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100.01 Purpose

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has developed the *Roadside Manual* to provide coordination between all WSDOT partners responsible for roadside activities, and to establish a common basis for consistent roadside management decisions statewide. It also establishes a convenient and accessible reference for new and previously unpublished material related to roadside management including planning, design, construction, and maintenance. In addition, the manual supplements statewide roadside guidelines established in the *Roadside Policy Manual*.

100.02 General

Roadsides are an important component of highway design, operation, and maintenance because of the operational, environmental, visual and auxiliary functions they provide. Properly designed and maintained, roadsides complement the functions of the roadway, integrate the roadway facility into the surrounding landscape and provide a positive psychological effect on vehicle occupants.

Almost one-third of fatal accidents are single vehicle run-off-the-road accidents. Recognition of this fact has led to roadway, traffic barrier, sign, and lighting standard designs that can reduce the seriousness of roadside encroachments. Roadsides can have a significant effect on errant-vehicle occupant safety. Refer to the *Design Manual* for guidance on roadway and roadside safety design.

Roadsides include virtually every habitat type that occurs in Washington State. They provide for native plant preservation and revegetation, habitat for animal species, and opportunities for stormwater storage and aquifer recharge.

In addition, there is increasing scientific evidence that roadsides can have a psychological effect on vehicle occupants. Nature-dominated roadsides may relieve drive-related stress and may have an immunizing effect on reaction to future drive-related stresses. The inverse has also been shown to be true: drives dominated by human development can increase drive-related stress. These research findings have important implications for management of roadsides. Roadsides are important for both physical safety of, and psychological impact on vehicle occupants.

100.03 Definitions

The roadside is the area outside the traveled way. This applies to all lands managed by WSDOT and may extend to elements outside the right of way boundaries. This includes unpaved median strips and auxiliary facilities such as rest areas, roadside parks, viewpoints, heritage markers, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, wetlands and their associated buffer areas, stormwater treatment facilities, park and ride lots, and quarries and pit sites.

100.04 Format

This manual is organized around a framework of roadside functions: operational, environmental, visual and auxiliary. Each of these functional areas has relevance to planning, design, construction, and maintenance personnel.

To avoid unnecessary duplication, existing WSDOT roadside publications have been outlined, referenced, or transferred to this manual.

Each division in this manual includes the following:

- Resources, including related published material and who to contact for more information.
- Definitions of technical terms specific to the division's subject matter. These and other definitions are also found in the glossary.
- Procedures for accomplishing roadside projects, including coordination and communication procedures, schedules, and required actions. Most chapters include a list of recommended procedures for each subject area.

100.05 Revisions

This manual will continue to present the best and most up-to-date information available. It is vital that you, the user, participate in the revision process by using the form provided at the front of the manual to report flaws and to contribute new material.