City of Alexandria

Wayfinding Program

RRRC Living Towns Culpeper Workshop September 16, 2010

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
WAYFINDING

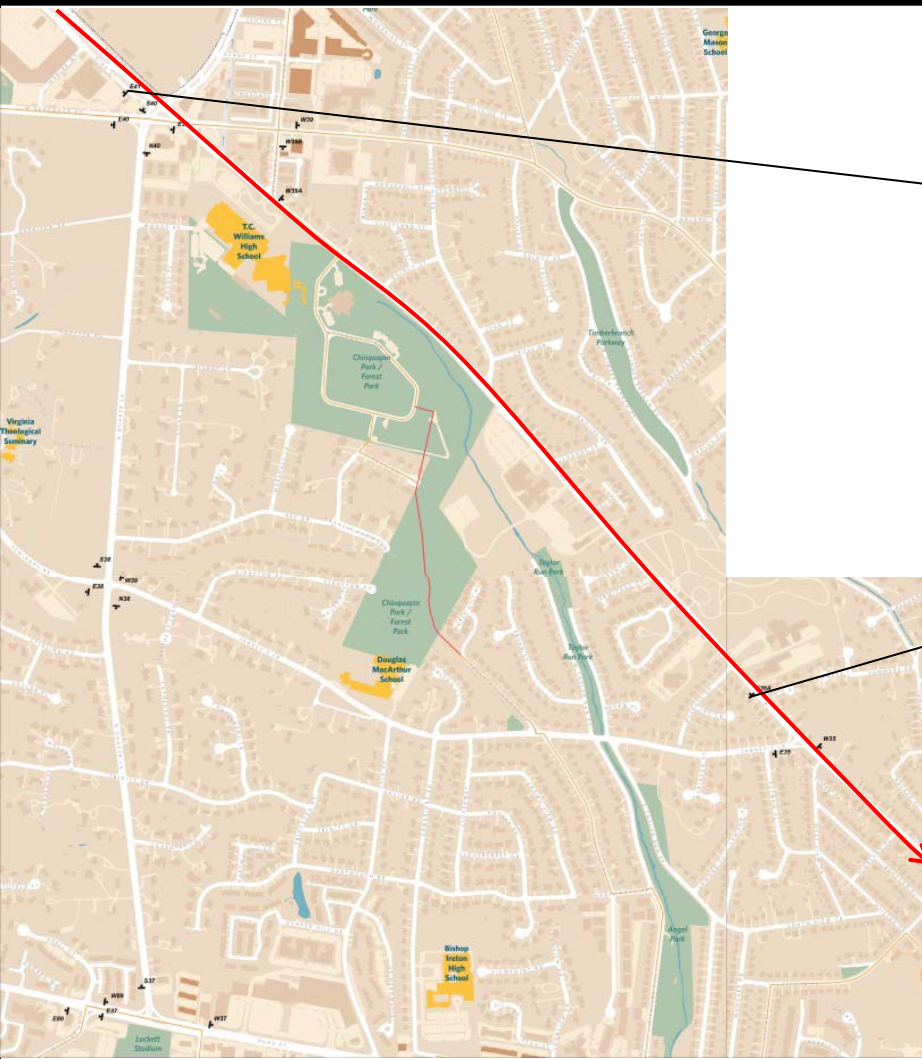*What exactly is a "wayfinding system" ?*

"A coordinated system of sign elements that serves to identify, direct and inform residents and visitors"

