




Signage Guide for Downtowns





Signage Guide for Public Sector



Signage Guide for Downtowns

Wayfinding signage in downtown districts serves several key purposes:

Navigation: The most fundamental role of wayfinding signage is to help pedestrians and motorists navigate through the downtown district. This includes directing them to specific destinations, such as shops, restaurants, and landmarks, as well as providing information on street names and directions.

Enhancing the User Experience: Good wayfinding signage improves the overall experience for visitors and residents alike. It reduces confusion and frustration by clearly marking routes and destinations, making it easier for people to find what they're looking for.

Safety: By providing clear directions, wayfinding signage can enhance safety, directing traffic effectively and reducing the likelihood of accidents due to confusion or misdirection.

Branding and Identity: Wayfinding signage can also contribute to the branding and identity of the downtown district. Distinctive designs, colors, and logos not only make the signs more effective but also add to the aesthetic appeal and character of the area.

Economic Benefits: Effective wayfinding signage can have a positive economic impact. By making it easier for people to locate businesses, attractions, and amenities, these signs can encourage more foot traffic and spending in the district.

Accessibility: Good signage ensures accessibility for all, including those with disabilities. It includes considerations for the visually impaired, such as braille or audio systems, and is designed to be easily understood by a diverse range of people.

Information Provision: Beyond just directions, wayfinding signage often provides valuable information about the district, such as historical facts, points of interest, or upcoming events, enriching the visitor's experience and knowledge of the area.

Linking Different Areas: In larger downtown districts, wayfinding signage helps to connect different areas, making it easier for visitors to understand how various parts of the district relate to each other and encouraging exploration.

In summary, wayfinding signage in downtown districts plays a crucial role in enhancing navigation, safety, user experience, and economic vitality, while also contributing to the area's identity and accessibility.



PLANNING A WAYFINDING SYSTEM

Planning a wayfinding system for your town involves a multi-step process that requires careful consideration, collaboration, and attention to detail. Here's a comprehensive approach to developing an effective wayfinding system:

Assess Current Needs and Goals:

Conduct an audit of existing signage and wayfinding elements.
Identify key destinations, landmarks, and areas that are difficult to navigate.
Determine the primary goals of the wayfinding system (e.g., to promote walking, support local businesses, improve traffic flow).

Engage Stakeholders:

Involve community members, local businesses, town officials, and other stakeholders in the planning process. Hold public meetings or workshops to gather input and ensure the system meets the needs of various user groups (residents, tourists, people with disabilities).

Understand Your Audience:

Consider the needs of different users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and public transport users. Pay special attention to accessibility requirements for people with disabilities.

Develop a Wayfinding Strategy:

Identify key routes and decision points where signage is needed.
Decide on the types of signs required (directional, informational, identification, etc.).
Consider the use of maps, digital tools, or apps to complement physical signage.

Design the Signage:

Ensure that the design is consistent, clear, and easy to understand.
Use recognizable symbols, large fonts, and high-contrast colors for readability.
Design for durability and ease of maintenance.

Incorporate Local Identity:

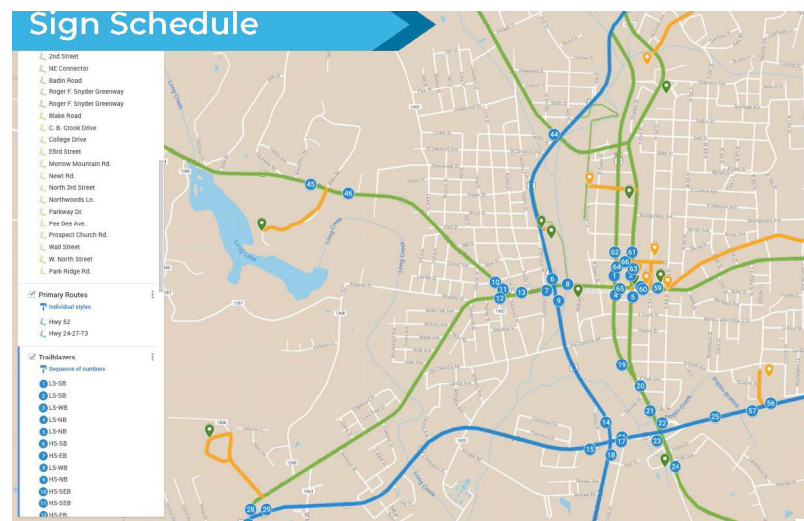
Reflect the town's character and culture in the design elements.
Use the wayfinding system to tell a story about the town or highlight its history.

