

Community Signage Program

Elgin County's Community Signage Program is a popular program designed to help non-profit tourism operators attract business and visitors. There are hundreds of tourism signs installed on Elgin County roads. Through this program, the County hopes to achieve affordable and consistent signage and tourism for residents and visitors alike, as well, it offers a streamlined process for managing and delivering tourism signage.

This guide establishes eligibility, use, design and authority for tourism-oriented directional signage on Elgin County road right-of-ways. The Community Signage Program seeks to protect the safety of road users by carefully considering the number of signs that exist in our communities and minimizes costs associated with the maintenance of signs through a cost-recovery program.

Non-profit tourism organizations can apply for a grant of \$150.00 per sign for a maximum of two (2) signs and may have the option to purchase more.

If you have questions, please [communitygrants@elgin.ca or call 519-631-1460 x.156].

General Guidelines

Eligible businesses and attractions may be eligible for tourism signage on County road right-of-ways in approved site locations. Tourism signage will only be located where sufficient space for signage exists along a route that will lead residents and visitors to their destination in a reasonably direct manner.

Note: Non-profit tourism organizations are only eligible for up to two (2) signs per destination under this program.

Objectives:

- Elevate Elgin County's tourist destination image
- Inform Elgin County's road users of tourism operations and attractions
- Provide roadway directions to Elgin County tourism operations
- Increase the frequency and quantity of tourism visits by:
 - Providing consistent tourism signage information to road users
 - Improving the management and delivery of tourism signage to customers
 - Protecting the safety of road users
 - Minimizing additional road maintenance costs

Applicability:

The Regulations define the requirements allowing eligible businesses and attractions to obtain tourism signage on County road right-of-ways in approved site locations. Tourism signage shall be located only where sufficient space for signs occurs along a route that will lead motoring tourists to their destination in a reasonably direct manner.



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & EVALUATION

Generally, the County receives a few requests for signage grants each year. A careful and consistent approach to the review of all signage applications is critical to ensuring funds are allocated in a way that treats all organizations fairly and consistently.

The County of Elgin's Economic Development department and Engineering Services jointly administer and implement the Elgin tourism signage program.

- Economic Development staff review the applications and approve the signage symbol and content, collect fees and payment terms for signage and receipt and refund payment for tourism signage.
- Engineering Services staff approve signage locations, supply the directional signage, install, remove or replace tourism signage and remove any signage that isn't consistent with this program.

Elgin County Council assigned the review of all grant and signage grant applications to the Rural Initiatives and Planning Advisory (RIPA) Committee. County Council provides final approval for all grant and signage grant allocations, as recommended by the RIPA Committee.

Notification: Following County Council's approval, all applicants are notified with the result of their application by County Staff.



ELIGIBILITY

The following requirements must be met to be eligible to obtain tourism signage on Elgin County road rights-of-way:

1. Only tourist-based businesses located in the County of Elgin will be permitted to erect tourism signage on County roads. However, tourism - based businesses located in the City of St. Thomas may make a written appeal to the General Manager of Economic Development if extenuating circumstances warrants County signage.
2. Only tourist-based businesses and facilities listed in Appendix "A" will be permitted to erect tourism signage on County roads.
3. Only tourism-based businesses that are members of Elgin County Tourism are eligible for tourism signage.
4. The tourist-based operation and/or facility must be accessible by a road open to the general public.
5. A seasonal tourist operation must be open during a specific season with set days and hours of operation; no indeterminate tourist operation is eligible for tourism signage.
6. The tourist-based operation must have a reception structure such as a controlled gate, staff reception and orientation point or permanent interpretation panels or displays and have adequate off road parking.
7. The operation must comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations.
8. The tourism signage must not detract or interfere with other traffic control devices.
9. The signage must not interfere with visibility at intersections or entrances.



SIGNAGE CRITERIA

Types of Signage

Elgin County tourism operators will have the opportunity to acquire (2) classifications of tourism directional signage:

Type 1

Size: 240 cm x 60 cm

Location: Along County rural roads with posted speed limits greater than 60 kilometres per hour, within 1.0 metre of property line and not in front of an existing residential land use. The County determines the exact locations.

