

## Temporary Way-finding System Report and Survey (2016)

In 2015 the City of Springfield Massachusetts started the process of developing a temporary way-finding system for pedestrians focusing on the Metro Center/Downtown neighborhood.

This initiative builds on over a decade of coordinated effort from a coalition of City departments, and public and private entities working together to promote health and safety in the City.

The work is catalyzed by a significant investment of resources from federal, state, and private sources into the City's Mass in Motion work, enhanced by a federal 1422 funding award.

City staff have convened an inter-disciplinary collaboration including:

- City Health and Human Services, Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, Elder Affairs, and Buildings, Parks and Recreation,
- Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC),
- University of Massachusetts Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (UMASS LARP) Department,
- DevelopSpringfield,
- Transformational Development Initiative (TDI), and
- Cultural District.

The steps to develop and implement a temporary way-finding system as a pre-cursor to a permanent system have included the following:

- 1) Forming an inter-disciplinary committee to oversee work and securing agreement on the focus of the way-finding system
- 2) Reviewing research and best practices on way-finding--excellent resource: CDC Healthy Aging Research Network "Community Way-finding Grey Literature Compendium"
- 3) Working with Technical Assistance provider-WalkBoston to facilitate a Walk Audit that started the process of determining the focus area for the way-finding system as well as highlighting safety issues that should be improved.
- 4) Working with UMASS LARP to design and implement a pre-installation survey (and planning to implement a post installation survey)

- 5) "Ground-truthing" the proposed routes to assure appropriate locations (available posts etc) for signs
- 6) Preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to go out to bid for a permanent system
- 7) Installing the system
- 8) Evaluating the System

The downtown system is perceived to be a pilot of an approach to way-finding that the City would like to expand to other neighborhoods throughout the city and will therefore be evaluated.

**Lessons Learned to date:**

- how to maintain focus on marginalized populations
- inter-disciplinary collaboration is important
- preliminary survey results--people who work downtown do seem to have an accurate sense of the distances
- given limitations on funding--have to focus on way-finding versus including street improvements in RFP
- list of criteria for the wayfinding signs is:
  - durability
  - uniqueness
  - reflect Springfield's history and character
  - health literacy

*see map of target area for detail*

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