

A SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING STRATEGY FOR THE CONCORD CENTER CULTURAL DISTRICT



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Project Background

The Town of Concord offers an array of important and fascinating historical, cultural, and natural resources for exploration, as well as an active, vital schedule of performing arts and cultural events. However, with less than ideal signage, Concord Center can be a difficult place to get one's bearings. The potential for a richly rewarding experience is lost when new and repeat visitors, and even local Town residents, cannot find their destinations or learn about current events or Concord's culture and history. This Study suggests an initial strategy for a contextual, responsive, and innovative approach to signage and wayfinding for Concord Center. It is not meant to provide specific, technical recommendations, but rather to suggest a framework of ideas and possible actions for the Town to consider.



WAYFINDING PROJECT GOALS

This report considers methods to significantly improve wayfinding within Concord Center and the connections to other destinations in Town. Rather than producing a technical set of recommendations about what type of signage should be installed where, this report seeks to identify organizing principles for a coordinated wayfinding plan. These include:

- Make it easier for first-time visitors to find their way to and within Concord Center, and to get an overview orientation to all the Center's offerings.
- Use parking resources more efficiently, and minimize confusion and circling of the driving public.
- Encourage residents of Concord and nearby communities who are already familiar with Concord Center to linger, learn about, and explore other events and destinations.
- Replace the current practice of event notices on plastic A-frame signs with a more contextually-appropriate solution.
- Make better use of the existing Visitor Center facility by making it easier to find and taking advantage of the front lawn.
- Create synergy between related destinations within Concord Center and greater Concord, making it easier for visitors and residents to explore the Town through different topics of interest.
- Improve overall wayfinding clarity for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

WHAT IS WAYFINDING, AND HOW DOES IT APPLY TO CONCORD CENTER?

Wayfinding offers a broader approach to understanding and finding one's way through the environment than physical signage. Beyond the expected assistance offered by a traditional signage program (including maps, kiosks, interpretive panels, and signs), wayfinding extends to encompass other visual cues such as artwork, pavement markings, lighting, printed maps and brochures, and online or digital content such as interactive walking tours and maps.

The Town of Concord would like the new wayfinding system to include coherent and clear navigational tools that will aid visitors in finding historic sites, parks, natural features, cultural attractions, parking lots, public rest rooms, and other amenities once they are within the boundaries of the Cultural District. Regardless of the method(s) recommended or selected, consistency of materials, typefaces, size, color, height, location, and organization around central topics will be important in managing peoples' expectations and effectively helping them to orient themselves to the built environment.

Wayfinding should enable visitors to understand spatially where the paths, edges, nodes, landmarks, and districts begin and end; promote the confidence, safety and comfort of the visitor when navigating the Cultural District; and create an easy and pleasant experience that brings the visitor back to Concord.



- Create a system of information and signage that is aesthetically appropriate for the image and character of the historic district.

A NEW CULTURAL DISTRICT

The heart of Concord, Concord Center is rich in cultural and historical destinations, as well as numerous high-quality shopping and dining destinations. In August 2012, Concord Center became one of the first 10 places in Massachusetts to receive a Cultural District designation from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC).



A Cultural District Steering Committee has been formed, and includes business owners, executive directors of various art programs and museums, and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Town itself.

As part of the Cultural District designation, the Town received an official logo to use for signage, branding, and marketing of the Cultural District. While this logo provides valuable branding cachet to Concord Center, the Cultural District Committee sought other ways to augment the experience of Visitors to the Cultural District, and identified wayfinding as an area of significant need. This report is the first step in rethinking Concord's wayfinding.

EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The boundaries of the Concord Center Cultural District are shown in red on the map on the next page. Concord Center is also the confluence of several Historic Districts:

- Main Street (extends along Main Street, Keyes Road, and a portion of Walden Street)
- American Mile (extends along Lexington Road southeast from Monument Square)
- North Bridge / Monument Square (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.

CONCORD'S VISITOR CENTER

Concord's Visitor Center is centrally located on Main Street near Walden Street. Run by the Chamber of Commerce and staffed by volunteer docents, it provides a unique educational and informative environment to distribute cultural and tourism information to residents and visitors. It is a special resource in Concord.

SIGNS TO CONCORD CENTER

Several main approaches by car and train (from other destinations in Concord) lead to Concord Center. However, signs for drivers (and bicyclists) are often too numerous (too many signs to read safely and quickly while in motion), non-existent, or placed in a less than ideal location, making it difficult to find Concord Center. Train stations have no signage directing visitors to Concord Center or other destinations within Town. Pedestrians have few detailed directional signs or maps at their disposal, and even basic street name signage is often hard to find. Often the only assistance available to pedestrians are the driver-oriented signs near and around Monument Square.

RELATED EFFORTS

The wayfinding solution must avoid a proliferation of signage, markings, or features in Town that confuse rather than inform the functional environment. To that end, the following current studies will be very informative.

- The Town's Department of Public Works is completing a separate, thorough inventory of existing signage types and locations throughout Concord.
- The transportation consulting firm Nelson\Nygaard recently completed a Parking Management Study for the Town, focused

on Concord Center and West Concord, with many recommendations on the coordination of parking regulations with parking signage.

- The Town is conducting a Trails and Pathways Study to evaluate existing conditions and recommend a more socially equitable and accessible wayfinding system.

Concord Center Cultural District, outlined in red, overlaps with three Historic Districts.



Wayfinding Applications for Concord: A Spectrum of Solutions

DIRECTIONS

Auto-Oriented Signs

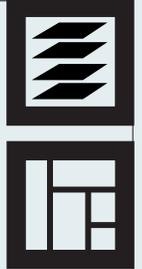
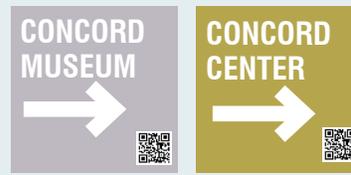
- Placed at key driver decision points
- Provided for major destinations only
- Concord Center, Keyes Road parking lot / Visitor Center
- North Bridge, Walden Pond, Orchard House



INFORMATION

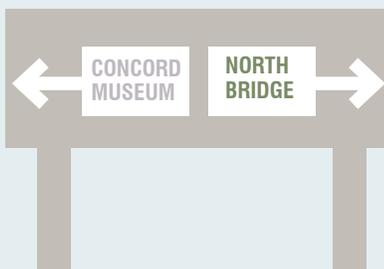
Destination Signs

- Placed in front of each destination
- Design may indicate the place's role or topic within Concord, such as history or literature
- QR codes may be provided to link to more in-depth, interpretive information about the destination; or to issue a "badge" for each stop on the walk (like a scavenger hunt)



Pedestrian-Oriented Signs

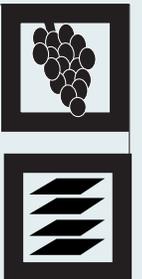
- Simple graphics, clean cohesive styling throughout Concord Center and beyond
- Design complements the historic character and context
- Could also list walking distances (in minutes) to encourage pedestrians to explore further



Analog Event Grid Display

- Banners, message board, or grid structure to display event notices within a consistent format
- Mounted in front of Visitor Center
- Event notices may be produced via templates at local printers in town, in a consistent format
- Event notices may be offered at various price points: for example, a free three-line listing on a shared event notice, a small fee for space within a message board grid, and a larger fee for the larger product such as banners
- Information may be duplicated on websites or mobile apps maintained by the Town or Chamber

MUSIC	SHOPPING	READING	ART
DATE TIME LOCATION	DATE TIME LOCATION	DATE TIME LOCATION	DATE TIME LOCATION



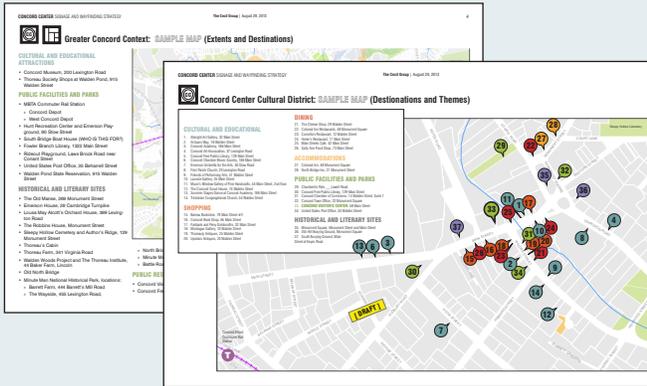
This diagram summarizes this report's recommended spectrum of wayfinding solutions for Concord Center. The symbols within the diagram relate to the four proposed strategies that are presented next.

WAYFINDING / ORIENTATION

INTERPRETATION / PLACEMAKING

Map Sign Boards

- Clear full-color sign boards with maps, placed in key visitor locations such as Visitor Center and Train Stations
- Fold-out paper maps, distributed widely from other locations
- Destinations colored by topic category



QR Codes

- Placed on sign boards, secondary signs, and/or interpretive panels
- Link to websites with in-depth information, interviews, maps, videos
- The linked content may provide a supplement to the posted or printed information, but for equity reasons should not replace it



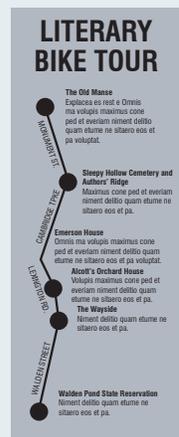
SmartPhone Apps

- Walking tours
- Custom itineraries
- Scavenger hunts



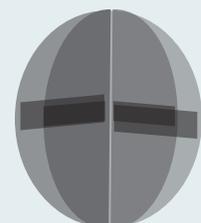
Topic-based Self-Guided Walking Tours Maps

- Topic-based, e.g. Revolutionary War, Literature, Thoreau and Conservation
- Printed map handouts may duplicate or supplement sign board maps
- May be used to extend walking tours beyond Concord Center as biking tours throughout Concord
- May also be reproduced as smartphone apps and website-based walking tours



Wayfinding through Artwork

- Provides a visual and sensory approach to link various elements
- Wayfinding Garden in front of Visitor Center, with walking paths, seating, lighting, plants, interpretive signage, sculpture, and artwork



Challenges with Concord's Current Wayfinding

SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONS ARE INCOMPLETE AND CONFUSING

Automobile Approaches

A challenge with basic directional signage is that there are many entrances or “gateways” to Concord Center. 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), and by foot and by bicycle.

A large share of car traffic ends up along Lexington and Lowell Roads, passing Main Street at Monument Square. A profusion of green directional signs in this area present an overwhelming amount of information to drivers.

