

**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 allows municipalities and counties the flexibility to display slogan(s) that depict their character or identity on official highway signs. This practice also allows municipalities and counties to display an emblem, seal, or flag on signs located on roadways posted 45 mph or greater. Communities with official boundaries recorded at the county courthouse and that appear on the official and most current 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 number of slogans and 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 Supplement to the 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. All slogans, 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 Welcome To/ Entering/Leaving signs I2-7 and I2-8 as described in the NC Supplement to the MUTCD Chapter 2D.48.B.

- 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” (top) sign. This sign/panel replaces the I2-5 or I2-6 standard City Limit signs as described in the NC Supplement to the MUTCD Chapter 2D.48.C.
- Each optional “Welcome To” sign request requires resolutions specifying any slogan(s) [including any existing slogans that are desired to remain on signing and any new slogans] and 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 limits requires a resolution from the county. 3) The resolution from the municipality and county also must specify a maximum installation of three years for any dated sign message. At or after the end of the third year, division forces should remove the dated sign message. 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.
- Optional “Welcome To” municipality and county signs may include a maximum of two slogans not to exceed three lines of copy in total. If a new “Welcome To” sign is located at the municipal limit, then the message “City Limit” shall be included in the main (top) sign. The message “City Limit” is not considered in the maximum lines of copy and the two panel maximum applies. The following options A, B, and C apply. (See typical sign layouts for maximum sizes and additional design information):

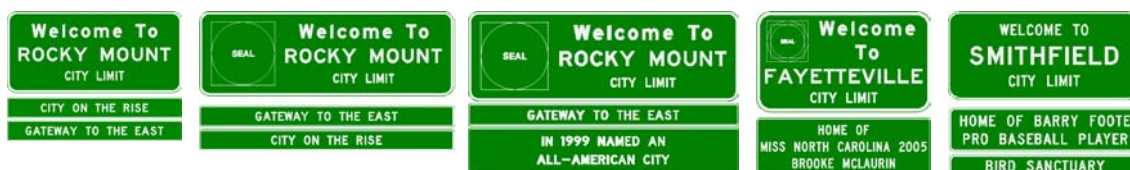
OPTION A: New or Modified Sign at City Limit Boundary

(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 following design configurations should be followed:

1. The message “City Limit” shall be included in the main (top) sign. (“City Limit” is not included as a part of the three lines of copy and two slogan maximum.)
2. One or two slogans not exceeding a total of three lines of copy in total may be attached as supplemental panels below the main sign.
3. If applicable, a Bird Sanctuary panel may be used as one of the two supplemental panels in lieu of the M16-10 (30” x 18”) sign shown in the NC Supplement to the MUTCD.

EXAMPLES: (NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



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

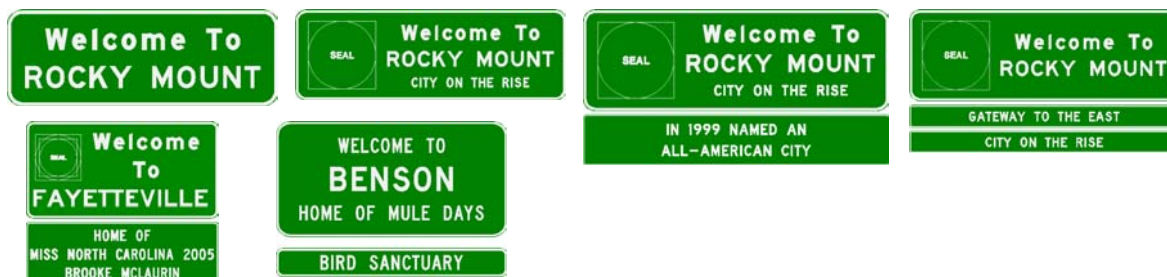
(This location is only allowed when installation is not practical at city limit boundary):

If the proposed “Welcome To” **municipality** location is not at the boundary line of the municipality, then the following design configurations should be followed:

1. The message “City Limit” shall not be included in the text of the main sign or as part of the supplemental panels.
2. If one slogan is used and does not exceed one line of copy, the slogan may be incorporated into the “Welcome To” (main/top) sign or may be attached as a supplemental panel.

3. If two slogans are used, one of the slogans may be incorporated into the sign and the other slogan will be attached as a supplemental panel or both slogans can be attached as individual supplemental panels.
4. If applicable, a Bird Sanctuary panel may be used as one of the two supplemental panels in lieu of the M16-10 (30" x 18") sign shown in the NC Supplement to the MUTCD.

EXAMPLES: (NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



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

Optional “Welcome To” **county** signs may include a maximum of two slogans not to exceed three lines of copy. The proposed “Welcome To” county sign should follow the design configurations as shown below:

1. If one slogan is used and does not exceed one line of copy, the slogan may be incorporated into the “Welcome To” sign or may be attached as a supplemental panel.
2. If two slogans are used, one of the slogans may be incorporated into the sign and the other slogan will be attached as a supplemental panel or both slogans can be attached as individual supplemental panels.
3. If applicable, a Bird Sanctuary panel may be used as one of the two supplemental panels in lieu of the M16-10 (30" x 18") sign shown in the NC Supplement to the MUTCD.

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 further than 200 feet from the county boundary, location must be approved by the Division Engineer, or designate.*

- Optional “Welcome To” municipality and county signs may include an emblem, seal, or flag if space is available within the maximum size limits of the sign (*see attachment*). Letter size and font, and emblem size criteria shall meet attached design criteria.
- Optional “Welcome To” signs for approved communities are allowed only on secondary roadways.
- Optional “Welcome To” signs for approved communities will be allowed only one slogan. The slogan may be included in the sign or be attached as a supplemental panel. 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 a slogan panel is requested to be added to an existing “Welcome To” sign, an appropriate engineering study should be conducted to determine if the sign support system requires modification to meet current safety standards. When a new or modified slogan panel is requested, the existing “Welcome To” sign shall be revised or modified to meet the current design standards. If the existing sign is larger than the current standards allow, the sign(s) shall be redesigned to meet the current standards. The width of a new slogan panel shall match the width of the “Welcome To” sign and the entire installation shall meet design criteria herein.
- All costs associated with modifying existing signs and/or supports including the engineering study will be the responsibility of the requesting party.
- 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(s). 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, North Carolina Supplement to 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) sign and supplemental panel(s) shall have white message and border on a green background
 - 2) sign message and slogan text shall be in standard highway font (no script or special fonts allowed)
 - 3) sign shall be fabricated from aluminum
 - 4) sign shall be retro-reflective, including emblems, seals, or flags
 - 5) sign support systems shall meet all safety requirements; and
 - 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 use 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.