

Direction Philadelphia

In 1985 the Foundation for Architecture (FFA) held a public forum dedicated to examining Philadelphia's public information system. The interest sparked by this meeting led to the formation of a steering committee composed of city agencies, area tourist attractions, local businesses and institutions and organizations such as the American

Institute of Graphic Arts. This committee formed a public-private partnership that examined the potential for a vehicular sign program unique to Philadelphia, closely examining funding, ownership, and maintenance issues. In 1988 the William Penn Foundation supported the committee with a three-year grant to develop the sign program.

A host of partners, chief among them the California-based graphic design firm of Sussman/Prejza & Co., developed criteria for vehicular directional signs. These criteria ranged from dividing the city into distinct districts, developing a hierarchy of signs, establishing standard typefaces and sizes, and coordinating a color palette. From this work the "Direction Philadelphia" wayfinding system was born.

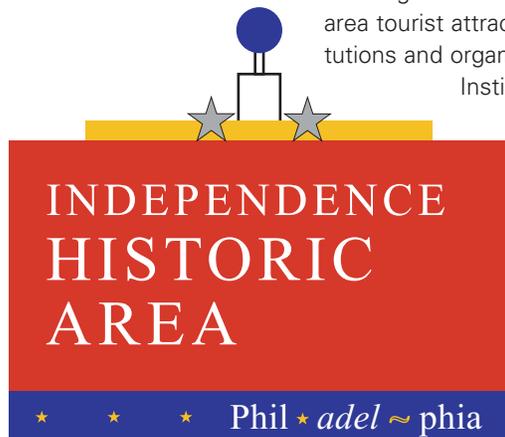
After a prototype installation by the University of Pennsylvania in 1989 the first signs were installed in the Historic Area in 1992. These were followed by signs in the Parkway/Museums, Convention Center and Avenue of the Arts areas. Separate but related projects were installed in Fairmount Park, at the Sports Complex, in University City and in Manayunk.

In 2001 new criteria were established for a neighborhood wayfinding program in Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill.

The fabrication and installation of these signs was financed by a combination of stakeholder, city, state and federal monies. More than 700 such signs are now located throughout Philadelphia.

Since 1992 maintenance of the signs has been funded by the organizations listed on the signs. Each stakeholder is assessed a yearly fee of \$140 per listing. These funds help defer the costs of annual survey work and routine repairs and cleaning. The city's Streets Department provides funds to replace badly damaged signs and capital dollars for new sign projects.

In late 2002 the Center City District assumed responsibility for the Direction Philadelphia program. Since then more than 400 signs have been refurbished and new listings added for destinations such as the Kimmel Center, Independence Visitor Center and National Constitution Center.



Conceived and supported by over 300 private stakeholders, Direction Philadelphia vehicular signs lead motorists to Philadelphia's most prestigious attractions.

Gateway signs introduce visitors to the system and provide a visually dynamic greeting at key entrances to the city.

District Directional signs point the way to major areas such as the Independence Historic Area, Penn's Landing, and Parkway Museums.

Destination Directional signs guide visitors to individual attractions.

Finally, **Arrival Signs** indicate when visitors have reached an attraction.

This comprehensive system of large, colorful signs help make Philadelphia's diverse cultural attractions more accessible and visible to motorists. The signs work in tandem with city's pedestrian wayfinding program, Walk!Philadelphia.

