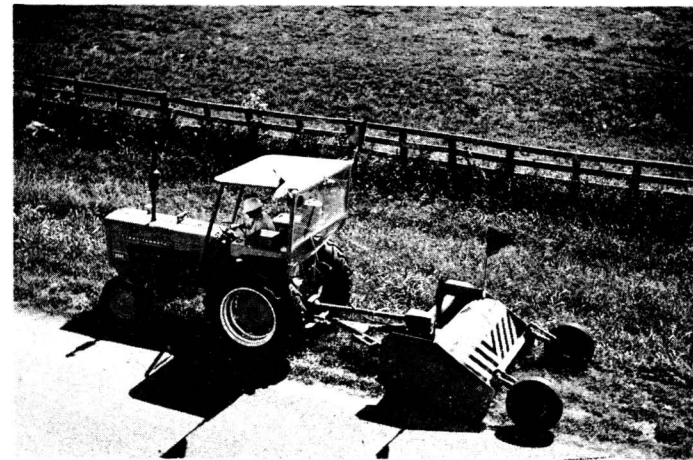




MOWING STANDARDS



TEXAS HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

ADOPTED JANUARY 1970

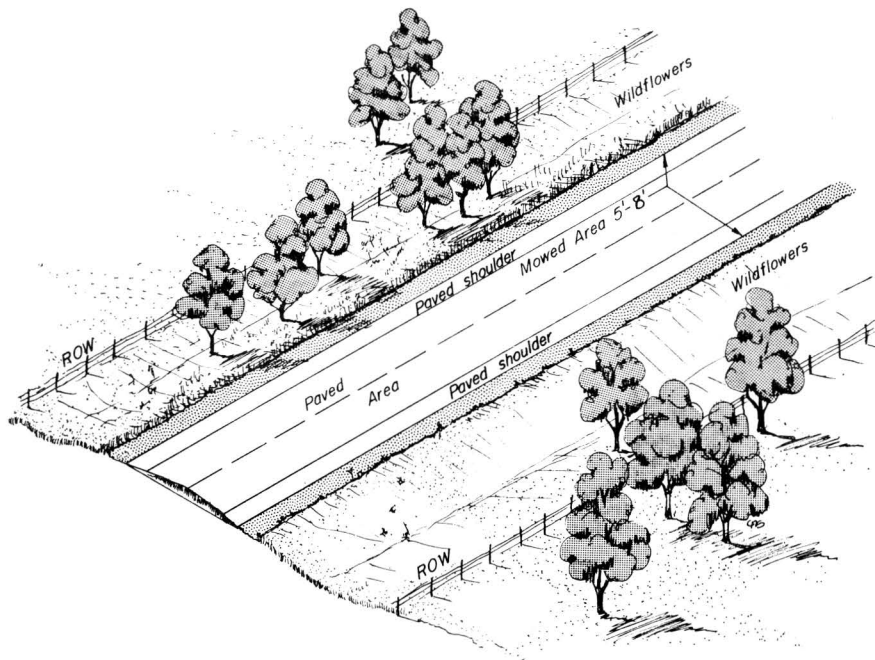
HIGHWAY MOWING STANDARDS

Introduction

The purpose of these mowing standards is to attain uniform maintenance of highway vegetation with appropriate priorities for safety and appearance, with maximum economy in these operations. They prescribe a high standard for mowing which is needed to provide lateral clearance and sight distance. High standards are also prescribed for built-up urban areas. In other areas, full width mowing is reduced in the interest of economy. Higher cutting heights are prescribed to improve the vegetation, increase the capacity of mowing equipment, reduce the hazard of flying objects, and avoid exposing small litter to view. Maximum height standards are given to promote uniformity and reduce excessive mowing. Provisions are made for special purpose mowing, such as; for control of brush and noxious weeds, for reduction of fire hazards, and for erosion control.

