

Introduction

Purpose

The Road and Development Standards serve the following goal, set by the County of Mendocino General Plan:

Provide an adequate, well-maintained, efficient, and safe network of County-maintained roads that extend into the unincorporated areas of the County from the State Highway system, and provide for both area and regional surface transportation needs of the County.

The standards apply to road improvements and other road-related improvements (e.g. roadside drainage systems) in subdivisions and other developments requiring county approvals, and which are required for property access subject to the expectation of public use by residential owners within a subdivision or business open to the general public, as well as improvements that are undertaken by the County Department of Transportation (DOT). They also apply to privately maintained roads and related improvements that are required for development projects subject to the expectation of public use where public health and safety is a factor.

Road standards have proven to be highly successful in many communities, setting reasonable, consistent requirements. Standards result in a road system that works well, meeting current needs and allowing for orderly expansion, where appropriate. Standards allow for efficient design, construction, and maintenance. Standards provide a common frame of reference for all of those with an interest in the County's roads, including:

- Civil Engineers
- Citizens
- Public officials
- Contractors
- Property owners
- Utility agencies
- Developers
- Planners

The County of Mendocino last adopted Road Standards in 1972. These Road Standards supercede the 1972 Road Standards and any previous Road Standards adopted by the County of Mendocino.

Document Overview

The Road Standards are organized as follows:

- Tab A – Standard Plans
- Tab B – Standard Specifications
- Tab C – Road Design Standards
- Tab D – Drainage Design Standards
- Tab E – Traffic Design Standards
- Tab F – Street Light Design Standards
- Tab G – Checklists and Forms
- Tab H – Exception Procedures

A table of contents has been provided at the beginning of the document and in each tab. Pages are numbered consecutively in each tab. For example, the Standard Plans are numbered A-1, A-2, etc. The standard plans in Tab A are also assigned an identification number that will be stable over time, even if pages are renumbered in future editions of the document.

The numbering system for the standard plans is based on that used by Caltrans. For example, the first standard plan would be referred to as *MENDOT STD. NO. A10*. Where the standard plan consists of more than one sheet, they are noted A, B, etc. For example, the typical cross sections for County of Mendocino Roads consist of *MENDOT STD. NO. A10A* through *A10J*. The numbering system for the standard plans and standard specifications is not sequential because it follows a standard format and numbers have been reserved for future use.

The Caltrans Standard Plans will serve as a valuable companion to the County of Mendocino Road Standards. The document is intended to supplement the standard plans and specifications prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), providing an additional level of detail only where needed. The Engineering Service Center at the Caltrans web site, <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/esc/> (as of July 2000) makes their standards available for viewing and transfer at no charge.

User's Guide

Civil Engineers, whether designing private projects, checking the plans for private projects, or designing county projects, will need to be familiar with the entire document as well as referenced standards, particularly those prepared by Caltrans. See Tab B, Standard Road Specifications, for the precedence of referenced standards. The Civil Engineer in responsible charge of the work must use independent judgement in applying the standards and in evaluating situations where no standards are provided. The County Road Standards are not intended to cover all aspects of design, but rather to address recurring situations where a consistent approach is appropriate. *Subdivision Map Act Section 66456.2 – Civil Engineers shall prepare Improvement Plans – and Section 66418 & 66419 – Improvement Plans present “Designs” for “Developments”.* *Professional Engineers Act: California Business and Professions Code Sec. 6700-6799. Section 6730: Necessity for registration (Civil Engineers) - In order to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare, any person, either in a public or private capacity,*

except as in this chapter specifically excepted, who practices, or offers to practice, civil engineering, electrical engineering or mechanical engineering, in any of its branches in this state, including any person employed by the State of California, or any city, county, or city and county, who practices engineering shall submit evidence that he is qualified to practice, and shall be registered accordingly as a civil engineer, electrical engineer or mechanical engineer by the board. Section 6731: Definition of civil engineering: Civil engineering embraces the following studies or activities in connection with fixed works for ... drainage, ... highways, ... grading,etc. Section 6744: Exemption for landholder: This chapter does not require a registration for the purpose of practicing civil engineering, by an individual, a member of a firm or partnership, or by an officer of a corporation on or in connection with property owned or leased by the individual, firm, partnership, or corporation, unless the civil engineering work to be performed involves the public health or safety or the health and safety of employees of the individual, firm, partnership or corporation.

Citizens with concerns about possible road construction would want to start with Tab A, which includes typical cross sections for various road classifications. Road classifications are based on the General Plan and on whether the road is urban or rural. See the discussion of terms and definitions.

Public Officials that are reviewing land development projects would refer to Tab A, which illustrates the typical cross-sections and various other road design features. Tab H, Exception Procedures, may also be an important reference.

Contractors will primarily rely on Tabs A and B for detailed construction requirements.

Property Owners and Utility Agencies that are interested in completing improvements within a County Road (e.g. a new driveway approach, utility lines, tree planting) would refer to the Standard Plans in Tab A when planning the work and seeking bids from contractors.

Developers and Planners reviewing development projects will primarily use Tabs A, C, and I, but may want to begin with the Functional Road Classifications in Tab C, the Road Design Standards. Road design requirements must be considered early in the design of any development.