Amid these signs, small brown “Information” signs for the Visitor Center and for historical destinations (such as The Old Manse) are lost. Furthermore, the Town allows local venues to place their event signs on moveable plastic A-frame “sandwich board” signs in the medians and islands of this busy traffic area. Nowhere

is there a sign that simply says “Visitor Center” or “Concord Center,” although the clear “Main Street” appearance of Concord Center is a good indicator. There are few, if any, signs to the two main parking lots.

Pedestrian Signage

For pedestrians trying to reach Concord Center from the east (such as from Sleepy Hollow Cemetery), Lexington Road / Monument Square presents a wide expanse of pavement to cross. The fast-moving and sometimes heavy traffic flows around a traffic circle, not always stopping for the occasional pedestrian.

Signage for pedestrians in the Monument Square area is poor. Nearly all the signs—as numerous and confusing as they are—face toward drivers. The typefaces on the driver-oriented signs are too small for drivers to read, but the typeface is also too small for pedestrians trying to read it from the other side of the street.

Most of the event signs, in contrast, have homemade printed notices inside letter-size plastic envelopes taped to the sandwich boards, and are impossible to read unless one can stand right in front of them.

The combination of these various signs in a location where drivers are moving fast and have



little time to make decisions regarding turns or parking makes for an unsuccessful and potentially dangerous situation.

Findings

- Consider prohibiting event signage in areas where drivers need to focus on essential navigational issues.
- Provide more advanced notification, via signs placed further back from decision points, to drivers of directional options.
- Check directional signage visibility from driver vantage points. Move signs, and/or trim vegetation, for better visibility.
- Provide clear, contextual, signage for Concord Center, Visitor Center, and Parking Lots.

CONCORD PARKING MANAGEMENT STUDY

A 2013 comprehensive *Parking Study* for Concord by Nelson\Nygaard consultants recommended:

- Channeling visitors to off-street lots for longer visits;
- Reserving on-street parking for shorter visits;
- Improving signage for parking areas;
- Improving vehicular circulation;
- Improving pedestrian access to parking lots;
- Pricing parking properly to allocate usage at different locations; and
- Adding bike and handicapped parking.



NEW VISITORS HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING THEIR BEARINGS

Public Parking Areas

Locals and frequent visitors can easily find their way around Concord Center, and find the appropriate parking spots. But to a newcomer, finding parking—and then being able to explore on foot—is confusing. The Visitor Center is a great resource for new visitors, but its very existence, and location, are not readily apparent.

Signs to the two large off-street parking lots are hard to find. The Walden Street lot—which, not being next to the Visitor Center, is more appropriate for shoppers and experienced visitors—only has a sign on the north side of a building, adjoining the parking lot driveway.

This discreet sign is only visible to drivers heading south on Walden Street from Main Street, and only helps if they are able to locate the line “Public Parking” on the sign below “Walden Liquors.”

On-street metered parking exists throughout Concord Center, but the signs explaining that it is one-hour parking are few in number. A driver may have to park, get out of his car, and read the fine print on the meter before discovering that the on-street parking is too short a duration for his needs.

Nonetheless, if a driver has managed to park in the Walden Street lot, no wayfinding maps or signs help to orient the person who now seeks to explore the Center on foot. Emerging from the parking lot to Walden Street, the



pedestrian cannot see any street signs indicating what street he is on, for the closest likely location to find a street sign—at Main and Walden—is hidden behind the corner building when viewed from this perspective.

The walkway from the Walden Street lot has a short, narrow sidewalk that is interrupted by an area for parked cars. An attractive, brick-lined walkway to Walden Street at the southern end of the parking lot is not signed.

Signage to the Keyes Road parking lot is only placed at either end of Keyes Road.

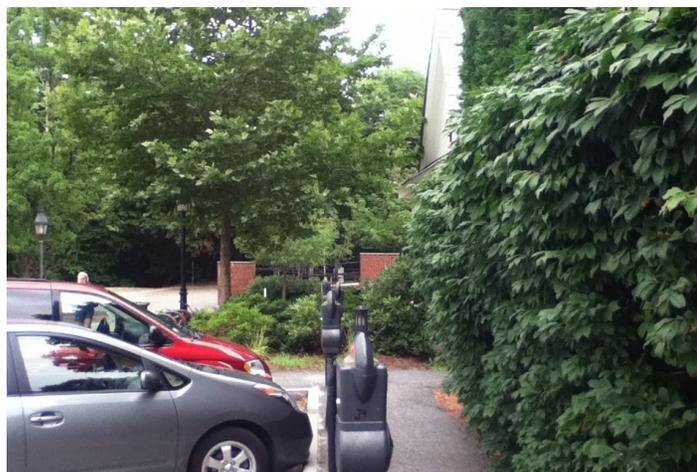
Finding the Visitor Center

If a driver has found the Keyes Road lot and parked, the Visitor Center—which directly adjoins the parking lot—is hard to locate. The small, tastefully subdued sign which faces the parking lot is hard to see. Anyone standing on the sidewalk at the front edge of the parking lot, or approaching from the Keyes Road sidewalk, cannot see any sign, for there are no signs oriented perpendicular to the sidewalk, and the leaves of bushes obstruct the view of the Visitor Center building.

Signs for the Visitor Center itself are spread throughout Concord Center. They are brown with only the word “Information.” This is a bit cryptic; it does not explicitly state Visitor Information, or Visitor Center, nor give a sense of all the amenities at the Center (maps, bathrooms, experienced docent guides, and free parking.)

Findings

- Send visitor-drivers to the Keyes Road lot, and provide wayfinding signage to help them get their bearings
- Ensure street signage is visible where visitors are most likely to look to get their bearings



THE VISITOR CENTER IS AN UNDERUTILIZED RESOURCE

The Visitor Center, 58 Main Street, is operated by the Concord Chamber of Commerce. Several large deciduous and coniferous trees scattered within the generous lawn predate the construction of the Center (on land leased to the Town by Middlesex Savings Bank).

A Valuable Resource

The Center is usually open daily from late spring through late fall, and its bathrooms are available year-round from 7 AM to 8 PM. Staffed by volunteer docents, the center is a trove of knowledge, maps, and brochures about the various sights in Concord. It also provides useful maps of the Town within the notice board on the exterior side wall. The front lawn is a Town-sanctioned posting area for event notices on the pervasive plastic A-



Photo by Nashawtuc Architects

frame signage boards, and there are typically several frames at any one time.

Visibility

The Visitor Center, and in particular its front lawn, is an underutilized resource. It is difficult for a pedestrian on Main Street to know that the building exists, for it is set far back from the street (as opposed to the traditional zero lot line Main Street buildings). Tall evergreen bushes along the adjacent Bank of America drive-through driveway block the view of the asphalt walkway to the Visitor Center. The discreet sign at the front blends in with the adjacent evergreen tree. From across Main Street, the building is nearly hidden behind the large evergreen tree. As discussed in the earlier section, the Visitor Center is not obvious from the rear either, due to its small sign and heavy vegetation. When the Center is closed, the only information available are the map posted on the side of the building, and the event notices on sandwich boards along the front edge of the lawn.

Orientation Difficulties

The Visitor Center is close to the center of Town—Main and Walden Streets—but with its deep front setback and small size relative to the thick stand of old trees, feels remote. The difficulty of new visitors in finding the Visitor Center and thereby getting their bearings in Concord is evidenced by the map of Concord that the Main Street Cafe—which is truly at the heart of Concord Center, at Main at Walden Streets—has placed atop their menu board for the benefit of visitors.

Another Town map is posted within a sign board display near Monument Square, on the north side of Main Street, but is similarly set back from the main road, and behind a wide stone wall that makes it difficult to get up close and peruse the map. This message board does not appear to be regularly maintained.

Findings

- Improve the visibility of the Visitor Center from the rear by pruning bushes and adding a more prominent, easy-to-read sign, while remaining contextually appropriate to the Town.
- Improve visibility from the front by enlivening the front lawn with features that will draw people up the pathway: meandering pathways, surfaced or edged with decorative pavers, landscaping (varied in texture, color, and seasonal interest), low lighting. The front lawn can become an enticing public space in its own right, and the additional foot traffic and visitors will in turn alert passersby that this is a place to check out.
- Prune the bushes adjoining the Bank of America property so that the walkway to the Visitor Center is more visible. Prune the underside canopy of the evergreen trees in front so pedestrians can see beyond it.
- Replace the asphalt walkway from the front sidewalk with a more attractive material that draws the eye toward the Center, and consider providing a meandering path through the lawn.



SIGNS HAVE COMPETING, INCONSISTENT STYLES

Issues

On the one hand, Concord Center has too many signs competing for attention, especially for drivers. On the other hand, signage to key destinations, and for basic orientation, is lacking, both for drivers and for pedestrians.

Throughout Concord Center, signs take many forms. Major road signs are the familiar green of state highway signage. Many contemporary signs for cultural destinations use the brown background and white serif typeface format associated with the National Park Service. Other cultural-related signs that call out historically-significant people or places are white ovals. Older signs—such as for the Mill Dam—use historical formats, familiar but no longer in use, for culturally significant places, giving an appealing, layered historic character to Concord. And plastic A-frame event signs are scattered throughout the Center.

Many signs have been placed haphazardly, relying on convenience for placement—such as atop an existing pole. This results in a large collection of signs in one place, making it difficult for drivers to find the critical information they need to make navigational decisions. These signs are often not in the best location for effective visibility.

The sheer numbers and variety of signage are confusing for drivers. For pedestrians, the signage does not contribute to an understanding of the variety of destinations, events, and businesses available in the Center. For example, signs for sights related to the Revolutionary War (e.g., Minute Man National Historical Park) are intermingled with signs for literary

destinations (Historic Houses). The ability to differentiate the different types of destinations and show what Concord has to offer is lost. Sometimes, the name of a destination on a sign is abbreviated to fit on the sign, to the detriment of its legibility.

Findings

Provide only essential information for drivers. Keep interpretive signs off signposts.

Organize the basic directional signage for the various destinations according to common topics, such as cultural, historic, and natural resources.





A Contextual Wayfinding Approach: Four Strategies

Based on the analysis summarized in the previous discussion, a set of goals emerged that focus on the basics and on high-impact changes. For visitors unfamiliar with the area, wayfinding in Concord Center needs to focus on the most essential element: getting people to a centralized destination where they can get oriented and plan their visit. For residents and repeat visitors, wayfinding needs to suggest or reveal other events and places in Concord Center, and encourage people to try something new. The approach must help clarify the many destinations while preserving the unique personality and context of each, and needs to be sensitive to the historic character of Concord. And to build support for re-thinking wayfinding in Concord Center, it would help to begin with solutions that are clear, concise, and innovative.

