Texas Roadside Parks Study

Historic Context & National Register Requirements

An historic overview of the development and evolution of roadside parks and rest areas in Texas constructed by the Texas Department of Transportation from 1930 to 2015 and evaluation criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Prepared by: Sara Gredler, Megan Ruiz, Heather Goodson and Rick Mitchell, Mead & Hunt, Inc.

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Part I Historic Context

A. Introduction

> The expanding role of highways in our automobile-oriented society makes increasing demands upon the imagination and abilities of the highway engineer and others concerned with highway development. Landscape design principles, as presented and practiced by the professional landscape architect, should be considered during all phases of the design process. These landscape design principles should include the very broad and inclusive aspects of integrating the highway with its environment.
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> From *A Guide for Highway Landscape and Environmental Design*, American Association of State Highway Officials, 1970.

The Texas highway system has long been hailed as a national leader in terms of both mileage and road quality. Since the early 1930s, Texas has proudly featured its roadside parks and rest areas as a focal point of its road system, serving both day-to-day highway travelers and tourists visiting the "Lone Star State." The design, materials, and overarching philosophy behind the construction of these resources were closely linked to prevailing state and national trends, both in park design and highway design. Roadside parks and rest areas therefore occupy a distinctive place as resource types, melding highway engineering with park-oriented design and landscape architecture. The study of Texas's historic roadside parks and rest areas provides a unique viewpoint from which to illustrate and understand the evolution of the state's highway network.

During the Great Depression, naturalistic park design, ample availability of work-relief labor, a concerted push for highway beautification and "roadside improvement," and preparations for the 1936 Texas Centennial coalesced in the construction of several hundred roadside parks around the state. These parks typically featured the use of stone masonry or timber for built structures and objects, executed in the Rustic style popularized in national and state park construction of the period. The Depression-era parks were designed to blend with the surrounding landscape, providing restful stops for leisurely picnics and relaxation.

Following World War II, the Texas highway system experienced rapid growth, but lacked the inexpensive work-relief labor that had been available a decade earlier. Texas Highway Department (THD) efforts after the war focused on rapid expansion of primary highways and Farm-to-Market roads, with little apparent interest in new construction of roadside parks or other roadside improvements, according to THD literature. However, construction history indicates a small number of new parks were built in this period, as well as some reconstruction and replacement of prewar parks. These postwar parks utilized new standard plans and featured more modern designs. A notable exception to these trends was the construction of several parks along the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, completing a prewar development plan that employed the Rustic aesthetic.

The construction of the Interstate Highway system and other limited-access freeways heralded the next generation of respites along Texas roadsides. The THD began construction of safety rest areas along its Interstate Highways in the early 1960s, broadly adhering to national guidance for siting and spacing of such resources. In sharp contrast to the Depression-era roadside parks, designed

for slow-paced enjoyment of the travel experience, safety rest areas were designed to maximize driver safety and efficiency in terms of rest area layout and spacing between rest areas. To allow for easy access to and from freeway lanes, the rest areas took on a more linear appearance in plan than their roadside park antecedents and gained long exit and entry ramps between the freeway and the rest area. Built features in the rest areas and their corresponding roadside parks took on a more modern appearance, reflecting broader architectural and design trends. Rather than rustic stone masonry, picnic table/bench sets were built with smooth brick and concrete, while roofs were often made of corrugated asbestos and framed with angular or tubular steel designs. While the genesis of the roadside park is rooted in the Depression-era construction, it is the mid-century designs that are the most iconic and ubiquitous markers of the roadside park movement.

Figure 1: Typical mid-century roadside park arbor with picnic table, Tyler District, Rusk County (10-201-RP004). (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

While overall appearance of park fixtures and landscaping remained very important to THD designers and maintenance staff, the rest areas were primarily intended to merely allow travelers a brief stop-off or picnic before returning to the freeway. By the early 1970s the THD's most-used rest areas featured comfort stations—a polite term for toilet facilities—and information boards "Infobords" displaying tourist information and highway maps.

After the flurry of safety rest area construction in the 1960s and early 1970s, the THD again shifted focus as it completed its Interstate Highway program. Highway beautification received greater emphasis, through activities such as wildflower plantings, litter pickup, and billboard removal. In terms of roadside stop-offs for travelers, the THD initiated a building campaign for new tourist information offices around the state. Like their Depression-era predecessors, the tourist centers

were generally located at key entry points into Texas. Roadside park and rest area work again focused on maintenance and upkeep of existing parks.

By the 1990s the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT, renamed from the THD) followed a national trend of closing older roadside parks and rest areas, based on a perception that many parks were in need of extensive maintenance and were public nuisances. The agency instead focused its efforts on developing a revised safety rest area program focused on replacement of older safety rest areas and construction of new facilities along Interstate Highways and other major trunk highways. Location of the new safety rest areas was based on evolving traffic patterns and urban growth along many of the state's highways. As with the state's Depression-era roadside parks and its "jet age" safety rest areas of the 1960s, Texas is receiving national attention for its new safety rest areas, which feature large parking areas, exercise and playground equipment, interpretive displays, and inventive regional designs, as well as the typical restroom facilities and picnic tables.

Even given the recent trend of park closures, Texas retains a considerable number of historic-age roadside parks and rest areas: nearly 600 as of early 2013.[1] These resources provide a highly visible and tangible reminder of the state's transportation past, and continue to serve a vital function for driver safety and comfort. However, they also pose a management challenge given their continued use by travelers and ongoing changes to the state's highways. Perhaps indicative of the wide range in construction periods, intended functions, and geographic placement of these resources, various sources have used several different terms when describing them. To avoid confusion, the following definitions are used consistently through this document:

Roadside park – Roadside area designated as a stopping place for motorists' use, generally constructed between the early 1930s and mid-1970s prior to Interstate Highway system development. Roadside parks are typified by:

- More than 0.5 acre in size; typically 1 to 2 acres
- Established on additional right-of-way beyond typical roadway right-of-way
- Distinct drive or entryway into the facility from the roadway
- Picnic facilities
- No restroom facilities

[1] Number of roadside parks and rest areas extrapolated from database information, provided to Mead & Hunt, Inc. from TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division and TxDOT Maintenance Division, April 2013.

Figure 2: Entrance to Roadside Park on Highway 7 east of Mexia, Limestone County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Safety rest area and **rest area** – These terms are commonly used interchangeably for areas designated as a stopping place for motorists' use, generally built along Interstate Highways or other limited-access freeways from the late 1950s to the present. Safety rest areas are typified by:

- Entry/exit via ramps to freeway lanes
- Usually 2 to 4 acres in size
- Comfort station as a central built feature
- Picnic arbors with table/bench sets
- Separate car and truck parking

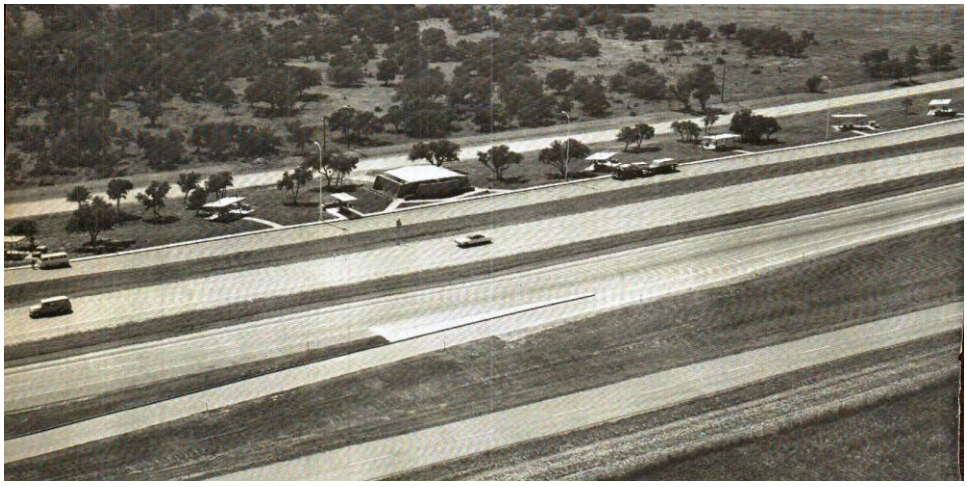

Figure 3: IH 35 safety rest area with comfort station, Williamson County, in 1967 (nonextant). (Source: *Texas Highways.)*

Turnout – Indistinct small area for motorists' use as a stopping place, generally established in the 1930s and the 1940s. Turnouts are typified by:

- Less than 0.5 acre in size
- No picnic facilities, generally
- Paved or graveled area directly adjacent to roadway, without a distinct drive or entry into the facility
- Located within the typical roadway right-of-way
- Often accompanied by a historic marker

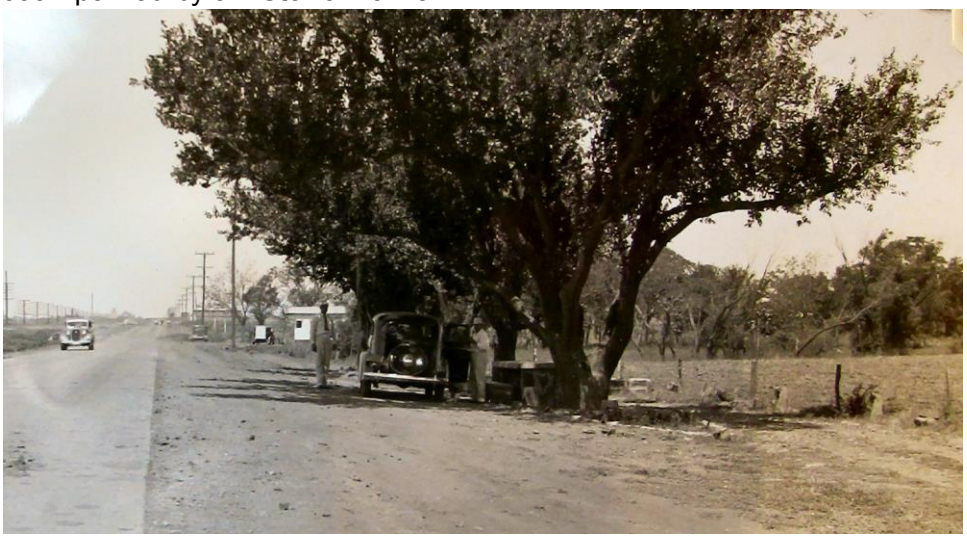

Figure 4: Turnout on State Highway (SH) 5 (now US 287) west of Wichita Falls, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas)

Scenic overlook – General term for a roadside park or turnout constructed in response to exceptional natural scenery or views visible from the overlook.

Figure 5: Illustration of a scenic overlook on US 90 at the Pecos River in Val Verde County, date not identified. (Source: American Highways and Roadsides, 1938, plate, nonpaginated, three pages after 58.)

Picnic area or picnic unit – Usually refers to the portion(s) of a roadside park or safety rest area with picnic arbors and table/bench sets. The term is also used by TxDOT to describe rest areas along Interstate or limited-access freeways that do not have comfort stations.

Figure 6: Rock benches and table within a roadside park, Callahan County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas)

Comfort station – Building with restroom facilities at safety rest areas.

Travel center – Term now used by TxDOT for safety rest areas constructed from late 1990s to the present with much larger size and wide range of amenities such as: architecturally unique building housing restrooms, travel information kiosk, and vending area; exercise areas or paths; playground equipment; picnic facilities; designated dog-walking area; and separated parking areas for cars and trucks. TxDOT uses the terms “travel center” and “safety rest area” interchangeably for these facilities.

Travel information center – Building constructed at key entry points to the state, specifically for travelers to receive maps, brochures, and other visitor information. Travel information centers are staffed during daytime hours by TxDOT employees. Picnic tables and park-like areas are present at some travel information centers. Travel information centers were preceded in the 1930s by small

“information stations” constructed by the THD. A new generation of centers were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and were known as “tourist bureaus” until receiving their current name.

B. Setting the Stage for Roadside Parks, 1860s – 1930

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a combination of trends, such as appreciation of nationally significant natural areas and provision of pleasure grounds for urban dwellers, coalesced into the idea of picturesque design of landscaped places. This period also witnessed the rise of the Good Roads movement, the influence of the bicycle, and an increasing desire to travel within the United States via automobiles. Decades later, these trends eventually would coalesce with the design and construction of roadside parks and rest areas.

1. The Idea of the Park

The park movement on the national level began as an instrument to protect sites of important natural significance. Yellowstone National Park was designated in 1872 at the federal level and is widely held to be the first national park in the world.[2] The idea was to allow these areas to "remain relatively untouched…tolerating nature for nature's sake."[3] While the next official national park was not designated until 1889, state and local governments were finding their own natural areas to name as state parks. The first state to do this was New York, designating Niagara Falls as a state park in 1885.[4] The national parks, limited primarily to natural landscapes, were all in the western part of the United States and were administered by the Department of the Interior.[5] Historic sites, such as battlefields, were first established in 1890 but were maintained as National Military Parks under the War Department.[6] The Antiquities Act, passed at the federal level in 1906, gave the President authority to establish additional national park lands.[7] Due to this law, the numbers of

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[2] James Wright Steely, *Parks for Texas: Enduring Landscapes of the New Deal* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999), 2; "Kotor, Srebarna and Yellowstone are Withdrawn from the List of World Heritage in Danger," *UNESCO* Press Release, 5 July 2005, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13284&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed 12 August 2013).

[3] John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 68.

[4] "America's Oldest State Park," *Niagara Falls State Park*, http://www.niagarafallsstatepark.com/Americas-Oldest-State-Park.aspx (accessed 13 August 2013).

[5] The first National Park on the east coast was not designated until 1916 and was located in Maine. See "National Park System Areas Listed in Chronological Order of Date Authorized under DOI," *U.S. National Park Service*, http://www.nps.gov/applications/budget2/documents/chronop.pdf (accessed 12 August 2013).

[6] "National Park System Areas Listed in Chronological Order of Date Authorized under DOI." The only other nationally designated area type was the reservation, which was used to designate prehistoric and cultural areas, such as the Casa Grande Ruins in New Mexico, and areas with mineral springs, including the Hot Springs Reservation and the Sulphur Springs Reservation. See also National Park System websites http://www.nps.gov/cagr/historyculture/index.htm and http://www.nps.gov/chic/historyculture/mineral-spring-parks.htm.

[7] "American Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 USC 431-433)," *National Park Service*, http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/anti1906.htm (accessed 13 August 2013).

national parks, monuments, and reservation lands grew substantially. The National Park Service Organic Act was enacted in 1916, creating the National Park Service (NPS), which provided a mechanism for supervising and maintaining all national parks, monuments, and reservations.[8] At the national level, parks were thought of as wide open spaces and nationally important, "exceptional" examples of nature.[9]

The designs put forth at the federal level for amenities inside national parks reflected the idea of these parks as exceptional examples of nature. A primary proponent of the designed landscape that blended into the parks' natural features was Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing "adapted the ideas and practices of the English designers [of landscape gardens] to the American landscape and fostered a strong awareness and appreciation of a native landscape that was inherently sublime and picturesque."[10] Combining the idea of the park areas as exemplary examples of nature with the desire to experience these areas first hand, the manmade or man-designed features of the area also had to be "inherently sublime and picturesque." These features included "serpentine drives, open meadows, winding paths, picturesque rockwork, rustic bridges, and wooded glades." Buildings utilized "unpeeled logs and branches," which "provided shade and seating for rest and contemplation."[11] Structures were designed to be beautiful and blend into their environs, but also needed to be functional. Rockwork, utilizing native stone, could be used in the construction of all types of park structures, and could be shaped and molded into the aesthetic needed to match the surrounding landscape.

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[8] "16 USC § 1 - Service Created; Director; Other Employees," *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell University Law School, http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/16/1 (accessed 9 September 2013). Battlefields were added to the National Park System when the War Department was reorganized in the 1930s.

[9] Steely, 7.

[10] Linda Flint McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1993), 11.

[11] McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, 12.

Figure 7: Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone National Park, northwest entrance. Originally built in 1904 in the rustic design style. (Source: *Library of Congress*)

The late nineteenth century saw the establishment of parks in urban areas to provide landscaped places to "escape" the perils of the city. Central Park in New York City, which opened in 1873 after more than a decade of design and construction, is a prime example. While the state provided the means for New York City to take land under the right of eminent domain, Central Park itself was created, designed, and maintained at the local level.[12] Park historian Galen Cranz noted that, for urban parks, "the notion of a park was endorsed as if it were a check on the encroachment of the city rather than as a feature of the city itself."[13] Frederick Law Olmsted, noted landscape architect and designer of Central Park, introduced the idea of picturesque design for landscaped places. It was a middle ground between wilderness and the highly circumscribed gardens of European royalty and elite.[14] The prototype for these landscaped places from the earlier part of the century was the

[12] Elizabeth Blackmar and Roy Rosenzweig, "History," *Your Complete Guide to New York City's Central Park*, http://www.centralpark.com/guide/history.html (accessed 12 August 2013).

[13] Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1982), 5.

[14] Cranz, 24.

designed rural or garden cemetery.[15] These open spaces provided locations where all sorts of recreation could take place by all types and classes of people. However, such designed pleasure grounds as Central Park were originally limited to urban areas where they could be used by large numbers of people.

In Texas, the first sites that would eventually become state parks were established in the 1880s with the purchase of the Alamo and land near the Battle of San Jacinto. These locations were already known as tourist attractions in the 1880s and 1890s, and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Texas gave impetus for the state government to purchase the land.[16] However, while these early "parks" received state monies, they were administered by outside groups. Further land purchases into the early 1900s were made, again for sites connected to the Republic of Texas. Due to the limited scope of sites important to Texas history, the early state parks were all located in the eastern part of the state. These early parks were generally used as picnic sites and for community events, such as camp meetings and political gatherings. They were not intended for camping or recreational use and offered only limited amenities.[17]

By 1920 Texas had a number of state parks, most of which were historic in nature, but no overall state park system.[18] Texas also had no national parks within its borders.[19] The 1921 Des Moines State Park Conference was the impetus behind the creation of the Texas State Park Board in 1923 as the number of proponents for a park system increased.[20] Governor Pat Morris Neff was an eager promoter of state parks as well as auto-tourism, and "prompted legislators 'to encourage Texans to see Texas first' and to promote tourism by developing state parks."[21] The Texas State Park Board, headed by good-roads advocate David Edward Colp and supported by Governor Neff, advocated "fifty-acre 'small parks' and 'beauty spots' as 'waysides' for intercity motorists" and received a number of donations of land for this purpose.[22] However, a group of state legislators and citizens championed development of larger "destination" parks, up to 500 acres in size but more widely spaced around the state. This group was influenced by the national movement for large tourist-oriented parks in scenic areas, an idea championed by the National Conference on State Parks and

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[15] Ann E. Chapman, "Nineteenth Century Trends in American Conservation – MA Conservation, A Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary," National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/massachusetts_conservation/Nineteenth_Century_Trends_in_%20American_Conservation.html (accessed 9 September 2013).

[16] Steely, 1-2.

[17] Sharon M. Toney, *The Texas State Parks System: An Administrative History, 1925-1984*, Dissertation: Texas Tech University, 1995, 12-14.

[18] Steely, 5.

[19] The first national park in Texas was Big Bend National Park, authorized in 1935; see http://www.nps.gov/applications/budget2/documents/chronop.pdf.

[20] Toney, 12-14.

[21] Toney, 20.

[22] Steely, 7.

the NPS. As a compromise between these two schools of thought, the legislature designated 23 small "state parks" by 1927, as well as a compromise proposal for the development of the Davis Mountains State Park Highway. This project proposed "an eighty-mile scenic loop in the mountains west of Fort Davis upon donated right-of-way."[23] However, work on the project did not begin until after the start of the Great Depression.[24] The 23 designated state parks were not given any money for infrastructure improvements, so Texas's parks still provided no amenities to travelers. In contrast, Texas's premier urban parks of the early twentieth century, such as Brackenridge Park in San Antonio and Hermann Park in Houston, were designed in the Olmsted tradition of landscaped grounds and recreational areas. Because of the lack of amenities in state parks, travelers had to avail themselves of commercial auto camps and motels for amenities.[25] By 1924 Texas had 174 of these auto camps.[26] Many cities and towns established campgrounds for automobile tourists and itinerant travelers, usually on the outskirts of their communities.

Figure 8: An example of an auto camp near Dania, Florida, in 1937.
(Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog)

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[23] Steely, 7.

[24] "TWPD Park: Davis Mountains State Park," *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, http://www.texascccparks.org/parks/davis-mountains/ (accessed 9 September 2013).

[25] "To Love the Beautiful: The Story of Texas State Parks," *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*, https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/parks/index.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

[26] Belasco, Warren James. *Americas on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910 – 1945.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979, 71.

