

MARYLAND SHA
TOURIST AREA AND CORRIDOR (TAC) SIGN GUIDELINES
April 2, 2008 (rev)

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------|
| I. Implementation Guidelines | |
| A. Hierarchy of Guidance | 1 |
| B. Creating the Area-Corridor Guidance Hierarchy | 3 |
| C. Area Signing | 5 |
| D. Individual Attraction Trailblazing | 6 |
| E. Attraction Eligibility Criteria | 7 |
| F. Changing Signs | 8 |
| G. Use of County and Municipal Rights-of-way | 8 |
| H. Maintenance and Replacement | 8 |
| II. Glossary | 9 |

I. Implementation Guidelines

A. Hierarchy of Guidance

Tourist Area and Corridor (TAC) Signing is a system of supplemental guide signs which directs motorists to *qualified* individual attractions by directing them first to groups of attractions. Attractions are grouped by geographical area and sub-area.

Signing starts with mainline signs on expressways or major highways which name the corridor by geographical areas. Then ramp signs and conventional road area signs guide motorists to a corridor in the TAC area. This corridor lines up the turns for all the individual attractions. Ultimately, attraction and parking trailblazers guide motorists to the drop-off zone or parking entrance for an attraction.

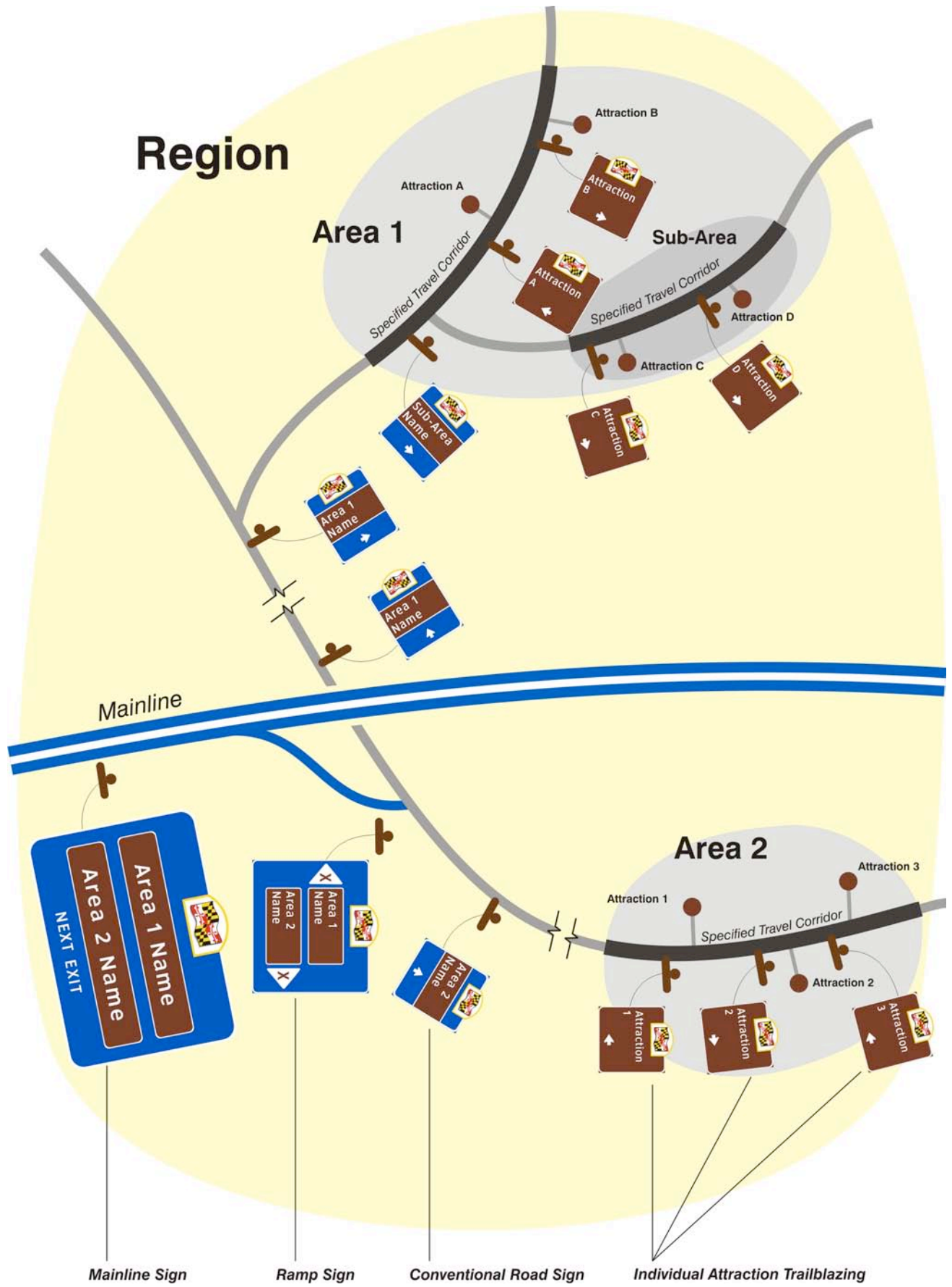


Figure I-A: TAC System Hierarchy of Signing

B. Creating the Area-Corridor Guidance Hierarchy

1. AREA CREATION

An area may be created if it satisfies the following conditions and all associated signs can be installed:

