



# 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....*

## 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)
- Provides a more **comfortable visitor experience, another reason to return**

## RESIDENTS

- Signs will direct to **civic destinations that are difficult to find**; highlight **historic trails and sites that residents overlook**.
- **Mobile resident population** – Over a five year period, on average, at least 50% of Alexandria residents are new to the City
- Improved visitor parking/traffic will **improve QOL for residents**

## VISITORS

- Addresses parking/traffic issues by directing **cars quickly into garages**
- **Directs visitors to** historic sites, museums, shops and restaurants

## ALEXANDRIA BUSINESSES

- Helps residents and visitors find **shops, hotels, restaurants**
- Implements key **components of King Street Retail Strategy**

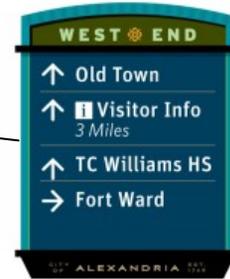
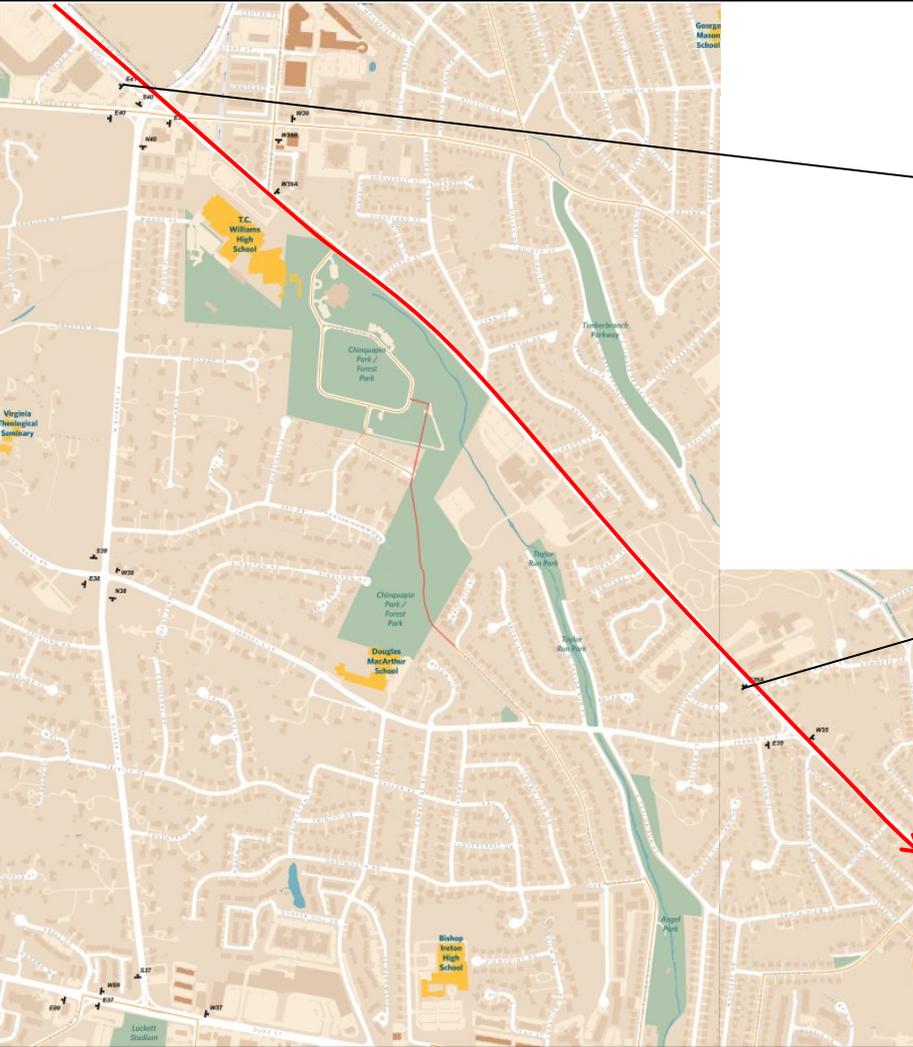
## Who has provided input?

- **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/enevs information; civic associations
- **Planning Commission, BAR, City Council:** Periodic updates and work sessions

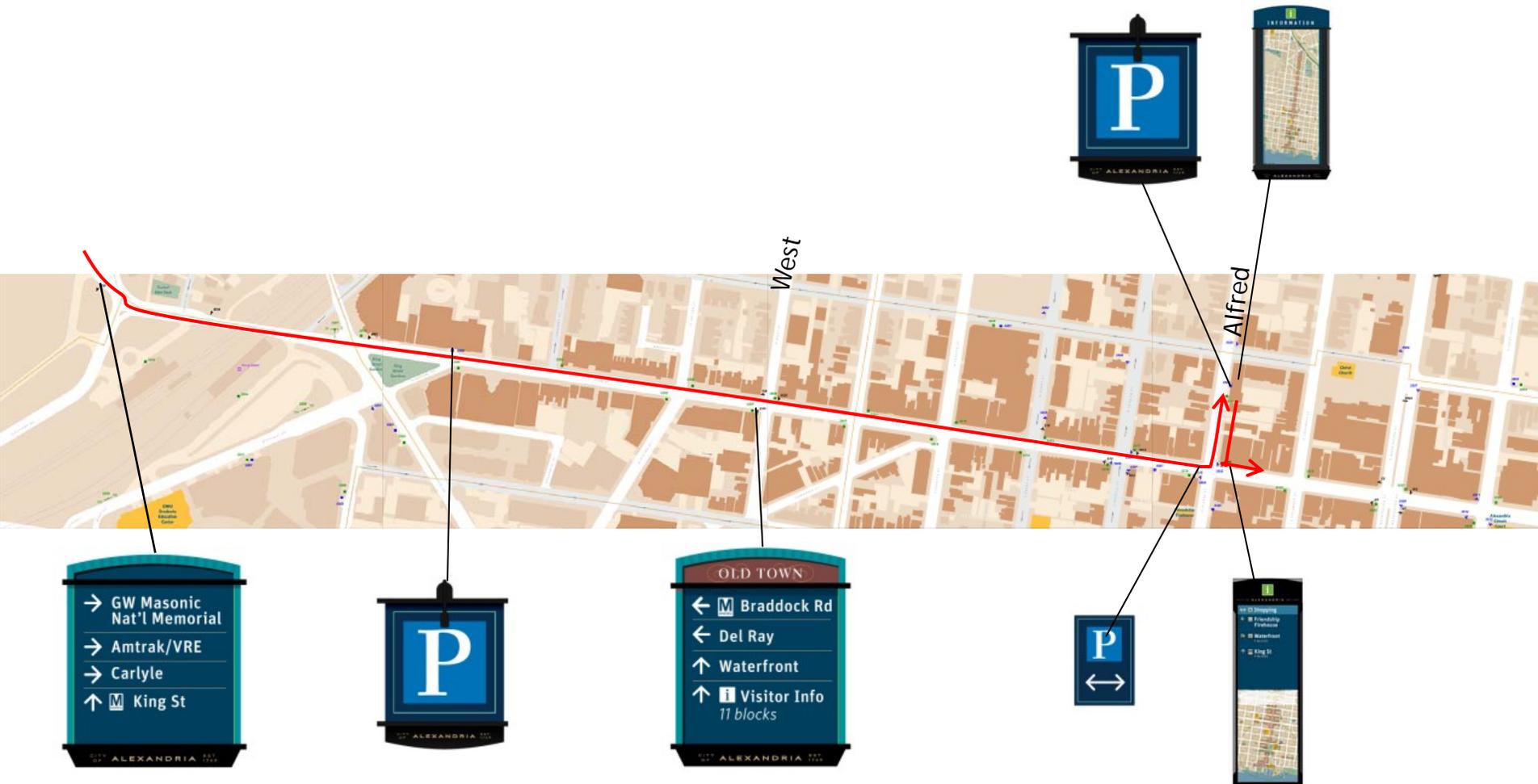
# Sample Path | I-395 to a King Street restaurant