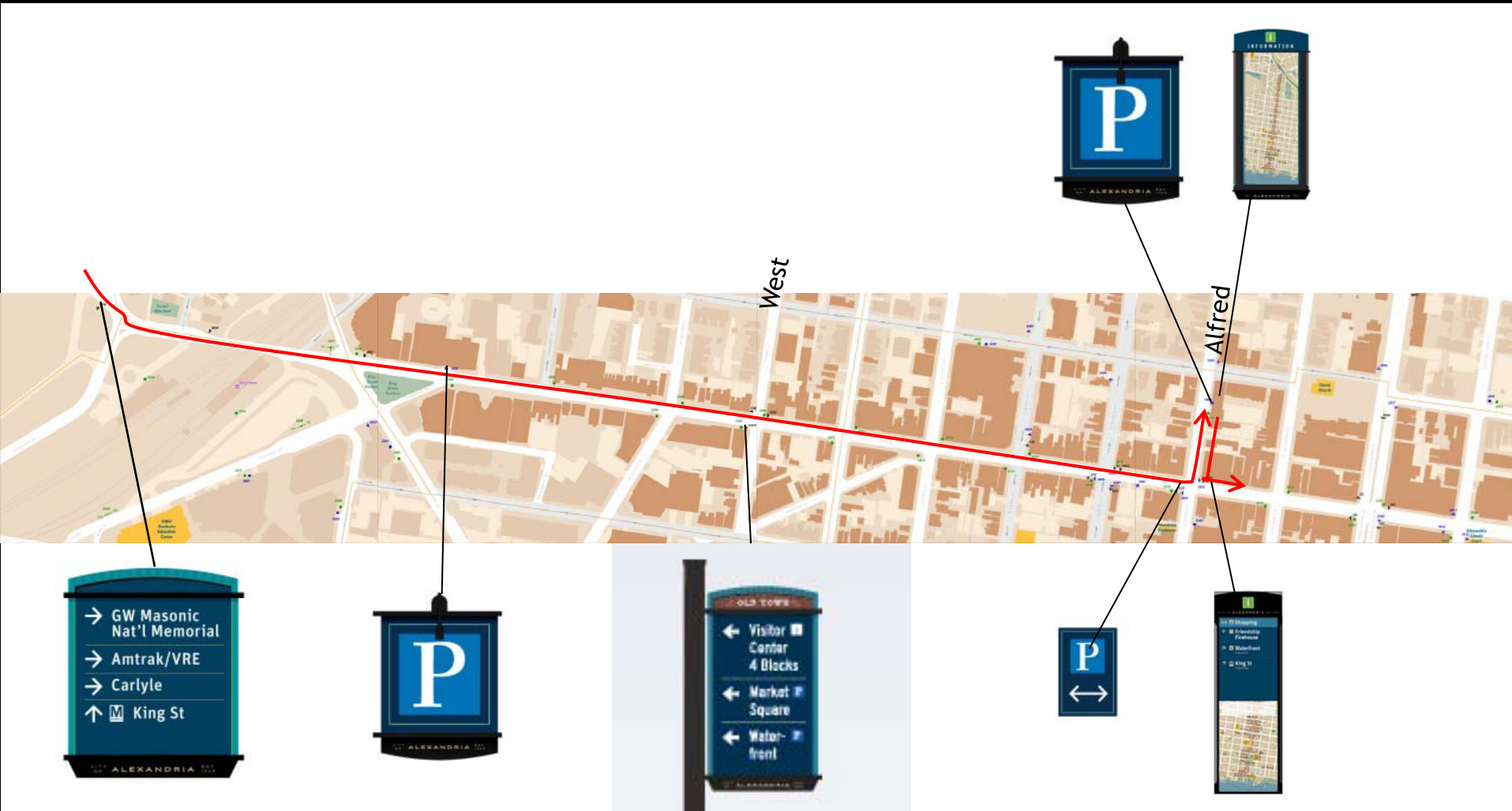*(Wayfinding signs are NOT traffic and regulatory signs)*

WEST ● END

↑ Old Town

↑ ℹ Visitor Info
3 Miles

↑ TC Williams HS

→ Fort Ward

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↑ Old Town

↑ ℹ Visitor Info
1.5 Miles

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Sample Path | I-395 to a King Street restaurant

West

Alfred

→ GW Masonic Nat'l Memorial
→ Amtrak/VRE
→ Carlyle
↑ Ⓜ King St

P

OLD TOWN
← Visitor Center 4 Blocks
← Market P Square
← Water-front

P
↔

Shopping
Friendship Firehouse
Waterfront
King St

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Why do you need a "wayfinding system" ?

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WAYFINDING

AESTHETIC

- Removes visual clutter; allows historic fabric of the City to shine through
- Replaces multiple sign efforts with one coordinated streamlined system

ENVIRONMENT and SAFETY

- Directs cars to garages, eliminates circling
- Promotes walking, biking, mass transit
- Reduces driver confusion

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Gets people out of their cars and oriented to shops, restaurants & historic sites
- Highlights the Alexandria Heritage Trail
- Addresses King Street Retail Strategy (parking, pedestrians, small business)
- Provides a more comfortable visitor experience, another reason to return

RESIDENTS

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

VISITORS

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

ALEXANDRIA BUSINESSES

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

Who provided input and review?

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

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

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

- **Community:** Federation of Civic Associations; Old Town Civic Association; public workshops, open house and ongoing web/enews information

- **Planning Commission, Board of Architectural Review (BAR), City Council:** Periodic updates and work sessions

- **National Park Service:** Official purview over the GW Parkway

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Analysis → Concept Design → Develop Design → Finalize Design → Mockups → Manual → Construct

February 2008 – September 2010

Analysis	▬ (blue)
Concept Design	▬ (green)
Develop Design	▬ (orange)
Finalize Design	▬ (dark red)
Mockups	▬ (tan)
Guideline Manual	▬ (yellow)
Construction	▬ (gray)