Plan for Implementation:

Develop a phased implementation plan, starting with the most critical areas.
Determine the budget and identify potential funding sources.
Work with local authorities for necessary permits and approvals.

Install the Wayfinding Elements:

Ensure professional and accurate installation of signage and other elements.
Consider the timing of installations to minimize disruptions.



Evaluate and Iterate:

After implementation, gather feedback from users and stakeholders.
Monitor the effectiveness of the system and make adjustments as needed.

Maintain the System:

Plan for regular maintenance and updates to the wayfinding elements.
Keep the system up-to-date with changes in the town's layout or points of interest.

Remember, a successful wayfinding system is user-focused, adaptable, and reflective of the community's identity and needs. It's also important to consider the long-term sustainability of the system in terms of maintenance and adaptability to future changes in the town.



PARTS OF A WAYFINDING SYSTEM

A wayfinding system for a Downtown district typically comprises several types of signs, each serving a specific function:

Identification Signs: These signs identify specific landmarks, buildings, or districts. They are often placed at entrances to Main Street or at significant locations like public squares, parks, or important buildings.

Directional Signs: These are perhaps the most critical in a wayfinding system. They guide visitors and locals to various destinations like parking areas, public transportation hubs, attractions, and different sections of the Downtown district. They are usually placed at intersections, decision points, and along routes leading to key destinations.

Informational Kiosks or Maps: Large, stationary maps or informational kiosks provide an overview of the area. They often include a “you are here” marker, making it easier for people to orient themselves and plan their route. These are commonly found in central locations, near major attractions, or at the beginning of the Downtown district.

Regulatory Signs: These signs provide necessary information about the rules of the area, such as parking regulations, speed limits, and other local ordinances. While not unique to wayfinding, they are essential for maintaining order and safety.

Pedestrian Signs: Specifically designed for pedestrians, these signs are placed at eye level and offer directions, distances, and estimated walking times to various points of interest. They are particularly important in pedestrianized zones of Main Street.

Vehicular Signs: Aimed at motorists, these signs are larger and positioned to be easily seen from the road. They guide drivers to parking areas, exits, and major attractions accessible by vehicle.

Historical and Cultural Markers: These signs provide background information about historical sites, architectural features, or cultural points of interest. They enhance the visitor's experience by deepening their understanding of the area's heritage.

Public Transit Signs: If the Downtown district is served by public transportation, signs indicating bus stops, subway stations, or other transit points are necessary. These signs often include schedules and route information.

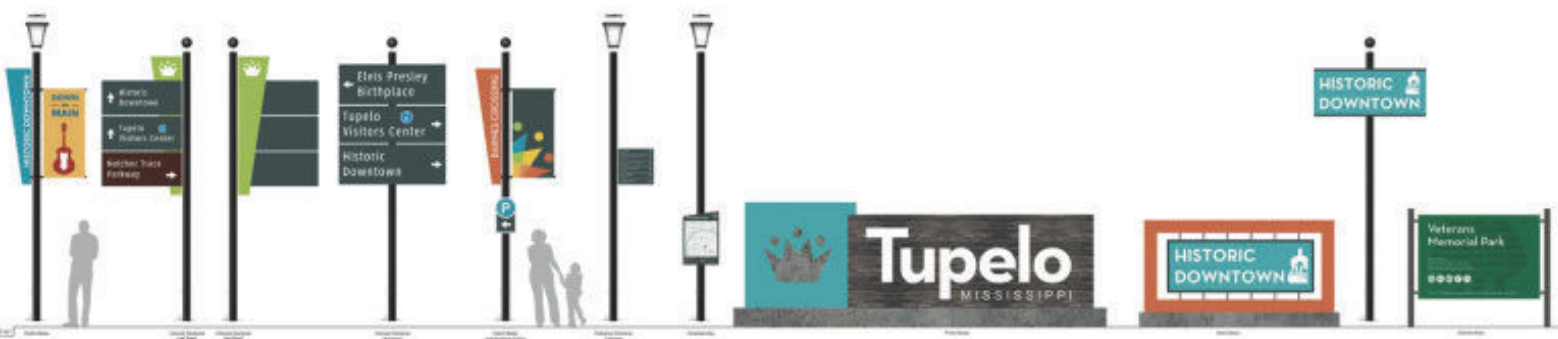
Interactive or Digital Signs: Some modern wayfinding systems include digital or interactive components, like touch-screen information kiosks or QR codes that link to maps or additional information when scanned with a smartphone.

