

	STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES		POLICY AND PROCEDURE NUMBER 05.05.030	PAGE 1 of 8
	Policy and Procedure			EFFECTIVE DATE April 20, 2000
SUBJECT Beautification of the Highway Right of Way		SUPERSEDES		DATED
TITLE Design and Construction	CHAPTER Highways	APPROVED BY Signature on File		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in administering the provisions of 17 AAC 10.011(e), which states:

After the completion of construction of a highway, the department will, in its discretion, issue at no cost a beautification permit to a government agency, a municipality, an individual, or a non-profit organization to allow planting of trees, shrubs, grasses, or flowers within the highway right-of-way. A beautification permit will be issued on a form that the department prescribes. The department will, in its discretion, attach to a beautification permit any condition that is necessary to protect the integrity and safety of a highway's design, and to protect the traveling public or the persons planting trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers within the highway right-of-way. The department will, in its discretion, remove trees, shrubs, grasses, or flowers planted in a highway right-of-way under a beautification permit that become a hazard to the traveling public, interfere with a highway's maintenance or operation, interfere with construction on a highway, or threaten to damage a highway embankment.

POLICY

Roadsides are an important component of highway design, operation and maintenance. Well-designed and maintained roadsides are safe, easy to maintain, and aesthetically pleasing. It is the policy of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (Department) to assist applicants who wish to beautify certain roadsides within state highway rights-of-way in accordance with the provisions of 17 AAC 10.011(e).

Applicants must obtain a beautification permit from the Statewide Design and Engineering Services Division's (D&ES) Right of Way permits section in order to conduct any beautification work (see addresses below for application information).

PROCEDURE

A. Department Contacts

Regional offices of the D&ES Right of Way permits sections are responsible for coordinating review of beautification permit applications and issuing the permits.

The Alaska Scenic Byways program in the Division of Statewide Planning will provide technical assistance for grant applications, plant materials, and program promotion.

B. Funding

Other than issuing a permit at no charge, the Department will not provide funds to support a beautification permit, except if obtained through a grant for the purpose of purchasing plant materials (which may be made available at the discretion of the Director of the Division of Statewide Planning). Applicants are encouraged to seek federal enhancement funds for landscape projects (for more information, contact the Alaska Scenic Byways coordinator).

C. Process

Interested applicants should send a beautification permit application to the Department office nearest the proposed beautification site (addresses below). Applications are also available on the Department's website (see address below).

D. Application Review

A D&ES Right of Way permits section representative will coordinate the application review and issue the permit. As appropriate, planning, design, traffic/safety, right of way, utilities, construction and maintenance staff will review and comment on applications. The review will ensure that an area will be safe and properly designed and maintained, so that the roadside complements the operational function of the roadway. We will consider traffic volumes, speed, highway geometrics, and maintenance concerns in selecting appropriate permit sites. The Department has the discretion to determine whether or not to issue a permit based on these and other factors.

Regional Right of Way permits section representatives will forward a copy of each permit application to the Scenic Byways Coordinator, Statewide Planning, with the disposition of the application noted.

E. Program Guidelines

General

Beautification must complement and enhance safe highway travel. Wide hazard-free areas must be maintained within the right-of-way. Sight distances must be unobstructed. Changes to roadsides may not introduce slopes that are steeper than existing slopes and no abrupt slope changes may be introduced. Beautification may be permitted in the median.

Items installed under a beautification permit shall not restrict stopping and passing sight distance to less than the requirements given in the 1994 *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Intersection sight distance shall not be restricted to less than the “desirable” values given in the Driveway Standards section of the Alaska DOT&PF *Preconstruction Manual*. Plants must be installed and maintained so that they do not obstruct traffic signs.

Permanent irrigation systems are not permitted.

If workers, vehicles, or materials will be on the shoulder or within 15 feet (4.6 meters) of the edge of pavement during initial planting or on-going maintenance, the applicant must contact the Regional Traffic Engineer to determine whether a Traffic Control Plan is needed and, if so, what it should consist of. Traffic obstructions must be minimized, and no work may be conducted on the road itself. The applicant is responsible for preparing a Traffic Control Plan if one is required.

The Department will furnish the permittee safety vests for use during planting and maintenance if the vests are available and the permittee has arranged for their use in advance. Advance warning signs may be provided if the permittee is trained in their use.

Trees and Shrubs and Other Fixed Hazards

Trees and shrubs and other fixed hazards (collectively referred to as “fixed hazards”) are not allowed on controlled access facilities. Trees with trunk diameters at maturity of less than 4 inches (10 centimeters) are not considered fixed hazards. Fixed hazards must be offset from the road by at least the distance shown in the following table. Sight distance considerations will require greater clearances in some cases.

<i>Clearance Requirements for Fixed Hazards</i>		
Posted Speed Limit (mph)	<i>Curb</i>	<i>No Curb</i>
	Minimum Offset from face of curb (feet)/(m)	Minimum Offset from shoulder stripe (feet)/(m)
20	10/3	16/5
25	10/3	16/5
30	10/3	20/6
35	10/3	26/8
40	10/3	30/9
45	N/A	36/11
50	N/A	43/13
55	N/A	49/15
60	N/A	59/18
65	N/A	69/21

Fixed hazards may be placed closer than specified in the above table only where they are located behind:

1. a non-traversable ditch (see Chapter 1130 of the ADOT&PF PreConstruction Manual) at least 2 feet deep,
2. a 3:1 or steeper cut slope at least 4 feet high, or
3. a guardrail.

