



## Highway Signage





*“There is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of a signage system and the satisfaction of individuals and groups travelling throughout the region.”*

*“Tourism signs and symbols should express their meaning in the most universal and simple language possible.”*

World Tourism Organization

## Highway Signage is a **FUNDAMENTAL** visitor service

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It should provide motorists with **safe directional** information to the types of services and attractions they are typically looking for:

- Places where they can use the washroom, eat, sleep or refuel; and
- Places where they can explore and experience Newfoundland and Labrador's culture, history and nature

# Current highway signage policy

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## Tourism Attractions

Theme Parks

Tourism Attraction

Craft Shops

Art Galleries

Museums

Tour Operations

Community Festivals

## Tourism Services

Roofed accommodations (Hotels/Motels, Cabins, B&B's, Inns, Hospitality Homes)

Campgrounds

Fuel Stations

Eating Establishments

Trailer Dumping

## Why not all businesses?

- Motorists typically need directions for tourism-related services and attractions (restaurants, gas stations, accommodations, etc.)
- Increased traffic to the region is good for all businesses
- Minimizes number of signs detracting from natural beauty
- Too many signs cause confusion and makes tourism signs less effective for generating traffic to the region

# Current highway signage policy

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## Tourist establishments permitted:

- Fingerboards in Corridor 1
  - Private billboards in Corridor 2
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- Corridor No. 1 is just off the shoulder of the road where government managed signs (speed limit, directional, warning, fingerboard, etc.) are located. The corridor is 8.5 metres wide and immediately adjacent to the right-hand side of the highway gravel shoulder.
  - Corridor No. 2 is located at least 10 metres away from the highway gravel shoulder directly adjacent to Corridor No. 1 and stops at least three kilometres from intersections.

# Current highway signage policy

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- Policy originally implemented in 1991 with attempts at enforcement and policy modifications over time
- Several province wide sweeps of sign removal
  - 2001 in Corridor 1 and 2;
  - 2006 in Corridor 1 only



# What do tourists say?

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## How did your trip to NL fall short?

*Most common response... Signage is confusing and inadequate; difficulty finding major attractions*

## How would you improve NL tourism products and services?

*Most common response... Improve your signage system*

*2004 Tourism Product Development Study*

*Focus Group testing with tour operators, leisure tourists*

# 2003-2004 Air/Auto Exit Survey

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The 2003-2004 Air/Auto Exit Survey (Non-residents) asked leisure travellers their motivation for visiting Newfoundland and Labrador.

*Exploration of the landscape* received the top mentions.

One of the conclusions drawn from that research was that “by far, compared to other destinations, Newfoundland and Labrador’s **spectacular natural landscape is our primary competitive advantage.**”



# Who are our tourists anyway?

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The primary non-resident market for NL is the *Explorer* Market.

They are leisure travellers who participate in sightseeing and soft adventure.

They anticipate, appreciate and value an uncluttered, pristine environment.

Residents important tourist market as well.

# What are stakeholders saying?

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**Tourism industry operators** and **Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador** express frustration over proliferation of signs and customer confusion.

Signage was brought up as a challenge to achieving the Vision for tourism in **2007 Strategic Plan Consultations**

The **Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation** has a plan to replace all their billboards with consistent system of signs

The **accommodators** in the Stephenville region pooled their resources and purchased a series of fingerboards in lieu of individual private signage

**Municipalities** have expressed concerns over current policy and its enforcement

## What would make our signage more effective?

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Research shows that signage on highways in excess of 90 km/hr should:

- be consistent and the smallest detail should be legible
  - contain only information that is needed
  - use lettering of sufficient height and clear fonts
  - use symbols that are easily understood
  - must be easily located and read quickly
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- Be strategically located to encourage more visitation &
  - Minimally impact the visual integrity of the landscape.

# Research into other jurisdictions...

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TCR conducted extensive research into the signage policies of other jurisdictions in Canada and the world

All other provinces and most other jurisdictions use ***Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)*** as the primary model.



**Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)** is the most universally-accepted and widely-used model for integrating private tourist signage into the highway system.



# Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)

## Overview:

- Universal colours, symbols, formats
- Close to exits
- Within Corridor 1 (Corridor 2 no longer utilized)
- Concise consistent information
- Categorized by:
  - Destination/Exit/Region and
  - Type of attraction/service
    - Eligible businesses same as with existing policy



# Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)

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## Benefits:

- The signage is consistent, easy to locate and uses universal symbols and standards for optimal safety and effectiveness for motorists
- Rural regions and tourist establishments will be promoted in a strategic manner
- TODS will be more cost effective for establishments
- Sign assemblies will be reduced by an estimated 50 percent
- Signage is consistent with rest of Canada
- Phase-in will give industry time to adjust to the new system
- Easier to enforce



# Tourist-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS)

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## Challenges:

- Industry establishments may react negatively if they have to re-invest in signage to comply with TODS
- Existing signs will have to be removed to comply with the new system; negative reactions from those businesses
- Ineligible signage will be removed
- TODS system may require an annual renewal fee from sign owners
- Areas of congestion

# The Future

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The tourism industry's future looks bright.

Government and industry are/will be investing in:

- Research;
- Tourism marketing;
- Technology – GPS;
- Product development and visitor services;
- Provincial sites and parks infrastructure;
- Extending the tourism season; and
- Developing a VISION for our tourism destination.

# In the end...

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- This is about being research-based and consumer-focused in:
  - Providing safe, clear directional signage
  - Clearly communicating and strategically promoting the attractions and services available in regions

# Next Steps

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- Conduct province-wide information sessions with key stakeholders (April/May)
- Present findings of the research to stakeholders highlighting the preferred approach – TODS
- Seek input and direction for implementation plan

# Feedback

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- Province-wide stakeholder sessions
- Advisory Committee
- Written submissions to:

**Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation**  
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**St. John's, NL A1B 4J6**  
**Fax: (709) 729-0870**  
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Questions

