

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

LOCATION AND DESIGN DIVISION

INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

GENERAL SUBJECT: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE PROGRAM	NUMBER: IIM-LD-253.1
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: INTEGRATION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES AND EXPERTISE	DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2014
	SUPERSEDES: IIM-LD-253
APPROVAL:	B. A. Thrasher, P.E. State Location and Design Engineer Approved December 18, 2014

Changes are shaded.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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- This memorandum is effective upon receipt.
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BACKGROUND

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- The intent of this IIM is to provide statewide staff an overview of the functional responsibilities of the Regional Landscape Architects (RLA) and how these responsibilities fit within the Department's Project Development Process.
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PURPOSE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL (L.A.) IMPROVEMENTS AND MITIGATION

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- "Landscape architectural improvements are important to enhance the visual quality of roads, mitigate environmental impacts and maintain quality of life for communities."
 - The term "landscape architecture" in context with transportation improvements is necessary to integrate context sensitive solutions into the design development process to help mitigate the impacts of transportation projects on the adjacent communities and on the environment. In most cases this means development of a landscape plan to mitigate the visual impacts of roadway development and improvements but can also enhance the environmental and visual quality of a community and traffic calming. Proposed improvements should consider recommendations for Context Sensitive Design such as:

- adjustment of cut and fill slopes to better fit the existing adjacent land use and to preserve existing vegetation where practicable
 - enhancement or protection of existing scenic view sheds
 - decorative sidewalks, median treatments, crosswalks, pedestrian lighting (streetscape)
 - inclusion of street furniture (benches, seat walls, trash receptacles, etc.)
 - incorporation of aesthetically pleasing components on traffic calming features, such as a decorative truck aprons on roundabouts
 - utilization of architectural treatments for retaining walls, sound barrier walls and bridges
 - utilization of special signage for shared use path facilities
 - trailhead facilities, safety fencing and other enhancements for shared use paths
 - planting plans for bio-retention, enhanced extended stormwater detention basins, and areas immediately surrounding stormwater management facilities
 - restoration/mitigation of negative impacts to tree populations which combine to form the urban and rural forest canopies along public rights-of-way
- In all cases, the specific mix of improvements must be related to the context of the project, the needs and desires of the affected localities and communities, the specific nature of project impacts, and maintenance and budget constraints.
 - Proposed mitigation measures should remain within the proposed preliminary engineering project limits and should also consider future maintenance needs and associated budgetary constraints.
 - The consideration of landscape architectural improvements is recognized as an essential component of transportation projects as communities increasingly request the inclusion of these improvements due to the heightened awareness of the values and benefits associated with their use.
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APPLICABLE PROJECTS

- Certain categories of transportation projects may consistently require and/or benefit from the inclusion of landscape architectural improvements or preservation as part of a complete design package. To ensure the early inclusion of, and budgeting for such improvements, Project Managers are encouraged to use Scoping Report (PM-100) and applicable worksheets (SWLA - Landscape Architecture or SWCI – Community Impact) for distribution to the appropriate Regional Landscape Architect on the following:
 - Interstate Projects with proposed lane widening and/or interchange construction/modifications to address potential aesthetic impacts on corridors and communities and how such impacts might be mitigated
 - Urban projects with proposed lane widening (improved Typical Section) other than intersection or signalization improvements to address specific requests and/or concerns of localities and communities impacted
 - Projects with sound barrier walls approved by the Chief Engineer with concurrence by the FHWA, in accordance with the Joint VDOT/FHWA Noise Abatement Policy recommendations and VDOT's Soundwall and Bridge Aesthetics Guide

- Projects with bridges or other structures (walls, etc.) replacing or rehabilitating historic or otherwise context sensitive structures as determined by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and/or as determined by input from the affected locality and/or community where an in-kind replacement or architectural finish is desired in accordance with VDOT's Soundwall and Bridge Aesthetics Guide and policy
 - Projects where impacts on the aesthetic, historic and/or cultural context (Context Sensitive Design) of a community or locality, are either anticipated or clearly identified in the planning stages of project development (Scoping) or identified during the State Environmental Review Process (SERP) and/or as identified by Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department and other state or federal agencies requesting mitigation measures appropriate to the context of the given project
 - Projects which include the development of shared use paths
 - Urban or suburban projects including roundabouts or other traffic calming features
 - Projects including (or anticipated to include) bio-retention basins, enhanced extended detention basins, or other stormwater management treatment that depends heavily on a natural component for improvement of water quality
 - Roadway construction improvements which significantly impact the existing urban and rural forest canopies along public rights-of-way
- Not all projects reviewed will necessarily require the inclusion of planting, aesthetic or other mitigation features, but will be considered on a case by case basis by the Regional Landscape Architect (RLA) or as specifically requested by the affected locality during project scoping process. Recommendations proposed or requested at a later date may be added with approval by the District Project Development Engineer (DPDE).

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING / RECOMMENDING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SERVICES

- The L.A. Section representative or RLA will review the project and make a preliminary determination or recommendation based on the available data, and return a **Scoping Worksheet (SWLA or SWCI)** to the L&D Project Manager with a recommended budget for P.E. and Construction if applicable. General recommendations will be updated, including estimated costs, during the project development process. Lack of early consideration and inclusion of such items can have negative budget and schedule impacts when added later.
- Upon approval of the Scoping Report (or supplemental approval by the DPDE), the L&D Project Manager shall establish Activity 53, "Landscape Architecture" in their project schedules. Activity 53 is not required for graphic support at the public hearing stage due to the short duration. Activity 53 begins following receipt of the Scoping Report or at a point when it is determined that design services are required.
- For requesting Landscape Architecture Services at any particular stage of project development, Project Managers may use Form LD-252.

- Other general distributions of plans and correspondence at project milestones should be distributed to the appropriate RLA where such services are included in the project development or as approved in the Final Scoping Report. The RLA should be informed of milestone meetings in order for proper coordination to occur for schedule updates, plan reviews and estimates, etc.
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LAND DEVELOPMENT, LOCALLY ADMINISTERED AND ENHANCEMENT PLANS

- VDOT District Land Use Engineers, Project Managers and Enhancement Coordinators should coordinate Land Development, Locally Administered and Enhancement projects affecting the public right of way with the RLA for review in the following areas:
 - Projects that propose tree and/or shrub plantings in the public right-of-way, for review of plant selection and location with regard to clear zone and site distance criteria.
 - Projects that include specialty pavements (pavers, stamped, colored asphalt or concrete, decorative thermoplastic products, etc.) either in vehicular access ways or pedestrian access ways (sidewalks / crosswalks) for review with conformance to agreements with local jurisdictions and / or appropriateness of the proposed material based on traffic data.
 - Assistance with the review of proposed pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities for compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).
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ELECTRONIC PLAN DISTRIBUTION FOR PROJECT REVIEW

- Plans are to be distributed for review as follows:

Northern Region Landscape Architect (Culpeper and NOVA):

Ellen Vogel, PLA 703-259-2430
VDOT NOVA District Office
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Eastern Region Landscape Architect (Fredericksburg, Hampton Rds. and Richmond):

Al Bryan, PLA 804-371-6737
VDOT Location and Design Division
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond Va. 23219

Western Region Landscape Architect (Bristol, Lynchburg, Salem and Staunton):

Dale Huff, PLA 540-643-2514
VDOT Dublin AHQ
5310 Bagging Plant Road
Dublin, VA 24084