Gateway Monument Program Guidelines

General

Integration of the transportation system to reflect community values may be achieved through enhancements that include Gateway Monuments. This program provides a method for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to permit enhancement of transportation facilities by local entities.

A Gateway Monument is defined as any freestanding structure, nonintegral or nonrequired highway feature that will communicate the name of a city, county, or town (Local Entity) within TxDOT right of way. A Gateway Monument may include the name of the Local Entity and/or the officially adopted seal. The approval of a Gateway Monument proposal shall be made with due consideration to safety (location, potential for motorist distraction, accessibility for maintenance, etc.), aesthetics, community support, and maintainability. Proposals for the placement of Gateway Monuments must comply with these guidelines.

Gateway Monuments differ from aesthetic treatments incorporated into engineered highway features (sound walls, retaining walls, or other highway features).

Guidance

Local Entities often desire transportation facilities to provide identification and a favorable image of the communities in which they are located. TxDOT encourages and promotes enrichment of the cultural and visual environment for transportation system users and local communities by facilitating and coordinating the integration of Gateway Monuments within the operational highway right-of-way, through the Gateway Monument Agreement process.

Gateway Monuments are to be solely funded and maintained by a Local Entity. TxDOT will collaborate with the responsible Local Entity supporting the proposed Gateway Monument.

Gateway Monuments are discretionary features within the transportation corridor. Only one Gateway Monument will be allowed per State route in each direction into a town. The incorporation of a Gateway Monument will be evaluated for its potential for creating a distraction to motorists. TxDOT retains sole discretion for determining the location, appropriate size, content, colors, and other elements of the Gateway Monument. TxDOT shall have responsibility for approval of all Gateway Monuments on the State highway system and in addition, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must approve Gateway Monuments on the interstate system.

Gateway Monuments shall be located beyond the clear recovery zone or otherwise placed to minimize the likelihood of being struck by an errant vehicle.

Other improvements such as landscaping or accent lighting may be considered in conjunction with the Gateway Monument proposal. Any improvements will be the responsibility of the Local Entity. TxDOT will collaborate with the Local Entity for appropriateness of the Gateway Monument proposal in context with existing, proposed, and future improvements.

Review/Approval Process

Gateway Monument submittals shall be reviewed with primary considerations to safety (location), appropriateness, aesthetics and access for maintenance purposes.

The Local Entity shall submit a Gateway Monument proposal to the District Engineer. The District Engineer has approval authority for these proposals. If the Gateway Monument is proposed for the interstate facility, the District shall coordinate with the Maintenance Division for additional processing and FHWA review and approval.

The Gateway Monument Agreement must be fully executed by both TxDOT and the Local Entity prior to the commencement of any construction associated with the project.

Financial Responsibilities

All costs for proposed Gateway Monument design, construction, access for maintenance, maintenance, and if required, removal of the Gateway Monument shall be the responsibility of the Local Entity and stipulated in detail within the Preliminary and Final Gateway Monument submittals.

The Gateway Monument Agreement shall stipulate that the Local Entity shall hold harmless, indemnify, and defend the State against any action associated with a Gateway Monument. TxDOT will assume the administrative costs associated with Gateway Monument proposal reviews, and developing, issuing, and monitoring the Gateway Monument Agreement for approved Gateway Monument projects. All other costs, including labor, materials, supplies, and traffic control (if required) for design, engineering, testing, construction, installation, maintenance, and removal of the Gateway Monument shall be the responsibility of the Local Entity. Coordination and resolution of any utility issues will be the responsibility of the Local Entity.

Maintenance

The Local Entity shall be required to provide for regularly scheduled maintenance, as described in the Gateway Monument Agreement, for its projected lifespan. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, restoration work to maintain the integrity of the approved Gateway Monument, maintenance of any associated landscaping or lighting and graffiti removal. Gateway Monuments shall be kept clean, free of graffiti, and in good repair. Graffiti removal shall conform to current TxDOT policies and guidelines, which require prompt removal of offensive messages and timely removal of all other graffiti.

Maintenance access shall be as stipulated by TxDOT in the Gateway Monument Agreement and should be provided from outside the highway right-of-way, wherever possible. For projects located on interstate highways, access shall not be from the mainlanes. Maintenance practices shall protect air and water quality as required by federal and state law.

Removal

The Local Entity shall remove Gateway Monuments, which in the opinion of TxDOT create safety or operational concern due to deterioration or inadequate maintenance. TxDOT will notify the Local Entity when it has determined that the Gateway Monument requires special attention. In the event the Local Entity fails to maintain, repair, rehabilitate, or remove the Gateway Monument in a timely manner, TxDOT may remove the Gateway Monument after 60 days following notification to the Local Entity, and bill the Local Entity for all costs of removal and restoration of the area.

TxDOT reserves the right to remove the Gateway Monument due to construction, rehabilitation, or other necessary activities affecting the transportation facilities without any obligation, compensation to, or approval of the Local Entity. TxDOT will strive to notify the Local Entity of its intent to remove the Gateway Monument to allow for timely removal and salvage by the Local Entity (if possible).

