

Way-finding Symposium

Public Hearing Room

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

December 7, 2007

Three Break-out Sessions & The Plenary Session

with facilitation provided by

The Municipal Land Use Center @ The College of New Jersey

A. Current Concerns:

1. *The current situation is a “cacophony”*
2. *Sign criteria as to who gets a sign are not always clear, e.g., why should convenience stores be preferred over cultural and historical sites*
3. *TODS is an inequitable and unfair approach because only those who can afford to pay for it get their signs posted*
4. *Signs for New Jersey destination locations rather than commercial establishments ought to be prioritized*
5. *Sign locations are sometimes inconsistent and unsafe*
6. *Signs would benefit by applying an understandable logic, framework and understandable consistency*
7. *Mileage is sometimes inaccurate or too frequently not noted*
8. *There are too many signs, i.e., sign clutter*
9. *The delineated route may not be the preferred or safest route*
10. *Signs are inadequately maintained*
11. *Signs are not always clear, visible, well-lit and sometimes faded*
12. *Signs may be vandalized and/or stolen*
13. *There is a lack of “connectedness” reflecting the limited jurisdiction of NJDOT and lack of connections with county and municipal jurisdictions*
14. *There are not enough signs posted on the municipal level of government, making way-finding more difficult once someone leaves the state highway*
15. *Too often signs for New Jersey State Parks are parallel to the road, rather than perpendicular, making them difficult to read*
16. *Street and road signs are sometimes confusing especially when names change from one side of an intersecting road or street to the other*

B. Vision/Goals for the Next Decade:

1. *Signs need to be attractive and aesthetically pleasing to do a better job in attracting out-of-state tourists*

2. *Signs should also attract commuters as many of New Jersey's "tourists" are in-state residents*
3. *Signs should do a better job of publicizing New Jersey's historic and cultural attractions*
4. *Signs should be part of a "tiered-system" whereby well-designed, interesting signs connect to county and municipal signs*
5. *Signs as part of a new system should not simply build up- on the old system thereby causing confusion, but instead replace it entirely*
6. *Signs ought to be researched in other states to benchmark "best practices," e.g., Indiana, Maryland employ common logos for attractive destinations*
7. *Iconography can be important to provide State of New Jersey with a "brand" and strengthened sense of place*
8. *Some allowance ought to be made for "seasonal" attractions, e.g., Jersey shore attractions that are not open in the winter could be accommodated through the use of electrical signage*
9. *Signage needs to be clear, concise, simple, understandable, highly readable*
10. *Signage needs to incorporate new technologies, e.g., google maps, radio information, community mapping technology, even though we will always need paper maps for some people*
11. *Way-finding should link multiple attractions, e.g., sports venues should also include other related attractions, e.g., local restaurants*
12. *NJDOT ought to establish easily understood signage categories, e.g., cultural/historic sites, farmers' markets, eco-tourism sites, colleges and universities, shopping centers/malls, government facilities, other attractions such as zoos, theaters, sports arenas, amusement parks*
13. *Public Transportation opportunities should not be overlooked or under-served by the way-finding system*
14. *Improved signage at New Jersey's gateways will create a more welcoming impression on out-of-state visitors. The same might be said for gateways to individual municipalities. Newark Airport and major highways into the State ought to be highlighted for this treatment.*
15. *Use the Garden State Parkway as a model to emulate*
16. *Use Union County "4 centuries in a Weekend" signage as a model to emulate*

C. Benefits of Improved Signage:

1. *Improved signage will lead to people stopping more frequently to visit sites in New Jersey*
2. *Improved signage will attract more tourists who will spend more money in New Jersey*

3. *Improved signage will lead to visitors visiting more sites that are located beyond the standards routes*
4. *Improved signage will save time and energy*
5. *Improved signage will save marriages*
6. *Improved signage will produce increased environmental benefits through reduced fuel consumption and emissions*
7. *Improved signage will enhance an appreciation and understanding of the state's geography and New Jersey citizens' sense of place*
8. *Improved signage will leave out-of-state visitors with an improved sense of who New Jerseyans are and what New Jersey is like*
9. *Improved signage will leave in-state residents with increased pride for living here, serving as a foundation for civic cooperation*
10. *Improved signage will produce benefits for the non-motorized, i.e., pedestrians and bicycle-riders, too*
11. *Improved signage will increase everyone's comfort level, reducing anxiety about getting lost*
12. *Improved signage will have out-of-state visitors feel more welcome and comfortable in visiting New Jersey*
13. *Improved signage will improve traffic management and serve to reduce traffic congestion in some instances*