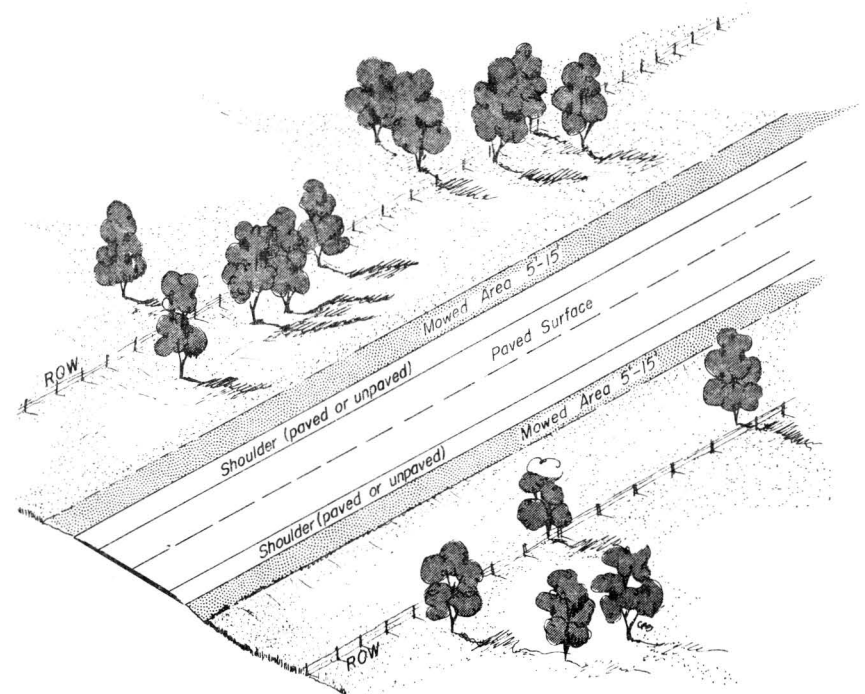
WILD FLOWER PRESERVATION

Full width right-of-way mowing shall be deferred until the early spring flowers have matured seed. In the area where Bluebonnet and Indian Paintbrush grow this will mean about six weeks after the height of their blooming period. Mowing should begin in the Southern portion of the District to allow more time for the flowers to mature seed in the Northern part since spring travels northward at an approximate rate of fifteen miles per day. There may be other varieties of wild flowers that will bloom a bit later that will make a mass display and consideration should be given to permitting their growth when they are not heavily invaded with tall growing weeds and grasses. During this period mowing shall be limited to a single pass of a single rotary or sickle mower adjacent to the pavement to provide for safety.



