

North Carolina Department of Transportation's Guidelines for Wayfinding Signs along State Maintained Roadways (for Motorists)

1. Wayfinding signs are destination guide signs that assist motorists to find destinations that generate substantial traffic from tourists or other unfamiliar motorists such as cultural, historic, art, sport attractions, or other destinations such as visitor centers, courthouses, or civic centers. These signs are generally located in downtown areas of municipalities where stacking destinations on signs and consolidating signs will benefit the motoring public.
2. Wayfinding signs shall include all existing and proposed guide sign destinations that are appropriate for wayfinding signing, as determined by the Engineer. Wayfinding signing shall eliminate separate stand-alone guide signs.
3. Destinations that are not event-oriented facilities should be open to the public a minimum of 40 hours per week, have a restroom available to the public, provide sufficient parking, and meet all federal, state, and local requirements for that type facility.
4. Destinations **not** allowed on wayfinding signs include privately owned businesses and attractions/establishments with age restrictions. Wayfinding signs for hotels, restaurants, and retail establishments are allowed but must be signed generally as "Hotels," "Restaurants," and "Shopping."
5. The sign support system for wayfinding signs located within the roadway clear zone (determined by Engineer) shall be break-away or yielding in design as detailed in NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawings or as approved by FHWA.
6. An informational guide sign shall be posted at the boundary of the wayfinding guide sign area when two or more geographical subareas are covered by the wayfinding guide signing.
7. All wayfinding designs shall follow the standards shown in the MUTCD, Section 2D.55. Legend used on message portions of signs, borders, arrows, and horizontal lines used to separate groups of destinations by direction shall be simple and uniform in color (black or white).
8. Wayfinding signs are generally located within a few blocks of the destination, and not further than 2 miles from the destination.
9. If more than one sign is used for an approach to an intersection, then one sign should be used for left turn, right turns, and straight through. One sign for allowable movements at the intersection. The left turn sign should be located furthest from the intersection.
10. There should not be any mixing of directions when multiple signs are used on an intersection approach. Should not use the left turn panel for overflow for the right turn.
11. Destinations on a panel should be in order of closest location on top.
12. If only one Wayfinding sign is used at an intersection approach, then the mixing of directions is allowed, left turn destinations should be shown first, then right turn, and through.
13. If there are guide signs already present for locations being placed on Wayfinding signs, in the vicinity of the proposed Wayfinding sign, these guide signs will be removed, unless it is a major traffic generator, and in these cases, the destination is not allowed on a Wayfinding sign.

14. Wayfinding signs have the lowest priority of all official highway signs.
15. If Wayfinding signs are placed on intersection approaches with limited space, Wayfinding signs can be removed to accommodate other signing needs. There will not be any reimbursement of cost to the municipality when these signs are removed.
16. If there are costs associated with rearranging signs to make space available for additional signs instead of removing the Wayfinding sign, the municipality will be responsible for these costs.
17. The request for wayfinding signs must be submitted in writing to the appropriate Division Engineer. A plan clearly showing requested sign locations and messages (layouts), and sign support designs for each location must be submitted with the request. The plan should also specify all existing signs that will be removed due to the implementation of this request. Any additional components (other than roadway signs) of the wayfinding effort, such as for signs for pedestrians, kiosks, etc, that are proposed to be implemented with the roadway signage should also be specified in the request. The Division Engineer will use this information when evaluating the request for roadway signs and will determine whether the request is approved.
18. All costs for wayfinding signs, including investigation, design, fabrication, installation, inspection, and maintenance shall be paid by the requester. The requester must enter into an encroachment agreement with NCDOT for any and all wayfinding signs. The agreement may only be with one entity.
19. If the approved sign request is not being implemented by the municipality forces, the requester will be required to hire and pay a pre-qualified private contractor that is approved by the Department and licensed to work in North Carolina, to install and/or maintain the signs. All materials and workmanship must comply with the Department's current Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures. Traffic control shall be in accordance with the MUTCD, North Carolina Supplement to the MUTCD, and current NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawings.
20. If a Division Engineer determines it is acceptable to allow a sign installation where a utility requires relocation, all work, coordination, and costs will be the responsibility of the requester.
21. As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the Department has the authority to control all signs within the right-of-way of the State Highway System.

§ G.S. 136-30. Uniform signs and other traffic control devices on highways, streets, and public vehicular areas. (a) State Highway System. - The Department of Transportation may number and mark highways in the State highway system. All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a highway in the State highway system must conform to the Uniform Manual. The Department of Transportation shall have the power to control all signs within the right-of-way of highways in the State highway system. The Department of Transportation may erect signs directing persons to roads and places of importance. (b) Municipal Street System. - All traffic signs and other traffic control devices placed on a municipal street system street must conform to the appearance criteria of the Uniform Manual. All traffic control devices placed on a highway that is within the corporate limits of a municipality but is part of the State highway system must be approved by the Department of Transportation. (d) Definition. - As used in this section, the term "Uniform Manual" means the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, published by the United States Department of Transportation, and any supplement to that Manual adopted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.