The following four strategies will meet these goals, and will help build excitement for this new wayfinding endeavor. The first two crystallize the wayfinding process at the heart of Concord Center. The second two are more traditional wayfinding steps, and require an analysis of existing wayfinding elements and an prioritization of destinations to be included.

Each strategy has an associated symbol that is used throughout the remainder of this document. Subsequent sections provide more detail on each of the four strategies.



STRATEGY ONE: CHANNEL PEOPLE TO THE VISITOR CENTER FIRST FOR ORIENTATION

Making the Visitor Center, and adjoining parking lot, more visible through directional signage will better direct people to these important, and somewhat underutilized, assets.

Park Once, Then Orient on Foot

- Direct all tourists / visitors to Concord Center, to park in the Keyes Road Lot, then proceed on foot to the Visitor Center.
- Encourage locals, shoppers, prior visitors to park in the Walden Street lot, or in on-street spaces for shorter trips.

Provide Wayfinding for Pedestrians

Once drivers get out of their cars and become pedestrians, with the opportunity to concentrate on more fine-grained information, provide detailed maps, directions, and information on all destinations and events in Concord Center (eventually, greater Concord).



STRATEGY TWO: CREATE A WAYFINDING GARDEN AND 'INFO HUB' AT THE VISITOR CENTER

A “wayfinding garden” within the expansive, underutilized front lawn of the Visitor Center will be a visible, tangible reminder of this helpful resource building. The garden will be a gathering place in Concord Center for locals and visitors, and will establish a “sense of place” at the Visitor Center. The garden’s location makes an ideal place to centralize the existing disparate event signage into a deliberate, conscious information board, and create excitement over the many cultural offerings in Town.

Provide Wayfinding in a Garden Gathering Space Context

- Garden will include seating, landscaping, lighting, wayfinding signage, and event information boards.

Systematize the Event Signage

- Analog event grid matrix / board, or a digital display.
- QR code links to online calendar of events.



STRATEGY THREE: GROUP WAYFINDING FOR COMPLEMENTARY DESTINATIONS INTO COMMON TOPICS

The multitude of signs, destinations, and events within Concord Center and beyond could be organized visually into logical groupings or topics. This will help visitors better navigate through Town will allowing Concord's many "stories" to be told. It will also allow drivers to quickly grasp key navigational information.

Organize Visually by Topics

- Examples of possible organizational topics: Frontier Outpost, Natural History, Revolutionary War, Literary Concord

Use Topics on Signage, Handouts, and Digital Content

- Map boards, directional and identification signs; paper maps, self-guided walking tour handouts; online content such as scavenger tour apps, websites with expanded interpretive content



STRATEGY FOUR: TAKE A COORDINATED APPROACH TO SIGNAGE FOR PEDESTRIANS AND DRIVERS

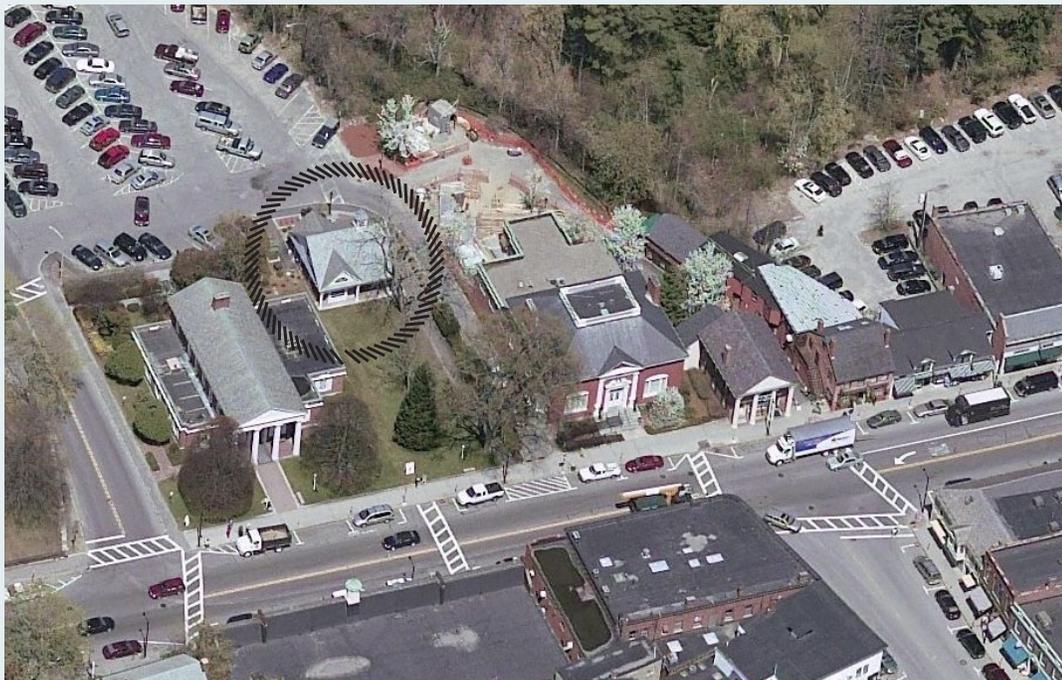
This is the nuts and bolts of the entire wayfinding strategy. Existing signs will need to be removed, relocated, or replaced. New signs will be needed, but with a judicious choice of priorities.

Limit New Signage for Drivers

- Provide auto-oriented signage for main destinations
- North Bridge, Orchard House, and Walden Pond

Provide Richer Signage Content for Pedestrians

- Clear overview maps placed strategically throughout Concord Center, and eventually further out.
- Smaller identification signs placed on sidewalks and in front of major landmarks,



The Visitor Center at Concord Center



STRATEGY ONE: Channel People to the Visitor Center First for Orientation

HELP DRIVERS FIND THE VISITOR CENTER

- Some of this strategy overlaps with the **Fourth Strategy**, A Coordinated Approach to Signage for Pedestrians and Drivers.
- Provide simple, essential “Visitor Center” signage at key driver decision points in Concord.
- Designate the front row(s) of the Keyes Road parking lot for short-term parking, and use the middle and rear of the lot for longer-term or all-day parking.
- Designate an area of the Keyes Road parking lot that is convenient for tour buses to pull off Keyes Road directly into striped bus spaces.

HELP PEDESTRIANS FIND THE VISITOR CENTER

- In the Keyes Road parking lot, provide a more visible and lighted (useful on dark winter afternoons) sign near the middle of the lot, and at the front of the lot, pointing to the Visitor Center building.
- Consider lighting the front and rear pathways to the Visitor Center, and pruning bushes along it to make it more open and noticeable.
- Enhance the front lawn of the Visitor Center to draw one’s eye up toward the building, and to make it more visible from the Main Street sidewalk.



Major vehicular approach points to Concord Center. The Cultural District is outlined in red.

PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE MAP AT THE VISITOR CENTER

- Provide clear, comprehensive maps on a sign board in an obvious, well-lit, and easily-accessible location. The sign will be most useful off-hours when the Visitor Center is closed.
- If the map continues to be provided at the side of the Visitor Center building, improve the visibility and invitingness of the existing walkway alongside the building, perhaps through decorative paving, lighting, and different or thinned border landscaping.
- Alternately, or in addition, a clear, contextual map board should be provided as part of the proposed Wayfinding Garden on the front lawn of the Visitor Center.
- The sign board should include a map of destinations in Concord Center, and another map of destinations in greater Concord. Both maps should organize the content into topics (**Strategy Three**) that help a visitor grasp the many interesting destinations in Concord.

PROVIDE TAKE-ALONG PAPER MAPS

- Provide paper hand-out maps duplicating the content of the posted map (in color or black and white, as budget allows) at the Visitor Center and throughout Town, such as at the Library and Concord Museum. These could be free, or sold for a small fee.
- Provide printed self-guided walking tour maps that link different topics (**Strategy Three**) and that relate to the content of the posted board maps. These could be free or carry a small fee.
- Include QR codes on the posted map to allow viewers to link to an online version using their smartphones. The QR code destination could be changed, as funding allows, to a more elaborate, interpretive, interactive website. (See later section on **Digital Wayfinding Content**.)



A sign at Weston Nurseries in Hopkinton



Informational map at the San Francisco Botanical Garden



STRATEGY TWO: Create a Wayfinding Garden and Information Hub at the Visitor Center

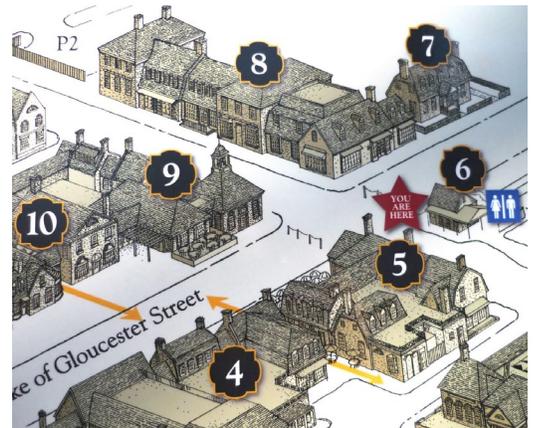
The Visitor Center is in an excellent, central location. An inviting and diverse garden located in the front lawn of the Visitor Center will help draw visitors and locals to use the space, and stroll into the Center. The garden will take advantage of this rare spot of green space right at the crossroads of Concord Center.



PROVIDE AN INVITING PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE

Seating, sunny and shady areas, arbors, landscaped plantings, atmospheric lighting, and artwork will create a pleasant environment that is fun to explore. Free wifi would make it even more inviting.

- The garden plantings could have an interesting demonstration theme, such as a Victory Garden, Edible Native Plants, Heirloom Colonial-Era Plants. Local gardeners might be interested in maintaining the garden.
- The Garden gives visitors a chance to get their bearings, take a rest, and think about what to do next. As a result, they might be more likely to linger in Concord Center and patronize local businesses, stores, and eateries.
- The garden should be designed to maintain a significant open area for gatherings, so that it can function as a space for special events. Possible activities in the front of the Center could include fundraising bake sales and book sales, historical costumed events, holiday-themed events, preview performances of evening events throughout Town, and poetry readings. These events will also help to draw casual



passersby down the pathway and into the Visitor Center building.

- Emerson Umbrella for the Arts has expressed an interest in providing a sculpture or other outdoor artwork for the garden.

PROVIDE INFORMATION AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

The garden is an ideal spot for a clear, detailed signage board of all the various destinations and attractions within Concord Center and greater Concord. Beyond just the informational content of what is where, the signage can include interpretive panels or artwork that introduces visitors to the rich history, culture, and current events in Concord.