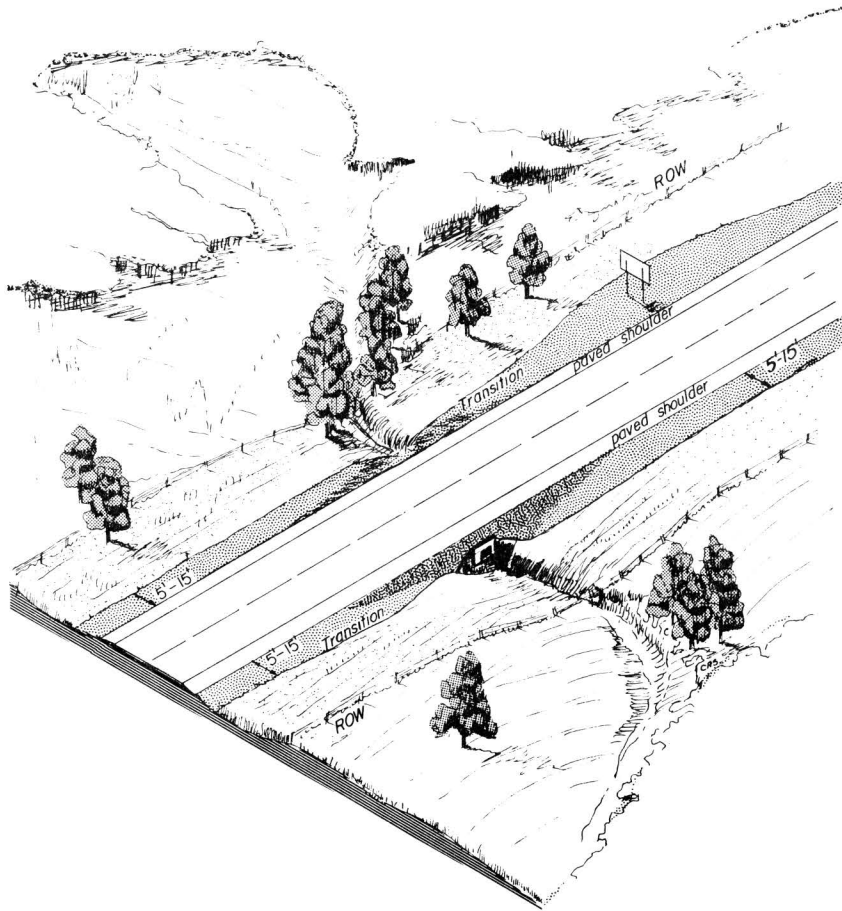
SHOULDER STRIP MOWING

Shoulder Strip Mowing is defined as the area including the shoulder plus a minimum of five (5) feet to a maximum of fifteen (15) feet measured from the crown line. This area shall be mowed as often as necessary for maximum safety and conformance with height standards. On low traffic FM and RM roads a five (5) foot strip will normally be adequate.



