



Aurora Parking & Mobility Enterprise

July 2015 • Final

Branding and Wayfinding

Includes a discussion of program branding elements and specific examples of how to brand the Parking and Mobility program in conjunction with the City of Aurora's branding campaign. This section includes specific signage examples for the parking facilities and on-street elements, as well as best practices for navigation and wayfinding.



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Expect More. Experience Better.

A decorative graphic consisting of a green line that starts at the top left, goes down, then right, and then down again. An orange line starts at the top left, goes down, then right, and then down again. Both lines end in arrows pointing to the right. The text "Branding and Wayfinding" is centered between the two horizontal arrow segments.

**Branding
and Wayfinding**



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One of the most important aspects of creating a new consolidated parking program will be the efforts related to branding and marketing the program, as well as educating program users. The program brand is the common denominator that patrons and community stakeholders use to identify the program components. It is not just a logo and a name—it is a way of thinking and operating that symbolize a major change in the business of parking. The five key elements of branding outlined in this section are the foundation for the new brand, as well as the related marketing and education campaigns.

The basic tenets of the branding campaign are to:

- » Communicate the new program elements and their benefits to users
- » Communicate how to use the program and elements intended for “ease of use”
- » Communicate where and when to park for different scenarios
- » Communicate how to use technology
- » Communicate how to find parking through wayfinding and navigation elements

The parking system should be branded to provide a cohesive look and feel that helps the end user better understand and find available parking assets and supply. Typically, parking branding is defined as the graphic “P” used to identify the location and entrance to a parking facility. In this case, the brand of the Aurora Parking and Mobility Enterprise System needs to typify more than that. The brand should provide the consistent look, feel, and message, in parallel with the mission and vision of the system and the marketing and outreach efforts identified in that component of the program.

The City of Aurora recently underwent a large branding campaign, including the identification of new messaging and visual cues that are intended to represent the evolution of the Aurora community. The branded parking system will follow that format, helping to integrate the new parking function in the

community with the changing perceptions of the community.

The themes and elements found in the recent “A Book” were used to identify parking program brand elements, which are described on the following pages.

These branding elements should be conveyed in everything related to the

Parking and Mobility Program, including signage, correspondence, web materials, outreach and presentation materials, clothing and gear for staff, stickers on technology, and advertising. The consistent and clear messaging should resonate through the use of the branding elements.

BRAND POSITIONING HOW WE SOUND					
KEY ATTRIBUTES Aurora's key attributes are what make our city unique and separate us from the competition. As it relates to cities and municipalities, there are many brand attributes that set us apart, such as our low crime rate, family friendly neighborhoods and strong job market. Utilizing these attributes will effectively help us promote the following points of difference when referencing our city and positioning it as a desirable place to live, work, visit, develop, do business and bring jobs.		LOW CRIME <i>Aurora is one of America's safest large cities. Our low crime rate per capita puts us ahead of Denver and Colorado Springs.</i>	COMFORTABLE <i>Residents here enjoy a unique quality of life that blends an old-fashioned sense of community with a range of outdoor and leisure activities.</i>	SCHOOLS <i>Home to both Aurora and Cherry Creek schools, Aurora makes top-tier public education accessible through flexible open enrollment.</i>	
PROUD TO CALL HOME <i>Offering a wealth of opportunity and a comfortable way of life, thousands of residents are proud to call Aurora home and often stay for generations.</i>		IMPROVING <i>Aurora continues to grow at an average 1.7% percent annually, attracting investments from top national employers, home builders and developers.</i>		MEDICAL CENTER <i>Aurora is home to the Anschutz Medical Campus composed of nationally renowned education, research and patient care facilities that currently employ 20,000 people, and eventually more than 43,000.</i>	CITY SERVICES <i>Aurora residents and businesses enjoy tremendous value for their money with award-winning public safety, quality parks and recreation, beautiful open spaces, and cultural, educational and community activities.</i>
FAMILY ORIENTED <i>Beyond the city's safety and education options, Aurora offers abundant of family friendly activities, trails and parks, and nearby shops and restaurants.</i>	NEIGHBORLY <i>Boasting one of the broadest varieties of nationalities across 450 neighborhoods, Aurora welcomes all walks of life and makes residents feel at home.</i>	HOUSING VALUES <i>Aurora offers the most house for the money in the Denver-Aurora metro area—an attractive, value-filled market for a full array of home buyers.</i>	JOB OPTIONS <i>From medical to aerospace to financial industries, Aurora has a wide variety of blue-chip employers increasing their investment in the city.</i>	OUTDOOR FACILITIES <i>Aurora is home to six award-winning golf courses and numerous outdoor attractions including the Jewell Wetlands, Plains Conservation Center, Morrison Nature Center and the Aurora and Quincy reservoirs.</i>	