Banners and Temporary Signs: These are used for promoting events, seasonal activities, or temporary exhibitions. They are usually placed along the Main Street and in public gathering areas.

Each of these sign types contributes to a cohesive and comprehensive wayfinding system, making the Downtown district more navigable, enjoyable, and accessible for everyone.



TUPELO WAYFINDING SYSTEM



SAMPLES

Gateways



Trailblazers



SAMPLES

Parking

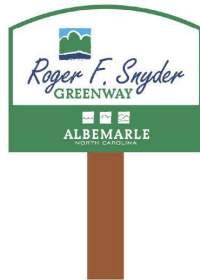
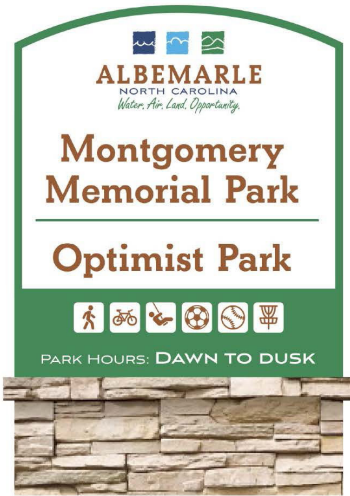


Pedestrian



SAMPLES

Park Signage



More to Explore Signs

The “More to Explore” sign, particularly when it highlights businesses off the Main Street and incorporates small blades with business names, serves several important functions in a community:

Promoting Local Businesses: This type of signage is crucial in drawing attention to businesses that are not located directly on Main Street but are in the vicinity. By highlighting these establishments, the signs help in distributing foot traffic more evenly and ensuring that off-Main Street businesses also receive visibility and patronage.

Encouraging Exploration: The “More to Explore” message piques curiosity and encourages visitors and locals to venture beyond the main thoroughfare. This exploration can lead to a more comprehensive experience of what the area has to offer, including discovering unique shops, restaurants, and services that they might otherwise miss.

Community Partnership: The involvement of both the public and private sectors in developing these signs represents a collaborative community effort. Businesses can participate in the design or sponsorship of these signs, fostering a sense of ownership and investment in the community's success.

Customization and Flexibility: The use of small blades with individual business names allows for a flexible and customizable approach. Businesses can join the program as they open or opt for more prominent signage as they grow, ensuring that the wayfinding system remains up-to-date and relevant.

Enhanced User Experience: For visitors and new residents, these signs make navigation easier and more enjoyable. They provide a clear guide to finding various businesses and attractions, improving the overall experience of exploring the district.

“More to Explore” signs with small blades for business names play a vital role in promoting local businesses, encouraging exploration, fostering community partnerships, and contributing to balanced economic growth and enhanced user experience.



Walk Your City Signs

“Walk Your City” style guerrilla wayfinding signs, which are often temporary in nature, serve several unique and important purposes in urban environments:

Promoting Walkability: These signs encourage people to walk by clearly showing the distance or walking time to various destinations. By demonstrating that many locations are within a reasonable walking distance, they promote a more walkable and pedestrian-friendly city.

Improving Navigation: They provide straightforward, easy-to-understand directions to pedestrians, helping them navigate urban spaces more confidently. This is particularly useful for visitors or residents who are not familiar with all the intricacies of the area.

Enhancing Discoverability: Guerrilla wayfinding signs can draw attention to lesser-known sites, attractions, or businesses. They can guide people to hidden gems in the city that they might not find in traditional guides or maps.

