

# Cities Continue to Embrace Benefits of Wayfinding

*New and Old Techniques, Applications Work Together*

Wayfinding is “direction for people in motion,” says Corbin Design President Mark VanderKlipp. It is “a communication challenge as much as it is a signage task.”

VanderKlipp told UTM that, despite the tough economy, people still need to find their destinations. Making it easier for visitors to find their way is paramount for any institution – be it a hospital, cultural center, educational institution, corporation, city or region. Visitors who feel competent and confident in an environment are more likely to have good memories and come again. This leads to return visits and increased revenue.

According to VanderKlipp, wayfinding ties together verbal and visual cues, using signage, but also by working through architecture, interiors, lighting and landscape design. It creates tools to support a variety of navigation preferences. “Visually, use of a similar graphic approach to mapping and the presentation of information will build familiarity with the program and make wayfinding tools recognizable, whether online, in a mobile device, or on a sign,” he said.

Asked about new directions for

wayfinding, VanderKlipp said that regions are realizing that a shared approach to attracting business, resident and tourist dollars will be a net benefit. Towns and destinations may have been competing for the same tourist dollars for generations. To realize the benefits of wayfinding, stakeholders must overcome this cultural hurdle at the beginning of the process. A consolidated approach to wayfinding unifies a region both verbally and visually, and gives visitors the tools they need to navigate successfully. Most importantly, the information provided to visitors can make them feel like “insiders” because they can discover unique events, attractions and destinations on their own. At the same time, wayfinding can build awareness among residents to all that their region has to offer.

VanderKlipp described three current Corbin Design wayfinding projects: Raleigh, North Carolina; Centre City, Calgary; and Georgetown, South Carolina.

## Connecting Physical to Digital: Raleigh, NC

As a state capital and one of the fastest

growing U.S. cities, Raleigh developed a wayfinding system for its 370,000 residents and 11.5 million yearly visitors. Corbin worked closely with the Downtown Raleigh Alliance, a nonprofit economic development organization, to improve wayfinding while better branding the city.

The resulting system was designed as a utility for direction giving and to help enhance the city’s market potential. For example, using a new ParkLink logo that Corbin developed to represent public parking, the system provides better direction to and identification of venues. The system’s design, with its aluminum mesh and leaf pattern fins and decorative acorn finials, also reflects Raleigh’s motto as the “City of Oaks.”

Other tools were developed to reach Raleigh visitors who rely on new technologies to navigate. Geocentric, a Bethesda, MD-based software company, created the “next level” of visitor support. The information in the digital tools includes a comprehensive events calendar; detailed information on local events, destinations and attractions; information on living downtown, and real-time connections to public transit.

A concerted effort to build awareness via local media was also launched, so regional residents understood the importance of wayfinding and the tools to support it. From streetscape to printed materials and mobile media, Raleigh now speaks in the same language to its visitors and residents. People can navigate confidently via wayfinding signage and digital tools: Website

(<http://www.godowntownraleigh.com/>),

mobile application

(<http://m.yourhere.com/>) and public Transit Circulator

(<http://www.godowntownraleigh.com/get-around/r-line/status>).

## Becoming a World Class City:

### Centre City Calgary, AB

With an increasingly diverse population and a burgeoning Centre City, Calgary asked Corbin Design to develop a master

*Please turn to Page 7*



*An example of a vehicular wayfinding directional sign. (Photo: Courtesy of Corbin Design)*

# European Commission Unveils Roadmap to Single European Transport Area

## *Plan Would Eliminate Gas-Fueled Cars in Cities by 2050*

The European Commission has unveiled a "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a Competitive and Resource Efficient Transport System," a plan aimed at enforcing "a profound shift in transport patterns for passengers" by 2050.

In the plan, the EC sets out 40 concrete initiatives for the next decade aimed at building a competitive transport system that will increase mobility, remove major barriers in key areas and fuel growth and employment. At the same time, the proposals will dramatically reduce Europe's dependence on imported oil and cut carbon emissions in transport by 60% by 2050.

The Transport 2050 roadmap sets different goals for different types of journeys

-- within cities, between cities, and long distance. Among these are:

For urban transport, a big shift to cleaner cars and cleaner fuels:

- A 50% shift away from conventionally fuelled cars by 2030, phasing them out in cities by 2050.
- Halve the use of 'conventionally fuelled' cars in urban transport by 2030; phase them out in cities by 2050; achieve essentially CO<sub>2</sub>-free movement of goods in major urban center by 2030.
- By 2050, move close to zero fatalities in road transport.

For intercity travel:

- 50% of all medium-distance passenger and freight transport should shift off the

roads and onto rail and waterborne transport.

- By 2050, the majority of medium-distance passenger transport, about 300 km and beyond, should go by rail.
- By 2030, 30% of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport, and more than 50% by 2050.
- Deliver a fully functional and EU-wide core network of transport corridors, ensuring facilities for efficient transfer between transport modes by 2030, with a high-quality high-capacity network by 2050 and a corresponding set of information services.

*Please turn to Page 8*

*Continued from Page 6*

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plan for wayfinding that could cover both current and future needs. The plan set a framework for the development of wayfinding tools in three key areas:

- Speak Calgarian – taking cues from the built environment and Centre City culture, design the foundational terminology that underlies all wayfinding and direction giving, including events, attractions, destinations and circulation.
- Connect Centres of Activity – specify and design the tools that will support the foundational wayfinding logic across media.
- Build Awareness – build compliance and support by creating lasting connections between Calgary's governmental, non-profit and private organizations, and include education as a critical component of a wayfinding program rollout.

Corbin's current efforts include detailed design development of the physical wayfinding elements, building a Digital Wayfinding Consortium to connect the physical to more immediate media, and connecting the Plus 15, Calgary's enclosed skywalk system, to the on-street wayfinding program.

Throughout this process, Corbin has been engaging a wide range of stakeholders – from those who influence urban design or historical interpretation to those who influence parks and trails, major

events, accessibility standards, or multi-lingual populations. The key is including as many points of view as possible in the process. With that shared vision, you begin building consensus, and then a flexible structure to account for technical, physical, regulatory and budgetary constraints. The wayfinding effort is planned to launch prior to July 2012, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Calgary Stampede.

### **Putting Yourself on the Map: Georgetown, SC**

In order to market the city and encourage new residential, retail, entertainment and office development, Georgetown had expressed a need for a wayfinding plan for residents and visitors. Most importantly, with its location between Myrtle Beach and Charleston, Georgetown needed to encourage visitors to turn off of Highway 17 and experience all that it has to offer as a historic seaport tourist destination.

The system of wayfinding elements recently approved will reflect the historic architecture in terms of color, masonry, lighting and landscaping. These elements need to support physical wayfinding, yet merge within the context of the environment so they seem a part of the fabric of this gracious city's streetscapes. Also critical is that they meet current federal, state and lo-

cal regulations for visibility, contrast, placement and safety.

The wayfinding program reflects the past and is prepared to meet the future. A primarily street-level utility, it will visually and verbally unify Georgetown's historic district and waterfront. It will provide the "connective tissue" that becomes recognizable to residents and visitors as a means for information, orientation, direction and exploration.

For more information, visit Corbin Design at [www.corbindesign.com](http://www.corbindesign.com) or contact Mark VanderKlipp at [mark@corbindesign.com](mailto:mark@corbindesign.com).



*The map artwork that people see on pedestrian kiosks matches the artwork that they can view online and in mobile applications. (Photo: Courtesy of Corbin Design)*