

Celebrate NJ!
New Jersey Wayfinding Steering Committee
Meeting on July 24, 2008

Attending: Leslie Bensley, Logan Brown, Marguerite Chandler, Andy Fekete, Karen Hatcher, Bob Kiser, Cate Litvack, Phyllis Oppenheimer, John Seitter, Allison Tratnor, Michael Zuckerman; Consultants John Bosio, Amy Rees, Lance Wyman

Meeting Location: NJ Chamber office (216 W. State Street)

Vision of the Wayfinding Initiative:

To make New Jersey a more welcoming, livable, friendly place by helping us find our way with ease and by making all our many points of interest and areas of natural beauty more accessible.

Overview: Marguerite Chandler opened the meeting with the introductory section of the new Wayfinding Powerpoint presentation that begins with, "Imagine a NJ that is friendly and welcoming" followed by a recap of the substantial progress that's been made since our Dec., 2007 conference. One highlight is that ***NJDOT empowered us to arrange a very successful meeting with NJ Transit which ensures that transit information will be integral to any statewide wayfinding system.***

Selection process for the Pilot Project area: After exploring various directions, the decision has been made to not solicit RFPs widely but rather to have a short application process that will be distributed through the several Transportation Authorities throughout the state. This will identify areas that are already working together and who meet the criteria previously established. ***Two areas that have indicated an interest in exploring this further are Cape May & Cumberland counties and Mercer, Somerset & Morris counties (both of which include state Scenic By-ways).*** Key factors in selecting one or more areas are: existing resources, tourism applicability, readiness to work together, multiple counties, urban and suburban landscapes. Our intention is to have any project(s) reviewed by the Pilot Project/Funding Committee before year-end with selection finalized in the first quarter of 2009.

NJ Points of Interest Community Mapping (NJPOI): Karen Hatcher showed a live demonstration of the features of the first phase of the NJPOI community map. Created to empower and supplement existing NJ tourism maps (e.g., VisitNJ.org) it is based on a Google platform and has the following capacity:

1. to create an expandable community mapping model where all POI locations work together to support the entire wayfinding community
2. to showcase thousands of POI locations on one map
3. to connect visually with the other components of the Wayfinding System currently under development. It also includes NJ Transit information about the location of bus and train stations.

Not only will NJPOI allow attractions to manage their own information, but it will also provide a seamless integration of data (Internet/cell phone/paper maps/road signage) and generate revenue for enhancing TODS signage for POI locations.

The NJ Dept. of Agriculture (www.visitNJfarms.org) already uses a version of this technology, indicated their desire to have all agri-tourism sites also listed on the NJPOI map, and agreed to provide their data list to us for loading. They were excited about this cross-marketing opportunity.

Karen mentioned that a simple listing (name, address, phone number) would be free and that ***the first 2,000 points will come largely from a list being developed by Brian Tyrell at Stockton State College through the Heritage Tourism Task Force.***

A full-featured annual membership (which allow photos, web-links, videos, and continuous updating) will cost between \$200-\$300/year, and the marketing campaign (brochure attached) will roll out beginning in September to enroll members offering a \$100 discount for the first year if members sign up during the first 100 days of the promotion. The NJPOI system will be promoted to the public beginning in January, 2009.

NOTE: It's the intention of this program to link with, enhance, and support existing websites and to fill the gap to provide familiarity and a seamless experience for the user from one medium (i.e., Internet, paper map, GPS/cell phone, road signage, public transit) to another—not to duplicate or compete with what's already being done.

Various people raised many useful questions:

Q. How is the NJPOI different from existing travel sites?

A. It's the POI community supporting and promoting itself as a whole community

Q. Since it's user-generated, how will it be monitored?

A. Typical community mapping models have an Administrator who oversees content, however they are largely self-regulating as a community. We expect that most POIs will see it in their best interest to accurately describe their offerings to avoid bad P.R. We can also look into ratings and blogging features to be added to the site. (Celebrate NJ! will be the NJPOI Administrator)

Q. What type of liability disclaimer would need to be on the site?

A. We will add a disclaimer so that POIs are liable for what they list on the site.

Q. Would it be search engine optimized?

A. Yes

Q. Where will the membership money go?

A. Marketing, administration, and TODS signage grants

Q. What about sites that don't have a website? (e.g., 70% of NJ's museums don't have websites)

A. NJPOI can actually give them a presence on the Web through their member page—we can also offer them website development through Vertices [the business that develops and maintains the site] at very affordable rates

The NJPOI Community Map is proposed as a non-profit, entrepreneurial co-marketing opportunity (a “bottom up” grassroots model that depends on networking, mutual support, and active participation by the attractions and the community) vs. a governmental “top down” model. Consider that if each of the initial 2,000 NJPOI locations have a mailing list of 500 contacts, **one Million people can be reached by using existing networks alone!**

NOTE: After the meeting, Karen revised the DRAFT brochure she had distributed (*Karen will forward this to the Steering Committee*)

New geographic zones & icons: The zones we discussed at our last meeting that used major highway arteries to distinguish zones began to break down almost immediately after the meeting. One problem was zone color bands that duplicated color bands used in existing wayfinding systems in cities and towns. Another was the marketing implications of being “in” or “out” of a zone (e.g., if the boundary was the Garden State Parkway and East, what if your business was 2 miles West of GSP?).