Type 2

Size: 90 cm x 70 cm

Location: Along County urban roads with posted speed limits less than or equal to 60 kilometres per hour, at edge of shoulder rounding in urban areas and in boulevard in urban areas. The County determines the exact locations.

Design

Elgin County tourism directional signage will project a consistent design and image that will be easily identifiable by County road users.

Elgin County tourism directional signage will contain the following design elements:

- A white reflective header with a full colour engineering grade reflective logo and tagline identifying Elgin County at the top of the sign (applies to first sign only). The principle body of the sign will be a blue background with engineering grade white reflective legend and border and the sign legend will be a maximum of two lines using Highways font, with one symbol as an option.
- The content of the sign legend shall be limited to the identification of the business by its operating name, the mileage to the business and a directional arrow.
- All sign legends are subject to the approval of the Economic Development department.
- Standard General Service Symbols and white Recreational Cultural Interest Symbols as displayed in the Manual of Universal Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), as revised, may be used to indicate a general class of business. When symbols are used, they must be contained entirely within the border of the legend. If a symbol does not exist for the class of business, no symbol will be included on the sign.
- No business logos or trademarks may be used in the tourism signage legend.



SIGN AND SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

The following information is how signage location is determined:

1. The location of other official traffic control devices shall take precedence over the location of tourism directional signage.
2. The maximum distance allowed to the tourism business from the sign location is 30 km.
3. A maximum of three Type 1 tourism signs shall be placed on one post location, with the Elgin County logo branding sign at the top of the first sign.
4. For the direction of traffic when approaching an intersection where more than one tourism directional sign is located, the order of the tourism sign shall be:
 - a. First, businesses signed for the left direction;
 - b. Second, businesses signed for the right direction;
5. Where the total number of tourism signs to both the left and right are less than the maximum allowed for a double post location, the signs will be accommodated in one location. When tourism signs are located in one location, the order of the signs shall be:
 - a. Top, businesses signed for the left direction.
 - b. Bottom, businesses signed for the right direction.
6. A maximum of nine Type 1 Tourism Signs (3 post locations) will be placed approaching any intersection. Due to sign congestion or other circumstances, Elgin County's Engineering Services may limit the number of structures. A tourism operator has the option of being placed on a waiting list for the desired location if the Engineering Services determines that structure/location is not available.
7. Position, height and lateral clearance of tourism signage shall be in accordance with the Ontario Traffic Manual and County Signing Standards. Appendix "B" provides illustrative diagrams as follows: Diagram I. Illustrates typical tourism signage layout. Diagram II. Illustrates location of tourism signage.
8. The Economic Development department shall give notice of their intention to the tourism operator, then will remove permitted tourism signs in the event of the following:
 - a. The location of tourism signage is needed to be utilized for roadway purposes or activities including construction, reconstruction, or maintenance;
 - b. The tourism operator is no longer in operation;
 - c. The tourism operator declines payment thus renewal of signage;
 - d. The location of a tourism sign endangers the health, safety or welfare of the public.
9. When a tourism sign is removed and cannot be re-erected at an approved substitute location, the tourism operator shall be entitled to an appropriate pro-rata rebate of that part of paid annual fees applicable to the remainder of the term.
10. All installation, removal and maintenance of tourism signage will be performed by Engineering Services or an approved contractor. At no time shall the tourism operator enter upon County road right-of ways for such purpose or perform any such activities within the roadway right-of-way.



HOW DO I APPLY?

- Applicants are responsible for reviewing all application materials, eligibility requirements, program priorities and monitoring requirements prior to submitting an application.
- If you have questions, please reach out to County Staff: [communitygrants@elgin.ca or 519-631-1460 x. 156]

Submit Online

- You have the option of completing the application and uploading supplementary information online through the County's Website [www.elgincounty.ca/communitygrantprogram].

Submit Print Copy

- If you'd rather not submit your application package electronically, please download the application package online or request a print copy from staff [communitygrants@elgin.ca or 519-631-1460 x. 156] and either drop off or mail your application to:

Corporation of the County of Elgin
c/o Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk
450 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas ON
N5R 5V1

Application Details

- Late applications will not be accepted.
- Applications can not be submitted by County of Elgin employees, Councillors or Local Municipal Partners.
- Your organization or association may be required to provide a presentation to the Rural Initiatives and Planning Advisory Committee to discuss your application.



APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Every tourist operator must apply through the Community Signage Program for tourism directional signage to be located on a County road right-of-way. No approval of application or sign installation will occur unless all requirements and criteria for eligibility have been satisfied.
2. Application packages can be obtained online [www.elgincounty.ca/communitygrantprogram] or by emailing communitygrants@elgin.ca or calling 519-631-1460 x. 156.
3. All applications must be received by the County by November 1 of each year.
4. Any sign authorized by November 1 will be installed in May of the following calendar year.
5. Sign approvals shall be effective June 1 of each calendar year through May 31 of the following calendar year.
6. The effective date of applications delivered by mail or email shall be the date and time of receipt by County Administration rather than the date of mailing or the stated date on the application.
7. The Rural Initiatives and Planning Advisory Committee will act promptly in the denial or approval of any tourism sign application. The Committee will deny applications which do not comply with this policy.
8. Engineering Services will review the proposed sign location. If the sign location is not approved they will contact the tourism operator with an alternate sign location.
9. The applicant shall provide complete application form.
10. The Committee may reject any application which is incomplete.
11. During any annual sign authorization period, any approved applicants shall have the right to request a change to their tourism sign, at their expense, provided that the changes conform to the regulations. Any changes to signage for any given location after approval of change request will result in the user paying any and all actual costs associated with the change in addition to paying the annual user fee.



APPLICATION PROCESS

12. If a tourist operator having approval for an existing sign seeks to change that sign at the beginning of the next annual period, then that tourism operator shall apply for approval of the new sign and, subject to the provision below, shall be responsible for and pay to Elgin County any and all costs for fabrication and installation of the new sign in addition to the applicable annual user fee; provided that, if the tourist operator has been a participant in the sign program for the three consecutive years immediately preceding, then the tourist operator is not responsible for and not required to pay those fabrication and installation costs.

13. If a tourist operator seeks to re-enter the signage program, that tourist operator shall make application in the normal course and subject to the requirements above and, in addition to any applicable annual user fee but subject to the proviso below, shall pay a re-entry fee equal to a single fabrication and installation charge then in effect; provided that the said tourist operator shall not be required to pay that re-entry fee if that tourist operator had been a prior participant in the signage program for a period of at least three consecutive years.

14. Engineering Services will not permit any signs to be located along local municipal roads, only County roads.

15. If a tourism operator qualifies for tourism directional signage but is observed by County staff that there are existing operational problems created by the business, the applicant will be responsible to correct, at their expense, such problems as a condition of the sign(s) approval. These observed operational problems shall be items such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Access improvement – road width
- Radius
- Relocation of access
- Reduction in the number of access points
- Provision of parking prohibitions on an adjacent roadway(s)

16. Upon approval of the tourism signage application by November 1st, the sign will be installed in May the following calendar year. The sign remains property of the County of Elgin. The County reserves the right to cancel the program.



EXEMPTION – NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Upon a satisfactory submission of proof of being a non-profit tourism operation, and certification showing registration as a non-profit entity as listed in Appendix "A", the Elgin County non-profit organization can apply to County Council for a tourism grant of \$150.00 per sign. Elgin County Council will grant a maximum of two tourism signs per non-profit tourism operation. Non-profit tourism operations also have the option at any time to enter into the tourism signage user fee schedule at the expense of the applicant.

User Fee Schedule

The Fee Schedule is attached as Appendix "C". The County will only accept payment for tourism directional signage fees in the form of cheques, money orders or certified funds. The County shall not accept any payment in the form of cash and shall not be responsible for the transmittal of cash payments.

Annual Renewal

The annual User Fee is due by March 30th of each year in order to maintain the presence of signage. Notification of required payment for renewal of Elgin tourism directional signage will be mailed by the County of Elgin up to 60 days prior to the expiry date of the permit/agreement. The tourism operator shall submit full payment according to the fee schedule. If full payment is not received by the due date of March 30th, the tourism signage will be removed.

Expiry

In order to maintain the presence of the sign, tourism operators must have paid the annual user fee by March 30th of each calendar year. However, the County reserves the right to cancel the program at the time of renewal.

