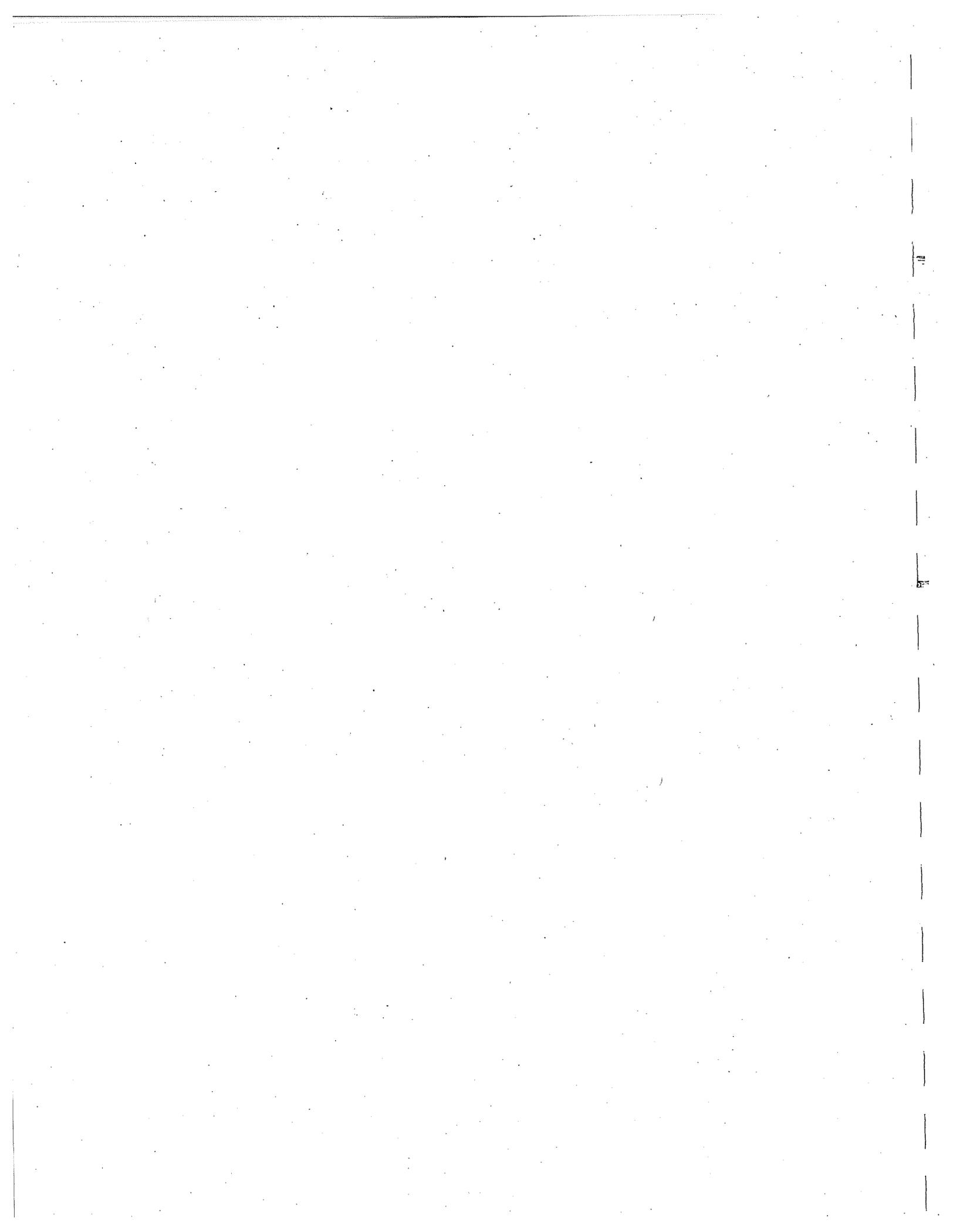
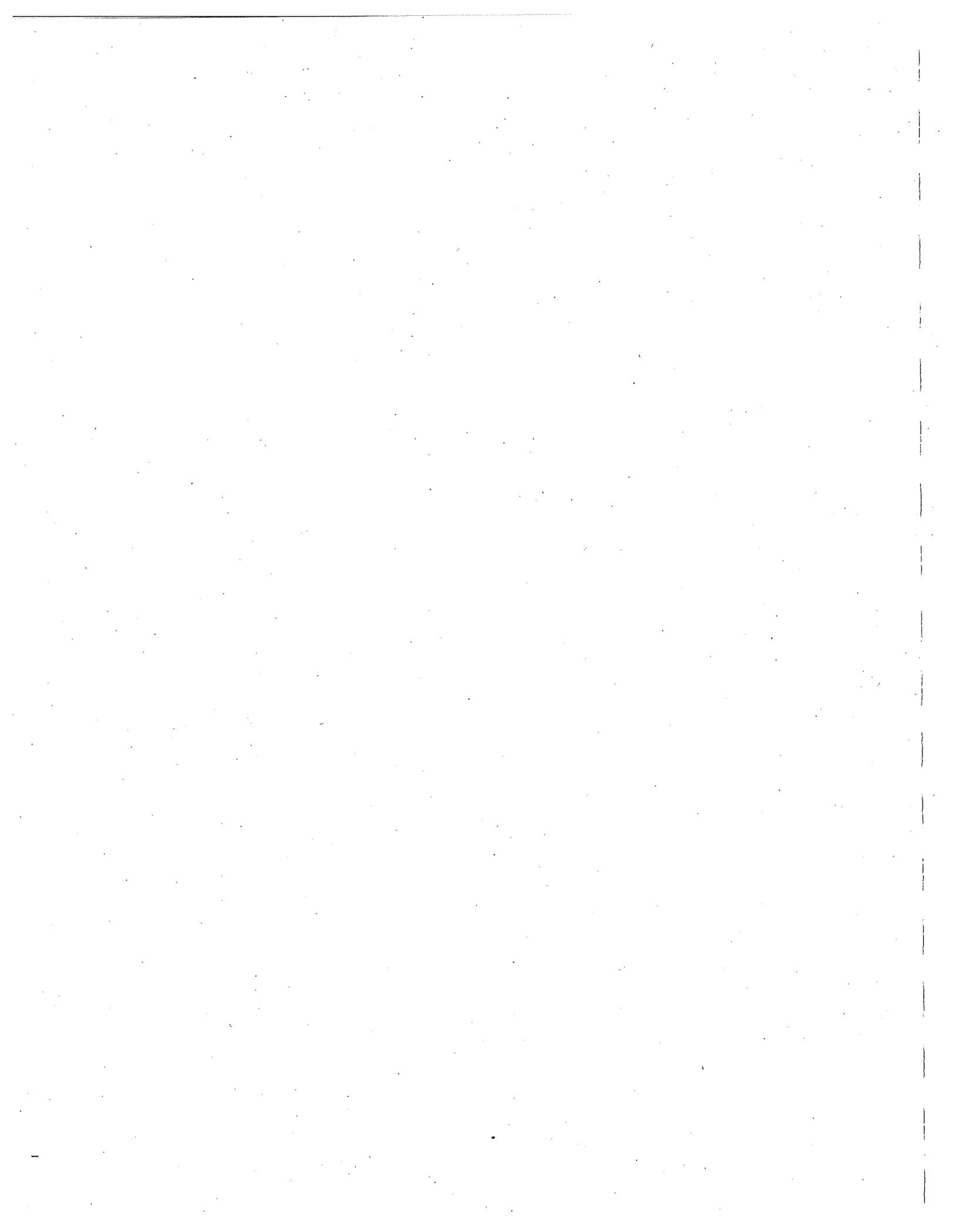




WE
WAY FINDING
in Reading





INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Reading offers residents a comfortable New England community desirable to families who will invest in their homes and potentially spend a lifetime, raising their families and taking part in civic activities and community events. There is little need to go beyond the borders of this town for most essential services and shopping opportunities. Reading offers excellent access by being convenient to all major highways and public transportation. However, unless you know Reading, finding some of these offerings is challenging.

The Town of Reading identified a need to evaluate their signage needs while considering what elements of the Town character could be incorporated and provide an identity or brand for this comfortable suburb of Boston. In addressing this need the design team made several visits to the community and met in December of 2009 and February and June of 2010 with the Economic Development Committee comprised of key partners in the community who play an active role in its growth, management and future successes. During these visits, the team identified key access points, destinations and obtained a vision of how its residents and business partners perceive its identity. The town leaders are trying to establish the community's identity, develop a current theme, and acknowledge their historical significance in the region, working towards a brand that fits their vision of the community.

A comprehensive and systematic wayfinding and directional signage system is a critical piece of work associated with identifying the Town's strengths and the amenities that attract residents, businesses, and visitors. From a clear identification of the main access routes and a systematic identification of the key destinations within the Town, a theme and brand will emerge. Reading is rich on history and is proactive in taking the necessary steps to enhance their richest resources. Recent projects show great care in defining the community as a warm and inviting New England haven while also assuring the offerings of a community so conveniently located to the City of Boston. The town offers major retail offerings and an attractive downtown that maintains a good level of retail offerings, a post office, financial institutions, institutional and municipal offices, and a commuter rail station.