Where these conditions are met, fixed hazards may be installed no closer than 10 feet (3 meters) to the top of the cut slope or back of guardrail.

Ditches, slopes, guardrail, or curb and gutter may not be installed for the purpose of reducing the required clearance for fixed hazards.

No trees are allowed close enough to the road to allow root systems to undermine or damage any roadway structure, such as curb, sidewalk, or drainage components, at any time during the tree's life. A biological or physical root barrier system may be considered in extenuating circumstances.

Applicants should not use trees that may cause future operational or maintenance problems, such as:

1. Trees or shrubs that attract wildlife near the roadway, especially plants that attract moose.
2. Trees or shrubs with brittle or weak branches or trees that drop materials such as fruit, sap, or fluff.
3. Trees with forms that are unsuitable for street-planting situations.

For a list of recommended native trees and shrubs to plant along Alaska highways, contact:

Alaska Plant Materials Center, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, HC04 Box 7440, Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 745-4469

Alaska Urban and Community Forestry Council, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450, Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone (907) 269-8465 Fax 907-269-8921 Contact: Patricia Joyner

Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska-Fairbanks (see resources at end)

Grasses

Any use of grass should blend with existing roadside character, and require little or no maintenance. Native grass seed is preferred. Consideration should be given to grass height and its effect on sight distance. Applicants may not use grasses that may cause future operational or maintenance problems by attracting wildlife near the roadway. For grass seed suggestions and a list of Alaska retailers, contact:

Alaska Plant Materials Center, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, HC04 Box 7440, Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 745-4469

Directory of Alaska Native Plant Sources, Second Edition, Alaska Plant Materials Center -- January, 2000.

Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska-Fairbanks (see resources at end)

Flowers

Native forbs (wildflowers) are recommended in landscape designs. Applicants may use non-native ornamental plants. Consideration should be given to plant height at maturity and its effect on sight distance. Applicants may not use plants that may cause future operational or maintenance problems by attracting wildlife near the roadway. Plants that discourage wildlife foraging near the roadway are recommended.

For information on native plant species and the use of native plants in landscaping, contact:

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Avenue, Austin, TX 78739-1702 (512) 292-4200 www.wildflower.org

Alaska Plant Materials Center, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, HC04 Box 7440, Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 745-4469

Directory of Alaska Native Plant Sources, Second Edition, Alaska Plant Materials Center -- January, 2000.

Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska-Fairbanks (see resources at end)

Resources

Alaska Cooperative Extension Service - University of Alaska Fairbanks

District Offices

Anchorage District 279-5582
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 118
Anchorage, AK 99508-4140

Bethel District 543-4555
Box 556, Kuskokwim Campus,
Yupik Language Center Bldg
Bethel, AK 99559

Delta Junction District 895-4215
PO Box 349, Jarvis Building
Delta Junction, AK 99737

Fairbanks/Tanana District 452-1530
1255 Airport Way, Suite 203
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Juneau District 465-8749
1108 "F" Street, Suite 130
Juneau, AK 99801

Ketchikan District 225-3290
2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 210A
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Kodiak District 486-6369
202 Center Street, Suite 206
Island Insurance Building
Kodiak, AK 99615

Nome/Northwest District 443-2320
Box 400, Northwest Community College
Nome, AK 99762

Palmer/Copper River/Mat-Su District 745-3360
809 South Chugach Street, Suite 2
Palmer, AK 99645

Palmer Research Center 746-9467
533 E. Fireweed
Palmer, AK 99645

Sitka District 747-6065
700 Katlian Street, Suite D
Sitka, AK 99835

Soldotna/Kenai District 262-5824
34824 K-Beach Road, Suite A
Soldotna, AK 99669-9728

State Offices

Anchorage State Office 279-6575
2221 E. Northern Lights Boulevard, Suite 118
Anchorage, AK 99508-4140

Anchorage State Office 276-2433
Community Development Program
2221 E. Northern Lights Boulevard, Suite 132
Anchorage, AK 99508-4140

Fairbanks State Office 474-7246
University of Alaska Fairbanks
ACE Building
P.O. Box 756180
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6180

Department Offices

Beautification permits may be obtained at the following Department offices:

Central Regional Office
Statewide Design and Engineering Services Division
Right of Way Section
4111 Aviation Avenue
P.O. Box 196900
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900

Northern Regional Office
Statewide Design and Engineering Services Division
Right of Way Section
2301 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709-5316

Southeast Regional Office
Statewide Design and Engineering Services Division
Right of Way Section
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, AK 99801-7999

Or, on the internet, at:

http://www.dot.state.ak.us/external/state_wide/dnc/eos.d/row/row.html

AUTHORITY

AS 19.05.020, AS 19.05.070, AS 19.25.200, and 17 AAC 10.011(e).

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

Statewide Design and Engineering Services Division, Right of Way permits sections, and Statewide Planning Division, Alaska Scenic Byways program, in cooperation with other functional groups within the Department.

DISTRIBUTION

All holders of the Policy and Procedure Manual