

- 900.01 General
- 900.02 References
- 900.03 Legal Requirements
- 900.04 Roadside Classification Plan
- 900.05 Roadside Manual
- 900.06 Project Development
- 900.07 Documentation

## 900.01 General

It is Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) policy to employ roadside treatments for the protection and restoration of community and roadside character as designated in the *Roadside Classification Plan* (RCP) and described in the *Roadside Manual*. The roadside is the primary place used to blend transportation facilities into the context of the natural and built environment. WSDOT is committed to build highways in context with the environment, which is reflected in the Context Sensitive Solutions Executive Order (E 1028.00) and the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP).

The roadside provides many functions, including operational, environmental, visual, and auxiliary. The design should coordinate the many functions, such as visual elements (walls, lighting, signs, bridges, and so on), pedestrian movement, and stormwater treatment facilities, to work together to provide visual continuity in the highway corridor and fit into the context of the surrounding landscape.

Whenever a project disturbs or adds elements to the roadside, the policy requires that the project is responsible for restoring roadside functions. Tools to restore functions include architectural features (such as walls), contour grading, and vegetation. The extent of restoration is dependent upon the source of funding. [Exhibit 900-1](#) summarizes the policy found in the *Roadside Classification Plan*.

Funding	Restore Roadside Functions Beginning to End of Project – R/W Line to R/W Line	Restore Only Roadside Functions Impacted by the Project
Mobility (I1) Economic Development (I3)	X	
Safety Improvement (I2) Environmental Retrofit (I4) Preservation (P)		X
<p><b>Note:</b> For Mobility (I1) and Economic Development (I3) programs, the project is responsible for restoring the entire roadside from right of way line to right of way line and from beginning to end of project using the guidelines found in the RCP. For Preservation (P), Safety Improvement (I2), and Environmental Retrofit Program (I4) projects, the project is responsible for restoring roadside functions that are disturbed by the project using the guidelines found in the RCP.</p>		

**Funding Source Determines Extent of Restoration**  
*Exhibit 900-1*

## (1) Roadside and Roadside Functions

The *roadside* is the area outside the traveled way. This applies to all lands managed by WSDOT and may extend to elements outside the right of way boundaries. This includes unpaved median strips and auxiliary facilities such as rest areas; roadside parks, viewpoints, heritage markers, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, wetlands and their associated buffer areas; stormwater treatment facilities; park & ride lots; and quarries and pit sites.

The roadside is managed to fulfill operational, environmental, visual, and auxiliary functions. In reality, these functions are interrelated and inseparable. One element, such as vegetation, can provide multiple functions simultaneously. For example, vegetation provides erosion prevention, sediment control, and stormwater quality and quantity control, and it may provide distraction screening and screening of the road from the view of adjacent residents. Roadside functions are described in detail in the *Roadside Manual*.

The design of a roadside project incorporates site conditions, commitments, and the extent of need. Roadside development concepts covered elsewhere in the *Design Manual* include the following:

- Contour grading (see [Chapter 910](#))
- Fencing (see [Chapter 560](#))
- Irrigation (see [Chapter 930](#))
- Jurisdiction (see [Chapters 300, 1100, 1600](#))
- Noise barriers (see [Chapter 740](#))
- Retaining walls (see [Chapter 730](#))
- Roadside safety (see [Chapter 1600](#))
- Safety rest areas, parks, viewpoints, and historical markers (see [Chapter 1710](#))
- Signs (see [Chapter 1020](#))
- Traffic barriers (see [Chapter 1610](#))
- Vegetation (see [Chapter 920](#))

Also see the *Utilities Manual* and the *Utilities Accommodation Policy* for utility-related roadside issues.

## 900.02 References

### (1) Design Guidance

*A Guide for Transportation Landscape and Environmental Design*, AASHTO, 1991 (revision to be published 2009)

*Maintenance Manual*, M 51-01, WSDOT

*Roadside Classification Plan*, M 25-31, WSDOT

*Roadside Design Guide*, AASHTO, 2006

*Roadside Manual*, M 25-30, WSDOT

*Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington*, WSDOT, 2004

*Utilities Accommodation Policy*, M 22-86, WSDOT

*Utilities Manual*, M 22-87, WSDOT

## 900.03 Legal Requirements

### (1) Partial List of Legal Requirements

Following is a partial list of legal requirements relating to roadside work. Further laws, regulations, and policies can be found in the *Roadside Manual*. The *Roadside Classification Plan* and the *Roadside Manual* provide policy and guidance for the manner in which WSDOT implements these laws, regulations, and policies.

#### (a) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 23 Part 752

The “Highway Beautification Act” furnishes guidelines and prescribes policies regarding landscaping and scenic enhancement programs, safety rest areas, scenic overlooks, and information centers. Policy statement (a) states “highway esthetics is a most important consideration in the Federal aid highway program. Highways must not only blend with our natural social and cultural environment, but also provide pleasure and satisfaction in their use.”

