Prince Edward County
Wayfinding Implementation

Strategic report
Form:Media is a full-service design firm specializing in wayfinding and identity signage, interpretive planning and design, branding, and digital multimedia. For more than 20 years, major clients throughout the Atlantic provinces, across Canada, and abroad have commissioned Form:Media to solve complex problems while providing world-class service. Form:Media is owned by principal Rob LeBlanc and managed by John deWolf. Our studio unites communication designers, web and new media specialists, exhibit designers, interior designers, writers, and 3D animation experts. Together with our sister company, Ekistics, we co-operate with landscape architects, urban planners, and civil engineers under one roof.

Our work spans master planning and feasibility studies, interpretive planning and design, landscape interpretation, programming, signage and wayfinding, detailed exhibit design including content development, writing, graphic design, interior design, community and stakeholder consultation, and three-dimensional design for interior and exterior applications. Form:Media is well-versed in the requirements of technical design and detailing for interior and exterior installations.
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Introduction

What is the project?
This project will improve visitors’ ability to find their way within Prince Edward County (PEC) to priority destinations. In addition, we’re planning a signage environment which:
• creates a sense of arrival for visitors
• alerts visitors to key tourism assets while travelling
• avoids sign and message pollution
There is an existing “pay-to-play” fingerboard system, which PEC intends to replace over time with a new system of signs. This project provides strategies to implement a sign system to replace the existing one, based on sign designs which were schematically designed prior to this project. This project also includes producing a location plan and message schedule which may be used to budget and for future tendering for sign fabrication and installation.

Several challenges were identified for resolution through signage, including directing people into Consecon, between various villages and the Millennium Trail, and to specific destinations within Picton. Picton destinations include: Picton Harbour, Market Lane, and Benson Park.

This document
This document provides an audit of the current state, some research and analysis, and a set of strategies and recommendations which the County may use to plan for signage implementation. This document will provide direction for the documentation to follow: a location plan (where signs should go), and message schedule (what signs should say), as well as phasing and budget information.

What is wayfinding?
Wayfinding is a set of environmental strategies to help point visitors in the right direction.
People who return to the same places day after day, month after month, don’t need much help finding their way. But travellers who are looking for a destination in an unfamiliar place will need some cues to get to their intended destination.
Wayfinding isn’t just signs, though signs are often a big
part of wayfinding projects. The road, the trail, the structure of a building, the presence of landmarks, and other environmental cues are all very important to wayfinding.

The art of wayfinding is reading the landscape and anticipating the decision points: the places where a visitor may be required to make a decision of which way to go. At or near the decision points, we may need to intervene and guide the visitor on the right path. Decision points could occur at intersections, forks in a trail, or at some change of transportation mode (like a parking lot).

For signs, there are generally only 3 basic wayfinding functions:

1. **Guidance signs** point the way to a destination (or to several). Destinations may be large (e.g. a downtown area) and small (e.g. a public washroom). Typically directional signs lead the way with the name of a destination and an arrow, but may include trailblazing signs and distance markers.

2. **Identification (ID) signs** identify a place, district, destination, building, etc. ID signs serve two functions: indicating to the visitor that they have arrived at a destination, and also naming that destination.

3. **Regulatory signs** point out things that visitors may, must or may not do in a place. Such signs include regulatory signs in parks and on trails, as well as roadway signs.

For clarity of message, it is best to avoid combining any of the above in a single sign.

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**Assumptions and challenges**

We like to begin each job by putting the essence of the project on the table.

**Facility or collaborative wayfinding?**
When planning wayfinding for a park, an airport or hospital, one organization generally owns and manages all the land, the buildings, and operates some or all of the destinations within, making it possible to unilaterally plan a system for the facility as a whole.

For tourism destination wayfinding, the site may be as large as a town, a county or a whole province, with many landowners, multiple overlapping jurisdictions, and myriad interests. The land on which signs will be installed may be owned by many different owners, requiring consent (and sometimes easements). Also important is the fact that the destinations we will direct people to will generally be a mix of public institutions and private enterprises. This form of wayfinding is highly collaborative.

In the case of Prince Edward County, we expect that
the majority of wayfinding signage will be within county road allowances. Nevertheless, wayfinding will be collaborative, requiring involvement of stakeholders in various county departments, business improvement areas and associations (BIAs), chambers of commerce, and individual tourism destination operators.

**MTO**

Several roads in the County are owned by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), and MTO will not allow other wayfinding systems than its own C-TODS system. Our location planning assumes that MTO roads may not be included in the program, though we may recommend administration or interfacing with C-TODS where required to make wayfinding possible.

See fig. 1. Highway 62 is owned by MTO, as are parts of route 33. Fortunately, sections of 62 and 33 which run through Bloomfield and Picton are municipally-controlled.

**Hierarchy of destinations**

Hierarchy is very important in wayfinding; we can’t install signs throughout the region to direct a visitor to every business on every street. We give priority to attractions which will be of greater interest to visitors. Prioritizing which destinations/attractions are included is essential to good wayfinding. We may prioritize and direct people to districts as well, or population centres, where there may be multiple destinations available.

We will employ best practices to determine the destinations, but as the system will be at least partially pay-to-play, we cannot guarantee involvement of any particular destinations.

While the signage plan attempts to define all major destinations, below were identified by the County as specific high needs areas:

- Picton Harbour
- Market Lane, Picton
- Benson Park, Picton
- Millennium Trail (various locations)
- Consecon (to address unique issues)

**Distances**

Based on the tourism experiences available in Prince Edward County, wayfinding will need to address destinations primarily in both urban and rural areas. There are no sizable wilderness areas in the County. Urban areas may contain many destinations within walking distance, whereas rural destinations may be tens of kilometres apart each other or populated places.

Travel mode plays a significant role here—signs in rural areas are designed mainly for people in vehicles, because that is how most visitors tend to travel there. Urban areas, as well as trails, may require signs to address people in vehicles, on bicycles, and on foot.

**Routes**

This project will require selecting and prioritizing certain routes in order to simplify getting around for visitors, and
to sign the region efficiently. It is neither possible, nor desirable to sign every road and intersection.

**Design standards and accessibility**

Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) has a set of traffic signs and signals guidelines called the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM). Tourism guide signs are not within the scope of OTM Book 8, but we will follow the guidelines for type-size, colour and layout where it is sensible to do so on roadway signs.

Any sign system must be accessible. Where applicable, non-highway signs designed in this program will incorporate guidelines from the Design of Public Spaces Standard in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as well as generally accepted rules for signs from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Canadian Standards Agency (CSA) and Parks Canada guidelines, for example.

There is generally no conflict between accessibility standards and highway authorities’ standards: both require high colour contrast, large, sans serif type, and simple messaging.

**Tourism vs marketing**

We focus on market-ready, visitor-oriented destinations (also known as attractions) in this project. Only market-ready destinations, should be included. Visitor-oriented signs direct visitors to something that they may do at specific places, for example: walking in parks, shopping in retail districts, eating at restaurants, and taking in cultural sites and museums. Within urban areas, we may include important visitor amenities, such as public washrooms, public parks, and public parking.