- a) **SENSE OF PLACE** – The area must exhibit an overall “sense of place” unique from neighboring areas. An example would be a city district that is clearly separated from its neighbors and exhibits an overall type of development “downtown”.
- b) **MINIMUM CONTENTS** – An area must contain at least one of the following:
 - i) Three eligible attractions, or an officially designated Historic District meeting the Attraction Eligibility Criteria (refer to **Section I-E: Attraction Eligibility Criteria** for the requirements);
 - ii) The single most significant attraction or traffic generator in the region (count main street districts as traffic generators.) – for example: Six Flags in Prince Georges County;
 - iii) A distinctive geographical area of at least 100 acres that is of regionally significant recreational, scenic or tourist value that includes a DNR park or site – for example, Fair Hill in Cecil County.
- c) **MEANS OF ACCESS** – Each area must contain a corridor which serves as the most efficient means of access to the area’s attractions. Areas must be either widely separated or separated by geographical boundaries (major expressways, industrial zones, rivers, mountains, etc.) and organized so that they do not “wrap around” each other.

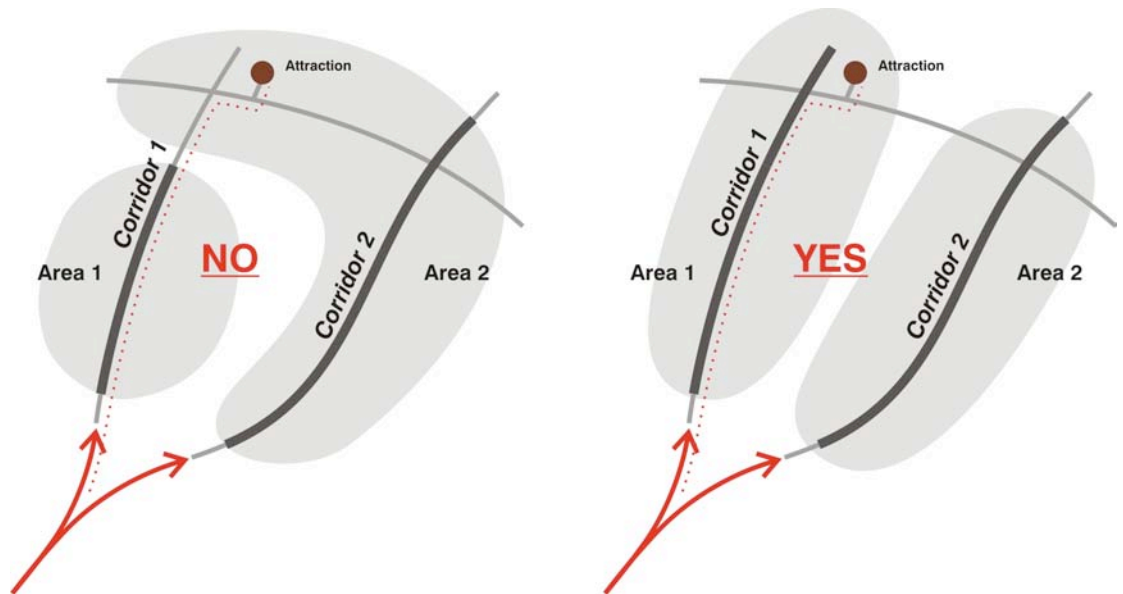


Figure I-B-1c: Means of Access: Example of Improper vs. Proper Area Layout

2. NAMING AREAS

- a) A name needs to be representative of the types of attractions found in that area. Examples are: “Historic Towns” and “Scenic Peninsulas”.
- b) Names shall be concise, unique and easily understood by visitors and local residents.

