

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Monday, December 16, 2024

DISCUSSION: Greenbelt Strategic Wayfinding Plan Outline and Sign Design Concepts.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. On site Council Chambers and via Zoom.

In attendance were: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver; and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff present: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Jaime Fearer, Assistant Planning Director; and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

Others present: Lybna Jaudrey, Neighborhood Design Center Project Manager, Anu Nair, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission; Christina Hartsfield, and Bill Orleans.

Greenbelt Strategic Wayfinding Plan and Signage Design

Council held a work session to discuss the Greenbelt Strategic Wayfinding Plan and Signage Design. Mayor Jordan recognized City Manager Salmerón and project managers from the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Neighborhood Design Center. Ms. Fearer provided an overview of the project, which aims to develop a unified wayfinding strategy for the city, separate from the Anacostia Heritage Trails project. The plan will be presented to the Arts Advisory Board and the Council for adoption.

Council discussed the role of the Neighborhood Design Center in community-based planning and the broader concept of wayfinding. Lybna Jaudrey the project manager from the Neighborhood Design Center, outlined the project's scope and presented an initial list of Greenbelt landmarks and attractions through a PowerPoint presentation.

Greenbelt Wayfinding and Site Research

Ms. Jaudrey presented research on the existing conditions of key sites in Greenbelt, focusing on their locations, signage, and the types of information displayed. The discussion highlighted the inconsistent signage, lack of unified wayfinding, and the need for maps and directories to better guide visitors. Suggestions were made to include additional sites, such as community gardens, forest preserves, and cemeteries. The meeting also reviewed community survey results, which revealed that most respondents, aged 45 to 74, frequent community institutions, trails, and parks more often than sites like cemeteries, hotels, and business parks.

Signage Improvements and Wayfinding Discussion

Council reviewed GIS mapping activity results and survey feedback on signage improvements in Center City, identifying three key themes: signage type, location, and community character. A strategic wayfinding plan was outlined, including the project's process, concepts, and strategies. The discussion emphasized the importance of wayfinding in guiding people through physical environments and identified four types of signage: welcome, directional, identification, and informational. Council also highlighted the significance of community institutions, suggesting the inclusion of the Green Belt Museum under community institutions and Martin's Crosswind under commercial and office parks.

Greenbelt Sign Design Concepts Discussed

The Council reviewed three sign design concepts for Greenbelt, all inspired by the city's natural beauty and existing color palettes. The first concept modernized the current design, the second incorporated the city's Art Deco style with simple graphics and primary colors, and the third featured a gateway monument sign along with directional and informational signage. Accessibility considerations were discussed, with concerns raised about color contrast. The potential for a unified design across all sign types, including historical interpretive signs, was also explored. The Council agreed to continue the discussion and consider additional design options.

Welcome Signage and Key Site Directions

Council discussed the need for cohesive welcome signage, including monument signs with the Greenbelt logo at city limits and jurisdictional boundaries along key corridors. They considered modifying existing vehicular signage, adding icons, and improving decision signage. Emphasis was placed on signage along major trails and the importance of guiding visitors to key sites, including adding directional signs at 295 exit to Greenbelt. Council also explored the idea of a unified design language for key sites, while allowing private sites the option to opt out. Lastly, they noted the lack of an identification sign at Spring Hill Lake Rec Center.

Historic Sign Maintenance and Replacement

Council discussed the maintenance and replacement of historic designation signs and kiosks across various areas. They conducted an inventory of these sites and suggested sharing the information with public works to establish a maintenance or replacement schedule. The possibility of replacing current signs with new ones, which would require a different maintenance program, was also considered. Placement of the signs, both near roadsides and within parks, was discussed, as well as the consistent design across sites, which helps visitors navigate more easily.

Exploring QR Codes and NFCs

Council discussed the potential use of QR codes and NFCs to provide more accessible information. They explored the idea of changing QR code content and reprogramming NFCs.

The proposal of using banners for identification signage in commercial centers was also considered. Council mentioned creating a directory for different key site types and types of signage that could be included for each.

City Wayfinding and Branding Project

Council discussed preparing a draft outline for the city's wayfinding and branding project, which will be shared with the Advisory Board. They emphasized the importance of coordinating with the broader county scheme, especially regarding trail connections, and working with the county Department of Public Works and Transportation staff. The potential for additional grant funding for implementation was also highlighted. The Council agreed on the need for a more detailed outline, including preliminary cost estimates and funding sources. They expressed appreciation for progress made and looked forward to advancing the project. The meeting ended at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Bonita Anderson

Bonita Anderson
City Clerk