

Category:241 Aesthetic Considerations



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Sound walls are commonly treated for aesthetics

The purpose and need of MoDOT's work may necessitate the responsible use of aesthetic applications. Such applications, in cooperation with stakeholders, will allow the system to blend with the character and reflect the cultural and environmental values of the communities they serve. MoDOT will consider baseline aesthetic applications that represent minimal costs to the project, can be reasonably maintained, and do not compromise safety. As much as possible, the applications should complement the surrounding area. When the stakeholder supplies additional funding and/or maintenance of aesthetic applications above the baseline, they will need to enter into an agreement with MoDOT.

When MoDOT Maintenance forces, in their normal activities, perform work within MoDOT rights of way, consideration should be given to practical aesthetics such as hardware which was installed for aesthetics or which has historical or regional significance.

241.1 Guidance

Aesthetics shall be considered on every project, although both reason and experience would dictate that in many cases, the consideration would yield no actual deployment of treatments. Nevertheless, the consideration is critical in that it provides the most assurance that projects with a legitimate aesthetic need will not be overlooked.

241.2 Potential Triggers

There are several aspects of any project that may trigger the need for aesthetic applications. Individual projects will inevitably present details, not listed here, that could necessitate aesthetic applications.

Environmental

- Maintaining environmental and human harmony
- Environmental constraints
- Environmental and historical mitigation needs
- Expediting Project Development

Public Interest

- Projects with high visibility to a community
- Previous project within the community have included aesthetics
- Maintaining a community theme
- Cost share projects
- Existing master plan
- Corridor continuity
- Opportunities for improved quality of life
- Mitigating adverse community impact from project
- Merging livability with mobility goals

Context and Location

- City limits
- Tourist areas (i.e. Branson, Lake of the Ozarks)
- Scenic vistas landscape (national parks, etc.)
- Existing landmarks replaced
- State, regional and / or community “gateway” potential
- Proximity to significant cultural resources, whether man-made or natural
- Community landscape themes
- Unique physical character of corridor environment

241.3 Engaging Stakeholders

In order for an aesthetics application to be properly planned, designed, or constructed, it is critical that the project team engage the stakeholders. In this manner, the community will collaborate with MoDOT to arrive at the aesthetics treatment that most closely meets its needs.

If the project team's aesthetic analysis determines a need, it becomes critical to identify and engage the stakeholders as early in the design process as possible. In this collaboration, the stakeholders should be made aware of the baseline aesthetic package that MoDOT intends to provide. The baseline package will consist of low-cost treatments that are added to the project in addition to MoDOT's normal construction.

The stakeholder may desire aesthetic treatments in excess of the baseline. If this is the case, the project team will continue the collaboration to arrive at a mutually acceptable plan. In any case, the cost of construction and maintenance in perpetuity of any application above the baseline, will be completely borne by the stakeholders.

Once an acceptable plan has been identified, MoDOT and the stakeholders must enter into an agreement that contains the following elements, at a minimum:

- Description and location of the specific aesthetic application(s)
- Description of the stakeholder's responsibility for maintenance
- Description of the stakeholder's contribution for construction costs
- Arrangements for stakeholder payments
- A failure to maintain clause

241.4 Applications

The following lists contain examples of construction elements that are commonly treated for aesthetics:

