DOWNTOWN PEORIA
WAYFINDING ANALYSIS
& RECOMMENDATIONS

APRIL 2018

CITY OF
PEORIA

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The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) with the city of Peoria (Peoria) hired Corbin Design to develop a Downtown Wayfinding and Signage Plan for Peoria. This plan will include the Central Business District, RiverFront, Warehouse district and hospitals while looking at the connection in and out of West-Main.

The first part of the Master Plan is this document, the Wayfinding Analysis and Recommendations Summary. This document is meant to quickly and simply layout the logic, language and recommendations that will become the foundation of the new wayfinding and signage program.

From March 26-28, 2018, Corbin Design toured Downtown Peoria and met with local stakeholders to better understand Peoria and how people find their way in an effort to address what can be improved.

The objectives of this Master Plan are to:

- Encourage pedestrian trips in the downtown;
- Enhance and promote pedestrian access and convenience; incorporate elements from the Bicycle Wayfinding Plan;
- Route motorists to large venues and parking; and
- Be flexible to accommodate future expansion into other parts of Peoria.

WAYFINDING TEAM
Corbin Design
Jeff Frank, Lead Designer
Moira O'Polka, Project Manager
Margaret Paxhia-Poppaw, Junior Designer

CORE TEAM
Kaci Geier, Partnership and Community Development Manager, Peoria Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Ryan Harms, Planner, Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
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Stacy Peterson, Communications, City of Peoria
Nicholas Stoffer, Traffic Engineer, City of Peoria

WE DEFINE WAYFINDING AS
"DIRECTION FOR PEOPLE IN MOTION."

It is unique because it has an opportunity not only to move people through a space to their intended destination, but also to carry brand elements and, by nature of its design, to integrate with the character of the streetscape and the local vernacular. We design terminology that defines and clarifies what's true about Peoria, and then develop tools that direct visitors, both in the built environment and across media. The journey map to the right depicts each potential point of contact with a given visitor. We believe that in order for a wayfinding system to be most effective, the visitor must be able to create a picture of the physical environment "in their mind's eye" prior to arrival. In this way, the signs in the environment reinforce what they already know about the area. Communication must be consistent across this continuum. We know that a diverse audience uses many different resources to navigate an environment, so the verbal and visual landmarks expressed must be consistent across all media. Web, broadcast, print and signage elements will speak in the same voice as the visitor learns about Peoria, makes a decision to visit, and engages in the visit itself.

Educated visitors feel confident and capable as they move toward their destination and are made aware of other opportunities once the initial reason for their visit is accomplished.

With this information in hand, the visitor now uses wayfinding signage to find their way around the city.

ARRIVE

PREPARE

Once a visitor decides to come to the area, all of the information they receive (print, digital or verbal) will use the approved wayfinding language and logic.

ENGAGE

Once on foot, visitors orient themselves to the area and move toward their destination. At the same time, they may look for other activities and amenities.

PRINT • DIGITAL • MOBILE • VERBAL • MAPS • SIGNAGE

LANGUAGE

LOGIC

LISTEN

Any information shared with a potential visitor that generates a reason to visit.

DEPART

With their visit completed, visitors need to know how to find their vehicle and navigate back to their place of origin.

EDUCATE • MAINTAIN

SUPPORT

Cities are constantly changing, so the City's Wayfinding Team will be required to update the system as needed.

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DESIGN FOR THE FIRST-TIME VISITOR.

Repeat visitors will rely heavily on their own experience. The simplest route between two points may not be a straight line, particularly for a visitor who is unfamiliar with Downtown. Our goal will be to help design and direct that first experience, assuring a positive experience and future return visits

STRUCTURE INFORMATION.

Tools designed to support a visitor's journey must provide the proper information at key decision points to keep visitors moving toward their destination. We call this concept "Progressive Disclosure." The challenge, then, is to verbally and visually simplify the information in the system. Consistency is the key to success.

SUPPORT INTUITION.

