

## Frequently Asked Questions



### **What is the purpose of the signs?**

The case for a regional gateway and wayfinding sign program was first introduced in the PerkUp Community & Economic Development Plan as a vital tool in branding the Upper Perkiomen Valley. Nestled among some of the fastest growing communities in the Commonwealth, the Upper Perkiomen Valley offers a wealth of natural and cultural resources. The friendly, small-town atmosphere reflects the hard-working, family values that continue to attract young families.

In addition to creating a sense of community, the signs will improve our economic profile by visually linking existing communities, improving streetscapes, marketing amenities, expanding connectivity and promoting economic development. The program includes removing old, faded and mismatched signs to eliminate roadside clutter. Adding new signs will enhance opportunities for local residents to enjoy the hidden cultural and natural resources in their own backyard and improve the visibility of our libraries, museums, parks, nature preserves and playing fields. With an emphasis on recreational locations, natural resources, and cultural venues, the signs will promote amenities to cultivate outdoor recreation and nature tourism.

These prominently displayed and strategically placed signs will remind residents of local facilities. First-time visitors attending sporting events, concerts or exhibits will become aware of other destinations such as the Goschenhoppen Folklife Museum and Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center. The signs will also help tap the economic potential of 450,000 annual visitors to Green Lane Park, the 13,000 visitors to the Cradle of Liberty's Boy Scout Camps and others passing through the region between the Lehigh Valley and Philadelphia.

### **How does the program fit into other plans?**

The Upper Perkiomen Valley Wayfinding and Identity Project is consistent with and helps to implement the boroughs' revitalization plans, PerkUp Plan and the Comprehensive Plans of both Montgomery County and the Upper Perkiomen Valley region. The project is compatible with the goals and recommendations of the *Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, 2015* to help market the county's cultural, historic and natural resources, and to revitalize its downtowns and main streets by improving the streetscape and signage of downtown areas. The project also reflects economic development goals and objectives identified in the 2011 *Upper Perkiomen Valley Regional Comprehensive Plan*, which specifically calls for a unified wayfinding sign system with an attractive design that will be consistent throughout the region.

### **How many signs will be installed?**

A total of 79 signs will be installed. A break-down of sign types is provided below:

5 major gateway signs

5 secondary gateway signs

13 town & village gateway signs

52 wayfinding/directional signs  
4 parking signs

### **Why isn't a local company installing them?**

Two local sign companies worked with PerkUp and the UPV Chamber throughout the planning, design and prototype phase of the project: Horizon Signs LLC and Reed Sign Company LLC. Both companies played an integral role in the development of the prototypes working with students at the Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center. Ed Reed (Reed Sign) and Kevan Price (Horizon Signs) led classes and workshops to provide students with hands-on experiences and an introduction to transferrable skills. This education component produced five prototype signs.

However, projects involving government funding have layers of requirements that many smaller companies find unnecessarily cumbersome. Both our local sign companies had other large contracts and felt that a project of this scope was too demanding at that time.

Two sign fabricators have been contracted for the installation of the signs: MS Signs, Inc. (<http://www.mssign.com/>) and Urban Sign Company (<http://urbansigncompany.com/>). MS Signs is responsible for the wayfinding and parking signs; Urban is responsible for the gateway signs.

### **Which municipalities are participating?**

This is the largest multi-municipal sign program in the Commonwealth; the program includes seven municipalities in two counties:

- East Greenville, Green Lane, Pennsburg and Red Hill boroughs
- Marlborough and Upper Hanover townships in Montgomery County
- Hereford Township in Berks County

### **Who is involved in this project?**

In addition to the municipalities above and the Upper Perkiomen Valley Regional Planning Commission, partners in this project include the following:  
Sign Program Management Team led by Craig Berger, consultant  
Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Services  
Montgomery County Planning Commission  
PerkUp Corporation  
Upper Perkiomen School District  
Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Western Montgomery Career & Technology Center

### **How was the design chosen?**

Working through the UPV Regional Planning Commission which included representatives from each municipality, PerkUp facilitated sessions to choose a design firm. The design firm, CVE (<http://cvedesign.com/>), led several public outreach sessions to gather community feedback for design options. After compiling the information from those sessions, the design firm shared the results and presented design options. The municipal representatives voted on the design. The design chosen was then confirmed with a vote of unanimous consent.

### **Who paid for the signs?**

Funding for the signs includes the planning, educational prototype, fabrication and installation phases. The following grants, municipalities, corporations and businesses contributed to this project:

- \$275,000 PA Department of Community and Economic Development Multi-Modal Transportation Fund – Commonwealth Financing Authority (30% local match provided by municipalities and UPV Chamber member businesses)
- \$42,000 Montgomery County 2040 Implementation Grant (20% local match provided by municipalities and UPV Chamber member businesses)
- \$25,000 Schuylkill Highlands mini-grant funded by the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the William Penn Foundation administered collaboratively by both the Schuylkill River Heritage Area and Natural Lands Trust (50% match provided by UPV Chamber members)
- \$5,000 Community Conservation Partnerships Program, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation in support of the Schuylkill Highlands Mini-Grant Program administered jointly by Natural Lands Trust and Schuylkill River Heritage Association
- \$10,000 United States Sign Council for educational prototype program with Western Montgomery Career & Technical Center (no match)
- \$13,000 The following municipalities each provided a \$13,000 match for the grants: East Greenville, Green Lane, Pennsburg & Red Hill boroughs; and Hereford, Marlborough and Upper Hanover townships
- \$20,000 PerkUp Corporation cash and in-kind services
- \$4,000 Upper Perkiomen Valley Chamber cash and over \$20,000 in-kind services
- \$13,000 UPV Chamber business designated contributions:
  - Blommer Chocolate Company
  - Brown Printing Company
  - Harleysville Bank
  - Knoll
  - PPL
  - QNB Bank
  - Stauffer Glove & Safety
  - Univest – Banking, Insurance, Investments

While 80% of the project funds came from other sources, municipal contributions provided a vital match for state and county grants. Community development grants target specific projects in communities including signage. Receipt of these grants brings tax dollars into the UPV that would be otherwise spent on similar programs in other communities.

### **What contributes to the cost of the signs?**

Signs are highly regulated at the local, state and federal levels. Regulations and code compliance include everything from design, construction, material, information and

installation. Multiple levels of approval are required for signs within the PennDOT right-of-way. Signs must be carefully constructed with material able to withstand vast changes in temperature, all types of weather and high wind speeds. They must also meet “break-away” standards in the event of a roadway collision.

A system of signs adds additional layers of complexity and regulations. Craig Berger, sign consultant and author of Wayfinding: Designing and Implementing Graphic Navigational Systems, helped manage this project and donated over 50% of his time. The planning and coordination required for a project of this geographic scope involving seven municipalities is a critical component and significant expense. However, those expenses were off-set by grants and contributions of time by the sign consultant and design firm hired for the project.

**Who owns the signs?**

The signs are the property of the municipality where they are physically located.

**When will they be completely installed?**

All signs should be installed by Spring 2018, weather permitting.

**What types of locations can be listed on the signs?**

There are specific criteria that each type of location must meet to participate in the Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) Program. Refer to the TODS Guidelines to help you determine if your location qualifies: <https://palogo.org/tods-program/tods-general-eligibility/>

**Can new signs be added at other locations? How do I apply to be considered for a sign?**

Applications will be available through the UPV Chamber office. Applications that meet the TODS requirements must be approved by the municipality where the sign would be located and the UPV Regional Planning Commission. Fabrication and installation fees vary depending on installation conditions and are the responsibility of the applicant.