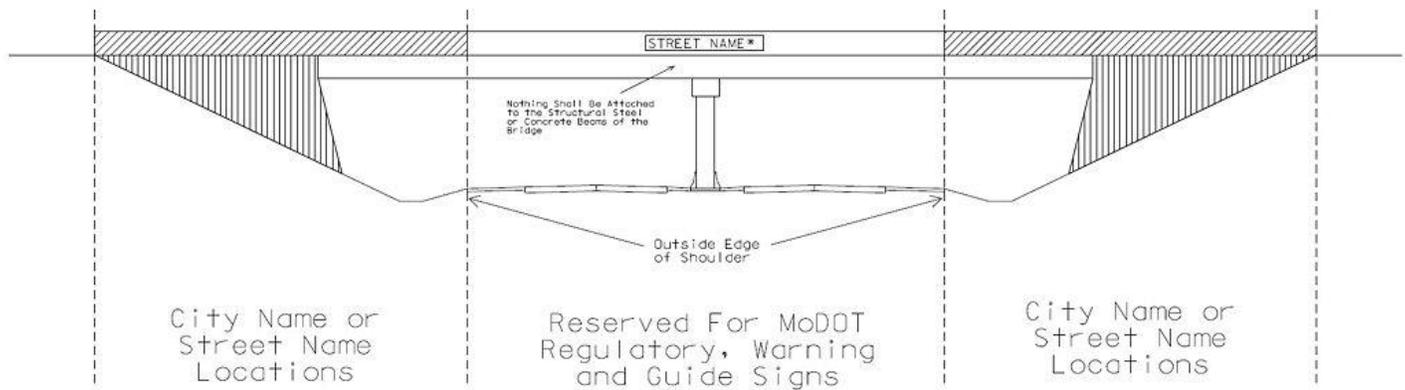


Fig. 241.4, Display of Signs and Messages on Bridges

*** The maximum street name sign size is limited to 240 in. x 30 in.**

Bridges

- Columns and abutments
- Substructures
- Lighting
- Railings
- Girders
- Cable color
- Cable lighting
- Beams
- Bridge style
- Barrier curb
- Signage equipment (painting signing, signals and lighting structures)
- Monument structure (bridge)
- Color
- Aesthetic Message (refer to Fig. 241.4)
- Street names, if installed, shall be placed on the bridge structure outside of the shoulder point. The street name may be placed as a special sign, individual fixed letters attached to the bridge structure or another MoDOT approved display which can be removed and/or updated should the street name change in the future. Embossed street names are not permitted due to the permanent nature of the installation and street names can change.
- Option – A street name may be placed in the center of a bridge span, centered over the median of a divided highway. The maximum area used to display the street name is limited to 240 in. wide by 30 in. tall, including legend and border, if a border is used.
- Signs or other markings depicting a city, community, or geographical name, seal, or nickname may be placed outside of the shoulder point in accordance with [EPG 903.4 Overhead Sign Mounting](#). The city name may be placed as a special sign, individual fixed letters attached to the bridge structure, embossed into the concrete or through the use of another MoDOT approved display method.

Walls

- Retaining walls
- Sound walls
- MSE wall panels
- Gabions
- Fencing

Roadsides

- Curbs and gutters

- Roadside hardware (cables, guardrails, etc.)
- Barrier walls (rock)
- Railroad crossings
- Signage equipment
- Glare screens
- Underground vs. overhead utilities
- Slopes

Roadway

- Colors
- Concrete surface texture
- Pavement (asphalt / concrete)
- Construction material
- Quiet pavement
- Shoulder type (width / material)
- Roadway curvature
- Roundabouts
- Interchange type

Traffic Control Devices

- Light poles
- Lighting equipment
- Lighting (lamp posts)
- Signal mast arms
- Signals
- Signal equipment
- Signal posts & arms
- Signal poles
- Signage equipment
- Street names embossed into Bridge concrete or on special sign

Bicycle / Pedestrian Facilities

- Sidewalk ramps
- ADA ramps in sidewalks
- Streetscape
- Sidewalks
- Lighting
- Railings – crosswalks, bridge and pedestrian areas
- Bridge pedestrian rail
- Crosswalks
- Sidewalks
- Paved median / island treatments / raised medians
- Surfaces
- Maintenance buildings
- Rest areas

Landscaping

- Planters on single point bridges
- Fill rock
- Types of trees and shrubs
- Types of grass
- Monuments

- Interchange Right of Way
- Paved median / island treatments
- Transportation art
- Flags, banners and decorations
- Gateway treatments
- Furnishings (garbage cans, benches, bike racks, etc.)

241.5 Constraints

As practical aesthetics are developed, existing constraints apply to their application such as:

- AASHTO (Green Book, LFRD, Roadside Design Guide, etc.)
- MUTCD (*Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*)
- NCHRP 350 and/or MASH 2016: AASHTO Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (2016)
- Utility conflicts
- Right of Way (limited amount of space, access control, who owns)
- Environment and/or location

Safety concerns will override any constraints shown in these publications. The project teams must collaborate with the [Central Office Highway Safety and Traffic Division](#) in developing aesthetic plans.

