

Environments Visual Identity & Wayfinding System

A unified system for how every site, building, entrance, and interior is named, navigated, and visually expressed.

CONTEXT

Years of inconsistent decisions, no unified system

Across St. Elizabeth's facilities, naming, signage, wayfinding, and environmental branding had evolved through years of independent projects and varied interpretations of guidelines, creating confusion for patients and staff with no sustainable process for future decisions. A campus-level audit, including stakeholder interviews, patient intercepts, observation sessions, and secret-shopper visits, surfaced the problem directly:

- "Google Maps took me to the Main Entrance when my appointment was closer to the Patient Entrance." (*Secret Shopper*)
- "It all looks the same and is difficult to get my bearings." (*Secret Shopper*)
- "What is Zone 2 versus 2A?", traced back to color-coded zone signage that meant nothing without advance knowledge of the system

Four root issues emerged:

- Interior architecture working against the wayfinding strategy instead of reinforcing it
- Signage lacking visual hierarchy and GPS-era clarity
- Inconsistent nomenclature causing real confusion at arrival
- Mapping tools that didn't match how people actually moved through the campus

ACTION

Building the governance model and the design system together

I led the creation of a comprehensive, systemwide visual identity and wayfinding system covering every site, building, entrance, elevator, and interior space, organized around how patients actually navigate: pre-visit communication, site entrance, drop-off and parking, building entrance, elevator, floor, and destination.

The system established:

- A consistent naming formula replacing color-coded zones (Zone 1, Zone 2A) with names tied to function and place (Patient Entrance, Cancer Center Entrance)
- Elevators renamed by cardinal point (North, South, Central) instead of color, since zone colors were built for parking, not interior wayfinding
- A defined directory strategy matching digital or static formats to location
- A unifying artwork concept, "Daybreak," celebrating the optimism of sunrise and the symbolic connection between faith and light: light-infused, calming, confident, uplifting

A governance model with defined decision rights:

- Legal and Compliance approve legal and regulatory signage and unique applications
- Marketing and Communications leadership approve standard formula applications
- Creative Design and Facilities teams execute site-specific implementation

A **tiered donor recognition system**, developed with the Foundation, ranging from building naming through clinical destination naming, building and feature naming, room naming, and specialty item sponsorship.

RESULT

A scalable system replacing years of inconsistency

A single organizationwide framework replaced years of fragmented decision-making across the system.

What changed:

- **Clarity and consistency:** eliminated redundant and conflicting naming and signage, reducing duplication and waste
- **Operational efficiency:** streamlined approvals across Legal, Marketing, Facilities, and Creative Design, minimizing costly rework
- **Navigation and experience:** improved wayfinding across complex campuses with a standardized sign family and intuitive hierarchy
- **Brand alignment:** strengthened the connection between the built environment and the St. Elizabeth brand through the "Daybreak" artwork concept

Built to scale:

- **Scalability:** a repeatable, standards-driven system supporting future construction and expansion
- **Governance:** clear cross-functional ownership spanning Facilities, Marketing, Legal, Nursing, and Patient Services
- **Experience:** a more intuitive, human-centered navigation experience for patients, families, and associates
- **Brand integrity:** consistent application of identity across interiors, signage, and environmental touchpoints
- **Sustainability:** a long-term foundation that reduces variation and protects investment as the system grows