

Agricultural Advisory Board Agenda

August 9, 2021



1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes
 - July 12, 2021
3. **Public Comment Session** [3 minutes per person]
If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by contacting the Planning Department at planninginfo@oconeesc.com or 864-638-4218, so that we may receive your comment and read it into the record.
4. **Discussion** – [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion if required]
 - **Road Safety and Agriculture**
 - i. Rural Roads Safety Brochure
 - ii. Mailbox placement
 - **Farmland Conservation and Preservation**
 - i. Voluntary Agricultural District Brochure
5. **Meeting Schedule for September 2021 – January 2022**
6. **Adjourn**

Oconee County Agricultural Advisory Board

When & Where

4:00 PM

Monday, August 9, 2021

Council Chambers

415 South Pine Street

Walhalla, SC 29691

Alternative participation

YouTube: “YourOconee”

Radio: F.M. 92.3 (within

500’ of Council

Chambers)

Staff contact

846-638-4218

planninginfo@oconeesc.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Debbie Sewell, Chairman, At-Large

Tessa Moxley, Secretary, At-Large

Rex Blanton, District III

Charlie Whiten, District V

Kim Alexander, Vice-Chairman, District I

Larry Cantrell, District II

Ashley Townsend, District IV

Kerrie Roach, Ex-Officio

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

Minutes

4:00 PM, Monday July 12, 2021

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present

Rex Blanton
Debbie Sewell
Charlie Whiten
Tessa Moxley

Staff Present

Vivian Kompier

Media Present

None

1. **Call to Order** – Ms. Sewell called the meeting to order at 4:00PM.
2. **Approval of minutes from June 14** – Mr. Whiten made a motion to approve the minutes with one correction (Letter from Trixi Derosa-Davis was a phone call, not a letter), seconded by Mr. Rex Blanton and approved 4/0.
3. **Public Comment**
 - a. Mike Smith, Chair, Oconee County Planning Commission: work with state and federal agencies to attract agribusiness related grants and revenue sources and support efforts to establish a pilot program related to new agricultural technologies and products.
4. **Presentations to AAB**
 - a. **Andy Whitten, Young Farmers-Road safety and agriculture**
 - i. Mailboxes on the shoulders of roads are big issue for farm equipment transportation
 - ii. Education is needed

Oconee County Administrative Offices

415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691 / 864.638.4218 / www.oconeesc.com

1. Can we start a program to educate drivers on how to drive around farm equipment?
- iii. Mailboxes and vegetation on Highway 24 are too close to the road
 1. Safety issue
- iv. Secondary roads have to be taken because of weight limits on bridges, but secondary roads are too narrow.

Discussion: Ms. Sewell suggests a county-wide awareness campaign on road safety in regards to agricultural equipment. Mr. Blanton volunteered to research already existing programs within the state that have been implemented in regards to the issue.

Mr. Whiten made a motion to have the Agriculture Advisory board present the issue of road safety in regards to agricultural equipment transportation to the County Council, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 4/0.

Ms. Sewell volunteered to present the issue at the next Planning Commission meeting.

5. Discussion – Farmland conservation and preservation: Agricultural Advisory Board / Planning recommendations

- a. Mr. Blanton looked into conservation easements and grants
 - b. Ms. Sewell found a voluntary ag-district program in North Carolina that was county by county instead of at the state level
- 6. Agricultural Advisory Board meeting start time** – the board must get approval from Ms. Brock before voting to change the time. Mr. Blanton made a motion to have the August meeting at 4:00 PM; seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 4/0.
- 7. Adjourn**— Mr. Blanton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 PM; seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 4/0.

W

hile driving on a rural road, you may encounter farm equipment. This equipment comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Sometimes you will see a single vehicle, such as a tractor or combine. Other times the equipment will consist of a tractor with an implement in tow.

Farm equipment is designed to be used primarily in a field and is not designed to travel at typical highway speeds. Most farm equipment is designed to travel at speeds of 15-25 miles per hour. Farm equipment may be wider than other vehicles, and perhaps even wider than the lane of travel. However, farm equipment must be operated on highways in order to travel between a farm and a field or field to field.

Just as motorists are entitled to operate their vehicles on public roadways, farmers are legally allowed to operate farm equipment on these same roadways. Caution, courtesy and special attention to the following safety tips will help ensure the safety of motorists, passengers, and operators of slow-moving farm equipment.

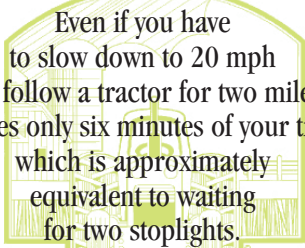
If you're driving 55 mph and come upon a tractor that's moving 15 miles per hour, it only takes five seconds to close a gap the length of a football field between you and the tractor.

