



TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

APRIL 2024



TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

For:
LOUISA FORWARD FOUNDATION
April 2024

Prepared By:



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

LOUISA WAYFINDING OBSERVATIONS & ASSESSMENT

A. Executive Summary

Wayfinding is a comprehensive and unified directional sign system that is customized to a community, county, or region and can play a key role in enhancing the signing area's brand. It is a tool designed to educate both residents and visitors to the boundaries, key destinations, and attractions while reducing sign clutter.

Frazier Associates was contracted by the Louisa Forward Foundation to conduct a wayfinding assessment for the Town of Louisa. The assessment consists of information gathering from members of the community (referred to as a wayfinding task group), a site visit to assess existing signs, routes, and destinations, and a follow up report with recommendations for a wayfinding system that can meet the needs of the community. The assessment does not include options for the design of the wayfinding system. This step would take place in a future phase of the project.

On January 3, 2024 a site visit was made to the Town of Louisa by Kathy Frazier of Frazier Associates. The visit started with a meeting with the wayfinding task group that began with an overview presentation on wayfinding (included as an appendix to this report). Questionnaires were then handed out that contained five questions for the participants to answer. A round-table discussion followed to allow each participant time to share their answers. Following the meeting, a tour of the community with members took place to observe travel routes, existing signs and destinations. Photographs and notes were taken on signs in the ground, destinations, and the experience of driving through the community.

This report includes the results of the wayfinding task group input as well as observations and recommendations for moving forward with custom wayfinding for the Town of Louisa.

The key destinations for the Town of Louisa included the Historic Downtown/Courthouse Square/Town Square, Town Hall/Louisa Art Center/Museum of Louisa County, Louisa County Offices and Town Park. As noted, these destinations have a variety of names and will need to be vetted if a custom wayfinding system moves forward.

The general budgets for design and fabrication of a basic sign system that includes primarily vehicular directional signs (trailblazers) and parking identification and directional signs is as follows. Design would range from \$35,000 to 50,000 but the Town should expect a higher fee due to the fact the system will need to go through the VDOT review process. A budget range for 20 trailblazers was estimated for a range of \$160,000-240,000.

The next steps for the process if the Town decides to move forward would be securing funding for design and initiating the full design process. A sample scope of work that includes VDOT is included in the Appendix.

B. Louisa Wayfinding Task Group Information Gathering

The five questions and the responses from the Louisa wayfinding task group meeting on January 3, 2024 are enumerated below.

1. What are the key goals for wayfinding in the Town of Louisa?

- Drive locals and tourists to the historic corridor, museum and art center complex using an interesting color design/logo.
- Drive visitation from Lake and Shenandoah Crossings to town for economic uplift. Identify key areas and how to get there. Create a sense of place.
- People are confident that they will easily get to their destinations.
- Greater moveability for visitors and ease of navigation.
- Bring visitors, look, update.

2. Wayfinding sign systems on a vehicular level are limited to key visitor destinations. What destinations do you envision a wayfinding system signing? The number indicates the number of surveys with that response.

- Louisa Art Center - 5
- Museum of Louisa County History/Historical Society - 4
- Town Square (Historic Courthouse Square) - 4
- Historic Downtown/Main Street - 4
- County Offices/voting/county services - 3
- Town offices - 3
- "Shopping & Restaurants"/Commercial - 3
- EV Charging - 3
- Parking - 3
- Parks - 3
- Trails - 2
- Uptown - 2
- Courthouses - 1
- Arts and Entertainment District - 1
- Visitors Center - 1
- Historic Churches -1
- Lodging - 1

3. What, in your opinion, are the biggest challenges visitors have navigating to key sites that a wayfinding sign system could help to solve?

- There are no directional signs to the Historic Downtown: retail, restaurants, art center, museum, parking, courthouse
- Distance to where they want to go, where key components to tourism are located, something to see/do, somewhere to eat, somewhere to stay. Directional signage to destinations, parking.
- Awareness of other activities. Access/Easy travel to amenities and attractions. Coordination/cohesion/collaboration (3C's)
- The knowledge of what is available in the town.
- 208 intersection

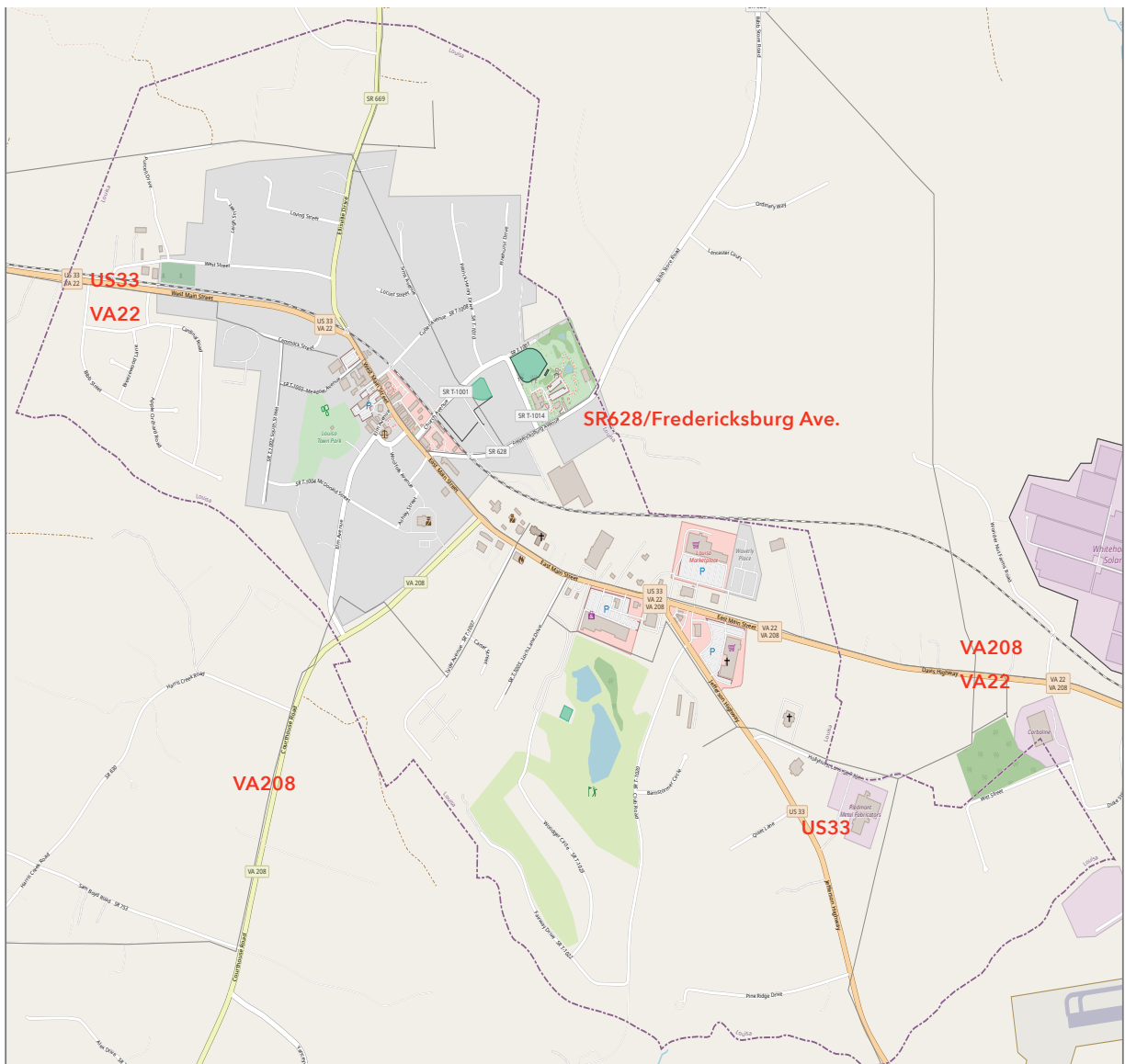
4. While this assessment does not include graphic design, it will be important to note what graphic images, colors, or icons (either currently used or not) convey the feel and/or atmosphere of Louisa? This will be recorded in the report.

