

Celebrate NJ! Wayfinding Initiative
Recommendations to NJDOT
Tourist Oriented Destination Signage Program
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Wayfinding Initiative Coordinators
Marguerite Chandler, Celebrate NJ!
Karen Hatcher, Celebrate NJ!

TODS Team Members
Mark Albin, The Newark Museum
Cindy Bloom-Cronin, NJDOT, Scenic Byways
Doreen Prinzo, Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Authority
Gregg Rackin, Wild and Scenic Lower Delaware
Barbara Steele, Ocean County Department of Public Affairs

Project Consultants
John Bosio, III, RMJM Hillier
Lance Wyman Ltd.

Celebrate NJ!
Wayfinding Initiative – TODS Program Recommendations

Table of Contents

I.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Page 3
II.	NJ WAYFINDING INITIATIVE OVERVIEW Wayfinding Symposium- December 7, 2007	Pages 3-4
III.	TODS PROGRAM	Pages 4-11
	A. Review Process	
	B. Current Program Data	
	C. Recommended Eligibility Criteria	
	D. TODS Pricing Comparison	
	E. TODS Interest Survey	
	F. TODS Pricing Recommendations	
IV.	TRANSITION PROCESS FOR NEW CRITERIA	Page 11
V.	PROMOTIONAL SUPPORT	Page 12
VI.	INTEGRATION WITH WAYFINDING MASTER PLAN	Page 12
VII.	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND GRAPHICS	
	A. State by State Comparison Chart	
	B. TODS Participation Site List	
	C. TODS Participation by Category	
	D. TODS Sign Pricing	
	E. TODS Signage Design	

Contact:

Karen Hatcher, Executive Director
 Celebrate NJ!
 49 Ford Avenue
 Freehold, NJ 07728
 732-333-0462

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Everyone has their story of being lost in NJ. A comprehensive, state-wide Wayfinding signage system is critical to the cultural and economic development of our state. When signage works, it helps us move with confidence in unfamiliar locations. It creates a more welcoming environment, enhances our sense of place, and benefits both travelers (all 8.5 million of us plus all our visitors!) and NJ's many points of interest (performing arts, museums, libraries, historic sites, parks, schools, etc.).

Because New Jersey State, county, and local authorities do not coordinate signage, it's often easy to lose the trail when trying to find our way. An example of an existing Wayfinding system that works (a combination of both icons and signage) are hospitals—the big blue “H” is universally understood and can be followed right to the Emergency Room door. A successful Wayfinding program has the potential for making all our important points of interest as easy to find as a hospital without creating unnecessary and confusing sign clutter.

The spirit of an object or place is intangible, yet essential. At its heart, the New Jersey Wayfinding initiative will reflect in physical terms New Jersey's spirit. It will seek to make us more accessible and visitor-friendly, and be a visible welcome that proudly displays our culture of arts, history, and natural beauty.

The context for our endeavor is this: our roadways are public spaces, part of the “public commons” of our state. **In addition to considerations of safety and good engineering practices, our roads should also serve the highest public good and support healthy, whole communities.**

NJ WAYFINDING INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Celebrate NJ!, a non-profit whose mission is “to create a legacy of pride in the spirit and character of New Jersey, for future generations to celebrate and preserve”, was asked by the History Advocates Group to coordinate a statewide wayfinding signage initiative. We began with a vision: to make New Jersey a more welcoming, livable, friendly place by helping us find our way with ease and by making our many attractions and areas of beauty more accessible.

As a first step, we engaged a variety of stakeholders, government agencies and community leaders at a Wayfinding Symposium held on December 7, 2007. As a result, the Wayfinding Advisory Committee of 70 was formed and 47 individuals representing a wide, cross-section of stakeholders organized themselves into Work Teams (i.e., Funding, Pilot Project, TODS Criteria, and Public Relations). These teams have been extremely productive.

A promotional video and online survey have been employed to gain public support, and over \$50,000 in private funds have been raised, enabling us to hire a nationally prominent

wayfinding design team, RMJM Hillier of Philadelphia, to manage the process of analysis and design. Ultimately what will be developed is a set of standards and options for creating signage districts and regions in the State of New Jersey, using best practices to develop a consistent, comprehensive statewide framework. One or two regional pilot projects will be selected by year end to demonstrate how a successful wayfinding system can work.

Wayfinding Symposium- December 7, 2007

Purpose

To have consensus for an innovative, first-class, tiered, statewide Wayfinding program that complies with MUTCD* sign standards.