Community Engagement: Often created by local residents or community groups, these signs can reflect the unique character and priorities of a neighborhood. They offer a platform for community members to share what they love about their area or to provide insider tips.

Experimentation and Feedback: Because they are temporary and relatively low-cost, these signs allow cities and communities to experiment with different wayfinding strategies. They can test what works and gather public feedback before committing to more permanent solutions.

Public Health and Environment: By encouraging walking, these signs can contribute to improved public health outcomes and reduced reliance on cars, leading to lower traffic congestion and decreased environmental impact.

Urban Activism: These types of signs can also serve as a form of urban activism, highlighting the need for better pedestrian infrastructure. They can draw attention to the lack of signage and safe, walkable routes in certain areas, potentially spurring action from city planners.

Event Promotion: Temporary guerrilla wayfinding signs are often used during special events, festivals, or pop-up markets, guiding visitors to event locations or points of interest related to the event.

Cultural and Historical Education: Some signs include not just directions but also snippets of cultural, historical, or interesting information about destinations, contributing to the educational experience of walkers.

In essence, “Walk Your City” style guerrilla wayfinding signs are an innovative, community-focused approach to urban navigation. They highlight the walkability of cities, encourage exploration, and can play a role in advocacy for better pedestrian facilities.



Street Banners

Planning a street banner system for your Downtown district involves several key steps, focusing on design, logistics, regulatory compliance, and community involvement. Here's a guide to help you through the process:

Define Objectives and Themes: Determine the purpose of the banner system (e.g., beautification, promoting local events, seasonal decoration). Decide on themes that reflect the character and culture of the Downtown district.

Engage Stakeholders: Consult with local businesses, community groups, and residents to gather input and support. Consider partnerships with local artists, schools, or organizations for banner design.

Understand Regulations and Permissions: Check with your local government or town council for any regulations regarding street banners. Obtain necessary permits and ensure compliance with safety standards and installation guidelines.

Design the Banners: Ensure that the design aligns with the themes and objectives. Use durable, weather-resistant materials suitable for outdoor display. Consider size and visibility, ensuring that the banners are legible and aesthetically pleasing from a distance.

Plan for Installation and Maintenance: Determine suitable locations for banner installation, considering visibility and impact on traffic and pedestrians. Coordinate with local utilities if banners are to be attached to light poles or other structures. Plan for regular maintenance, including cleaning and repairing banners as needed.

Budgeting and Funding: Estimate costs for design, production, installation, and maintenance. Explore funding options, such as sponsorships from local businesses, grants, or community fundraising.

Create a Rotation and Storage Plan: Develop a schedule for rotating banners to keep the display fresh and relevant (e.g., seasonal themes, local events). Plan for safe storage of banners when not in use, protecting them from damage.

Community Involvement and Promotion: Involve the community in the unveiling of new banners to generate excitement and a sense of ownership. Promote the banner system through local media, social media, and community events.

Evaluation and Feedback: After installation, seek feedback from the community and stakeholders. Assess the impact of the banner system on the Downtown district's ambiance and traffic.

Sustainability Considerations: Consider environmentally friendly materials and practices in the banner design and production process. Plan for the end-of-life of banners, such as recycling or repurposing materials.

By following these steps, you can create an effective and appealing street banner system that enhances the aesthetic appeal of your Downtown district, promotes community events and themes, and fosters a sense of community pride and engagement.



Guide to Street Banners Video

scan the QR code above to get a full video on the roll of street banners in your Downtown districts



Signage Guide for Private Sector



Signs for Your Business

Creating effective signage for a small business in a historic district involves balancing modern marketing needs with the aesthetic and regulatory requirements of the area. Here are various types of signage that can be suitable:

Hanging Signs: These signs are often double-sided and hang perpendicular to the storefront, making them visible from both directions on the street. They're ideal for pedestrian traffic in historic districts.

Window Graphics: Utilize the front windows of your business for subtle, yet effective signage. This can include business names, logos, operating hours, and brief descriptions of products or services. Ensure compliance with any historical district regulations regarding window signage.