3. SUB-AREAS - Inside an area, sub-areas may be identified.

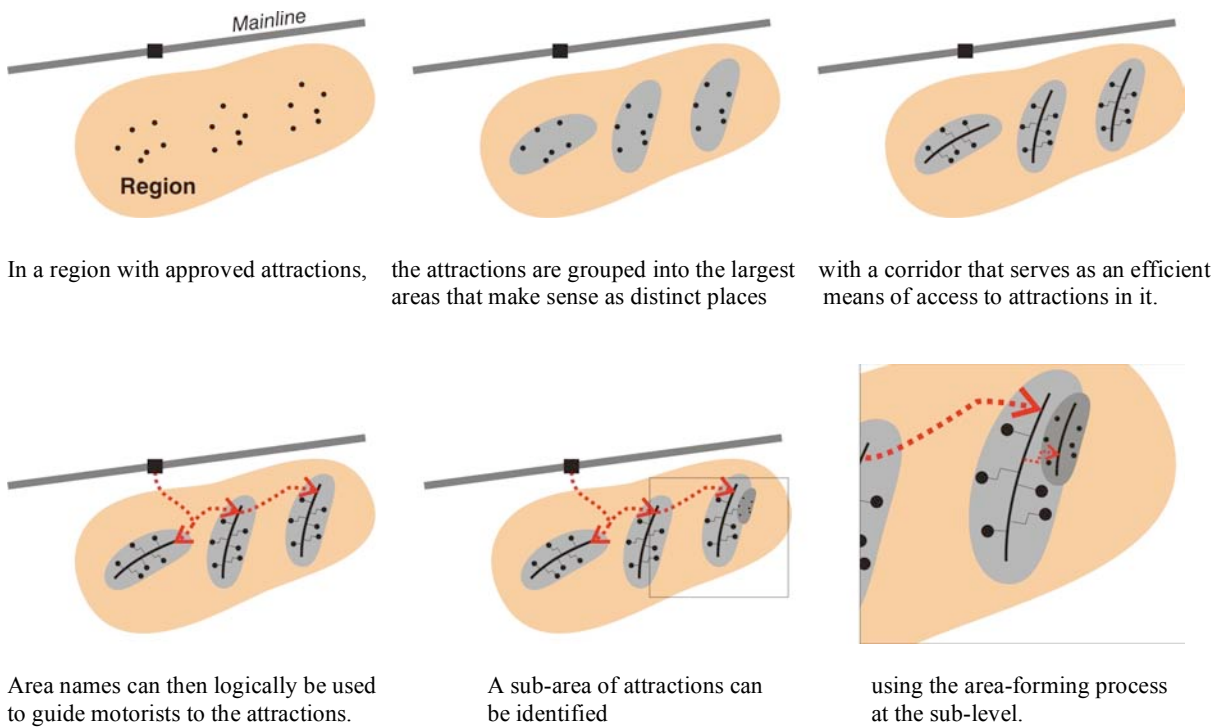


FIGURE I-B-3: Area and Sub-Area Creation

4. SUPER-AREAS

A Super-Area may be signed along an expressway. A Super-area encompasses a group of areas which share a common action message. For example, “Downtown Baltimore” encompasses the areas of Mt. Vernon, Inner Harbor and Fells Point. A “super-area” does not have a specified travel corridor.

5. ADDING A NEW AREA OR SUB-AREA

Every two years, when enough new eligible attractions are identified and approved by the TAC Eligibility Committee, new areas may be created if space is available.

6. EXISTING ATTRACTIONS NOT IN A CORRIDOR

Generic symbol mainline signs shall be used to replace existing Attraction Logo Signs at interchanges which do not link to a corridor, if the attraction qualifies for TAC-approved generic symbols. In such cases, the attraction logos shall be replaced with a brown field and the required generic symbol(s) as illustrated in C.3 below. When more than four are eligible, priority shall be:

- State Welcome Center / DMO-operated Visitor Center (which may not be excluded or bumped), then
- attractions by largest documented annual attendance

C. Area Signing

All signing shall meet the Md MUTCD and AASHTO requirements, the Maryland Book of Standards, SHA guidelines, Maryland Roadside Design Manual guidelines and Maryland Standard Specifications for Construction and Materials.

