

**City of Minot**

## **Downtown Wayfinding Study**

City of Minot, North Dakota

September 30, 2019

Mr. John Zakian, NDR Program Director  
515 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW  
Minot, ND 58702

RE Minot Downtown Wayfinding

Dear Mr. Zakian,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our services for the Minot Downtown Wayfinding Study. Enclosed you will find our final report and maps with recommended sign locations.

As we progressed through the study, it became clear that the City in general and the downtown specifically would benefit from a comprehensive signage plan. While our study focused on the placement of signs for downtown area, the ideas for signage types, locations, and content continued to come to the surface as we met with various stakeholders. In addition to the sign locations required of the study, we have offered suggestions to address some of those ideas.

The Ackerman-Estvold team is excited to continue assisting the City as you move to the next stages of signage implementation. We look forward to working with your team to create more features that will make the City of Minot shine.

Regards,  
Ryan Anderson, AIA  
Principal-in-Charge/Project Manager



Ackerman-Estvold

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND .....	2
METHODOLOGY .....	3
HISTORICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	6
STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARY .....	7
SIGN LOCATION RECOMMENDATION .....	9
OPINION OF PROBABLE COSTS .....	10
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS.....	11
CONCLUSIONS .....	12
APPENDICES	
MAP 1: Overall Sign Locations	
MAP 2: DOT Sign Locations	
MAP 3: City Wide Sign Locations	
MAP 4: Downtown Sign Locations	
FIG. 1: Sign Examples	

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

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### *Introduction*

The City of Minot was awarded \$74.3 Million from the National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDR) that must be used for projects included in the City's NDR application. The City's application was developed based upon unmet needs and a resilient vision of Minot defined by residents in over 70 public and stakeholder meetings held during the application process. The Minot NDR application and subsequent research documented the need for economic resilience strategic planning, which is expounded on in the following section.

### *Background*

The City of Minot, in accordance with their NDR application, desires to address the unmet need for sustainable growth and development through resilience measures in downtown Minot. The City of Minot commissioned the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in 2018 to undertake a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats analysis of the city's overall economic development activities and plans with a lead focus on downtown Minot. The outcome of the SWOT analysis was a series of recommendations to be considered to promote a sustainable resilient downtown foremost of which is the need to create an identity and promote increased foot traffic, investment, and activities in the downtown district. As a follow through to the IEDC report, multiple technical committees were formed by the city comprised of economic development stakeholders to assess various aspects of the IEDC report and options to follow based on the IEDC suggestions. One distinct outcome from the committee's effort was a consistent identification of the need to establish a clear identity for the downtown as well as to create multiple means for attracting more people and investment with a specific recommendation being the installation of wayfinding signs in the downtown and connected areas, such as the greenway and passive recreation areas along the Souris River, as well as throughout the city leading to downtown.

Our task was development of wayfinding signage locations to meet the need for directing traffic of various modes to downtown starting at the outer periphery of the city working inward and ultimately within downtown Minot. Additionally, we developed various tiers of signage to correspond with location in the city and developed concepts of what these signs may look like.

Our process followed a linear progression of Analysis, Planning, and Mapping. Analysis is further expounded upon in the following Methodology section, while Planning is encompassed within the Historical Considerations, Environmental Considerations, Stakeholder Summary, and Sign Location Recommendations portions of this narrative, ultimately resulting in the location map and concept signage.



## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to locate wayfinding signs included reviewing the existing infrastructure and various transportation modes, taking an inventory of existing signs serving a similar purpose, identifying current and future attractions, and seeking input from local stakeholders. Once these items were completed, the different types of signs were devised based on location relative to downtown and the user group being served. The following explains the methodology in more detail.

The functional class of roadways in Minot consist of principal arterials (US Hwy 2, US Hwy 52, US Hwy 83, and Business Hwy 2) that have the most traffic, minor arterials (such as 3rd Street, 2nd Ave SE within downtown Minot) with less traffic, and collector roads with the least amount of traffic.