Recognize the Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem- Brake Immediately!

When you see the slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem, you should immediately slow down. SMV emblems must be visible at least 500 feet away from the vehicle, but because it may be difficult for you to judge the speed at which you are closing in on a vehicle, you should slow down immediately. Think of the slow moving vehicle emblem as a warning to adjust your speed.

Be Patient

A farmer understands that your trip is being delayed, so he or she will pull off the road at the first available safe location to allow you to pass. Don't assume that the farmer can move aside to let you pass. Shoulders may be soft, wet, or steep, and this can cause the farm vehicle to tip, or they may not be able to support a heavy farm vehicle.



Even if you have to slow down to 20 mph and follow a tractor for two miles, it takes only six minutes of your time, which is approximately equivalent to waiting for two stoplights.

Yield to Wide Vehicles

Some farm equipment may be wider than the lane of travel. If you approach a piece of wide farm equipment traveling in the opposite direction and you cannot pass safely, stop. Then pull off the road or safely turn around or back-up to a location that will allow the equipment to pass you.

Don't Assume that the Farmer Knows You're There

Most operators of farm equipment will regularly check to see if there is traffic behind them. However, the farmer must spend most of the time looking ahead to keep the equipment safely on the road, and to watch for oncoming traffic. Also, most farm equipment is very loud, and the farmer will probably not be able to hear your vehicle. Therefore, do not assume that the farmer knows where your vehicle is located. Before you attempt to pass, use your car's horn to signal to the farmer that you are there.

In 2010, there were 78 accidents and 5 fatalities in Pennsylvania involving farm equipment and other vehicles.

*Statistics from PennDOT

Pass with Caution

If a farmer has pulled off the road to allow you to pass, or if the farmer cannot pull off the road and you feel you must pass, do so with caution.

- Be watchful of vehicles behind you that may also try to pass.
- If you must enter the oncoming lane of traffic, do not pass unless you can see clearly ahead of both you and the vehicle you will pass.
- If there are any curves or hills ahead that may block your view or the view of oncoming vehicles, do not pass.
- Do not pass if you are in a designated "No Passing Zone" or within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad grade crossing, bridge, elevated structure or tunnel.
- Do not assume that a farm vehicle that pulls to the right side of the road is going to turn right or is letting you pass. Due to the size of some farm implements, the farmer must execute wide lefthand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and check the left side of the road for gates, driveways or any place a farm vehicle might turn.



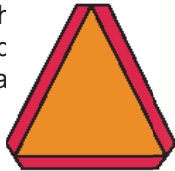
By being aware of farm equipment during your travels on rural roads, you can help make the trip safe for both you and Pennsylvania's farmers.

For more information, call 717-761-2740 or email: GovCom@pfb.com

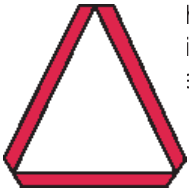
Do You Recognize these Symbols?

Less than 30% of drivers know what these symbols mean.* But it's a matter of life and death for drivers of automobiles, farm equipment, and animal-drawn vehicles on rural roads.

This is a daytime view of the slow moving vehicle emblem. It is to be displayed on animal-drawn vehicles and on other vehicles designed to travel at speeds of 25 mph or less. It is not simply a reflector- it is a warning to slow down.



Occasionally you may encounter slow moving vehicles traveling at night. The SMV emblem's red border is designed for nighttime visibility. Your car's headlights will reflect off the red border of the SMV emblem, and appear to you to be a glowing red triangle floating in the darkness. It is extremely important to slow down immediately because reduced lighting will make it difficult to judge how rapidly you are closing in on a slow moving vehicle, or what the dimensions of the slow moving vehicle may be.



**According to findings of Penn State researcher Philip M. Garvey, author of "Motorist Comprehension of the Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem."*

It is illegal for any resident of Pennsylvania to display the slow moving vehicle emblem on permanent, stationary objects such as mail box posts, driveway entrances and fences.

