

Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System

History

In 2005, a professional consulting team was retained to create a comprehensive vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding signage system to help visitors arrive in, enjoy and exit the Uptown area of Charlotte with ease.

A subsequent 2006 study of Charlotte's Uptown area recommended some options for finding destinations and parking that would benefit visitors and residents. Focus group meetings with both occasional and frequent visitors to Uptown identified the same solutions. The key issues and needs were:

1. Clear, consistent signage to help Uptown customers and visitors more easily find attractions, sports venues and cultural districts.
2. Improved signage to destinations and parking to save motorists' time and fuel.
3. Better directions for commuters and visitors to available parking to reduce confusion and frustration. Enhanced pedestrian signage to encourage "parking once" and finding uptown destinations as a pedestrian by walking.
4. Signage for drivers to find their way back to I-277 or I-77 when leaving Uptown.

The resulting [Center City Transportation Plan](#) included policies to address these needs, create a collaborative parking management system and implement a unique Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System.

What is the Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System?

The Charlotte Wayfinding and Parking Guidance System includes real-time parking supply information in Charlotte's Central Business District. The system directs motorists from the Uptown freeways to public parking that is convenient to their destination. From parking facilities and transit stations, pedestrian-scaled directional signs and maps identify routes to and from major public destinations in Uptown. Finally, the system directs the motorist back to the roadway network through a set of egress directional signs.

The system's signs include a distinctive "P" parking sign with a blue lighted background. It is intended to provide visitors and residents real-time parking information at parking decks. In addition, five Gateway signs entering Uptown from the freeways will display a variety of messages.

The selection of "messages" for wayfinding and parking signs is based on Federal and State standards and experience. Visibility requirements define font size, color, reflectivity and style to ensure legibility with design speed and age of average user as other determinants of sign message characteristics.

The project conveys the feeling of a parking "system." It helps visitors find venues and parking more easily, facilitates balancing the parking supply with growing transit service, and provides congestion mitigation and air quality benefits.

Funded by Federal initiatives to reduce congestion, improve air quality and increase energy efficiency, the grants totaled \$3.2 million. Signage includes pedestrian, freeway, on-street directional, dynamic gateway and parking guidance, and egress signs. Installation began in 2007 and is now complete.