241.6 Maintenance Guidance

When MoDOT performs routine maintenance on right of way, consideration should be given to practical aesthetics. For example, if hardware was installed for aesthetics or has historical or regional significance, it should be replaced in kind. Other examples include guardrail repair or replacement, architectural lighting, signage, etc.

241.7 Roundabout Aesthetic Structure

The first step the district should take when receiving a request from an entity for a roundabout aesthetic structure is to work with the requester to determine if there are acceptable locations for the proposed aesthetic structure off Commission-owned right of way. Consideration should be given to alternative aesthetic improvements before exploring a roundabout aesthetic structure. Examples of alternate aesthetic improvements include decorative concrete, pavers/zero maintenance landscaping and low-lying landscaping.

If there are no appropriate locations off commission-owned right of way, the district will work with the requesting entity and Central Office Highway Safety and Traffic Division to review the request along with the Aesthetics Review Team.

Roundabout Aesthetic Structure Requirement

At a minimum, the request must include:

- Detailed design plans (exhibits, graphics, irrigation, location map, etc.) and specifications of the aesthetic structure, including grading around the aesthetic structure.
- A location map which should include nearby highway(s), intersection(s), town, etc.
- An aerial map of the proposed aesthetic structure location.
- A statement that alternative aesthetic improvements to a roundabout structure (e.g., decorative concrete or pavers, or zero maintenance or low-lying landscaping) have been considered and rejected.
- An explanation as to why those alternatives were rejected.
- A statement that there are no acceptable locations for the proposed aesthetic off Commission-owned right-of-way.
- Exhibit which shows the legal description from a professional land survey of the property requested for the aesthetic structure location.
- Signed and sealed plan sheets for the structure's design.
- Roadway plan sheets
- Documentation from the district which addresses all the above requirements.

An aesthetic structure cannot be mounted in an overhead configuration, on sign structures, or on bridge structures, (i.e. girders, columns abutment walls, aesthetics, etc.).

An aesthetic structure shall only be allowed in inner-most center island, which is defined by the area that is half the diameter of the center island, not including truck apron.

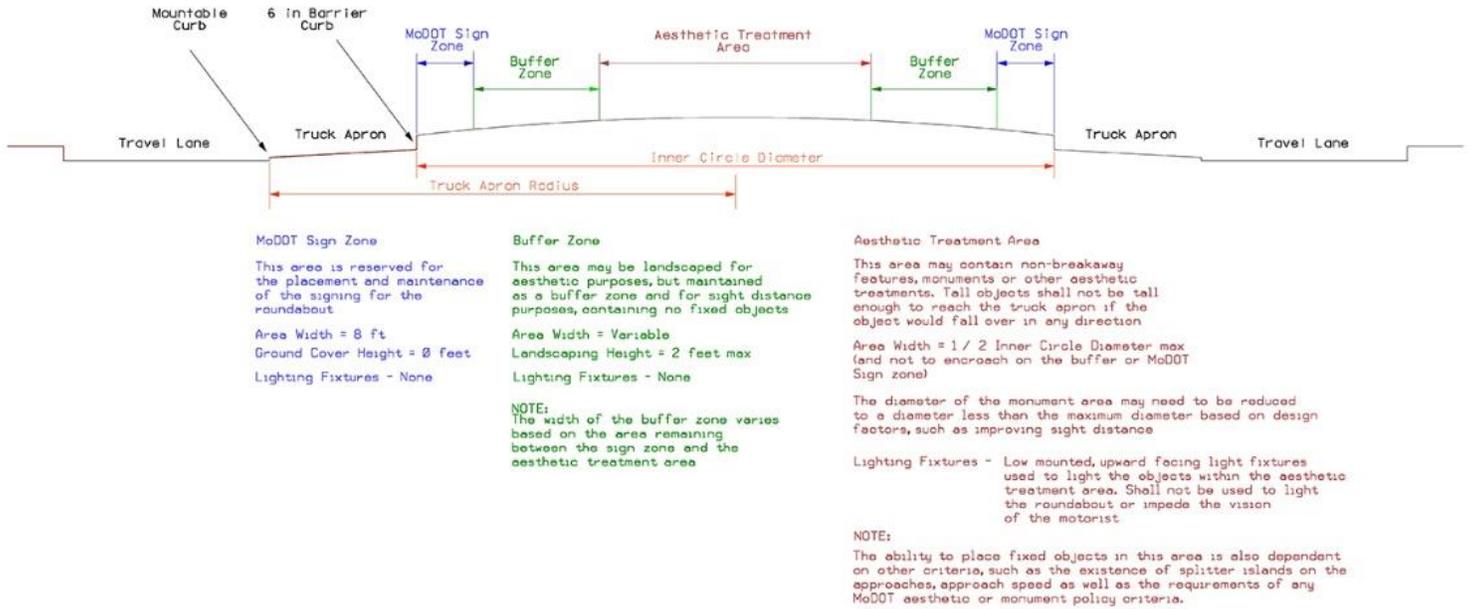
An aesthetic structure height is limited to distance to the truck apron, to ensure no part of the aesthetic structure will reach the roadway should it fall over.

