



Cycle Notes

No. 11 July 2002

Directional Signing for Off-Road Paths

Welcome to CYCLE NOTES No. 11. The purpose of CYCLE NOTES is to provide information on the design of bicycle facilities for engineers and planners.

CYCLE NOTES should be read in conjunction with:

- Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14 – Bicycles, and
- Australian Standard 1742.9, Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Part 9 Bicycle Facilities.

Introduction

Regulatory signs, warning signs, behavioral signs and directional signs can all be used to provide for the safe and orderly use of off-road paths.

The purpose of this edition of *Cycle Notes* is to provide guidance on the provision of directional signing for off-road paths. The principles outlined in this edition of *Cycle Notes* may also be applied to Rail Trails.

Why provide directional signs?

Just like motorists, cyclists need to know where they are and be confident that they are going in the right direction to get to their destinations.

This can be achieved by providing cyclists with well designed and located directional signs that:

- (a) direct cyclists between the surrounding road network and an off-road path,
- (b) provide cyclists with the name of the path that they are on,
- (c) give cyclists information on the direction and distances to significant destinations that can be reached along the path, and
- (d) provide cyclists with the names of any intersecting roads and streets.

Directing cyclists to an off-road path

Directing cyclists between the surrounding road network and an off-road path can be achieved by providing cyclists with signs at the ends of the path and at any road crossings or connections along the path.

Providing information to cyclists on an off-road path

As cyclists enter an off-road path, they should be advised of the name of the path and the direction and distances to any significant destinations that can be reached along the path.

This can be achieved by providing cyclists with directional signs at path intersections. These signs will also be used by cyclists riding along the path to re-assure themselves that they are heading in the right direction.



Typical path intersection on the Koonung Trail

Types of Directional Signs

The design of off-road path signs should be consistent throughout the path network. Path users then become familiar with the signs and know what to look for. The two most common types of directional signs are plank signs and blade signs.

Plank Signs

Plank signs can be used to provide cyclists with the name of the path that they are using and the direction and distances to particular destinations along the path.

Plank signs are usually made from external grade timber that is capable of being routed. They can also be made from other materials such as recycled plastics.

Plank signs provide information at a height that is easy to read by cyclists and pedestrians. The suggested format for plank signs provides an appearance that reflects and is in keeping with the recreational and natural environment that many off-road paths pass through.

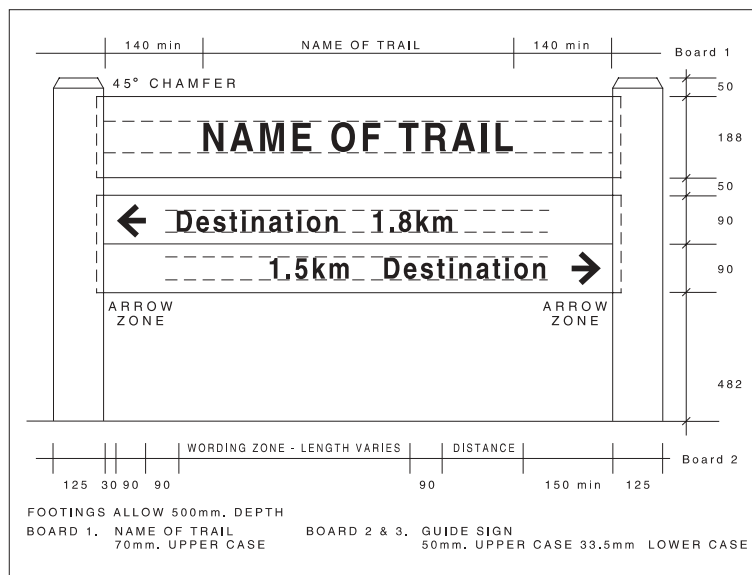


Figure 1. Typical Plank Sign Layout

As indicated in Figure 1, plank signs should only have one line of wording on each plank. The trail name should be on the first board and should be in 70mm high capital letters and centralised, as shown.

The words on the destination board should be in 50 mm high capital letters and 35 mm lower case letters.

For guidance on the sign colour, logos and other design information for plank signs, refer to the former Department of Planning and Urban Growth Publication – “Sign Guidelines for the Metropolitan Trail Network (1990)”, which is available from Parks Victoria.