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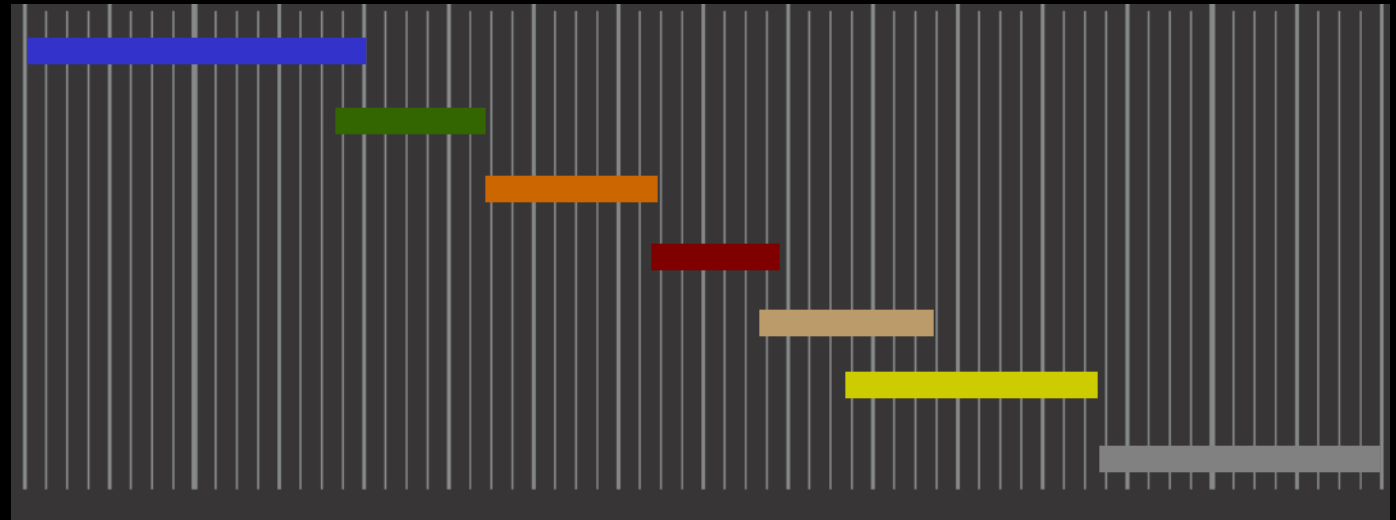
Analysis

What places do people need to find?

Tourist Destinations

- Visitor Center
- Museums / Historic Attractions
- Parking Facilities

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WAYFINDING

Analysis

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Visitors (non-sightseeing)

- Visitor Center
- Museums / Historic Attractions
- Parking Facilities
- Named Districts
- Courthouses and Municipal Buildings
- Theaters, Arts Centers and Performing Arts Centers
- College or Universities
- Metro Stations
- Areas of Commercial Concentration

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- Theaters, Arts Centers and Performing Arts Centers
- College or Universities
- Metro Stations
- Areas of Commercial Concentration
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Major Trails and Trail Access Points
- Schools
- Parks, Public Squares and Recreational Facilities
- Regional Destinations outside of Alexandria

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W A Y F I N D I N G

Tourist Circulation

Visitors & Residents Circulation

TIER A — Destination of primary importance;
direction throughout city via all access routes

TIER B — Major destination; advance strategic wayfinding provided

TIER C — Minor destination, or exclusively civic destination;
wayfinding provided if "hard to find" (e.g. on a side street)

TIER D — Minor destination or exclusively civic destination;
directional wayfinding not needed, but still may be
identified on map or at site.

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W A Y F I N D I N G

Address Pedestrian information needs

An informed pedestrian is comfortable, confident, and ready to explore

There will be a HIERARCHY of wayfinding signs that guide visitors from the Interstate exits, through town, to parking, and from parking to the pedestrian experience

2

Streamline Vehicular wayfinding

Focus on the essentials: get visitors quickly to parking so they can start enjoying Alexandria on foot

3

Balance visitor & community needs

Community destinations are many & far reaching; vehicular signs should account for both groups in a unified design standard

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4

Define focal districts past Old Town

Identifiable districts give visitors more to explore; plus they make wayfinding
easier by creating "bite-size" sections of the city