**Sustainability**

*Environmental sustainability* is an essential part of every design discussion; we strive to create built work with the lightest ecological footprint.

For a project to be truly sustainable, design decisions must go beyond just ecological sustainability.

*Cultural sustainability* considers how we can shape the built environment to improve human interactions and understanding. Our design solutions strive to foster the culture of place, while improving the health and well-being for residents and visitors. A greater understanding of culture, heritage, and identity benefits everyone.

*Economic sustainability* is often excluded from the conversation until too late in the process, but it is as critical as the others. If there is no way to finance the work, then the project will never materialize. If the organization does not consider building support, then all of the valuable work to reinforce a sustainable approach is futile. It is critical to consider how the project can be supported over the short- and long-term by a variety of stakeholders including community members, supporters, and funding agencies (regional, national, and supranational).
Location plan and message schedule
Some important principles common to all our work in wayfinding:

Use as few messages as possible
Roadway signage requires extreme brevity of message—it’s not possible or desirable to use long names or to convey complex information. Non-vehicular signs also need to be simple, with focused, brief messaging to give people what they’re looking for but no more.

Use as few signs as possible
Present people with too much information, and they simply won’t see it. Signs should be installed as infrequently as possible to get the message across.

Likewise, the County would like to limit the number of businesses participating on the fingerboard program, we need recommendations on how to reduce the count over time, without causing angry business owners who (rightly or wrongly) think we are taking away business.

Boundaries
Information is given to visitors only as it is needed, as boundaries are crossed, as destinations approach, or at decision points.

Project area
The study area includes all public roads, urban areas, and the Millennium Trail within Prince Edward County.

Materials
In general, sign fabricators will warranty signs for 5–10 years, depending on the components used. The reality is that most signs stay in the ground much longer than 10 years. We will specify materials for signs based on a 10-year life.

Scope
We are producing research and recommendations to support a sign system plan and design.

Location plans and message schedules
At the end of this project, a message schedule and location plan is prepared to list what signs need to say, and where they should be installed. Locations given are approximate, and do not include investigation of land ownership, permitting, or other administrative needs—they are best location recommendations. The winning sign fabricator would be responsible for ensuring any land ownership/permitting requirements are met for sign installations.

Construction administration
This project does not include construction administration (CA) to provide guidance to the client during fabrication and installation; Form:Media can provide such a service
for an additional fee after this contract is complete. This is worth considering for at least the first implementation phase for Prince Edward County to ensure the results fit the design intent. CA may include such services as:

- tender preparation and advice
- bid advice
- shop drawing review, including advice on materials and colours
- review of panel layouts
- on-site walkthrough to check sign locations
- deficiency review of the installed signs

Engineering
The scope does not include stamped engineering drawings; any engineering drawings required must be provided by the sign fabricator. This is standard practice within the industry.

Templates or final artwork
Typically, final artwork is to be produced by the fabricator using a set of vector templates, and using a message schedule defining what needs to appear on each sign. Fonts required to work with the artwork templates must be acquired or purchased by the fabricator.

Map design
We may recommend production of maps, but producing map artwork is outside the scope of this project. FormMedia can design maps, provide cartographic standards, work with GIS designers or otherwise to provide high-quality cartography for PEC artwork, if recommended in this project.
What we heard

Workshop

On 9 October 2018, representatives from Prince Edward County, business associations in the County, and the Millennium Trail worked with consultant Adam Fine of Form:Media to discuss several pivotal issues in implementing a regional wayfinding system in the County. Attendees at the workshop included:

- Grant Hopkins (county GIS)
- Pat Heffernan (county road supervisor)
- Pat Maloney (Millennium Trail)
- Preston Parkinson (county director of operations)
- Rebecca Lamb (county destination development & marketing coordinator)
- Rob Leek (Bloomfield & Area Business Association)
- Sarah Doiron (Picton Business Improvement Association)
- Teal Beaverstock (Rossmore business owner)
- Toby Toth (Consecon business owner)
- Trevor Crowe (county community development coordinator and the County’s project manager)

This document presents essential notes from the workshop and its content will be part of the basis of the wayfinding audit and strategic report to follow.

Discussion points

After a presentation on the project’s background, general wayfinding, and signage principles, and a quick review of the new Prince Edward County signage family, we split participants into two groups and discussed three main issues within the project:

- tourism destinations and criteria
- primary routes
- pay-to-play vs pay-to-sign

Initially, we considered discussing administrative approaches to implementation, but we felt that it would only be of interest to county staff, and reserved it for another time.
Tourism destination criteria

After presenting on the common tourism-destination criteria in other jurisdictions, we had participants select and discuss top destinations in Prince Edward County. Each of two groups were asked to identify 25–30 priority destinations. Selections included the following:

- Ameliasburg Museum / Heritage Village (2)
- Arts Trail
- Beer Store (several locations)
- Birdhouse City
- Bloomfield (2)
- Campbell’s Orchard
- Casa Dea Estates Winery
- Cherry Valley Summer Village
- Closson Chase Winery
- County Cider Co.
- Crystal Palace
- Essroc Arena
- Taste Trail
- Kinsip Distillery
- LCBO (several locations)
- Lake on the Mountain (2)
- Little Bluff (2)
- Macaulay Heritage Park
- Millennium Trail
- Museums (not specified)
- North Beach
- Orchards (various locations)
- Picton Main Street (2)
- Picton Marina
- Prince Edward Dog Park
- Rose House Museum
- Sandbanks (2)
- Slickers Bloomfield (ice cream)
- Trailer Parks and camping
- Wellington (2)
- Wellington Beach
- Wine region (not specified)

(2) = destinations chosen by both groups

Each group was then asked to shortlist their top 5 spots. Both groups independently arrived at the exact same shortlist:

- Bloomfield
- Lake on the Mountain
- Picton Main Street
- Sandbanks
- Wellington

The intent of the exercise was not to establish which destinations should appear on signs, but rather look at participants’ vision of what kinds of destinations were top-of-mind. When deciding on criteria for tourism destinations, did Prince Edward County have unique offerings which didn’t fit in common categories? Were
participants’ choices primarily public or private? Most importantly, we wanted to get across that signing for destinations is complex, and that criteria should be flexible to allow for important edge cases.

We discussed whether the destinations followed common criteria for tourism spots, but we essentially found no outliers—most were food and drink, parks, downtowns, and cultural spots. While many of the long-list destinations were privately operated, all of the short-list destinations were public, civic spaces.

Primary routes

To sign efficiently for wayfinding, it’s often important to prioritize the available routes—to keep the burden of administration, installation and maintenance as low as possible. With 1100 km of county roads, and upwards of 2000 intersections, there can’t be a set of signs at each decision point. After a discussion of the challenges for selecting sign locations, including the existence of the Arts Trail and Taste Trail programs, the same two groups drew routes on paper maps to indicate the most important routes. Routes were deemed important if:

- the road had a large amount of traffic
- the road is scenic
- the road connects with one or more important destinations

Workshop route selections will not be summarized here, but will inform programming decisions later on.

