



Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR Director, Bureau of Highway Operations		2-6-50
CHAPTER 2	Signing	
SECTION 6	Guide Signs – Freeways	
SUBJECT 50	Community “Downtown” Signing	

A. General

Supplemental guide signs *may* be allowed to direct motorists on freeways and expressways to a community’s “downtown” area, subject to the conditions described in this guideline.

B. Definitions

Downtown is the area, usually within the central city that has governmental offices, business offices, retail shopping, and other amenities closely associated with each other in a contiguous area, and will normally be referred to by the community and its usual residents as downtown or the central business district. Unfamiliar motorists directed from the freeway or expressway to downtown *should* have this same expectation.

C. Eligibility

Communities are eligible for freeway or expressway signs directing motorists to downtown when the following criteria are met:

1. The community must be served by at least two interchanges from the freeway or expressway with the interchange highways leading toward the downtown area.
2. The freeway or expressway on which the downtown signs are located must:
 - a) pass within the corporate limits of the community, or;
 - b) formerly have passed through the corporate limits of the community, or;
 - c) replace a highway which formerly passed through the community.
3. The community must agree to comply with this criteria and requirements of this guideline, and accept responsibility for all costs associated with signing for the

community downtown under this guideline.

Communities *may* also be eligible for signs directing to downtown on conventional highways when the highway bypasses the downtown area and provided the signs designate the “city center” area. For additional guidance about downtown signs on conventional highways, refer to TGM 2-15-2, Directional Signing for Public and Private Facilities – Conventional Highways.

D. Sign Requirements, Location, and Installation

Downtown signs on a freeway or expressway mainline are considered supplemental signing. The approval and installation is subject to all provisions of the Department’s policy on “Supplemental Guide Signing On Freeways and Expressways For Public and Private Facilities” in addition to the eligibility requirements and sign location and installation details of this guideline. Approval of signs for eligible communities is subject to the following criteria:

1. Only one downtown sign *may* be installed in each direction of travel on a freeway or expressway. The sign location in each direction of travel along the freeway or expressway *may* be at a different interchange.
2. The community must pass a resolution or similar official document which specifies the requested access location(s) for the downtown directional signs and **shall** submit the resolution to the Department’s Regional office as the official request. The location(s) selected **shall** remain fixed for ten years or the life of the signs before changes to the location(s) *may* be considered.
3. Specific location of the freeway or expressway signs will be determined by the Department.
4. The community must install and maintain confirmation signs suitable to the Department on the selected access route(s), agree to comply with this guideline, and accept responsibility for all costs associated with signing for the community downtown under this guideline. These confirmation signs are required before signs *may* be installed on the freeway or expressway.
5. Freeway or expressway sign design and message will be determined by the Department in accordance with applicable standards and in the interests of uniformity.
6. Freeway and expressway downtown signs will incorporate the name of the community within the sign message.
7. The community will be responsible for all costs incurred by the Department, including installation and long-term maintenance of the signs. This includes signs on the freeway and expressway mainline and ramps along with all confirmation signs.

8. A combination of community downtown signs and “Historic Downtown” signs for the same community **shall** not be allowed.
9. Downtown signs with appropriate directional arrows *should* be placed at the junction of the ramp and crossroad at the access interchange.