Community Wayfinding Grey Literature Compendium

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Online resources and relevant Professional Organizations are listed at the end.

Key
B=Background: general information about wayfinding
P=Practice: examples of existing wayfinding systems
S=Standard/Guideline: standards, guidelines and best practices for wayfinding and related transportation systems
T=Tools: tools to develop or evaluate a wayfinding system


The Legible Cities initiatives underway in the UK and elsewhere in Europe are very promising applications of best practices and evaluation in environmental wayfinding. These initiatives, such as Legible London, seek to augment the legibility of the city to promote seamless journeys including all modes of travel. Legible London has an explicit public health agenda to increase walking for health as

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1 Resources were identified by experts from various disciplines during the summer of 2012.
well as to foster economic and environmental benefit. Working with local governments and citizens who articulate their needs, Legible London addresses identified issues such as the existence of 32 different wayfinding systems within the city. With the goal of helping pedestrians readily create a mental map, the city applies key design principles such as parsimony, progressive disclosure and consistency in placement of aids.

Citation: Legible London: A Wayfinding Study. AIG London, Ltd. for Central London Partnership; March 2006. Available from: http://www.tfl.gov.uk/microsites/legible-london/12.aspx#Legible_London__a_wayfinding_study. See also the main Legible London website that includes a variety of other resources, reports and case studies of interest. http://www.tfl.gov.uk/microsites/legible-london/

Category: Background, Practice

Multi-Modal Navigation Tools Improving User Information For Walking, Cycling and Public Transit
Victoria Transport Policy Institute's overview of wayfinding and "multi-modal navigation tools" provides an overview of the concept and some specific benefits and recommendations for a general audience. The resource focuses mostly on multi-modal navigation tools, described as "Navigation Tools can range from a simple map printed on the back of business cards or event invitations, to a special brochure, map, Internet page or comprehensive information packet. This information can also be incorporated into other printed documents, including business cards, invitations, letterhead, brochures and catalogues." The resource outlines the benefits of wayfinding and navigation tools to increasing utilization of "transportation demand management" strategies like public-transit, ride-sharing and active transportation. The resource also lists some best practices and case studies for navigation tools.

Takeaways: This is a good background piece but it focused more on navigation tools like maps then wayfinding in general. It links wayfinding with transportation demand management and other smart growth strategies.


Category: Background

Best Practices in Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding in the Washington Region (DRAFT May 15, 2007)
The Washington DC Region investigated uniform standards in bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding signage, as part of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) bicycle and pedestrian work program. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) provides standards for bicycle wayfinding, but there is no national standard for pedestrian wayfinding signs. The Subcommittee members expressed concern that creating regional standards for pedestrian wayfinding would be complex, and might distract from implementation. TPB staff gathered examples of national and local best practices in pedestrian wayfinding and best Practices for Swiss, Dutch, Belgian and Irish Bicycle wayfinding. Conclusions: There is little coordination of pedestrian routes or wayfinding signage in the Washington region, but also little need for such coordination. Pedestrian trips are mostly short and local, and each agency and jurisdiction has its own priorities, purposes, and intended audience. Target audience: cities, counties,
municipalities/transportation planners/public works directors. Focus is on whether or not standardization of bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding signage is required at the regional level.

Takeaways: Focus is on standardization of bicycle and pedestrian wayfinding at the regional level for all users, not just for one population subgroup. At least for pedestrian wayfinding, the author seems to argue that perhaps there is not a need for regional coordination for pedestrian wayfinding since the realm for pedestrian wayfinding is generally within 1/2 mile of one's destination. There appears to be a greater argument for regional bicycle wayfinding since trip length is longer and there are interregional trip/and trips between jurisdictions. Thus, greater collaboration between various jurisdictional entities is suggested.


Category: Practice

Best Practice in Pedestrian Wayfinding within Urban Areas
This resource was created by design firms for the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority of Western Australia to provide background information and set of best practices regarding signage for pedestrian wayfinding. The report pulls from reports like Legible London and highlights successful wayfinding signage system implementation in London and Bristol to make the case for a comprehensive signage system to promote pedestrian wayfinding. The bulk of the report is on best practices for sign use and design.