# 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

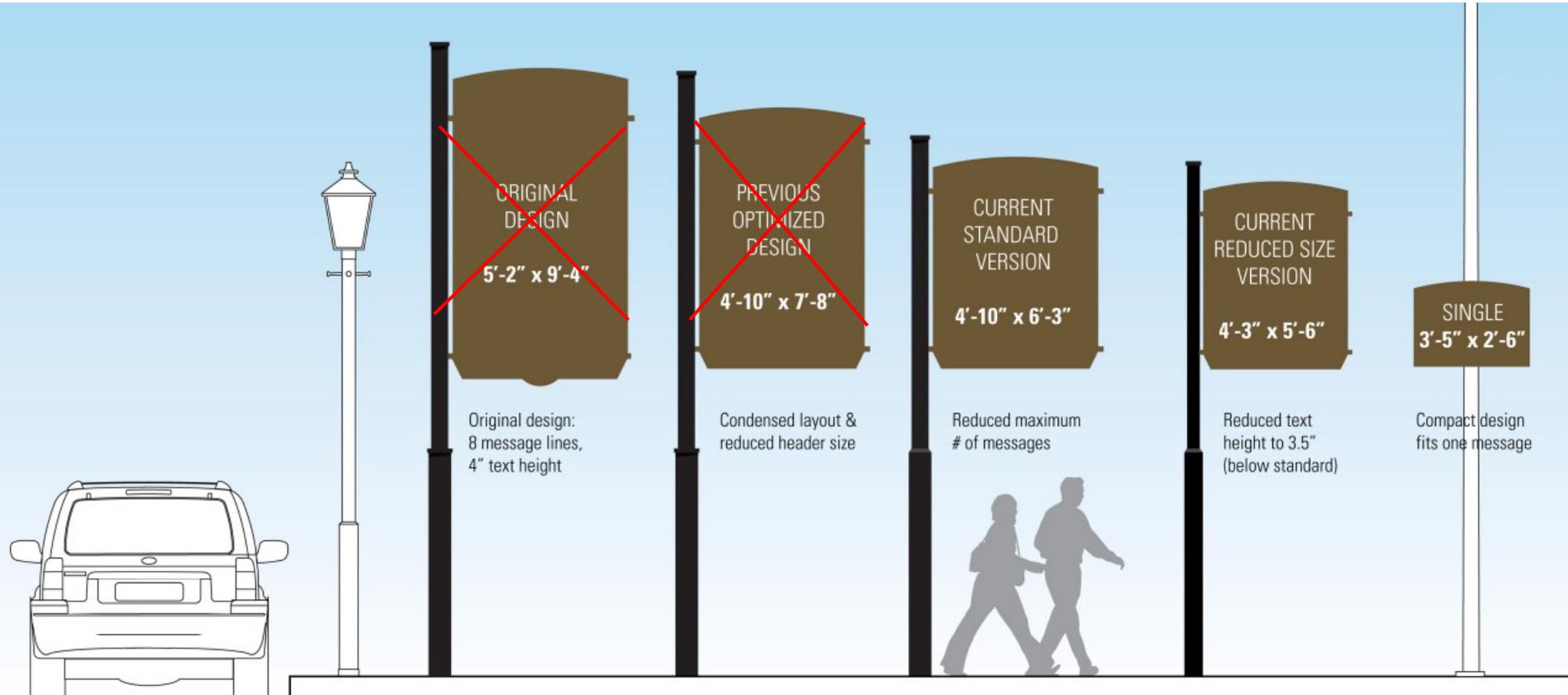
Quantity

Clutter

Illumination

# Vehicular Size Reduction Study - Scale

- 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

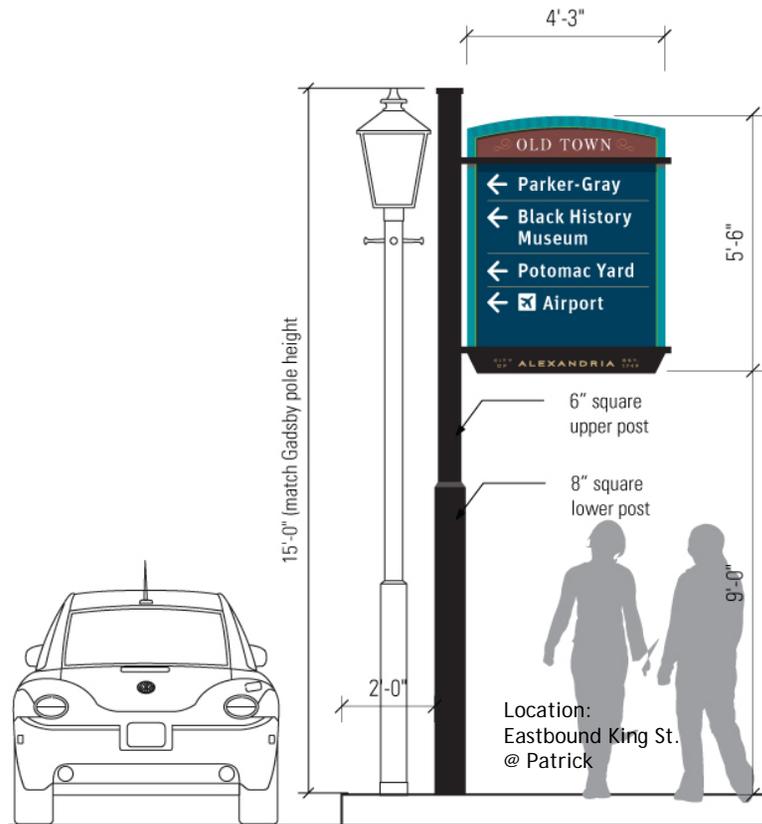


# Vehicular Directional Three proposed sizes - Scale

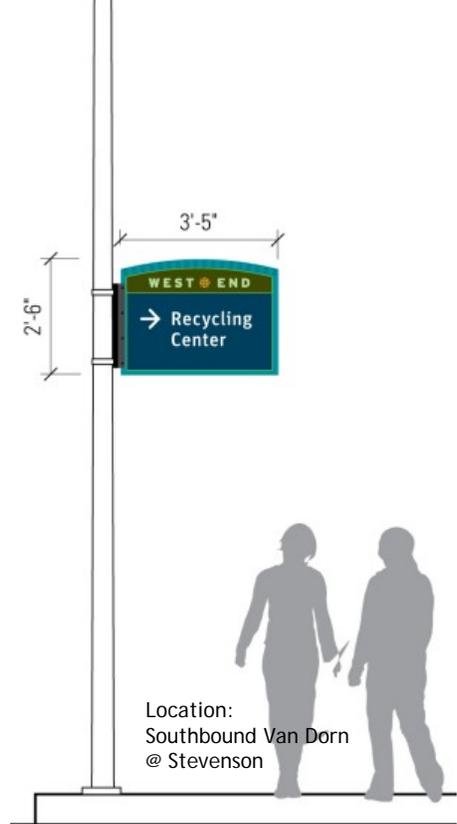
Standard version (4" text)



Reduced Size Version (3½" text)



