

# TxDOT Guidelines for Wayfinding Guide Signing

## Section 1. General Description

Wayfinding guide signs are a systematic network of directional signs installed and maintained by a city to guide the traveling public to major civic, cultural, visitor, and recreational destinations within a specified region with the minimum number of signs. The goal of a Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan should be to take advantage of local geographical areas (medical district, historical district, etc.) to replace turn by turn trailblazing to specific, individual locations. With this process, a region's most prominent features and assets are called out and promoted, but only as required to serve visitor guidance.

## Section 2. Definitions

- A. City Pride Sign Program - An existing TxDOT sign program that allows municipalities to erect signs near its jurisdictional limits that displays points of interest or geographical, recreational, cultural, or civic information. The City Pride Sign Program policies and procedures are contained in the Texas Administrative Code.
- B. Conventional Road – A street or highway other than a freeway or expressway without access control. A conventional road may include the frontage road of freeways.
- C. Enhancement Marker – A sign or portion of a sign where a shape, color, or pictograph is used as an aesthetic identifier at the top or side of and incorporated into a wayfinding guide sign. An enhancement marker can be incorporated into a wayfinding guide sign or an attachment to the sign.
- D. Pedestrian Directional Sign – Smaller versions of Vehicular Directional Signs to be viewed by pedestrians or bicyclists and not motor vehicle operators.
- E. Pictograph – A non-commercial graphic for a governmental agency or public institution.
- F. TMUTCD – The Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- G. Vehicle Directional Sign – A directional guide sign that guides the traveling public to civic, cultural, visitor, and recreational destinations within a specific region.

H. Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan – The location area, design, engineering, and sign plan submitted to TxDOT for approval. The Plan shall include:

- Sign detail with dimensions, colors and font size for each sign
- Mounting height, type and location of mount
- Distance to any existing adjacent traffic control devices, driveways or other physical roadway features

### Section 3. Roles of Cities and TxDOT

A current Municipal Maintenance Agreement between the City and TxDOT must exist. Per the agreement, with written approval from TxDOT the city can install and maintain signs within TxDOT right-of-way along conventional roadways provided the sign and sign structure meet TxDOT requirements. Vehicular Directional signs shall be located so as not to interfere with, obstruct or divert roadway user's attention from official traffic control devices. To implement a Wayfinding Program, the city must submit a Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan to the local TxDOT district for approval.

On the state highway system, a Wayfinding Guide Sign System Plan may only be applied to conventional roads and only with written approval from TxDOT.

