2016

Clinton Iowa Wayfinding Assessment

Dr. Matthew Fockler
Augustana College, Rock Island Illinois

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Clinton, IA Wayfinding Assessment

Prepared by students from Dr. Matthew Fockler’s Introduction to Human and Cultural Geography course, Fall 2015.

In cooperation with Augustana College’s Sustainable Working Landscapes Initiative.
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INTRODUCTION

Clinton, IA is located in eastern Iowa and has an estimated population of 26,647 people which represents a slight decline from the 2010 census. The Clinton region was first settled in the 1830s (in 1835 the town of Lyons was established followed by Clinton in 1936. The two towns would merge). By the 1850s, Clinton emerged as an important center for the lumber industry. Log rafts were floated down the Mississippi River from the Great Lakes region and milled into lumber in Clinton. From there, lumber was shipped via the river and railroad to feed industrial and urban growth in the post Civil War United States. Great wealth brought great architecture. Throughout Clinton today you can witness numerous Victorian era mansions.

But by the early 1900s, the great northern forests were depleted and Clinton’s prominence as a lumber town receded. However Clinton’s access to the river, the Lincoln Highway (one of the earliest transcontinental highways for automobiles across the U.S.) and already established railways brought industry and heavy manufacturing to the city. Currently, Clinton is home to Archer Daniels Midland’s cogeneration corn processing plant.

WAYFINDING IN CLINTON, IA

Clinton, IA has a wayfinding system that is identified in the literature as a District Gateway system (Figure 1). A district gateway system identifies a unique district of a city and usually contain a unique identifying symbol that contributes to or clarifies the unique sense of place of that district.

Figure 1: Example of District Gateway wayfinding system in Clinton, IA. Note that other than colored squares, it contains no significant identifying or place defining symbol.
Clinton is divided into five wayfinding districts: 1) Lincoln Way District; 2) Downtown District; 3) Riverfront District; 4) Lyons District; and 5) Mill Creek District (Figure 2). For the purposes of this assessment, Comanche and Fulton communities were not included in the assessment.

It was difficult to find any precise boundaries for these districts and we often found that qualities inferred by the name of the district (Downtown) were not present in portions of those districts. We will address this further in our later assessment. In order to organize our assessment, we drew strict boundary lines that reflected those identified in Figure 2 and city streets (Figure 3).
In some places, students were confused by the type and purpose of the wayfinding signage. Along Lincoln Way and the Riverfront, students felt that the district was organized around one path and could or should function as less a district gateway and more a Path Gateway wayfinding system. Path Gateways point users to clearly themed pathways or linear town segments. They are often themed by use, experience, or historical importance.

Interspersed throughout Clinton’s wayfinding system are **Directional Identity** wayfinding signs - though, as our assessment will show, the class feels that there are far too few of these (Figure 4). Directional identity wayfinding signs direct users to specific locations. Directional identity signs are often most effective when multiple scales are employed (vehicular and pedestrian). In our recommendations section, we will show examples of ways in which Clinton could re-invigorate its wayfinding system using directional identity signs.

Directional identity signs also work in concert with **Destination Identity** signs. Destination identity signs are free-standing or attached signs that signal that the user has reached his/her destination. Destination signs can be superfluous, but when used
correctly, destination signs can add significantly to the sense of place and community identity of a wayfinding district.

In our recommendations section we will show examples of how some towns in the upper Midwest of comparable size have utilized each of these wayfinding techniques as stand-alone systems or in concert to great effect.
ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Assessment began with a thorough in and out of class literature review on the characteristics, history, and cost/benefits of wayfinding. Furthermore, students examined the importance of landscape, sense of place, and design in urban contexts.

Students were divided into five groups - each representing one of Clinton's five wayfinding districts.

Lincoln Way District: Anne McBarron, Joshua Cox, Katrina Friedrich, Kylee Villareal
Downtown District: Andrea Pardo, Christina Gosiewski, DeAnna Bender, John Danko
Riverfront District: Alexandra Madison, Ethan Williams, Madison Vandersee, Omar Delgado, Zach Carlson
Lyons District: Kirsten Burke, Krista Dawson, Shelby Grandt, Uxmar Torres
Mill Creek District: Anna Dispensa, Destiny Chavez, Ian Magnuson, Lindsey Amati

Each group prepared for our initial visit to Clinton by conducting preliminary research on Clinton's history and brainstorming potential themes and destinations that could occur within their district.

Groups examined their wayfinding districts on at least two separate occasions: once with the entire class and again on their own or with Dr. Fockler. These examinations comprised the data-gathering portion of our assessments. There were three components to this exercise.