Takeaways: While most of the report focuses on types of signage, it provides useful background information on why wayfinding systems are important and how people navigate through their environment.

Citation: Grant, John and Bruce Herbes. Best Practice in Pedestrian Wayfinding within Urban Areas. 2007. mra-39--waeha.pdf

Category: Standards/Guidelines; Practice

NashVitality
Nashville, TN started NashVitality with a grant from the CDC to promote healthy eating and physical activity and combat obesity in Nashville. As part of the program, they implemented a wayfinding system to “encourage residents to walk and bike...The unique maps display multi-dimensional views of the surrounding area and make it easy to understand where you are and where to head.”


Category: Practice

Ontario Wayfinding Research Study
The firm Oliver Wyman created this white paper to help Ontario develop a comprehensive wayfinding system. The paper reviews 22 existing wayfinding plans in cities and private institutions to determine
the best practices for developing a wayfinding system. The paper reports on two types of wayfinding systems: (1) Facility-specific branding and wayfinding systems used by single organizations to help people get around their facilities/sites (management owns facility so can fully implement wayfinding system); (2) Collaborative models where an umbrella organization (i.e. city) encourages a coherent wayfinding/signage program to help tourists/people to find their way around and promote tourism (success depends on voluntary participation from tourist facilities/sites). The paper discusses what role provincial government should play in leading the effort and encouraging others to improve wayfinding.

The report discusses need for "multi-channel redundancy" to address the 4 ways in which people prefer to gather wayfinding information. The report provides some specific recommendations for Ontario, including a 10 step plan to develop wayfinding systems, challenges, and benefits.

The report also details some existing smart phone technologies that have been used for wayfinding.

Takeaways: This report provides both a review of existing wayfinding programs and best practices for developing future programs. It touches on the cognitive framework behind wayfinding strategies and some new technologies being used such as smart phones. The report includes case studies of existing programs as well. Provides a good overview of what's going on in the field and recommendations for the future.


Category: Practice, Standards/Guidelines

Pedestrians in Central London Lost and Found: The Legible London Wayfinding System
Transport for London worked with consultants AIG, Westminster City Council and numerous other stakeholders to develop a prototype standard wayfinding system for pedestrians in London. This wayfinding system integrated on-street mapping with information at bus stops and London Underground stations to provide an intuitive way for pedestrians to navigate an area of the city. While not specifically focused on healthy aging, the report does focus on using wayfinding tools (maps) to improve walkability in cities.

Takeaways: The project utilized simple, cost effective on-street mapping to improve wayfinding and walkability in a section of London. The maps were effective for those who knew the neighborhoods and those who did not (e.g. tourists). The only drawback is that the use of the system declined with age, with the highest usage reported from the age group 14-34.


Category: Practice

You Are Here: A Guide to Developing Pedestrian Wayfinding
This guide was created by the State of Victoria Department of Transportation to provide local governments with guidelines for developing a wayfinding system to support increased walking in their community. The guide discusses the two ways pedestrians approach travel: the micro-minded and
macro-minded approaches. The guide discusses the steps to develop a wayfinding system including: identifying need, determining the geographic area, and conducting an audit to determine community needs and the current state of infrastructure. The guide goes into some detail about the types of information the audit should collect, including the type of pedestrians in the geographic area (older people, tourists, etc). It also goes into some detail on signage systems and sign types.

The guide includes 4 case studies on communities that have implemented a wayfinding system as part of a Victoria DOT grant program to promote walking and cycling. Although this guide is targeted for communities in the State of Victoria, Australia, it is general enough to be useful for any community interested in developing a wayfinding system.

Takeaways: The guide discusses the public health benefits of implementing a wayfinding system as well as the factors that need to be considered in system design. The guide focuses heavily on signage, with limited treatment of transportation infrastructure and non-signage wayfinding cues. The case studies are very useful in determining some models for good wayfinding systems that communities can try to emulate.


