



WOODWARD AVENUE  
FRAMEWORK SIGNAGE PLAN



August 2003

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## I. Introduction

Signage along the byway is a very important element. Currently there is a wealth of signage demanding attention from the byway users. The Heritage Team will be adding to the signage on the byway. It is important that the Heritage Team consider various elements and issues in determining signage design, placement, and purpose to insure that additional signage on the byway is an enhancement and not an addition to visual clutter.

This document is a framework signage plan. This plan includes the concept design of the identification heritage signage, which can incorporate the Auto Heritage logo where appropriate, along with the 18 Districts/Community identity logos/images. Recommendation is made for placement of the heritage signage on the corridor along with suggested icons and categories for Wayfinding and additional signage including but not limited to attractions, venues and downtowns. Design for sign production will be included in a subsequent phase of work.

## II. Considerations

Signs are a vital part of Woodward Avenue. They can identify, provide information and directions, and in addition, they can serve to educate. Signs actually do even more. They project an image – good or bad – of the type and quality of the resource and the organization or management of the resource. Effective signs reflect the best qualities of both. Through the design, style, material and construction, they present the personality of the organization and the resource.

Think of the signage that is used in the State Park system. They are dark brown with yellow lettering usually of a wood material. They are certainly identifiable and communicate useful information. The signs use both words and images such as this symbol to communicate camping facilities:



The State Park signage system also communicates---rustic and utilitarian, by its design, material and style. Unfortunate signage left in a state of disrepair or not replaced when needed can communicate a system with strapped financial resources or a resource that is not valued by the citizens or state government.

If you have been to Disney World or Disney Land and recall their signage, it also uses both words and images. However, the materials, style, design and construction communicates quality and efficiency, in addition to the sign's purpose. Their signage styles and designs change to reflect the nature of the attraction and recreation resource.

When considering signage there are many aspects to think of: Purpose, size, location, color(s), lighting, style, material, design, typeface, symbols or images, and

most importantly, quality of workmanship and construction. A simple, well-made and maintained sign speaks more highly of the organization and its resource than an extravagant, but sloppily constructed sign.

The Heritage Team effort will employ several type of signage along the corridor including:

- **Identification** - Identification signage is signage that contains the logo and identifies Woodward as a Heritage Route and one of America's Byways. It is placed along the public right-of-away at intervals which insures that Woodward users are aware of the designation. Identification signs might also be placed along cross roads to Woodward allowing travelers approaching the corridor to know not only where they are but also the designations which the corridor has achieved.
- **Traffic** - Traffic signs usually identify traffic rules such a no parking, stop or yield. However, traffic signs also include road names and/or mile markers.
- **Resource/Services** - Resource/Services signage direct Byway users to locations for emergency care, public restrooms/water, public telephones, shopping, points of interest, parking, and byway resources.
- **Public Relation/Educational** - Public Relation/Educational signs convey information or are used for educational purposes. Such signs might describe the history of the corridor, acknowledge important events, sponsors, or take the form of historic markers or interpretation signage.

**II. Signage Goals** – The following goals will guide the efforts for the creation of a signage program.

**General Signage Goals**

1. Heritage signage along the byway will be:
  - complete,
  - comprehensive,
  - easy to understand,
  - attractive,
  - easy to maintain,
  - of high quality,
  - and set a high standard for all signage.
2. Heritage signage will be designed and implemented in a fashion so as not to add to the visual clutter of the corridor.
3. Heritage signage will be designed to be easily identifiable.
4. Heritage signage will be installed in phases.
5. Where feasible, Heritage signage will be designed as an attachment, especially in existing Wayfinding systems, to reduce the number of signs on the corridor.
6. Consideration will be given to coordination and consolidation of Heritage Signage with District/Community Identity Signage.

**Wayfinding**

1. Heritage Signage will be designed to the extent possible to “fit” within a Wayfinding system.
2. The Heritage Team will participate in the development of a comprehensive framework for Wayfinding for the region encompassing the corridor from I-75 to the Lodge/Telegraph Road.
3. The Heritage Team will develop a detailed Wayfinding system for the Woodward Avenue Corridor featuring area districts, communities, facilities, attractions, and parking, with international symbols, coordinated with bus stops. The system will identify in detail the placement, type, and Wayfinding messages needed for Woodward Avenue. The Wayfinding system should reduce signage clutter by consolidating information and messages assisting the user in understanding where they are and how to “get” to their destination. The Wayfinding signage will be attractive and incorporate the branding themes and messages and be appropriate for both vehicular and pedestrian users.