1) Students utilized their smart phones and the ArcGIS Collector application to record the locations of wayfinding signs in their districts (Figure 5). Once a location was recorded, the group took a photo of the sign and assessed the following characteristics:
   a) The type of wayfinding sign (district gateway, path gateway etc)
   b) The purpose of the wayfinding sign (to direct vehicular or pedestrian traffic)
   c) The legibility of the sign (depending on purpose, is the sign legible at an appropriate distance).
   d) The clarity of the sign (depending on purpose, does the sign clearly display intended information).
   e) The design of the sign (a critique of the way the sign portrays information/sense of place).
   f) Comments to clarify answers.

2) Also using the ArcGIS Collector application, students were asked to identify potential locations for important district defining and functional wayfinding destinations. Students consulted the Clinton, Iowa Visitors Guide to aid this process.
3) Finally, students were asked to identify the sense of place of their districts. They were asked to go slowly through their districts, taking notes and photos of what they see. They were asked to organize their thoughts around the following questions:

1) What can the city of Clinton display that encourages and entices visitors to explore the city?
2) What key landmarks and themes are/could/should be used as identifiers for your district?
3) What is the unique sense of place of your district? Is it cohesive?

Figure 5: Student identified wayfinding points and potential sites.
In class, groups explored different wayfinding examples in other cities. The consulted wayfinding plans and wayfinding literature to brainstorm a wayfinding rubric for assessment (Appendix 1). Students decided that the rubric should be divided into six distinct categories:

1) **ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**: Wayfinding hopes to build spaces that facilitate movement of people and allows them to experience place in a defined, yet open (up to their choosing) way. All wayfinding should answer basic questions:
   a) Where am I?
   b) How do I get where I want to go?
   c) How long will it take/how far is it?
   d) Where can I find DISTRICT essential amenities that I may need/want?
   e) Where can I connect to other forms of transportation/paces/districts?
   f) Where can I get more information?

2) **USER PLAN DEVELOPMENT**: A good wayfinding system allows users to develop a plan to take them from their location to their destination. This focused on:
   a) Integration of district and directional signs
   b) Ability of a user to develop a plan based on existing signs (to take them from a location to a desired location).
   c) Can a user execute the plan AND negotiate any potential changes

3) **PLACE IDENTITY and SENSE OF PLACE**: Does the wayfinding system influence or contribute to the district and city’s sense of place?
   a) Does signage provide clear and unique symbols that identity a distinct city OR district sense of place?
   b) Does gateway signage identify a distinct sense of place or identity?
   c) Does the signage feel unique, legitimate, not contrived, false, or ubiquitous?

4) **SIGN CLARITY**: A good wayfinding system contains signage that is clear, informative, and uncluttered and conveys an image of the region/town/district.
   a) Sign readability for both vehicles and pedestrians
   b) Signage is uncluttered and evenly/appropriately spaced for both vehicular and pedestrian users
   c) Signage is pleasing, well designed, and conveys a distinct sense of place.

5) **USER and INFORMATION VARIETY**: A good wayfinding should be made usable to a variety of users and should incorporate multiple information delivery techniques.
   a) Signage is well adapted for vehicular users
   b) Signage is well adapted for pedestrian users
   c) Signage uses multiple platforms to convey information
d) Signage uses its design elements to convey information well

6) **WAYFINDING ORGANIZATION**. A good wayfinding system organizes places by clearly identified and cohesive elements.
   a) Organization of the districts is uniform and makes sense
   b) District organization conforms to a clear place identity or sense of place
   c) District’s identity is uniform
   d) District information provides users with a clear possibility of choice and a starting point for the acquisition of further information.

Students used this rubric to think critically about Clinton’s wayfinding system as a whole and within their districts. All recognized that a modified version of this rubric should be administered to Clinton locals, visitors, and even the Wayfinding Commission.

**RESULTS**
The following **summary rubric results** are on a scale of 0-5 where
   1 = Poor or not present
   2 = Lacking, could use improvement
   3 = Adequate
   4 = Good, could use improvement
   5 = Excellent.

A green highlight equals the district with the highest value. A red highlight indicates the district with the lowest value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>CLINTON</th>
<th>LINCOLN</th>
<th>DOWN-TOWN</th>
<th>RIVER-FRONT</th>
<th>LYONS</th>
<th>MILL CREEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a) Where am I?</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b) How do I get where I want to go (quickest, safest, attractive route)</td>
<td>1.665</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c) How long will it take? How far is it?</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d) Where can I find essential amenities that I may need/want (restrooms, parking, information, police, hospital, food, drink, shopping)</td>
<td>2.3525</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e) Where can I connect to other forms of transportation (busses, paths, taxi, trolly, boats)</td>
<td>1.125</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1f) Where can I get more information?</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a) Integration of district signs (gateways) and directional signs</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>2b) Ability to develop a plan to take them from a location to a desired destination</td>
<td>0.7825</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c) Ability to execute the plan and negotiate any required changes</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS BY DISTRICT

