

ANOKA COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

LANDSCAPE/STREETSCAPE GUIDELINES June 2000

INTRODUCTION

The Anoka County Highway Department (Department) has a delegated function and responsibility to maintain a system of roadways that provide transportation for business and residents of the county, and those traveling through Anoka County, in a safe, efficient manner. Year-round safety requires adequate sight distances, snow and ice control, and a minimum operational clear zone that can also accommodate snow storage, signs, and utilities. The Department has prepared these Landscape/Streetscape Guidelines in an effort to consistently and thoroughly respond to questions about landscape/streetscape design practices. For existing conditions and relocations due to reconstruction of a roadway, where the cost to cure is prohibitive, the Department may allow essential facilities inside the operational clear zone on a case by case basis (i.e., power distribution line).

All landscape/streetscape plans must be prepared and signed in accordance with the Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture and Interior Design by the designer. The City Engineer shall also approve and sign the title or cover sheet for those landscape/streetscape plans. The City Engineer shall also evaluate sight distances along the project and present a certified report to assure the Department that sight distances are adequate.

The placement of obstacles or fixed objects, such as structures, trees, etc., within Anoka County's right-of-way shall comply with MSA 160.277 and be cause for the Municipality to assume legal liability and additional maintenance responsibility through a Cooperative Agreement. Those requesting exceptions to MSA 160.277, shall apply for and acquire a license permit from the Department.

Prior to commencing any work in the right-of-way of any county route, a permit must be obtained from the Department.

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINE CRITERIA

The following is an alphabetical listing of the Departments recommended guidelines for landscape/streetscape design. The criteria listed are not all-inclusive or necessarily complete. Requests for more clarification should be addressed to the County Engineer or his/her designee. Figure 1 at the end of this document contains a summarization of the recommended operational clear zone guidelines. The term City and Municipalities are used interchangeably and means any city or township located in Anoka County.

- Berms

- 1) Berms are permitted only where a minimum of 60 feet of right-of-way exists as measured from the centerline of the road. Where a berm is proposed, the property owner must provide the Department with a permanent slope easement 10 feet in width outside the 60 foot right-of-way. This is to allow the Department room to work should the berm need to be modified for any reason, i.e., installing utilities, installing trails, widening the road.
- 2) A maximum of ½ of the berm can extend into the right-of-way provided the area is not proposed to be used for other facilities such as trails or sidewalk.
- 3) A berm can extend no more than 10 feet into the right-of-way.
- 4) The maximum slope of the berm within the right-of-way is 3 to 1.
- 5) No special or additional maintenance will be performed by the Department in regards to the upkeep of the berm.
- 6) The property owner/developer is responsible for construction of the berm.
- 7) The Berms may be removed at any time by the Department in order to construct additional facilities on the right-of-way. The Municipality or property owner may elect to pay for a retaining wall along the right-of-way so that the berm can remain on the private property.

- Boulevard

- 1) The Department prefers a low maintenance boulevard. Snow and ice control methods may prevent the survival of some desired vegetation where a City or Township has installed landscape/streetscape in the boulevard of a County State Aid Highway or County Road. The Municipality has the responsibility for mowing and the maintenance of facilities behind the curb for that segment of roadway as agreed in the joint powers agreement.

- Crosswalks

- 1) Crosswalks shall conform to the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD).
- 2) The Department's standard crosswalk is a block type pattern, painted white, on top of bituminous or concrete pavement.
- 3) Non-standard crosswalk surfaces (such as decorative brick, colored aggregated, etc.) shall require prior approval by the Department. Municipalities shall have the responsibility to install and maintain any crosswalk surface, as well as the abutting material, if the crosswalk surface is not the County standard. The Municipality shall also indemnify the County for the use of a non-standard crosswalk surface.

- **Curb**
 - 1) Curb design must conform to the Department's Standard Design and the State Aid Manual. Curb and Pedestrian ramps must also comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

- **Irrigation**
 - 1) No plantings will be allowed unless the Municipality agrees to pay for the design, installation and maintenance of an underground watering system which covers all areas which are not hard surfaced. Irrigation must be of the trickle type, no spray heads will be allowed. The water system shall be automatic and shall water the medians two or three times per week between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. The system shall have an automatic cutout, which will not allow watering when the air temperature is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - 2) Water from irrigation systems shall not flow or spray onto the traveled roadway or onto any County owned structures such as traffic signal components and signage. Concrete gutters shall collect excess water from irrigation systems and not allow water to flow across roadways (gutter in).
 - 3) Effects of subgrade saturation shall be addressed when irrigation systems are proposed. This is not generally a problem in Anoka County except in the City of Lino Lakes, City of St. Francis, and Burns Township. Provisions, such as perforated pipe, shall be included for the pickup and disposal of irrigation water where necessary.
 - 4) The Department will not allow an open cut for installation or maintenance of irrigation piping within three years after construction or reconstruction of the road, so consideration should be given to installing irrigation piping within a sleeve for roadway crossings. Maintenance and repair of the irrigation system is the responsibility of the owner.