- Water Tower-4 - (Why the water tower?- 1)
- Railroad-3
- Courthouse - 3

- Town Hall - 2
- Jack Jewett
- Note: there are current parking signs in Burgundy behind a section of Main Street in "The Alley"
- History, agriculture, art - what is the draw that is unique. Niche marketing is key.
- Simple black/white maybe some color blue/green

5. Are there any other concerns, ideas, or suggestions you have for the design of the wayfinding system for the Town of Louisa?

- Are there options for solar lighting/night sky for these signs?
- Readability from a car is a big deal with directional arrows.
- Economic development and aesthetics.
- Tourism = new money!
- Small town: walkable, bikeable
- Name districts: Historic Uptown, Sports and Entertainment, Commercial
- As we grow and change, we need a system that can change and adapt.



This map shows the primary travel routes in and through the Town of Louisa including VA 22, 208, US 33 and SR628.

C. Typical Wayfinding Components with Louisa Observations

1. Highway signs

These signs are typical Department of Transportation (DOT) signs that are of universal design nation-wide and are based on the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices published by the Federal Highway Administration. While the green signs mark an exit, there is also a system of brown and blue signs that are intended for tourist destinations.

Louisa: There are limited green signs directing automobiles to “Louisa” from I-64 but there is not distinction between the Town and the County. Once on VA 208, there are no additional DOT mileage or directional signs to the Town of Louisa. The distance is 9 miles.

Observations: Additional highway signs would be helpful and would need to be coordinated with VDOT.

2. Gateway Entrance Signs

These signs are the first custom component of a wayfinding system and mark the entrance to the signing area such as a county, city, or town. Depending on the type of road and potential locations for gateway signs, they may either be monumental type signs or post and panel and may need to be breakaway as required by local DOT district engineers.

Louisa: Standard green VDOT signs exist at the boundary between the Town and the County. Custom gateway signs were in the process of being updated at the time of the site visit.

Observations: Since gateway signs are already in the process of being updated, there are no additional gateway signs recommended at this time.



Green MUTCD directional signs are currently found on Interstate 64 east and west. The exit is for Louisa which is the County and the Town.



Directional sign on I-64 exit ramp.



Louisa gateway sign heading north on VA 208. A brown directional sign to the Louisa Arts Center is under the gateway sign.



Existing gateway signs coming into the Town of Louisa. This photo is a temporary banner of the new gateway sign design to be installed.

Sample
Vehicular Trailblazer



This is a sample custom trailblazer sign designed for Woodstock, Virginia. Typically, trailblazers list no more than three destinations and are designed for the size and speed of the road. The Woodstock sign system was required to go through VDOT review and approval since their streets are maintained by VDOT as are the streets in the Town of Louisa.

3. Vehicular Trailblazer Signs

These signs are the key component to a wayfinding sign system that identifies key destinations and provides seamless direction to destinations from major roads in the signing region. Routes are determined during the design process. These signs are designed for the complexity and speed of the road and require breakaway mounting. For readability and legibility, the number of destinations per sign is generally limited to three and the size of the lettering is determined by the speed of the road. VDOT maintains the roads in the Town of Louisa and will be a required part of the design process for the development of a new sign system.

Louisa: The Town currently has a variety of trailblazer signs to key destinations. These signs are typically the brown and blue MUTCD type signs.

Observations: The Town would benefit from custom wayfinding signs to destinations such as Historic Downtown, Louisa Courthouse, Town Hall, Louisa Art Center, Sargeant Museum, public parking etc. These destinations would be fine tuned in the design process. All existing signs would be removed. VDOT coordination and approval would be required.



Sample existing trailblazer signs in the Town of Louisa. They follow MUTCD guidelines as far as color and content. Many signs are faded, have very small lettering and need replacement.



While these are brown signs that follow MUTCD standards to some extent, the size is very small and not readable and the signs are mounted very low.

LOUISA WAYFINDING OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

4. Public Parking Directional and Parking Lot Identification Signs

Once arriving at a destination, finding public parking is many times a key wayfinding need. These signs are sometimes independent smaller directional signs or can be an additive panel to the vehicular trailblazer sign post.

Louisa: The Town of Louisa has several public parking lots in the downtown area as well as the Town Hall/Art Center/Sargeant Museum. Some custom parking signs have been recently installed in the downtown parking lot.