#### LINCOLN WAY DISTRICT

*Introduction:* Lincoln Way District is an important entryway to the city of Clinton (Figure 6). Lincoln Way District is anchored by the historic Lincoln Highway and there are numerous landmarks that connect the visitor to the Highway (Figure 6). There are a few prominent businesses in the Lincoln Way District including Harley Davidson and ADM - however they are not represented in the city’s wayfinding system. Statues, public art, and small park-like structures in the middle median of the highway are pleasing and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>CLINTON</th>
<th>LINCOLN</th>
<th>DOWNTOWN</th>
<th>RIVERFRONT</th>
<th>LYONS</th>
<th>MILL CREEK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a) In-town signage provides clear and unique symbols that identify a distinct sense of place or identity</td>
<td>2.405</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b) Gateway signage provides clear and unique symbols that identify a distinct sense of place or identity</td>
<td>2.365</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c) Signage or symbols feel legitimate, not contrived or false</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a) Signage is easy to read (vehicular)</td>
<td>2.3625</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a) Signage is easy to read (pedestrian)</td>
<td>2.7075</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b) Signage is easy to uncluttered (vehicular)</td>
<td>1.965</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b) Signage is easy to uncluttered (pedestrian)</td>
<td>2.3075</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c) Signage is pleasing and conveys distinct sense of place</td>
<td>2.005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a) Signage is well adapted for vehicular users</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b) Signage is well adapted for pedestrian users</td>
<td>1.2775</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c) Signage uses multiple platforms to convey information</td>
<td>0.5375</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d) Signage uses design elements to convey information well (symbols, words, colors etc)</td>
<td>1.5175</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6a) Organization of districts is uniform and makes sense</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b) My district conforms to a clear place identity.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c) My district’s identity is uniform</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d) My district information provides users with a clear possibility of choice and a starting point for the acquisition of further information.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there is a walking trail running alongside the Highway. We feel that they are both inadequately represented and connected to the city’s wayfinding system. While the numerous placards and signs along the Lincoln Highway connect the visitor to the highway, once you are away from the Highway, it is very difficult to tell that you are in the district.

Facilitating Movement and Direction: We feel that the wayfinding system in the Lincoln Way district does a poor job of taking people to their destinations. Signs are small and cluttered. We found the color-codes on the signs confusing (we understand that they connect to the Visitor’s Guide, but think asking visitors to memorize the colors and refer to the guide while driving is unsafe and unusable). Lincoln Way does a fine job of facilitating movement out of the district to other districts. It lacks, however, any connection to points of interest within the district, trails, or businesses. Right now, the Lincoln Way District is a place someone would drive through to get to other places.

Usability for a Variety of Users: Lincoln Way District is a vehicular district only. Vehicular signs, as stated above, only direct visitors through the district to other districts and lack any sort of connectivity to businesses, trails, and the district. Some vehicular signs are tough to see because they are poorly placed or partially obscured by trees and bushes. It generally lacks pedestrian signs. There are no signs with multiple
platforms or applications - all they show are districts and the small color square (the colors are difficult to tell apart while driving).

Sense of Place and Identity: Our group decided that the biggest problems affecting the sense of place and identity in Clinton’s Lincoln Way district are a lack of a district-wide sense of place. While it is clear when one enters Lincoln Way that they are in the Lincoln Way district, there is not much else to draw people there other than the Lincoln Highway. Outside of the Highway, there is nothing to connect people to the district. The district needs signs that bring visitors to the better, more attractive parts of the Lincoln Way district. Wayfinding in Lincoln does not seem to point visitors to any place in the Lincoln Way district that are representative of the sense of place. The wayfinding system, if anything, directly guides users out of Lincoln Way, and a good wayfinding system should guide people through the best parts of a district. This district is, for many, the first impression people have of Clinton. There are no welcome signs for the actual city of Clinton when one enters the district, and the Lincoln Way district should be a way to welcome visitors into the area.

Suggestions for Improvement:
1) Develop the district as a PATH GATEWAY. This type of wayfinding points users to clearly themed pathways or linear town segments. They are often themed by use, experience, or historical importance. A path gateway could connects users through the area and anchors the area with a unique theme. The historical Lyons district has a rich history that the people of Clinton are proud of, but we are sure that the Lincoln Way district probably also has interesting history as it is home to the Lincoln Highway. This information could probably be made available around the district, for example on signs and plaques that pedestrians could read in the grassy park areas, trails, and public art spaces.

2) Connect trails and businesses. Again, the Lincoln District is something to drive through. But there are many things that would be of interest to pedestrians. We asked Dr. Fockler when we first drove through about the big golden dome. Other users would as well. The trail system connects to the river front district (we think). Wouldn’t it be nice to have pedestrian signs that guided people through Clinton, to the river and other businesses, and gave important bits of history?

