

CITY OF SPOKANE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE	ADMIN 0370-08-04 LGL 2005-62
TITLE: <b>CLEAR ZONE POLICY</b> EFFECTIVE DATE: November 17, 2005 REVISION DATE: June 26, 2008	

## 1.0 GENERAL

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform practice for implementing clear zones along City of Spokane streets and managed access State highways within the City. The City of Spokane is granted jurisdiction over clear zones along City streets and managed access State highways within the City per RCW 47.24.020 (2). Along managed access State highways this authority applies only beyond the curb, or if no curbs, beyond the portion of the roadway used for highway purposes. Between the curbs (median areas) the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has jurisdiction over clear zone. WSDOT has full authority over clear zones inside and outside curbs along State limited access facilities within the City. In adopting this policy, it is not the intent to enhance or expand any duty of care. Nothing herein is intended to create any specific duty towards any particular person or class. Any duty nonetheless deemed created shall be to the general public only.

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## 2.0 DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS AFFECTED

This policy shall apply to all City divisions and departments.

### 3.0 REFERENCES

- 3.1 City and County Design Standards, WSDOT Local Agency Guidelines (LAG), Chapter 42 including the appendix.
- 3.2 WSDOT - Local Agency Guidelines M 36-63  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/fasc/EngineeringPublications/manuals/LAGManual.pdf>
- 3.3 WSDOT - LAG Chapter 42: City and County Design Standards  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/Operations/LAG/LAG42.pdf>
- 3.4 WSDOT Design Manual, M 22-01.
- 3.5 WSDOT Design Manual in its entirety  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/fasc/EngineeringPublications/manuals/Designmanual.pdf>
- 3.6 WSDOT Design Manual in Individual Chapters  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/fasc/engineeringpublications/designmanual.htm>

### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 "Available Clear Zone" means the distance, measured in feet, normal to the highway beginning at the edge of the traveled lane to the closest part of any fixed object or non-traversable obstacle.
- 4.2 "Clear Zone" means the total roadside border area, starting at the edge of the traveled lane, available for use by errant vehicles. This area may consist of a shoulder, a recoverable slope, a non-recoverable slope, and/or a clear run-out area.
- 4.3 "Traveled Lane" means the portion of the roadway intended for the movement of vehicles, exclusive of shoulders and lanes for parking.
- 4.4 These definitions take precedence over those found elsewhere. Definitions not presented herein shall be taken from the WSDOT Design Manual (Reference 3.5 above).

## 5.0 POLICY

- 5.1 Public and private construction on all arterial streets in the City must comply with the City and County Design Standards. However; the City possesses the authority to establish clear zone standards for all roadways within the City except for limited access state highways. Appendix Table 1, sets forth the minimum desired clear zone.
- 5.2 When indicated by Appendix Table I, rigid objects within the clear zone should be removed or not installed, relocated to an inaccessible position outside the minimum clear zone, remodeled to make traversable, breakaway, or shielded.
- 5.3 Clear Zone in Urban Areas. The City of Spokane Comprehensive Plan promotes a sense of place, encourages the installation of street trees in the planting/pedestrian buffer strips, and encourages other urban amenities along and adjacent to roadways. Examples of urban amenities include planters, bollards, benches, light fixtures, kiosks, clocks, drinking fountains, and transit shelters.

The American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) anticipates urban amenities in its Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, page 485, as follows: "Horizontal Clearance to Obstructions: Clear roadside design is recommended for urban arterials whenever practical. On curbed street sections, clear roadsides are often impractical, particularly in restricted areas. In such areas, a clearance between curb face and object of one and one-half (1.5) feet (or wider where practical) should be provided. A three (3) feet clearance to roadside objects should be provided particularly near turning radii at intersections and driveways. This offset provides sufficient clearance to keep the overhang of a truck from striking an object. Where pedestrians are not a factor, obstructions should be set well back, protected, or provided with breakaway features. For further guidance, refer to the AASHTO Roadside Design Guide.

- 5.4 Street Hardware and Above Ground Utility Fixtures. The urban arterial system often serves as a utility corridor. Preferably, utilities are located underground or as near the outer edge of the right-of-way as practical. Whenever practical, service access openings and covers should not be located in the traveled way, but should be placed outside the entire roadway. Other street hardware and above ground utility transmission fixtures should be placed further from the travel way.

