



Sign Design Recommendation
Richmond Hill Village District
Wayfinding Strategy

August 2018

Stempski Kelly Associates Inc.

Introduction

A Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy Execution for Richmond Hill commenced in early June 2018 to help define the direction the Town should pursue in terms of a “family” of wayfinding signage for the Village District along Yonge Street from Major Mackenzie Drive in the south to Wright Street / Dunlop Street at its northern boundary.

This strategy provides recommendation on the gateway, directional and identification elements (signs and markers) in providing awareness, communal identity and continuity for the district.

Approach & Results

The Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy employed several steps to gather information, consult with community, staff and leadership. Collectively this information aids the development of a style guide to illustrate the “look” of the proposed signage.

Initially a meeting with Town staff provided insight and affirmed the direction for the project. A review and summary of various planning documents (planning reports, design guidelines, by-laws, etc.) followed. In late June, a public engagement review commenced with a community session and followed with targeted stakeholder calls. On-site observation of the project site provided added context and revealed the situations that signage must be “dovetailed” into. The following provides added detail of each step:

A. Background Documents: The project team sought supportive information in the following 6 sources regarding wayfinding and sign design within the district.

1. The Richmond Hill Brand Guidelines provide important information on the character and identity being presented to stakeholders for marketing and advertising purposes. The guidelines provide specific details regarding layout, graphics, colour, and typeface relevant to use of the brand and logo. Any deviation from the guidelines will need to be approved by Communication Services.
2. The Public Realm Guidelines provide some general considerations regarding “Identity, Accessibility and Inclusivity, Placemaking and Wayfinding” within the Town of Richmond Hill. Although more general, reference to these guidelines will ensure the production of a comprehensive wayfinding system and associated signs that will support and enhance the Public Realm of the Village District of Richmond Hill.
3. The Downtown Local Centre Secondary Plan identifies general information on the design of the Village Gateways. The Plan encourages gateway design that supports existing architectural features and helps to unify public spaces.
4. Although the Village District Signage By-Law is focused towards use within the private realm, the by-laws are broad in scope and should be considered for sign design and placement for all wayfinding signs.
5. Village Core Neighbourhood Design states respecting the evolving development periods and element of change and progress are important considerations to maintain Richmond Hill Village as a place that embraces past, current and future.
6. The Downtown Parking and Transportation Study states appropriate and well placed signs will help drivers navigate and find suitable parking within the Village District. This will include both directional signs and parking lot identity signs. It is suggested that parking lot signage, where and when appropriate, include specific ‘time of day’ and ‘day of week’ parking allowances and restrictions within a chart like time table for clarity.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

A Public Open House session was held on 21 June 2018 at the McConaghy Centre. Approximately 22 Business Improvement Area member, resident and staff participated in a general questionnaire and Visual Preference Survey (VPS). Local councilors were also interviewed with the same questionnaire via telephone.

The VPS used 116 images were presented in specific categories, respondents were asked to rank the images based on their initial impulse – whether they felt the image was appealing to them or not. Generally the exercise's outcome revealed that:

1. Respondents appreciate Richmond Hill's connection with its parks and open spaces and its place in the greater landscape, as well as its quaint small town character. Images reflecting progress and more modern or up to date amenities were also favoured.
2. Respondents favoured green and blue colours, with some appreciation for additional contrasting colours such as orange.
3. Generally, the favoured images reflected a sensible, easy to read, basic 'style'. Some adornment in terms of detailing can be seen in the favoured images, but most reflect simple shapes with strong messaging. No one particular style was favoured over another; however, some of the top 10 images do offer affinity for unique detailing.
4. Stone, steel and brick were the common choices for materials. Cut out or raised letters were also noted as preferred treatments for identification names.

