ABSTRACT

Title of Document:	**HISTORIC SITES & SIGNAGE: COMMEMORATING LOST AND INTANGIBLE HISTORY**
	Kate Kachovec, Master's of Historic Preservation, 2016
Directed By:	Dr. Donald Linebaugh, Professor & Director
	Dr. Dennis Pogue, Adjunct Associate Professor

Historic markers and marker programs are a common way of recognizing historic sites, particularly those that no longer exist or sites for which no physical evidence ever existed. Markers are used to inform visitors and community members about why a site is historic and significant. However, markers are often not able to attract the public's attention or provide the information necessary to accomplish their goal. In order for historic markers and marker programs to be successful the goals and conditions must be clearly identified. Goals differ across communities, and different physical, social and economic conditions are likely factors in the success of markers and marker programs. Drawing on a series of case studies focused on markers that are part of historic walking tours, this study seeks to determine what makes certain markers and marker programs successful and what the best approaches are to improve markers for no longer extant or intangible historic sites.

HISTORIC SITES & SIGNAGE:
COMMEMORATING LOST AND INTANGIBLE HISTORY

By

Kate Kachovec

Advisory Committee:
Professor Dennis Pogue, Co-Chair
Professor Donald Linebaugh, Co-Chair

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Chapter 1: Introduction - Historic Marker Programs in Historic Preservation

Introduction

Throughout the over 150-year history of historic preservation, heritage sites of all types have been designated and memorialized using various types of markers. Markers have been placed at heritage sites by various preservation groups and agencies to formally recognize and designate sites, both those with tangible remains and those of a more intangible nature. With the advent of automobile travel, in the early 20th century, site marker programs were increasingly developed by city and state agencies to designate and create awareness of historic sites of local, state and national heritage.[1]

Markers have also been used for designating stops on historic site walking tours. These tours typically consist of a series of historic sites designated by similar markers on a predetermined path; they are usually found in historic, urban areas. While these walking tours typically include many wonderfully preserved historic buildings and sites, they also are used to mark sites that are no longer extant or to mark events that never had a permanent physical presence. This study will address the question of how well traditional markers deal with important sites and events that have no physical or visible evidence preserved. The extent, to which a program, including those related to

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[1] Bluestone, Daniel M. *Buildings, Landscapes and Memory*. 240-255.

historic walking tours, successfully present lost and intangible history ultimately

determines whether or not these sites and events are remembered, commemorated and

recognized. Three case studies of walking tour programs, Lost Rockville, The

Downtown Frederick Self Guided Walking Tour and the South Bronx Heritage Trail,

are analyzed in this paper in order to gauge their success in detailing with lost and

intangible heritage, and to develop a sense of best practices for marking these types of

heritage. These case studies are presented in Chapters 2-4. In each case, I examine

three main elements of walking tour marker programs; content and interpretation,

program elements and sign design. The case studies will break down these three

elements into finer detail, to look at the ways in which the markers deal with the

represented narrative and story and present graphic information. Chapter 5 will

compare the three programs to determine the strengths and weaknesses of these

historic walking tours and marker programs. Using this comparative analysis some

recommendations will be provided for future walking tour programs in terms of

intangible or lost heritage.

Intangible Heritage and Marker Programs

Heritage is the legacy of attributes of a society that are inherited from past

generations, maintained in the present and passed on for the benefit of future

generations. Tangible heritage includes buildings, monuments, landscapes and works

of art. Intangible heritage includes, but is not limited to, cultural expression, oral

tradition, performing arts, social practices, events and traditional craftsmanship.

Intangible assets are challenging for preservation and interpretation because they cannot be perceived by the senses, i.e. something that you can see, touch or smell. Intangible heritage can also incorporate "lost" tangible heritage, i.e., buildings and sites that are no longer extant or have been modified beyond recognition. People play a key role in intangible heritage, as the significance of intangible heritage is largely represented by the activities, memories and experiences of communities, groups and individuals instead of a physical representation.[2]

Tangible historic sites and intangible heritage are core elements of historic preservation concern as they give a physical and emotional connection to the past and can give communities a sense of place. A historic site is a location where political, cultural or social history has been preserved due to heritage value, which can be locally, regionally, or nationally significant. Historic sites enhance our quality of life, they contribute to the aesthetic quality of our surroundings, and a historic environment, including both tangible and intangible resources, can enhance our sense of well-being. The historic environment is fundamental to our sense of place, it helps us link to our roots and find a sense of cultural identity. Historic sites have value for what they tell us about past society, modern culture and human interaction with the environment. The historic environment contributes significantly to people's sense of place and their connection to space. The character of heritage resources is largely the product of historic development which can be reflected in building styles and even cultural traditions. This historic character is not only rooted in the physical but also connected to the intangible culture which gives a community an emotional link to the

[2] Smith, Laurajane, and Natsuko Akagawa. *Intangible Heritage*, 284-285.

past and to place. For example, Glassberg notes that "Psychological studies of place attachment remind us of the enormous influence that memories have upon how we see our environment. When we recall places, we recall emotions and activities, not merely the physical setting."[3] Memories affect how and what we feel and feelings can exist even without something tangible. The history of a place remains long after what was once there is gone, and this is one of the purposes of marker programs. They help ensure that the history and story of a historic site's past is conveyed to those in the present, even when it is no longer there or was never a physical resource.

There are multiple ways to commemorate intangible historic sites and heritage and many mediums available for presenting these stories. One common way to present and interpret intangible and lost history is through markers and signage. Signs can be any kind of visual graphic that displays information to a particular audience. The main purpose of a sign is to communicate and convey information. As such, signs inform the visitor of the story of a place and aim to engage the viewer in the narrative. As a type of sign, a historical marker commemorates an event or person of historic interest and helps the viewer to associate that point of interest with a specific location. However, if there are no tangible remains, the sign or marker can inform but may not necessarily fully engage the viewer in the story. Thus, one of the more difficult tasks of preservation is the commemoration and interpretation of lost or intangible heritage.

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[3] Glassberg David. *Sense of History*, 115.

Historic markers are one of the oldest approaches to recognizing and interpreting a historic personage, site, or event at a specific location. However, a particular challenge exists when the person, site, or event is no longer represented by a physical resource. In these cases the marker or signage must literally stand in for the original. To do this, it must be an innovative, smart design. In the case of lost or intangible heritage, the scale, style and content of the marker should be guided by the local context. What works in some communities may not work in others. The successes and failures of these types of projects are determined by a variety of factors, including financing and audience. The success of these types of projects is critical in that they inform the community about a past that otherwise would become lost. Historic sites that have no physical representation are arguably the most important sites to mark and commemorate because they are at the greatest risk of being forgotten or lost. Without these intangible historic sites, communities lose an important sense of place that enhances the environment.