The Five Key Ingredients for a Successful Parking Brand

A parking brand is successful when it evokes a memorable and positive parking experience to users, drawing them back time and time again. A successful parking brand usually includes five key elements:

Be Memorable

The brand's logo, brand name, and its overall “look” must be memorable so that motorists can easily identify, remember, and associate it with the City of Aurora Parking and Mobility Enterprise system.

Be Affordable

Being affordable does not mean being cheap. Rather, the appearance of affordability is often created by simplifying rate structures and making it easier for people to pay. Programs that provide consistent rate structures for short-term transactions across the entire system make it easier for patrons to figure out how and where to park. First Hour Free programs give the appearance that the City is giving away some type of free parking, even though the result is longer parking transactions that mean more money spent in the community.

Be Convenient

A primary factor for creating a successful parking brand is to make the system convenient to utilize from beginning to end, which is primarily rooted in effective communication. Thorough communication strategies allow users to easily understand and navigate the parking system, making locating and utilizing the most optimum parking option convenient for drivers. This begins with developing clear and standardized

Five Key Elements of Branding

- » Be Memorable
- » Be Affordable
- » Be Convenient
- » Be Clean and Safe
- » Be Easy



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wayfinding signage, such as trailblazer signs, that indicate where available parking is located. Dynamic messaging signage communicates parking location and space availability. Web-based communication and social media provide an opportunity to communicate parking regulations, locations, and rates before motorists begin their trip.

Be Clean and Safe

Even when parking is available and affordable, it will not be effectively utilized if motorists feel unsafe and consider the facility unkempt. Improvements such as decreasing clutter, providing additional lighting, maintaining clean facilities, and periodic painting can support a positive image of the parking facility and increase the likelihood of motorists choosing to park there.

Be Easy

An easy parking system is created when all of the branding elements are implemented collectively. When motorists can identify the location or parking through memorable trailblazer signage, they may quickly and easily access available parking. When parking rates are properly structured, communicated, and presented, the motorists can easily determine how much they will be paying for parking. When vehicle navigation strategies including interactive maps, parking information websites, trailblazer signs, and dynamic messaging signage, motorists are guided through the parking system.

Summary

When implementing these Five Key Ingredients in Aurora, the following tenets should be held constant and used to define the Park Aurora brand.

- » Make public parking memorable by creating a strong name “Park Aurora”, and associating the parking service with the many amenities that Aurora is providing the community.
- » Make public parking affordable by establishing a consistent pricing methodology from on-street to off-street to neighborhood permit. Pricing based upon demand and offering a value-based pricing proposition, e.g. “walk a block and save a buck.”
- » Make public parking convenient by integrating parking information within City of Aurora and community stakeholder communication streams (websites, social media, etc.) all aimed to create a convenient parking experience, before, during, and after the trip.
- » Make public parking clean and safe by committing to treating the parking facility as a retail store and not a dusty and grimy garage. Change this perception and you will continually increase use of your parking facilities.
- » Make public parking easy by planning and designing thoughtful signage that anticipates the user’s needs while seeking parking, using the facilities, paying for parking, and exiting the facilities. Use the opportunity to “welcome” and “thank” the parking patron for coming!

With these elements in place, along with key design elements from the recent rebranding effort within the community, several program-specific branding elements were developed that include wayfinding, guidance, signage, and theming elements. These were built from a combination of industry experience and best management practices, and incorporated into the new community branding elements. The graphics on the following pages provide a description of these elements and their use within the parking system.