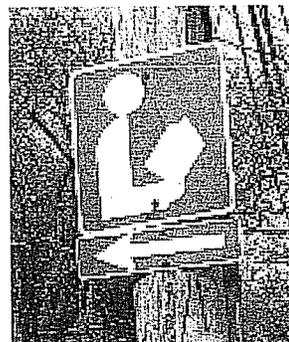
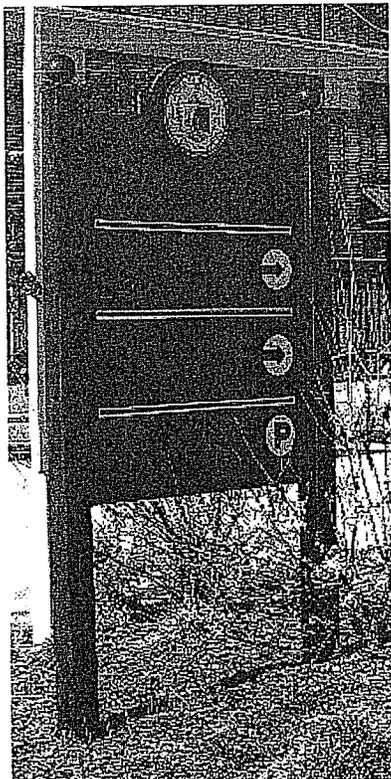
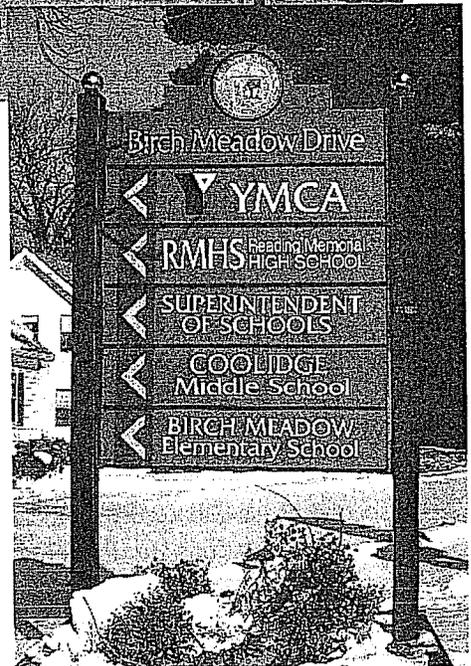
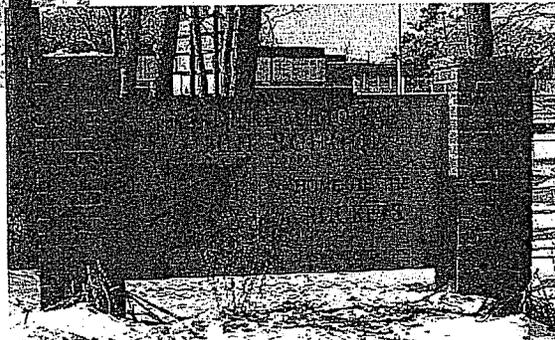
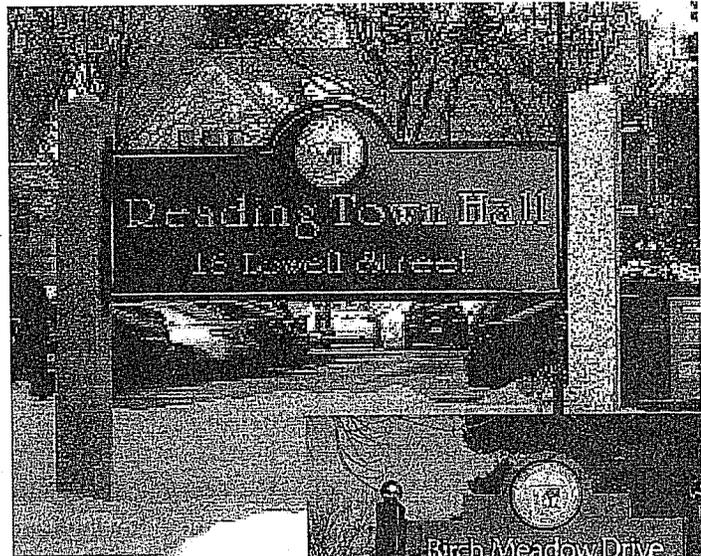
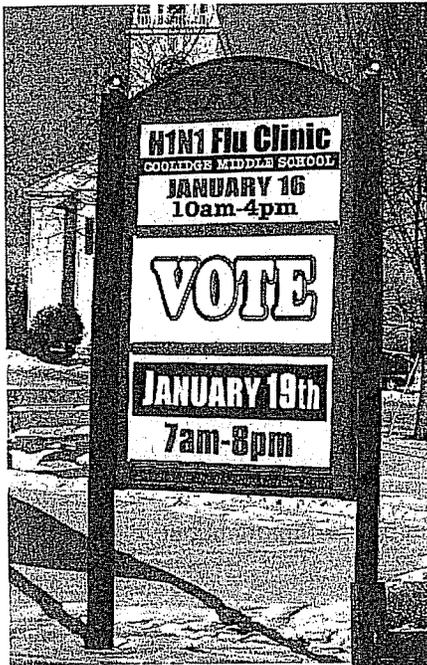
A sign system in a Town often faces the same challenges as a City. A good design will aid the Town in highlighting its unique features, setting it apart from similar destinations. Signs help identify potentially hidden or under recognized assets, adding value to these assets while giving them personality. The signs should fit the environment and compliment the streetscape enhancements resulting from Master Planning, Market Assessments, Economic Development Strategies, and ongoing observations of revitalization needs. A look at the existing environment leads to a proposal to find your way into, around and about, and out of the Town of Reading.

EXISTING SIGNS

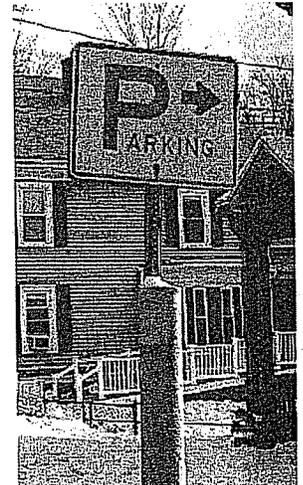
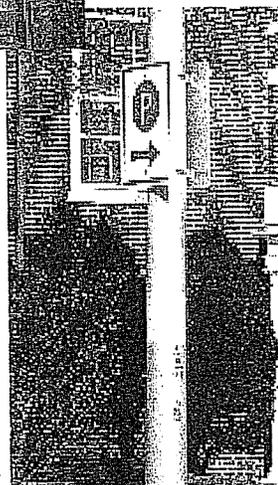
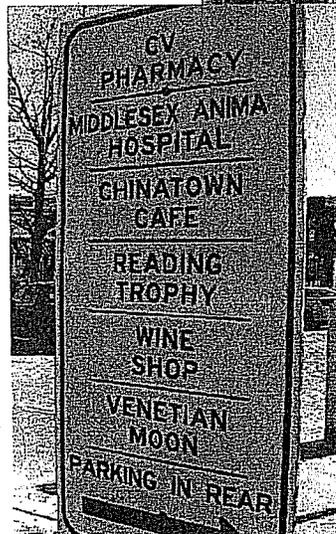
A study of existing signage shows that over time the Town has developed very tasteful, practical, and durable signage. However, the current signage offers limited guidance to visitors or those less familiar with the Town. The design team feels that existing signage can be incorporated and expanded upon rather than starting over.

In undertaking this study, the team identified major routes and sought assistance in identifying key destinations and sign issues, whether it be certain areas of the City that are a specific destination with certain offerings or directional assistance to routes, commuter rail, or public facilities. All this needs to be better detailed in how it is identified on a signage system.

Reading is identified in public transit literature as Reading Center or Reading Square. It was confirmed that the preferred and most commonly known term is "Center". The Center offers good shopping opportunities and a town feel while Reading also offers major big box stores that people from beyond would seek out. The Reading Commuter Train Depot is conveniently located off the town center within walking distance. However, this is another key element of convenience that is not well identified and difficult to find if not familiar with the area. Town leaders seek to create an ease of not only finding your way to the community and its assets but in finding your way back to the highway or state route system.



Existing Signs



PHASING

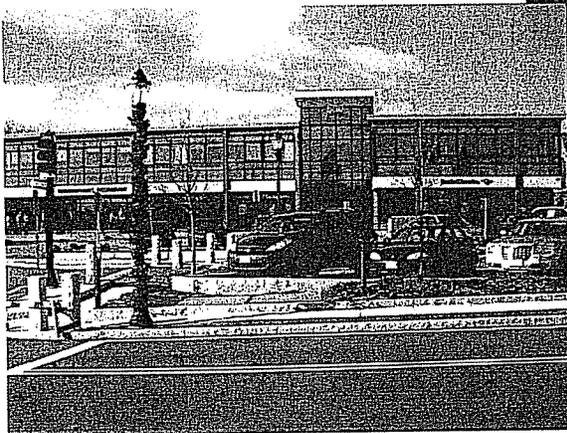
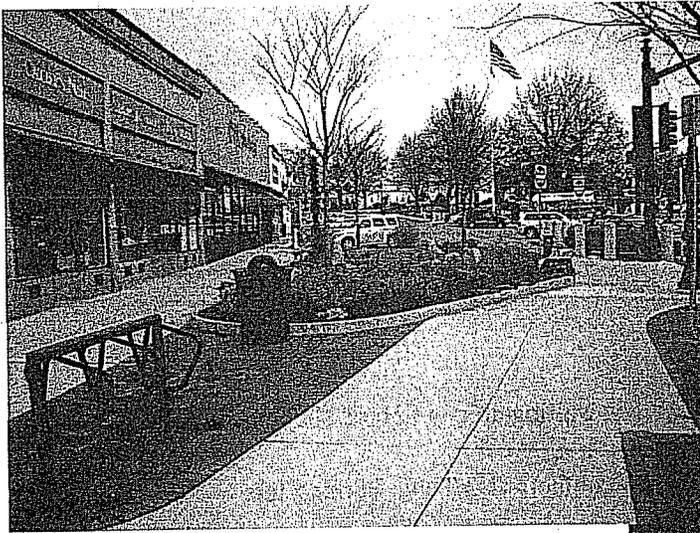
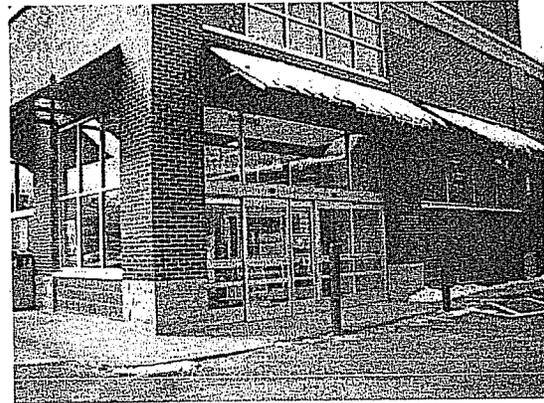
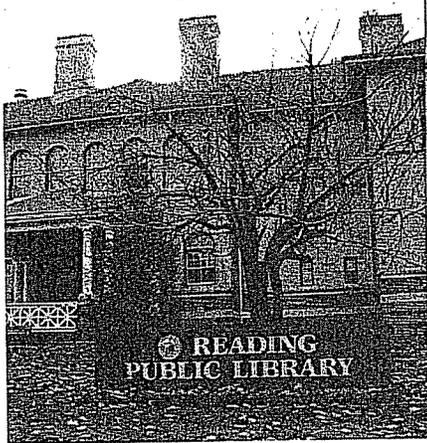
Economic conditions cause all communities to approach their expenditures and investments carefully. As a sign system will have varying costs associated with its implementation, the design team recognizes the need to provide a means to phase the installation of any new sign system. The Economic Development Committee assisted in identifying the more key issues at hand and the more immediate needs versus a longer-term vision. It makes sense to approach the implementation through phasing the signs recommended in this report. The design team identified the phasing for this sign program that will address the immediate needs first while allowing for a later implementation of still important but less critical destinations.

The initial phase identified would include:

Downtown Reading or Reading Center that includes the Smart growth area;
Directions to Birch Meadow Institutional & Recreational area;
South Main Street shopping strip and;
Walker's Brook Crossing adjacent to 195/Rt. 128

The second phase of signage should include relevant destinations throughout the entire Town. The second phase should use elements of the initial phasing to keep signage consistent and recognizable. These destinations would include:

Open Space and conservation features;
Neighborhoods;
Historical Districts or features and;
Any other destination for events or activities now present or developed in the future.