Many marker and signage programs are used today to commemorate historic sites that no longer exist. While many struggle to provide clear representations, others are able to engage intangible history in fun and creative ways. There are programs that look towards the future in preservation and strive to engage communities by connecting them to history and helping them gain that sense of place that history can provide. We can learn from both the good and bad examples and develop a way forward in the preservation and commemoration of intangible heritage; keeping the audience

connected to a historically significant place is the most important way to raise awareness about preserving its story.

Since the 1930's, one of the oldest programs in the nation, the Virginia State Highway Historic Marker Program, has been marking and interpreting lost and intangible historical sites through signage. The easily recognizable signs, consisting of black lettering against a silver background, aim to commemorate people, places and events of state and national significance; there are currently more than 2,000 of these signs throughout the state. While some signs have disappeared over the years, the motivation for the program has always been to attract drivers and tourists to different historic sites in the state and establish a standard for alerting people of heritage and history.[4]

Many programs today have set out to accomplish similar goals. As will be presented in Chapter 2, the Lost Rockville series in the City of Rockville, completed in 2001 by Peerless Rockville, the Historic District Commission and the Maryland Historic Trust, aimed to present lost history and historic sites, but has languished in recent years. The marker program and walking tour are not well designed or maintained. Many of the sites on the tour are in fact "lost" or intangible sites, so the markers that acknowledge them need to be thoughtfully designed and well maintained as they provide the only link to a vanished or intangible past. The program needs to be overhauled if they want to accomplish their goals and become a greater success in commemorating sites of intangible heritage. As will be discussed below, in order for

[4] Bluestone, Daniel M. *Buildings, Landscapes and Memory*, 240-255.

them to do this, they need to evaluate what they have, who their audience is, and what opportunities there are for improvement.[5]

As presented in Chapter 3, the historic walking tour program in downtown Frederick aims to incorporate their rich historic heritage with their ongoing development plans. They attract visitors to their family friendly historic downtown with several exciting and informative walking tours. While many historic resources have disappeared over the decades, Frederick is committed to commemorating both sites that no longer exist along with many wonderful extant sites; the combination forms a compelling and cohesive walking tour program. Yet, some problems exist and there are opportunities for improvement.[6]

Chapter 4 presents The Bronx Heritage Trail project that aims to engage the community through art and dance by creating a marker program to commemorate the Bronx's rich cultural heritage and attract a younger generation to their historic past. This historic marker project looks toward the future of preservation rather than at the present or past by using cutting edge design and multimedia platforms, and approaches the concept of historic markers in a new way. Many of the sites commemorated are lost or intangible heritage sites, which makes for a unique juxtaposition of history and art.[7]

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[5] E-mail interview with Judith Christensen.
[6] "Welcome to an Engaged Community." *The City of Frederick, MD.*
[7] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education.*

Ultimately, all of these programs need to better identify and engage the target

audience and garner resources by addressing present and future community needs in

order to accomplish the goal of successfully commemorating intangible historic sites.

Chapter 5 will compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the three

programs and offer some recommendations for improvement.

Chapter 2: Lost Rockville Walking Tour

Peerless Rockville, an award-winning nonprofit, community-based organization founded in 1974 has a mission to preserve buildings, objects and information important to Rockville's heritage. The organization advances its goals through education, advocacy, and community involvement. Their historical marker program is one of the ways that they accomplish these goals. There are many heritage walking trails in and around the downtown Rockville area including the Lost Rockville Walking Tour. Completed in the early 2000's, the tour highlights both lost and highly modified sites important to Rockville's history. The Lost Rockville Walking Tour includes a tour brochure and a sign for each historic site. The sites were selected to illustrate change over time in the City of Rockville from 1801-1850. City planner, Judith Christensen, who worked on the project, states that the hope for this particular trail was to get history out on the street where people could see it and interact with it. This chapter analyzes the Lost Rockville Walking Tour in terms of its approach to marking and interpreting lost or intangible heritage sites.[8]

The Lost Rockville Walking Tour includes fourteen historic sites, three of which no longer physically extant. A tour brochure provides a map, text and photos to guide the visitor from site to site (Figure 2-1). The Lost Rockville brochure is not visually appealing to the reader in its design and its images are also of poor quality. The text is lengthy and hard to read for both the brochure and on the signs, which

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[8] *Peerless Rockville*. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.peerlessrockville.org/>.

doesn't encourage the visitor to engage the site or spend the time to retain the information. The brochure is not visually or contextually able to accomplish the goals for the project and the signs that accompany this brochure are similarly problematic.
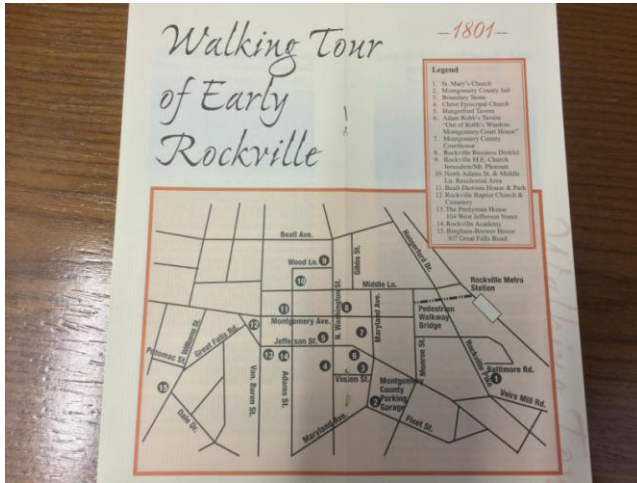
Figure 2-1. Lost Rockville Series Brochure (Photo by author).

An examination of the individual markers for the tour will provide a detailed analysis and address many of the larger issues faced by marker programs in general. The first site on the tour, The Montgomery County Jail, has great historical significance to the City of Rockville but the structure no longer exists; there is currently a marker that represents the historic site (Figure 2-2).

The history of the jail site begins in 1777, when seven commissioners were appointed to purchase a plot of land for building a court house and prison for Montgomery County. In 1801, the County received funds to build a jail house at the site of the County Office Building on the east side of Maryland Avenue, then known as Perry Street. This jail burned in 1861 and a new two-story stone building was built in 1862.