Projecting Signs: Similar to hanging signs but often larger and more ornate, projecting signs extend out from the building and can be designed to reflect the historical character of the area.

A-Frame Signs: Portable and easy to manage, A-frame signs can be placed on the sidewalk during business hours to attract passersby. These should be tastefully designed to complement the historic surroundings.

Wall-Mounted Signs: These signs are fixed directly onto the building and can range from simple nameplates to more elaborate signboards. In a historic district, it's important to choose materials and designs that harmonize with the building's architecture.

Blade Signs: Thin and elegant, blade signs are mounted on a wall and stick out, making them visible from a distance. They can be designed to match the historical theme of the area.

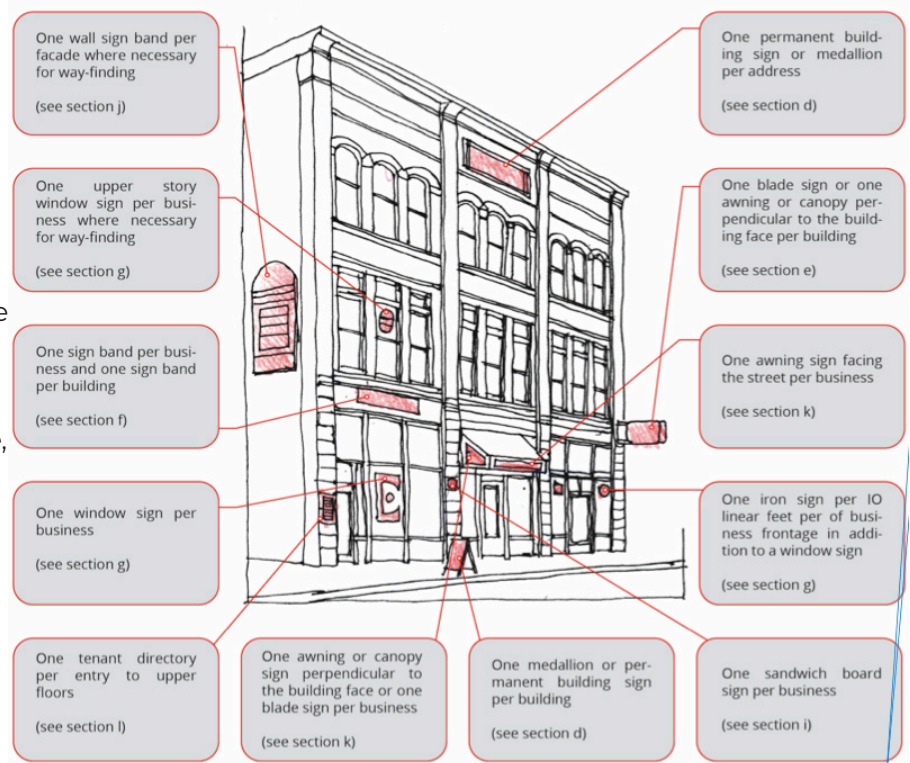
Awning Graphics: If your business has an awning, using it for signage is a subtle way to convey your brand. Ensure that the material and lettering style are in keeping with the historic character.

Banner Signs: While more temporary, banners can be used for special promotions or events. They should be designed with a nod to the historic environment to ensure they don't clash with the surroundings.

Informational Plaques: These can be used to provide historical information about the building or area, alongside your business information, adding a storytelling element to your signage.

Hours Signs: Hours signs on downtown businesses are crucial as they inform customers of operational times, fostering convenience and managing expectations in bustling urban areas.

Remember, each historic district may have specific guidelines and restrictions for signage, so it's crucial to check with the local historic preservation or planning office before designing and installing your signs.



Hanging Signs

Hanging signs serve as an elegant and effective solution for Main Street businesses, particularly in areas with heavy foot traffic. These signs, often crafted from materials like wood or metal to evoke a classic, timeless feel, hang perpendicular to the storefront, making them easily visible to pedestrians approaching from either direction. Their compact and elevated design ensures minimal obstruction on bustling sidewalks, while offering ample space for creative branding.