3) Improve and vary sign placement. Our third priority recommendation for the district includes better sign placement and more signs on stop lights. Better sign placement would be very beneficial for this district. Currently, the signs on the side of the road in Lincoln Way are small or covered by trees. This makes it very difficult to actually see the signs, and if they are impossible to be seen, then they are not helpful. Entryways would also be beneficial for this district to aid in finding a sense of place. Currently, there are signs that tell visitors that they are in Lincoln Way, but there is no entryway that actually announces when one enters Lincoln Way from another district. Another issue this district has is a lack of uniformity within the district for signs on stoplights. Some of the signs feature a picture of the mill as a symbol of the district. The district could benefit if this
symbol was on every street sign in Lincoln Way. This would aid the sense of place for the area.

**DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**

*Introduction:* As the name implies, the Downtown District is home to Clinton’s historic downtown. The Downtown District lines up next to the Riverfront District, but then continues westward into residential areas, eventually turning into the Mill Creek area. The Downtown District in Clinton, IA has a lot of history and old architecture and a distinct sense of place. However, there are a lot of sites in the Downtown District that did not carry a distinct sense of place - this is because they are primarily residential. As a driver, the wayfinding system was present, but there could have been more specificity to the directions. With regards to the district boundary, there was some confusion with where downtown “stopped” and where the next district began. While we were unable to look at the Mill Creek boundary very closely, the boundary between the Riverfront and Downtown was almost nonexistent.

Wayfinding signs in the District are plentiful, but not very helpful. Some were in the middle of the downtown saying downtown district with an arrow. It was confusing because as a visitor we thought we were in the downtown district already. Our group decided that it would be difficult to develop a plan to get to a desired location because the signs were not clear. If a change had been made in the route that we were to take, we would be extremely challenged to get back on track without a map or our phones. There is a lot of opportunity to bring a stronger sense of place to the Downtown District, and finding key points to create a personality for the district, as well as emphasizing important landmarks and services more in the layout and signage in the area will help this.

*Facilitating Movement and Direction:* As a whole our group agreed that it was difficult to tell exactly where you were in the Downtown District - or why you should be there. While there were some directional wayfinding signs, it was hard to tell how far away some building would because the signs were unclear (Figure 7). Just as the signs were unclear about the distance of the place of destination, they were unclear about how long it would take to get there because they did not have any estimates of times or any mileage. If the signs could have a direction and either blocks or miles to the destination it would be more helpful. It was possible to find some essential amenities that a visitor would need. The parking signs were a key strength of the downtown district because visitors need a place to park. However, these were not incorporated in a directional wayfinding system.

Finding connections to other forms of transportation were difficult because we saw only one bus stop in the downtown area we walked and bike path signs that lead to some type of path, but that was unclear. There were three bike signs in a row pointing to something, but we could not find the path (Figure 7). It would be better to have bike signs that show how many miles it is to the bike path or route. Again, these signs were not incorporated in a directional wayfinding system. We also noted the lack any
information booths or kiosks. It would be beneficial to add some in the district with a map saying “you are here”, so people can find their way around the district easier.

*Usability for a Variety of Users:* Throughout the Downtown District, signs do not give enough information and are either very cluttered or too spread out. The signs were difficult to read if you were driving. The signs did not tell you how far you are from your destination and the colors and symbol did not fit the district. The color scheme and lighthouse symbol seem dated and ununique. As a group we discussed how to possibly alter the wayfinding system. We decided on uncluttering the signs and adding an indication of distance to your destination. Also changing the symbol to something that is distinct to the Downtown District and get rid of the rainbow theme.

The signs in the Downtown District did not give much information about where places are or what they are about. Each sign has color but the color does not fit the town. We discussed possible changes and came to a conclusion that the wayfinding from Ferndale, Michigan would work nicely for Clinton. The signs could have more
information about each historic or important location in Clinton and have a symbol that is distinct for this district. This would give the city a more informative platform to display throughout the city.

Sense of Place: The downtown district of Clinton has a unique sense of place that ties directly to the city’s once booming logging industry. The wayfinding system in the downtown districts has some strengths, but there is definitely room for improvement. The district is lacking a distinct symbol that represents it well. The current color representing this district is green, which does not contribute to its overall identity and is generally unclear. Frankly, the signs are very boring and unappealing. They do not do a good job of drawing a visitors attention and it is difficult to determine the major attractions of the district.

Suggestions for Improvement:
1) Follow the model of Ferndale, MI. Ferndale, MI incorporated multiple layers of wayfinding to bring a focus on the downtown, its businesses, its history and distinct sense of place, and its amenities. Having the signs with information, maps, and historical pictures makes the city feel more inviting because the visitors can learn about the history and attractions. The symbol and color scheme would be consistent throughout the Downtown District thus giving it a sense of place.

2) Connect the Downtown District to the Riverfront and Lincoln Districts explicitly through other forms of transportation - specifically through improving the biking and pedestrian wayfinding system. As of now, the bike path signs in the downtown district are scarce and do not promote bicycle traffic. Adding more signs showing how far away the paths are would promote traffic and draw more people in to explore the area. Adding mileage markers to vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signs is a great way to let visitors know how far away their destinations are. It would also allow visitors to make stops at attractions that are on the way to their final destination. Implement kiosks with a map on it saying that they are there. Also having the shops names and their location would help business.