Existing Sites in Reading Center

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current proposal seeks to address the initial phase for both vehicular and pedestrian signage in a permanent environment broken down as follows:

Vehicular

District Directional Signage

Signs to "Reading Center" on Route 28 and Route 129 inbound

Outbound Directional Signage

Birch Meadow recreational area (on Common)

South Main Shopping Strip (on Park @ Washington & Main)

Walker's Brook Crossing regional retail stores (Washington Street)

Parking Lot Directional Signage

Visible "P" signs to the three public parking lots

Public Buildings

Town Hall

Library

Senior Center

Police Station

Others

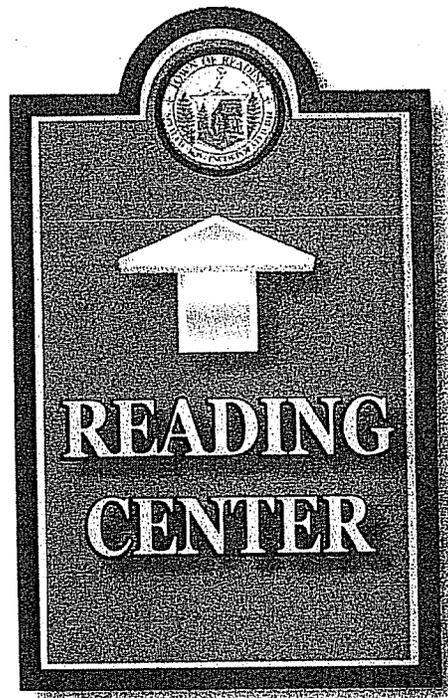
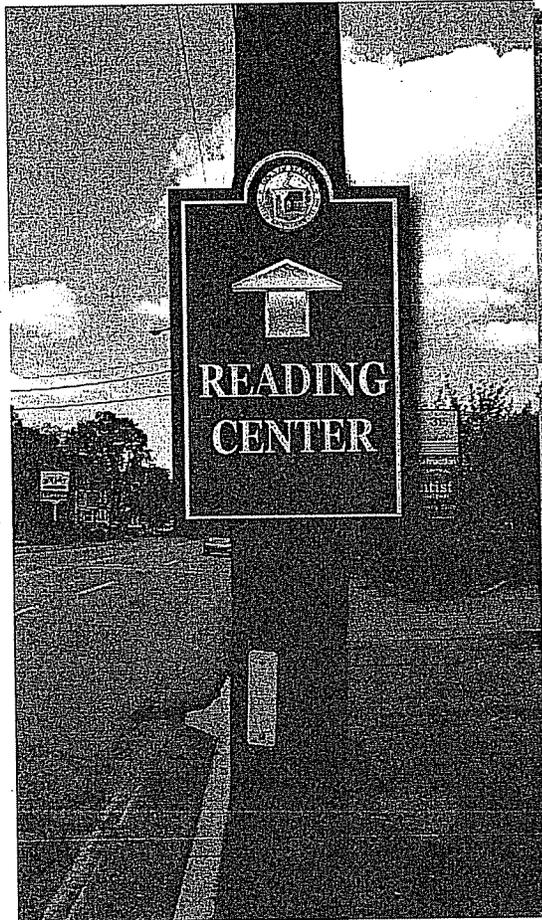
Pedestrian

Major Reading Wayfinding map & attractions @ RR waiting area in lighted shelter

Shoppers map & directories in off the shelf exterior cabinets @ 3 Town Parking lots

Mini maps with stores @ corner shopping nodes

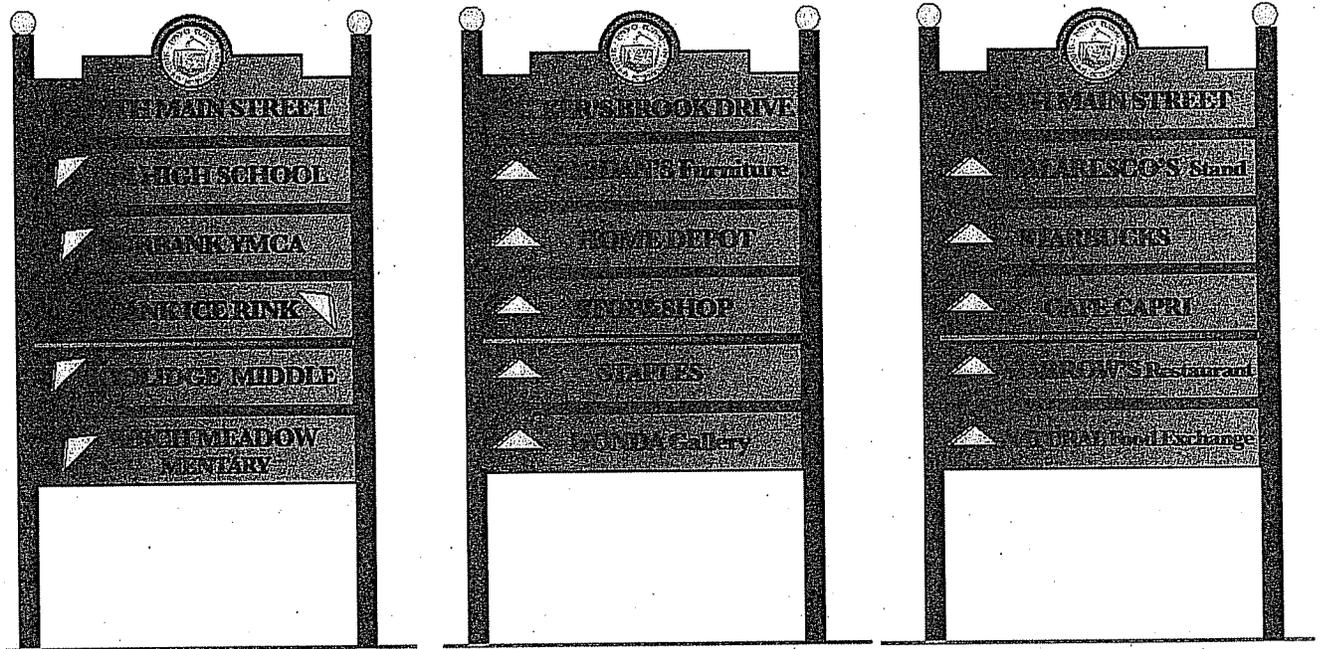
Major Event & Promotions Kiosk on open space in front of CVS,
Preferably electronic and /or touch activated



Vehicular

It may seem unnecessary to say, but directional signage to the Town's Center is crucial. As the motorist exits the highway, the need for direction is immediate. The Town Center is a focal point and properly located directional signs are the start of a visitor's experience as they traverse the community they have just entered. They also provide comfort to the driver in knowing their path is defined and there is assistance in finding the way. It is also a quality of life issue for residents. Residents can have comfort in knowing their visitors have a guide system. This experience will be the determining factor in many return visits.

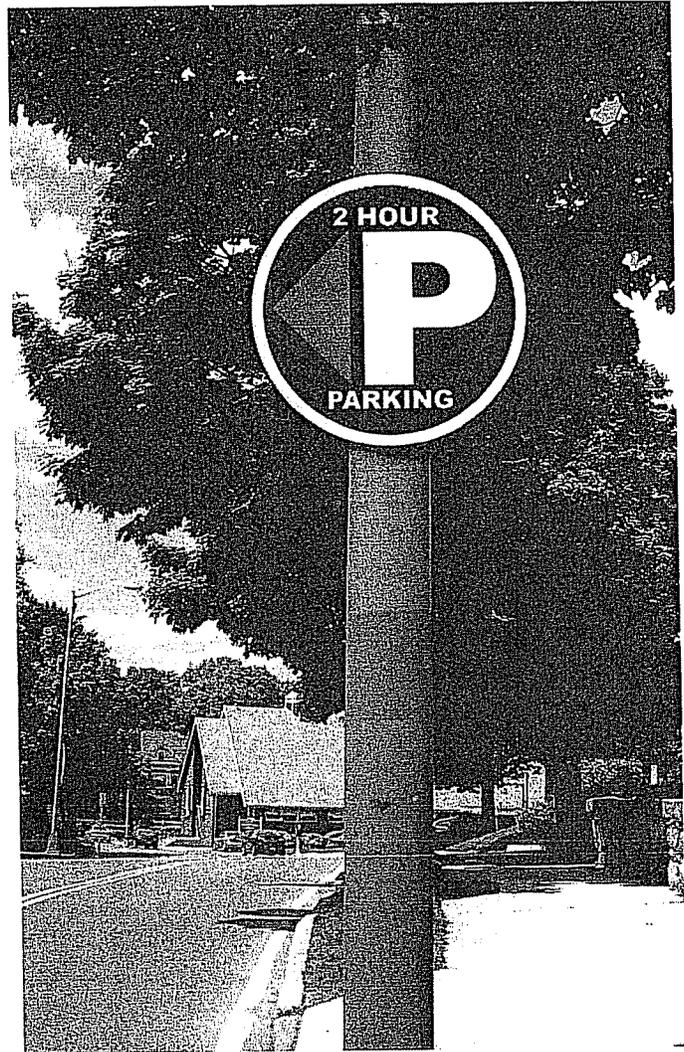
Directional signs to outlying districts:
Birch Meadow Drive, South Main Street, Walker's Brook Drive
on Common, park @ Washington & Main, & Washington Street

