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Traffic Engineering Council
presents TIPS on



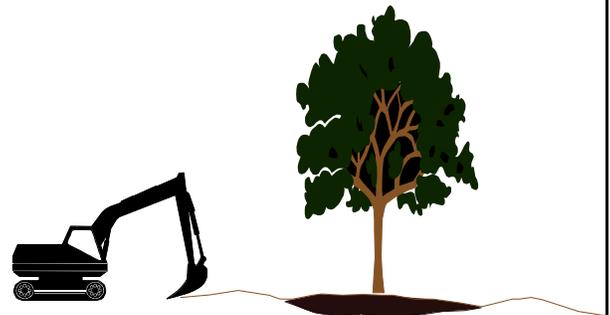
Tree Removal

Why do they have to remove those trees next to my roadway?

One of the most critical elements of design in considering the layout of a driveway or intersection is sight distance. The amount of sight distance required for a given circumstance is dependent upon a number of factors, including posted speed limit, and curves and hills. However, in all cases, clear and unobstructed sight of vehicles on both the travel way and intersecting street or driveway is of paramount concern.

When trees were planted years ago, many of the current safety design standards did not exist. At the time the trees were planted, consideration was not given as to whether or not the line of sight to a driver would be impeded or whether motorists would hit the trees. Now, as the trees reach full maturity, their location may block a driver's line of sight. Since the safety criteria for sight distance have been established, it becomes necessary to remove trees which cause a hazard to

drivers by impeding their line of sight or creating a hazard along the side of the road.



Design engineers try to save as many of the existing trees as possible when redesigning a road or planning driveway access, recognizing the aesthetic value of older trees. However, safety and proper design always take precedence. In many instances, when older trees need to be removed they are replaced with new plants. The new trees are planted in locations that will not impede a driver's line of sight now or in the future.

Besides blocking a driver's line of sight, consideration must also be given to errant

vehicles that may stray from the travel way. If trees are immediately adjacent to the roadway (or in some instance actually encroach into it), the potential for an accident involving serious injury is greatly increased. Therefore, a clear (or recovery) zone is often an integral part of proper roadway design. The amount of space required in the zone is related directly to speed.

In summary, trees can serve to beautify a roadway as well as cause the potential for serious accidents by either impeding sight

or from errant vehicles striking them. The design engineer must use established guidelines, practices and standards when considering the layout of a driveway or intersection. These criteria are the minimum requirements which must be satisfied to ensure a proper design; it is encouraged that these minimum criteria be exceeded whenever possible. Although every attempt is made to preserve as many existing trees as possible, they must sometimes be removed if their location prevents fulfilling these requirements.