

# SIDEWALK AND STREET TREE MAINTENANCE

Public Works Agency  
Roads & Transportation  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009-1620



## INTRODUCTION

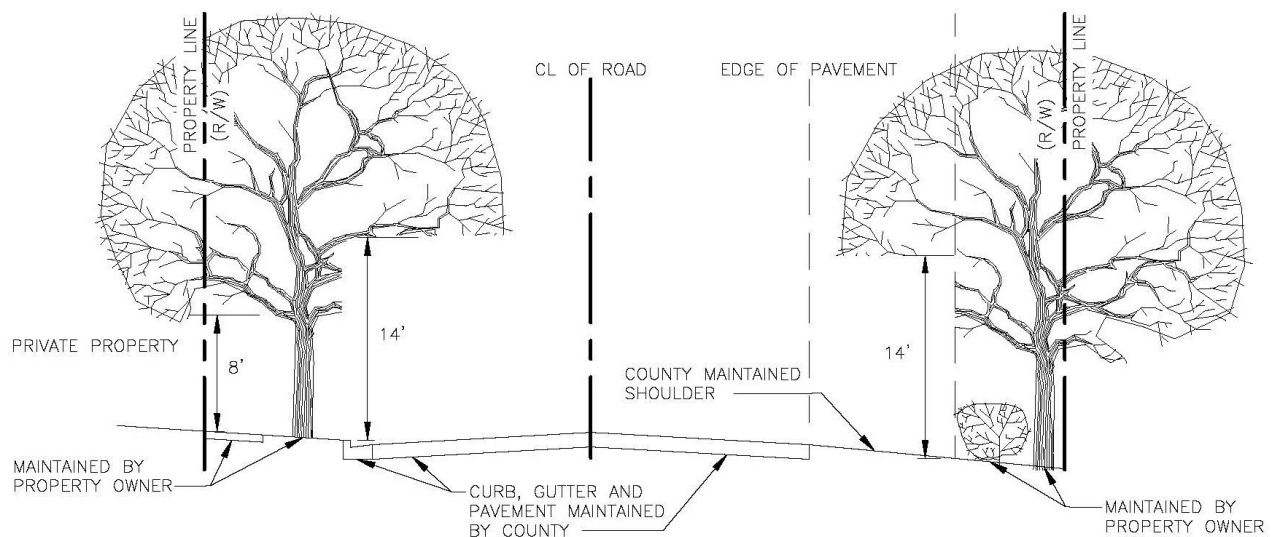
Sidewalks and trees benefit communities. Sidewalks provide a safe path for pedestrians, and trees are recognized as contributing to the environment and improving air quality.

Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks and street trees in unincorporated Ventura County per Ventura County Ordinance Code Sections 12701-12703, California Streets and Highways Code (Chapter 22, Sections 5600-5630), and the 1968 Ventura County Resolution Establishing Policy for Planting, Maintaining, Trimming and Removing Landscaping Encroaching into County Road Rights of Way.

## DEFINITIONS

**Encroachment** – An encroachment is any obstruction, structure or object placed in the road right-of-way (R/W). Sidewalks and trees are considered encroachments. Per Ventura County Ordinance Code Division 12 the County may permit or deny encroachments in the road R/W. The County may require removal of any encroachment that endangers the public or restricts public R/W use or access.

**Road Right-of-Way** – The width of the R/W varies. Generally, the County road R/W extends 30 feet to each side of the road center line for a two-lane road. The R/W generally includes more than the area covered by asphalt or concrete. To find out the width of a road, use the county's software located here: <http://gis.ventura.org/PWA-Transportation/>.



A typical delineation is shown on the sketch above.

Sidewalk and Parkway Strip – The sidewalk and parkway strip is the area between the property line and the back of curb and may include trees, bushes, other vegetation, sidewalks, or other encroachments.

Roadway Shoulder – On rural roadways the area between the property line and the edge of pavement and may include trees, bushes, vegetation or other encroachments.

