation. Your wayfinding designer should be able to get ball-park pricing once a concept is in place.



Directional Signage in Anaheim, CA.

Starting Your Project

Developing a Project Team

First, establish **who will lead the project** on the municipal side. For large cities and towns, the planning departments typically work best. Integration with other departments is encouraged at the correct time, i.e., for feedback sessions or specific questions. For smaller cities and towns, a single point of contact will work. Typically, a person who handles most of the communication will be a great resource as well as a point of contact for the project.

Think about who your **champions** are. These are the people who will advocate for you at the highest level and may have power to allocate funding. It's important to involve them in the process along the way so they understand the process.

At minimum, a hired design agency will need a main point of contact (POC) and an understanding of what group or individual(s) make the **final decision**.

Conducting a Signage Audit

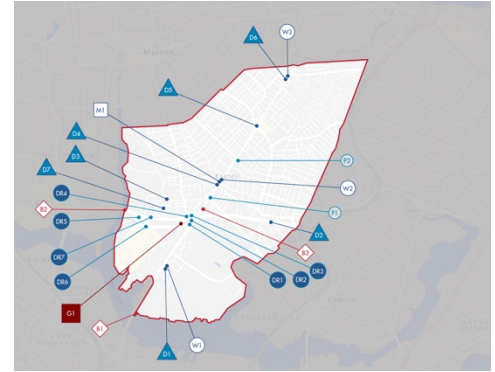
Time to hit the streets! This is best done with a modern smartphone. **Pictures can now be geotagged by smartphones to help confirm location of signage instances as photos are taken.**

Developing a plan to systematically canvas an area on a map, the team should photograph and capture each instance of a relevant sign. In most cases, street name signs can be omitted, but the more important signage to document is usually relevant to a user's directional path. **The goals of the signage and wayfinding study will determine which signage the team is looking to audit.**

Let's say the city has identified an issue with parking in a smaller downtown area. The signage relevant to this issue is largely parking signage, but vehicular directional signage as well. The team would document parking signage and vehicular directional signage in the set area to audit. This will then be analyzed in the following process.

Once the team has collected photos of the signage as it exists, it's time to put them into a system to help process that data. Developing a naming system should be the first step.

After each sign instance has been assigned a name tag, the sign instances should be shown accurately on a map, using a symbol to call out a sign type (ex: all one-way sign types are represented with a triangle) and the according tag. The geolocation of the photos can provide the necessary location reference. The design team should use a low contrast map, allowing the signage to be clearly identified on the map in relation to other relevant signs.

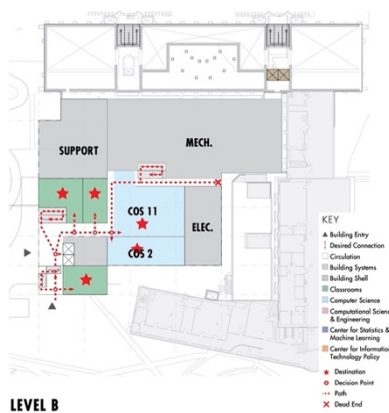


Example of a Sign Location Plan

Gathering the Relevant Data Sets

The first step in developing a signage and wayfinding plan, aside from a signage audit and defining the goals and area for the study, is to gather the other relevant data.

Most commonly, design teams look at the following data:



Example of a Circulation Map



Example of a Point of Interest (POI) Map



Example of a Heat Map



Example of a District ID Map

These sets of data can be obtained through different means, but Google Maps offers great base maps that can be used as reference. GIS mapping is also commonly used by municipalities, and in some cases offer detailed information on districts and signage.