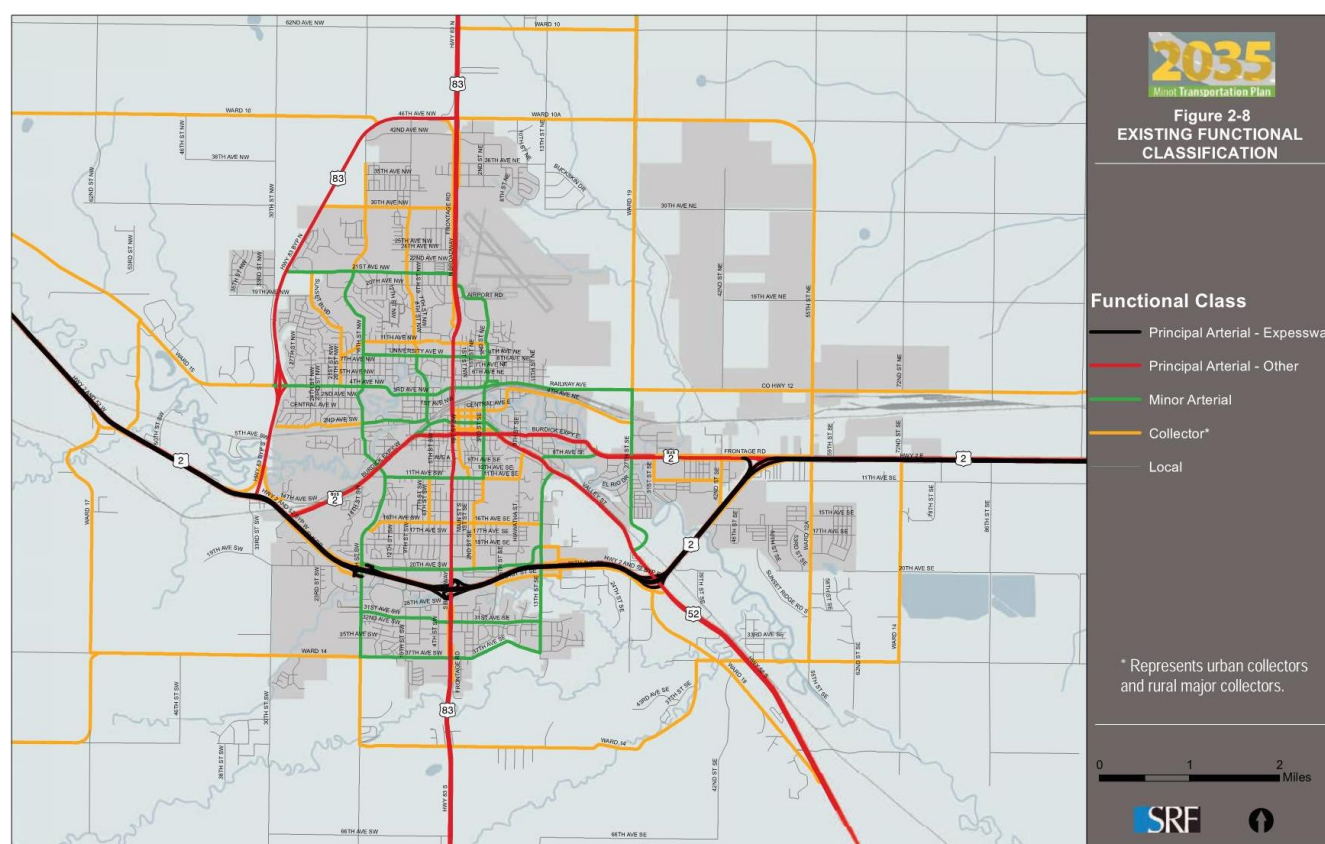


Image 1: Functional Classification Map from City of Minot's 2015 Transportation Plan.

## METHODOLOGY (Continued)

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Sign types have been divided into three tiers. Tier 1 signs serve to direct vehicular traffic entering the city along the principal arterials. These signs would follow North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Regulations and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). In addition to the standard white lettering on green background, it is suggested that an additional key element, the extended signage on the bottom, would reinforce district branding and act as an introduction to the distinguishable downtown area. Such branding signs will require approval from the NDDOT.

Traffic within the city is directed towards downtown with City-wide Destination Signs, Tier 2, that are located at key intersections of arterial roadways and near other attractions, such as Dakota Square Mall, the North Dakota State Fairgrounds, etc., and will serve both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Destination signage creates a coordinated system of wayfinding throughout the city, uniquely expressing and featuring the downtown district. By continuing the distinctive color scheme and shape, the frame mount would be placed on existing traffic signage and would include directional cues to the downtown district, along with a distance description. The signs indicated on MAP 3 are designated specifically for vehicular traffic. Additional signs for pedestrians would be placed along multi-use trails that are not along streets and connect to downtown. These signs would be added as the trail system is developed and coordinated with Minot Park District.

Tier 3 signs are signs within the downtown area. There are five types of Tier 3 signs:

1. *District Identity / Gateway* – District identity signs create a memorable and welcome threshold to the downtown district. Brand identity elements are introduced through color and logo placement. The monumental brick base detailing is evocative of historic brick structures and is based, in part, on the distinctive existing gateway signage to Eastwood Park. The bold sans serif lettering distinctly gives the district a sense of place. Signage may also be illuminated in various ways.
2. *Vehicular Directional* – Vehicular directional signage presents a clear guide to motorists to navigate toward a particular destination. Opportunities to include additional iconography exist as a visual cue to further guide the motorist. The inclusion of a customized framework (header panel) reinforces district presence and brand. Additional panels may be included (footer panels) to incorporate overall City OneBrand messaging as a way to present a full-city cohesive message. Vehicular directional signs may be included as an addition to existing signage. Brand consistency can be achieved with customized frame shapes, along with a top pole accessory showing district identification.
3. *Pedestrian Kiosk* – Located in key pedestrian areas, visitor kiosks serve as a limitless way to provide information. Using a four-panel system with a brick monument base, they reinforce district identity and create a uniform, recognizable structure that is approachable from all sides. Content panels may provide information regarding wayfinding, such as district “you are here” maps to aid in navigation. The panels should be modular and easily adaptable to changing messaging, as well as weather resistant. These panels also create opportunity to highlight history and cultural interpretive information. Panels may also be utilized as an income source for the DBPA to sell advertising space. Visitor kiosks may be illuminated.

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4. *Historical Landmark* – The City of Minot’s downtown district includes seven structures that are currently included on the National Historic Register. To enhance the downtown experience, identifiable signage should be placed at the landmark/building. A unified design may be used to indicate historic significance, such as a ‘history’ icon and additional frame panels may be added to incorporate historic information unique to each landmark/building. Adding headers and footers to the customized informational frames reinforces district brand.
  5. *Destination Identification* – Destination Identification signs can be used as trail markers, bike path guides, parking ramps, government facilities, parks, etc. The design of these signs provides a way for distinguishable icons or logos to be used as amenity markers on the top frame, while the bottom frame could encompass signage already provided by other entities, such as the Minot Park District for trail markers or park logos. The flexibility of the bottom frame could also be useful to mark trailheads and provide directional maps along pedestrian paths.

A unique and recognizable wayfinding system aids in traffic/pedestrian safety and economic development, but it also gives the City of Minot an opportunity to create a cohesive identity downtown. This aesthetic should work in tandem with the future One Brand effort.

We have provided a sample of what that identity could be and how it can be utilized throughout each wayfinding element, not only within the downtown district, but as a supplement to existing city, county and state signage. These samples can be found on Appendix FIG. 1.

While we understand that this may be outside of the scope of this project, our team is excited to provide these visual samples to showcase the great possibilities the City has before it.

## HISTORICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

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### *Historical Considerations*

The history and culture of our community supports the foundation of a wayfinding system that enables user navigation and creates a strong sense of place. Communities should build upon their unique identity to creatively replicate and characterize their history and culture for planning and design. Soliciting the events and experiences that a community takes pride in or often refers back to “Did you know” important to consider for reflection. The community, as well as visitors, are more likely to accept and engage the cultural elements when they are incorporated into the navigation experience and regional context. Conveying ideas and information from these experiences can bring the community together by recognizing the history of a place while also projecting an enhanced future. Such locations have meaning and value and already are part of the wayfinding system in the community.

Our team looked at several different inventories of Minot’s cultural sites, ranging from the National Register of Historic Places to Renaissance Zones and local subject matter experts. The inventory resulted in an exhaustive list of Minot’s historical and cultural sites. The sites selected were geared towards increasing the public’s awareness of Minot’s historical resources. It is projected that the wayfinding system will not only increase the city’s tourism levels, but also increase the number of visits by residents as well. Additional wayfinding points can easily be incorporated as the system becomes more robust.