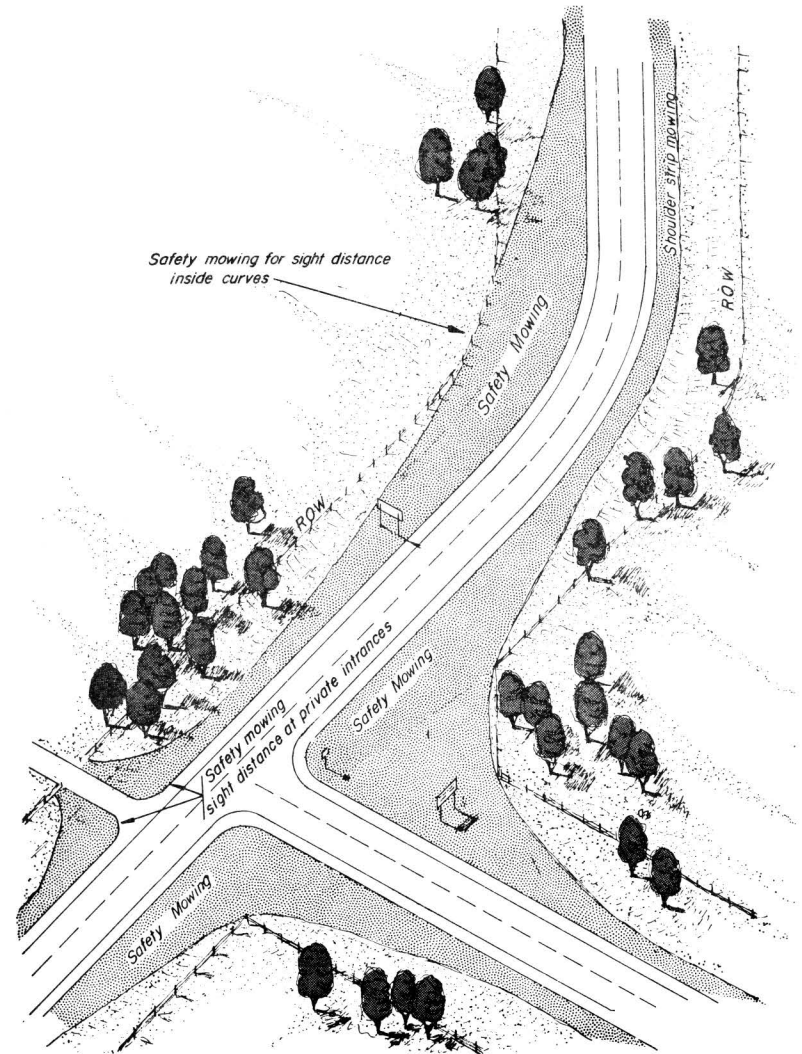
TRANSITION MOWING

Transition or contour mowing should be exercised to provide adequate sight distances for signs or obstructions greater than fifteen (15) feet from edge of shoulder and to avoid abrupt changes in width of mowed area.



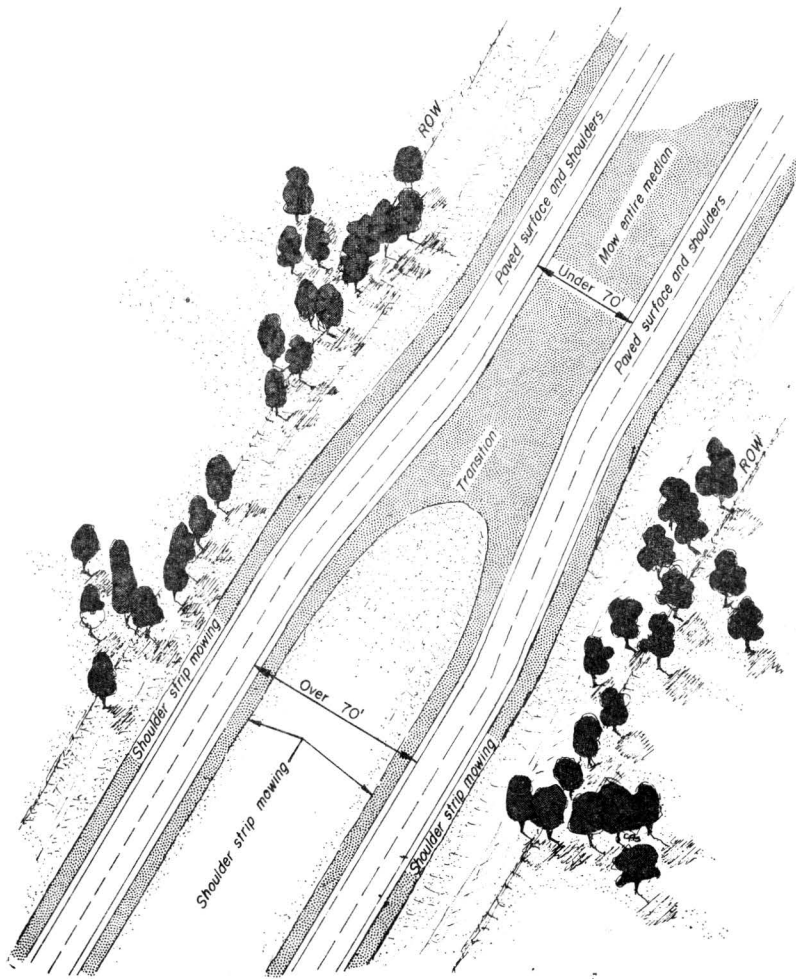
SAFETY MOWING

Mowing shall be performed where needed to maintain sight distance; such as inside curves, off ramps, on ramps, intersections, and private entrances.