Grant Hopkins brought up the existence of routes designated for tourism in the Prince Edward County Official Plan—and these will be integrated into the program of this project.

Pay-to-play

Tourism destinations will pay a fee to have wayfinding signs directing tourists to their location. This is a common approach for highway-based wayfinding systems in Ontario and throughout North America. The question addressed in the workshop involved how to charge for signs: whether destinations should pay one fee just to be involved, no matter how many signs they require, or whether they should pay by the number of signs needed. The basis for the question is whether the latter is fair or unfair to destinations far from urban areas, where more
signs may be required. The participants weighed various options for how to charge destinations fairly, but more or less settled that destinations should pay by the sign in order to be involved.

Other discussions

Participants identified a few other signage needs which may be addressed among strategic recommendations, including:

- directing visitors to parking
- providing some way of marketing temporary events
- wayfinding to/from Millennium Trail trailheads
Audit

An essential part of the wayfinding planning process is getting an impression of the place, reading the layout of streets and towns on foot and in a vehicle. Over two days in the region, Adam Fine, Form:Media planner and project manager, was a visitor in Prince Edward County (PEC). He drove and walked around looking for existing wayfinding implementations, reading the signs (literally and figuratively). Fine drove 347 km of county roads over 2 days to: collect data, get a sense of how things are connected, test the condition of roads and destinations, and establish how any existing wayfinding and signage is working. He had in mind the following questions:

1. Could a visitor naturally end up at essential attractions in the region, if they didn’t know where they were?
2. Did the existing signs strengthen the visitor’s sense of place, or confuse?
3. Did the signs provide a welcoming experience?
4. Are there too many signs or too few in the environment?
5. Did signs complement or detract from the environment?

This section outlines his experience and observations, and forms the baseline to produce strategic recommendations, and design sign types.

Prince Edward County is a municipality on an island of a little over 1000 km², separated from mainland Ontario by the Bay of Quinte and the Murray Canal. It is populated at rural densities throughout (24 people per km²), with a large amount of land employed in agriculture. There are several small population centres, mostly along the municipality’s south, with the largest being Picton (4702 people in the 2016 census).

General impressions

County-wide

There is a large amount of signage throughout PEC. Most of PEC’s signage tends toward the generic and unbranded—there is little that would build an association between the roads, the landscape, and the County as a distinct, branded entity. That said, having a single-tier municipality means that there is little competition for branding between the County and other municipal governments, or specific communities. There is an opportunity to create a much stronger brand identity and recognition.

Communities

Three of the main communities may not require much wayfinding effort: Picton, Wellington, and Bloomfield’s main streets are all coincident with main highways through the region. If a visitor was looking for the retail areas of each place, they could not miss them.

Consecon, by contrast, requires a lot of help: it does not lie on a major highway (its Mill Street runs roughly
Routes visited (in orange)
parallel with the Loyalist Highway), the road named “Consecon Main Street” is objectively not the main street in the village, and there are three ways in and out of the town. Lastly, Rossmore, which lies south of Belleville, at the gateway to the County at the foot of the Bay of Quinte Skyway Bridge, doesn’t have a clear centre nor did it seem to have destinations that might be tourism-focused.

Route layout
PEC isn’t a large county, but there are many ways between various points in the region. Fortunately, as an island, there are few entry points, two on major road bridges (see “Entry points” on page 51):
- Carrying Place, near Trenton/Quinte West in the west,
- the Norris Whitney Bridge between the City of Belleville and Rossmore
- the Bay of Quinte Skyway Bridge / highway 49 in the east, connecting with the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, and nearby Deseronto.
- the ferry service from Glenora to Adolphustown

There is a lesser-used access point in the far west of the County, on County Road 64.

Currently, highway 49 provides an unambiguous connection with Picton. The main route from Belleville, Highway 62 connects to Bloomfield and Picton from the west. Wellington and Consecon are not as clearly connected with the main roads from outside the County. Consecon is easily missed as it is adjacent to, but does not lie directly on the Loyalist Parkway. The Loyalist Parkway in general, provides an important spine to the island’s main settled areas and destinations.

Existing fingerboard directional signs
The county has an existing fingerboard sign system (fig. 2) which has good coverage throughout the region. Despite the coverage, the system has several functional issues:
- many signs carry far too many messages,
- tourism messages are often stacked below other kinds of guide signs,
- the signs themselves aren’t branded for the County,
- many signs feature custom corporate logos which creates a lot of visual clutter,
- most fingerboards are white legend on a blue background—common for on-road tourism signs—but there are different type weights and widths in play,
- some fingerboard signs use yellow on blue for no clear reason,
- smaller destination signs are often ill suited to their environment (very wide, installed on a single post, or rotated 90º from other messages, e.g. fig. 3).

2. Existing highway fingerboard sign
3. very wide fingerboard signs on a single post (and buried in the bushes)
Prince Edward County—sign ecosystem

Fingerboard signs

4. existing fingerboard signage
5. leaning (single-post telespar)
6. sign & message pollution
7. sign cube
8. mixed directional

Gateway & community ID

9. The County gateway
10. Generic Picton gateway
11. service clubs
12. Consecon community ID
13. Bloomfield community ID

Urban and human-scale signs

14. recreation ID sign set
15. Consecon banners
16. Consecon banners
17. boat launch board
18. Picton kiosk
19. Benson Park ID (Picton)
Urban scale cont.

20. regional map (Picton)
21. urban fingerboards (Bloomfield)
22. visitor information ID sign (Bloomfield)

Millennium trail

23. Millennium trailhead sign
24. Wellington trail kiosk
25. trail “street signs”
26. an unceremonious trail end
27. “fine-print” regulatory signs

Other

28. Birdhouse City sign
29. Quinte Conservation
30. County heritage plaque
31. Sandbanks directional sign
32. Commercial destination sign
33. Commercial destination sign
34. Quinte’s Isle Tour Route
35. Quilts
Brand
The county brand did not seem well established on signs throughout the region—other than large gateway signs at the County’s edges, most signs did not carry branding of any kind. The existing fingerboard system does not include branding. Village identifying signs were either generic road signs, or custom signs (e.g. Bloomfield), which did not associate the village with the wider region.

Summary impressions
1. Many tourism destinations in PEC are within or near population centres.
2. The existing fingerboard signs are well administered, but not all that functional for visitors
3. There is a good sense of arrival in most settlements; Wellington, Picton, and Bloomfield are all well identified and are welcoming.
4. Retail areas in Wellington, Picton, and Bloomfield settlements are largely self-contained, linear, and central; they don’t need too much help to delineate or direct, once you’re inside the district, it’s fairly obvious where to go.
5. Consecon has three entry points, and an unclear structure. It would be easy to miss its charms.
6. Sometimes unrelated signs are stacked up on the same post. This looks careless and diminishes the clarity and legibility of any sign, whether vehicular, urban, or trail.
7. Visitor information centres (VICs) are easy to find and don’t need much help.
8. There is a set of recreation directional signs which are inconsistent, but somewhat effective.
Administration of the current fingerboard system

Currently, the fingerboard system is administered within the roads division of the Engineering, Development and Works Commission of the County.