2. Importance of the Highway and the Rise of Automobile – Good Roads Movement

The Good Roads Movement, through its demand for better roads and improved road networks, indirectly influenced the later creation of roadside parks. The group as a whole lobbied for rural mail delivery, for farmers through its slogan to "get the farmer out of the mud," and for bicyclists (and later automobile owners) in urban and rural settings. The Good Roads Movement argued that better roads would encourage people to move from the cities into the countryside. To some extent, their arguments mirrored those of the park movement, which championed the virtues of recreation in rural or landscaped oases from urban life similar to the park movement's notion of the country being preferable to the city.[27] The bicycle was noted for its egalitarian audience, especially since automobiles at this time were an extreme luxury item, and was also championed for its use in urban recreation. Through the 1910s and 1920s, as automobile ownership became widespread, Good Roads efforts centered on auto-centric highway development rather than the original focus of bicycle-based recreation and transportation.

Prior to the introduction of the automobile, the railroad was the primary method of transportation due to the poor quality of American roads. In the early decades of the twentieth century, however, ownership of an automobile became a reality for a greater percentage of the population. In 1900 there were only 7,946 cars registered in the U.S., out of a total population of over 77 million.[28] By 1910 the number had increased to nearly half a million automobiles for a total population of 93.4 million.[29] These early automobile owners were hampered by the lack of good roads on which to drive; in 1904 only 7.14 percent of roads were surfaced, primarily with gravel.[30] This made it difficult for car owners to get to the newly designated larger parks and other recreational areas, and even more so for the bicyclist. Due to the automobile's use by a larger segment of the population, combined with a "back to nature" movement similar to that seen during the 1890s, travelers "… soon overwhelmed the most inviting roadside landscapes, and private landowners howled at the resulting damage. Many towns offered some relief by establishing camping sites at shaded outskirts."[31] State government, local governments, and private citizens were not ready for the advent of the automobile. Roadway infrastructure was uncoordinated and underfunded, unable to adequately support the burgeoning automobile recreation culture. Additionally, roadside amenities

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[27] "Good Roads and How to Make Them," *Outing* 4, no. 3 (Dec 1884), in *Outing and the Wheelman* 5, The Wheelman Company (Boston, Mass.: 1885), 194.

[28] James J. Flink, *American Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1970), 75; United States Census Office, *Census Reports, Volume 1 - Twelfth Census of The United States, Taken in the Year 1900: Population, Part 1* (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Office, 1901), 2.

[29] Flink, 75; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910, Volume 1: Population 1910 General Report and Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 23. The population numbers include overseas territories owned by the United States.

[30] Flink, 203.

[31] Steely, 7.

for the automobile traveling public were less developed than those available to rail travelers. Yet, by 1920 autocamping was thriving and required a system better than squatting on private property. As noted above, travelers no longer stopped "along the roadside but in public campgrounds in municipal parks."[32]

In America's early history, road financing and construction was conducted on a local level. Most states initially established their state highway departments in the 1900s and 1910s, with widely varying degrees of funding and oversight. To fill the gaps between local funding sources and meet the increased need for improved roadways with the rise of the automobile, other groups took on the job of road designation and construction. Until the 1920s the primary impetus for road construction was through private auto trail associations.[33] These groups lobbied local governments for road improvements and encouraged travelers through guidebooks that showcased particular routes across the U.S. Many of these routes were transcontinental, such as the Meridian Highway or the King of Trails Highway, as well as some regional or state routes.

A number of Texas groups contributed to the Good Roads Movement on a state level. These groups included the Texas Good Roads Association (TGRA), the Associated Secretaries of Commercial Clubs, and the Texas Farmer's Congress. Together these groups "carried out educational programs related to road development and pressured state and local politicians for road improvements."[34] Before the creation of the state highway department in Texas, four transcontinental highways routes crossed Texas: the Meridian Highway, Dixie Overland Highway, Bankhead Highway, and Old Spanish Trail. Other named highways included the Jefferson Highway, Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway, King of Trails, Hug-the-Coast Highway, and Ozark Trail.[35] The private auto trail associations focused on promotion of routes and urged for basic upgrades in terms of surfacing, all-weather stream crossings, and alignments. Lack of a centralized highway department hampered Texas in its construction of roads in the early twentieth century. The system of local governments paying for their own roads caused an inequity between counties and cities, and the road systems became a haphazard network of multiple road types, most in poor condition.

3. Introduction of the State Highway Systems

Real change did not come to America's road system until the passage of the first federal law for rural roads, the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. Before passage of the law, over half the states had already created a state highway department. Because of the law's requirements, the remaining states had to do so as well.[36] The federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR, formerly the Office of Road

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[32] Warren James Belasco, *Americas on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910 – 1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), 71-2.

[33] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, April 2011, prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation, 37, 52.

[34] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 35.

[35] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 37.

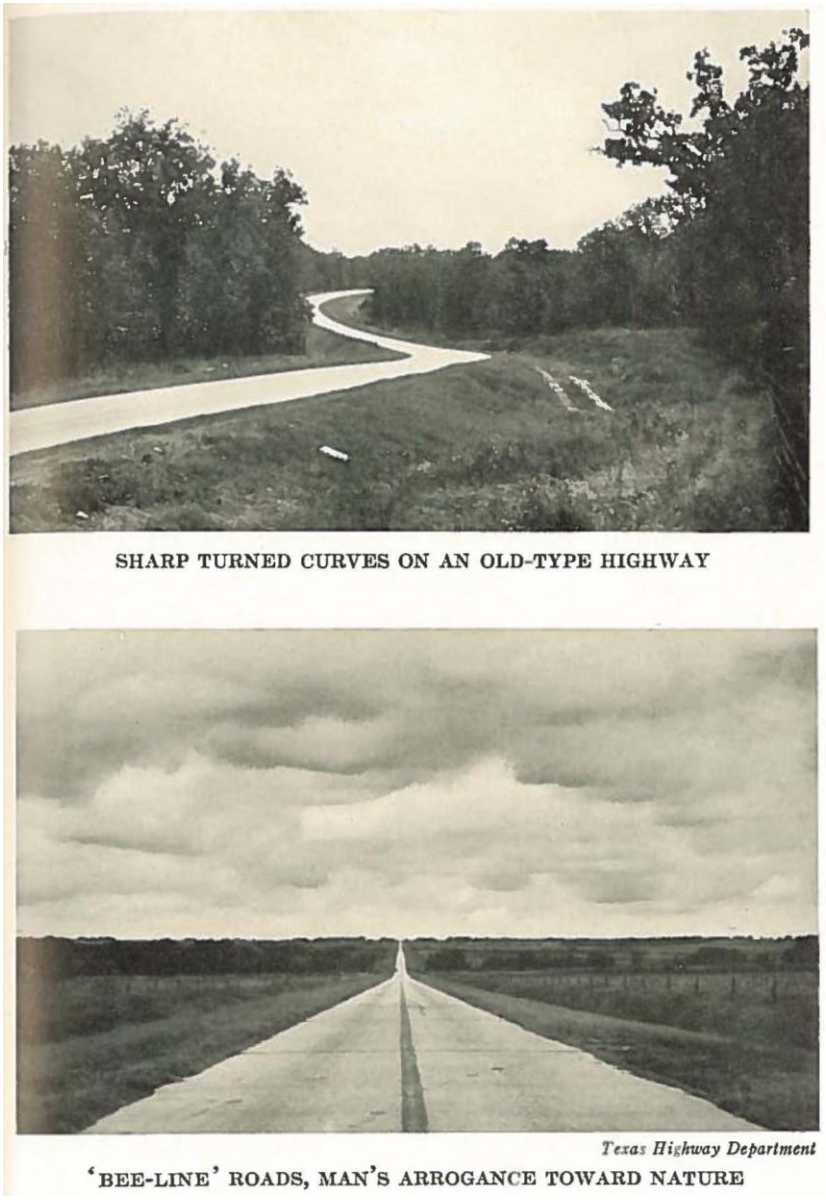
[36] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 52.

Inquiry), was tasked with distribution of federal highway funds and oversight of road standards, in conjunction with the state highway departments. This had an immediate effect on shifting the control from local governments to the state and federal governments, and the focus became local and state-wide road networks and forest highways.[37] Long distance routes and transcontinental roads were still the purview of private auto trail associations.[38] However, the country's entry into World War I in 1917 curbed spending on non-war necessities, and road funding at the national level was limited.

After World War I, road construction again became the focus of attention. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 expanded the amount of money available to states for road construction. Road building for the automobile (rather than for the horse) and conveyance became the primary focus. Nonetheless, most early highway engineers were former railroad employees and adhered to their previous experience when designing roads. Consequently, most roads built in this period followed or fit into natural topographic features, often resulting in roads with sharp curves or miles of monotonous straight road, and steep embankments. Road design with the automobile and its driver in mind was still in its infancy.

[37] Federal Highway Administration, "The Trailblazers: Brief History of the Direct Federal Highway Construction Program," *Highway History,* 7 April 2011, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/blazer01.cfm (accessed 9 September 2013).

[38] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 52.



SHARP TURNED CURVES ON AN OLD-TYPE HIGHWAY

Texas Highway Department

'BEE-LINE' ROADS, MAN'S ARROGANCE TOWARD NATURE

Figure 9: Early road designs.
(Source: *American Highways and Roadsides*, 1938, plates 1 [unpaginated].)

As the 1920s continued, the BPR expanded into parkway design with the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway in Virginia, constructed in conjunction with the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth.[39] The Mount Vernon Parkway was designed with "… easy curves to fit the natural contours of the land, pleasant scenic vistas were provided, and the parkway was landscaped so that it became

[39] Federal Highway Administration, "The Trailblazers: Brief History of the Direct Federal Highway Construction Program."

a natural part of the environment. At the same time, the arterial highway aspect was recognized, and access to the parkway was provided only at long intervals." Parkways in this period were primarily an east coast phenomenon and were often designed as a divided highway with a landscaped median. The BPR also began building roads within national parks during this period.[40] Other changes in the 1920s included the end of named auto routes and the substitution of numbered routes. While this was not immediately instituted universally, it had taken hold by the 1930s.

After the stock market crash in 1929, the federal government continued to funnel money to the states for road construction through the regular federal-aid program. However, the laws required matching state or local funds, and the federal money often went unused as public entities faced devastating revenue shortfalls. This breakdown in the road funding mechanism set up the system for direct federal "National Recovery" road funding, as well as road-related New Deal work relief projects throughout the country.

4. Early State Highways in Texas

Texas was one of the few states that did not have a state highway department at the passage of the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916. Upon its creation in 1917, however, it almost immediately ran into problems. Though the THD existed, it was merely a funnel for federal money to the counties, which still had control over design and construction.[41] This fact hindered efforts to build a state-wide road network. Around the time of the THD's designation, Texas contained the most transcontinental highway mileage by far, with a 1918 auto trail map showing 8,690 miles on 13 transcontinental trails.[42] In 1917 Texas also designated a State Highway system composed of 22 numbered State Highways, which was increased to 38 in 1919. Funding through the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921 helped to expand both the national and State Highway systems, and federal and state funding was allocated at a 50/50 match. The official state highway system was not to exceed seven percent of the state's total highway mileage.[43] From 1917 until the late 1920s, Texas highway engineers followed typical road design practices of the time, with high roadway profiles, deep side ditches, narrow pavement, and inadequate shoulders, with little regard for driver comfort or aesthetics.

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[40] Federal Highway Administration, "The Trailblazers: Brief History of the Direct Federal Highway Construction Program."

[41] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 53.

[42] *Transcontinental Highways of the United States* in *Auto Trails and Commercial Survey of the United States* (New York: George F. Cram Co., 1918).

[43] Wisconsin Historical Society, "Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921," (http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/archstories/late_roads/fed_hwy_act.asp (accessed 9 September 2013).

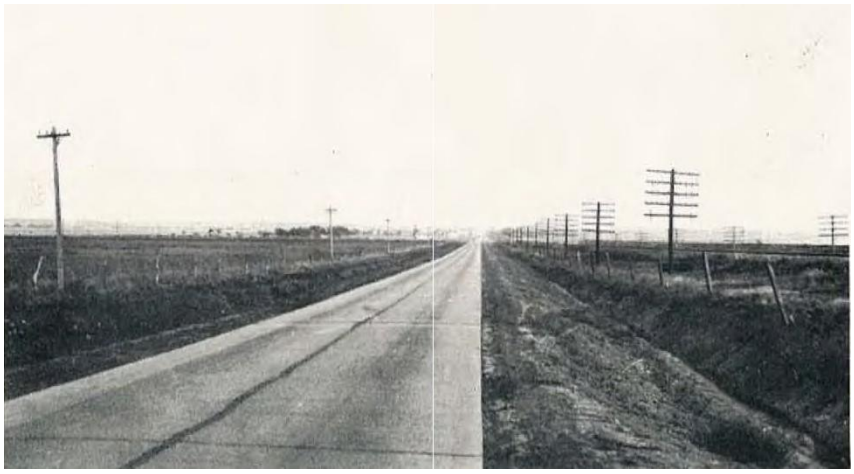

Figure 10: Typical highway section, 1926.

(Source: Gibb Gilchrist, Texas Highway Department 1927-1937, 46.)

In 1923, due to changes in federal requirements for approval of highway funding, the Texas Legislature gave the THD administrative control over the State Highway system. Later that decade, Texas followed other states to renumber their highways as part of a national highway system. Those same years found Texas in conflict with federal officials on highway spending, resulting in the lack of highway money for a few years. However, by the end of the 1920s the THD had "largely developed its primary trunk system, assumed responsibility for construction and maintenance on the State Highway system, and steadied the overall administrative and organizational direction of the agency."[44] This set the stage for what the agency would achieve in the 1930s, including the development of its first roadside parks.

[44] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 72.

C. The Depression and the Idea of the Roadside Park, 1930 – 1941

During the Great Depression, several factors coalesced to create the roadside park and encourage its construction. The national factors included naturalistic park design, the availability of work relief labor, and a focused effort on highway beautification and roadside improvement. The 1936 Texas Centennial celebration also contributed on a state level. This period saw the advancement of the idea that roadways were for automobiles, and these automobiles were utilized by many people for differing purposes. These design ideas and beautification programs became part of the evolution of roadway and highway designs, and helped set the stage for further improvements.

1. General Effects of the Great Depression

Nationally, the early years following the stock market crash of 1929 and the beginning of the Great Depression were marked by a number of programs meant to boost the economy through emergency appropriations. Prices for cotton, crude oil, and other commodities declined in the 1920s, and this trend deepened in the early 1930s. Industrial and commercial activity, which prospered during the boom years of the 1920s, dropped sharply following the 1929 crash. With increasing loss of tax revenue by the early 1930s, the federal government initiated attempts to increase public works funding in an effort to compensate for deteriorating state and local economies. With regard to road construction, the federal government increased regular federal-aid funding for road construction and provided emergency matching-fund loans to state governments. The Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932, enacted towards the end of Herbert Hoover's presidency, issued emergency loans to the states for public works projects; however, all the projects provided for were to be temporary.[45]

In the immediate aftermath of the stock market crash, the Texas economy was not as impacted as some others. The 1929 cotton harvest was good, the oil boom was still going strong, and both the government and the universities continued to spend money.[46] Texas continued to secure lands for state parks, buoyed by the decade-long campaign for state parks by Governors Neff and Colp, though little money was provided for improvement. Part of the continued development of state parks was due to the approach of the Texas Centennial celebrations in 1936, even as there was a marked decrease in leisure travel by the public as the Depression deepened.[47] Relief loans were secured from the federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation for development of state parks at Palo Duro Canyon, Davis Mountains, and Longhorn Cavern.[48] These parks were designed with

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[45] Nancy E. Rose, *Put To Work: Relief Programs of the Great Depression* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), 15-16; "Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, 21 July 1932, http://fraser.stlouisfed.org/docs/publications/rcf/rfc_19320721_act.pdf (accessed 19 September 2013).

[46] Ben H. Procter, "GREAT DEPRESSION," *Handbook of Texas Online,* http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/npg01 (accessed 19 September 2013).

[47] Steely, 8.

[48] Steely, 12-13.

tourism and recreation in mind, and were similar to the national parks in that they were places of "exceptional examples of nature."[49] At the same time, they provided employment to local workers as the Depression continued.

Federal and state governments used road construction funding as a mechanism to combat unemployment. Between 1930 and 1933 regular federal-aid road spending on the Texas State Highway system ranged from $6.8 million to $7.6 million annually, a marked increase from the $4.5 million per year spent from 1928 to 1930.[50] This spending was accomplished under President Hoover's programs to loan state and local governments money for matching funds, rather than increasing direct federal spending.

Even with greater State Highway spending, as well as spending by other entities, Texas could not keep up with the impacts of the Great Depression on the economy. As the Great Depression continued, prices of commodities such as oil and cotton dropped, causing widespread unemployment. The drought that characterized the Plains states became ever more severe, leading to its moniker as the Dust Bowl. These factors, combined with bank closures and a greatly increasing population that was becoming more urbanized, put the state's economy under massive strain.[51] In 1932 Hoover requested state governors "to meet unemployment with 'energetic yet prudent pursuit of public works,'" a request Texas met. Governor Sterling signed a law that "encouraged hand labor as a substitute for machinery on the state's own public works projects, limited mostly to highway construction and university buildings."[52] Creating "public work" that did not compete with private enterprise limited the work that could be completed, and, by passing federal money through individual states and thence to local governments, the relief benefits were diffused. Additionally, the public work money parceled out by the federal government under Hoover was intended to be temporary, even though the collapsed economy and unemployment continued to worsen.

At the time of his inauguration in March 1933, President Roosevelt promised a "New Deal" for the American people, instituting a number of programs, legislation, and executive orders designed to stimulate the economy and provide the unemployed with jobs. Early New Deal programs included: Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Civil Works Administration (CWA), Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and various programs and funding through the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Roosevelt initiated the "Second New Deal" in 1935 with two new work-relief agencies: the Works Progress Administration/Works Projects Administration (WPA) and the National Youth Administration (NYA), both of which replaced the FERA program. Each of these New Deal programs was administered differently, but can be divided into two groups: one that directly provided jobs for public works through the federal government

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[49] McClelland, *Presenting Nature*, 11.

[50] "Federal Aid: Fiscal Years 1928-1944," Unpublished notes, Available in Depression-era Files, Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division.

[51] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 73.

[52] Steely, 8.

programs; and the other that provided funds to the states to complete public works projects. Texas utilized money and labor through many of these public work programs: the CCC completed construction on park structures in state parks, NIRA and WPA funds were used for highway construction, and NYA labor was used for the construction of roadside parks on state owned highways. These public programs continued through to the declaration of war in 1941 and into 1942. Between increased "national recovery" federal-aid highway spending and the work-relief agencies, federal road construction spending during the Depression was greatly increased from the levels allocated for the federal-aid highway program in previous years, even taking into account the economy-stimulating spending under Hoover's administration at the beginning of the Great Depression.[53]

Figure 11: NYA laborers working on roadway development on Highway 30 near Burkburnett, Wichita County, Texas. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas)

One of the earliest executive orders of Roosevelt's presidency was Executive Order 6246, which required "fair competition for the trade or industry" for federal contracts.[54] This generally eliminated the use of convict labor for road construction using federal money, a practice particularly common in the South prior to the Great Depression.[55] Without this legislation, it would have been difficult to

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[53] The Works Progress Administration was renamed in 1939 to the Works Projects Administration. "Records of the Works Progress Administration [WPA], *National Archives*, http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/069.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

[54] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Executive Order 6246 on Code Compliance and Government Purchases," 10 August 1933, online publication by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=14500 (accessed 12 September 2013).

[55] Leanne Fiftal Alarid, Paul Cromwell, and Rolando V. Del Carmen, *Community-Based Corrections* (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008), 47-8.

utilize men and women without jobs for public works. However, similar to legislation under Hoover, the work relief projects were restricted to "work that 'would not otherwise be done,' and job assignments had to exclude such fields as manufacturing, merchandizing, and marketing" and could not directly compete with private enterprise.[56] This limited the types of work that could be completed as public works projects, and set the stage for changes in the THD, both in organizational structure and how roads were designed and constructed.

2. Changes in Highway Design and the Introduction of Beautification on Roads

In 1930, prior to any official roadside improvement program for highways, Gibb Gilchrist, the State Highway Engineer for Texas, issued a memorandum regarding tree preservation. This memorandum stated that no tree should be cut down within the right-of-way if it could be preserved or would beautify the highway, and "[i]n cases of very beautiful trees, it would be worth while [sic] to deflect the ditch or widen the shoulders in order to preserve it."[57] Gilchrist also stated that "many people have the idea that trees should be planted for highway beautification. Of course, this is necessary and desirable, but to my way of thinking, there is nothing prettier than a few large trees at irregular points along the right-of-way."[58] However, it appears this edict was being ignored by district engineers in their local areas, as a second memorandum a year later stated that the previous order was being disregarded and trees needed to be saved.[59] This pattern of thinking, with design of the road following aesthetic principles, was similar to the naturalistic park designs of the NPS and early parkways rather than traditional highway building. Gilchrist was influenced in his highway beautification plans by Judge W.R. Ely, a proponent of tree plantings and park construction who served as member and chairman of the Texas State Highway Commission in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[60]

Beginning in 1934, projects that utilized national recovery funding or other federal-aid highway money were required to use a minimum of between 0.5 and 1 percent of the project's cost for beautification and landscaping. While this was the first policy of federal highway spending to make beautification a requirement to receive federal money, the idea of beautifying the highway and roadsides occurred in some states as early as the late 1910s. Even as early as 1928 federal highway legislation "permitted the planting of shade trees" as part of federal funding, but no

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[56] William W. Bremer, "Along the 'American Way': The New Deal's Work Relief Programs for the Unemployed," in *The New Deal: Conflicting Interpretations and Shifting Perspectives*, Melvyn Dubofsky, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 207-8.