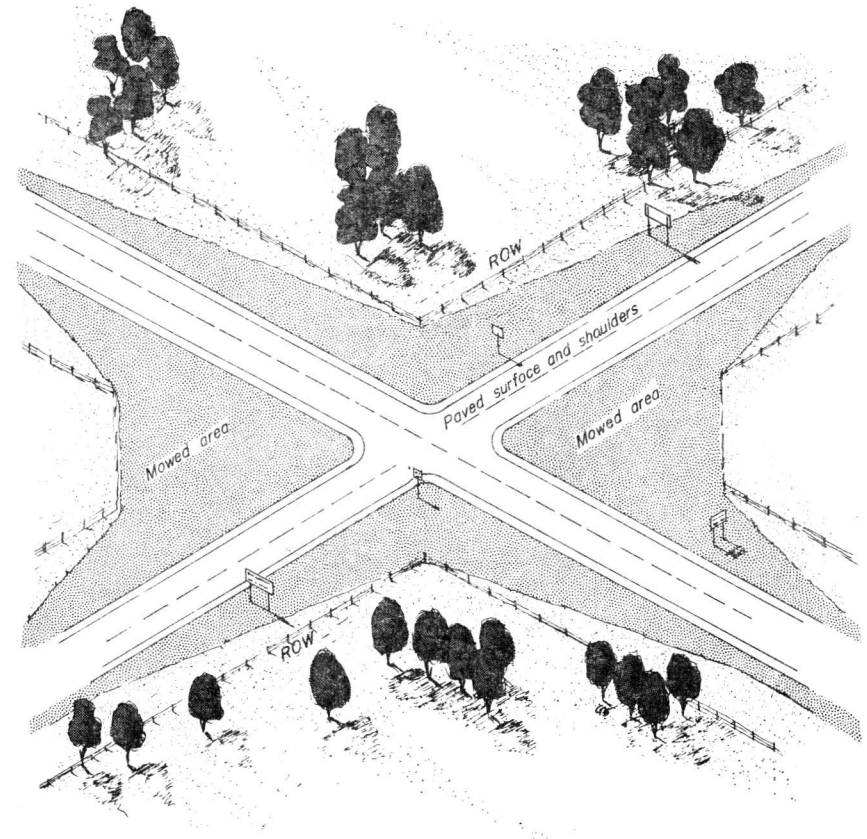
RURAL MEDIANS

The entire area of medians and outer separations which are less than seventy (70) feet in width shall be mowed. On these areas which are over seventy (70) feet in width, only Shoulder Strip Mowing shall be performed. The seventy (70) feet shall be measured from the edge of the traffic lane.



RURAL INTERSECTIONS

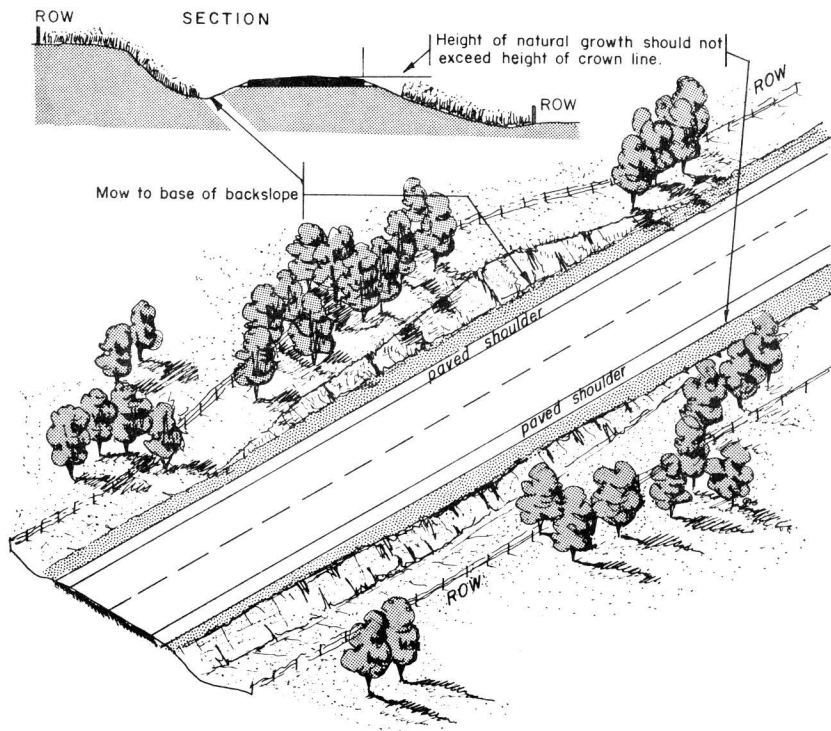
Mowing shall be performed over all areas within the right-of-way necessary to provide adequate sight distance.