3) Reconfigure wayfinding sign location - including decluttering the wayfinding signs and adding directions on the signs. Decluttering the signs will allow visitors to be able to read the signs instead of driving past three signs and not being able to read any of them. Adding some form of direction would allow the visitors to know how far they will need to travel to arrive at their destination. We thought the best way of adding the directions to the Downtown District signs would be to convey the distance in blocks. An example would be the Painted Rooster is two blocks and an arrow pointing in the direction you need to go.
RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

Introduction: The Riverfront District in Clinton is mostly the designated area along the Mississippi River. It consists of a few roads, with one main road along the river. The wayfinding in the Riverfront District is extremely poor. There are vehicular signs right outside the district boundaries, pointing people in the way of the Riverfront District, but there are no “You are here” signs as you enter the district. There are signs on certain attractions within the district. There are absolutely no vehicular or pedestrian signs specifically for wayfinding throughout this district. There are no vehicular or pedestrian signs with arrows pointing to attractions, the number of miles it takes to walk or drive to the attractions, what types of attractions are in the district. There is a major symbol in the Riverfront District, the lighthouse. However, this symbol is not really unique to the Riverfront District in terms of Clinton’s wayfinding as the lighthouse is used for all of the district signs (Figure 8).

The Riverfront District has a very laid back and relaxing sense to it. When we walked through the district, it was very inviting and calming. Many of the attractions were entertaining and/or places to relax, which I think help make the Riverfront a place to go to not only relax but to have fun. The wayfinding system should guide visitors to the Riverfront from, let’s say, Downtown. It should allow people to stop and enjoy the Riverfront, learn a bit about the town, experience what it has to offer, and then successfully guide them back from the Riverfront. It does not successfully do this as of now.

Facilitating Movement and Direction: We believe that the Riverfront is currently quite difficult to navigate. There is currently little or no way for visitors to establish where they are, how to get where they want to, or advertisement for possible destinations. The lack of wayfinding is particularly a problem for those who enter Clinton from the river, such as the anticipated Mississippi cruiseline tourists. However, the district is fairly open and simple, and there is a major pathway that can facilitate pedestrian traffic through the riverfront district and into downtown.

The Riverfront District is an easy sell to anyone looking for recreation. We found the lack of real recreation wayfinding confusing - what is there is inadequate (Figure 8). The addition of simple signage could dramatically improve visitors’ ability to plan and execute their routes.

Usability for a Variety of Users: Across the board the signage in the Riverfront and how it is adapted to be visible and usable by pedestrians and vehicles was rated as “could use improvement.” Some of the strengths of the Riverfront is that where there are signs they are easily read by both vehicles and pedestrians. So what is already there as far as signage is useful and helpful. Some of the weaknesses in with the signage on the Riverfront is that there isn’t much of it. There isn’t a lot to direct people from the Riverfront into the places in town that the townspeople want people to go. The main problem with the Riverfront is the lack of signage; however what’s already there is useful. There does not need to be a lot more signs on the Riverfront but additions
are needed to direct the flow of people that may come through the Clinton Riverfront as tourists and want to know and see where things are.

_Sense of Place:_ For a sense of place, the Riverfront’s wayfinding system was overall successful. Looking over the average score given by my group and comparing them to the other groups, it shows that the Riverfront is better represented by the wayfinding system than other places such as the Mill Creek District.

It should be no question that the Riverfront has one the best senses of place with appropriate wayfinding; it is a main tourist destination for being on the river alone! It would be hard to mess up the sense of place for this area as the river does a great job of providing its identity already, yet Clinton still messes up because of their levee (I understand it is necessary but still needs to be addressed). The levee separates the other main district, Downtown, from forming even more economic potential as a visual barrier. Just think how the Downtown would feel if you could look down every avenue
and see the mighty Mississippi flowing by. But there are also the positives for the sense of place here like the blue light posts and the lighthouses along the banks. The visitors center, while poorly represented, places the the district far ahead of the others just by the fact that they have one. It may seem out of place, but they kept with the river/lighthouse theme and the effort shows.

We felt the logo used on all wayfinding signs is most appropriate for this district. The lighthouse best represents the Riverfront because they are important to the city's history and gives the district a strong sense of place.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1) Better and more complete signage in the Riverfront. There are absolutely no specific wayfinding signs for vehicular or pedestrian use once you enter the Riverfront District, which makes it difficult for visitors to not only know what is in the Riverfront District, but how to get there. At the very least, Clinton should invest in at least two or three vehicular signs to be placed at the larger intersections in the Riverfront District, that point to attractions in the district, as well as the districts surrounding the Riverfront. Also, pedestrian signs would be very helpful along the river walkway, an even more so next to the visitor's center. A single sign with a map of the Riverfront District, highlighting attractions would be very helpful and useful.

