



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Cathy Wolfe  
District One

Sandra Romero  
District Two

Bud Blake  
District Three



**PUBLIC WORKS**  
An Accredited Agency of the  
American Public Works Association

Ramiro A. Chavez, P.E., PgMP  
Director

March 1, 2016

Dear Resident:

Thank you for your interest in wanting to maintain the vegetation in the county right-of-way in front of your property. This letter is to help provide you with information about our Owner Will Maintain Program.

The Owner Will Maintain Program is an opportunity for property owners or residents located along county roads to maintain the vegetation along the county right-of-way rather than having the Thurston County Public Works Department perform the mowing and/or brushing work. The resident who signs up for the program agrees to maintain the vegetation to a standard that will accomplish four objectives:

1. *To maintain visibility for safety reasons to motorists and the public who use the roadway.* This is accomplished by trimming and removing trees and shrubs to the back of the ditch or 5 feet off of the edge of the roadway. Any limbs hanging above the roadway should not be lower than 18 feet from the road surface. This is to prevent the limbs from being hit by large trucks, school buses, or equipment used during road maintenance.
2. *To preserve the shoulder area so motorists can pull off the road if necessary.* This means keeping the vegetation short (about 4 inches or less) between the edge of the roadway and the back of the ditch or 5 feet off the edge of the roadway. This also helps preserve the road surface, since encroaching vegetation can break down the road edge.
3. *To control noxious weeds.* Contact the Thurston County Noxious Weed Department (360) 786-5576 if you need control advice or have difficulty identifying any noxious weeds. Some noxious weed species, such as Knotweed, cannot be controlled in one season using manual methods, and those manual methods may spread the species further, therefore some noxious weeds may not fall under the Owner Will Maintain Agreement. The Noxious Weed Department will retain responsibility for controlling those species on County right-of-way. **Caution: Wear rubber gloves when pulling Tansy, Poison Hemlock or other toxic species.**

4. *To provide drainage of water away from the road surface.* If water doesn't drain properly, it can saturate and break down the road surface. Water may also freeze during the winter, creating a safety hazard. Periodically when the sod rises above the edge of the roadway it is necessary for the maintenance crew to remove a strip of sod along the edge of the roadway to restore or allow proper drainage flow.

The County shall not be responsible for activities conducted by the participant under the terms of this agreement and all activities performed under this agreement will be entirely at the participant's risk. The participant expressly agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the County, its officers, agents, employees, or otherwise, from any and all liability, loss or damage including reasonable claims, demands, actions, or damages to any and all persons or property, costs or judgments against the County which result from, arise out of, or are in any way connected with the activities to be performed by the participant under this agreement.

To sign up for the Owner Will Maintain Program, the resident needs to submit the attached program application form to Thurston County Public Works Department. This application is for a one year period and needs to be renewed annually. The department will mail renewal notification letters and new signs to residents who were previously signed up for the program.

If the resident fails to maintain the vegetation to the agreed upon standard, the County will make a concentrated effort to contact them and work out a corrective action plan. If this fails to solve the problem and it becomes necessary for the county to perform the work, the Owner Will Maintain Application will be revoked.

After signing up for the program the resident will receive a minimum of two signs. **One sign, marked "BEGIN", is placed at the beginning of the property owner's lot line, on 2x2 wooden posts 3 to 4 feet above the road surface, and on the backside of the ditch or at least 5 feet back from the edge of the roadway. The other sign, marked "END", is placed at the end of the property line (along the roadway), in the same manner. The signs need to face the traffic flow so the vegetation maintenance crew employees approaching the area in their mower(s) can easily identify the beginning and end of the participants' property line.**

It is the responsibility of the resident to maintain these signs. If any of the signs are missing, the resident can receive replacements from the Public Works Department. New signs will be issued each year and old ones will need to be discarded.

If you have questions concerning the Owner Will Maintain program, please contact Public Works, Road Operations Division at (360) 867-2300.