127 Community Aesthetic Features

127.1 General

A Community Aesthetic Feature (CAF) is an enhancement installed within the Department's right of way to represent or reflect the surrounding community's identity, culture, and values. A CAF may also enhance the sense of place through which a highway passes.

A CAF placed within FDOT right of way (R/W), or attached to an FDOT structure or facility must be approved by the Department. These features are designed, maintained, and paid for by a local governmental agency. A CAF is typically constructed by the sponsoring entity, but may be included as part of a Department project.

The ***Community Aesthetic Feature Agreement*** (***Form Number 625-010-10***) must be executed by the local governmental entity and the Department prior to any construction within the Department's R/W. This agreement provides for the removal and/or relocation of the CAF at the local governmental entity's expense should it not be maintained by the local governmental entity, or if the Department needs the R/W for transportation purposes. A Deposit, Performance Bond, or Letter of Credit is required as part of the ***Community Aesthetic Feature Agreement***. A waiver of the Deposit, Performance Bond or Letter of Credit is allowed for certain minor installations as indicated within the CAF agreement.

See ***F.S. 334.187*** for Bond and Letter of Credit requirements.

Final plans for placing a CAF within the Department's R/W must be accompanied by a resolution of the local governmental entity indicating their full financial responsibility for the feature's design, construction and maintenance during its lifespan. The resolution must indicate the office or position title (e.g., Mayor, City Manager) within the local agency with approval authority to execute the CAF agreement.

127.2 Requirements

A CAF must meet the Department's requirements governing safety, access, and maintenance of the highway. A CAF is classified in the following categories:

(1) Public Art (Stand Alone or Affixed)

(2) Local ID Markers (Stand Alone or Affixed)

While there are some criteria unique to each category, all CAFs must meet the following requirements:

(1) Except where parking is available, select a site and lay out the site plan to deter drivers from stopping within the roadway. If drivers are expected to stop or park, provide for parking in the plan. If public access is available, Department Standards and Specifications must be met, including ADA requirements. Prohibit public access to the CAF when located within limited access R/W.

(2) The feature must not contain any signs as defined in the ***2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Part 1, Chapter 1A.13***, traffic control features, auditory devices, reflective surfaces, flashing lights, moving parts or moving illumination.

(3) The feature must not contain any advertising per the ***MUTCD*** and ***23 C.F.R., 1.23*** which prohibits advertising on, or commercial use of the R/W. Commercial advertising on state R/W is also prohibited by ***Chapter 479, Florida Statutes***, including charitable, fraternal, religious, or political signs, symbols, logos, banners, web links, or any other such devices. Governmental seals or logos are permitted as part of a Local ID Marker.

(4) Lighting of the feature must not be directed at motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians. For roadway and intersection lighting criteria see ***FDM 231.*** When located near an airport, the feature must not create a hazard as defined by ***Section 333.01(3), F.S.***

(5) In absence of feature lighting, messages or text included on Local ID Markers must be retroreflective. Decorative or accent lighting must not include any strobe effects, flashing lights, moving parts, or moving illumination.

(6) CAF installations that are visible from the Interstate mainline, require FHWA approval.

(7) Do not install Public Art or Local ID Markers in both the median and roadside at a given location. Median placements are allowed on roadways with restricted right of way or restricted roadside conditions..

(8) CAFs within the median of a limited access facility are prohibited.

(9) One Stand-Alone feature will be allowed per mainline interchange approach (for a maximum of two installations). The local governmental entity must select one site from amongst the ramp and the mainline, along the outside of a ramp, or the area inside a loop ramp.

(10) The feature must meet applicable building codes and design criteria for similar structures or landscaping placed adjacent to the highway's R/W, including wind loading commensurate with highway signs in the area.

(11) The feature must not cause adverse impacts or create public controversy related to any of the following:

(a) Property access

(b) Air quality

(c) Noise

(d) Water quality

(e) Wetlands

(f) Floodplain encroachments

(g) Imperiled, endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat

(h) Historical resources

(12) The CAF, including amenities like landscape or fencing, must not obstruct signs or interfere with a sight distance, sight triangle, or permitted view zone (billboards).

(13) The CAF final design must be signed and sealed by a responsible professional licensed in Florida, excluding art wraps.

