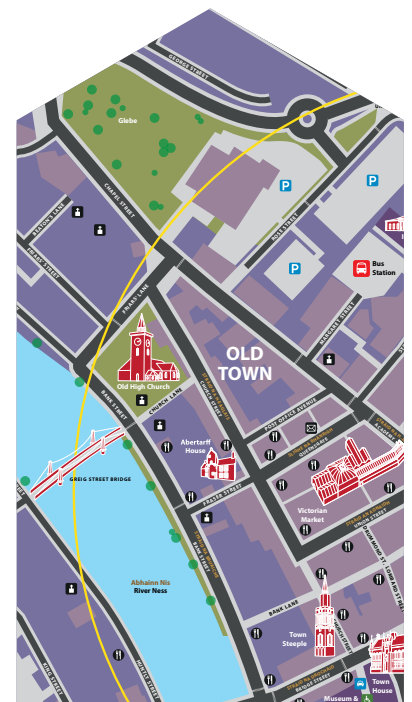


active**in**verness

Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre Ro-innleachd Lorg-slighe airson Meadhan Baile Inbhir Nis

Adopted November 2018



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Wayfinding strategy

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1 What is wayfinding?

Wayfinding is the term used for signs, maps and other devices that convey information about location and directions to visitors and residents. In the context of Inverness city centre, it is the information needed to know where you are, your choice of destinations and how to get there from your present location.

2 Why does Inverness city centre need a wayfinding strategy?

Inverness city centre attracts large numbers of visitors. It is a significant tourist destination accommodating almost 900,000 visitors per year. It is the principal administrative and commercial centre serving the business, retail and service needs of the Highlands and Islands. Many people work in, or travel to, the city centre in connection with their business. Inverness is also a leisure, cultural and shopping destination for visitors and residents alike.

All these people spend time exploring Inverness city centre on foot or by bicycle. The quality of their experience will be affected by the ease with which they can find their way through the urban landscape.

In 2014 the Council commissioned a review of wayfinding in the centre of Inverness that analysed the effectiveness of current on-street wayfinding information. This study concluded that it is difficult for visitors and many residents to plan journeys in advance and to fully appreciate, when navigating the streetscape, all that the city has to offer. Shortcomings in the range and quality of wayfinding information included:

- Signage that is often difficult to read due to inappropriate text sizes, unsuitable typographic formats and information overload.
- An unhelpful profusion of sign types and sizes, contributing to a strong sense of visual clutter.
- No evidence of an easily-recognisable city-wide signage style/presentation and little evidence of city branding.

Problems with current city centre signage and mapping are illustrated in Box 1 'Problems with current city centre signage' and Box 2 'Problems with current city centre mapping'.

Box 1

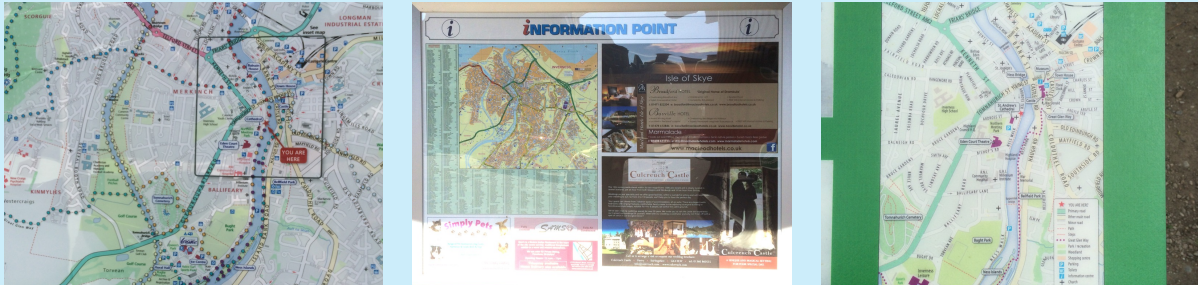
Problems with current city centre signage



- Information overload: too many messages and crowded appearance.
- Poor legibility due to very small text size and small pictograms.
- Structures are suffering from corrosion, weather and damage.
- Unnecessary repetition of walking man symbol.

Box 2

Problems with current city centre mapping



- No consistent city-wide mapping style.
- Advertising around map panels creates visual clutter.
- Poor legibility due to small text sizes.
- Map frame structures are suffering from corrosion and damage.
- No heads-up display - maps not orientated to viewing direction.

There is a strong case for taking action to upgrade wayfinding information in the city centre in anticipation of proposed improvements to Inverness Rail Station, the creation of a major new cultural attraction at Inverness Castle, and significant investment in the regeneration of Academy Street supported by the city's first Townscape Heritage project.

A wayfinding strategy is needed to:

- ensure a consistent approach to wayfinding in the city centre, focussed on developing a coherent network of dual-language information about location and directions that improves people's understanding of the city;
- ensure wayfinding information meets the needs of all users, including disabled people;
- showcase an easily recognisable city brand;
- contribute to de-cluttering the city's streetscape by enabling the removal of damaged or redundant pedestrian signage;
- provide a mechanism for seeking Developer Contributions towards the cost of wayfinding components.