- **Landscaping/Streetscaping**
 - 1) Roadway geometrics and driver sight distances shall be considered when installing landscape items. A report indicating adequate sight distances has been maintained is required for all access points along the projects. The report should consider all elements obstructing a driver's vision such as trees, shrubs, plantings/planters, structures, etc.
 - 2) Any loose landscaping material, such as bark, must have an adequate means of containment that will prevent the material from spilling onto the roadway or sidewalk/trail. The Municipality shall be responsible for maintaining such material, if installed, and for removing the material from the roadway or sidewalk/trail if the material spills onto those surfaces. Loose landscape rock is not permitted within Anoka County's right-of-way because of problems caused during mowing, with rocks on the roadway, vandalism, etc.
 - 3) The Municipality has the responsibility to trim all plantings and to maintain required sight distances and lines.

- 4) The Department's responsibility for landscape/streetscape restoration, after any County activity, shall be limited to topsoil, sod or seed. Restoration of specialty landscape/streetscape items, sidewalks and plantings shall be the responsibility of the City.
- 5) The Department prefers traffic control signage to be located between the sidewalk and curb in urban areas. Landscape/streetscape should not obstruct the view of signage.
- 6) Landscape/streetscape should make allowances for placement of future expansion of utilities within the right-of-way. Landscaping following the installation of utilities shall be replaced. The City shall be responsible to follow up on restoration with individual utilities.
- 7) Traffic control during maintenance of landscaping shall comply with MMUTCD for traffic control. Maintenance shall be done between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or after 7:00 p.m. and before sunset.

- Medians

- 1) In urban type construction, the Department will provide a concrete median finished as a broomed surface similar to standard walk at no cost to the Municipality. In rural areas either concrete medians, sod or seeded medians will be provided at no cost to the Municipality.
- 2) The Department will provide special hard surfacing as requested by the Municipality(s) involved, which will be bid as an alternate to standard concrete median. This will be done under the following conditions:
 - a) The Municipality must identify the alternates desired in writing to the Department.
 - b) The alternate cross section and special provision must be supplied in writing to the Department by the Municipality.
 - c) The alternate design must be submitted to the Department early in the design process and will not be added to the plans late in the design process. (This is to prevent major plan revision due to special median width dimensions.)
 - d) The Municipality must agree to maintain the alternate system from April 15 to November 1.
 - e) The Municipality shall provide proper traffic control in accordance with MMUTCD of the Uniform Manual on Traffic Control.
 - f) Alternates under this section shall be hard surfaced such as:
 - 1) brick pavers
 - 2) stamped colored concrete
 - 3) exposed aggregate concrete
 - 4) other alternates will be evaluated on a case by case basis
- 3) The Department can supply typical design standards for raised and depressed medians. Median drainage is a concern of the Department and should be discussed with the County Engineer. The Department's guideline does not allow planting trees within the median unless there is the minimum operational clear zone for the posted speed limit in both directions (see Operational Clear Zone).

- 4) The Department will include plantings in median areas wider than 10 feet under the following conditions:
 - a) Any hard surfacing behind the curb shall add to the minimum width of medians where plantings will be allowed. For example, if there are 2 feet of hard surface behind the curb on each side, the minimum median width will be 2 feet + 2 feet + 10 feet or 14 feet.
 - b) The Municipality shall pay for the design of the plantings, which will be accomplished by a consultant under the direction of the Department. The fee charged by the consultant shall be passed through to the Municipality as part of the joint powers agreement.
- 5) Plantings, in medians, including raised planting beds, shall not be higher than 3 feet from the bottom of the lowest adjacent curb gutter line, however, sight lines must still be maintained. Medians may be depressed up to two feet to allow for plantings. Plantings should be kept as far back from the face of curb possible to minimize disturbance due to snow plowing (see also Irrigation). If the Municipality proceeds with placing plantings within Anoka County right-of-way, then the Municipality has the responsibility to trim plantings to maintain sight lines.
- 6) The Municipality(s) shall be responsible to maintain all medians in which there are plantings from April 15 to November 1 of each year.
- 7) The Municipality(s) shall provide proper traffic control on accordance with Appendix B of the Uniform Manual on Traffic Control. Maintenance shall be done between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or between 7:00 p.m. and sunset.
- 8) If the Municipality(s) does not comply with this policy, the Department at anytime may remove all plantings and install hard surfacing in its place.

- **Noise Walls**

- 1) Minnesota Statutes 116.07 Subdivision 2a exempts roadways under County jurisdiction from the State Noise Standards unless the roadway has full access control. The Department will not provide noise walls on these types of roadways. However, the City may provide noise walls at their option if they meet the following conditions:
 - a) Additional right-of-way must be acquired if the right-of-way is less than 200' in width (100' on each side of centerline) where noise walls are to be installed.
 - b) Noise walls must be of type and style approved in advance by the Department and must be located 98' from the centerline of the roadway.
 - c) The City shall pay for 100% of the construction and maintenance of noise walls.
 - d) As an option to noise walls, see the section on berms.

- e) Roadway geometrics and driver sight distances shall be considered when installing noise walls. A report indicating adequate sight distances has been maintained is required for all access points along the noise walls. The report should consider all elements obstructing a driver's vision such as trees, shrubs, plantings/planters, structures, etc.

