

**SIGN REQUEST POLICY**  
**For Signs Located Within the Public Right-of-Way**

**Rationale:**

The City of Cottage Grove receives many requests for sign installations within the public right-of-way from residents and City Council members directed to Public Works, Engineering, and Public Safety. This policy establishes how the City will respond to such requests and allocate the resources necessary for determining need, installation, and maintenance.

**Sign Types:**

This document classifies signing into six general categories:

1. Regulatory
2. Warning
3. Directional
4. Construction
5. Special Purpose
6. Not Permitted

*Regulatory*

Regulatory signing is defined as signing that informs drivers on how to function at an intersection or on a street. In the case of most regulatory signing there are certain criteria that must be met before they are installed. These criteria are set out in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the Minnesota Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD). Both documents specify conditions for installation as well as requirements of maintenance. The courts look to this national publication, MUTCD, and also state publication, MMUTCD, when determining the reasonableness of installation and maintenance.

*Examples of Regulatory Signs:*

Stop signs, Yield signs, Do Not Enter, No U-Turn, etc.

*Warning*

Warning signs are signs that provide advanced warning to drivers or pedestrians that something dangerous or unexpected may be ahead. As with the Regulatory signs, these signs are generally mandated by the standards as to where and when they must be installed. Once installed, the City is required to maintain them.

*Examples of Warning Signs:*

Curve Ahead signs, Steep Slope signs, Stop Ahead signs, etc.

*Directional*

Directional signs provide additional information to help drivers find particular streets or to direct them in certain areas. Directional signs are required on higher speed roadways and must be maintained and are sometimes installed on lower speed roadways but they are

not required.

*Examples of Direction Signs:*

Jamaica Avenue South, Ideal Avenue South, 70<sup>th</sup> Street South, etc.

*Construction*

Construction signing is self explanatory. These signs are installed to move vehicles and pedestrians safely through or around a construction zone. These signs provide safety to both vehicles and workers in the area. Their placement is mandated by law.

*Special Purpose Signs*

Special Purpose Signs are signs that are not required to be provided by the City for general traffic purposes to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. These signs are usually requested by a small group of people or individuals and benefit only a limited number of citizens.

*Examples of Special Purpose Signs:*

Crime Watch, Drug Free Zone, Special Events, Deaf Child, Dual Street Names, No Parking Between Signs, Building Entrance, Children Playing, Limited Time Parking, etc.

*Not Permitted*

Not Permitted signs are those that are prohibited by State Statute, City Ordinance, or City Policy. Examples are private signs on the public right-of-way and advertising. Other signing that falls into this category are signs that may fall into any of the above categories, but studies have shown that the sign has no effect on influencing the public's behavior. These signs may create a false sense of security that actually worsens the situation, detracts from other signs which have a much higher public safety benefit or the cost of installation and maintenance far outweighs the benefit.

**Procedure for Sign Requests:**

All signs installed in the public right-of-way must be approved by the Engineering department or by City Council resolution.

When a sign request is received, the receiving department will complete Part A of the City of Cottage Grove Sign Request form, including the requester's information, and will forward the form to the Engineering department.

The Engineering department will gather additional information required and assign the request to one of the six sign classifications explained above. Once the sign has been classified, the necessary judgment will be applied and any studies and reviews required for that classification will be completed. This evaluation will result in one of the following actions:

*1. Recommended for installation:*

Engineering department recommends, or sees no harm in, installing the sign, installation of the signs will be approved and cost allocations for the installation will be set. The requester will be notified and Part B of the Sign Request form will be completed.

## *2. Not recommended for installation:*

Engineering department determines that the sign not be installed. The department representative will send a letter explaining the decision to the requester, including available informational materials, and a summary of the following appeals process. Part B of the Sign Request form will be completed and the documentation supporting the decision will be filed.

### *Appeals Process*

The requester may appeal the *not recommended for installation* decision by implementing the following procedure:

The requester may present their rationale and additional information at the next available Public Works Commission meeting. A decision regarding the sign request will be made by the Commission and the requester will be notified about the decision in writing.