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- *Focus of revisions:*

    Show which signs will come down - Clutter

    Reduce the # of signs (Old Town) – Quantity
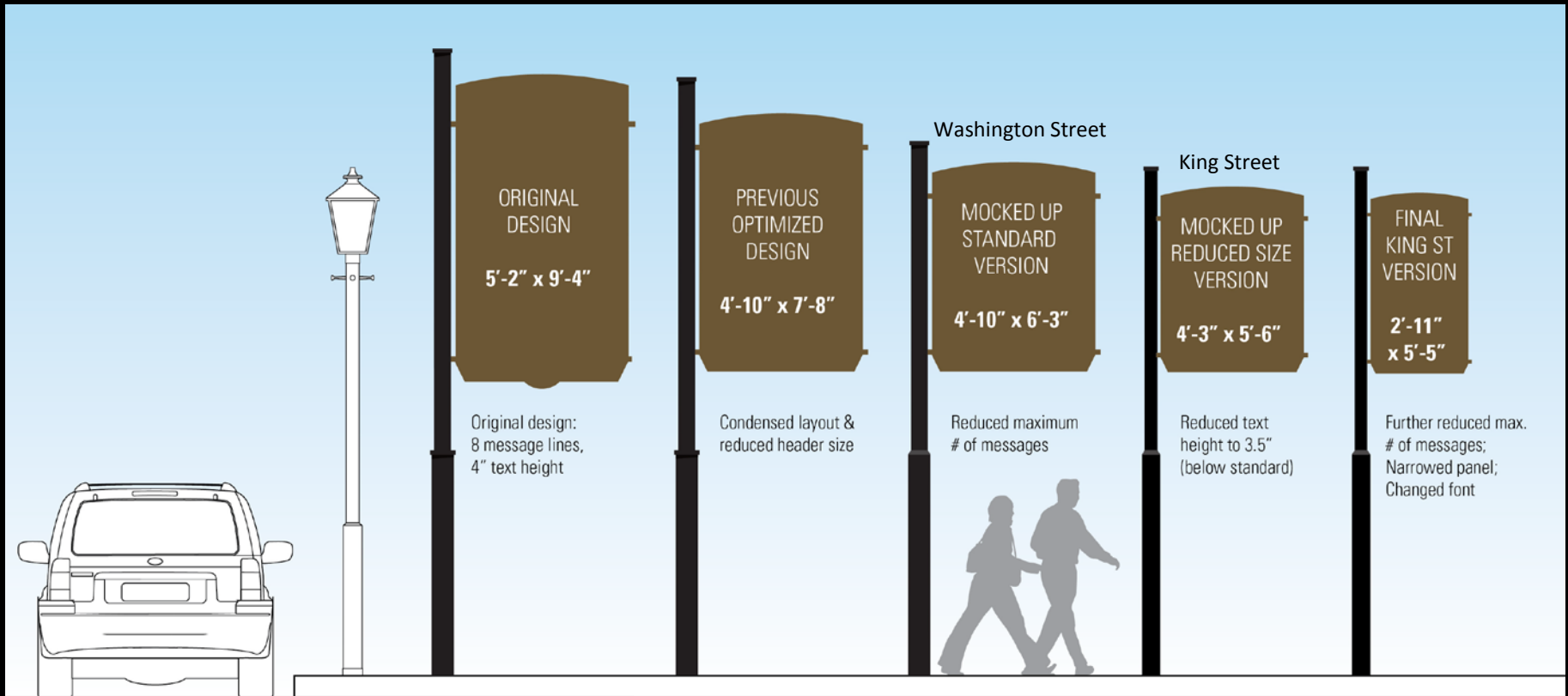
    Reduce the size of the signs – Scale

    Evaluate the design and program – Mock-ups

- OBJECTIVE: Striking the fine balance between form and function – making the signs as small and as few as possible, while also creating a legible, functional system
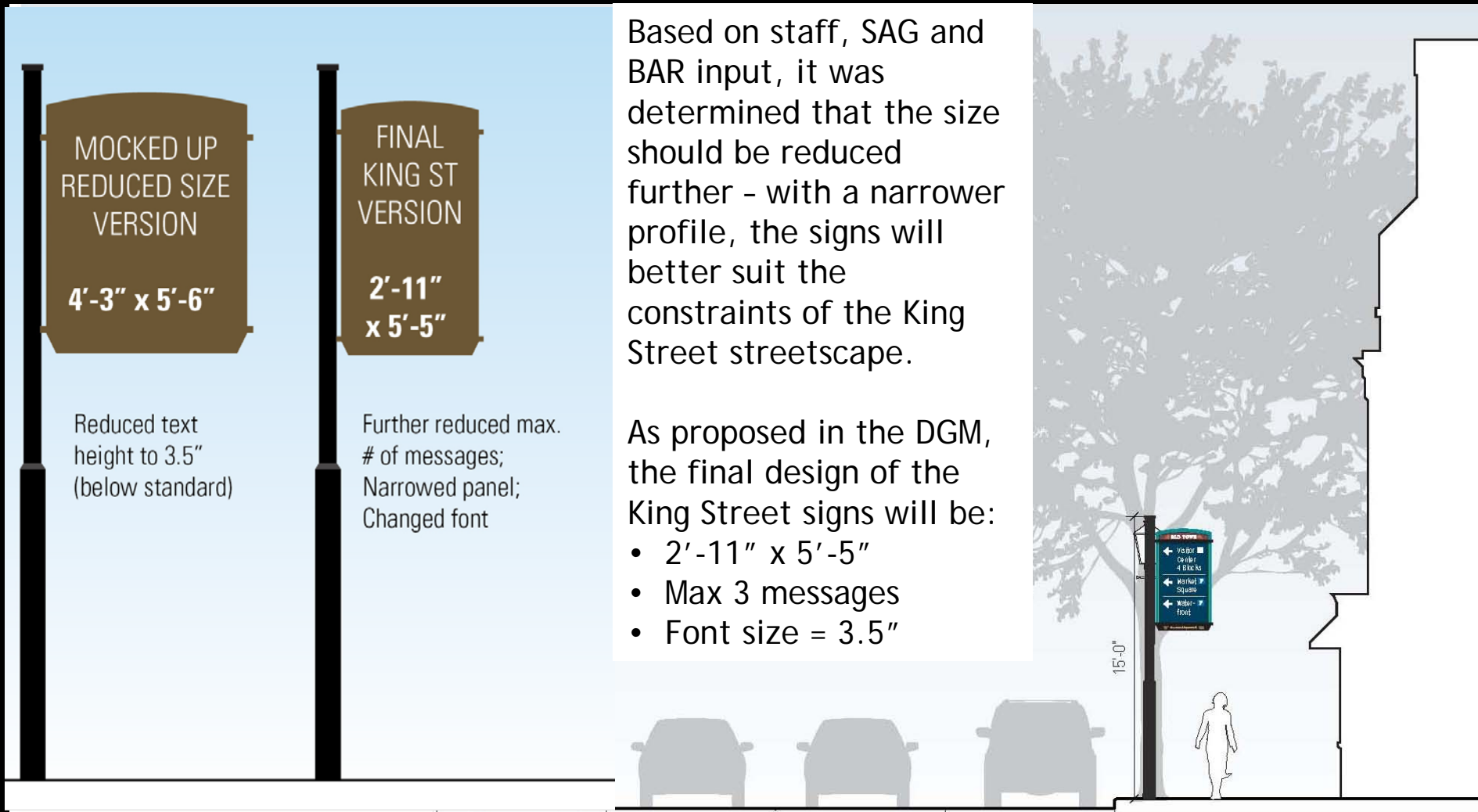
- Multiple sign efforts with varying types, colors, vintages, sizes result in visual clutter