ORGANIZE EVENT NOTICES IN A COORDINATED FRAMEWORK

- Event graphics may be cleverly incorporated into the garden as a design feature, replacing the ad hoc A-frame boards. A unified structure will allow users to post their varied event notices within an organized framework.
- New visitors to Concord will be drawn into the garden out of curiosity, and will find the event board. Locals and regular visitors will quickly learn to stop by the event board periodically to see what's going on.
- Examples of possible event board structures are shown on the following pages.





CREATE AN EVENT INFORMATION FRAMEWORK AT THE GARDEN

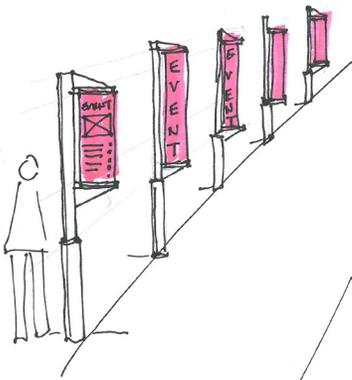
The existing clusters of A-frame event sign boards that line the front edge of the Visitor Center's front yard should be replaced with a systematic structural framework. The new framework should provide some type of regular pattern, array, or grid of mounting surfaces for standard-sized event notices to be quickly mounted for a short duration (days or weeks).

While a few possible design options are illustrated here, others are certainly possible. The common design goal is to allow event notices to vary while maintaining a unifying background graphic that ties the entire collection together even when not all slots are filled up by event notices.

Example: A Procession of Banners

Event notices could be arrayed in a procession along the Main Street sidewalk or in a meandering path through the front yard.

Banners along the street should be designed to be bold, concise, and easily read, so as to



be legible to drivers; they would only contain the basics—the name and date of the event. Further information on the event would be provided on a smaller, more detailed sign within the Garden, or on a website that people are directed to.

Banners would be the most festive and striking option; however, their larger size and durability requirements would give them the highest printing cost. One type of banner that is relatively lower in cost is a “teardrop” banner; the poles may be permanently affixed to the ground, while the designs on printed fabric sleeves may be easily changed as needed.

Example: Arrayed in a Vertical Grid

Event notices could be fastened with clip or pin fasteners to a wireframe grid or even a grid of mounted clipboards. This gives a uniform design template for the diverse-content and format of event notices. However, making such a framework completely durable and weatherproof may be challenging.

Example: Trailhead-type Sign Case or Kiosk

A more traditional display case, such as a multi-sided kiosk or a trailhead-style case, could be installed in the Garden. These can have locked polycarbonate cases to protect the notices and maps within. A sign case is used



just west of Monument Square, on the north side of Main Street, but it may be that the lack of regular maintenance and cleaning of that structure is due to its remote location, without any nearby “owner.” A Sign Case at the Wayfinding Garden, with its adjacency to the staffed Visitor Center, is more likely to remain clean and up-to-date through the efforts of Center volunteers or Chamber staff.

Example: Pasted on the Ground or on Furnishings

Event notices could be pasted on the sidewalk. Various types of waterproof full-color vinyl printing products are available.

Use Durable Print Substrates

Regardless of the form the structure takes, the event postings should take advantage of newer print technologies that use ink that is waterproof and fadeproof for short duration uses (days or weeks), and durable, waterproof print stock materials (such as Tyvek) that offer low-cost and widely-available printing.

Maintain Attractive Design where No Notices are Posted

Regardless of the chosen design, the event posting structure should have default banners or inserts for each slot so as to maintain an overall background graphic that ties together the entire structure. An example is shown below, where a photograph of Concord extends across all event notice slots, and is visible in the areas where no sign notice has been posted. Similarly, default banners with simple graphic patterns, such as seasonal foliage or photographs, could be mounted on any banner poles that are not in use for event notices.

Production of Event Notices

Local printers in Concord could be given design templates for the event notices. The tem-

plates would define certain parameters, which could be as specific or as general as desired.

For example, a minimum font size, a family of available typefaces, a palette of colors, and guidelines for minimum resolution of any photographs, would help greatly to ensure a bit of uniformity among the event notices, while allowing each to showcase its own content.

A more structured approach might spell out the location and formatting of certain “fields” for each type of content (such as date, location, contact information), and organize the different type of event notices into different topics, (such as different colors for cultural, performing arts, historic, nature, etc.)



Information kiosk in Falmouth





STRATEGY THREE: Group Wayfinding for Complementary Destinations into Common Topics

Creating a linked set of organizational topics for wayfinding content will help visitors quickly grasp all that Concord has to offer and get a better sense of the Town's rich history. Possible topics are shown below at left, divided loosely into current events and history. Other organizational frameworks are certainly possible as well.

USE TOPICS ON SIGNS, HANDOUTS, AND ONLINE

The topics can carry across posted signage, map handouts, and expanded online / mobile content. Within a posted map sign, the topics can be used to organize the identification symbols on the map, and to group the associated listings' information. An example is shown on the following page.

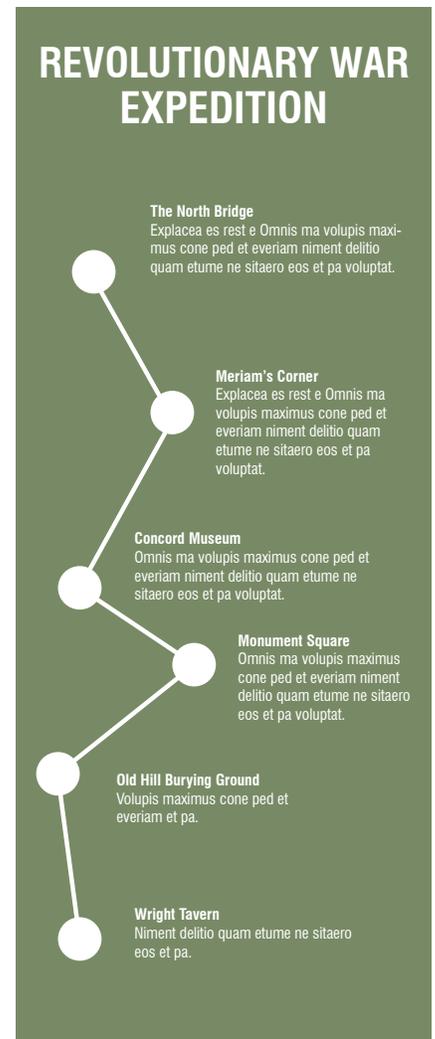
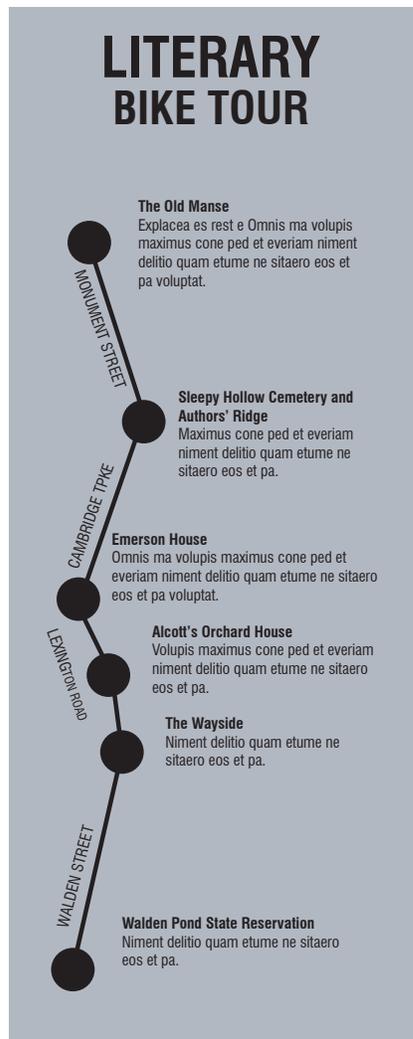
Each topic, in turn, may be used to create custom walking/biking/tours. Simple mockups of possible tours are shown below. Simple paper maps work well for these tours, and they

Current Attractions Topics

- CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS
- SHOPPING AND DINING
- SEASONAL EVENTS / TOURS

Historical Topics

- LITERARY CONCORD
- DRINKING GOURD PROJECT
- REVOLUTIONARY WAR
- THOREAU AND CONSERVATION



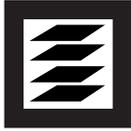
can also be replicated digitally as smartphone apps or websites.

With mobile content, topics can carry into unique scavenger hunts, self-guided walks, and expanded interpretive content. See the later section on **Digital Wayfinding Content** for more information.

Example of a Wayfinding Strategy

The photos on this page are from the San Francisco Botanical Garden. While this is of course a more controlled environment and urban setting than the Town of Concord, with its various businesses, institutions, and state and local directional signage needs, it is an interesting example of how a wayfinding graphic concept can apply to different types of signs: identification signs, directional signs, maps, and interpretive signs.





CONCORD CENTER: SAMPLE MAP SHOWING POSSIBLE DESTINATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL TOPICS

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL

1. Albright Art Gallery, 32 Main Street
2. Artisans Way, 18 Walden Street
3. Concord Academy, 166 Main Street
4. Concord Art Association, 37 Lexington Road
5. Concord Free Public Library, 129 Main Street
6. Concord Chamber Music Society, 166 Main Street
7. Emerson Umbrella for the Arts, 40 Stow Road
8. First Parish Church, 20 Lexington Road
9. Friends of Performing Arts, 51 Walden Street
10. Lacoste Gallery, 25 Main Street
11. Muse's Window Gallery of Fine Handcrafts, 44 Main Street, 2nd floor
12. The Concord Scout House, 74 Walden Street
13. Summer Stages Dance at Concord Academy, 166 Main Street
14. Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden Street

SHOPPING

15. Barrow Bookstore, 79 Main Street #2
16. Concord Book Shop, 65 Main Street
17. Fairbank and Perry Goldsmiths, 32 Main Street
18. Montague Gallery, 10 Walden Street
19. Thoreau's Antiques, 25 Walden Street
20. Upstairs Antiques, 23 Walden Street

DINING

21. The Cheese Shop, 29 Walden Street
22. Colonial Inn Restaurants, 48 Monument Square
23. Comella's Restaurant, 12 Walden Street
24. Helen's Restaurant, 17 Main Street
25. Main Streets Cafe, 42 Main Street
26. Sally Ann Food Shop, 73 Main Street