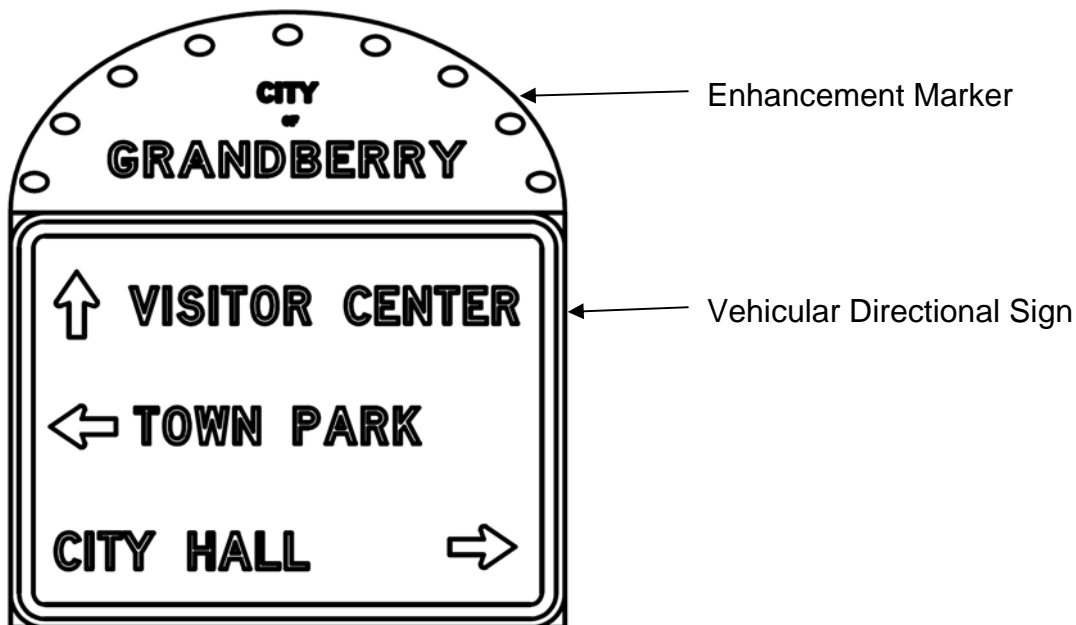


Figure 1. Wayfinding Guide Sign

If TxDOT determines that additional regulatory, warning or guide signing is needed, it may require the city to remove or relocate an existing or planned wayfinding guide sign at the expense of the city. Additionally, the city shall remove a wayfinding guide sign if it has not provided a replacement sign within 60 days of written notification from TxDOT that the sign is damaged, broken, faded or has become a hazard.

## **Section 4. Types of Wayfinding Guide Signs**

Wayfinding guide signs are not permitted on controlled access facilities, including ramps. Once the wayfinding guide signs are approved in writing by TxDOT, the fabrication, installation, and maintenance of all wayfinding guide signs and their assemblies are the responsibility of the city. Signs on TxDOT right-of-way shall be installed on a standard TxDOT support or an alternate support approved by the Traffic Operation Division. Signs on TxDOT right-of-way shall be installed at the appropriate height, offset from travel lane, and spacing from other traffic control devices in accordance with the TMUTCD or TxDOT standards.

### **A. City Pride Signs**

City pride signs may be incorporated into a wayfinding guide sign system plan. The City Pride Sign Program allows cities to erect and display signs concerning points of interest or geographical, recreational, cultural, or civic information at the city limits on state highway right-of-way. If city pride signs are used, the rules for the City Pride Sign Program must be followed (see City Pride sign rules in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 43, Part 1, Chapter 25, Subchapter H).

### **B. Boundary Area Guide Signs**

Boundary Area Guide Signs are informational guide signs at the boundaries of the geographical area of the wayfinding guide signing which identify the use of the color coding for the various districts, regions or destinations within the area. These signs shall be green background with white legend. The color coding shall be accomplished by the use of different colored square or rectangular panels on the face of the guide signs as described in Section 2D.03 of the TMUTCD.

### **C. Enhancement Markers**

Enhancement markers may be used, at the option of the city, as a means of aesthetically identifying the wayfinding guide sign. An enhancement marker may be on the top or side of a wayfinding guide sign. The size and shape of an enhancement marker shall be smaller in comparison to the wayfinding guide signs themselves and approved by TxDOT. Enhancement markers shall not be designed to have an appearance that could be mistaken by road users as being a traffic control device.

#### D. Vehicle Directional Signs

A vehicular directional sign is installed on conventional roadways providing vehicular directional guidance to destinations or groups of destinations (i.e. Historic District, Medical District, etc.). In regard to location priority, regulatory, warning and guide signs shall have a higher priority than wayfinding guide signs (see TMUTCD Section 2A.16).

Vehicle Directional signs should be limited to 3 destinations per sign and shall not contain commercial advertising. Arrow location and priority order should follow that shown in the TMUTCD. Arrowheads should also be the same design as the Texas Standard Highway Sign Designs. Additional requirement for wayfinding guide signs are detailed in Section 5.

#### E. Pedestrian Directional Signs

Pedestrian Directional Signs are intended for viewing by pedestrians and bicyclists and should be oriented away from the view of motorists. Pedestrian Directional Signs should not be located in TxDOT Right of Way. Pedestrian Directional Signs may be kiosks and may contain maps of the area. The design, installation, and maintenance of pedestrian directional signs are the full responsibility of the city.