Program Name, Logo, and Tagline

Simplicity is typically vital when developing a program name. Complicated and lengthy names can often be misconstrued or misinterpreted for inaccessible or unavailable parking. The key is for the motorist to quickly identify the public parking asset, park their vehicle, and be on their way. With that in mind, the easiest and most recognizable naming option for the new Parking and Mobility Program is **Park Aurora**. It simply relates the action and the management entity and conveys the necessary information for the motorist to recognize the available parking. The logo and the tagline below are the result of that naming convention and are inclusive of branding elements from the larger community rebranding effort.



Be colorful. Be unique. Be Aurora. Park Aurora!

On-Street Parking Signage

On-street signage should be simple and convey the most important information—where can the user park and what is the predominant regulation? Many communities have over-complicated their systems by overlaying regulations that are confusing and create frustration with the patron. The on-street signage to the right provides a simple messaging system that includes the time limits and regulation periods. The

panels also introduce additional messaging, such as neighborhood permit areas, value zones, commuter zones, or specific block face regulations. These signs are similar in nature to signage in Seattle, Washington, where their program management uses concepts like value parking to help balance demands by providing lower priced parking in fringe areas. When coupled with an appropriate pricing program, these signs help promote a more balanced parking environment where it is easier for patrons to find and access parking.

The graphics on the following pages provide a depiction of the size and scale of the signage.





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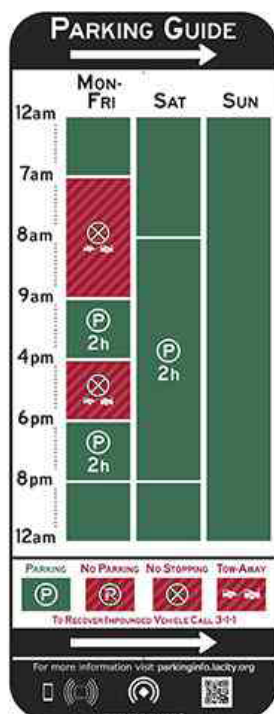
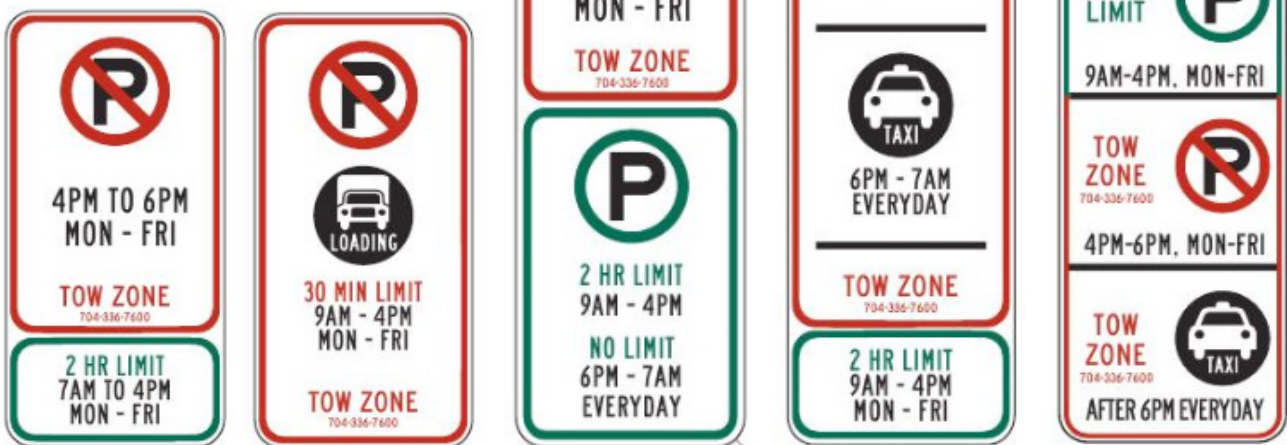




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standard street signage, because they are intended to stand out to motorists and easily convey the parking opportunities and regulations. However, should the City decide to go with a more standard signage package that more closely resembles those found in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Design (MUTCD), the following examples from Charlotte, North Carolina provide an example of using symbology and simple messaging within the standard MUTCD framework.