ACCOMMODATIONS

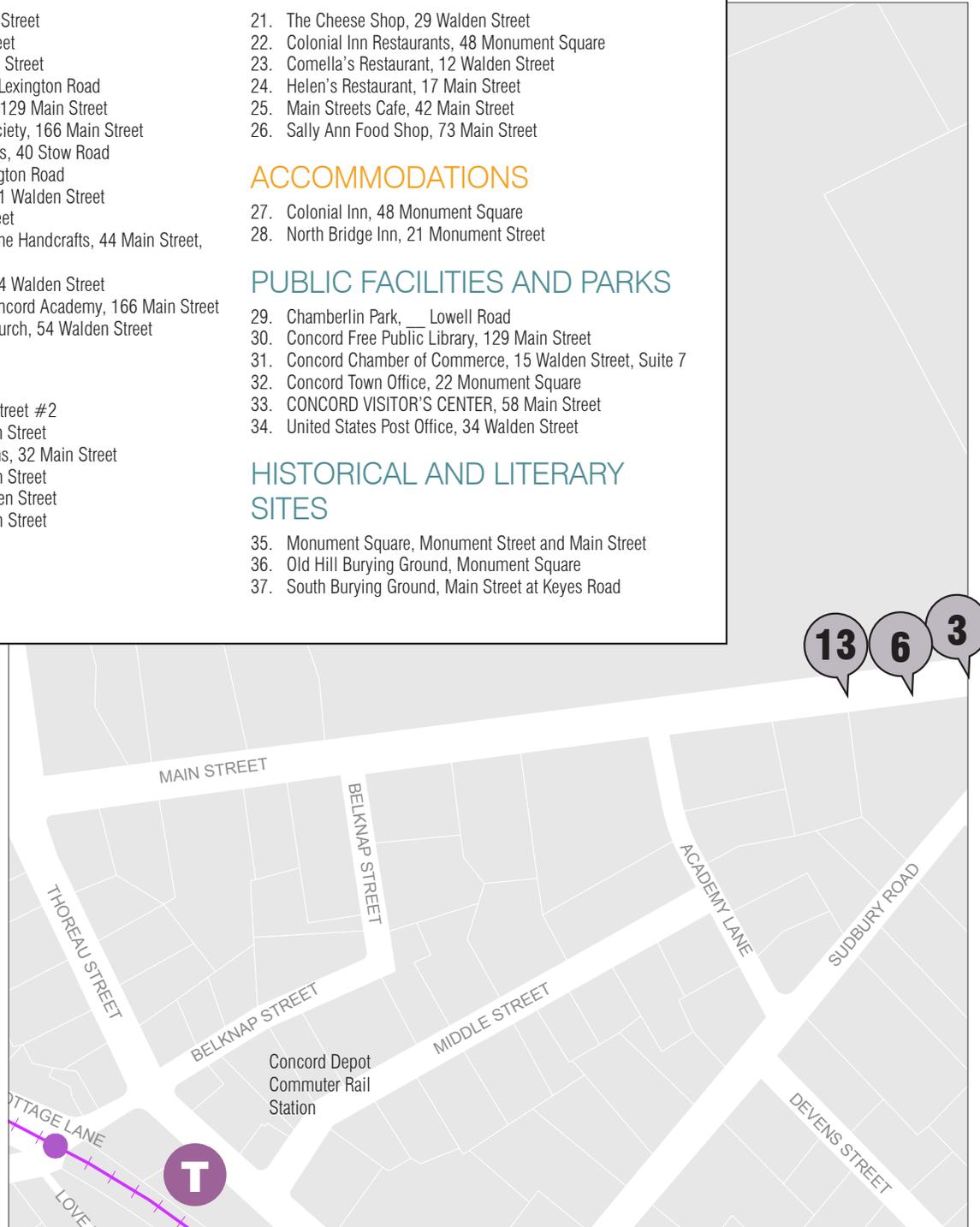
27. Colonial Inn, 48 Monument Square
28. North Bridge Inn, 21 Monument Street

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PARKS

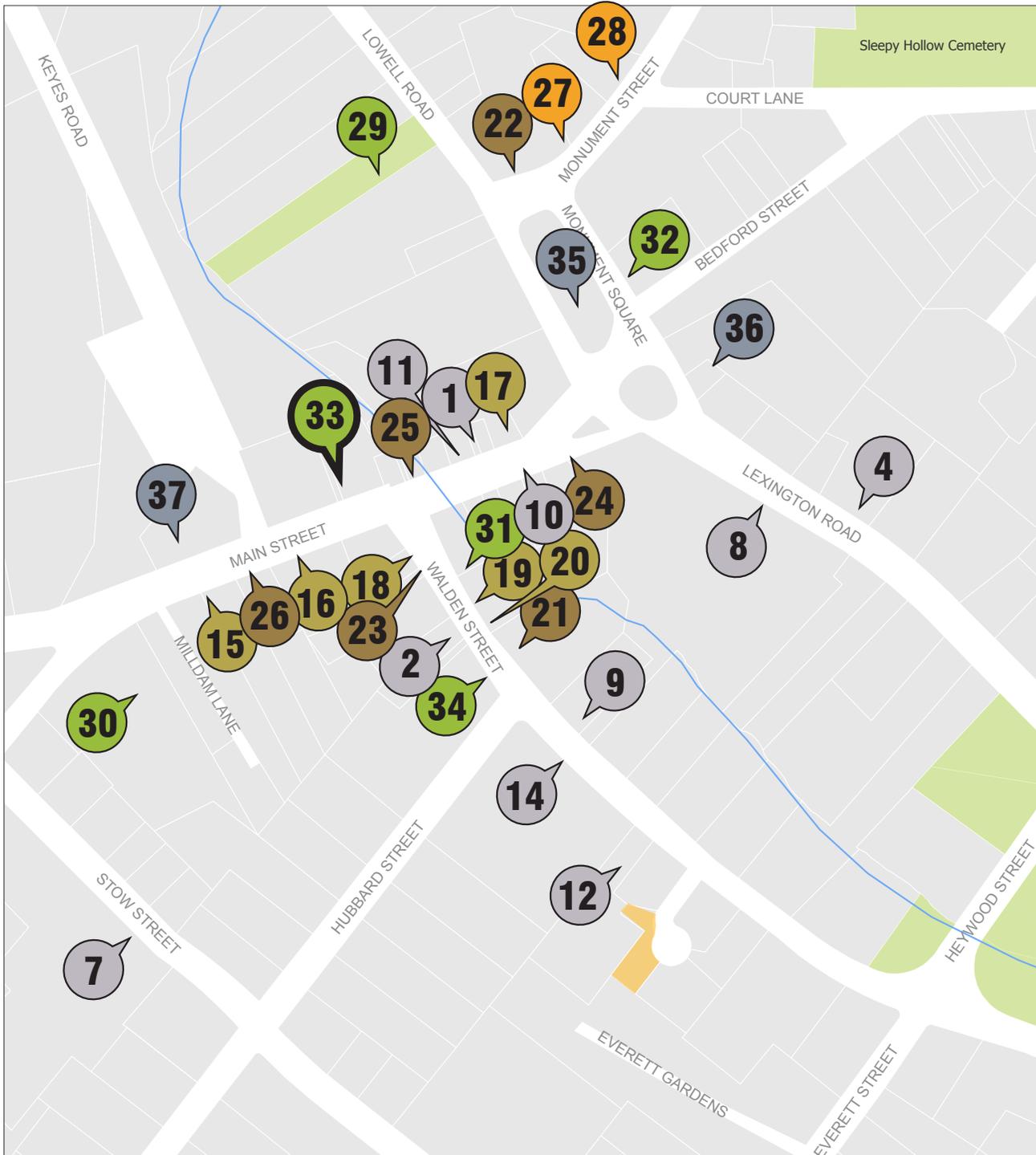
29. Chamberlin Park, __ Lowell Road
30. Concord Free Public Library, 129 Main Street
31. Concord Chamber of Commerce, 15 Walden Street, Suite 7
32. Concord Town Office, 22 Monument Square
33. CONCORD VISITOR'S CENTER, 58 Main Street
34. United States Post Office, 34 Walden Street

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY SITES

35. Monument Square, Monument Street and Main Street
36. Old Hill Burying Ground, Monument Square
37. South Burying Ground, Main Street at Keyes Road



This map is illustrative only, showing a very general concept for what cultural destinations and businesses might be included in a map of Concord Center. It should not be taken as a final design. The choice of content and the style of the graphics would need to be designed before such a map could be considered final.





STRATEGY FOUR: Take a Coordinated Approach to Signage for Pedestrians and Drivers

IMPLEMENT A COHESIVE WAYFINDING SYSTEM

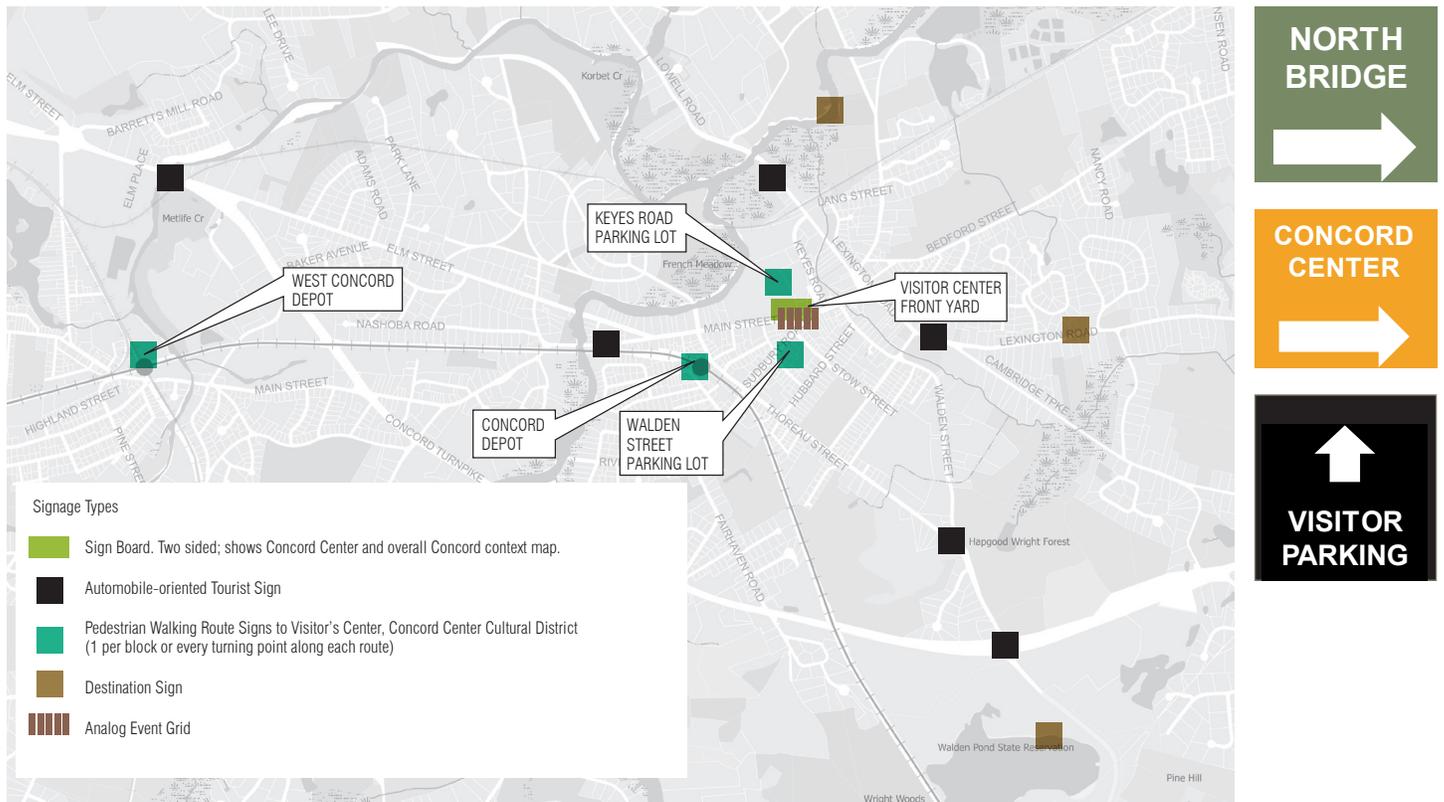
The map below shows an example of how locations within Concord could be assigned to the most important directional and wayfinding signs. Various types of signs will need to be placed throughout the Center, and additional signs should be placed farther out in Concord for the benefit of drivers. This map is illustrative and should not be taken as a final recommendation.