Process
To be featured on a sign, a tourism operator makes a request to the roads division, and a form is sent over. The application includes a space for the applicant to propose locations.

The roads foreman checks locations to see if there is an existing post. Currently, posts may carry up to 6 destinations, though some older signs carry even more. No fingerboard signs are allowed within urban areas.

Once locations are approved by the foreman, the registrar asks the County sign maker to prepare graphic mockups. Custom logos are allowed, and generic pictograms may also be used from the same set as Canadian TODS (MTO’s wayfinding system). Artwork is sent for approval to the applicant, along with an invoice. Once paid, the sign will be fabricated and installed.

Signs are built by an fabricator, and cut vinyl for graphics and lettering is applied by the County. Each sign fingerboard costs about $60 in fabrication costs, and $85 in installation.

Criteria
Regarding approvals for fingerboard signs, there are only a few criteria:

- locations must be set back from intersections and may not conflict with regulatory road signs
- all signs must be located within county road allowances (none are installed on MTO roads, nor private roads)
- no straight-ahead directionals are allowed (only signs indicating turns at decision points)

There has been no limiting criteria for how far away a potential sign is from its destination: applicants may request a directional fingerboard sign just metres from a destination, or 100 km away.

Maintenance
Maintenance of installed signs is complaint or issue-based; there is no annual maintenance program, nor any periodic auditing.
An overloaded environment
At this T-intersection just outside Sandbanks Provincial Park, the visitor is presented with 17 top-level messages (e.g. choices of places to go, route options), with 56 total elements (including secondary messages like arrows, logos/pictograms).
Policy and bylaw review

We looked at policy, bylaws and legislation in place to see if there are implications for the design or installation of signs within your region. We reviewed bylaws which were flagged as relevant by Prince Edward County, and we also offer prior knowledge we have on the regulatory and policy framework in the province. The following should not be considered exhaustive or constitute legal advice.

For the purposes of signage legislation review, signs are regulated mostly by where they are installed and what they communicate. The former is more common, as the jurisdiction and ownership is pretty clear for the land or building on which a sign is installed. The regulations may include design and location constraints, limits on quantities and types of signs, restrictions on content, or requirements for signs’ upkeep. The following are common categories of signs in legislation:

Rights-of-way signage—signs installed within the road allowance (fig. 37); generally the purview of a road authority having jurisdiction (generally provincial or municipal). These may include standard road-authority highway signs (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada, or MUTCD in much of Canada, and Ontario Traffic Manual, or OTM in Ontario), as well as third party signs installed by permit within the road allowance. It is common for regulations to also limit signs facing the road from adjacent private lots. Generally rights-of-way signs are heavily regulated for safety reasons.

Urban street signs—signs in pedestrian areas such as sidewalks and squares. These are rarely regulated in signage bylaws except for limitations on temporary A-frame signs, or specific design restrictions within heritage districts. Some sight-line requirements are common, such as disallowing signs to be installed in the “sight-triangle” within 7–10 metres of an intersection. Signs in those positions could render people on foot looking to cross the street invisible to those in vehicles.

This category also includes banners or signs on street poles and other pageantry. Some municipalities have bylaws addressing street-pole banners, but this generally also requires working with the power utility which manages the street poles.

On-premises signage—signs installed adjacent to the business or product they are advertising (fig. 36). Such signs may include tall pole signs for an auto dealership, or a small fascia sign on a downtown retail building.

Rules for on-premises signs are often very restrictive in heritage districts and in residential zones, and tend to be more flexible in commercial and industrial zones. These are generally regulated by type, with different design restrictions in place for signs attached to a pole (pylon or ground signs), signs which are affixed to a building facade...
(fascia signs), protrude from a building face (protruding signs), and other common types (murals, awnings).

**Off-premises signage**—advertising for a business or product sold somewhere other than where the sign is installed (fig. 38). This includes billboard signs, where advertising space is sold to a third party.

**Indoor signage**—indoor signs are not usually covered by municipal bylaws. Generally, the provincial building code has requirements for what signs are required within buildings for life-safety and for accessibility reasons. We will not be examining any indoor signs within this project.

Rights-of-way regulations tend to be most important to tourism wayfinding systems, and most restricted by legislation and regulation. On-premises and off-premises sign laws may be relevant, but less important. We are looking primarily for any design restrictions (size, structure, placement, etc.) or rules about rights-of-way signs which might apply.

**Municipal powers given in the Ontario Municipal Act**

**Rights-of-way signs**
The county is given power by the Ontario Municipal Act (section 59, sign restrictions) to prohibit or control signs on county-owned roads, within 400 metres of the road allowance. This allows the County the potential to offer a visual environment which is quiet along highways, and also provides space for important regional communication such as wayfinding signs.

**Other signs**
Per section 99(1) of the Ontario Municipal Act, signs erected on private land under a valid permit can’t be ordered to be removed as long as they comply with the regulations in place when they were erected. This “grandfathering” remains in force, unless the sign is substantially altered, in which case landowners would have to follow the newer bylaw. This means that municipalities can’t affect installations of currently installed signs on private land through bylaw amendments.

This doesn’t apply to signs installed on public land through a system of permitting. It is reasonable to assume that signs permitted to be installed through an annual permit must be removed when the permit is revoked.

**Ontario Heritage Act**
For areas with a heritage conservation district (HCD) plan, a municipality may not:
- carry out work that contravenes the plan’s objectives
- pass any bylaws which contradict the objectives of the plan
where conflicts exist between the plan and bylaws, the heritage conservation district plan prevails.

Picton has had a HCD in place since 2013, and is the only county community covered by such a plan. Picton’s HCD does not include policies with any clear implications for wayfinding signage. Where it addresses signage, it generally provides guidelines for on-premises signage (e.g. facia signs, awning), and doesn’t address signs or amenities on sidewalks or in rights-of-way. The plan does prescribe directional signage to make the laneways off of Main St. more welcoming.

Prince Edward County

PEC municipal policy has language which encourages wayfinding and signage to support tourism:

Prince Edward County Draft Official Plan

5.2 Policies to Support Economic Development

Tourism

The County shall recognize and promote recreation-based tourism opportunities, including with regard to water-oriented activities, hiking, cycling, touring and camping, in the following areas shown on Schedule ‘F-1’: Recreation & Tourism and Schedule ‘F-2’: Recreation & Tourism:

i) Potential Tourist Resort Areas;

ii) Tourism Corridors, which are a network of local and County roads that shall be promoted as scenic driving/cycling routes and the location for tourist-related development;

iii) Trails, which will be developed and/or maintained for hiking, cycling, and cross country skiing; and

iv) Provincial Parks and local Conservation Areas, including Sandbanks Provincial Park, which is one of the most popular parks for camping in Ontario.