Withdrawal

A tourist operator shall have the right to withdraw from the signage program, effective May 31 of each calendar year. Any existing sign authorized for that tourist operator shall be removed by the Department of Engineering Services no sooner than seven days prior to the effective date of withdrawal.

Application for Re-Entry

A tourist operator who previously had been a participant in the Signage Program is entitled to apply for re-entry into the said program at any time, subject to the restrictions set forth above.



COMMUNITY SIGNAGE PROGRAM

APPENDIX "A"

Tourism Operations Eligible for Directional Signage

- Antique Dealers
- Art Galleries
- Banquet Halls
- Boat Launches
- Boat Rentals and Charters (canoes, kayaks, sailboats, rowboats, motorboats)
- Campgrounds
- Casinos
- Conference Centres
- Cultural Centres
- Destination accommodations, resorts, and inns
- Equestrian Facilities
- Farm-based Tourist Attractions
- Farmers Market's
- Fishing
- Golf Courses (Open to the Public)
- Hotels & Bed & Breakfasts
- Interpretive Centres & Live Theatres
- Major Tourist Attractions
- Major Sport Facilities
- Marinas
- Motor Speedways
- Raceways
- Restaurants or Foodservice Establishments*
- Shopping Store Locations*
- Skiing
- Sports Fields
- Swimming Pools
- Wineries
- Zoos

***Business must be unique to Elgin County.**



COMMUNITY SIGNAGE PROGRAM

APPENDIX "A"

Elgin County Non-Profit Tourism Operations Eligible for Directional Signage

Non-commercial (non-profit /community owned) operated tourism attractions that provide visitors with an experience in Heritage or Historical, Recreational, Entertainment, Natural, Cultural, Education activities.

A categorized listing of qualifying non-profit operation types are included below:

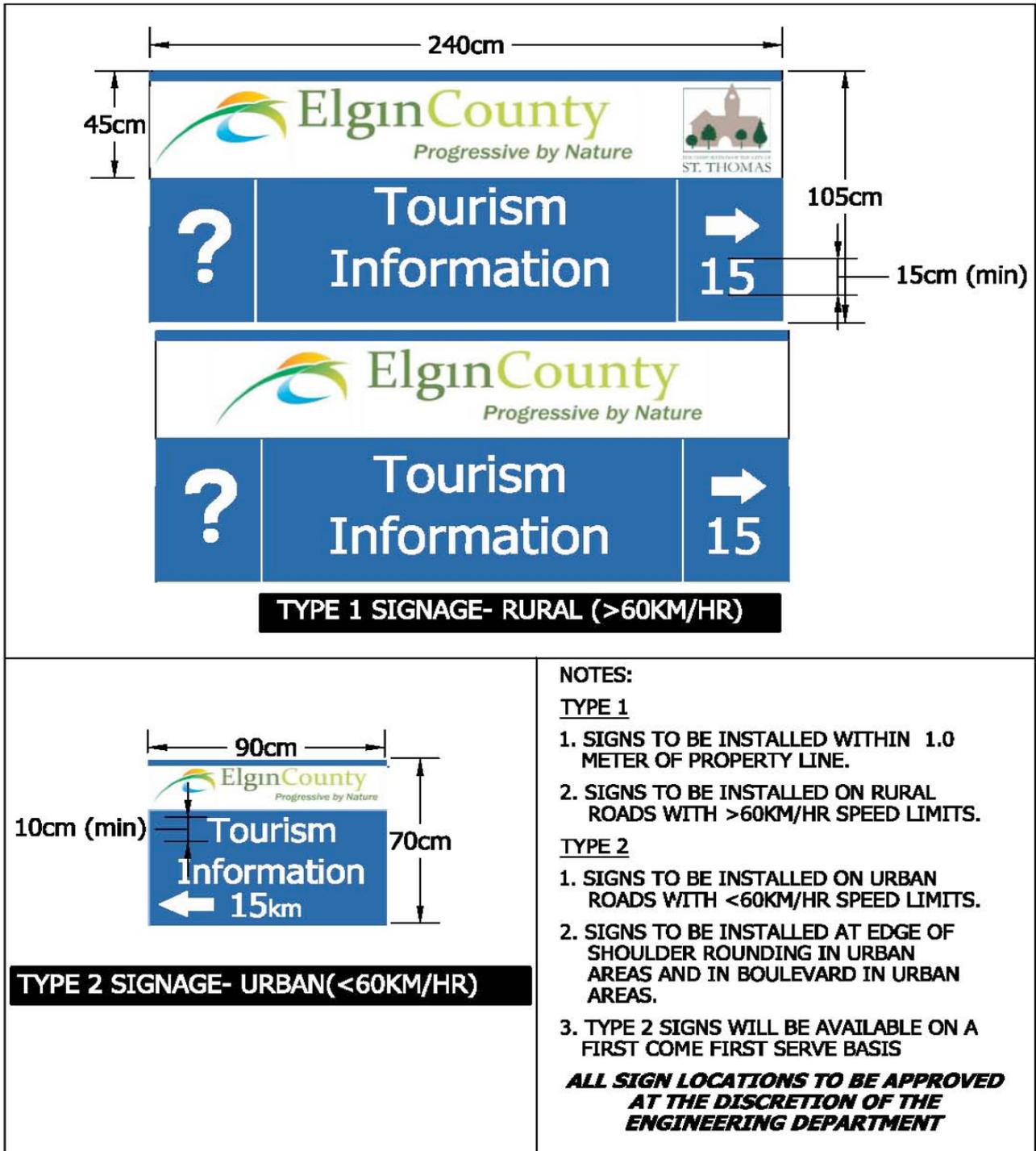
- Archives
- Arena and Community Centres
- Business/shopping districts*
- Churches
- Conservation Areas
- Hiking Trails
- Historic Sites; Historic / Heritage Buildings
- Federal Parks
- Libraries
- Murals
- Museums
- Parks
- Public Arts Organizations/Galleries
- Points of Interest; Plaques
- Provincial Parks
- Public Beaches
- Picnic Areas
- Scenic Lookouts/Natural Attractions
- Tourism Information Centres
- Tourism Related Associations
- Municipal Airports