Observations: Directional signs to public parking should be included in a wayfinding system and can be stand alone or part of new vehicular wayfinding signs.



Standard parking directional signs (above left) are in place on Main Street in the Town of Louisa and there are several public parking lots in the downtown. Signs vary in design.



Louisa public parking lot behind Main Street (left) and recent public parking signs (right).

Sample Parking Directional and Parking Identification Signs



Sample parking directional and parking lot identification signs in Woodstock. The sign, above, has an added parking directional panel and the sign, below, is a parking lot identification sign.



5. Information Kiosks

Once parked and out of the car, the visitor can be greeted with more information about walkable destinations within the community including other destinations not shown on the vehicular trailblazer signs such as shops, restaurants, and lodging. Again, a website that is coordinated with this information reinforces the “seamless” experience for the visitor.

Louisa: No information kiosks were noted during the site visit.

Observations: Louisa would benefit from kiosks in public parking lots downtown and at the parking lot of Town Hall, particularly given the location of the Art Center and the Museum.

Sample Information Kiosk



Sample information kiosk in downtown Huntsville, Alabama, above, that consists of a location map.

The multi-sided kiosk, below in Blacksburg, includes a map and other information on destinations and the history of the community.



6. Site Identification Signs

Some communities choose to have the destination site identification sign, such as the visitor center or a museum, coordinated with the wayfinding system design, but this is not a requirement. However, all vehicular trailblazer destinations are required to have a site identification sign, so motorists know when they have arrived.

Louisa: Some key destinations have site identification signs.

Observations: The Louisa Town Hall site has three significant destinations and would benefit from a site identification sign as well as a sign for the Town Hall itself.

Site Identification Signs



Sample site identification sign at a multi-use facility.



Some destinations at the Louisa Town Hall site have site identification signs. Town Hall needs its own sign.



7. Banners

Sometimes banners are used to reinforce the boundaries of areas in a community such as downtown or historic districts. The banner design can be a part of the wayfinding system.

Louisa: On the day of the site visit, banners were in place on Main St. commemorating veterans. Banners celebrating 150 years were also in place around the community.

Observations: Banners could further blaze the trail to downtown and the Town Hall site, reinforcing the visitor experience and bringing the community together visually.



Sample Banner

This is an example of banners using the wayfinding design to blaze the trail to a key destination.



Banners noted on site visit.

8. Website, Brochures, and Maps

As outlined earlier in terms of “website to onsite” these components create a complete seamless experience of a community or region for the visitor.

Louisa: Both the Town and the County have welcoming websites.

Observations: If Louisa moves forward with custom wayfinding, using a new graphic image developed during the wayfinding design process could be used on the website to create a stronger “website to onsite” experience, particularly for visitors.



Louisa County has an attractive website with a brand that expresses the character of the County. It has a page (shown above) that links visitors to the Town of Louisa website which is also up to date, attractive and engaging. It could become a good link for wayfinding.



D. Examples of Sign Systems in Smaller Communities like the Town of Louisa

These examples are provided to help the Town of Louisa envision the possibilities of a community-wide wayfinding sign system. These systems were designed for communities of similar size to the Town of Louisa and were based on existing community branding.

1. Falls Church, VA
2. Strasburg, VA
3. Woodstock, VA



Post and Panel Gateway Sign



Vehicular Trailblazer with Parking Directional Sign



Site Identification Sign

LOUISA WAYFINDING OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT



Monumental Gateway Sign



Information Kiosk



Vehicular Trailblazer Sign



Vehicular Trailblazer Signs



TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Recommendations

What follows are recommendations for the Town of Louisa to consider in planning a custom wayfinding sign system.

1. Brand, Existing Signs, and Tourism Websites

When searching for Louisa on the web, the County shows up and Lake Anna is heavily promoted. There are other visitor websites that eventually takes a visitor to the link for the Town of Louisa website. The visitor can also go directly to the Town website but would need to know to google "Town of Louisa" to get to the town website which is full of good information. There is no branding for the Town, just the use of the town seal. Creating a brand, geared to the visitor experience and an expression of the Town could be a part of a wayfinding sign system design as well as the website for visitors. This would create the "website to onsite" experience.

2. Coordination with Louisa County

Something to consider would be to reach out to the County of Louisa to see if there is interest in a wayfinding system for the county. If there is, the two sign systems could be coordinated, creating a larger, well coordinated experience for the visitor. An example of this kind of coordination can be seen in Alleghany County, Virginia. There, the County with the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge created a unified wayfinding system.

Schematic design of wayfinding sign system for Alleghany County and the Town of Clifton Forge in Alleghany County.



