

Wayfinding Defined:

Wayfinding signs help visitors and residents orient themselves in and navigate through a region. Wayfinding signage can be designed for either vehicular or pedestrian viewpoints. Signage can include destination, facilities and amenity names or icons sometimes accompanied by directional arrows, placed on-route or at an important decision-making point. Wayfinding signage can also include arrival signs which indicate to road users or pedestrians that a destination has been reached. Collectively, the presence of coordinated, logistically-placed wayfinding signage demonstrates a concern for the welfare of visitors, reflects the hospitality of a region and aids in the definition of place and community.

Community Wayfinding:

Community wayfinding signage pertains specifically to signs that guide people to public-accessible areas such as recreational destinations, frequented government offices and commercial/industrial zones or neighborhoods and districts. It also includes signs on privately-owned lands that provide access to public services such as hiking trails, ski runs or Lake access. A consistent design for these types of signs provide a cohesive image for that community. Directional wayfinding signs should have no more than 4 important destinations listed on a single sign.

Things to consider when designing your Wayfinding Signage System:

Signage Materials & Project Budget:

Material choice will have a dramatic effect on design features, maintenance, mounting/installation and overall budget for your project. Signature Streetscapes uses a variety of materials to construct our signs that range from low, medium and high costs. Once we have had time to sit down and discuss the project scope, requirements and overall budget we can help recommend the best material to accomplish your goals and meet your needs.

Appropriate Size:

The stature of the signs matches each purpose and the scale of the surrounding region and should be neither dwarfed by, nor overpower its environment.

Font Choices and Character Sizes:

When choosing a font there are several things to keep in mind in order for your signage to remain both attractive and effective in its purpose of routing traffic properly.

- Type Font – Easily read from vehicles. We can help suggest the best type fonts and character sizes based on the speed of the traffic on the roads, see our “viewing distance guide”. We can give you a list of federally approved road guide sign fonts if required in your project.
- Letter spacing - Default letter spacing of our standard fonts automatically conforms to Federal Highway standards. There is no need to typeset the spaces between each letter – a step that may be required when using custom fonts.
- Upper & Lowercase - It has been proven that signs using the first letter of each word in uppercase with the remainder of the word in lowercase are more easily recognized at increased distances. Font size specification heights refer to capital letter height, not lowercase heights.

Disabled & Aging Vision

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Society for Environmental Graphic design (SEGD) propose standards for signage to accommodate pedestrians with disabled or aging vision. These standards underscore clarity in type and contrast between background and letter forms.

Letter Height vs Vehicle Speed :

Proper letter height is an important when considering the speed of the vehicles on the road where signs are being placed. Proper character sizes and appropriate fonts will allow drivers to easily identify and read signs from a distance that allows them to react in time.

Colors:

Foreground and background colors should contrast to ensure readability. Darker colors work best for backgrounds. Limit the number of different colors on general signage. On interpretive signs and maps, a good rule of thumb is to have at most 8-9 colors in text, legend, or design elements. Check with your local authorities first to determine what colors should be used in your signage design for both wayfinding and traffic signs.

Symbols & Logos:

It is recommended to use internationally recognized symbols for wayfinding signs, such as “P” for parking or “H” for hospital (Signature Streetscapes has a list of all universal symbols that can be incorporated into your sign designs). Logos should be kept small and should not compete with the message on a sign.

Sign Placement:

Be sure to consider the placement for each sign when taking into account the design, shape and size. Some roads have laws in place that restrict how close or far away signs can be placed from the roads edge. Proper placement will also ensure that your signs are not struck by traffic causing unnecessary damage. It is helpful when starting a project to create placement diagrams for each sign that will assist in determining the design features and help during the installation process.

Reflectivity:

It's All About Safety. Providing retroreflective signage is important as a means of reducing the higher nighttime crash rates. Signs that have sufficient retroreflectivity during nighttime conditions are especially beneficial to older road users. See our guide on retro-reflectivity on the Signature Streetscapes website.

Installation:

It is important to determine the installation method that will be used for each sign during the design process. This is an important information to have when presenting your project to a local planning department, who will determine the approval your signage package. It will also have an impact on the overall cost for each sign unit. Also, be sure to check the “Breakaway Post Requirements” with your local authority. Signature Streetscapes has several options to help make your signage consoles Breakaway compliant.

Maintenance & Cleaning :

All signs require cleaning and maintenance on some level. It is important to consider materials that will best fit your maintenance needs. Anti Graffiti style signs are also available if you are concerned about vandalism for signs being placed in certain areas.

Permitting

Check with your local planning department and other agency requirements to ensure that your signage designs conform to all local codes and regulations. Presenting your wayfinding signage package and having it approved can eliminate costly reworks due to signage that does not pass inspection or meet local codes. A written description of the community wayfinding signage project, state goals and purpose; be sure to include a statement stipulating an understanding of maintenance responsibilities

- Know the exact location of the proposed signage and land owner
- Minimum 5" x 7" photographs of the area of the proposed sign (indicated on photo) showing any existing signage, or any signage that is recommended for replacement / elimination within 100 feet; show signs in place from the travel perspective and full front view
- Parcel map showing sign location; to scale with north arrow
- Survey of the sign area showing sign location and surrounding signs, trees, rocks, roadway, shoulders, land contours within 100 feet
- Drawing of proposed sign(s) indicating which Sign Type is referenced; show colors, materials, dimensions
- Complete details of sign face with actual wording to be included, sample icons and arrows in position
- Construction drawings of proposed sign showing footings or other installation technique to be used
- Engineered calculations for construction
- Show how new signage will consolidate or eliminate existing signage; include photography of existing signs to be removed