Tourist Areas and Corridors (TAC) and Tourist Attractions Sign Programs (TASP)

The Tourist Areas and Corridors (TAC) Signing Program is a system of supplemental guide signs which direct motorists to eligible individual attractions by first directing motorist to groups of attractions. Attractions are grouped into geographical areas and sub-areas. Each area or sub-area has a defined roadway corridor to provide access to the attractions. Signing starts with mainline signs on freeways, expressways or major conventional highways which name the geographical areas. Then ramp signs and conventional road area signs guide motorists to the corridor in an area or sub-area. Along the area or sub-area corridor, individual attraction trailblazing signs guide motorists to individual attractions. In historic towns and urban areas, the applicable parking area or facility that serves multiple attractions is signed in lieu of individual attractions. A schematic overview is presented in **Figure 1.**
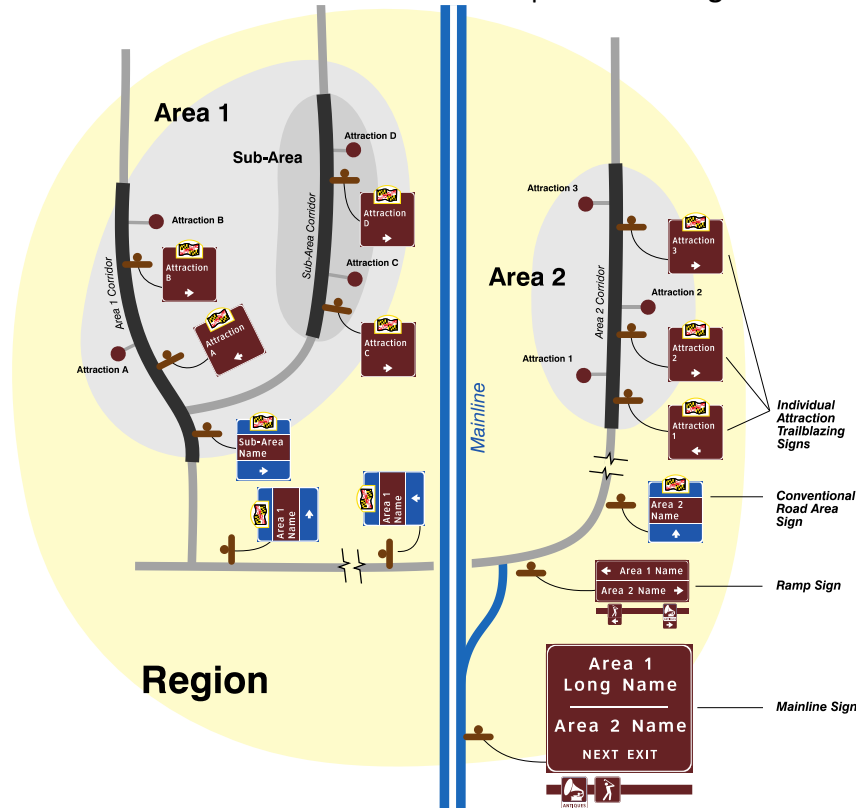
Figure 1. TAC Signing Program Schematic Overview

The Maryland Tourist Attractions Sign Program (TASP) and TAC Signing Programs have been a collaboration between the Maryland Department of Commerce Office of Tourism Development (OTD), the Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC), and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTS). The TAC Signing Program was originally conceived to replace or absorb other existing sign programs in Maryland to avoid signing overload, address increased demand for tourism related signing, and accommodate a larger population of attractions. Examples of previous or other programs include Local Wayfinding (Vehicular), Maryland History Sign Program, Recreational or Cultural Interest Areas, Specific Service (LOGO) Signs, TASP, Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS), and Winery Signing. Additional benefits and reasons for the creation of the TAC Signing Program include:

- The TASP, a subset of LOGO, is limited to freeways and expressways per current and past federal and state regulations. This limited the program to counties with expressways and freeways, which in turn limited program opportunities in rural areas of the state with otherwise eligible attractions.
- Additionally, the logos for Attractions are not always as recognizable when compared to logos for specific services such as gas, food, and lodging.
- The TASP program was limited to 6 attractions per interchange.

- TODS are limited to rural conventional roads meaning two systems of signs would be implemented in the state. Tourists would need to look for TASP along expressways and freeways and TODS on rural conventional roads. In some cases the two systems may overlap.
- TAC provides guidance to more attractions and is more legible than other programs.
- TAC provides guidance to attractions that were not eligible for previous programs.
- TAC incorporates older signing programs into a cohesive, statewide system of signs that are more recognizable to tourists.

The TAC Signing Program Guidelines and Application were developed with eligibility criteria based on federal and state regulations, guidelines, and the previous TASP. The TAC Guidelines and eligibility criteria are used by the TAC Eligibility Committee (EC) to fairly determine which attractions meet the minimum criteria. The EC includes representatives of MDOT SHA (Office of Environmental Design and OOTS), Department of Commerce OTD, Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, associated County Destination Marketing Officer and the MTC. Generally, eligible attractions must primarily provide recreational, historical, cultural, or leisure activities to the public and meet or adhere to the following:

In order to qualify for TAC signing a facility must meet specific criteria which may be found here. www.roads.maryland.gov/tac

The state is implementing TAC county by county. To date 17 counties have received their initial TAC implementation and 6 counties await their initial TAC signing implementation. **Table 1** includes more detailed information on the implementation and program status for each county. At this time the program remains on hold pending available resources and applications are still being accepted and deferred until program efforts resume.

Table 1. TAC Implementation Status

County	TAC Status
Charles	Construction Completed
Cecil	Construction Completed
Harford	Construction Completed
Caroline	Construction Completed
Dorchester	Construction Completed
Calvert	Construction Completed
Talbot	Construction Completed
Allegany	Construction Completed
Kent	Construction Completed
Frederick	Construction Completed
Carroll	Construction Completed
Queen Anne's	Construction Completed
Saint Mary's	Construction Completed
Montgomery	Construction Completed
Garrett	Construction Completed
Prince George's	Construction Completed
Washington	Construction Completed
Somerset	Design on Hold
Wicomico	Planning on Hold
Worcester	Planning on Hold
Howard	On Hold
Baltimore	On Hold
Anne Arundel	On Hold

It is noted for those counties not yet receiving their initial TAC implementation, TASP applications are still being accepted. It is noted TASP is only applicable to freeways and expressways. More information may be found here: https://www.roads.maryland.gov/mdotsha/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=138