Telephone conversations with 6 councilors revealed several desires for signage that resonate with:

- a small quaint village, with opportunities to accent and heighten the visual and aesthetic appeal of the streetscape through creative expression and historical reference;
- the wayfinding signs for the Village of Richmond Hill being of an unique quality that sets it apart from the Town of Richmond Hill;
- with places that emphasize guest experience and authenticity as an important economic driver for streetscape design;
- Including appropriate 'universal' logos as needed for local services and amenities; and
- potentially including technological opportunities (with restraint) to the strategy. This might include simple personal connections via apps. for information and connections to existing tour routes, current events, festivals etc.

Style Development

Consistent themes were generated from the background review and engagement sessions. Concerns, ideas and issues have been interpreted and consolidated into a set of design considerations that can be used to support and inform concept development for sign design. These considerations are flexible enough to guide concept development, rather than dictate requirements for a final design. A style guideline for the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy follows outlining possible character, materials, colours, and typeface is provided.

Character

Generally, signs/markers should maintain a style that is:

1. considerate of historical or past initiatives but reflective of future growth and development;
2. of an integrative style that belongs to the current street aesthetic; and,
3. will have a combination of historic detailing (more decorative poles, brackets/ hardware, textures) and progressive or modern detailing (smooth or matte finishes, raw materials, simple uncomplicated forms, colour).

Materials

Aluminium Steel
Stainless or galvanized powder coat
Laser cut or expanded steel pattern
Masonry (brick)

Colour

Colour selection should be consistent with Richmond Hill's branding palette and not introduce 'new' colour needlessly. Deep grey for standards (post/poles) and hardware desired.

Typeface

The Town of Richmond Hill currently approves of 3 typefaces that should be used within signage development:

Arial - Regular:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Garamond - Regular:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

The NautiGal - Regular: (used in the Richmond Hill logo)

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
0123456789

Recommendation

The following illustrates the family of signs/markers that are recommended for the Downtown Village District Wayfinding Strategy. It represents a style that is both progressive and prominent along the Village District stretch on Yonge Street.

The signage will be adequately prevalent in a milieu of existing street regulatory and proprietor signage in addition to the existing street utilities. The signage will also support a strong and consistent identity for the District while embracing both cues from the District's heritage and current materials and finishes.

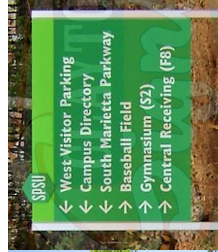
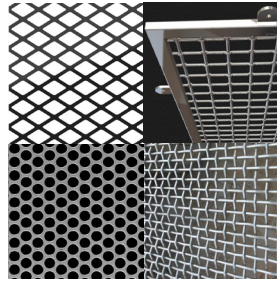
The preferred concept, 'Progressive Predominant' is being recommended for the following:

- The Progressive Predominant sign concept is a unique design, that integrates well with the existing village district architectural fabric. re forms, materials and heritage style, but maintains a progressive look through use of colour materials and fabrication detailing;
- The bright and cheerful colours, part of the Richmond Hill branding guideline, will assist with messaging intent (ie green for parks; blue for civic; lime green for parking lots etc).
- The grey steel pole and associated hardware integrates the sign with future Richmond Hill furnishing projects;
- The destination blades are removable for flexibility re. alterations or changes;
- The concept includes reference to the 'Village' of Richmond Hill.
- Generally, this design, given the above should fare well into the future - demonstrating longevity with fit into an evolving streetscape.



