ALEXANDRIA WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Boards of Architectural Review Joint Work Session

May 19 2010
Purpose of the work session

1. To get BAR feedback on the overall sign program (Design Guidelines Manual and Mock-ups) per City Council request for BAR input

2. To get BAR feedback on the building mounted parking signs prior to future application for certificate of appropriateness per Zoning Ordinance requirements
Some of you have asked why the City is proposing a sign program and who the signs are for....
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Why a comprehensive sign system is good for the City</th>
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</table>
| AESTHETIC | • Removes visual clutter; allows historic fabric of the City to shine through  
| | • Replaces multiple sign efforts with one coordinated streamlined system  |
| ENVIRONMENT and SAFETY | • Directs cars to garages, eliminates circling  
| | • Promotes walking, biking, mass transit  
| | • Reduces driver confusion  |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | • Gets people out of their cars and oriented to shops, restaurants & historic sites  
| | • Highlights the Alexandria Heritage Trail  
| | • Addresses King Street Retail Strategy (parking, pedestrians, small business)  
<p>| | • Provides a more comfortable visitor experience, another reason to return |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Who are the signs for?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDENTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Signs will direct to <em>civic destinations that are difficult to find</em>; highlight historic trails and sites that residents overlook.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Mobile resident population</strong> - Over a five year period, on average, at least 50% of Alexandria residents are new to the City</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved visitor parking/traffic will <strong>improve QOL for residents</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VISITORS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Addresses parking/traffic issues by directing <em>cars quickly into garages</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Directs visitors to</strong> historic sites, museums, shops and restaurants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ALEXANDRIA BUSINESSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps residents and visitors find <em>shops, hotels, restaurants</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implements key <strong>components of King Street Retail Strategy</strong></td>
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Who has provided input?

- **Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG):** Civic, Business, National Park Service, WMATA, DASH, City commissions (Arts, ACPD, Aging and HARC), Hotels, Ped/Bike, ACVA, AEDP, and Chamber of Commerce

- **City Working Group:** P&Z, T&ES, RPCA, OHA, GS, CMO

- **Sasaki:** selected to design Wayfinding program in partnership with City, SAG and Community

- **Community:** Federation; SAG meetings, workshops, open house and ongoing web/enews information; civic associations

- **Planning Commission, BAR, City Council:** Periodic updates and work sessions
Sample Path | I-395 to a King Street restaurant

Old Town Alexandria
EXIT 5
VISITOR INFORMATION

Old Town Alexandria

West End
Old Town
Visitor Info
3.5 Miles
TC Williams HS
Sample Path

I-395 to a King Street restaurant
Sample Path | I-395 to a King Street restaurant
Last time we met, you gave us the following feedback:

Reduce the size of the signs - Scale
Reduce the # of signs - Quantity
Show us the signs that will be removed - Clutter
Re-think lighting - Illumination
Test the signs - Mockups Evaluation
Signs for Drivers

Scale
Quantity
Clutter
Illumination
• Layout has been repeatedly evaluated with the goal of optimizing legible information while minimizing overall size - for compatibility with Alexandria streetscapes

• Final sizes to be confirmed during mockup study
Three versions for different message & site conditions
### Vehicular Directional

Examples of existing signs to be removed

- Multiple sign efforts with varying types, colors, vintages, sizes result in visual clutter
- Existing signs are often illegible due to size, placement
- Design and messaging are inconsistent, difficult to follow
### Vehicular Directional

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Proposed vehicular signs in Old Town replace Thistle and other directional signs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Message content and sign quantity are still in review, but currently, ~50 existing signs will be replaced with ~54 proposed new signs (41 of these are multi-message, 13 are single message)</td>
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</table>
District Marker

OBJECTIVE:

- Reinforce districts by identifying them at edges or central locations
- Formalize a sense of arrival in a district for ease of wayfinding

Proposed Quantity - 2 on Washington Street median

FEEDBACK:

- These signs are not needed in Old Town and may contribute to the clutter. Will solicit further input.
- May be appropriate for other districts
Banner strategy: Business District corridors

Old Town:

- For a corridor in a well-established district such as King Street, banners may actually detract from, and visually compete with the vibrant context.

- Sasaki recommends that the King Street banners be removed to reduce the number of competing visual elements in the streetscape, and allow the strong context of place to come to the fore.
Signs for Pedestrians

Scale

Quantity

Clutter

Illumination
OBJECTIVE:

- Reinforce close walking distances to encourage travel on foot & by transit
- Direct pedestrians to both visitor and community destinations and amenities
- Reinforce the availability of retail/dining on & off King Street (symbols, map colors - not business names)
- Provide greater visibility for historic attractions
- Provide space to feature historic and interpretive information
- Use a design/structure that is compatible with the physical environment and appropriate to historic district
- Utilize a flexible format that is inexpensive to update

Four-sided box that will wrap around existing Gadsby light poles at opposite corners of King Street intersections. North-south facing sides shown at right (map plus directions to attractions). East-west facing sides will feature interpretive information or graphic illustration.
Pedestrian Mini Kiosk

Examples of existing signs to be replaced - Clutter

- Existing signs provide limited information; additional content could make for a richer experience
- Some are traffic-style and not geared for pedestrians
- Tend to add clutter instead of effective messaging for pedestrians
Pedestrian Mini Kiosk | Locations in Old Town - Quantity

• 36 proposed units on opposite corners on King Street
• Replace ~55 existing single-sided signs

Proposed quantity is under review. An alternative would be to site units only on those corners that have historic attractions down the side street, and periodically on those corners that don’t, with the goal of reducing the overall quantity to about 18-20
BACKGROUND:

- Participants in current pilot program attribute significant increase in business and foot traffic to the improved visibility from the A-frames program
- Community feedback: Build on success of pilot program with a more secure & refined design standard

OBJECTIVE:

- Establish required standards for design, fabrication and installation to ensure coordination with wayfinding program and safety for pedestrians
- Provide an opportunity for increased visibility of shopping/dining on side streets
- Allow businesses to work together on management and maintenance of the shared signs
OBJECTIVE:

- Provide on-site information and maps in open space plazas to orient visitors and reinforce walkability.
- Utilize an attractive structure that is compatible with the physical environment and has a flexible format that is inexpensive to update.
- Provide historic and interpretive information as well as seasonal visitor information.