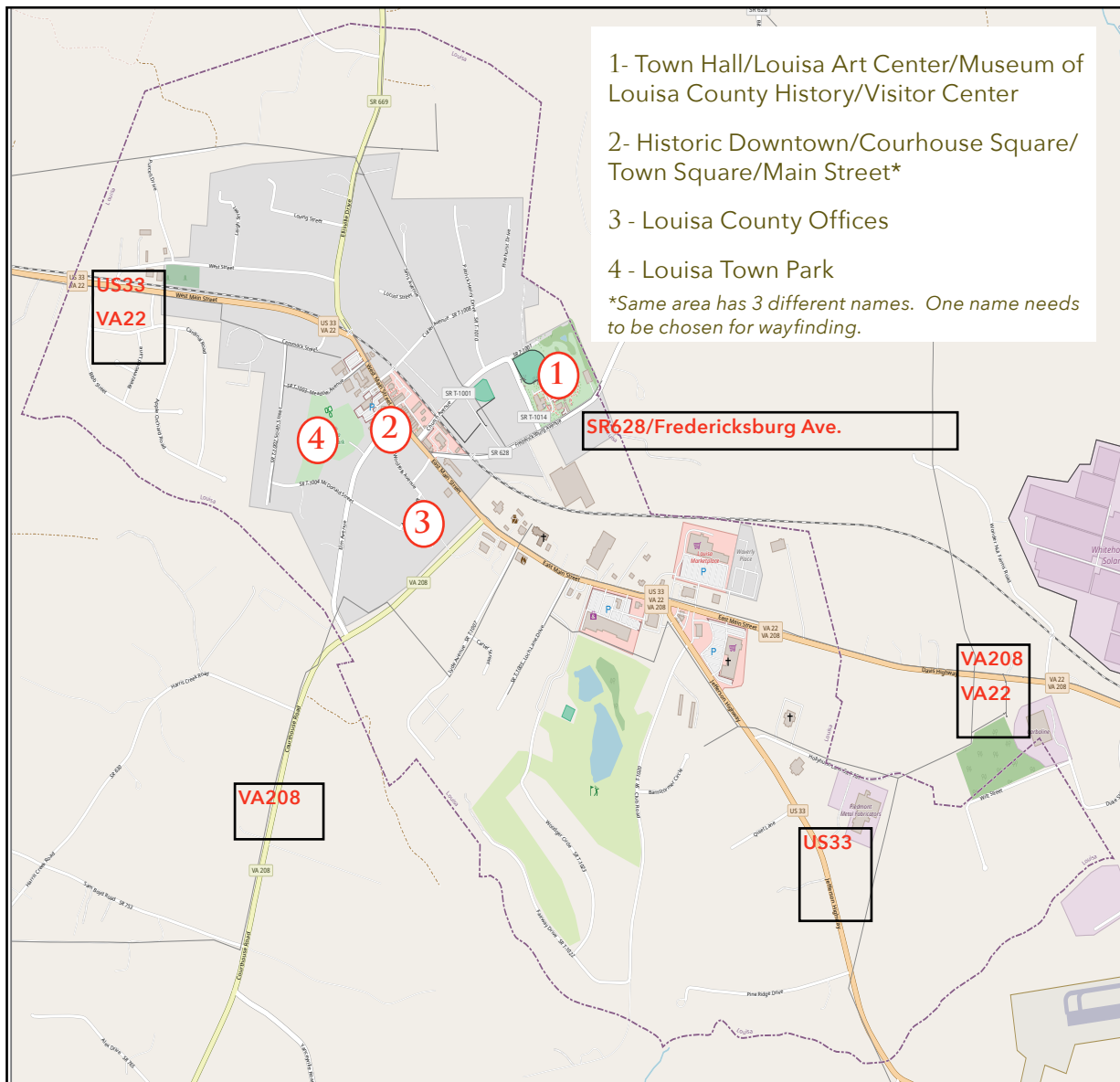
FINAL SCHEMATIC

LOUISA WAYFINDING RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

3. Destinations

Key destinations include places such as historic downtowns, museums, parks, etc that attract visitors. Typically, acceptable destinations should have cultural, recreational or historical significance. Vehicular trailblazer signs include these key destinations

There are very good destinations in the Town of Louisa, as listed earlier from the participants questionnaire responses, that would benefit from a custom wayfinding sign system vehicular trailblazer components. That said, there are several destinations that have multiple suggestions for a title on the wayfinding sign system. For example, downtown is noted as "Town Square", "Historic Courthouse Square", "Historic Downtown", and "Main Street." Deciding on what the best description for the downtown is will be key for concise wayfinding. Also the Town Offices, Louisa Art Center and the Museum of Louisa County are all at the same destination location and all three destinations are key for the Town of Louisa. It may be possible to arrive at an overall name for the location that could be used on wayfinding signage such as "Louisa Art, History and Town Center". The point here, is in developing a wayfinding system, arriving at concise destinations will be key. Town Hall would benefit from a clearer site identification sign. Note that VDOT will have final approval of destinations. See map below for destinations from information gathering.



4. Gateways and Routes

Routes 208, 22 and 33 all go through the Town and provide gateways from all directions. Gateway signs have been in place for awhile and were being updated at the time of the site visit. If a custom wayfinding system is designed, updating the gateway signs to coordinate with the wayfinding design could be an option.

5. Other Sign Types

The Town would benefit from well coordinated parking directional and public parking lot identification signs particularly in the downtown area. Information kiosks would also be beneficial at the Louisa Art, History and Town Center and downtown public parking lots.

6. Cost of Fabrication, Installation, and Maintenance

The cost to fabricate, install, and maintain a wayfinding sign system depends on the size of the signing area, the number of destinations and signs and the types of signs - gateway, vehicular trailblazers, parking, pedestrian, etc. - determined most beneficial for the signing region. That said, signs are not inexpensive and vehicular signs need to be engineered to meet required breakaway standards and need to meet certain legibility standards which makes the size of the panel vary depending on the size, complexity, and speed of the road. Note: Typically, vehicular trailblazer signs have a maximum of three destinations. The cost for these signs typically range from \$8000-12,000 but will depend on the design. For the Town of Louisa, it is unknown at this time how many destinations and signs would be needed. An estimate of 20 signs would be a range of \$160,000-240,000 but this is only an estimate and does not take into account design, installation and maintenance costs and should not be used as a total estimate.

7. Coordination with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

The roads in the Town of Louisa are maintained by VDOT. Implementing a custom wayfinding system will require VDOT review and approval. A diagram of VDOT involvement is included as an example in Appendix A of this report. Also see: https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/media/vdotviriniagov/about/vdots-transportation-system/signs-and-signals/signs-for-business-and-tourism/Community_Wayfinding_Manual_Rev_3-5-2019.pdf

8. Cost of Design

The cost of design depends on the number of wayfinding components desired and the size of the community. The Town should budget at least \$35,000 for the design and construction intent drawings of trailblazer and parking directional signs and up to \$50,000 if more components are desired.

9. Future projects

When planning a wayfinding system, if a project or projects are in the works that would benefit from being included in the system in the future, the system can be planned with that in mind and the system could use a modular sign blade system or allow space on signs to accommodate for future destinations.

10. Funding

Wayfinding sign systems are funded by a variety of methods and many times a community has a tax base that can be used to save money over time. There are other grant sources that would require research with various Virginia departments. Some communities have used sources such as transportation enhancement grants, tourism tax dollars and local foundations to fund these projects.

Over time, wayfinding systems require updates, maintenance, and expansion. To provide ongoing support, it is recommended that a financial plan be developed that provides the necessary funding. One method of funding is for the signing region to set aside 10% of the overall fabrication/installation cost each fiscal year. Staying up to date on grants and funding programs on a local, state and national level is recommended.