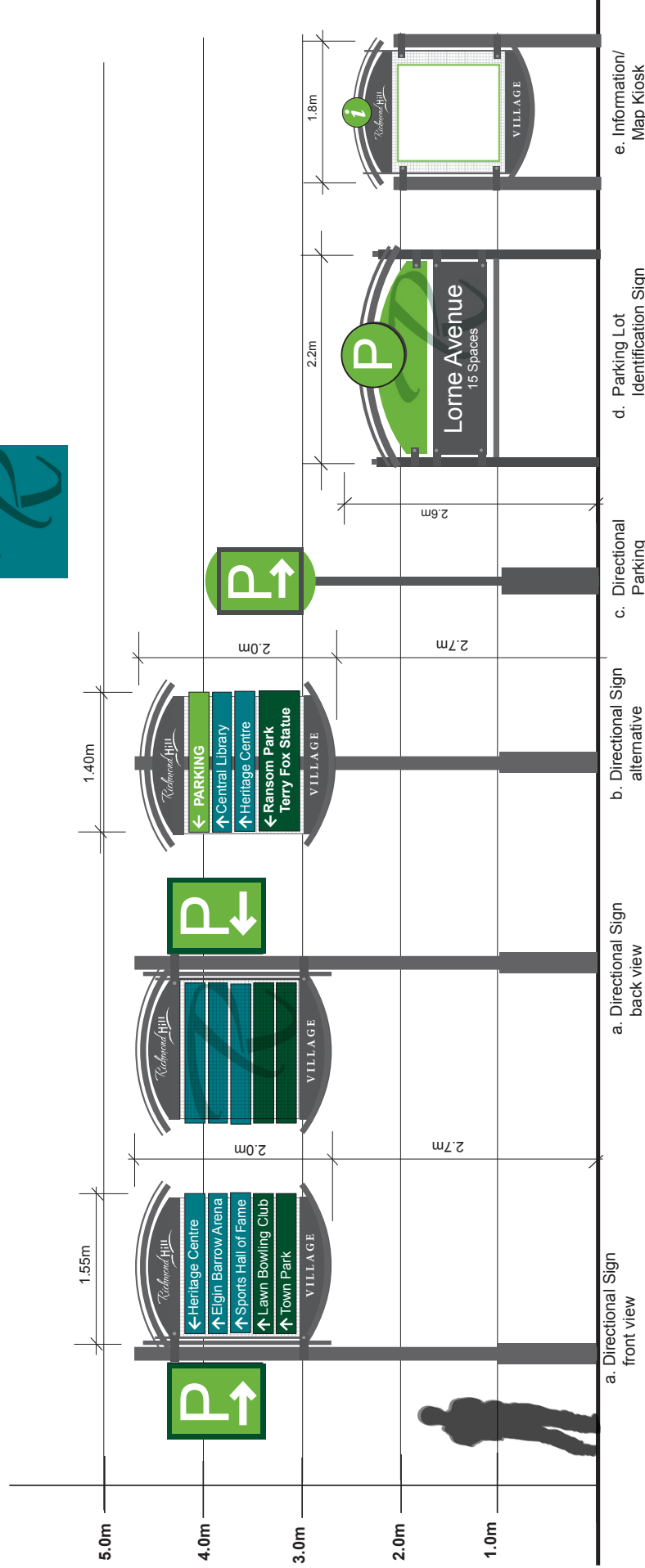
Artist rendition

Progressive Prominent Concept • Yonge Street



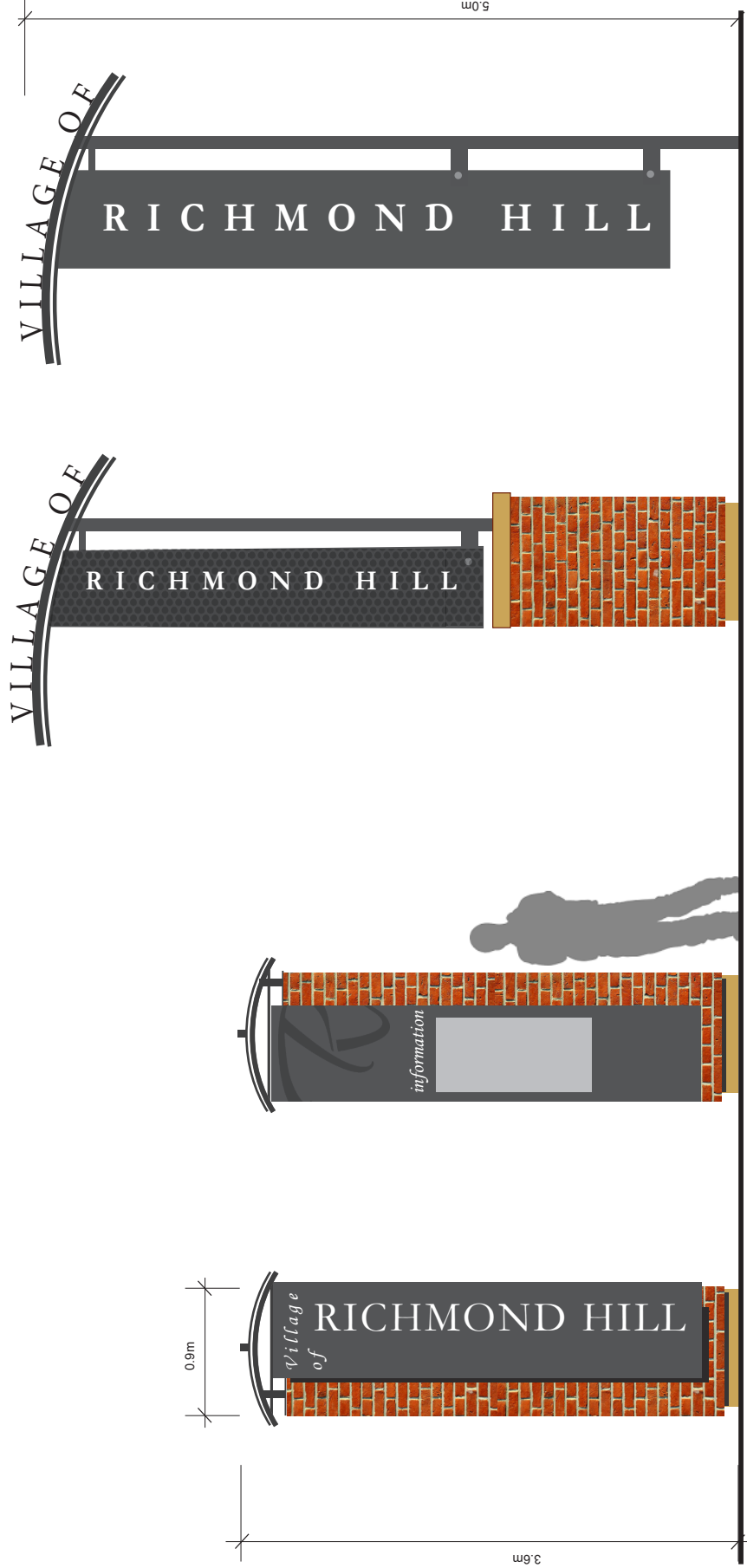
- concept:**
- progressive style with traditional forms;
 - focus on message;
 - modular format;
 - tubular frame and 'grill';
 - brand colour used as a messaging element;
 - Richmond Hill logo, with 'Village' identity

note: dimensions shown are approximate.



Progressive Prominent Concept

Richmond Hill • Village District • Wayfinding Strategy



note: dimensions shown are approximate.

Progressive Prominent North Gateway Concepts



note: dimensions shown are approximate.

Progressive Prominent South Gateway Concept

Richmond Hill • Village District • Wayfinding Strategy

Implementation

A three part phased-approach is suggested with identification signage (eg parking areas) first, directional signage second, and gateway markers third.

Of note is the current disrepair and deterioration of the existing masonry walls adorning the District. It is strongly recommended that masonry assessment and reparation occur prior to the integration of any signage to these structures.

Budget

The following budget demonstrates a range of both conservative and generous estimates for the Progressive Prominent family of signs concept. The estimate will vary depending on design alternative selection, design detailing, specific material selection, fabrication methods, site locates, etc. Note repair of the existing masonry wall (north east corner of Major Mackenzie Drive and Yonge Street) is not included in the estimate.