- 5.5 Center Medians on Managed Access State Highways. The clear zone for medians on State managed access highways is under the jurisdiction of WSDOT. The WSDOT Design Manual Supplement, Design Clear Zone, dated November 1, 2002 provides guidance as follows: For managed access State highways within an incorporated City that have a raised median, the median's Design Clear Zone is evaluated using Figure 700-1. In some instances, a median analysis will show that certain median designs provide significant benefits to overall corridor or project operations. In these cases, flexibility in establishing the Design Clear Zone is appropriate. To achieve this flexibility, an evaluation of the impacts including safety, aesthetics, the environment, economics, modal needs, and access control can be used to establish the median clear zone. This discussion, analysis, and agreement must take place early in the consideration of the flexible median design. An agreement on the responsibility for these median sections must be formalized with the City. The justification for the design decision for the selected Design Clear Zone must be documented as part of a project or corridor analysis. (See Chapter 330).
- 5.6 Does Not Provide for All Situations. The standards in Table 1 cannot provide for all situations. They are intended to assist, but not to substitute for, competent work by design professionals. These standards are also not intended to limit any innovative or creative effort that could result in better quality, better cost savings, or both.

## 6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 The City of Spokane Design Standards, maintained by the Engineering Services Department will be revised to incorporate these clear zone standards. All public street designs will be designed and reviewed in accordance with these standards. These standards include a variance process when adopted standards are impractical when applied to a particular project or location. Projects that propose installation, removal or pruning of street trees will be coordinated with the City Parks Department Director pursuant to SMC 12.02.910.
- 6.2 The Design Standards and the responsibility for design of City Street improvements are the responsibility of the Director of Engineering Services including final determination of street tree locations pursuant to SMC 12.02.912(f).

Proposed variances to the Design Standards are reviewed for approval or denial by the Director of Engineering Services.

Permitting for installation, removal, and maintenance of street trees is the responsibility of the City Parks Department Director (SMC 12.02.904) and the Engineering Service Department Director (SMC 11.02.03458(d)).

## 7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Engineering Services Department shall administer this policy.

## 8.0 APPENDICES

Table I Minimum Clear Zone

APPROVED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney (A2st)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Engineering Services

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Public Works and Utilities

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator

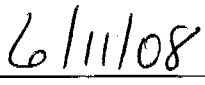
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Table 1

Minimum Clear Zone <sup>(8)(9)(10)(11)</sup>  
 (Clear distance in feet from edge of traveled lane)

Project Type	Existing Fixed Objects		New Installation of Fixed Objects	
	Street Trees	All Other	Street Trees	All Other
State Highways <sup>(8)</sup>	WSDOT <sup>(8)</sup>	WSDOT <sup>(8)</sup>	WSDOT <sup>(8)</sup>	WSDOT <sup>(8)</sup>
New street construction	3 <sup>(2, 4)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>	3 <sup>(2, 4)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>
Street construction including width or profile adjustments	1.5 <sup>(2)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>	3 <sup>(2, 4)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>
Street construction, no width or profile adjustment <sup>(7)</sup>	1.5 <sup>(2, 3)</sup>	1.5 <sup>(2, 3, 5)</sup>	3 <sup>(2, 4)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>
New Installations not related to street construction	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	3 <sup>(2, 4)</sup>	10 <sup>(1, 5, 6)</sup>

Table 1 Notes:

- (1) If 10 feet clear distance cannot be provided within the available right-of-way, the design engineer may evaluate and justify placement as near the outer edge of the right-of-way as practical.
- (2) This distance shall be measured from the face of curb rather than the edge of travel lane.
- (3) Fixed objects / trees with less than 1.5 feet clearance should be considered for removal or relocation. If clearance is between 1.0 and 1.5 feet existing fixed objects including trees may remain unless damage indicates a history of vehicle collision, the object or tree conflicts with the condition or operation of a street, alley or sidewalk, or removal / relocation is required due to other public safety, convenience or aesthetic considerations.
- (4) In areas where sidewalk does not exist, the future location of sidewalk shall be evaluated. Existing buildings or other property improvements may make it prohibitive to provide separated sidewalk with planting or pedestrian buffer strips in the future. If it is determined that future sidewalk will necessitate installation

adjacent to curb, the distance behind curb shall be increased to allow installation of the proper width sidewalk.

- (5) For operation practicality, parking meters may be set at 18 inches from face of curb (see note 6).
- (6) The width of on-street parking can be included in the measurement of clear zone distance.
- (7) If the project includes significant improvements outside the curb, clear zone shall be evaluated using the criteria under the category "Street reconstruct including widening".
- (8) Clear zone between the curbs (typically medians) on Managed Access State highways and both inside and outside the curbs on Limited Access State highways within the City must comply with Clear Zone distances as specified by WSDOT Design Manual (typically 10 feet or greater for all objects). Deviations require approval of the Washington State Department of Transportation Operations Engineer, for Highway and Local Programs. (Source: page 1 of the City and County Design Standards 2002, WSDOT Local Agency Guidelines, Appendix 42.31).
- (9) The values reflected in the table are minimum allowable clear zone distances. Design engineers should evaluate and provide larger clear zone distances wherever practical.
- (10) Attainment of these clear zone values does not relieve the Design Engineer of the responsibility to evaluate sight distances in accordance with applicable design standards.
- (11) The values reflected in this table are for streets with curbs. On arterial streets, where curbs are not provided, the clear zone shall be in accordance with WSDOT design manual.