

CITY OF **ALEXANDRIA**

WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Sign family components, program strategy and
initial design vocabulary

Stakeholder Advisory Group & Community Presentation

29 May 2008

The Team

Alistair McIntosh, ASLA

Urban planner, landscape architect

Principal in charge, design overview, project advocate

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Director

Overall project direction

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Lead Designer

Project design direction

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Senior Designer

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Designer

Along with support staff in graphic design, CADD/GIS

The Firm Collaborative design with a multi-disciplinary approach



Since 1953

Architecture

Landscape

Planning

Urban design

Civil engineering

Interior design

Graphic design

Environmental graphic design

Over 400 design awards

CITY OF

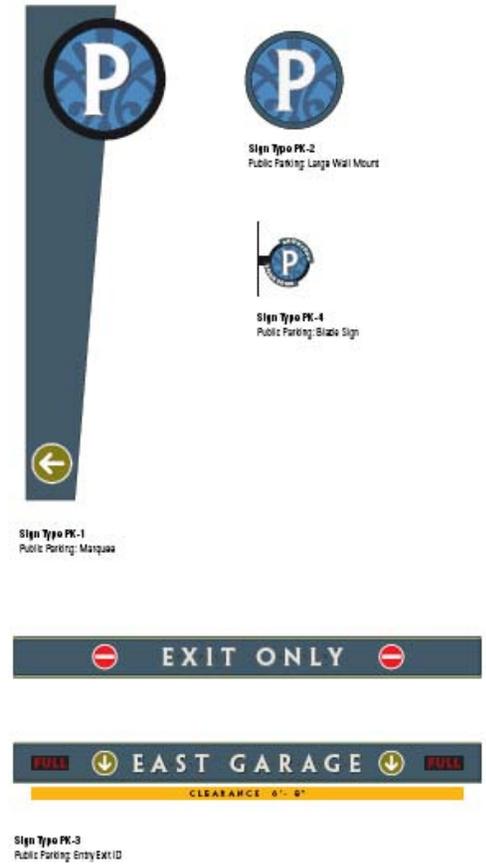
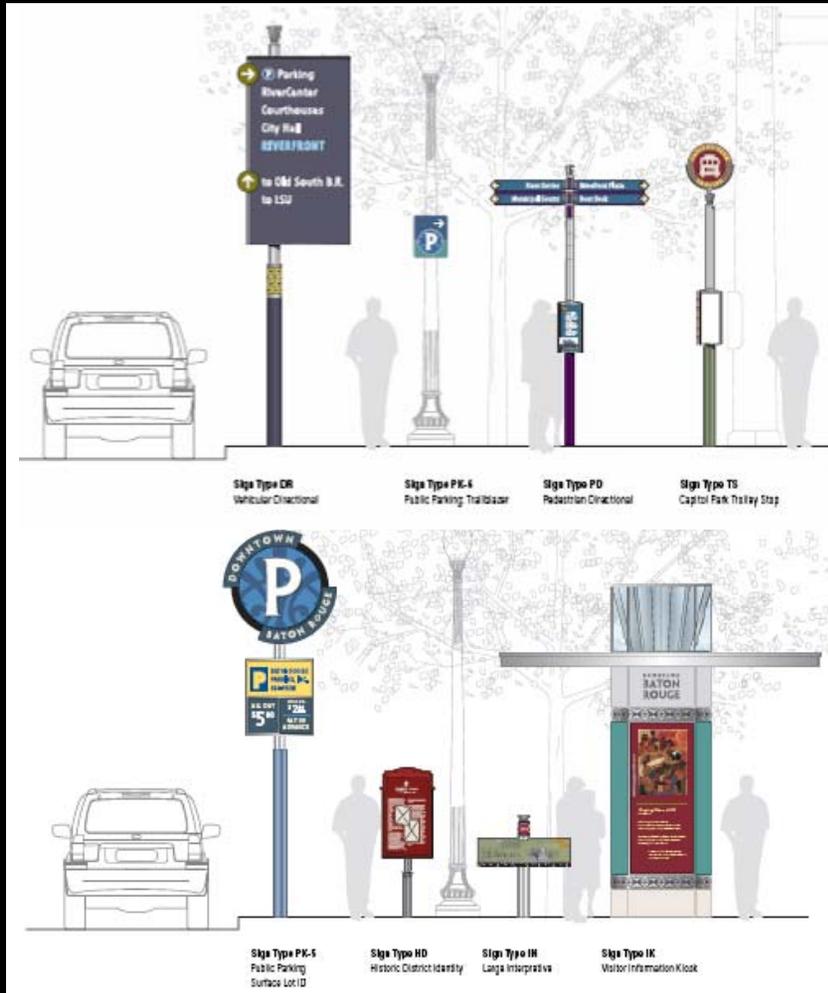
ALEXANDRIA
WAYFINDING DESIGN

SASAKI

*What exactly is a
"wayfinding system" ?*

*A coordinated system of
sign elements that serves to
identify, direct and inform...*

The Project Inspiration



Baton Rouge Downtown Visitor Amenity Plan | Baton Rouge, LA

The Project | Inspiration



Baton Rouge Downtown Visitor Amenity Plan | Baton Rouge, LA

The Project Inspiration

*Why does Alexandria need a **wayfinding system** ?*



Why are we here today?

*Because a **comprehensive** wayfinding approach will arise from **collective input** by city stakeholders & the community*

*And finally...**The time is now !**
There are big things planned and happening for **all** of Alexandria*

The Process | Project Phases



The Process | Current Status



Agenda

1. *The Big Picture*
2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*

Agenda

1. *The Big Picture*
2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*

The Big Picture | Objectives

There will be a HIERARCHY of wayfinding signs that guide visitors from the Interstate exits, through town, to parking, and from parking to the pedestrian experience



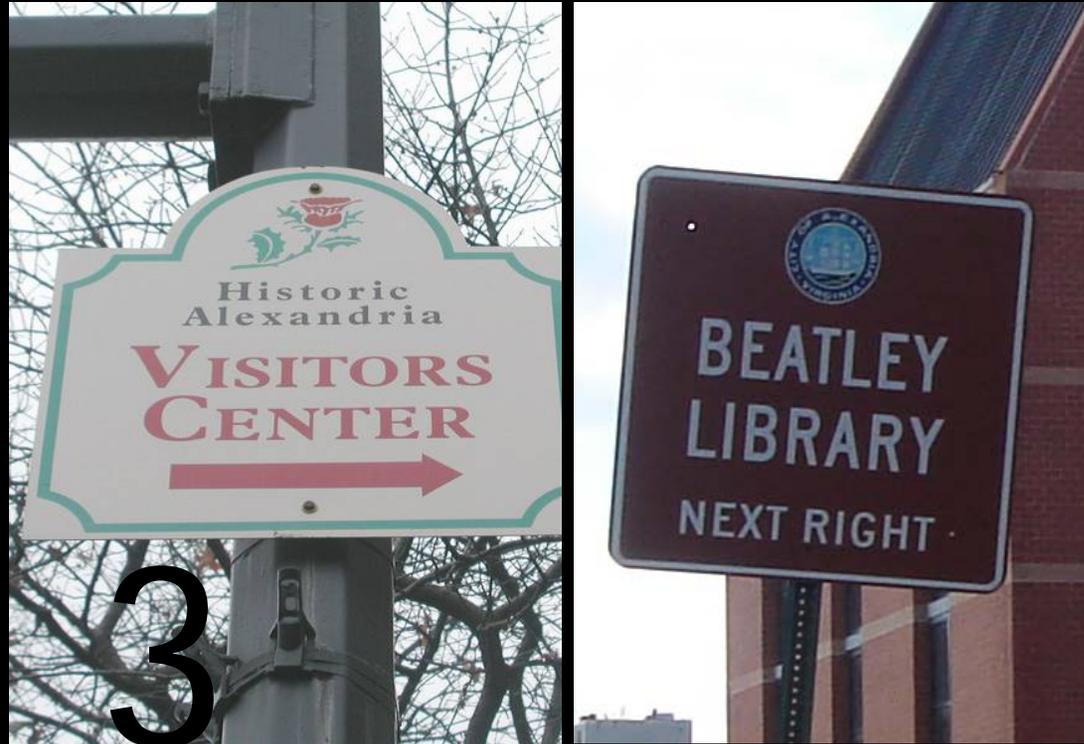
Streamline Vehicular wayfinding

Focus on the essentials: get visitors quickly to parking so they can start enjoying Alexandria on foot



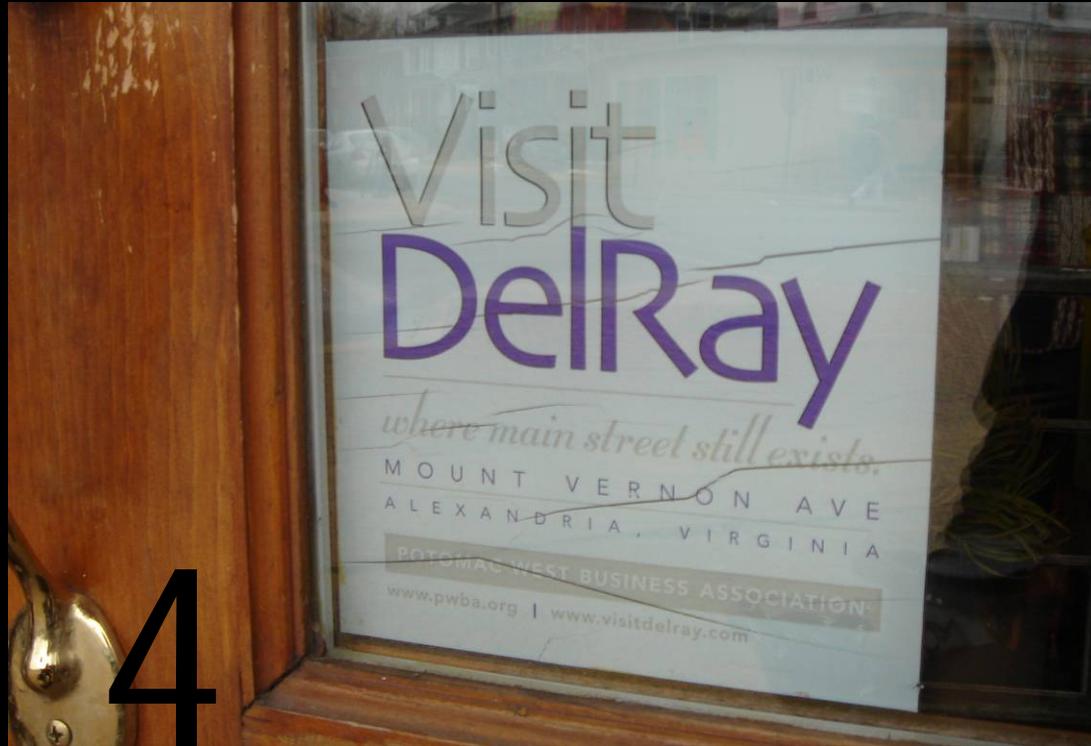
Address Pedestrian information needs

An informed pedestrian is comfortable, confident, and ready to explore



Balance visitor & community needs

Community destinations are many & far reaching; vehicular signs should account for both groups in a unified design standard



Define focal districts past Old Town

Identifiable districts give visitors more to explore; plus they make wayfinding easier by creating "bite-size" sections of the city

Agenda

1. *The Big Picture*
2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*

Proposed sign types fall into **six key categories**:

1. **Vehicular**
2. **Pedestrian**
3. **Bikes**
4. **Parks and Community Services**
5. **Interpretive**
6. **Distinctive Areas**

Within all of these categories, we need to balance **visitor** and **community** information

1. Vehicular

Issues that will drive the sign design



>> Visitors arriving by car

>> Visitor vs. Community needs

>> Legibility

>> Parking

Which sign should I look at ?

Is *this* Old Town?

Are we there yet?

Where should I park?