14.0 The Parks, Open Space and Trails Network

14.2 Policies

Millennium Trail (p123)

a) The Millennium Trail is identified on Schedule ‘F’: Recreation & Tourism and is a key element of the parks, open space, trails network, and the County’s premier active transportation route. It provides connections for residents and visitors between Settlement Areas and natural, cultural and culinary attractions located throughout the Countryside and along the Shoreline. The County will recognize the Millennium Trail as an important route that supports local active transportation, agri-tourism, eco-tourism, and the emerging industry for cycle tourism, and will work with community partners to:

i) Develop new and improve existing trail access points;

ii) Improve connectivity to major destinations;

iii) Improve signage, wayfinding, interpretive opportunities, and coordination along the Tourism Corridors, including the Arts Trail and the Taste Trail;

iv) Upgrade the trail surface to improve accessibility for all
people, including for casual cycling;

v) Maintain bridges along the trail; and

vi) Improve the sustainability of the trail, in terms of permeable surfacing, erosion control, mitigating impacts on wildlife habitat, providing waste receptacles, and developing eco-education information along the trail.

r) Upgrades, maintenance and expansion of the Millennium Trail should meet the appropriate design standards for multi-use paths, trails and active transportation corridors.

Part V: Glossary
Tourism corridor definition (p213)

Existing roads, including Loyalist Parkway and settlement Main Streets, which have a historic and scenic value for tourists and other visitors. Some of these roads are identified as routes linking particular cultural amenities, such as the Arts Trail and the Taste Trail. The County’s network of Tourism Corridors together with the Millennium Trail, a major recreational resource, make up the Tourism Routes shown on Schedule ‘F’: Recreation and Tourism.

Sign Bylaw
There is a broad-scope sign bylaw covering the entire county. Much of the bylaw addresses on- and off-premises advertising signage, and there are several exemptions to permitting which apply to the signs we are programming within this project. Permits are required for all signs in the County (though one assumes that the bylaw covers only exterior signage), with the exception of public authority signs: an official sign required or authorized by a recognized public authority.

PEC will be planning and implementing all signs in this program, and therefore there should be no conflict with the sign bylaw.

Summary
In general, the policies we reviewed showed a strong intent to improve the experience for visitors to Prince Edward County, including signage, roadways, and the Millennium Trail.

Neither provincial legislation, nor municipal bylaws seemed to provide any barriers to wayfinding signage.
Pay-to-play signage

There are very few working models for controlling signage in road rights-of-way in North America. The most common is a Tourism-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) program, in which the road authority allows signage advertising near to tourism destinations. Signs are fabricated and installed in the roadway in exchange for an installation charge and an annual fee to tourism operators.

Efforts to control road signage stems from the 1965 Highway Beautification Act in the USA, which called for controls to advertising on the American Interstate Highway system. Canadian road authorities developed similar legislation and regulatory environments in the decades to follow.

In general, TODS programs are administered by the provincial or state highway authority (or an outside agent), and the TODS are the only guide signs allowed to be installed as directional signs within the road allowance. Similar programs exist in PEI, Quebec, Nova Scotia, as well as in many states in the USA. Newfoundland and Labrador is currently rolling out a TODS program to control roadway signs across the province, and TODS-type programs are also common in Western Canada.

Some sign programs are intended to be self-sustaining: fees collected from destination operators cover the cost of installation and maintenance of the signs. Fees range wildly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JURISDICTION</th>
<th>INSTALLATION FEE</th>
<th>ANNUAL FEE</th>
<th>6-YEAR TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NB</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>$480</td>
<td>$180</td>
<td>$1,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>$4,977</td>
<td>$4,977</td>
<td>$29,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QC</td>
<td>$2,187</td>
<td>$729</td>
<td>$5,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>$560</td>
<td>$450</td>
<td>$3,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
<td>$1,835</td>
<td>$37</td>
<td>$2,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>$560</td>
<td>$112</td>
<td>$1,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex ON</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$500 (24mo)</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC (current)</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above table may oversimplify the situation somewhat. In some jurisdictions, only a single sign-type is available for purchase. Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, offers a standard-design “fingerboard” sign to tourism operators. Ontario’s TODS system has seven signs available to order, ranging in intent, size and cost. The “major attraction” sign costs $4500 annually in Ontario, and a more basic “trailblazer” sign is just $60. The former is limited to destinations which already have a large attendance, whereas the latter may be accessible to any destination. The very high Ontario fees in the comparative table likely represent the most expensive option available to the operator. To control private non-TODS signs, provincial governments generally institute laws which prevent private advertising signs to
be installed within a certain distance from the roadway. This is generally specified as a regulated area where signs may not be installed, usually within a band along the road centreline or road edge. Nova Scotia prohibits any private signs within 1 km of the centreline, while Ontario prohibits signs within 400 m from the road allowance. Quebec allows signs, but only by permit within a restricted area 300 m from the highway’s edge. Some jurisdictions relax the restricted area within incorporated municipalities or built-up areas.

Most importantly, most TODS programs restrict signs to be installed for tourism businesses only. The definition of a “tourism business” is very subjective. Not surprisingly, there is a wide range of criteria, but a few consistent policies emerge (see the next section for some suggestions). Applicants’ destinations may also be required to comply with other provincial laws or municipal bylaws in order to receive or keep a TODS sign.

Designs of TODS signs are wide ranging. They must follow existing provincial sign guidelines for type (size and typeface), reflectivity, colour, etc. Some allow text messages only, but others allow generic pictograms representing destination type (e.g. a logo of a bed and roof for accommodation; a coffee cup, fork, and knife for a restaurant). A few provinces and states (including Ontario) allow corporate branding to be incorporated into the sign: a custom logo or wordmark for a destination is placed next to the text message on the sign.

As a consideration in exchange of limiting signs on roadways, several jurisdictions have provided pay-to-play stopping areas. In most cases, this is a parking area with a large kiosk next to amenities such as a washroom or concession stand. The kiosk contains signs showing regional or area maps and other information, along with advertising space which may be purchased by local businesses.

There is, unfortunately, little recent public research on the effectiveness of TODS-type signs. Nevertheless, they are common throughout North America and well-used by tourism destination businesses, suggesting a certain level of efficacy. It is unlikely businesses would keep paying for signs if they didn’t think the signs were worthwhile.

We use the term “pay-to-play” which means tourism operators must pay a regular fee to participate in some kind of program of signage. Some systems charge a fee per-sign, which can preclude complete wayfinding: depending on their location and access, some unlucky destinations may require many signs (and a large fee), and others may be lucky and require few. If the operator is charged per sign rather than to participate, we call this “pay-to-sign”.

Setting criteria
When planning a tourism wayfinding system for a region, it’s important to decide what destinations may be included.

When the program is administered by a municipal authority like Prince Edward County, it makes sense to include priority civic destinations—those owned or maintained by the municipality—by default. To avoid having to pick favourites, private operators would pay to
be included on signage. To ensure that pay-to-play wayfinding is on-brand, brief, effective, and tourism-oriented, most municipalities employ criteria to limit potential applicants. The criteria gives program administrators a clear directive for decision-making, and ensures a fair and consistent process for tourism operators in the region.

Typically, the criteria falls into two categories: fundamentals and use. The former sets out some standards of market-readiness, and the latter determines whether a destination is tourism-oriented. In general, sign authorities seem to employ both kinds of criteria in tandem. While less common, we’ve included a third category, spatial criteria: there are a few things to do with location which we think should apply also.