Common Terms and Definitions

Approval Authority. The public official or body empowered to act upon a permit or request for approval, or empowered to act upon an appeal of a decision on a permit or request for approval.

California Department of Transportation. Caltrans or CALTRANS.

California Streets and Highway Code. S&H

California Vehicle Code. CVC

Commercial or Industrial Road. A road providing access to, or through, an area that contains commercial or industrial uses (not limited to commercial or industrial “use types” in the Mendocino County Code Zoning Code).

County Road. A road accepted by the County of Mendocino on behalf of the public, for public use, which may or may not be accepted for public maintenance. (S&H Sec. 941)

County Maintained Road. Roads open to the public and designated by the County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors for maintenance pursuant to the California Vehicle and Streets & Highways Codes. (S&H Sec. 941)

DOT Director. Director of the Department of Transportation of the County of Mendocino, acting either directly or through properly authorized agents, such agents acting within the scope of the particular duties entrusted to them.

Driveway. A vehicular access that serves no more than one lot or parcel. These standards do not regulate driveways beyond the public Right-of-Way.

Driveway Approach. That portion of a driveway within the road right-of-way between the edge of road pavement and the property line. When the width of right of way is not defined the driveway approach shall be constructed and maintained to provide for the care and protection of the county road and traveling public (see right-of-way below). (A driveway is an “encroachment” and subject to regulation pursuant to S&H Ch. 5.5)

Exception. Relief from a requirement of the road standards, granted by the approval authority through the exceptions process described in Tab H.

Functional Road Classification. The classification of a road segment according to its purpose. The County of Mendocino General Plan classifies and lists certain roads according to the following classifications: Minor Arterial, Connector, Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local Connector. All county roads that are not listed are considered Local Roads. Caltrans classifies roads in accordance with the “Transportation System Network” (TSN) designations, which are published by Caltrans for all “on system” roads in California. All TSN roads that are not listed by Caltrans are considered Local Roads as well. These TSN designations are listed in C-3 & C-4 of this standard.

Lot or Parcel. Pre Mendocino County Code (MCC) sec 17-24&25 - A “Lot” means a parcel of land held by one owner. A “parcel” means a unit of land held by one owner.

Private Road. A road over which the general public has no right to pass.

Private Road with Public Easement. A private road, requiring county approvals, and which provides property access subject to the expectation of public use by residential owners is regulated under this standard. A private road may have a public easement granted over it to satisfy a parcel development but it is still a private road.

Public Road. A road over which the general public has the right to pass.

Right of Way. Right of Way shall be defined as one of the following: 1) property offered to the County of Mendocino for public road purposes; 2) access easements or private road easements; or 3) prescriptive rights held by County of Mendocino for public road purposes. In those cases where County Maintained Road is not within a dedicated or acquired “fee title” road right-of-way and yet the County Maintained Road has been designated by the Board of Supervisors the County has in fact made a County Maintained Road pursuant to law (S&H Sec. 25). This condition creates road right-of-way by prescription or “presumed dedication” which is beyond the scope of these road standards. When a title conveyance makes reference to a County or public road and no width is indicated it is implied to be a minimum of 40 feet (S&H Sec. 906).

Road. Road shall mean any public or private road that provides access to more than one lot.

Rural Road. Rural Road Standards shall apply in all areas not designated for urban road standards. Also, Rural Connector Roads shall be used to connect isolated subdivisions and businesses with existing County public roads under the conditions described in Tab C, Road Design Standards.

Sidewalk. An improved path for public convenience that will not endanger persons or property and will accommodate the disabled. (S&H Sec. 907. Any owner or occupant of land may construct a sidewalk on the county highway along the line of his/her land, subject to the authority conferred by law on the Board of Supervisors.)

Urban Road. Urban road standards shall apply when any one of the following conditions are met:

- 1) Any of the property abutting the road has a General Plan land use classification with a base density of less than forty thousand square feet per parcel, regardless whether public water or sewers are available or currently extended to the property.
- 2) Urban improvements, such as curb, gutter, or sidewalk, are in existence on the road frontage of property adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, the development.
- 3) The road is within an urban area on a map prepared by the State of California Department of Transportation or the County of Mendocino Department of Transportation. As of

February 2007, urban areas had been designated for Ukiah, Willits, and Fort Bragg on said maps.

Subject to the Approval Authority, urban road standards may apply when the road is within an urbanized or urbanizing area as evidenced by one or more of the following: 1) the road is within a city sphere of influence and pre-zoned by the city at a base density of less than one acre, 2) it is within the urban limit line within the Coastal zone, 3) sites with certain uses having high occupancies regardless of zoning. For example- multi-family housing, some civic uses, or other uses with high traffic volumes constituting urban land use intensities (over 15 people per acre).

Feedback and Changes

Suggestions are welcome and should be directed to the County of Mendocino Department of Transportation by letter or e-mail - dot@co.mendocino.ca.us.

Changes to the Road Standards may be adopted from time to time. Changes will be posted on the County of Mendocino Web Site and will be available at the Department of Transportation. Each change will be numbered and will include instructions for removing, replacing, and adding pages. Use the Record of Changes form, in the Table of Contents Tab, to ensure that you have the most current version of the standards.