1. Vehicular

Arriving: Highway exits, key routes & gateways



RECOMMENDATIONS

Plan messages comprehensively, update highway signs as necessary

Reinforce Old Town and King Street as recognized names/common destinations i.e. "Old Town Alexandria Visitor Center" instead of "Tourist Info Center"

Consider "King St/Old Town" or "King St Shopping" as trailblazing messages in addition to Visitor Center

New gateway design should be larger/more prominent; integrated landscape scheme where space allows



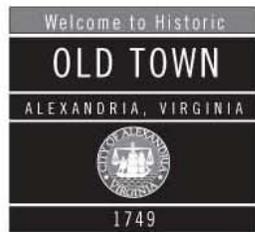
1. Vehicular Arriving: Highway exits, key routes & gateways



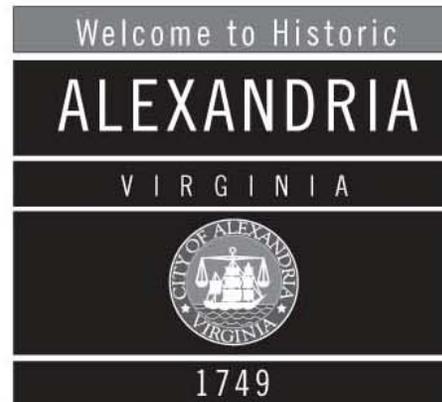
1/4" = 1'-0"

HG Highway Guide

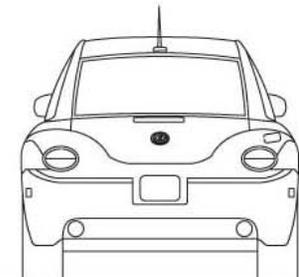
1. Vehicular | Arriving: Highway exits, key routes & gateways



GV Gateway, Vertical



GH Gateway, Horizontal



1. Vehicular

Balancing visitor & community needs

RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporate both visitor & community message needs in the same system

Develop a design solution that distinguishes between the two types for clarity, so that neither is compromised

Community messaging can be more subtle because the program will be familiar to residents



Examples

Existing signs

1. Vehicular Sign legibility

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular signs should be both visible & legible

Consider sight lines for design & location

Design with optimal contrast, text height

Develop standard minimum distance for sign in advance of turns; account for various posted traffic speeds



Examples

Existing signs

1. Vehicular | Balancing visitor & community needs



DR1 Vehicular Directional
6 inch copy height

DR2 Vehicular Directional
4 inch copy height

DR3 Vehicular Directional
4 inch copy height

1. Vehicular Visitor Parking



RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt a standard parking graphic vocabulary for use in municipal facilities and adoption by private operators; apply to both parking trailblazing and identification

Incorporate standard sign for rate information into parking sign system

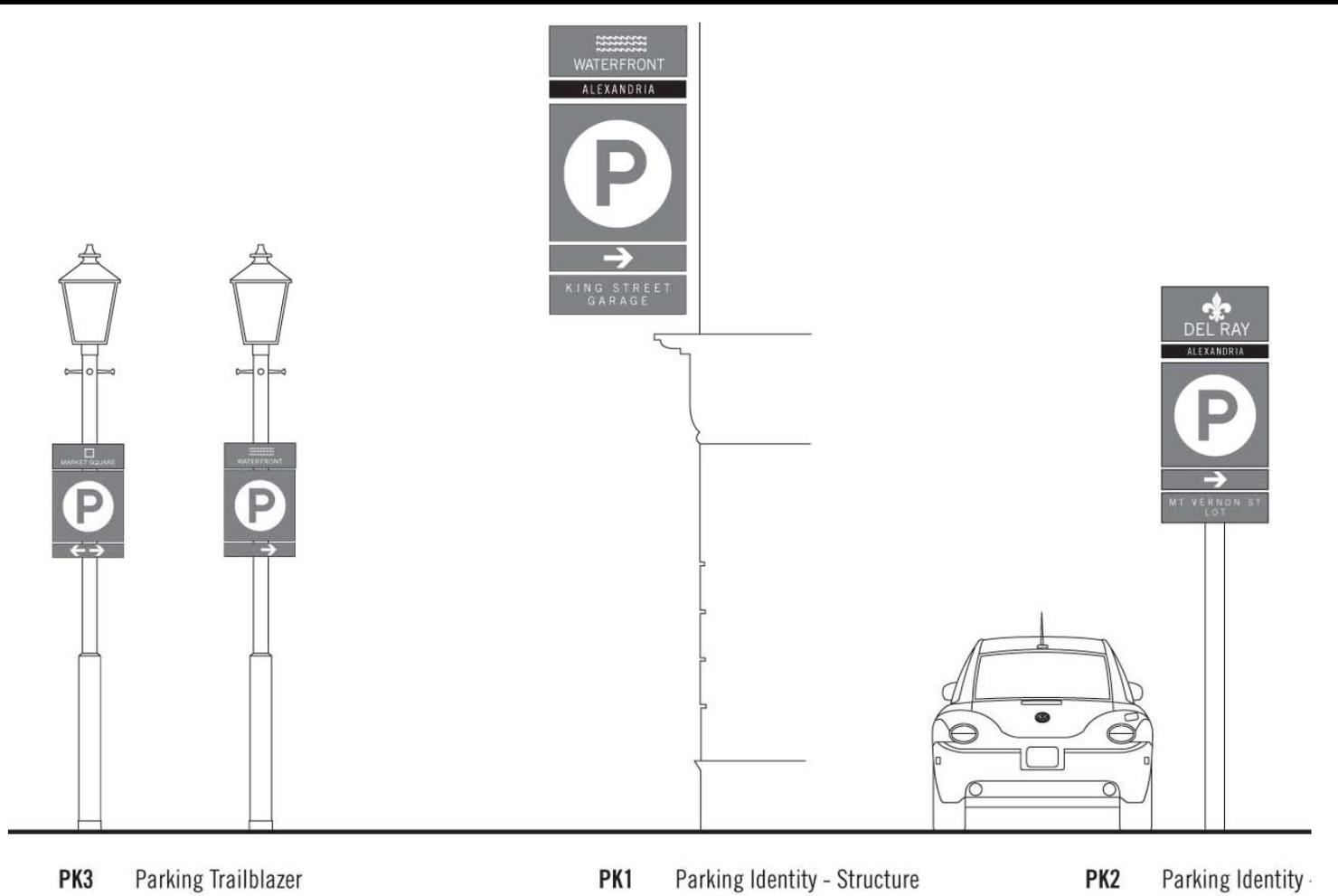
Modify sign code as necessary to allow/require posting visible from the street



Examples

Existing signs

1. Vehicular | Visitor Parking



PK3 Parking Trailblazer

PK1 Parking Identity - Structure

PK2 Parking Identity

Enlarged Detail



Enlarged Detail



2. Pedestrians

Issues that will drive the sign design



>> Arriving

>> Moving through the environment

>> Finding attractions and retail

Now What? What is there to do here?

Where am I?

Where is the waterfront?

Where is King Street?

2. Pedestrians

Arriving

RECOMMENDATIONS

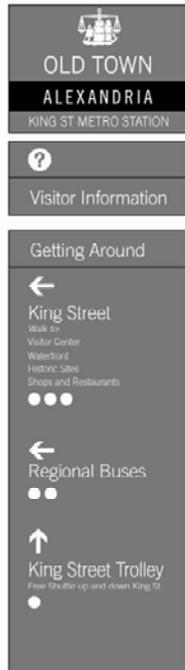
- Prioritize pedestrian wayfinding system & utilize transit facilities as "launch points"
- Shopping and dining are critical visitor attractions and should be highlighted
- Consider including shopping/dining in frequently updated directory
- Evaluate **PRE-TRIP** information (ACVA website, Metro Opens Doors, others) for its effectiveness in communicating walk-ability and public transit options



Examples

Existing signs

2. Pedestrians | Proposed Sign Types



OLD TOWN
ALEXANDRIA
KING ST METRO STATION

Visitor Information

Getting Around

←
King Street
Walk to
Visitor Center
Waterfront
Historic Sites
Shops and Restaurants
●●●●

←
Regional Buses
●●

↑
King Street Trolley
Free Shuttle up and down King St
●



OLD TOWN
ALEXANDRIA
KING ST METRO STATION

Visitor Information

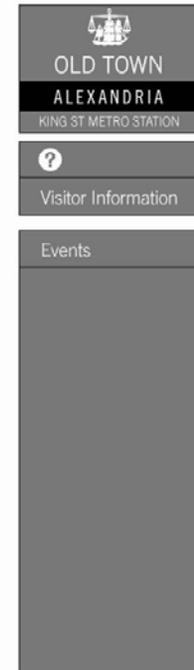
Things to Do
Places to Shop



OLD TOWN
ALEXANDRIA
KING ST METRO STATION

Visitor Information

Historic Places



OLD TOWN
ALEXANDRIA
KING ST METRO STATION

Visitor Information

Events

IK1 Visitor Information Kiosk

Kiosk Side 2

Kiosk Side 3

Kiosk Side 4

2. Pedestrians

Moving through the environment

RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrate distance & location information: show that King Street is walkable

Feature transit facilities prominently

Wayfind both to and from transit facilities

Promote King Street **FREE** trolley service as part of pedestrian wayfinding
Include history of each block section; incorporate interpretive info

Use King Street Retail Strategy sub-districts to break King St. down into smaller segments for wayfinding ease



Examples

Existing signs

2. Pedestrians

Finding Attractions and Retail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide directional information at key intersections and accentuate side street destinations in orientation information /maps

Include shopping and dining functions in pedestrian maps with color coding by category, rather than business name

Coordinate signs with overall retail strategy, including website and printed maps (including handout maps)



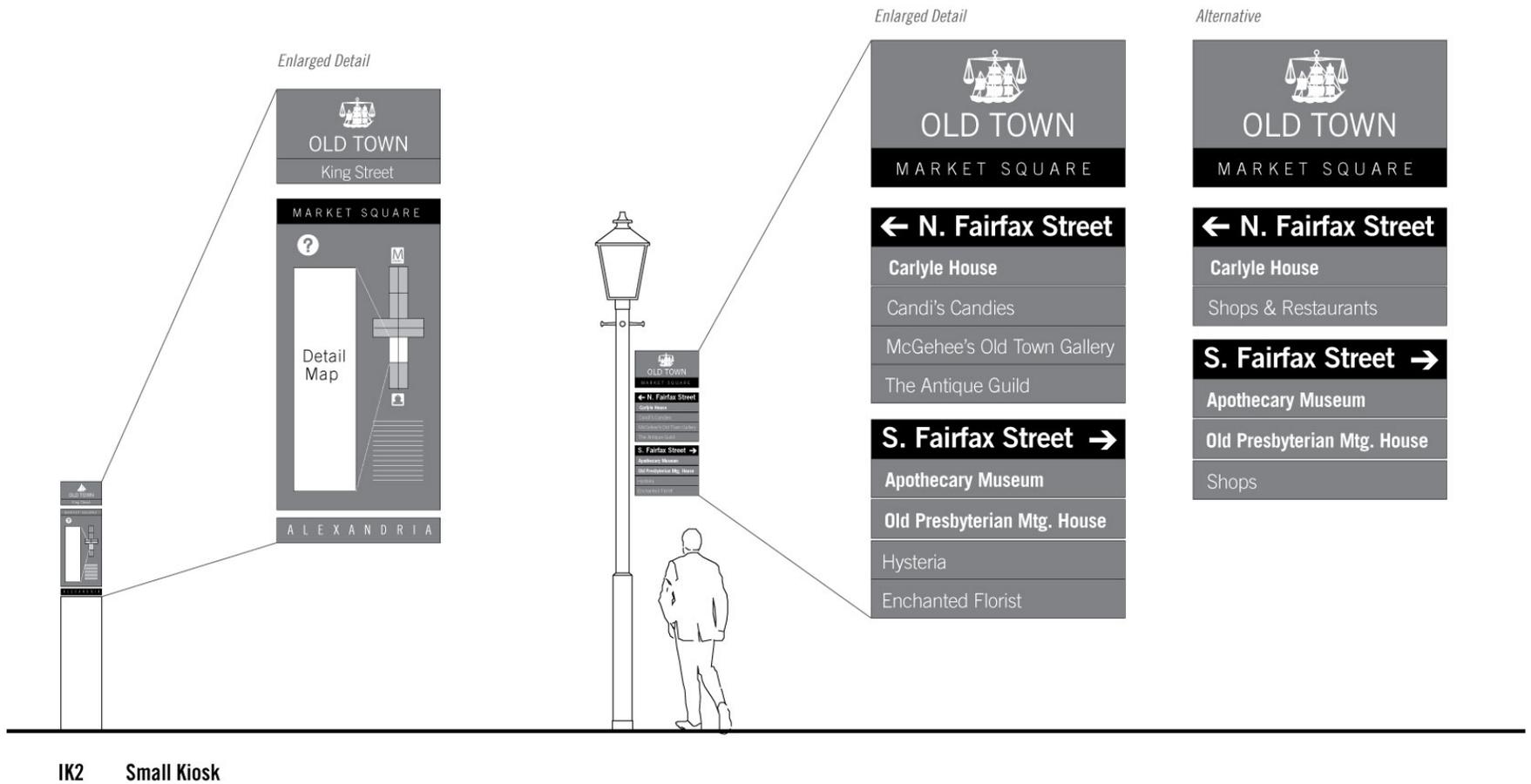
Examples



Existing signs



2. Pedestrians | Proposed Sign Types: various techniques



3. Bikes | Issues

>> Identifying major bike and multi-use trails

>> Bike services



Where can I fix my flat?

Did Mt. Vernon trail just disappear?

3. Bikes Major bike and multi-use trails



RECOMMENDATIONS

Locate signs along key bike routes that promote bike services and Old Town attractions

Identify trail on city streets in conjunction with additional components

Consider an identity system for Alexandria bike routes

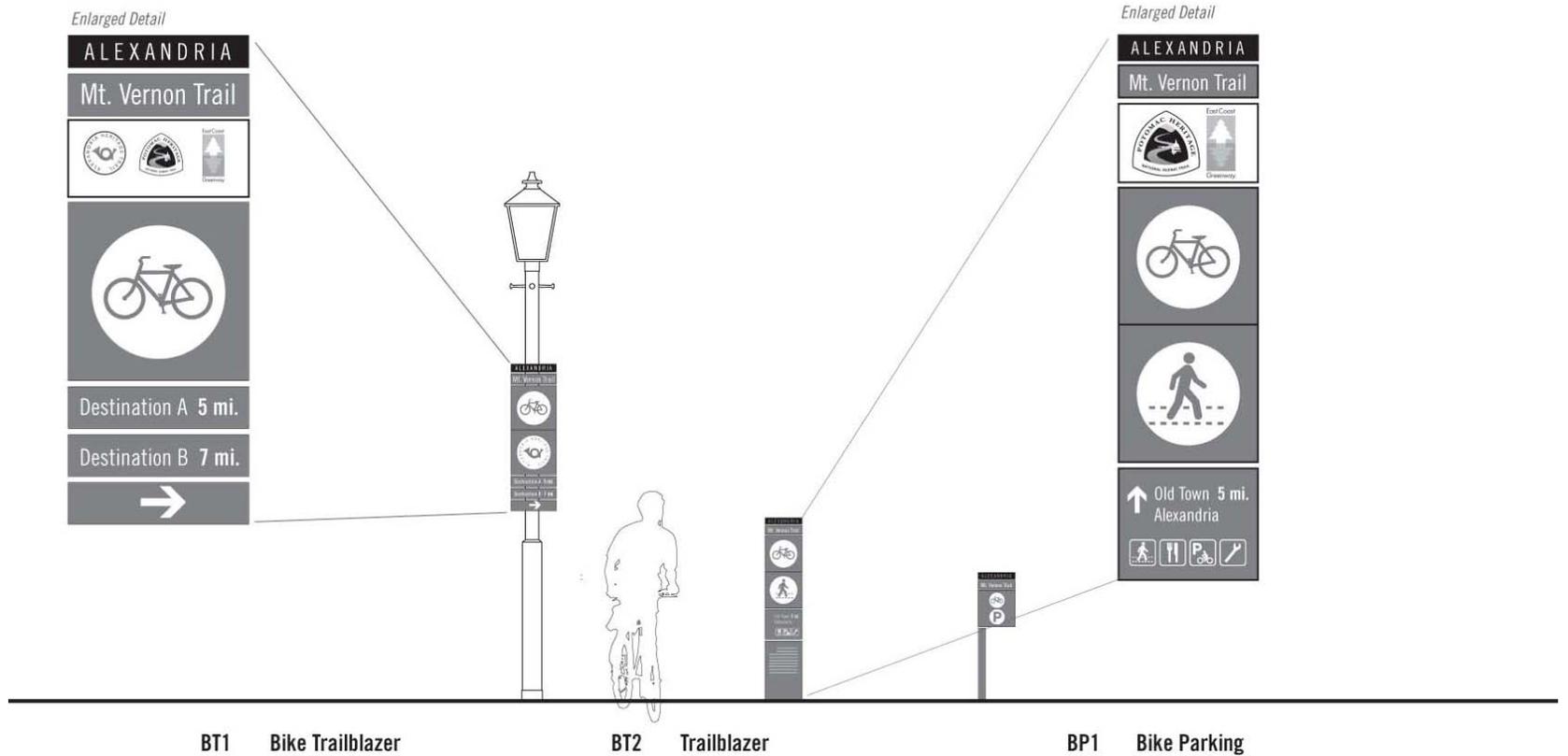
Numbering or otherwise identify distinct routes and coordinate with maps



Examples

Existing signs

3. Bikes | Proposed Sign Types



4. Destinations

Issues

>> Consistent Park Identity & Info

>> Historic Trail Identity



Are we there yet?

