



FARMINGTON VALLEY TRAILS COUNCIL

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Suggested Trail Signage Standards

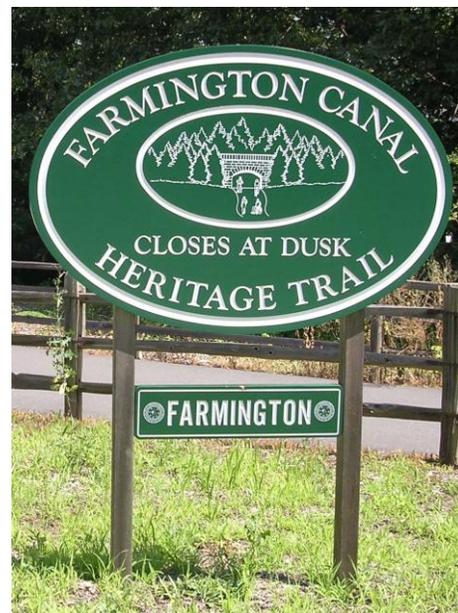
This paper's intent is to provide an outline for a cohesive local design standard and is not meant to dictate trail-building guidelines which are solely the purview of federal, state and local authorities. However, as a general guide we collectively recognize the following design criteria:

- The AASHTO *Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities* (1999).
- The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, (MUTCD US DOT, (2003) at <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/HTM/2003/html-index.htm>.



In particular, the MUTCD "contains all national design, application, and placement standards for traffic control devices. The purpose of these devices, which includes signs, signals, and pavement markings, is to promote highway safety, efficiency, and uniformity so that traffic can move efficiently on the Nation's streets and highways."

ConnDOT and federal DOT standards for basic signage should be maintained and used throughout the trail system. Federal regulatory, warning and recreational and cultural interest sign patterns should remain the standard. In an effort to recognize the whole of the 50+ mile trail from New Haven, CT to Northampton, MA, the FVTC has acknowledged the designation of "Farmington Canal Heritage Trail", replacing the selective and parochial designation "Farmington Valley Greenway". This becomes more important as the trail is completed through the MA border and plans for building in Plainville, CT move ahead in the coming years.



Trail Head Signage at Red Oak Hill Rd.

Trail Head Signage

Farmington initially designed and implemented what the FVTC suggests as the design standard for the trailheads of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trail. This oval sign includes a center oval in which each town can individualize the graphic design to fit the area or a town motif. The sign is carved and painted wood and is approximately 3'x 5' and placed on 4x4 PTL dimensional posts. Individual town designations can appear below.



East Coast Greenway Designation

The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is part of the East Coast Greenway which stretches from Florida to Maine. The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail north from New Haven to Route 315 in Simsbury is now designated as part of the ECG. Signage is standardized in heavy duty plastic and available from the ECG. The majority of this signage is complete.

Mile Markers

The FVTC has created, installed, and will continue to improve upon a mile marker system for the entire trail length. New sections will be mapped using GPS for reliability and new signs will be installed with town permission. Now that the trail goes from point to point, occasional “distance to” signs at trailheads would add information and spur travel to town centers. (See “Interpretive Signage”) “0” mile is at Red Oak Hill Road/New Britain Avenue in Farmington for both the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trail. “0” mile for the whole of the FCHT will eventually be New Haven and reach to the border in Suffield over 50 miles.

Unified Etiquette/Regulation Signs

Some towns have a few signs posted indicating rules specific to the trail including prohibited conduct, exclusions, curfews, etc. The FVTC would like to suggest a uniform code of conduct or guidelines along the lines of the rules below:

- For the safety of all, please stay on the designated trail, be courteous, and respect the rights of adjacent property owners.
- The flow of traffic on the Trail is similar to road traffic. Always ride or walk single file on the right and before passing on the left alert others by bell, horn or verbally.
- Stop, look and listen before crossing roads. Obey all traffic signs and regulations.
- The bicycle speed limit on the Trail is 15 mph.
- Bicycle riders are encouraged to wear protective headgear. Make sure your bicycle or other equipment is in safe operating condition.
- Please do not litter. In consideration of others please keep dogs on a short leash at all times and clean up after your dog.