TxDOT reserves the right to remove or alter any Gateway Monument that presents an immediate safety hazard to the public without delay or advanced notification to the Local Entity.

Design and Placement of Gateway Monuments

Proposed Gateway Monuments shall:

1. Be freestanding.
2. Feature only the letters of the community name and/or officially adopted seal.
3. Include, if required by TxDOT, approved protective graffiti coatings.
4. Be appropriate to its proposed setting and community context.
5. Be in proper size and scale with its surroundings. The maximum size of the gateway monument face shall not exceed 400 square feet in total. The height shall not exceed 20 feet above existing grade. Monument widths exceeding 20 feet will not be allowed for gateway monuments on the Interstate, although the FHWA may consider waiving this limitation on a case-by-case basis.
6. Be composed of materials that are durable for the projected life span of the project.
7. Be located beyond the clear zone, for both main lane traffic and frontage road traffic
8. Be located where maintenance can be safely performed, as specified in the Gateway Monument Agreement and in conformance with TxDOT procedures.
9. Be subject to the review and approval of TxDOT in consideration of design, size, and scale for appropriate integration on urban or rural highway features.

Proposed Gateway Monuments shall not:

1. Be allowed within the center median areas of interstate highway right-of-way.
2. Contain religious, political, special interest, private, or commercial messages of any sort, including, but not limited to, symbols, logos, business names, trade names, jingles, or slogans.
3. Contain any displays of any sort, advertising, decorative banners, flags, or flag poles.
4. Display telephone numbers, street addresses, or Internet addresses.
5. Interfere with airspace above the roadway.
6. Create a distraction to the motoring public, for example, the proposed Gateway Monument shall be large enough to interpret at highway speed, but not be so large that it demands attention from the motorist.
7. Include reflective or glaring surface finishes.
8. Include illumination that impairs or distracts the vision of transportation system users. Other lighting may be permitted.
9. Display blinking or intermittent or moving lights, including changeable message signs, digital displays or lighted static displays such as LED. Ground mounted uplights to illuminate the gateway monument itself will be acceptable.
10. Include moving elements (kinetic art) or simulate movement.
11. Include water features of any sort.
12. Interfere with official traffic control devices nor interfere with the operational right-of-way above the roadway.
13. Be placed within State right-of-way upon trees, or painted or drawn upon rocks or other existing natural features.
14. Make use of or simulate colors or combinations of colors usually reserved for official traffic control devices described in the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control

Devices.

15. Require the removal of trees or other vegetation for visibility, or harm trees during construction. Pruning of tree branches or roots, and removal of shrubs should be avoided.
16. Negatively impact existing highway features, including existing signs, irrigation systems, necessary drainage patterns, and facilities.

Submittal Requirements for Gateway Monument Proposals

A Gateway Monument proposal must be supported by the Local Entity that has jurisdiction in the area where the Gateway Monument will be incorporated. The Local Entity shall issue an adopted resolution or other official document recommending approval of the proposed design of the Gateway Monument and requesting installation within the operational highway right-of-way.

The Local Entity shall provide the Department an adopted resolution or other official documentation that describes the Local Entity's:

1. Jurisdiction over the area of the project site.
2. Approval of the Gateway Monument content.
3. Funding responsibility.
4. Commitment to ensure maintenance of the Gateway Monument (and any associated landscaping and/or lighting), including timely graffiti removal/repair, and removal (or restoration) of the Gateway Monument as needed.
5. Proposed schedule for commencing and completing project installation.

A licensed landscape architect, architect, or professional engineer shall professionally prepare, sign and seal submittals for a Gateway Monument Proposal. Exhibits, plans, and details shall include, but are not limited to the following:

1. A full description of the proposed Gateway Monument, including location, construction, and installation techniques, details necessary to convey construction methods, proposed color scheme, proposed materials, including, but not limited to, paint and protective coatings.
2. Specifications for proposed materials, including material data sheets.
3. A scaled drawing indicating the placement of the proposed Gateway Monument.
4. Elevations and details clearly illustrating and dimensioning the proposal (the Gateway Monument must be aesthetically pleasing on all visible sides).
5. Landscape, irrigation and lighting plans if required.
6. Construction schedule.
7. Cost estimate.
8. Traffic control plans and provisions if required.
9. Proposed maintenance plan and schedule (including proposed access for maintenance purposes).
10. Environmental documentation.

The Local Entity shall adhere to and maintain compliance with departmental rules, regulations, state and federal laws, and any additional requirements TxDOT may apply to the project. If, at any time during the process, TxDOT recommends any changes for a proposal that has not yet received final approval, the proposal may be returned to the Local Entity for revision. Once TxDOT approves a Gateway Monument proposal, no changes shall be made to the Gateway Monument without prior written approval of the District Engineer. For Gateway Monuments located on interstate highways, changes must be submitted to FHWA for approval.