If the Public Works Commission concurs with the *not recommended for installation* decision, the Commission will send a letter to the requester and Engineering department summarizing the basis for the decision and explain that the requester may appeal the decision further at the Open Forum session at the City Council meeting.

If the Public Works Commission disagrees with the *not recommended for installation* decision, the Commission will notify the Engineering Department and the Staff will prepare a REQUEST OF CITY COUNCIL ACTION form and supporting documentation. The Council decision regarding the sign installation and cost allocation will be implemented and the requester will be notified in writing.

## *3. Additional information needed:*

If the department requires more information from the requesting party and / or other departments, the department will schedule the sign request to be reviewed at the next available Public Works Commission meeting and will invite the requester to present additional information to the Commission. A decision regarding the sign request will be made and the requester will be notified about the decision in writing.

### **Procedure for Sign Installation:**

All signs installed in the public right-of-way shall be installed by the Department of Public Works or under the Department's supervision. Once cost allocations have been determined, and all funding received, a work order to install the signs will be written. The Department of Public Works will administratively establish guidelines for the location, number, design and maintenance of the signs. Routine maintenance of the signs, once they are installed, will be performed by the Department of Public Works at no charge. Extraordinary maintenance, such as a high amount of vandalism or theft will cause the removal of the signs, or the costs of all maintenance to be billed to the requesting party.

### **Procedure for Sign Maintenance and Removal**

The City will inspect signs approximately every twelve years. At this time, all Special

Purpose signs will be removed. If the Special Purpose signs are still desired, the requesting party must participate in the funding for reinstallation according to the schedule of fees for that year.

When a sign is scheduled to be replaced or removed, the Department of Public Works will attempt to notify the original requesting party and publish a notification in the local newspaper. If the requested sign is to remind the public of a state law, statute or City ordinance, the Department of Public Works shall install and maintain the sign only after receiving a written request to do so from the Cottage Grove Public Safety Commission.

**Procedure for Cost Allocation:**

When the City determines that a sign is necessary and/or a sign meets warrants, the City shall pay for engineering services required (such as a traffic study), installation, and maintenance of the sign as follows:

*Regulatory, Warning, Directional, Construction Signs:*

These signs are required to be installed and maintained by the City of Cottage Grove for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The City shall be responsible for all costs of installation, routine maintenance and refurbishing of signs.

For extraordinary maintenance such as vandalism, theft, damage, etc., the City shall charge for the full cost of replacement to the responsible party and they shall be held responsible according to state and local ordinances.

For signs not recommended for installation by Engineering staff and Public Works Commission but approved by Council through the appeals process, the requesting party shall be responsible for costs incurred for engineering services, document preparation and sign manufacture and installation.

*Special Purpose Signs:*

Special Purpose signs serve a limited number of citizens' needs and are not signs required for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Since the signs benefit only a limited group of people or individuals, the City will charge for installing such signs in order to defray costs and maintenance of signs in this category.

If the City recommends, or sees no harm in, installing a requested Special Purpose sign, the City will charge the requester per the City's established fee schedule. The sign costs also will be determined based on the availability of other fund sources and the contribution that the sign makes to the public good.

The public will be informed about the fees through the Sign Request procedure and the fees will be approved by City Council annually in the Schedule of Fees.

For signs not recommended for installation by Engineering staff and Public Works Commission but approved by Council through the appeals process, the requesting party shall be responsible for costs incurred for engineering services, document preparation and sign manufacture and installation.

**Attachments:**

City of Cottage Grove Sign Request Form

Regulatory Sign Procedures for:

Do Not Enter Sign

No U Turn Sign

Regulatory Speed Limit Sign

Stop Sign

Yield Sign

Warning Sign Procedures for:

Advisory Speed Limit Sign

Playground, Park and Trail Sign

School Pedestrian Sign

Pedestrian Crosswalk

Warning Signs

Directional Sign Procedures for:

Street Name Sign

Special Purpose Sign Procedures for:

Crime Watch Sign

No Outlet Sign

Not Permitted Sign Procedures for:

Deaf Child/Blind Child Sign

Watch for Children Sign