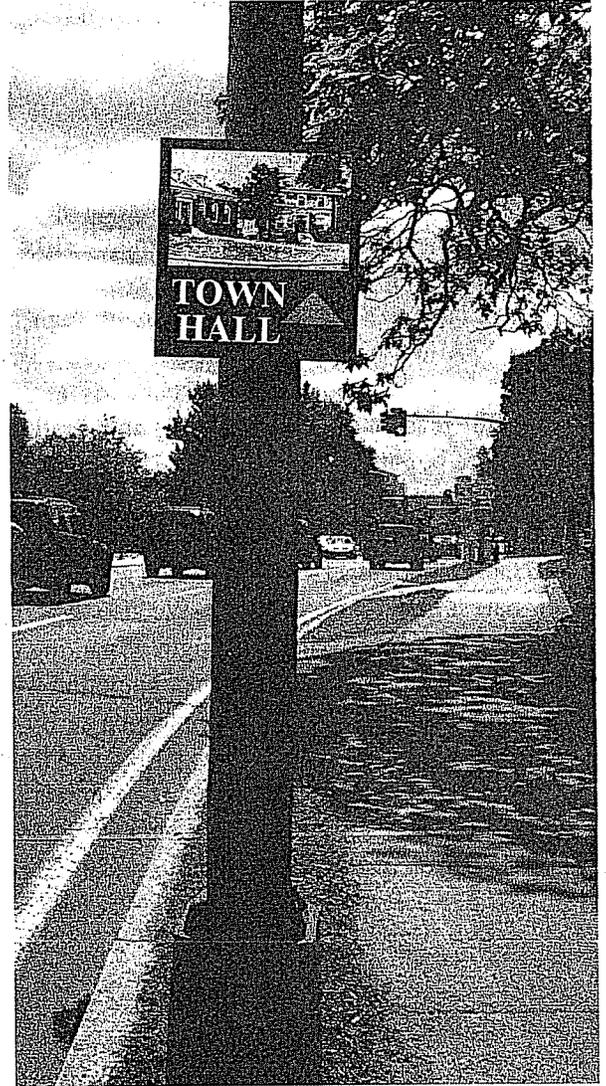
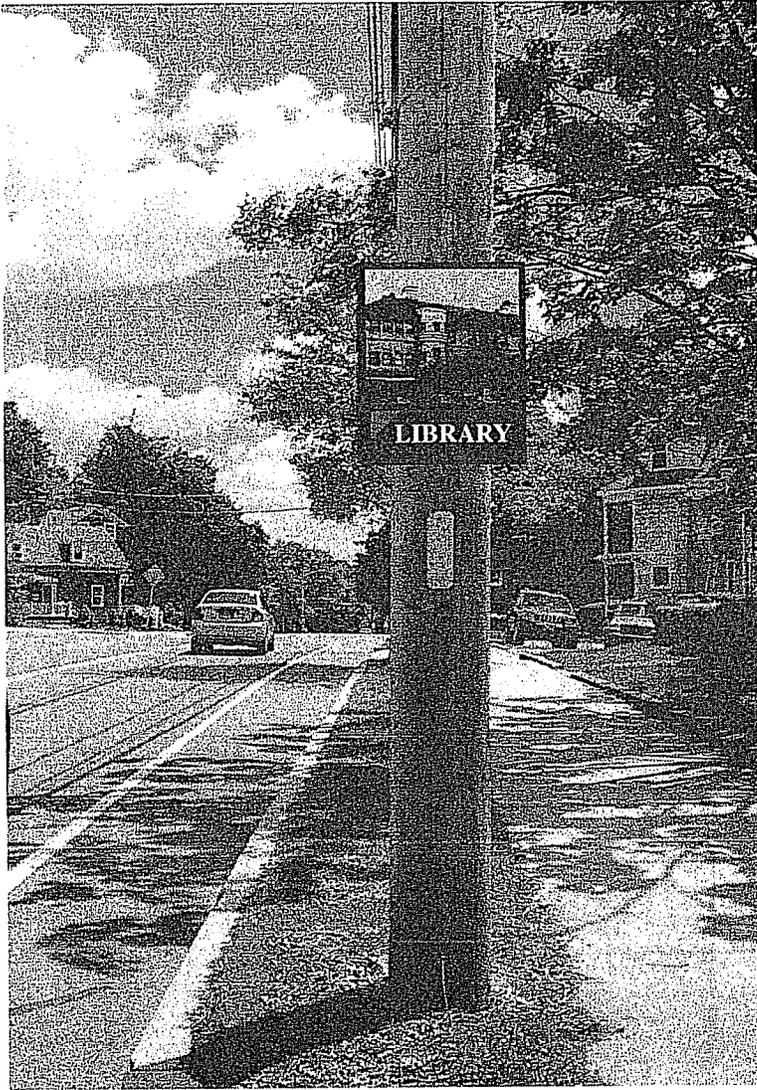


Also an important element of any signage program is directing the motorist on their outbound trip. It is important to assure the routes are well marked and the departure is as pleasant as the arrival. Reading also has the challenge of directing the motorist and shopper to other outlying retail destinations. The Town is most fortunate to host an area of larger retail destinations at Walker's Brook Crossing. The Economic Development Committee and the design team agree that it is important to inform the driver that these options exist and provide guidance in accessing them from the Town Center through directional signage. The signage may even provoke a shopping trip for residents who have completed their visit to the Center.

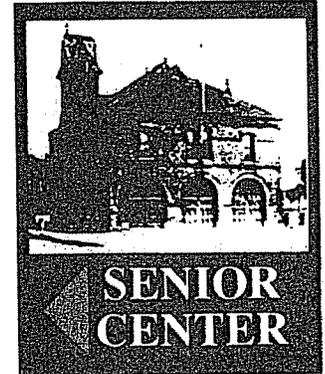
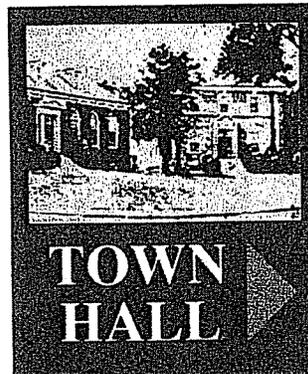
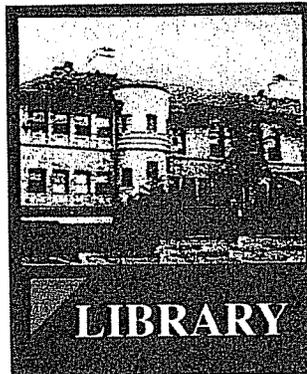
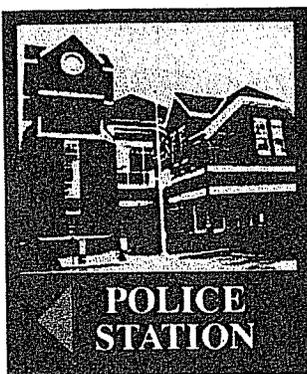
Parking seems plentiful in Reading Center, which is supported in a Parking Study completed in the spring of 2008. However it is not well identified or necessarily easy for visitors to find. Reading is fortunate in this regard as most communities struggle with parking needs in their Town and City Centers. More recent improvements enhancing access to lots located at the rear of the commercial shopping and dining districts have added to both visibility and access for pedestrians once they have left their vehicles. The study team took notes that it is important that all these access points were well maintained during the winter months and would encourage the town to establish a maintenance program through their DPW or recruit business owners who might assist with this effort to assure there is safe passage and they remain a benefit to the Center. This could be a shared responsibility and handled in a manner so as to minimize the responsibility to one business by sharing the load.

It is highly recommended to use long identified national or international standards like the parking "P". Many of these symbols are available to designers on the web through AIGA in usable formats. In Readings's case we veered slightly from the standards and offered some options by adding color and shape hoping to really draw the driver onto the lot and thereby resist the temptation to circle the block for more in demand, shorter term on-street spaces that should accommodate high volume turn over. We also took the liberty of identifying the length of parking by introducing the hours "2" in conjunction with the standard "P". This option can be easily changed if the town might experiment with changing time limits to better accommodate various parking needs. The town can choose the option that best fits their view of how the town is best represented.

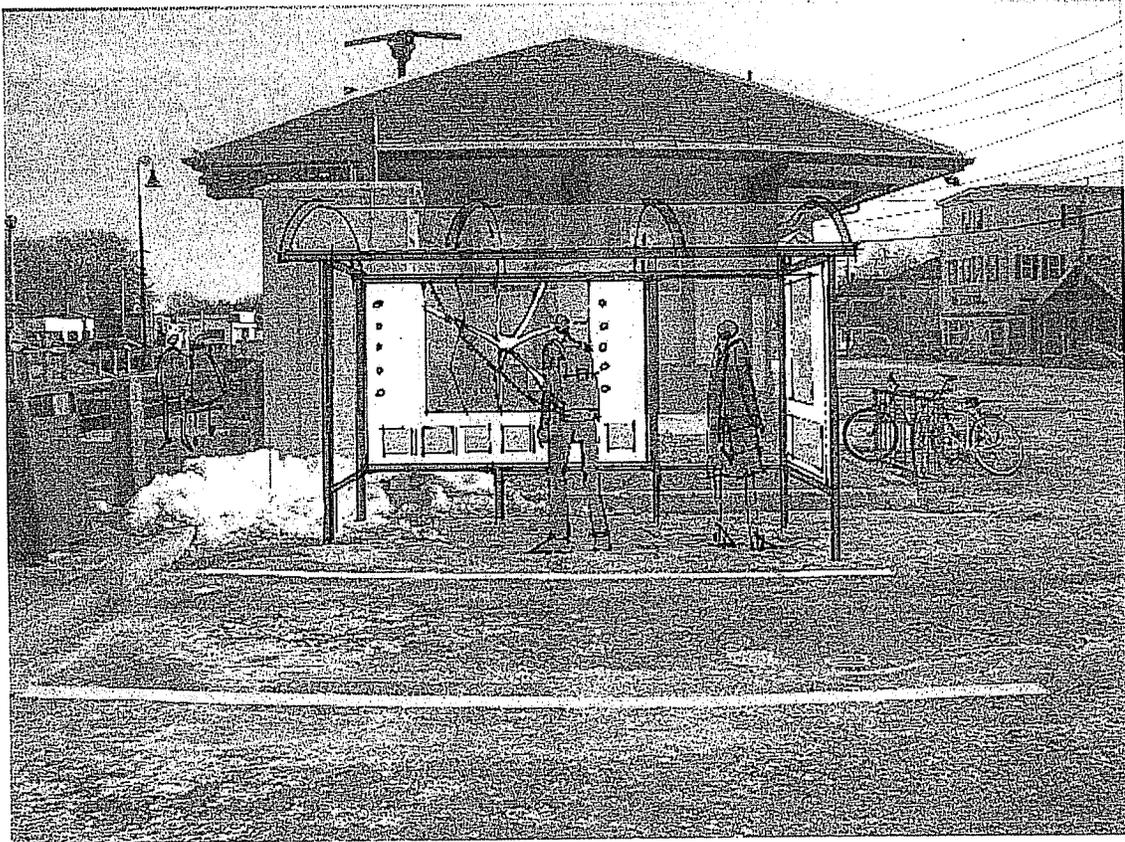




In prior sign studies, it was frequently heard that residents and visitors alike prefer to see the municipal service amenities identified- Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, Police Station, etc.



INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTIONAL SIGNS



Major Reading wayfinding map/directory in advertising shelter with back lighting

Pedestrian

The “Power of Maps”, an exhibit at the Cooper Hewitt Museum displayed the dynamics associated with the use of maps and the visitor’s reaction to colors and graphics that represents the “whole” in a familiar way. The design team recognized the underutilization of the Commuter Rail Depot as a captive audience at over 800 persons each day. As such the team recommends the installation of a new back-lit advertising shelter that provides maps/directories in an advertising format that will highlight what Reading Center has to offer. Again, this is a huge opportunity to provoke a visit to the Downtown and is highly underutilized by the retail sector.



