

**Roadside Character Classification**

Roadside character was classified from the roadway user’s visual perspective of the landscape. Roadside character classifications fall within two categories: natural and built.

**Natural Character**

Natural character refers to a landscape in which vegetation and landforms are predominant. Human elements and structures are rare or insignificant in the overall context. Natural character includes the forest and open roadside character classifications.

**Forest**

The forest landscape is predominantly natural or naturalized forest.

A roadside classified as forest is characterized by natural-appearing landforms and native trees and/or understory vegetation. Zone 2 may be meadow.



**Forest Roadside Character**

**Open**

In the open landscape, sky and sweeping views prevail in a landscape of few or no trees, including prairie, steppe, desert, and agricultural fields.

A roadside classified as open is characterized by natural-appearing landforms and low-growing native vegetation or agricultural crops associated with adjacent farming.



**Open Roadside Character**

**Built Character**

Built character indicates a landscape in which human elements and structures are notable or predominant in the overall context. Built character includes the rural, semiurban, and urban roadside character classifications.

**Rural**

The rural landscape is characterized by intermixed built and natural or naturalized elements, with built elements beginning to encroach on the natural environment; human manipulations of the land are evident.

A roadside classified as rural is characterized by natural-appearing landforms and vegetation. Vegetation is predominantly native. Non-native vegetation may reflect historical land use. Zone 2 may be meadow or agricultural crops associated with adjacent farming. Character continuity is provided by uniform Zone 2 management.



**Rural Roadside Character**

**Semiurban**

The semiurban landscape is characterized by intermixed built and natural or naturalized elements, with built elements prevailing.

A roadside classified as semiurban is transitional in character. Vegetation is a combination of native and non-native species. Trees and large shrubs are predominant where sufficient right of way is available. Zone 2 may vary from mowed grass to low-maintenance vegetation. Roadside management is used to develop a consistent, informal, moderately-refined appearance in Zone 2. Structures are coordinated for visual continuity throughout the corridor.



**Semiurban Roadside Character**

**Urban**

The urban landscape is a predominantly built environment.

A roadside classified as urban is characterized by elements that mirror the character of adjacent land use. Vegetation is mostly non-native (ornamental) trees, shrubs, groundcover, with remnants of native vegetation. There is a consistent, refined appearance throughout all management zones. Structures are coordinated for visual continuity throughout the corridor. Special attention is given to architectural detail.



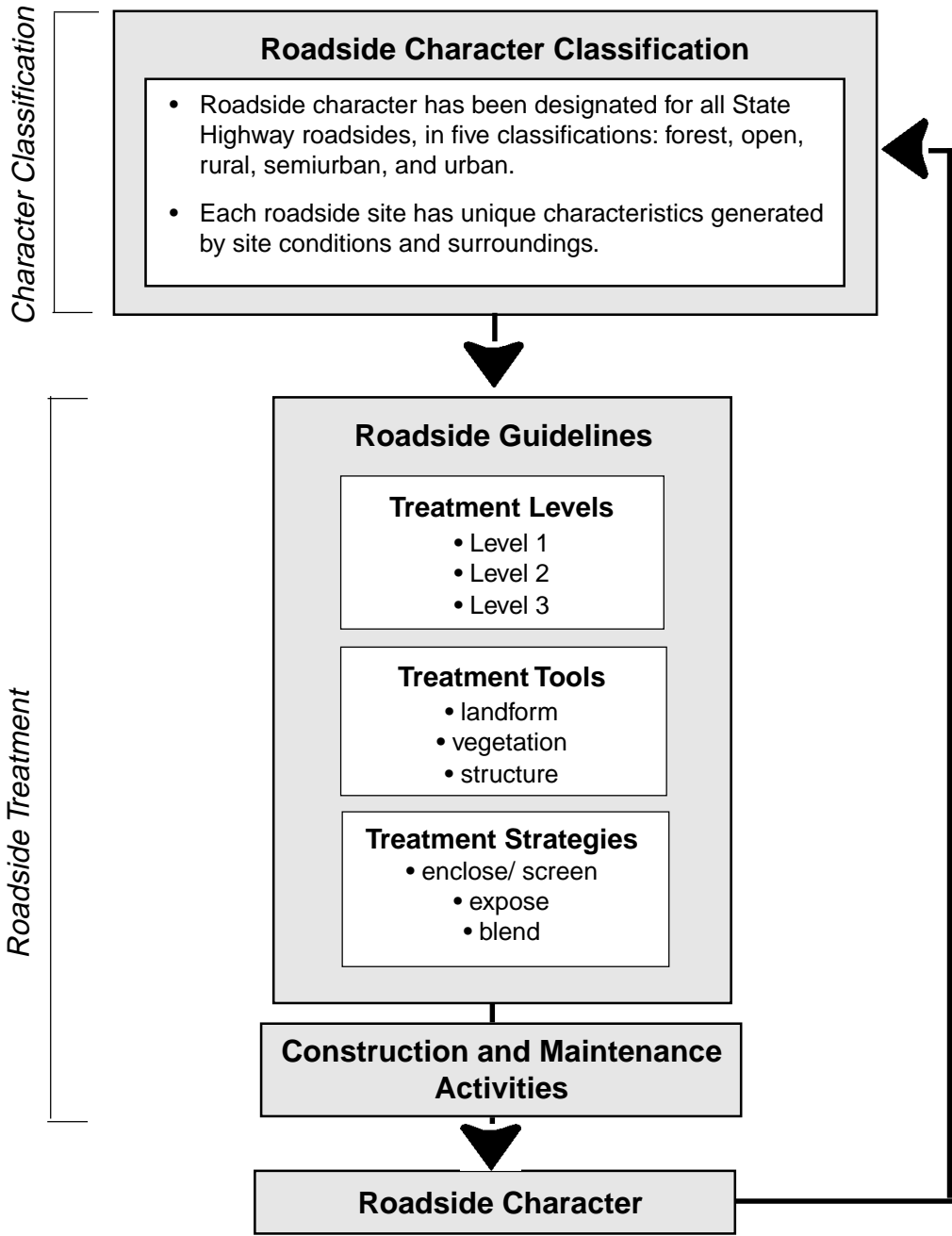
**Urban Roadside Character**

## **Roadside Character Segments**

A *roadside character segment* is a route or portion of a route distinguishable by one predominant roadside character. The WSDOT regions and Olympia Service Center have located, by milepost, the boundaries of roadside character segments along every Washington State highway. These roadside character segments are recorded in the *Roadside Classification Log* (see Appendices). Roadside character segment specifications are as follows:

- All roadside treatment within a segment is directed toward restoration of the designated roadside character. Restoration towards a more natural character category is appropriate.
- To minimize roadside character fragmentation, character segments are no less than 1.5 kilometers [0.9 mile] in length, with the following exceptions:
  1. Where a route passes through a small town, a roadside character segment of no less than 800 meters [.5 mile] may be designated. This allows the route within the town to be treated according to the town's unique character.
  2. A semiurban roadside character segment may be less than 1.6 kilometers [1 mile] in length if it is immediately next to an urban roadside character segment.
  3. Exception to the 1.5 kilometers [0.9 mile] length may be made in the vicinity of two intersecting roads if a shorter length is necessary to blend the two route corridors together, in keeping with the RCP objectives.
- If keeping roadside character consistent with the *Roadside Classification Log* is not achievable through planning, design, construction, and/or maintenance activities, then a revision to the *Log* is required. See "Revisions" in Chapter 2.

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Roadside Classification and Treatment

Figure 2