Intended Results

1. That signage clutter will be reduced while safety and mobility will be enhanced.
2. That signage will reflect the beloved landmarks of our state and increase the spirit of place.
3. That signage will link all forms of mobility (e.g., public transit, bicycle paths, cars, Park & Ride Lots, pedestrians) in every medium (e.g., road signs, GPS, Internet, maps)
4. That signage will give visitors—and residents—useful information when and where they need it.
5. **To deliver a set of recommendations to improve the Tourist Oriented Destination Signage (TODS) program to NJDOT by May 1, 2008.**

*Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

TOURIST ORIENTED DESTINATION SIGNAGE (TODS) PROGRAM

The purpose of the NJ TODS program is to promote “tourist oriented activities” defined as “any lawful cultural, historical, recreational, or educational activity whose major portion of visitors are derived from motorist not residing in the immediate area.”

The TODS Criteria Team set out to achieve the following goals:

1. Bring a wider assortment of tourist-oriented venues into the current NJ TODS program,
2. Make the TODS program more accessible and affordable to the tourist-oriented venues, and
3. Help visitors more easily find their way to those destinations.

Review Process

One of the primary objectives of the Wayfinding Symposium was to participate in the process of improving the Tourist Oriented Destination Signage (TODS) program so that it will better meets the needs of both visitors and the cultural, historical, recreational and educational

organizations around the state. The current TODS contract will expire at the end of 2008. In order to see changes reflected in the new RFP, we understood that recommendations would need to be presented to NJDOT by May 1, 2008.

The TODS Criteria Team was formed and included the following people:

- Mark Albin, The Newark Museum
- Cindy Bloom-Cronin, NJDOT, Scenic Byways
- Doreen Prinzo, Atlantic City Convention and Visitors Agency
- Gregg Rackin, Wild and Scenic Lower Delaware
- Barbara Steele, Ocean County Department of Public Affairs
- Karen Hatcher, Celebrate NJ!

Using email and conference call, the group met several times to focus on two major areas of the program:

- Eligibility Criteria
- Pricing

Current Eligibility Criteria

Under the current program, NJTODS allows the following businesses to apply:

- Commercial: Fuel, Food, Lodging, Antiques, Crafts, Malls, Winery, Farm Markets
- Cultural: Drama, Theatre, Galleries
- Historical: Historic Areas, Caves, Memorials, Reservations, Mansions
- Educational: Museums, Tours, Colleges, Universities, Vo-Tech Schools
- Recreational: Camping, Resorts, Riding Stables, Golf, Sports, Speedways, Arenas, Amusement Parks

All locations must be located on the crossroad, within 3 miles of the highway. (Exception: Fuel must be located within one mile of the highway.)

Current NJTODS program usage (based on NJ DOT Status Report – New Jersey TODS dated March 3, 2008):

- 73% of all current signs represent food and fuel (majority are franchises or members of national chains)
- 10% represent lodging (majority are franchises or members of national chains)
- 10% represent commercial or retail establishments
- 7% represent amusements, cultural, historic, eco-tourism, camping and recreational venues

State by State TODS Comparisons

New Jersey is unique in that no other state is as densely populated or has as many roadways per square mile. Thus, it's difficult to draw "apples to apples" comparisons. However we had data from six other states currently running a TODS program: Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Virginia to measure against. Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Virginia are also managed by Interstate Logos, LLC, the company currently managing the New Jersey TODS program. (See comparison chart for details– Addendum)

Recommendations for New Eligibility Criteria

The recommendations we are making are largely modeled from the Virginia TODS program, a comprehensive, two-tiered approach.

Eligibility Criteria

Businesses or activities may participate if:

- a substantial portion (more than 50%) of its products or services are of significant interest to tourists,
- it derives its major portion (more than 50%) of income or visitors, during the normal business season from road users not residing in the immediate area (those residing outside of a five-mile radius**) of the facility, and
- it meets the other criteria outlined below.

** Because New Jersey is so densely populated and because our 8.5 million residents count as potential visitors to all tourist-oriented destinations, the team felt strongly that this requirement is both justifiable and sensible.

Gas, Food and Lodging businesses wishing to participate must also satisfy the specific criteria for its facility category outlined in the table below.

Tier I General Eligibility Requirements

- Shall be located within five (5) miles and 4 turns of the intersection of a non-limited access state primary system highway as defined by the MUTCD 2G.01, where the initial TODS panel is to be located at the nearest primary intersection along the selected route. (This allows for a maximum of 3 TODS signs beyond the state highway. All signage locations are subject to engineering approval.)
- Shall have the name of the business prominently displayed on the premises in such a manner that it is readily visible to motorists from the public highway on which the facility is located.