These signs use simple symbols



to denote user restrictions (such as commercial loading, parking, and taxis), while using green and red colors to define prohibited and allowable parking. Additionally, the time-based restrictions are listed chronologically by time, to allow motorists to more quickly and easily understand the restrictions on parking.

Further variations of this chronological methodology were tested in Charlotte (as shown in the first graphic to the right) and have been implemented in Los Angeles (as shown in the second graphic to the left).

Trailblazer Signs

The graphic below represents standard trailblazer signs that will guide motorists to public parking. Trailblazer signs should be easy to follow, navigating motorists to available parking supply. Typically, static signage is used with the graphic elements as “bread crumbs” to lead the motorist through the street network to the parking asset.





Garage Signage

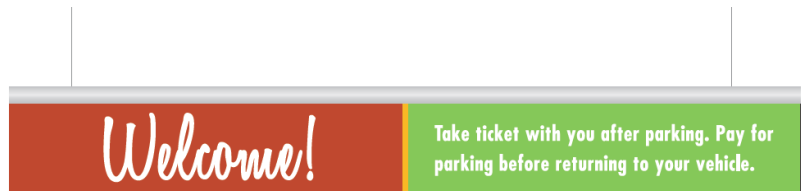
The exterior garage signage indicates that the motorist has reached their destination. The use of larger illuminated signage indicates that the motorist has arrived at their destination. In some locations, dynamic signage can be used to identify if a facility has available spaces.

This type of dynamic signage should be made as simple as possible, with the information transmitting whether there are “OPEN” spaces (meaning there is less than 85% to 90% utilization in the facility), the facility is “FULL” (meaning all spaces are occupied), or providing an available space count if the occupancy is between 85% and 100%.



Below, interior garage signage is used to welcome motorists, direct them to parking, and identify payment options and where to exit. The image on the following page depicts the new Iliff parking garage with these branding elements affixed to the exterior of the façade.

Branding should not be limited to City owned assets. Should the City maintain, manage, or operate private parking assets as publicly available parking, those facilities should also be branded to ensure that the public is aware of the availability of those spaces to serve public demands.





Additional Branding Opportunities

The City shouldn't stop the implementation of branding concepts at the parking system. As this program is focused on both parking and mobility, the City should also ensure that the programs branding and marketing efforts are broad enough to cover the mobility components that will help enhance the system for Aurora residents, businesses, and vendors. While individual components like car share and bike share will likely be branded by the company who provides the equipment, the application of the equipment and education and marketing components should be closely tied to the City of Aurora Parking & Mobility Program. To that end, marketing and education campaigns should be inclusive of these elements and help to promote their use within the system.



Parking Navigation Elements

Navigation and wayfinding strategies are critical for guiding motorists to designated public parking locations. Proper navigation elements act as “breadcrumbs”, leading drivers from their home, through the street system, and to a final parking destination that best matches their destination. There are numerous elements that could be considered, ranging from static signage to technologically advanced systems that communicate route and destination information. Establishing a connected system comprising multiple elements will best support balanced use of the parking system, enhancing the overall parking experience.

The remainder of this section describes elements that should be considered for the three elements of the decision making process: Pre-Trip, In-Route, and Post-Trip.

PRE-TRIP NAVIGATION

In this age of limitless information dissemination, planning for a positive parking experience has never been easier. Parking programs have websites, smartphone applications, and online information sources that allow users to plan for and execute a flawless parking experience. While this information is readily available, getting users to utilize the information is a struggle for some organizations.

The traditional method for finding parking has been (and will likely remain) for a motorist to drive to their destination, and then begin circling to find available parking that is cheap (or free), convenient, and easy. Changing the motorist’s behavior to better understand how and where parking is available can have a profound impact on congestion, circulation, and experience. Studies have shown that up to 30% of street congestion in a community can be attributed to motorists cruising for parking. Helping just a portion of these motorists to more easily and quickly find parking can reduce street traffic and improve the customer experience.