Wayfinding systems work best when they build upon routes that are intuitive to first-time visitors. Wayfinding cues should come as much as possible from the environment itself. This way everyday people can help support consistent wayfinding if asked for directions.

DESIGN THE SYSTEM FOR EASY UPDATING.

The need to change a single message should not require the replacement of an entire sign structure.

70% of visitors would consider extending their trip if new, additional destinations were discovered.

+30%
CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY WATERFRONT
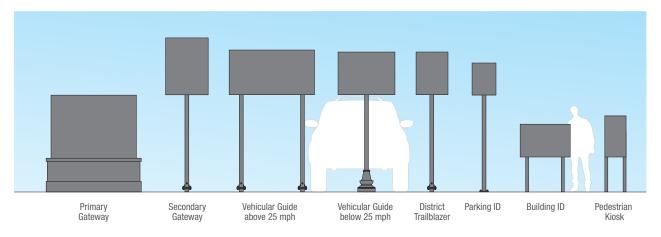30% increase in visitation since installation of their wayfinding program.

+10%
LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA
10% increase in visitation in the first year of the wayfinding program.

+18%
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
18% increase in visitation in the first year and 8% in the folowing year.

SUCCESSFUL WAYFINDING CREATES "REPEAT VISITATION" BY INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE DEPTH OF DESTINATIONS.

Sample Sign Type Array

| Primary Gateway | Secondary Gateway | Vehicular Guide above 25 mph | Vehicular Guide below 25 mph | District Trailblazer | Parking ID | Building ID | Pedestrian Kiosk |

Note that these sign silhouettes represent sign types only, not design, and are approximate in size.

A wayfinding program is only as good as the information it contains. It is important to consider destination names that are included on wayfinding signage for consistency, clarity and fit.

The Wayfinding Team will establish a local criteria for a destination's inclusion on wayfinding signage, particularly vehicular signage. The criteria will comply with IDOT and DOT standards.

Because the DOT will only allow for three destinations on a vehicular guide sign, space on there is limited. Destinations that do not meet criteria for inclusion on vehicular signs can be included on the pedestrian level.

Guidelines need to be established for documentation and implementation of vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding systems. Guidelines should provide a precedent and provide a logical framework for future destination additions and removals.

In order for a destination to appear on vehicular signage, it must meet the following criteria set by the DOT.
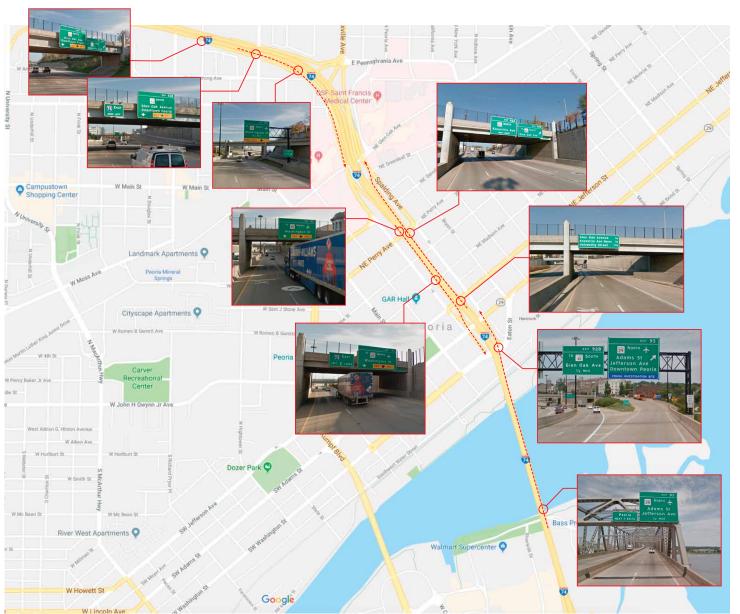
THE DESTINATION MUST:

- Be a public destination.
- Be a not-for-profit destination.
- Have ample public parking.
- Have high attendance relative to the area.