Blade Signs

Blade signs are an effective method of directing cyclists between the road network and an off-road path. They may be used to indicate the direction of the off-road path, of an intersecting road or of any significant destinations.

Blade signs are typically manufactured from an extruded aluminum or plastic “blade” that is mounted on a galvanized steel pole.

The use of blade signs to direct people between the road network and the off-road path is consistent with the practice of using blade signs on the road network. As a result, people have come to associate the use of blade signs with the road network.



Blade signs must be manufactured and installed in accordance with Australian Standard AS1742.5 – 1997 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Part 5: Street name and Community Facility Name Signs. Blade signs must be at least 150 mm deep and should be installed on a galvanized steel pole at a height of between 2.5 and 3.0 metres. The lettering should be 100 mm high.

Providing Directional Signs at Path Intersections

Typically, there are three types of path intersections. They are when one path intersects with another, when a path crosses or intersects a road, and when an access path (usually from a nearby street) intersects with the main path. It is recommended that these path intersections be provided with directional signs as detailed below.

Intersections with Other Paths

Off-road paths often form a network of routes. Hence there are locations where one path will intersect with another path.

As indicated in Figure 2, plank signs should be used to provide the name of the path and the distance to significant destinations. These signs also provide reassurance to cyclists already using the path.

These signs should be located so they can be read when approaching the intersection from each direction.

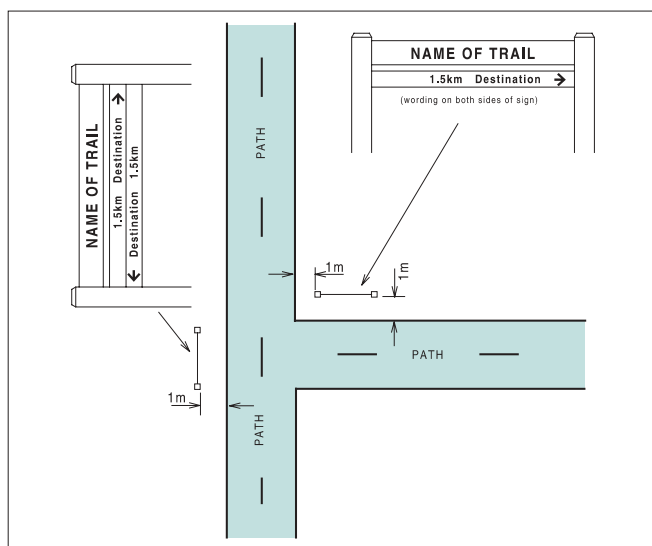


Figure 2. Sign layout for path to path intersections

Intersections with Roads

A path may intersect with a road when it crosses it, or when a path begins adjacent to a road.

At these intersections, signs should provide information to path users continuing along the path, and inform users how to access the path.

As indicated in Figure 3, plank signs should be used to provide the name of the path and distance(s) to key destinations along the path.

Road related information such as the road name and the distance to nearby destinations reached using the road should be provided using a blade sign.

Destinations reached along the road may include shops, toilets, and major recreational facilities.

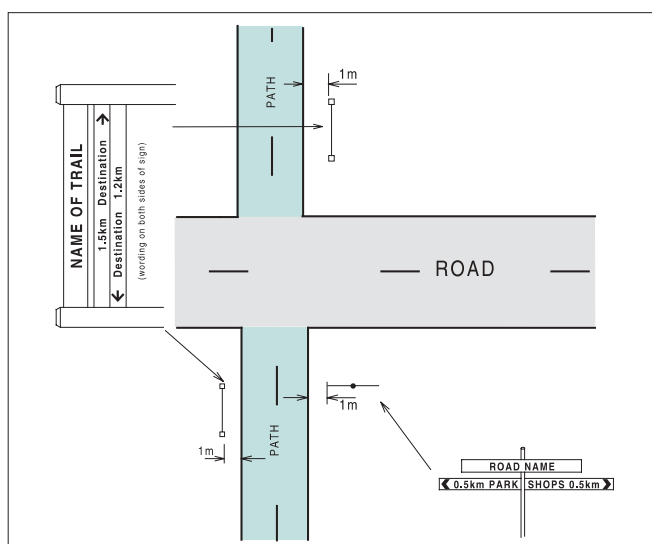


Figure 3. Sign layout for path to road intersections

Intersections with Access Paths

At intervals along the main path, there are usually intersections with access paths. These paths allow users to join the main path from adjoining areas such as nearby streets.