### *Environmental Considerations*

Ackerman-Estvold will provide the project with the needed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation (environmental, biological, and cultural resources) for any construction project deriving from this Study. Based on the Study’s scope, we anticipate that construction related NEPA compliance would be addressed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) document. The construction will likely be within existing public rights-of-way and should have minimal disturbance to the environment. Anticipated activities would likely result in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY

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At the onset of the project we worked with City of Minot staff to identify project stakeholders which included Minot Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Minot, Minot Park District, Minot Downtown Business & Professional Association, and Little Chicago Pub District. Once the stakeholders were identified, we met with representatives of each organization to gather input that could be incorporated into the development of the project. Summaries of those conversations are outlined here.

### ***Minot Area Chamber of Commerce***

Project team members met with Minot Area Chamber of Commerce representatives on August 14, 2019. Staff felt that critical needs included signage entering the city and entering the downtown area. They currently utilize several building landmarks in the area to help people navigate to the area and recommended a recognizable landmark like the water fountain be used in place of the default buildings they now use. The discussion also included opportunities to utilize the flowers along Main Street within the signage.

### ***Visit Minot***

Project team members met with Visit Minot representatives on August 22, 2019. As a point of interest for most visitors to the community, Visit Minot felt strongly that signage be placed at the visitor's center directing people to the downtown district. In general, they do feel that signage for many of the community's attractions and destinations could be improved upon. Cohesive walking signage became a significant part of the discussion as this organization would like to see larger maps showcasing all downtown attractions and private businesses directing you to areas of interest similar to those found within malls. Some of the discussion surrounded light post banners depicting the downtown districts used in other communities.

### ***Minot Park District***

Project team members met with Minot Park District representatives on August 26, 2019. This stakeholder group agreed that more signage would be a benefit to the community and downtown Minot. With several park facilities near the downtown area, this stakeholder would like to see some collaboration between the entities to promote all area activities. The Minot Park District staff would like to see the pedestrian bridges and walking paths in the downtown area identified within the project. This entity also discussed the idea of large-scale signage for the walking public to use to locate specific attractions/destinations.

### ***Minot Downtown Business & Professional Association***

Project team members met with Minot Downtown Business & Professional Association representatives on August 27, 2019. These stakeholders communicated their desire for a landmark identifying the downtown district. These representatives also felt strongly about capturing the historical aspect of the area but ensuring that it wasn't too heavily representing the "Little Chicago" theme. The desire was to have the ability to tell the story of downtown Minot and the buildings and people that make it such a great destination. They were supportive of signage for the ages that speaks to all people and interests. The desire was also to include some substantial signage on the edges

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of the district depicting the designated downtown area. One stakeholder posed the idea of utilizing some of the existing landmark buildings within the signage development plan. This group indicated that the downtown area needs to be all encompassing including areas outside of the Main Street corridor. They acknowledged that downtown Minot is much more than just Main Street. They desired to showcase more of the creative culture that inhabits the district. This stakeholder group also liked the use of the streetlights and the possibility of weaving those into the signage design.

### ***Little Chicago Pub District***

Project team members met with Little Chicago Pub District representatives on August 27, 2019. This group of stakeholders felt strongly about directional signage for the walking clientele. A significant portion of their business comes from those traveling on foot throughout the downtown area from one location to the next. This group supports the idea of embracing and expanding on the historical aspects of the community and the downtown area and would very much welcome an all-encompassing downtown brand with signage that reflects that brand.

## SIGN LOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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Recommended sign locations are indicated on the attached maps. Each map depicts a different level of signage.

*MAP 1: Overall Sign Locations* – Highlights the locations of all signs recommended in this study. The following maps provide additional details for each map type.

*MAP 2: DOT Sign Locations* – The locations of DOT provided signs are typically at the periphery of the city and placed at the main routes into the city.

*MAP 3: City Wide Locations* – These signs are located within the city, but outside of downtown Minot. Signage will direct people to downtown from various locations and along main routes.

*MAP 4: Downtown Locations* – These signs are located within downtown. Each sign type was described in the Methodology section above.

## OPINION OF PROBABLE COSTS

Below is an Opinion of Probable Costs based on the proposed locations and the type of signs indicated. Costs will vary depending on several factors, including, but not limited to, timeframe of installation, exact design of the signs, change in the proposed number of locations of signs, etc.

Sign Type	Quantity	Unit Cost <sup>1</sup>	Unit	Cost
<b>DOT Road</b>	14	\$ 1200.00	Ea.	\$ 16,800.00
<b>City-Wide Signs</b>	40 <sup>2</sup>	\$ 350.00	Ea.	\$ 14,000.00
<b>District Identity / Gateway</b>	6	\$ 8,500.00	Ea.	\$ 51,000.00
<b>Pedestrian Kiosk</b>	5	\$ 7,500.00	Ea.	\$ 37,500.00
<b>Vehicular Directional</b>	9	\$ 2,000.00	Ea.	\$ 18,000.00
<b>Historic Landmark</b>	7	\$ 425.00	Ea.	\$ 2,975.00
<b>Parking</b>	8	\$ 250.00	Ea.	\$ 2,000.00
<b>Walking / Trail</b>	2	\$ 350.00	Ea.	\$ 700.00
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	1 <sup>3</sup>	\$ 15,000.00	LS	\$ 15,000.00
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 157,975.00</b>

### Footnotes

1. Costs include new posts for all signs. However, where possible, signs shall be installed on existing posts.
2. Includes additional sign along multi-use trails that have not had a location identified.
3. Includes items to provide a unified appearance throughout downtown, e.g. banners and flowerpot hanger added to existing streetlights.
4. Table is expressed in 2019 dollars.



## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

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Through the course of the project we have identified several critical items that fall outside the scope of this project. The project team felt it was important to document those elements here for potential implementation in future phases.

*NDDOT Signage* – In general, there is a lack of NDDOT signage identifying the following:

- Downtown Minot
- Minot Park Facilities
- Visitors Center
- Historical Landmarks

*Signage from Downtown Minot to Other Minot Destinations* – There was a desire to promote other community attractions using signage within the downtown area to point patrons and visitors to locations outside of the downtown district.