Category: Guidelines/Standards, Practice


This guidebook was created by the Federal Highway Administration's Bicycle and Pedestrian program to provide planners, designers, and transportation engineers with a better understanding of how sidewalks and trails should be developed to promote pedestrian access for all users, including people with disabilities. It provides guidance on best practices (not requirements) for designing sidewalks and trails. The guidebook involves four parts:

1. Understanding the User: provides background info on the benefits of biking and walking and the needs of users
2. Sidewalk Development: provides a comprehensive approach to creating accessible sidewalk networks. It addresses a broad array of sidewalk topics including planning, design, and maintenance.
3. Trail Development: provides planning, assessment, and design guidance for trails
4. Appendices: Includes tools to evaluate sidewalks design and accessibility.

Chapter 6: Providing Information to Pedestrians is particularly relevant for wayfinding. Chapter 2.3 Designing for all abilities; 2.4.2 Information barriers; 3.2.2 Pedestrian oriented detail; and 3.8.4 Community involvement in sidewalk assessments are also relevant.

Takeaways: The guidebook is a comprehensive resource covering most aspects of sidewalk design. It was developed in 2001 so might be a bit dated in terms of regulations and best practices.

Category: Standards/Guidelines

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
This work provides a set of standards, guidelines, and polices relative to pedestrians, bicycles, intersections, crosswalks within urban/suburban and other environmental contexts. It provides universality in terms of treatments for states and local governments for wayfinding improvements/solutions for traffic engineering practitioners to employ. Various chapters such as signal timing recognizes the differences in aging and functional limitations and frailty that aging may impose, and the resultant pedestrian signal timings in this most recent edition of the MUTCD has taken into account reduced walking speeds at intersections for this important subgroup.

Takeaways: Areas of emphasis include: pedestrians, accessible pedestrian signals, crosswalk markings, pedestrian detectors, pedestrian beacons.

Citation: Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, 2009 Edition. Approved by the Federal Highway Administrator as the National Standard in accordance with Title 23 U.S. Code, Sections 109(d), 114(a), 217, 315, and 402(a), 23 CFR 655, and 49 CFR 1.48 (b) (8), 1.48(b)(33), and 1.48(c) (2). http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/

Category: Standards/Guidelines

Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America
This report was written by the AARP Public Policy Institute as a resource for planners and engineers to design and build safer streets and balance the needs of older drivers and older pedestrians. The report reviews strategies in existing transportation design guidelines from AASHTO and FHWA that are aimed at older drivers and looks at how those strategies will impact older pedestrians. The report then goes on to list recommended best practices grouped into the following categories: slow down, make it easy, and enjoy the view. The "Enjoy the View: Make it easy for older drivers and pedestrians to notice, read, understand, and respond to visual cues and information" recommendation is relevant to wayfinding. The report lists the following design strategies for older pedestrians on page 44: pavement maintenance and materials, curb ramps, median refuges, pedestrian crossing signals, and other pedestrian amenities (i.e. lighting, benches, street trees).

Takeaways: This report doesn't explicitly discuss wayfinding but talks about the best practices in design and engineering to provide the infrastructure elements that are important to older adult pedestrian mobility. Shows the lack of attention paid in existing AASHTO and FHWA standards toward this goal.


Category: Guidelines/Standards

TCRP Report 12 Guidelines for Transit Facility Signing and Graphics
This is a report by the FTA. The report recommends guidelines that describe the use of signs and symbols that provide for the safe and efficient movement of passengers to and through transit facilities. These guidelines will also assist transit operators in providing passenger information systems that
encourage the use of transit by new users, infrequent riders, and individuals with disabilities. This report outlines a wayfinding design process for a transit trip model. While it primarily focuses on navigating transit systems and facilities, it also provides important guidelines for forming a cognitive map. It recommends providing tools, such as signs and maps, so people can determine their location, destination and form a plan of action. General recommendations in the report include providing tools to improve trip planning, trip segment assessment, identifying decision points along the route and ensuring legibility/readability. To improve legibility/readability, as well as wayfinding for multilingual populations, the use of generic icons is recommended.

Takeaways: While the guidelines are aimed at transit systems, they also outline valuable information about providing wayfinding cues that can be applied to other situations and environments.