- Existing signs are often illegible due to size, placement

- Design and messaging are inconsistent, difficult to follow

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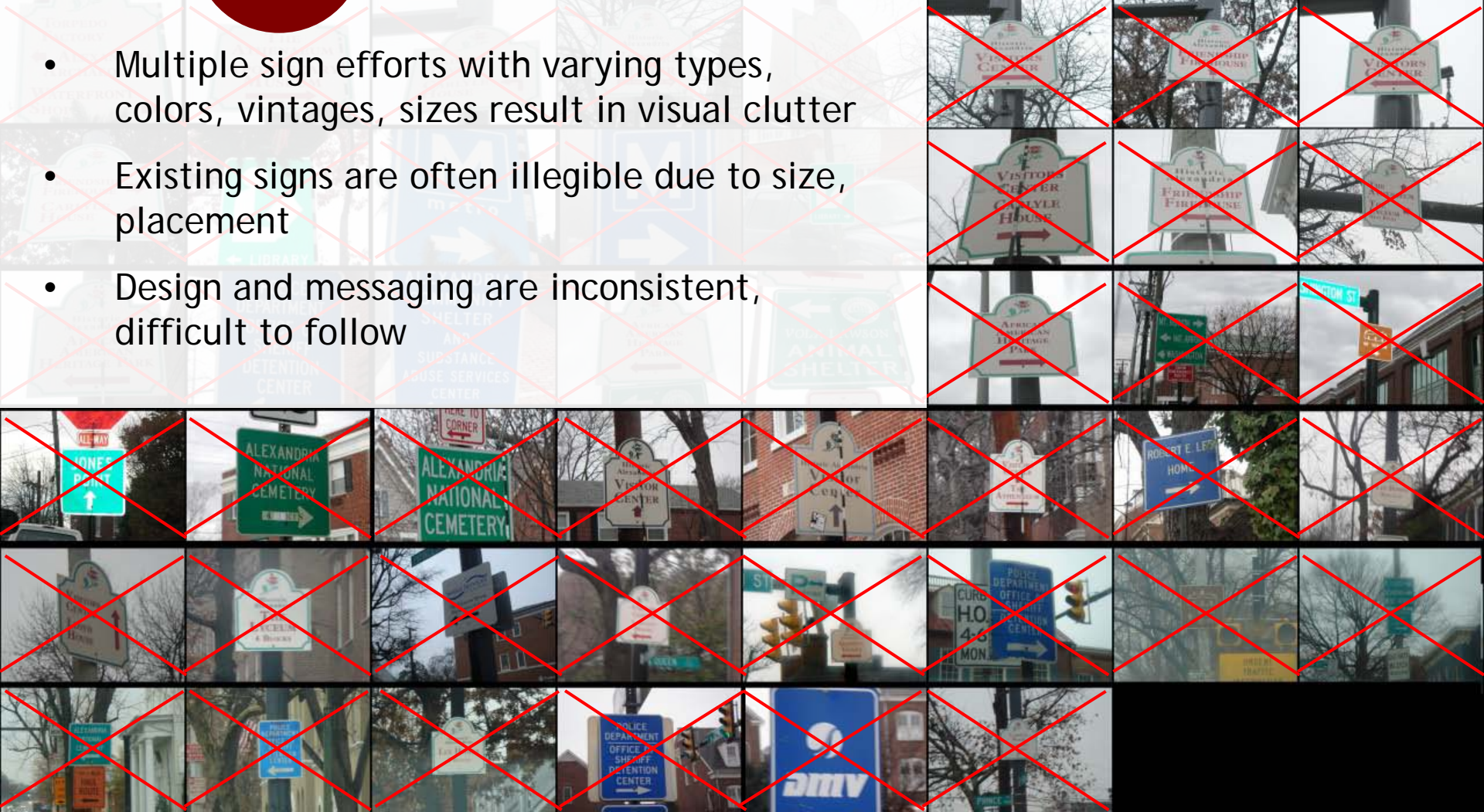
Size Reduction Study – Vehicular Directionals