What is there to do here?

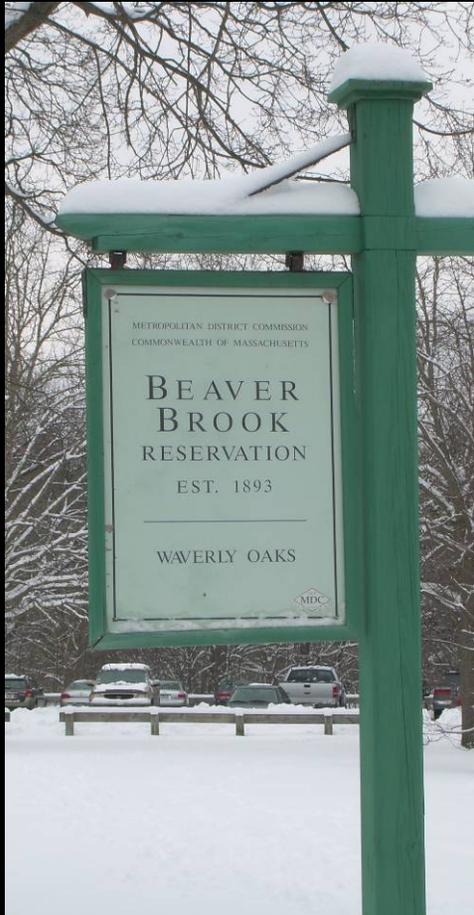
4. Destinations

Consistent park identity

RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporate park facilities into wayfinding messages based on a threshold of annual attendance or significance (e.g. Cameron Run, Jones Point)

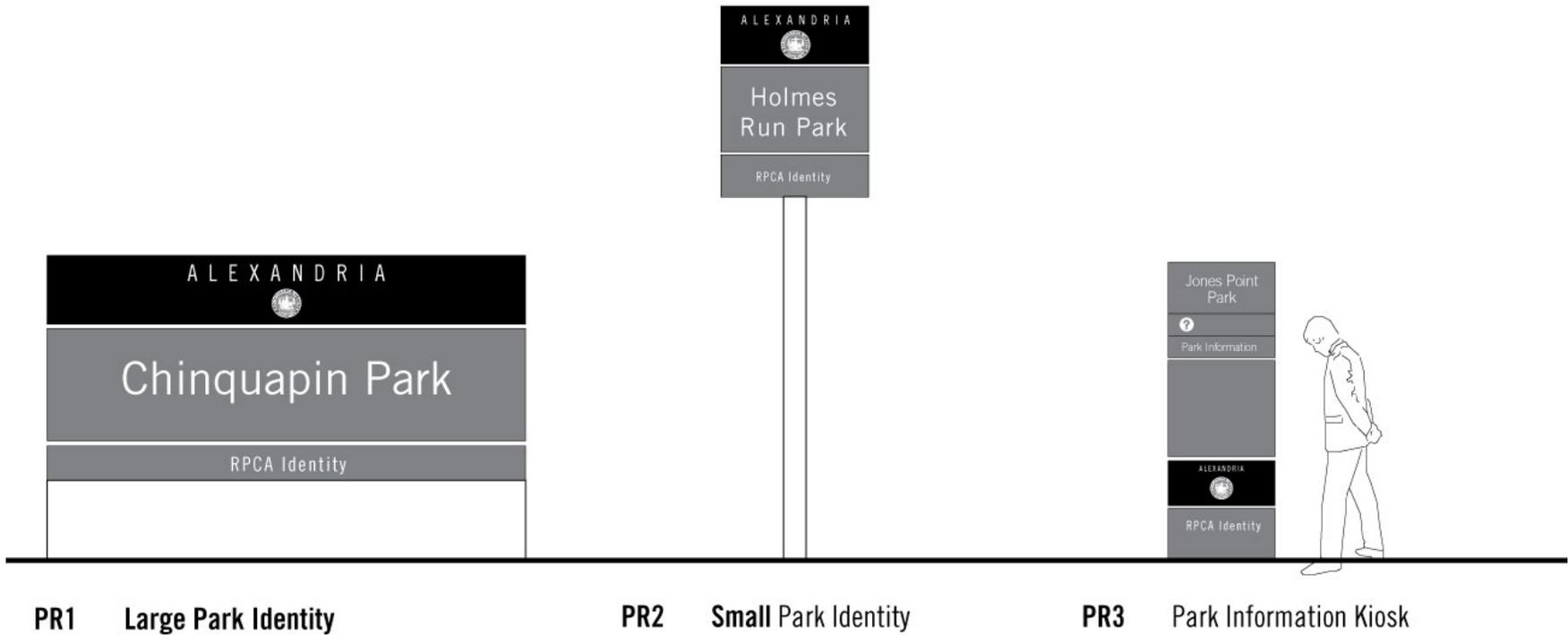
Create a destination ID standard for city parks to replace current routed-wood signs



Examples

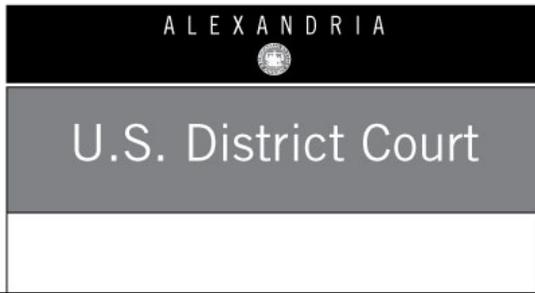
Existing signs

4. Destinations | Consistent park identity



4. Destinations

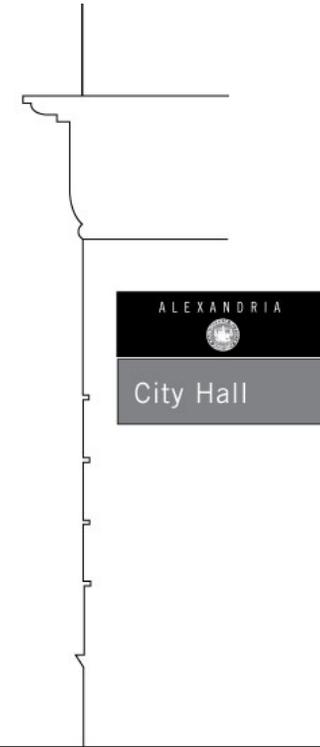
Consistent community services identity



CS1 Large Community Services Identity



CS2 Small Community Services Identity



CS3 Small Community Services Identity

4. Destinations

Historic Trail Identity

RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify historic trail stops to tie destinations together as a series, and to reinforce individual destinations for cars & pedestrians

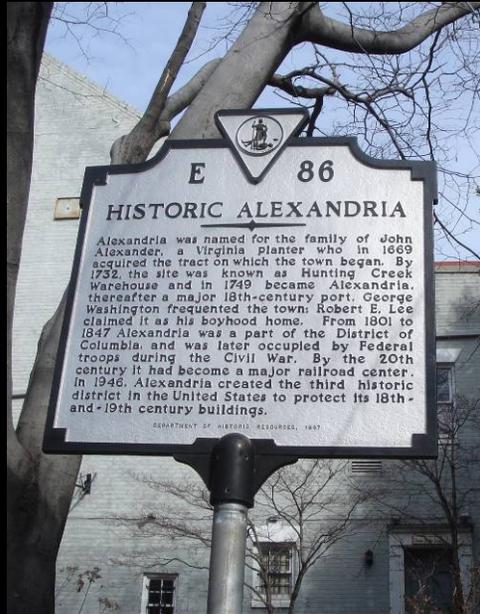
Incorporate interpretive information



Examples

5. Interpretive Issues

>> The urban museum



Context image

What is that?

I wish I knew more about this place...

5. Interpretive

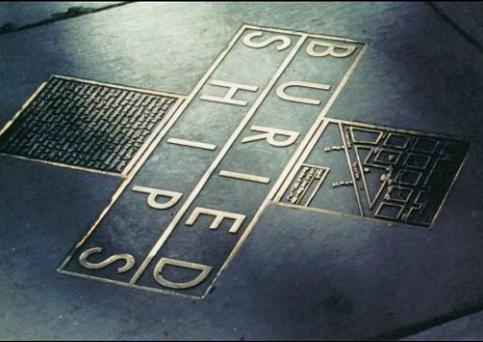
The urban museum

RECOMMENDATIONS

Coordinate attractions in a unified program that is visible to pedestrians/cyclists

Provide identification and interpretive information at historic trail sites

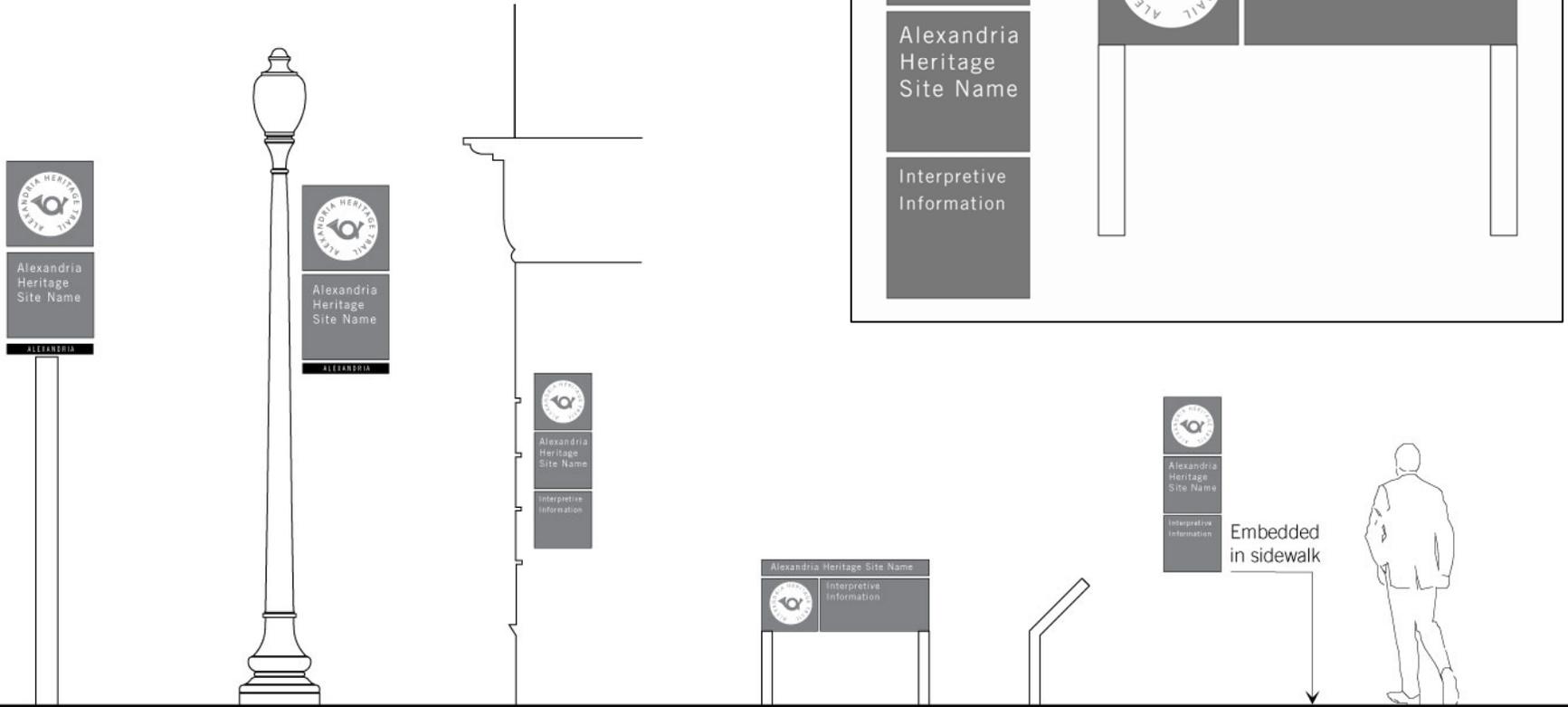
Fold interpretive content into other sign types throughout the city where practical



Examples

Existing interpretive information

5. Interpretive Proposed Sign Types



IN1 Interpretive: Site Identity Banner

IN2 Interpretive: Wall Plaque

IN3 Interpretive: Wayside Freestanding, "wayside"

IN4 Interpretive: Ground Plane Embedded

>> Districts

>> Neighborhoods

>> Commercial Areas, Malls
& Shopping Centers

>> District Character

6. Distinctive Areas

Districts



Albuquerque vehicular directional, utilizing districts for easy wayfinding

RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify districts & incorporate districts as a vehicular message to help in wayfinding

Wayfinding districts reinforce the notion of Alexandria as a "city of neighborhoods" and "more than just Old Town"

Utilize pedestrian system components to reinforce access pathways between Metro and district centers, and to promote walking

Consider use of enhanced gateway, vehicular directional messaging to enhance visibility

6. Distinctive Areas

Neighborhoods



Precedent images

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider the National Historic Register status of the areas.

