

Alternatives To Using Sod For Right-Of-Way Plantings

May 2, 2023 – Sanibel City Council





Right-Of-Way Requirements

HISTORY AND POTENTIAL CHANGES

History of Right-Of-Way Requirements



- ▶ 1990 Right-of-Way Vegetation Memo
 - ▶ Memo established no stone in City ROW, sod as a restoration requirement and encourages use of grassy vegetation.
- ▶ 1995 Public Right-of-Way Memo
 - ▶ Summarized previous Right-of-Way guidance
 - ▶ Explained ROW permitting process and issues that must be avoided with ROW vegetation
- ▶ Resolution No. 98-100 (Sanibel Subdivision Improvement Construction Requirements)
 - ▶ Sanibel's subdivision standards includes road and ROW requirements
 - ▶ Requires the grassing of all disturbed non-paved area within the roads right of ways with sod
- ▶ Standard for City Work
 - ▶ All City projects use Bahia Sod to stabilize ROW ground after excavation is complete.
 - ▶ Bahia Sod does not require watering or fertilizer

Items that caused issues

- ▶ Fencing
- ▶ Mulch/Stone/Rock
- ▶ Irrigation
- ▶ Trees/Shrubs
- ▶ Private Signs
- ▶ Permanent Bollards
- ▶ Ornamental Rocks
- ▶ Unstabalized Ground Surfaces



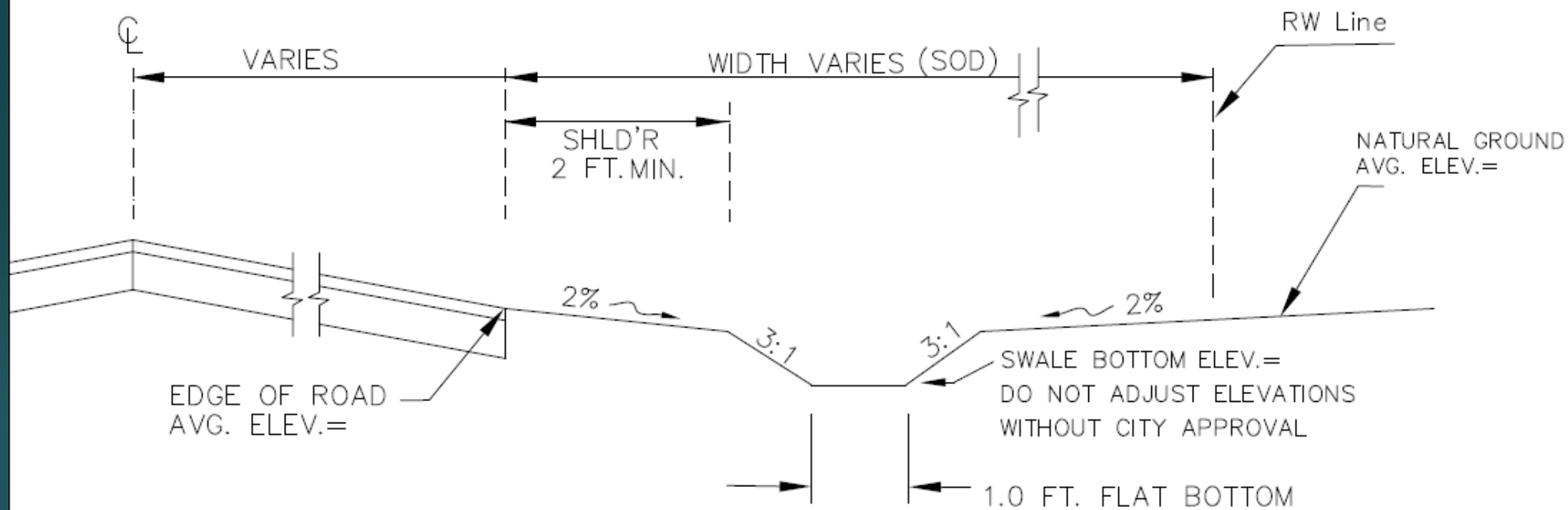
ROW Permits



- ▶ Driveway Permits
 - ▶ City staff reviews permit applications and sets driveway/swale elevations for conformance with stormwater requirements.

- ▶ Utility Installation
 - ▶ All utility companies are required to get permit for any work in ROW.
 - ▶ City staff reviews for conflicts and inspects to verify restoration after completion of work.
 - ▶ Utility companies are required to restore all areas of ROW with sod within 48 hours.