[57] Gibb Gilchrist, Memorandum No. 83, 21 January 1930.

[58] Gilchrist, Memorandum No. 83.

[59] Gibb Gilchrist, Circular Letter #2, 24 February 1931.

[60] Steely, 25; Wayne Gard, "Texas Landscape engineer Explains Roadside Decoration," *The Daily Texan*, 4 December 1938; "Ely Helped Lay Foundation for State's Highway System," *The Abilene Reporter-News*, 8 April 1956.

actions were required.[61] Some of the beautification ideas included park areas, though some states focused on state parks and their access from highways rather than the highways themselves. These beautification actions all fell under the "roadside development" or "roadside improvement" monikers. While providing an avenue for beautification, these improvements also had the effect of developing better environmental controls for highway construction.

Ideas for roadside improvements also included advocates for "camps, comfort stations, certified drinking water, signs and signals, and all things needed either for conveniencing [sic] and pleasuring travel or for safeguarding traffic."[62] This was a national phenomenon, with collaboration occurring between highway departments and community groups to improve the roadside.[63] A second important aspect encouraging the improvement process was that "[g]ood appearance is a business asset."[64] As the country wrestled with improving its economy, anything to increase business was a good thing. Specific numbers helped the argument: from July 1930 through June 1931, the estimate for spending by highway tourists just in the state of Michigan neared $275 million.[65] By 1935 eleven states had created organizations with the express purpose of spurring roadside improvements.[66]

The beautification movement of this period also brought changes in highway design, as engineers increasingly worked the road design into the landscape rather than the opposite.[67] The ideas and derivatives of early parkway design were gradually incorporated into new highway designs. In Texas, the limitation of roadside improvements to plantings and memorials was removed when the THD created the position of State Landscape Engineer in 1933. Gilchrist hired Jacobus (Jac) Gubbels, a native of the Netherlands who was already an accomplished professional in the field. Gubbels completed several major landscaping and beautification projects in the Houston area in the 1920s, then moved to Austin where he was involved with projects for the City of Austin's Parks Department and designed landscaping for the Texas State Cemetery. The hiring of Gubbels also marked the establishment of a new Landscape Division within THD to develop and coordinate roadway beautification efforts.[68]

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[61] Alexander R. George, "Highway Officials See Demand for Roadside Improvements," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 29 July 1934; Gilchrist, Memorandum No. 83.

[62] "Roadside Beautification," *Engineering News-Record* 102, 27 June 1929, 1016.

[63] Florence E. Lemmon, "The Roadside Beautiful: Organizations in Many States Are Taking Up the Fight to Abolish Slum Boulevards," *The New York Times*, 17 March 1935.

[64] "Roadside Beautification," *Engineering News-Record*.

[65] George.

[66] Lemmon.

[67] Gibb Gilchrist, Memorandum from the Landscape Division Circular, 15 January 1937.

[68] Wayne Gard, "Texas Landscape Engineer Explains Roadside Decoration," *The Daily Texan*, 4 December 1938; Gibb Gilchrist, Letter to All Division and District Resident Engineers, 4 April 1933.

With increased federal funding for roadway construction and the additional requirement to spend money on roadside improvements, Gubbels began to fundamentally change how highways were designed in Texas. While previous efforts had focused on aesthetics via plantings on the roadside and retention of "beautiful trees," Gubbels set forth a number of design changes for the road itself, which included utilization of spaces that were previously ignored in highway construction, such as the highway's right-of-way and medians, as well as placing greater emphasis on safety considerations. Gubbels, in his changes, noted that "nature does not encourage sharp lines or corners."[69] Many THD highways in the late 1910s and 1920s had been designed in the manner of railroad lines, with a narrow right-of-way raised up above the surrounding landscape with shoulders flanked by steep ditches. While this design was already starting to give way by the 1930s, Gubbels pushed the changes even further, making the roadway match the elevation and contours of the surrounding landscape features as much as possible.[70] This evolution in road design and construction is illustrated in Figure 12.

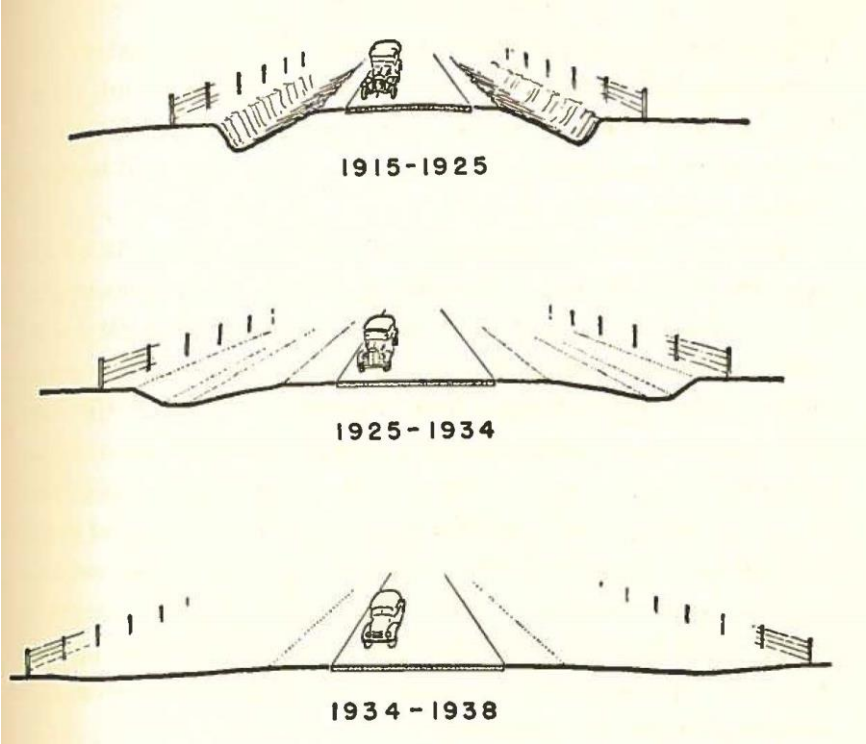

Figure 12: Illustration of the evolution of road design.
(Source: *American Highways and Roadsides*, 1938, 21.)

[69] Gibb Gilchrist and T. H. Webb, Circular Letter: Memorandum from the Landscape Division, 15 January 1937.

[70] Jac L. Gubbels, *American Highways and Roadsides* (Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin, 1938), 21.

Another impetus for change to highway design was maintenance. The old-style highway had issues with erosion and required a large amount of upkeep. The introduction of new roadway designs, along with the "beautification" programs of plantings, helped arrest such issues and lower the amount of required maintenance. In a more general sense, by the mid-1930s the THD's roadside improvement program included greater attention to litter removal and sign maintenance along rights-of-way.[71] Even as the THD's definition of "roadside improvement" expanded, the role of roadside plantings and retention of trees continued to be important. The THD's Tenth Biennial Report, covering the period between September 1934 through August 1936, discusses how planting shrubs, trees, sod, and other plants was used for erosion control and ground cover.[72] Large-scale projects that collected seeds of native wildflowers flourished in the 1930s.[73] The THD used the dedicated roadside improvement funding from national recovery and work-relief programs, as well as regular federal-aid highway money, to beautify and improve large stretches of state-system highways. The result of this spending was that nearly 262 miles of Texas highways received roadside improvement during the 1934-1936 biennial.[74]

3. The Refinement of the Rustic Aesthetic

With the large amounts of money being used for relief work and the larger role initiated for beautification, landscaping, and other improvements, rustic or naturalistic design was the primary aesthetic used in new construction. Though introduced in the 1890s through urban park design (natural versus extreme landscaping), the rustic design aesthetic was used in national parks particularly, and federal park advocates encouraged its use by states for their own parks. Similar to the ideals of picturesque design from the beginning of park design in America, the rustic design used "native materials for construction and … naturalistic plantings," and drew "from architectural styles such as the Shingle style, the Adirondack style, the Prairie style, and the vernacular forms and methods of pioneer settlers and indigenous cultures, which all used native materials of log, wood, stone, clay, or thatch and situated manmade elements in harmony with the natural topography and surroundings."[75]

The use of the rustic aesthetic had an additional benefit in that it required less outlay in materials and less maintenance. Many work relief projects throughout the country also utilized hand labor during construction of work relief projects, as a way to maximize employment. Because one of the goals of work relief was to minimize costs, much of the construction utilized materials "on the

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[71] State Highway Department of Texas, *Tenth Biennial Report, 1934-1936* (Austin, Texas: State Highway Department of Texas, 1936), XXIV.

[72] *Tenth Biennial Report, 1934-1936*, XXV.

[73] Higgins, "What Price Beauty."

[74] *Tenth Biennial Report, 1934-1936,* XXVI.

[75] Linda Flint McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942*, Washington, D.C. (National Park Service, 1993), 11.

grounds" of the areas receiving improvements. This dovetailed nicely with the rustic aesthetic promoted by national landscape architects in this period. The use of natural elements was also advocated for use in conjunction with the popular architectural styles of the day, including the Prairie and the Arts and Crafts movements.

Through the 1920s, NPS landscape architects Thomas Vint and Daniel Hull increasingly applied the nineteenth-century naturalistic principles of Downing and Olmsted to the design of structures and roads in national parks. By 1932 the NPS's Western Field Office, led by Vint, had developed drawings, specification provisions, and best practices to encourage landscape preservation and use of natural materials such as native stone and timber. The NPS landscape architects also incorporated ideas from the maturing discipline of roadway design, stressing gentler rounded curves, flattening of steep slopes, and use of natural topography and vegetation to help control erosion on national park roads. In this program, the NPS staff worked closely with BPR engineers, with both agencies satisfied with the results.[76]

While these NPS guidelines directly applied only to construction in national parks, their influence was felt in state and local park design, as well as Depression-era roadway design. With the establishment of the CCC in 1933, the NPS was tasked with sponsoring CCC work in state parks. The agency soon established a State Parks Division. NPS landscape architects helped to plan and design the parks, while NPS staff led the camps. Through this interaction, the NPS principle of rustic design, using materials and techniques to blend man-made construction into a natural setting, was diffused to park designers, landscape architects, and even engineers throughout the nation.

The NPS published two volumes of plans and photographs to encourage states to adopt the rustic style of construction for their parks, one in 1935 and one in 1938. The 1935 illustrations included everything from entranceways, trail steps, and bridges and culverts to bathhouses, swimming pools, comfort stations, seats and tables, outdoor fireplaces, and drinking fountains.[77] The 1938 publication expanded to include cultural facilities such as "markers, shrines, and museums…historical preservations and reconstructions," and outdoor theaters, as well as multiple picnicking structures.[78] Figure 5 shows an example of one such illustration from the 1935 publication. Figure 13 shows a page of small shelters used in state and metropolitan parks influenced by the rustic design aesthetic.

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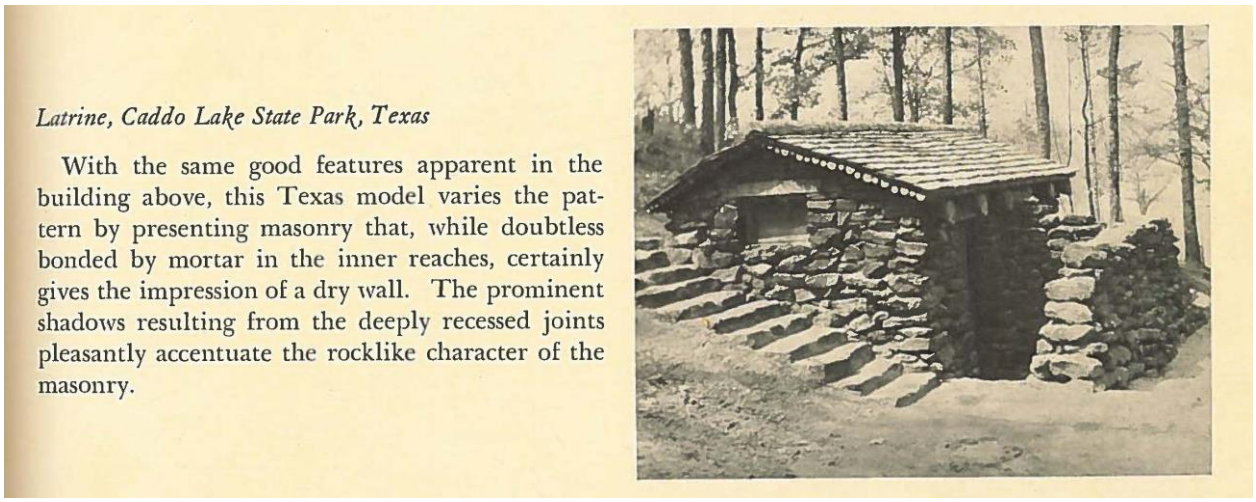
[76] McClelland, *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916 to 1942*, 118-124 and 135-136.

[77] United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Park Structures and Facilities*, Washington, D.C. (National Park Service, 1935).

[78] Albert H. Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, New York (Princeton Architectural Press, 1999 [reprint of 1938 edition, published by United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service]).



Latrine, Caddo Lake State Park, Texas

With the same good features apparent in the building above, this Texas model varies the pattern by presenting masonry that, while doubtless bonded by mortar in the inner reaches, certainly gives the impression of a dry wall. The prominent shadows resulting from the deeply recessed joints pleasantly accentuate the rocklike character of the masonry.

Figure 13: Latrine (comfort station) from a Texas state park. (Source: *Park Structures and Facilities*, plate R-13, 213.)

Whitewater State Park, Minnesota

Mount Penn Metropolitan Reservation, Reading, Pennsylvania

SMALL SHELTERS OF STONE AND TIMBER

Here are shown shelters which retain elements of the shelter detailed opposite, varied by regional and personal influences. Two, even without captions, could be quickly tagged as not of the Far West. The Mount Penn example is the earlier illustrated all-wood shelter in this same area, with stone piers introduced. The Fort Worth subject might fittingly be approximated in many environments. Not so the Phoenix South Mountain ramada. Definitely of the desert country are its piers of thin stone slabs, roof of vigas and bearded thatch of old Spanish custom. The scale, mass, and blending to site of the Osage Hills shelter are admirable.

Lake Worth Metropolitan Park, Fort Worth, Texas

Phoenix South Mountain Metropolitan Park, Phoenix, Arizona

Osage Hills State Park, Oklahoma

Figure 14: Types of rustic design picnic shelters.
(Source: *Park and Recreation Structures*, Plate II D-7, 53).

4. Roadside Improvement: Constructing the Roadside Park in Texas

As Gubbels and the THD developed its roadside improvement program through the 1930s, roadside parks soon became a major focus of the agency's efforts, perhaps representing the most lasting legacy of the THD's Depression-era work. The rustic design aesthetic established and encouraged by the NPS greatly influenced the appearance of Texas's roadside parks. Gubbels, beginning his employment with THD in April 1933, soon began to plan for roadside parks on a statewide level. Gubbels's employment consolidated roadside development under one department at the THD. In two years the state had over 500 roadside parks or turnouts along its highways, with a goal of eventually having over 1,000.[79] Gubbels soon began to designate individuals as landscape assistants at each THD district office to handle the day-to-day administration of the roadside program. Several of the new landscape assistants were recent graduates of Texas A&M College's nascent landscape architecture program. Roy Rodman and Benjamin (Ben) Lednicky both joined THD in the mid-1930s, soon after their graduation from Texas A&M, and remained with the department for several decades, providing a link back to Gubbels' vision of roadside improvement.

Figure 15: One of the earliest "roadside parks" in Texas, on present day US 190 in Newton County, 1941. The rustic style facilities likely postdate the original park. (Source: TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas.)

[79] "Free Roadside Parks in Texas," *The New York Times*, 24 May 1936; Charles E. Simons, "Traveler's Oasis," *Texas Parade* 1, no. 4, September 1936.

Figure 16: That same roadside park in 2014, with substantial changes in the past 85 years. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

Several years before the THD undertook its concerted roadside development work with the employment of Gubbels, two THD maintenance workers created the first "roadside parks" on the Texas highway system without official authorization or standards around 1930. The goals of these early parks included safety, beauty, and recreation for travelers, all purposes that were not clearly defined until much later in the period. R.W Wingate, a THD maintenance worker in District 21 (now Beaumont District), was pioneering the idea of roadside parks along highways in far southeast Texas. In 1930 Wingate built a park in Newton County (20-176-RP001) on present-day US 190 (see Figures 15 and 16, above). Wingate's park included a "bath house on Cow Creek."[80] Wingate also built two other parks in Jasper and Tyler Counties in the early 1930s. The Tyler County park (20-229-RP001), located on US 287 four miles northwest of Woodville, remains in use (see Figures 17 and 18). William Pape, a THD maintenance worker in Fayette County, is credited by many sources as constructing the first roadside park along present-day State Highway (SH) 71 west of La Grange in the early 1930s. Pape's park included picnic tables and benches of local material.[81]

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[80] Bob Bowman, "The First Roadside Park, and Cow Creek, a favorite swimming hole in East Texas," *Texas Escapes*, 18 July 2010 (http://www.texasescapes.com/DEPARTMENTS/Guest_Columnists/East_Texas_all_things_historical/FirstRoadsidePark1BB302.htm (accessed 12 September 2013).

[81] W.S. Higgins, "What Price Beauty," *Texas Parade* II, no. 5, October 1937; Michael Barnes, "The State's First Roadside Park Awaits a Mantle of Flowers," *Austin American*-Statesman, Sunday 17 April 2011, http://www.statesman.com/news/lifestyles/the-states-first-roadside-park-awaits-a-mantle-of-/nRZHg/

Figure 17: Swimming hole at the pre-THD roadside park in Tyler County on US 287.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Figure 18: Other built features within the Tyler County roadside park on US 287.
(Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

(accessed 12 September 2013). The date of the building of this "first" roadside park ranges from 1925 to 1933, which is currently on the text of the Official Texas Historic Marker (OTHM) at this location.

Roadside parks in Texas were usually small areas of land, which by THD definition were areas more than one-half-acre in size and typically less than two acres, and that were specifically deeded for park use and were outside the usual roadway right-of-way width. The land was donated or deeded to the THD for use as a roadside park area by the owner, often in the name of a particular group of individual. District 7 (now San Angelo District) maintenance staff reported that park locations were "usually located by our maintenance forces and our county committees."[82] It is not known if all districts followed this process in selecting potential park locations. Roadway shoulders were considered part of the highway and therefore not suitable as a stopping point. Nonetheless, by the late 1930s the THD had several hundred "turnouts," defined as areas less than one-half acre in size and located within the usual roadway right-of-way width.[83]

Figure 19: Roadside park on Highway 42 near Emory, Rains County, c.1936.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas)

The roadside park of the Depression era served multiple purposes: safety, beautification, recreation, and tourism. Safety was deemed as important as beautification; the idea was to "focus the motorist's attention and at the same time diminish the stupefying sense of monotony."[84] Unlike many other states, Texas had large portions of its highways that traversed sparsely populated areas and required places to stop and rest. In west Texas, District 5 (now Lubbock District) staff also noted that "many such parks are located about two miles from small towns. These towns are so

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[82] Jac Gubbels, ed., "Discussions on Roadside Development," Texas Highway Department, 1940, 22.

[83] Julian Montgomery, "Summary of Roadside Parks, etc.," Landscape Circular Letter No. 2-38, 29 April 1938.

[84] "Free Roadside Parks in Texas."

small they cannot afford such parks, so it gives them a recreation area, thus serving tourists and local people alike."[85] The idea was to have one park approximately every 10 miles.

Differing designs for roadside parks were utilized depending on the size of the park and the surrounding landscape. Roadside parks were designed to blend into and become part of the landscape. This overriding objective—to have the park blend into its surrounding environment—led directly to the use of the Rustic design aesthetic by the THD for its roadside parks. The THD also looked favorably towards the lower initial outlay and potential lowered cost for long-term maintenance of roadside parks having stone masonry fixtures, where possible. In his 1938 book *American Highways and Roadside*s, Gubbels described the thought process behind a typical roadside park:

> Let us suppose for example, that the highway passes through a forest of trees for the distance of half a mile. The highway department will acquire from the landowner an area half a mile long, and perhaps one or two hundred feet wide. A gravel road is constructed diverging from the main highway to pass for half a mile through the trees before uniting with the main road. The underbrush is cut out, the desirable trees are trimmed properly, and the native shrubs are carefully preserved. The traveler is here given a sense of being in a real park maintained for his pleasure. There may be a camp-ground with rustic seats of logs or stone, but these are not essential.
>
> Similar parkways may be constructed by a little different treatment. Suppose the forest lies on a hill, or some elevation. The road may divide so that there is a natural park left between the two streams of traffic. A gravel road may lead through the park from one channel of traffic to the other. Occasionally a single group of trees, or scattered groups with natural grass and flowers between, may justify this treatment. The split highway is often justifiable on steep hills where there is danger of collision.[86]

By 1936 Gubbels as head landscape architect for THD had drawn four layouts for parks, but noted that "[t]hese designs must be adapted to fit the needs of local conditions."[87] The first design was intended for use in any situation; the second with the entrance at a "heavy cut," where there was a large ditch incorporated into the landscape; the third for an entrance from a high fill; and the fourth where ditches or trees did not permit the installation of the first layout. While each park had its own layout, it was generally thought that the land acquired would be rectangular in shape and easily accessed from the roadway. The primary design is presented in Figure 20, with the other three layouts presented in Figures 21 through 23.