OTHER RURAL AREAS

On fill sections, no mowing at all may be necessary, other than Shoulder Strip Mowing; however a strip should be mowed far enough down the slope, to insure that the height of natural growth will not exceed the height of the crownline.

Normally, Shoulder Strip Mowing will be adequate in cut sections; however, mowing should be performed across the ditch to the beginning or base of the backslope at deep cuts where the distance from the crownline to the ditch is not excessive.



CUTTING HEIGHTS

In urban areas the minimum height of cut for turf forming grass, such as Bermuda, St. Augustine, and Centipede, should be three (3) inches. The same kind of grass or a mixture of it with other grasses in the rural area should not be cut lower than five (5) inches. In the Western part of the state where we may have Bermuda or Kentucky Blue Grass under irrigation and Buffalo or Curly Mesquite Grass under natural conditions in urban areas, the height of cut should not be lower than three (3) inches for these turf forming grasses. Where bunch grasses such as Grama, Western Wheat, Green Sprangletop and others are predominant the height of cut should not be lower than seven (7) inches whether it be in an urban or rural area.

TURF GRASSES

Examples:

- Bermuda
- St. Augustine
- Centipede
- Buffalo
- Curly Mesquite

MINIMUM CUTTING HEIGHT

- Urban — 3"
- Rural — 5"

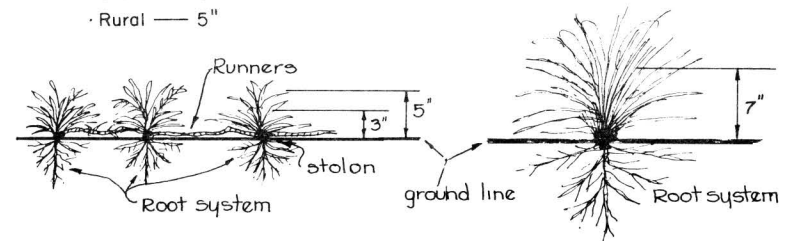
BUNCH GRASSES

Examples:

- Grama
- K.R. Bluestem
- Green Sprangletop
- Western Wheat

MINIMUM CUTTING HEIGHT

- Urban & Rural — 7"



Turf grasses grow by sending out low growing runners which take root at joints called stolons where new plants have formed. The 3" to 5" cutting height will not interfere with the healthy growth of the plant since the major portion of the leaf surface remains.

Bunch grasses spread by increasing the size of the leaf area (bunch) above ground. The root system does not spread from its original location. The life of the grass is dependent on the leaf area providing sufficient food to support the root system. For this reason it is essential to have a higher minimum cutting height.

HEIGHT STANDARDS

In areas where mowing is required, other than full width mowing, it shall be performed when the vegetation has reached a height of twelve (12) inches, except on low traffic FM and RM roads where a height of fifteen (15) inches shall govern and in those urban areas where lower heights are necessary to maintain grass cover at desired standard.

URBAN AREAS

Mow all portions of right-of-way as often as is necessary to provide a pleasing appearance consistent with the appearance of abutting property. Urban area shall be defined as developed areas adjacent to and within cities and small towns. Mowing shall be performed in accordance with Municipal Maintenance Agreements where applicable.

FULL WIDTH MOWING

The full width of the right-of-way should normally be mowed only once each year. However, on major highways in areas with heavy rainfall and lush spring growth it may be necessary to mow the entire right-of-way twice each year. The first full width mowing should be performed after the wild flowers season and again in the fall if considered to be necessary. In areas of less than fifteen (15) inch normal annual rainfall, full width mowing will not normally be needed.

