

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES	PART	ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
	SECTION	
	SUB-SECTION	

General

In our increasingly urbanized highway landscape, beautification of roadside areas has become of greater importance in developing areas.

Beautification can help relax tense drivers and overall make driving on the highway a more pleasurable experience, in addition to the positive environmental effects that result.

Landscaping includes vegetation, mulches, and irrigation systems.

Standard

No trees will be allowed as a part of landscaping projects in the highway right-of-way. Trees and large bushes/shrubs can become hazards to errant vehicles, and as such can be a safety concern and liability for the department.

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation may allow landscaping consisting of small shrubs and bushes (less than 100 mm base and 4 foot height at maturity), flowers and other well maintained horticultural displays at the backslope.

The landscaping must be crashworthy and not consist of large solid objects such as boulders or concrete sections. The expertise of landscaping professionals should be consulted to find out the typical shrub size for each species chosen for use.

An attempt shall be made to design all landscaping outside the clear zone because the exposure of maintenance workers to errant vehicles is a safety issue. Under no circumstances shall shrubs, trees, or other non-traversable objects be placed adjacent to the highway within the limits of the clear zone.

In the event that the area under consideration is located at the base of a traversable slope, the addition of vegetation must be on the backslope, not the foreslope (even if the foreslope extends beyond the limits of the clear zone).

A detailed project plan should be sent to Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation for review and approval. Approval is based on the review of a complete set of landscape plans. Landscaping work must conform to all local bylaws and provincial environmental regulations.

Applicants must include the following with their submission:

1. project data relating to location and contact information for the project;
2. plans drawn to scale and showing the necessary dimensions;
3. all proposed landscaping arrangements identified on the plans, and all plant types listed (including name, maximum size, and quantity);

4. locations of all utility lines within the limits of the proposed landscape area;
5. a comprehensive maintenance plan for all proposed landscaping;
6. Traffic Accommodation Strategy (TAS) for all proposed landscaping construction and maintenance activities to be conducted within the highway right-of-way; and
7. be signed and sealed by a registered landscape architect.

Landscape lighting in the highway right-of-way will not be permitted.

These guidelines apply to both urban and rural municipalities. Landscaping projects are limited to semi-urban and urban areas (i.e., inside and within the fringe areas of urban communities, where the adjacent development is sufficient to justify landscaping). According to this policy, highway beautification is prohibited at rural interchanges.

Guidelines for Placement

No bush, shrub or other landscaping material will be permitted in any location where it may interfere with highway safety or traffic visibility (including signs and other traffic control devices). Plants that might prove detrimental to safety, to the highway, or to adjacent property will not be permitted. Otherwise, the selection of plants is left to the discretion of the applicants. Experience has proven that indigenous plant material is more satisfactory.

Bushes, shrubs, or earthen mounds must not block the line of sight along the

roadway. If in the future a plant's growth obstructs the view of signs or interferes with the sight distances of approaching traffic, the department will require the applicant to remove, relocate, or prune the plants to eliminate this obstruction at the applicant's expense.

Bushes and shrubs must be placed outside the clear zone, in accordance with Table C5.2a in the Highway Geometric Design Guide. A bush or shrub that will attain a 100 mm base diameter at maturity must have the edge of its trunk outside the highway clear zone.

No bushes or shrubs will be allowed close enough to the road to allow root systems to undermine or damage any roadway structure at any time during the plant's life.

Irrigation

Irrigation systems for landscaping should be designed so that irrigation can be achieved without any system components encroaching on the highway right-of-way. The landscaping plan must detail provisions for the drainage of water used to irrigate in the right-of-way. Under no circumstances will water used to irrigate be allowed to spray onto the roadway.

Maintenance and Installation

The applicants (rural municipality or other) must furnish, install, and maintain all plantings. They will be responsible for coordinating with utility companies if any of the existing utility lines will require protection or relocation during the landscape construction or maintenance.

The applicants will be responsible for maintaining all vegetation that is a part of the landscaping. The department will not be responsible for providing water, fertilizer, weed removal, labor, materials, or maintenance for the landscaping in the right-of-way.

Maintenance must be carried out in accordance with Section 13 of the Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation (304/2002).

The department will exercise care in normal highway maintenance and construction to avoid unnecessary damage, but does not accept responsibility for the protection of plants and irrigation systems. If subsequent changes to the highway require the removal of plants, this must be done by the applicants.

References to Standards

<i>Highway Geometric Design Guide</i>	Section C.5 Roadside Design Table C5.2a Clear Zone Distances
<i>Use of Highway and Rules of the Road Regulation (304/2002)</i>	Section 13