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[85] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 16.

[86] Gubbels, *American Highways and Roadsides*, 55-56.

[87] Jac L. Gubbels, "Improvement of Roadside Parks," State Highway Department of Texas, 13 July 1936.

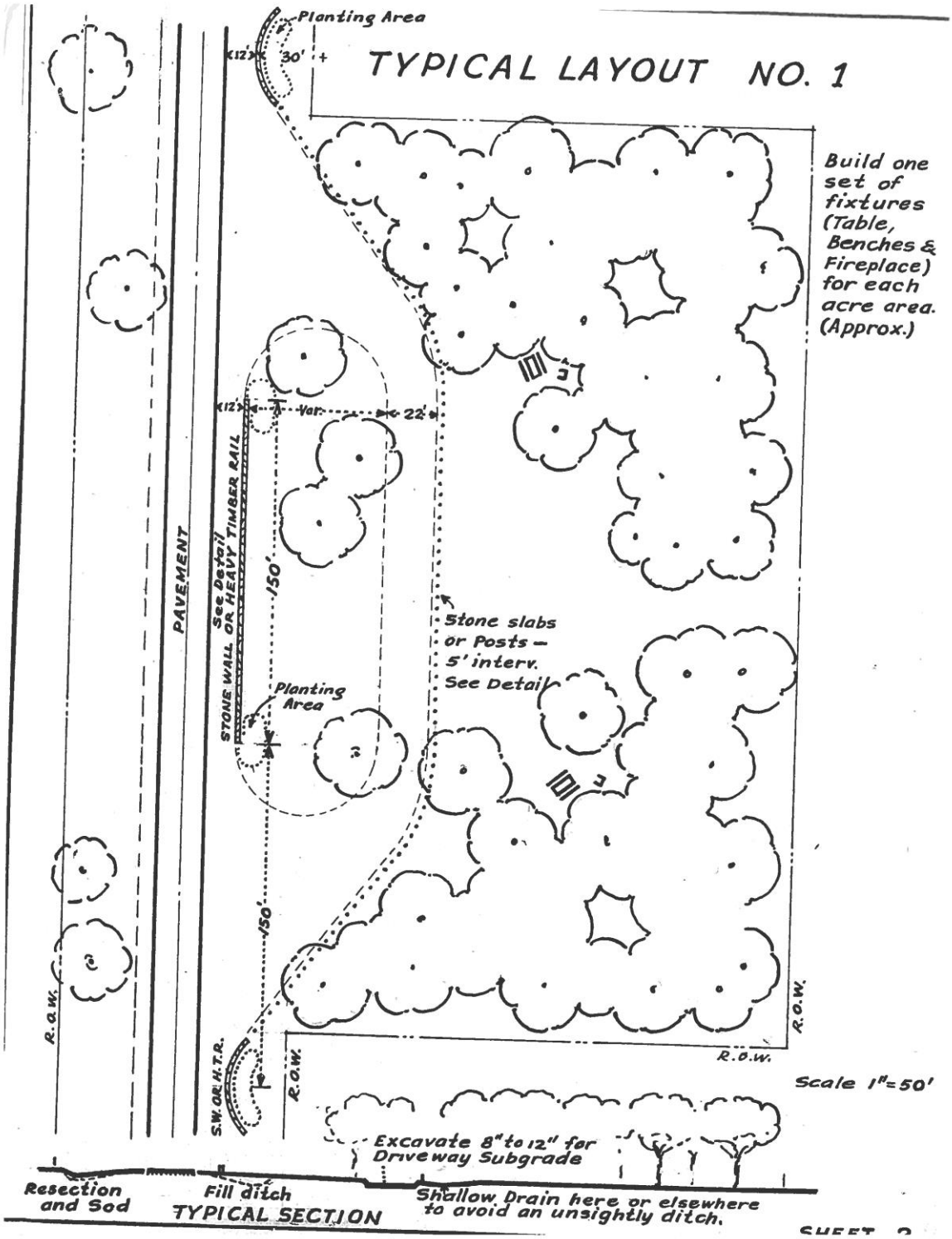

Figure 20: Typical roadside park layout no. 1 designed by Gubbels (1936).

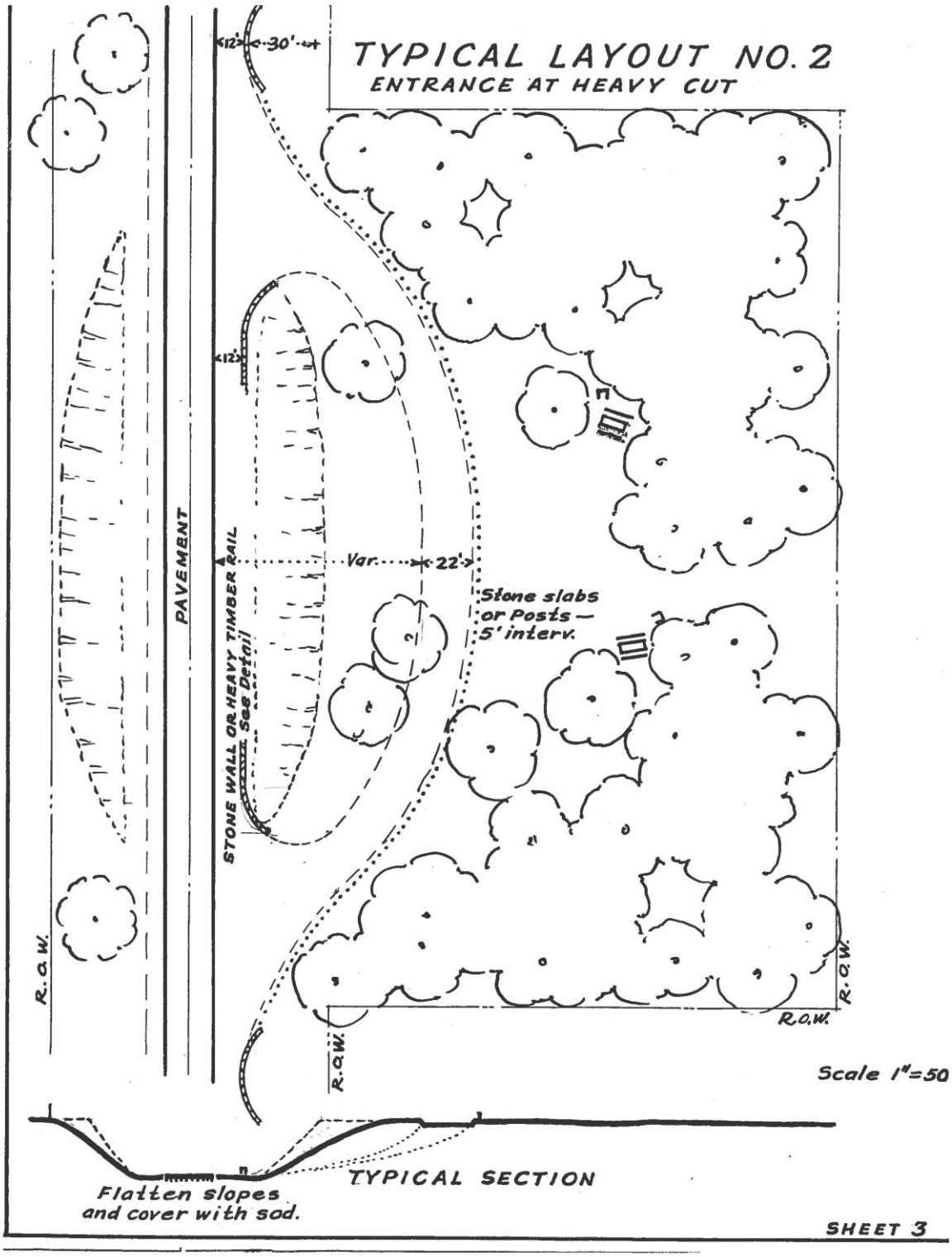

Figure 21: Typical roadside park layout no. 2 designed by Gubbels (1936).

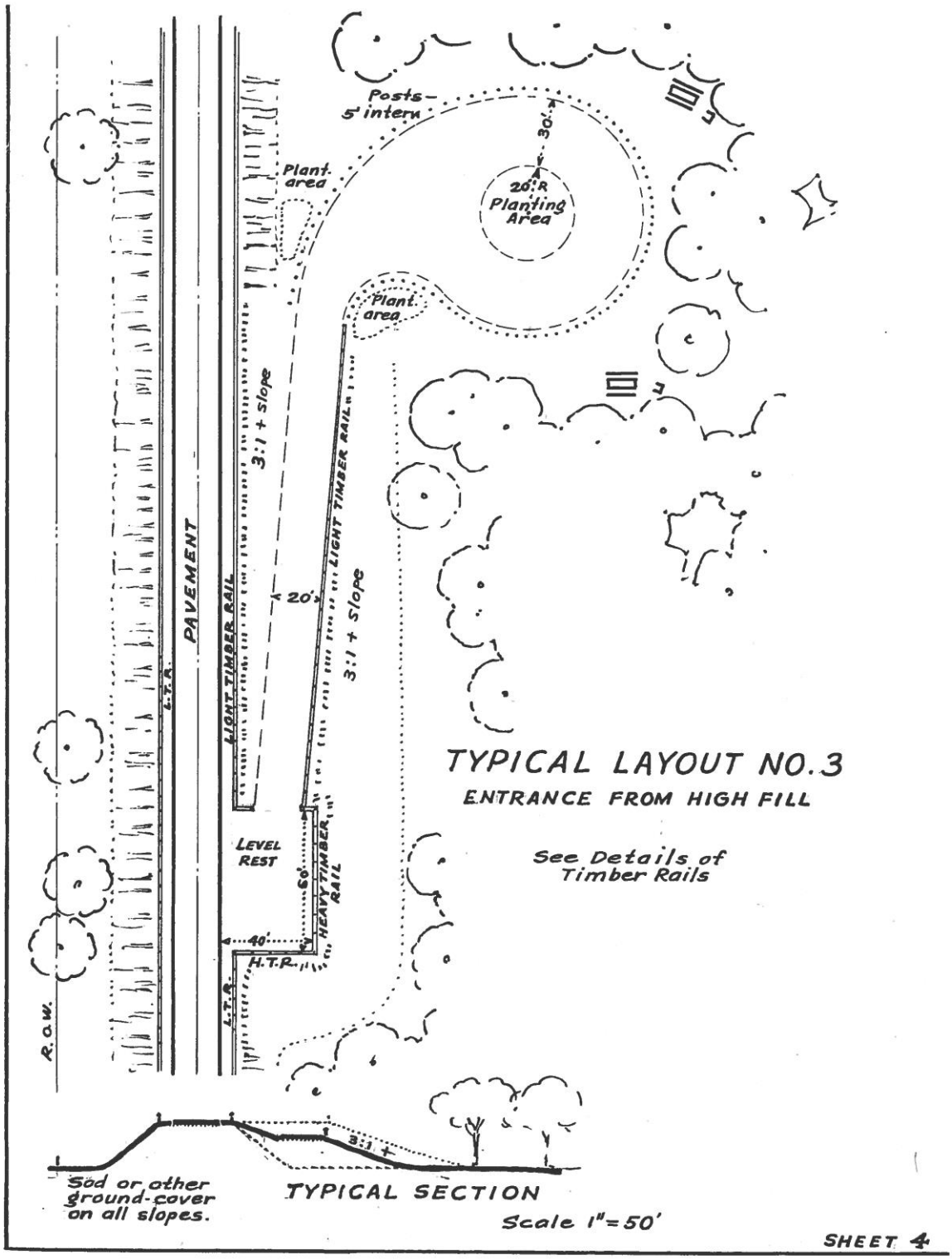

Figure 22: Typical roadside park layout no. 3 designed by Gubbels (1936).

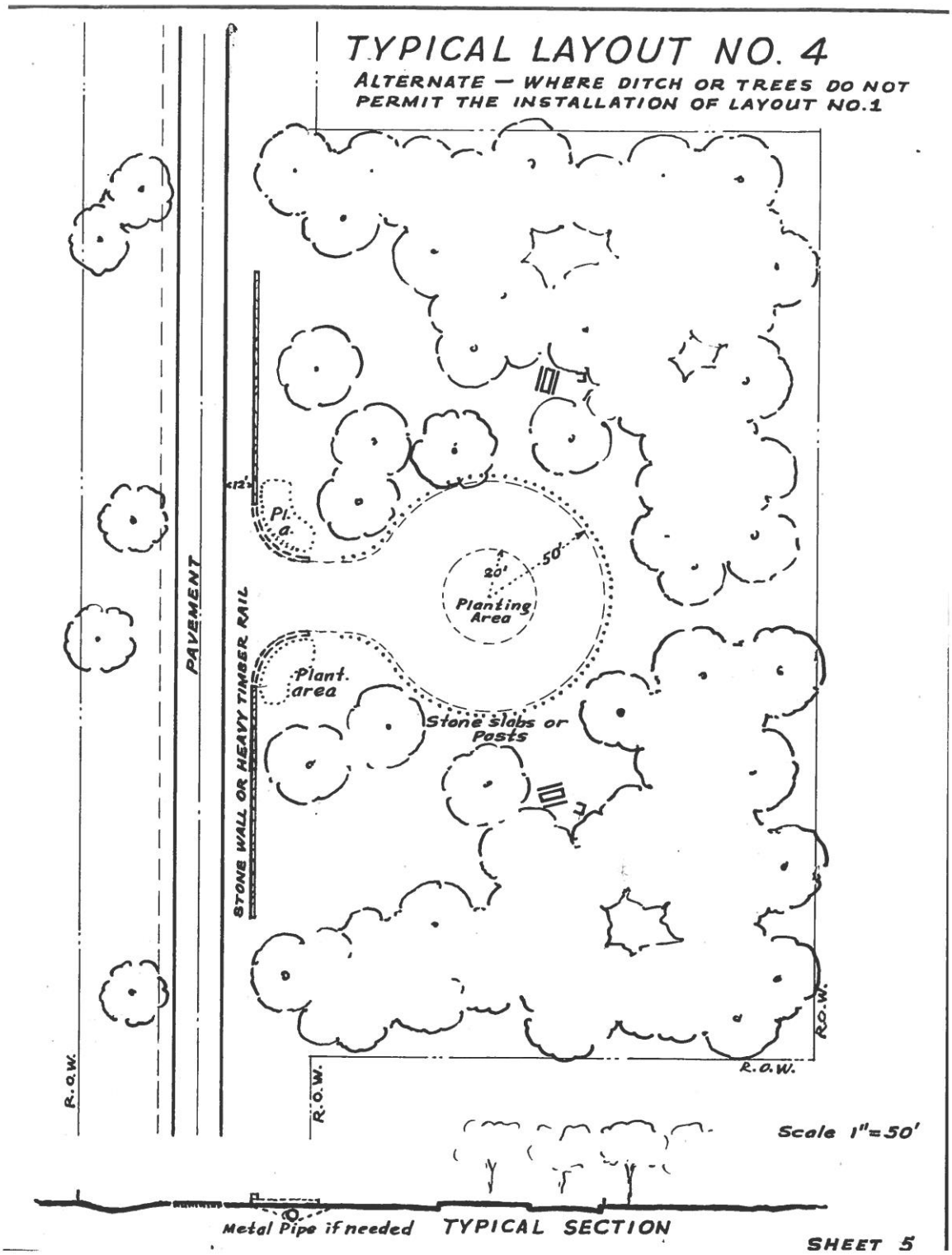

Figure 23: Typical roadside park layout no. 4 designed by Gubbels (1936).

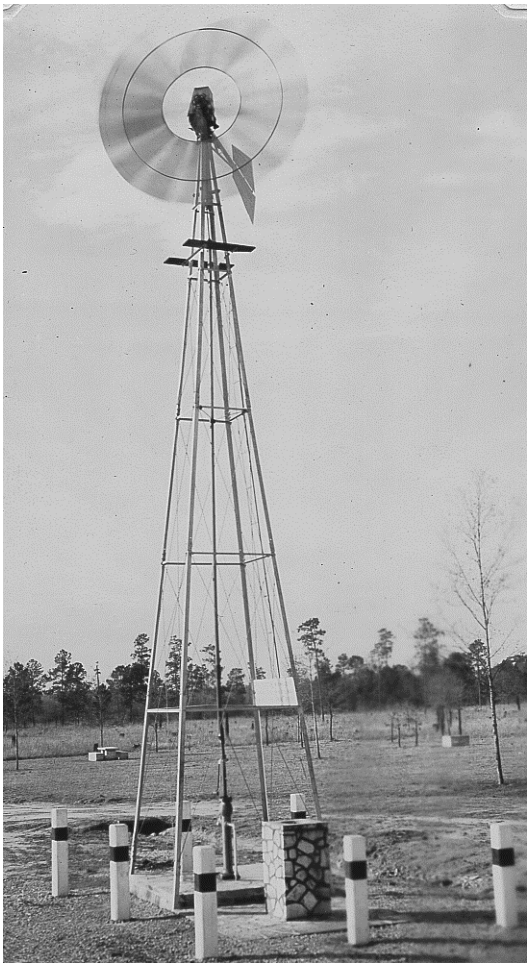

Figure 24: Roadside park near Kirbyville, Jasper County, c.1936. The information given from the district about this park states, “A deep well furnishes cool water for tourists who choose to stop at this park. A spring-fed creek runs across the back of the park. There are plenty of tables and shade for the picnic.” (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas).

Figure 25: Comfort station in Brown County, c.1936, featuring masonry construction (no further locational information is known). (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

The size of the park also indicated how many "fixtures," or table/bench sets, were to be constructed within the park, with a general rule being one set for each acre of park. The general description of a roadside park is that it must provide picnic facilities of some type. Generally, roadside parks from this period utilized trees rather than constructing arbors for shade. Some THD districts did provide other amenities, such as water and restroom facilities, but these were rare.

Figure 26: Depression-era table/bench set featuring masonry construction, on SH 37 in Wood County, 0.3 miles north of the Mineola city limits. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

In his 1938 publication *American Highways and Roadsides*, Gubbels differentiated among various types of "roadside structures" designed to cater to auto travelers. These THD roadside parks were designed as places to stop, rest, and eat, but few offered amenities such as water (unless easily supplied through natural sources) and none were planned with restrooms of any type.[88] However, the amenities provided had to be thought out for each site. In one THD district, an engineer noted, "[W]here I go, so goes my car. Travelers are reluctant to leave their cars and carry food and cooking equipment. …[A]ll drives, parking areas, etc., must be lined with guard posts, rock embedded in the ground, treated timber, rails, masonry walls, or in some cases, hedges or trees."[89]

Both roadside parks and turnouts were designed to match the landscape of their location. In order to achieve that aim, Gubbels also designed detail sheets for masonry walls, timber fences, boulders for donor tablets, benches and tables, fireplaces, and even masonry surroundings to protect springs. The detail sheets instructed THD staff to use timber only where native stone was unavailable. For picnic table/bench sets and retaining walls, THD crews were to use rubble stone masonry laid horizontally, with uniform coursing and wide mortar joints.[90] Figures 27 through 31 show the use of masonry and native stone in park amenities.

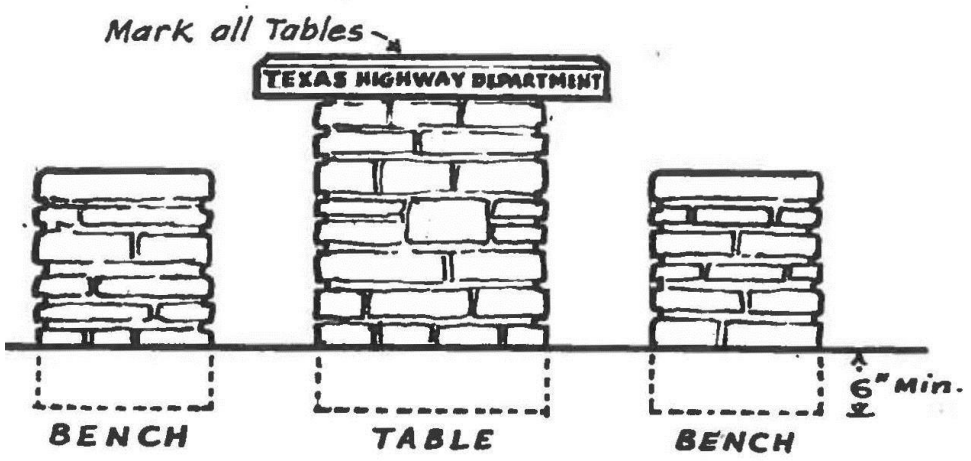

Figure 27: Design of masonry picnic table by Gubbels (1936). (Source: Gubbels, *Improvement of Roadside Parks*.)