The jail capacity was only about twenty inmates and there was a large yard behind the building. This yard was used for hangings and the last hanging in Montgomery County occurred on April 15, 1921. This jail was used until the new grey courthouse, which includes jail cells on the top floor, was built in 1931, at which time the 1862 jail building was demolished.[9]

This site is an extremely important aspect in the City of Rockville's history due to the significant historical events that occurred there. However, the site was demolished for a new building that stands today. The absence of the physical structure creates a need for other strategies to acknowledge the building and its history. Unfortunately, the only acknowledgement of the history that took place here is the Lost Rockville marker. It's poor condition, illegibility and dense text, along with a lack of context renders it ineffective in drawing in visitors and creating a sense of the building's importance to the community. These are common issues for many of the markers in the Lost Rockville tour.
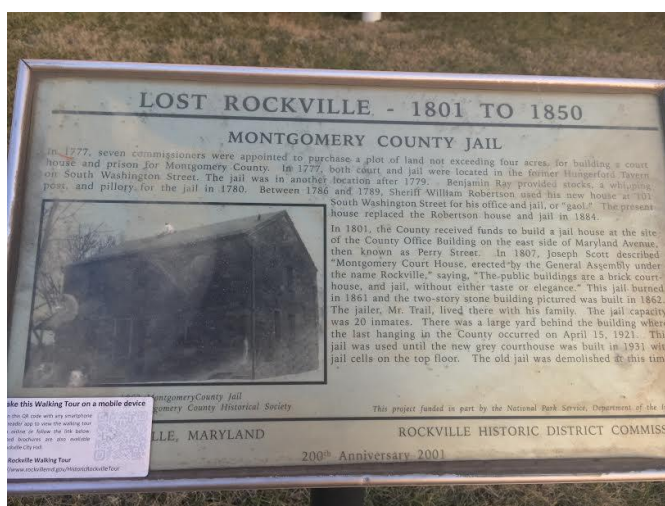
[9] McGuckian, Eileen S. *Rockville: Portrait of a City*, 40.

Figure 2-2. Montgomery County Jail Marker (Photo by author).

The second historic site on the Lost Rockville Walking Tour is the "Out of Robb's Window," Montgomery County Courthouse site. This site, no longer extant and now the home of the Montgomery County Court House, is reportedly where Architect Benjamin Latrobe stayed in 1811, hoping that the fresh air would help his ailing young son regain his health. He and his son are said to have lodged at Adam Robb's Tavern, which may have been located on Jefferson Street across from the Court House lot, although its exact location in unknown. The drawing he made during his stay is the earliest known view of Rockville. Early 19th-century Rockville had rutted dirt roads shared with pigs and livestock, and small log or frame houses dominated the area; they were built anywhere on the lot that the owner chose as there were no zoning regulations. This site is one of great historical significance as it is the source of one of the earliest images of the City of Rockville. The Lost Rockville marker commemorating this historical site, like the tavern itself, is no longer extant.[10]

The marker that depicted the tavern and Latrobe's stay in Rockville is believed to have been demolished or to have disappeared during the construction of the new Rockville Courthouse on Maryland Avenue in 1980. Without this marker, the site has been lost again and cannot be recognized and commemorated. The brochure speaks about the site and the history but with a map that is hard to read and images that do not convey the importance of the site; the absence of this marker creates a site of lost heritage that is at extremely high risk of being forgotten.

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[10] McGuckian, Eileen S. *Rockville: Portrait of a City*, 42.

The third site on the Lost Rockville Walking Tour that does not have an extant,

tangible structure to represent it is the Montgomery Avenue and Washington Street

Business District (Figure 2-3). Rockville grew from a convenient crossroads meeting

place in the 1750s and became a market center for Montgomery County. The tiny

village was selected as the seat of local government in 1776 for its central location

and the presence of taverns and inns to accommodate those with court business.

Rockville's businesses shared residential living space, as many craftspeople and

merchants lived on the second story of, or next to, their businesses. Significantly, the

area of North Washington Street just north of Middle Lane was also the location of

the earliest black settlement in the City of Rockville.[11]

In the 1950s social economic problems led to the redevelopment of the area and most

of the old buildings were demolished. The site then housed an enclosed mall, The

Rockville Mall, which was built in 1995. The marker that is supposed to represent

such an important and thriving part of Rockville's business and economic history can

be seen in Figure 2-3. Sadly the thriving business district is no longer extant, and

even the sign erected to represent its history is problematic. The sign contains dry

lengthy text, is difficult to read and in extremely poor condition.

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[11] McGuckian, Eileen S. *Rockville: Portrait of a City*, 80-81.
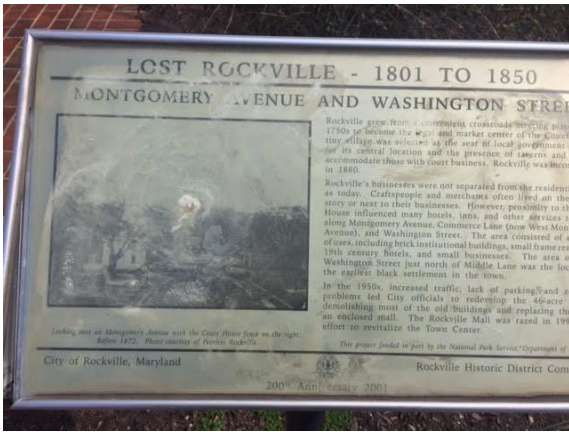
Figure 2-3. Montgomery Avenue and Washington Street, Business District Marker (Photo by Author).

The sites that are incorporated into the Lost Rockville series were selected for a reason, the stories and the history of these sites are extremely important to the heritage of the City of Rockville. While the lost and intangible heritage resources are represented by the signs that mark their previous locations, some of the signs themselves have become lost. These historic sites have great importance to the history and heritage of the City of Rockville, and help Peerless Rockville accomplish their goals to preserve buildings, objects, and information important to Rockville's heritage. Thus, they need to be better represented, interpreted and presented.

Summary and Conclusions

This section analyzes and summarizes the overall Lost Rockville Walking Tour and related markers. First, it discusses overall content and interpretation, second, it examines program elements, and third, it explores sign design. Overall, the content and interpretation contained in the Lost Rockville Walking Tour markers needs

significant improvement. The graphics are of poor quality and not visually appealing. The images are blurry and lack a connection to the interpretive message Peerless Rockville and the Lost Rockville series is trying to accomplish. The fact-based information within the signs and brochure is for the most part historically accurate but presented in a dry narrative format. The information includes diverse and inclusive topics relating to Rockville's history. The stories told are informative and relevant to the context, and could be engaging and interesting. While the stories are potentially interesting, the target audience for the program is not entirely clear, impacting the interpretive direction. This also applies to the narrative, which is too long and can be tedious to read. This is especially true for those whose first language is not English. The representation of the organization is also problematic in that there is no reference to who did the signs and how to access additional information.

The program elements for The Lost Rockville Walking Tour are also in need of some serious work. The brochure is not visually appealing and the text is extremely long. The map is somewhat more informative than the images but could use more detail to help with the ease of use, and better contextualize the tour. The sources, however, are well represented. The markers themselves have poor graphics and lengthy text which fail to engage the visitor. There is a more recent digital component to the Lost Rockville series in which the city added stickers to the Lost Rockville signs that have a bar code you can scan on your phone to access the series app, linking you to the City of Rockville website. However, the stickers are not good quality and they were

just placed on top of the existing signs, covering up some of the info on the signs. The stickers are not integrated into the signs themselves and are a clear afterthought.

The actual design of the physical sign is at an appropriate height and size but it is not visually appealing. The text is not easily read and the background is not used successfully. The imagery itself is also not extremely interesting. The font is small, hard to read and has a limited visual impact. The mounting of the sign is sturdy and was meant to withstand vandalism, however, the signs themselves have been heavily damaged by the weather and lack accessibility for those with disabilities.