Washington Street

King Street

ORIGINAL DESIGN
5'-2" x 9'-4"

PREVIOUS OPTIMIZED DESIGN
4'-10" x 7'-8"

MOCKED UP STANDARD VERSION
4'-10" x 6'-3"

MOCKED UP REDUCED SIZE VERSION
4'-3" x 5'-6"

FINAL KING ST VERSION
2'-11" x 5'-5"

Original design: 8 message lines, 4" text height

Condensed layout & reduced header size

Reduced maximum # of messages

Reduced text height to 3.5" (below standard)

Further reduced max. # of messages; Narrowed panel; Changed font

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MOCKED UP
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VERSION

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FINAL
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# of messages;
Narrowed panel;
Changed font

Based on staff, SAG and BAR input, it was determined that the size should be reduced further – with a narrower profile, the signs will better suit the constraints of the King Street streetscape.

As proposed in the DGM, the final design of the King Street signs will be:
- 2'-11" x 5'-5"
- Max 3 messages
- Font size = 3.5"

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KING STREET MOCKUPS EVALUATION
BAR, SAG and public comments:
--Reduce size further – by 30% if possible, particularly width
--Restrict the number of messages

Mock-ups Evaluation Parking Trailblazers

- Parking sign mockups were well received with some suggestions for design tweaks (see later slide)