Sidewalk and Street Tree Maintenance – Sidewalk maintenance can be done by repair or replacement of the sidewalks and is required to ensure safe pedestrian access. Maintenance of vegetation includes tree trimming, root pruning, trimming of shrubs and/or ground cover or other actions necessary and required for safe vehicle and pedestrian access and safe sight distance for all users. Placement and maintenance of any vegetation must allow adequate sight distance. Please refer to the Fact Sheet titled “Sight Distance – A Clear View” for more information.

Property Owners – The legal owner of lots or portions of lots adjacent to or fronting on any portion of sidewalk between the property line and the street line.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Public Works Agency Roads & Transportation – Periodically inspects R/W and notifies property owners if sidewalks require repairs or maintenance and if vegetation in the parkway strips or roadway shoulders needs maintenance.

Property Owners – Maintain and repair the sidewalk and maintain all trees and landscaping in the parkway strip and shoulder. If a property owner is issued a written notice and fails to complete the sidewalk repair or vegetation maintenance in the allotted time, the County will cause the repairs to be completed and the property owner will be billed for all costs incurred by the County to complete the maintenance or repair action.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ’S)**

Q. Do I need a permit to trim or remove a tree in the parkway or repair the sidewalk in the R/W?

A. Yes. The permit application can be found at:  
<http://vcpublicworks.org/transportation-department/road-encroachment-permit>

Q. Do I have to replace a tree removed from the road R/W?

A. No. Although trees are beneficial to the environment, current County regulations do not require you to replace the tree. If you want to plant a tree, the tree must be from the approved tree list on Page 37 of this document:

<http://pwportal.ventura.org/ESD/ESD/docs/Landscape%20Design%20Criteria.pdf>.

More information regarding protected trees and permits for trees in the R/W or on private property can be found here: <http://vcrma.org/planning/permits/tree/tree.html>.

Q. My tree has been identified for removal by VCPWA-RT. Can I keep my tree by using alternative repair methods or rerouting the sidewalk?

A. Any tree in the R/W that is deemed a public safety or public access concern must be removed. Sidewalks cannot be rerouted. Any deviation from this policy would require evaluation by an Arborist and acceptance of liability for the tree by the property owner.

- Q. If I receive a Repair Notice from VCPWA-RT, then how much time do I have to respond and repair the sidewalk?
- A. Corrective work should be completed within the time specified on the Notice and no later than the Completion Date on the Encroachment Permit.
- Q. What happens if I receive a Repair Notice from VCPWA-RT and I do not comply with the Notice?
- A. VCPWA-RT will perform the work and bill the property owner. For unpaid bills, the County will pursue a lien on the property to recover the costs associated with the repair.
- Q. Are there sidewalk repair standards?
- A. Yes. Repair work must comply with the Repair Standards found here:  
<https://www.vcpwpublicworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2022-12-20-FINAL-Sidewalk-Stds.pdf>.
- Q. What are the requirements for maintaining tree/vegetation?
- A. Where there is a curb and no sidewalk, all vegetation/landscaping and trees must be trimmed to the back of the curb to provide a minimum fourteen feet (14') vertical clearance above the roadway.

Where there is a sidewalk, all vegetation/landscaping and trees must be trimmed to provide a minimum of 8 feet (8') vertical clearance above the sidewalk.

Where there is a dirt shoulder, all vegetation/landscaping and trees must be trimmed to the back of maintained shoulder/ditch to provide a minimum fourteen feet (14') vertical clearance above the shoulder/ditch.

The stability of the tree must not be compromised during or after maintenance of the tree. Extensive tree or root trimming may require the property owner to get an Arborist report prior to trimming.

## **REQUESTS AND INQUIRIES**

If you have questions, contact Roads & Transportation Permits section.

Phone: (805) 654-2055

Email: [PWA.TransPermits@ventura.org](mailto:PWA.TransPermits@ventura.org).

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