

TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND FACILITIES (1968, R1990, R2001*, R2008, R2009)



Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes that transportation corridors and facilities are major components of the nation's landscape and public realm. Integrating comprehensive transportation planning with natural systems analysis and land use planning is essential for creating livable communities in sustainable environments. The alignment, scale, and character of our thoroughfares play an integral role in determining urban form, development patterns, and a sense of place. ASLA supports the design, construction, and management of streets and highways that enhance interconnected transportation options, particularly for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people with disabilities. All multi-modal transportation systems should be safe, efficient, convenient, and beautiful.

Rationale

Communities should have well-connected, easily accessible transportation networks that provide attractive, safe, comfortable, and cost-effective access; improve mobility; and support economic vitality in conjunction with environmental quality. Comprehensive transportation planning should be a component of regional and local land use planning, matching infrastructure capacity with current and proposed land uses. Well-managed transportation corridors should preserve the inherent natural and cultural characteristics, while balancing transportation, community, and environmental considerations. As members of interdisciplinary teams, landscape architects can help locate transportation corridors and facilities, fit roadways to the terrain, reduce cuts and fills, and enhance travel experiences.

Communities with "complete streets" encourage alternative transportation uses including provision of safe sidewalks and bicycle lanes enhanced with appropriate roadside plantings. Multi-modal streets provide mobility to people of all ages and abilities. Safe routes to schools are critical and encourage physical exercise. Additionally, some obsolete or abandoned corridors such as rail rights-of-way can be converted to new uses to provide additional safe mobility within or between communities.

Collectively, the transportation support facilities greatly affect a community's character and quality of life, and must be carefully designed and sited. Transportation corridors and facilities, including those above and below ground should be sited to minimize impacts on adjacent land uses. Transit and bus stations, airports, rail depots, and ports should be carefully integrated into the community and serve as inter-modal facilities. Parking facilities should be designed and managed to minimize visual and physical impacts and the consumption of land, while maintaining safety.

Special care needs to be given to the preservation of historic roads and parkways, transit and rail facilities in order that these facilities meet current needs while respecting their character-defining elements. Some elongated "parks" may exclude billboards and freight use, limit access points and speeds, and provide overlooks and recreational facilities. Special land use procedures such as scenic easements should be considered for corridors along scenic byways to preserve their visual quality and character. The visual

* Replaces Highways and Scenic Roads Policy and Parkways Policy.

impacts of all transportation corridors and facilities can be improved by framing views and screening eyesores, developing appropriate signage and managing vegetation.

Transportation facilities should be sited to protect wildlife corridors and avoid fragmentation of wildlife habitat. Where habitat impacts cannot be avoided, innovative techniques such as wildlife over- and underpasses should be considered. The impacts of paving on stormwater quality and quantity should be minimized by providing facilities such as vegetated swales that filter pollution and help recharge groundwater. Appropriate vegetation can reduce air, light, and noise pollution, avoid soil erosion, and provide shade to mitigate the effects of the urban heat island. In some settings, native plants are used to provide a sense of place and to reduce potential for invasive species establishment along linear landscapes and edges created by transportation corridors.