*Expanding the Look and Feel of Downtown Beyond Main Street* – All stakeholder groups had very positive comments on the updates that have recently been completed in downtown Minot. However, several of the stakeholders talked about their desire to see these upgrades extend beyond Main Street and throughout all of downtown Minot. They felt that expanding the look and feel of Main Street throughout the area that has been identified as downtown Minot would make the entire area more conducive to patrons and visitors.

*Private Business Signage* – Recognizing that this exercise was developed to promote general downtown activities and not necessarily private businesses, there was a desire to create signage that promotes those individual businesses to people looking for specific products, services, and experiences.

*Wayfinding App* – The project team feels that the downtown area would benefit significantly from the development of a walking app. With technology continuing to be the means by which people receive information, downtown visitors would benefit from content in a format that is easily usable and accessible. Utilizing this medium also makes it very easy to update ever-changing content being pushed out to patrons and visitors regarding shops, attractions, historical locations, and nightlife. We also believe that it has the ability to be easily customized for special events like street fairs, pub crawls and wine walks, highlighting key stops along the way. This format would give downtown establishments the ability to advertise to customers and draw people to this district.

*Digital Kiosk* – A digital kiosk is an extension of the pedestrian kiosk, aiding downtown entities in the promotion of all things downtown. This tool would provide a medium that could include a downtown map listing all businesses, historical locations, restaurants, bars, and points of interest. It could point out your current location and help you determine the route you would take to get you where you want to be. This medium would be easily updatable, reflect upcoming and current events, and can be changed as the downtown environment changes.

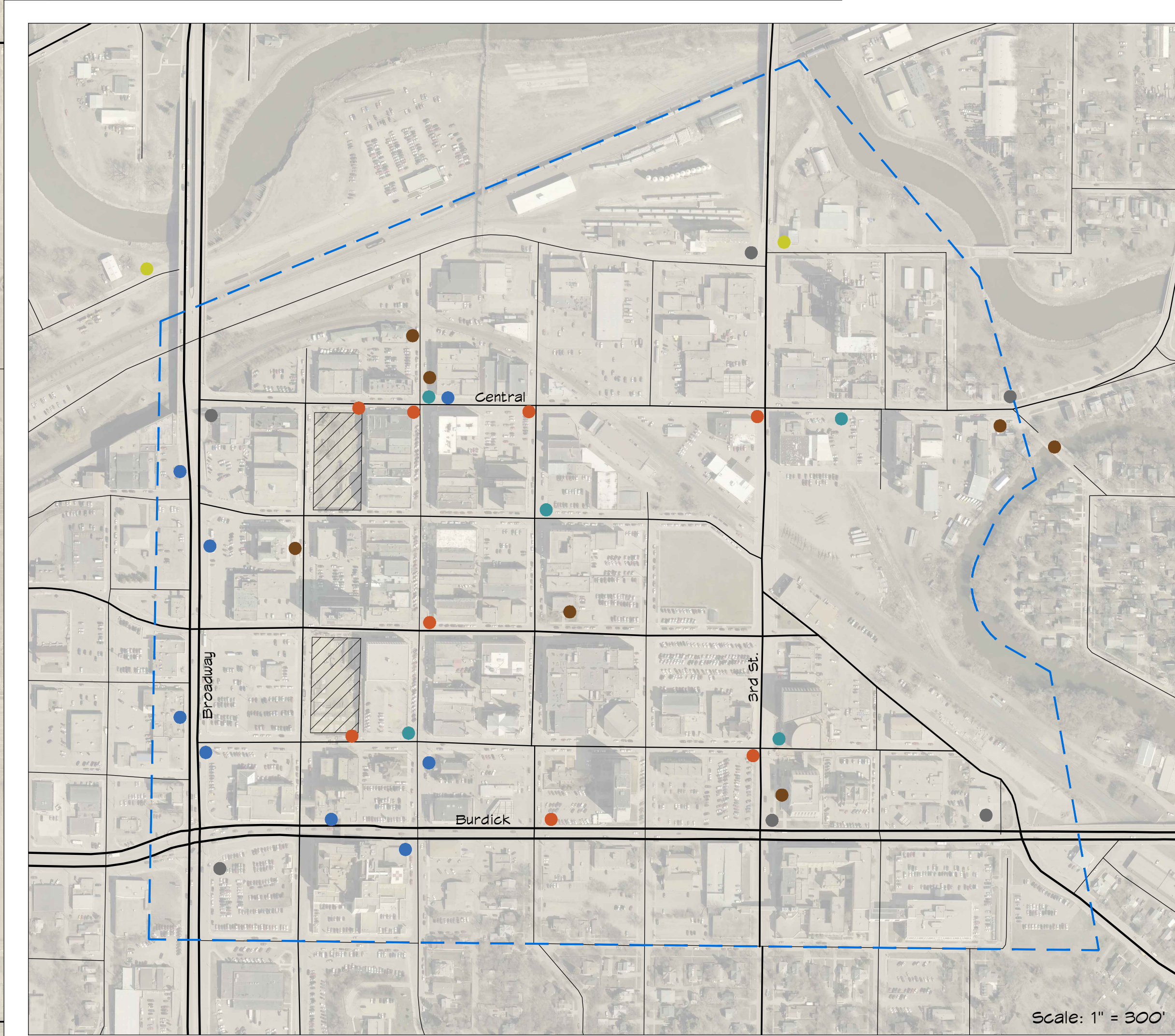
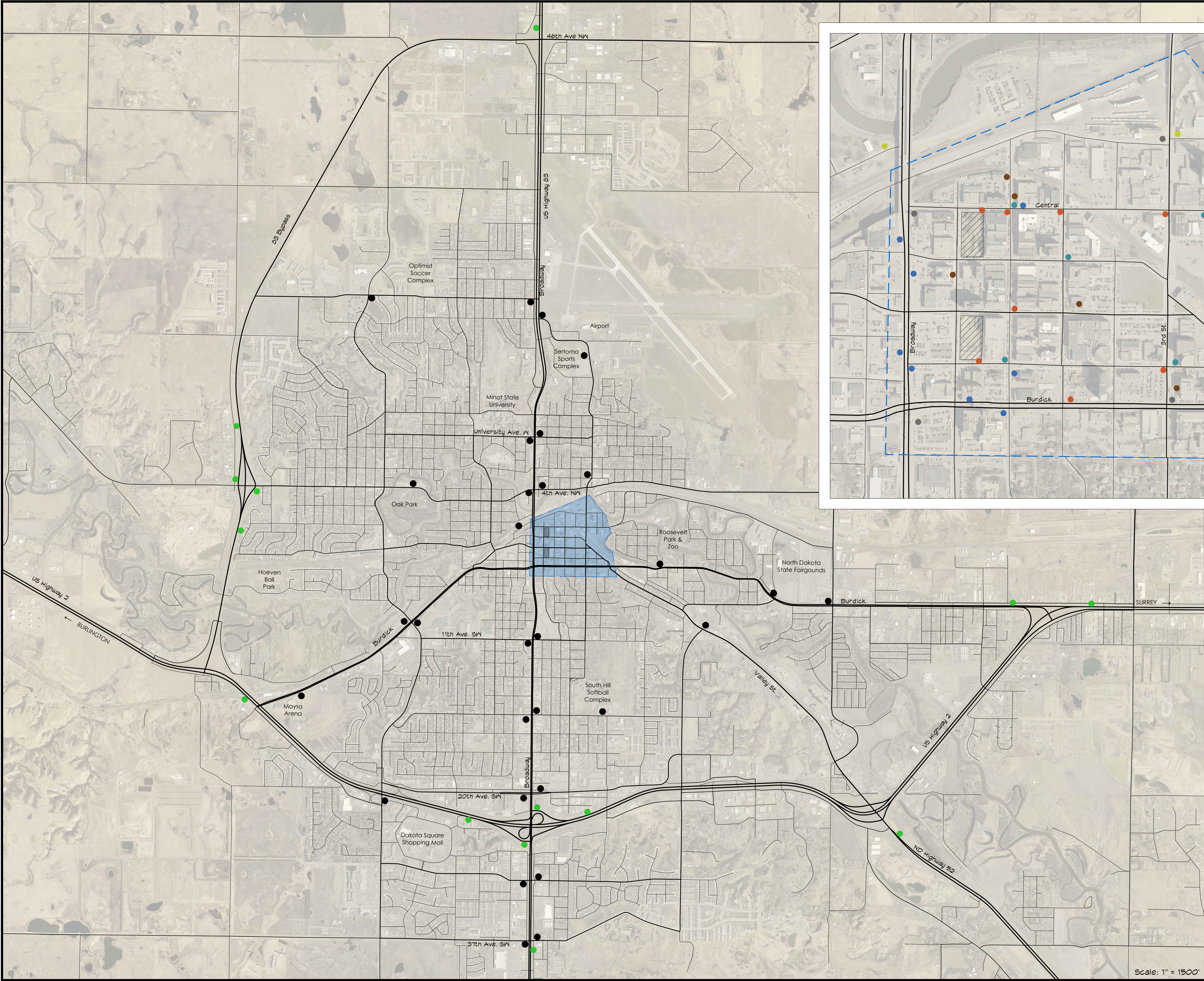
## CONCLUSIONS

