

## **ADOPT-A- MEDIAN APPLICATION PACKET**

The ADOPT-A MEDIAN Program was designed as a way to empower neighborhoods to engage in community beautification efforts. The Program is designed as a tool for the community to:

- > Beautify and increase the quality of life in neighborhoods;
- > Promote community involvement through landscape and streetscape projects;
- > Promote a sense of ownership for community members through “sweat equity” on their projects; and
- > Infuse the landscape of the City of Altoona with color, culture, and creativity.

### **CRITERIA**

The following criteria has been established in order to better assist community members in determining whether or not their project qualifies under the Adopt-A Median Program:

1. Project is sponsored and submitted by a neighborhood-based organization such as Homeowners Associations, Improvement Associations, Block Clubs, Neighborhood Watch Groups, Chambers of Commerce and Beautification Committees, and/or City Council members.
2. Project is under \$10,000.00 in total cost.
3. Project structures shall be below 36” in height from the road surface for freestanding objects, such as street furniture or signage. Acceptable exceptions to this requirement include, but are not limited to, murals on existing walls, City-approved flag poles and/or new trees.
4. Project is free of improvements that require extensive technical review such as: alterations to the horizontal alignment of the street (i.e. changes to the street width, curbs, gutters, median locations/shapes, or traffic lanes), alterations to the water drainage patterns on the street, alterations to traffic lane alignment(s) or street parking.

If you do not meet the above criteria, please contact the City Engineering office for information on the permitting process at 814-949-2447 or by email at [publicworks@altoonapa.gov](mailto:publicworks@altoonapa.gov) .

## **ADOPT-A-MEDIAN APPLICATION PACKET (continued)**

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### **GUIDELINES**

**Please read the following before you submit your package. Be sure that your plans adhere to the following:**

In order to consider the application complete, please submit three (3) sets of the application packet including all attachments. The attachments include:

1. A completed “Adopt-A-Median Neighborhood Beautification Partnership” Agreement
2. A completed Maintenance Agreement
3. A completed Waiver and Release of Claims form
4. Current photographs of the project site from multiple angles
5. A listing of the materials, with estimated costs, that will be used for the proposed improvement, i.e., plant listing for a landscaping project including plant species, quantities, container sizes and spacing, decorative paving materials, street furniture, community signage, etc.
6. Scaled (measurable) project plans showing the proposed encroachments and/or improvements in relation to property lines and existing infrastructure, such as: power poles, light poles, traffic signals, utility boxes, sidewalks, curbs, storm drains, trees, etc. Proposed improvements such as decorative paving, community signage, or furniture will require additional detail drawings or instructions that depict how these proposed elements will be secured to the site.

If any of the above-mentioned items are missing from the application at time of submittal, the applications will be considered incomplete and placed on a “pending” status until all necessary items are received.

All projects will require a revocable permit from the City of Altoona Engineering office.

**Please allow a minimum of 3 months for the processing, review, and approval of your project.** All projects shall be submitted for design review and recommendation to a Committee so designated by City Council from time to time. Once you receive permits and all conditions are met, contact the Engineering office for inspection prior to commencing work. If the improvements involve digging, you must contact PA ONE CALL by dialing 8-1-1 and all utilities must be marked at least three business days before beginning any digging or excavation.

**“ADOPT-A-MEDIAN” NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION  
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

This Agreement between the City of Altoona and \_\_\_\_\_  
(Community Group)

is to establish the terms and conditions for improving, beautifying and maintaining City-owned property (median strip or other public right-of-way) located at

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Location)

Please describe the proposal below, including the means to complete the project and expected completion date. If additional space is required, continue on reverse side of paper. Please include a plan or sketch detailing the work to be performed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Community Group agrees to:

- Provide the labor and materials required to improve the adopted area, and further to maintain and water the area following completion of the project.
- Follow the plan as approved by the City with any special conditions or requirements.

The City of Altoona/Department of Public Works agrees to:

- Help the Community Group with the process of obtaining approval of this proposal.
- Pay for costs incurred by the City to investigate this proposal.
- Waive any associated permit fees for revocable permits.
- Loan hand tools to the group working on the beautification project. Such items may include rakes, brooms, shovels, hoes, etc. The applicant shall pay for lost and/or damaged tools and may be required to submit a deposit for such tools.
- Provide liability coverage for the project.
- Provide resources, as the situation may require, to the extent that resources are available.

\_\_\_\_\_  
For Community Group (Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
For City of Altoona (Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ATTACHMENT I**  
**CITY OF ALTOONA**  
**AGREEMENT ASSUMING RISK OF INJURY OR DAMAGE**  
**WAIVER AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS**  
**BY PARTICIPANTS**

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In consideration of the City of Altoona (hereinafter "City") permitting (check one)

ME (an individual)

the GROUP, known as:

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(Name of Participant Adopting the Project)

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(Name of Group Adopting the Project\*)

to participate in the Adopt-A- Median Program, I do hereby agree for myself, my heirs, executors, assigns and administrators:

The City, its officers, agents, and employees shall not be responsible or liable for any injury, damage, loss or expense either to me/our group or my/our property incurred while I/we am/are cleaning, raking, shoveling, planting, or otherwise improving and beautifying public parkways and median strips, or engaged in similar activities as more fully defined in the Project Application.

I/We further agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the City, its officers, agents and employees from all injuries, damages, costs and expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) that may arise out of, result from, or in any way be connected with the issuance of this permit for purposes described above. This waiver does not apply to injuries and damages that are solely due to the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the City or its officers, agents or employees.

