



HISTORY

Early in the State's history, the California Legislature, recognizing the value of roadside enhancement, enacted a statute to encourage the planting of trees along California's public roads and highways. In 1895, it created the Bureau of Highways to improve the condition of California's roads. One of the first recommendations was to plant trees along the highways to mitigate dust and mud problems. In 1917, highway plantings were recognized as part of a complete highway. Here the foundation of roadside beautification and Transportation Landscape Architecture began.

In 1921, the California Highway Commission recommended that greater attention be given to beautification of the highways and protection and preservation of the roadway and roadside environment.

Over time, the landscape architectural practice expanded to respond to changing transportation demands. In 1936, the Division of Highways hired its first Landscape Architect to create a roadside development program.

The massive effort to build the Interstate Highway System in the 1950's expanded the Landscape Architect's role to find design solutions to fit the new system into the local context. In the 1960's, the Highway Beautification Act and National Environmental Policy Act advanced landscape architectural values as crucial to highway development. New emphasis was placed on the importance of fully considering environmental, scenic, and aesthetic values in developing transportation projects.

In the 1990's, federal transportation policy shifted emphasis, giving State and local governments more flexibility in determining transportation solutions. This allows funding for projects that protect the environment, provide for bicycle and pedestrian mobility, and promote highway beautification.

Caltrans Landscape Architects employ Context Sensitive Solution principles to ensure stakeholders are involved early and continuously on projects to balance transportation goals with community and environmental values.

CALTRANS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

PROVIDE EXPERTISE IN A SPECIALIZED AREA

NOW & FUTURE

We contribute to the development of transportation corridors that are safe, functional, and beautiful, reflecting current and emerging aspects of landscape architecture, environmental planning and management. Our goal is to optimize user safety and integrate the transportation corridor with its setting to create an aesthetic travel experience.