127.2.1 Public Art (Stand-Alone)

Additional requirements for Public Art (Stand-Alone) are as follows:

(1) All roadways

(a) The location must be outside the appropriate lateral offset or clear zone as defined in ***FDM Table 215.2.3*** and ***215.2.4,*** .and should be as close to the right of way line as practical.

(b) The structure may not display messages with text, or contain any words or alpha-numeric characters.

(c) The artist's insignia may be inscribed or etched on a small plaque affixed to the artwork, or placed on the artwork itself. The insignia must not be visible from the roadway so as to avoid distraction to drivers or bicyclists.

(d) The object's highest point must not be greater in elevation than 25 feet above the nearest point of the traveled way.

(2) Curbed roadways

The feature may be placed within the median of curbed roadways, where:

(a) The Design Speed is less than or equal to 45 mph, and

(b) The R/W or roadside is restricted, and

(c) A minimum 4-foot offset from the face of curb is provided.

127.2.2 Public Art (Affixed)

Additional requirements for Public Art (Affixed) are as follows:

(1) The feature may not display any messages with text, or contain any words or alpha-numeric characters.

(2) The artist's insignia may be inscribed or etched on a small plaque affixed to the artwork, or placed on the artwork itself. The insignia must not be visible from the roadway so as to avoid distraction to drivers or bicyclists.

(3) For bridges, the feature must not reduce the vertical clearance over the roadway.

(4) For art wraps affixed to roadside features:

(a) Do not obstruct traffic control cabinet vents or access panels with the art wrap.

(b) Art wrap themes can be approved for general use by a local government entity.

(c) A CAF Agreement will be required for these features.

(d) Any maintaining agency, other than a local government, must coordinate approvals and maintenance through the appropriate local government entity.

(e) Official seals or logos representing the local governmental entity are permitted. Alpha-numeric characters are allowed if they are part of official seals or logos. Seals or logos must be less than 200 square inches each. Only one seal or logo per face is permitted.

(f) Maps on traffic control cabinet wraps are not permitted to face the roadway.

(g) A Deposit, Bond, or Letter of Credit is not required for art wraps on traffic control cabinets.

(h) The DDE should coordinate with the District Traffic Operations Office during the review process for traffic control cabinet wraps.

127.2.3 Local ID Marker (Stand-Alone)

Additional requirements for a Local ID Marker (Stand-Alone) are as follows:

(1) All roadways:

(a) Local ID Markers are intended to represent the geographic boundary for a county, municipality, sovereign nation, or unincorporated area. The Markers should be located in close proximity to the actual geographic boundary of that area. Remove existing standard geographic boundary guide signs, and unofficial signs or structures, at or near the location.

(b) Local ID Markers for an unincorporated or community area must provide a map, or sufficient enough description to clearly designate the geographic boundary of the area. Also provide documentation of approval of such boundary by the local governing authority.

(c) The location must be outside the appropriate clear zone and lateral offset as defined in ***FDM 215.2.3*** and ***215.2.4*** and should be as close to the R/W line as practical.

(d) The structure may contain text such as the name of the municipality, county, or community area (as defined in ***Chapter 14-51.041, F.A.C.)*** with a short phrase or message. Text such as “Exiting” or “Leaving” are prohibited.

(e) The object’s highest point must not be greater in elevation than 25 feet above the nearest point of the roadway.

(2) Curbed roadways:

The feature may be placed within the median of curbed roadways, where:

(a) The Design Speed is less than or equal to 45 mph, and

(b) The R/W or roadside is restricted, and

(c) A minimum 4-foot offset from the face of curb is provided.

(3) Limited Access Facilities:

(a) Provide a minimum 50-foot offset (100-foot preferred) from the edge of the traveled way, whether guardrail is present or not. The 50-foot to 100-foot lateral offset will help to minimize driver distraction, and reduce the likelihood that vertical structures will become storm debris blown across the roadway.

(b) Letter height must not exceed four feet.

(c) Short phrases or messages are prohibited.

127.2.4 Local ID Marker (Affixed)

Additional requirements for a Local ID Marker (Affixed) are as follows:

(1) All roadways:

(a) The feature may contain text such as the name of the municipality, county or community area (as defined in ***Chapter 14-51.041(2)(c), F.A.C.)*** with a short phrase. Text such as "Exiting" or "Leaving" are prohibited.

(b) For bridges, the feature must not reduce the vertical clearance over the roadway.

