



**STAFF REPORT ON ODOT DOWNTOWN/OR 211  
STREETSCAPE PLAN AND ADDITIONAL ODOT RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM JANUARY 9, 2008 LETTER**

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This staff report covers comments received by the City of Molalla from ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation). Staff comments and suggestions are made in ***Bold Italic*** print.

**STAFF REPORT**

Trees in the Median: As noted in my prior letter, ODOT Highway Design Manual standards are based on classifications, the built environment and the posted speed and design speed of highway facilities. For OR 211, trees would not be allowed to be installed in highway medians in sections with posted speeds greater than 35 mph. If conditions change in the future (speeds are reduced, adjacent area develops), the City could request that ODOT consider a “design exception” to allow trees in the medians in the 40 mph sections. In the interim, low plantings would be permitted in the sections with speeds equal to or greater than 40 mph.

- We recommend that Figure 8.2 be revised to provide two cross sections:
  - For sections with posted speeds of 35 mph or less;
  - For sections with posted speeds greater than 40 mph
- Please add a footnote to Figure 8.2: “ODOT design exception approval necessary for trees in the median in locations with speeds greater than 35 mph.

Street Trees: As highway speeds increase and roadside conditions change, the Highway Design Manual required width for the “clear zone” widens. A clear zone is a flat area free of obstacles required to provide errant vehicles an opportunity to recover and return to the roadway.

Figure 8.2 indicates a 10 foot “Sidewalk and Buffer” for all corridor sections regardless of speed.

In speed zones of 35 mph and below, the planned OR 211 Streetscape Design cross-section is sufficient to provide a 4’ landscape strip and 6’ sidewalk, consistent with ODOT minimum standards.

- If the City desires a sidewalk and landscape strip wider than the ODOT minimum, the cross-section for the 35 mph under section should be widened.

In the 40 mph speed sections, Highway Design Manual standard requires that trees be a minimum of 6’ behind the curb. To meet this standards the landscape strip needs to be a minimum width of

8'. With a minimum 6' wide sidewalk, the combined "Sidewalk and Buffer" minimum width must be 14'.

- In order to address ODOT's minimum standards, the Figure 8.2 cross-section for areas with speeds of 40 mph and above needs to provide a minimum 14' wide "Sidewalk and Buffer" area. If the City desires sidewalks or landscape strips above the minimum, additional width should be added to that typical cross-section.

Highway Design Manual standards for highway sections with speeds greater than 40 mph requires a clear zone of up to approximately 16-30 feet depending on average daily trips and existing roadside conditions. Given the constrained OR 211 right-of-way and the wide clear zone requirements, trees in these higher speed sections would need to be installed behind the curb, probably on private property.

- Our recommendation is that the plan stipulate a consistent cross-section for all areas with posted speeds of 40 mph and greater: Low plantings could be installed in these areas, and in the future if/when speeds are lowered to 40 mph, the landscape strip would be sufficient width to accommodate trees and comply with ODOT clear zone requirements.

*These comments refer to required amount of space for trees and ODOT's requirements for street trees based on different speed levels which we have within the 211 corridor. ODOT representative Sonya Kazen and Planning Director Shane Potter met on March 24, 2009 and discussed the options of streetscapes. We changed the streetscapes slightly from a multitude of emails that we had passed back and forth for the months prior to this meeting. Between both ODOT and staff we were able to address street trees. Currently staff has provided a list of approved street trees to the Public Works Director who will ultimately make the decision on what type of street trees will be required. It is important to pick a select few trees and stick with those requirements to ensure uniformity throughout. For a more detailed description of this information see the staff report on the letter from ODOT from March of 2009.*