The introduction of a standalone parking website might not impact all motorists driving decisions, but it can have a large enough impact to help motorists to better find and utilize parking. The online parking information should guide users to public parking facilities by utilizing a collection of parking information, online maps, and user education tools related to the new public parking system. The Marketing and Education chapter discusses developing a standalone website that represents the new parking brand and information related to the program. If a stand-alone website is created, it should provide the parking related navigation, payment, and access information to users.

The website should be compatible with mobile platforms, including iPhone and Android. Websites that aren’t compatible with these platforms are generally difficult to navigate for tablet or smartphone users, with some functions such as scrolling or images not functioning properly or at all. Allowing for streamlined mobile compatibility provides an easier transition from pre-planning to in-route navigation, without the need for transitioning from a home computer to a mobile device.

IN-ROUTE NAVIGATION

Whether the motorist uses pre-planning options or not prior to leaving for their destination, they will likely use some form of in-route navigation to help them find their way once they reach vicinity of their

destination. In-Route navigation could be as simple as static wayfinding or trailblazer signage, or as complex as in-vehicle navigation. In-Route Navigation is likely the most effective form of communication, because well placed signage or routing can impact the largest number of motorists as they look for their destination.

The following subsections provide guidance on several In-Route navigation tools.

Signage

Strategically placed signage provides opportunities to direct motorists to public parking facilities, reducing the potential for cruising and possible patron frustration related to finding available parking. There are numerous approaches to implementing signage, including traditional destination-based wayfinding signage, parking-specific trailblazer signage, exterior facility signage, and parking guidance systems.

Destination-Based Wayfinding Signage

Vehicular guidance signs include multiple panels that direct drivers first to community landmarks, such as the parks, entertainment venues, and municipal complexes. Once they have arrived in the districts, the signage provides navigation to parking around those destinations.

Locations for vehicular wayfinding signage should be assessed based on destinations served and primary traffic patterns. Routes that are primary traffic carrying corridors provide the best opportunity to inform motorists. The Parking and Mobility Manager should work with traffic engineering to define signage placement standards to maximize visibility of wayfinding elements. This strategy is a relatively low cost option to guide motorists to public parking and can be implemented relatively quickly given the existing presence of wayfinding signage and infrastructure.

Parking Specific Trailblazer Signs

Parking-specific trailblazer signs act as a system of “breadcrumbs”, directing motorists as they enter the community, navigate through the community street network and arrive at public parking facilities. The design of the signs should be representative of the new parking brand, including associated color and font schemes, helping the signage and message to stand out to drivers among the sea of other wayfinding and traffic control signs. Trailblazer signs should be consistently designed in terms of design, height, and placement in relation to the street and the driver, offering a consistent vantage point for motorists to identify directions to public parking.

The most effective static navigation system in the community will likely include a combination of existing destination-based wayfinding signage and parking-specific trailblazer signage. The City should review existing signage locations, in conjunction with potential locations for parking navigation signage, including predicting the most likely routes people take into the community based on available traffic data, indicating key travel routes and prime locations for additional trailblazer signs. Generally, trailblazer signs start appearing a few blocks away from a facility with additional signage dictated by turning movements from primary routes. Each trailblazer sign should be mounted at the same height for easy visibility. As the motorist approaches the facility, the final trailblazer sign will be mounted on the parking facility, indicating arrival at the destination.



Exterior Facility Signage

The final trailblazer sign is actually the exterior facility signage. This signage serves as the final indication for a motorist that they have arrived at their destination, using the branding and marketing elements to provide the motorist with assurance that they have reached an identified public parking facility. The brand signage is usually installed above the entrance, or in a prominent location that can be easily identified by motorists on the adjacent street network.

Ideally, this signage is large enough to be seen from approaching blocks, is illuminated to be seen in evening hours, and has a unique design that sets it apart from other parking signage. By using the new brand symbology outlined in the previous sections, these parking program signs will indicate that the motorist has arrived at a public parking location.