Category: Standards/Guidelines


This guidebook includes guidelines from the Federal Transit Administration for designing passenger information aids for transit systems. It includes recommendations for signage and addresses principles of wayfinding and how to improve navigation. The report indicates that individuals need to orient themselves using landmarks, build travel directions and decisions based on landmarks and plan a series of actions to reach a destination. It addresses three stages of wayfinding, which are identifying landmarks, building travel directions and decisions, and developing a cognitive map. It integrates these into recommendations for travel information aids for transit systems, specifically map and sign development. In terms of wayfinding, the report indicates that transit information must translate elements of a transit system into a base knowledge that will allow passengers to identify and make decisions about their trip. The recommendations to improve wayfinding in the transit system include simplicity, consistency, continuity and repetition of information aids, as well as rehearsal using the transit system, through maps or verbal communications. It provides specific information for passenger aids: passenger aids should be clear, concise and visible, and include consistent colors and typeface, as well as phone numbers. Signs should be placed in a way that a visually impaired person can approach within 3 inches to see the sign, but not in a way so the sign is an obstacle. Maps should also include a legend to differentiate between icons used for landmarks.

Takeaways: The report specifically addresses wayfinding for navigating transit systems. It provides specific guidelines for developing maps, signage and icons that would be beneficial for a non-specific population.


Category: Standard/Guidelines

**Universal Design New York**

This book, written by the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access at the University of Buffalo, provides guidelines for architectural wayfinding elements including: paths/circulation, markers, nodes, edges, and zones/districts. It includes good examples of design in each of these areas. It has a
focus on wayfinding within public and private buildings and is intended to be used by New York City contractors to improve the design and accessibility of buildings. The audience includes: professional designers, building owners and developers and general contractors and construction managers. It is general guidelines as opposed to prescriptive design standards.

The book does not cover public spaces and transportation infrastructure in any detail and is mostly focused on wayfinding inside buildings. The book chapter also touches on the design of wayfinding assistive tools such as maps and signage. The book also addresses these elements in the context of visually impaired users.

Takeaways: Although the book is primarily focused on wayfinding inside buildings, I think some of the guidelines are universal enough to be applicable to community wayfinding. The signage and map guidelines are especially relevant.


Category: Standards/Guidelines

Wayfinding Design Guidelines
Wayfinding Guidelines, written by CRC Construction Innovation, provides an overview for architects and building managers that covers: what is wayfinding, why is wayfinding important, and guidelines to address specific wayfinding challenges. The guidelines use the principles of universal design and include accessibility issues for the visually impaired. The guidelines focus on wayfinding inside buildings and the immediate area surrounding buildings.

The guidelines provide some useful general information on wayfinding: "Any visual wayfinding system is more than just signs — it encompasses architecture, landscape architecture, lighting, and landmarks and orientation points. The design of spaces should assist users with spatial problem-solving by providing consistent clues."

The guidelines were written by Queensland, Australia based CRC for Construction Innovation, an Australian research, development and implementation center focused on the needs of the property, design, construction and facility management sectors.

Takeaways: Although the guidelines focus mostly on visually impaired people and wayfinding within buildings, they do have some design guidelines that are useful in broader context, such as signage. The guidelines also provide useful background information about what is wayfinding and what elements should be included in wayfinding systems.

Citation: Cooperative Research Centre for Construction Innovation. Wayfinding Design Guidelines. November 2007.

Category: Standards/Guidelines
AARP Pedestrian Safety and Audit Guide
This is an audit guide created by the AARP to determine what environmental aspects affect pedestrian safety and mobility, specifically for older adults. The audit guide was intended to be simple, and as non-technical as possible to facilitate the volunteers conducting the audit. There is a section specific to wayfinding, which focuses on ease of wayfinding by using signs, street names and clear walking routes. This includes simple recommendations for creating useful wayfinding signs, such as including distance, color coding routes, ensuring enough signs to help pedestrians find important destination, making sure street names clearly visible, and ensuring signs convey a simple, clear meaning. The results of the audit are intended to propose improvements to local agencies.

