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APPROVED:  DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER, (Facilities Design Division)	Date: <u>6/29/87</u> Supersedes:	

This Engineering Instruction transmits the Department's Planting Policy.

This policy addresses the importance of planting in transportation projects, consolidates in one document the Department's current planting practices, and requires documentation of the many considerations landscape architects make when incorporating planting in a project. In addition to defining conditions where planting is justified, the policy requires that maintenance responsibilities be considered during design to assure that the investment is protected.

The policy requires documented accountability for decisions related to planting, and is effective immediately.

The contents of this instruction will be incorporated into the next revision of Chapter 17 of the Highway Design Manual.

Preliminary
 Plan Review Bureau
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PLANTING POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

Transportation projects result in positive and negative impacts on the natural and man-made environment. The Department is mandated by both State and Federal environmental laws to assess the impacts that its projects will have on the natural, visual, social, and cultural environments. In addition, FHWA policy recognizes that "aesthetics is a most important consideration in the Federal-aid program" and that finished projects "must provide pleasure and satisfaction in their use".

Plantings are an important and integral element in the process of minimizing and mitigating impacts on natural, cultural, social and visual environments and in satisfying aesthetic concerns.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Transportation to provide appropriate planting on transportation projects. Plantings shall be included in Department projects when they serve one or more of the following objectives:

1. Satisfy permit requirements or state and federal laws.
2. Satisfy any agreement between the Department and a municipality or other agency.
3. Satisfy local community zoning or planning requirements and/or objectives.
4. Mitigate impacts or effects identified in environmental or project development documents, e.g. provide plantings to mitigate removal of existing vegetation, etc.
5. Serve specific functions, e.g. provide erosion control, reduce headlight glare into adjacent properties, indicate highway alignment changes, provide snowdrift control, reduce roadside maintenance, etc.

6. Integrate the transportation facility into its surroundings by softening or screening views to and from the facility and moderating visual impacts of noise walls, retaining walls, and similar features, etc.

III. PROCEDURES FOR INCLUDING PLANTING IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Regional Landscape Architect (RLA) will coordinate all anticipated planting with regional planning, design and maintenance personnel from the inception of transportation projects.

The RLA will coordinate an inventory and evaluation of the existing vegetation on a project's site; including location, type, species, age, and condition and how the plant material relates to individual properties and to the character and quality of the project area.

The RLA will evaluate the identified impacts that proposed projects have on the natural and man-made environments and shall make recommendations for planting.

The recommendations shall identify the specific design objectives of the proposed planting, planting costs and proposed plant maintenance responsibilities .

The recommendations and supporting documentation shall be included in the PIR and subsequent design reports.

IV. DESIGN DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

A. Planting designs shall be consistent with the Department's Vegetation Management Policy as presented in the following documents prepared by the Landscape Architecture Bureau:

- A GUIDE FOR THE DETERMINATION OF MOWING LIMITS
- A GUIDE FOR APPLYING PESTICIDES ALONG STATE HIGHWAYS
- A GUIDE FOR LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT
- A GUIDE FOR MANAGING VEGETATION ALONG STATE HIGHWAYS

B. The planting shall be in general conformity with accepted concepts and principles of highway landscaping and environmental design as shown in HDM Chapter 17, AASHTO'S " A GUIDE FOR HIGHWAY LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN " and other guidance from the Director of the Landscape

V. MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Maintenance of planting is essential in assuring the proper appearance of roadsides and in assuring that plantings continue to satisfy their intended purposes. The following guidelines should be observed in relation to planting maintenance.

1. Turf (or other erosion control plantings) shall be provided as needed on all projects and no formal maintenance resolution is required.
2. Tree and shrub planting proposed to mitigate project impacts on residential, commercial and industrial properties should be, when possible, located on the affected properties with permission from the property owner (use Form HC91 PERMISSION TO PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS).
3. Tree, shrub and vine plantings proposed to mitigate impacts on public properties, other than the highway right-of-way, should only be provided if the governmental unit or agency owning the property formally agrees to maintain such plantings. The maintenance responsibility of such planting should be specifically included in the maintenance agreements executed for the project.
4. Plant species selection and planting designs should reflect consideration of the equipment, capabilities and horticultural expertise of the maintaining organization.
5. The maintenance responsibilities for plantings at transportation related facilities (eg. Park & Ride, TSM , commuter, and railroad station parking lots, rest areas, etc.) shall be documented as follows:
 - a) When it is determined that a municipality or other agency will assume maintenance responsibility for the facility, the maintenance of the planting should be included in the maintenance resolution.

or

 - b) When the Department will provide the maintenance of the plantings, the proposed planting should

be discussed with the Regional Highway Maintenance Engineer (RHME) during design development. The RHME will indicate acceptance of the landscape maintenance responsibilities by signing the contract plans.

VI. PARTICIPATION BY OTHERS

Highway planting accomplished under permit by other agencies and/or the private sector is:

encouraged as a welcome supplement to Department planting.

Required as mitigation for disruption caused by public or private projects (including utilities) constructed within the R.O.W.

The RLA should review proposed planting to be financed and maintained by others to assure that it is consistent with Department planting guidelines and procedures and is coordinated with existing or proposed planting.

Work permits are required for these planting and plant maintenance activities.

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