As indicated in Figure 4, a plank sign should be provided opposite the access path to provide path information to people entering the path network. It also provides reassurance to cyclists already on the path.

Blade signs should be provided at each end of the access path. The purpose of these signs is to direct people between the main path and the nearby street.

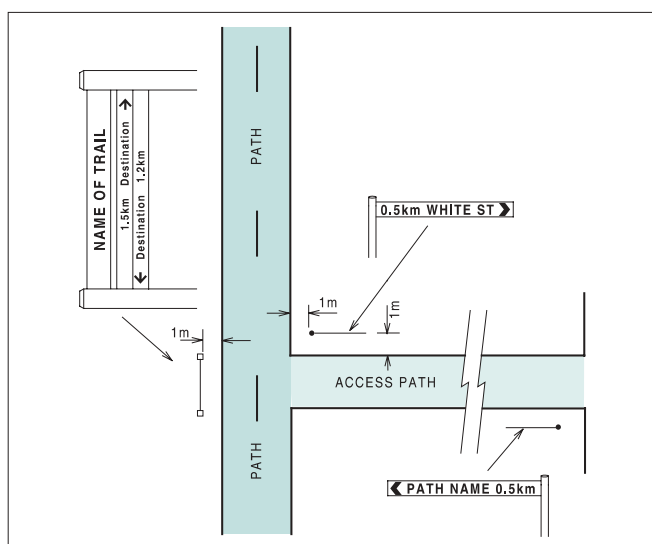


Figure 4. Sign layout for access path intersections

Choosing Shared Path Names and Destinations

Shared Path Names

If a shared path does not have a name, consideration should be given to naming it.

In addition to assisting path users, naming a shared path provides an important reference system for transportation, communication, and emergency services.

Parks Victoria, Local Councils, VicRoads, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and other State Government Departments have the authority to provide names for shared paths.

For advice on how to name a shared path, please contact the Registrar of Geographic Place Names within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Information can also be obtained from the vicnames website at www.vicnames.vic.gov.au.



Metropolitan Trail Network Map

Destinations

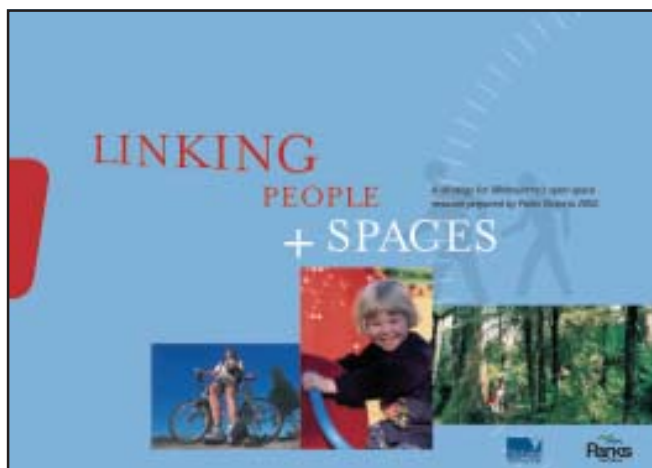
In the Melbourne metropolitan area, Parks Victoria is responsible for the Metropolitan Trail Network (MTN). The MTN is a network of strategic off-road paths in metropolitan Melbourne.

As such, Parks Victoria is responsible for nominating the key destinations on the MTN. Local Councils and other organisations that plan to install directional signs on the MTN should contact Parks Victoria for guidance.

On those paths that are not part of the MTN (both in Melbourne and in regional Victoria), it will be necessary to develop a key destinations plan for the particular shared path.

Key destinations along a shared path may include town centres, shopping precincts or major geographical features such as rivers, intersecting paths, or major recreational facilities.

In nominating key destinations along a path, it is recommended that the key destinations are spaced between 5 km and 15 km apart.



"Linking People + Spaces" is Parks Victoria's new strategy for Melbourne's Open Space. It contains information on the Metropolitan Trail Network.

For further information on providing directional signs on off-road paths and cycling related matters, please contact:

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Previous editions of *Cycle Notes* can be downloaded from the VicRoads website at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au.

For further information on the Metropolitan Trail Network, please contact Parks Victoria on Telephone: 13 19 63.

Information on Parks Victoria can also be obtained on www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.