Residential neighborhoods may be identified by gateways but may not appear in the wayfinding program as destinations.

Residential neighborhoods will be offered an identity sign palette

6. Distinctive Areas

Commercial Areas, Malls and Shopping Centers



RECOMMENDATIONS

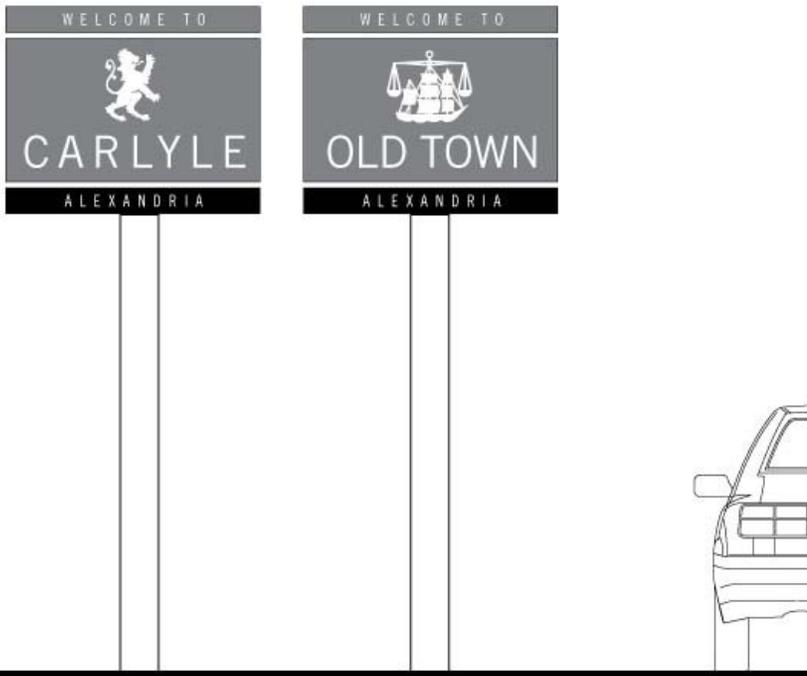
Identify commercial corridors and design "gateway" that responds to the corridor condition

"Areas of commercial concentration": commercial zones with a certain number of independent businesses united under an umbrella association. Suitable for inclusion in maps & vehicular wayfinding, plus gateway signs.

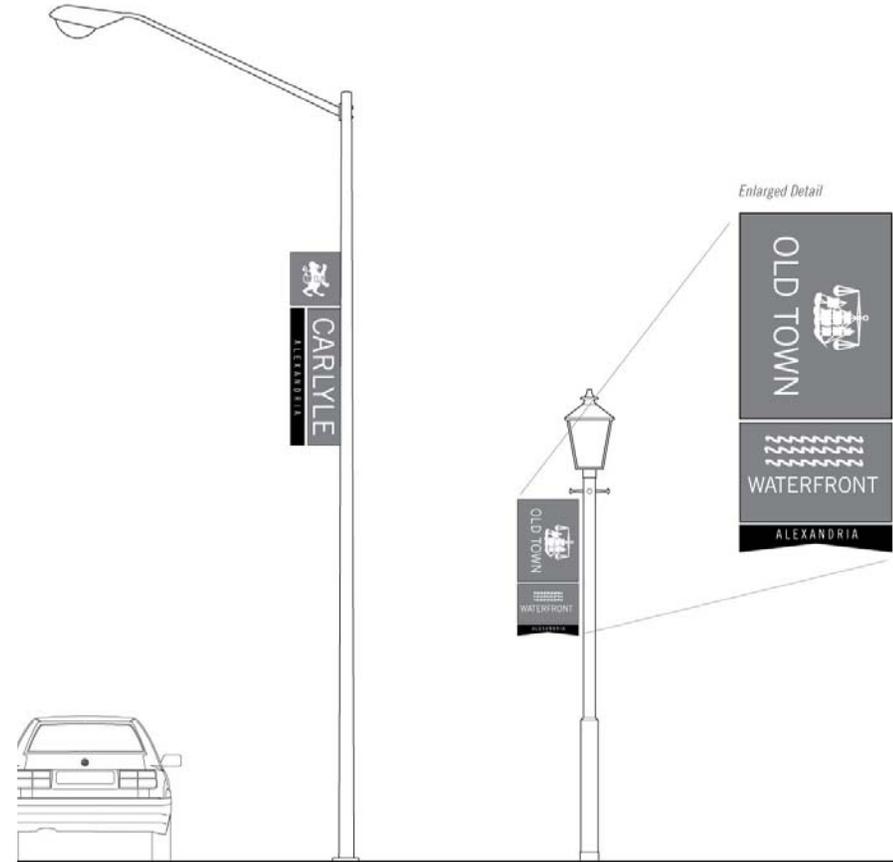


"Retail centers": planned retail developments (malls, shopping plazas). Those which are "regional draws" defined by a minimum # of square feet are suitable for inclusion in maps & vehicular wayfinding. Those meeting a lower minimum are suitable for maps only.

6. Distinctive Areas | Proposed Sign Types



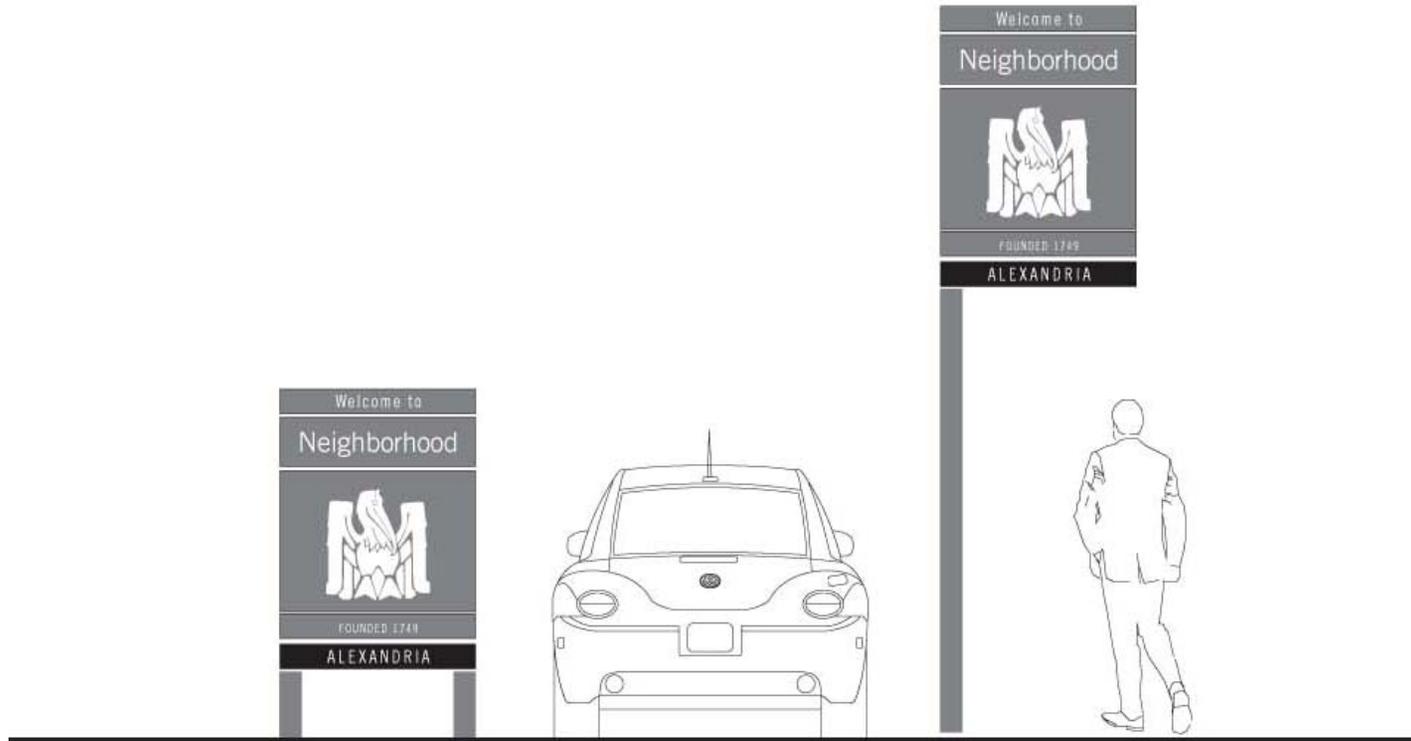
DM District Identity Marker



DB1 District Identity Banner

DB2 District Identity Opt 1 & 2 Banner

6. Distinctive Areas | Proposed Sign Types



NM1 Neighborhood Marker
Design palette only

NM2 Neighborhood Marker
Design palette only

Agenda

1. *The Big Picture*
2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*

- Visitor Center
- Courthouses and Municipal Buildings
- College or University
- Metro Stations
- Areas of Commercial Concentration
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Major Trails & Access Points
- Museums / Historic Attractions
- Theaters, Arts Centers and Performing Arts Centers
- Parking Facilities
- Schools
- Parks, Public Squares and Recreational Facilities

Wayfinding | Destination Hierarchy

TIER A

— Destination of primary importance;
direction throughout city via all access routes

TIER B

— Major destination; advance strategic wayfinding provided

TIER C

— Minor destination, or exclusively civic destination;
wayfinding provided if "hard to find" (e.g. on a side street)

TIER D

— Minor destination or exclusively civic destination;
directional wayfinding not needed, but still may be
identified on map or at site.

Wayfinding | Destination Hierarchy

TIER A

Visitor Center

Ramsay House Visitor Center

TIER B

Named Districts

Old Town
Carlyle
Eisenhower Valley
Arlandria
Del Ray
Landmark
West End
Uptown—Parker-Gray

Courthouses & Municipal Buildings

Court House Square
City Court
U.S. District Court
U.S. Bankruptcy Court
City Hall

College / University

Virginia Theological Seminary
Northern Virginia Community College

Metro Stations

Eisenhower Ave
King Street
Braddock Road
Van Dorn

Areas of Commercial Concentration

Old Town/King Street
Carlyle
Del Ray/Mount Vernon Avenue
Arlandria
Landmark/Van Dorn Area

Shopping Centers

Landmark Mall
Potomac Yard

Museums

African American Heritage Park
Alexandria Archaeology Museum
Alexandria Black History Museum
Archives and Records Center
Fort Ward
Friendship Firehouse
Gadsby's Tavern Museum
J.Q. Adams Otolaryngology Museum
The Lyceum
Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Parks, Public Squares & Rec Facilities

Jones Point Park
Cameron Run Regional Park

Historic Attractions

Seaport Center
National Cemetery
The Athenaeum
Carlyle House
Christ Church
G.W. Masonic National Memorial
Lee-Fendall House
The Old Presbyterian Meeting House
The Ramsay House

Theatre, Arts Centers & Performing Arts Centers

Schlesinger Center
The Birchmere
The Athenaeum
Torpedo Factory Art Center

Hospitals

Inova Alexandria Hospital

Wayfinding | Destination Hierarchy

TIER C

Municipal Buildings

- Animal Shelter
- Police Department
- Senior Services
- Office of Sheriff Detention Center

Major Trails & Trail Access Points

- Holmes Run Trail
- Mount Vernon Trail
- Woodrow Wilson Bridge-Ped Bike Trail to MD
- Route 1 Ped Bike Trail to Washington Street and Hunting Creek/Beltway
- Four Mile Run Trail
- C&O RR Trail

College / University

- Virginia Tech Architecture Center

Historic Attractions

- George Washington's Town House on Cameron St.