Tips for Farmers

Farmers have a role in rural road safety too. Here are some tips to alleviate some hazards when taking wide equipment onto the road:

- ▲ Pennsylvania law requires you to place a slow moving vehicle reflector on any machine that travels the road slower than 25 mph. Always point the triangle up, keep the SMV emblem clean to maximize reflectivity, and replace the emblem when it fades, normally every 2-3 years.
- ▲ Mark the edges of tractors and machines with reflective tape and reflectors. Consider installing retrofit lighting on older machinery to increase visibility.
- ▲ Turn on your lights, but turn off rear spotlights when going onto the road. From a distance they can be mistaken for headlights.
- ▲ Avoid the highway during rush hours and bad weather. Don't drive before sunrise or after sunset.
- ▲ Use pilot cars, one in front and one in back if you are going a considerable distance. Hang an orange flag out the window of these pilot vehicles.
- ▲ Consider installing mirrors on equipment to enable you to be aware of motorists around you.



Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

510 S. 31st Street - Box 8736, Camp Hill, PA 17001-8736
717-761-2740 • www.pfb.com



It's a matter of life and death



fig a.

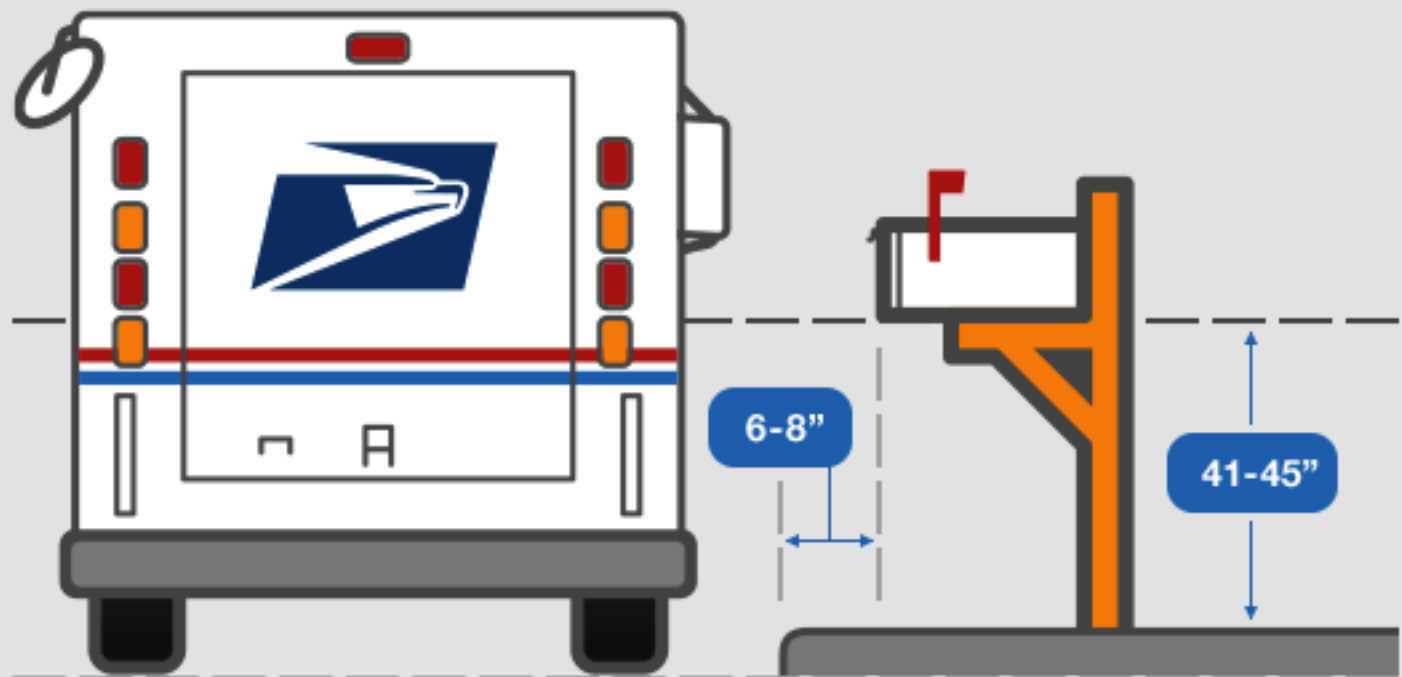
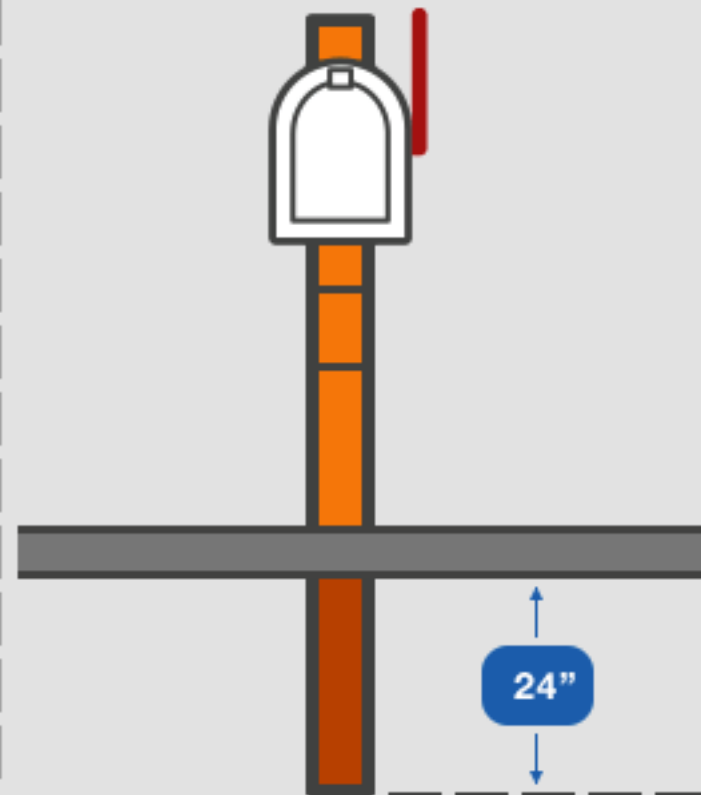