Ideal for historic or quaint shopping districts, hanging signs can be designed to blend seamlessly with the architectural charm of the area, often featuring intricate details, custom typography, or artistic renderings of the business logo. This type of signage not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of a Main Street but also plays a crucial role in increasing business visibility and attracting potential customers.



Window Graphics

Window graphics offer Main Street businesses a versatile and cost-effective way to enhance their storefronts while maximizing marketing potential. These graphics, ranging from simple vinyl lettering to elaborate full-window designs, transform a business's windows into a canvas for creative expression and branding. They effectively communicate the essence of the business, display operating hours, or highlight promotions without taking up additional sidewalk

space, crucial in bustling pedestrian areas. Tailored to fit the unique style and architecture of Main Street settings, window graphics can be designed to reflect a vintage, modern, or thematic look, thereby contributing to the street's visual appeal. This type of signage is particularly beneficial for businesses seeking a subtle yet impactful way to attract the attention of passersby, enhancing their storefront's aesthetics and drawing in customers with minimal structural modification.



Projecting Signs

Projecting signs, distinct from hanging signs, are a prominent signage option for Main Street businesses, offering high visibility from a distance while complementing the street's architectural character. Unlike hanging signs, which are typically smaller and suspended from a bracket or a support, projecting signs are larger and mounted directly onto the building's facade, extending outward in a way that makes them noticeable to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. They can be crafted in various shapes and sizes, often

illuminated for added visibility at night. These signs provide a broader canvas for creative design, allowing businesses to feature more detailed graphics or larger text. The key difference lies in their orientation and size: while hanging signs are more compact and ideal for narrow streets and pedestrian zones, projecting signs are designed to be eye-catching and readable from a greater distance, making them an excellent choice for businesses on wider or busier Main Streets.



A Frame or Sandwich Board Signs

A-frame signs, also known as sandwich boards, are a highly versatile and portable signage option for Main Street businesses, ideal for attracting foot traffic and promoting daily specials or events. These freestanding signs can be easily placed on the sidewalk in front of a store or café, offering a direct line of sight to passing pedestrians. Their double-sided design allows for messages to be seen from both directions, maximizing exposure. A key advantage of A-frame signs is their mobility; they can be brought indoors after business

hours or repositioned as needed throughout the day. Additionally, they offer a quaint, personal touch to the storefront, often featuring chalkboard surfaces or customizable panels that enable businesses to frequently update their messaging. This adaptability makes A-frame signs particularly suitable for the dynamic and pedestrian-oriented environment of Main Street, where engaging directly with passersby is crucial for attracting customers.



Wall Mounted Signage

Wall-mounted signage is a classic and enduring choice for Main Street businesses, offering a prominent and permanent way to display a brand. Mounted directly onto the exterior of a building, these signs are designed to be both visually striking and harmonious with the architectural style of the street. They come in various forms, from flat panels to dimensional letters or intricate lightbox signs, providing businesses with a broad canvas to showcase their name, logo, and aesthetic. The permanence of wall-mounted signs makes them

a key element in establishing a business's presence and identity within the Main Street landscape. Their elevation above street level ensures visibility from a distance, making them ideal for businesses looking to stand out in a bustling, competitive environment. Additionally, wall-mounted signs can be illuminated for night-time visibility, enhancing their impact and ensuring that the business's presence is felt around the clock.



Blade Signs

Blade signs are a distinctive and elegant signage option for Main Street businesses, particularly effective in areas with heavy foot traffic. Unlike traditional projecting signs, blade signs are usually narrower and more streamlined, extending outward from a building's facade with a vertical orientation. This design makes them highly visible to pedestrians approaching from either direction, without overwhelming the streetscape. Often crafted from materials like wrought iron, wood, or high-quality plastics,

and sometimes incorporating lighting for added visibility, blade signs offer a blend of modern functionality and classic charm. Their slim profile and customizable design options make them ideal for businesses in historic districts or those with limited façade space. Blade signs not only enhance a business's visibility but also contribute to the overall aesthetic of Main Street, providing a quaint, yet sophisticated signage solution that resonates with the character of the area.