☞ [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx\\_03/23cfr752\\_03.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_03/23cfr752_03.html)

#### (b) United States Code (USC) 23 319

On federal-aid highways, the costs are authorized for landscaping and roadside development, including acquisition and development of rest areas and land necessary for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty adjacent to such highways. ☞ <http://vlex.com/source/1022>

#### (c) Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.40.010

States that planting and cultivating of any shrubs, trees, hedges, or other domestic or native ornamental growth; the improvement of roadside facilities and viewpoints; and the correction of unsightly conditions upon the right of way of any state highway is declared to be a proper state highway purpose.

☞ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=47.40.010>

#### (d) RCW 47.40.020

Authorizes the department to expend funds for the purposes stated in RCW 47.40.010. ☞ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=47.40.020>

#### (e) RCW 47.40.040

Requires screening or removal of junkyards, located outside a zoned industrial area and within 1000 feet of the nearest edge of right of way, so they are not visible from the traveled way. The department is authorized to acquire land for screening these junkyards.

☞ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=47.41.040>

#### (f) Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act may apply to work in or near wetlands. The act requires a permit to discharge dredged or fill materials into most waters of the United States, including wetlands. The Section 404 permitting process requires advanced planning and coordination with the permitting agency, which is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Work with the region Environmental Office for guidance on the Section 404 permit. ☞ <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/wetlands/regs/sec404.html>

(g) **Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-270-040**

Requires the department to establish and maintain stable plant communities that resist encroachment by undesirable plants, noxious weeds, and other pests. It also requires a vegetation management plan that includes operational, aesthetic, and environmental standards.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-270-040>

(h) **WAC 468-34-340**

Requires utilities to repair or replace unnecessarily removed or disfigured trees and shrubs, and specifies vegetation management practices when utilities use highway right of way.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=468-34-340>

## 900.04 Roadside Classification Plan

The *Roadside Classification Plan* coordinates and guides the management of Washington's highway roadsides within a framework of roadside character classifications. It provides policy and criteria for roadside restoration and advocates the use of native plants, integrated vegetation management (IVM), and a long-term management approach to achieve sustainable roadsides.

## 900.05 Roadside Manual

The *Roadside Manual* establishes a common basis for consistent roadside management decisions statewide. It shows the links and coordination necessary between all WSDOT partners responsible for roadside activities.

It also establishes a convenient and accessible reference for new and previously unpublished material related to roadside management, including planning, design, construction, and maintenance. In addition, the manual supplements statewide roadside criteria established in the *Roadside Classification Plan*.

A partial list of topics discussed in the *Roadside Manual* includes:

- Federal, state, and departmental roadside law and policy.
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Safety rest areas and scenic byways.
- Roadside treatments such as erosion control, landform grading, soil bioengineering, wetland mitigation, and vegetation restoration.

For more information on roadside issues, see the *Roadside Manual*.

## 900.06 Project Development

The region Landscape Architect designs, supervises, has approval authority over, and stamps roadside restoration and revegetation plans, and is responsible for coordinating the visual elements within highway corridors. The region Landscape Architect also designs and supervises other roadside work, such as site design for park & ride lots or safety rest areas, to ensure roadside restoration is designed and constructed to WSDOT guidelines. The Landscape Architect is also responsible for visual discipline reports for environmental documentation. The Headquarters (HQ) Roadside and Site Development Section will provide roadside design, visual impact assessment, and construction inspection work for the Project offices in regions without a Landscape Architect.

There are typically two types of roadside restoration projects pertaining to vegetation related to roadway construction projects: regulatory and restoration.

### (a) Regulatory

The first type is work related to regulatory requirements. This work typically must occur at the time of impact to an identified resource in order to meet permit requirements. These aspects of the project will normally be a part of the roadway construction contract.

### (b) Restoration

The second type of project is the restoration of construction impacts to roadside functions to meet WSDOT policy requirements as outlined in the *Roadside Classification Plan*. The roadside restoration work should be evaluated to determine whether it will be most efficient as part of the roadway construction contract or as a separate stage contract. A separate stage contract provides the following opportunities because it would be done when road construction is completed:

- All impacts can be identified that may be different than anticipated during the original project design.
- The prime contractor can be someone who specializes in roadside work.

Plant establishment periods are typically included as part of roadside restoration. Regulatory aspects of projects can have up to 10 years of plant establishment to ensure the standards of success outlined in the permit. Roadside restoration projects typically have 3 years of plant establishment.

The Landscape Architect typically administers the project development phase of the contract with funding from the project.

## 900.07 Documentation

For the list of documents required to be preserved in the Design Documentation Package and the Project File, see the Design Documentation Checklist:

🔗 [www.wsdot.wa.gov/design/projectdev/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/design/projectdev/)