Suggested Next Steps for the Town of Louisa

If the Town of Louisa desires to move forward with designing and implementing a custom wayfinding sign system, several steps are recommended:

1. Secure funding for design. That process will inform the type and number of signs and cost estimates for fabrication and installation.
2. Research and decide if the Town would benefit by coordinating with Louisa County on a wayfinding system.
3. Set up a wayfinding task group that will help guide the project from design through implementation. What follows is a suggested list of members of the task group. Eight to ten members is recommended.
 - Project coordinator and liaison between design consultants and task group
 - Town of Louisa Council member/ County supervisor
 - Other Town/County officials such as city planner, city engineer, economic development, public works, transportation engineer, etc.)
 - Tourism (Chamber of Commerce)
 - VDOT-Local District rep
 - Large attractions/destinations (Art Center, Historical Society. etc)
4. Hire a consultant who specializes in wayfinding to take the County through the design and implementation process.
5. Decide on the destinations to be signed.
6. Decide how the project will be phased.
7. Complete the design process including final schematic design, design development, programming and construction intent documents. Coordinate with VDOT.
8. Secure funding for implementation.
9. Implement the System.



TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

APPENDIX A: VDOT WAYFINDING PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

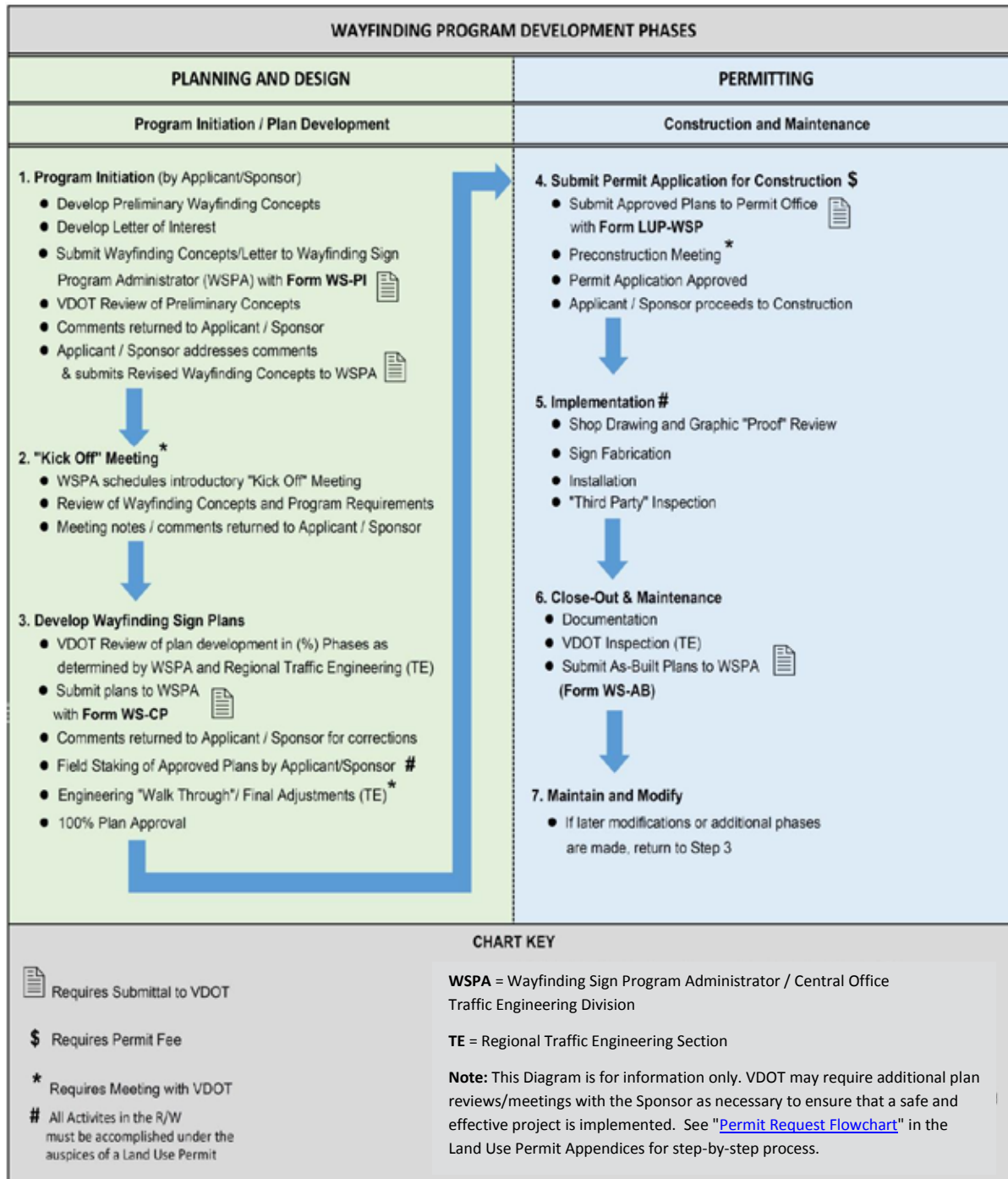
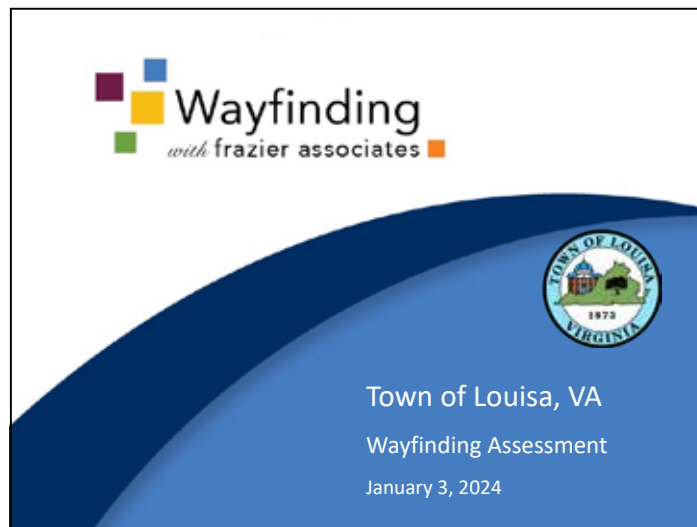


FIGURE 1: WAYFINDING SIGN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PHASES



TOWN OF LOUISA, VIRGINIA WAYFINDING ASSESSMENT REPORT

APPENDIX B: JANUARY WAYFINDING PRESENTATION



1



2

Today's Agenda

- Scope of Project Review
- Why Wayfinding?
- Wayfinding Goals
- Components and Elements of a System
- Considerations when Planning a System
- Typical Design Process
- Sample Systems
- Questionnaire and Discussion

3

Wayfinding **with frazier associates** | Why Wayfinding?



