Trail Wayfinding Systems
A Practical Guide

Karen Vitkay, RLA
American Trails Webinar Series
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- Creating Active Communities
- 29 office with 100+ planners, designers, and engineers
- Over 7,000 miles of bikeways, walkways, and trails planned and designed
Wayfinding PRINCIPLES

• Connect Places
• Be Predictable
• Be Inclusive
• Keep Information Simple

Elliott Erwitt/Magnum Photos
Wayfinding BENEFITS

Encouragement

Go Bronzeville
Chicago, IL
Wayfinding BENEFITS

Economic Investment

Photo: Baker County Tourism
Wayfinding BENEFITS

Community Pride
TOOLS: Fundamental
Standards: Bicycle

• Manuel on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
• Traffic control devices shall be defined as all **signs**, signals, markings… used to regulate, warn, or **guide** traffic, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, **bikeway**, or private road open to public travel…
• All in the name of **consistency**
Standards: Bicycle

Do MUTCD standards pertain to my trail project?

- Recreational natural surface trail  
  – NO
- Paved shared-use pathway with transportation function  
  – YES

Intertwine Regional Trail Sign
Portland Metro, OR
Case Study: The Intertwine

Photo: Metro

Design: Mayer/Reed
Owner: Metro
Portland Metro, OR
The MUTCD Continuum

Rigid $  

Flexible $$$
Flexibility

MUTCD section 2D.50 Community Wayfinding allows custom colors and enhancement markers (logos)

• “Limited to conventional roadways”

NCUTCD - Current proposal to apply Community Wayfinding standards to shared-use paths
Design: Standard

- Standard color
- Standard icon
- Three destinations
- Rectangular shape
- Arrow location
Design: Flexible

- Custom shape
- Custom logo
- Color options
- Distance in minutes
- Color coding
- Local Identifier
TOOLS: Enhanced

IDENTITY

KIOSK / ORIENTATION MAP

HAND HELD MAP

INTERPRETIVE PANEL
Community Input

Feedback

Communication Needs and Preferences

MAG Off-Street Bicycle Network Wayfinding Guide
Phoenix Metro Region, AZ
TOOLS: Orientation Maps

Abbott Street Recreation Corridor
Strathcona Park

City of Kelowna Transit and Pathways Wayfinding Guide
Alta | Applied
TOOLS: Mile Marker

- System/Path name and brand mark
- Agency name
- Allow use of icons
- Distance
- Place every ¼ - ½ mile

Park to Playa Trail – Los Angeles, CA
TOOLS: Pavement Markings

Centerline

Center of logo marks distance

3.25

13.25° 19.25°

Arrow Point Centered in Path

Trail Width Varies

Research Triangle Park, NC
TOOLS: Material Selection

Base Package components (plus assorted standard mounting hardware)

- Standard size Aluminum sign panels
- Mill Finish Steel 2x2 or 3x3 post
- Mill Finish Steel 6" x 4" I-Beam
- Mill Finish Steel Architectural angles
- SS perforated screen slotted hole
- Direct Embed Graphic panel
- Reflective vinyl

Valley Path Wayfinding Guidelines – Phoenix Metro   Alta | Merje
Management: User Conflicts

- Clarify allowed uses
- Reinforce trail etiquette
Management: User Conflicts

Hawthorne Bridge
Portland, OR
Management: User Conflicts

Intuitive Legibility

Burke Gilman Trail – Seattle, WA
Logic: Destinations

- Many potential destinations
- Limited space per sign
- Need a consistent approach
Destination Prioritization

Level 1: Cities
Level 2: Districts/Neighborhoods
Level 3: Landmarks
Level 4: Local Destinations

Priority:
- High
- Low
Destination Prioritization

- Cities: 5 miles
- Districts/Neighborhoods: 2 miles
- Landmarks: 1 mi
- Local Destinations: 0 miles
Challenges
Challenges: Placement

- Path access points
- Path-path intersections
- Path gaps
- Off-street / on-street connections
- Path-roadway intersections
- Path bifurcations
Placement: Setback

PATHWAY

3' CLEAR (2' MIN)

3' CLEAR (2' MIN)

4' MIN
Intersection

Path Access Point
Network Gap
Route Prioritization

- Connect high priority destinations
- Need for route clarification
- Trail infrastructure provides a safe experience

*Transit and Pathways Wayfinding Guide
Kelowna, BC*
Demonstration Projects

Bicycle Boulevards Plan
Rochester, NY
Demonstration Projects

Bicycle Boulevards Plan
Rochester, NY