3 Initial feedback on wayfinding from city centre stakeholders

In early 2016 the Council organised a small collaborative workshop for key stakeholders led by wayfinding consultant Tristram Woolston. The purpose of this event was to illustrate potential benefits of improved signage in the city centre and secure feedback on relevant priorities. Twenty eight people took part representing 18 organisations including community councils, disabled people's organisations, businesses, Inverness BID, Inverness Access Panel, active travel groups, transport companies and public sector agencies. Shortly afterwards, workshop attendees were asked to complete a short online survey inviting feedback on the level of detail, style, and appearance that should be used in wayfinding maps. This feedback was used to develop the maps put forward in this strategy.



4 Aims and objectives

The strategy aims to help pedestrians to navigate their way around Inverness city centre and the surrounding areas by improving the effectiveness of on-street wayfinding information with specific reference to signage, including signs that incorporate city maps.

The Strategy's objectives are to:

1. facilitate pedestrian and cycling journeys into, around and out from the city centre;
2. include all user groups and journey types;
3. work at all levels from journey planning and arrival at the city centre through to navigation to neighbourhoods, key buildings, transport nodes, facilities and destinations within walking distance of the city centre;
4. reinforce city branding and accommodate the individual identities of the city centre areas;
5. utilise on-street signage and be capable of future extension to all communication channels, from static signs to on-screen information and hand held devices.

In addition, wayfinding information and components will be:

- compatible with the design aesthetics of the cityscape, architecture and hard landscaping and be in harmony with the materials and finishes used;
- high quality, robust and durable;
- flexible, so as to accommodate future developments.

5 How will the strategy be delivered?

The Council does not expect this strategy to be delivered in a single operation. It is likely that the manufacture and installation of wayfinding components will be funded through:

- significant capital projects, such as the Inverness City Active Travel Network, the Inverness Rail Station Improvement Project, and forthcoming works to transform Inverness Castle into a major new visitor attraction;
- grant funding for improvements to active travel infrastructure;
- Developer Contributions, as appropriate, from new development in/around the city centre.

6 Key concepts

The key concepts that define the Draft Strategy are:

Accessibility - information should be designed to meet the needs of all users and to be accessible to all, including those with physical and mental disabilities.

Integration - the wayfinding information should be relevant to the users' entire journey and the style of delivery should be consistent throughout, whether delivered by on-street signage or online devices, printed materials, electronic displays or people (at information points).

Co-ordination - the wayfinding information and city mapping should be co-ordinated with other information systems already in place within Inverness City Centre, such as civic and tourism websites, transport information, event information and other public information.

There is potential in the longer term to liaise with city centre businesses, community groups and stakeholders to ensure that the wayfinding information system becomes a shared asset to improve the experience for all visitors and residents.

7 Key components

The Strategy proposes two key components to make up the core of the wayfinding information package:

- **Monolith signs** - at entry points and key locations;
- **Fingerpost signs** - at junctions and decision points.

Both sign types will be dual language, English and Gaelic and will conform to the Council's Gaelic Language Plan.

Wayfinding components will be fit for purpose, robust, durable, easy to maintain and easy to update when information changes.

Monolith signs are freestanding structures delivering a combination of directional information and mapping. It is proposed that these will also feature city branding. They will act as highly-visible totems within the streetscape that will allow visitors to understand where they are and plan their onward route. The signs will be internally illuminated to ensure they are adequately well lit to be read, whilst avoiding dazzle or glare.

The maps provided will also be of two types:

1. A "You-Are_Here" local-area walking map will show the area of the city within a 5-minute walking distance from the monolith location.
2. A "Wider City" overview map will show the entire city centre area, including cycle routes, with the area of the local area map superimposed for reference.

The local area maps will be rotated so that the direction of travel is at the top of the map to aid navigation and understanding of the streetscape ahead.