Takeaways: The audit tool is a beneficial assessment piece for individual communities, however there are minimal wayfinding guidelines or recommendations. The tool provides valuable information to determine how older adults view the community, but not necessarily how they utilize wayfinding.


Category: Tools

Neighborhood Wayfinding Assessment Pocket Guide
This guide to neighborhood wayfinding describes things to consider when walking, driving, bicycling or taking a bus or train to reach stores, community centers, libraries, parks, trails, restaurants, places of worship, or any destination of your choice. It was developed in partnership by the CDC Healthy Aging Research Network and Easter Seals Project ACTION for individuals and community groups to use to assess the wayfinding elements in their neighborhood.

Takeaways: A great resource for individuals without a lot of background on the issue to learn about wayfinding and assess wayfinding in their community.


Category: Tool

Wayfinding System Audit
This Audit checklist was created by CRC Australia as a companion document to their Wayfinding Design Guidelines. It is intended to assist designers, developers and property owners and managers to identify ways to improve access to, into and through new or existing properties, particularly buildings and large complex facilities and particularly for people who are blind or vision impaired. It includes an external checklist and an internal checklist. The categories included in the check-list are:

External Checklist categories:
(1) Mode of transportation
(2) Obstructions and visual clutter
(3) Landmarks
(4) Entrances
Directional signs (additional questions is yes)
Locational signs (additional questions is yes)
Maps
Directory Board
Staff assistance—information desk
Telephone assistance—information desk

Internal Checklist Categories:
Arrival point
“you are here” map
Directory board (external)
Information desk
Lifts
Directory board (internal)
Further signage
Architectural clues: (the following sections reference relevant “building codes of Australia” BCA)
Have people who are vision impaired or hearing impaired been adequately considered?

Takeaways: The checklist is more relevant to buildings and commercial complexes like hospitals and shopping areas and isn't as usable for community wayfinding. The internal checklist items are very specific and focused on compliance with Building Codes of Australia and specific accommodations for people with visual or mobility impairments. I still recommend the document for inclusion in the blueprint as an example of how a wayfinding audit can be done.


Category: Tool

**Accessible Pedestrian Signals: A Guide to Best Practice**
This website provides a comprehensive source of information on APS, including how APS are used, what features are recommended or required, and how to design intersection corners to accommodate APS appropriately.


Category: Standard/Guideline(s)
Online resources

There are several blogs and videos that cover design issues, including wayfinding. Some especially useful online resources are included below. Blogs vary in the quality of their content and we have included blogs we believe to be high quality because they are linked to periodicals and/or have substantive content provided by subject matter experts.

Blogs

The Atlantic Cities: Place Matters, http://www.theatlanticcities.com/
Wayfinding related posts can be found at http://www.theatlanticcities.com/topics.wayfinding/

Selected Posts:

Selected Posts:

Streetsblog, http://streetsblog.net/
Selected Posts:

The Velvet Principle, http://thevelvetprinciple.com/blog/
Selected Posts:
Webinars

**Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Professionals** (available for purchase)

**Sustainable City Network**
Professional Organizations

Most professional organizations that work in the areas of urban planning, design, and engineering recognize wayfinding systems as an important component in creating walkable communities and promoting active living. A few organizations provide resources to educate their members on the benefits of wayfinding, including ASLA and AIA, but most organizations only include brief mention of the need for wayfinding and do not go into detail on how they view wayfinding, what they see as the characteristics of a good wayfinding system, or provide specific policy guidelines around wayfinding. Some organizations have a narrow focus on wayfinding for the visually impaired.

ADA, http://www.ada.gov/
The ADA has a large amount of regulations that impacts wayfinding but they do not explicitly mention wayfinding much on their website.

American Institute of Architects, www.aia.org
AIA has several wayfinding resources on website, including some for blind pedestrians. An article in “Practicing Architecture” defines wayfinding as “Providing cues to orient people as they make their way through an unfamiliar building, complex, or city is called wayfinding, a term first used by architect Kevin Lynch in his 1960 book The Image of the City. While signage is one element of wayfinding, it also includes architectural, tactile, and audible cues.” They also have a short wayfinding bibliography and a best practices 2-pager titled "Wayfinding Signage Points You in the Right Direction."