D. Challenges to be Overcome:

1. *Dealing with the multiple interests/players, e.g., NJDOT, Port Authority of New York/New Jersey, Federal Highways, counties, municipalities, New Jersey Turnpike Authority, Garden State Parkway, Atlantic City Expressway, and the many other stakeholders in this process*
2. *Devising an appropriate business model and plan that will help to properly fund what is eventually proposed*
3. *Raising the money to finance the project*
4. *Defining a framework to work together more cooperatively and collaboratively than we currently do*
5. *Establishing a reasonable, hierarchal approach*
6. *Creating an environmentally sensitive way-finding system*
7. *Selecting appropriate icons*
8. *Remaining flexible yet uniform, consistent, fair and safe*
9. *Identifying a "pilot project" to draw some lessons learned*

E. Who Else Needs to be Included?

1. *NJDOT Traffic Engineers*
2. *County & Municipal Engineers*
3. *County Planners & County Planning Boards*
4. *County Parks people*

5. *Garden State Parkway, New Jersey Turnpike, Atlantic City Expressway Personnel*
6. *South Jersey Transportation Authority*
7. *North Jersey Transportation Authority*
8. *Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission*
9. *New Jersey Hotel and Lodging Association*
10. *New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce*
11. *New Jersey Amusement Association*
12. *New Jersey Truckers Association*
13. *American Automobile Association*
14. *New Jersey League of Municipalities*
15. *New Jersey Association of Counties*
16. *School representatives including school children*

The Plenary Session:

- *Transform the existing “cacophony” into a system that is characterized by its “connectedness”*
- *Employ tiered-pricing to make TODS more equitable*
- *Install increased and improved signage on the Interstate highways*
- *Explore ways to develop a more collaborative process among all levels of government*
- *Modernize the process through the use of an “electronic forum”*
- *Consider an on-line survey for participants*
- *Avoid handing over too much responsibility to the State of New Jersey as its limited resources and lack of continuity will present ongoing problems*
- *Identify and empower a strong, stable non-profit group such as Celebrate New Jersey to champion this process*
- *Establish an Advisory Committee to interface regularly with NJDOT*
- *Note that TODS is a limited approach that may be augmented and extended if properly designed*
- *Urge NJDOT to maintain flexibility in its Request for Proposals so that the TODS program may evolve, grow and expand over the next decade in ways to extend to other signage programs*
- *Provide NJDOT with a rationale and the support it needs to move beyond just the TODS program*
- *Develop a strong signage constituency to ensure adequate follow-through*
- *Enlist the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce to ensure that the business community is adequately engaged*
- *Remember that the State of New Jersey is comprised of multiple parts and all the relevant pieces should be included in this process*
- *Reject being constrained by just the upcoming Request for Proposals to look beyond to the other NJDOT signage programs*
- *Employ an internet platform to raise revenue to underwrite the cost of signs for cultural and historic sites which otherwise would not be able to afford them*

- *Establish as a goal that within 10 years multiple information layers will be available through the internet and thereby reducing the need for roadside signs*
- *Acknowledge that roadside signs will still be needed for those who are not computer literate and others who may be lured by impulse to different sites*
- *Remember to incorporate objectives to clean-up and maintain signs as well as to reduce sign clutter over the next decade*
- *Design a system that may be layered or tiered, but still maintains a sense of order*
- *Develop a data base to demonstrate to skeptics the economic impact and value of history, cultural heritage and the arts*
- *Devise a study to demonstrate the differences between benefits to businesses in TODS and those not participating in TODS*

And the Next Steps ...

- *Edit today's video taping*
- *Compile notes and summarize findings of the Break-out and Plenary Sessions*
- *Identify times and locations for subsequent meetings in north, south and central New Jersey*
- *Design a process based on what was learned from today*
- *Create a vision, an understandable framework along with clear signage criteria to be presented to NJDOT for its consideration*
- *Distill what was learned here and at future meetings to define and select a set of New Jersey symbols to assist in "branding" New Jersey, its regions and attractions*
- *Contact those who are important to the process who did not attend the symposium*
- *Organize an Advisory Committee*
- *Learn more about what flexibility TODS might have and the way that this effort should relate to it and extend it*
- *Participate in annual conferences to publicize what is being proposed, e.g., Annual Governor's Tourism Conference – April, New Jersey Association of Counties Conference – June, New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference – November.*
- *Help link New Jersey attractions and amenities to the New Jersey State Tourism website*
- *Identify appropriate local jurisdictions, e.g., counties, municipalities, to develop a pilot project to draw the appropriate lessons learned*