4. The Heritage Team will work to implement the Wayfinding recommendations and signage throughout the corridor.

### **Identification**

1. The Signage Plan will identify the number and placement of the Byway identification signage.
2. The Signage Plan will suggest a design for the Byway identification signage using the adopted Branding images, recognizing the Michigan Heritage Route designation and National Scenic Byway designation.

### **Traffic**

1. The Signage Plan will suggest a design and color for the Byway street signs.
2. The Signage Plan will suggest a design for corridor mile markers.

### **Resources/Services**

1. The Signage Plan will create a system to communicate to Byway travelers the resources and services along the Byway including but not limited to:
  - a. Art
  - b. Attractions
  - c. Music, Stage, Film
  - d. Museums
  - e. Shopping
  - f. Tours
  - g. Sports
  - h. Transportation
  - i. Historical Sites
  - j. Parking, Public Restrooms, Telephones, etc.

### **Public Relations/Educational**

1. The Signage Plan will make recommendations concerning the development of guidelines and standards for Interpretive Signage.
2. The Signage Plan will make recommendations concerning Historic Markers.
3. The Signage Plan will make recommendations concerning the design of Educational and Sponsor signage.

#### IV. Conceptual Design Process

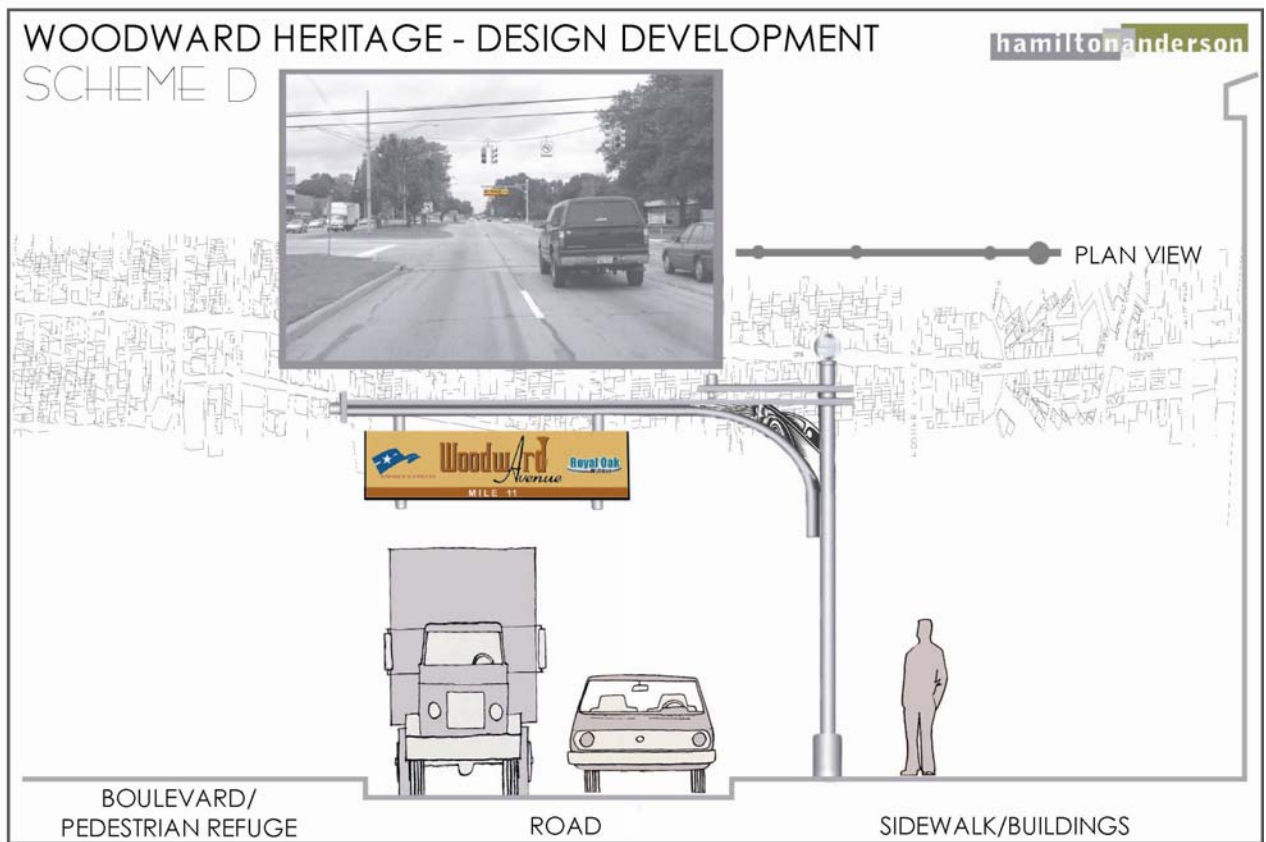
Hamilton Anderson Associates designed concepts for the specific heritage signage acknowledging Woodward's designation while incorporating 18 District/Community identity logos/images. The signs are not only meant to be identification markers for the heritage route but will also serve to initiate a Wayfinding "family" of signs. This sign system will address overall needs of the stakeholder group and acknowledge a broad range of resources as part of a coordinated signage system.