### **Section 5. Design and Legibility of Wayfinding Guide Signs**

#### A. Basic Requirements and Font

Wayfinding signs are guide signs and they should be rectangular in shape. Standardized colors and rectangular shapes should be used so as to maintain their distinction to the motorist as guide sign information. Simplicity and uniformity in design, position, and application as described in TMUTCD Section 2A.06 are important.

The basic requirements of all highway signs are that they be legible to those whom they are intended and that it be understandable in time to permit a proper response. Desirable attributes include: high visibility by day and night and high legibility (adequately sized letters or symbols, and a short legend for quick comprehension by a road user approaching a sign).

Standard Highway Signs (SHS) alphabet fonts provide optimized legibility. If a font other than an SHS alphabet font (Highway Gothic or Clearview) is used, approval from the Federal Highway Administration shall be required.

Except for signs intended for viewing only by pedestrians, bicyclists, or occupants of parked vehicles, internet addresses shall not be shown on any sign, supplemental plaque, sign panel (including logo panels on specific service signs), or changeable message sign.

### B. Retroreflectivity of Wayfinding Guide Signs

Wayfinding guide signs shall be retroreflective or illuminated to show the same shape and similar color by both day and night, unless specifically stated otherwise in this or other TxDOT policies of a particular sign or group of signs. The requirements for sign illumination shall not be considered to be satisfied by street or highway lighting.

### C. Word Legends on Wayfinding Guide Signs

Wayfinding guide signs should be limited to 3 destinations per sign (See TMUTCD Section 2D.07) and shall not contain commercial advertising.

Abbreviations (see TMUTCD Section 1A.14) should be kept to a minimum, and should include only those that are commonly recognized and understood, such as AVE (for Avenue), BLVD (for Boulevard), N (for North), or JCT (for Junction).

Word messages should be as brief as possible and the lettering should be large enough to provide the necessary legibility distance. A minimum specific ratio of 1 inch of letter height per 30 feet of legibility distance should be used. Except as noted in the option below, the minimum size of sign legend is 6" for signs on conventional roads. Low speed (25 mph) local streets may have a minimum legend size of 4" (see TMUTCD Section 2A.14).

### D. Colors and Legend Contrast

The colors of TMUTCD red, TMUTCD orange, TMUTCD green, TMUTCD fluorescent yellow-green and TMUTCD yellow shall not be used as background colors (color coding) for wayfinding guide signs in order to minimize possible confusion with crucial regulatory and warning sign color meaning readily understood by motorists.

Colors other than the approved TMUTCD colors may be used for color coding of wayfinding guide signs accomplished by the use of different colored square or rectangular panels on the face of the guide signs to provide a color "identity" for the wayfinding destinations by type of destination or by geographical area of the destination.

A minimum contrast value of legend color to background color of 0.70 or 70% is required for wayfinding guide signs (ADA minimum contrast value).

### E. Graphics on Wayfinding Guide Signing

Wayfinding guide signs shall not contain commercial advertising or commercial graphics (logos) of businesses, including within the pictographs.

Symbols shown in the TMUTCD are allowed for use on wayfinding guide signs.

Pictographs are allowed for use on wayfinding guide signs. A pictograph is a graphic for a governmental agency (such as for the Dallas Area Rapid Transit light rail system) or a public institution (such as a college or university or public stadium). A stadium with naming rights of a business such as Heinz Stadium shall not display the Heinz company logo on the wayfinding guide signing. The maximum dimension (height or width) of a pictograph shall not exceed the size of the route shield on the guide sign. If the guide sign does not include a route shield, the maximum size of the pictograph shall not exceed four times the letter height of the legend.

Other graphics that specifically identify the wayfinding system, including enhancement markers, may be used on the overall signing assembly and sign posts.