FRONT ELEVATION

SIDE ELEVATION

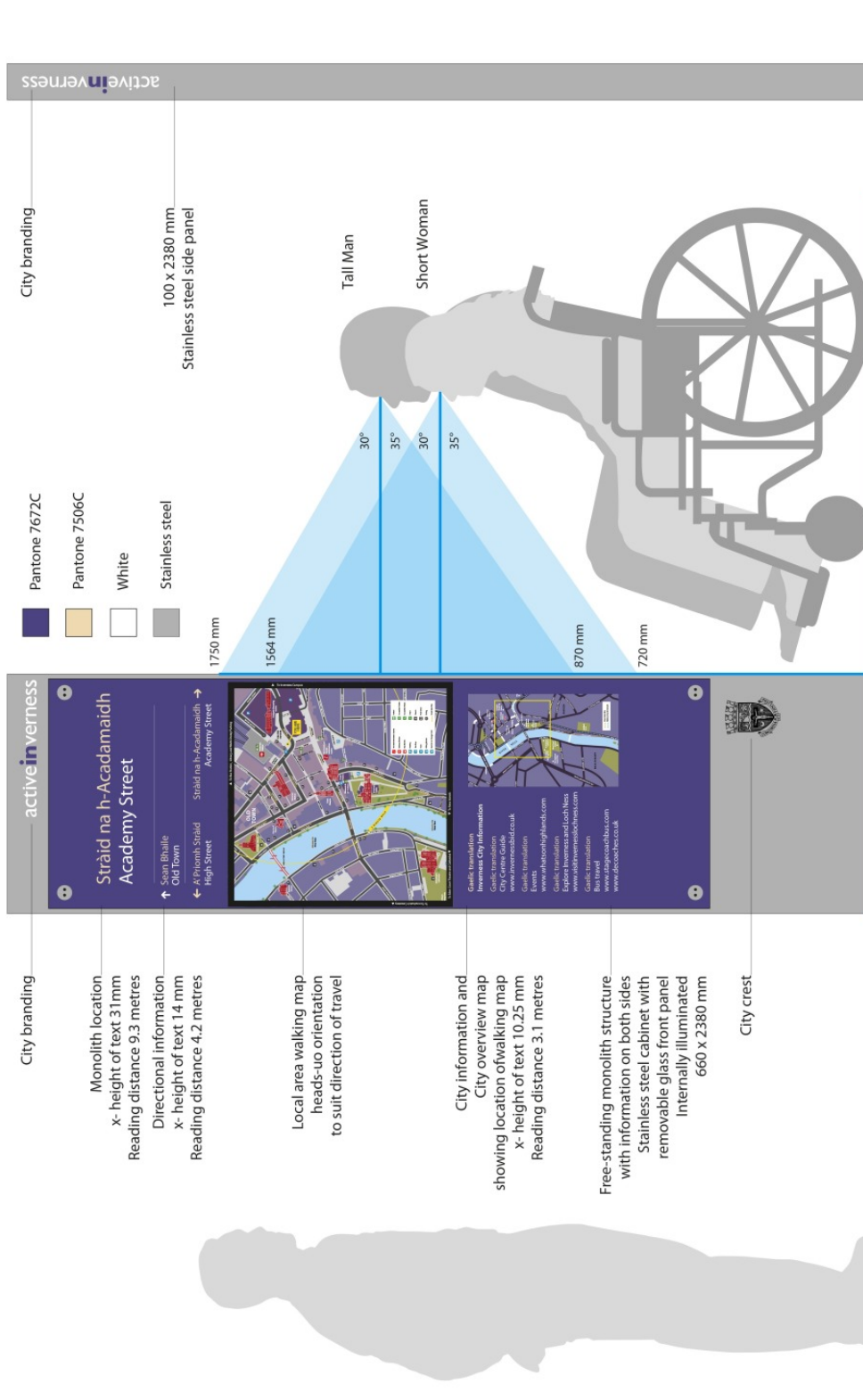


Figure 7.1 Proposed sign type: monolith.