fig b.



REFERENCES

NATIONAL DOCUMENTS
 AASHTO M 278
 AASHTO GEOMETRIC DESIGN
 AASHTO ROADSIDE DESIGN GUIDE

SCDOT DOCUMENTS

RELATED DRAWINGS & KEYWORDS
 720-105-00

PRECONSTRUCTION SUPPORT ENGINEER

SOUTH CAROLINA REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
 NO. 8858
 SYLVESTER EARGLE, II

E. S. Eargle
 SIGNATURE

MARCH 3, 2008
 DATE

6			
5			
4			
3			
2			
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0	3/2008	DSO	GENERAL REVISIONS
#	DATE	CHK	DESCRIPTION

SCDOT
 SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DESIGN STANDARDS OFFICE
 955 PARK STREET
 ROOM 405
 COLUMBIA, SC 29201

STANDARD DRAWING

EXCAVATION ASSOCIATED WORK (MAILBOX PLACEMENT)

203-905-00

EFFECTIVE LETTING DATE: MAY 2008 THIS DRAWING IS NOT TO SCALE

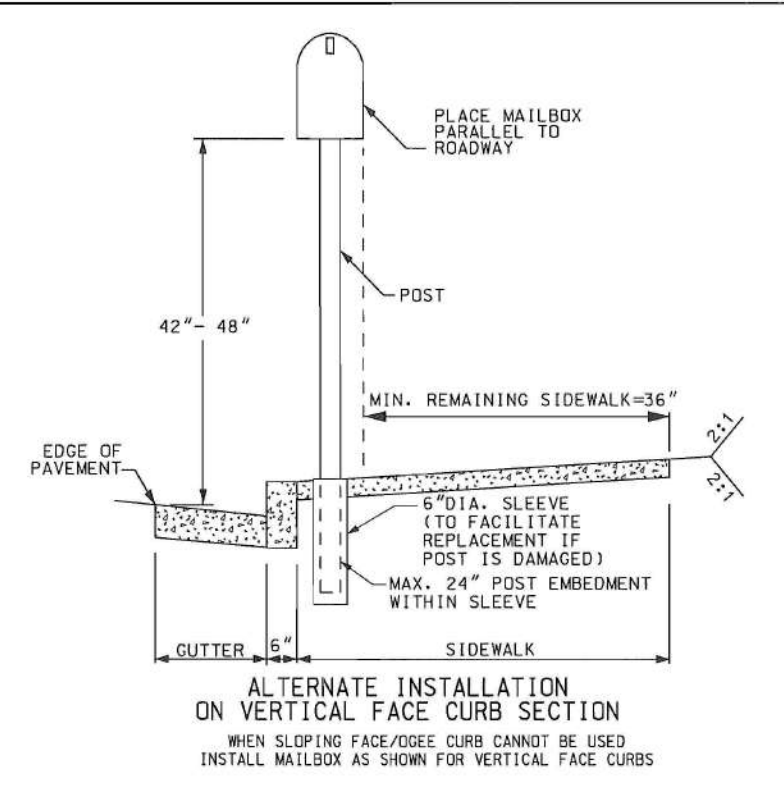
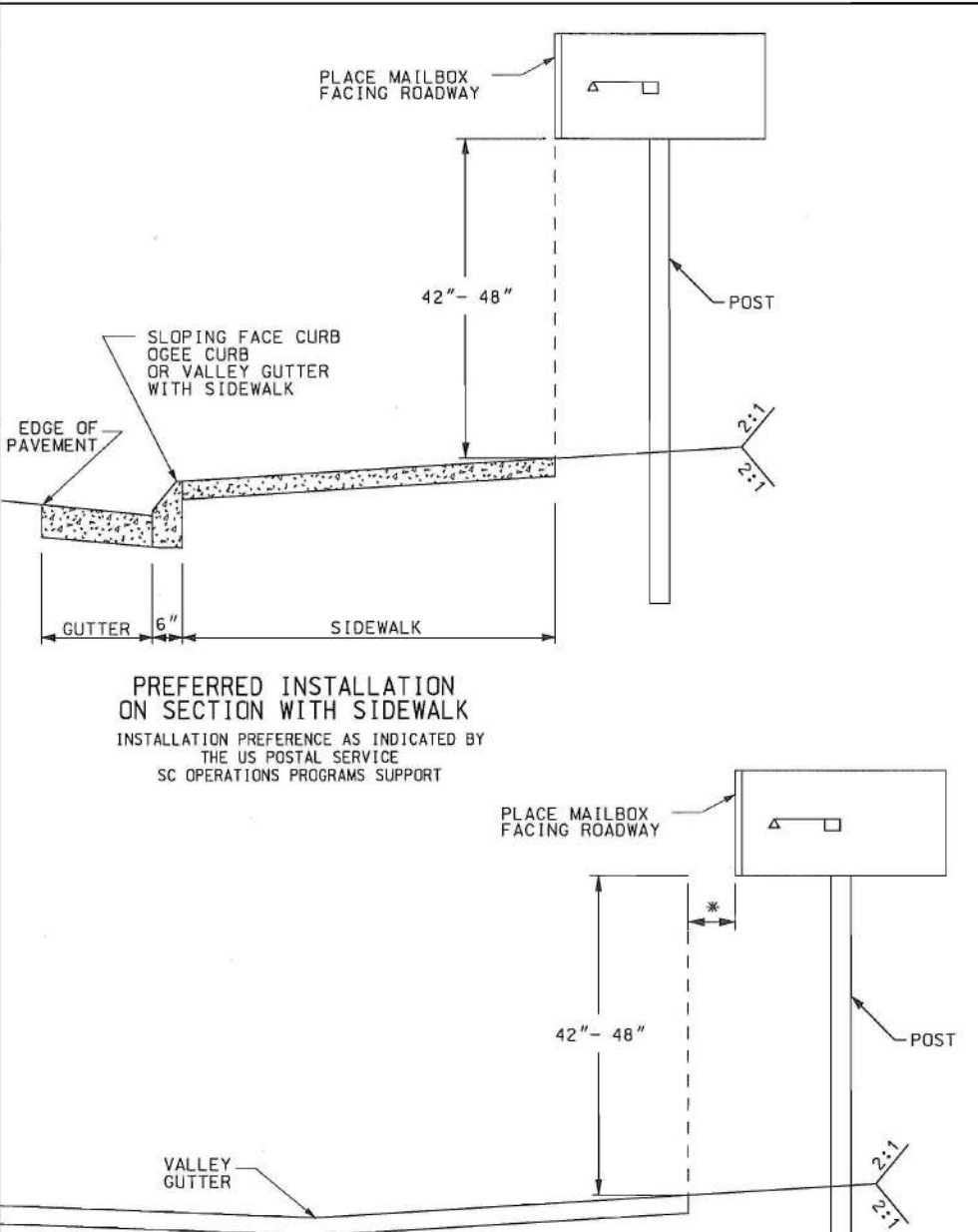


