

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Traffic Engineering and Safety Systems Branch**

**STANDARD PRACTICE
for
Optional “Welcome To” Signs**

The purpose of this standard practice is to establish guidelines for optional “Welcome To” signs at or near municipality limits, county lines, or community limits along NCDOT roadways. This practice also allows municipalities and counties to display an emblem, seal, or flag on signs located on roadways posted 45 mph or greater. The display of community slogans, elected officials, notable accomplishments and claims, local statutes and ordinances, or other promotional messages shall not be allowed in the message of “Welcome To” signs, nor added as supplemental signs or plaques. Communities with official boundaries recorded at the county courthouse and that appear on the official and most recent North Carolina State Transportation Map may also participate in optional “Welcome To” signs; however, signs for communities are allowed only on secondary roadways and emblems, seals, or flags are not allowed on these signs. This practice sets reasonable guidelines by restricting the overall sign size, as well as to consolidating installations along NCDOT roadways by including municipality and county limit signing within “Welcome To” signing. The intent is also to promote statewide consistency in responses for “Welcome To” signing requests.

It is the standard practice of NCDOT to allow the installation of optional “Welcome To” or “Entrance” signs on the highway right-of-way for municipalities, counties, and communities as specified in this practice. Optional “Welcome To” or “Entrance” signs shall be located and erected according to the standards of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the North Carolina Roadway Standards, and the standards and criteria herein.

CRITERIA

- Requests for optional “Welcome To” signs should be directed to the appropriate Division Engineer and shall include required resolutions. The emblem design and any official seal to be displayed on any optional “Welcome To” sign must be reviewed and approved by the Division Engineer.
- All costs associated with administration, designing, fabricating, erecting, inspection, and maintaining any approved optional “Welcome To” signs will be the responsibility of the requesting party or others. An agreement between the requester (responsible party) and the NCDOT is required. This agreement is written and executed by the Division.
- Optional “Welcome To” signs shall be erected at or near the municipal/boundary limits at locations approved by NCDOT. Only one installation of a welcome sign or sign assembly is permitted per direction of roadway.
- When optional “Welcome To” county signs are installed, these signs replace the standard jurisdictional boundary signs I2-1 as described in the MUTCD.
- When optional “Welcome To” city or town signs are installed at the city or town limit, the “City Limit” message shall be within the “Welcome To” sign. This sign replaces the I2-1 standard City Limit signs as described in the MUTCD.
- Each optional “Welcome To” sign request requires resolutions specifying seal/emblem/graphics (seal/emblem/graphics not applicable to community signs) as follows: 1) a “Welcome To” sign for a municipality or community within the municipal limits requires a resolution from both the municipality and the county. 2) A “Welcome To” county sign or sign for a community not within a municipal limit requires a resolution from the county. All

approved resolutions must be forwarded to the Division Engineer with a copy to the State Traffic Engineer prior to final approval for optional “Welcome To” signing.

- The following sign design options A, B, and C apply. Letter size, font, and emblem size criteria shall meet MUTCD design guidelines corresponding to facility types and posted speeds:

OPTION A: New or Modified Sign at City Limit Boundary:

(This location is required when it is possible to install sign at city limit)

If the proposed “Welcome To” **municipality** location is at the boundary line of the municipality, then the message “City Limit” shall be included in the sign. The proposed sign should follow the design configurations as shown below:

EXAMPLES: (NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



OPTION B: New or Modified Sign Not at City Limit Boundary:

(This location is only allowed when installation is not practical at city limit boundary)

If the proposed “Welcome To” **municipality** location is not at the boundary line of the municipality, then the message “City Limit” shall not be included in the text of the main sign. The proposed sign should follow the design configurations as shown below:

EXAMPLES: (NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



OPTION C: New or Modified Sign at/near* County Limit Boundary:

The proposed “Welcome To” county sign should follow the design configurations as shown below:

EXAMPLES: (NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



** Note: Location of “Welcome To” county signs may be adjusted within the county boundary, but should be installed as close as possible to the county line. If it is further than 200 feet from the county boundary, location must be approved by the Division Engineer, or designate.*

- Optional “Welcome To” signs for approved communities are allowed only on secondary roadways.
- Emblems, seals, or flags are not allowed on “Welcome To” community signs. To qualify for signs, a community must have official boundaries recorded at the county courthouse, must be approved by the Division Engineer, and comply with all other applicable criteria herein.
- When an optional “Welcome To” sign becomes worn, faded, or is damaged (or supports for the sign are damaged), the Department will notify the requester (responsible party) that the sign and/or supports needs to be replaced/repared. The requester will have 90 days to provide full payment to replace or repair the subject signs/supports. If the Department does not receive the requested payment, the Department will cancel the agreement and remove the existing sign. The Division Engineer may require the requester to supply the replacement sign. Signs shall meet all NCDOT specifications and design requirements, herein, and attached, and sign sheeting standards as specified in TEPL topic S-68 (<http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/preconstruct/traffic/tepl/Topics/S-68/S-68.html>).
- The Division may require the requester 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 version of the Standard Specifications for Roads and Structures. Traffic control shall be in accordance with the MUTCD, and the current version of the NCDOT Roadway Standard Drawings. The Contractor shall not be allowed to perform any work on weekends or official State holidays. The Contractor shall furnish Proof of Insurance prior to beginning work within the Department’s Right of Way.
- All optional “Welcome To” signs for full control of access facilities require a sign design from the Traffic Engineering Branch. The Traffic Engineering Branch will provide a sign design for any location upon request, excluding emblem or seal design. Sign designs for installation on non-full control of access facilities must be approved by the Division Engineer, or designate, prior to fabrication. See typical sign layouts for sign parameters based on facility type and posted speed limits.
- All optional “Welcome To” signs shall meet the following design criteria:
 - 1) signs have white messages and border on a green background
 - 2) sign message shall be in standard highway font (no script or special fonts allowed)
 - 3) sign shall be fabricated from aluminum
 - 4) signs shall be retro-reflective, including emblems, seals, or flags
 - 5) sign support systems shall meet all safety requirements
 - 6) all signs shall be rectangular in shape
- Overhead installation of “Welcome To” signs shall not be permitted.
- Existing “Welcome To” signs in place at the time this policy goes into effect may remain in place until replacement or upgrade is necessary as directed by the appropriate Division Engineer or until replacement or modification is requested by the municipality, county, or community is implemented. At the time of replacement, any new signs shall conform to this practice.
- The Department has the responsibility and authority to relocate or remove signs on highway right-of-way if a need for a higher priority regulatory, warning, or guide sign is identified.
- The NCDOT reserves the right to cover, relocate, or remove any signs for maintenance or construction operations, or when deemed to be in the best interest of the NCDOT or the traveling public, without advance notice. The NCDOT reserves the right to remove signs when roadway improvements or changes in the roadway cross section or

configuration will no longer accommodate the existing signs. If existing signs no longer meet the Department's size and design requirements for an upgraded roadway and existing signs are removed, the municipality/community/county may request to upgrade their signs, provided that minimum spacing is available on the upgraded roadway.

- This practice is not intended for signs in removal of existing signs; however, when a new project is established for the North Carolina highway system, or when existing signs are in need of replacement, repair, or maintenance, conformance with this practice is required.
- As described in General Statute 136-30 (a), (b), and (d), the NCDOT 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.