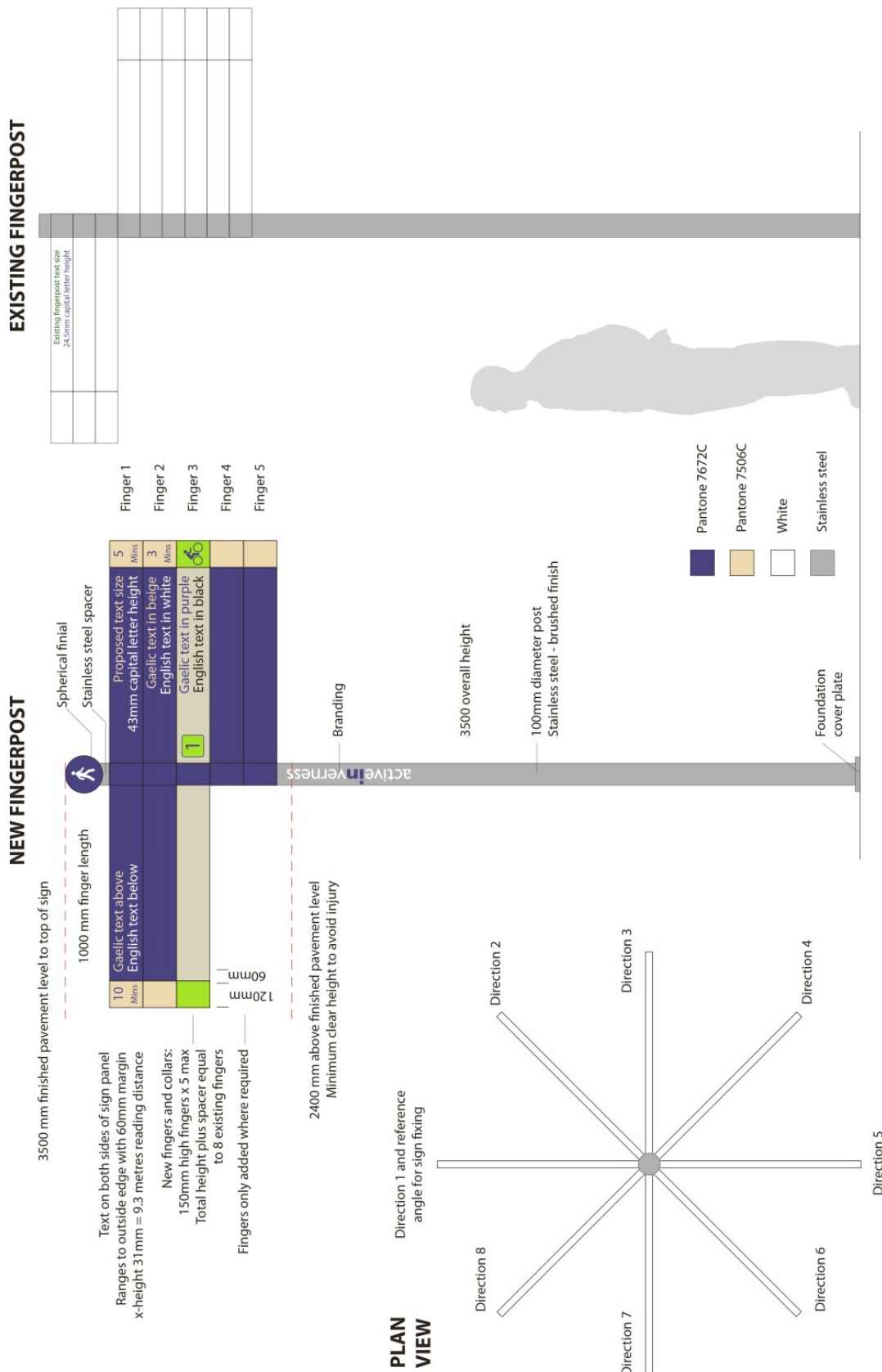


Figure 7.2 Proposed sign type: fingerpost (illustrating height, finger depth and text size relative to existing fingerpost)

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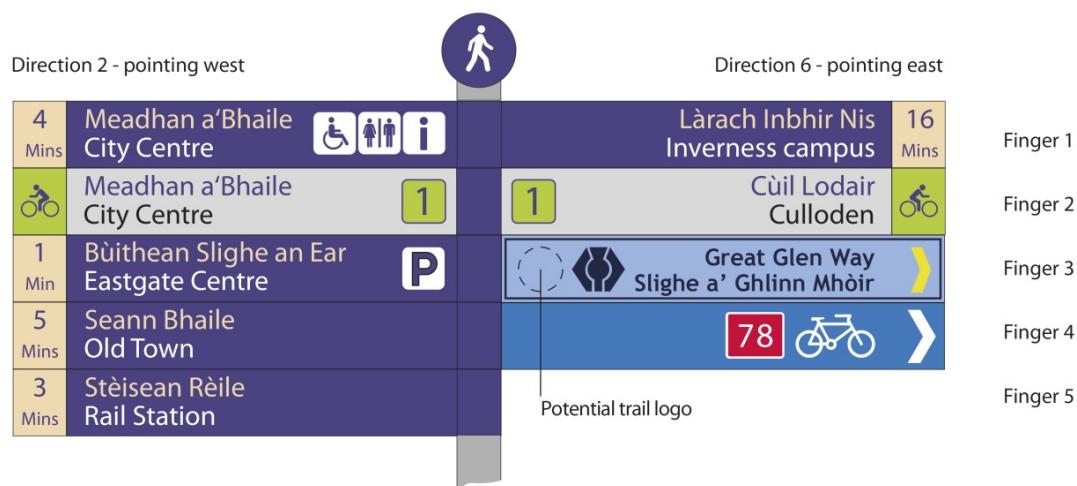


Figure 7.3 Detail showing range of finger signs (destinations vary according to sign location)

Fingerpost signs deliver directional information above head height and have multiple fingers stacked typically no more than five high. The height, position and text size of each finger will allow comfortable reading from the viewers' location.

Fingerposts will convey information about destinations and attractions in Section 10.6, Box 5. Where relevant, they will also signpost:

- the National Cycle Network and cycle routes identified in the Inverness City Active Travel Network;
- the Great Glen Way and nearby long-distance walking trails.

8 Additional components and technology for future consideration

The design of wayfinding maps and hardware follows a globally-recognised standard for street navigation that has a proven track record in improving people's understanding of a city. In due course it is likely that advances in wayfinding design and technology will make use of Smart City data delivering live, real-time information about navigation and/or destinations, events, activities and transport. Monoliths could also feature interactive technology providing tailored information for visitors with specific needs, such as disabled people, who have fewer journey options. For the time being, however, the technology associated with city-wide digital wayfinding, providing seamless connections between people, places and data, has yet to be mainstreamed.

Information and technology that could be considered to amplify the effectiveness of city centre wayfinding in the longer term include:

Interpretation display panels - signposting city centre businesses, services, events and facilities etc. These could be static display panels or interactive touchscreen displays modelled on and complementing the monolith design but adapted to showcase shopping opportunities and attractions in a specific area such as the Old Town.

Audio information - such as audio-enabled touch screens, making wayfinding accessible to residents and visitors who are blind or partially sighted where sound will not be compromised by surrounding noise.

Digital mapping - information/access guide provided online, sharing the new monolith mapping style. Also made available free of charge for inclusion in website of local businesses and tourism providers. Digital mapping can be accessible for various assistive technologies e.g. screen readers and voiceovers.

Printed guides and access maps - available to all visitors at tourist information centres and transport nodes, made available in alternative formats, such as large print maps for visitors with specific needs. Also made available as free-issue art work for inclusion in third-party city guides and tourism marketing documents.

City centre “Welcome” branding - at entry points by road, bus and rail.

Location signage - improved street signs, and signs to identify urban spaces, facilities and individual buildings (particularly civic and historical buildings).