Theaters, Art Centers, and Performing Arts Centers

- Little Theatre of Alexandria
- MetroStage

Libraries

- Charles E. Beatley, Jr.
- Central Library
- Kate Waller Barrett Branch
- Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch
- James M. Duncan Branch Library
- Local History/Special Collections

Shopping Centers

- Slaters Lane
- Bradlee Center

TIER D

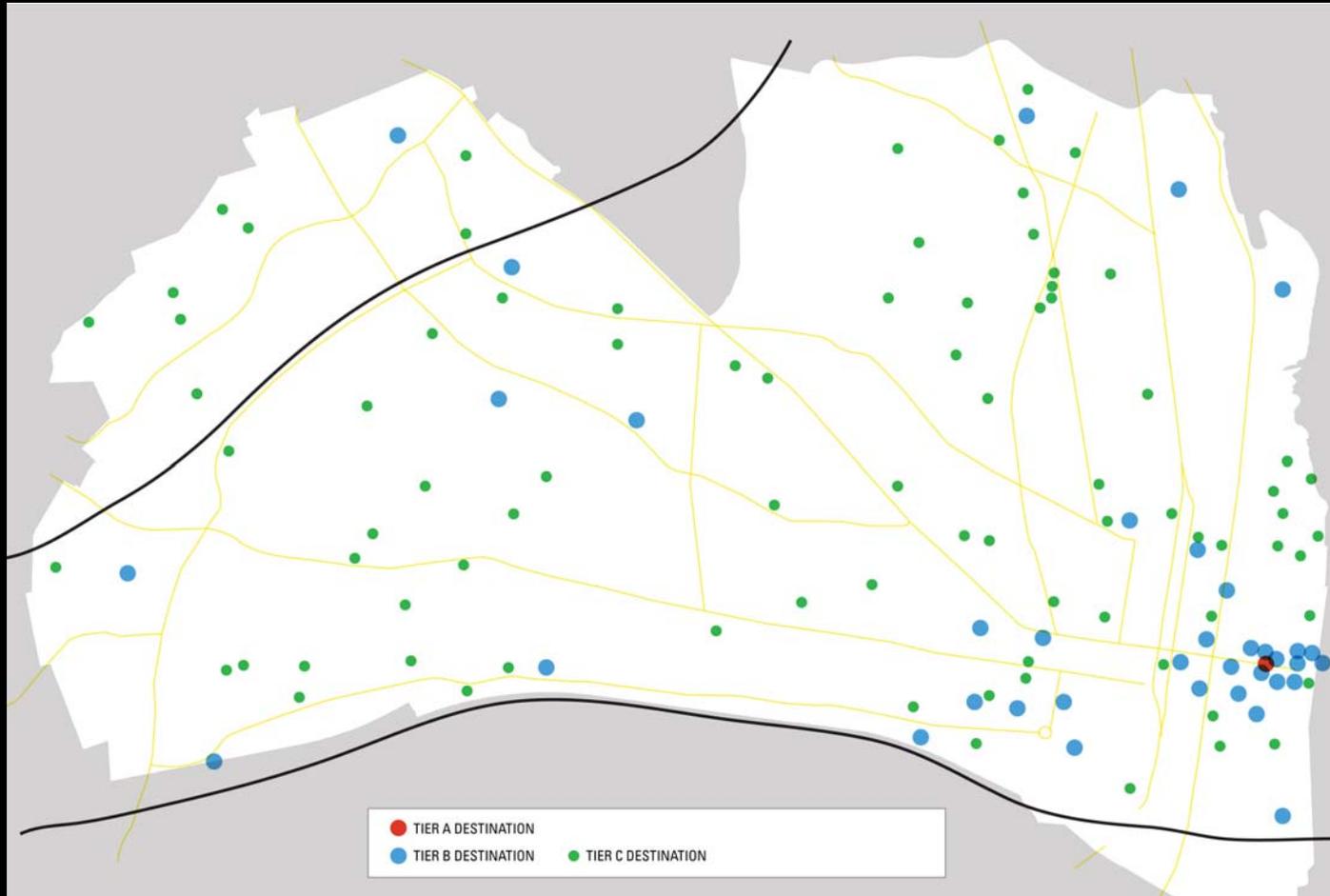
- All Other Parks
- All Other Schools

Wayfinding

Destination density

Key destinations

- Tourism
- Transit
- Major Civic
- Park Facilities
- Schools

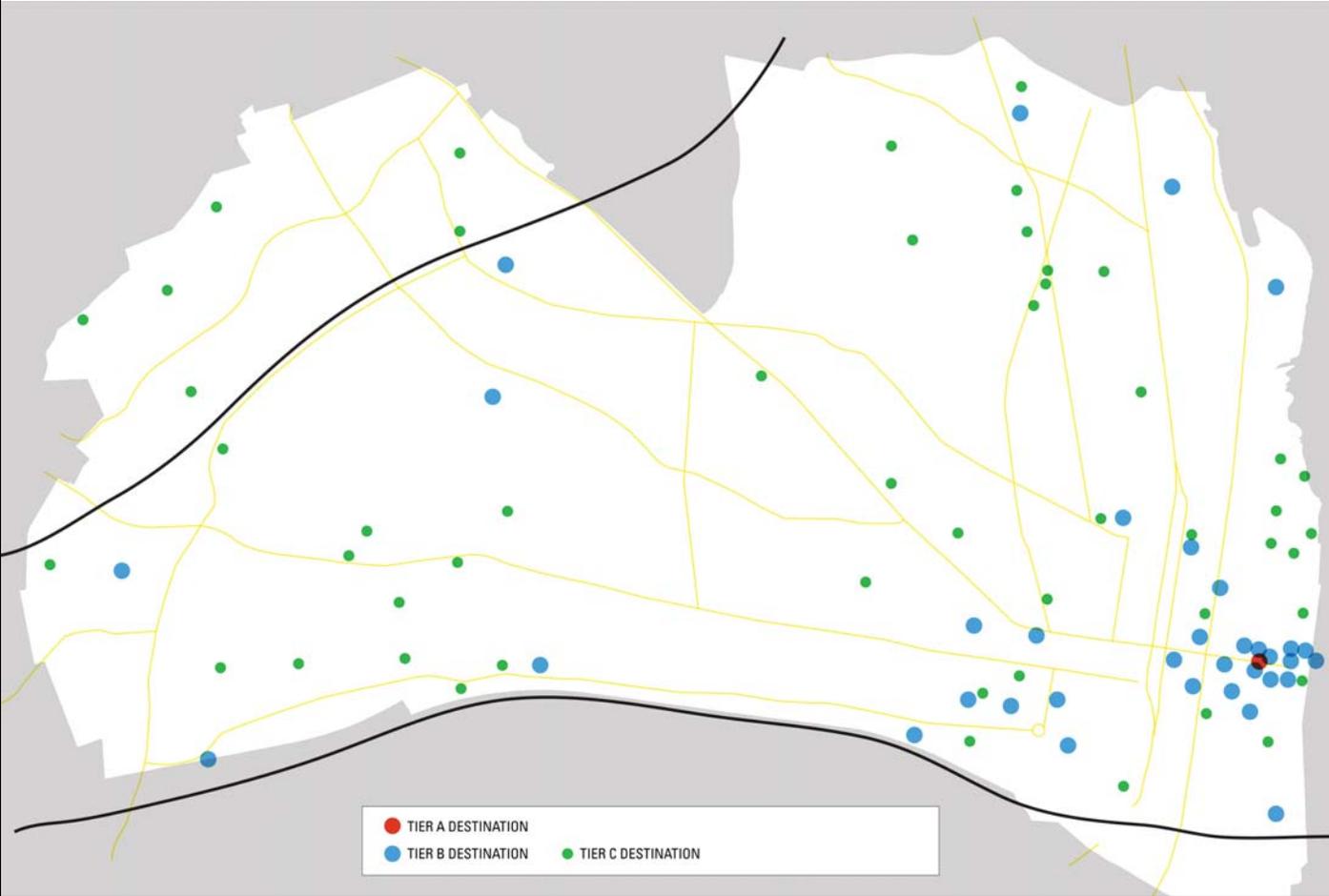


Wayfinding

Destination density

Key destinations

- Tourism
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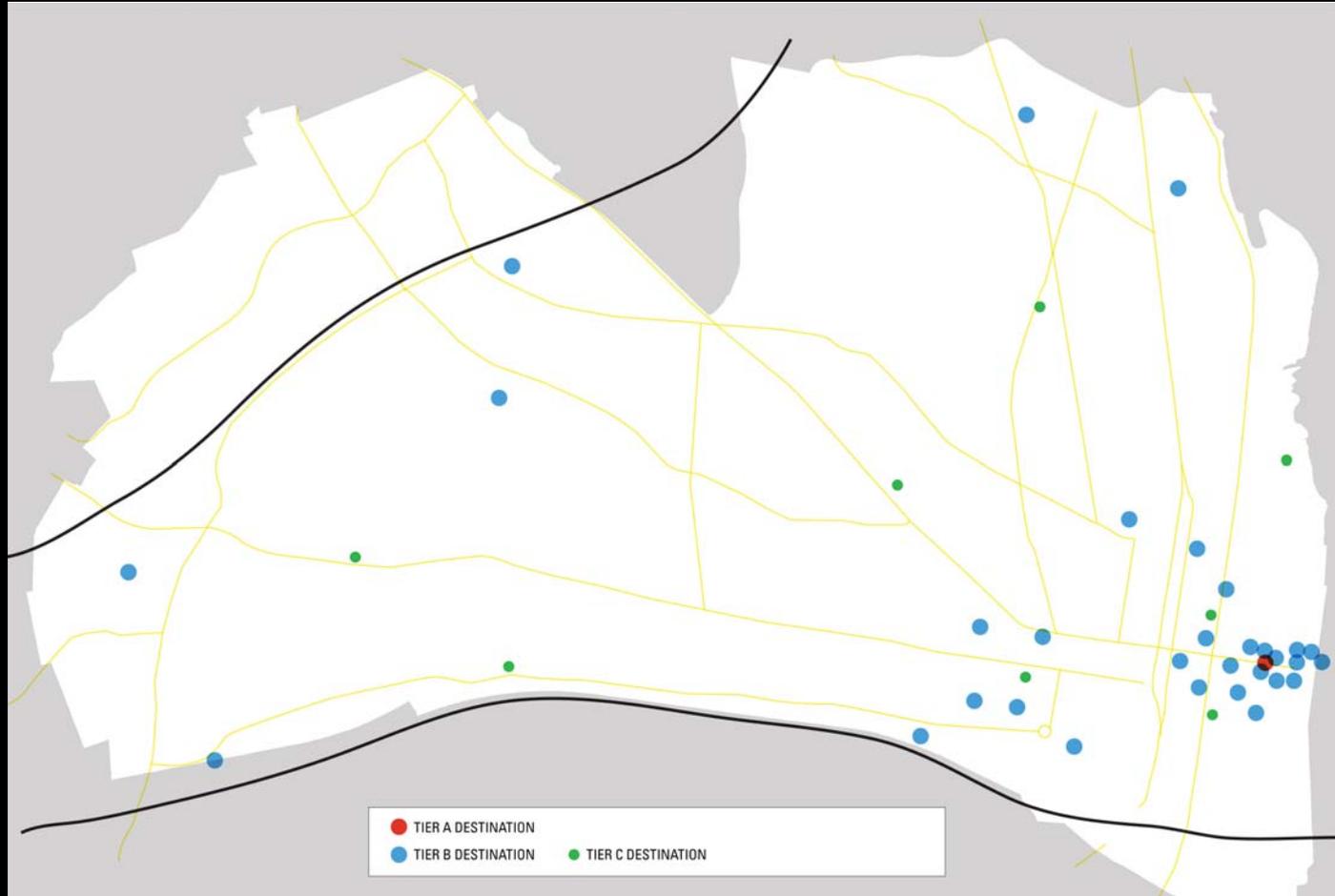