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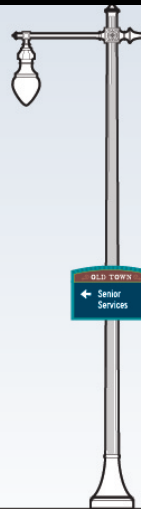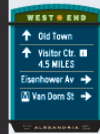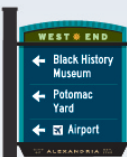
Mock-ups Evaluation Gateways
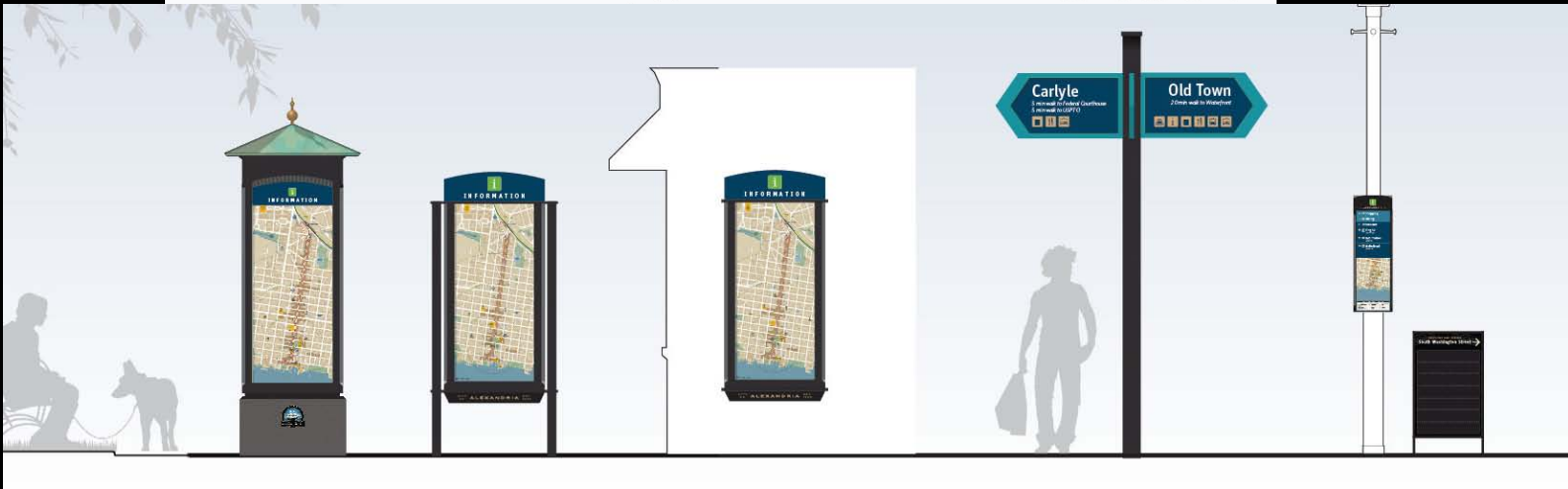
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Mockups
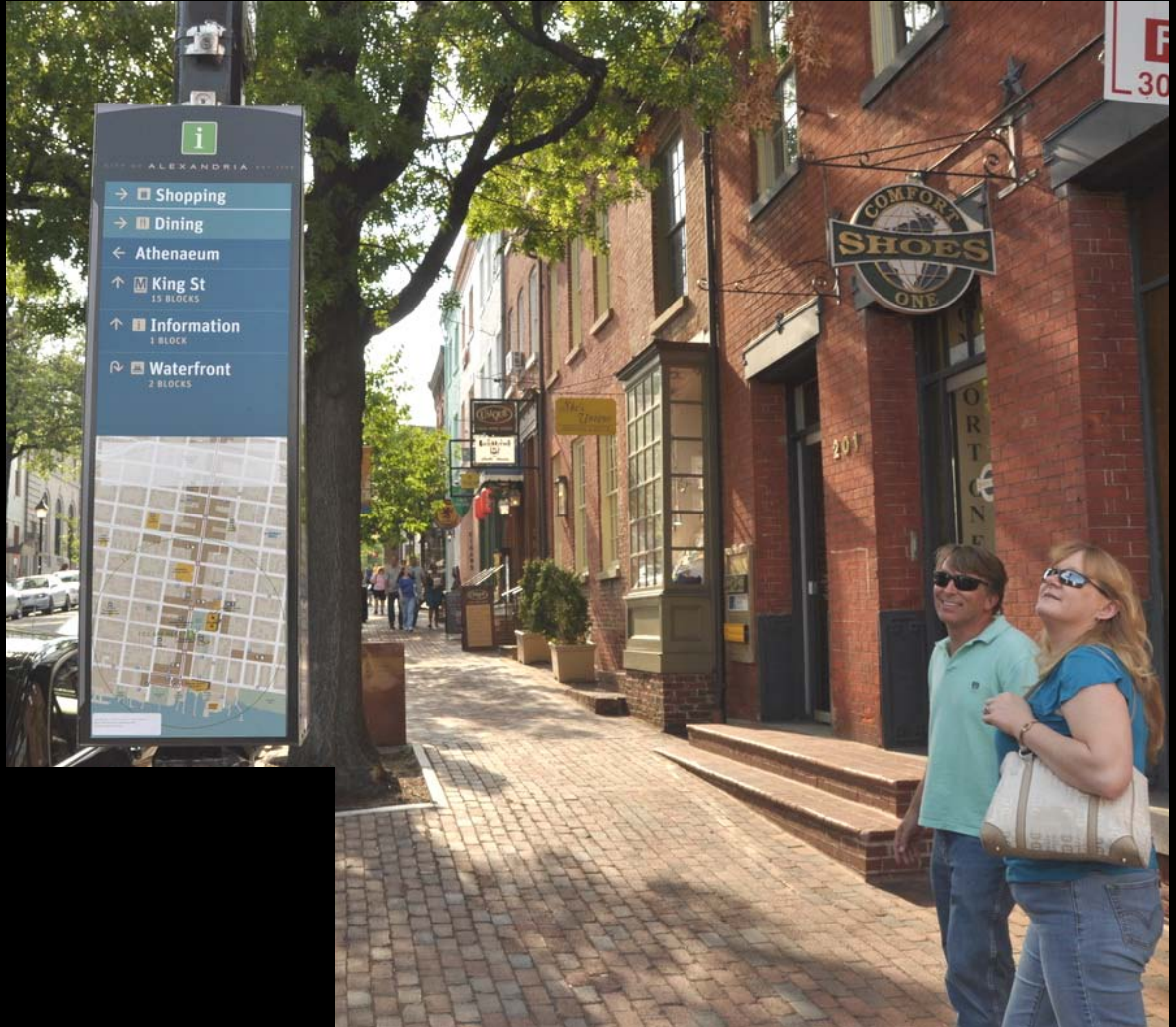
Revision:
- Mount lower on pole
for improved legibility
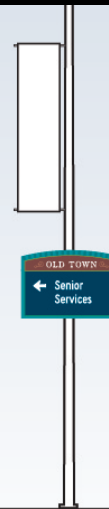
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Alexandria Wayfinding System Family of Signs