The Lost Rockville Walking Tour is an example of a very traditional approach to marker programs with static, text heavy signage that has little visual appeal. While an attempt has been made to update the signs with a digital app, it is clearly an afterthought and needs to be fully integrated into the signage program.

Chapter 3: Downtown Frederick Self Guided Walking Tour

The City of Frederick's mission for its historic preservation program is to safeguard

its historical and cultural heritage. This mission helps to improve property values,

foster civic beauty, strengthen the local economy and promote the appreciation of

historic sites and districts for the education and welfare of the residents of the city.

When historic sites and structures are designated by the City of Frederick, a Historic

Preservation Overlay Zoning District is created, enabling the city to regulate the

treatment of either individual or multiple historic resources. The Historic Preservation

Commission authorizes staff to review and approve work, provided the proposed

work complies with current guidelines. The Planning Department also contributes to

education and outreach related to historic preservation in the city. This chapter will

explore the Frederick self-guided walking tour by examining the content and

interpretation, the program elements and sign design.

The downtown Frederick self-guided walking tour is a part of Frederick's plan to

spread awareness about historic preservation. The tour covers Frederick and it's

founding in 1745 by English and German settlers up to current times, exploring

twenty-five sites that represent the city's national contributions, local legends and

cultural amenities. Many sites on this walking tour are designed with multiple

markers placed by various agencies and organizations, suggesting the site's great

historical significance. Of the twenty-five sites on the tour, several no longer

physically exist, i.e., they represent lost heritage. Thus, these sites are represented

exclusively using signage; the intended goal is to ensure that the historical story and significance is not forgotten due to the absence of a tangible resource.[12]

The brochure for the Downtown Frederick Self Guided Walking Tour is well written and visually presented (Figure 3-1). The sites are clearly labeled on an informative map of the downtown area. The tour starts at the visitor center where staff can provide help to visitors as to what path to take, what sites to visit and provide tips on other activities that they might want to consider during their walking tour and visit. The visitor center is an extremely important element in the walking tour because it provides a face to face opportunity for the visitor to ask questions and be fully prepared for their tour. The visitor center employees really help to set the stage for the tour and how to use the brochure and map to guide oneself and realize a successful experience, i.e., to get the most information and enjoyment out of the tour.
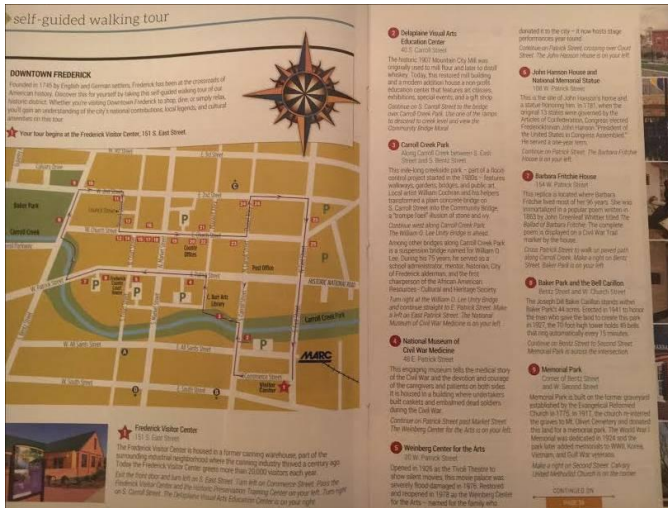

Figure 3-1. Downtown Frederick Self-Guided Walking Tour Brochure (Photo by author.)

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[12] "Welcome to an Engaged Community." *The City of Frederick, MD.*

The brochure has current images of the sites, so the visitor is able to visually connect to the information within the brochure to their tour. The brochure also includes short write ups on why the site is historically significant that is not included on the actual sign itself. This allows the user to be able to interact with the brochure in a brief and efficient way. The text is not lengthy or repetitive, which keeps the user informed but also keeps them moving throughout the sites.

The John Hanson House is the first site on the Downtown Frederick Walking-Tour that no longer physically exists on the landscape. The property where the John Hanson House stood is now a statue and memorial (Figure 3-2). John Hanson was the First President of the United States Congress. In 1781, when the original thirteen states were governed by the Articles of Confederation, Congress elected Hanson President; he only served one term in office. The site represents historical importance on a local level but it also represents national historical significance for the city of Frederick. Although the home that John Hanson once lived in no longer exists, the sign marking the site clearly identifies the Hanson property. The sign has large print, is easily seen and draws the attention of the viewer, but it contains no information other than the name. The brief synopsis of the site history detailed in the brochure makes sure the visitor knows the facts relating to why this marker is here. Thus, if a visitor is walking by without the tour guide they would not learn anything about the site or its historical significance. A statue of John Hanson is located on the site of the Hanson House.[13]

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[13] "Official Tourism Website of Frederick County." Self-Guided Walking Tour, http://www.visitfrederick.org/walking_tours.

Figure 3-2. John Hanson Memorial Marker and Hanson Site (Photo by author).

The Barbara Fritchie House is the next historic site on the tour that has no original, tangible remains; it is now represented by a reconstructed building (Figure 3-3). Barbara Fritchie, who-lived in the house for ninety six years, was a Unionist during the Civil War and a friend of Francis Scott Key, the lawyer, author and poet who wrote the National Anthem. Fritchie is remembered for waving a Union Flag out of the window of her home while Stonewall Jackson and his Confederate troops marched through Frederick during the Maryland Campaign, an event documented in a poem written in 1863 by John Greenleaf Whittier, *The Ballad of Barbara Fritchie.* This particular event of both local and national significance is also detailed on one of the Maryland Civil War Trail markers nearby. The marker, similar to the other markers along this tour, is easily read and seen by the visitor; however, the history of

the site can only be accessed in the brochure. An everyday passerby may be made aware that it is a significant site based on the signage, but they get little else.[14]

Figure 3-3. Barbara Fritchie House Marker (Photo by author).

Another interesting site on the Downtown Frederick Walking Tour is the Memorial Park (Figure 3-4). Memorial Park is the site of the former graveyard established by the Evangelical Reformed Church in 1775. In 1917 the church moved the graves to Mt. Olivet Cemetery and donated the land as a memorial park to honor veterans. A World War I memorial was added in 1924 and memorials for World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War were subsequently built on the site. The site is one of local historical significance and now represents national history. The sign that represents the site is in good condition but does not speak to the history of the site prior to its current program as a place of public memory about America's wars and fallen service men and women. Visitors are not informed of the local historical

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[14] "Official Tourism Website of Frederick County." Self-Guided Walking Tour. http://www.visitfrederick.org/walking_tours.

significance that was once there. One gets a sense that this place is significant based on the signage and current look of the park, but again, the information on the site's history is only accessible via the brochure for the walking tour.[15]

Figure 3-4. Memorial Park Marker (Photo by author).