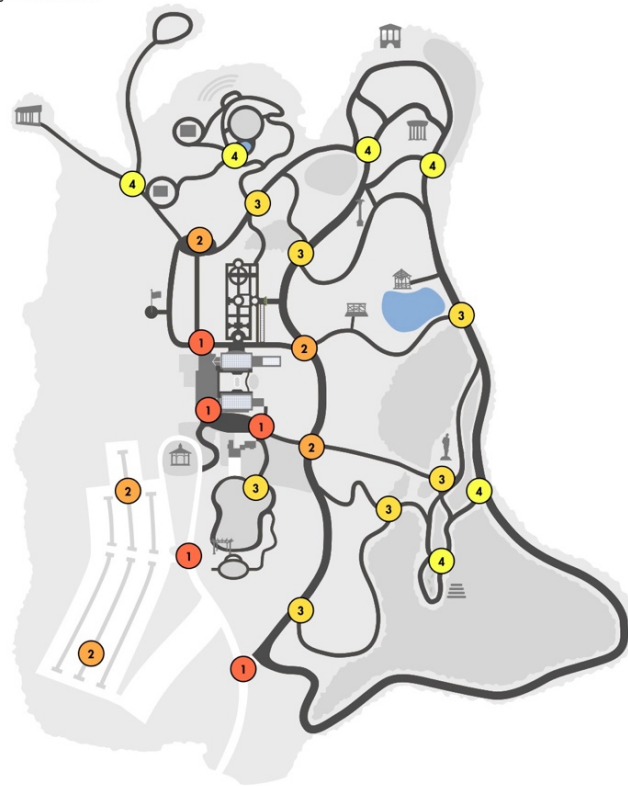
Analyzing the Findings

After all the data has been collected, it will be cross referenced to another diagram, called a Decision Point map.

A decision point map is based on location contextual data. Basically, the map will call out specific, high traffic locations that offer a user choice on their way to popular points of interest. **Decision points are data defined points that can make a user's journey easier by providing more information in the form of a sign.**

Decision points are best categorized on a map by the degree of importance. For example, an intersection that leads to 70% of the area's points of interest one way, but also entirely out of town the other is a highly important decision point; a user with not enough information could journey the wrong direction, thus sending them away from their destination.

- ① Primary Navigation Decision Point
- ② Secondary Navigation Decision Point
- ③ Tertiary Navigation Decision Point
- ④ Minor Navigation Decision Point



Example of a Decision Point Map

In summary, the decision point map will provide the design team with a response to the “where” regarding sign. It is a culmination of data that will inform the design team of points on a map where signage is required to inform a user on how their navigation choice will impact their route.

The decision point map will be the final step in the analyzing phase. Determining the sign types for the project is the next step in a signage and wayfinding plan, followed by a sign location plan. A sign location plan will outline where the new signage will exist, and what sign type each instance will be.

Determining Sign Types

Review the project's wayfinding goals

The first step in determining the elements of your signage and wayfinding plan is to review the goals of your study. This focus will shine a light on the signage types that will be the most effective for each decision point the design team has outlined.

For example, a project focused on addressing parking issues in a downtown area will likely include (but not be limited to) the following:

- Directional vehicular signs
- Parking lot identifier signs
- Pedestrian kiosk signs including maps

These sign examples will help direct vehicles to the parking lots, identify the parking lots when they arrive, and help users journey to their destination by providing maps to navigate on foot.

Define your user

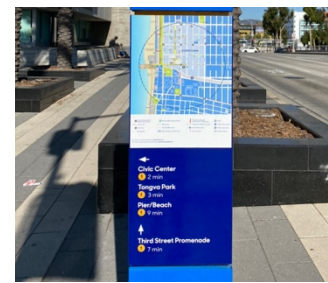
It's important to remember that sign types may be the same in terms of their goal but will differ greatly depending on the user. **Directional signs will be different in visual scale for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian users.**



Vehicular Signage



Bicycle Signage



Pedestrian Signage

Users you'll want to address in your signage and wayfinding package will vary based on the context of your area but are commonly broken into groups based on their transportation methods. We've ordered the most common user types in the list below by scale of sign in relation to user, with the largest style sign at the bottom of the list.

- Pedestrian users – smallest signs
- Public Transit users
- Bicycle users
- Vehicular users – largest signs

Common sign types

Sign types can range from a standardized set to something that is more specific and catering to the project's needs. Depending on the context of your project, the objectives of the project, and the user's needs, the signage will range in scale and objectives.

Signage sets are commonly referred to as Signage Families. This term speaks favorably to their shared set of goals, and ideally the shared set of visual language as well. Below is an example of a signage family diagram. Signage drawn together at scale helps illustrate how the signs will work together as a system.



A signage family example. This signage family is intended for bicyclists and pedestrians to help them find inner city destinations.

Common sign types include:

- Directory signs
- Directional signs
- Map signs
- Path/trail signs
- Limiting signs
- Gateway signs
- Monument signs
- Kiosk signs

Again, this list is meant to be exemplary. Other sign types exist, and a signage design team or firm involved in the project will be a resource for other examples. In some cases, a very specific goal or objective may present a need for an entirely new type of sign specific to the project!