Criteria may vary greatly between jurisdictions. When deciding what to include, decision-makers should take into account regional context, administrative capacity as well as economic development policy goals.

**Fundamental criteria**
The first type of criteria is a set of standards to test for destinations’ market-readiness. Some examples require that a given destination:

- has a site to which people can be directed,
- provides access via a road,
- is open to the public (i.e. destinations requiring membership should not be included),
- has reliable open hours and a determined season (or be open year round), and
- has some kind of permanent installation; if staffed, there should be a gate and reception area.
- is within the boundaries of the region (i.e. Prince Edward County)

Naturally, what defines market readiness may vary from region to region. Road access and having a determinate “site” are fundamental to good wayfinding, and we recommend that they are always included.

**Use-criteria**
Just because a destination is market-ready doesn’t mean that it is tourism-oriented. Use-criteria define what tourism-oriented means.

The definition of tourism experiences should be as broad as possible—visitors seek many different things to do—but should rule out businesses which merely provide daily-needs services or retail. There should be an experience of some kind, ideally one which is unique to the place and engaging.

Categories are typically broad and should allow for destinations run by formal private businesses as well as ad hoc and volunteer-run facilities. The following list may be used as a starting point—it has been distilled down from the provincial C-TODS system in Ontario with some additions from various regional wayfinding systems:

- Accommodations
- Archives
- Art galleries
- Beaches
- Bicycle rental
- Boat cruises
- Boat rentals & charters
- Campgrounds
- Casinos
- Conservation areas
- Convention centres
- Cultural centres
- Developed natural sites
- Duty free shops
- Farm-based attractions
- Farmers’ markets
- Federal parks
- Flying operations
- Golf courses
- Heritage conservation districts
- Historical / archaeological sites
- Interpretation / craft centres
- Lodges and outpost camps
- Marinas
- Motorized trail access points
- Museums
- Outfitters
- Performance theatres
- Provincial parks
- Racetracks

- Riding operations
- Rural downtowns
- Scuba diving centres
- Ski hills & resorts
- Spas
- Sports & leisure parks
- Themed parks
- Tourism designated outlet malls
- Tourist cluster attractions
- Trails (cycling, waterway)
- Visitor information centres
- Water parks
- Zoos

It is possible (but not necessary) to link the use-criteria categories with standard pictograms employed on signs, e.g.

- ![Campground](image)
  - campground

- ![Farmers' Market](image)
  - farmers’ market

- ![Museum](image)
  - museum
Spatial criteria
We also recommend limiting or declining applications for directional signage:
- to destinations further than 8 km from a given sign location
- to destinations which lie on a linear, historic main street retail area. In such cases, we recommend directing visitors to the retail area as a whole, not to individual businesses.

Mobile wayfinding
Why invest in static signs in this mobile and digital age?
The use of mobile wayfinding systems (such as Google Maps and in-vehicle GPS devices) is widespread in North America. Nevertheless, there are several reasons that improving wayfinding in the real-world environment should remain a top priority for tourist regions:
1. Prince Edward County doesn’t control how mobile systems present information to users. We can’t prioritize certain tourism attractions to appear on maps, nor can we control what destinations are shown to users.
2. Mobile wayfinding responds only to queries that a user makes deliberately: a person must enter a destination into their device, and they will get a suggested result. There is little opportunity for the user to discover other possible attractions. In contrast, sign-based wayfinding is always present and visible, and not just when a user has decided that they need help. In this way, visitors may discover new places while finding places they already decided to visit.
3. Wayfinding and brand are heavily linked. Through repetition, signs in the environment build a positive association between the sign’s brand and visitors. Each sign is a reminder that the tourism region is visible, accessible and ready to help. Put another way, letting Google Maps do the job of helping people means Google’s brand is strengthened, not Prince Edward County’s.
4. Mobile wayfinding is very good at the macro level, but often fails at the micro level. In complex urban environments, a single sign can solve a problem that may be difficult to model and show in a wayfinding app. For example, such things as stairs and ramps require a very high degree of complexity in mobile wayfinding models, but may be served in the real environment with just a single sign.
5. Mobile wayfinding does not provide any opportunity to improve or consider the existing condition of the environment. Going through the planning process for...
wayfinding can address and inform urban design, architecture, produce clearer place-naming, and generally result in a system that is easier for everyone to use.

6. Studies have shown that people who navigate using cues in the environment actually improve their spatial cognitive abilities, whereas people who are reliant on digital wayfinding lose some of their “spatial recall”, their ability to remember how to move between places.

7. Lots of people still don’t own a smartphone: 28% in Canada as of 2018 (Newzoo Insights). It’s not clear today how many smartphone owners use mobile wayfinding regularly, but in 2013, it was just 49% in the USA. We estimate that at perhaps one-third to one-half of all Canadians today do not use mobile wayfinding and require an analog alternative. Mobile wayfinding may indeed be a growth industry, but there is no evidence that it is available for and used by everyone.

8. Many wilderness/rural areas don’t have mobile data coverage. GPS does not require mobile connectivity, but users must use mobile networks in order to download maps covering their location.

9. Mobile wayfinding does not work indoors—GPS penetration within buildings is poor.

It is often suggested to develop custom mobile wayfinding apps for a specific region. We recommend against this for two main reasons:

1. There is little incentive for users to download and use a customized, region-specific wayfinding app, when existing wayfinding apps are of such high quality and cover most of the world.

2. New mobile app development is very expensive compared to installing signage, especially to develop apps for both major mobile operating systems (iOS and Android). There are few economies of scale: developing for two operating system costs almost twice as much as developing for just one.

We recommend that clients ensure that their mobile wayfinding is well done—that their priority destinations are present and correct in the databases of common apps (e.g. Google Maps, Apple Maps, and OpenStreetMap). Mobile wayfinding and signage can work together to improve the visitor experience in an area.

Nevertheless, people still rely heavily on their environment for cues, for ideas, and for inspiration when travelling, and signs are still the most effective way of communicating about place with the widest possible audience.
Sign system

directional sign (DS)

fingerboard themed (FT)

fingerboard major-T (FM)

upcoming side roads (FS)

pedestrian directional (FP)

parking dir. (PK)

trailhead (TH)