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The map and signage concepts were not necessarily meant to be the final and only solution – these are certainly appropriate at this time and stage of development, however the recommendations and concepts are viewed as a living document that can be re-visited and updated over time as conditions and circumstances change. Consideration would need to be given to the One Brand Minot branding exercise that will begin shortly and how that can work synergistically with any future signage installation project.

Ultimately, this mapping exercise will serve as a guiding document for any signage installation project related to downtown Minot and we believe the locations and concepts presented will be of great value to the ongoing economic development efforts for downtown Minot.





- GENERAL NOTES
1. SIGN LOCATIONS ARE PRELIMINARY. VERIFY EXACT LOCATIONS PRIOR TO INSTALLATION.
  2. SIGNS SHALL CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS OF THOSE AUTHORITIES HAVING JURISDICTION.
  3. WHERE POSSIBLE, WAYFINDING SIGNS SHALL BE INSTALLED ON EXISTING POSTS, EITHER BY REPLACING AN EXISTING SIGN OR ADDING SUPPLEMENTAL SIGNS.
  4. SIGN ORIENTATION ON THE MAP DOES NOT REPRESENT INSTALLED ORIENTATION. SIGNS SHALL BE ORIENTATED SUCH THAT THEY ARE READABLE TO TRAFFIC ON ADJACENT ROADS.

- LEGEND
- DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY
  - DOT ROAD SIGN
  - CITY-WIDE SIGN
  - DISTRICT IDENTITY / GATEWAY SIGN
  - VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL SIGN
  - PEDESTRIAN KIOSK
  - PARKING SIGN
  - HISTORICAL LANDMARK SIGN
  - WALKING / TRAIL SIGN