Wayfinding

Destination density

Key destinations

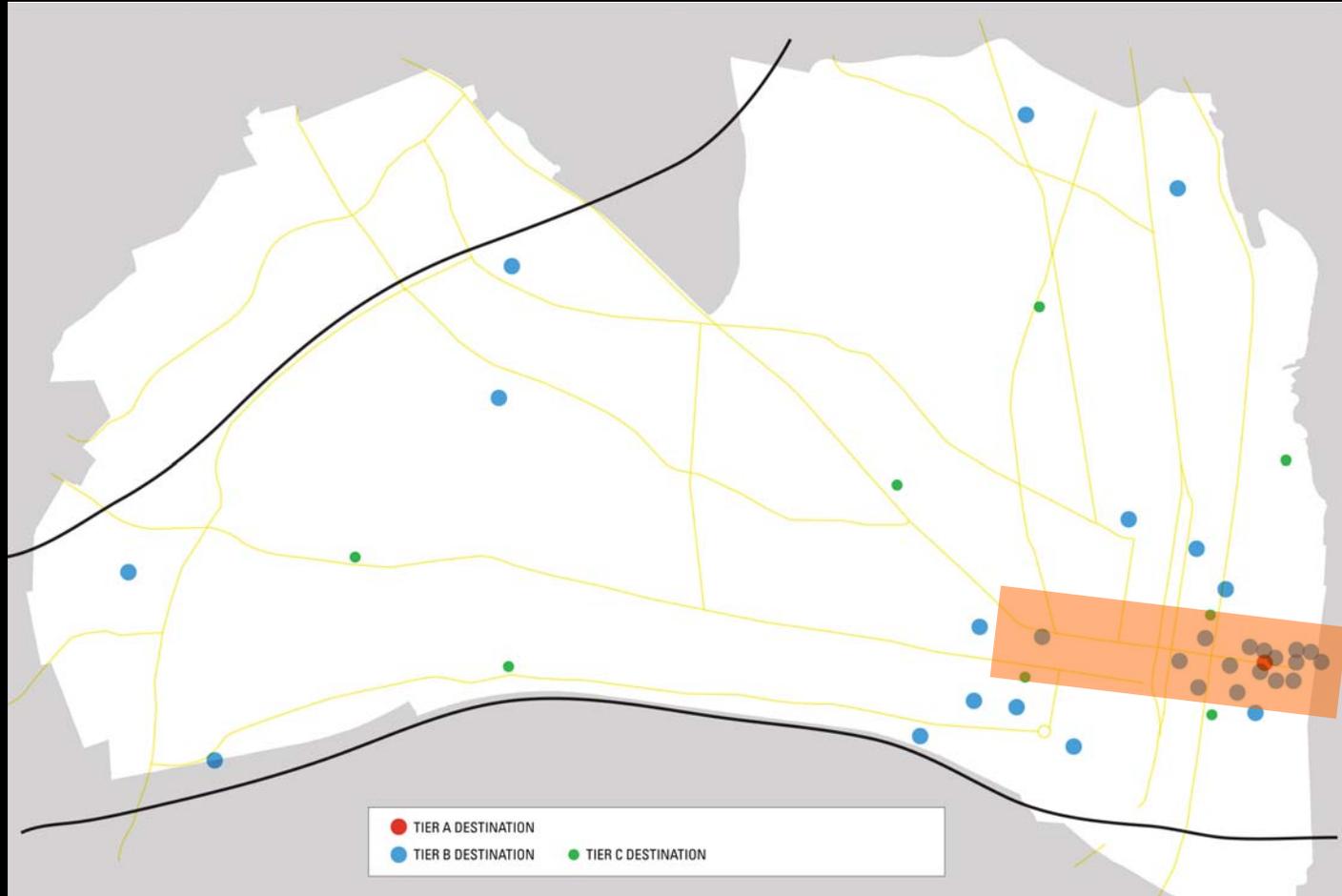
- Tourism
- Transit
- Major Civic



Wayfinding

Destination density

King Street density presents a challenge, and an opportunity



Wayfinding | Subdivisions of King Street

Aids in directing cars to localized parking for myriad destinations

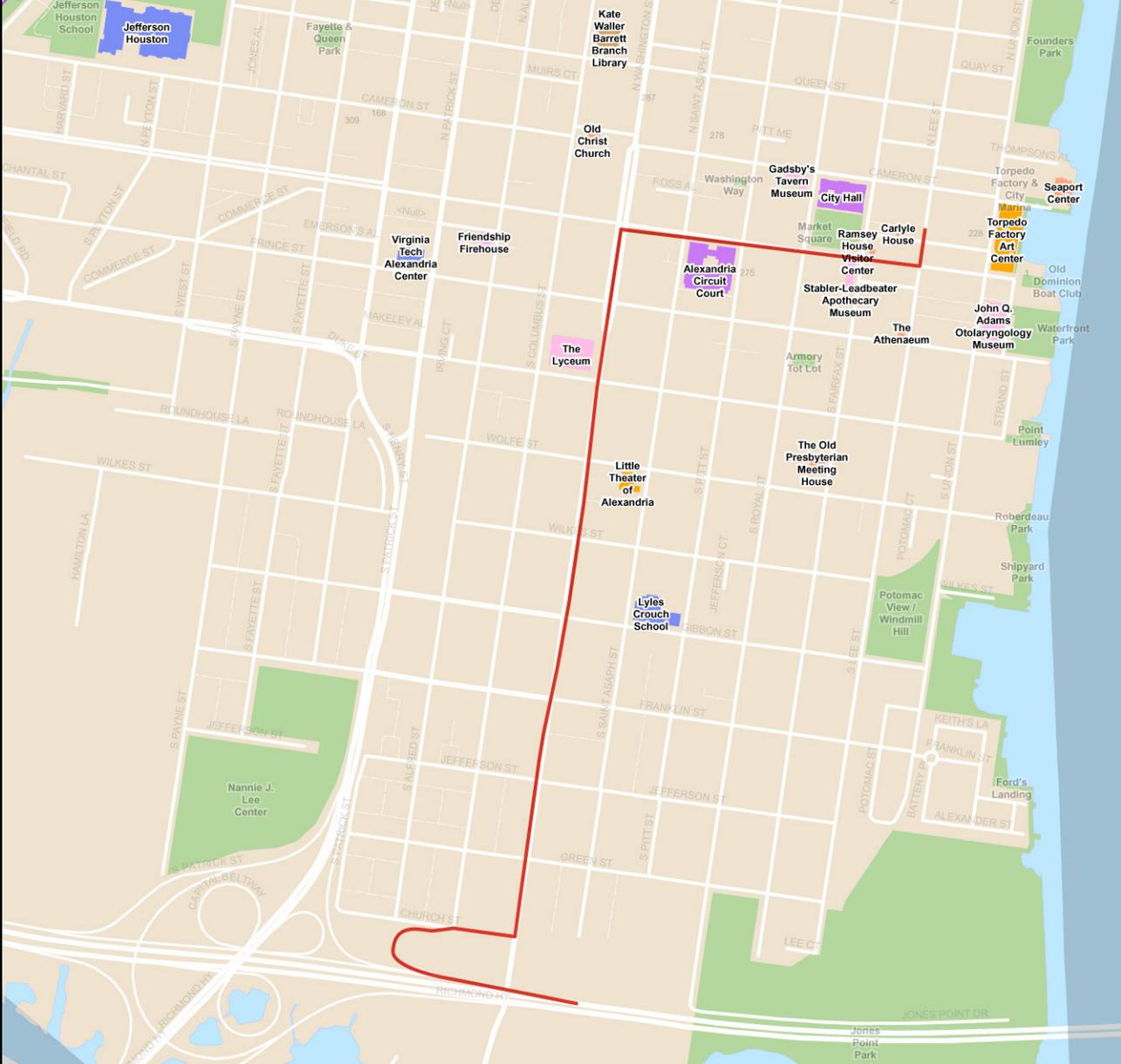


Aids in pedestrian understanding of distance, character of King Street



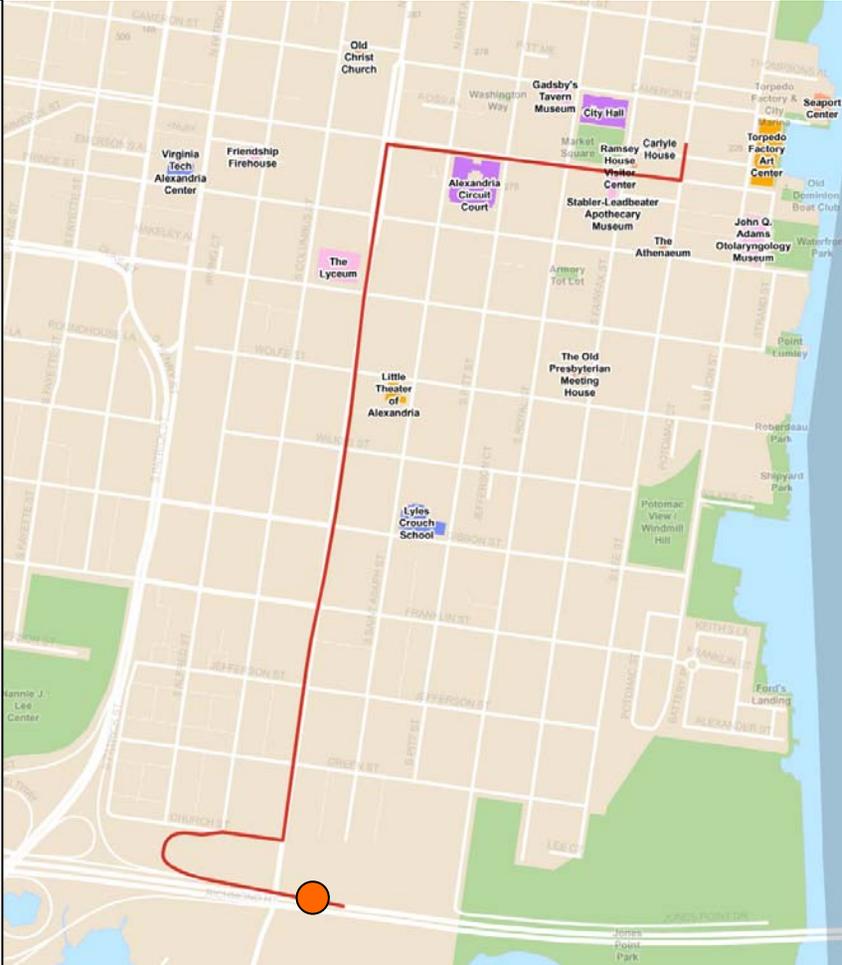
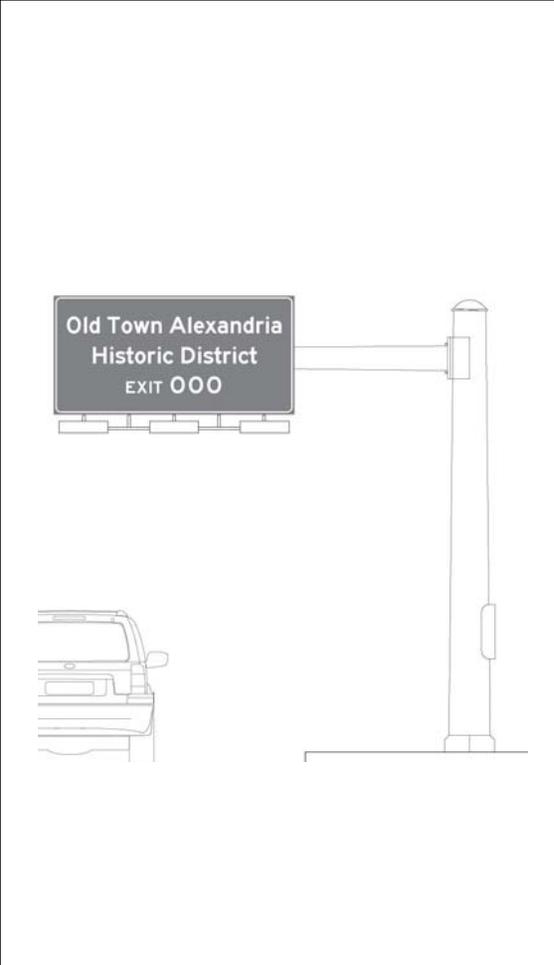
Sample Arrival Path

A tourist driving from Maryland to the Visitor Center

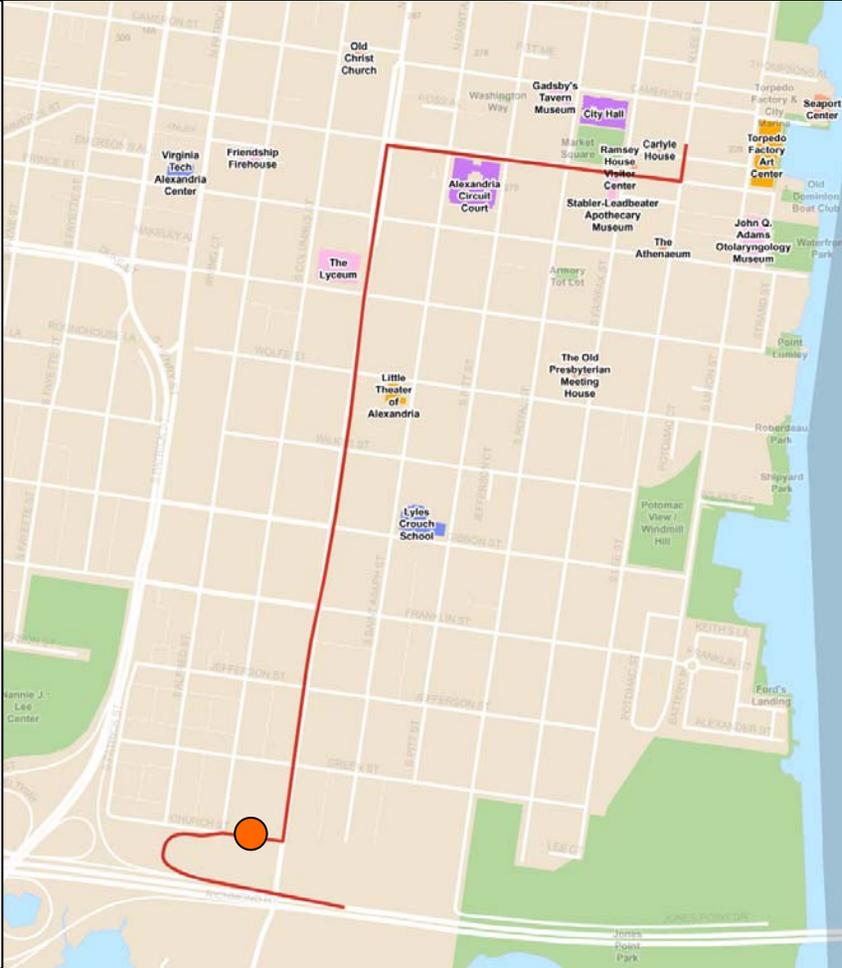


Sample Arrival Path

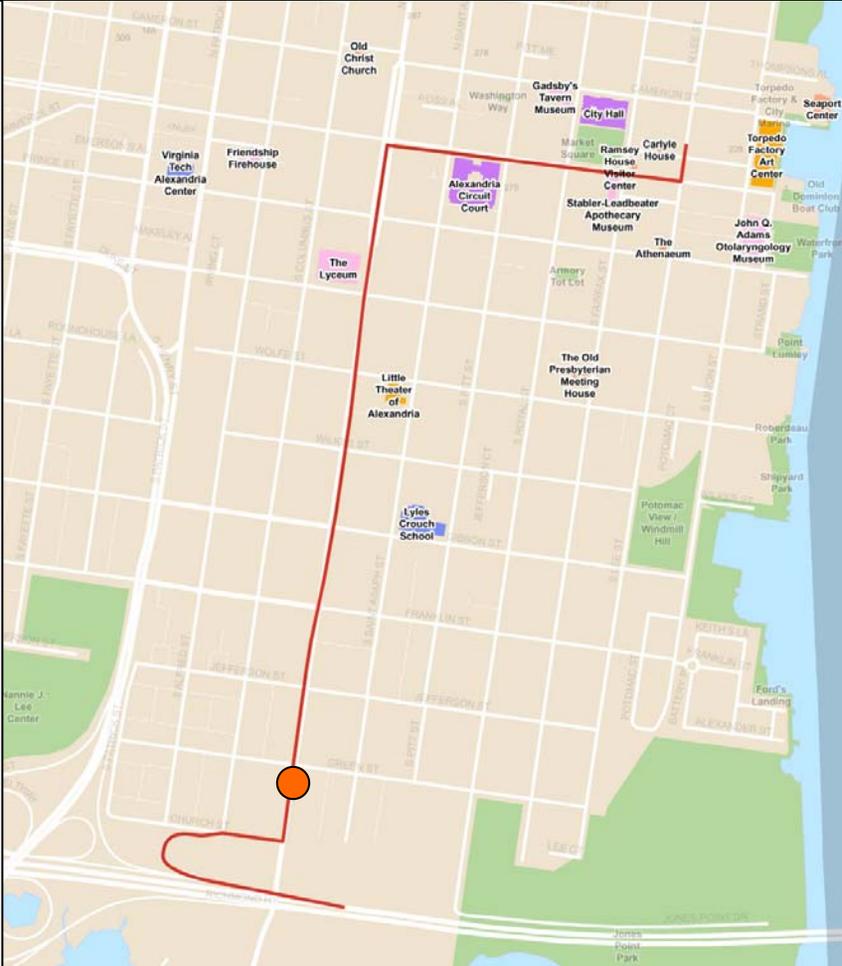
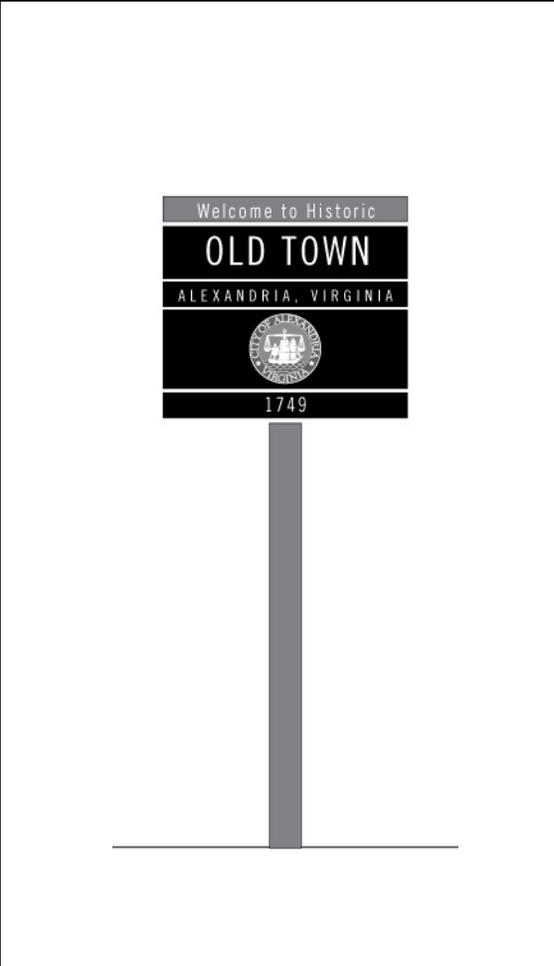
1. Highway Guide



