

ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT AND WAYSIDE AREAS - MAINTENANCE

By

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Types and Purposes

A wayside may be a widened shoulder at a historical marker, or it may assume the proportion of a small park. It may serve the traveling public as an outlook, as a picnic area, or for other opportunities for rest and enjoyment. It may serve the highway department as a storage space for emergency road material. It may serve in a passive capacity by merely preserving and protecting a section of natural beauty, a group of virgin timber, or the shore line of a beautiful lake or river. Whether it serves an active or passive purpose or a dual capacity in benefitting both the traveling public and the highway department, it is a public area and must at all times be maintained in a clean and orderly condition.

Safety Consideration

It is a problem to maintain yesterday's construction under to-day's traffic. Highway safety is of paramount importance, and is growing more so each day. Anything that we can do to eliminate hazardous conditions is our prime duty. It is estimated that 60 per cent of our traffic is of a recreational nature. Our people are using the highways for their playground. This type of traffic is not content to keep moving; it seeks places for rest and sport, opportunities to enjoy the scenery. It must stop at vantage points to take in scenic vistas, and it must have facilities for parking, picnicking and for other recreational features which comprise the day's itinerary. If we do not furnish highway travelers with adequate accommodations for safe stopping and parking off the traveled way, they will park on the road shoulder or pavement, endangering their own lives and the lives of others as well.

We can stock emergency supplies along our roadsides, hit or miss, or we can consolidate them in orderly piles; we can go further and locate them out of sight of the traveled way where they will not become a jarring note in the landscape, providing we have adequate right-of-way. We can go further and make the driveway leading to the stock pile serve a dual purpose by also being an entrance to a parking area. Still more, we can provide picnic tables, fire-places, comfort stations and drinking water, providing funds are available and there is sufficient justification for the expenditures expressed in public demand.

### Limitations

On main roads traffic surveys may reveal the relative volumes of commercial and recreational traffic using them. A careful study will also show to what extent recreational traffic, or in fact commercial traffic, takes advantage of scenic vistas, wayside springs and picnicking places that fall within the public right-of-way. However, it is only in the more recent right-of-way acquisitions that right-of-way widths are sufficient to accommodate these extra facilities. It is not always possible to obtain extra right-of-way for these so-called nonfunctioning highway activities; yet they are creating hazardous conditions which can and must be controlled.

Unless such areas are carefully designed and properly constructed, they become unwieldy in their upkeep.

### Trends

It is safe to assume that recreational traffic is going to increase rather than decrease. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that the annual increase of recreational traffic is about 10 per cent. It is also safe to assume that as recreational traffic increases there will be increasing demand for more recreational opportunities. Therefore, if these wayside areas are to be provided as a part of the highway program and cared for from maintenance funds, more consideration must be given to the selection of the site and the design of the development in advance of construction.