COUNTY EXPRESSWAY
LANDSCAPING STANDARDS AND APPROVED PLANTS

POLICY AND PROCESS

In June 2000, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following policy statements to ensure all new landscaping will be properly maintained:

1. New landscape improvements shall not be installed unless full recovery of capital and maintenance costs can occur.
2. The County shall cooperate fully with public agencies and private entities seeking to make landscaping improvements to the expressway system.”

Public agencies and private entities seeking to make landscaping improvements within County expressway right-of-way must obtain an encroachment permit from the County Roads and Airports Department (Department). The following steps are required to obtain the encroachment permit:

1. Applicant contacts the Permits Unit at 408-573-2475 or permits@rda.sccgov.org to obtain an application.
2. Applicant submits the permit application with the landscaping and irrigation system plans and a Traffic Control Plan (TCP). The landscaping plans should be in conformance with the standards on the next page unless an exception is granted by the Department. The TCP should be in conformance with the 2012 Edition of the Caltrans Manual of Uniform Traffic Controls.
3. Department staff reviews and approves the landscaping/irrigation plans and TCP. Applicant may be asked to modify the plans prior to approval.
4. Department staff provides the applicant with a Landscaping Maintenance Agreement (LMA) delineating responsibilities and liability. If the landscaping is to be maintained under an existing LMA, the responsible party for the LMA (e.g., a city) shall submit a letter to the Department so indicating. It may be necessary for the County and responsible party to enter into an amended LMA adding the new landscaping.
5. Department staff issues the encroachment permit upon approval of the landscaping/irrigation plans and TCP and receipt of an executed LMA.

1 Primary Source: County of Santa Clara Expressway Master Landscape Plan, May 2000. Certain requirements and the species list have been updated based on current best practices.
STANDARDS, REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

The following standards, requirements and conditions shall apply to expressway landscape improvements:

1) Landscaping shall be appropriate to the conditions. From an aesthetic design view, landscaping improvements must blend with existing features and provide for some level of corridor continuity or enhancement. From a safety design view, landscaping shall provide for safety sight lines when plantings are mature.

2) Plantings shall be drought tolerant and not prone to pest infestation (see attached list for approved plant species).

3) Landscaping shall include provisions for irrigation to increase likelihood of planting survival and health.

4) Roadway sub-grade shall be isolated from watering facilities in the median or behind the curb through the use of concrete cutoff or slurry walls, full depth median curbing, or equal treatments (e.g. sub-drain systems).

5) For irrigation installation, pavement crossing shall be implemented using bore-and jack, directional boring, or other technology that provides for conduit placement without cutting of the pavement surface. Exceptions will be limited to water line connections or other documented situations of physical limitations or impediments.

6) Minimum median width for tree plantings shall be 8 feet measured from curb face to curb face.

7) Large trees shall be located with a minimum of 7 feet of clearance between the face of the tree when mature and the face of the curb. For lesser clearances, trees with mature trunk diameters of 4 inches or less shall be used.

8) Tree canopies at median or sidewalks shall not encroach into the travel way below 15-foot vertical distance.

9) Root barrier construction shall be required to direct root growth downward to reduce the risk of root interference with sidewalks, curbs, and pavement. Root barrier shall extend 10 feet linearly beyond tree trunk in each direction (20 feet of root barrier on each side, 2 sides total) between curb and sidewalk.

10) Where frontage landscaping precedes improvement of sidewalk areas, irrigation shall be located so as not to conflict with future sidewalk improvements (7 feet from curb face).
APPROVED PLANTS FOR EXPRESSWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY

The following list of plant materials has been developed based on evaluation of successful landscape materials on the expressway in terms of plant vigor, growth habit, and maintenance requirements. The listed plant material will survive extended periods of drought especially once established. The plant material recommendations require regular summer water for 5-7 years to become established. Applicants are encouraged to select native plant species over non-native species from the list below.

Should an applicant wish to install a plant that is not on the approved list, they may submit a request to the Department along with a certified arborist’s description of the plant’s characteristics (e.g., type of plant, size when mature, drought and pest tolerance) and findings that the plant is appropriate to the proposed planting area conditions.

TREES

Broadleaf Evergreen and Coniferous

Acacia decurrens = Green Wattle
Acacia longifolia = Sydney Golden Wattle
Acacia melanoxylon = Blackwood Acacia
Agonis flexuosa = Peppermint Tree
Casuarina equisetifolia = Horsetail Tree
Cedrus deodara = Deodar Cedar
Ceratonia stricta = Coast Beefwood
Ceratonia siliqua = Carob
Cordyline australis = Australian Dracaena
Cupressus glabra = Arizona Cypress
Cupressus macrocarpa = Monterey Cypress
Eucalyptus carmal dulensis = Red Gum
Eucalyptus citriodora = Lemon Scented Gum
Eucalyptus ficifolia = Red Flowered Gum
Eucalyptus maculosa = Red Spotted Gum
Eucalyptus polyanthemos = Silver Dollar Gum
Eucalyptus robusta = Swamp Mahogany
Eucalyptus rudis = Desert Gum
Lophostemon confertus = Brisbane Box
Lythranthus floribundus asplenifolius = Catalina Ironwood
Melaleuca stypheliodes = Prickly Melaleuca
Olea europaea = Olive
Olea europea ‘Swan Hill’ = Fruitless Olive
Pinus canariensis = Canary Island Pine
Pinus densiflora = Japanese Red Pine
Pinus elderica = Elderica Pine
Pinus pinea = Italian Stone Pine
Pinus sylvestris = Scot’s Pine
Pinus thurbergiana = Japanese Black Pine  
Podocarpus gracilior = Fern Pine  
Podocarpus henkelii = Long-leafed Yellowwood (male, fruitless)  
Quercus agrifolia = Coast Live Oak  
Quercus suber = Cork Oak  
Robinia pseudoacacia = Black Locust  
Schinus molle = California Pepper  
Schinus terebinthifolius = Brazilian Pepper  
Sequoia sempervirens = Coast Redwood  
Ulmus parvifolia ‘Brea’= Chinese Elm