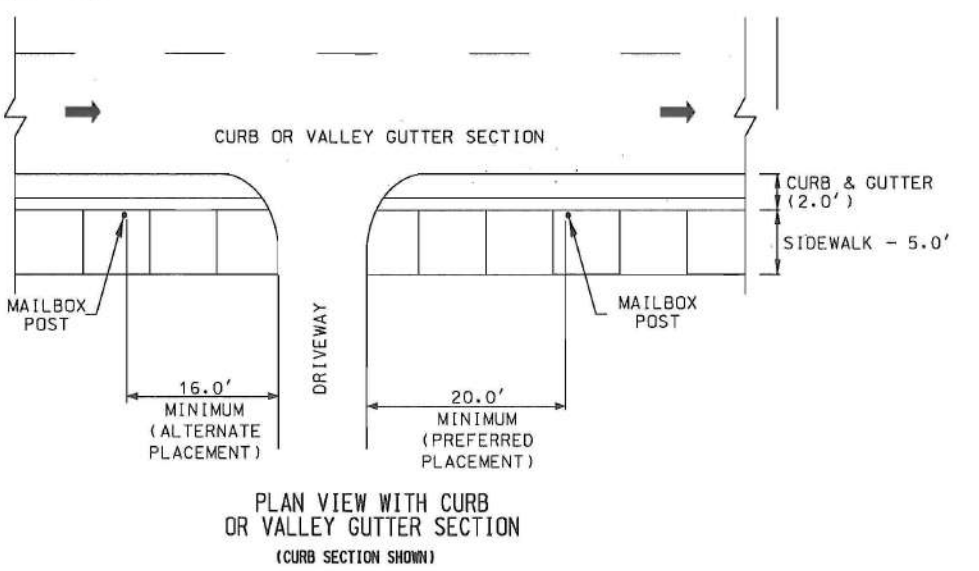
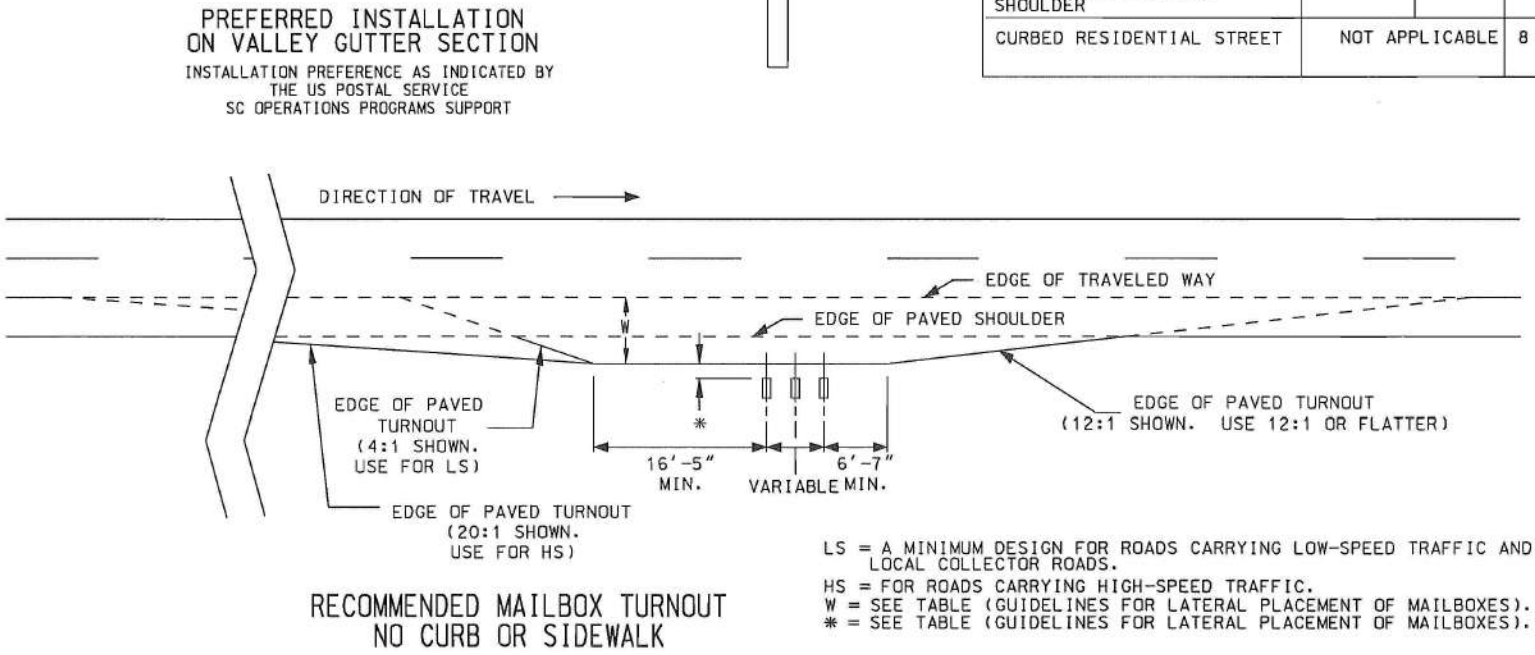
TABLE 203-905A GUIDELINES FOR LATERAL PLACEMENT OF MAILBOXES
 TAKEN FROM TABLE 11.1 - AASHTO ROADSIDE DESIGN GUIDE (LATEST EDITION)

