



Natural Beauty Road Guidelines

Goals

The Natural Beauty Roads Program aims to preserve, in a natural, essentially undisturbed condition, certain county-local roads having outstanding or unusual natural beauty by native vegetation and other natural features within or associated with the right-of-way (ROW). The designation of a road as a Natural Beauty Road does not affect or restrict the activities of the RCKC having jurisdiction over that roadway. The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) and utility companies have the right to control vegetation in connection with the installation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of utility facilities or perform construction, maintenance, repair, or replacement of public utilities crossing a Natural Beauty Road. This program follows the [Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act \(EXCERPT\) Act 451 of 1994 Part 357 Natural Beauty Roads; Sec-324.35704, Part 7.](#)

Objectives

1. To officially recognize and designate roads in the county-local system which meet the natural beauty criteria.
2. To keep these roadsides as they presently exist as long as possible.
3. To maintain and administer these roads so that they will continue to meet the criteria and provide safe public travel.
4. To mark such roads for the information of the public.

Accepted Maintenance Practices

In general, natural beauty roads should receive the same level of maintenance performed on the road before designation and consistent with actions that are necessary to protect the safety of the motoring public, as long as the character of use and development of the road and along the roadway does not change to the extent that a higher degree of maintenance is necessary to protect the safety of the motoring public.

1. **Mowing:** Mowing should be continued where done previously, but should be limited to one swath (maximum of five feet) on either side of the road as follows:
 - a. On one-lane trail or dirt roads, mowing should be immediately adjacent to the edge to the tracks.
 - b. On two-way gravel roads, mowing should be immediately adjacent to the edge of the graded surface.
 - c. On paved roads, mowing should be immediately adjacent to the edge of pavement.
2. **Grading:** Grading will be kept as narrow as possible. This should normally be kept within a total width of 10 - 15 feet for trail roads. On other roads, grading should continue as normally provided in a manner consistent with maintaining the safety of the motoring public and should be kept to a minimum when possible to avoid disturbance of vegetation. It should be pulled back to avoid trees and unusual sites which have been designated.

3. **Herbicides:** Under no circumstances will herbicides be used to control or eliminate roadside vegetation.
4. **Dust Control:** Where dust control has been the practice or becomes a necessity, a minimum level of dust control, as determined by the RCKC, may be used.
5. **Cross Drainage & Bridges:** Cross drainage and bridges normally will not be part of a Natural Beauty Road. However, when cross drainage is included in the portion of a local county road designated as a Natural Beauty Road, cross-drainage must be handled where necessary to prevent damage to the road, possible washouts, and other problems which in the opinion of the RCKC may be detrimental to the safety of the motoring public.
6. **Signage:** Natural Beauty Roads will be identified at entrance and exit points by a specifically designated standard sign to be a design prepared by the Department of Transportation and placed by the RCKC. The length of the portion of the road designated as a Natural Beauty Road will be designated on the entrance sign.
7. **Tree and Shrub Trimming & Tree Removal:** Where necessary for the safety and/or protection of the traveling public and vehicles, as determined by the RCKC tree branches and shrubs may be trimmed or whole trees removed.
8. **Road Surfacing:** The existing road surface at the time of designation should normally be continued. Necessary changes in surface to improve drainage, reduce maintenance problems, etc. may be cause for the RCKC to at its sole discretion after a public hearing undesignate a Natural Beauty Road if such changes disturb the natural beauty characteristics for which the road was originally designated.

| Road Name | From | To | Township |
|-----------|---------------------------|---|----------|
| F Avenue | 7 th Street | 8 th Street | Alamo |
| E Avenue | N 12 th Street | 0.50 miles E of N 12 th Street | Cooper |
| BC Avenue | E Gullway Drive (M-43) | 34 th Street | Richland |
| R Avenue | 6 th Street | 2,700 feet E of Vankal Street | Texas |

Current list of RCKC Natural Beauty Roads as of January 1, 2023.