Designing Signage

Design Aesthetic

Ideally, the visuals of signage design borrow from the city/town's visual language, or brand DNA. This helps connect the sign to the place on a subconscious level and instills trust in the user – a directional sign that visually matches the town or cities' brand won't be second guessed as a third-party sign, and likely assumed to be installed by the municipality.



An example of how brand DNA should visually relate to signage.

There is a plethora of logistical elements that need to be considered when designing the aesthetics of signage. This task is best left to a qualified designer or design team, as **specifics apply to font size and shape, contrast of all colors on the sign, scale of the sign, mounting height of the sign, and so on.** If knowledgeable staff or resources are not available to the project, refer to precedents that the project team can source as reference.

Signage Templates

Once the signage family has been determined, the signs themselves need to be tailored. Signage must be built around messaging; messaging is the text included on the sign. All the brand aesthetic previously mentioned needs to be retained, however the sign must be able to accommodate the messaging the sign is scheduled to include. The signs must be built to accommodate different lengths of text - **signs need to accommodate the smallest pieces of copy and not look overly sparse as well as the longest messaging and not looked cramped.**

Once each sign has been designed in detail, a template needs to be designed as well. This template will feature placeholder text where messaging will go. **Signage templates are the deliverable to signage fabricators,** as projects with large sign quantities would be cost prohibitive for the design team to produce individual art for. These design templates, paired with a message schedule, will give a production firm all the information they need to fabricate or print the signage to your package.

Message Schedules

A message schedule is a spreadsheet formatted document that pairs your sign identification tag with the sign type, textual message, and quantity. Installation details, iconography, fonts, and any additional information required for fabrication is highlighted on this document.

Sign Type	#	Message	Symbol	Grade II Braille	Glass Backer?	Notes	Reference Page
D2	2	Side A: Mens Restroom Side B: Elevators					27
D2	3	Side A: Elevators Side B: (Blank)					27
D2	4	Side A: Elevators Side B: Floor 3					27
D2	5	Side A: Floor 3 Side B: Blank					27
D2	6	Side A: (Blank) Side B: Elevators					27
D2	7	Side A: Elevators Side B: Womens Restroom					27
D2	8	Side A: Womens Restroom Side B: Elevators					27
▼ F1							
F1	1	MIT POLITICAL SCIENCE					17
▼ F2							
F2	400	Stairs	Stairs			Stairwell #1	18
F2	400	Stairs	Stairs			Stairwell #2	18
F2	428	Womens	Womens Restroom				18
F2	477	Stairs	Stairs			Stairwell #3	18
F2	492	MENS	Mens Restroom				18
▼ F3							
F3	1	MIT POLITICAL SCIENCE				Glass of Suite 490	19
▼ F4							
F4	1	HEADQUARTERS				Requires Power (by others)	20
▼ F5							
F5	438	Classroom 438				Applied to wall under R1	22
F5	438	Millikan Room				Applied to wall under R1	22
F5	470	Weiner Room				Applied 1st surface of glass, under R1 & N1	22
F5	485	Classroom 485				Applied 1st surface of glass, under R1	22

An example message schedule.

This document is of the utmost importance to any signage and wayfinding project. Message Schedules will determine what language, iconography, and is ultimately fabricated for your project. The document also provides the opportunity to establish pricing based on quantities.

For example, if your project calls for seven directional signs that read “One Way”, and the fabricator has estimated each instance at \$100 per sign, we can multiply the price per unit by the quantity to get a line total, and then for each sign listed on the message schedule. This will establish base pricing for the fabrication of the job, which can be difficult to determine during the design phase.

Finding a Fabrication Partner

Getting pricing

To establish what your project will cost to produce, a set of documents should be provided to a fabrication or print shop for them to respond with a quote. The set of documents is sometimes called a Design Intent drawing set, and this set should consist of the following:

- **Project Description**
 - Summary of the goals and history of the signage/wayfinding project
 - Not to exceed budget number
 - Ideal timeline
 - Installation labor specification (union v. non-union installation)
- **Signage Design Templates**
 - These templates need to be drawn to scale and labeled with dimensions and material specifications. The fabrication team should be able to calculate material costs off these dimensions. You should also show examples of signs with their messages.
- **Message Schedule**
 - This spreadsheet style document will outline the quantities of each sign, and later inform the production of each specific sign.

