

2. MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The routes to be selected for inclusion in Michigan's Heritage Route program, must by law, be part of the state trunkline system. Maintaining these roads in their existing natural state is of primary concern. All activities undertaken to maintain the highway should enhance and protect the existing aesthetic, ecological, environmental, and cultural amenities that distinguish the particular highway and its roadside. The following guidelines are intended to provide this protection.

MOWING

Mowing may be done where necessary, but should be limited to one swath on either side immediately adjacent to the edge of pavement. Certain designated areas should be maintained according to specific guidelines which may prevent mowing.

GRADING

Grading should be kept to a minimum to avoid disturbance of vegetation. It should be pulled back to avoid mature trees or unusual sites which have been designated.

TREE AND SHRUB TRIMMING AND TREE REMOVAL

Where necessary for safety or protection of the traveling public and vehicles, and to preserve or enhance aesthetics, tree branches and shrubs may be trimmed. Whole trees may be removed if dead or dying. This should be done judiciously and in consultation with the Heritage Route Committee.

RESURFACING, RESTORATION, AND REHABILITATION (RRR)

Michigan currently designs and constructs its state trunklines according to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards and rehabilitates its non-freeway system according to Michigan's RRR guidelines. The RRR guidelines are "less" than AASHTO, but provide for highways that are reasonably safe and fit for highway travel while incurring minimal aesthetic and environmental disturbance and economic burden.

In determining standards of design, it is recognized that Heritage Routes may include major routes requiring normal AASHTO and RRR standards of design and rehabilitation as well as routes in which minimal standards can be utilized to maintain existing natural scenic and historic conditions.

It is recommended that current RRR guidelines serve as general guidance for Heritage Routes. Where economic or environmental concerns are great, design exceptions addressing narrow pavement, narrow shoulders, winding and/or rolling alignment, steep side slopes, roadside obstacles and narrow right of way would be allowed. Such exceptions would be requested through normal procedures within MDOT and if approved, addressed with appropriate traffic signing.