- Shall be open a minimum of six (6) hours, five (5) days a week during its normal operating season (at least a 12 consecutive week period each year). Exceptions of this requirement may be made for certain facilities such as arenas, auditoriums, civic centers, farmers markets, farm markets, wineries and flea markets.
- Shall be licensed and approved by the appropriate state and/or local agencies regulating the particular type of business or activity.
- CAMPING businesses shall meet Specific Travel Service (LOGO) Program criteria to be eligible.
- Comply with all applicable laws concerning the provision of public accommodations without regard to age, race, religion, color, sex, national origin, or accessibility by the physically handicapped.
- Agree to abide by all rules, regulations, policies, procedures and criteria associated with the program.
- Agree that in any cases of dispute or other disagreement with the rules, regulations, policies, procedures and criteria or applications of the program, the decision of the State Traffic Engineer shall be final and binding.

Tier II Eligibility for Gas, Food, Lodging

In addition to the facilities listed as acceptable TODS sites, Gas, Food and Lodging establishments that are franchises and/or are members of national chains, may participate in the TODS Program as a "TODS - Tier II" site, provided they meet all of the "TODS - Tier I" criteria with the exceptions to the criteria noted below:

Tier II Facilities

- Shall be located within required distance (below) of the intersection of a non-limited access state primary or secondary system highway as defined by the MUTCD 2G.01, where the initial TODS panel is to be located.
- Shall meet the "Specific Travel Services (LOGO) Signing Program - Tier II" criteria for their respective type of facility. (See table below.)
- Agree to be bumped in accordance with the Bumping Policy for a Tier II facility.

Fuel

- Maximum distance from intersection of facility: 1 mile
- Minimum period of operation: 12 hours per day, 7 days per week
- Required service to be provided & other requirements:
 - Provide fuel, oil, tire repair service or information on available tire repair service in area.
 - Provide compressed air for tire inflation and free water for battery and radiator.
 - Provide free drinking water and cups.
 - Provide free restroom facilities with appropriate lock, sink for washing, flush toilet, tissue and sanitary towels or drying devices.

Food

- Maximum distance from intersection of facility: 3 miles
- Minimum period of operation: 6 hours per day, 6 days per week
- Requirements:
 - Display valid permit from the State Board of Health.
 - Shall have a menu available.
 - Shall have and keep in place easily accessible indoor seating at tables or counters to comfortably seat a minimum of 20 adult people.
 - Possess valid permit to operate by the State Board of Health.

Lodging

- Continuous 24 hour operation, 7 days per week
- Provide a minimum of 4 lodging rooms with off street parking for each room.

Acceptable NJTODS Tier I Sites*

(1) Shall not be a franchise or member of a national chain

***NOTE:** A location may be deemed ineligible if its facility and/or signage may be clearly seen from the state highway.

Cultural	Recreational	Retail Tourism
Arts/Crafts Center	Amphi-theatre	Agri-Business
Gallery	Amusement Park	Antique Business
Museum	Aquarium	Auction Houses
Historic Building	Arboretum	Bed and Breakfast
Historic Cemetery	Arena	Brewery
Historic Site	Auditorium	Distillery
Historic District	Boat Landings/Marina	Farm Market
Performing Arts Center	Botanical Garden	Farmers Market
	Civic Center	Flea Market
	Coliseum	Nurseries/Greenhouses
	Concert Hall	Restaurants(1)
	Equestrian Center	Winery
Educational	Fairground	
Schools	Golf Course	
Colleges and Universities	Natural Attraction	
Science Centers	Natural Resource	
Educational Attractions	Pavilion	
	Race Track	
	Park: National, Municipal, Privately Owned, Regional	
Trails	Ski Resort	

Historic Trails	Stadium	
Recreational Trails	Theme Park	
Others as approved	Water Oriented Business	
	Zoo	

Excluded NJTODS Sites

The following would be excluded from participation in the NJ Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage program. **The exclusion only relates to qualification under these categories. These facilities may participate if qualifying under another acceptable category.**

Business/Commercial	Medical	Religious
Adult Entertainment	Drug Rehabilitation Facility	Cathedrals
Funeral Homes	Extended Care Facility	Chapels
Industrial Parks or Plants	Fraternal Homes	Churches
Media Facilities	Hospitals	Mosques
Movie Theatres	Humane Facility	Shrines
Office Parks	Infirmaries	Synagogues
Radio Stations	Mental Facility	Temples
Television Stations	Nursing Homes	Other Religious Sites
Truck Terminals	Retirement Homes	
	Sanitariums	Miscellaneous
Governmental	Treatment Centers	Animal Shelters
Local Jails	Veterans Facilities	Cemeteries/Columbaria
Local Police/Sheriff Offices		Mobile Home Parks
Post Offices		Subdivisions
		Veterinary Facilities

NJTODS Bumping Policy

“Bumping” or the removal of a business from the TODS program is only applicable to Tier II participants - GAS, FOOD, and, LODGING (franchises and/or members of national chains). Bumping would occur only at the end of the contracted period AND only if previously requested by a Tier I facility.