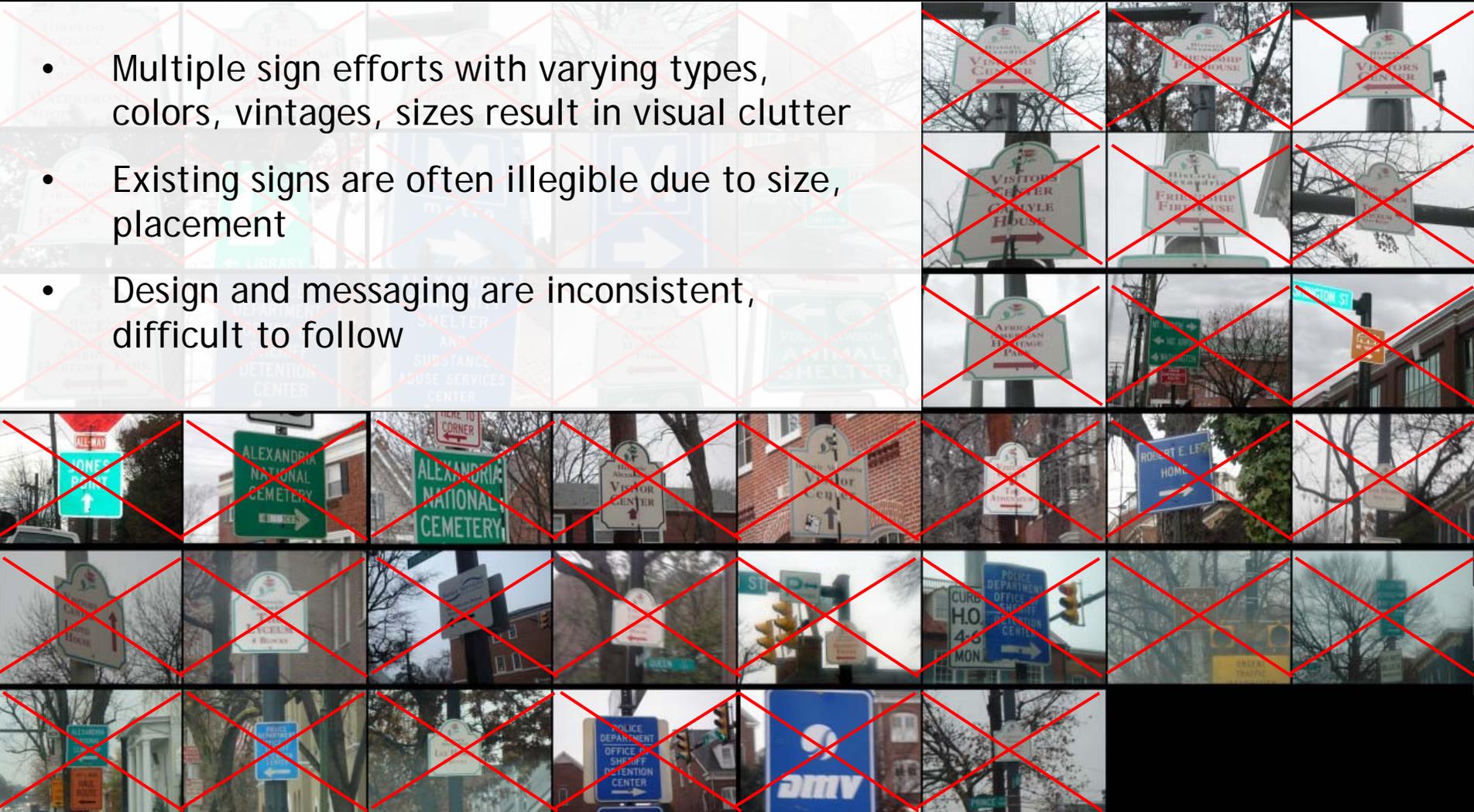
Single message version (3½" text)



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 Quantity

- Proposed vehicular signs in Old Town replace Thistle and other directional signs
- 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)



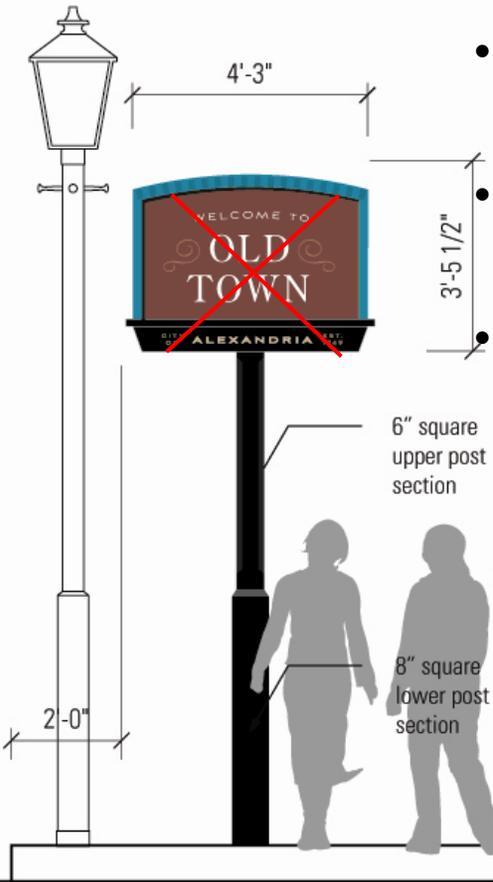
# District Marker

## 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



Back

## 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

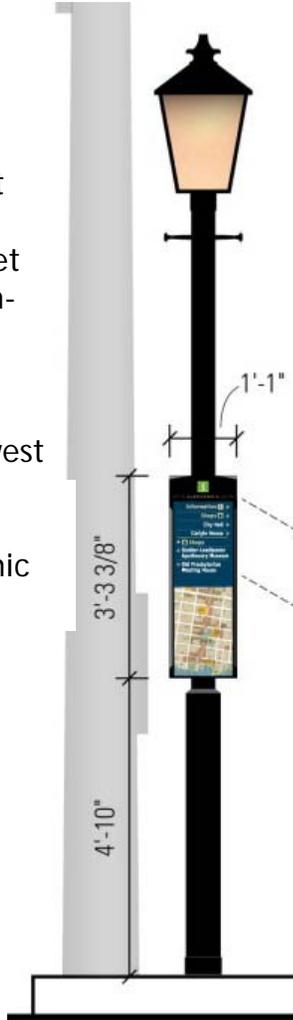
Quantity

Clutter

Illumination

# Pedestrian mini kiosk

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.

