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Development Bureau
Technical Circular (Works) No. 2/2012

Allocation of Space for Quality Greening on Roads

Scope

This Circular sets out the policy and requirements for allocation of space on roads for quality greening and landscape works. This Circular applies to new at-grade roads projects.

Effective Date

2. This Circular takes immediate effect on new road projects from 1 May 2012 at planning and inception stage prior to approval of Technical Feasibility Statement (TFS) if applicable. Projects in advanced stages with approved TFS and beyond are not affected.

Effect on Existing Circulars

3. This Circular supersedes WBTC No. 25/92 on Allocation of Space for Urban Street Trees. It should be read in conjunction with the following Circulars:

Circular No.	Subject
WBTC No. 7/2002	Tree Planting in Public Works
ETWB TCW No. 10/2005	Planting on Footbridges and Flyovers

Background

4. The Development Bureau has been striving to uplift the quality of our living environment through quality greening and landscape planning and design, and proper tree management. The target is to bring about noticeable improvements in greenery, to enhance existing greened areas and opportunities for quality greening and landscape during the planning and development of public works projects.

5. One of the key potential improvements in greenery is to enhance greening on public roads, including carriageways and footways. Trees, when suitably planted, will contribute substantially to greenery and hence priority should be given for tree planting when compared with other technical and planning requirements in road projects. However, inadequate at-grade space and congested underground services, which hamper healthy plant growth, are frequently the major constraints for promoting greening on roads. Clear requirements on the allocation of adequate space for quality greening on roads are therefore required.

Policy

6. To strengthen the Administration's commitment to greening, provision of quality greening in the public road networks should be enhanced in the feasibility, planning, design and construction stages.

7. This circular outlines the requirements for allocating adequate space for greening on at-grade public roads with a view to promoting quality greening. It applies to all road projects in the Public Works Programme, excluding Cat. D items, during the feasibility, planning, design and construction stages. Rehabilitation, reconstruction, and resurfacing of existing roads are excluded. Relevant departments should review their circulars/guidelines to

establish procedures to ensure compliance with the requirements in this Circular for public works projects.

Allocation of Greening Zones on Roads

8. To achieve quality greening on roads, it is essential to consider greening and provide adequate provision for successful greening in the early project planning stage. To ensure sufficient greening coverage on roads, the following greening zones should be allocated during the planning and design of the road projects:

- (i) Central Median Greening Zone (CMGZ)
- (ii) Roadside Verge Greening Zone (RVGZ)

9. The requirements for allocating space for greening on roads are stipulated in **Appendix A**. The Greening Zones should be free of utilities along the roads in general except those for necessary utilities crossing the road, essential lighting and irrigation which should be appropriately located to minimise constraints. Localised discontinuities of greening zones for standard provision of traffic and transport facilities, such as vehicular run-in/out, pedestrian crossings, bus stops, taxi stands, etc. would be allowed. Sufficient clearance between proposed trees and roadside facilities should also be allowed for consideration of road safety. Planting proposals should comply with prevailing planning, design, maintenance and management guidelines of relevant departments.

10. Exemption of the above space requirements stipulated in **Appendix A** may apply under the following considerations:

- (i) Road safety considerations such as to maintain clear visibility near road junctions, road crossings, bus stops, etc; and
- (ii) Essential street furniture like directional signs, traffic signs, signal posts, etc.

Other than the above, the project proponents should provide sound justifications with alternative greening measures for the exemption to the satisfaction of the Works and Maintenance Committee on Greening. Examples of exemptions may include:

- (i) Difficulty in maintenance of the planting at traffic-sensitive locations such as high speed roads/expressways;
- (ii) Significant constraints on existing site areas (e.g. road widening projects restricted by buildings, or locations with unfavourable conditions for healthy planting);
- (iii) Not cost-effective, e.g., requiring resumption of a substantial amount of private land, incurring considerable maintenance costs, requiring a substantial amount of site formation works in return of a greening effect that is disproportionate to the costs or resources involved, etc.

Interfacing with Greening Master Plans (GMPs)

11. The development of district-based GMPs is to bring about visible improvements to the built-up areas. A GMP provides a coherent, overarching greening framework, defined by a greening theme and a palette of plant species, to guide the planning, design and implementation of greening works in an area/district. As such, in design for greening on new roads, reference to the GMP themes should be made as far as possible.

Maintenance of Planting in Various Greening Zones

12. The maintenance responsibility for the greening works in various greening zones on roads shall be identified and agreed with the respective maintenance parties during the project feasibility and design stages with reference to the prevailing technical circular.

Enquiries

13. For enquiries of this Circular, please contact AS(GL)3 of the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau.

(C S Wai)
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Space Requirements of Greening Zones on Roads

Central Median Greening Zone (CMGZ) and Roadside Verge Greening Zone (RVGZ)¹

1. For road hierarchies² with central reserves to be provided, the following requirements for CMGZ and RVGZ shall be followed:

- (a) For trunk road and primary distributors, 2.5m minimum width shall be reserved for CMGZ.
- (b) For roads other than trunk road and primary distributors, 2m minimum width shall be reserved for CMGZ.
- (c) 2m minimum width shall be reserved for RVGZ.

2. For roads other than (1) above, 1.5m minimum shall be reserved for RVGZ.

3. The CMGZ and RVGZ act as planting strips for at-grade planting. The planting strips should have the following characteristics:

- (a) Free of constraints such as underground utilities and overhead spaces along the roads that will hinder the planting works and limit plant growth. Necessary utilities crossing the road, lighting cables, and water supply pipes for irrigation systems can be exempted;
- (b) The planting bed should have an open base to allow free drainage and root extension;
- (c) The CMGZ and RVGZ with dimensions in (1) above, include soil width only and do not include central profile barriers, hard shoulders and marginal strips, if required; and
- (d) Low-level continuous shrub/hedge to replace installation of railings may be considered for CMGZ and RVGZ where appropriate.

¹ RVGZ should be applied to both sides of roads.

² Road hierarchies shall be in accordance with the Transport, Planning and Design Manual