trail marker (TM)
Proposed sign types

An important input to this project are the designs produced in 2017 for Prince Edward County. On the facing page are mock-ups of the existing sign type designs which inform this strategy. Below is a table with some basic data on the types. When we suggest alterations or additions to the sign system in the recommendations section of this document, these are the designs we refer to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGN TYPE</th>
<th>ROUGH DIMS</th>
<th>SIGN CODE</th>
<th>TYPEFACE</th>
<th>CAP HEIGHT</th>
<th>MESSAGE LOAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>directional sign</td>
<td>2.4 × 2.4 m</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Gill Sans</td>
<td>130 mm allcaps</td>
<td>5 max, 17 chars/line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fingerboard sign themed</td>
<td>1.8 × 3.2 m</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Gill Sans</td>
<td>100 mm mixed-case</td>
<td>7 max, 19 chars/line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fingerboard sign major T</td>
<td>1.8 × 3.2 m</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Gill Sans</td>
<td>100 mm mixed-case</td>
<td>8 max, 19 chars/line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fingerboard side roads</td>
<td>1.2 × 3.2 m</td>
<td>FS</td>
<td>Gill Sans</td>
<td>75 mm mixed-case</td>
<td>6 max, 13 chars/line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pedestrian directional</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>FP</td>
<td>TNR</td>
<td>75 mm allcaps</td>
<td>5 max, 11 chars/line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parking</td>
<td>3 m high pole</td>
<td>PK</td>
<td>Gill Sans</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trailhead</td>
<td>3.2 m high poles</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>Museo 300</td>
<td>100 mm mixed-case</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trail marker</td>
<td>1.4 m high</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Museo 300 / Arial</td>
<td>various</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ironically, the path to wayfinding is neither direct, nor simple. At the regional level, such as in this project, there are hundreds of potential public and private tourism destinations, spread over a large area (1000 km²) and appearing along approximately 1100 km of public roads. There is, of course, no budget which enables Prince Edward County to sign every place at every intersection, nor would this be a desirable result.

The key to wayfinding success is setting priorities, and phasing a program in over the long term, but keep in mind:

- policies and budgets change,
- tourism destinations come and go, and
- brands become outdated long before the signs do.

Our recommendations below are based on the research in this report, our experience, and the context of Prince Edward County. In the next phase of this project, we will employ the recommendations below as a basis for deciding what sign types we require, how the wayfinding system should work, and begin designing sign structures and artwork.

**Wayfinding strategy**

1---Leverage mainstreets
Picton, Wellington, and Bloomfield all have linear mainstreets which lie on primary county roads—they are eminently legible for visitors, with most destinations lying along the main street. We do recommend directing visitors to these retail areas from outside the urban areas. However, we recommend against cluttering up such places—any wayfinding to destinations along the street would merely state the obvious. Destinations which are off of the main street are the exception, and may require special help.

Of the main communities, Consecon is unique in that its downtown is not along a primary county road.

2---Begin with the short-list of destinations
Essential to beginning a wayfinding program is to select a small set of destinations and ensure they are well covered. Other destinations may be added over time. See “Primary and secondary regional destinations” on page 52 and local maps thereafter. Only major public/civic destinations have been included.

3---Treat Arts and Taste Trails as signage programs, but not as wayfinding
The Arts Trail and Taste Trail are treated and signed as tourism themed routes, but the reality is that the
destinations do not make up coherent routes which a visitor is expected to follow. We think tourism themed routes are worth exploring, but the current program will not fulfil that function.

4—Leave MTO roads out of the system
Due to explicit MTO restrictions, we will not be able to directly sign on several highways in the region, including sections of Highways 33, 62. Fortunately, sections of King’s Highways which run through towns (called connecting links) are exempt from the MTO restriction on signage. Bloomfield and Picton have connecting link roads which may be signed.

Let the provincial C-TODS system do tourism destination signage on provincial roads in the region. The Prince Edward County wayfinding system will complement C-TODS with a parallel regional system using only county roads.

We recommend that the County manage C-TODS applications on behalf of clients, to ensure complete direction for visitors when travel on MTO roads is involved. Access to C-TODS sign space, nevertheless, should not hold back installations on county roads.
Naming

5—Consecon Main Street should be renamed
There is a street in Consecon called “Consecon Main Street”. This is misleading as the village’s main street is actually Mill Street; “Consecon Main Street” is a quiet residential street with no retail, no amenities, and of little interest to visitors.

It would be easy for people to drive “Consecon Main Street”, decide there is nothing in the town, and continue driving. We recommend changing the name of “Consecon Main Street” to anything else to avoid confusion.

6—Make destination names consistent
Select and simplify place- and destination-names wherever possible, and ensure they are consistently used on signage, in brochures, maps and in digital mobile wayfinding systems. Using standard abbreviations for generic names is acceptable in most cases: long destination names are as undesirable on signs as they are in spoken language.

42. “Consecon Main St.” is NOT Consecon’s main street
Design

There are several new designs we’d recommend to fill out a county sign system, as well as modifications we’d suggest to the existing designs. Some of these are fundamental changes which require action to fulfil this project’s goals, whereas others are suggestions to make the sign system more comprehensive but which are not essential. Sign type designs which appear in this section show existing designs: those which predate this strategy. New designs will be developed from the recommendations here.

7—Develop modularity of design
There are many ways to make fingerboard signs modular—to enable easy adding and removing of destinations as needed, and to ensure the sign looks complete no matter how many destinations are present. While modularity is a given in these sign type designs, the current designs do not establish how the modularity will work. Design development would establish the details of these structures including mounting of fingerboard panels.

8—Unify directional sign (DS) design with other types
The existing directional sign design (fig. 46) uses different type and colour from the other fingerboard, Major-T, and Side road types. To ensure the user perceives all sign types as part of a system, we recommend that all road signs employ a blue background (associated throughout North America with tourism signage), and use the same type—with type size varying depending on the speed zone a sign is intended for.

We recommend treating this sign as a top-level fingerboard destination sign, with a greater emphasis on civic destinations.

9—Fingerboard themed (FT)
The existing PEC sign system guidelines includes three sign types to group destinations by their theme: accommodations, food, and experiences (fig. 44). We recommend avoiding the use of these sign types altogether—there will likely not be enough destinations of each theme at a given decision point to justify their use.

We would prefer that the other PEC-branded fingerboard sign-types are employed instead, as in the existing design in fig. 43 (i.e. directional sign (DS), major-T (FM), or upcoming side road (FS)).

10—Revise parking signage design
Currently the design uses the logo of the Toronto Parking Authority. Absent written permission for its use, we recommend retaining the green circle-P symbol, but making it generic to avoid intellectual property issues. The current design is a parking directional sign, and we
recommend adding an ID type with space for regulatory messages (e.g. 30 minute limit).

11—Millennium Trail trailhead signs require AODA elements
In the Design of Public Spaces Standard (part of the AODA regulation) is a strict requirement for trailhead signs on public trails. They must have the following messages:
- length of the trail
- type of surface to be encountered
- average and minimum trail width
- average and minimum trail running and cross slope
- location of amenities, where provided (DPSS 80.9(1))

The current design (fig. 43) will require these messages to be designed into the existing sign template.

In addition, trailhead signs often carry any necessary introductory information for trail users: does this sign type require regulatory messaging, or informational content? Is trail mapping required? Along with adding AODA requirements, design development should address any other requirements established for the trail.

12—Ensure that kilometre marker signs are branded for the trail
Current designs employ wordmarks for “Friends of the Millennium Trail” and for “The County” (fig. 48, fig. 47) but the signs should be primarily branded for the trail itself—donor recognition is important, but would be more meaningful if there was a clear association between the trail and the donor. Also, kilometre markers should match branding of the trailhead signs so there is no ambiguity.