What to look for in a fabrication partner

When it comes to identifying potential production or fabrication teams, the managing city or town should include at least three vendors in their search if possible. With these three teams entering competing bids or price quotes to win the job, **having multiple quotes or bids will ensure competitive pricing for you.** The fabrication teams can be informed of the other teams' identities, but proposals should be kept confidential to ensure fair and even bidding.

Good qualities to look for in fabrication qualities include:

- Analyzing your designs for potential cost savings
- Suggesting alternative sign materials for more beneficial qualities
- Flexibility in any meetings or calls regarding the project
- Timely to respond to the request for bids

Once the bids have been collected, they should be reviewed and compared. The internal project team should compare materials and pricing for each sign type. Considering other elements of each fabrication team, the internal project team can then award the project to a fabricator and begin fabricating the signage and wayfinding package.

How Others Are Doing It

How Others Are Doing It



Worcester, Massachusetts

Client:

City of Worcester

Timeframe:

2009 – 2015

Budget:

\$75,000

Project Description:

SPD created a brand identity and wayfinding master plan for the City of Worcester, including a comprehensive analysis of their district identity and wayfinding signs, recommendations, and design concepts. SPD collaborated with the project team to increase awareness and tourism, and to improve the overall image of the city by creating a functional wayfinding system for visitors and residents.

- Wayfinding elements are **integrated with city branding**
- Signage prototypes helped create **support for the larger project**
- District Identifiers used as opportunities for **Storytelling and Public Art**

Project Challenges:

Changes in leadership brought a halt to the project for some time. The Master Plan has continued to be implemented but SPD was not involved in the final location plan and fabrication oversight.



Washington Square District



Salisbury District



Canal District



Downtown District



Shrewsbury Street District



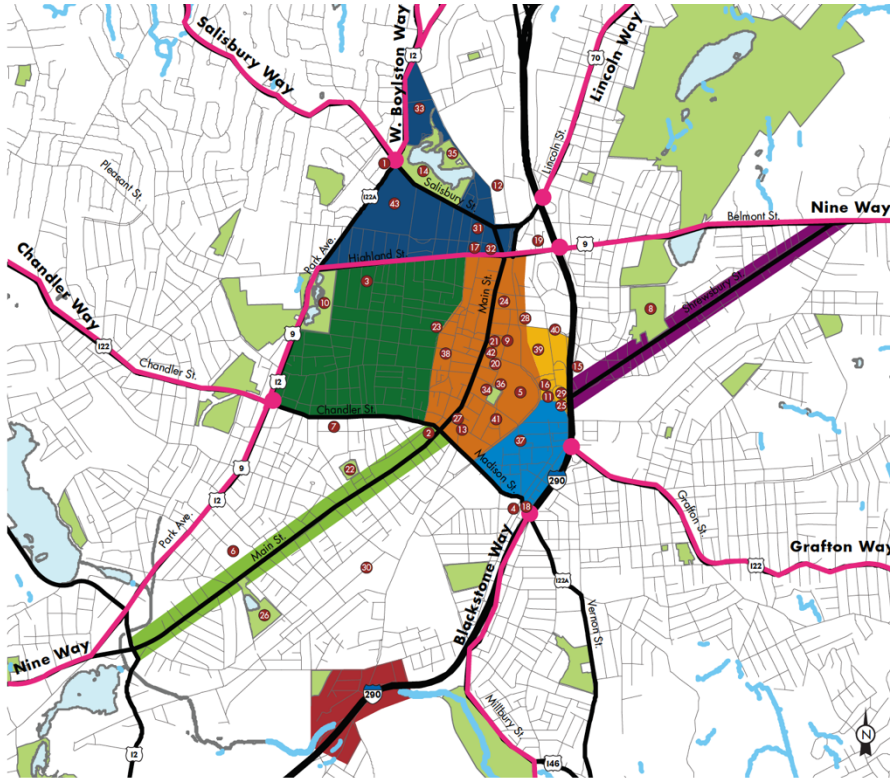
Main South District



Elm Park District



South Worcester District







Everett, Massachusetts

Client:

