



Guidelines for Landscaping Within TxDOT's Right of Way Limits

The use of plants in the right of way must always be considered in the context of the important role of safe and maintainable transportation corridors. TxDOT is required to use regionally appropriate plants in highway right of way beautification effort.

Below are some of the important guidelines necessary to observe while preparing a landscape plan on TxDOT right of way.

LANDSCAPE

- TxDOT right of way areas shall receive ¾" to 1 ½" size rock with an underlayment of 30 mil woven polypropylene or approved equal.
- Increase rock size when placed on steep slopes or on a swale/ ponding area.
- Rock color vary depending on corridor or area theme color.
- Place rock at 1" minimum below top of adjacent concrete or other paved areas.
- Trees to have a maximum of 4" trunk diameter at maturity. A multi-trunk tree to have a combined 4" trunk caliper at maturity.
- Select plant species that have demonstrated an ability to not just survive but to thrive in the stressful conditions of the roadside environment.
- Selected plants should fit with in the intended location without impairing safety or maintenance access when their mature size is attained.
- Plants must not obscure any unyielding structure within the clear zone.
- Avoid using plants that are known to attract and harbor damaging insects that are not easily controlled. Examples include but are not limited to: *Euonymus (scale)- *Ehotinia (aphids)- *non-native holly (aphids and scale).
- Avoid using plants that are considered noxious or invasive. Examples include but are not limited to: *Cottonwood - *Chinese tallow- *Chinaberry- *Hackberry
- Avoid planting trees or plants that are weak wooded or that routinely generate excessive limb fall and provide potential hazard to traffic or become projectiles during mowing operations.
- Plants that produce large or popular fruits are not suitable for the roadside since they may entice pedestrians to use as projectiles. Examples include but are not limited to:
*Pomegranate, *Persimmon- *Fruiting Plums or Pears- *Pecan- *Bois d'arc

PLANT MATERIAL IN RELATIONSHIP TO VISIBILITY

- Provide and maintain open visibility in all directions. Maintain vegetation at an appropriate eye level sight line height to allow open visibility in all directions for vehicles exiting the property onto a travel lane.
- Visibility within intersections is always a primary goal. Plant use within intersections must be limited to low growing varieties.
- Do not plant trees with a mature 4" trunk caliper or greater within the clear zone.
- Plants or trees shall not interfere with existing structures or a utility box.

PLANT MATERIAL IN RELATIONSHIP TO STRUCTURES

- Do not place trees where their mature height or spread will interfere with overhead utilities or encroach onto travel lanes. Trees/plants should not be placed where foliage may intrude to within 10 feet of the travel lane of elevated roadways and bridges.
- Do not place trees or plants near storm water structures (drainage structures) as they may inhibit maintenance and lead to excessive hand maintenance. Keep trees at least 20 feet from headwall and culverts to allow maintenance access.
- Do not place plants or trees with the potential of blocking a sign or in front of the face of any sign.
- Plants should not be placed any closer to a wall structure for example a sound wall or retaining wall than half the expected mature spread of the plant.

PLANT MATERIAL IN RELATIONSHIP TO SAFETY

- Avoid situations that would require personnel and equipment to be on the driving lane side or on shoulders of traffic lane.
- Allow a minimum of 3 feet clear space between the back of curb and any area to be maintained by maintenance personnel (and the equipment) to stand well clear of moving traffic.

CLEAR-ZONE – Clear-zone is the unobstructed, traversable area provided beyond the edge of the through traveled way for the recovery of errant vehicles. Such recovery areas should be clear of unyielding objects where practical or shielded by crash cushion or barrier.

All urban curbed roadways with speed limit \leq 45 mph

- Trees shall have a desirable 8'-0" set back from back of concrete curb to edge of mature (4" caliper) tree trunk.
- Shrubs to have a minimal of 3' setback from back of concrete curb to edge of mature shrub foliage to allow maintenance personnel (and the equipment) to stand well clear of moving traffic.
- Proposed parkways or landscape areas to be at a desirable width of 15 feet to allow planting of trees past the 8' set back which will allow root development and to prevent tree limbs or foliage encroachment on to the travel lane.

- Do not plant trees on a parkway in the right of way that does not meet the clear-zone requirement.

All urban curbed/uncurbed roadways with speed limit \geq 45 mph with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) >16,000.

- Place trees at a minimum of 20' or at a desirable \blacklozenge 30' set back from back of concrete curb or edge of travel lane to edge of mature tree trunk.

All urban curbed/uncurbed roadways with speed limit \geq 45 mph with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) 12,000-16,000.

- Place trees at a minimum of 15' or at a desirable \blacklozenge 25' set back from back of concrete curb or edge of travel lane to edge of mature tree trunk.

All urban curbed/uncurbed roadways with speed limit \geq 45 mph with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) 8,000-12,000.

- Place trees at a minimum of 10' or at a desirable \blacklozenge 20' set back from back of concrete curb or edge of travel lane to edge of mature tree trunk.

All Urban uncurbed roadways with speed limit \leq 45 mph

- Trees shall have a minimal 10'-0" set back from edge of travel lane to edge of mature (4" caliper) tree trunk.
- Proposed parkways or landscape areas to be at a desirable width of 15 feet to allow planting of trees past the 10' set back to allow the recovery of errant vehicles.

\blacklozenge Desirable, rather than minimum, values should be used where feasible.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM

- Place Irrigation meter outside the TxDOT right of way.
- Place an irrigation system for proposed landscape on TxDOT right of way whenever feasible and to establish vegetation. Irrigation system in the right of way may be disconnected from the main water source once vegetation is established and can thrive with in its natural low water habitat and/or rain cycles.
- If placement of vegetation consists of cacti material, succulents or native desert plants, an irrigation system may be omitted in the right of way. Hand water if feasible until plant has established and can thrive with rainwater cycles.

BOULDERS

- Place boulders or boulder schemes at 12' min or 25' max as applicable set back from edge of boulder to back of concrete curb or pavement edge.
- Boulder size to be a maximum of 24" in diameter.