Direction was given to design signs that are completely unique, fun and different than existing signage along the highway, yet are sensitive to the risk of adding visual "clutter" to the corridor. This concern is acknowledged by realizing that a unique, yet strong and consistent design with strategic placement helps unify the corridor and heightens expectations of repeated use. Special consideration would be given to Detroit's Midtown District because of its recent new signage design and installation program. These signs already have distinctive characteristics, and the new heritage signage should be designed to blend and compliment the midtown program.

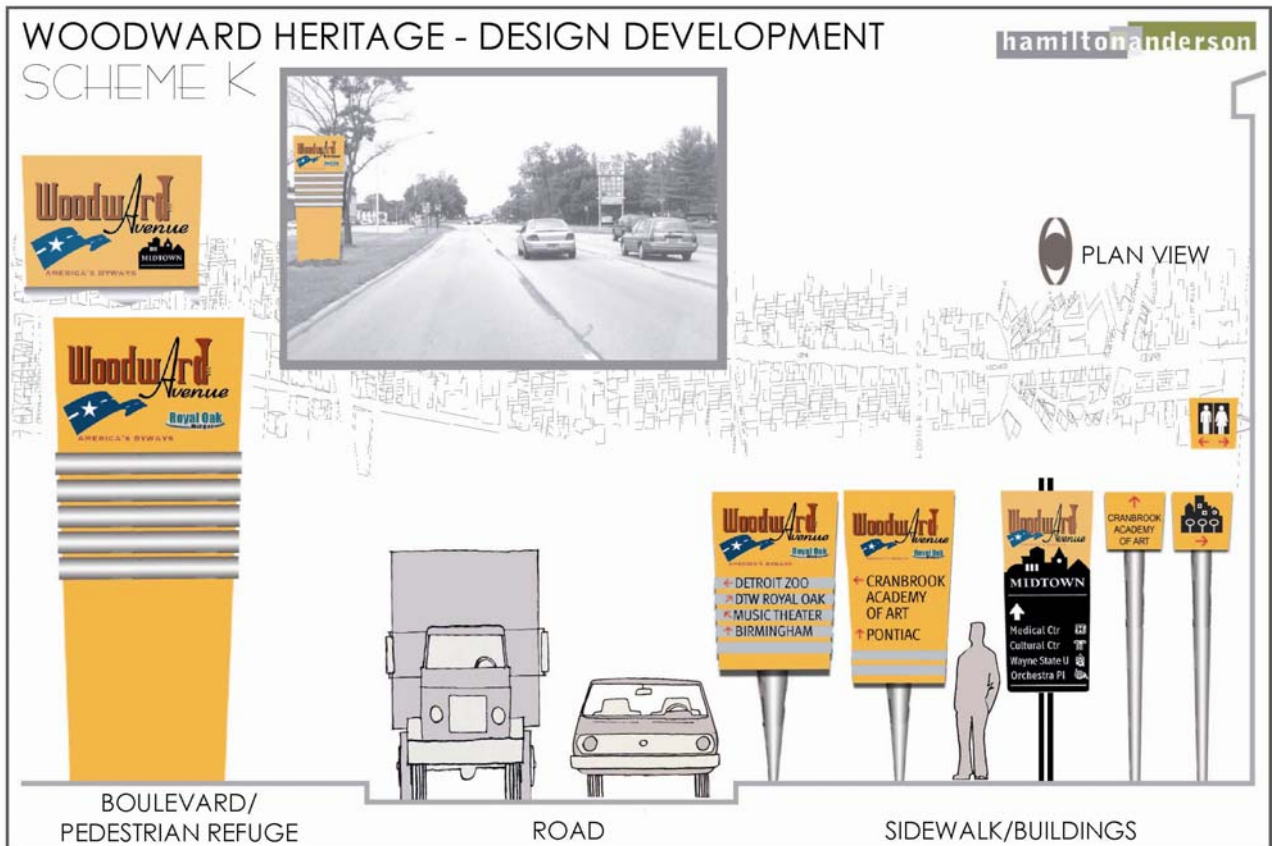
The initial presentation of concepts was inspired by images revolving around the automotive industry and emotions evoked by memories of events and life on Woodward Avenue. Nine concepts were presented; and after collective team discussion, three were selected for further study. Although many historic events and buildings along Woodward evolved from the automotive industry, stakeholders felt an overemphasis on the automotive theme would not clearly represent the ideals of each community and underestimate the importance of music as a contributing heritage element. Concepts attracting the most interest were design solutions suggesting automotive ornamentation and grillwork in a way that did not overstate an automotive theme. The team wanted to see concepts carried further to illustrate examples highlighting a series of different sign sizes and levels of importance.