# MINOT WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

DATE: 09/30/2019

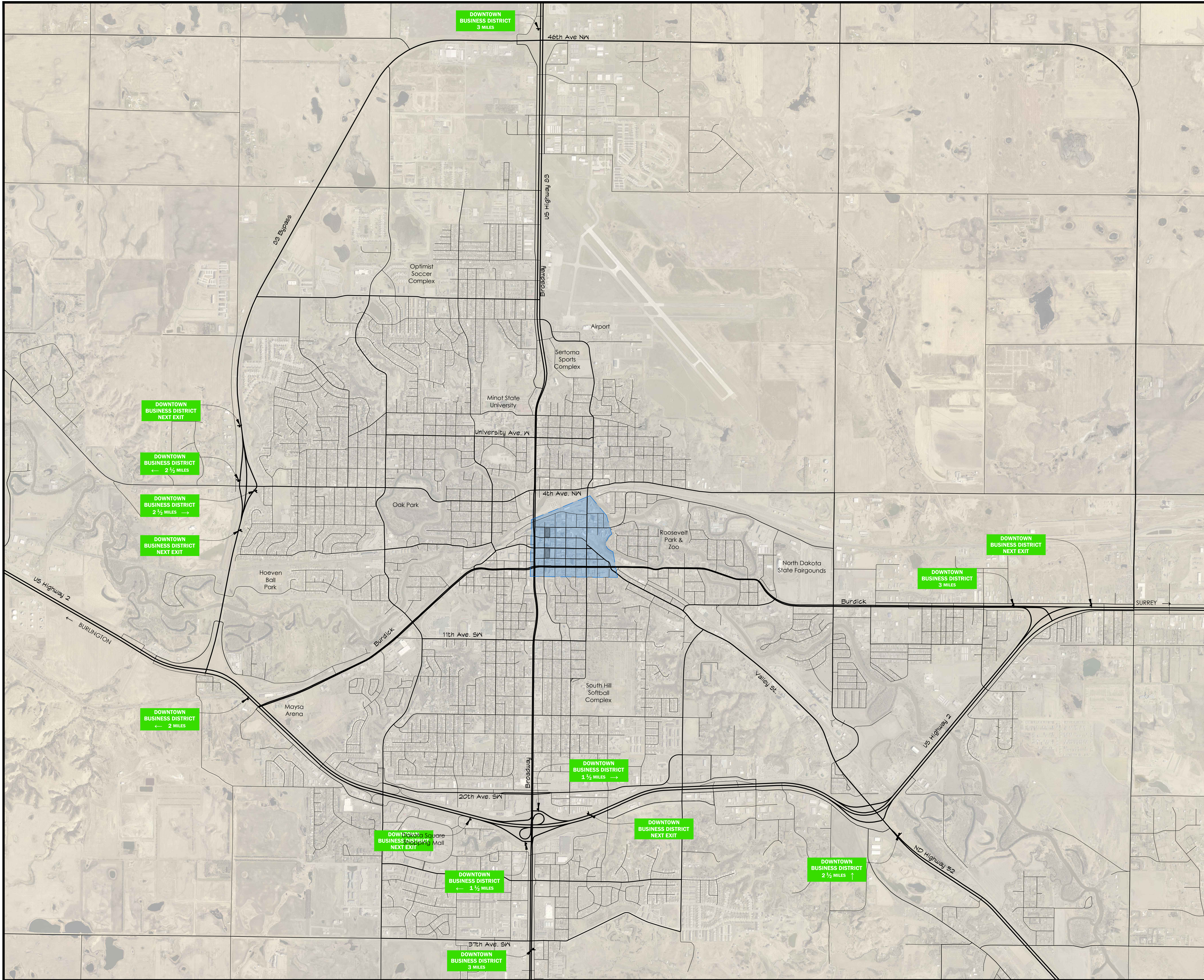
REVISIONS  
# DATE

Project No.  
R19042

OVERALL SIGN  
LOCATIONS

MAP 1





- GENERAL NOTES
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- LEGEND
- DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY
  - TIER 1 SIGN
    - DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT 2 MILES DOT ROAD SIGN
  - TIER 2 SIGN
    - CITY-WIDE SIGN
  - TIER 3 SIGNS
    - DISTRICT IDENTITY / GATEWAY SIGN
    - PEDESTRIAN KIOSK
    - VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL SIGN
    - HISTORICAL LANDMARK SIGN
    - PARKING SIGN
    - WALKING / TRAIL SIGN

NORTH

Scale: 1" = 1500'



ACKERMAN  
ESTVOLD

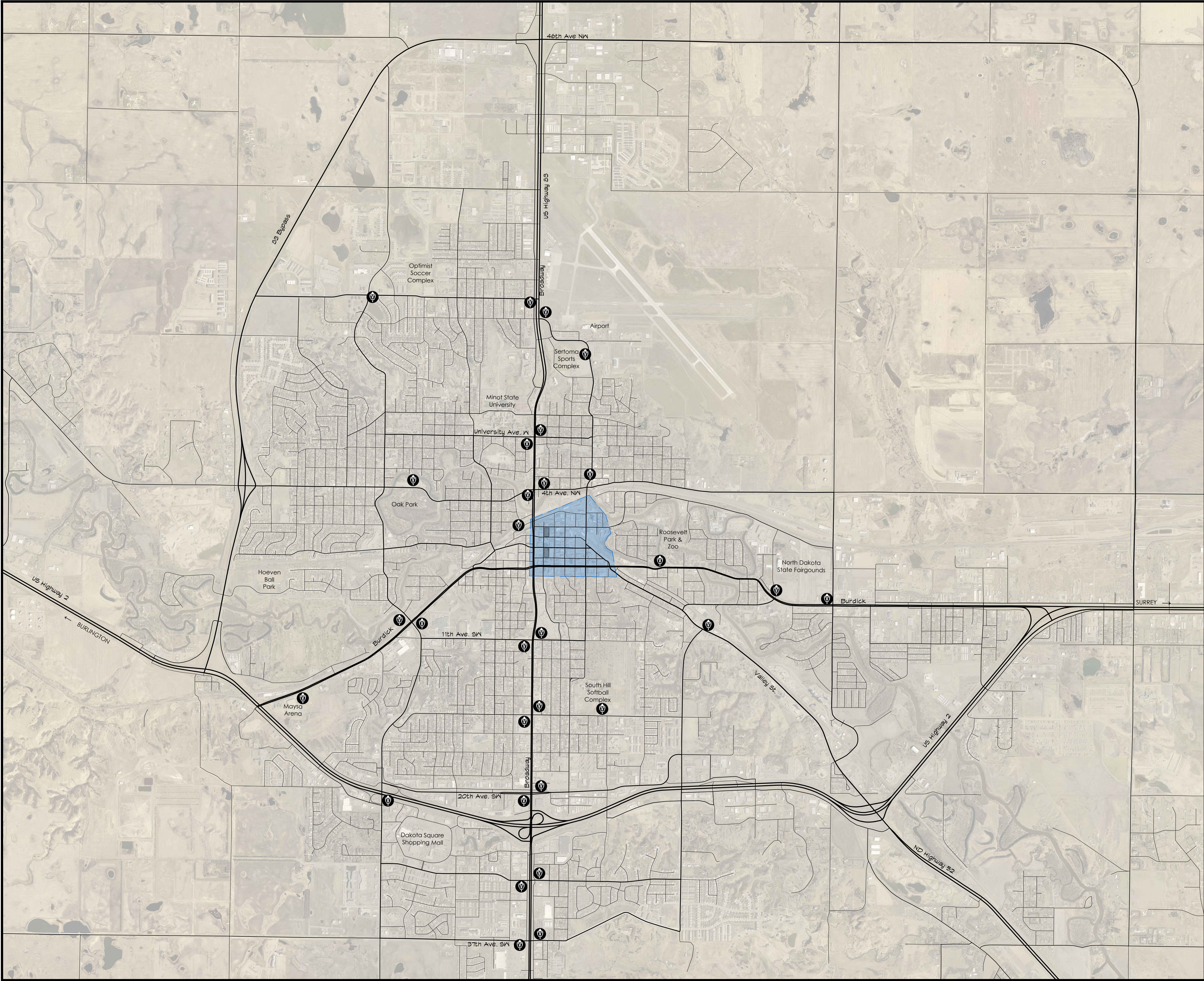
1907 17th St SE · Minot, ND 58701  
701.837.8737 · [www.ackerman-estvold.com](http://www.ackerman-estvold.com)  
Minot, ND | Williston, ND | Boise, ID