HERBICIDES

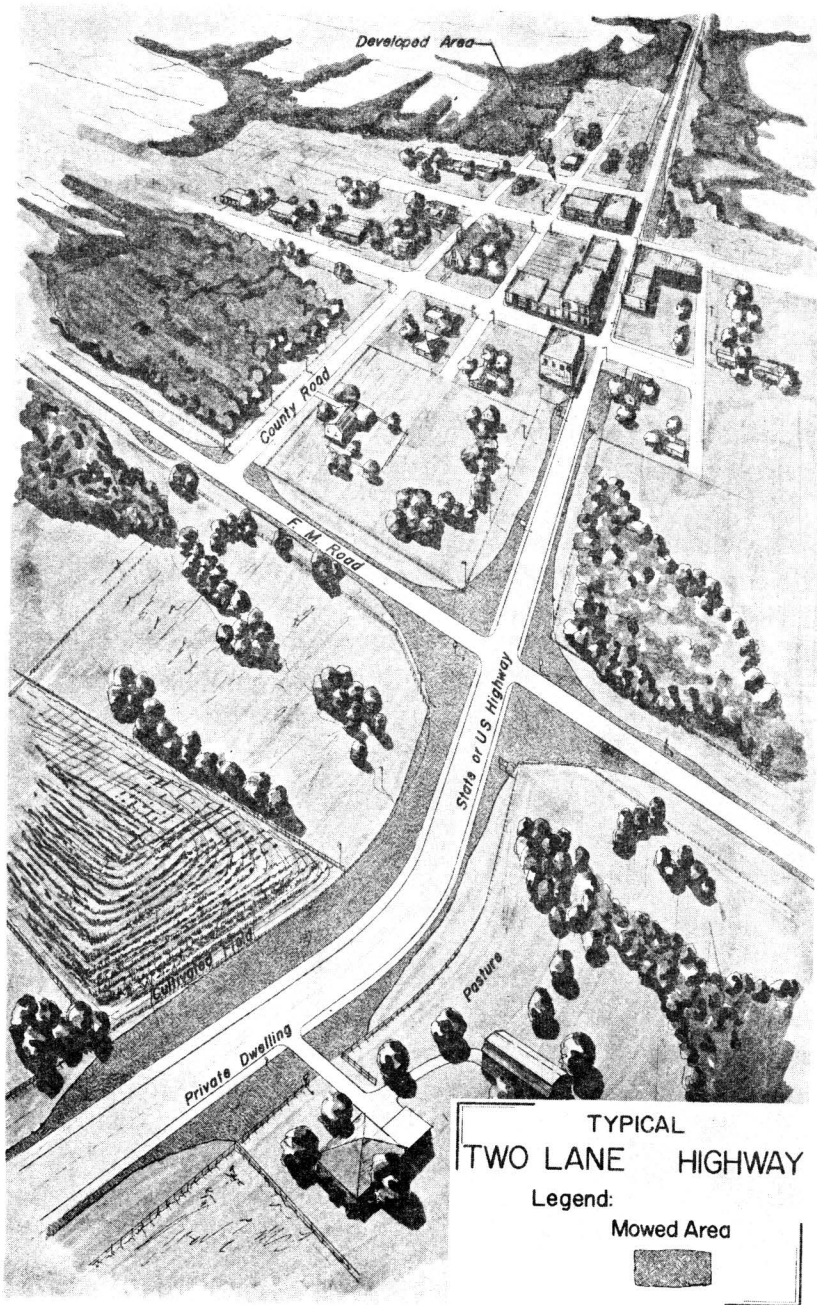
Herbicides should be employed around sign posts, delineators, guardrail and other obstructions to minimize hand mowing.