PRELIMINARY DESTINATION LIST	
Destination Name	Suggested Name for Vehicular Signage (If Different)
Dozer Park	Ballpark
Peoria Civic Center	Civic Center
Peoria Riverfront Museum	Riverfront Museum
Caterpillar Visitor's Center and Museum	CAT Museum
Bradley University	
Contemporary Art Center	CAC Art Center
Spirit of Peoria	
Peoria Riverfront Market	
Peoria Public Library	Library
Peoria County Courthouse	County Courthouse
RiverPlex Recreation & Wellness Center	RiverPlex
GAR Hall	
Morton Square Park	
Gateway Building	

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The new wayfinding program will focus primarily on Downtown Peoria. However, it is important to understand how visitors are accessing Downtown. To do so, a review of the existing IDOT exit signs is required to ensure that the new wayfinding program picks up visitors when they get off of the highway.

Northbound 74:

Current DOT signage identifies exit 93 as the Downtown Peoria exit. To further support this route, supplemental city wayfinding signs should be added off of this exit ramp to direct people effectively and efficiently to their destinations.

However, IDOT signage for northbound traffic on 74 does not support direction to the hospitals. Hospital administration should petition IDOT for 1.) adding "H" signs to the current DOT signage or 2.) add the umbrella-term to refer to this area to the signs. (Please see "Suggested Boundaries and Names.")

Southbound 74:

Exit 92B is identified as the proper exit for Downtown Peoria. However, exit 93 brings visitors to the heart of Downtown and near the riverfront. We would recommend that the city petition IDOT to make exit 93 the primary exit for Downtown. This route is more intuitive and offers more access to visitor amenitites and destinations.

Exit 92B should be used to support the hospitals instead.

OBSERVATION:

Some routes into Downtown Peoria are counterintuitive because of their industrial nature. Visitors begin to question if they are going along the correct route.

Once visitors reach Downtown, the abundance of wide, one-way streets can cause visitors to quickly pass their intended destination before they even know they have arrived.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a Circulation Plan that Better Connects Districts and Destinations.

Wayfinding signage needs to be located along routes that lead into Downtown and spaced incrementally to create a confidence with drivers that they are heading in the right direction. These signs can also include driving distance in miles.

Once in Downtown, we want to highlight the main routes that expose visitors to the most visitor amenities and destination. Along these routes we want to supply visitors with the information needed to get to their intended destination by reducing the time that visitors have to drive around an area. Signs need to be located prior to an intersection to ensure that the driver has time to get into the proper lane as indicated on the sign. This will help visitors find their destination the first time around rather than have to recirculate back into the system.

The circulation routes highlighted in the graphic to the right have been created to not only highlight visitor destinations but to also connect the multiple centers of activity throughout Downtown.

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OBSERVATION:

There is a lack of gateway/welcome signage in Peoria and near downtown. This makes it difficult to distinguish between East Peoria and Peoria.

RECOMMENDATION:

Clearly Identify the Boundaries of Downtown through the use of Consistent Gateway Signage.
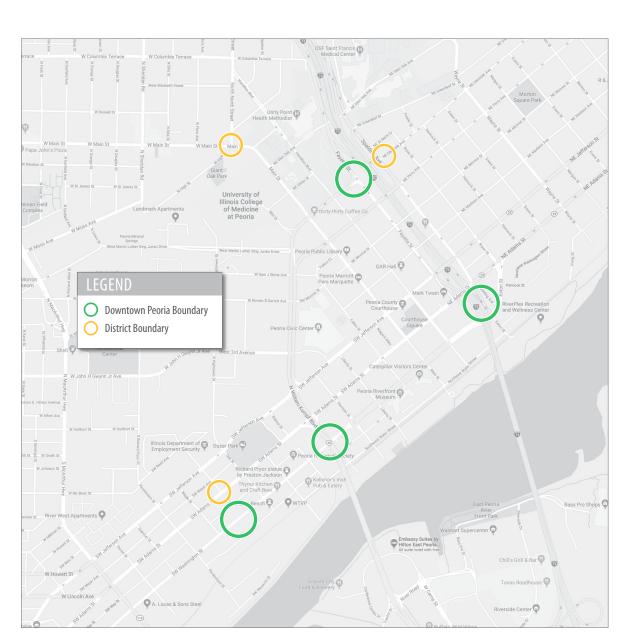
Peoria sets itself apart from other nearby municipalities, particularly East Peoria, with its thriving Downtown districts including the pedestrian-friendly RiverFront. It is important for Peoria to capitalize on these valuable assets and promote them to visitors. To do so, Peoria should introduce a series of gateway and welcome signs that announce the transition into Peoria. This will be even more important as visitors enter downtown. Boundary markers should be installed to identify Downtown and introduce the various, unique districts.

