

CITIZENS FOR A SCENIC WISCONSIN
7525 Oakhill Avenue
Wauwatosa WI 53213
December 20, 2006

POLICY STATEMENT – ROADWAYS

1.Scenic Byways A program that establishes good stewardship which is good for tourism and business is Scenic Byways. The Scenic Byways Program is a federally-sponsored scenic conservation program that was approved by the Wisconsin legislature last year and is being administered by the DOT. It allows communities to designate and preserve sections of highways that have outstanding scenery, to provide an exceptional travel experience, to attract tourists and to increase business. The regulation provides for scenic byways to be established on state highways (not on county roads or interstate highways) and the scenic byway must be at least 30 miles long. One of the local governments along the route must be the initiator of the application for a Byway. A Corridor Management Plan must be created, the purpose of which is to maintain scenic character. We encourage the creation of Scenic Byways.

2.Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs We believe that more small signs could be put into use by more businesses without spoiling scenery. In 2006 we supported legislation that allowed “attractions” to participate in the Specific Information Sign program (along with Food, Fuel, Lodging and Camping). Under this program, logo signs are placed at freeway exits and small directional signs are placed along the off-ramp. We believe that the Tourist Oriented Directional Sign program, under which small signs are placed on public land close to the road, could also be expanded.

3.Non-Conforming Billboards These are mainly billboards that were built in unzoned rural and agricultural areas before 1972 when federal law changed to prohibit them. We believe that it’s important to uphold and enforce federal and state law regarding non-conforming billboards. The law intends that they be removed when they wear out. They detract from scenic areas and clutter commercial areas and should be removed eventually, as the law provides. Owners of non-conforming billboards should not be allowed to rebuild them - that’s like putting up a new billboard in an area where they are not allowed.

4.Limit Construction of New Billboards We would support a new law that would limit the size and height of billboards or prohibit new billboards from being built along state and federal highways. There are seven states that have prohibitions on new billboards (Maine, Vermont, Alaska, Hawaii, Michigan, Oregon & Rhode Island). These states depend on a healthy tourism industry and business climate, and they know that the best way to do it is with limits on billboards. We continually get reports from people who have been tourists or visitors in those states. They tell of the great impression the uncluttered scenery makes. Limits on billboards is becoming more important since billboards are getting larger and taller and many of them have very distracting electronically illuminated surfaces.

Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin is a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve the scenic beauty of our natural landscape and maintain the special character of our cities and towns. We believe that scenery is a precious resource important to our quality of life and to our business climate. We believe that urban sprawl and over-sized billboards are detrimental to scenery.