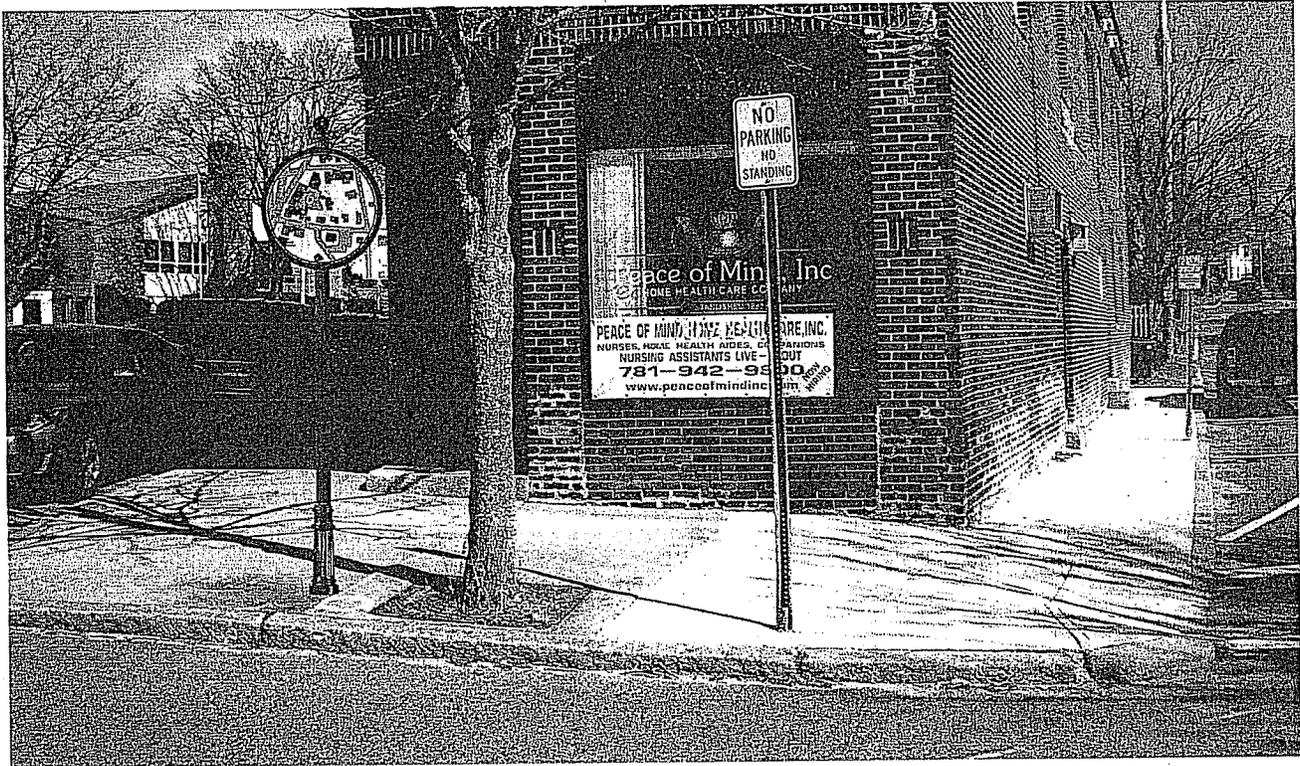
Shopper's map/directory in off the shelf exterior cabinets in the three public parking lots

In a similar offering, the team recommends installation of an off the shelf model, series of exterior cabinets located at the 3 parking lots to guide the pedestrian to their destination and promote the walkability of the Downtown. This will alleviate the potential for confusion as noted in the 2000 Parking Study and prove to be a worthwhile investment.

As an active town with many family activities for residents to avail themselves of, the community identified a changeable message system as an important element of a sign system. There is currently a changeable sign in place on the Town Common that serves as a notice board for community events. It is, again a good example of signage aimed at delivering a series of messages in a tasteful and visible manner. It reaches both motorists and pedestrians. In further addressing this need the design team recommends a major event and promotion kiosk located on a preferred open space in front of CVS or near the Common. Preferably this sign would be electronic and touch activated. We recommend it be sited in a structure that mimics the bandstand once located on the Common and featured on historic postcards of days past. Although Reading was unable to preserve the bandstand structure, the opportunity exists to recognize its former existence and provide an eye catching and inviting form for visitors and residents alike.

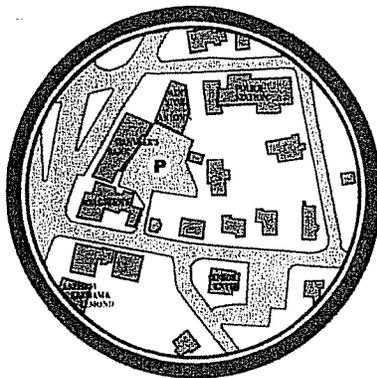


Event/promotions kiosk on open space in front of CVS. Electronic touch screen in "band stand" shelter

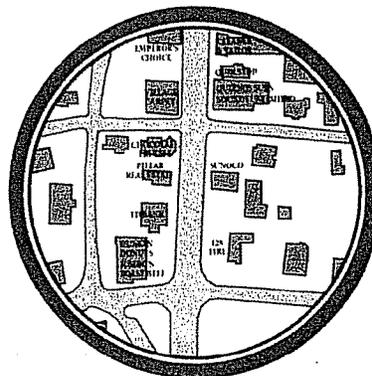


Again, in line with providing direction to the shoppers, and addressing the Economic Development Committee's desire to provide information to the shoppers at decision making points, the design team identified nodes within the shopping district where a mini-map with shop names can provide this information. To be effective the maps must be orientated to the directions the users are facing, so the location of mini maps at these nodes should be carefully considered. Consideration should be given to identifying any landmarks that may be notable allowing the pedestrian to further orient themselves during their walking experience.

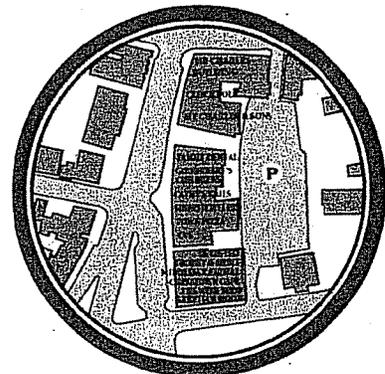
Shopping maps @ Retail nodes



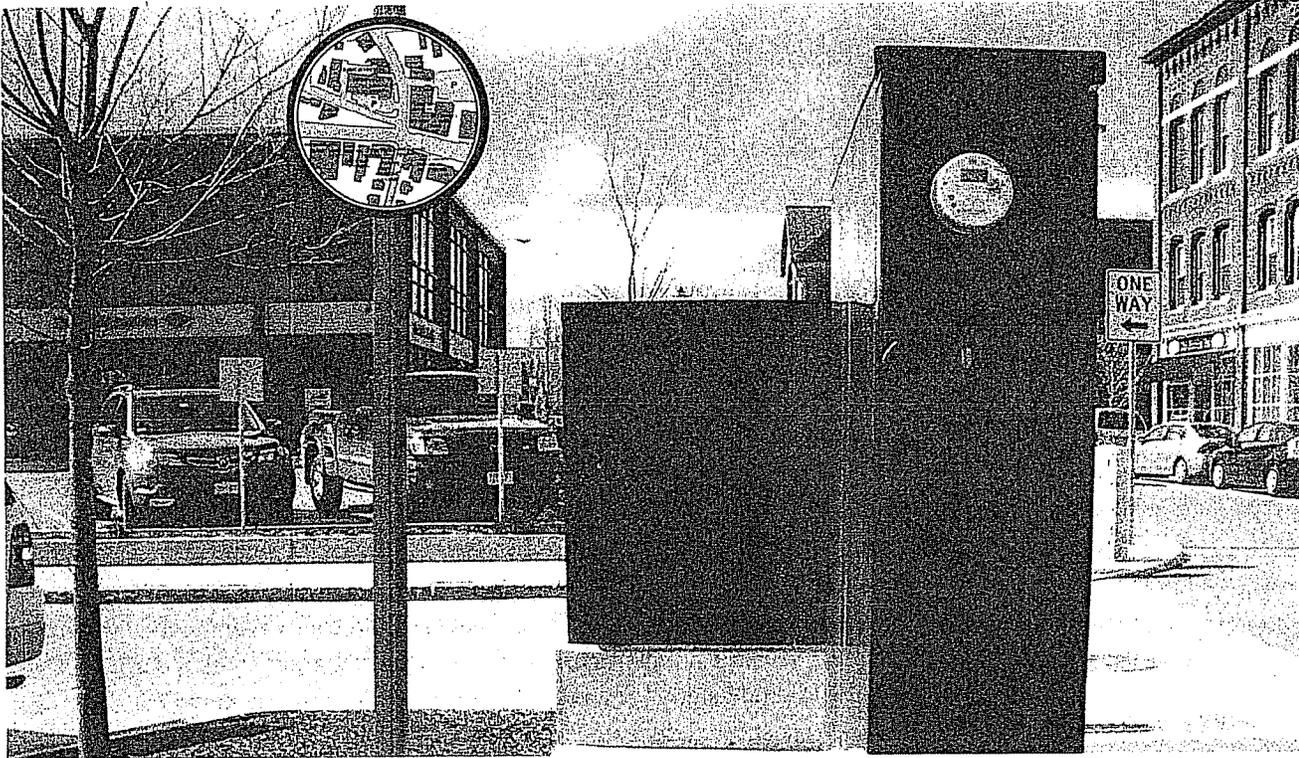
MAIN LINCOLN



MAIN WASHINGTON

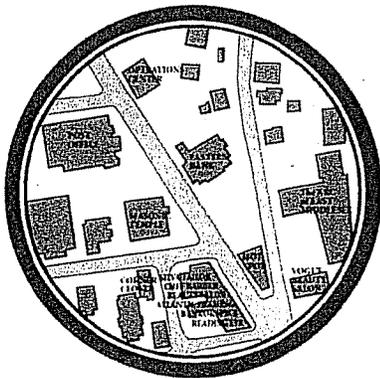


MAIN-LINCOLN



Mini map locations include Main/Woburn, Main/Lincoln, Main/Haven, Main/Washington, Haven/Grove, and Haven/Chute.

Committee members noted a desire to see the mini-maps in round form based on their observations in other communities. Maps can be in either form, rectangles or round, and communicate the same information. As others view the options for various sign styles, a preferred shape may emerge as the final selection. The need to frequently change the individual shop names can be accommodated by placing cut vinyl names over a digital print of the map.



GOULD HAVEN



MAIN HAVEN



HAVEN RR.

IMPLEMENTATION

Of design interest to the study team was the definition of the color commonly used on town signs- "Reading Red". This special color reference presents a great opportunity to capitalize on this special identity by using this color reference. It may add to the opportunity to raise funds through describing a special and unique color associated with the Town's image and history by incorporating "Reading Red" into the overall signage program. We have incorporated red into the majority of sign elements for key destinations that will help distinguish between the types of signs the viewer is asked to comprehend. We recommend that whoever implements the sign program work with a local paint supplier or sign shop to develop or select a red that can be specified for all Reading sign components calling for the red color.

The design team understands that Reading does not have it's own sign shop and must contract for all sign work, including street signs and any other signage. Therefore an inexpensive and easily maintained system makes the most sense and will lend itself to either a fund raising effort or potential grant sources for the initial implementation. All directional and guide signs for motorists should conform to the new Federal regulations requiring high reflectivity on most municipal signage, to be converted over the next several years.

This report provides the basic groundwork for a sign system but some decisions lie ahead. It would be beneficial for whoever is implementing the sign program phases the work with a local sign company. Most companies have staff with design skills who can assist in selecting the best materials, keeping costs down, and making recommendations for efficient installation and easy maintenance moving forward. This report supplies the basic concepts that can be further developed and detailed to result in a cohesive and comprehensive system.

Vehicular

Directional signs for Reading Center can be pole or post mounted, .08-gauge aluminum stock with highly reflective vinyl sheeting. Sign dimensions are recommended to be a minimum of 18" x 36".

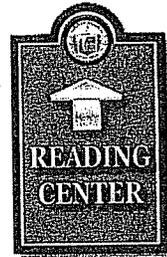
Posts should be break away, black, and post tops may accommodate decorative caps to provide a style.