Deciduous

Acer rubrum ‘New World’ Red Maple  
Aesculus californica = California Horse Chestnut  
Albizia julibrissin = Silk Tree  
Fraxinus americana = “Autumn Purple” Ash  
Fraxinus oxycarpa ‘Raywood’ = Raywood Ash  
Gingko biloba ‘Princeton Sentry’ = Maidenhair Tree  
Koelreuteria paniculata = Golden Raintree  
Lagerstroemia indica x fauriei ‘Natchez’ = Hybrid Crape Myrtle  
Liquidambar styraeiflua = American Sweetgum  
Pistacia chinensis = Chinese Pistache  
Platanus acerifolia ‘Bloodgood’ = London Plane Tree  
Populus alba = White Poplar  
Prunus cerasifolia ‘Krauter Vesuvius’ = Purple Leafed Plum  
Pyrus calleryana cultivars = Flowering Pear  
Quercus coccinea = Scarlet Oak  
Quercus kelloggii = California Black Oak  
Quercus lobata = Valley Oak  
Quercus palustris = Pin Oak  
Quercus rubra = Red Oak  
Rhus lancea = African Sumac

SHRUBS

Acacia verticillata = Star Acacia  
Arbutus unedo = Strawberry Tree  
Arctostaphylos hookeei = Hooker’s Manzanita  
Atriplex lentiformis breweri = Brewer Saltbush  
Berberis thunbergii = Crimson Pygmy Japanese Dwarf Barberry  
Callistemon citrinus = Lemon-scented Bottlebrush  
Ceanothus impressus = Santa Barbara Ceanothus  
Ceanothus’Julia Phelps’= Julia Phelps Ceanothus  
Cercis occidentalis = Western Red Bud
Cistus hybridus = White Rockrose
Cistus purpureus = Orchid Rockrose
Cotinus coggygria = Smoke Tree
Cotoneaster pannosa = Silverleaf Cotoneaster
Cotoneaster parneyi = Parney Cotoneaster
Cytisus canariensis = Canary Island Broom
Dodonaea viscosa = Hopseed Bush
Garrya elliptica ‘James Roof’ = Coast Silktassel
Hakea suaveolens = Sweet Hakea
Heteromeles arbutifolia = Toyon
Juniperus chinensis’ Pfitzeriana Aurea’ = Golden Pfitzer Juniper
Juniperus chinensis ‘Pfitzeriana Glauc’ = Blue Pfitzer Juniper
Leptospermum laevidatum = Australian Tea Tree
Leptospermum scoparium ‘Ruby Glow’ = New Zealand Tea Tree
Loropetalum atropurpurea = Chinese Fringe
Mahonia aquifolium = Oregon Grape
Melaleuca armillaris = Drooper melaleuca
Myrtus communis = Myrtle
Nerium oleander = Oleander
Phormium tenax = New Zealand Flax
Prunus caroliniana = Carolina Cherry
Prunus illicifolia = Hollyleaf Cherry
Prunus lyonii = Catalin Cherry
Pyracantha coccinea = Firethorn
Pyracantha fortuneana ‘Graberi’ = Graber’s Firethorn
Rhamnus alaternus = Italian Buckthorn
Teucrium fruticans = Bush Germander
Xylosma congestum = Shiny Xylosma

GROUND COVERS
Arctostaphylos hookeri ‘Monterey Carpet’ = Monterey Carpet Manzanita
Arctostaphylos uva ursi= Bearberry
Baccharis pilularis ‘Twin Peaks’ = Dwarf Coyote Bush
Ceanothus griseus horizontalis = Carmel Creeper
Gazania ‘Copper King’ = Copper King Gazania
Gazania uniflora = Common Gazania
Hypericum calycinum = Aaron’s Beard
Juniperus sabina ‘Tamariscifolia’ = Tam Juniper

VINES

Lonicera japonica ‘Halliana’ = Hall’s Honeysuckle
Parthenocissus tricuspidata = Boston Ivy (on masonry walls)
PLANTS NOT PERMITTED

TREES

Broadleaf Evergreen and Coniferous

Eucalyptus globules = Blue Gum
Eucalyptus globules ‘Compacta’ = Dwarf Blue Gum
Eucalyptus lehmanii = Bushy Yate
Pinus radiata = Monterey Pine *

Deciduous

Alianthus altissima = Tree of Heaven

SHRUBS

Abelia x confetti = Dwarf Abelia

GROUND COVER

Carpobrotus edulis = Ice Plant
Hedera canariensis = Algerian Ivy