HIGHWAY TYPE AND ADT (VPD)	W (FT)		* (IN)	
	PREFERRED	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	MINIMUM
RURAL HIGHWAY OVER 10,000	12	8		
RURAL HIGHWAY 1,500 TO 10,000	12	8	8 TO 12	0
RURAL HIGHWAY 400 TO 1,500	10	8		
RURAL ROAD UNDER 400	8	6		
RESIDENTIAL STREET WITHOUT CURB OR ALL-WEATHER SHOULDER	6	0	10 TO 12	10
CURBED RESIDENTIAL STREET	NOT APPLICABLE		8 TO 12	6

- NOTES:**
- MAILBOXES SHOULD MEET THE US POSTAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS OF 39 CFR PART 111 (STANDARDS GOVERNING THE DESIGN OF CURBSIDE MAILBOXES). EXISTING MAILBOXES, MEETING THE US POSTAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS, ARE TO BE RESET IN ACCORDANCE WITH AASHTO ROADSIDE DESIGN GUIDE (LATEST EDITION) AND THIS STANDARD DRAWING. IF EXISTING BOX DOES NOT MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS, THE PROPERTY OWNER SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE ANOTHER BOX OF THEIR CHOOSING, MEETING USPS REQUIREMENTS, PRIOR TO INSTALLATION.
 - IN GENERAL, THE PROPERTY OWNER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT THEIR MAILBOX IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH USPS REQUIREMENTS. ALL EXISTING MAILBOXES WILL BE RESET AS SHOWN EXCEPT IN THE MOST OBVIOUS NON-COMPLIANT CASES.
 - IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 203 OF THE STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS FOR HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION, MAILBOXES ARE TO BE RESET BY THE CONTRACTOR AS REQUIRED BY CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN CURRENT MAIL DELIVERY.
 - MAILBOXES WILL BE LOCATED ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROADWAY IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DELIVERY ROUTE EXCEPT ON ONE-WAY STREETS WHERE THEY MAY BE PLACED ON THE LEFT SIDE.
 - MAILBOXES SHOULD BE INSTALLED ON THE TRAILING SIDE OF THE DRIVEWAY A MINIMUM OF 20' FROM THE DRIVE. IF MAILBOXES CANNOT BE INSTALLED ON THE TRAILING SIDE OF THE DRIVEWAY, INSTALL ON THE LEADING SIDE OF THE DRIVEWAY, A MINIMUM OF 16' FROM THE DRIVE.
 - IF MORE THAN ONE MAILBOX IS TO BE INSTALLED AT A DRIVEWAY, DISTANCE BETWEEN POSTS SHALL BE EQUAL TO THE HEIGHT OF THE MAILBOX.
 - THE BOTTOM OF THE BOX SHALL BE SET AT AN ELEVATION BETWEEN 3.5' AND 4.0' ABOVE THE ROADWAY SURFACE.
 - WHEN MAILBOX IS PLACED IN A SIDEWALK, THE ORIENTATION OF THE MAILBOX WILL BE PARALLEL TO CENTERLINE OF THE ROADWAY TO ENABLE ACCESS TO THE BOX. THE BOX SHALL OPEN ON THE APPROACH SIDE AND THE SIDE OF THE BOX WILL EQUAL TO THE BACK OF CURB OR BACK OF VALLEY GUTTER.
 - WHEN A GRASS AREA IS BETWEEN THE BACK OF CURB OR VALLEY GUTTER AND THE SIDEWALK, THE MAILBOX WILL BE INSTALLED PERPENDICULAR TO THE ROADWAY, AS LONG AS THE MAILBOX DOES NOT OVER-HANG THE SIDEWALK. ALSO WHEN NO SIDEWALK IS PRESENT THE MAILBOX SHALL BE PLACED PERPENDICULAR TO THE ROADWAY.
 - A 6" SOIL TUBE MEETING SCHEDULE 40 AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF AASHTO M 278 SHALL BE USED. THE INSTALLATION OF THE SOIL TUBE SHALL BE FROM THE TOP OF THE SIDEWALK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE POST. BACK FILL VOID BETWEEN SOIL TUBE AND MAILBOX POST WITH SAND WITHIN 2" OF FINISHED GRADE AND SEAL WITH SILICONE CAULK.
 - WOOD POST SHOULD NOT BE SMALLER OR LARGER THAN RECOMMENDED. MAILBOX TO POST ATTACHMENT SHALL MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE. NEWSPAPER RECEPTACLES ARE ALLOWED ON POST AS LONG AS NO INTERFERENCE IS ENCOUNTERED AND WILL BE INSTALLED PARALLEL TO THE MAILBOX ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE POST.
 - THERE ARE NO SEPARATE PAY ITEMS TO RESET MAILBOXES. COST IS INCLUDED IN THE COST OF OTHER WORK WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION.