City of Everett

Timeframe: 4 – 6 Months

Budget: \$70,000

Project Description

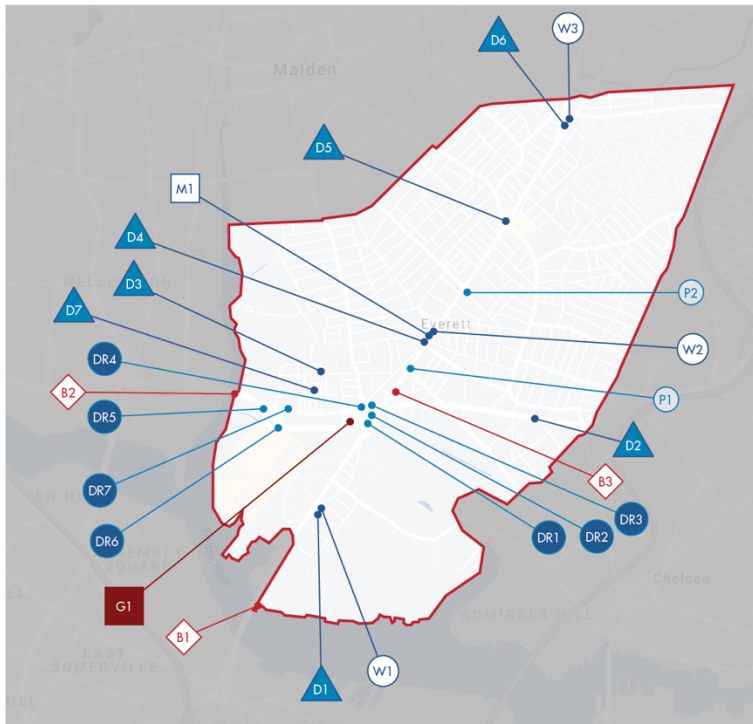
Selbert Perkins Design worked directly with City staff to create a wayfinding master plan for the City of Everett including district naming, district identifiers, placemaking opportunities, and a multi-modal wayfinding system. During the wayfinding design process, we discovered the need for a municipal brand and took a pause to design that.

Challenges:

SPD was contracted through Design Development and the Covid-19 Pandemic hit right around the time this was getting wrapped up. Due to staff changes and other priorities the city needed to tend to, this work has not yet been completed.



SIGNAGE LOCATION PLAN & MESSAGE SCHEDULE - R1



Type	Location	Size	Message	Price Per
B1	Alford St Bridge			TBD
B2	Revere Beach Parkway Bridge			TBD
B3	Everett Sq			TBD
D1	The Lynde			TBD
D2	Commercial Triangle			TBD
D3	Bevergreen			TBD
D4	Everett Square			TBD
D5	Clondale			TBD
D6	North Everett			TBD
D7	The Village			TBD
D8	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D9	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D10	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D11	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D12	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D13	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D14	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D15	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D16	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D17	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D18	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D19	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
D20	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
G1	Sawtooth Circle			TBD
M1	Norwood St & Broadway			TBD
P1	Everett Square			TBD
P2	City Hall			TBD
W1	The Lynde			TBD
W2	Everett Square			TBD
W3	North Everett			TBD

District Identifier:
Structural Aluminum,
Painted casing with vinyl
wrapped graphic interior
as shown.
REAR LIT "SQUARE".