- A lot of effort has been going into community revitalization
- Post-WWII road systems were designed to bypass obstacles - like communities!
- Signs were neither coordinated or consistent
- Sign clutter
- Standard signs did not reflect the community or give a "sense of place"

4



Wayfinding Goals

1. Welcome and orient visitors (*arrival*)
2. Provide unified image and reinforce a sense of place (*community character, history, brand*)
3. Guide to major destinations
4. Support tourism and economic development
5. Create a “Website to On-site” visitor experience (*a continuous “seamless” and positive experience*)
6. Be cost-effective



5



Wayfinding Components

Auto-Oriented

- Highway Signs (DOT)
- Gateway Signs (Custom)
- Trailblazer Signs
- Parking Signs
- Street/District ID Signs
- Banners
- Temporary Signs

Pedestrian-Oriented


- Pedestrian Directional Signs
- Information Kiosks

Web/Print Oriented


- Mobile Apps/GPS
- Websites
- Brochures & Tear-off Maps



6


 **Wayfinding**
with frazier associates

Pre-Design Considerations



- A. Scope – What does your community actually need?
- B. Who are the stakeholders?
- C. Brand graphics
- D. Budget and funding
- E. Design and CIDs

7

 **Wayfinding**
with frazier associates

Wayfinding Scope Considerations

- Would your community benefit from the sense of place and unified image wayfinding can help provide?
- Do you have a lot of directional sign clutter?
- Do you have the infrastructure to support planning, implementing and maintaining a system?
- Is tourism an important aspect of the economic vitality of your community?
- Do you have multiple visitor destinations?
- Do you have multiple (and/or confusing) routes to destinations and through your community?

8

Wayfinding
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Wayfinding Design Considerations

- Existing Brand, Graphics and Signs
- Community Character & History
- Destinations
- Gateways & Routes
- Connectivity between Sites
- Future Projects
- VDOT





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Wayfinding
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Destinations: Criteria for Inclusion

- Visitor Count
- Hours/Season of Operation
- Destinations That Give Community its Identity
- Sign to Areas vs. Individual Business, Office or Industry
- Budget for Sign Fabrication, Installation and Maintenance
- General Readability
Requirements = Number of Destinations on a Sign




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Sample Destinations

Primary (2-3 maximum)

- Historic Downtown
- Visitors Center
- Other large visitor attractions



Secondary (Proximity)

- Museums
- Cultural Attractions
- Parks
- Farmers Market
- Government Centers
- Library
- Higher Education Institutes

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Typically Not Signed

- Retail Businesses*
- Restaurants
- Shopping Centers
- Hospitals
- Airports
- Libraries







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Budget and Funding

What will it cost?

- Design cost
- Implementation costs
- Maintenance costs

Funding Sources

- Tourism \$
- Bonds
- General Funds
- Other grant sources



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Design, Fabrication and Installation

- Explore Design Options
- Arrive at a Preferred Design
- Coordination with DOT
- Prepare Construction Intent Drawings
- Bidding
- Fabrication and Installation
- Role of the Fabricator



14

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Sign Standards

- Coordination with MUTCD Standards/VDOT
- Uniformity
- Standardization
- Continuity
- Ease of Review

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Bidding and Installation

16

Wayfinding with frazier associates | Sample Installed Projects: Stafford County



Project Began without a Brand

17

Wayfinding with frazier associates | Sample Installed Projects: Stafford County



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Sample Installed Projects: Allegheny

Phased Project

- Installed Phase One Gateway Signs




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Sample Installed Projects: Wytheville, VA





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Louisa – First Step - Assessment

WAYFINDING SIGN ASSESSMENT
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

COMPONENTS AND ASSESSMENT

B. Components of a Comprehensive Wayfinding Sign System and Assessment of Current Signs




In short, a wayfinding sign system is a part of a larger marketing and communication system that serves "those who do to us." It is a comprehensive sign system that begins at location selection and concludes when the visitor steps inside a destination. See the appendix for a copy of the January presentation that describes in more detail the components of a wayfinding sign system.

The components of a comprehensive system include the following sign types. What accompanies these descriptions are images of the current signs found in Farmville.

1. Highway signs

There are the large green and brown signs that appear on major roads that guide travelers in destinations in the community. These signs are mandated and signed according to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration and used by the Virginia Department of Transportation in specifying and fabricating road signs. Current road signs will be inspected by two visitors and directed into two sets of the visitor road.


There are three sets for Farmville off of Route 400 with the primary exit being at the intersection of Route 15.


There are additional supplemental signs found at the Route 15 exit off of Route 400. Many of these destinations were identified to be important destinations for current, potential or future signs.

Wayfinding Sign Assessment 3


21



Questionnaire: 10-15 minutes followed by a Round Table Discussion




22




Question 1: What are the key goals for wayfinding in the Town of Louisa?

23




Question 2: Wayfinding sign systems on a vehicular level are limited to key visitor destinations. What destinations do you envision the system signing?

24




Question 3: What, in your opinion, are the biggest challenges visitors have navigating to key sites that a wayfinding sign system could help solve?

25



Question 4: While this assessment does not include graphic design, it will be important to note what graphic images, colors, or icons (either currently used or not) convey the feel and/or atmosphere of the Town of Louisa? (This information will be recorded in the report.)


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Wayfinding | Louisa Wayfinding

Question 5: Are there any other concerns, ideas, or suggestions you have for the design of the wayfinding system for the Town of Louisa?