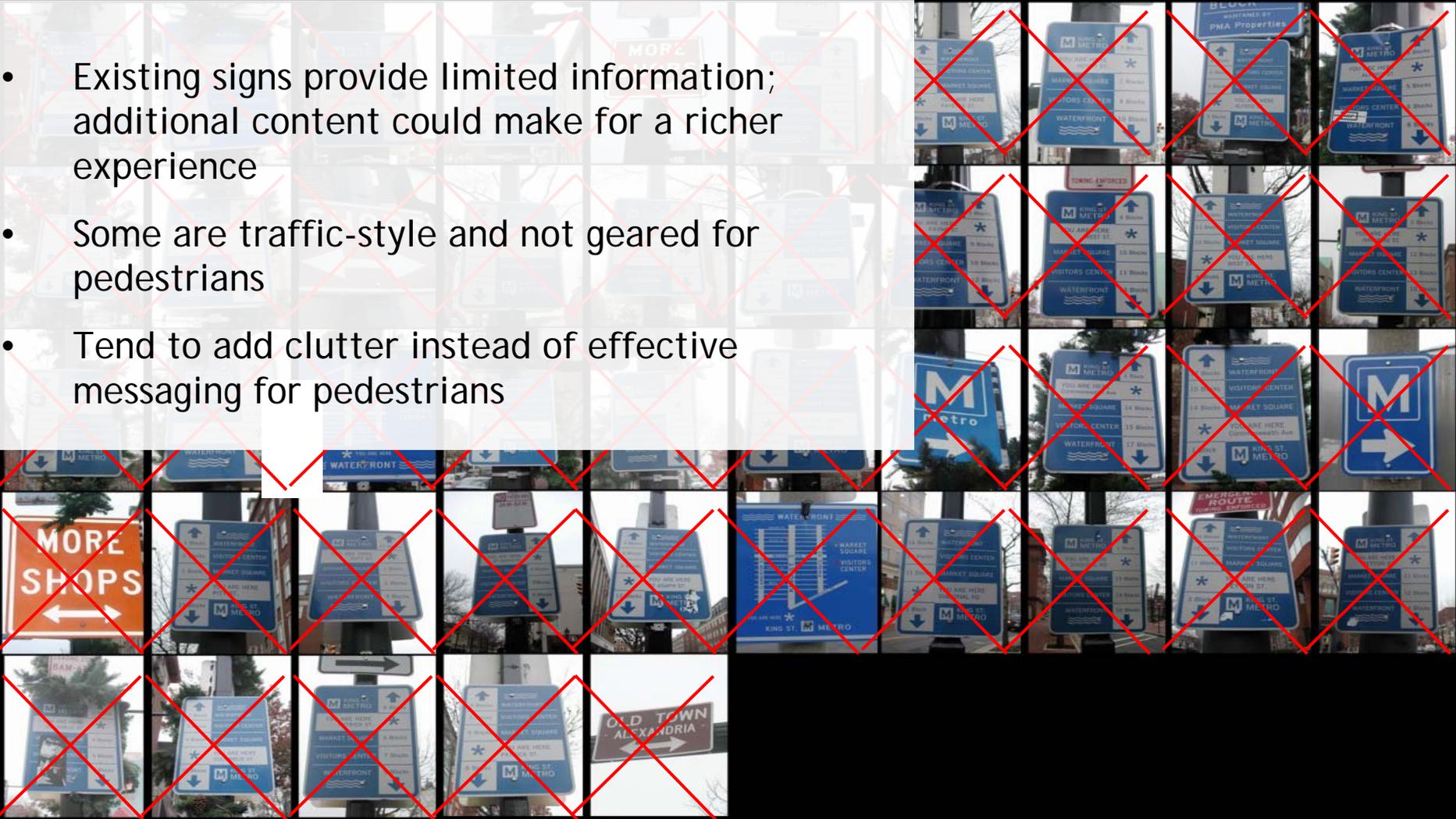


## OBJECTIVE:

- 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

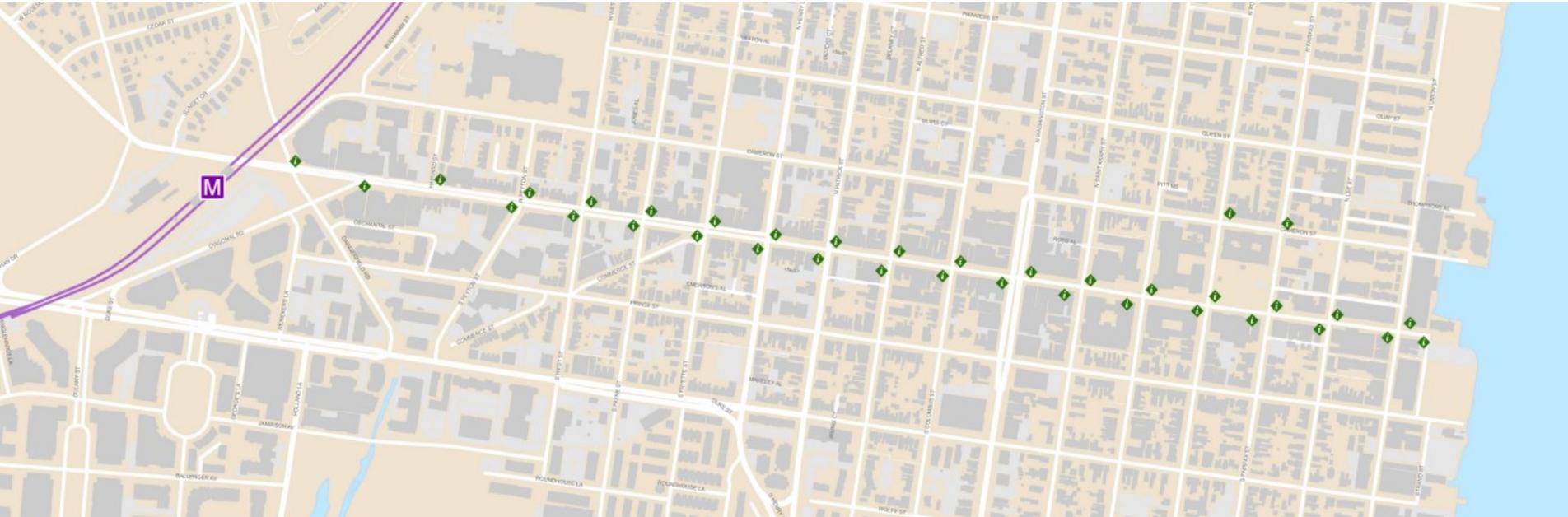
# Pedestrian Mini Kiosk | Examples of existing signs to be replaced - Clutter

- 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



# Pedestrian Companion A-frame sign

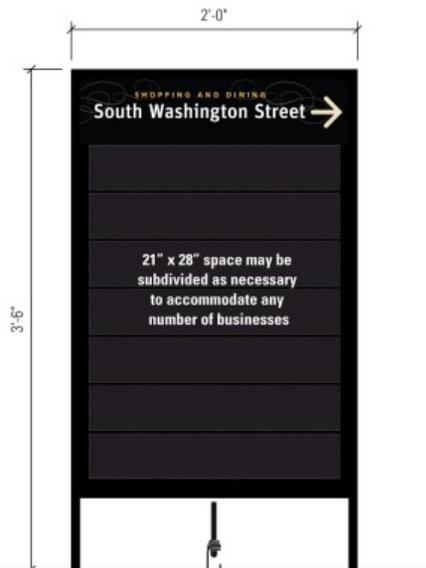


## BACKGROUND:

- 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

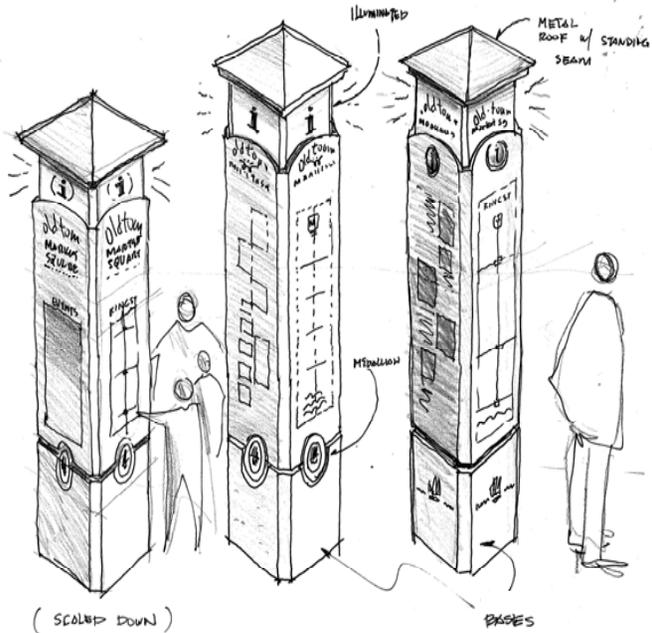
## OBJECTIVE:

- 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



# Visitor Kiosk | Design evolution to establish appropriate scale

Previous proposal -- What BAR saw 2009



Refined current design



## 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 | With multiple configuration options

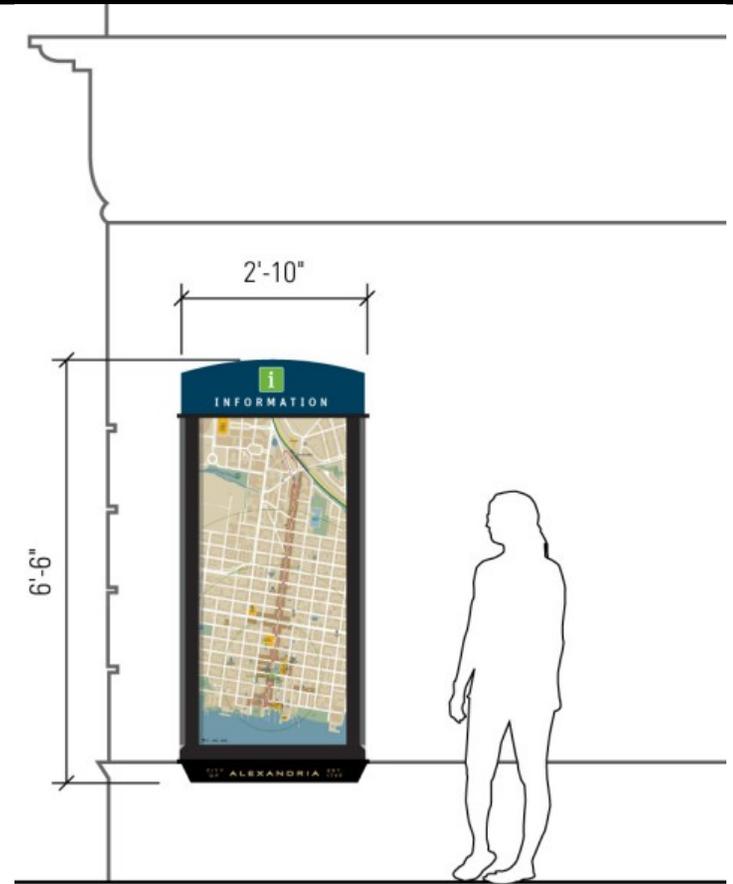
Three configurations for different site conditions, with same panel size for efficiency across the system.



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



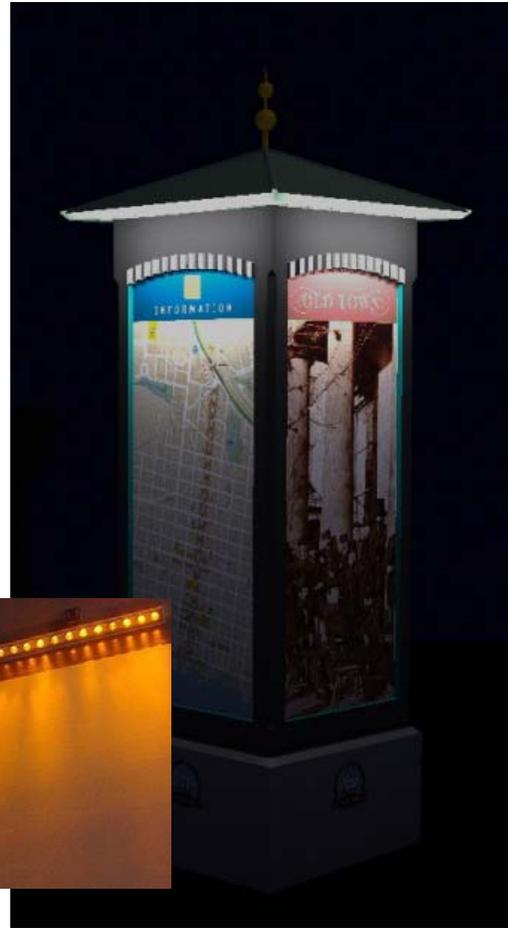
Two-sided pole-mounted kiosk suited to trail heads or smaller spaces that can't accommodate a large structure



One panel wall-mounted. Particularly suited to parking garage exits (new construction) to provide immediate orientation.

# Lg. Pedestrian Kiosk | Illumination

- Two illumination options for four-sided version -- downwash or backlit depending on kiosk location and surrounding environment.



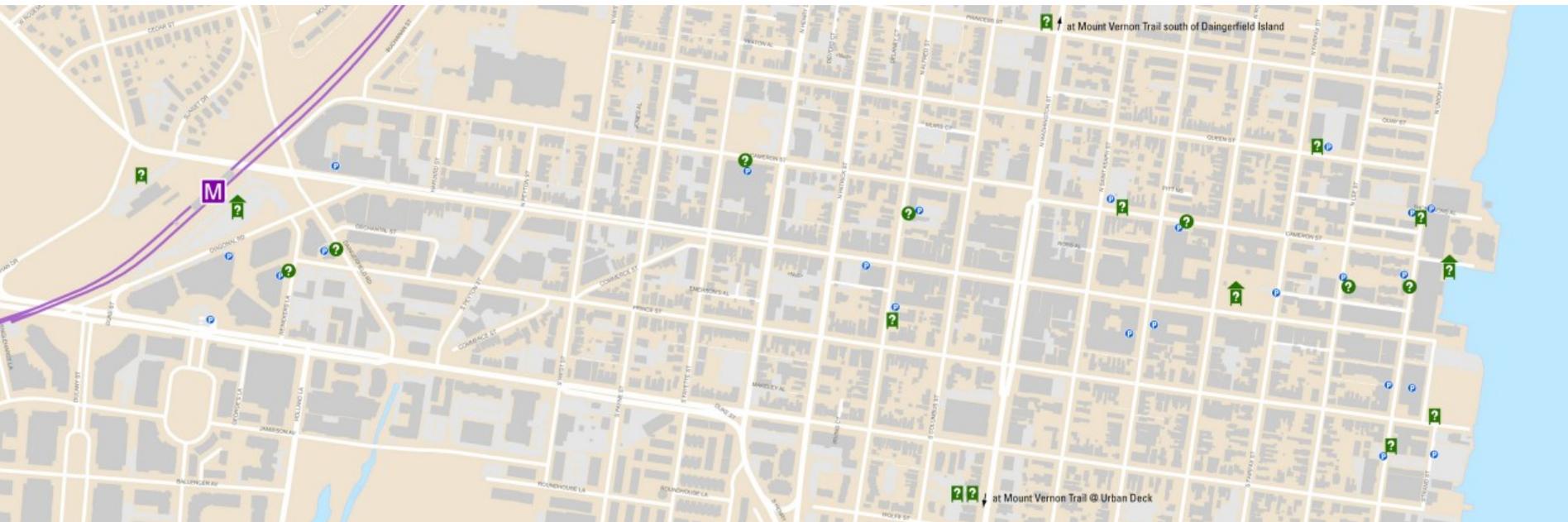
Option A: Downwash (recommended for Market Square)



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) 