I/We hereby represent that I/we have carefully read and understand the contents of this document and sign the same of my/our own free will.

Signature of Representative on behalf of Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Individual: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian if Participant is under 18 y/o): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*City of Altoona Office Use Only:*

*Cognizant City Department:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Department Contact:* \_\_\_\_\_

\*All members of the Group and any person involved in constructing the Project must sign separate waivers.

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GENERAL GUIDELINES  
FOR  
ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROGRAM

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- I. Drawings submitted to the City for approval should contain the following:
1. Site Plan drawn at 1/4" or 1/8": min. scale showing what you want to do.
    - a. Identify plants with symbols plus botanical and common names per the City of Altoona Shade Tree Commission (STC) requirements and as approved by the STC.
    - b. Label Materials: Boulders, stepping stones, stamped concrete, brick, gravel, benches, flag poles etc.
    - c. Show mound limits and heights.
    - d. Indicate plant sizes.
  2. Identify the project in the Title Block (e.g., "Landscape Traffic Median on X Avenue between Y Street and W Street"). Also, list "submitted by" with name, address and phone number of contact person and date.
  3. Include a small-scale vicinity or location map
  4. Plant and material list
- II. Technical Considerations:
1. All plantings will require soil amendments (fertilizers and mulches). Please consider the use of xeriscape or drought-tolerant plants to conserve water.  
  
For projects proposing signage, signs must have a collapsible base and must not be over 3 feet in height.
  2. Where plant life is involved, water will be required. Even for "drought-tolerant" and/or "native" plant species, supplemental water will be required for the first one to three growing seasons before the plant materials can survive solely on annual rainfall. Give special thought to how plants are to be watered and by whom.

Water as necessary. We strongly advise against running hoses across streets or depending on citizens to cross streets to water.

3. Remember, SAFETY FIRST! Be careful not to obstruct traffic sight lines or distract drivers. For projects proposing signage, signs must have a collapsible base and must not be over 3 feet in height.
  
4. Flag Poles must be no higher than 30 feet and be constructed of material, mounted and located as approved by the City. Only the United States of America and/or the flag of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may be attached to said flag poles. Flag pole construction and installation shall consist of commercial grade materials and shall be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and/or specifications. Flag poles shall have a fall zone of 1.5 times the height of the flagpole. Fall zone shall mean the area (including but not limited to the area directly beneath the load) in which it is reasonably foreseeable that partially or completely suspended materials could fall in the event of an accident.

### III. Design:

Prior to submission of an application, the applicant shall be required to meet with City representatives regarding the design of the Project. Please contact City Engineering Staff to assist you at (814) 949-2447.

**LANDSCAPING AND TREE GUIDELINES  
FOR  
ADOPT-A-MEDIAN PROGRAM**

LANDSCAPING:

- 1) All costs of said planting and removal, maintenance and/or repair of such landscaping located in the public right-of-way shall be at the applicant's expense.
- 2) All weeds and debris shall be removed and hauled away as required by the City's Property Maintenance Code.
- 3) All dead plants shall be removed and replaced, within one (1) year with the originally approved plant species.
- 4) All ornamental vegetation shall be trimmed to provide clearance of the street and sidewalk at all times.
- 5) All vegetation shall be trimmed and maintained to a height of less than 36" above the street at all times.
- 6) All vegetation shall be watered and fertilized to assure survival of all vegetation.
- 7) Pests and disease shall be controlled to provide a healthy environment for plants and the public.
- 8) Any future modifications to the landscape plan shall be approved, in writing, by the City.

TREES

- 1) Excised roots and exposed roots shall be properly protected until trenches and other excavations are backfilled.
- 2) Pruning and/or removal of trees shall require a pruning and/or removal permit from the Shade Tree Commission and pruning and/or removal shall be performed by a Certified Arborist.
- 3) Trees are fragile when there is a change to their environment. Therefore, a maintenance program shall be established to ensure the trees receive proper care.
- 4) No ornamental ground cover shall be placed within the dripline of trees. Planting material within the dripline shall be of a native variety compatible with tree species and be approved by the Altoona Shade Tree Commission.
- 5) No landscaping or construction shall occur within the trees protected root zone without the approval and permission of the Altoona Shade Tree Commission.

TRAFFIC-RELATED GUIDELINES  
FOR  
ADOPT-A- MEDIAN PROGRAM



**Landscaping** - Plantings on City right-of-way are to be limited to a maximum mature height of 3 feet to ensure sight distance is not impaired, particularly near traffic signals or other traffic controls. If on an island or median, a minimum 3 foot walking path is required for pedestrians to access the existing crosswalks. All planting proposals require the approval of the City to ensure that minimum visibility requirements are met.

**Tree Installations** - Trees shall be located to minimize the potential for being struck by errant vehicles. All trees shall be located so that the visibility of traffic signals meet minimum required distance when mature. Sight lines between drivers and signal heads shall be contained in the planting plans for island installations. For purposes of illustration, a driver is required to have continuous visibility of traffic signal heads for a minimum distance of 325 feet to the stop line at that intersection for speeds of 25 mph.

**Fixed object installations other than trees** – Projects on City property or City right-of-way which propose fixed object installations, such as monument signs, architectural enhancements, flag poles, etc. shall have these objects located in the same manner as described for trees. Whenever practical, the object shall be breakaway or crushable, to minimize risk to a driver of an errant vehicle. The fixed object, with the exception of City-approved flag poles, shall be a maximum height of 3 feet.

**Lighting** - Solar lighting shall be the only approved means of illumination for all Projects.