American Planning Association, www.planning.org
APA has had conference sessions, RFPs, and webinars related to wayfinding, including one titled “Virtual Session 2011: Multimodal Transportation Planning and Wayfinding (S465).” APA also included an article in Planning Magazine titled “Way to Go - Wayfinding programs involve more than signs” by Karen Finucan. There are likely additional resources accessible to APA members.

American Society of Landscape Architects, www.asla.org
ASLA discusses wayfinding in their Fall 2011 newsletter titled “Wayfinding: The Value of Knowing How to Get There.” Define it as: “Wayfinding combines marketing, consensus building, identity, planning, function, and design. It is a process of navigating through public and private spaces and maximizing that experience by explaining the environment ahead, recognizing that the user might employ several different modes of transportation.” They have a self-test on wayfinding in the member section of their website as well. ASLA uses the term “legible city.”

Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Professionals, http://www.apbp.org
APBP has several webinars available to members on wayfinding, including “Best Practices in Pedestrian Wayfinding” presented on January 13th and “Wayfinding Options for Cyclists” presented on December 12th. They have additional resources and case studies on a variety of topics that relate to wayfinding available to members on their website.

The Center for Health Design acknowledges the need for wayfinding systems in hospitals and published a report on best practices for wayfinding in hospitals by Barbara Huelat titled “Wayfinding: Design For

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2 Professional organization websites were reviewed for wayfinding content in September 2012
Understanding.”

The purpose of EDRA is “the advancement and dissemination of environmental design research, thereby improving understanding of the interrelationships between people, their built and natural surroundings, and helping to create environments responsive to human needs. “They have a number of wayfinding articles and books posted on their website that address wayfinding and some have a focus on older people with cognitive impairments.

The Institute for Human Centered Design published the book *Directional Sense: How to Find Your Way Around* in 2011 as a guide for individuals to learn how to use wayfinding tools. IHCD describes the guide as “a lighthearted introduction to the ins and outs of wayfinding, it provides step-by-step guides to following signs, reading maps, recognizing landmarks, using GPS devices, and more.” IHCD is involved in the universal design movement and is “committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities through excellence in design.”

Institute of Transportation Engineers, www.ite.org
ITE has several wayfinding resources, mostly focused on blind pedestrians. They partnered with the Access Board to host a workshop on intersection design for visually impaired. They and also partnered with AARP on a pedestrian audit guide that includes section on wayfinding (p15).

Lighthouse International is focused on issues for visually impaired people. They define wayfinding as: “Wayfinding may be defined as the ability, both cognitive and behavioral, to find the way to a destination. It is a form of spatial problem solving that involves identifying a current location, then following a route, and finally reaching and identifying a goal.” They conducted a research study to develop wayfinding technology for use in buildings for visually impaired people. They describe the project aims as “to test the feasibility of commercial development of a computer-controlled, interactive tactile map and wayfinding system to enhance the accessibility for visually impaired individuals, of office buildings and other public accommodations.”

Main Street Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/
The Main Street Program acknowledges wayfinding as an important tool in promoting historic towns and sites. They held a webinar, “Finding Your Way Around Wayfinding: Community Wayfinding 101” and described wayfinding as “One of the most powerful projects you can undertake in your community is the design and installation of an effective wayfinding system.”

Project for Public Spaces, http://www.pps.org
PPS does not explicitly mention wayfinding on their website but it is included in several case studies and recommendations, including this document providing an analysis and recommendations for Times Square and this for Stamford, CT.

Wayfinding is a main focus for SEGD, including courses on wayfinding in different contexts. They created education materials focusing on ADA compliance as well. They state on their website that “The newly adopted federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) includes a new Community
Wayfinding section that reflects many changes SEGD and its members have fought to achieve over the last several years.”

**US Access Board,** [http://www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

The Access Board is very involved in wayfinding. They have a joint wayfinding project with ITE focused on intersection design for people with visual impairments. Their “Detectible warning” research synthesis talks about use of ground surface indicators for wayfinding.