- Report Trail maintenance problems to the [Parks & Recreation] Dept.: (xxx) xxx-xxxx.
- Report accidents on the Trail directly to the Police Dept.: Dial 911. Report your position using the mile markers or the stenciled road names at crossings.
- Motorized vehicles (except wheelchairs), horses and livestock are prohibited.
- The trail is open for recreational use between the hours of sunrise and sunset.
- [Any specific town ordinances]



An example from Rhode Island

Interpretive Signage

The FVTC envisions the use of interpretive signage to bring attention to items of cultural, historical, artistic and natural interest to trail users. The FVTC feels that a direct appeal to tourism through accessibility to our great cultural heritage will add to everyone’s experience on the trail system. Such signage is already in use on a few parts of the trail. “You are here” signs in town centers could help visitors to access restaurants and other retail establishments.

Some such signage has already been installed on some of our kiosks on the FCHT featuring the East Coast Greenway mileage points. →

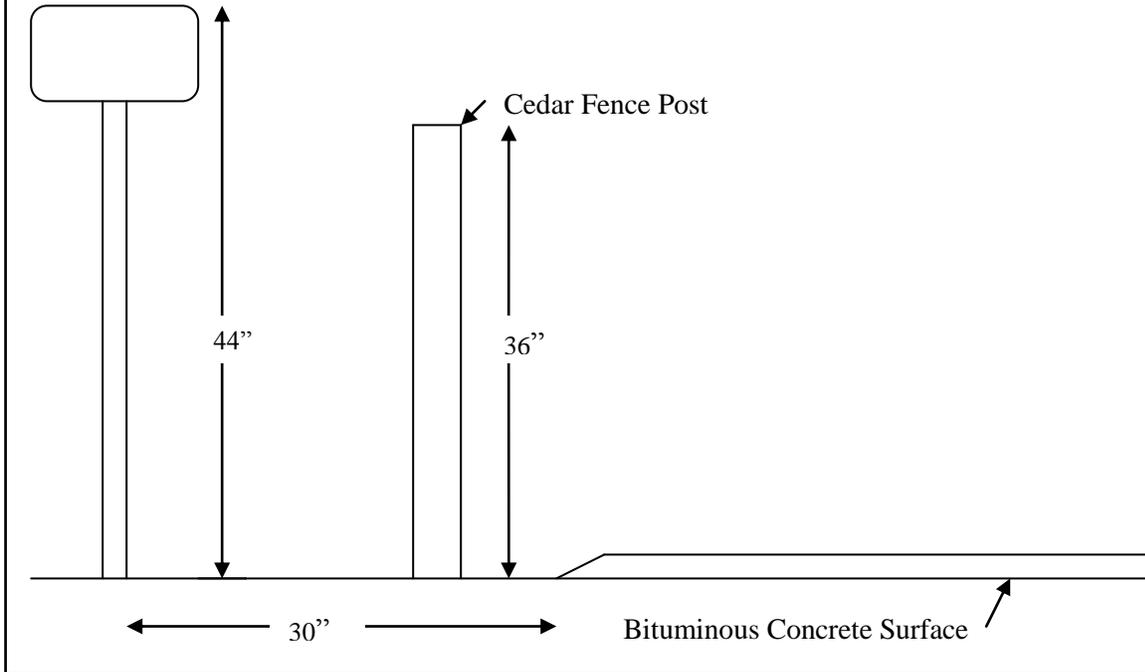
Commercial Signage

The FVTC and many of our area towns have noted that businesses adjacent to the trails have started to put up signage to attract business. In an effort to avoid unneeded, invasive, large, or poorly fabricated signs we need to create some sort of sign ordinance/standard for the trail system. The economic component of the trails is a very real and important contribution to our towns and should be encouraged. Despite this, unsightly signs plastered all over the trails will proliferate and destroy the natural beauty of the trails. Safety being of paramount concern, the availability of restrooms, medical care and police/fire first responders should be offered on signs as necessary public information.