MISCELLANEOUS

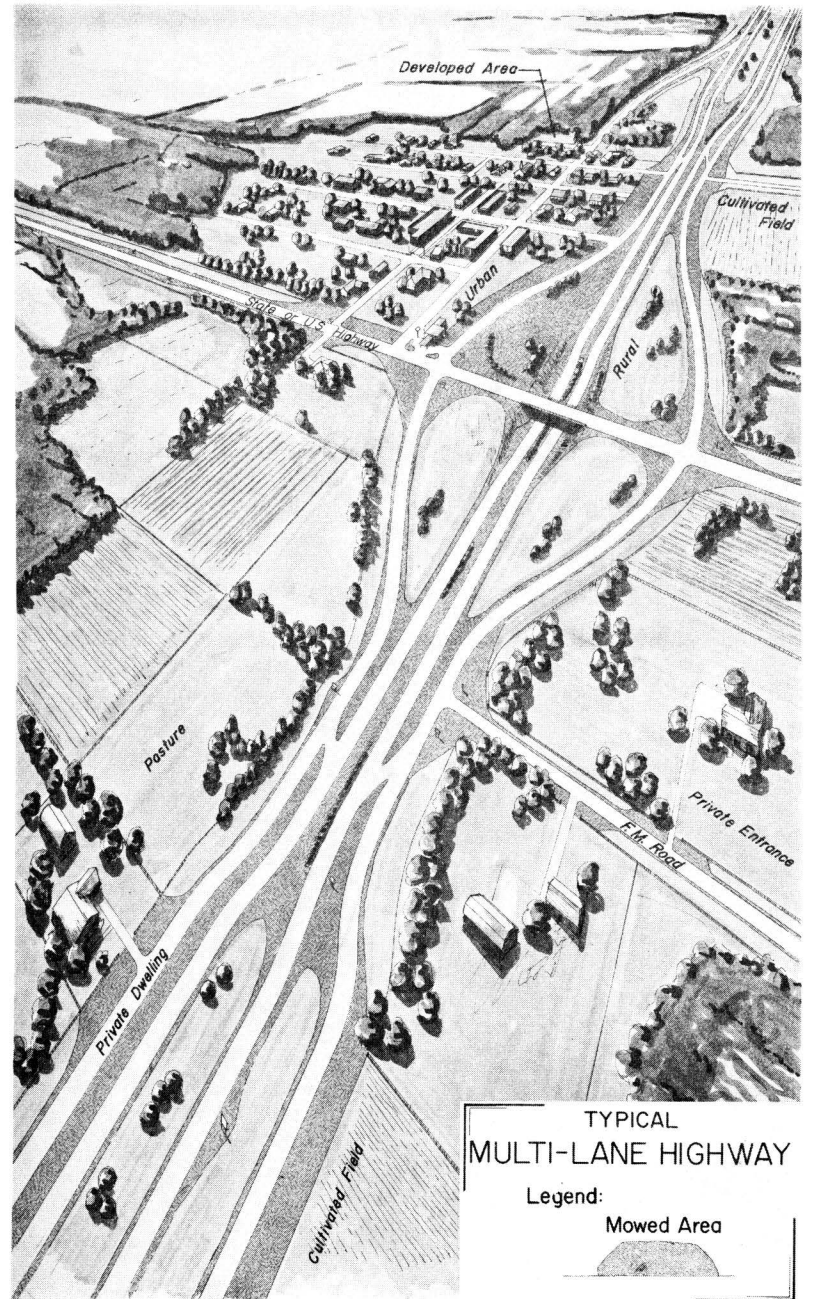
The area behind guardrails should be mowed for a sufficient width to prevent encroachment of vegetative growth.

Mowing should be performed as necessary to control brush or noxious weeds, reduce fire hazard and aid in developing sod cover on newly sodded areas or new construction.

In highly developed areas mowing commensurate with the abutting property should be performed.



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