



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR Director, Bureau of Traffic Operations	2-1-41
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 1	General
SUBJECT 41	Jurisdictional Boundary Signs

A. General

Communities *may* request informational signing to either identify their municipal boundaries or to promote/advertise their community. These types of signs are considered to be Jurisdictional Boundary signs and *may* take the form of three different types of signs:

- Welcome Signs
- Enhanced Political Boundary Signs
- Community Population Signs

The Community Population Signs and Enhanced Political Boundary Signs are considered a traffic sign and are allowed on the highway right-of-way. Welcome Signs are interpreted as an off right-of-way advertising sign and are permitted off of the highway right-of-way. Some of these signing requests *may* get complicated as there are many different types of designs, message and installation methods that are often proposed. This policy provides guidance for working with these types of signing requests.

B. Authority

Section 86.19 of Wisconsin statutes prohibits signs within the limits of any highway except as are necessary for the guidance or warning of traffic and certain other exceptions as provided in that section. This statute also requires the department to prescribe regulations with respect to erection of signs on public highways.

The 2009 MUTCD, Section 1A.01 states that advertising messages **shall not** appear on traffic control devices and Section 1A.10 of the 2009 MUTCD states that the design, application and placement of traffic control devices, other than those adopted in the MUTCD are prohibited.

Therefore, the 2009 MUTCD and Wisconsin State Statute 86.19 have specific standards regarding the design and installation of such signing.

C. Definitions

Freeways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have full controlled access, by means of grade separation at interchanges.

Expressways are defined as divided arterial highway facilities that have partial control of access and generally with grade separations at major interchanges.

Conventional Highways are defined as either divided or undivided roadway facilities that have no control of access or grade separations at intersections. These highways can be two lane or multilane facilities.

D. Policy For Community Welcome Signs

Welcome signs are defined as any sign or marker that is erected by or for a local government near the municipal boundary with the primary function of welcoming people to the community.

1. Welcome signs along state highways **shall** only be permitted when located off the highway right-of-way with a permit as required for outdoor advertising signs and provided for in Trans 201.05.
2. Existing permitted welcome signs inside the highway right-of-way will be allowed to remain temporarily without modification or replacement until the end of their useful life. Unpermitted welcome signs **shall** be removed as soon as possible.
3. Temporary existing welcome signs must be located outside the minimum clear zone specified in the Facilities Development Manual. No welcome sign *may* be allowed to remain if it is a safety hazard. The permit holder is responsible for any costs incurred by the department to correct or eliminate hazards related to the welcome sign.
4. Temporary existing on right-of-way welcome signs **shall** meet the standards for breakaway supports unless the sign is not reachable by an errant vehicle. Landscaping features such as retaining walls, landscape timbers or ground-mounted lighting fixtures **shall not** be allowed to remain if they are reachable by an errant vehicle.
5. Temporary existing welcome signs **shall not** have auxiliary plaques.

E. Policy for Enhanced Political Boundary Signs

Enhanced Political Boundary Signs are more of an informational sign as they do not directly provide a guidance function for the motorist. These signs are traffic signs that are installed on conventional highways, in the highway right-of-way, at the municipal limits by permit. The signs serve the functions of conveying the municipal limits of a

community and *may* tie into the theme of the community by utilizing different colors and/or a pictograph on the sign.