2) Connect the Riverfront to the other districts through recreation, history, and river experience. Highlight the recreational activities - biking, jogging, etc. Highlight the trail and the connection to downtown. Perhaps begin by finding one or more places to put large maps of the city. City scaled maps placed along the levee could grab the attention of many pedestrians and could lead them to new places within town or at least simplify their work to find a place. By adding more pedestrian friendly amenities we hope to bring more people out along the river. Add amenity specific signs, signs on the light posts, and to find a place to designate as a scenic lookout or information point. This district is lacking signs directing visitors to the docks, the pool, or parks: really anything. It would be important especially in this district to add signs pointing to any water amenities and any recreational areas. These would move traffic easier and be a simple fix. There are light blue light posts lining the levee drive but they do not have any character to them which could benefit the aesthetic of the area. The riverfront is beautiful and needs some character added to the land to match the water. Adding to the aesthetic appeal of the area, it would be nice to see some spots with information about the history of the river at this point or some historical photographs to show how the river has changed. Clinton needs to find more ways to get people to stop and look around instead of simply driving past all of these unique opportunities.

3) Follow the model of Ferndale, MI. Ferndale, MI incorporated multiple layers of wayfinding to bring a focus on the beauty of the Riverfront. Having the signs with information, maps, and historical pictures makes the city feel more inviting because the visitors can learn about the history and attractions.
LYONS DISTRICT

Introduction: The Lyons District is Clinton’s northernmost district, located between downtown and Eagle Point Park. The Lyons District represents the historic settlement of Lyons. However, the wayfinding system does not represent that legacy. Each sign is equipped with a subtext reading “Lyons” that lets you know that is the district in which you currently entering, or leaving, pending the direction you are headed in. Some of these signs are color coded whereas others are not. The color coded signs are an awkward hue of some mix between burgundy and maroon (Figure 9). One doesn’t have to be confused by that color choice since less than half of the Lyons District signs are just regular green, which is the color of Clinton’s regular, generic, non-specific signs.

When meandering around the district, there is a very homely feeling that captivates the visitor, as most of the district is a residential neighborhood. If you are ever curious as to whether or not you are still in the Lyons District while gallivanting about, just look around. If you see quiet neighborhoods all around, you are probably still in it. If you see any commercial buildings then you have gone too far. This makes us wonder if the Lyons District is suitable for “district” status in the wayfinding system. While we believe that they Lyons history is important, would it be better to focus on specific historic locations in the district?

Facilitating Movement and Direction: Weaknesses of Lyon’s District wayfinding system include the scattering of the signs. There are too many signs in some areas and too few signs in other areas. This creates confusion among people who may look at one sign that points towards the east and look at a sign right behind it that points to the south. In other areas people will look at a sign that points north, and continue on driving without seeing another sign. Another problem with the signs is their placement, signs tend to be placed in areas that prevents the driver coming towards it from spotting it until he or she is right next to it. This prevents them from having time to decide on where they may want to make their next turn and what to plan next until the very last minute. Other issues include the color coding on signs. Color coding is an effective strategy to direct people looking at a map, and to pin point areas on a map but proves to be ineffective on street signs that people take a quick glance at as they drive by, it would take them several minutes to comprehend exactly which color corresponds to what destination. Another problem with the color coding was that too many colors were too similar to each other making understanding what they were corresponding to difficult, some were different shades of purples and blues (Figure 9). The city symbols were on many signs which could get in the way of navigational directions that are more significant to people looking for help on navigation.

We have to image ourselves from the perspective of the visitor. Would the visitor deem Clinton’s wayfinding system to be helpful and effective? People are looking for the most efficient way to get to their destinations. They are looking for the easiest way to navigate. They need to be able to easily develop an efficient plan and to be able to execute that plan and put it into action when trying to get somewhere. The Lyons’ district is a part of the whole City of Clinton. Lyons has a history to it that gives it its theme and
makes it significant just in the way that each district in Clinton has significance to it one way or the other by something within it.

Usability for a Variety of Users: As our wayfinding group made our way around Clinton both in a vehicle and on foot, we noticed some things that were acceptable and some things that need improvement in the wayfinding system for the Lyons district. Although there were many signs, they were not easy to read while driving or walking. While driving along the main street, we noticed that the signs had a lot of information on them. Much of this information was repetitive of other signs within 50 yards away and many of these signs were not easy to read. The signs that were not easy to read were either obstructed by tree branches, badly damaged, and/or coded with colored squares that would be highly confusing to a visitor.
As a pedestrian, the experience was similar. There were broken signs as well as blocked signs that could only be read by standing directly next to the sign. The streets along where the Lyons district meets the Downtown district had an overwhelming amount of repetitive signage and signs pointing to districts much farther away. Something that stood out to me in particular was a large sign with various destinations and arrows all pointing straight ahead, followed by an identical sign with the same information just on the other side of the street. I thought this was strange and unnecessary considering there was no new information or turns involved for the visitors in vehicles. In the Lyons district beyond the main street, there was almost no wayfinding signage.