[88] Gubbels, "Improvement of Roadside Parks"; Gubbels, "Free Roadside Parks in Texas."

[89] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 50.

[90] Though Gubbels had drawn these designs, no as-built plans from the construction of any Depression-era roadside park have been found in any TxDOT archive.

Figure 28: Utilization of Gubbels's masonry picnic table design at "wayside park" along Highway 33 three miles east of Miami in Roberts County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Figure 29: Alternative masonry picnic table design on SH 29 in Burnet County, 10 miles west of Burnet. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Figure 30: Unique masonry table design on SH 6, 3.3 miles south of Crowell in Foard County. Note: photograph was taken after heavy rains. Table is generally accessible to park users. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

Figure 31: Park bench without accompanying picnic table, Brownwood District (no other identifying location details), c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

The layouts and detail sheets noted a preference for the use of local materials from the location where the park was sited, and made adaptations for those sites that did not have access to certain materials. A detail sheet for a wooden park table and bench notes that wood may be used where

good stone is not available, and a design for an arbor is included for those areas "where quick-growing shade trees are not available."[91] Other districts were "compelled to do a little more building than was approved in the beginning, but it was necessary to have some sort of shade" for the park sites and "built arbors over tables for shade until shade trees can be grown."[92] These designs utilized the rustic aesthetic of the designed landscape, drawing from the principles of Olmsted as well as the guidance developed by the National Park Service for use in national and state parks. Figures 32 through 38 show designs and photographs of roadside park components that match the landscape of their locations.

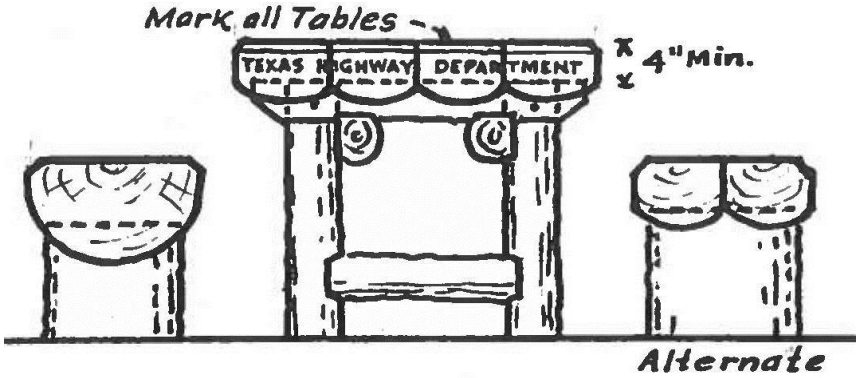

Figure 32: Design of wooded picnic table and bench types by Gubbels (1936). (Source: Gubbels, "Improvement of Roadside Parks.")

Figure 33: Implementation of Gubbels's wooden picnic table and bench designs at a roadside park along SH 1 in Bowie County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas).

[91] Gubbels, "Improvement of Roadside Parks."

[92] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 22.

Figure 34: Alternative design of wooden picnic table and benches on SH 8 about eight miles south of Carthage, Panola County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas).

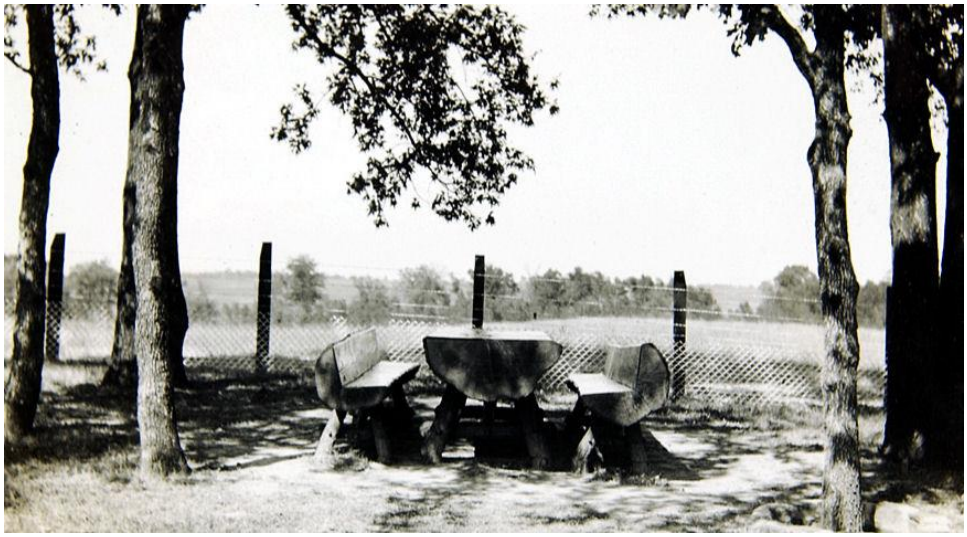

Figure 35: Alternative design of wooden picnic table and benches on SH 1 about two miles east of Mount Pleasant, Titus County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas).

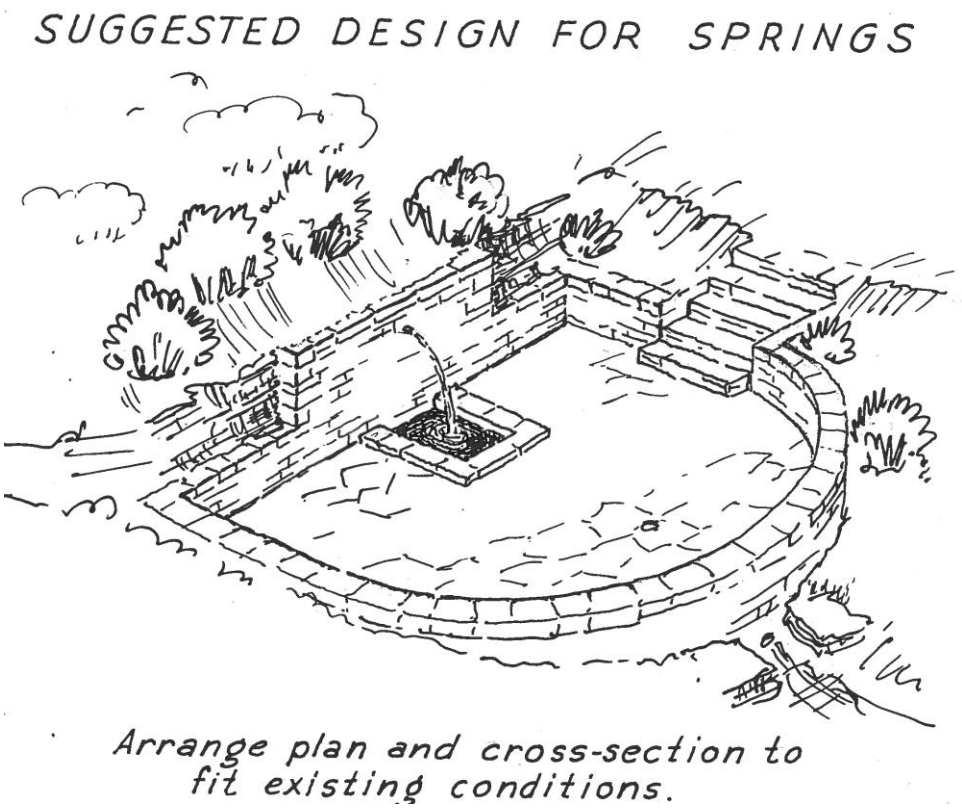

Figure 36: Design of masonry surrounding natural spring location for roadside improvement by Gubbels (1936). (Source: Gubbels, *Improvement of Roadside Parks*.)

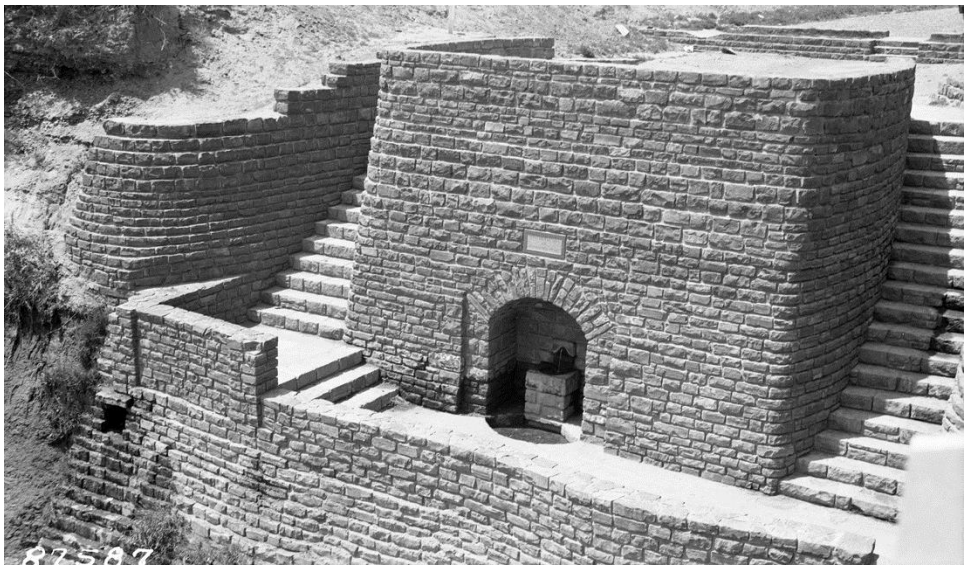

Figure 37: Canadian River "scenic overlook" and water supply, illustrating the use of Gubbels' design for water and springs. Date and particular location unknown. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas).

Figure 38: This spring is the primary feature within the roadside park on US 175 in Anderson County, approximately 3600 feet east of FM 1892 (10-001-RP001). (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

In addition to the typical roadside park, some larger and more unique examples were scattered around the state. For particularly scenic parks, such as the nine-acre White River/Blanco Canyon Roadside Park in Crosby County, construction included tables and benches, but also "stairways over the bluffs, and protecting walls … constructed of native rock" and "meandering drives wind[ing] through the park," taking advantage of the "waterfalls, flowing from the dam under the massive highway bridge near the picnic grounds."[93] THD also constructed "a system of foot trails and footbridges" to allow "a pleasing interim for the cramped motorist to 'stretch his legs.'"[94] While specifically describing the White River Roadside Park, the idea of providing a resting place for a tired motorist is a central one behind the construction of all the roadside parks in Texas. A second example of a particularly scenic park is San Felipe Park, located along US 90 in Del Rio, Val Verde County (see Figure 39). It was built in 1936, utilized the natural topography of the springs and the river to create a pool, and features multiple park benches, fireplaces, and a footbridge across the pool. These parks, however, were the exception in THD's roadside park construction.

[93] Jewell Walton, "The Highway Beautiful," *Texas Parade* II, no. 10, March 1938, 23-24. This is now located on US 82.

[94] Walton, "The Highway Beautiful," 24.

Figure 39: San Felipe Park, US 90 near Del Rio, Val Verde County. Date of photograph unknown. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

As noted above, Gubbels also designed turnouts as a second type of stopping location. These turnouts were:

> selected for their natural beauty and attractive view, usually on a hill or bluff overlooking some interesting scenery, and afford the opportunity to stretch one's legs briefly while enjoying the attendant sights. It has the additional safety angle of removing the tendency to park vehicles along traveled portions of the road.[95]

Designed as places for short stops, these turnouts might also be called waysides, lookouts, or scenic overlooks. Unlike a roadside park, they often did not include picnic facilities, required no additional right-of-way, and did not need to "be built with reference to shade" (see Figures 40 and 41 for example photographs). In his writings, Gubbels differentiated between turnouts and scenic overlooks, but they both were selected for short stops as well as for their particular site location for viewing the surrounding landscape.[96]

[95] Simons, "Traveler's Oasis."

[96] Gubbels, *American Highways and Roadsides*, 57-58.

Figure 40: Turnout, with cedar shade arbors, located along Highway 35 at Copano Bay near Rockport, Aransas County, July 1937. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Figure 41: Turnout at the Fort Richardson Monument, Jacksboro, Jack County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

To further harmonize the roadside parks matching their locations and utilizing local materials for park structures, Gubbels also encouraged the use and identification of local plants for roadside beautification. For example, the local plant life found while building the Botanical Garden Park on SH 154 near Sulphur Springs in Hopkins County was surprisingly varied, according to THD landscape architect Benjamin (Ben) Lednicky. Lednicky, a Texas A&M graduate, joined the THD in 1937 and served the agency as a landscape architect and designer for nearly 40 years. Workers on the Botanical Park construction found 46 native varieties of plants at the park site, identified with the help of botany staff from nearby Paris Junior College. These plants included five types of oak,

three types of elm, two types of creeper, and Texas redbud. Texas redbud plantings had been part of the highway beautification planting program since the early 1930s under the egis of Borglum. An additional 19 plant types were moved into the park, including two types of cedar, crape myrtle, honeysuckle, mesquite, and flowering dogwood.[97] While the product of this roadside improvement, a "botanical garden," was unusual, the variety of local plant life was similar to that found in other places in Texas, and the use of these local plants encouraged.

Much of the reporting by the THD Districts in the "Discussions on Roadside Development" publication from the THD in 1940 included facts about planting for roadside improvement. District 5, the Lubbock District, states that it used a number of tree types in its plantings, including the Green Ash, Walnut, Hackberry, and Chinese Elm, but "[t]he Honey Locust promises to be the best tree over a period of years."[98] THD staff in other districts took on the topics of finding local plants resistant to Texas root rot, or finding plants that met certain criteria for screening unsightly places, for intersections, or for other types of natural landscapes.[99]

The THD's beautification strategy had the effect of stimulating the public's attention to highways. One district noted that "in some places [local organizations] have built parks of their own where they have never had any before." Other community benefits included a tree-planting campaign by the local Lions Club, and a community-sponsored flower show and the adoption of a county flower.[100] These efforts joined the THD's highway improvement efforts to those led by local governments and private organizations in cities, towns, and their immediate surrounding areas to provide a cohesive beautification ideal for Texas roadways.

While the THD paid great attention to ensuring new roadside parks fit into their surrounding landscapes, it did not do so at the expense of making swift progress. The THD's roadside park program expanded rapidly throughout the state with the help of a unique partnership with the NYA, the federal work-relief agency that employed young men and women who were still in school or had graduated but could not find jobs.[101] This program utilized the labor of young people to build public works, and received its initial funding from the WPA. The Texas director of the NYA was a young and energetic politician named Lyndon B. Johnson. After his appointment as state NYA director in 1935, Johnson almost immediately negotiated a contract with the THD "to employ some 15,000 youths on its [THD's] two year old road beautification program."[102] For the 1936 fiscal year, according to the THD, NYA labor had already undertaken 136 park jobs with over $62,000 in funding.[103] Other

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[97] Benjamin Lednicky, "History of Botanical Garden," c.1940.

[98] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 17-18.

[99] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 38.

[100] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 22.

[101] Steely, 94.

[102] Steely, 94.

[103] State Highway Department of Texas, *Tenth Biennial Report, 1934-1936 (*Austin, Texas: State Highway Department of Texas, 1936), 134.

publications put the number at closer to 200 parks by the end of 1936, and funding over $230,000.[104] NYA labor also built school bus stop shelters using plans designed by Gubbels.[105] NYA crews were used for construction and landscaping, not maintenance. According to THD District 11 (now Lufkin District) landscape architect Roy S. Rodman, a typical NYA labor crew totaled 12 to 15 people and was under the authority of the THD's NYA Supervisor and the truck driver for the project.[106]

Figure 42: Roadside park sign indicating the use of NYA labor at a park in Wichita County. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

[104] Simons, "Traveler's Oasis."

[105] Simons, "Traveler's Oasis"; Gubbels, "Improvement of Roadside Parks."

[106] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 31.

Figure 43: NYA plaque at entrance of park on SH 6 in Foard County, 3.3 miles south of Crowell. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

In Texas, roadside parks represented the NYA's greatest lasting legacy. Roadside parks were a large part of their workload. According to a district engineer, NYA crews were completing work such as graveling turnouts for mailboxes, sloping and sodding banks, building grass retards, sodding and reshaping ditches, building and landscaping roadside parks, transplanting plant material, and caring for and pruning plant material.[107] While a later example, the Botanical Garden near Sulphur Springs is a good illustration of the use of NYA labor on roadside parks. The first deed of land to the THD occurred in July 1939. According to Lednicky on the construction of the Botanical Garden, in the period of two weeks "we [THD] secured about thirty NYA boys and put them to work on it." The site was reportedly a mess and required a lot of work to create a roadside park from it. "Work started August 24th, clearing the underbrush followed by erecting a six foot steel fence around the park, putting in a sand and oil mix driveway and building stone headwalls at the entrance." The site was expanded with a second land deed in October, which included a stream. Work on the park continued, including construction of a wooden pedestrian suspension bridge, and a picnic table, firebox, and incinerator, constructed of stone. Work at the site was completed by February 1, 1940. The total price for the park was $2,671.18; NYA labor accounted for $1,526.01, or 57% of the park's total cost.[108]

[107] Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 31.

[108] Lednicky, "History of Botanical Garden."

While roadside parks and turnouts were a focal point of Texas's roadside improvement program, they were sometimes designed separately from beautification tasks such as plantings and erosion control measures, which took place as part of roadway construction.[109] In his history for the Botanical Garden near Sulphur Springs, Lednicky stated, "The idea for a roadside park somewhere on the 8.6 miles of paved Highway 154 North of Sulphur Springs was considered while the Beautification Job was underway, but park sites were not plentiful on this Highway."[110] A second example can be found in Liberty County, where the donated roadside park land was noted in the maintenance project plans, but the original construction included only the building of a fence, a drive, and two culverts, using a combined force for NYA and THD maintenance labor.[111] Essentially, during highway construction roadside park areas remained blank slates and park amenities were designed at a later date.

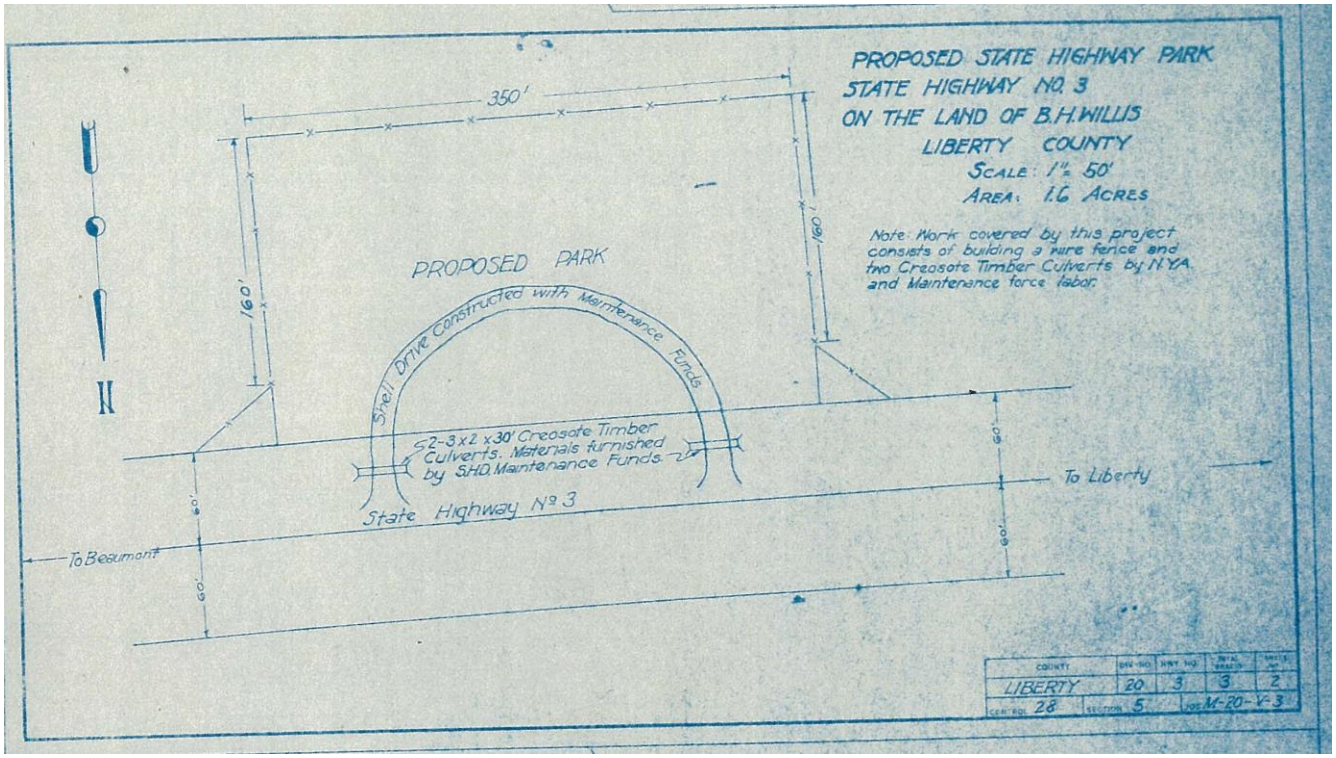

Figure 44: An example of highway maintenance plans for a roadside park in Liberty County along SH 3 (now US 90) in 1936. (Source: TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas.)