Frisco, TX

Downtown Lansing, MI

LEGEND

- ○ Downtown Peoria Boundary
- ○ District Boundary

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OBSERVATION:

Downtown Peoria has four existing districts: Central Business District, RiverFront, Warehouse District and West-Main. Each of these districts offers visitors a unique experience based on architecture and landmarks, destinations, and visitor amenities. It is important for this program to evaluate the current state of each district and how it relates to the first-time visitor. The following pages will dive deeper into our analysis and recommendations for districting for wayfinding.

- The boundaries of the Central Business district are too big. We do not want to send visitors into residential areas that are not connecting to other primary destinations and districts.

- The name Central Business District is not intuitive enough for the first-time visitor. Though it creates a strong connection to the Downtown workforce, it does not communicate its recreation and entertainment opportunities.

- Peoria's RiverFront is one of its greatest assets. We want to fully utilize this asset by taking advantage of its boundaries. RiverFront and Warehouse are two separate districts but current boundaries are overcomplicated and lack intuition. If a visitor can see the RiverFront from where they are, they will assume they are in the RiverFront District.

- There is a lack of a connection to and from West-Main.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Redefine the district boundaries.

The wayinding districts are based off a visitor's understanding of an area. We need to build off of this intution to create districts that support wayfinding. The new district boundaries allow for districts to grow. (See Page 12 for New District Boundaries.) Most significantly, it is our recommendation that the RiverFront District extend its boundaries on Water Street from RiverPlex to State Street. Also, the boundaries of Central Business District should be reduced to include Spalding Ave, Glendale and Kumpf. Its boundaries should no longer extend into residential neighborhoods.
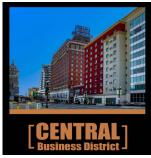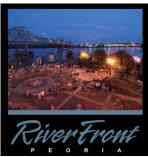
Rename Central Business District.

We suggest calling this district City Center. This is a more inclusive name and allows a better understanding that is a major hub of activity for culture, entertainment and recreation within Downtown.
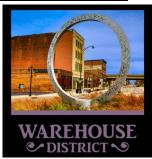
Create the Health Hill district.