Estimated cost

Directional signs to Reading Center = \$250-\$300 each including labor & materials

Number of Signs

Minimum of 6 at key entry points to be determined during implementation.



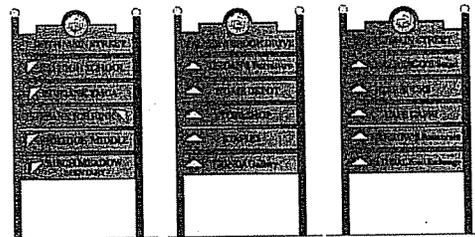
Directional signs to outlying districts will utilize the form of existing signs incorporating the Town seal at the head of the sign and Reading Red on the sign panels. These monument style signs can utilize the same or similar materials on existing signs or design can be further developed for ease of changing messages and reducing cost. Sign size may vary depending on the size and number of messages, and ability to site properly but are generally in the range of 4-5+/- feet in height and 3-4 feet in width. Decorative elements include post and ball and top form to fit seal.

Estimated cost

Directional signs to outlying districts = \$1,500 each

Number of Signs

3 Minimum- dependent on desired # of messages.



Directions to the Town's three Parking lots are designed to be highly visible. Color choices are optional. Hourly limits displayed (optional). Pole or post mounted .08 -gauge aluminum stock with highly reflective vinyl sheeting. Sign blanks are recommended to be 2' round. Posts should be breakaway, black, and post tops may accommodate a decorative cap to provide a style.

Estimated cost

Parking Signs + \$200 -250 each including labor and materials

Number of Signs

6-10 identified, may be others

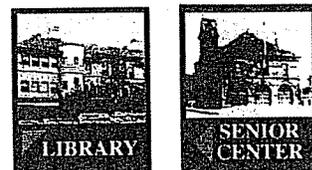


Signs to individual public buildings including Town Hall, Library, Senior Center, Police Station, and others are comprised of digital photos of buildings with cut vinyl names and arrows. An option for a logo is available in the Appendix. Sign blank size may vary depending on logo but range from 20" x 20" to 18" x 24".

Estimated cost

Public Buildings = \$200-250 each including labor & materials

Number of signs - 4 identified, with potential for others.



Pedestrian

Major Reading Wayfinding map & attractions directory at the Rail Depot waiting area in lighted advertising shelter available from manufacturers. Electrical service required.

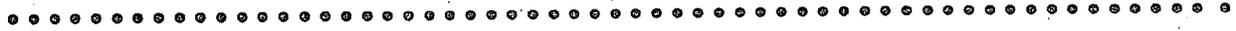
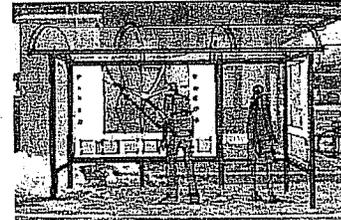
Size can vary depending on selection. Recommendation may result from advertiser's interest in participating and options for ownership & maintenance.

Estimated cost

Advertising shelter = +/- \$10k for shelter & installation

Number of shelters - 1

*Columbian
Wayfinding*

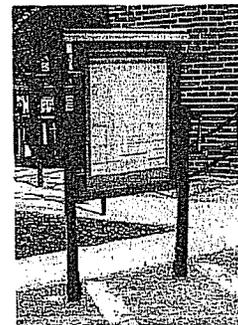


Shoppers map & directories in single sided exterior cabinets @ 3 Town Parking lots are available from several manufacturers in various colors and styles. Key lock access for changing maps or messages recommended. Further walking map development needed.

Estimated cost

Cabinets = to \$600 each includes cabinet and installation.

Number of cabinets - 3



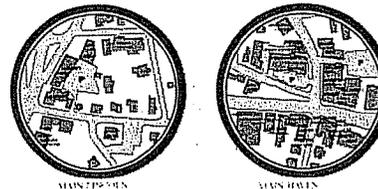
Mini maps with stores at shopping nodes. Vinyl with digital maps on round sign blanks with cut vinyl store names. Posts can be decorative aluminum.

Estimated cost

\$500-\$600

Number of mini maps @ nodes

6 identified.



Major Event & Promotion Kiosk on open space in front of CVS or near Common preferably electronic & touch activated.

Shelter structure to mimic bandstand in roof style & frame.

Material could be wood or metal.

Should be vandal resistant and be of solid lasting construction.

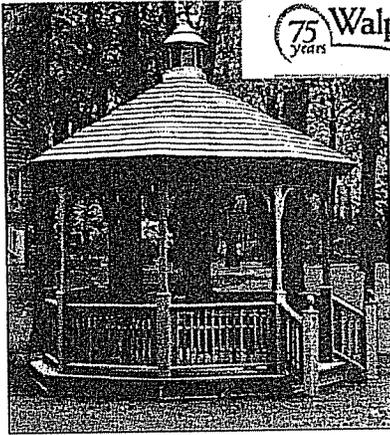
Estimated cost

Kiosk Shelter \$5K including labor & materials (wood)

Electronic Touch Kiosk +/- \$10,000

Number of shelters - 1





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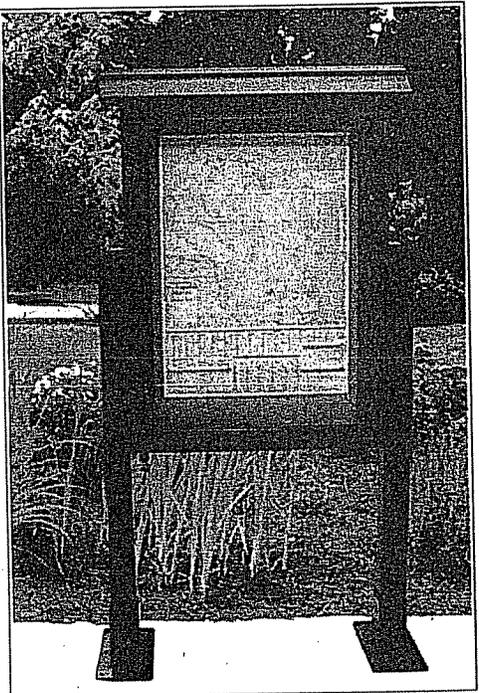
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 - Stainless steel hinged door with keyed locks
 - Guaranteed for 25 years

- available colors
-  Evergreen
 -  Brown
 -  Cedar
 -  Desert Tan
 -  Gray
 -  Black



Columbia Equipment Company Inc.

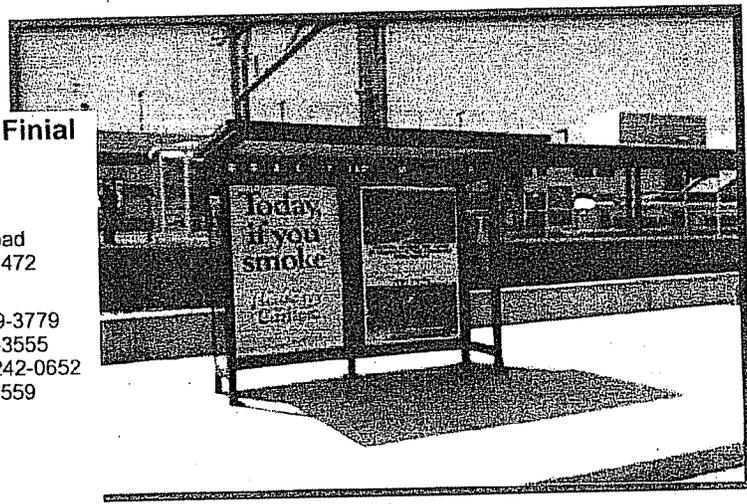
180-10 93rd Avenue
Jamaica, NY 11433
Phone : 718.658.5900 Fax : 718.526.4110
Toll Free: 800.742.1297 Email: shelterpr@aol.com

Steel Post - 10' X 3" X 3" - Includes Ball Finial

Item #: 10P3X3



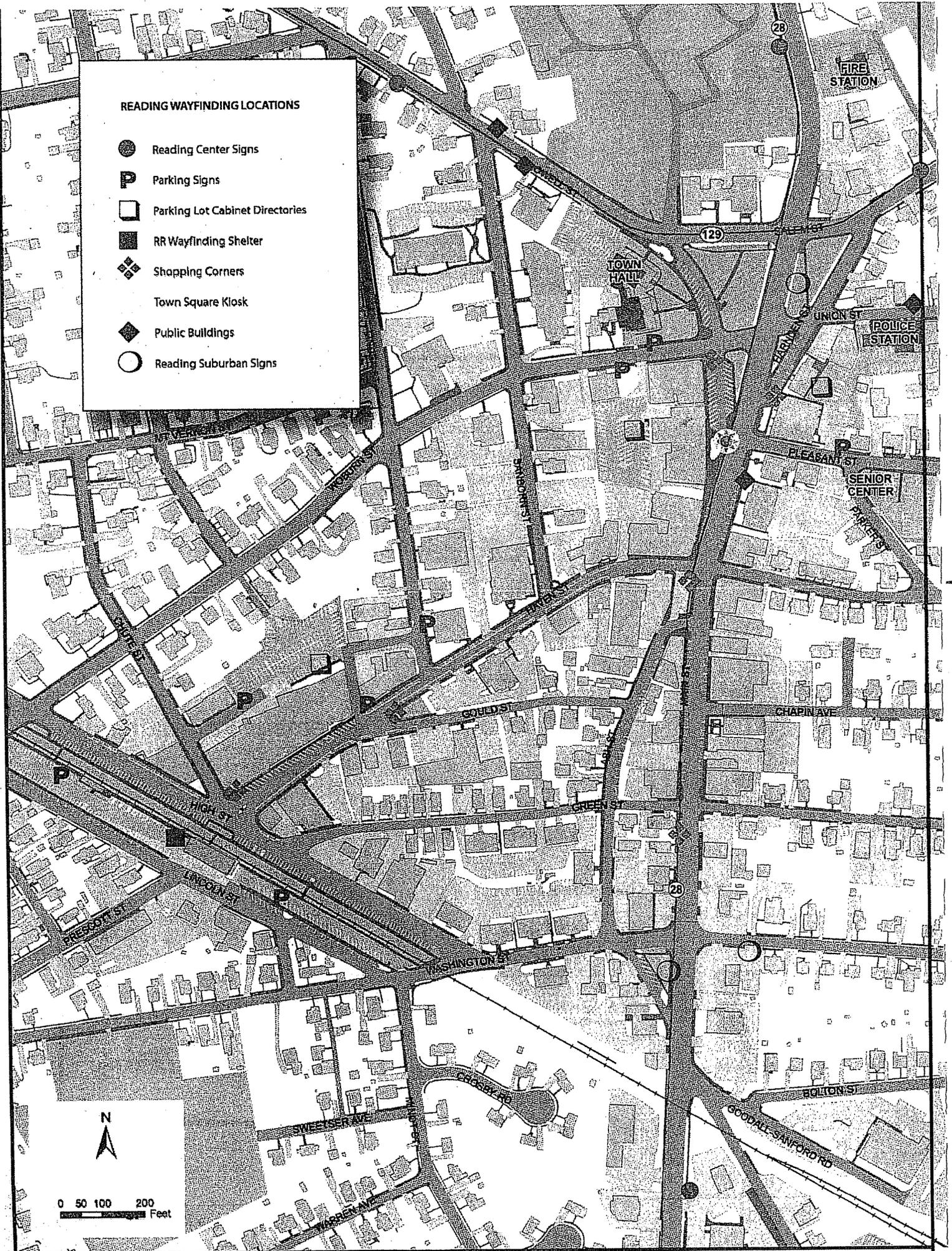
120 Cypress Road
Ocala, Florida 34472
Toll-Free: (888) 609-3779
Phone: (352) 680-3555
Toll-Free Fax: (888) 242-0652
Fax: (352) 680-3559



