



# 2013 Downtown Technical Assistance Application Cover Sheet

## Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program

Community Name:	Town of Concord
Date of Application:	September 28, 2012
Title of Project:	Concord Center Cultural District - Wayfinding

### Principal Contact: Please print clearly.

Name:	Marcia Rasmussen	Address:	Dept. of Planning & Land management  141 Keyes Road  Concord, MA 01742
Title:	Director, DPLM		
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Email:	mrasmussen@concordma.gov		

### Name & Signature of the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Elected Official (Required):

Name & Title:	Chris Whelan, Town Manager
Signature:	

(REQUIRED FOR SUBMISSION) Check one box for the type of assistance being requested:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Improvement District | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Economy              | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Way finding/Branding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics of Downtown         |  |

See attached program description for more information relating to the designated topics.

<p><b>Summary Statement:</b> Please describe your request in 25 words or less:          We are requesting technical assistance to support development of a wayfinding program that addresses the needs of multiple groups in a historic setting.</p> <p><b>Application Deadline:</b> 5:00 p.m. on September 28, 2012</p>
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**2013 Downtown Technical Assistance Application**  
**Wayfinding in Concord Center Cultural District**  
**9.28.12**

- **Way finding/Branding (Streetscape Improvements):**

Requests for assistance may address any aspect of developing a public way finding system and the creation of a distinguishable image or logo that carries through the various streetscape elements, including but not limited to: creation of public design elements that will be used throughout the downtown, way finding plan, cost analysis for implementation, and branding of a downtown through historic elements.

#### **APPLICATION REVIEW**

Please include the following with the application:

- *Application Cover sheet- with original signature (see attached)*
- *Downtown/town center target area map (see attached)*
- *List of individuals comprising a downtown organization or committee and their business or organizational affiliations.*

**Concord Center Cultural District Committee:**

Stephanie Stillman, Chamber of Commerce  
Jerry Wedge, Director of Emerson Umbrella for the Arts  
Carole Wayland, Director of Friends of the Performing Arts in Concord (FOPAC)  
Peggy Burke, Director of Concord Museum  
Allie Kussin, Emerson Umbrella for the Arts  
Peter Lovis, Owner of The Cheese Shop  
Christopher Whelan, Town Manager  
Marcia Rasmussen, Town of Concord - Director of Planning & Land Management  
Julie Vaughan, Town of Concord - Senior Planner

**Other Contributors:**

Richard Reine, Town of Concord - Public Works Director  
Lara Kritzer, Town of Concord - Senior Planner

- *Narrative – (see below)*

***Description of issue to be addressed:***

In August 2012, Concord Center became one of the first 10 places in Massachusetts to receive Cultural District designation from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). As part of this designation, the Town received an official logo to use for signage, branding and marketing of the Cultural District, and the Cultural District Committee is currently working to identify appropriate locations for 4 to 6 signs alerting visitors that they have entered into the Cultural District. In addition to this, the Committee is exploring other ways to augment the experience of the visitor in the Cultural District and has identified wayfinding as an area of significant need.

The Town of Concord is interpreting wayfinding as a set of standardized navigational tools that will aid visitors in finding historic sites, parks, natural features, cultural attractions, parking lots, public restrooms and other amenities once they are within the boundaries of the Cultural District. Regardless of the method(s) recommended or selected, standardization and

consistency of materials, font, size, color, height, location, and organization around a central theme will be of utmost importance in managing peoples' expectations and effectively helping them to orient themselves to the built environment. Objectives of wayfinding include enabling the visitor to understand spatially where the paths, edges, nodes, landmarks and districts begin and end; promoting the confidence, safety and comfort of the visitor when navigating the Cultural District; and creating an easy and pleasant experience that brings the visitor back to Concord. Whether the Town utilizes signage, pavement markings, kiosks, interpretive panels, maps, etc., all recommendations of any wayfinding plan must take into consideration the constraints and challenges inherent to the Cultural District that are described below.

One of the challenges of wayfinding in downtown Concord in general, and in the newly designated Cultural District, is its inclusion within several of Concord's Historic Districts. The Cultural District encompasses portions of three of the Town's six Historic Districts: Main Street, American Mile and North Bridge/Monument Square (a map of the Historic Districts in Concord is found at [http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA\\_HDC/HDCmap2005.pdf](http://www.concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_HDC/HDCmap2005.pdf)). The Main Street Historic District extends along Main Street, Keyes Road and a portion of Walden Street; the American Mile Historic District extends down Lexington Road; and the North Bridge/Monument Square Historic District includes Monument Square and extends down Monument Street and Lowell Road. Within the Historic Districts, any exterior changes which are visible from the public way (including the addition of new signage) must be reviewed and approved by the Historic Districts Commission. The Commission's charge is to maintain the historic, literary, and architectural significance and character of the sites and streetscapes within the Historic District by ensuring that any changes within these areas are appropriate to their specific setting. As such, there is an inherent challenge to adding any new wayfinding elements as they must be clear, consistent, and prominent to be useful for new visitors and yet blend in well with the historic streetscape to meet the requirements of the Historic Districts. The Town will greatly benefit from a grant for technical assistance to meet this challenge through a comprehensive review of the Historic District Design Guidelines and regulations in relation to proposed wayfinding techniques.