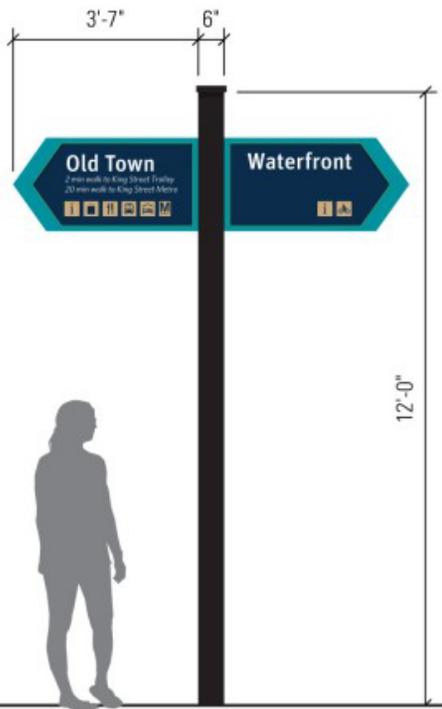


## OBJECTIVE:

- 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





# Parking Signs

Scale

Quantity

Clutter

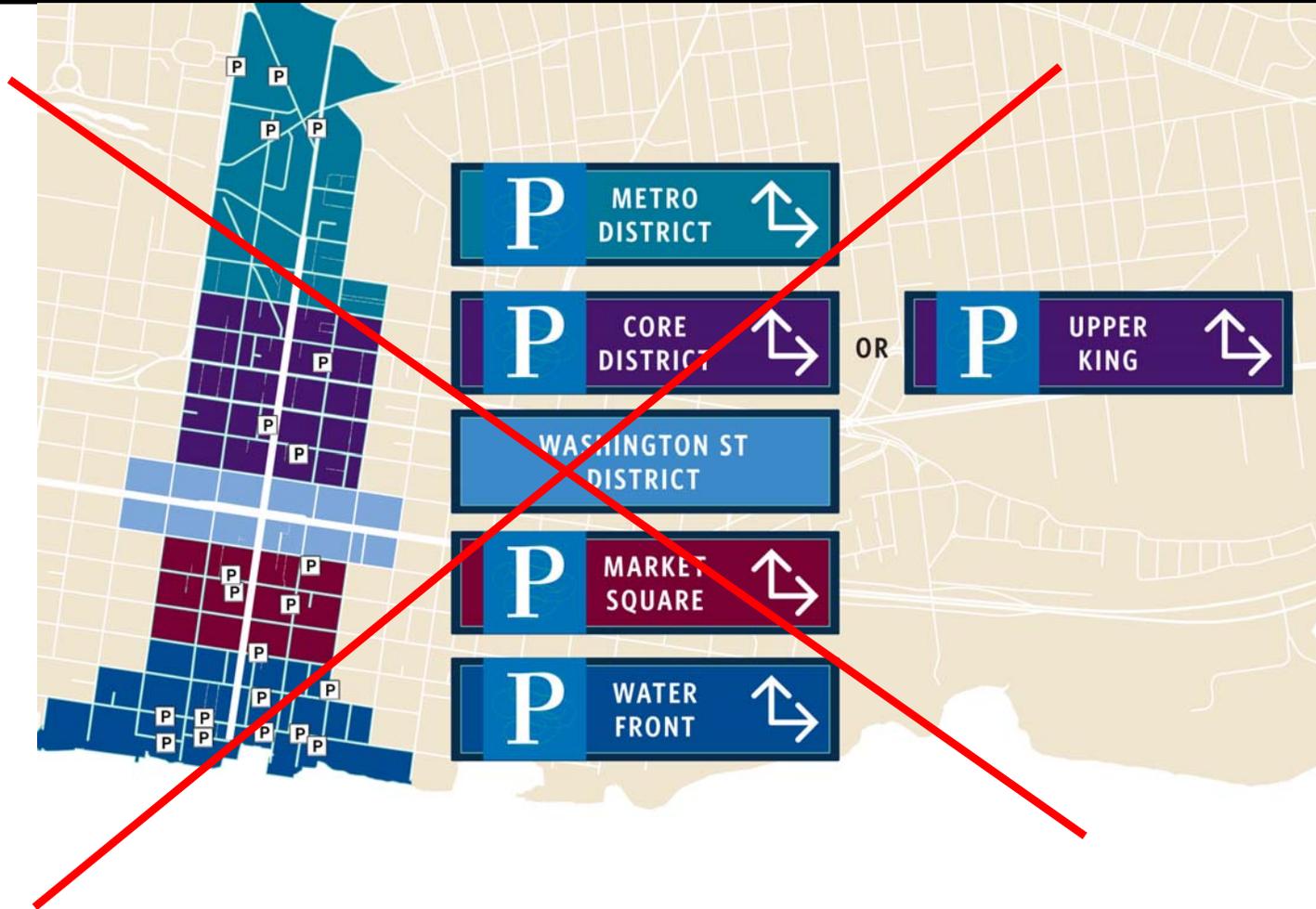
Illumination

# Vehicular Public Parking - SCALE

Proposed King Street Zones - delineation and naming strategy

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

Zone concept was scrapped.



# Vehicular Public Parking - SCALE



Parking ID sign  
proposed in  
2009

# Vehicular | Public Parking - SCALE



Parking trailblazer signs proposed in 2009



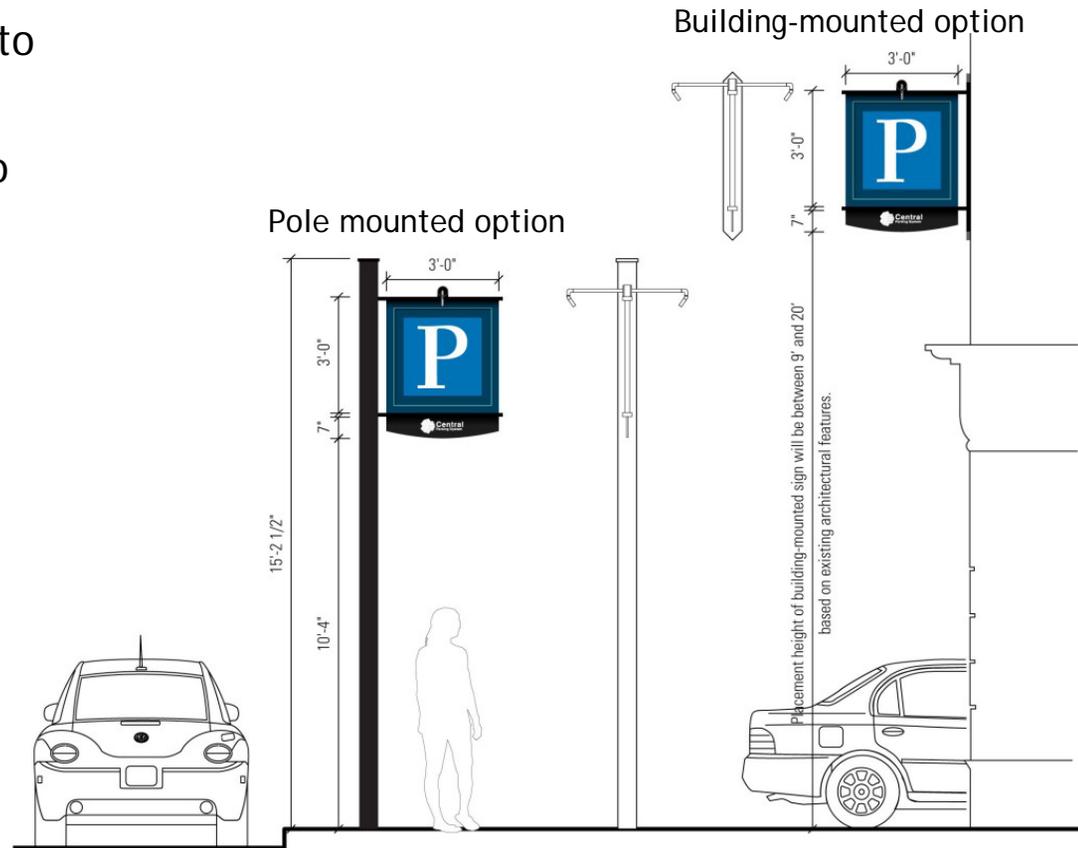
# Vehicular | Public Parking – SCALE 3x3