1. GENERAL SIGN DESIGN

- Color: Signs use blue background with brown panels and white legend
- The size of sign panels are to be minimized
- Maryland Crest without year founded banner shall be centered at the top
- Sign copy shall be Clearview Highway Font
- No specific logos will be allowed, but generic symbols are allowed
- Copy sizes are based on the MD MUTCD, Tables 2E-1 and 2E-2, and MD Sign Standard D3-2(1).
- Only one sign allowed per expressway interchange, or mainline, approach
- No area should be signed more than 15 miles from its boundary



2. MAINLINE SIGN DESIGN

- Size: 15 feet wide by 18 feet tall (Maximum)
- Three brown panels with five lines of copy (Maximum)
- An area or sub-listing shall not exceed two Area upper/lower case copy 13.33"/10" or 10.67"/8"
- Sub-listing upper/lower case copy 10.67"/8" or 8"/6"
- A divider separates the area from the sub-listing
- An action message or exit number shall be at the bottom with 10" or 8" caps and 15" or 12" numeral



3. GENERIC SYMBOL MAINLINE SIGN DESIGN

- Size: 9 feet wide by 12 feet tall (Maximum)
- The word "ATTRACTIONS" shall be centered at the top in 10.67" caps
- A single brown panel is overlaid on an existing blue sign with up to four generic symbols (Maximum)
- Wineries, Golf, Visitor Center, Antiques, or other standard recreational symbols (except marinas) may be allowed
- An action message or exit number shall be at the bottom with 10" or 8" caps and 15" or 12" numeral



4. RAMP SIGNS DESIGN

- Size: 9 feet wide by 15 feet tall (Maximum)
- The word "ATTRACTION" shall not be on the ramp sign
- Three brown area panels maximum on a blue background
- An arrow is located right or left of the area panel
- A brown mileage number may be added to the arrow
- A maximum of three lines of copy per area or sub-listing with a max. of six lines of copy per sign. (A generic symbol is counted as a line of copy)
- Sub-listings can only be included if space is available
- Copy heights are 4"/3" for ramps posted at 25 mph or less, otherwise 6"/4.5" minimum



5. CONVENTIONAL ROAD AREA SIGNS DESIGN

- Size: 4 feet wide by 10 feet tall (Maximum)
- Maximum of three brown panels with area names on a blue background
- A maximum of three lines of copy per area or sub-listing with a max. of six lines of copy per sign. (A generic symbol is counted as a line of copy)
- Brown panels are separated with a band of blue
- Sub-listings are only included if space is available
- “ATTRACTION” shall not be on the top of the signs
- Copy shall be 4”/3” if posted at 25 mph or less and 6”/4.5” minimum for greater than 25 mph
- Arrows and action messages are centered on the sign
- Two arrows or action messages maximum can be used if separated by a divider



6. AREA TO AREA SIGNS – An area may be signed from a corridor in an adjacent area using a blue and brown sign and the word “TO”.

D. Individual Attraction Trailblazing

All signing shall meet the MD MUTCD and AASHTO requirements, the Maryland Book of Standards, SHA guidelines, Maryland Roadside Design Manual guidelines and Maryland Standard Specifications for Construction and Materials. Individual attractions in an area or between two areas are eligible for trailblazers. Attractions may be signed starting from the nearest corridor or if it is between two areas, from the two adjacent corridors. In dense urban areas, signing shall guide motorists to parking facilities identified by the attractions they serve.

1. GENERAL SIGN DESIGN

- Size: 4 feet (3 feet in urban areas) wide by 7 feet tall (Maximum)
- Color: Brown background with white legend
- Sign copy shall be Clearview Highway Font
- The word “ATTRACTION” shall not appear on the signs
- Copy sizes are based on the Md MUTCD
- An attraction name is limited to three lines of copy
- The word “ATTRACTION” shall not appear on the sign
- A maximum of 2 signs are permitted on an approach to an intersection
- No specific logos will be allowed, but approved generic symbols are allowed
- Three left justified attraction names and a maximum of six lines of copy per sign. A generic symbol is counted as a line of copy.