Another challenge of wayfinding in downtown Concord is the simple fact that there are many entrances, a.k.a. "gateways" to the Town. Visitors can enter Concord via Lexington Road ("the Battle Road") from Lincoln, via Walden Street from Walden Pond or Route 2, via Monument Street from Carlisle, via Lowell Road from the Concord rotary or points west along Route 2, via Main Street (Route 62) off of Route 2, or via Sudbury Road from the south. Visitors also come to Concord on the MBTA Fitchburg-South Acton commuter rail line (although numbers are low), by foot and by bicycle. As a result, a cohesive wayfinding plan for Concord Center will need to account for sight lines - what is visible - from various methods of transportation, and provide a sufficient number of indications at each entrance point without distracting, occluding or overcrowding the Cultural District, i.e. striking the balance between not enough and too much.

A third challenge of creating a wayfinding system in the Cultural District is the coordination that will be necessary with the many current and ongoing studies, initiatives and operations of the Town. Any proposed wayfinding system will need to be coordinated with the Town of Concord's

Public Works Department in advance of implementation, as Public Works will most likely be responsible for the installation and maintenance of the wayfinding features. In addition, certain features and locations may not be acceptable to Public Works if, for example, they conflict with a handicap ramp, crosswalk, curb cut, parking meter, obstruct a right-of-way, inhibit a sight line, or create difficulty with regards to Public Works operations, i.e. snowplowing.

- Concord Public Works is currently working with a consultant on a Town-wide signage study that will include recommendations for implementation of a consistent signage strategy throughout Town, as well as a wayfinding component for the Town as a whole.
- The Town is also in the process of working with a consultant on a Parking Management Study primarily for Concord Center and West Concord, and is expecting recommendations this fall/winter 2012 that include the coordination of parking regulations with parking signage. The consultant for this project is already coordinating with Public Works to ensure that parking signage and street signage recommendations are in harmony wherever possible.
- A third study that is underway is of the Town's existing network of trails and pedestrian pathways with regards to accessibility and availability to Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs). The study may include recommendations that would help inform a more socially equitable wayfinding system.

The Town would benefit from a wayfinding system that takes these current studies into consideration in an effort to avoid a proliferation of signage, markings, or features in Town that confuse rather than inform the functional environment. Any wayfinding system resulting from a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant would be expected to be in alignment with, or complementary to, the recommendations of the signage study, parking management study and accessibility study.

***Proposed project costs and scope of service:***

The proposed project cost is expected to be \$10,000. The scope of service for a wayfinding study and plan shall include the following:

1. Meeting with representatives of the Town and Cultural District Committee to ensure a clear understanding of the project;
2. Familiarization with the Cultural District and limits of project area;
3. Review of relevant documents, including but not limited to:
  - a. Historic Districts Guidelines
  - b. Signage Study recommendations
  - c. Parking Management Study recommendations
  - d. Accessibility Study recommendations
  - e. Town of Concord Sign Bylaw, if applicable
4. Review of current practices and industry standards;
5. Review of strategies used in similar nearby Towns and an assessment of what works and what does not;
6. Preparation of initial findings & recommendations – may include maps, pictures, etc.

7. Meeting with representatives of the Town and Cultural District Committee to review initial findings & recommendations;
8. Presentation of initial findings & recommendations to Board of Selectmen;
9. Meeting with stakeholders in the Cultural District and/or presentation to Concord Business Partnership;
10. Informal meeting with the Historic Districts Commission;
11. Preparation of Final Wayfinding Plan that includes the following:
  - a. Findings
  - b. Recommendations:
    - i. Feasibility given historic district and other constraints
    - ii. Cost analysis for implementation, by recommendation
    - iii. Timeframe for implementation, by recommendation
  - c. Related maps, pictures and other visuals

***Evidence of strong public/private partnership:***

The makeup of the Concord Center Cultural District steering committee (which is comprised of business owners, executive directors of various arts programs and museums, the Chamber of Commerce and the Town) and the expressed support by the Board of Selectmen in seeking Cultural District designation provide evidence of the strong public/private partnership for this project. Letters of support can be provided if required.

***Positive outcomes expected as a result of the requested assistance:***

The development of new wayfinding measures to designate and highlight the Cultural District will positively impact the businesses and cultural centers within the District by highlighting their presence and drawing attention to the unusual characteristics which make Concord Center so unique. These wayfinding elements will be designed to be informative as well as attractive additions to the Center, and will both contribute to and enhance the area's unique historic charm.

***Demonstration of a community's ability to begin implementation of recommended action(s) within one to three months of completion of Downtown Technical Assistance Site Visit Grant:***

The proposed scope of work anticipates that all of the necessary stakeholders within the Cultural Districts, including business owners as well as the necessary Town Boards, Commissions and Departments (Board of Selectmen, Historic Districts Commission, Public Works Department, etc.), will be part of the review and design process. As such, all stakeholders will have any opportunity to express their opinions and any project requirements during the design process so that the project can incorporate these needs and be ready for immediate implementation. The Town anticipates that the few remaining steps of the process including the final approval of the project by the Historic Districts Commission; manufacturing of the wayfinding elements; and installation of these elements by the Public Works Department can then easily be accomplished within one to three months following the completion of the grant, weather permitting.

# Concord Center Cultural District