## 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

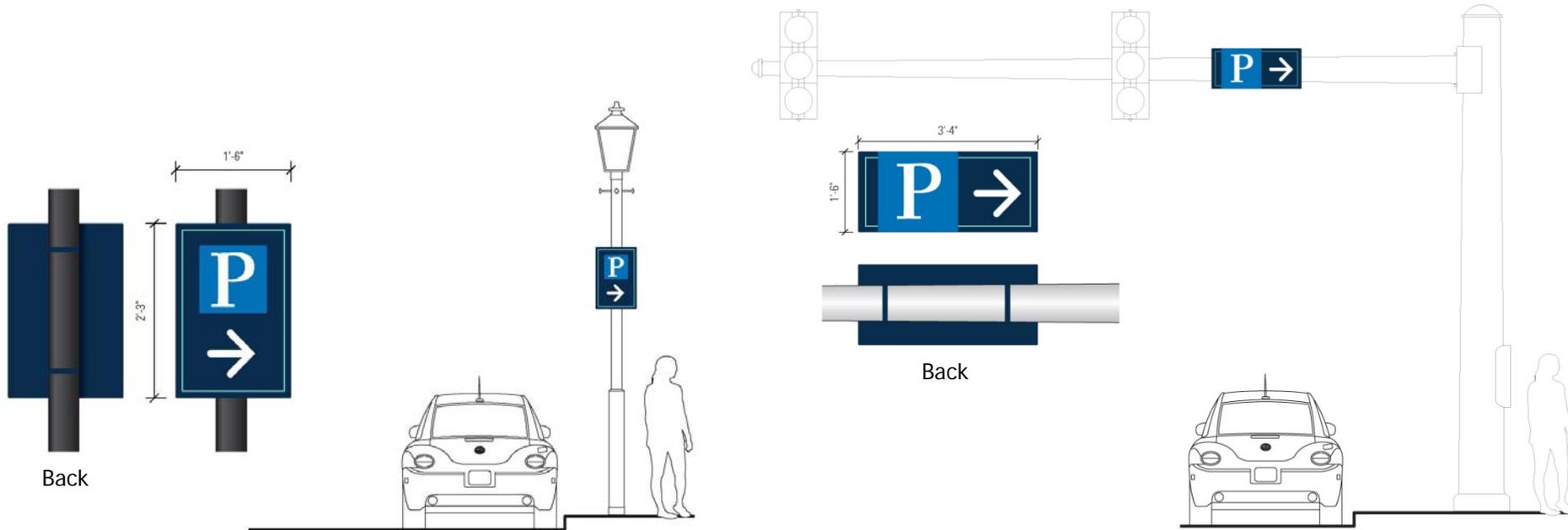
## Function

- 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



# Vehicular | Public Parking - SCALE

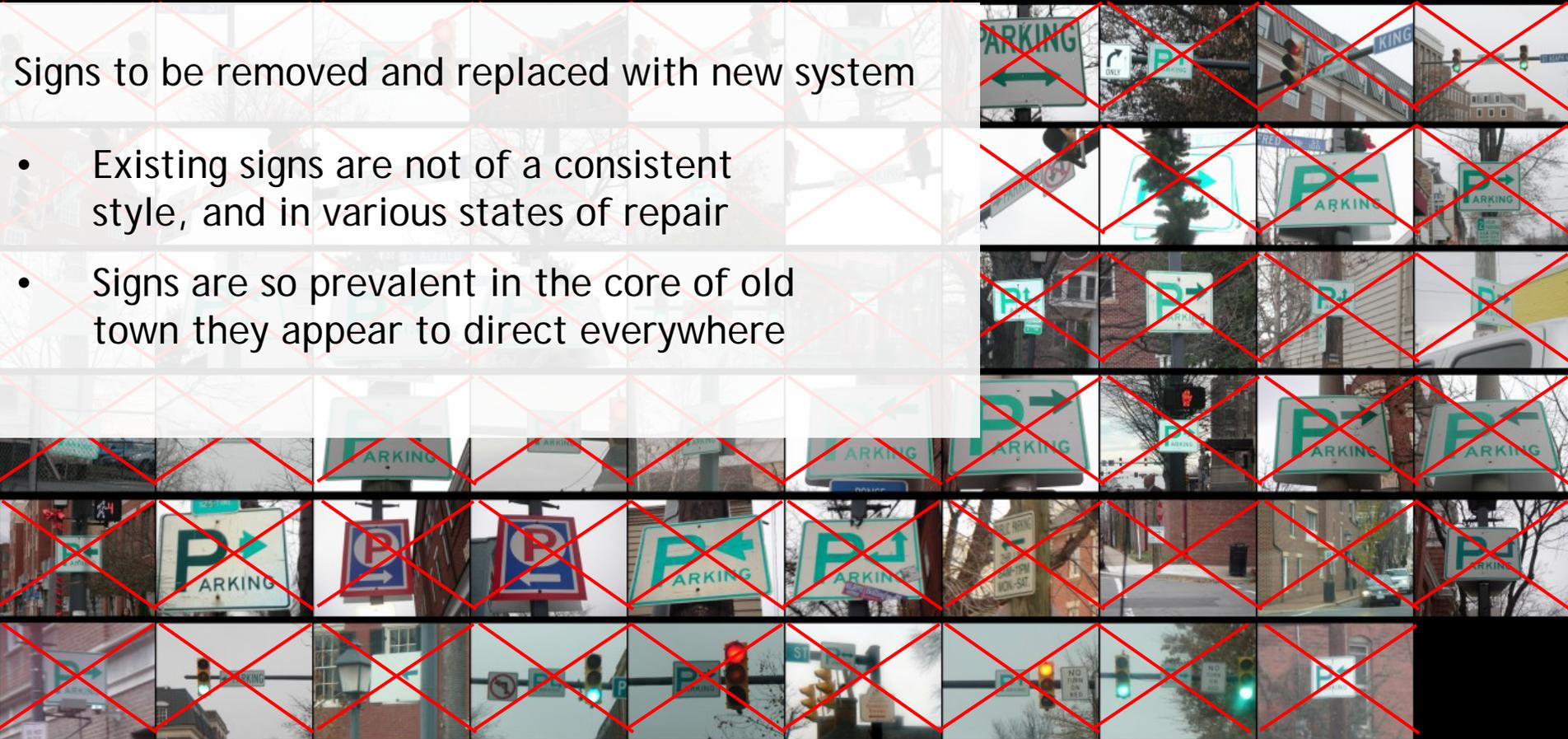
- New trailblazers coordinate with identification signs for consistency as part of a comprehensive parking sign system



# Vehicular | Public Parking Trailblazers - CLUTTER

Signs to be removed and replaced with new system

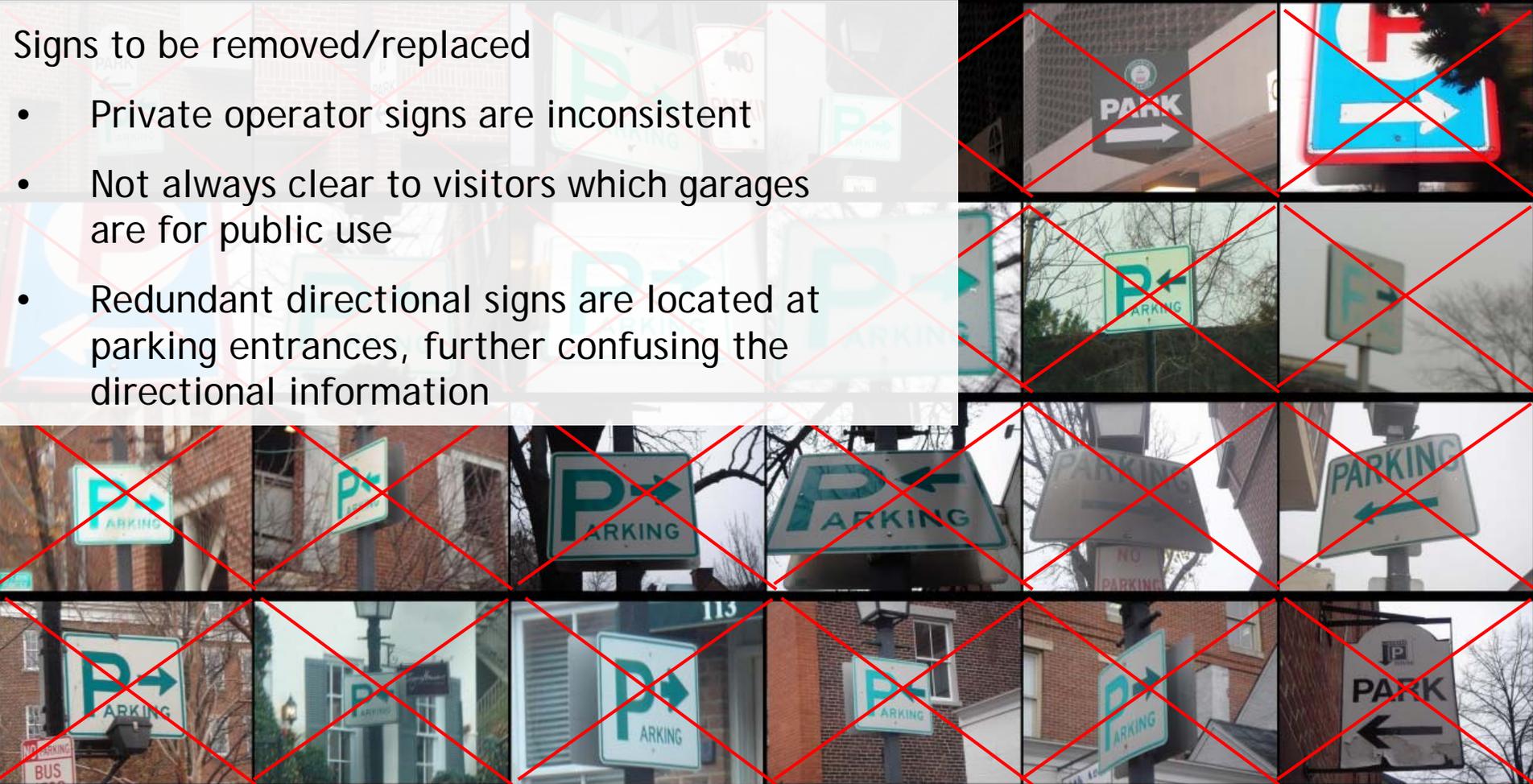
- Existing signs are not of a consistent style, and in various states of repair
- Signs are so prevalent in the core of old town they appear to direct everywhere