- Height X Width=10' X 3" X 3"
- Powder Coat - Satin Black

READING WAYFINDING LOCATIONS

- Reading Center Signs
- P Parking Signs
- Parking Lot Cabinet Directories
- RR Wayfinding Shelter
- ◆ Shopping Corners
- Town Square Kiosk
- ◆ Public Buildings
- Reading Suburban Signs



0 50 100 200
Feet

References:

“You are Here, Graphics that Direct, Explain & Entertain” Society for Environmental Graphic Design, Gail Diebler Finke, Edited by Leslie Galler-Dilberth, FAIA 1999

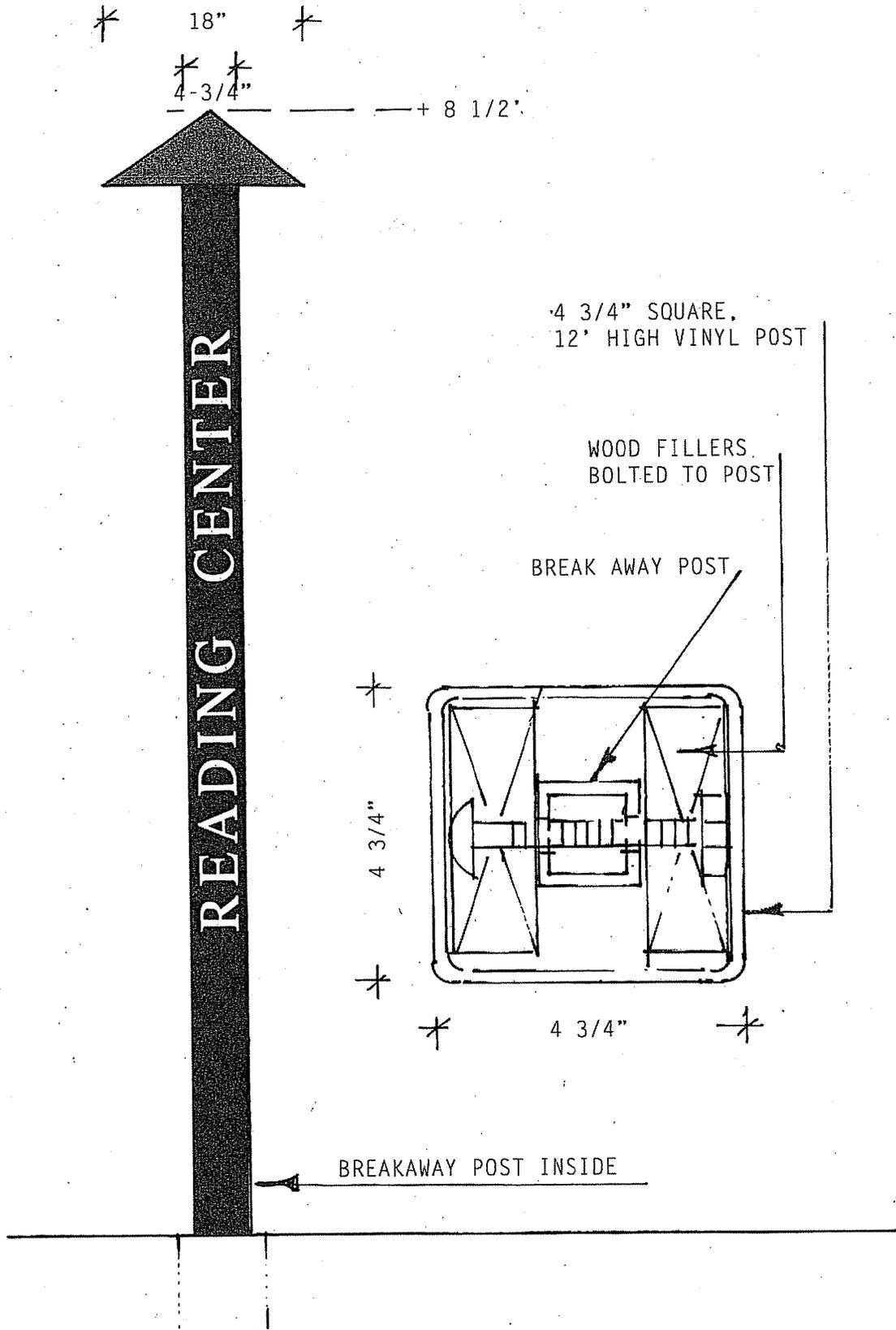
“City Signs; Innovative Urban Graphics”, Gail Diebler Finke, Printed in Hong Kong, World Distribution by Hearst Books, 1994

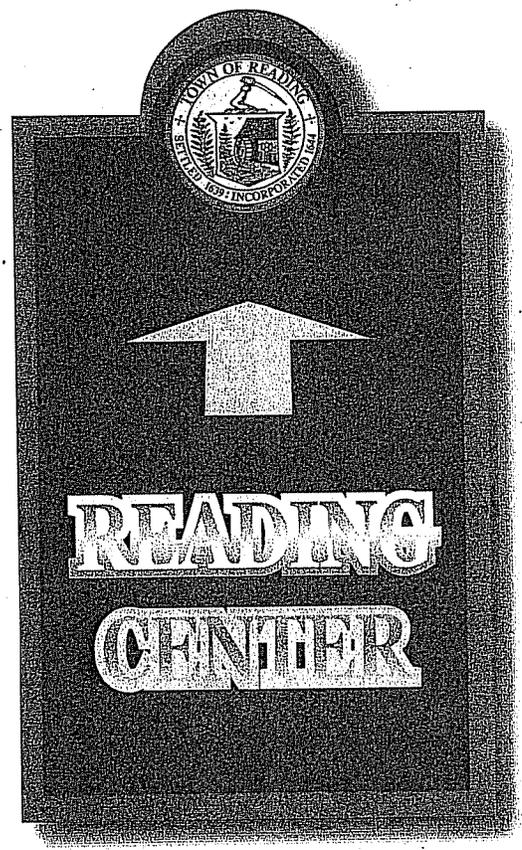
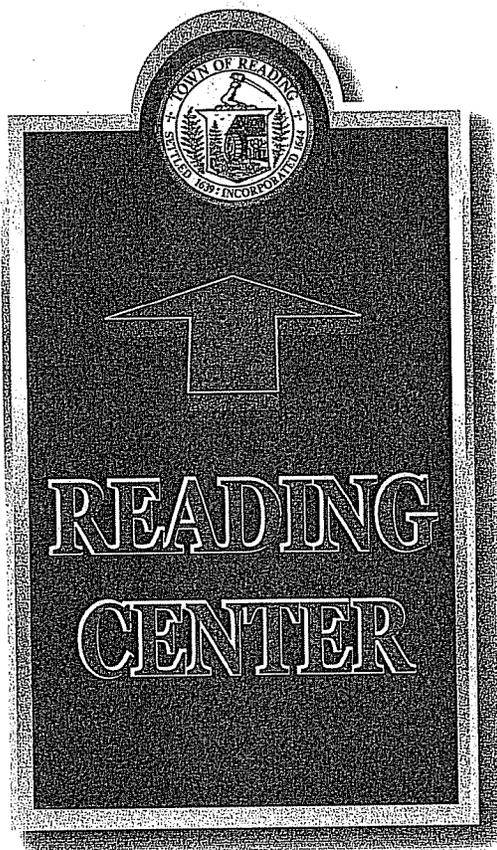
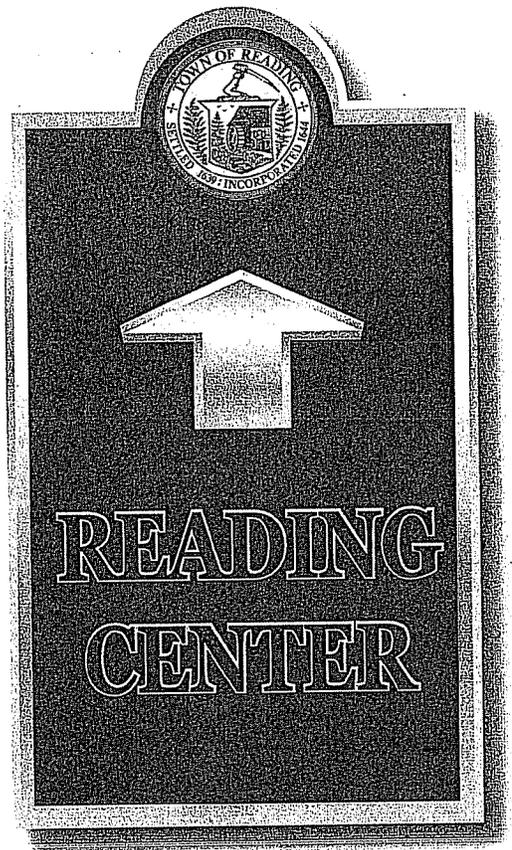
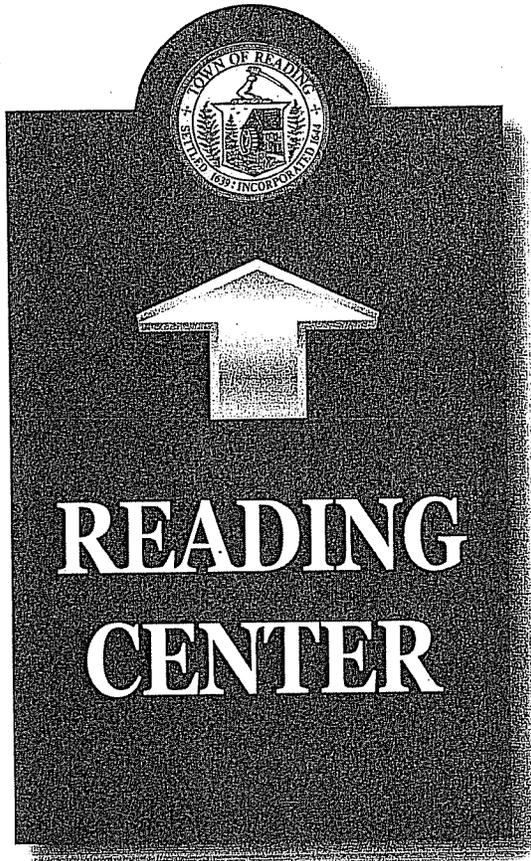
“Wayfinding, Designing and Implementing Graphic Navigational Systems”, Craig Berger of SEGD, Published by RotoVision SA, Switzerland

