

Questions and Answers: New Routes Added to The Control Route System

Question	Answer
Why is GDOT concerned with outdoor advertising signs on City Streets and County Roads?	The 2012 federal transportation appropriation bill known as Map -21 was signed into law by President Obama and became effective on October 1, 2012. Map -21 changed Federal Law to affect what routes are regulated by the states with outdoor advertising. This law extended outdoor advertising control to the National Highway System (NHS) and redefined the NHS to routes classified as principal arterials. Principal Arterials are major and minor traffic handling corridors and may be Interstates, State Routes, County Roads and /or City Streets. The Department's Office of Transportation Data has identified the routes affected by the change in law.
Why doesn't GDOT just ignore this confusing change in law?	The Department is the State of Georgia Agency designated by law to carry out the compliance and regulatory controls for outdoor advertising. Not following the law is a violation of Federal and State of Georgia laws and may lead to the Federal Highway Administration imposition of the 10 % funding penalty for the State of Georgia's failure to maintain effective control of outdoor advertising. The effect of the penalty may result in the withholding of an estimated 250 million dollars in federal highway funds to the State of Georgia.
Is GDOT taking control of the City Streets and County Roads?	The Department is only interested in meeting its legal and regulatory requirements with regards to outdoor advertising signs. Map-21 does not change or eliminate local ordinance controls with outdoor advertising signs.
How will GDOT treat existing outdoor advertising signs?	The first step for the Department is to contact the local governments, give notification of the change in law and request their assistance in identifying sign and property owners affected by the change in law. From the information gathered from the locals, the Department will give notification to sign owners to file an application for permit. By Federal Regulations, legal signs on new routes added to the outdoor advertising control routes are nonconforming signs. The Department will evaluate applications for permit for the entire route. Existing legal signs that meet the conforming sign requirements will be issued a conforming GDOT permit; likewise, signs that do not meet the conforming sign requirements will be issued a nonconforming GDOT permit.

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What happens if the local government refuses to provide the local government sign off and approval for the GDOT application?	The Department does not anticipate any issues with the local government refusing to provide the required information for the Department application for permit. Local governments may refuse to certify that the sign meets the requirements of their ordinance. In this case, a note written upon and endorsed by the local official on the application or a letter from the local authorizing agency attached to the application will suffice.
What happens if I am not happy with GDOT issuing a non-conforming permit to my locally conforming permitted sign?	The Department will evaluate submitted application and location to make the determination of the sign's conforming status. Signs that meet the conforming requirements will be issued a conforming permit and signs that do not meet the requirements for conforming will be issued a non-conforming permit. Sign owners that believe that the Department erred in the assessment of the sign may file an administrative appeal to review the Department's decision and determination.
What happens if I do not file an application for permit for my sign?	The sign becomes an unauthorized (illegal) sign. The Department will review the signs for which it did not receive an application and cite the sign owners as required by the law and subject to removal.
Do I have to pay the application fee?	The law requires that an application must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee in order to be processed.
If I have a sign that changes messages electronically or mechanically, do I also have to file a multiple message application?	Yes, the law requires an application to be filed for this type of sign.