9 Harmonisation

To create a system that is easy to follow, we will harmonise as many of the information elements as possible. These include:

- **Branding** - use of brand identity components for Inverness city centre.
- **3D design** – of sign structures, materials, finishes, illumination, locations, foundations and fixing details.
- **2D design** - of graphic formatting for sign content and information displays.
- **Typography** - text style, sizes, spacing and layout, including use of pictograms and symbols.
- **Colour** – for sign panel backgrounds, English and Gaelic text, and colour-coded information on mapping.
- **Terminology** – naming and numbering of city entrances, character areas, roads, buildings, spaces, facilities and other destinations.

Consistency of application will instill confidence in the wayfinding information and add to the perception of overall quality of the City Centre.

10 Wayfinding elements

10.1 Maps

Maps are two-dimensional representations of the three-dimensional world.

In wayfinding there are two relevant categories:

- **Portable** - hand-held maps. Used as an aid that visitors can study before departure and take with them to find their way on a journey.
- **Orientation** – “You-are-here” maps. These will be used on the proposed new monolith signs. Presented on signs and placed within the environment which they depict, visitors can establish their position on the map, plan their onward route and memorise the features they will meet along the way. The design of the map should include memorable landmarks and features that will assist the mental mapping process.

Box 3 'Examples of UK city centre maps' provides examples of monolith maps from other UK cities.

Box 3

Examples of UK city centre maps



Figure 10.1 London



Figure 10.2 Bristol



Figure 10.3 Birmingham

Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre



Figure 10.4 Typical "You are here" map

Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre

Figure 10.4 'Typical "You are here" map' illustrates the proposed content of a local walking map that will be used on the new monolith sign proposed for Falcon Square. This content has been informed by initial feedback from key stakeholders followed by public consultation. Each monolith will feature a different map that is orientated to suit the viewpoint of the reader.

Box 4 '3D landmarks' contains 14 city centre landmarks and features that have been selected for 3-D illustration to assist the mental mapping process.

Box 4

3D landmarks

- Inverness Castle
- Inverness Town House
- Inverness Cathedral
- Inverness Library
- Victorian Market
- Old High Church
- Midmills
- Toolbooth Steeple
- Greig Street Bridge
- Infirmary Bridge
- Eden Court
- Eastgate Shopping Centre
- Abertarff House
- Balnain House

