



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-4-48
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 4	Guide Signs – Conventional
SUBJECT 48	Signing For Unincorporated Communities

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the use of signs identifying or directing to unincorporated communities.

B. Definitions

Unincorporated communities are defined as historically named and recognized communities without official boundaries or government, generally located within a township, which often will have a different name.

Freeways are defined as divided highways with fully controlled access at interchanges only. Interstate Highways are freeways with the interstate route designation.

Expressways are defined as divided highways with partially controlled access by a combination of interchanges, at-grade intersections, and driveways.

Conventional Highways are defined as streets or roads other than freeways or expressways. They *may* be divided or undivided, two-lane or multi-lane, and access is available at intersections and driveways.

C. Policy

Identifying Unincorporated Communities

Signs *may* be installed on conventional State Trunk Highways as near as possible to the generally recognized entrance to an unincorporated community, subject to WisDOT general signing criteria and the following guidelines.

1. The unincorporated community must be located and identified by name on the official State Highway Map.
2. If an unincorporated community is not shown on the official State Highway Map, the community *may* contact the WisDOT Surveying and Mapping Section to officially request map placement. Some specific criteria for inclusion on the official State Highway map include:

- There must be adequate space on the map to display the community name and symbol.
 - The community *should* have a reasonable permanent population (a minimum of 50 people) within a reasonable geographic proximity (1/4 miles in each direction of a common intersection or 1/2 mile in diameter).
 - The community *should* have either a dependable motorist service (such as a service or repair garage) or a major attraction (such as a consolidated school or major industry) or a recognized point of interest to which tourists might be directed to
3. Signs *may* be installed for an unincorporated community, in advance of a map printing, provided the community has been approved by the Surveying and Mapping Section to be on the official State Highway Map.
 4. The request for signs request must come from residents and/or business owners within the unincorporated community and be approved in writing by the governing body of the township or municipality surrounding the unincorporated community.
 5. Signs identifying unincorporated communities **shall not** be permitted on freeways or expressways.
 6. These signs **shall** be made according to the unincorporated version of the DOT standard sign code I2-3.

Directing to Unincorporated Communities

Signs *may* be installed on expressway or conventional State Trunk Highways directing to an unincorporated community, subject to WisDOT general signing criteria and the following guidelines.

1. The unincorporated community must be located and identified on the official State Highway Map.
2. The unincorporated community must be located within five miles of the State Highway intersection.
3. When the unincorporated community is located on a roadway other than a State Trunk Highway, signs identifying the community on that roadway must be in place prior to allowing any sign on a state highway directing to the community.
4. The sign(s) request must come from residents and/or business owners within the unincorporated community and be approved in writing by the governing body of the township or municipality surrounding the unincorporated community.
5. Signs directing to unincorporated communities **shall not** be permitted on freeways. Such signs *may* be permitted on expressway approaches to an at-grade intersection. They **shall not** be permitted on the expressway approaches to an interchange exit.
6. These signs **shall** be made according to the DOT standard sign code D1-1.

Existing unincorporated community signs that do not meet the DOT general signing criteria and above guidelines *may* remain until the end of their useful life. Useful life is defined as undamaged and legible to drivers. Once such non-conforming signs have reached the end of their useful life, they **shall** be removed and **shall not** be replaced.