Awning Graphics

Awning graphics blend functionality with branding for Main Street businesses, offering a unique way to advertise while providing aesthetic and practical benefits. These graphics are incorporated into the fabric of awnings, extending over the sidewalk or entryway of a store, café, or restaurant. They serve a dual purpose: protecting customers from the elements and enhancing the storefront's visual appeal. The customization of awning graphics allows businesses to showcase their logo, business name, or key information

in a subtle yet impactful manner, contributing to the street's overall charm. This type of signage is particularly effective in historic or densely packed shopping areas where traditional signage space might be limited. Awning graphics maintain a low profile, preserving the architectural integrity of the street, while still providing a visually appealing and distinctive branding opportunity. Their functionality, combined with the capacity for creative and elegant designs, makes awning graphics a smart choice for businesses looking to stand out on Main Street.



Banner Signs

Banner signs offer Main Street businesses a flexible and dynamic signage solution, particularly well-suited for temporary promotions, events, or announcements. These signs are typically made of durable, weather-resistant materials like vinyl, enabling them to withstand outdoor conditions. Their large, eye-catching format ensures high visibility, making them an excellent tool for drawing attention to sales, grand openings, or special occasions. One of the key advantages of banner signs is their portability and ease of installation; they can be

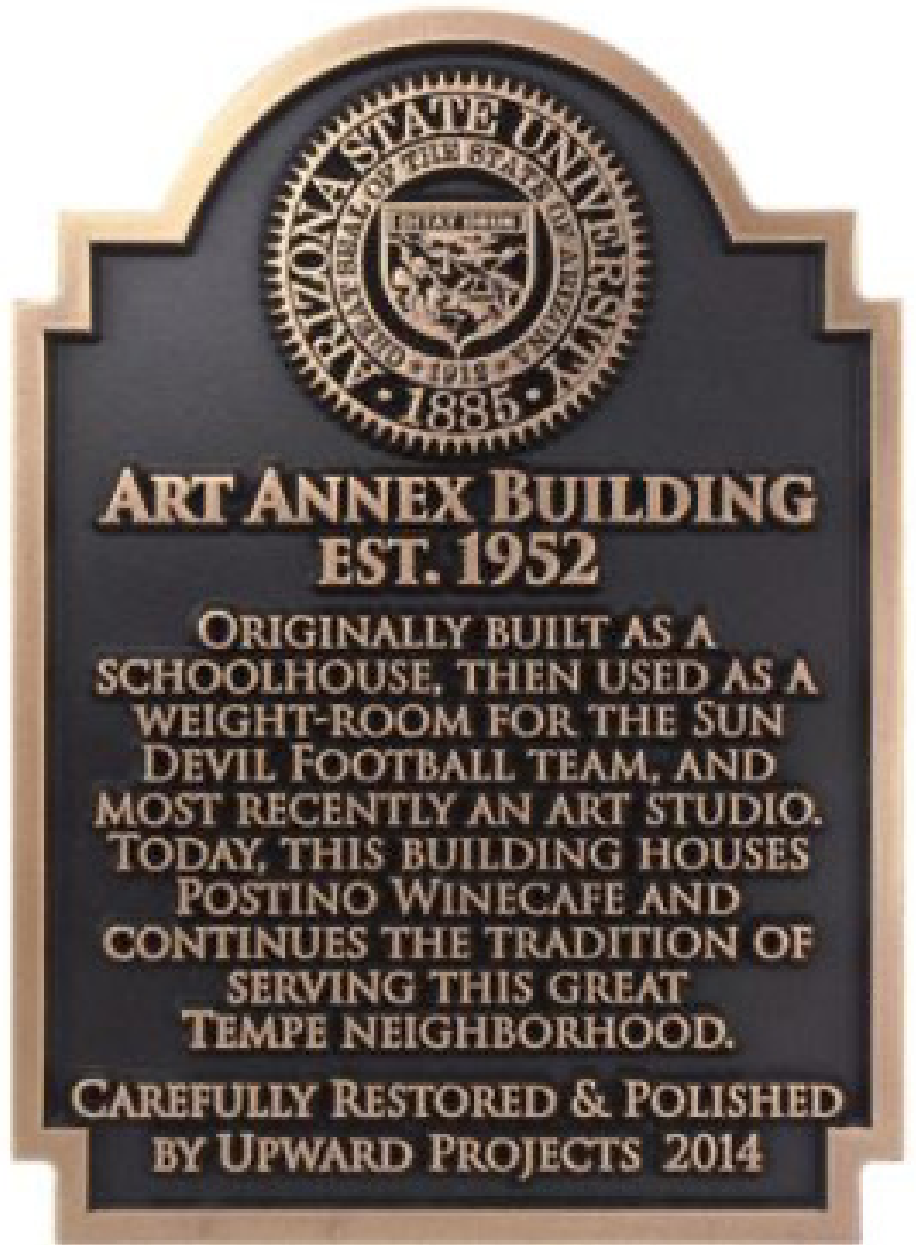
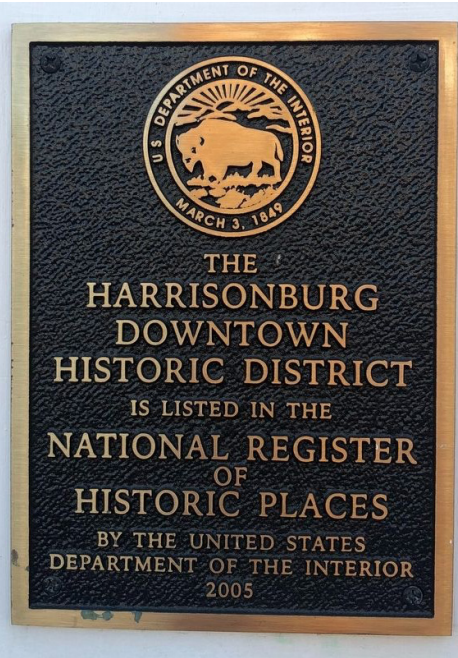
hung across the storefront, between street poles, or in other prominent locations. This versatility makes them a popular choice for businesses that need to frequently update or change their promotional messaging. Despite their temporary nature, banner signs can be designed with vibrant colors and bold text to blend seamlessly with the aesthetic of Main Street, ensuring that they contribute positively to the area's visual appeal while effectively communicating their intended message.