- ▶ Right of Way Modification
 - ▶ All non-utility related modifications in the ROW are required to get a permit
 - ▶ City staff reviews plans and sets swale elevation in ROW to ensure conformance with stormwater requirements.
 - ▶ Does not allow any plantings other than sod



TYPICAL SWALE SECTION

NO SCALE

Stormwater Considerations

- ▶ Modifications to grades in the ROW can cause drainage blockages which lead to drainage issues on roadways and at adjacent properties
- ▶ Stabilizing disturbed ground is crucial for water quality and stormwater system performance
- ▶ Rock and mulch materials lead to blockages in drainage infrastructure



Traffic/ Safety Considerations

- ▶ Space for safe emergency parking of disabled vehicles.
- ▶ Sight Distance at Intersections
- ▶ Alternate path for avoidance or other emergency maneuvers.
- ▶ Space for errant drivers to regain control and stop/return to travel lane.
- ▶ Pedestrian use where no pathway exists.



Restoration/Maintenance Considerations

- ▶ Ability to restore in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- ▶ Restoration requirements for Utilities
- ▶ Plant roots can cause issues for underground utilities.
- ▶ Ability to remove trash and debris from ROW.
- ▶ Mowing and General Maintenance to reduce encroachment of vegetation and roots on pavements and pathways.



Incident Description: Water Level
Feet: 0000.0



Why Consider Alternatives to Sod?

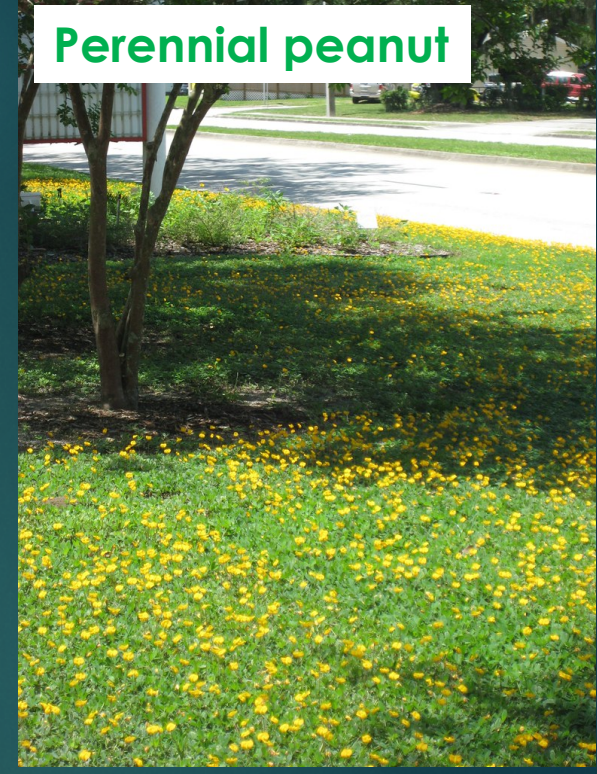
- ▶ Consistent with the Sanibel Plan & Strategic Goals
 - ▶ Promote the use of native plants
 - ▶ Support water quality improvements
 - ▶ Seek resiliency through green/natural infrastructure
- ▶ Best Management Practices Recommended by the Sanibel Nutrient Management Plan
- ▶ Citizen interest



UF/FDOT Florida Research Urges Less Mowing Along Highways to Preserve Pollinators

Possible Alternatives

- ▶ Site-specific considerations
 - ▶ Are certain alternatives better suited for certain areas?
- ▶ Groundcovers
 - ▶ Native: Sunshine mimosa, matchweed, golden creeper, wildflowers
 - ▶ Exotic: Perennial peanut
 - ▶ Available in a “sod” form; mixed results from past use on Sanibel



Possible Alternatives

- ▶ Site-specific considerations
 - ▶ Are certain alternatives better suited for certain areas?
- ▶ Mixed plantings
 - ▶ Trees, shrubs, groundcovers
- ▶ Bioswales

Babcock Ranch



Phillippi Creek, Sarasota County



Next Steps

- ▶ Continue to engage with local experts to evaluate suitable alternatives
 - ▶ SCCF, UF/IFAS, landscape architects & vegetation contractors
- ▶ Initiate a pilot program to demonstrate and test alternatives
 - ▶ Allow & encourage interested residents to implement alternative plantings
 - ▶ Any alternative plan would be approved through a City Right-of-Way permit reviewed by Natural Resources & Public Works
 - ▶ Identify City-managed areas for design & implementation of demonstration projects

