

# PART C

## Chapter 4 Aesthetics

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## Chapter 4 Amendments – June 2013

### Revision Register

Issue / Revision No	Reference Section	Description of Revision	Authorised by	Date
1	-	Initial Release of 2nd Edition of Manual	Steering Committee	Jun 2013

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# Part C - Chapter 4

## Aesthetics

### 4.1 Introduction

Aesthetics in the road landscape is the visual integration of the road and other transport modes into the broader landscape. This visual integration contributes to the perception of communities and the qualities of place. The user may be within the corridor or viewing into the corridor.

Aesthetics is more than creating a desirable view or user experience. *“Aesthetic properties provide its users with a clear picture of what is going on around them and what is expected of them. This is accomplished by using techniques and materials to provide better definition of the elements of the facility, to visually highlight important information, and to reduce the stress on users that results from operating a vehicle in a complex environment.”* (TxDOT, 2009).

This chapter reviews some of the basic design tools and techniques which can be employed to preserve, maintain and create visual integration.

### 4.2 Scenic Routes

Scenic routes designation is part of the asset management condition assessment process. They are segments of road corridors that display unique aesthetic attributes of the broader landscape that merit preservation and enhancement. These segments have been mapped within the Element 8 Road Landscape condition assessment database. They possess characteristics that attain a level status of regional significance combined with at least one of the following aesthetic values:

- **scenic;**
- **cultural;** and
- **natural.**

#### 4.2.1 Scenic Value

Scenic value is derived from a stimulating visual experience. It is the result of an emotional reaction created when viewing a natural or man made element as viewed from within or from outside the corridor (Figure C4-1). Scenic value offers a pleasing and memorable visual experience that is distinctive and unique within the road landscape. It may be one single element such as a tree or forest, or a combination of landform, water, vegetation and built features which display a sense of harmony and balance.



Figure C4-1: Scenic value within the road landscape

#### 4.2.2 Cultural Value

Cultural value involves legacies, traditions and historic artefacts that tell a story about people, their past and their community. It includes evidence of past activities or practices, such as artwork, events, vernacular architecture, transportation systems or ruins (Figure C4-2). They may hold scientific, ethnic, social or community significance that educates the viewer of their relevance and instils an appreciation of their contribution to society.



Figure C4-2: Cultural value within the road landscape

### 4.2.3 Natural Value

Natural value relate to the road landscape that is in a relatively undisturbed state (Figure C4-3). While there may be evidence of some human interaction, the basic features remain largely undisturbed. This may include landforms, water bodies, forests and islands.



Figure C4-3: Natural values retained within the road landscape

## 4.3 Basic Design Tools

Basic design tools to achieve aesthetic outcomes within a road landscape include:

- **scale;**
- **proportion;**
- **colour;**
- **texture;** and
- **contrast.**

### 4.3.1 Scale

Scale is formed by the physical relationship between design components within the road landscape (Figure C4-4 and Figure C4-5). Human scale helps people relate to, interpret and appreciate features of the transport corridor. The perception of scale is dependent on the landscape context and angle of view.





### 4.3.3 Colour

Colour can create the most obvious visual impact within the road landscape. It is significant in defining the character and quality of design components. Colours may be used to compliment or create contrast to other parts of the road landscape.

### 4.3.4 Texture

Texture is achieved by incorporating variations and tactile relief to surface finishes (Figure C4-6). Texture helps to define form and add visual interest. Textural treatments to design components can either be subtle or dominant depending on its functional requirements and design intent. Light changes and shadows also affect the appearance of texture (Figure C4-7). Developing patterns in design components are simple measures in achieving texture



Figure C4-6: Subtle texture of the retaining wall design components

### 4.3.5 Contrast

Contrast is based on developing opposing visual characteristics within design components. Contrast can be achieved in many different ways, for example; through varying forms, shapes, colours, light and shadow (Figure C4-7). Design components are often designed to be highly distinguishable from the surrounding landscape setting. This contrast makes the component dominant, a strong feature or statement, and commands visual attention by users. Contrast can also be quite subtle in its effects, by using tonal colouring or slight texture relief to generate visual change. Contrast relieves monotony creating a stimulating driver experience. It also accentuates opposites within a design component, heightening viewer awareness of a singular or series of feature elements.



**Figure C4-7: Contrast through colour, shape, light and shadow**