


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 30, 2017

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: WAYFINDING PROGRAM UPDATE

The City continues to make progress in the phased implementation of the Wayfinding program. Staff is currently focused on the third phase of the program (vehicular-oriented signage), which includes the signs currently being erected across Alexandria. Feedback about these signs has been near universally positive. The purpose of this memo is to provide a short background summary, note progress to-date, and outline key next steps.

BACKGROUND: In 2010, the City completed development of a citywide [Wayfinding Design Guidelines Manual](#) to guide implementation of a comprehensive citywide signage system. The wayfinding system projects a consistent image for the entire city; reduces visual clutter; and promotes walking, bicycling, and use of mass transit. A Wayfinding Stakeholder Advisory Group established by the City Manager provided input to the City and consultant team and served as a liaison to the community regarding the project as it developed. Membership of the group was made up of representatives from business/civic groups and City commissions and boards. On September 7, 2010, Planning Commission approved the Wayfinding Design Guidelines Manual. City Council approves funding for the program in the annual Capital Improvement Program. The FY 2018 to FY 2027 budget for Wayfinding is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION: Implementation and maintenance of the Wayfinding program is led by the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) with support from the Department of Planning & Zoning (P&Z). The signage program is implemented in phases as budgeted in the CIP and outlined below.

Phase 1, completed in fall 2015, included parking directional and identification signs directing motorists to parking lots or garages in Old Town.

Phase 2, completed in spring 2017, consisted of 30 small pedestrian kiosks in Old Town on King, Cameron and Union Streets. The pedestrian kiosks provide 10-minute walk orientation maps directing pedestrians to key cultural or civic sites within walking distance as well as historic interpretive panels. In addition, this phase included 5 pedestrian directional pointers at the waterfront, orienting visitors to King Street and providing guidance to waterfront attractions such as Founders Park and the Water Taxi. Finally, this phase included one large visitor kiosk at Market Square.

Phase 3 is undergoing installation in two phases (3a and 3b). Phase 3a, now underway, consists of 73 vehicular directional signs throughout the city directing drivers to major destinations such as districts, civic or cultural sites, institutions, or key city services that were identified through the community process to develop the Wayfinding Guidelines. Installation of concrete footers for the signs extended through the spring and summer; installation of the signs themselves began in September and is expected to be complete by early December. Approximately half of the signs had been installed as of November 1. T&ES staff also worked with Planning & Zoning staff to update the color and design of the Carlyle district header to be consistent with other existing branding.

Additionally as part of Phase 3, eight (8) new signs have been installed on I-395 directing drivers to “Old Town Alexandria” and the “Tourist Info Center.” Also, the City has been working with VDOT and the National Science Foundation (NSF) so that NSF exit signage could be installed on I-95. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) signage will also be added to the NSF signage soon. These signs not only guide visitors to NSF and PTO, but they help the thousands of persons traveling I-95 learn that PTO and NSF are located in Alexandria.

Finally, new pedestrian-oriented business identification signs on King Street were also developed and installed during Phase 3. They replace the old A-frame signs that had been used to direct pedestrians to businesses off King Street but, due to age and design, no longer functioned successfully. T&ES staff is installing the individual business slats on the signs as they are received in the Zoning office, which is administering the business signage program.

NEXT STEPS: Phase 3b will include the remaining seventy-nine (79) vehicular directional signs, completing the installation of vehicular directional signage citywide with a total of 152 signs. Anticipated fabrication and installation of the Phase 3b signs is scheduled to begin in Summer of 2018.

Signs contemplated in later phases of the Wayfinding program (if funded) include City gateway signage, destination identity signs, and additional interpretive signage and kiosks. Neighborhood identity signs are also a possible phase, but Council and the community will need to discuss further before any actions are taken on those signs.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Yon Lambert, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services, at yon.lambert@alexandriava.gov or (703)746-4081.