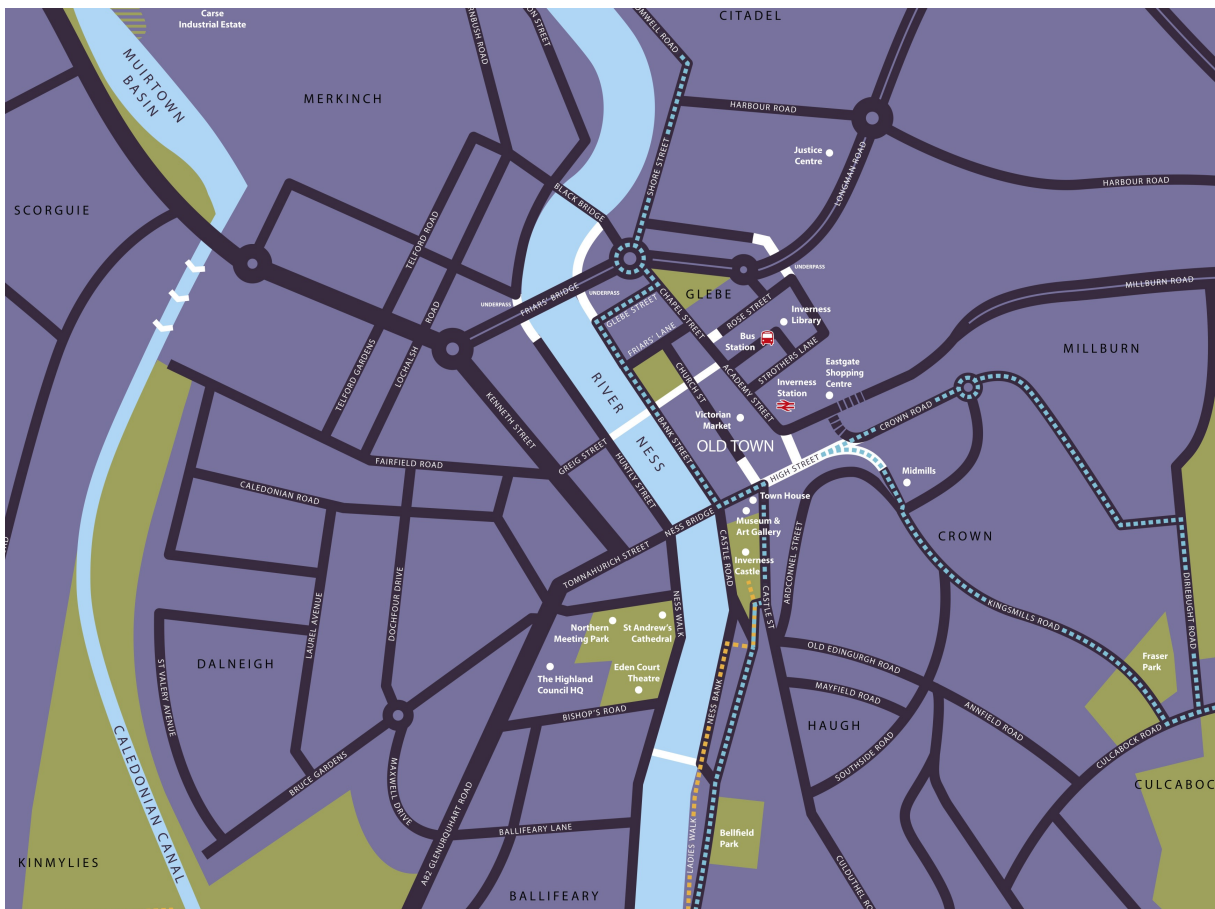


Figure 10.5 Extract from Inverness Wider Area map

Figure 10.5 'Extract from Inverness Wider Area map' illustrates the proposed content of the wider city/overview map that will appear on all new monolith signs. This overview map will identify the context for its larger counterpart, the detailed "You are here" map. It will also identify key destinations within walking/cycling distance of the city centre and show National Cycle Network routes and the Great Glen Way.

10.2 Typography

The typeface(s) selected for use on screen, in print, on static signs and on electronic screens must meet high standards of legibility. Specifically they will be san-serif, of medium and/or semi bold weight and not condensed, extended or italicised.

The propose typeface for city centre wayfinding is Myriad Pro.



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Figure 10.6 Myriad Pro regular



ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Figure 10.7 Myriad Pro semibold

10.3 Symbols and pictograms

Wayfinding information will adopt a standardise set of symbols and pictograms that are universally understood, as anything that deviates far from accepted norms is unlikely to work effectively.

Two universally used sets of pictogrammes are proposed:

- **AIGA/DOT** (in the UK) for transportation situations such as airports and stations;
- **TCRP/ADA** (in the USA) for transportation situations (coverage differs slightly).

A selection of pictograms will be drawn from the above sets to cover all city centre information requirements, redrawn if necessary to ensure they harmonise, and then made available as a shared resource for all city centre users.

These can be used on all mapping and signs.



Picture 10.1 Pictogram set

10.4 Direction arrows

Direction arrows must be used consistently, whether on signage or in printed or online materials. A style of arrow will be selected for use on all wayfinding.

Wherever possible directions will be given in the following sequence:

1. Ahead arrows, pointing up,
2. 45 degree angled up arrows,
3. Left facing arrows,
4. Right facing arrows.

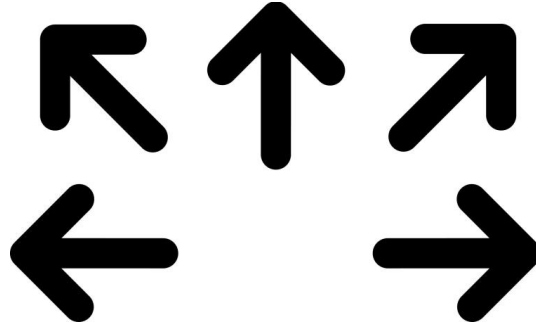


Figure 10.8 Arrow set

Different direction messages will be grouped, and listed under a single arrow in each relevant direction, rather than arrows for each line of text.

Ahead arrows and left facing arrows and text will be aligned to the left of the sign.

Right facing arrows and text will be aligned to the right of the sign.

10.5 Colour palette

The palette shown in Figure 10.9 'Colour palette' has been selected for use on city centre wayfinding signage to coordinate with the Inverness city brand identity when used on mapping, in print or on the web.

All wayfinding information will utilise colours from this palette, chosen for legibility. Research has shown that colour contrast values above 69% are the preferred choice of viewers with visual impairment.