The final site on the tour without any physical historic representation is Shab Row and Everedy Square (Figure 3-5, 3-6 and 3-7). The shops on Shab Row previously housed tinkers and wheelwrights during the 1800's to service stagecoaches traveling on the National Road, a six state road that spanned over seven hundred miles during the 1800's. Across the street from the Shab Row shops are shops that now occupy the place where the Everedy Company once manufactured bottle cappers and other kitchenware for fifty years in the early 1900's. Everedy Company also produced arms during World War II. This site has so much history on a local and national level. However, the signs that represent this historical area despite being in good condition, fail to inform visitors of the rich history of the site; that information can only be

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[15] "Official Tourism Website of Frederick County." Self-Guided Walking Tour. http://www.visitfrederick.org/walking_tours.

found in the actual brochure for the walking tour. Those that come to Frederick to shop at these stores are not made aware of the great history that once occupied these streets.[16]

Figure 3-5. Everedy Company Markers (Photo by author).

Figure 3-6. Everedy and Shab Row Marker (Photo by author).

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[16] "Official Tourism Website of Frederick County." Self-Guided Walking Tour. http://www.visitfrederick.org/walking_tours.

Figure 3-7. Shab Row Markers (Photo by author).

Although the Frederick walking tours are very well planned out, accessible and informative, the markers that represent sites of intangible heritage need to better inform the visitors of the sites that were once there. The signs acknowledge that something historically significant took place, but without the proper preparation the average everyday visitor does not get the necessary historical background to inform them of the importance of these sites to the context of the City of Frederick.

Summary and Conclusions

This section analyzes and summarizes the City of Frederick Walking Tour and related markers. First, it discusses overall content and interpretation, second, it examines program elements, and third, it explores sign design. The City of Frederick Walking Tour brochure provides current images that allow the viewer to connect a site's past

history with the present in a general sense. However, while the images are clear and visually appealing they do not provide any historical context, for example, as a historic photo of Shab Row shops would do. The brochure text is historically accurate and addresses a variety of topics. The brief history for each site that is provided in the brochure is informative and interesting. While targeted to tourists, the signs themselves do not contain any information beyond the name, making it imperative that the visitor have a copy of the tour brochure. The signs clearly identify that they are a City of Frederick program based on their prominent use of the city's logo. However, they could reach out more to local residents through more informative and visually appealing signage. This program also does not make an attempt to accommodate those who do not speak English as a first language.

The program elements for the Frederick Walking Tour are both relatively successful. The brochure's text is a good length. The images are clear and correspond to the current look of the historic site which enables the user to easily identify the location. The brochure map is informative and alerts the user of places to eat and park in the area, as well as where the historic sites are located. The sources and advertising within the brochure give the user knowledge about the town and the organizations that are related to the tour. However, the markers themselves do not have graphics, the text is large, bold and easily read but the signs lack any imagery. An exciting digital component to the Frederick Walking Tour is the app that goes along with certain tours. There is audio and imagery that one can use on their smart phone, which is a very useful component to historic walking tours.

The designs of the physical signs themselves have an appropriate height and size for the viewer to easily see and read. The height of the sign and the large size of the text draw the viewer in and accommodate those who may be visually or physically disabled. The text can be seen well as it is white with a black background. The one negative is the signs really do not have any interesting imagery, which could add an extra element to make the signs more successful. The signs are obviously very well cared for as they are a part of a larger system within Frederick and receive a good deal of maintenance and care.

The City of Frederick Walking Tour has a clean modern look, avoiding the dense text of the Lost Rockville signs. In this sense, they have rejected the original approach, instead, relying on the signs to justify the site and then the brochure to provide historic information. This approach has been further improved with a mobile app that allows the visitor to access much more information about the site. So, in the case of the City of Frederick Walking Tour, visitors rely on having the brochure or app to get any information on the site. Casual visitors would gain little from interacting with the signage and sites.

Chapter 4: The South Bronx Heritage Trail

The Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education located in Bronx, New York, has a mission to empower youth and their families by creating a culture of learning through high quality social, cultural and educational opportunities. They are one of the few organizations in the South Bronx that welcomes kids and their families, providing learning through the arts and attracting community members to utilize their services. The goal of the Center's work is to engage the community and positively influence future generations.

In the fall of 2011, Casita Maria was awarded an $80,000 grant to partner with artist workshop companies including Company-in-Residence and Dancing in the Streets to launch The South Bronx Heritage Trail. The goal of the Heritage Trail project is to protect and interpret the community's great cultural heritage and use it to drive future creative and economic development in the Bronx.

The Bronx community has a remarkable history especially as it relates to music and musicians from the 1930s to the 1970s. For example, in the late 1960s and 1970s the Bronx became a center for the development of Hip Hop and many other cultural movements. As with many types of history, these stories are at risk of being lost, as many South Bronx historic sites and structures associated with these stories have closed or been demolished. Furthermore, the development of a cultural movement

like Hip Hop is an intangible type of heritage, in that it didn't always have a set or
fixed place or space in which it developed. Interestingly, many youth of the South
Bronx community are unaware of the rich history of their community. Thus, the
South Bronx Heritage Trail is a step in the right direction to prevent the loss of this
history and get the younger generation in these neighborhoods informed and excited
about the history of their community.
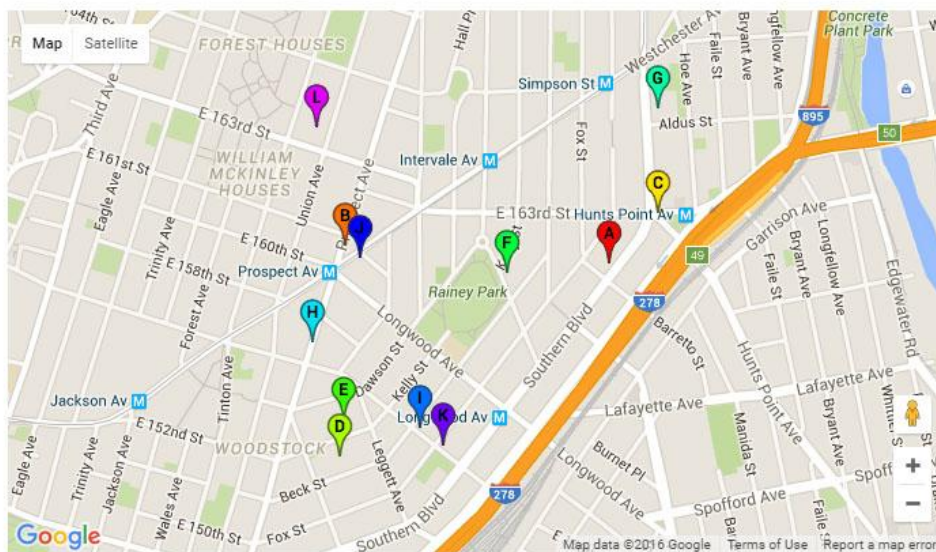
Figure 4-1. South Bronx Heritage Trail Proposed Site Map.[17]

In the first year of the project The South Bronx Heritage Trail Advisory Council
gathered information on the sites they felt would best mark the community's cultural
history (Figure 4-1). The launch of the project in April 2012 included many musical
performances, concerts and evenings of story-telling. Tours of the trail began and a
map for the trail along with a project website was developed (Figure 4-1). The trail
will incorporate twelve markers that will highlight the cultural heritage of the

[17] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*.
<http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

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neighborhood. The proposals for the project markers include a variety of different mediums and a modern perspective on ways to commemorate history. Although most of proposals are very diverse in medium and content, they all share the same mission of preserving and interpreting cultural history for future generations.