PROVIDE BASIC DIRECTIONAL SIGNS FOR DRIVERS

A small set of clear, concise signs (“Automobile-oriented Tourist Sign” in the map below) should be repeated at strategic locations in Concord to direct drivers to the Visitor Center and to the top visitor destinations (such as Walden Pond, Old North Bridge, and Orchard House—three destinations that relate well to possible organizing topics: Nature/Conservation, Revolutionary War, and Literary Concord, respectively).

The limited directional signage will clarify that Visitors may head first to the Visitor Center for a comprehensive orientation, or to one of the top destinations. There, they can obtain a printed map of everything else. Additional destination identification signs (shown in red in the map below) could be placed in front of each of the top destinations).

This diagram is illustrative only, showing a very general concept for what type of signs might be placed in different locations around Town. It should not be taken as a final design approach. A more detailed inventory and analysis would need to be undertaken before final recommendations could be made.



PROVIDE ENHANCED SIGNS FOR PEDESTRIANS

Signage for pedestrians can be more detailed and elaborate than for drivers. The “show-piece” sign for pedestrians will be a comprehensive, clear sign board with a map of Concord Center and another map of greater Concord (shown in light green in the map on the facing page).

Further pedestrian signs could be placed throughout Concord Center to help people find their way to the Visitor Center; these are shown in teal green in the map at left).





SUPPLEMENT WAYFINDING WITH ONLINE CONTENT

The growing world of smartphone apps and online interactive content offers a rich universe to expand the wayfinding system. Digital content can provide more in-depth information, and it can be a cost-effective way to update content as it changes or as budgets allow the development of more content.

QR Code Links to Websites



The most basic way to link physical visitors to online content is via QR codes. These black and white symbols may be printed on maps and signage.

When scanned with a smart phone equipped with a QR code scanner app, each QR code connects to an online destination, typically a website.

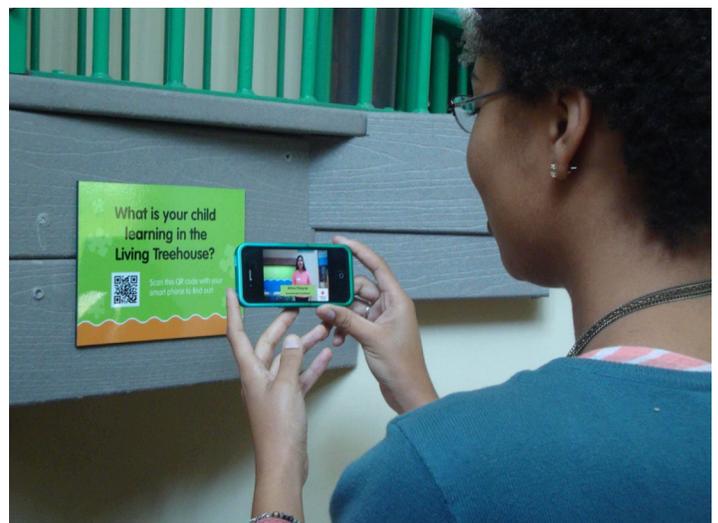
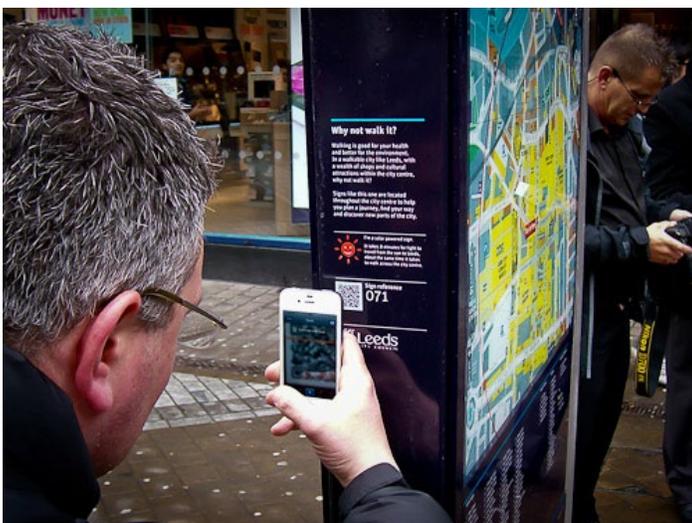
The online content can continue to be refined and augmented while the same printed QR code continues to provides the digital link from the physical signs and maps. For example, a QR code could initially link to something that already exists, such as the Concord Chamber of Commerce's website, or

something simple to produce, such as a web page showing a PDF map of Concord Center. Over time, the web page could be updated to be interactive, for example allowing a user to request different content by topic of interest, or to customize a walking tour itinerary.

Rich, multi-media content of the type found in some museums, such as recorded stories, music, and short films, could be provided to help to bring the map's content to life, especially for younger visitors.

Other Digital Content in Apps

- Walking tours and scavenger hunt games can be provided through smartphone apps. In fact, walking tour apps for different destinations in Concord already exist, and it is fairly easy to create a new online walking tour using various app software.
- Examples of walking tours and scavenger hunt mobile apps are shown on the facing page.



Social Equity Issues

Access to online content assumes the user has access to a smartphone or computer and the understanding and ability to use it. Use of online content must be measured against the social equity issue of relying too much on digital access to provide basic information. Any provided digital content should only be supplementary to information provided in physical form. To help address inequalities in digital access, a computer hosting the same content could be provided within the Visitor Center.



Historic Concord, MA
a walking tour

Stops	6
Distance	1.7 miles
Duration	1.5 hours
Return Walk	35 minutes

Tour begins at the Allee across the road from the Monument Street parking lot for Old North Bridge

Brought to you by: *Spatial Adventures*
Mobile Phone Tours

Would you like to create a tour app?

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www.spatialadventures.com

1 Historic Concord, MA

Introduction

- 1 Historic Concord, MA**
Introduction
- 2 Old North Bridge**
Birthplace of the Revolution
- 3 The Old Manse**
Home of Reverend William Emerson - Grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson
- 4 Monument Square**
Concord Town Common

-1:46

List Gallery Map GPS Info

2 Old North Bridge
Birthplace of the Revolution

Old North Bridge

On April 19, 1775 96 British regulars secured North Bridge while 400 militiamen and Minute Men watched from the hill to the North of the bridge.

At 9:30 A.M. the colonial militiamen saw smoke rising from Concord town center and, fearing that the regulars were burning Concord, the colonials advanced toward the bridge. The regulars fired on the

-3:54

List Gallery Map GPS Info

2 Old North Bridge
Birthplace of the Revolution

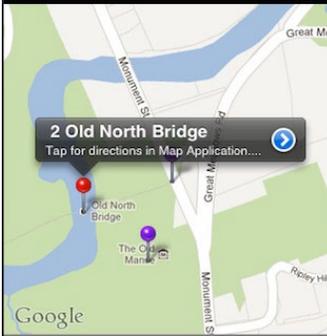


Old North Bridge
View of bridge from East bank looking West

-3:54

List Gallery Map GPS Info

2 Old North Bridge
Birthplace of the Revolution



2 Old North Bridge
Tap for directions in Map Application....

-3:54

List Gallery Map GPS Info



Implementation: Turning the Vision into Reality

BUILD UPON EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

Middlesex Savings Bank has been a supportive and generous partner to the Town with its lease of bank-owned land to the Town for its Visitor Center. The Bank's continued support is critical for the creation of a wayfinding garden at the Center. The Visitor Center is run by the Chamber of Commerce and is maintained by the Town. Both funding and staffing are limited. Improved wayfinding will increase exposure to the Visitor Center and enhance its potential to educate more visitors on Town cultural events and destinations.

The Town should continue to build upon its relationships with Middlesex Savings Bank and the Chamber of Commerce. Each has the potential to work together to create a focal point at the Visitor Center to improve visibility of the Center and provide an organized and visually appealing way to advertise upcoming cultural and other Town events.

GROW THE COALITION

In order to continue the momentum of this project it will be important to appoint a working group. Through the preliminary process of creating this report, many stakeholders have already been identified and brought together. There is excitement and support building around the idea of a more robust wayfinding program. Within this group, it will be important to find one or two individuals to "own" the project and continue to identify and advance steps toward design and implementation. As a first step, these individuals should determine if they have representatives from all stakeholders that would need to be consulted in order to advance the program.



COORDINATE WITH OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS

Historic Districts

In the past, the Town has proposed signage that was denied due to non-conformity with Historic District regulations. While proceeding with new wayfinding design concepts, it will be important to recognize the existing regulations while working with the different authorities to consider possible variances when and where appropriate. Town signage regulations may also need to be amended.

Massachusetts Cultural Council

With the designation as a Massachusetts Cultural District comes another layer of complexity regarding conforming to signage regulations. Massachusetts Cultural Council provides a logo to designated cultural districts that can be used on literature and/or signage. The logo's design is best suited to small-scale uses such as a window decal; the logo design's small type relative to the size of the oval does not lend itself to use on a sign that needs to be legible from a distance. The Cultural District logo will need to be appropriately incorporated into the wayfinding system.

Concord Public Works Department

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, such as snowplowing.