Sample Arrival Path 2. Vehicular Directional

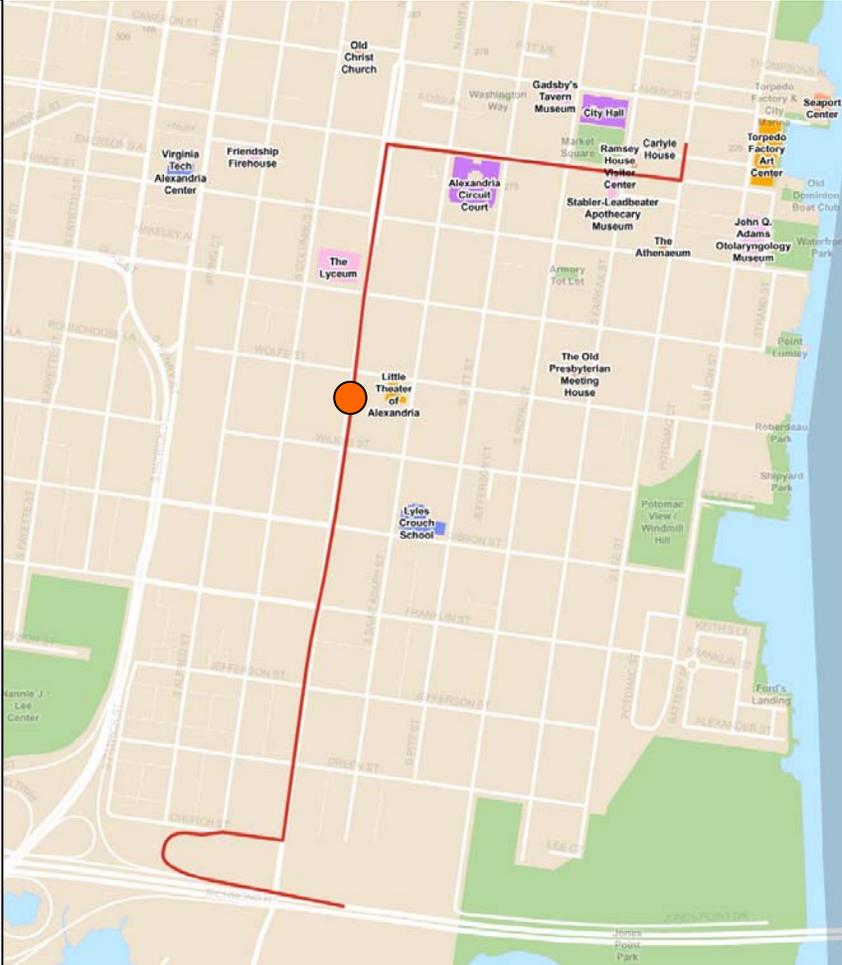
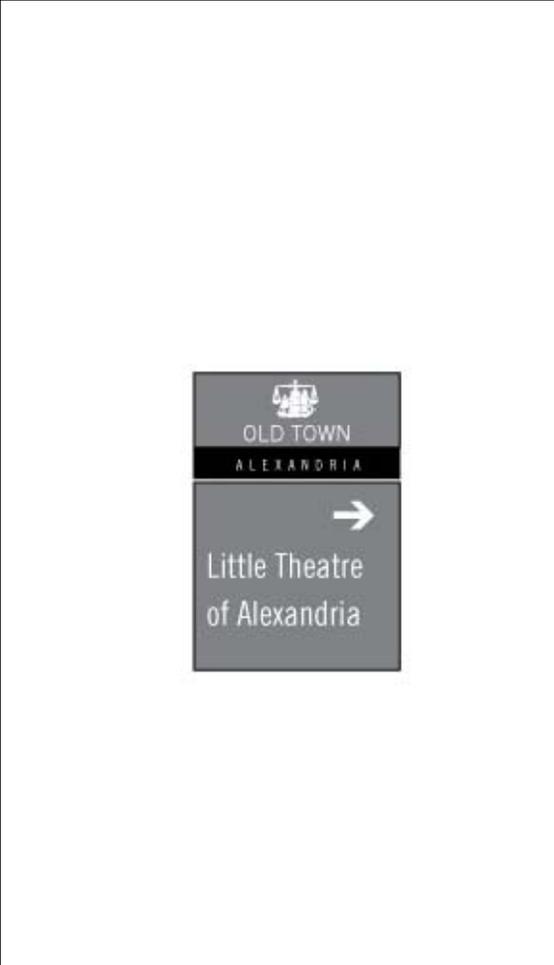