Parking Guidance Systems

Parking Guidance Systems (PGS) can be implemented in the community to expand vehicle navigation through the provision of a higher level of data communicated through electronic signage. Parking Guidance Systems include dynamic messaging signs that are connected to either space detection systems or revenue control systems for each individual parking facility supported by the PGS. These connections serve to relay real-time parking space availability in those facilities, helping motorists make the decision where to park based on availability. Parking Guidance Systems provide an excellent opportunity to reduce the perception of a lack of parking in an area by communicating real-time parking space availability, and directing traffic to those available parking spaces. Just like the static signage options, this directed navigation serves to reduce traffic congestion and promote an easier parking experience.

Because parking guidance systems require accurate real-time parking utilization data, it is the responsibility of parking facilities to continually share data related to parking availability to ensure that the system displays accurate information. It may be necessary to invest in vehicular detection systems at the facility level. This could include loop detection systems, space-by-space detection systems, or camera detection systems, all of which can help define the true ingress and egress patterns of a parking facility. However, the implementation of a new counting system will be costly, and could require additional investment on the part of the City.

PERSONAL PARKING GUIDANCE TECHNOLOGY

In addition to signage platforms, there is an additional In-Route navigation platform that can be implemented – Personal Parking Guidance Technologies. These technologies include the dissemination of parking information (location, rates, availability, etc.) for each individual user, whether using smartphone applications or in vehicle wayfinding platforms. While this component of navigation is still in the evolutionary phase, within the next five to ten years this will be the predominant form of parking navigation on the market. There are numerous well known smartphone application vendors (ParkMe, QuickPay, Parkopedia to name a few) who have helped to develop that component of the market into a viable alternative to exterior wayfinding signage. Additionally, these major players in the industry have also begun to broker deals with automobile manufacturers and vehicular GPS companies to use their data in in-vehicle navigation systems. While not widespread today, it is only a matter of time before these systems become commonplace in the personal vehicle.

Smartphone App Navigation

Smartphone applications provide a platform to share parking information and vehicle navigation services through a medium that is easily accessible to motorists. Basic information can include maps with parking locations, rate, and regulatory information. Data provided through on-street parking revenue control technology or sensors and private parking operators would provide an additional avenue to relay real-time parking availability via the app.

For most smartphone developers, the implementation of such a system would come at no cost to the City. These developers and vendors are interested in obtaining a direct source to parking availability data, which is being used to consolidate a larger nationwide network and strengthen the offerings of in-vehicle parking navigation systems. The implementation of a smartphone application would simply require the City make data sources open and available to developers. Data sources could include the static information found on the program website, parking availability data from on-street parking sensors, transaction data from on-street parking meters, and parking transaction data from off-street garages.

In-Vehicle Parking Navigation

The next evolution in personal parking guidance is the addition of parking facilities (locations, information, and availability) to in-vehicle GPS systems. Many of the premier smartphone application developers and data aggregators are beginning to provide their consolidated parking data to vehicle manufacturers to provide real-time navigation to available parking. Just in the last year, several deals have been brokered with auto manufacturers such as Ford, Audi, Volvo, and more.

It is only a matter of time before this type of system is more prevalent in the parking and transportation industry. While the City should make parking data open source for development on a number of platforms, they should also promote the development of applications with major developers (ParkMe, QuickPay, Parkopedia, ParkMobile, etc) to ensure that as the impending movement towards parking data integration into vehicle navigation systems is widely available in the Aurora area.

POST-TRIP NAVIGATION

While the primary sources of parking navigation are found Pre-Trip and In-Route, there are still opportunities to navigate and educate motorists after the completion of their trip. While most motorists will know their way home, negating a need for true post-trip navigation, the act of exiting a facility or parking space can allow the City one last opportunity to direct motorists to the parking website. This becomes a platform to help alter behavior on the next trip, hopefully promoting pre-trip and in-route planning.

Using parking receipts from meters or facilities, the City can provide a link to the website, likely on the reverse side of the receipt. Within parking facilities, signage can be posted thanking the motorist for their transaction, and inviting them to visit the parking website for more information about the program and potential opportunities to improve their experience further.