Informational Plaques

Informational plaques provide Main Street businesses with an understated yet impactful means of connecting with their community by blending historical context with business identity. Typically made of durable materials like bronze or brass, these plaques are mounted on the exterior of a building, often near the entrance, and offer a brief history of the site, the building, or the area, along with information about the current business. This blend of past and present not only informs and engages passersby but also adds

a layer of depth to the business's presence, fostering a sense of continuity and respect for the locale's heritage. Especially suitable for businesses located in historic districts or buildings with a significant past, informational plaques enhance the cultural experience of Main Street, inviting customers to appreciate the rich backstory of the area while they shop, dine, or explore. This unique form of signage serves as a testament to a business's integration into the fabric of the community and its commitment to preserving local history.



Hours Signs

In the dynamic and fast-paced environment of downtown areas, the clarity and visibility of business hours signs are paramount. These signs serve as the first point of communication between businesses and potential customers, offering essential information at a glance. For people navigating through the bustling streets, an easily readable and well-placed hours sign can be the deciding factor in choosing where to dine, shop, or seek services. Especially in downtown areas, where competition is fierce and every footfall counts, missing out on potential customers due to unclear or absent business hours signs can significantly impact a business's bottom line. Moreover, good hours signs mitigate confusion and prevent the frustration of customers showing up at closed doors, thereby maintaining a business's reputation for professionalism and customer service.

Furthermore, in an era where digital presence is crucial, the physical aspect of a business, like its hours sign, continues to hold significant importance. It reflects the business's attention to detail and commitment to customer experience. A well-designed, accurate, and easy-to-read hours sign not only attracts foot traffic but also enhances the business's image. It sends a message of reliability and trustworthiness, qualities highly valued by customers in any industry. In addition, as downtown areas often host tourists and visitors unfamiliar with local business hours, clear signage helps these businesses tap into the lucrative tourist market by reducing uncertainty and encouraging spontaneous visits. In essence, investing in a good hours sign is not just about displaying operational times; it's about respecting customers' time, improving service efficiency, and ultimately, fortifying the business's presence in a competitive urban landscape.