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

Formalize a Working Group and Leadership

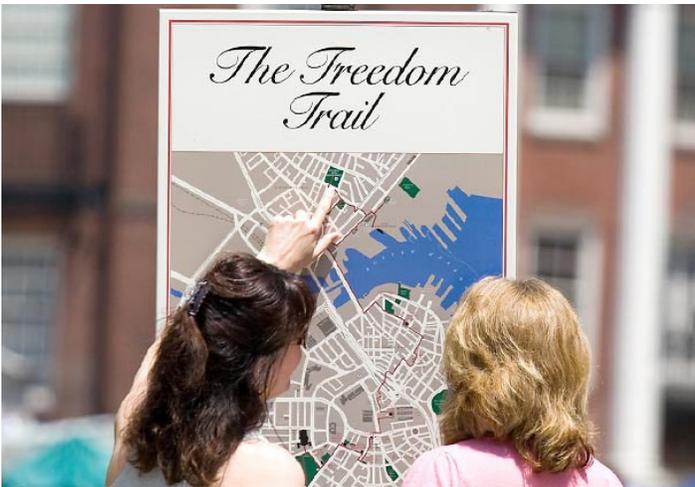
The next steps will be to confirm stakeholders, beginning with those who have already participated in an advisory role in the creation of this report. Project coalition leaders should be identified to shepherd the project through all phases. Finally, project goals must be articulated and confirmed.

Undertake a Thorough Wayfinding Study

The Town Department of Public Works has already completed an inventory of existing

signage placement, content, and location. A wayfinding / design consulting firm should be hired to assess this information and begin the task of recommending a coordinated wayfinding approach for Concord Center. An initial suggested budget range for the wayfinding program is provided at the end of this report; a refined budget by category and suggested phasing will be necessary once the scope of the wayfinding program is better defined.

The first products could be the suggested topics for organizing signage and events (such as Revolutionary War, Literary Concord, etc), and the sign boards with maps of destinations.



BACKGROUND RESEARCH: SURVEY VISITORS ON NAVIGATIONAL ISSUES

As a first step, a survey should be conducted to gather more information from visitors to Concord.

Ask of Visitors in Concord Center:

- Why did you come here? For a specific purpose or just to explore?
- How did you arrive (car, foot, train, bike)?
- If by car, where did you park, and how often / for how long?
- Did you have trouble finding parking, finding destination sites, knowing where to go?
- How long did you plan to stay in Concord?
- Did you make any unplanned, unanticipated other stops (e.g. shopping, dining, other historic sites)?
- What other information would you like to see?
- Do you have a smartphone? Do you have and use a QR code reader?

Additional Questions for Visitors at Walden Pond, North Bridge, and Orchard House:

- Do you know about Concord Center as a destination?
- Do you know about other destinations within Concord?
- Do you plan to visit any of these places, and how will you get there?

The next products could be the directional signs to the Visitor Center and the top visitor destinations for both drivers and pedestrians.

Create Clear Sign Boards with Simple but Informational Maps

As an initial step for assistance to visitors, design and produce a two-sided sign board to be mounted in key locations (such as the Visitor Center and at the train stations). The sign board could include all destinations in the Town Center (on one side) and the Town (on the other side), with content organized into some type of topical framework. Including phone numbers and possibly websites URLs or QR codes will help viewers find out more immediately about the most popular destinations. Printed copies of the map contents should be created for wider distribution at places such as the Library and Concord Museum.

Improve Directional Signs to the Visitor Center and the Top Visitor Destinations

Simple driver-oriented signs to the Visitors Center and top visitor destinations will be fairly straightforward to design, but placing them correctly throughout Concord where they will be most visible and helpful to drivers will require more advance planning and consideration. In addition, pedestrian-oriented signs for the Visitor Center and other top destinations within Concord Center should

be designed. Their appropriate placement in Concord will similarly advance planning.

Design and Build the Wayfinding Garden at the Visitors Center

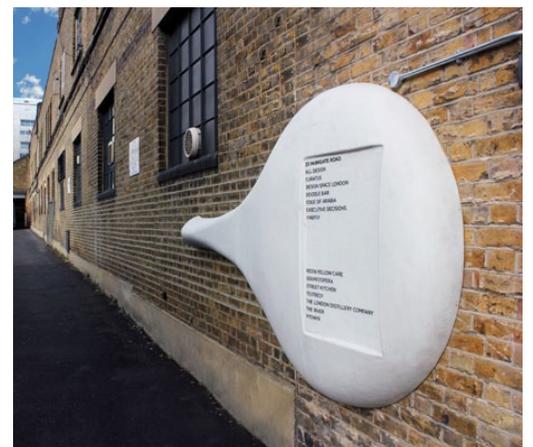
The wayfinding garden is a good opportunity for local community building. Fund-raising can target local private donors and businesses. Garden installation and maintenance could be a popular volunteer activity, helping to bring people together in a high-profile, centrally-located event.

Implement the Detailed Signage and Wayfinding Recommendations Town-wide

The final steps in the signage and wayfinding strategy will be the fabrication of signs and other remaining program elements, and installation (by Town staff) in recommended locations.

Expand to Possible Additional Wayfinding Elements

Additional wayfinding elements could include informational signs, identification signs, and interpretive signs. Digital technology applications such as smartphone apps and online content would also be a useful expansion.



Sample Wayfinding Budgets

The following budget numbers were developed with input from experienced sources in the wayfinding and signage industry, from experienced landscaped architects, and from similar projects undertaken in other towns. The budget is provided here simply as a guide to allow the Town to begin prioritizing the wayfinding goals and understanding the extend of budgeting or fundraising that may be necessary.

WAYFINDING PROGRAM

An overall budget for the design and the fabrication of the range of signage and wayfinding discussed in this report, in the quantities and locations necessary to provide adequate wayfinding in Concord Center, may fall within the wide range of \$250,000 to \$400,000. A

more targeted approach with fewer products could certainly reduce the budget by a significant margin.

Design and Project Management Fees

Within the cost range stated above, design fees alone could be in the range of \$50,000 to \$75,000, assuming that the Town or Chamber or other party provides the bulk of the content (text and raw imagery such as photography or historic drawings) for the elements. Design fees could be higher if a large amount of research is needed to develop the signage content (particularly for interpretive panels that tell a story). The variable here is not so much the amount of hard design time, but rather the soft elements such as the number of meetings, the amount of coordination with different stakeholders, and the effort to track down content.

GENERAL BUDGETING GUIDE

The Signage Foundation's¹ excellent *Urban Wayfinding Planning and Implementation Manual* includes a general overview of the costs and financing for *urban* wayfinding systems (i.e., for a municipality, as opposed to for an institution such as a museum or a destination such as an airport or a park). There are four major cost areas, expressed below in a range from the smallest (neighborhood or main street wayfinding systems) to the largest (for entire cities and regions):

- **Planning:** Planning the scope of a system and creating the conceptual design range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 depending on project size and complexity. This is usually paid by grants, donations, or from a municipality's budget. This report may be considered the initial planning phase for Concord's wayfinding effort.
- **Design:** Designing a complete wayfinding system includes design development, approvals, documentation, and bidding. Design fees range from \$35,000 to \$500,000. These are often paid from the same sources as the Planning phase. For neighborhood- and main street-scale projects, the Signage Foundation suggests a design budget range of \$35,000 to \$75,000; for projects at the scale of a small town, the range may be \$75,000 to \$100,000.
- **Fabrication and Installation:** Shop drawings, fabrication, and installation may range from \$100,000 to \$5 million. Financing typically includes local, state, and federal programs. For neighborhood- and main street-scaled projects, the Signage Foundation suggests a fabrication and installation budget range of \$75,000 to \$150,000. For a wayfinding system scaled to a small town, an appropriate budget range may be \$200,000 to \$350,000.
- **Ongoing Management:** Ongoing care of the wayfinding system includes cleaning, repairing, and updating and expanding the components. Ongoing funding sources may include destination fees, business levies, and municipal budgets. Commercial businesses and non-profit institutions could pay a fee to be included on signage, and the fees would help fund maintenance. Advertising revenues from spots on kiosks, signage, or public restrooms could also help fund signage.

¹ www.thesignagefoundation.org > Research Library > Urban Wayfinding and Implementation Manual

In addition to the design fees, a project management fee of about \$15,000 to \$30,000 to coordinate the entire effort is included in the total cost.

Fees for Each Signage Element

Specific cost ranges for different types of signage follow. In all cases below, costs are for the fabrication only; design and installation fees would be separate – installation could be by the Town of Concord Public Works Department.

- Large sign board, size of 4 feet by 8 feet horizontal, with a metal structure, durability of 10 years, and no lighting included. Surface materials include high pressure laminate (HPL) and porcelain; each has different properties and characteristics. Due to printing and fabrication processes, ordering multiples or variations results in a small cost savings. **\$15,000 each.**
- Driver-oriented and pedestrian-oriented blade signs. These are typically a simple aluminum stock blade on a Telespar post (square tubing designed to bend or break if hit, for safety reasons). Because visibility is paramount for driver-oriented signs, reflective, die-cut lettering is the best solution for the content. Exterior-grade printed vinyl can be used for multi-color designs, and could be appropriate for pedestrian-oriented signs that do not need the reflectivity. Ordering multiples or variations often results in a large cost savings, due to the way they are manufactured. **\$2,000 each for blade plus post.**
- Interpretive wayside panels. Size is about 3 feet by 4 feet, position is fairly low to the ground and angled, to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements. The supporting armature is typically two metal posts. Ordering multiples or variations can result in a unit cost savings on the metalwork. **\$4,000 each.**
- Identification signs. A panel that is approximately 18 inches by 24 inches, designed to be mounted to a building wall

or a supporting structure such as a stone pillar. Creative possibilities to customize each sign include die-cut, filigree, or relief-carved artwork along the top or side edge. **\$2,000 each.**

- Teardrop banners. These are available through online print shops, and increasingly through local print services. These could be used for event notices in the wayfinding garden. Various sizes are available; most are about six to ten feet tall. **\$300 to \$500 each for a banner pole with an initial banner. Additional banners (excluding frames), printed as needed, are typically \$100 to \$200 each.**
- Trailhead-style structure. A polycarbonate, lockable signage case on a roofed structure of wood, metal, or a composite. These could be used for event notices in the wayfinding garden. **\$4,000 each.**

A sample breakdown of budget costs for a modest wayfinding system is provided on the opposite page.

WAYFINDING GARDEN

The fees for design of the garden; materials such as plants, seating, lighting, and water features; and construction administration and installation, are likely to be in the range of \$80,000 to \$200,000. This cost for the wayfinding garden is not included in the previous section.