13—Add a trail directional sign type
Currently, the system includes two Millennium Trail sign types, both of which are devoted to wayfinding functions on the trail itself. We suggest adding a small sign-type directing visitors to the trailheads and access points from off-trail places, such as retail districts in Wellington and Bloomfield.

14—Add a washroom directional sign type
to employ in urban areas with public washrooms available (e.g. Benson Park in Picton). This could also be a generic recreation/amenity directional type to include directions to parks, playgrounds, etc.

15—Add a smaller fingerboard sign type that can carry fewer destination messages
The existing designs are geared to large message loads—some up to 8 destinations. We recommend reviewing the highway fingerboard types to determine if a smaller type may be useful for decision points with fewer destinations.

16—Limit the number of destinations per fingerboard sign
Some of the current sign type designs allow for up to 8
destinations, which goes against best practices for highway sign design. We recommend limiting all road signs to a maximum of 5 destinations. If more destinations are required at a certain location, it’s better to say no, or to add a second sign.

17—Ensure type-size meets best practices
We recommend checking type size for legibility at speed in all highway signs, and make adjustments to layout as needed.

18—Ensure signs will fit destination names
The existing designs have character limits, but don’t establish whether 2 or 3-line destination names are possible. We recommend estimating the longest destination name in the region, and working backwards to ensure the designs can accommodate it.

19—Use the TAC icon set for tourism destinations
The Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Information Sign Symbols are simple, comprehensive for destination types, and similar to icons in use on road signs across the continent. In our opinion, they are more recognizable for visitors than those employed by MTO / C-TODS on signage, which in many cases are unique to Ontario.

20—Design a temporary events sign type
It is very common for municipalities to want to market or direct visitors to festivals and events, and this typically requires a sign design whose messages are easy to change and which may be movable.
Administration

21—Treat civic/public destinations independently of private ones
We recommend including major publicly-owned destinations as a matter of course: public facilities with some draw for visitors, such as Lake on the Mountain. No fees should apply in such cases. Privately-owned and managed destinations should pay a nominal fee to gain access to the wayfinding system and to help cover the program’s costs.

22—Employ pay-to-play wayfinding to give flexibility to your destination list
Using pay-to-play as an organizing principle gives flexibility to the system: it allows the wayfinding to include both public and private destinations in the program, and even within individual fingerboard signs. Prince Edward County should create objective criteria for tourism destinations and allow private organizations to buy into certain sign-types in the system, passing on some of the responsibility for selecting destinations to the marketplace.

Criteria for pay-to-play should be based on common standards employed in other jurisdictions in Ontario and elsewhere (for guidance, see “Pay-to-play signage” on page 31).

23—Avoid sign pollution
When new signs are installed, redundant signs should come out of the ground. This means replacing the existing fingerboard system with the newer system. We will use existing highway fingerboard signs as a guide to new locations, but it should not be taken as given that every sign will be replaced.

24—Offer the new fingerboard signs to existing clients
Replacing old signs is an opportunity to clean the slate. The system suggested in this document is based on a new arrangement, with new destination criteria.

We recommend against treating this system as a “plug-in” continuation of the existing fingerboard system. Do ensure existing clients are given opportunity to buy in early on, but don’t give the idea that every existing fingerboard will be replaced with a new one.

25—Replace existing fingerboard signs in Bloomfield with PEC-branded pedestrian fingerboard signs
Bloomfield is the only community with an existing set of pedestrian signs (fig. 49). These point to myriad destinations, including several which are not within

49. urban fingerboards (Bloomfield)
walking distance. These should be replaced with the standard Prince Edward County pedestrian fingerboards (fig. 50). Destinations on the fingerboards must be within the settlement boundary, and ideally within 1,000 m of the sign. Destinations which are further out should be addressed using highway fingerboards.

26—Administer wayfinding via a department devoted to development or communication

Fundamentally, wayfinding is about communication and marketing. Planning and administering a wayfinding should be the purview of a municipal department whose mandate includes ensuring a high-quality visitor experience—we recommend putting the program in the hands of PEC’s community development department to market and administer. The department already administers destination development and visitor services. Several other departments will need to be consulted from time to time:

- operations would need to confirm sign locations, and may be engaged regarding destinations under its purview (marinas, parks, town halls, and other civic facilities)
- corporate communications should be consulted on new sign designs with respect to brand, they may opt to be involved with civic destination naming
- information technology should be involved to keep and update a spatial database of signs

27—Phase signage installations

It’s often difficult to install all recommended signs in one go, especially where existing signs need to be replaced or removed. Once locations and sign-type costs are established, we suggest budgeting for 3–4 years of installation, with year one covering installations at busy or essential decision points, or in environments overloaded with existing signage.
Spatial recommendations

On the following pages are plans which indicate our basis for decision-making in this project.
Entry points

There are 4 main entry points to the region, with County 64 a fifth, secondary entry point less used than the others.
Primary and secondary regional destinations

This and the following destination plans are intended as a basis for location planning of ideal sign locations.
Primary routes

These county highways connect the main communities, destinations, and entry points. Many options were possible within the road network, but we selected in favour of routes which were well travelled, direct, and/or scenic. As mentioned elsewhere, MTO roads will not be accessible for PEC wayfinding.
Each node (where primary routes meet) is a decision point—a place where the visitor may be expected to decide where to go by continuing on a route or making a turn. It’s not necessary to sign all decision points, but they are likely places for an installation.
Primary local destinations—Bloomfield
Wellington itself is a regional destination, and the beach and arena are appropriate local destinations to direct visitors to once in the village. Pointing out access to the Millennium Trail may also be important. Most businesses are easily found along Main Street and do not require wayfinding signage.
Local destinations—Consecon

The community itself is a regional destination, and requires wayfinding help, with three entrances from the Loyalist Parkway and a slightly nebulous retail district. We want to ensure that people leaving the highway will be able to find the village’s centre.
Primary local destinations—Picton

Like Wellington and Bloomfield, Picton is largely linear, and we recommend not signing destinations which will be easily found along Main Street. There are quite a few destinations here which will need wayfinding help, especially anything east of the wye intersection where main St. and Bridge St. diverge.
This plan shows some of the greater detail for the area from Picton’s downtown east to the harbour.
Millennium Trail sites

Sites listed above are priority entry points for the trail, including trail beginning and end, as well as important mid-points in or near communities.

Wellington, above, is the only site with an existing kiosk and signage. The staging areas which are not within villages appear on the following pages.
The beginning of the trail is on the western edge of the county, continuing from the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail from the west. This will be a natural starting point for people wishing to traverse the county, ending on the east side, in Picton.
West of Consecon is the first intermediate staging area at Novotny Ct. A two-turn diversion is required from the Loyalist Parkway.
Between Wellington and Consecon, there will be a main staging area at Station Rd., requiring visitors to make a small diversion from the Loyalist Parkway.
Millennium Trail—trail end beyond Picton

A spur of the trail bypasses to the north of Picton, currently expected to terminate on the east side of Highway 49.
Appendix

Selected sources


New Brunswick Department of Tourism and Parks and Department of Transportation. (2010). *Tourism Signage Review*.


Various provincial sign legislation and promotional information online.