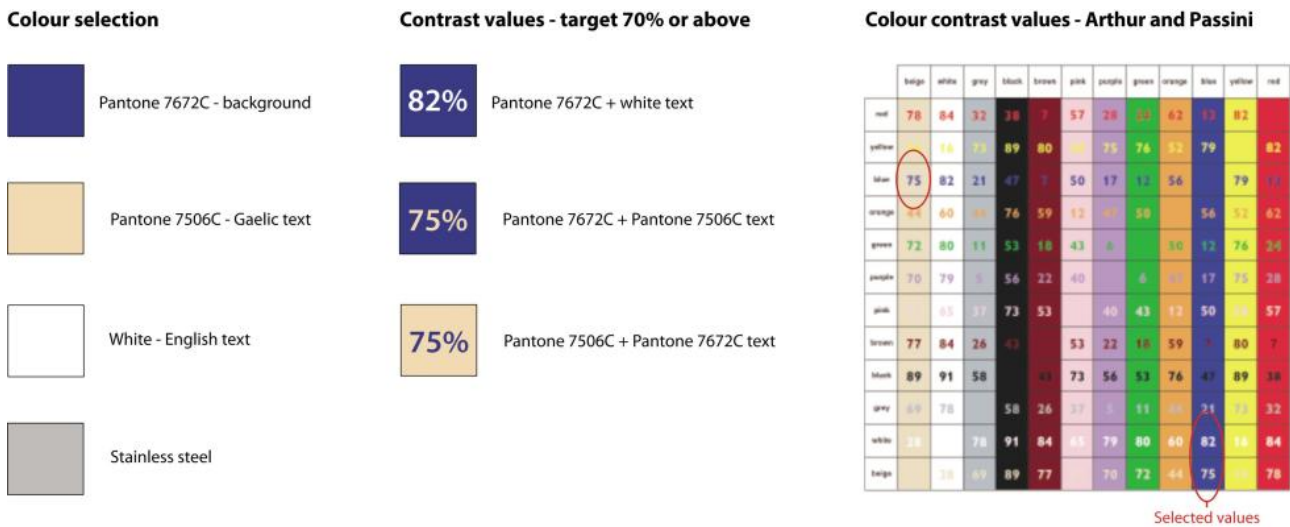


Figure 10.9 Colour palette

10.6 Destinations

A comprehensive list of city destinations has been developed to suit fingerposts signs, monoliths and mapping panels. It is important that these are kept as concise as possible, as space is limited on the sign panels. Previous city fingerposts signs have carried a very wide range of destination information but, owing to the volume of information, the text size was extremely small and legibility poor.

The proposed mapping on monolith panels will replace much of the city centre's existing fingerpost information, allowing these signs to simply show directions to city areas and key features, drawn from an agreed priority list.

The new fingerpost sign format offers a much improved legibility, allowing ease of reading from 9.3 metres as opposed to 5.4 metres on the previous signs. To achieve this, location names have been kept as short as possible.

Box 5 'Proposed inventory of city destinations that will appear in English and Gaelic on fingerpost signs' contains a list of city destinations that will appear in English and Gaelic on finger post signs, according to the location of the sign. A detailed inventory of map and sign data for each new monolith and fingerpost prior to manufacture.

Box 5

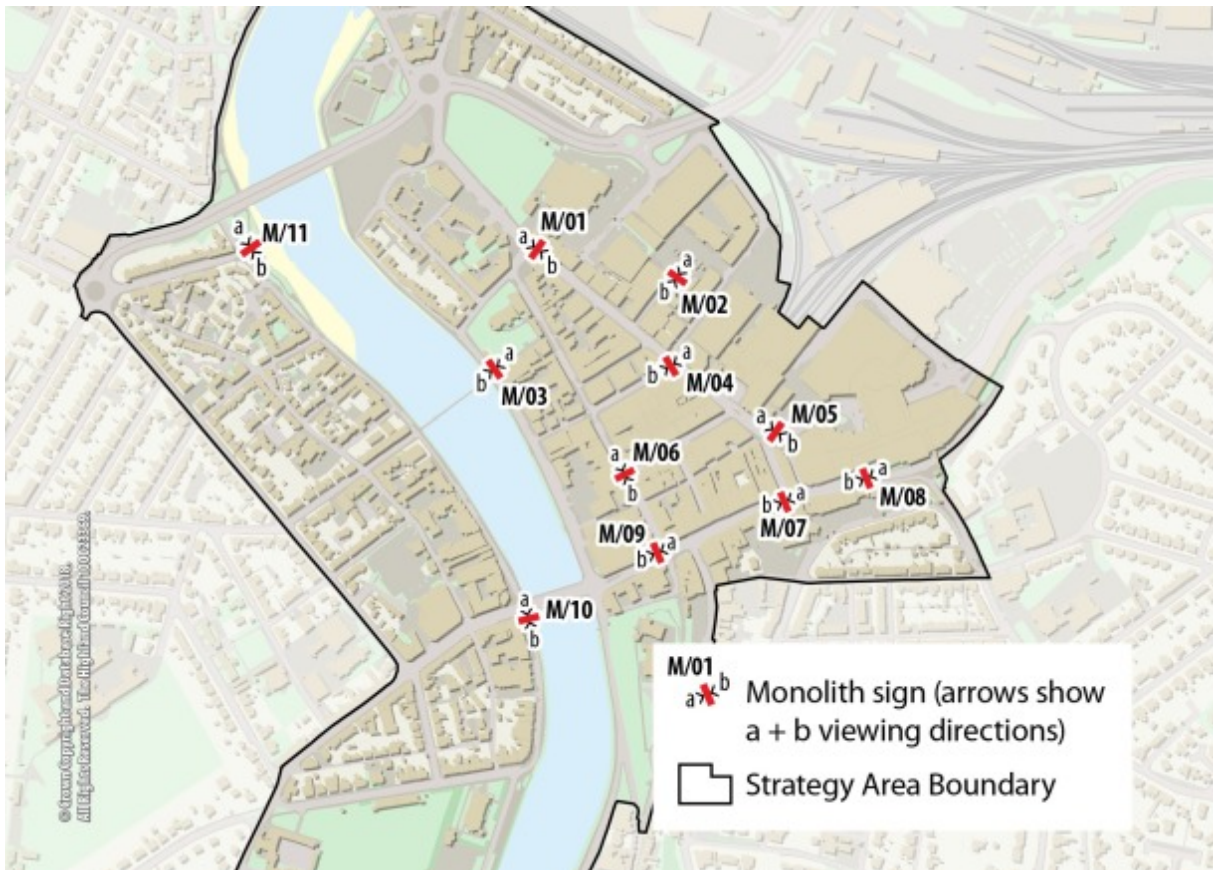
Proposed inventory of city destinations that will appear in English and Gaelic on fingerpost signs