[109] Lednicky, "History of Botanical Garden."

[110] Lednicky, "History of Botanical Garden."

[111] State Highway Department of Texas, Plans of Improvement, Maintenance Special Job No. M-20-V-3, Liberty Co, Highway No. 3, NYA Park Project, n.d.; Texas Highway Department, *Record of State Control Number, Sections and Jobs, Control No. 28, Sec. 5*.

5. *The Texas Centennial and its Aftermath*

The celebration of the Texas Centennial in 1936 had a profound impact on the THD's work as well as the rest of the state. More than $3 million was appropriated by the state "to fund centennial activities."[112] A World's Fair Exposition was held in Dallas, the first held south of the Mason-Dixon Line, as part of the Centennial celebrations.[113] Not to be outshone by its rival to the east, Fort Worth hosted its own Texas Frontier Centennial. Other organizations on the local and state levels began their celebrations in 1935, continuing into the centennial year.[114] The Texas Centennial celebrations provided an opportunity to increase tourism and bring badly needed money to the state. The concerns for the THD then became how to accommodate the additional traffic on the highway system and how to provide basic amenities for travelers. Many of the earliest state parks were related to events associated with Texas independence. To that end, the Texas Highway Park Board (a committee of the THD) hired noted sculptor Gutzon Borglum to help plan for the Centennial celebration. Borglum is most famous for his sculpture of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. By August 1931 he had already created a statewide plan for highway improvement through plantings of Bluebonnets and Redbuds along the highways.[115] In 1932 Borglum advocated that Texans beautify the state to entice visitors for the Centennial, stating "[a]lthough Texas has no mountains to carve memorials out of, other of its natural resources can be utilized in beautification."[116] His suggestion utilized the idea of the picturesque designed landscape, but limited it to planting and "memorials."

Appropriations for the Centennial included the erection of historical markers throughout the state. There were multiple marker types, including those for memorial museums, historic markers, highway markers, bronze markers, memorials, and grave markers.[117] The THD worked with the State Commission of Control to erect historical markers along Texas highways. These THD-funded markers were constructed of pink granite with a bronze description plaque on top and the front face displaying a bronze star within a circle (see Figures 45 and 46). The pink granite is a native

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[112] "Texas Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations: An Inventory of Records at the Texas State Archives, 1926, 1934-1940," *Texas Archival Resources Online*, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/tslac/20063/tsl-20063.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

[113] *Texas Centennial 1936*, http://www.texascentennial.com (accessed 12 September 2013).

[114] "TEXAS CENTENNIAL," *Handbook of Texas Online* (http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkt01 (accessed September 12, 2013).

[115] "Women of Texas Making Progress Toward Five Aims," *The Dallas Morning News,* 14 August 1931. Interestingly, the front page of this issue discusses the cotton destruction program advocated by the Federal Farm Board.

[116] "Gutzon Borglum Tells Texas to Dress Up for Centennial," *The Dallas Morning News,* 22 December 1932.

[117] "1936 Texas Centennial Markers," *Texas Historical Commission*, http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/state-historical-markers/1936-texas-centennial-markers (accessed 12 September 2013).

Texas material, relating to state buildings such as the State Capitol as well as paralleling the idea of natural design for a picturesque landscape. The THD highway markers were originally located within the highway rights-of-way and were often included as part of a roadside park or a larger roadside improvement area. These markers were installed in every county, and included the county's name and creation date.[118]

Figure 45: Centennial marker for Coryell County as focus for roadside park on US 84 in Coryell County, located 8.4 miles east of Gates. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

[118] "TEXAS CENTENNIAL," *Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/lkt01 (accessed September 12, 2013). Many of these highway markers were removed and relocated due to later highway work.

Figure 46: Centennial marker within turnout along SH 65, approximately three miles south of Gilmer, Upshur County, c.1936. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

In addition to the establishment of roadside parks to facilitate tourist travel through Texas, the THD also built 14 information stations at key highway entry points around the state. These information stations had attendants "on duty to advise travelers as to routes and points of interest they might wish to visit."[119] The Texas Tourist Bureaus were the first permanent highway tourist bureaus in the nation.[120] The courtesy offices or information stations that were built for the Centennial were not originally intended to be retained following the close of the celebrations, but due to their popularity remained in service for several years. The stations were originally staffed with students from Texas A. and M. College (now Texas A&M University) during the Centennial celebration; when the stations reopened the young men were chosen from all the state schools based on need and qualifications.[121] Later, full-time employees replaced the students and provided "curb service" by coming out to the car to give directions.[122] Like roadside parks, the "buildings were constructed at strategic points on sites that could be improved so they would be attractive…all in keeping with the architecture generally considered fitting for the respective areas."[123] For example, in the forested region of East Texas the stations were log cabins, along the Red River they were "Old Texas Colonial," and in the west they were designed as "picturesque Aztec." The facilities had no toilets,

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[119] Charles E. Simons, "On Texas Highways," *Texas Parade*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1936, 25.

[120] "Texas Tourist Bureaus – Our front line of service to the traveling public," *Texas Highways* 23, no. 6, June 1976, n.p.

[121] Morris Hastings, "Welcome to Texas," *Texas Parade* III, no. 9, February 1939

[122] Pinkard, 20; "Texas Tourist Bureaus – Our front line of service to the traveling public," np.

[123] Hastings, "Welcome to Texas."

and were open 16 hours a day.[124] The operation of these courtesy stations were a boon to the Texas economy. As an example, nearly 15,500 cars stopped between June 1 and September 1, 1938, all looking for information on what to do, what to see, or where to stay on their trip into Texas.[125] While not directly related to roadside parks, the Depression-era courtesy stations represented the THD's conscious efforts to serve the growing numbers of automobile travelers and tourists using the state's highways. Figure 47 shows an example of one such station.

Figure 47: The El Paso information station in 1939. (Source: *Texas Parade*, "Welcome to Texas.")

After the big push for the Centennial celebrations, the THD continued to build its roadside parks and turnouts through the remainder of the Depression. In 1941 *Texas Parade* magazine noted that there were "more than 400 roadside parks and 350 turnouts dotting the State Highway system."[126] One example, a park in Belton constructed in November 1939, employed 50 NYA youth in cooperation with the THD and was to "include picnic units, boat landings, roadways, and landscaping in the park area."[127] As land continued to be donated for roadside parks, the THD realized that smaller parks of only a few acres were easier to maintain both in labor and upkeep costs.[128] However, large parks needing many amenities were accepted as well. In 1939 a roadside park located five miles east of Midland along US 80 was completed that included construction of

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[124] "Texas Tourist Bureaus – Our front line of service to the traveling public," n.p.

[125] Hastings, "Welcome to Texas."

[126] Lionel Brill, "By the Side of the Road," *Texas Parade* V, no. 9, February 1941. The publicity numbers for the Centennial had noted over 500 roadside parks, but it is impossible to know how many of these were redefined afterwards as turnouts.

[127] "Road Park Planned," *The Dallas Morning News*, 12 November 1939; Gubbels, "Discussions on Roadside Development," 17.

[128] "Texas Roadside Parks," *The Dallas Morning News*, 25 March 1938.

three cedar arbors, concrete masonry tables, a windmill, tank, hydrants, drinking fountain, and fireplaces, as well as the planting of varieties of vines, shrubbery, trees, and grass.[129]

While Texas may not have been the first state to construct roadside parks, it led the charge nationally in terms of park numbers and designs. Articles regarding planned roadside parks are found in newspapers through 1941, both in Texas and nationally, and the work on roadside parks continued to utilize work relief labor. Even while still in the grips of the Great Depression and on the eve of World War II, American tourists were traveling in Texas and taking advantage of its highways and their amenities.

[129] "Large Roadside Park Accepted Near Midland," *The Abilene Reporter-News*, 2 May 1939. Parts of this roadway were absorbed into and others bypassed by IH-20.

D. The World War II Period, 1941 – 1945

The World War II period was a low one for official, new roadside improvement, including the construction of roadside parks. Policies created during the Great Depression to keep people in work and economies moving were no longer necessary as young men went to war or went to work for the war machine. This period is marked by maintenance and the increased role of community groups taking a larger role in highway beautification and tourism due to lack of government money.

1. Effect of War Funding on Roadside Parks and Beautification

In the 1930s the idea of a national defense highway system—a connected, intercontinental series of well-kept roads, the precursor of the Interstate Highway system—had been introduced to lawmakers. The growing militancy of European powers was a rallying cry for even greater highway improvements in the U.S. to provide better access for military purposes. In 1939 a new federal agency, the Federal Works Agency (FWA), was created. The BPR was moved to the administration of the FWA, and was renamed the Public Roads Administration (PRA). Also under the FWA umbrella were the WPA, the PWA, and the U.S. Public Buildings Administration.[130] A federal highway law passed in 1940 gave larger amounts of federal money for the construction of highways and expansion of roads on the national defense highway network, without requiring state matches.[131] While many immediate improvements to this network were made using completed using work relief labor, the goals of relief projects were increasingly moving away from public works into military support roles.[132]

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the country's declaration of war, the economic policies that had created roadside improvement programs were altered. Monies that were funneled into roadside improvements during the Depression now were put toward defense projects, such as the national defense highway system. In 1942 a memorandum from the Commissioner of the PRA stated that "[d]uring the war emergency the minimum requirement for roadside improvement work is waived and separate projects for roadside improvements shall not be submitted for program approval…."[133] In addition, with the onset of war, young men no longer needed work relief programs to keep their families fed and out of poverty. They now had the opportunity to enlist in the army or

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[130] "PART THREE: To Control the Levers (Page 4 of 6) - "Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy": The Fight Against Federal-Aid - Highway History – FHWA," *U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration*, n.d., http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist06d.cfm (accessed 9 September 2013).

[131] "PART THREE: To Control the Levers (Page 4 of 6) - "Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy": The Fight Against Federal-Aid - Highway History – FHWA."

[132] Steely, 156-157.

[133] Thomas H. McDonald, Public Roads Administration (PRA) Commissioner, General Administration Memorandum No. 150, 7 February 1942, part of D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 32-42, 3 April 1942, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

be employed in factories for the war effect. The situation was similar for young women, who were needed to supply the labor for the factory jobs unable to be met by the male population.

As the war raged, the federal government began highway planning for after the war, with the focus more on a national network of roads as opposed to highway beautification. The 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act, a national postwar highway program, increased funds for primary roads and also provided new funding for construction of urban highways, expressways, and secondary roads. Previous federal aid had been focused largely on rural roads and had limited the number of miles of secondary roads that could be improved with federal funds. This was the first time federal funding was provided for urban and secondary highways without mileage limitations. The 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act provided $500 million in nationwide funding over a three-year period, including $150 million for secondary roads. Yet, this funding, for which the states were responsible to match at a 50/50 ratio, proved to be somewhat limited when distributed among all the states.[134] States had to have planned for their projects and be able to match the federal funds.

The trend away from new beautification efforts by federal and state government entities was not emulated by community groups. In 1944 the New Jersey Council of Garden Clubs planted dogwood trees to honor the service of World War II veterans.[135] This was the beginning of what would become known as the Blue Star Memorial Highway system (see Figure 48). By 1945 the program included Blue Star Memorial Highway markers in addition to "roadside beautification," which in the next few years developed to include plantings, "roadside rests, bird sanctuaries, playgrounds and … the elimination of blighted areas."[136]

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[134] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 109-110.

[135] "Blue Star Memorial Program," *National Garden Clubs, Inc.,* http://www.gardenclub.org/projects/ongoing-projects/blue-star-memorials.aspx (accessed 9 September 2013).

[136] Richard F. Weingroff, "Blue Star Memorial Highways – Highway History - FHWA," *U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration*, http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/blue01.cfm (accessed 9 September 2013).

Figure 48: Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker, unknown location, c.1950. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Roadside park construction and highway beautification in Texas roughly followed the national trends in the war period. After the memorandum from the PRA stating that the roadside improvement requirement for federal highway work had been removed, it still took almost a year for the THD's Division of Roadside Improvement, directed by Gubbels, to have its work suspended.[137] Roadside improvement spending for the fiscal year ending in August 1942 totaled $153,955.86.[138] Considering that construction costs for a new park were around $3,000, this represented a large pool of money for roadside improvement spending even as THD priorities shifted toward military support and wartime preparations.[139] At the same time, some Texas state legislators called for a complete end to all beautification projects. One senator was quoted in February 1942 as saying, "'I have always thought too much spending in highway flowers and beautification was bordering on the extravagant, and now I think it ought to be definitely stopped for the duration and even beyond."[140] While ostensibly ended, roadside improvement projects continued, and the beginning of the 1943 fiscal year saw $51,833.90 worth of roadside improvement projects continuing.[141] Maintenance and completion of roadside improvement construction projects were still under way as of January 1, 1943.

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[137] Thomas H. McDonald, Public Roads Administration (PRA) Commissioner, General Administration Memorandum No. 150, 7 February 1942, part of D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 32-42, 3 April 1942, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[138] State Highway Department of Texas, *Thirteenth Biennial Report*.

[139] Lednicky, "History of Botanical Garden."

[140] William M. Thornton, "Senators Demand Halt to Beautifying," *The Dallas Morning News*, 13 February 1942.

[141] State Highway Department of Texas, *Thirteenth Biennial Report*.

New roadside park lands were also being donated despite the fact no new roadside parks were being constructed.[142] Instead, as the Depression-era roadside parks began to age, the THD was also learning of the maintenance required for these roadside parks. A local Abilene paper ran an article with the headline "Highway Department Learns Roadside Park Must Be Neither Too Big Nor Too Elaborate." Providing some amenities such as comfort stations and water supplies in some locations was difficult, and both could be "abandoned because of the impossibility of keeping them clean and sanitary."[143] As the war continued, maintenance was the order of the day, and the spending on landscaping became a much smaller part of the THD's overall budget.[144]

Even in this period, however, Texas was planning for the future of roadside improvement. State Highway Engineer D. C. Greer stated:

> The authorities of today feel that our post war development programs are going to involve material improvements in and adjacent to urban areas, [so] it is considered most desirable for the Department to crystallize its ideas on definite urban plans in and around many of our cities insofar as designated highways are concerned.[145]

Gubbels, who had been so instrumental in changing the designs of Texas highways and including roadside development, became the Director for Urban Planning in 1942 to facilitate this work. In conjunction with the 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act, Texas began working on how it would improve its roads after the war when funds became available. Because of the THD's advance planning, the end of the war became a springboard for roadway and roadside development.

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[142] "Clarksville to Get New Roadside Park," *The Dallas Morning News*, 16 August 1942.

[143] Brooks Peden, "Highway Department Learns Roadside Park Must Be Neither Too Big Nor Too Elaborate," *The Abilene Reporter-News*, 1 May 1942.

[144] State Highway Department of Texas, *Fourteenth Biennial Report*, 74, 76.

[145] D. C. Greer, Administration Circular No. 105-42, 22 December 1942, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

E. Roadside Improvement Immediately After World War II, 1945 – 1950s

After World War II, the country shifted into a period of rebuilding its roadside improvement strategies. There was no longer a need for public works construction for economic relief as the economy had rebounded due to war spending. The returning soldiers and their families took advantage of the "buying power and increased leisure time" and utilized American highways for vacations at an even greater rate than seen previously.[146] However, the changes in both automobile and highway designs, which allowed for greater speeds on much improved roadways, also impacted how the vacationer looked at the highway. It now became the means to an end, only a way to travel to a specific destination rather than as part of a greater journey to that destination, or the journey alone being the purpose.

1. Planning Highway Design Changes and the Impact on Roadside Parks

Innovations in highway designs related to societal changes. Highways became even straighter and wider. The idea of the suburb as a self-contained community expanded in conjunction with home and automobile ownership, the decreased costs of gasoline, and the increased lifespan of automobiles. "Postwar automobile design – low, sleek, and shiny – provided a level of comfort and power that brought motoring into a new era" and reflected the "aerodynamic qualities of World War II combat aircraft."[147] This translated into the design of highways as well. The planning for a highway system that could take advantage of these innovations had begun during the war due to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, but due to its lack of associated funding, generally no construction was undertaken. This highway funding act did include the requirement for roadside development work as part of receiving federal monies.[148] Postwar highway design was also influenced by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), which set a policy of design standards that was then adopted by the PRA. These design standards were for Interstate Highways, but also influenced design policies for other highway types. These AASHO guidelines were concerned with specific highway designs, and did not mention policies for roadside improvements.[149]

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[146] Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth Century North America*, 185.

[147] Transportation Research Board, *National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 723: A Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing* (Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 2012), 51.

[148] H.E. Hilts, Public Roads Administration (PRA) Deputy Commissioner, Roadside Improvement on Federal-Aid Projects, 22 March 1946, part of D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 38-46, 9 July 1946, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[149] "Design Standards for the National System of Interstate highways of the American Association of State Highway Officials," adopted 1 August 1945, part of D.C. Greer Road Design Circular No. 16-45, 1 November 1945, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

Post-World War II highways were generally designed as controlled access facilities. These highways incorporated interchanges between highways and local roads, which altered the previous highway construction system and influenced suburban design strategies. The highway designs included roadside beautification as an aspect of construction, but not as a primary consideration. The procedures put into place by the PRA in 1946 stated that roadside improvement "as most effective and economical when given full consideration in the initial stages of location and design, and the work is incorporated in the plans and carried out as an integral part of construction."[150] These guidelines were first concerned with keeping natural major landscape features in place, if possible, to form the nucleus of the roadside beautification for each project. The next steps included salvage of natural materials for building purposes and grading of the project area to facilitate erosion protection. The directive to utilize natural landscape features and the salvage of natural materials for use in building indicates that in this early postwar period, roadside development continued to utilize the rustic or natural design aesthetic seen during the Great Depression for work relief projects and advocated by the NPS. Unlike the early period of roadside improvement, however, the "development of selected safety and service turn-out areas and waysides" was near the end of the list of improvements. The guidelines now included more service-oriented facilities that previously were thought too costly or unimportant to provide: water supplies and sanitary facilities.[151]

By the late 1940s most states concentrated on maintenance of their roadsides rather than new construction. This included the states that before World War II had embraced a holistic approach of roadside improvement and included other beautification development beyond flower and tree plantings. The period immediately after World War II was one of development planning rather than active construction.

The immediate postwar period in Texas was very similar to the rest of the country. Texas had already built a large network of highways in the years before World War II, and was intent on maintenance of its existing system and planning the next stages of highway development. However, as early as November 1945 the THD stated to the newspapers that "roadside betterment work" would resume, partially due to the requirement for roadside development as part of federal funding. That meant improvements of some type had to be planned, as Texas utilized construction plans completed during the war and had healthy financial reserves that allowed the state to match federal funding.[152]

With its wide-ranging highway system, the THD also had a larger amount of maintenance to sustain than other states, in terms of roadside development as well as highway miles. By August 1940 Texas had "9,600 miles of planting; 13,995 miles of erosion control; 15,260 miles of good or

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[150] Hilts.

[151] Hilts.

[152] Mead & Hunt, *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic* Context, 110.

moderate cross-section; 119 miles of extra width right-of-way for tree preservation; 478 roadside parks larger than one-half acre; 277 roadside parks and turnouts less than one-half acre; and 264 historical markers."[153] These pre-World War II numbers are similar to those after the war, considering that very little new roadside improvements were completed during the war years. Those numbers did not include the miles of improved highway that were then used and nearly destroyed by heavy trucks during the war years. Similar to other states and previous roadside programs in Texas, the THD encouraged the local civic groups to play a role in roadside beautification, such as the Roadside Improvement Counsel or the Citizens' Organization for Highway Beautification during and after the war years.[154] By 1950 the THD was speaking with garden clubs in the state about increased conservation as part of the beautification aspect of the THD roadside development program.[155] The civic groups could develop roadside improvement plans that resembled THD strategies for non-THD areas, including urban locations and non-State Highways.

With the THD's creation of the Urban Planning Department, and naming of Gubbels as Director during World War II, the THD was in a good position for anticipating urban and suburban growth after the war.[156] Gubbels analyzed and commented on national plans for the roadside improvements included in Interstate Highway network construction put forth by the PRA in 1946 for utilization in Texas. Gubbels emphasized the relationship between road design and roadside improvement, as certain guidelines could be met more easily through the process of road design rather than under the separate subject of roadside improvement.

Corresponding to the national trends, Texas stayed with the rustic design aesthetic for its roadside parks immediately following the war. An example of the continued use of the rustic design aesthetic is seen in the roadside parks of what is now known as the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop Highway in Jeff Davis County. Construction of the highway had begun using federal work relief funds in the 1930s and early 1940s. However, the onset of World War II stopped construction, which did not resume until 1946. The THD completed construction of nine roadside parks along this highway in 1947, the year the Loop was officially opened.[157] The roadside parks were all built in the rustic style using natural materials, and were incorporated into the surrounding landscape. The roadside parks, with names such as Point Of Rocks and Rockpile Park, took advantage of the natural landscape and used natural boulder formations as picnic areas.