The proposals for this project draw on the concept of traditional historic markers but attempt to create more modern and unique solutions to commemorating heritage. Much like the other heritage marker programs discussed in this study, the South Bronx Heritage Trail has both extant sites and those that are no longer extant or are more intangible in nature. Through the use of sculpture, mixed-media and various types of installations, artists and designers are able to express their interpretation of the historical value of South Bronx culture and help younger generations get involved in history through educational, dynamic and engaging displays for many sites that would otherwise be forgotten.[18]

One such resource is Hunt's Point Palace, a site that hosted nearly a century's worth of American popular music including swing music in the 1920's and 1930's, big band and jazz dance bands in the 1940's, Latin music in the 1940's through the 1970's and Hip Hop in the 1970's and 1980's. The ornate architecture and beautiful balconies made the venue grand and welcoming to capacity crowds of close to 2,500 people. Many stars and jazz greats, such as Stan Getz, the famous saxophone player in the 1950's and 1960's who is best known for his hit *The Girl from Ipanema,* played there.

[18] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education.* <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

In the 1980's the ballroom closed and a Woolworths department store occupied the space. Today the building is being renovated as an office complex and the original site that was once of such historical grandeur is no more. This site needs something like the South Bronx Heritage Trail to help visitors and community members tap into its historical legacy. Without a reminder that provides intriguing and engaging interpretation to mark its importance, the site could be completely forgotten as redevelopment hides its stories.[19]

Another site along the trail is Casa Alegre of Alegre Records, opened by musician and record producer Al Santiago in 1955. The site was a gathering place for local and visiting musicians. In 1956, the business was expanded and Santiago started his own record label, Alegre Records. The label was a staple for New York Latin music, for example recording hits by Eddie Palmieri, a Grammy Award winning pianist and musician. The site is now home to a Rite Aid drug store. As such, this site that holds so many historic musical memories is now an anonymous part of modern society. People who visit the site have no idea of its great stories and historical importance. A marker is needed to tell the site's story in a unique way.[20]

Another site along the South Bronx Heritage Trail that may soon have no physical representation is the Olympic or Prospect Theater. The theater opened in 1918 and served as a concert and theater venue for many years. The theater was restored in the

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[19] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*. <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.
[20] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*. <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

early 2000's and brought back to its original historic beauty. However, the venue

unfortunately closed in 2006 and now sits vacant and empty. Possibly subject to

demolition and redevelopment this historic site is at extremely high risk of being lost.

The site has such a rich history and deserves to be remembered. If awareness is not

brought to this particular site due to its convenient location in the city the site may be

sold, demolished and forever lost as its current commercial zoning does not protect

it.[21]

Seven proposals have been put forward for the South Bronx Heritage Trail markers to

feature and celebrate the types of sites presented above. They are all focused on

creating unique and creative art pieces that aim to engage the viewer and inform

visitors in a fun and creative way. The different proposals can be seen on display at

the Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education Gallery and the community can vote

for which proposal they prefer on the Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education

website. Each artist submitted a proposal with their ideas and inspiration, as well as a

budget and references. While the markers were supposed to be installed in late 2015,

voting on the website is still active.

The *Play Bronx* proposal by the artists Chat Travieso and Yeju Choi is a sculpture

that resembles an old phonograph and street sign (Figure 4-2). The marker would

include a brief written description of the historic site and a speaker that plays audio

geared towards the site's historical significance. The idea behind the artist's work is

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[21] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education.*
<http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

that even if the visitor does not read the marker they will be able to feel the history through sound.

Figure 4-2. Play Bronx Marker Proposal.[22]

Artist Keith Godard's proposal, *Untitled*, is a metal sculpture based on each site's unique story (Figure 4-3). The overall design of each site marker would be consistent but speak to the individual history at each location through imagery, text and sculpture. The proposal also includes pricing for a mobile app specifically for the heritage trail. The idea behind the work is that the signs resemble old hanging shops signs that are colorful, elaborate and direct.

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[22] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*. <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.
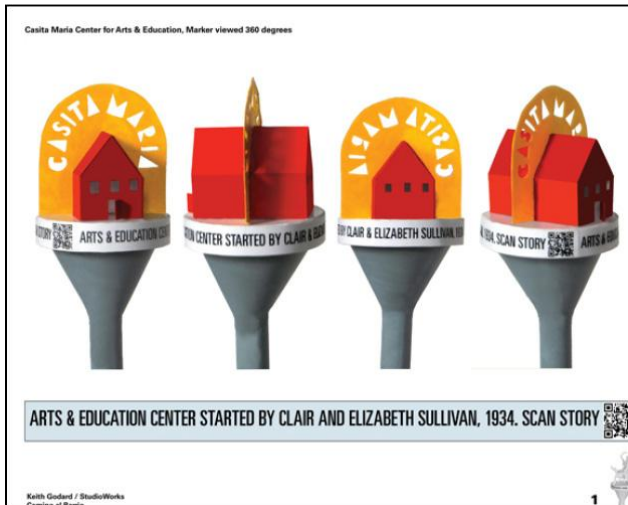
Figure 4-3. Untitled Marker Proposal.[23]

Linda Cunningham's proposal titled *Shards of Bronx History* communicates the historical significance of each site through images that can be understood quickly by anyone walking by the site (Figure 4-4). Each image would represent the site visually before redevelopment. The shard-like shape signifies the broken past; together the signs symbolize a jewel which is a symbolic reference to the Bronx and its history.

Figure 4-4. Shards of Bronx Heritage Marker Proposal.[24]

[23] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*. <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

The *South Bronx Blue Band* proposal by Robertson and Partners hopes to give voice to the rich cultural heritage of the South Bronx. Their goal was to create something memorable, recognizable, whimsical and informative. The design is intended to catch the eye and enter the memory system as an icon. The marker itself is meant to be a road sign, sundial and part monument. Each location would have an identical marker that represents the blue banner on the flag of the Borough of the Bronx (Figure 4-5).

Figure 4-5. South Bronx Blue Band Marker Proposal.[25]

The proposal *You are Here* by Beyer Blinder Belle consists of panels with both written and graphic content (Figure 4-6). It is divided into three layers of increasing detail. The first layer targets a passerby or child visitor and features easily understandable content. The second layer is more detailed and includes the address of

[24] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*.
<http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.
[25] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*.
<http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

the site and a brief descriptive of the sites history in both English and Spanish. The

third and most detailed layer of piece is revealed through a scanned code. This code

links to the Bronx Culture Trail website where additional photos and more thorough

historical information.