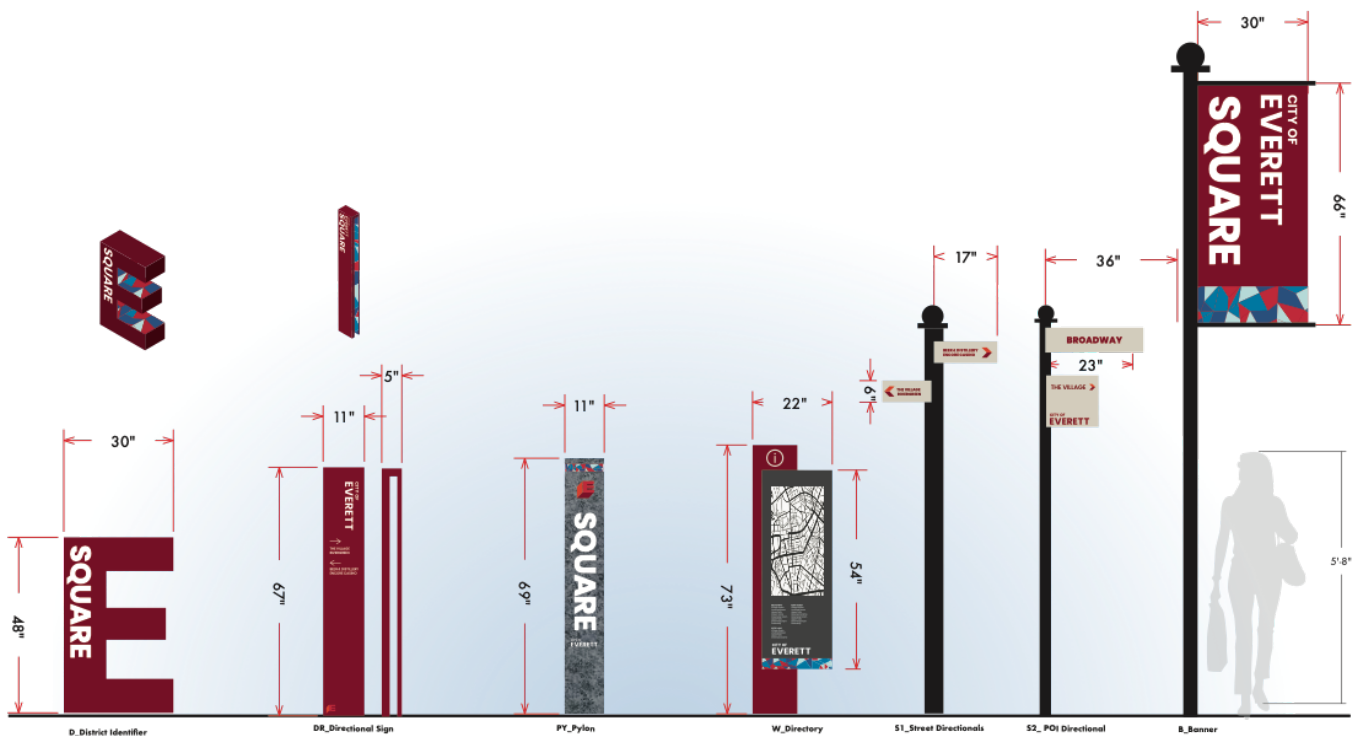
Directional:
Structural Aluminum,
Painted casing with vinyl
wrapped graphic interior
as shown.
LIT INTERIOR.

Pylon:
Granite plynth with
sandblasted, paint
filled text. Graphics
near plynth cap.

Directory:
Structural Aluminum,
Painted casing with vinyl
wrapped graphic interior
as shown.
REAR LIT "i" & MAP

Street Directional:
Fabricator to recommend
cost effective manufacturing
and materials.

Banner:
Fabricator to recommend
cost effective manufacturing
and materials.





Testimonial

"Including a consultant or Design Partner has a lot of benefits. The Public Sector is often siloed, and City Staff are stretched so they serve as your capacity, but also a neutral 3rd party to bridge the gap between government agencies and their constituents."

Jay Monty

Director of Transportation, *City of Everett*



Melrose, Massachusetts

Client:

City of Melrose

Timeframe:

6-8 Months

Budget:

\$42,500

Project Description:

Selbert Perkins completed a Wayfinding & Creative Placemaking Master Plan for the City of Melrose in collaboration with Civic Space Collaborative. The goals of this effort were to identify opportunities for useful signage to better direct the public around the city and to engage with the local community to create public art. The Initiative was entirely funded through a grant secured for this purpose. A collection of public art was also curated and installed across the city as part of the implementation of the master plan.

Challenges:

The entire project, including community engagement, was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Most of the project relied on community engagement, and SPD was able to leverage digital tools to engage with over 700 members of the community. Despite the pandemic, the art was able to be put on display outside and help lift the spirits of the community during the tough times.