Once the three selected concepts were refined, another presentation was made to determine this preferred direction.

The first concept incorporates a pole-mounted arched sign spanning above approximately two traffic lanes and perpendicular to the street. The theme used in this concept is “27 Mile of History”, and the sign system would highlight each mile road intersection. Bottom banding identifies the individual mile road and can also be used for information as well. The main body has the Woodward Avenue Heritage logo, the America’s Byway logo and the individual community or city logo. Chrome details are reminiscent of those on an automobile. The top of the pole sports a “headlight” with an acrylic prism in the center. The arch detail contains a portion of the Woodward Avenue Heritage logo graphic, inset into the arch support as a laser cutout – see next page.



The second concept uses an automotive “grille” as a theme. The bands of the grille on the main “monument” are a “chrome-like” metal and are dimensional. By keeping the grille to the five bands, it also suggests a sheet music bar. The shape of the sign itself is unique, wider at the top than at the bottom. The shape and color serve as effective identifying features regardless of the size of the sign used. Each “monument” sign simply acknowledges Woodward as a Heritage Highway, an American Byway and identifies the community the sign is located in. In concept, its height would be approximately 15 feet. It would not contain directional information or specific text. Other pedestal-mounted signs are interpreted to create a family of signs that can be used in virtually every situation. All signs are slightly curved in shape, so in plan view they have an oval form. The poles are oval-shaped as well. Each sign has the same angle, logos and colors; although the grille theme is replicated by painted bands in these versions as a solution to control overall costs for the system.





















### V. Recommendation

The Heritage Team, after evaluating the final concepts selected the “arch” concept as the major identifier for the Heritage Route to be placed at every mile road along the 27-mile corridor. One of the other concepts would be used for ancillary signage to call out more specific information (attractions, buildings, events, etc.) and would likely be placed on the sidewalks, in the boulevards or in the planned “pedestrian refuges”. Future phases of the design study will address specific Wayfinding applications, fabrication, MDOT requirements and exact signage location.

Consideration should be given to the following iconographic categories in the development of the Wayfinding exercise. These categories were developed after review of the *What to See, Hear and Do – Woodward Avenue Map*, and the web-site inventory of Events/Attractions/Historical Sites.



WOODWARD HERITAGE  
ICONOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

		Historical Districts/ Sites
		Tours Attractions Events
		Music Stage Film
		Art Museums Cultural
		Downtowns
		Parking
		Sports
		Restrooms