2. ATTRACTION TRAILBLAZER DESIGN

- Maryland Crest without year founded banner shall be centered at top except on general symbol signs and parking signs
- May have up to two action messages (Maximum)

3. PARKING TRAILBLAZER DESIGN

- A parking symbol “P” in a blue circle shall be centered at the top
- Profile of the sign shall match signs with the Maryland Crest
- Name of the facility may be below the parking symbol with a divider
- One action message or arrow per sign (Maximum)



E. Attraction Eligibility Criteria

Individual attractions must meet the criteria in Section E-1 below. Certain types of attractions are eligible for generic symbol signs if they meet the criteria in Sections E-1 and 2 below. The Eligibility Committee shall determine the eligibility of an attraction for signing based on its procedures. All signing is subject to space availability based on Md MUTCD and AASHTO requirements. State-operated Welcome Centers and DMO-operated Visitor Centers automatically qualify for signing.

1. ATTRACTION CRITERIA

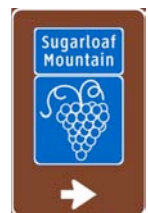
An eligible attraction must primarily provide amusement, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public and meet or adhere to the following:

- MUST BE PRIMARILY A NON-RETAIL BUSINESS - no more than 20% of the interior square footage of the attraction may be devoted to retail sales; and
- MUST BE OPEN TO RANDOM DAILY VISITATION - the attraction does not require advance reservations or extended attendance; and
- MUST APPEAL TO VISITORS FROM OUTSIDE THE AREA – the attraction must be able to demonstrate that at least 50% of its visitors are from outside a 50 mile radius; and
- Meet generator minimum numbers in designated urban centers; and
- Be open at least six hours per day; and
- Be open five days per week including Saturday and/or Sunday; and
- Be open at least eight months each year (Seasonal attractions such as ski resort or amusement park may be exempt); and
- Provide documentation of annual number of visitors; and
- Provide public access to onsite restrooms, water, telephones and parking; and
- Provide an interpreter or guide, printed self-guided tour, or interpretative signing during the hours of operation; and
- Meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities) requirements for handicapped accessibility.

2. ATTRACTIONS SIGNED WITH GENERIC SYMBOLS

Certain attractions are eligible for trailblazing with generic symbols if it meets the appropriate requirements below as well as the above criteria (except as indicated in (a) below). Special Case: If the direction to one golf course differs from another at a decision point, trailblazing may include the name of the attraction above the generic symbol from that point

- a) Golf Course: Requirements for Trailblazers starting at the corridor –
 - Must be a public 18 hole golf course of PAR 63 or greater
 - Must have Tee-times generally available without reservations
 - Entrance must not be located on a corridor
 - Exempt from requirement that at least 50% of visitors be from more than 50 miles away
- b) Golf Course: Requirements for Signing starting at the mainline (space permitting) –
 - A majority of visitors are from fifty miles away; or
 - Must have hosted a national tournament within the past ten years
- c) Visitor Centers – Official DMO-operated visitor centers shall be eligible for mainline symbol sign and trailblazing. Other visitor centers are eligible for only trailblazing with legend “Local Info” from the corridor if it is approved by the DMO and OTD
- d) Antique Row – antique stores are eligible for trailblazing from the mainline if,
 - three or more antique stores are located within two blocks of one another; and
 - it is approved by the Eligibility Committee; and
 - it demonstrates that half of its items for sale are at least 100 years old
- e) Wineries – wineries are eligible for trailblazing from the mainline if it is approved by the Eligibility Committee such that:
 - mainline signing shall never include a winery name;
 - ramp signing may include names, space-permitting, only if wineries are in opposite directions off the ramp; and
 - conventional road signing may include the winery name as per illustration.



- f) Marinas – Marinas are eligible for trailblazing starting from the corridor only if
 - it has a boat launch with at least ten slips; and
 - it provides parking for vehicles and trailers; and
 - it is open to the public without reservation; and
 - shall not be closed to public use other than for a single period of up to 120 consecutive days between November 1 and April 1

F. Changing Signs

After signs are installed in a region, the Eligibility Committee shall consider new requests from attractions for signing every year. For new eligible attractions, available space is determined based on MUTCD and AASHTO requirements.

When there is no space on existing signing for the new attraction, SHA shall, upon approval of the Eligibility Committee, replace the current messaging for attractions with group terms (i.e. “ski resorts” in place of the names of specific resorts) or SHA shall upon the approval of the Eligibility Committee bump an existing attraction from the program if the new attraction to be listed can document attendance greater than the attraction to be bumped. No attraction will be bumped without prior notice and no sooner than two years after its signs have been installed.