Archive Centre	City Centre
Inverness Campus	Old Town
Inverness Castle	Crown
Bellfield Park	Railway Station
Justice Centre	Hospital
Botanic Gardens	Leisure Centre
Library	River Ness
Bught Park	Rose Street Car Park
Merkinch	Stadium
Bus Station	Eastgate Centre
Midmills	Tomnahurich Cemetery
Caledonian Canal	Falcon Square
Museum and Art Gallery	Victorian Market
Ness Islands	Maritime Quarter
Cathedral	Whin Park
Northern Meeting Park	Carnac Point
Eden Court	Great Glen Way

10.7 Locations of monoliths and fingerpost signs

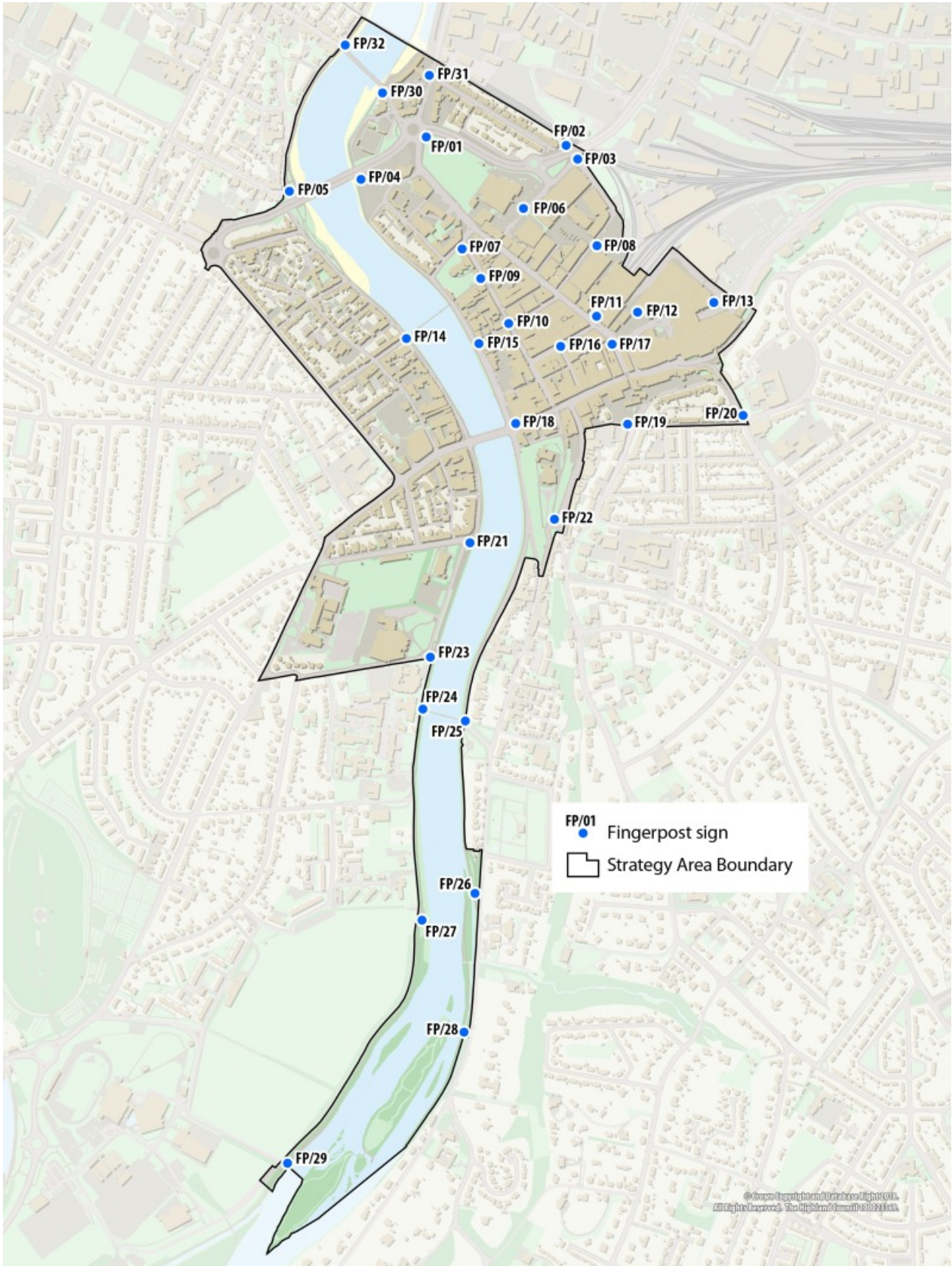
Map 10.1 'Monolith location map' and Map 10.2 'Fingerpost location map' illustrate the proposed locations of ten monoliths and 23 fingerposts.

An engineering assessment will be carried out at each monolith location to check that footway widths are sufficient for pedestrians, including disabled people, to continue to move easily and safely, and vehicle visibility is not restricted.



Map 10.1 Monolith location map

Wayfinding Strategy for Inverness City Centre



Map 10.2 Fingerpost location map



**The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd**
