

Millwood Historic Preservation Commission Project: Historic District Street Signage

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April 2025*

1. Introduction: Raising Visibility, Supporting Preservation

The Millwood Historic Preservation Commission is charged with identifying and encouraging the conservation of Millwood's historic resources, maintaining the local historic register, reviewing proposed changes to registered properties, and promoting awareness of the city's historic character. As part of its responsibilities, the Commission also plays a central role in maintaining Millwood's status as a Certified Local Government (CLG) with the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation.

This proposal directly supports that mission by addressing a fundamental visibility gap: aside from a single trail-side marker, there is no signage denoting the boundaries or even the presence of Millwood's designated Historic District. This lack of physical identification limits community awareness and undermines opportunities for education, engagement, and civic pride.

By initiating a signage program—starting with clearly defined entry points or district-wide identifiers—the Commission is fulfilling its mandate to raise public awareness, promote preservation, and ensure the City's historic identity remains visible and accessible to current and future generations.

This effort is designed to be highly cost-effective, with design work being done internally, saving thousands in consultant fees. Even a modest investment (e.g., \$500–\$1,000) could create meaningful change, aligning with the city's planning and beautification goals while furthering the Commission's core mission.

2. Choosing a Signage Strategy: Two Options for Consideration

Before selecting any design, the Commission must decide the scope and method of signage implementation as this will impact the design options of the signage. Two primary options are presented:

A. Option A: Entry-Only Signage

- Install signs at major vehicular and pedestrian entry point into the Historic District.
- This provides a lower initial cost, high visibility, and minimal infrastructure required.
- Easily scalable for future expansion.

B. Option B: Full Historic District Street Signage

- Mark every street within the designated district.
- Creates strong neighborhood identity and reinforces district boundaries.
- Higher cost but offers long-term cohesion and visibility.
- May be implemented in phases if budget is a constraint.



Example of Option A



Example of Option B

3. Signage Type Discussion (Independent of Design)

Several practical signage types are under consideration. The choice of signage type will guide design and installation logistics:

1. Pole-mounted signs at district entry points, affixed to new or existing poles.
2. Street sign toppers added above or below existing street name signs.
3. Full replacement signs for existing street signs, sourced through vendors such as roadtrafficsigns.com, with the option to include a small identifying graphic.
4. Each type presents different cost, visibility, and maintenance considerations. Whenever possible, signs should be mounted on existing infrastructure to reduce installation cost.



4. Cost Strategy and Internal Design Savings

The City has tentatively indicated looking at supplying support for incorporating signage costs into the city's planning and beautification budget. Preliminary pricing from the Washington State Department of Transportation sign studio estimates costs at \$18.54 per square foot.

Because the Commission has committed to developing design concepts internally, the project will avoid consultant or agency design fees. This represents significant savings and allows budget allocations to go directly toward fabrication and installation.

Even a modest initial investment of \$500 to \$1,000 could produce highly visible results and offer long-term benefits by making the Historic District easier to recognize and appreciate.

5. Design Direction: Deferred Until After Approach Selection

1. Design work is underway but intentionally paused until the signage approach is selected. Existing concepts include:
2. A circular badge-style design.
3. A crest or shield-style emblem.
4. Traditional horizontal sign toppers.
5. A minimalist replacement street sign with a small identifying graphic (e.g., through roadtrafficsigns.com).
6. Some concepts incorporate the current city logo; however, alternatives using historic imagery, map graphics, and typographic treatments have been explored. This is to avoid over-reliance on the current logo, which may be updated and lacks historic context.
7. Final design decisions should reflect the chosen signage type and align with Millwood's diverse architectural character (1920s to present).

6. Recommended Next Steps for the Commission

1. Select a signage approach (Entry-Only vs. Full District).
2. Approve a signage type (topper, pole-mounted, full replacement).
3. Use the selected approach and type to refine design and estimate production costs.
4. Engage City staff to confirm alignment with planning and beautification funds.
5. Develop an implementation plan with a proposed timeline.
6. Review and finalize designs once the scope and type are approved.

appendix: Option A: Entry-Only Signage Options

Real-World Exmaple



Option Examples



appendix: Option A: Entry-Only Signage Options

Option Examples



Real-World Exmample



Rendor Example

appendix: Option A or B: Signage Options

Real-World Exmample



Option Examples



appendix: Option A or B: Signage Options

Real-World Exmaple



Option Examples



appendix: RoadTrafficSigns Option Example



► Select Material ?

Choose a grade of reflective street sign. High Intensity Grade is most popular.

Package: 1 Sign. Prices shown below are per Sign					
6" x 24"	1	2	3	4	5
☒ Engineer Grade	\$34.95	\$34.75	\$34.65	\$34.55	\$34.45
☐ High Intensity Grade	\$39.75	\$39.65	\$39.55	\$39.45	\$39.35
☐ Diamond Grade	\$45.95	\$45.75	\$45.45	\$45.25	\$44.95

