

Memorandum

To: DESIGN MANAGEMENT BOARD
DISTRICT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Date: June 1, 2021



From: ELBERT COX
Deputy Division Chief
Landscape Architecture Program
Division of Design

Subject: **PLANTING POLICY**

This memorandum replaces the Caltrans Maximum Costs for Planting and Water Assessment policy as stated in the Project Development Procedures Manual (PDPM) Revised 5/24/18, Chapter 29 – Landscape Architecture, Section 2 Highway Planting, Article 1 Definitions, General Policy, and Programs, General Policy – Maximum Costs for Planting and Water Assessment, Maximum Cost per Acre for Planting, and Maximum Water Assessment Fee Limit. Additionally, this memorandum modifies the PDPM - Chapter 29 Landscape Architecture, Section 2 Highway Planting, Article 1 Definitions and General Policy.

Roadsides are to be designed to be context-sensitive, appropriate for the project location, setting, adjacent land uses, and public expectations. The design must be consistent with any Permit, License, Agreement, and Certification (PLAC) requirements. Costs will vary by project to meet the minimum expectations outlined below. Warranted planting is described in the PDPM - Chapter 29 Landscape Architecture, Section 2 Highway Planting, Article 1 General Policy – for Freeways, Controlled Access Highways, and Expressways. Minimum expectations for warranted planting areas are as follows:

Planting: The planting design for the tree canopy and ground plane is expected to meet the criteria of "good condition" as defined in the current version of the State Highway System Management Plan. For specific design requirements, refer to the Highway Design Manual (HDM) Topic 904 – Planting Design.

- Tree Canopy - Prepare canopy cover calculations using an estimated 15 years of tree growth. The District Landscape Architect may adjust the minimum canopy cover as needed.
- Ground Plane - Acceptable ground plane coverage material may include plants, such as shrubs, groundcover, or grasses, and/or permanent inert groundcover such as rock mulch, rock blanket, and/or

permanent design elements required to meet maintenance, aesthetic or PLAC requirements.

- Include planting for graffiti control where appropriate. This may include planting vines on walls. See HDM 904.7.

Irrigation: Refer to the HDM 901.2(6) Water and Resource Conservation and Topic 905 – Irrigation Design. Include a new or rehabilitated irrigation system. Irrigation system rehabilitation includes the replacement of all irrigation facilities not in “good condition” as defined in the current version of the State Highway System Management Plan.

Plant Establishment: Refer to the HDM section 904.9 and the Caltrans Construction Contract Standards – Standard Specifications, section 20-4 Plant Establishment Work for minimum plant establishment requirements. To achieve construction contract acceptance at the completion of plant establishment, planting will be in good condition and irrigation infrastructure operable and in good condition.

Water Conservation: All projects that include warranted planting must follow the requirements in the PDPM, Chapter 29, Section 2, Construction Contract Submittal for Advertisement – Water Conservation Requirements for Planting Work, to ensure that additional water conservation actions are followed.

Roadside Maintenance Worker Safety: In addition to the minimum expectations listed above, infrastructure for worker safety may also be required, including but not limited to, contrasting surface treatment paving beyond gore areas, slope paving, stairs on slope, off-pavement access, access gates, removal or relocation of elements and barriers placed to limit worker and equipment exposure. Consult with the District Landscape Architect, and District Maintenance Representative for required worker safety improvements.

Required Review Schedule: The landscape design and implementation will be reviewed by the District Landscape Architect, and District Maintenance Representative at the following milestones or phases:

- Project Initiation
- Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED)
- 35% Conceptual Design
- 60% Design
- 95% Plans, Specifications & Estimate
- Ready-to-List

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- Construction review and walk-throughs at irrigation layout and prior to Plant Establishment
- Final Plant Establishment walk-through (prior to Construction Contract Acceptance)

Implementation: Projects with PA&ED after the date of this memorandum must follow this policy.

Exceptions to this policy will be reviewed and approved/denied by the Headquarters Landscape Architecture program if the District Landscape Architect determines the minimum planting and irrigation requirements are not met.

This memorandum will expire when the PDPM, Chapter 29 – Landscape Architecture – ‘Caltrans Maximum Costs for Planting and Water Assessment Policy’ has been updated.

If you have questions, please contact Lori Butler, Office Chief, Division of Design – Landscape Architecture Support and Planning, at (916)654-4814 or at <Lori.Butler@dot.ca.gov>.

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