

Excerpts from Sections 6.0, 6.01, and 6.03  
Streetscape & Median Development Standards

**6.0** DEVELOPMENT OF LANDSCAPED MEDIANS

The City of Costa Mesa currently (1999) has approximately 12 acres of landscaped medians constructed on major highways, primary roads, secondary streets, and commuter streets (see Exhibit C: City Medians and Bikeways). At the completion of this Master Plan, Costa Mesa would have an approximate total of 28.5 acres of landscaped medians (does not include local Neighborhood Entries).

Raised medians function primarily for traffic safety and as a means of beautification; however, they also serve several other purposes. Medians have been built on high-use roads to channel traffic and to reduce the number of cross-traffic and turning conflicts. This is evident especially on north Harbor Boulevard, Fairview Road, Newport Boulevard and medians near Orange Coast College (Adams Avenue, Merrimac Drive) and South Coast Plaza (Bristol Street, Bear Street, Sunflower Avenue, South Coast Drive).

Landscaped medians assist in shading and cooling adjacent side parkways. Environmentally, these median plant materials provide sun protection, urban cooling, absorb air pollution, provide a reduction of vehicle noise and improve streetscape aesthetics. They also present a positive civic image to motorists – both residents and visitors alike. Median design and plant materials vary, depending on the street. However, future median development should incorporate uniform hardscape and landscape treatments, including enriched paving, lighting, and signage.

**6.01** Criteria for Median Installation

Functional criteria should be considered when developing median or parkway plans. Such criteria shall include: appropriate separation of function uses, clean identification and separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, reinforcement of the traffic circulation system with plantings, climatic mitigation, sun protection/urban cooling), traffic noise and hazard mitigation, horticultural limitations as a basis for plant selections, compatibility of ultimate plant size with existing plantings on or adjacent to the site, and maximizing the long-term ease of maintenance and optimizing water conservation through efficient irrigation design and utilizing xeriscape plant materials (low water-use plants) and mulches.

Aesthetic considerations which should also be considered include: a cohesive Costa Mesa theme with enriched City entries, design compatibility with adjacent land-uses, special lighting, if appropriate, and use of color and vibrancy in the streetscape (more color in urban areas, more green in residential areas).

### 6.03 Median Installation: Major Arterials

Concept: Bold use of a designated tree species per streetscape corridor, shrub and groundcover palette per predominate land-use of corridor (urban vs. suburban). Urban streetscapes shall incorporate more colorful plant material while suburban streetscapes should include more greenery and less vibrant plant types.

Streetscapes should incorporate the city-wide background/evergreen tree (Brisbane Box, etc.) for continuity. Either one or two additional median street trees should be installed depending upon the Standard's two categories: A) Urban (one additional tree), and B) Suburban (two additional trees). The additional trees should be specimen accent trees unique to the streetscape corridor.

- Urban Streets (one or two tree types)
- Suburban Streets (three tree types)
- **Fairview Road; San Diego Freeway to Newport Boulevard (Suburban Streetscape)**
  - A. Median Tree: Liquidambar 'Palo Alto' (Scarlet Red) and 'Festival' (Canary Yellow)
  - B. Median Shrubs: Wheeler's Dwarf Pittosporum, White India Hawthorn, Gold Coast Juniper, California Lilac
  - C. Median Accent Shrubs: White New Zealand Tea, Pink New Zealand Tea, Yellow/Orange Daylilies, Blue Salvia, Deer Grass
  - D. Median Groundcover: White Gazania, Shredded Bark Mulch
  - E. Median Left Turn Noses: White Gazania only, no shrubs