# MINOT WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

DATE: 09/30/2019	
REVISIONS	
#	DATE
Project No. R19042	
DOT SIGN LOCATIONS	
MAP 2	





- GENERAL NOTES
1. SIGN LOCATIONS ARE PRELIMINARY. VERIFY EXACT LOCATIONS PRIOR TO INSTALLATION.
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- LEGEND
- DOWNTOWN BOUNDARY
  - DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT
  - DOT ROAD SIGN
  - TIER 2 SIGN
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  - TIER 3 SIGNS
  - DISTRICT IDENTITY / GATEWAY SIGN
  - PEDESTRIAN KIOSK
  - VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL SIGN
  - HISTORICAL LANDMARK SIGN
  - PARKING SIGN
  - WALKING / TRAIL SIGN

NORTH

Scale: 1" = 1500'

# MINOT WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

DATE: 09/30/2019

REVISIONS

# DATE

Project No.  
R19042

CITY SIGN  
LOCATIONS

MAP 3

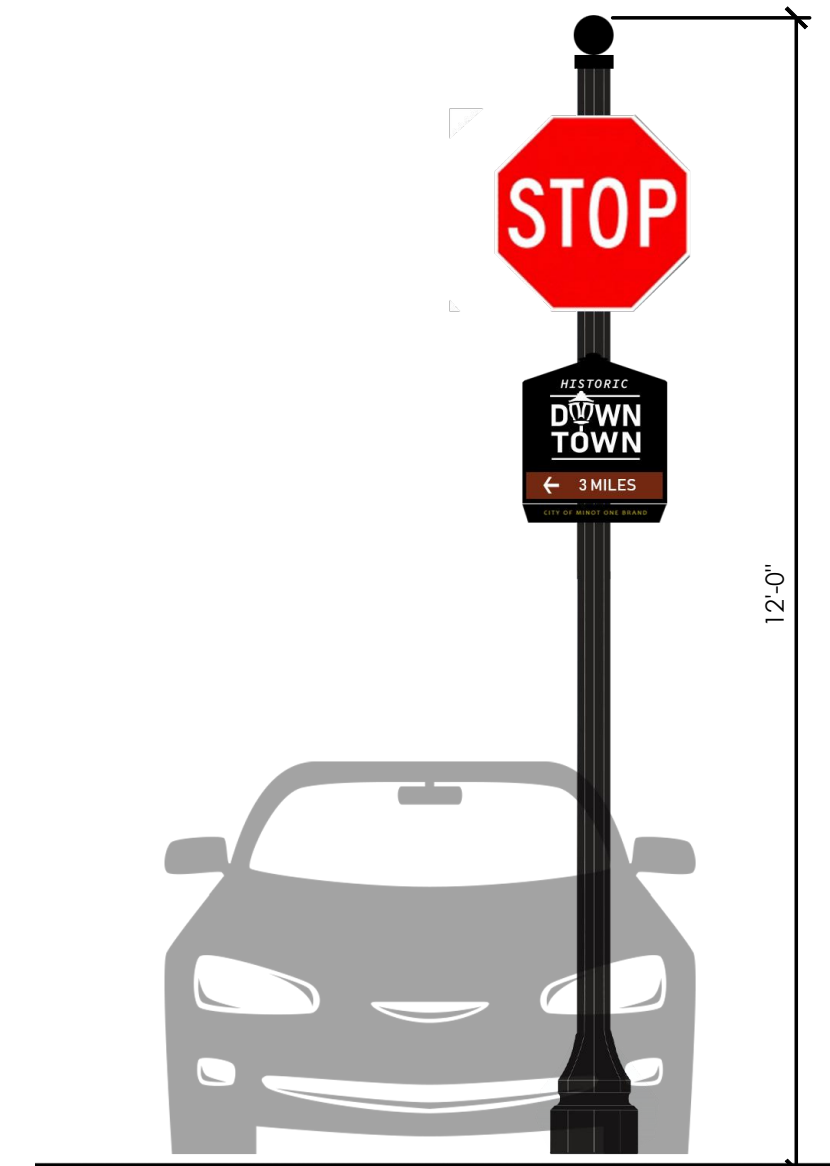




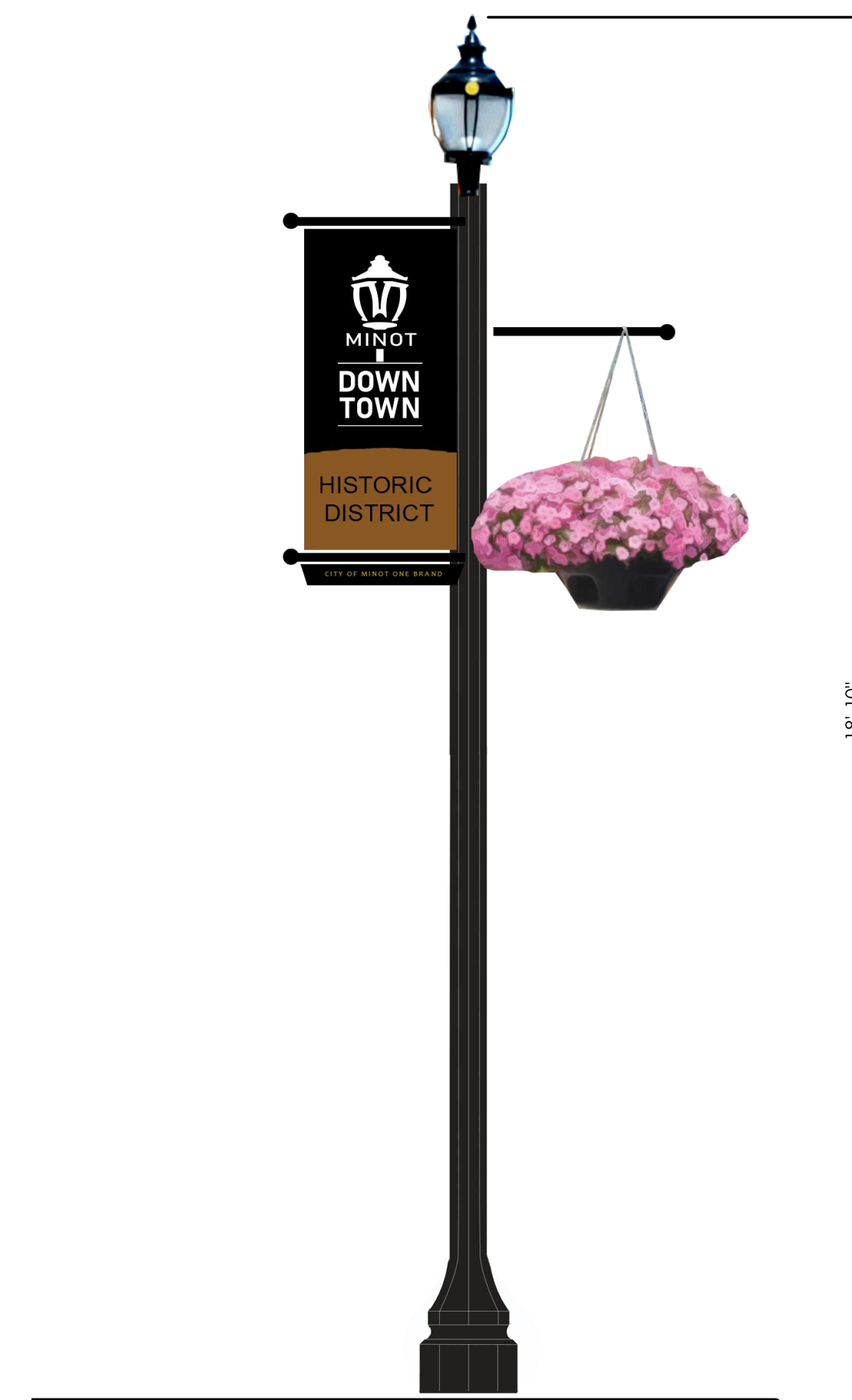




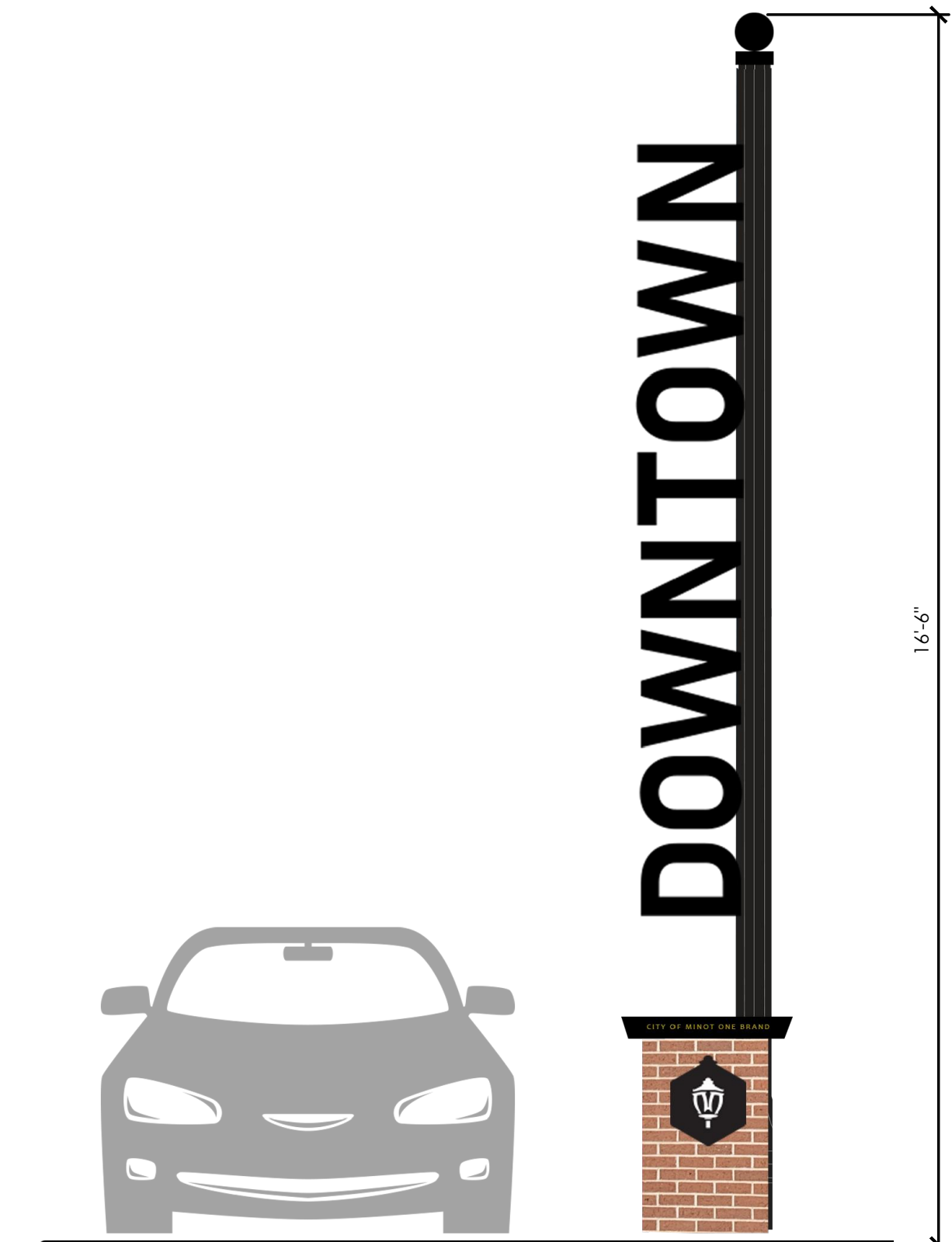
DOT SIGN  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



CITY-WIDE SIGNS  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



IDENTITY BANNERS  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



DISTRICT IDENTITY / GATEWAY  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



VEHICULAR DIRECTIONAL  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



PEDESTRIAN DIRECTIONAL  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



PEDESTRIAN KIOSK  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"



DESTINATION IDENTIFICATION  
Scale: 1/2" = 1'-0"