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[153] State Highway Department of Texas, *Twelfth Biennial Report*, 57.

[154] "Roadside Betterment Work to Be Resumed," *The Dallas Morning News*, 15 November 1945; Norma Stillwell, "The Solace of Pilgrims," *Texas Parade* 5, no. 11, April 1941, 6.

[155] "Roadside Program Embraces Conservation, Beautification," *The Dallas Morning News*, 13 February 1950.

[156] D. C. Greer, Administration Circular No. 105-42, 22 December 1942, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[157] "Davis Mountains State Park Highway," Brochure, *Texas Department of Transportation*, http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/trv/fort_davis_brochure.pdf (accessed 5 September 2013).

The roadside parks of the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop match the roadside parks completed throughout the rest of the state in the 1930s using work relief labor, uniting the two periods of construction under one design aesthetic. The roadside parks designed for the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop Highway were completed by THD landscape architect Lednicky, who had worked at the THD in the prewar period.

Figure 49: Location of small table unit number 3 under large, spreading Mansanita tree. Rockpile Roadside Park, Jeff Davis County on Scenic Loop, c.1950.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

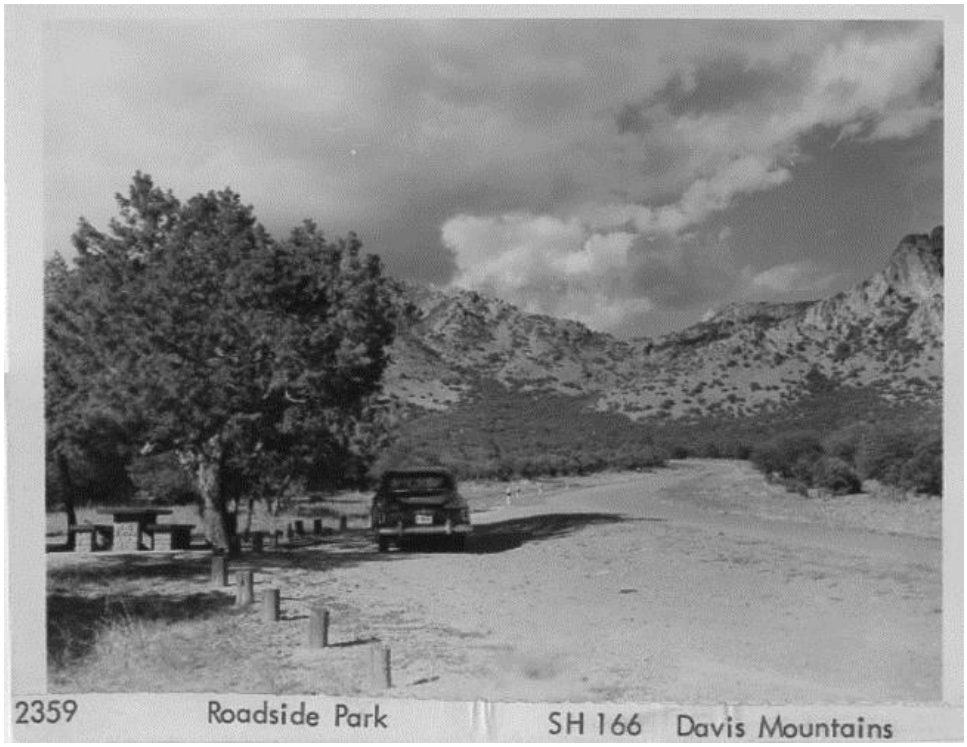

Figure 50: Roadside park in the Davis Mountains on Texas 166, c.1950. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Figure 51: Madera Canyon Roadside Park, June 1947, on Scenic Loop, rear end of "West Texas Firebox." (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

For the THD, the shift in priorities away from new roadside park construction, reduced roadside development funding, and staff changes presented an opportunity to reorganize the department's landscape work. In late 1945, the Landscape Division was reorganized on a regional basis, replacing the landscape assistants in each district office. Each landscape region consisted of five districts, with a professional Landscape Advisor assigned to each region. The regions were divided geographically: North Texas, South Texas, East Texas, West Texas, and Plains. The Landscape Advisors were paid from Division funds, in contrast to the district-oriented system of the 1930s and early 1940s.[158] These regional advisors had control over the plans and designs of roadside development within their assigned areas of the state. This provided continuity throughout a region, but also provided variety from region to region through the use and highlighting of local materials and differing designs.

In 1947 a large change in the Landscape Division at the THD greatly impacted the future of roadside development. Gubbels, who had worked at the department in some form or fashion for 14 years on differing aspects of landscape design, left the THD in August 1947. Gubbels' singular design ideas had made a significant impact on roadside development in Texas under his tenure. The vacancy left by Gubbels' departure provided multiple opportunities, both for individuals and the THD as a whole.

With Gubbels' resignation, the Landscape Division was reestablished as the Division of Traffic Services. Within the new division, Landscape became one of three sections, alongside Traffic Engineering and Road Safety.[159] Landscape architect Roy Rodman, who had worked District 16 (now Corpus Christi District) and District 11 (now Lufkin District) as a landscape assistant in the 1930s and 1940s, became the new supervising landscape architect for the THD. Robert Bowen, who had begun work at THD as a landscape architect soon after Gubbels' arrival in 1933, remained in the Landscape Section office in Austin, but took an increasingly important role in designing arbors and other roadside park features from the late 1940s until his retirement from the department in 1972.

Several individuals gained importance as regional Landscape Advisors. Ben Lednicky, who had started as a landscape assistant in District 1 (now Paris District), took an influential role as Landscape Advisor for the West Texas and Plains regions, based out of Brownwood. Lednicky worked for the THD until his retirement in 1976. Another important regional Landscape Advisor was Rudolph Riefkogel. The German-born Riefkogel had worked for the THD as landscape assistant in District 24 (now El Paso District) from 1935 to 1945. Following the reorganization into the regional

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[158] DeWitt C. Greer, Letter to All District Engineers, 7 November 1945.

[159] DeWitt C. Greer, Administrative Circular No. 41-47, 7 August 1947, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

system, Riefkogel became the Landscape Advisor for the South Texas region, a post he held until his death in 1960.

Roadside parks and landscaping plans were to be incorporated within the project planning stages, via the guidelines put forth by the PRA.[160] Roadside development designs were to be included in grading plans, through the provisions of Federal-Aid regulations, but "special landscape jobs" could be considered under those provisions as well.[161] No other money was to be used for new construction for roadside improvements; instead the THD stressed maintenance of its existing roadside parks. By 1950 the $200,000 set aside in the fiscal year for the roadside development program was to be used for maintenance and rehabilitation of older, Depression-era parks.[162] Also by that same year the state had 638 roadside parks and 216 turnouts to maintain.[163] Maintenance, however, also included changes to design. An example occurred in 1950 with a redesign of the parks' fireplaces. S.J. Treadaway, a highway engineer in the THD's District 8, designed a new style of fireplace that was constructed of "salvaged metal signs, [and] is embedded in concrete but will revolve so that advantage may be made of any wind blowing."[164] *The Abilene-Reporter News* also reported that all the fireplaces in existing roadside parks were to be replaced with Treadaway's design.

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[160] D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 38-46, 9 July 1946, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[161] D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 38-46, 9 July 1946, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[162] D. C. Greer Traffic Services Circular No. 9-50, 15 September 1950, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

[163] "'Golden State' Admits Superiority of Texas," *The Dallas Morning News*, 20 August 1950.

[164] "Highway Engineer Praised for New Road Park Units," *The Abilene Reporter-News*, 26 August 1950.


Figures 52 and 53: Fireplace (left) for cooking, located in Milam County on US 190 0.5 miles southeast of Bell County line, and barbeque grill (right), located in San Patricio County on IH-37 2 miles south of Edroy. (Source Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

The immediate postwar period of Texas's roadside development was characterized by the continued utilization of the rustic, naturalistic design aesthetic championed in the Depression-era. However, the highway planning that evolved from national defense needs during World War II began to influence other design changes in Texas. By the 1950s, highway designs incorporated modern design aesthetics, requiring a similar alteration of roadside park design.

F. Modernizing designs, 1950s – 1960s

The years following World War II were a time of nationwide growth, and by the 1950s it became apparent that the nation was in need of a more effective travel system. Politicians in Washington, D.C., began to examine the idea of a new high-speed highway network, the Interstate Highway system. With the advent of the Interstate system and other freeways, the concept of the roadside park was adapted and updated to align with the evolving trends in transportation and design.

1. Interstate Highways and the Safety Rest Area

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, a continuation of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, provided the first real funding for construction of the long-discussed Interstate system. After taking office in January 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower helped to get the Interstate from planning to reality. Driven by fear of another economic depression, a desire to provide escape routes in the event of a nuclear attack, and memories of the German Autobahn's efficiency and strategic value during World War II, "Ike" marshaled a bill through Congress that provided federal money for primary, secondary, and urban roads, as well as the first significant funding for Interstate Highways. Signing the bill into law as the Federal-Aid Highway Act on May 6, 1954, Eisenhower declared: "That gets us started, but we must do more."[165] The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 fulfilled that request, authorizing the expenditure of $25 billion over a 12-year period for construction of a "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways."

Development of the Interstate Highway system responded to many needs – increased use of highways for shipping and trade; adequate movement for military vehicles and potential civilian evacuees at the height of the Cold War; and increasing reliance on the automobile for inter-city or long-distance travel. Automobile-centered tourism, a trend that began as early as the 1910s, also surged in the postwar decades and contributed to the need for highway improvements. As the Interstate Highway system was designed and constructed, highway engineers and landscape architects recognized the need to provide amenities to the growing numbers of highway users.

In conjunction with the Interstate Highway system, the new legislation mandated the standardization of safety rest areas, to be constructed as part of the Interstate Highway system and modeled after roadside parks. Much like roadside parks, they were created to provide minimal comfort amenities for the traveling public.[166] The federal legislation in 1956 was followed in 1958 by the publication of *A Policy on Safety Rest Areas for the National System of Interstate and*

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[165] Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 1987), 214-215; Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Viking, 1997), 88.

[166] Joanna Dowling, *Rest Area History.org*, http://www.restareahistory.org/Home_Page.php (accessed 13 August 2013).

Defense Highways by the AASHO. The publication defined safety rest area guidelines and standardization, stating that safety rest areas:

> …are to be provided on Interstate highways as a safety measure. Safety rest areas are off-road spaces with provisions for emergency stopping and resting by motorists for short periods. They have freeway type entrances and exit connections, parking areas, benches and tables and may have toilets and water supply where proper maintenance and supervision are assured. They may be designed for short-time picnic use in addition to parking of vehicles for short periods. They are not to be planned as local parks.[167]

Newly constructed safety rest areas were to be located at 25- to 35-mile intervals along the new Interstate Highways.[168] Safety rest areas differed from older roadside parks in their siting, layout, and design. Whereas roadside parks were typically turnouts along roadways, with a few arbors, tables, benches, and picnic facilities, safety rest areas were designed with a different goal. They were located along fast-moving Interstates with limited access, which called for long entry and exit ramps. Their siting took the following factors into consideration:

- Topography, preferably at road grade, favoring easy access, conservation of landscape features, and economic development.
- Natural advantages including wooded areas, trees, streams, lakeshores, exceptional scenic views, and points of special interest.
- Natural drainage.
- Availability of drinking water.
- Volumes and types of traffic estimated for 1975.
- The cost of land area to be acquired beyond the normal highway right-of-way.
- Anticipated changes in adjacent land use.
- Suitability for development with accepted and standard facilities, including: (a) freeway entrances and exits (b) parking areas (c) adequate signing, approaching, within and leaving the rest area, (d) facilities for accommodation of drivers and passengers such as table-bench units and (e) toilets and water supply where adequate maintenance is assured.[169]

While design and construction of the new safety rest areas took precedence for state highway departments, a few roadside parks were still constructed along non-Interstate roadways. Maintenance of existing older roadside parks, a trend that began soon after World War II, continued through the 1950s.

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[167] American Association of State Highway Officials, *A Policy on Safety Rest Areas for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways* (N.p.: AASHO, 1958), 1.

[168] THD Administrative Order 21-58, II-91.

[169] American Association of State Highway Officials, Committee on Planning and Design Policies, *A Policy on Safety Rest Areas for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, 30 April 1958, 8.

While the goal of safety rest areas remained the same as it was for the roadside parks of the 1930s and 1940s—to provide a safe place for drivers to stop—their intended utilization differed from their Depression-era predecessors. When the first roadside parks opened, drivers and their passengers often used the parks as a leisure stopping point, a place to picnic and relax. The parks were also intended to be used as recreation areas for the local population. By the 1950s they had become a place for tired drivers to briefly stop and rest before quickly continuing on to their destination. While some people still stopped and stayed for a more leisurely visit, most wanted to resume their travels and reach their destination as quickly as possible. With this change in thinking, the idea of roadside parks as pleasure stops along the traveler's route became obsolete.

2. Mission 66 and Postwar Park Design

During the Depression, the Rustic design aesthetic championed by the NPS strongly influenced the layout and design of roadside parks, as well as state and local parks. The parallels between trends in national park design with state and local parks, including roadside parks, continued after World War II. Maintenance of existing facilities, rather than new construction, took precedence for the NPS in the late 1940s and early 1950s, a trend mirrored by many state highway departments in their roadside park programs.

Roadside park design was again influenced by broader park design trends with the NPS's Mission 66 program, an effort by the federal government to "modernize, enlarge, and reinvent the park system by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service" through funding increases and major construction campaigns.[170] Mission 66 was introduced in 1956, the same year as the start of the Interstate Highway program. Increased tourism, particularly the growing number of park visitors arriving via automobile, was a primary driver for Mission 66. The family vacation of traveling by car to national or state parks became a quintessential, if somewhat idealistic, depiction of post-World War II American life.

Between 1940 and 1955 visitation to national parks increased from 17 million annually to 56 million annually. Visitors were choosing to drive rather than use rail transportation to reach the parks, and most parks were in dire need of updated facilities.[171] Table 1 illustrates the nationwide tourism increase to national and state parks in the years following the end of World War II.

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[170] Ethan Carr, *Mission 66 – Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 3.

[171] Carr, 4.

Table 1: Tourism Trends

Year	National park and historical site visitors (in thousands)	State park visitors (in thousands)
1947	25,534	109,995
1957	68,016	216,780
1967	139,678	391,063

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Abstract Statistics – Bicentennial Edition: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970" US Census, http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical_abstract.html (accessed 19 September 2013).

Bolstered by a $700 million congressional appropriation for the 10-year program, the NPS built new visitor centers and comfort stations, and updated roads. Unlike the Rustic park architecture of the 1930s, NPS designs in the postwar years were highly influenced by American modernism. Mid-century American Modern architecture, dominant in institutional and commercial property types through the 1950s and 1960s, was characterized by the extensive use of concrete, large windows, flat rooflines, and geometric massing, all of which carried over into park architecture, which was constructed using "steel, concrete, prefabricated elements, unusual fenestration, and climate control."[172]

Mid-century Modern architecture also gained popularity for park buildings and structures, as a more economical alternative to the hand-labor construction techniques used by work-relief agencies during the Depression. Without inexpensive relief labor, true rustic architecture was cost prohibitive for government institutions.[173] The loss of cheap labor had an effect on both national park designs and roadside parks. Economical labor saving techniques including use of mass-produced materials; prefabrication of structural elements; increased use of steel, concrete, and glass; and curtain wall construction, which all contributed to lower costs. While remaining firmly in the American postwar modernist motif, Mission 66 facilities were nonetheless designed to fit the terrain and remain relatively inconspicuous within their park environment. While the NPS did not have standardized park architecture designs for the Mission 66 visitor centers, other buildings, such as comfort stations, were built according to standard plans that reflect the change in form and materials

Conrad Wirth, NPS director from 1951 to 1964, was a convert to the modernist park designs of the post-World War II era. Wirth had been a champion of the Rustic style in the 1930s, when he led the agency's cooperative efforts using CCC labor on state and regional parks. Nonetheless, by the mid-1950s Wirth stated:

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[172] Carr, 13.

[173] Carr, 131; 137.

> Structures should be designed to reflect the character of the area while at the same time following up-to-date design methods…structures are to conform, to some extent, with the trend toward contemporary design and the use of materials and equipment accepted as standard by the industry.[174]

Other influential Rustic stalwarts such as NPS architect Cecil Doty also shifted quickly to support modern designs and materials in the 1950s.

3. THD Roadside Parks and Safety Rest Areas in the 1950s

After a period of inactivity and deterioration during World War II, the THD's roadside park program was reinvigorated in the postwar years.[175] Like the rest of the nation, the aesthetic of THD safety rest areas began to change radically in the 1950s, shifting from the rustic designs of the 1930s and 1940s to a modern appearance incorporating far more man-made materials.

Texas continued to be at the forefront of roadside park design and construction, highway and Interstate road building, and tourism. Texas roadside parks even led to development of roadside parks in other states. Marion Shearin of Shelbyville, Tennessee, saw her first roadside park on a trip to Texas in the 1940s. When she returned to Tennessee, she went to Tennessee authorities and presented them with the idea for roadside parks. The first Tennessee roadside park opened in 1949, and using federal aid funding, Tennessee focused on planting in roadside parks along highways as they were built.[176] While Tennessee opted to use federal funding for roadside planting in the 1950s, Texas, led by the THD, was focusing on the evolving designs of roadside parks and safety rest areas and routing funding towards their eventual construction.

As the Interstate was constructed and the vast landscape of Texas was capable of being more easily traversed, tourism became an increasingly important avenue of revenue for the state. Until 1958, state legislation prevented the promotion of tourism. The Texas Constitution made it unlawful to expend any state funds for the "attraction of immigrants," often interpreted as including tourists.[177] Even with the legislation, tourism was the fifth largest industry in Texas in 1950, and it was still such an important source of state revenue that the THD put out a Tourist Industry Report in

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[174] Carr, 141; Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers – The History of a Building Type*, http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/allaback/vc.htm (accessed 13 August 2013).

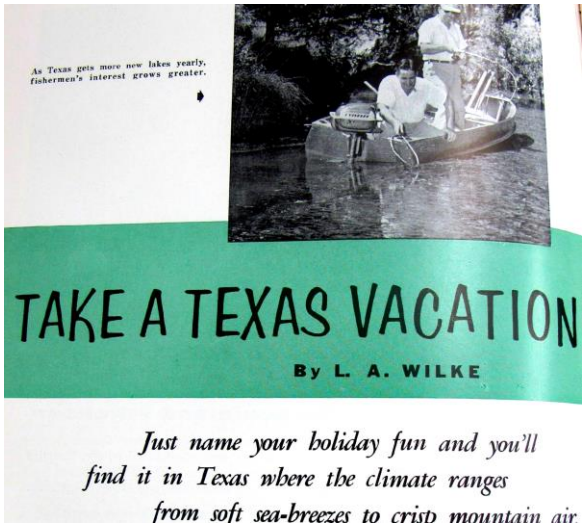
[175] Information on roadside parks in this section is condensed from HHM, Inc., *Preliminary Guidelines for Assessing NRHP Eligibility for Texas Roadside Parks*, 2005. Information on Depression-era parks is found on pages 29-42 of the 2005 study.

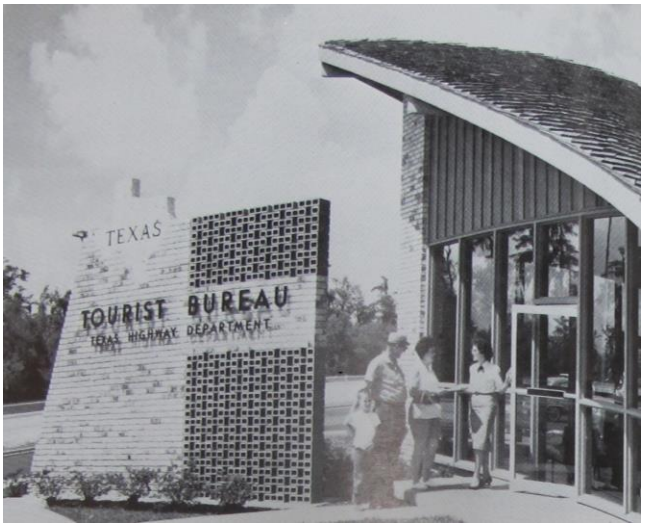
[176] "Mother of Volunteer State's Roadside Parks Visits Dallas," *The Dallas Morning News*, 2 January 1957.

[177] Keith Elliott, "Tourism," *Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dut01 (accessed 28 August 2013).