_Sense of Place_: The Lyons District has an important historical legacy to Clinton. While there is a distinct residential sense of place, we found that what makes this district distinct - in fact, the reason it is a district at all (it’s history) - is not represented in the wayfinding. The signs also lack a unique symbol that identifies the Lyons district. This takes away from a sense of place because there is not something that says, “this is what represents the Lyons district,” and without that, it just seems like a thrown together place with no history.

_Suggestions for Improvement:_

1) **Is it a district? If so, emphasize the historical aspect.** Multiple layers of wayfinding can be employed to direct people to the important historical locations.

2) **Wayfinding placement.** Including decluttering the wayfinding signs and adding directions on the signs. Decluttering the signs will allow visitors to be able to read the signs instead of driving past three signs and not being able to read any of them. Adding some form of direction would allow the visitors to know how far they will need to travel to arrive at their destination.

3) **Either be uniform or distinct in signage.** We wonder why the Lyons District has both the brown and green signs? The color change does little to add any distinctiveness or character to the district. If you are going for distinct, then the symbols need to change.

**MILL CREEK DISTRICT**

_**Introduction:**_ The Mill Creek district is more of a place for the locals to live. Driving into this district, no one had a clue that we were in the district. There was no signage informing the drive that they are in Mill Creek. Though it is mostly open land and corn fields, there are important locations - such as the airport, Erickson center, and the elementary school. Though commercial and suburban expansion may occur in the future, there is no reason why a visitor would need to go to this district if they are not visiting someone that they know lives there or traveling around the city. **Therefore, we believe that this district is not a cohesive district. Instead, wayfinding in the district should focus on routing users into town. To do so, the wayfinding system**
needs to be vehicular and engaging. The simple colored square system employed today is insufficient.

**Facilitating Movement and Direction:** The directional way-finding in Mill Creek is practically nonexistent. Other than two or three signs pointing into town to the rest of the districts and a “Welcome to Clinton” the sense of place is more of a “I’m lost” feeling than anything else. The two facilities, the Recreation Center and the airport, basically do not have any signs showcasing them at all. The airport has a sign right before the turn, but as a visitor, this did not help me find it, nor did I really feel like I was in Clinton’s boundaries. We did not see a sign for the Recreation Center, which would help people find it a lot easier. With the absence of signs reminding us we are in Clinton, the visitor gets the sense that they went the wrong way. There should be signs helping the visitor get to both the Rec Center and the airport. And as you enter Clinton’s boundaries on this side, there is a great opportunity to advertise businesses through way-finding signs. Tell the visitor what each of the districts offer. A street sign with just names simply does not offer any useful information. Doing this will help direct drivers into the parts of the town you would like them to visit.

**Usability for a Variety of Users:** Overall, the usability of the Mill Creek district’s wayfinding is adequate. The majority of the wayfinding signs in Mill Creek are for vehicle users - which is appropriate. Most of Mill Creek is made up of roads to get to houses and local areas, and the nearby airport makes the highway an important spot for wayfinding signs.

**Sense of Place:** While Clinton as a whole does have some aspects that ultimately give it a sense of place, the Mill Creek district is lacking in features that allow it to have a specific sense of identity. A sense of identity is a key feature of any place, and based upon observations of Mill Creek, we felt that Mill Creek was severely lacking regarding displaying a distinct sense of place. On the wayfinding survey that we completed in class, our group ranked Mill Creek poor in many of the categories that were relating to sense of place and identity. It was almost hard at times for our group to consider Mill Creek as a district because there are not very many distinctive places that contributed to defining the district.

More specifically, in order to really analyze the sense of place in Mill Creek, we examined questions from sections three, four, and six in the wayfinding assessment packet. In the questions listed in section three, we rated two out of the three categories as being poor and one as being adequate. The categories ranked as poor related to the in-town and gateway signs providing unique characteristics that defined the district and gave it a unique sense of place. When we observed Clinton, we felt that there were hardly any signs, and of the signs that were present, they were very generic and did not point out unique features of the Mill Creek district. Aside from these poor ratings, we did rate one aspect of the wayfinding system in Clinton as adequate. This category was that the signs in Clinton looked legitimate. We felt that although not many signs were present, the ones that were placed in the Mill Creek district looked official.
Additionally, in the set of questions listed in section six and in section four, Mill Creek ranked poorly regarding all off the categories. The questions for section six related to organization within the district contributing to the identity of the district. We felt that Mill Creek was kind of a mash up of all of the leftover places that would not fit in other districts. For example, there was a residential area, a school, a few shops, an airport, and many cornfields. Considering that these features do not really fit together, we felt that Mill Creek was lacking in identity. Also, in section four, one of the questions referred to the district providing information that tourists could use to navigate around the features within the district. There was a recreation center in Mill Creek that tourists could probably obtain information from, but it was not advertised nor specialized in dealing with tourists or distributing information.