The aesthetic structure may not contain advertising or sponsorship. In addition, the nature of the aesthetic structure should be such as to not bring about any undue criticism to MoDOT or the state of Missouri. Determination as to whether the aesthetic structure would bring about undue criticism shall be at the sole discretion of MoDOT.

To determine if a roundabout aesthetic structure could be allowed at a roundabout the following needs to be considered:

- Maximum posted speed limit of 40 mph on any of the approach roadways to the roundabout.
- For all approaches the grade must be less than +/- 3%.
- Raised splitter islands are required on all approaches to the roundabout.
- The center island (after/beyond truck apron) is required to have a barrier curb.
- The aesthetic structure shall be installed in a location that does not interfere with normal highway signs or impede sight distance.
- An aesthetic structure shall only be allowed in inner-most center island, which is defined by the area that is half the diameter of the center island, not including truck apron. The center island perimeter buffer zone or MoDOT sign zone this area is reserved for:
 - Meeting sight distance requirements
 - Installation of MoDOT traffic control signing
 - Includes a space to perform maintenance activities and for a maintenance vehicle to pull onto the center island.
- Contact MoDOT motor carriers to confirm route is not in conflict with Oversize overweight (OSOW) routing.
- The district should work with the requesting entity to find a location that poses the least risk to the public.
- The city will be required to provide detailed design plans (exhibits, graphics, irrigation, location map, etc.)and specifications of the aesthetic structure, including grading around the aesthetic structure.
- The aesthetic structure must not create a distraction or a hazard to motorists or be designed in a way that might invite pedestrian traffic. Therefore, plans which include features such as water and electricity must be thoroughly examined.
- Breakaway aesthetic structure signing is preferred.
- In addition, the District Traffic Engineer must approve the installation after considering other factors,including call reports, knockdowns, and crash history.

The figure below illustrates the permitted area in which an aesthetic structure may be installed at a roundabout island.



Review and Recommendation

The district will present the request information and documentation to the district's Asset Management Committee (AMC) for conceptual approval as referenced in [EPG 236.5.25 Leases, Licenses and Airspace License Agreements](#).

The district's Asset Management Committee will then complete their review and conceptual approval.

The district will present the provided documents to Central Office Highway Safety & Traffic who will work with the Aesthetics Review Team to provide their conceptual approval.

Once the AMC and Highway Safety & Traffic provides conceptual approval, the district will send the items presented, including the AMC meeting minutes to Central Office Right of Way for conceptual approval and compliance with [EPG 236.5.25](#).

Once Central Office Right of Way provides conceptual approval, if the aesthetic structure location is within an interchange termini they will request conceptual approval from FHWA. Once FHWA provides conceptual approval, Central Office Right of Way will inform the district that execution of the RW 45 – License Agreement for City Monument can begin.

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