MAILBOX POST MATERIALS:

WOOD:	4" x 4" DR 4" DIA. NOMINAL DIMENSIONS
ALUMINUM:	1.5"-2.0" DIA.
GALVANIZED STEEL:	1.5"-2.0" DIA. (SCHEDULE 40 MAX.)



Why Have Agricultural Districts?

The State of North Carolina passed the Farmland Preservation Enabling Act in 1985, authorizing counties to establish farmland preservation programs, including agricultural districts. Forsyth County adopted an ordinance establishing procedures for creating Voluntary Agricultural Districts in 2008. The purpose of the ordinance is to promote the preservation of farmland in Forsyth County so that development and growth will be accompanied by protection of farms from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms, recognizing the importance of agriculture to the economic and cultural life of the county.

What is the Agricultural Advisory Board?

The Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) is composed of seven county residents, including farmers, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The AAB reviews and approves applications to the Voluntary Agricultural District program, in addition to advising the Board of County Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy or way of life within the county.

About the Agricultural Advisory Board.

The Agricultural Advisory Board supports voluntary measures and incentives that will lead to the continued viability of farming in Forsyth County. The goals of rural preservation, including the preservation of prime farmland, the scenic vistas of the agricultural landscape, the family farm tradition, and the economic viability of agriculture in Forsyth County, would be served by keeping agriculture a viable enterprise.



Forsyth County

Forsyth Soil & Water Conservation District
NC Cooperative Extension Service
1450 Fairchild Road
Winston-Salem NC 27105

Phone: 336-703-2840
E-mail: bowmanml@forsyth.cc

Forsyth County

VOLUNTARY
AGRICULTURAL
DISTRICT



For more information please call:
336-703-2840

Your Agricultural Land is a Valuable Asset to the Citizens of Forsyth County.

Citizens of Forsyth County derive many benefits from your farmland: clean water and air, plant and animal habitat, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products, horticultural products, and scenic rural vistas. Now you can enroll in a program that demonstrates your pride and commitment to agriculture and celebrates your contribution to the exceptional quality of life in Forsyth County.

Voluntary Agricultural Districts Promote the Pride and Tradition of Forsyth County Agriculture.

Forsyth County's Voluntary Agricultural District Program enhances the identity of the agricultural community by encouraging the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development.

Benefits of Becoming a Voluntary Agricultural District.

Recognition.

The County will place signs (see below) to identify the areas included within the Forsyth County Voluntary Agricultural Districts. These signs will indicate to passersby that you, the farm owner, are committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Forsyth County.



Increased Protection from Nuisance Suits.

Persons buying land in rural areas will do so with the knowledge that a bona fide agricultural operation exists nearby. Agricultural Districts will be identified in the computerized land record system of Forsyth County.

Deferment of Water and Sewer Assessments.

Landowners within Agricultural Districts will not be required to connect to water or sewer systems owned and/or operated by the City/County Utilities Commission, nor will they be assessed water and sewer charges until their property is connected to such service.

Eligibility for Preservation Funds.

Agricultural Districts may be eligible for farmland preservation grants, should funding become available from local, state, or federal sources.

Participation in Agricultural Tourism.

Landowners in a Voluntary Agricultural District may be eligible for the Agricultural Tourism use classification as outlined in the Unified Development Ordinance. Examples of activities allowed under Agricultural Tourism include outdoor special events such as weddings; bed and breakfasts; and limited restaurant and retail uses. These uses would be allowable without a change in zoning. For more information, contact the City/County Inspections Division.

Qualifying Measures to Become a Voluntary Agricultural District.

To become an Agricultural District, a farm must first be certified as Qualifying Farmland.

To secure county certification as qualifying farmland, a farm must be certified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture as a farm on which at least two-thirds of the land is composed of soils that are best suited for agricultural purposes.

The farm must have been actively engaged in agriculture as defined by N.C.G.S. 106-581.1 (1-7) during each of the five previous years, and must have a minimum of 5 acres in agricultural production. The land must be managed, if highly erodible, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion control practices that are addressed to said highly erodible land.

Agricultural District Membership Requires a Voluntary, Non-Binding Conservation Agreement.

A Voluntary Agricultural District member will be subject to a **non-binding** conservation agreement between Forsyth County and the landowner that prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of at least 10 years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations. You may revoke the agreement at any time with a 30 day written notice to the Agricultural Advisory Board.

This agreement shall be deemed automatically renewed unless either the Advisory Board or the landowner gives written notice to the contrary no later than thirty (30) days prior to the termination date.