General Policy Criteria

1. If off-right-of-way location efforts fail for a Welcome Sign, then a community could apply for permit to install and maintain an “Enhanced Political Boundary Sign”. Enhanced political boundary signs **shall not** be allowed if there is an off-right-of-way Welcome sign in place.
2. If an enhanced political boundary sign is installed, then WisDOT would remove the standard population sign.
3. Enhanced political boundary signs *should* be ground mounted on the right side of the roadway. Ground mounted median signs *may* be installed if right side installation opportunities are not available. No overhead sign installations are allowed.
4. Supplemental signs (tree city USA, 1979 baseball champs, lions club, etc.) **shall not** be allowed on the enhanced political boundary signs or supports.
5. Enhanced political boundary signs **shall** only be allowed on conventional highways for incorporated cities and villages, located at the municipality border. Enhanced political boundary signs **shall not** be allowed for townships or unincorporated communities.
6. All enhanced political boundary sign requests, including CSS projects, **shall** be approved by the Region Traffic Engineer. Requestor **shall** furnish proposed locations, sign and pictograph design and type of supports used.
7. The community population number *may* be included on the enhanced political boundary sign.
8. The community **shall** be responsible for all costs associated with the manufacture, installation and maintenance of the permitted enhanced political boundary signs.

Sign Design Standards

1. Destinations, arrows or specific traffic generators **shall not** be allowed on the signs.
2. The pictograph (logo) height **shall not** exceed two times the height of the upper case letters and **shall** be located at the top or left side of the sign. The

pictograph **shall** be the official designation adopted by the jurisdiction. The Pictograph *may* contain wording, provided it is not a commercial advertising message. Only one pictograph is allowed per sign.

3. Enhanced political boundary signs **shall not** be lighted or contain any animated or moving parts, flashing lights or disks.
4. At a minimum, enhanced political boundary signs **shall** utilize Type H – High Intensity sheeting.
5. Minimum letter size **shall** be 4 ½” lower case / 6” upper case letters. Maximum sign size **shall** be 72” width x 48” height.
6. Sign base material **shall** be in accordance with Section 637 of the WisDOT Standard Construction Specifications.
7. The sign shape **shall** be rectangular. Aluminum signs **shall** have rounded corners.
8. Border is required on the signs and **shall** be retroreflective, and of the same color as the text.
9. Colors **shall** meet the standards for highway colors specified by the Federal Highway Administration:

Two color combinations *may* be used which are:

- White or yellow on blue, green or brown
- Blue, green, black or brown on white
- Red or orange on white, but not the reverse
- The background colors of orange, red, yellow, purple, or the fluorescent versions thereof, fluorescent yellow green and fluorescent pink **shall not** be allowed. One background color only allowed. Lettering and border (if used) **shall** be of the same color.

Sign Installation Standards

1. The standard WisDOT posts (4” x 6” wood or 2” x 2” tube steel) *may* be used. The community also has the option to utilize other types of sign posts, provided they meet NCHRP350 crash requirements.
2. Sign installation and placement **shall** be per WISDOT standards.
3. Sign mounting height **shall** be five feet to bottom of sign.

4. Sign locations **shall** be approved by WisDOT. Signs **shall** be located outside of the influence area of an intersection (typically 200 minimum distance from the intersection).
5. WisDOT **shall** approve any proposed landscaping plans. Any landscaping items **shall** meet breakaway standards or be shielded with FHWA approved shielding. For example there is a 20" high decorative curb that meets FHWA standards.

F. Policy For Community Population Signs

1. City or village limit signs *may* be installed on freeways or expressways at or near where the highway enters the municipality, **unless** the city or village is identified on the primary guide signs or a supplemental guide sign.
2. City or village population signs **shall** be installed on conventional highways at or near where the highway enters the municipal limits. WisDOT will install and maintain the standard signs with the official current decennial census figures. No other signs **shall** share the supports.
3. If the city or village requests a population update, the Regional Traffic Engineer *may* authorize the municipality to modify the numbers with a white on green Type H adhesive overlay, using the same size and font as the original sign.

G. Application and Permit

1. Permit **shall** be approved by the WisDOT Regional Traffic Engineer.
2. The application from the requesting community **shall** contain a plan showing the sign location(s) and sign fabrication detail (including colors and heights of letters and pictograph).
3. If posts other than the standard WisDOT posts (4" x 6" wood / 2" x 2" tube steel) are used, the requestor **shall** submit proof that the posts are NCHRP 350 Crash Compliant.