***Must be a recognized designated area by a municipality.**



COMMUNITY SIGNAGE PROGRAM

APPENDIX "B" COUNTY OF ELGIN TOURISM SIGNAGE





COMMUNITY SIGNAGE PROGRAM

APPENDIX "C"

User Fee Schedule for Directional Signage

Type 1 (size: 240 cm x 60 cm)

- Annual user fee \$150.00 plus applicable taxes, per sign.
- The tourism operator must be a member of Elgin County Tourism.
- A non-profit organization that is successful in obtaining a signage grant of \$150.00 will not have an annual user fee; however, it must be a member of Elgin County Tourism.
- Note: Tourism membership cost is \$100.00 per year, plus applicable taxes.

Type 2 (size: 90 cm x 70 cm)

- Annual user fee \$150.00 plus applicable taxes, per sign.
- The tourism operator must be a member of Elgin County Tourism.
- A non-profit organization that is successful in obtaining a signage grant of \$150.00 will not have to pay an annual user fee; however, it must be a member of Elgin County Tourism.
- Note: Tourism membership cost is \$100.00 per year, plus applicable taxes.

Note: the sign costs are estimates and are subject to change based on actual costs.



APPLICATION



APPLICATION FORM FOR ELGIN COUNTY TOURISM SIGNAGE

NAME OF APPLICANT:		
TITLE:		
LEGAL NAME OF BUSINESS:		
TYPE OF BUSINESS:		
FULL BUSINESS ADDRESS:		
POSTAL CODE:		
CONTACT INFORMATION:	Tel. No.: ()	
	Fax No.: ()	
	Email:	
MEMBER OF ELGIN COUNTY TOURISM?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**** THE COST OF EACH SIGN IS \$150 + APPLICABLE TAXES (13% HST) PER YEAR. APPLICANTS MUST BE MEMBERS OF ELGIN COUNTY TOURISM (\$100 + 13% HST PER YEAR).**

**** NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS LOCATED IN ELGIN COUNTY, ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A GRANT OF \$150 PER SIGN (2) EACH YEAR. PLEASE CONTACT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT 519-631-1460 EX. 164 FOR INFORMATION. ****