Visitor Kiosk | Design evolution to establish appropriate scale

Refined current design

Previous proposal -- What BAR saw 2009

(Scanned down)
**Visitor Kiosk**

With multiple configuration options

Three configurations for different site conditions, with the same panel size for efficiency across the system.

- **Four-sided kiosk** suited to large open plaza spaces; includes two panels for historic and seasonal information.

- **Two-sided pole-mounted kiosk** suited to trail heads or smaller spaces that can’t accommodate a large structure.

- **One panel wall-mounted.** Particularly suited to parking garage exits (new construction) to provide immediate orientation.
Two illumination options for four-sided version -- downwash or backlit depending on kiosk location and surrounding environment.

Option A: Downwash (recommended for Market Square)

Option B: Backlit (Recommended for King Street Metro and other stations)
Visitor Kiosk

Locations in Old Town - Quantity

- 3 4-sided units (Metro, Market Square and Waterfront)
- 18 wall or post-mounted units (At parking garage exits, VRE, trails, small open areas)
OBJECTIVE:

- Quickly orient and direct visitors to key locations and visitor amenities
- Located at potentially confusing points of entry where pedestrians begin their exploration on foot such as transit stops, water taxi area, motorcoach drop-offs, etc.

QUANTITY/LOCATION

- 7 proposed locations (Waterfront - marina, torpedo factory, foot of King; King Street metro exits - 3; one at market Square
Site Identity Signs

Multiple size options to suit individual sites

Options for post-mounting operational or interpretive information

- **2x3 - Ped oriented**
  - Front view: Historic color scheme
  - Back view: Historic color scheme

- **3x6 Car oriented - open area**
  - Front view: Historic color scheme
  - Back view: Historic color scheme

- **3x5 - Car oriented**
  - Front view: Historic color scheme
  - Back view: Historic color scheme

- **1.5 x 2.5**

- **1.5 x 3.5**

- **1.5 x 2.5**

- **1.5 x 3.5**

- **1.5 x 6** Car oriented

- **Area of open area**

- **Area of 2x3 - Ped oriented**

- **Area of 3x6 Car oriented - open area**

- **Area of 3x5 - Car oriented**
• Design and color palette concepts are under review with the Office of Historic Alexandria

• New template can be adapted to various configurations
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Parking Signs
Proposed King Street Zones - delineation and naming strategy

BAR thought the zones were unnecessary and made the signs too large.

Zone concept was scrapped.
Parking ID sign proposed in 2009
Vehicular Parking - SCALE

Parking trailblazer signs proposed in 2009
OBJECTIVE:

• Establish a comprehensive system of trailblazers and parking lot identification signs that are easy to spot, recognize and follow
• Direct cars into garages quickly so visitors will explore by foot

Function

• Replaces a variety of public and private operator signs with a consistent recognizable standard
• Improves visibility
• Provides an option for including operator logo on sign without increasing sign size
• New trailblazers coordinate with identification signs for consistency as part of a comprehensive parking sign system.
Vehicular Public Parking Trailblazers - CLUTTER

Signs to be removed and replaced with new system

- Existing signs are not of a consistent style, and in various states of repair
- Signs are so prevalent in the core of old town they appear to direct everywhere
Signs to be removed/replaced

- Private operator signs are inconsistent
- Not always clear to visitors which garages are for public use
- Redundant directional signs are located at parking entrances, further confusing the directional information
• 20 proposed new identification signs
• ~45 proposed new trailblazing signs
• Proposing 65 new parking signs total

• ~8 existing ID signs to be removed
• 74 existing trailblazers to be removed, including those currently used as ID signs
• Removing more than 82 parking signs
- Previous version proposed internal box-style illumination for maximum visibility
- Current version proposes unobtrusive LED downlight to provide nighttime visibility with minimal spillover
MOCK-UPS Evaluation
Mock-ups Evaluation: Gateway - North end
Mock-ups Evaluation: Gateway - South End
Mock-ups Eval: Vehicular Directional King Street
Mock-ups: Vehicular Directional - Washington
Mock-ups: Pedestrian Mini-Kiosk - King and Lee
Mock-ups: ID Signs - Lyceum
Mock-ups: ID Signs - Lee-Fendall
Mock-ups: Small ID Signs - Apothecary
Mock-ups: Small ID Signs - Friendship Firehouse
Mock-ups Evaluation Parking Trailblazers
Mock-ups Evaluation - Parking Garage ID
NEXT STEPS

• Staff will forward BAR feedback to City Council and Planning Commission
• Staff will document input from the community on the program/mockups
• June 16 - Staff will present a formal request to the BAR for a certificate of appropriateness for the parking garage ID sign designs, allowing staff to administratively approve building mounted parking signs within a limited set of BAR-approved criteria
• Early June, date TBD - Final SAG/Community meeting
• Summer 2010 - End of public review of draft manual; staff revisions/refinements per input
• September 2010 - Design Guidelines Manual (DGM) docketed for Planning Commission
• Once the DGM is approved, City will implement Phase 1 - parking garage ID signs in Old Town with funding in City Council’s FY2011 budget
• Subsequent phases will be implemented over many years should funding be allocated