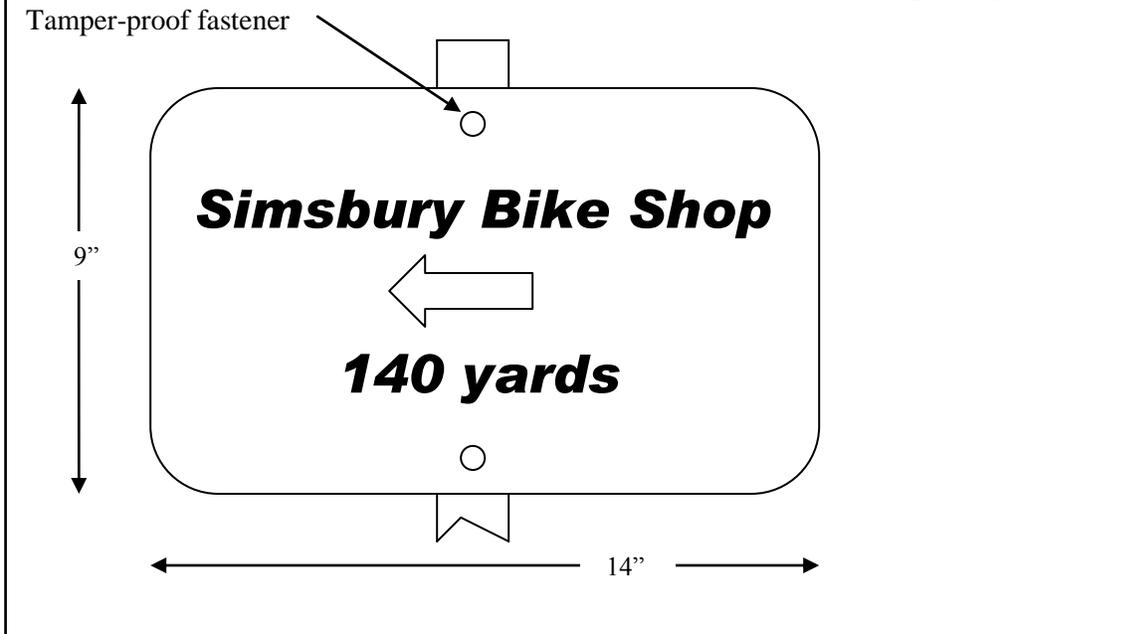


After much thought and research on the matter, an easy to manufacture sign on a standard AASHTO size metal blank that can be fabricated for a reasonable amount. This amount can be redeemed by the town through a fee charged the individual business. A standard green or black metal signage pole would resist weather and vandalism. Tamper-proof fasteners should be used. Placement should be above rail-fence height up to approximately eye height, outside any existing trail barrier, and at the edge of any available trail shoulder to limit any detrimental contact with trail users but apart from any obscuring foliage.

FVTC Commercial Signage Specification Fig. I



FVTC Commercial Sign Fig. II



The sign itself should have the commercial establishment's name and purpose as well as a directional arrow any directions necessary to find it off the trail system. Other information such as logos or pictures are detrimental to the natural setting of our linear park.

A distinctive color should be used to differentiate this signage from safety and directional signs. An example in Unionville (the establishment is also a Simsbury Free Bike site) is below:



Once an agreement on such a commercial signage ordinance is completed in each town, the economic development coordinator could offer the program to businesses adjacent to the trail system that fall into categories useful to trail users. Such businesses could include restaurants, lodging, and bicycle repair. Other businesses that are deemed “bike friendly” (for instance providers of rest rooms or other services) could be eligible for the program. We would discourage towns from offering the program indiscriminately to every commercial or retail establishment.

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