In order to simplify wayfinding and to create a distinction between City Center and the hospitals, we suggest creating an umbrella-designation for the numerous healthcare facilites on the hill north of City Center. The district name is inclusive of all of the facilites and it highlights this area's unique topography.
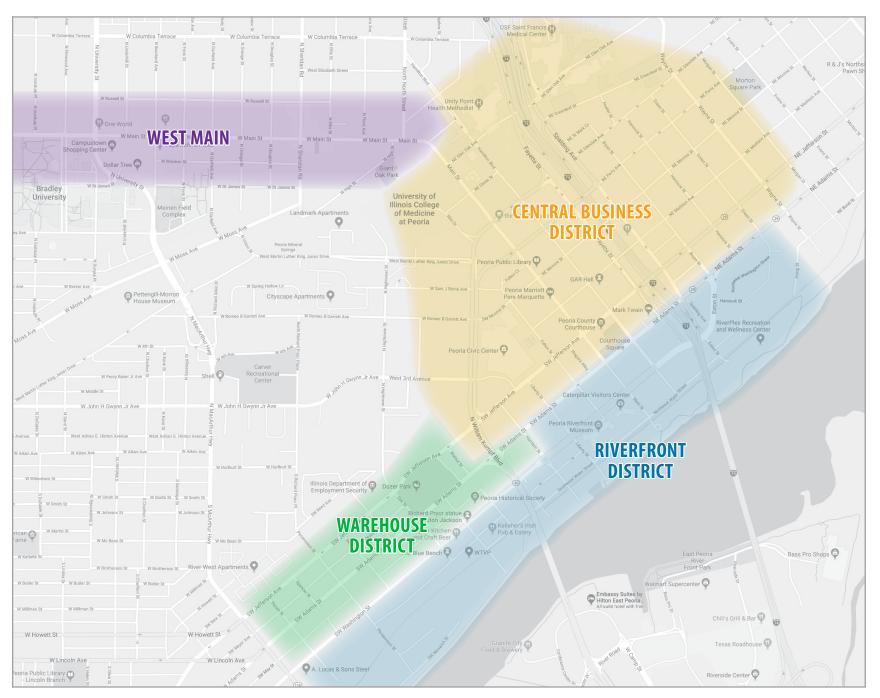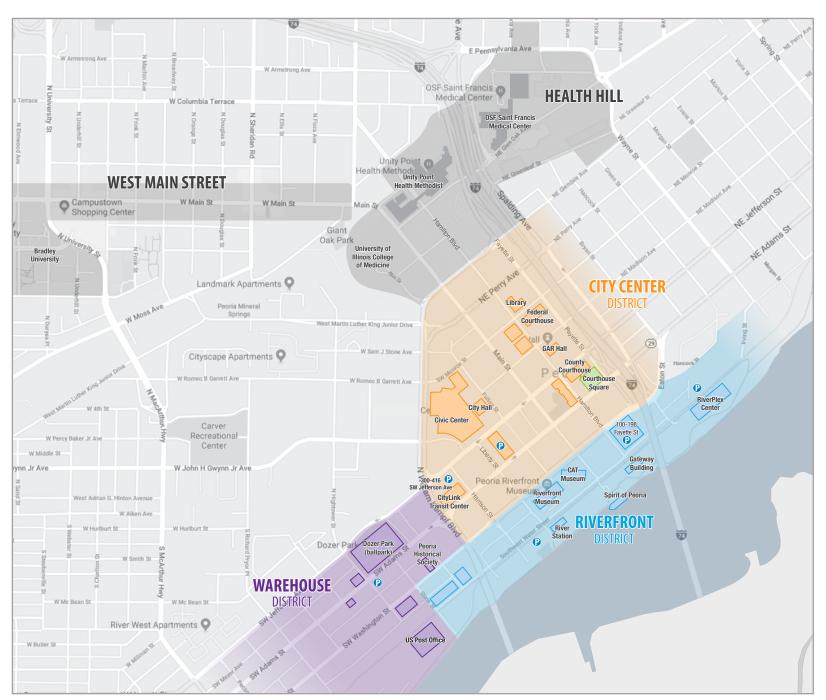
Existing District Names

WEST MAIN

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

WEST MAIN STREET

HEALTH HILL

CITY CENTER
DISTRICT

RIVERFRONT
DISTRICT

WAREHOUSE
DISTRICT

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OBSERVATION:

There is an abundance of parking opportunities throughout Downtown Peoria, particularly public, city-owned parking. However, public parking is difficult to find as signage is inconsistent and undersized. Parking is a problem but it's not what you think.

RECOMMENDATION:

Clearly and Consistenly Identify City-Owned Public Parking.

As illustrated in the circulation routes, we need to ensure that we are directing verhicualr traffic along pathways that connect to city-owned parking lots as this is one of the most important destinations during a visitor's journey. It is also important to make sure that public parking opportunities are easy to identify through consistent signage. The new wayfinding system should include directions to public parking opportunities and each public lot/ramp should have signs that match the new system. Also, the new system should use the universally-recognized circle P symbol to identify public parking opportunities.