Tier I Bumps Tier II: A Tier II business can be removed from the Program only if a request for participation is made by another business that satisfies all of the Tier I requirements.

Tier II bumping of another Tier II: A Tier II business located outside of one (1) mile of the intersection as measured for inclusion in the TODS Program may be “bumped” from the Program at the conclusion of their contract period if a request is made by another business of the same service which satisfies all of the Tier II requirements for the service and is located

more than 1/2 mile closer to the interchange or intersection as measured for inclusion in the TODS Program.

However, a Tier II business located within one (1) mile of the intersection as measured for inclusion in the TODS Program cannot be “bumped” from the Program by another Tier II business. It will remain in the Program as long as it continues to satisfy the Tier II requirements for the service, provides the necessary service to the motorist, and satisfies the contracted financial obligation to the Program.

TODS Pricing

When compared to the six other states mentioned above, New Jersey’s TODS program is the most expensive at \$800 per mainline sign panel.

TODS Program Comparison Summary

	Mainline Sign	Coverage fee Seasonal	Application Fee	Fabrication Fee	Maintenance Fee	Sign Modification & Relocation
Illinois TODS	\$65	\$50	\$50	Included	\$50	N/A
Kentucky TODS	\$216	None	None	Additional	None	\$200
Indiana TODS	\$350	None	None	Included	\$50 Annual	\$250
Michigan TODS	\$360	\$25	None	Additional	None	N/A
Ohio TODS	\$360	None	None	Additional	None	N/A
Virginia TODS	\$450	\$50	\$100	Additional	None	N/A
NJ TODS Current	\$800			Included		N/A

TODS Interest Survey

We distributed a brief survey to a small sample of tourist oriented destinations to gauge their level of interest in the TODS program.

- 72 Respondents represented:

Arts and Culture	22
History/Heritage Tourism	12
Entertainment/Amusements	13
Eco-Tourism/Nature Sites	12
Recreation	6
Education/Information Sites	4
Retail Tourism	3
- 69 Interested in learning if they qualified for a TODS sign.
- 66 Located within 5 miles of a state highway
- 39 Would apply if the price were reduced to \$500 per sign

- 23 Thought the program was still too expensive at \$500 per sign, but would apply if a grant program were in place to support TODS signage.

As part of the Wayfinding Initiative, Celebrate NJ! is developing a “NJ Points of Interest Community Map”, which intends to use a membership fee to help fund a grant program to support TODS signage. When asked about interest in this program, respondents said:

- 66 Could benefit by being a member of an online promotional map site
- 51 Would be willing to pay between \$100 and \$500 per year for this service

Based on this limited data, interest levels indicate a grant program to support TODS signage would be attractive and feasible.

Pricing Recommendation:

The team is recommending a two-tiered approach to pricing in the new NJ TODS contract.

Tier II (food, fuel, lodging)*	\$800 per sign
Tier I (attractions per criteria list)*	\$500 per initial sign, \$350 per additional sign
Sign modification or relocation fee	\$100 per occurrence

*refer to eligibility criteria

Transition Process for New Criteria

Existing TODS Contracts

We recommend implementation of the new criteria upon renewal date of current signs. If we have Tier I signs applying for space, the “bumping policy” would apply. If there are no Tier I applicants for the space, the Tier II sign would be renewed. The maximum number of TODS signs allowed per assembly is four in each direction per the MUTCD. This would allow for expansion of signs in a location without the need to bump and existing sign. (Refer to the Bumping Policy)

Notification of New Criteria

We recommend that NJDOT send out a notification and FAQ flyer to all existing TODS contract holders regarding the new criteria policy upon adoption of these changes.

New Applicants

New applicants will be advised of the new eligibility criteria including the bumping policy and will be informed about possible timing issues when replacing existing signage.

Promotional Support

In support of the adoption of the new eligibility recommendations, Celebrate NJ! and members of the Wayfinding Initiative Advisory Board will promote the NJ TODS program within their respective “points of interest” communities. We plan to co-market the TODS program along with the NJ Points of Interest Community Map and provide a grant program to support cultural organizations to participate in the TODS program.

Integration of TODS program with Wayfinding Master Plan

In accordance with the MUTCD regulations, TODS allows for limited design change. That being said, our intention is to include the TODS signage in the overall wayfinding plan by creating sign assembly “frames” that include icons/text or other acceptable graphics that will connect the TODS signs into the overall program.

(See sample designs attached.)