Conservative Budget Estimate

Sign Type	quantity	unit cost	sub-total
Directional (a.)	12	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 42,000.00
Directional (b.)	2	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 6,400.00
Parking Lot Identification (d)	7	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 21,000.00
Information Kiosk (e) (south gateway)	1	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Gateway North - Pillar concept (includes information panel)	1	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 9,500.00
Gateway South - Wall Mount	1	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500.00
sub-total, conservative			\$ 88,400.00

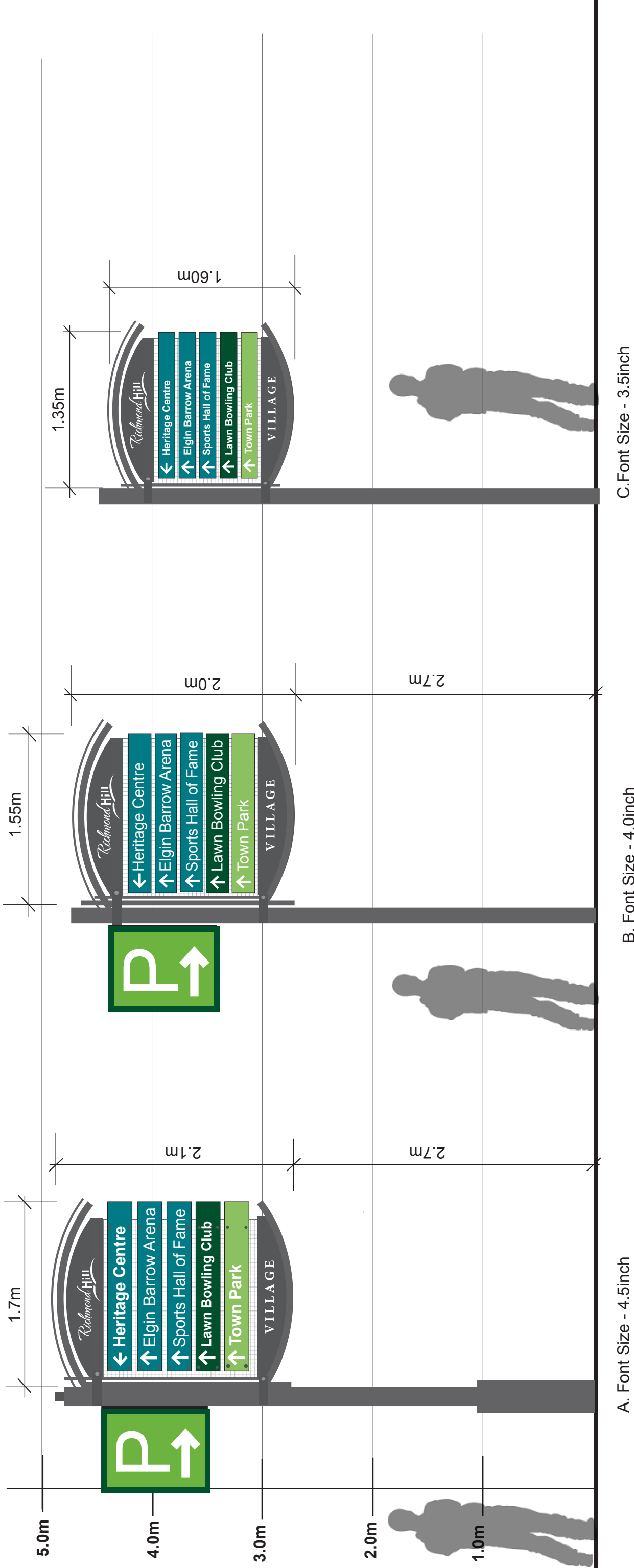
Generous Budget Estimate

Sign Type	quantity	unit cost	sub-total
Directional (a.)	12	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 78,000.00
Directional (b.)	2	\$ 6,300.00	\$ 12,600.00
Parking Lot Identification (d.)	7	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 42,000.00
Information Kiosk - south (e) (south gateway)	1	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
Gateway North - Pillar concept (includes information panel)	1	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00
Gateway South - Wall Mount	1	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
sub-total, generous			\$ 162,600.00

concept:

- progressive style with traditional forms;
- focus on message;
- modular format;
- tubular frame and 'grill';
- brand colour used as a messaging element;
- Richmond Hill logo, with 'Village' identity

note: dimensions shown are approximate.



Progressive Prominent Concept

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