Project Examples

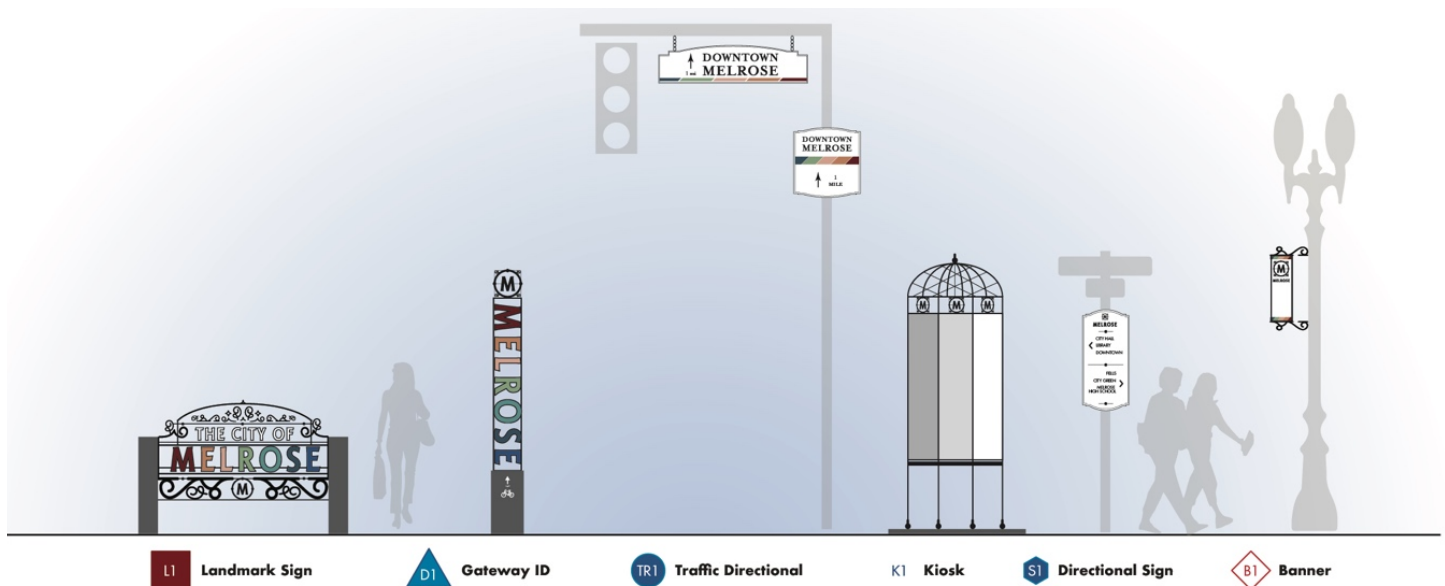


Testimonial

“The whole project was such a great success. With limited funds we were able to create a Wayfinding and Placemaking Master Plan to guide future efforts in Melrose. The early decision to include placemaking and public art was brilliant.

This allowed us to bring together community members we don’t usually collaborate with in a celebratory and unique way. It was very uplifting to unveil the art projects and be able to make something tangible appear quickly with long lasting ties to the art community that hadn’t been very well represented before.”

Denise M. Gaffey
Director & City Planner, *City of Melrose*



Overcoming Challenges

Overcoming Challenges

Common Challenges for Massachusetts-based cities/towns

Gathering Consensus

Everyone is entitled to their opinion but how do you get people moving in the same direction? The traditional Town Meeting public process leaves a lot of people out. The necessity of these being online during the pandemic has actually been a win for inclusion as more people are able to participate. Your Project Team will be able to work together to make decisions but whenever possible, this should be based on what your hearing from the community.

We recommend stakeholder interviews and online surveys to gather input and hear people out before and during the design process. We have found this to be an effective way to test ideas and develop ownership and excitement. Several free and easy-to-use services exist that allow teams to create easy to use polls and presentations for sharing online, such as www.forms.google.com, www.surveymonkey.com, and Microsoft Forms (with Office 365 subscription).

Residents can also scan QR codes or log on to URLs to access these surveys and vote in real time. During the pandemic, these resources have allowed communities to continue developing projects for their municipalities in place of in-person community meetings. These polls can include multiple choice, open comment and ranked voting. This data is highly valuable to any community project and is mostly free to collect.

Inclusive Design

One of the most common issues across Massachusetts based city/towns is balancing the old and new and making sure everyone feels welcome. Many towns in Massachusetts have historic significance and may want to emphasize that but also feel fresh and relevant.

If your project budget allows, conducting outreach to your local **schools and senior centers** to solicit feedback from some of the city/town's oldest and youngest residents. A collaboration with the local **high school** for example, can provide valuable commentary and drive parts of the design. High school students or art departments can participate in murals, fabrication efforts or even the signage auditing process.