Attachment 1: Transportation Signage & Wayfinding System, FY2018 to FY 2027 CIP
Attachment 2: Wayfinding Guidelines Sign Types

cc: Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Yon Lambert, Transportation & Environmental Services
Karl Moritz, Planning and Zoning
Patricia Washington, Visit Alexandria

TRANSPORTATION SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING SYSTEM

DOCUMENT SUBSECTION: City-Wide Amenities
MANAGING DEPARTMENT: Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

PROJECT LOCATION: Citywide
REPORTING AREA: Citywide

PRIMARY STRATEGIC THEME: Theme 10: Multimodal Transportation

PROJECT CATEGORY: 3
ESTIMATE USEFUL LIFE: Varies

Transportation Signage & Wayfinding System													
	A (B+M)	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M (C-L)
	Total Budget & Financing	Through 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	Total FY 2018 - FY 2027
Expenditure Budget:	3,099,000	1,820,000	616,000	381,000	432,000	241,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,649,000
Financing Plan:													
Cash Capital:	1,049,000	400,000	616,000	381,000	432,000	241,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,549,000
Prior City Funding:	1,120,000	1,120,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Financing Plan:	3,099,000	1,820,000	616,000	381,000	432,000	241,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,649,000
Additional Operating Impact:													
Annual Impact:	191,662	0	0	0	0	25,000	25,750	25,623	27,318	28,138	29,982	29,851	191,662
Total Additional Operating Impact:	191,662	0	0	0	0	25,000	25,750	25,623	27,318	28,138	29,982	29,851	191,662

CHANGES FROM PRIOR YEAR CIP

No changes from prior CIP.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & JUSTIFICATION

This project provides for the comprehensive design of a signage, wayfinding, and identification system that will project a consistent image for the entire City, reduce clutter, promote walking and mass transit, and be sustainable and expandable. A well-designed and implemented wayfinding program will increase identification of key sites and attractions, including parking, and support the City's goals of orienting and informing visitors and residents, motivating them to visit historic sites, and making the navigation of the City easier.

Work sessions with the City Council, Planning Commission, and the Board of Architectural Review were held in January 2009. The design phase of this project was approved in FY 2010. Implementation began in FY 2011 with Phase 1, and remaining phases are occurring over time as funding becomes available. Implementation involves the fabrication and installation of the wayfinding signs and will be coordinated with the implementation of the Braddock Road, King Street, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Arlandria, Waterfront, Beauregard, Potomac Yard, and Landmark/Van Dorn plans. In order to distribute the cost of the wayfinding program over multiple years, a phased approach is recommended for implementation.

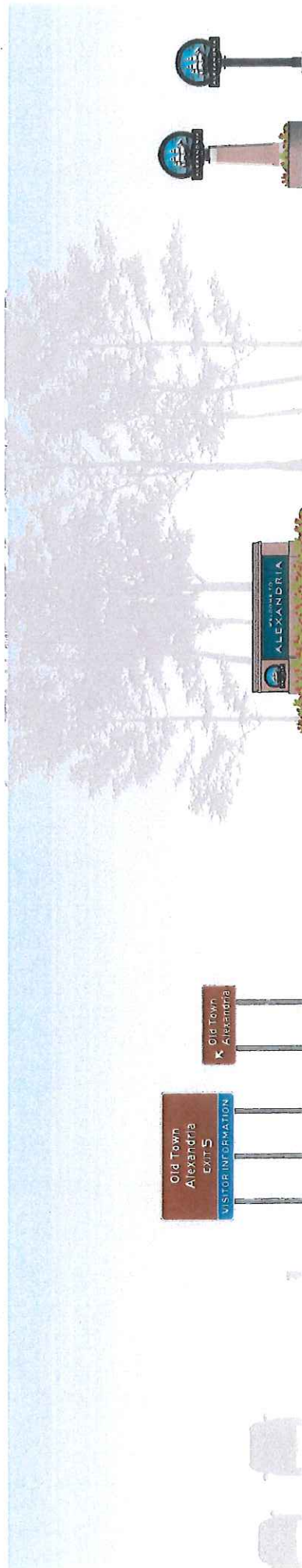
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EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL ADOPTED PLAN OR RECOMMENDATION

City of Alexandria Wayfinding System Design Guidelines Manual approved by Planning Commission, September 2010

ADDITIONAL OPERATING IMPACTS

The \$25,000 assumed in FY2021-FY2027 accounts for maintenance costs for vandalism, signs struck by errant vehicles, and replacement of signage that may begin to reach the end of its useful life. By FY2021, the Phase 1 signs will have been in place for 8 years, with an expected life of approximately 10 years. These maintenance funds will be used to replace signage that fades due to UV sun exposure. The expectation is that once the approximately 120 vehicular directional signs proposed for Phases 3a, 4, and 5 are installed, on average 1-2 signs per year may need to be replaced due to being struck by vehicles.