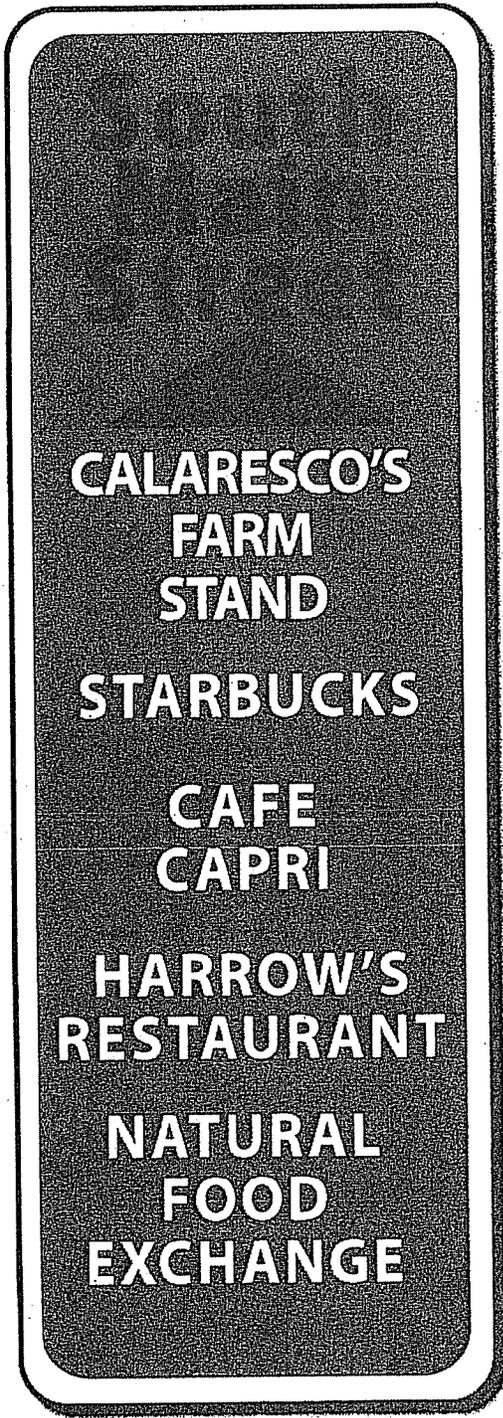
Prepared by: Anne M. Barton and Sandra Swaile 2010
Funded by: Department of Housing and Community Development
Peer to Peer Program

APPENDIX:

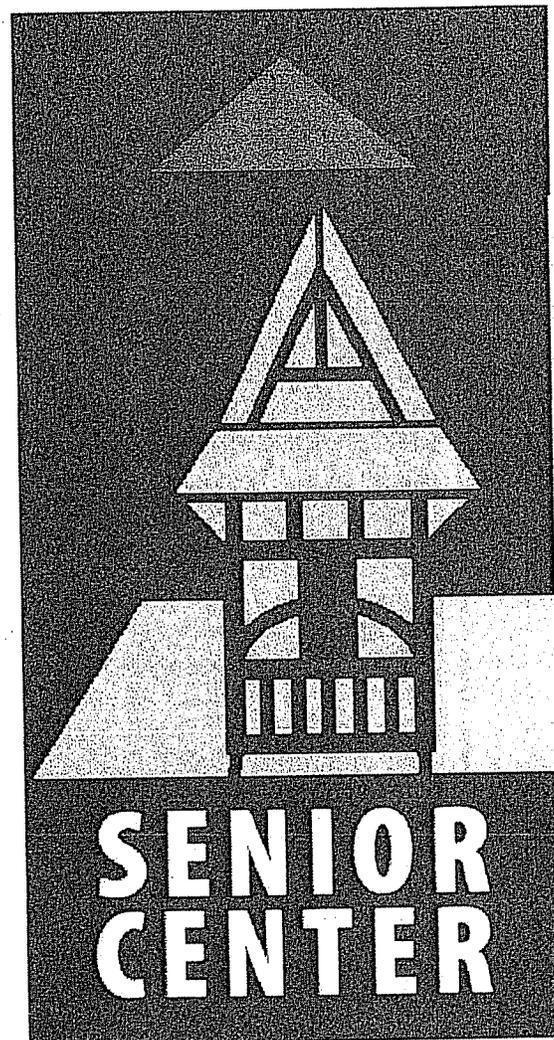
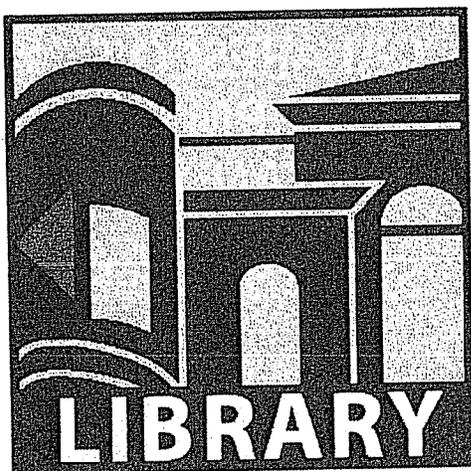
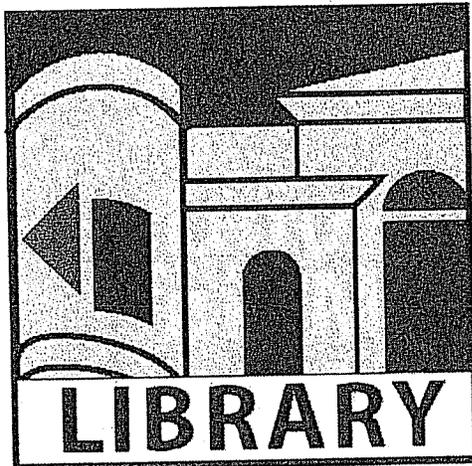
provides assortment of initial concepts and alternatives for reference.



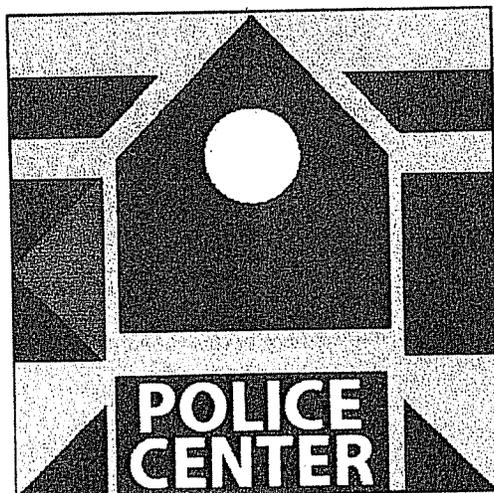


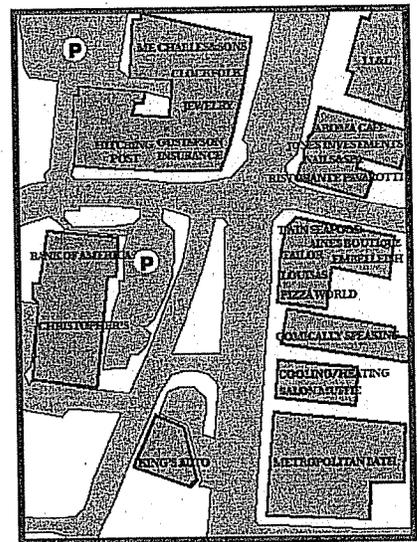
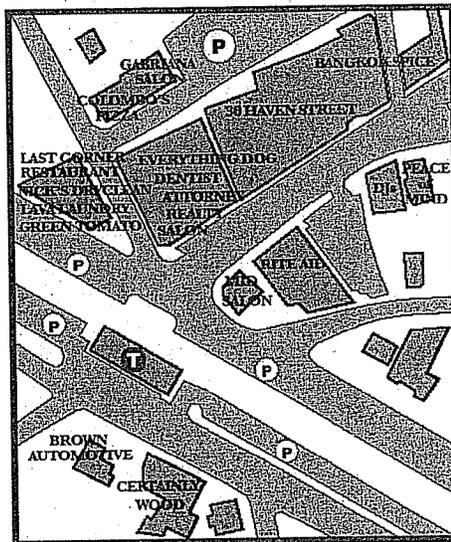
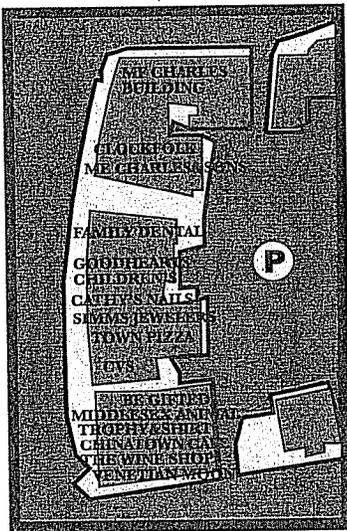


Simpler Version of outbound signs

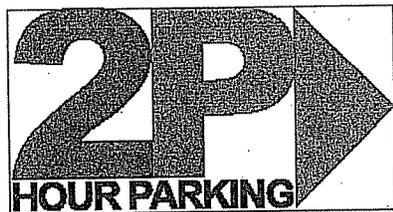


Symbolic logo directional signs to individual public buildings





Mini maps with shops at shopping nodes (corners)
 Main & Woburn, Main & Lincoln, Main & Haven, Haven & Grove, Haven & Chute



Vehicle "Parking" signs to the three public parking lots

Implementation Tips – Reading Wayfinding

Find a sign company you feel comfortable working with who spends some time understanding the program and who has design capabilities in-house so you can select final colors designs, etc. Be sure they have capabilities to do vinyl and digital. If you need to procure through a competitive process, hold a pre-bid conference to review the Town's needs and get to know who is interested in the project. This will be key to your project's success. A good sign company should give you their full attention and be able to deliver without extensive lead times.

Signs termed as "directional" and the "parking" signs should conform to the new Federal Standards for reflectivity. A good sign maker should be aware of these standards. There are some color restrictions on the highly reflective materials but I believe all colors we have recommended will work. These signs will be vinyl.

Other signs such as the municipal buildings and mini-maps will not be able to meet these reflectivity requirements. These are digital maps which are a different sign technique. The mini-maps that will need to be changeable are digital with vinyl lettering. The vinyl lettering can be changed out. Let the sign maker know that you want to be able to change the lettering on store names. It will require someone removing the old lettering, with a heat gun or other mechanism, and using caution so as to not damage the underlying digital sign.

The advertising bus shelter is an off-the shelf product. You will work with a company to select the best and most affordable product and to select the panels and materials.

The monument style signs can be various materials. We recommend you work with a sign shop on selecting what is most affordable while meeting your style desires and quality.

Posts, caps and bases can be purchased in a wide range of prices. You can purchase black posts and caps inexpensively if you look for standard sizes and no specialties. There are very attractive products that have good detail but can be expensive. These products may also have longer lead times for ordering. It is a fiscal choice that will need to be made. The decorative hardware is very attractive but expensive.

We recommend that you hold off on the touch kiosk. This type of signage is still in a development stage and we feel it will be better and less expensive in the next year or two. It would be a good idea to begin researching it and talking to companies now and making your purchase down the road when the technology has been fully developed.