## Vehicular | Public Parking ID Signs - CLUTTER

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



# Vehicular Public Parking - CLUTTER



North Union between  
Cameron and Queen



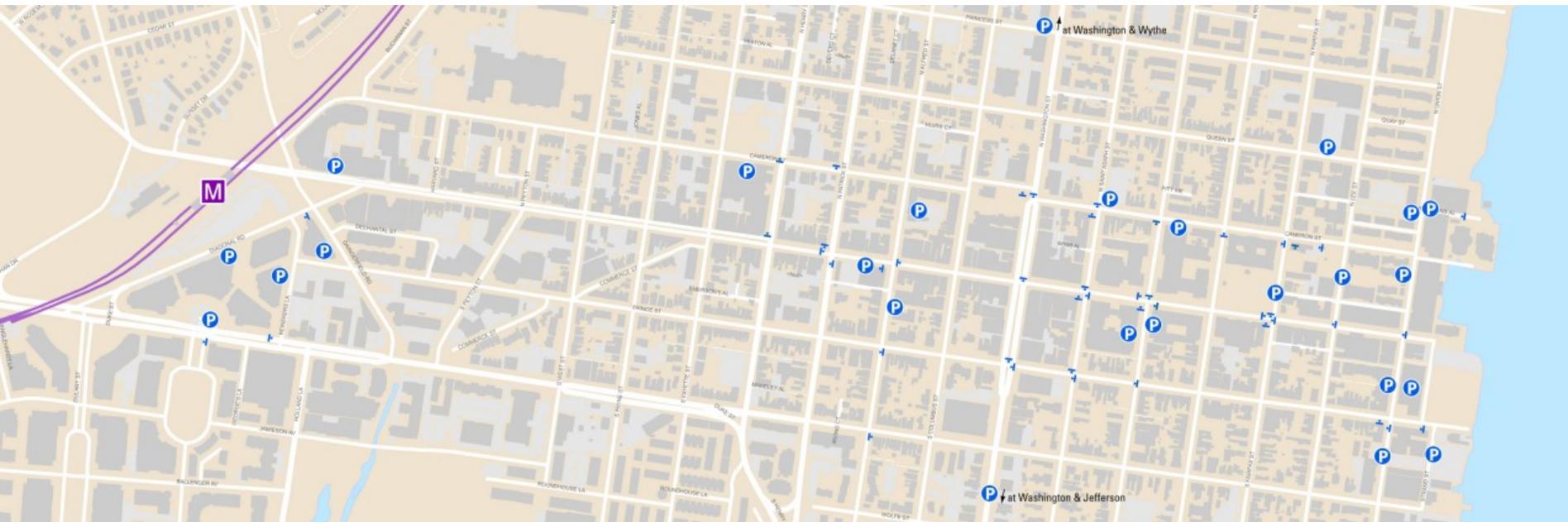
Fairfax at City Hall garage

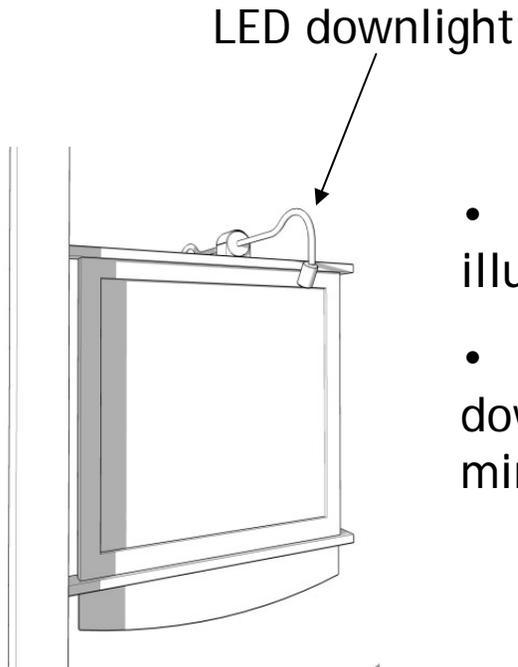


Cameron between  
Pitt and Royal

## Parking | Public Parking - QUANTITY (locations in Old Town)

- 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



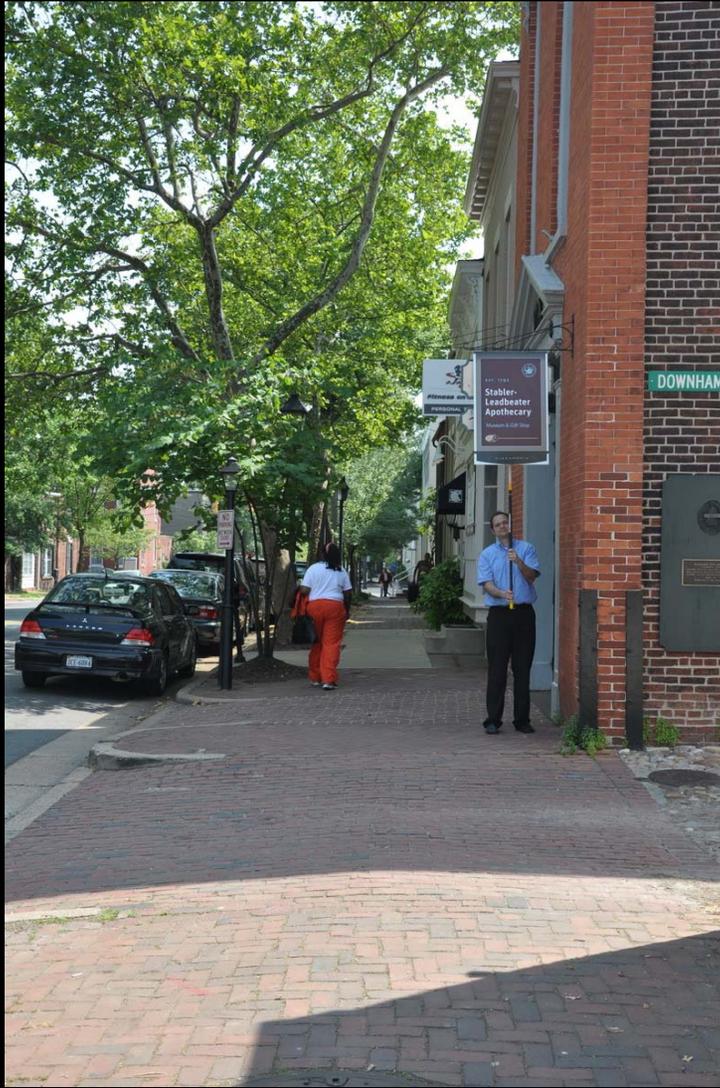
# Mock-ups: ID Signs – Lee-Fendall



# 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