(2) Limited Access Facilities:

(a) Letter height must not exceed four feet.

(b) Short phrases or messages are prohibited.

127.3 Approval Process

The application process is conducted in two phases, the Concept Phase and the Final Phase.

When any of the requirements in ***FDM 127.2*** are not met, a Design Variation must be approved by the State Roadway Design Engineer.

127.3.1 Concept Phase

The Concept Phase includes District coordination with the applicant to ensure:

(1) The appropriate Community Aesthetic Feature category is selected,

(2) The corresponding requirements are achievable and acceptable, and

(3) The conditions of the ***Community Aesthetic Feature Agreement*** are acceptable.

The District will submit a concept drawing and documentation to the State Roadway Design Engineer. The concept submittal must include a ***Submittal/Approval Letter***, which can be found in ***FDM 103, Form 122-A***. The ***Submittal/Approval Letter*** is to be signed by a representative of the requesting entity and the District Design Engineer or Turnpike Design Engineer.

Upon review by the Roadway Aesthetic Community of Practice (RACoP) and the State Roadway Design Engineer, conceptual approval may be granted. If the concept and

proposed Design Variations are deemed acceptable, the signed ***Submittal/Approval Letter***, indicating Central Office conceptual approval, will be returned to the District.

For applications involving the Interstate System, the District should coordinate with the FHWA District Transportation Engineer prior to submitting to the Central Office.

The package submitted to the Central Office for conceptual approval must include the following:

(1) The designation of the feature category.

(2) A conceptual drawing/rendering showing the top, front, and side views of the feature with labeled dimensions, material designations including connections, proposed lighting configuration, and any alpha-numeric characters.

(3) A draft site plan and cross section view dimensioning the location of the feature in relationship to the edge of traveled way and the R/W.

(4) The design speed of all adjacent roadways.

(5) A citation of the Governing Design Standards (or Governing Standard Plans), criteria, and building code to which the feature will be designed.

(6) If the feature is to be affixed to a bridge:

  (a) Identify the bridge owner.

  (b) Declare what the impact is to the bridge loading.

(7) For Local ID Markers, include a site map or provide a dimension from the jurisdictional boundary associated with the marker.

(8) The Signature/Approval Letter signed by the applicant and the District Design Engineer or Turnpike Design Engineer.

127.3.2 Final Phase

The Final Phase includes the preparation and review of all final documents. The District will submit the ***Submittal/Approval Letter*** and final documents with a recommendation for approval to the Central Office. The Roadway Aesthetic Community of Practice (RACoP) and the State Roadway Design Engineer will review the application and provide approval to place the feature, or deny the submittal with comments.

The package submitted to the Central Office for final approval must include the following:

(1) Site Plans, including a Traffic Control Plan if temporary maintenance of traffic will be required to place and maintain the feature.

(2) Structural Plans including a wind load analysis.

(3) Local Governmental Entity Resolution.

(4) Design Variations for any requirements in ***FDM 127.2*** that are not met.

(5) ***Community Aesthetic Feature Agreement*** signed by the local governmental entity.

(6) ***Signature/Approval Letter*** signed by the applicant and the District Design Engineer or Turnpike Design Engineer.

Upon receiving Central Office final approval and, if applicable, FHWA, the District will notify the local governmental entity that placement of the feature may proceed. The final approval is valid for one year, at which time the local governmental entity may request an extension from the District.

127.4 Place Name Signs

Customized Place Name Signs are considered Local ID Markers which are addressed in ***FDM 127.2.3 and 127.2.4***.

The placement of Place Name Signs within FDOT R/W is regulated by the Department. Requirements for Place Name Signs within FDOT R/W are located in ***Rule Chapter 14-51, F.A.C., Part IV Place Name Signs***.

All signs placed within the Department's R/W must meet the requirements contained in the ***MUTCD, Part 2***. Signs for general information, services, tourist destinations, and recreational/cultural interest areas all have specific chapters in the ***MUTCD***, which specify color, size and lettering requirements. Destination signs are classified in the ***MUTCD*** as Guide Signs.

127.5 Blue Star Memorial Markers and Flag Poles

Blue Star Memorial Markers and Flag Poles are not considered Community Aesthetic Features and are not covered by this chapter. These markers are managed through the Local FDOT Maintenance and Traffic Operations offices.