Lower income folks will not have time to go to community meetings so **going to where they are is important**. If in-person outreach is possible, try to align with local celebrations. Make sure to cast your net wide and provide materials in various languages whenever possible.

Not Enough Parking

Complaints about parking are common but many times there is ample parking people are not aware of or is a very short walk. A good wayfinding plan will make parking more visible and accessible but pointing out how many minutes it will take to walk. Even in LA where famously “nobody walks”, this approach is having success.

Keeping Momentum

Large community-based design projects can take many months and sometimes years to complete. Engagement efforts during the design process will build excitement. Once the design is finalized, keeping a summary on your website so people can refer back to, it will help keep it top-of-mind. If you do not have enough money to complete the entire system, installing a prototype or prominent sign like the City/Town gateway sign can be a nice way to make your plans a reality.

When it comes to keeping these projects on schedule, a regular **bi-weekly or monthly meeting** with the project team is essential. Notes from each meeting should serve as a record of the decisions made you can refer back to later.

Managing a Budget

Signage and wayfinding projects can be stressful because of the economics involved. Budgets need to accommodate multiple phases, and due to the length of these projects the time involved can be expensive when working with consultants or design firms.

Discussing your budget with consultants prior to engaging in any effort is highly beneficial. This will set expectations on cost for the time to design. These experts should also be able to give you a rough estimate of fabrication and installation costs to help you plan a budget.

Your budget should have a phased approach based on any contracts, and each phase should have at least a 10% contingency to prevent running over budget. Most municipalities will not have surplus budget to pull from, so appropriate planning is necessary with signage and wayfinding projects.

Frequently, these jobs are broken into master planning/design, and fabrication/implementation.

This dual phase approach allows for a design budget to hire a firm, design the signage and establish a design intent set for bids. The fabrication bids can then be used to determine a budget for the second phase of the project.

Key Resources

Funding

With the American Rescue Plan Act and Infrastructure Bill passed, there is an influx of interest in and funding for improving the public realm. Wayfinding is a key component to these improvements and provides opportunities for branding and placemaking.

Federal / State Grants

- **ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund Allocations** - \$135 million earmarked to support cultural facilities and tourism assets throughout Massachusetts <https://www.nlc.org/covid-19-pandemic-response/american-rescue-plan-act/arpa-local-relief-frequently-asked-questions/>
- **Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Preservation Funds** - pre-development projects can range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm>
- **Rural Business Development Grants** – Funds available for rural transportation improvement (trails, etc.) and community economic development in Massachusetts <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/ma>
- **Massachusetts Gaming Commission** - community mitigation funds available to Casino host and neighboring towns <https://massgaming.com/about/community-mitigation-fund/>
- **MassDevelopment TDI Creative Catalyst** – Grants of \$20,000 - \$100,000 for public-facing cultural or placemaking projects in current and graduated Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) communities
- **Massachusetts Downtown Initiative** - Technical Assistance Grants for wayfinding and other economic development initiatives
- **Transportation Improvement Project (TIP)** - Funds available through your Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- **MAPC Technical Assistance Program (TAP)** <https://www.mapc.org/about-mapc/funding-opportunities/>

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- **MassDOT Community Connections** – Available to Boston Region MPO Towns/Cities and regional transit authorities <https://www.bostonmpo.org/community-connections>
 - **Mass Development Commonwealth Places** - \$5,000 - \$300,000 grants for quick-build, community-based projects <https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/commonwealth-places/>
 - **Rural Business Development** - transportation improvement and Community economic development grants in Massachusetts <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/ma>

Development

- Developers sometimes are required to provide **Community Benefits** to appease the City/Town where they are building. A percentage of each project's benefits could go into a fund to for the planning, design, and maintenance of a wayfinding program.
- Regardless, Developers have a vested interest in improving the perception of the area where they are and likely already have a budget for wayfinding. We recommend including them in the process and/or asking for support, especially if it is a larger area that will help revitalize a neighborhood or district.

You can also search <https://www.grants.gov> and the DCHD's crowdsourced list of opportunities at <https://airtable.com/embed/shrh5rVQMbVbpYLKF/tblk00qQM2JPpie>



For more information, visit:

www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program

If you have questions about the RRP program, contact:

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