**** NO SIGNS WILL BE PLACED DIRECTLY AT AN INTERSECTION AND ENGINEERING SERVICES WILL HAVE FINAL DISCRETION REGARDING EXACT LOCATION OF SIGNS****

LOCATION OF PROPOSED SIGN	ROAD NO.:	ROAD NAME:	
	LOCATION:		
COMPLETE CONTENT OF SIGN'S LEGEND	SYMBOL:	ARROW:	DISTANCE:

**** IF MORE THAN ONE SIGN IS BEING REPLACED OR PURCHASED PLEASE INDICATE LOCATIONS FOR EACH SIGN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE. ****



APPLICATION



LOCATION OF PROPOSED SIGN	ROAD NO.:	ROAD NAME:	
	LOCATION:		
COMPLETE CONTENT OF SIGN'S LEGEND	SYMBOL:	ARROW:	DISTANCE:

LOCATION OF PROPOSED SIGN	ROAD NO.:	ROAD NAME:	
	LOCATION:		
COMPLETE CONTENT OF SIGN'S LEGEND	SYMBOL:	ARROW:	DISTANCE:

LOCATION OF PROPOSED SIGN	ROAD NO.:	ROAD NAME:	
	LOCATION:		
COMPLETE CONTENT OF SIGN'S LEGEND	SYMBOL:	ARROW:	DISTANCE:

LOCATION OF PROPOSED SIGN	ROAD NO.:	ROAD NAME:	
	LOCATION:		
COMPLETE CONTENT OF SIGN'S LEGEND	SYMBOL:	ARROW:	DISTANCE:

TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGNS _____

TOTAL FEE DUE BY MARCH 30TH (+ 13% HST) _____

(PLEASE MAKE ALL CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE COUNTY OF ELGIN)

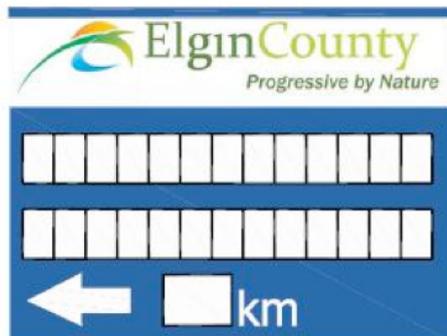


APPLICATION



TYPE OF SIGNAGE REQUESTED	TYPE 1: Size: 240 cm x 60 cm (Rural) TYPE 2: Size: 90 cm x 70 cm (Urban) *Please see Signage Policy for additional details
TYPE 1 SIGNAGE <input type="checkbox"/>	TYPE 2 SIGNAGE <input type="checkbox"/>

**** PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S NAME TO APPEAR ON THE SIGN USING THE DIAGRAM BELOW. ****



****PLEASE NOTE THAT SIGNAGE LOCATED IN URBAN AREAS WILL NOT INCLUDE SYMBOLS****



APPLICATION



It is important for applicants to note that regulatory, warning, and information/directional signs take precedence on Elgin County roads. Elgin County's Engineering Services department will follow all regulations set out in the Ontario Traffic Manual, when determining signage locations. It is also important to note that the County of Elgin is committed to reducing signage pollution and maintaining the safety of motorists and pedestrians and therefore no signs will be placed in "built up" areas, villages and hamlets, for example in downtown Port Stanley. County of Elgin Engineering Services will also limit the number of sign structures to a maximum of three or less at any given location.

In Rural areas Type One signs may not:

- Be placed in 60km speed zones
- Be placed in the regulatory or warning sign safety area
- Be placed in front of residential property
- Distract or interfere with other traffic control devices
- Interfere with visibility at intersections or entrances
- Interfere with pedestrian traffic
- Interfere with sidewalk snow removal

Engineering has final approval of sign locations

In Urban Areas Type Two signs may not:

- Be placed within 100m of an intersection
- Be placed in front of residential property
- Be placed in a downtown business area
- Distract or interfere with other traffic control devices
- Interfere with visibility at intersections or entrances
- Interfere with pedestrian traffic
- Interfere with sidewalk snow removal

Engineering has final approval of sign locations.

I have read and understand the conditions above:

DATE: _____

APPLICANT SIGNATURE