

REPORT of SPECIAL TASK COMMITTEE  
PLANNING and MANAGEMENT of ROADSIDE VEGETATION

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Over a considerable period of time, policies have been formulated and articles written regarding the many aspects of roadside development which are related to the preservation of existing trees and shrubs along highways and the planting of trees and shrubs in special locations. This committee has endeavored to assemble these recommendations in the form of a comprehensive report. It has been prepared for use by all who are engaged with administering roadside development, designing plantings for highway roadsides, or who may have need for applying the principles of planting design to the maintenance of roadside vegetation.

Neither the methods nor the degree of roadside development is the same in all states. They often differ even within the same state. The experience of people who direct such work varies also, just as there is a variation in financial conditions, geographical conditions, climatic conditions, and traffic conditions. The report therefore does not attempt to tell how any particular work should be done but rather to present a series of statements regarding the generally recognized objectives. Guiding principles may then be adapted to local conditions wherever they are considered appropriate either with relation to existing or proposed vegetation.

Following a statement of these objectives is a series of considerations that apply in general terms to highways everywhere. They embrace such topics as the relationship of woody vegetation to highways according to their volumes of traffic, how vegetation may be used to guide traffic movements, what influence vegetation has on the use and value of lands adjacent to highways, and something about the control of vegetation on highway property from a legal standpoint.

The next subdivision provides a series of considerations which apply solely to special situations. They include such subjects as the relationship of vegetation to a highway cross section and to structures, its use in controlling erosion and snow drifting or obscuring headlight glare, and the general principles of using plantings in urban areas, at highway intersections, and at wayside developments.

The succeeding portion of the report is being submitted at this meeting. It is the final chapter on the phase of designing vegetation for roadsides. It discusses methods of doing the work. This may be by a public agency or delineated by a public agency for execution by others. There follows an explanation of dealing with contractors, the kinds of working drawings which have been found desirable for roadside development, an enumeration of the qualities to be stipulated with regard to different materials, and a description of methods which are in common use for achieving the designer's intentions.

Although much of this subject matter on specifications has been assembled on the basis that consulting engineers may be engaged to do the planning or the supervision, or that general contractors or specialized landscape contractors may do all

the work, the intention has been to provide a check list which could equally serve as a guide to a public works agency which does all of the planning, buys its own materials and does the work with its own forces.

An objective in compiling all of these data has been to present guiding principles insofar as it is possible to formulate them. Additional experience and research will undoubtedly continue on many subjects, such as screening the noise of traffic, reducing headlight glare and more accurately evaluating trees along the roadsides. When new principles are found, they may be added to the ones which have been assembled according to their respective subject matter and thus keep the text progressive. Also it is difficult to evolve a range of guiding remarks that apply to all kinds of highways, all soils, all climates and all other local conditions without errors or omissions. Therefore when the report is released, it should be the continuing duty of the committee to receive and incorporate the constructive recommendations of authorities and the findings of those who use the report.

The chapters on construction and maintenance are planned for submission at a later date. They will conclude the basic report on the planning and management of roadside vegetation.

The unabridged reports on planning and management of roadside vegetation, presented at the 1953 and 1954 annual meetings, are being combined and prepared for distribution at an early date. Copies will be available from the Highway Research Board upon request.