The variability in this range relates to the amount and quality of the component features, whether custom or off-the-shelf ele-



CONCORD CENTER

SAMPLE WAYFINDING BUDGET (EXCLUDES WAYFINDING GARDEN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, AND SIGNAGE INSTALLATION COSTS)

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Design fee for wayfinding	60,000	1	\$60,000
Project management	25,000	1	\$25,000
Large sign boards	15,000	8	\$120,000
Driver-oriented signs	2,000	20	\$40,000
Pedestrian-oriented signs	2,000	20	\$40,000
Interpretive panels	4,000	6	\$24,000
Identification signs	2,000	10	\$20,000
Teardrop banners	400	8	\$3,200
Trailhead structures	4,000	3	\$12,000
Website design	20,000	1	\$20,000
TOTAL			\$364,200

ments (such as seating) are used, and whether water features—which greatly increase the complexity of a design—are included. Within this range, the design fees are likely in the range of \$15,000 to \$25,000.

Costs for the event notice structure in the Wayfinding Garden were included in the previous section.

ONLINE CONTENT

Development of a basic website using a Content Management System such as WordPress could be anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

The price range for a new WordPress website depends on various factors such as: whether a stock theme or a custom theme is created, whether the site files and database are hosted by the Town or through WordPress.com; and the amount of alternatives and iterations required in the design process. A WordPress “theme” specifies how the content of the site (such as text, images, videos, user com-

ments) is organized and displayed visually – elements such as page structure, links, headers, columns, sidebars, size and proportion of images, and decorative graphics. Regardless of whether the content of the website is initially modest or fully-loaded with interactive features and multi-media, the initial planning should take into account all possible features for the site so that the elements of the website theme may be structured properly at the start. Websites today should also be designed with ‘responsive web design’ principles, so that the content will resize and shift to be successfully viewed from a computer monitor or any type of smartphone, tablet, or other device.

Of course, the Town or Chamber could also host content within their existing websites, and use staff time to create the content.

Fundraising and Funding Sources

STEWARDSHIP

While Concord is rich in various nonprofit entities, these are all busy with their own missions, and lack the resources to advocate for Concord Center and take on major endeavors such as a wayfinding program. The Town should consider creating a nonprofit organization to serve as a steward and fundraising entity for Concord Center in general and to lobby for the Cultural District wayfinding program in particular. Many models of a downtown or village nonprofit abound, and should be evaluated.

PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES

Institutions, private companies, and individuals are a potential source of funding for the wayfinding program and even more likely for the Wayfinding Garden. Naming rights and donor plaques offer ways to visibly showcase and thank generous donors.

PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES

Municipal Improvement Funds

One source of funds is Concord's municipal improvement funds. A wayfinding system is a legitimate use for such funds, as it would fund a shared resource for the Town of Concord.

Parking Meter Fees and other Creative Sources

Creation of a special parking district downtown (as the City of San Diego did with its Centre City Development Corporation) could allow parking meter fees to be channeled into creating and maintaining a wayfinding system.¹ Coming upon the heels of Concord's Parking Study, this could be a novel approach to raise funds for wayfinding and tie them directly to improving vehicular access and parking in Concord Center.

¹ <http://www.sandiego.gov/parking/resources/>

Business Improvement Districts

Concord Center could establish a Business Improvement District (BID) as a means to raise funds for signage and wayfinding improvements. By including retail shopping and dining businesses in addition to cultural and arts-related organizations and businesses, the BID would be more inclusive than the Cultural District.

A BID is empowered to assess an annual tax for maintenance and district promotions, including wayfinding, banners, and events. As stated in the *Urban Wayfinding Planning Implementation Manual*²:

These districts also have the authority to improve streetscape infrastructure by using special taxing powers to provide for specific projects or overall improvements. These districts also can issue bonds for capital costs on large improvements.

As stated at the *Massachusetts Smart Growth Toolkit* website³,

Communities are authorized to establish BIDs under M.G.L. Chapter 40O. A BID must be a contiguous geographic area in which at least 75% of the land is zoned or used for commercial, retail, industrial, or mixed uses. A BID is established through a local petition and public hearing process. The petition must be signed by the owners of at least 60% of the real property and at least 51% of the assessed valuation of the real property within the proposed BID. The petition must also include delineation of the BID boundaries, a proposed improvement plan, a budget and an assessment/fee structure.

² <http://www.thesignagefoundation.org/Portals/0/UrbanWayfindingPlanningImplementationManual-Website.pdf>

³ http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/mod-bid.html

Massachusetts Cultural Council

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) invests about \$3.4 million annually in some 400 organizations across the state.

MCC's Cultural Facilities Fund

If either the Concord Center Cultural District or the Visitors Center is considered a Cultural Facility, it may be eligible for certain grants in these programs.

The Cultural Facilities Fund⁴ enables the Massachusetts Cultural Council and MassDevelopment to provide matching grants to assist with the acquisition, final-stage design, construction, repair, renovation, rehabilitation or other capital improvements or deferred maintenance of Cultural Facilities in Massachusetts. The grants support capital projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences that expand access and education; create jobs in construction and cultural tourism; and improve the quality of life in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Eligible recipients for Cultural Facilities Fund grants are "Cultural Organizations" including nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. The Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)(3) that manages the Visitors Center, which arguably is a cultural facility in that it connects visitors and tourists to cultural resources throughout Concord. The Cultural Facilities Fund's enabling legislation is geared towards organizations that are primarily concerned with the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; and includes, but is not limited to, museums, historic sites, exhibition spaces, and classrooms. The facilities must be owned or leased by a nonprofit cultural organization, and accessible to the public. While the site of the proposed wayfinding garden is owned by a private bank, it is leased to the Chamber.

4 http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities_guidelines.htm

In the 2014 round, the Cultural Facilities Fund's grant pool is approximately \$15 million. For 2014, the Intent to Apply deadline was February 7, 2014. The Final Application Deadline was March 7, 2014.

Cultural Facilities Fund grants fall into three categories:

- **Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants.** These are for initial studies for eligible projects, and may be appropriate for Concord Center's wayfinding goals. Awards are up to \$50,000 each, with a 1:1 matching requirement. As stated on the website:⁵

Types of planning and technical assistance may include but are not necessarily limited to: market studies; capital campaign feasibility studies; systems replacement plans or other comprehensive facility plans; site selection surveys; preliminary architectural plans and/or schematic drawings; accessibility assessments.

- **Systems Replacement Plan Grants.** These are for the needs assessment of buildings and mechanical systems. Maximum grants are \$7,000, with a 1:1 matching requirement.
- **Capital Grants.** There is no award maximum, but typical grants have ranged from \$250,000 to \$675,000. Awards up to \$1 million have a 1:10 matching requirement. Purposes for the capital grants, according to the website,⁶ include "projects for new construction or expansion that demonstrate a transformative impact on the host community."

The Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grant program may be appropriate for initial signage and wayfinding studies. The program's Capital

5 http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities_feasibility.htm

6 http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities_capital.htm

Grants might be appropriate for new signage for either the Visitor Center or even the entire Concord Center Cultural District.

The criteria for all grants under the Cultural Facilities Fund include a benefit to tourism in the local area; and demonstrated community need for the project, financial need for the grant, and local support. If Concord Center can demonstrate how an improved wayfinding program will increase patronage and visitors to the various organizations within the cultural district, it may be eligible to apply for this funding source.

MCC's Cultural Investment Portfolio (CIP)

This is a relatively new funding program that replaces the Organizational Support Program. It provides “unrestricted funding for nonprofit arts, humanities, and interpretive science organizations.”⁷ It provides unrestricted general operating support, and is broadly targeted at strengthening the cultural sector as a whole. The Portfolio has three categories of participation.

- *Partners* and *Colleagues* are organizations with a long funding relationship with MCC and thereby no longer required to submit a traditional grant application. Concord Museum and Emerson Umbrella are examples of Partner organizations, the highest level of funding support. Colleague grants are typically \$3,000 to \$10,000 per year; Radius Ensemble is an example of a Colleague organization.
- *Peers* are organizations who are not yet part of the CIP and new to the MCC operating support funding pool or not fully cultural in scope. Summer Stages Dance at Con-

cord Academy is a Peer organization for 2014.

The 2014 Online Grant Application for Peers was available on March 3, 2014. The next Peers application deadline is May 5, 2014. Peer category applications are accepted every other year because grantees are awarded \$2,500 per year for two years. The Peer category does not provide general operating support; instead, proposals must focus on a single project.

Peer funding for the Visitor Center or Cultural District could be a good way to pay for ongoing event signage programs, such as upkeep of the unified event sign board in the Visitor Center's proposed Wayfinding Garden. It may be possible to obtain grant funding for the garden upkeep.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MassDOT offers assistance⁸ in “sign placement on state roads or highways directing people to cultural districts” and in obtaining federal enhancements grants from FHWA.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Enhancements

The Federal Highway Administration's funding for Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities may be a good source to help fund the planning and construction of the comprehensive wayfinding and signage program.

The federal enhancements program is intended to strengthen “the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation's intermodal transportation system.” Eligible activities, numbered according to the list in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(35), include:⁹

⁷ http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/cultural_investment_portfolio.asp

⁸ http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/services/cultural_districts_resources.asp

⁹ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transporta->

- **Item 2.** Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Item 4.** Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities). Examples include construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; construction of visitor and welcome centers; and designation signs and markers. The last two categories indicate that TE funds may be ideal for both the wayfinding garden at the Visitor Center and the portions of the signage program that would be installed on Main Street (Route 62).
- **Item 5.** Landscaping and other scenic beautification. Examples include landscaping, street furniture, lighting, public art, and gateways along highways, streets, historic highways, trails, and waterfronts.

In addition, each TE project must relate to surface transportation¹⁰, for example through the project's proximity to a highway or a pedestrian/bicycle corridor, or by enhancing the aesthetic, cultural, or historic aspects of the travel experience. These criteria should be fairly straightforward to demonstrate for the Cultural District's wayfinding goals.

Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The Block Grant program is a stand-alone federal source of funds to support urban streetscape projects. It is managed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI)

MDI is part of the Department of Housing and Community Development. As a designated Cultural District, Concord Center can take advantage of several programs and resources that benefit cultural districts. MDI offers assistance supporting downtown and town/city center revitalization efforts, including consultant services targeting specific issues (such as wayfinding, BIDs, and cultural districts). This report was funded by a Technical Assistance Grant. MDI's "Technical Assistance Site Visit Program" is for specific issues related to a community's downtown revitalization efforts. Outside consultants may be brought in if required. The "Desktop Technical Assistance" provided by MDI staff may help identify further funding sources.

tion_enhancements/teas.cfm

10 http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/relate.cfm