If an attraction closes or goes out of business, its signs shall be removed. If an attraction moves or changes its name, the sign shall be moved (if possible according to the Guidelines) or changed only at the attraction’s expense. Otherwise, it shall be removed.

G. Use of County and Municipal Rights-of-way

Most TAC signs are installed within SHA-owned rights-of-way. When signs are installed within county or municipal rights-of-way, it shall be the responsibility of the county, municipality or the DMO to obtain any additional right-of-way needed for the program. SHA shall require written permission from property owners and local jurisdictions to install a sign within any such additional right-of-way. The TAC Sign Program provides no funding for the purchase of right-of-way.

H. Maintenance and Replacement

SHA shall maintain and replace all signs installed within state rights-of-way; however, maintenance of signs placed within jurisdiction of municipalities or counties shall be the responsibility of that jurisdiction. SHA will provide replacement signs should they become damaged, at no cost to the jurisdiction.

II. Glossary

“MUTCD” below refers to the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Attraction: facility which has the primary purpose of providing amusement, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public; in Attraction Sign Program, must also meet requirements as per II-D.

Attraction Type: term which describes the type of amusement, historical, cultural or leisure activities common to a group of attractions

Blue: color for signs relating to road user services guidance, tourist information and evacuation routes

Brown: color for signs offering recreational, historic and cultural interest area guidance

Bump: in the context of these guidelines, replacement of an existing individual attraction mention on a sign with a new individual attraction mention

Conventional Road: a highway other than an expressway or special purpose road (low volume, low-speed roads such as those serving recreational areas)

Corridor: a highway or a linked sequence of highways which run within a narrow tract of land (without doubling back and crossing over any part of itself)

DMO: Destination Marketing Organization (County Tourism Office)

Eligibility Committee: Committee established by SHA and OTD which reviews applications and supporting materials from individual attractions and determines eligibility for TAC signing

Expressway: a divided highway with full or partial control of access

Generator Minimum Number: requirement which a traffic generator must meet by type of facility in order to qualify for a Generator Sign, as specified in the Traffic Generator Policy of the Maryland MUTCD

Generator Sign: short term for green supplemental guide sign for traffic generators, sign used to provide information regarding destinations accessible from an interchange other than places shown on standard interchange signing

Guide Sign: a sign that shows route designations, destinations, directions, distances, services, points of interest, or other geographical, recreational or cultural information

Highway: a general term for denoting a public right-of-way for purposes of travel by vehicle, including the entire area within the right-of-way

Mainline Sign: an expressway sign, or a sign on a major highway before an intersection that serves as a gateway into TAC areas.

Maryland Byways: a program of the Office of Environmental Design, SHA that as designated 19 byways with names that reflect the heritage of the region and are marked with signs featuring the state flower, the black-eyed susan.

Maryland Tourism Development Board: Governor-appointed board of executives representing lodging, retail, transportation, food service and attractions, DMO's, and four members of Maryland's General Assembly. By General Assembly authority, the Board has broad policy powers to guide the direction of all activities necessary to develop and market the State as a destination.

OTD: Office of Tourism Development of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development

Primary Guide Signing: standard green guide signs, black and white route and direction signs, and street name signs

Region (for TAC purposes): a County or group of contiguous Counties designated by SHA as a TAC region; may include bordering areas between County line and nearest expressway

Sense of Place: quality of a place “that makes it visually differentiated from other places . . . recognizable, memorable . . .” from “An Analysis of the Visual Form of Brookline, Mass.”, Kevin Lynch, 1965, Section II, C.

SHA: State Highway Administration of the Maryland Department of Transportation

Specific Services Signs: guide signs that provide road users with business identification and directional information for services and eligible attractions (sometimes referred to as “logo signs” with five types: gas, food, lodging, camping and attraction; up to six logo panels per sign)

Supplemental Guide Signing: provides information regarding destinations accessible from an interchange other than places shown on the standard interchange guide signing; for example, tourist-related services information signing, in blue and/or brown, installed on a space available basis subject to destination qualifications and right-of-way availability

Tourism Stakeholders: “Tourism Stakeholders” or “Stakeholders” shall, for the purposes of these Guidelines, be restricted to federal, state, county, and municipal agencies and officials (including those listed above), state-recognized heritage area boards and officials, and state-recognized historical societies.

Trailblazing Signs: sequence of guide signs which provide advance warning of the turns required to reach a given attraction from a given starting point