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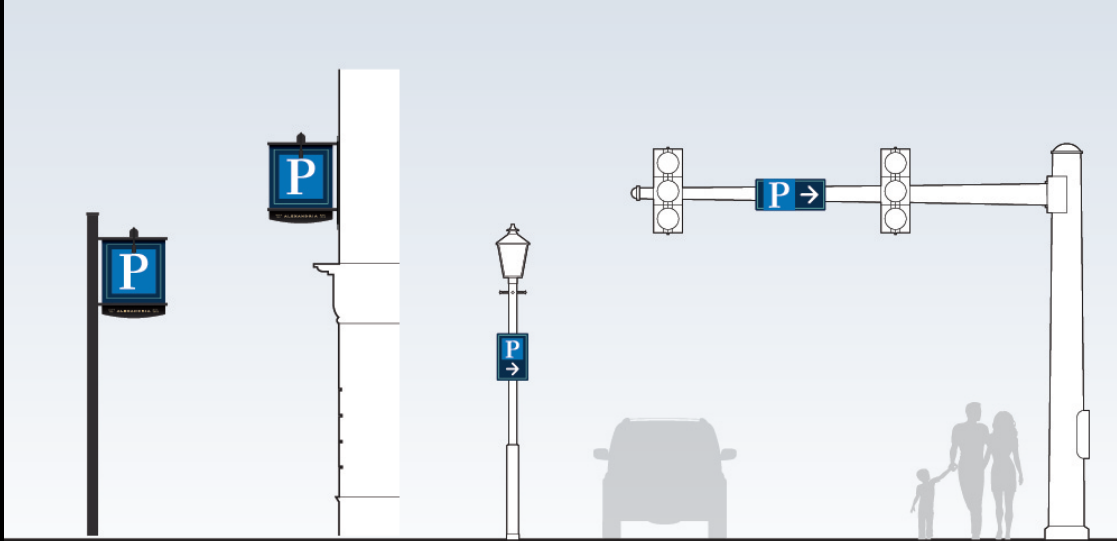
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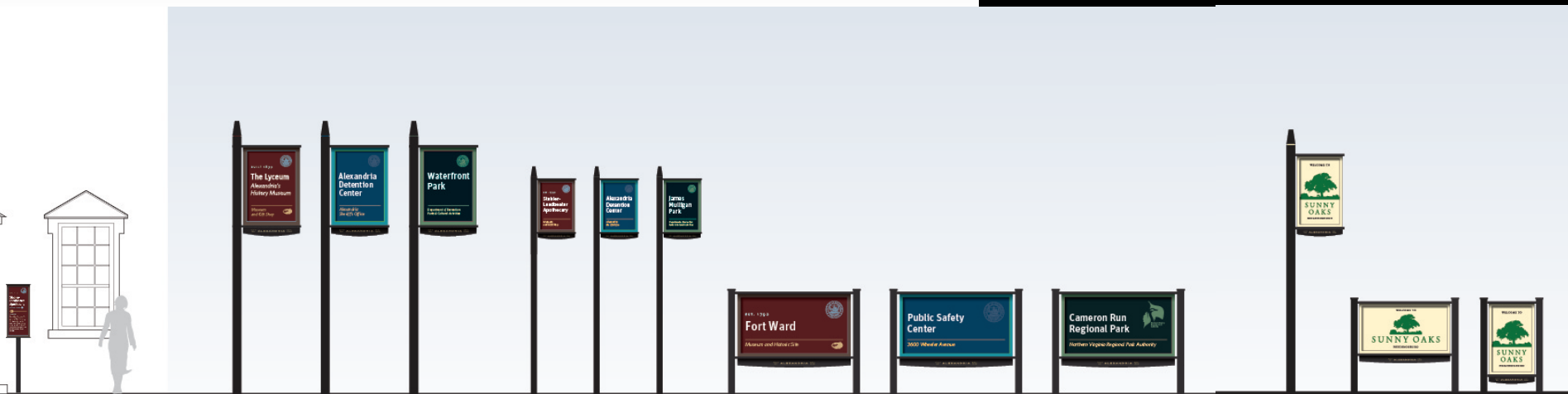
IMPLEMENTATION

Phasing

- Implemented in phases with an estimated $2.3 million total capital cost

- Now that DGM has been approved, City will implement Phase 1 (parking signs in Old Town) with funding in City Council's FY2011 budget

- Proposed phasing plan subject to funding and prioritization consideration in City's annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning and budgeting processes.

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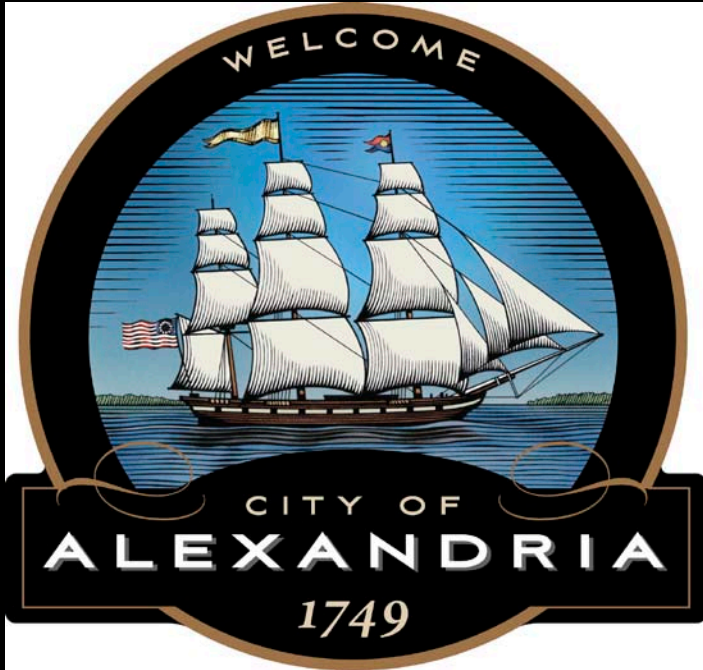
- Stakeholder involvement
- Preliminary analysis and inventory
- Clear objectives
- Existing signs/clutter
- Balance between form / function
- Mock-ups
- Funding

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