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Wayfinding | Next Steps

- FA will write a summary of input from today
- FA will write a summary of observations and recommendations from field work
- FA will prepare a document with recommended next steps.

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APPENDIX C: SAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK WITH VDOT



FRAZIER ASSOCIATES

ARCHITECTURE
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
COMMUNITY
DESIGN
COMMUNITY
GRAPHICS

SAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK FOR
WAYFINDING SIGN SYSTEM IN VDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY

OVERVIEW

Frazier Associates, working closely with VDOT, offers this scope of work for planning, design and implementation of a wayfinding sign system within a VDOT Right-of-Way. In the following scope, VDOT related steps and tasks are highlighted in blue. Note that the design process that follows applies to design of signs both within and out of the VDOT right-of-way.

Here are important conditions to be aware of when planning a system in the VDOT Right-of-Way:

- When VDOT maintains the roads, then the VDOT Central Office will have complete oversight of the design, implementation and approval process of a custom wayfinding system. See [VDOT Community Wayfinding Sign Manual: Operations Manual and Guidelines, September 2017 \(Revised March 2019\)](#).
- When signs are located on private property but visible from and adjacent to a VDOT maintained right-of-way, design review will come under Outdoor Advertising in Sight of Public Highways, a division of VDOT.
- If signs in the system are not to be located in the VDOT right-of-way or are on roads not maintained by VDOT, wayfinding signs will not come under VDOT review.

Please note that Applicant/Sponsor is the term used in the VDOT Sign Manual to refer to the community (County or Town for instance) who is planning and financing the system. A consultant, acting on behalf of the Sponsor is referred to as the Agent.

While FA will provide guidance to meet the Community Wayfinding Sign Manual and provide designs consistent with those guidelines, it will be the responsibility of the Sponsor (Client) to prepare and submit all necessary documentation to VDOT and coordinate all VDOT meetings. In this scope, FA is not acting as the Agent for the Sponsor however FA can provide that service if so desired by the Sponsor/Client.

WAYFINDING COMPONENTS

A comprehensive wayfinding sign system can include the following elements. (The first step of the wayfinding design process will be to finalize which elements are included based on the number and type of destinations, the design character of the signing area, and the design, implementation and maintenance budget.)

- Highway and Interstate signs
- Gateway signs
- Trailblazer signs: vehicular directional
- Historic district/downtown gateway signs
- Site identification signs
- Parking directional signs
- Parking Identification signs
- Street Signs
- Kiosks and pedestrian signs
- Banners
- Temporary event signs
- Interpretive signs

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COMMUNITY
DESIGN

COMMUNITY
GRAPHICS

TASK A: INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Frazier Associates recommends that a wayfinding task group (WTG) be established to ensure that the right community players are at the table. The role of the WTG is to guide the project from start to finish and can include community staff members responsible for the implementation of a system, representatives of key destinations, etc.
2. Existing data, including studies, brand information and information on future projects, is collected and reviewed.
3. [VDOT: While FA will provide guidance to meet the new Virginia Department of Transportation \(VDOT\) Community Wayfinding Sign Manual and provide designs consistent with VDOT guidelines, it will be the responsibility of the Sponsor \(Client\) to prepare and submit all necessary documentation and coordinate all VDOT meetings.](#)
4. [FA Site Visit 1](#): an initial site visit kicks off the design process. The following takes place:
 - A. Kick-off meeting with Wayfinding Task Group (WTG) to review wayfinding goals, design process and schedule. Using written questionnaires, information is gathered about destinations, travel routes, colors and branding, and any other ideas for, or concerns about the sign system. A facilitated discussion follows allowing all members to express their ideas and concerns.
 - B. A preliminary list of criteria for including destinations is distributed and reviewed by the group.
 - a. [For VDOT information on destination selection, refer to "VDOT Community Wayfinding Sign Manual, pages 19-25.](#)
 - C. FA to review state wayfinding guidelines with WTG and explain the VDOT review process requirements.
 - D. A tour of the signing area is conducted with members of the Wayfinding Task Group.
 - E. Field work is conducted to gather more detail on existing signs and travel routes.
5. A meeting is conducted via "GoToMeeting" with the WTG to review findings and gather any additional data. Out of this data, guidance is gathered on desired design approaches for the system.

TASK B: SCHEMATIC DESIGN

1. Based on the input from Task A, two or three schematic options are developed for the wayfinding sign system (gateway and vehicular trailblazer signs). Design tools such as photo-simulations showing the signs in the context of the community are used to better illustrate the options in the environment. Note: Frazier Associates uses the MUTCD standards and the VDOT Wayfinding Sign Manual as a basis of design in terms of readability, number of destinations per sign, etc.
2. [Site Visit 2](#): FA presents design options to WTG.
 - A. Presentation of design options is made to the WTG. Using a written questionnaire, the WTG records whether the design reflects the character of the community and using a facilitated discussion process, the group arrives at a preferred design with potential options. (Usually, the preferred approach ends up being a combination of elements from all or some of the options.)
 - B. A list of preferred destinations, along with the criteria for including destinations on vehicular wayfinding signs, is reviewed and edited by the committee.
 - C. Further field investigations take place during this site visit.
3. The preferred schematic design option is further developed and applied to the various sign components in the system. The revised design is delivered to the WTG for review. A preliminary implementation cost estimate is developed. Destinations are finalized.
4. [VDOT Program Initiation and VDOT Review #1](#): Using the design concept developed in Task B, the Sponsor (Client) submits wayfinding concept along with "Letter of Interest" to VDOT Wayfinding Sign Program Administrator (WSPA) using form WS-PI. See form in VDOT Community Wayfinding Sign Manual.
 - A. VDOT reviews preliminary concepts and provides comments back to the Sponsor.
 - B. Based on comments, revisions are made by FA.
 - C. The Sponsor submits Revised Wayfinding Concepts to WSPA.
5. [VDOT Kickoff Meeting](#) is scheduled by the WSPA and includes the Area Land Use Engineer, VDOT Residency Staff, VDOT District Traffic Engineer staff and VDOT Central Office staff to determine the following tasks:
 - A. Review intended project scope;
 - B. Review revised concept plans;
 - C. Establish contact with Sponsor (Client) to review program requirements and long-term maintenance responsibilities before initiating a formal design process;
 - D. VDOT to provide meeting minutes/comments summary to Sponsor (Client).The Sponsor informs FA of the results of this meeting.