Overall, we felt that the limited amount of signage really took away from the sense of identity within the Mill Creek district. When analyzing Mill Creek, our group attempted to give a name or defining characteristic to the district, but could not think of anything. This only goes to show that Mill Creek is severely lacking in definition and needs key places that bind it together and ultimately form identity within the district.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1) **Emphasize the important locations already there - especially the airport.*** Mill Creek should emphasize its airport. We noticed that there were hardly any signs pointing to the airport. While the airport is small, it is definitely a beneficial tourist feature, so it should be stressed. If Mill Creek were to expand upon and advertise its airport more, the airport would become more developed and possibly benefit Clinton in the long run.

2) **Utilize vehicular wayfinding to direct users toward town - and businesses.*** Add signs that offer information, not just names. Adding information to the signs like specific businesses or vaguely describing the type of businesses there are will help direct visitors to areas of importance, not to residential areas. As of right now, the signs are clustered together in the downtown areas and make it difficult to figure out where the other districts are, which one they are in, and how to navigate the town. There needs to be less signage in those areas. Go for quality, not quantity.

3) **Re-evaluate district status.*** Reevaluating the authenticity of a district will help emphasize specific parts of the town, not all of the town needs to be in a district, and a visitor honestly does need to visit all of the town. The names of the district should be very clear. Perhaps you should add maps that clearly define where the districts are, and where you want visitors to go.
The Ferndale Way-finding project was supported by a Preserve America grant.

What Ferndale did well is take a typically stodgy topic – interpretive and way-finding signs – and update these to make them both fun and friendly. Let's start with the interpretive signs first. These are placed at strategic locations throughout the community. The sites they refer to is visually proximate to the sign. This allows for some interesting comparison of historical photos with the buildings as they appear today. The casing for the sign has a marquee in green and white with the word "Ferndale" in large block letters. The interpretive panel is surmounted by a large scale photograph. Text describing the landmark is below. The reverse side of each sign has a “Fun Ferndale Fact.” I found these signs to be both playful and instructive.
Interpretive sign showing building in background.

Sign system working together in concert to guide and direct.
Another type of sign used are the way-finding directional signs. Here the marquee motif is used again, though it is shrunk in size to fit a smaller sized sign. The white and green are inverted to create a white background with green text over it. In the directional portion of the sign with arrows and names of sites, a green background and white text and arrows make the content jump out. There are two versions of the directional signs - a larger version on the street targeted towards automobile traffic, and a smaller version on the sidewalk targeted towards pedestrians.

Automobile oriented way-finding on street.
There is one final sign type that completed the sign system. The Parking directional signs carry the Ferndale marquee logo, and then have a "P" in a circle along with an arrow. This effectively serves a purpose to direct people to parking while reinforcing the visual identity of the sign system.
Parking directional signs carry the visual identity of the overall sign system.
Business listings and map for the downtown.

Detail of map with downtown broken into 4 color-coded districts.
CONCLUSION and NEXT STEPS

Our review of Clinton came from opinions based on the city as a whole as well as based on each district. Clinton is a city that we found adapted to vehicular travel but lacking the availability of another option of transportation. Many of our greatest votes went to low scoring questions such as “Where can I connect to other forms of transportation?”. As visitors, it was important for us to see other modes of transportation to use throughout the city. There were areas that were very clear for pedestrians, but the lack of signage proved a real issue as we do not know our way around Clinton. Overall we gave lower scores to many questions concerning the functionality of the wayfinding signs. The signs were confusing, lacking information, and we did not believe that they helped visitors find their way around town. Some of the signs were just outdated or didn’t concern what visitors may be looking for as well as not being adaptive for pedestrians. Our highest scores went to questions concerning the uniqueness of Clinton’s identity and the ease of knowing you are entering city limits. We acknowledged the identity of Clinton to be unique and eye-catching as we drove into and around the city. Clinton does have a distinct sense of place and those attributes should be the focus of improving the Wayfinding System. Overall we saw that the most improvement should be focused on aiding visitors in understanding how to navigate the city while still showing the uniqueness of Clinton’s culture and identity.

Next steps include:
1) an honest and open discussion on the wayfinding system by the committee. Is it important for the city? If so, it needs to be unique and distinctive. Right now, it is neither. Other cities in IA have similar signage and, as our results dictate, the current wayfinding system does little to add to a visitor’s experience.

2) survey users and local stakeholders, including businesses.

3) conduct a review of other towns and examine multiple ways wayfinding can be employed

4) experiment with temporary or “guerrilla” wayfinding. This is a cheap and easy way to connect stakeholders and visitors.

5) critically evaluate existing and potential sign location at multiple scales and for multiple users.

6) critically evaluate current district system. Is it serving a purpose?

7) explore digital wayfinding.