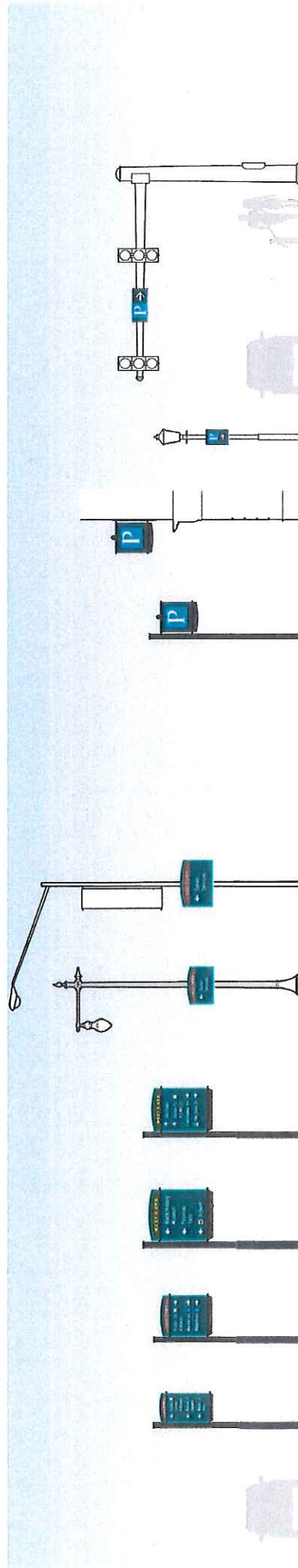


TB.1 Highway Guide Sign

TB.2 Destination Guide Sign

CG.1 Washington Street North Gateway

CG.2 - 3 City Gateways

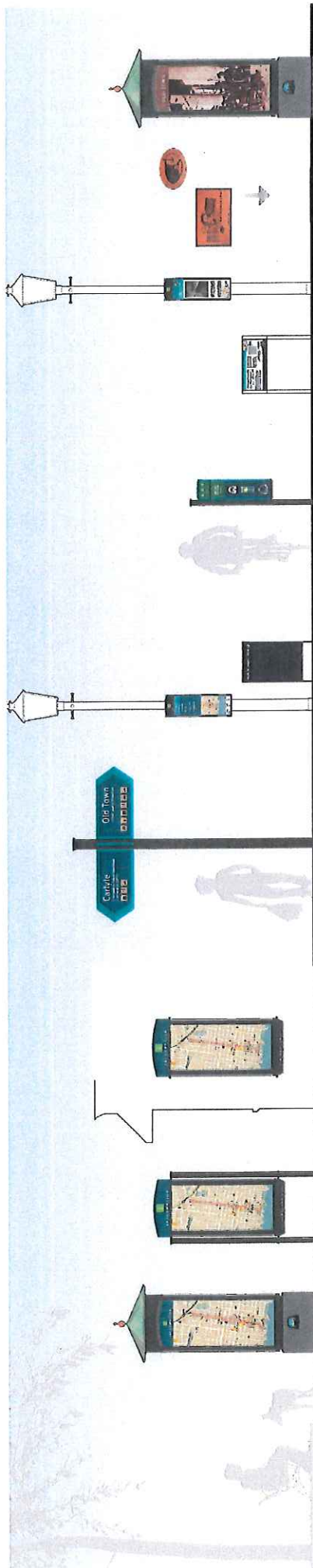


DR.1 - 4 Vehicular Directionals

DR.5 - 6 Vehicular Directionals

PK.1 - 2 Parking Identities

PK.3a - 3b Parking Trailblazers



IK1 - 3 Visitor Kiosks

PD.1 Pedestrian Directional

PD.2 - 3 Pedestrian Directionals

BP1 Shared-Use Path

IN Interpretive Signs and Panels



D1.1 Destination ID

D1.2 Destination ID

D1.3 Destination ID

DM District Identity Marker

DH Historic Marker

Neighborhood Identity