Figure 4-6. You are Here Marker Proposal.[26]

Artist John Ahearn's idea for the South Bronx Heritage Trail markers is called

Clasped Hands, a bronze plaque with two pairs of children's hands embracing each

other to deliver a message of community and family (Figure 4-7). The artwork on the

piece was done by children at a local Bronx school. The text would be specific to

each historic site and would be wall mounted with the intention of preventing

sidewalk clutter.

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[26] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*.
<http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.
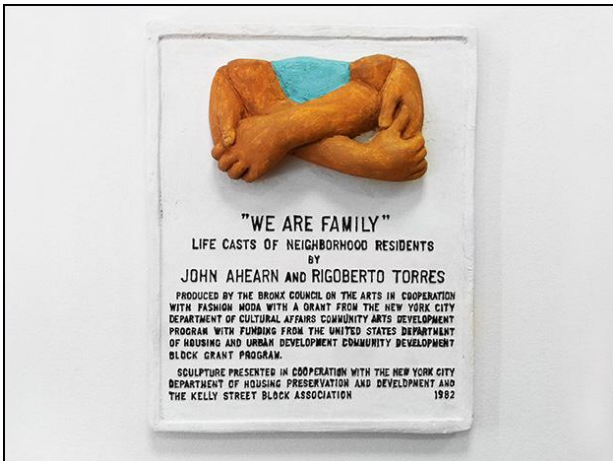
Figure 4-7. Clasped Hands Marker Proposal.[27]

The Bronx community has a remarkable history. However, many of these stories are at risk of being lost. In fact, many historic sites and structures in the South Bronx have been demolished. The Bronx community is unaware of their history and in order for this to be rectified these lost and intangible historic sites and stories need to be commemorated in an informative and exciting way. The South Bronx Heritage Trail is capable of accomplishing this with their unique and creative proposals for the project. The proposals and ideas for these markers are the future of commemorating lost and intangible historic sites and can prevent the loss of the South Bronx's history.

Summary and Conclusions

This section analyzes and summarizes the South Bronx Heritage Walking Tour and related historic marker proposals. First, it discusses overall content and interpretation,

[27] "South Bronx Culture Trail." *Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education*. <http://www.casitamaria.org/southbronxculturetrail>.

second, it examines program elements, and third, it explores sign design. The content and interpretation of the proposals for signage for the South Bronx Heritage Trail have graphics that are easily seen and visually appealing. The high quality images make an effort to connect with the history of the site and help those visiting to see how different the site once was. The effort to connect the user visually to the past speaks to the desire of those who submitted the proposals to really connect with The Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education's message and goals to engage and educate the community. The signage will be historically accurate and include diverse and inclusive topics relating to Bronx history. The representation of the organization, Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education, is not entirely clear on the proposals that were submitted but that can be added to the design after the fact if needed.

An important part of some of the proposals submitted are design elements that target specific audiences. There are proposals that have elements that specifically target school age children vs. adults. These target audiences affect the narrative length and reading level which is specific to the audience. Some of the proposals even include Spanish as a second language on their signs which speaks to the diversity of the Bronx and aims to include all residents. The historical and photographic accuracy is also something that is being thoroughly considered and incorporated into the process as this is an ongoing future project. Many of the proposals also speak to the placement of markers and the thought process that goes into that. Some designers already have specific install instructions, to be wall mounted, etc. as their goal is not to interfere with street flow.

The program elements for the proposals are a bit harder to analyze as they do not yet exist. However, many proposals speak about the images and text length that they would include for each sign. There is not much mention of brochures or informative area maps but it seems like almost every proposal includes a suggestion and inclusion of a mobile app for the walking tour, with the goal to provide additional information and an ease of use. Some proposals also include audio for the markers which would be an extremely interesting and progressive element. There is opportunity for not only mixed media and music but also help with accommodating those with hearing disabilities.

The proposals for the design of the physical signs themselves are unique. Each proposal has a different motivation and design concept. All of the signs have an appropriate height and size based on their goals and each sign is visually appealing with text and imagery that clearly speaks about the history of the site and the South Bronx. The text style has been well thought out and chosen specifically by the designers for each proposal. The various designs aim to draw in the viewer through visual appeal and then keep the viewer there through presentation of concise, informative and intriguing information.

The South Bronx Heritage Trail is a progressive project that aims to commemorate historic sites in a creative and informative way. The application of this project looks at historic sites in a new way through their representation with design and art. The project also aims to help The Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education with their

goal of engaging the community and informing them of the important historical

events of the city's past. A project like this could be revolutionary for the historic

preservation field as it engages a younger generation and gets the community

involved and excited about historical properties through exciting art and media.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations: Improving Walking Tour Marker Programs

This chapter compares the three walking tour marker programs explored in the case studies to determine the strengths and weaknesses of these programs. The case study's strengths and weaknesses are presented based on three main areas: content and interpretation, program elements and design. Each case study is detailed in a matrix presenting these three main study areas, and each is then divided into specific elements and attributes and scored on a scale of presence (green) and absence (red) (Tables 5-1 to 5-3). The matrix provides an opportunity to visualize where the case study programs were consistently strong and consistently weak or where they varied among the three programs. Using the data from the matrix and the comparative analysis, recommendations for future walking tour programs in terms of intangible or lost heritage are developed and presented throughout the chapter.

Content and interpretation as related to markers and brochures are extremely important elements to the success of walking tour programs. As can be seen in the matrix scoring of the three case studies, seven different areas of weakness and concern are evident, i.e. two or more that scored low for the specific element (see Table 5-1). These areas include graphics, fact-based information, representation of the organization, audience, narrative, language and accuracy. Clear and visually appealing graphics that are also high quality images allow the user to visually connect

to the overall narrative and message. This is evident in several of the South Bronx Heritage Trail proposals, where compelling historic images allow for a direct visual connection to the past. Factually accurate information is also important, ensuring that the story is historically accurate and connected directly to the larger themes and context of the walking tour; it is also important that it portrays an informative and interesting story that is engaging to the visitor. This can be seen in all three of the case studies, however, in the cases of Lost Rockville and The Frederick Walking Tour the information is not well developed and presented via the markers. Even when the entire program works together cohesively, it can suffer from a lack of connection to the organization the designed and installed the signs themselves; this can hinder further exploration of the sites and topics by the visitor.