Sample Arrival Path 3. Gateway



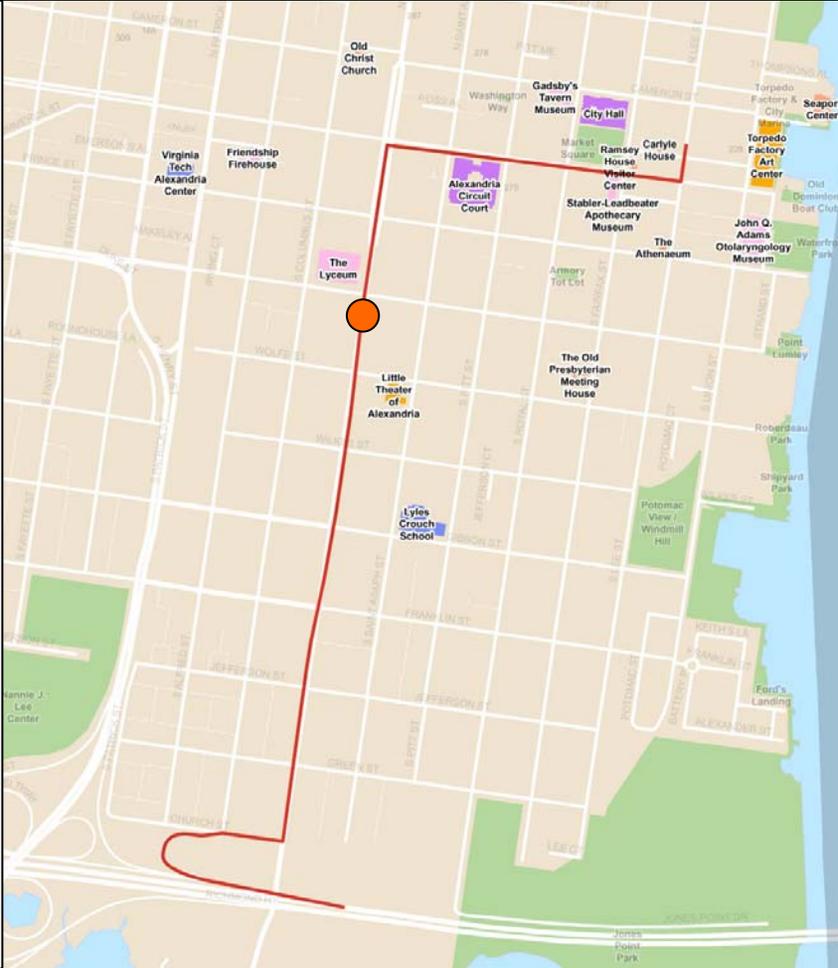
Sample Arrival Path

3b. Minor Vehicular Directional



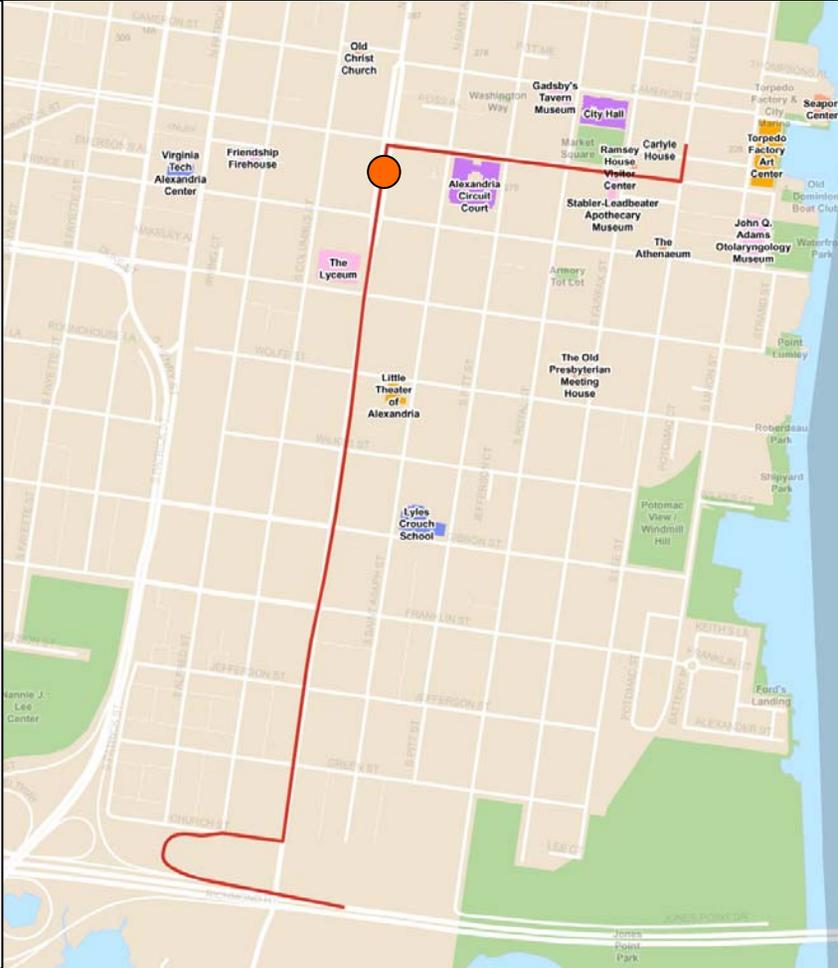
Sample Arrival Path

4. Vehicular Directional

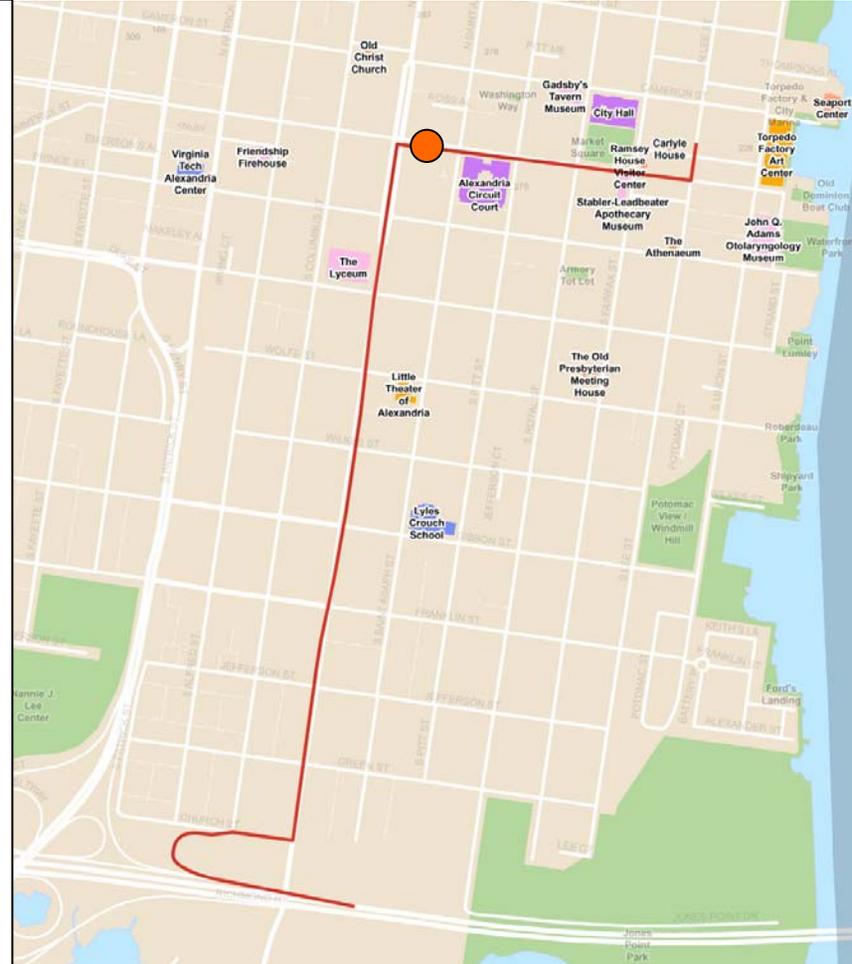


Sample Arrival Path

5. Vehicular Directional

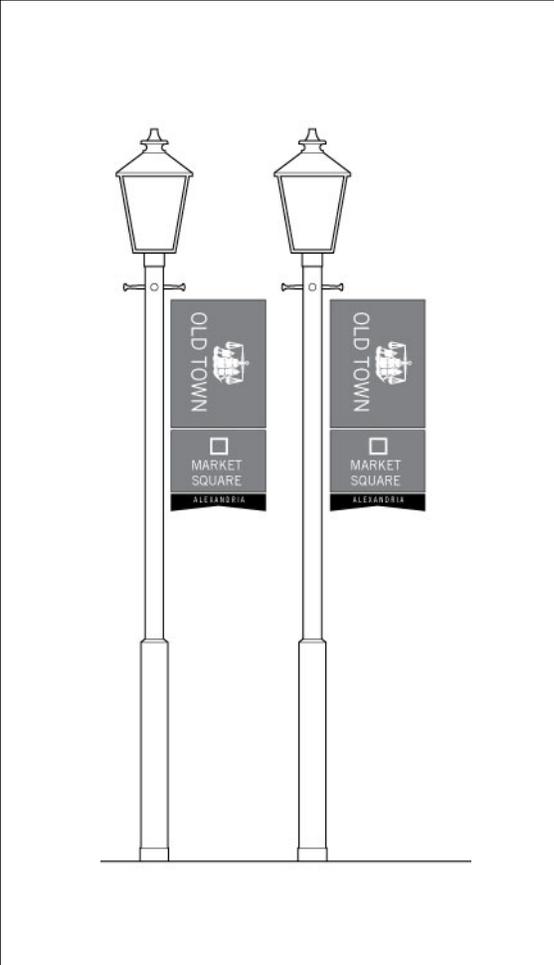


Sample Arrival Path 6. Vehicular Directional

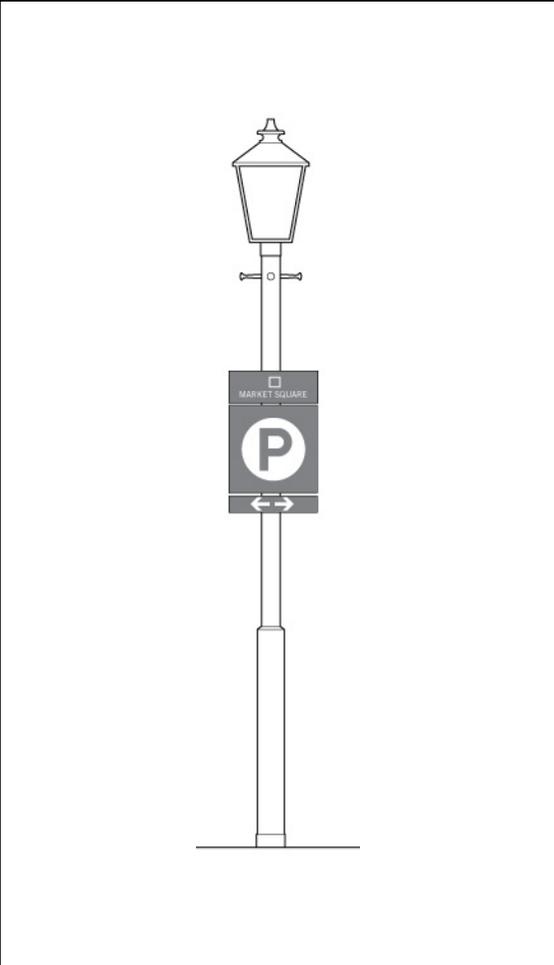


Sample Arrival Path

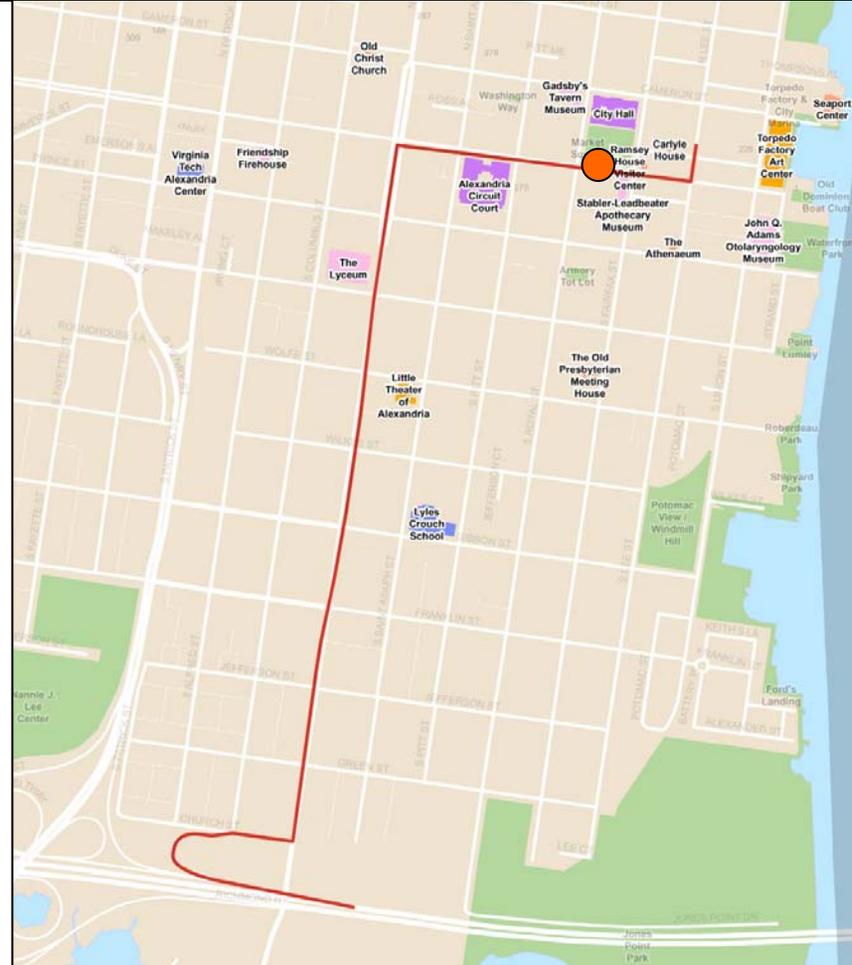
7. Banners



Sample Arrival Path 8. Parking Directional

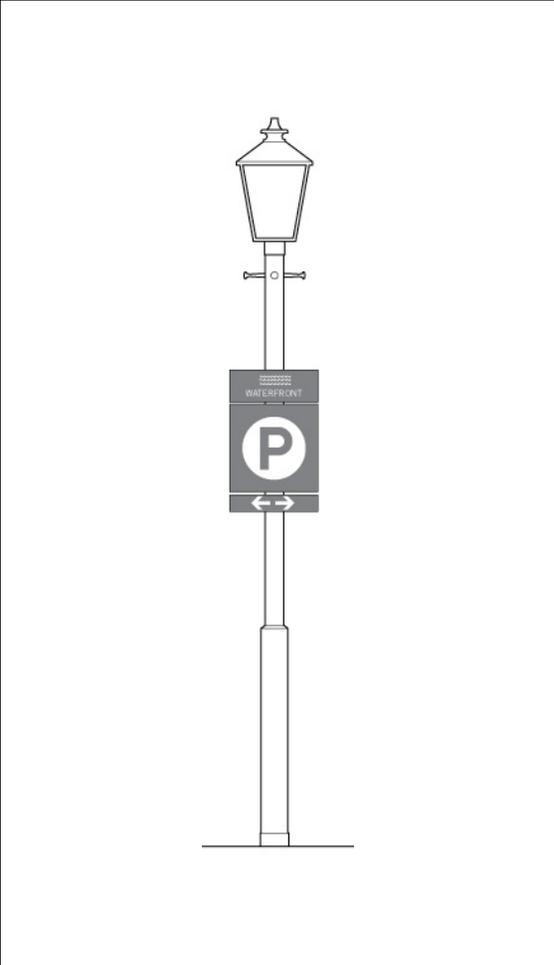


Sample Arrival Path 9. Vehicular Directional

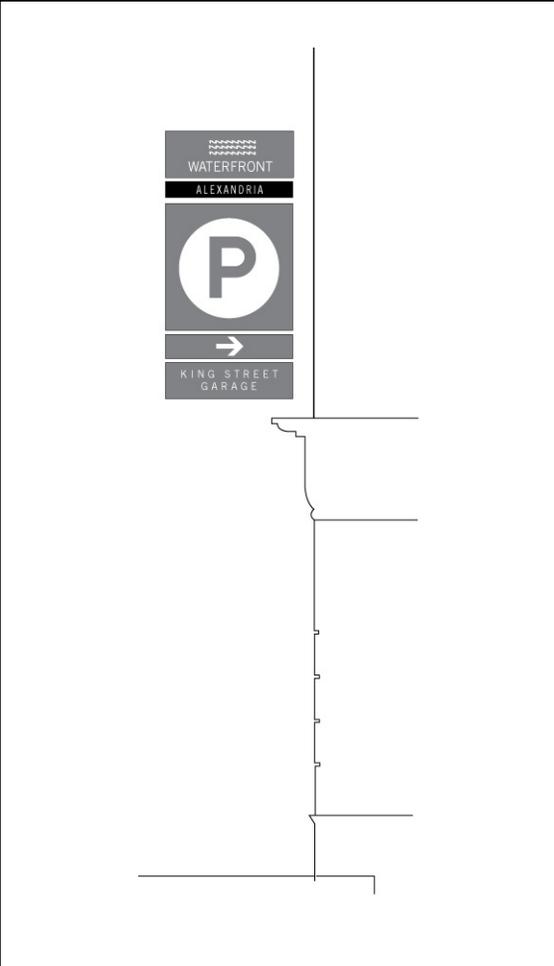


Sample Arrival Path

11. Parking Directional



Sample Arrival Path 12. Parking Identity



Agenda

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2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*

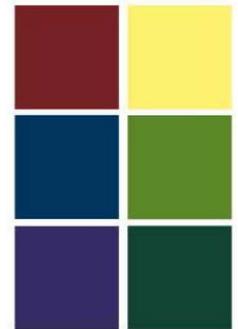
Scheme A | historical / ornamental / charming / timeless



Scheme B | detail-oriented / architectural / subtle / decorative



Scheme C | vintage / chic / distinctive / bright / memorable



Scheme D | urban / sleek / utilitarian / civic / modern



Henry Street

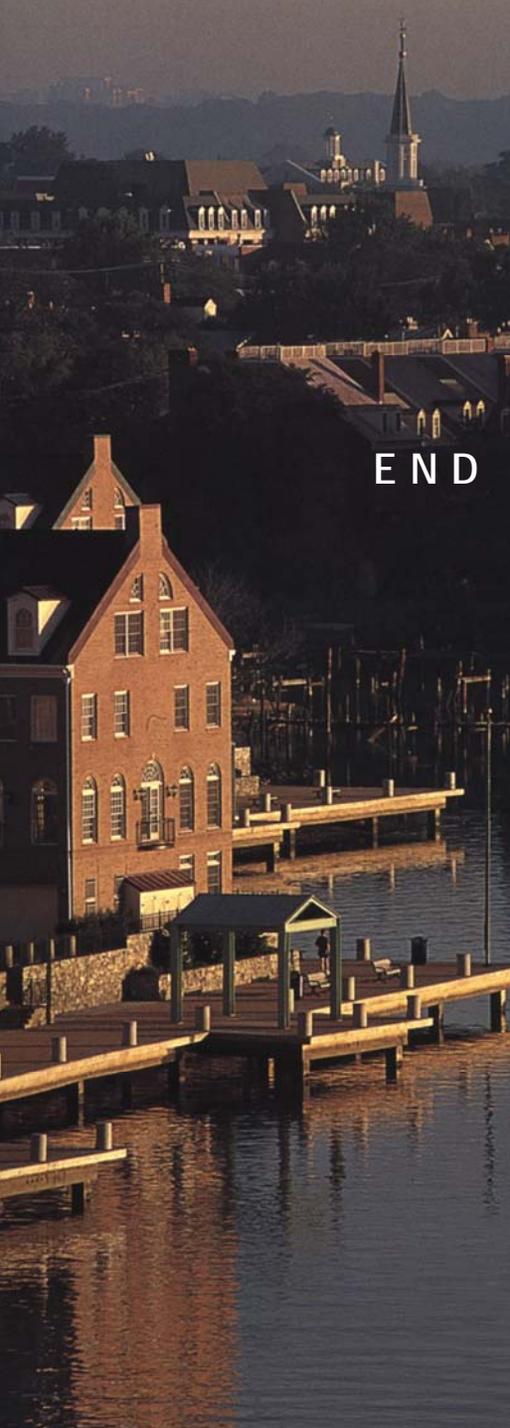
ATTRACTIONS
 ← Lorem Ipsum
 → Suspensisse et Urna Quisque Hendrerit

SHOPS / DINING
 ← Nulla Pede Duis Adipiscing Felis Eget Ipsum Ut
 → Tincidunt Pharetra Pellentesque



Agenda

1. *The Big Picture*
2. *What are the signs?*
3. *Where will they go/what will they say?*
4. *What could they look like?*



END

Sign family components, program strategy and
initial design vocabulary

Stakeholder Advisory Group & Community Presentation

ALEXANDRIA
WAYFINDING DESIGN

SASAKI