Lance Wyman, recently back from consulting on the Beijing Olympics signage, presented a different rationale, utilizing the highly distinctive shape of our state, dissected by latitude and longitude lines (which created equality of geographic areas, none superior to the others). Then he identified symbols that highlighted the dominant **character** of each zone and created distinctive graphics using both pixels and solid figures of the six icons that represent the six zones.

The simple symmetry of six approximately equal zones is easy to visualize, and these symbols clearly highlight prominent aspects of New Jersey's quality of life and sense of place. The icons translate easily from large gateway signage to tiny cell phone displays.

ICON	ZONE	DOMINANT CHARACTER
Hiker	Skylands	Outdoor recreation, nature
Light bulb	North Jersey	Bright lights (& bright ideas!), intense urbanization, innovative thinking, creativity
Capitol dome	Capital	History, commerce, government
Lifeguard stand	Shore	Beach, family gatherings, boardwalk
Bushel basket	South Jersey	Farming, produce of the

		farm & sea, the Garden State
Sand piper	South Shore	Bird migration, shore birds, beaches

(see attached graphics)

There was lively discussion about the purpose the icons served: i.e., marketing constituent groups (e.g., history, arts, eco-tourism, etc.) vs. Wayfinding (directional orientation). ***The group concluded that all the icons represented aspects of ALL parts of the state and were primarily for ease of orientation for the first-time visitor, not for marketing constituent groups.***

Wayfinding Executive Summary: John Bosio reviewed the Executive Summary and the 90% draft Master Plan report and provided color copies of the Executive Summary and CDs of the Master Plan for comment. This plan will ultimately provide the basic guidelines and templates for the statewide Wayfinding legislation. Creating a statewide system will evolve over a 10-year period and eventually connect all existing city and municipal wayfinding systems.

Both the Summary and the Master Plan now include more textured information including transit interface, wayfinding tools (and how each part intersects with the others), the zone and icons, and the NJPOI Community Mapping feature—see attached Executive Summary

(NOTE: RMJM Hillier has been reorganized and is now called MERJE—new name, same fine people!)

BOTTOM LINE: THE PURPOSE OF ALL ASPECTS OF A STATEWIDE WAYFINDING SYSTEM IS TO ALLOW FIRST TIME VISITORS IN ANY PART OF THE STATE TO FIND THEIR WAY WITH EASE.

Next steps

- Gather further feedback from the Steering Committee (generate consensus on basic elements of the Wayfinding Master Plan)
- Update NJDOT and arrange to meet with the NJ Turnpike Authority (which now oversees the Garden State Parkway and Atlantic City Expressway as well) to explore the opportunity to make interim recommendations on the LOGOS sign program on NJ's toll roads and Interstate highways (work with Steve Dilts for guidance and best timing)
NOTE: The LOGOS contract doesn't expire for 6 more years—Our goal here is "How can we maximize the current program for the benefit of the cultural and history venues of our state?"
- Present the Wayfinding plan to Secretary of State Wells (work with Kathy Kisko for guidance and best timing)
- Draft statewide Wayfinding legislation (which will include addressing cross-liability issues among state, county and local levels of government to provide

indemnity if working on each others roadways to install and/or maintain wayfinding signage)

- Create further opportunities to advocate for our TODS recommendations now that the TODS deadline has been extended (i.e., the new TODS contract will begin June 1, 2009, not January 1)
- Support further opportunities for coordination of NJDOT and NJ Travel & Tourism materials (e.g., the official NJ map that is designed and printed every two years by NJDOT but distributed by NJ Travel & Tourism; marketing of attractions via the new TODS criteria)
- Identify one or more Wayfinding Pilot Project areas and develop funding packages for the substantial costs
- Share information with counties and municipalities about the MUTCD standards and need for uniformity of signage (i.e., quality specs for signage in regard to cutting, painting, welding, and bending metal to make signs of significant size and quality)
- Widely market the NJPOI Community Map, first to the initial 2,000 attractions and then to the users, in-state and out-of-state
- Develop consensus among the members of the Wayfinding Steering Committee before introducing legislation so that we can all speak with one voice in support of the legislation