Prior to the execution of an interpretive program like a historic walking tour it is also important to clarify the target audience. Whether it is school age children or adults or residents vs. tourists the program needs to be tailored in appropriate ways. The three case studies do not do a great job of clarifying the audience they target and this can result is a generic and unfocused presentation that fails to engage anyone. As shown in great detail with each case study, the narrative voice expressed on the signs themselves, within the brochure and within supporting digital components of the walking tour is critical to success and must be coordinated across these platforms. The narrative needs to be the appropriate length and reading level for the target audience. Another element to consider in terms of narrative and target audience is the use of multiple languages. With the rapid growth of the Hispanic community, a

consideration of accessibility is critical. None of the three case studies provide any bilingual materials within the programs – this could be easily corrected with mobile phone apps and QR codes that provide translations in multiple languages. The placement of the marker itself also greatly affects the way in which the content and interpretation of the signs is accessed and received by the visitor. They need to be within close proximity of the actual historical event or structure, to provide the sense of place value and site attachment.

Content and Interpretation

	Lost Rockville	Frederick	South Bronx
Graphics			
Easily Seen	Red	Green	Green
Visually Appealing	Red	Yellow	Green
High Quality Images	Red	Yellow	Green
Connection to Message	Red	Green	Green
Fact Based Information			
Historically Accurate Story	Green	Green	Green
Diverse and Inclusive Topics	Green	Green	Green
Informative Story	Yellow	Green	Green
Interesting Story	Green	Green	Green
Relevant to Context	Green	Yellow	Green
Representation of Organization			
Logo	Red	Green	Yellow
Audience			
School Age	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Adults	Yellow	Green	Green
Residents	Yellow	Green	Green
Tourists	Red	Yellow	Green
Narrative			
Appropriate Length	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Grade Level Reading	Red	Red	Yellow
Presence of Context	Red	Green	Green
Language			
Billingual	Red	Red	Green
Accuracy			
Historical	Green	Green	Green
Photographic	Green	Green	Green
Placement of Marker	Yellow	Yellow	Green

Table 5-1. Content and Interpretation Matrix (Scale – Green= Good, Yellow=

Average, Red= Poor)

The program elements are also extremely important to the success of walking tour

and signage programs. As can be seen in the matrix scoring of the case studies (see

Table 5-2), three different areas of weakness and concern is evident in regard to

program elements. These areas include the brochure, markers and the digital

component.

An accompanying brochure needs to have the appropriate text length and images, and

include an area map that is informative and easy to use. The failures of having a

substandard brochure can be clearly seen in the Lost Rockville case study. The

markers themselves have to have clear graphics and text and, as noted above,

narratives that engages and informs the audience. Again the failure of these important

elements within a walking tour and marker program can be seen most clearly

throughout the Lost Rockville case study and somewhat in the actual signage for The

Frederick Walking Tour. The digital component of walking tours is becoming more

and more important with rapidly improving technology and changes in the way

people interact with technology. Walking tour programs and their outward program

elements need to accommodate links to the websites and mobile apps that allow for

modern technology to be integrated into these somewhat traditional historic walking

tours. The inclusion of digital technology can be best seen in the South Bronx

Heritage Trail case study. Although still in the proposal stage, each marker idea

includes a digital component as an integrated part of the project idea. This allows for

endless possibilities and a plan that makes allowances for the future; not only the

future of the walking tour itself as interpretation and research advance, but also broader ideas about the future of preserving these types of sites.

Program Elements

Program Elements	Lost Rockville	Frederick	South Bronx
Brochure			
Text Length	Red	Yellow	Green
Images	Red	Yellow	Green
Informative Area Map	Yellow	Green	Green
Sources	Red	Green	Green
Ease of Use	Red	Green	Green
Marker			
Graphics	Red	Yellow	Green
Text	Red	Green	Green
Digital Component			
Website	Yellow	Green	Green
Apps	Yellow	Green	Green
Audio	Red	Yellow	Green

Table 5-2. Program Elements Matrix (Scale – Green= Good, Yellow= Average, Red= Poor)

The actual physical design of the markers and the other physical elements of walking tour marker programs are also incredibly important to success. As can be seen in the matrix scoring of the three case studies (see Table 5-3), seven different areas of weakness and concern are evident in terms of overall design elements. These problem areas include the actual sign, visual appeal, text, visual impact, the sign holder, maintenance/care and ADA accessibility.

The design of the physical sign needs to be the appropriate height and size. This factor depends on the goal of the particular project as well as the target audience. The design of the actual sign also has to be visually appealing, again an element that may vary based on goals and audience. Another important element is design consistency linking the markers and other program elements to one another. The text needs to be easily read, with background design and color that enhances readability and overall appeal. The South Bronx Heritage Trail proposals do a great job of this by incorporating these elements in many different ways through different media and inspirations. Text is also extremely important as this is the main way that the static markers and signage elements of the overall tour convey information. The font needs to be attractive and appropriately sized to be easily read. The visual impact of a sign can determine its success, i.e. whether or not it attracts and informs viewers. This notion is clearly visible in the Lost Rockville case study where the signs themselves have become lost or damaged, directly affecting our ability to identify and mark sites of intangible or lost heritage. The sign holder itself can also come with many options and challenges. The mounting and installation of the sign and/or post requires careful planning as it can determine how viewers interact with the physical sign. Many proposals within The South Bronx Heritage Trail take this into account and certain proposals have very specific reasons for their installation technique, some of which accommodate ADA accessibility. Finally, a plan for regular care and cyclical maintenance is important. Developing a system that is weather proof and accommodates some sort of anti-theft/vandalism strategy is important. Although the

Lost Rockville series does fail in many elements regarding the physical installation the post support system for their signs is vandal, theft and weather proof.

Sign Design

	Lost Rockville	Frederick	South Bronx
Physical Sign			
Appropriate Height	Yellow	Green	Green
Appropriate Size	Yellow	Green	Green
Visual Appeal			
Text Easily Read	Red	Green	Green
Background Used Successfully	Red	Green	Green
Interesting Imagery	Red	Yellow	Green
Text			
Visibility	Red	Green	Green
Font Easily Read	Red	Green	Green
Style Appealing	Red	Yellow	Green
Visual Impact			
Illumination	Red	Red	Yellow
Draws in Viewer	Red	Yellow	Green
Sign Holder			
Mounting/ Installation	Green	Yellow	Green
Maintenance/ Care			
Weather Proof	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Cleanliness			
Anti-Theft	Green	Yellow	Yellow
ADA Accessibility			
Type of Accessibility	Red	Yellow	Green

Table 5-3. Design Matrix (Scale – Green= Good, Yellow= Average, Red= Poor)

The success of the three components of a historic walking tour and signage program is essential in determining whether or not that particular program is able to accomplish its goals. All programs have different goals, however, they all aim to

commemorate historic sites, especially those that are no longer extant and raise awareness of the history of a community. If we do not work on these historic signage programs and help them to adapt to current practices and technologies then there are many historic sites that are at risk of being lost to the general public. We need to revamp signage programs so that they can attract young people and get them interested in their heritage. This can be done by looking at progressive signage projects like the South Bronx Heritage Trail and applying these practices to other programs that hope to accomplish similar goals. Then and only then will we be able to preserve and interpret sites important to our local, state and national history.

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