- **Operational Clear Zone**

- 1) To facilitate the safe operations and maintenance of a roadway facility, an operational clear zone is required. Encroachment into the operational clear zone causes safety and maintenance concerns.
- 2) The Department standard provides an operational clear zone of 6 feet from the face of curb where authorized-posted speeds are 35 miles per hour (MPH) or less. For speeds greater than 35 MPH up to and including 40 MPH, the Department standard provides a 10 foot operational clear zone. The required operational clear zone for speeds greater than 40 MPH shall be analyzed on an individual basis by the Department, but in no case will it be less than 10 feet. The clear zone will be determined by use of State Aid Rule 8820.9920 for rural sections, State Aid Rule 8820.9936 for urban sections and Mn/DOT Road Design Manual Chapter 4 Sections 4-6.04 through 4-6.05 latest revisions. The maximum clear zone shall be the one used for landscaping projects.

- **Right-of-Way**

- 1) Landscape/streetscape items within the County's right-of-way are reserved for the public and owned by the Municipality. The Department does not allow private enhancements within the County's right-of-way.

- **Sidewalks**

- 1) The Department recommends a sidewalk with a minimum 5 foot width, and prefers the sidewalk to be placed 10 feet from the face of curb to accommodate snow storage, in no case will the sidewalk be moved closer than 10 feet from the face of the curb to accommodate plantings within the right-of-way.

- **Signals, Signing and Other Traffic Control Devices**

- 1) All traffic control devices shall comply with MMUTCD.
- 2) For urban cross sections, the Department recommends traffic signs be placed at least 6 feet from the face of curb to the edge of sign. The location of utilities should be considered with regard to future sign placement. In areas where there is no sidewalk, clearance to the signage should be at least 6 feet from the curb or edge of shoulder to allow for maintenance and compliance with the MMUTCD.
- 3) Landscape/streetscape shall not obstruct the view of signage.

- 4) Traffic signals shall have the Department standard type and color. Any other color scheme requires prior review and approval by the Department and requires the Municipality to maintain the paint system at no cost to the Department. Lead based paint shall not be used. Paint must comply with current Mn/DOT specifications. Internally illuminated street signs shall be designed, paid for, and maintained by the City and must comply with the MMUTCD.

- **Snow Storage**

- 1) The Department requires minimum operational clear zones for safety, signs and snow storage along the side of the road based on the posted speed limit. The requirement of an operational clear zone for snow storage allows the Department to efficiently clear roads of snow and help maintain the road's traffic carrying capacity. Inadequate snow storage will reduce lane widths, adversely affect traffic handling capacity of the road and prevent trucks from using the partially blocked traffic lane. Roads that are not cleared of snow along the curb to the storm drain can also cause drainage problems when the snow melts.
- 2) The Department may require that the Municipality obtain an additional easement if there is inadequate snow storage available within the right-of-way as a result of landscape/streetscape structure placement. In areas where landscape/streetscape structures cause inadequate room to store snow off the road, the Municipality will be required to either move or haul away the snow (see Introduction for legal liability and maintenance requirements).

- **Street Lighting**

- 1) All street lighting on the county highway system is the responsibility of the Municipality. Street lighting must be functional and meet appropriate standards for illumination. Special consideration should be given to eliminating glare and shadows. Questions on street lighting should be referred to the County Engineer.

- **Trees**

- 1) Trees, in general, can obstruct the view of traffic signs and signals. Trees also prevent the sun from melting frost, snow and ice during the winter months. Prior to the placement of any tree, sight lines and shade patterns should be evaluated, that include consideration for fully mature trees and their canopies.
- 2) The Department standard does not allow the planting of trees on County right-of-way within the operational clear zone (see Operational Clear Zone).
- 3) Planting coniferous trees is discouraged within County's right-of-way. Coniferous trees provide too much shade when located on the southwest and east sides of a roadway and act as a snow fence which tends to blocks the driving lanes when located on the north and west sides of a roadway.

- 4) Tree grates in sidewalks or paved areas, unless properly installed and maintained, can be a hazard to pedestrians, people with disabilities, and snow removal operations, etc. The Municipality assumes all liability for the placement of any tree grates or other obstacles within the County's right-of-way.
- 5) Irrigation, if deemed necessary, should be limited to a trickle type system (see Irrigation).
- 6) The Department does not contribute to the replacement of any landscape/streetscape alteration as a result of any highway maintenance, modification or utility work.

- **Utilities**

- 1) Underground utilities that do not extend above the surface may be placed within the Department's operational clear zone. Above ground utilities, however, should be placed outside the Department's operational clear zone.

PERMITS

The Department's Permit Office shall be informed of and shall issue a permit for all construction activities or maintenance work within or affecting the County's road right-of-way. Prior to the start of work, the City shall apply for a permit on the form supplied by the Department. The application shall include a traffic control plan, hours of operation and any other information requested by the Department. Prior to beginning any work, the Department must approve traffic Control Plans and time of work. (Example: Parking in a traffic lane during rush hour is not allowed).