East Lansing, MI

East Lansing, MI

Downtown Lansing, MI

OBSERVATION:

There is such an abundance of parking in Downtown that visitors can drive from destination to destination without getting out of the car and experiencing Downtown as a pedestrian.
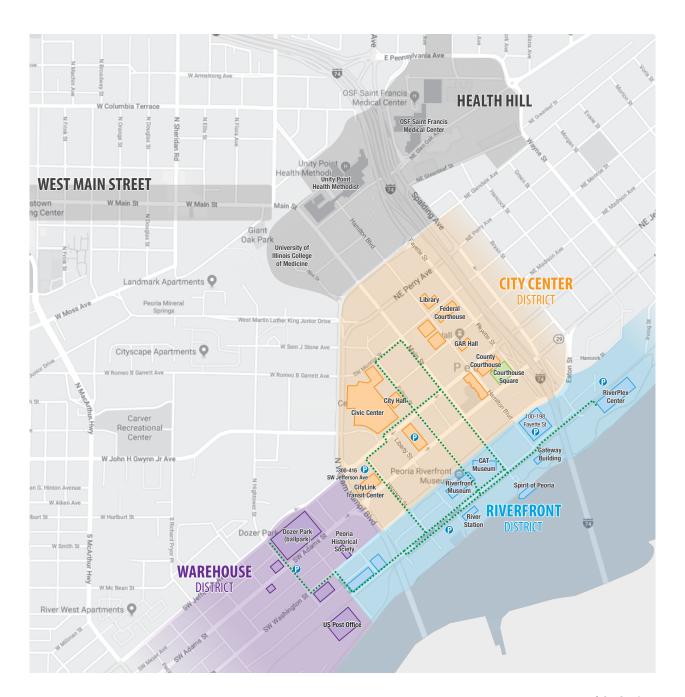
RECOMMENDATION:

Create a Pedestrian Wayfinding System.

The development of a pedestrian wayfinding system that includes guides and map kiosks will expose visitors to more destinations encouraging them to explore more of Downtown Peoria on foot.

Create a comprehensive, Downtown wayfinding map that includes districts and destinations as well a visitor amenities such as public restrooms and parking. The maps can include: Bike Share locations, Art Walk sculptures and walking distance radium.

Create pedestrian kiosks that also serve as informational kiosks that can house additional informaotin such as pamphlets and brochures. These specific kiosks should be located where they can be easily managed and maintained. For example, consider placing these kosks outside the Parks Dept. office at Festival Park, near Riverfront Museum and Civic Center.

We know that visitors to Peoria will use multiple tools to navigate downtown. Once the foundational logic and sign program is established, the city can consider the following digital tools to support and enhance the wayfinding and navigational experience.

INFORMATION KIOSK $
On static kiosks, provide web address or QR code to direct visitors to more information.

MOBILE ENABLED WAYFINDING WEBSITE $
Add wayfinding map and overall logic to Downtown Peoria mobile website. The mobile-enabled website should include retail, dining, business and key attractions. It can also be used to promote upcoming events.

NEAR FIELD COMMUNICATIONS $$
Smartphones equipped with NFC can be paired with NFC Tags or stickers on physical signs which can launch an app, or prompt the user to accept wayfinding/navigation data. This passive technology is more effective than a QR code.

BLUETOOTH BEACONS $$
Like NFC technology, this passive resource sends a location-specific message to a smartphone app.

INTERACTIVE LED GUIDE SIGN $$$
Programmable LED sign panels that change messages depending on the time of day or for special events.

INTERACTIVE ELECTRONIC KIOSKS $$$$
Provide visitors with the opportunity to explore the Plano website and future apps through the use of interactive monitors. Pedestrian kiosks could be implemented with static maps and could be upgraded in the future with exterior grade monitors.

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