6. Based on VDOT kickoff meeting comments, FA to make any edits necessary to design concept and submit to Sponsor (Client) and VDOT for final approval.

TASK C: SIGN SYSTEM PROGRAMMING & EXISTING SIGN AND SIGN REMOVAL CATALOG

1. Based on the approved destinations, a sign program and map(s) are developed showing the content of each new sign component and its site location. A part of the programming will also include an existing sign and sign removal catalog showing a photograph of each sign to be removed.
2. The draft sign program is delivered to the WTG and other key technical and implementation members for review.
3. Based on input, the sign program is revised and updated and delivered to the Client.

4. VDOT Review

- A. The Sponsor (Client) informs property owners adjacent to sign locations about the intended sign system.
- B. The Sponsor (Client) prepares and adds the following to the sign programming plan:
 - a. A list that includes name and contact information of owner/operator of each wayfinding destination and adjacent property owners to each wayfinding sign;
 - b. Provide list of potential concerns from property owners after notification of the wayfinding project.
- C. The draft sign program is delivered to the WTG, VDOT and other key technical and implementation members of the Task Group for review and comments.
- D. Based on input, the sign program is revised and updated and a phasing plan is created for the system. The system is resubmitted for review and approval.
- E. It is VDOT's discretion to determine how many reviews and at what % completion they want to review. It is recommended to have VDOT review the programming before going into the development of the CID's.

TASK D: CONSTRUCTION INTENT DOCUMENTS

1. The VDOT Central Office will determine the number of plan reviews required, based on the complexity of the project. The Sponsor will be notified on the number of submittals required for their project following the VDOT project “kick-off” meeting in Task B. See Plan Reviews on page 17.
2. Based on input from Tasks A-C, the design for the system is finalized.
3. The estimate of implementation costs is updated for the system based on the approved schematic design, sign system implementation phasing and sign schedule.
4. Construction intent documents (CID) for all sign types including structural details and specifications are developed. Note that site engineering will be the responsibility of the sign fabricator once the project is bid and the fabricator is under contract.
5. Maps/Spread sheet per VDOT with sign locations are finalized.
6. Cost estimates are finalized.
7. The CID documents are submitted to the WTG at 65% and 95% for review and approval. Be aware that VDOT will determine the number of reviews however FA is planning for two reviews.
8. VDOT Review: For master plan details and requirements refer to the “VDOT Community Wayfinding Sign Manual, pages 14-17. Wayfinding sign plans, including the sign programming and the construction intent documents, are generally submitted to Wayfinding Sign Program Administrator (WSPA), the Area Land Use Engineer (ALUE), and the District Traffic Engineer (DTE) at 60%-75% plans and then 90% for review and comment along with the Form WS-CP____% Submittal.
9. Based on VDOT comments, final edits are made.
10. Finalized plans are resubmitted to VDOT for review and approval along with the form WS-CP____% Submittal.
11. Based on approval, the wayfinding construction intent documents are finalized and delivered to the Sponsor’s (Client) procurement staff for the bid process.
12. For Sign Stake-Out permit application and approval, refer to the “VDOT Community Wayfinding Sign Manual, page 17.

TASK E: BIDDING AND NEGOTIATIONS

1. VDOT Submittal: Sponsor submits VDOT approved construction plans to Area Land Use Engineer (ALUE) in the local VDOT Residency Permit Office along with Permit Application form LUP-WSP to obtain Land-Use and Environmental permits for construction. (Permit fees to be determined.) Sponsor shall prepare a formal maintenance plan as part of the submittal for the Land Use Permit.
2. Once sponsor obtains Land Use Permit the wayfinding sign project is put out to bid.
3. A mandatory pre-bid meeting with design consultant and fabricators to respond to any requests for information is conducted.

4. With the designated community representative, bids are reviewed and contract award is recommended.
5. The contract for sign fabrication is awarded to a fabricator/installer (hereafter referred to as the Contractor) with a district-wide surveying permit to perform work in VDOT's R-O-W.

TASK F: FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION

1. A kick-off meeting with Sponsor, Consultant and the Sign Contractor is conducted.
2. Requests for Information from the fabricator are reviewed and processed.
3. Sign Contractor to complete the following tasks:
 - A. Stake sign locations based on general sign locations spreadsheet (provided by consultant).
 - 1) Fill in all required spreadsheet information and add GPS coordinates;
 - B. Identify and mark utilities in signing area:
 - 1) Contact Miss Utilities to mark utilities in signing area;
 - 2) Contact VDOT permit engineer to coordinate with district traffic engineer to mark VDOT utilities in signing area;
 - 3) Contractor makes adjustments based on location of utilities in signing area;
 - C. Coordinates with district traffic engineer to conduct staked sign "Walk Through";
 - D. Spreadsheet is updated with any sign location adjustments.
4. VDOT SUBMITTAL: Final staked sign plans are submitted to VDOT for final approval.
5. VDOT PRECONSTRUCTION MEETING: Contractor submits permit applications (Form LUP-WSP) and construction intent documents to obtain Land-Use and Environmental permits for construction. (Permit fees to be determined.).
6. Prior to fabrication, Contractor develops fully engineered shop drawings for signs.
7. Shop drawings are submitted to Sponsor/Client and Consultant for review and approval.
8. VDOT REVIEW: Contractor submits approved shop drawings to Sponsor, (Client), Frazier Associates (Agent) and VDOT for review and approval.
9. Based on approved fully engineered shop drawings, signs are fabricated and installed.
10. Implementation-Construction Administration performed by FA (Agent)
 - A. Site visits are made as needed during the fabrication process and /or at the beginning of the installation process.
 - B. Final project inspection.
11. VDOT REVIEW: Sponsor shall notify the VDOT District Area Land Use Engineer (ALUE) once the sign installation is complete. VDOT will conduct independent final inspection of all installed sign locations. Upon approval the Land Use Permit will be closed out.
12. FINAL VDOT SUBMITTAL: Sponsor shall submit As-Built Plans (provided by Contractor) and Form WS-AB to WSPA to the VDOT Central Office.