1951, which noted that tourism generated $375 million in 1951.[178] By 1954 nine million visitors drove to Texas for vacation, fueling the tourism trade. A total of $409 million was spent by out-of-state tourists that year, and those visitors by and large approved of roadside parks in the state.[179] When a study in 1958 emerged showing that tourism was declining despite "a growing thirty billion dollar annual vacation expenditure among Americans," Texas voted in a new constitutional amendment earmarking tax monies specifically for tourism.[180] The first tourist-oriented brochure was published in 1960 and tourism became an increasingly large focus of promotional literature.

From the 1960s forward, tourism became more intertwined in the overall planning of roadside improvement and beautification programs, including roadside parks and safety rest areas.





Figures 54 and 55: Publications and tourism signage advertising Texas.

(Sources: left image: *Texas Parade* XVII, No. 2, July 1956; right image: *Texas Highways* II, No. 8, August 1964.)

With approximately 1,000 roadside parks by 1956, the THD stressed maintenance and upgrading of its existing roadside parks through the early 1950s, given its limited funding for roadside improvement work. A THD Administrative Circular from September 1954 stated "it is our present thought that previously planted areas and roadside parks that are in a bad state of maintenance should be given priority to new construction. The purpose of this particular program of work is to

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[178] D.C. Greer & Fred T. Bennett, "No. 2-52 – 1951 Tourist Industry Report," *Traffic Services Circular*, Texas Highway Department, 7 March 1952, n.p.

[179] Jean Simmons, "Texans, Let's Look at Texas Like 9 Million Guests Did," *The Dallas Morning News*, 13 March 1955.

[180] Elliott, "Tourism."

improve the appearance of our highway system."[181] In many parks, wooden table/bench sets and wood-frame arbors with thatch or wood roofing were replaced with more permanent materials, such as brick or concrete. Brick largely replaced stone for use in fixtures and arbors incorporating corrugated metal or other substances became popular in some regions, though local materials were still used.[182] A local material example was hand-made brick, often referred to as "Mexican" brick, and made in the Rio Grande Valley near Mission.[183] Examples of this brick have been found as far north as Live Oak County.

Throughout the 1940s and the 1950s the THD created standard plans for roadside park fixtures. These features ranged everywhere from the table/bench sets and their corresponding arbors to fireplaces and incinerators. Arbors were the most designed element of the roadside park, and became more elaborate through time.

Figures 56 and 57: Before and after photographs of a roadside park in Terrell County on US 90 in 1948 and 1951 after improvements, including construction of a permanent masonry arbor, fireplace, and windmill for water. Photos taken by Benjamin Lednicky. (Source: TxDOT ENV)

While improvement of existing parks was the primary focus during this period, the THD also continued to accept donated land and construct new parks. Although the Interstate program had not yet started, divided highways with higher speeds were becoming more common. This divided highway design, influenced by parkway design in that it was divided by a center median, was used both for new construction and for the upgrading of roadways into modern, faster highways. These modern highways required roadside amenities, but the change to divided highways with wider roadways meant the THD had to design its roadside parks differently. In order to facilitate the upgrading of old roadways with roadside parks to the new divided highway style, the THD released drawings that illustrated how these roadside parks could be incorporated into highway design

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[181] D.C. Greer, *"No. 20-54 – Roadside Improvement Program," Administrative Circular,* Texas Highway Department, 17 September 1954, n.p.

[182] HHM, Inc., 32.

[183] "Texas Highways Roadside Parks Are Among Most Beautiful in U.S.," *Texas Highways*, June 1956, 20.

changes (see Figure 58). These designs involved moving the roadside park from the literal roadside to the median of the divided highway, though it is unknown how many pre-World War II parks were upgraded in this manner.[184]

[184] D. C. Greer Administrative Circular No. 24-52, 27 June 1952, Administrative Circulars – Texas Highway Department Correspondence.

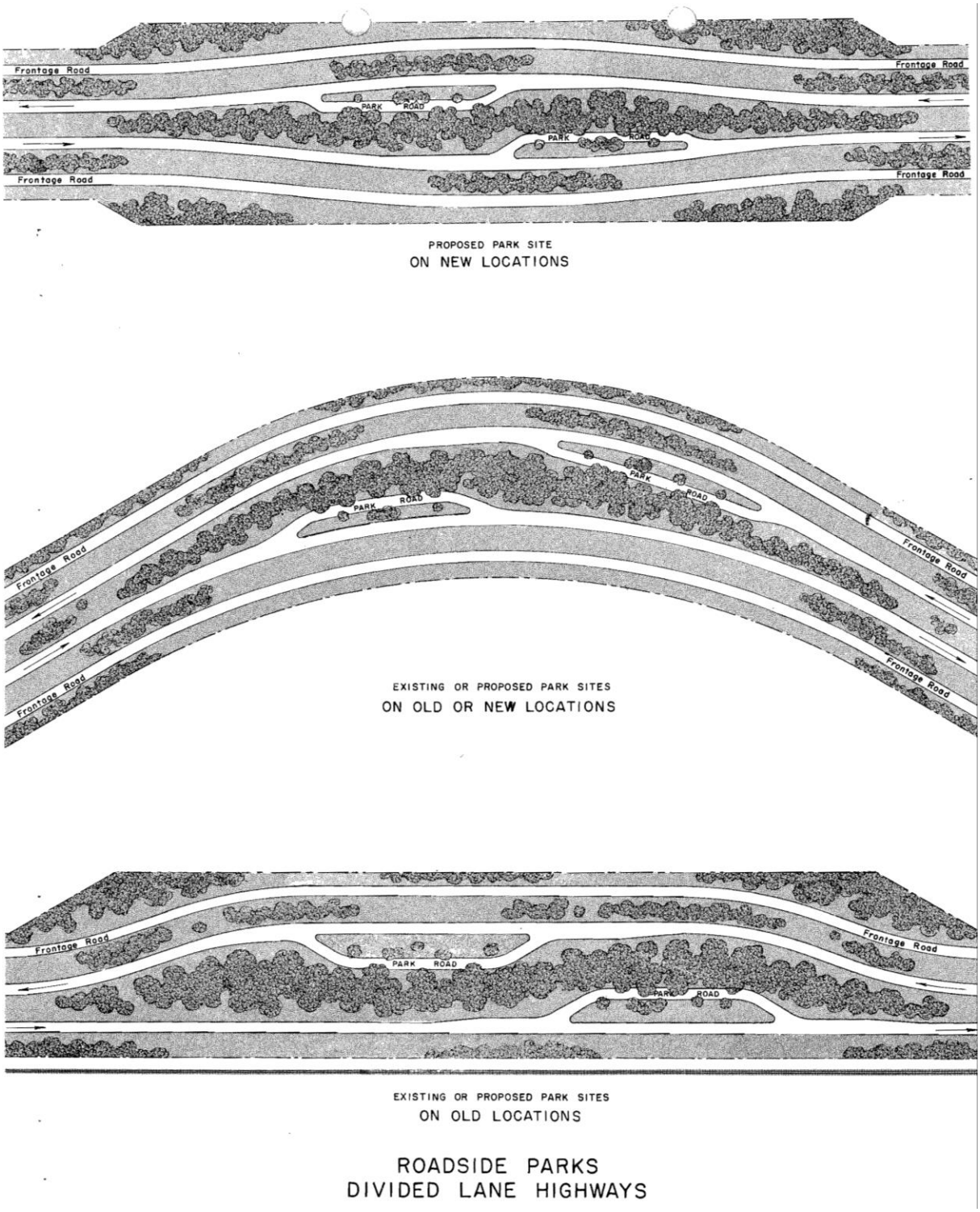
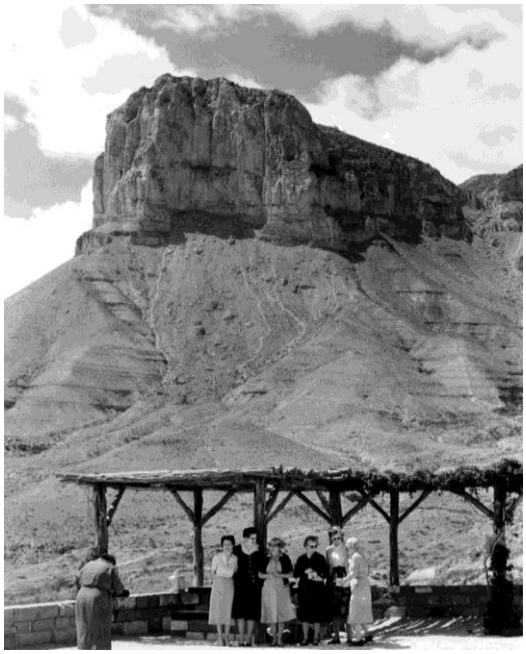


Figure 58: Drawings incorporating roadside parks into divided highway design by the THD, 1952. (Source: TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas.)

In 1953 the THD issued requirements for roadside facilities that were on land donated by the public:[185]

- Sites should be a minimum of three miles from corporate limits or built-up area of a community, preferably a greater distance.
- Sites must permit safe ingress and egress.
- Sites should not be located near intersections where park users might interfere with safe movement of traffic.
- Sites should not be adjacent or near a residence or commercial development.
- Sites subject to excessive flooding, drifting sand, and other objectionable conditions are undesirable.
- Sites high in scenic quality, with shade, near water, or other interesting natural features, are preferable. Such sites are often used by the public prior to installation of these facilities.
- Sites – generally ½ to 2 acres, the size to be determined by the District Engineer upon the recommendation of the Landscape Advisor – are to be deeded to the Highway Department at no cost and free from all liens and encumbrances.
- Design, construction, and maintenance of these parks will be the responsibility of the Highway Department.

[185] D.C. Greer & Fred T. Bennett, "Requirements for Selecting Roadside Park Sites," *Traffic Services Circular No. 2-53,* Texas Highway Department, 18 February 1953, n.p.



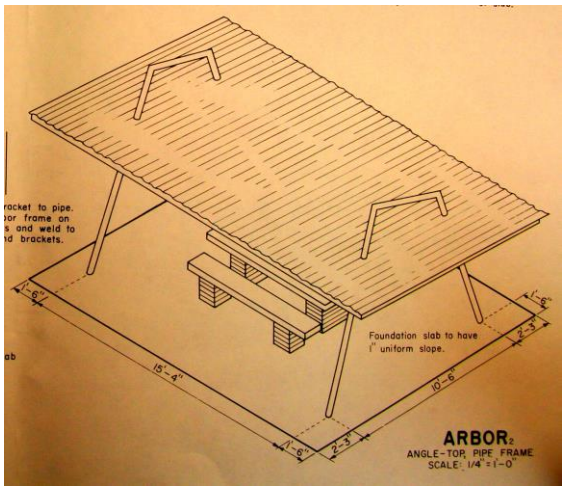
Figures 59 and 60. Original Depression-era picnic arbor (left) replaced by newer facilities (right), at park near Guadalupe Mountains in Culberson County. These changes are indicative of post-World War II THD policy to maintain or upgrade facilities at older roadside parks. The newer facility also illustrates post-1990s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) alterations. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

By 1956 the state had approximately 1,000 roadside parks. Like the rest of the country, postwar road development in Texas was shaped by the 1956 federal legislation that emphasized the Interstate system. Interstate Highways, including IH 10, IH 35, and IH 20, soon crisscrossed the state. According to the literature of the period, construction of roadside parks built along older State Highways began to wane, and the focus on them turned to maintenance. However, in a study group of 104 roadside parks in 41 counties in Texas, 21 roadside parks were built in the 1950s and 39 were reconstructed, nearly 60 percent of the total surveyed.[186] So while the interstate system was definitely a driving force, other roadways were not being ignored.

The new parks were designed with corrugated asbestos arbors with V-shaped steel supports, illustrating the transition from rustic to Modern roadside park design. Native stone was still used for some parks, including tables, benches, arbor bases, and retaining walls, but was laid in smooth, even courses and topped with a concrete coping for a sleek, brick-like appearance. An arbor template and photograph are shown in Figures 61 and 62, respectively. Other parks were built

[186] Mead & Hunt, Inc. surveyed or reviewed files for 104 roadside parks in the summer of 2014. The roadside parks were located in the following TxDOT districts: Austin, Beaumont, Bryan, Childress, Corpus Christi, Houston, Pharr, Tyler, and Waco. Every county was not fully surveyed.

entirely of brick, stressing smooth horizontal lines that form a contrast with the surrounding landscape.[187]



Figures 61 and 62. Template for arbor (left) and photo of arbor (right) in roadside park on US 77 0.3 miles south of Falls county line in Milam County. (Sources: Left image: Texas Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas; right image: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

The THD also included designs for picnic areas that became part of a discrete unit of fixtures for the traveling public. Each picnic area contained a picnic table/bench set, an arbor if needed for shade, a fireplace for cooking, and an incinerator for burning trash when finished at the park. These units were usually set on concrete pads and also occasionally featured retaining walls to further separate the picnic areas from the rest of the park.

[187] Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Development of Texas Road Networks: A Historic Context*, 140-141.

Figure 63: Built in 1963, this roadside park on US 59 in Live Oak County, 17.7 miles south of George West, features two discrete picnic units with all the possible features for the traveling public.
(Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

In 1958 the THD began planning for a new type of roadside park along the Interstate system: the safety rest area. These facilities were planned as part of the overall Interstate system, with specific requirements regarding location and placement in relation to other parks and nearby cities. THD landscape architects including Roy Rodman (the supervising landscape architect for the THD) and Rudolph Riefkogel (Landscape Advisor in District 15 in San Antonio) designed many of the safety rest areas. Funding for the purchase of the site came from Federal Aid Interstate funds, while the picnic facilities were funded by the THD.[188]

The THD safety rest area design called for a park size between one-half and 2 acres (later increased to two to four acres), with two to four picnic units, each consisting of a table with benches, a fireplace, and a garbage facility.[189] Safety rest areas followed a set of approximately 20 standardized templates. While the first safety rest areas were not constructed in Texas until the early 1960s, the initial planning phase for them, in conjunction with new roadside park designs, marked a turning point in roadside development.

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[188] "How Would You Like To Mow This Guy's 'Yard'?" The Brownsville Herald, 1 May 1960; "A Scenic Roadside Park," *Texas Highways*, 1955.

[189] Texas Highway Department, Administrative Order 21-58, issued May 29, 1958, II-91.

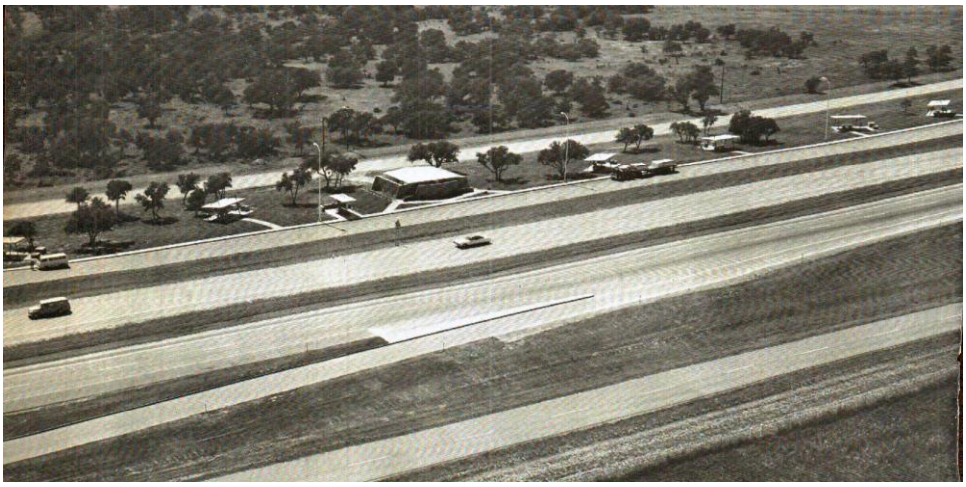

Figure 64: Aerial view of IH 35 safety rest area in Williamson County, 1967 (nonextant). (Source: *Texas Highways*.)

G. Interstate Highways and Safety Rest Areas, mid-1960s – early 1970s

1. National Trends

The goal of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 was to complete 42,500 miles of highways by 1975. As the program progressed, it was obvious that the system would not be completed by 1975, but major inroads had been achieved. By 1960 more than 10,000 miles had been completed. Five years later 20,000 miles were open, and by 1970 a total of 30,000 miles of roadway were in use.[190] As the Interstate network expanded, construction of safety rest areas along Interstate Highways commenced.

In addition to the continuation of the vast road network expansion program, the early 1960s were also a time of shifting ideologies regarding highway beautification, the modernist park movement, and conservationism. By 1963 Mission 66 was seen merely as a "development program" with very little impact on federal recreation policy.[191] The creation of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) in 1962, the passing of the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the establishment of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1964 all contributed to the decline of the Mission 66 program. While the program within the NPS was declining, it nevertheless continued to impact safety rest area and roadside park design.

AASHO released updated safety rest area guidelines in 1968 with *A Guide on Safety Rest Areas for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, as an update to their initial 1958 guidance document. The new guidance generally followed the original tenets of Interstate-oriented rest area design; however, a few important changes were included with the 1968 document. States were urged that "consideration should be given to making facilities accessible to physically handicapped persons." The typical designs included in the 1968 report (see Figures 65 and 66 as examples) were somewhat modified from the 1958 drawings to show:

- An option for fully separated truck and car parking areas
- A comfort station as a central design element
- Lengthened entry and exit connections with reduced lane curvature between the freeway lanes and rest area, further adapting the rest area design to safe accommodation of high-speed traffic. [192]

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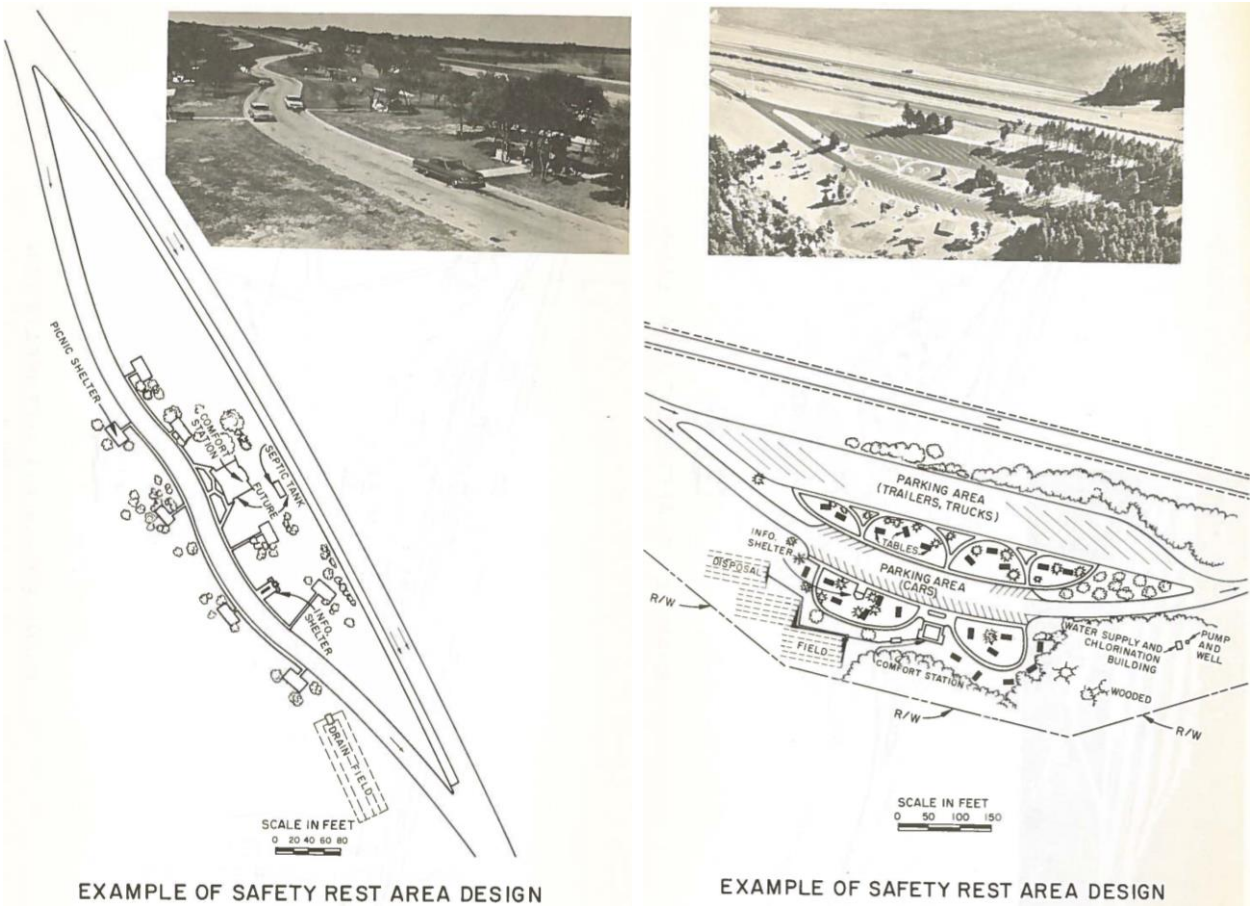
[190] Wendell Cox & Jean Love, *The Best Investment A Nation Ever Made: A Tribute to The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways* (N.p.: American Highway Users Alliance, June 1996), 4.

[191] Carr, 309.

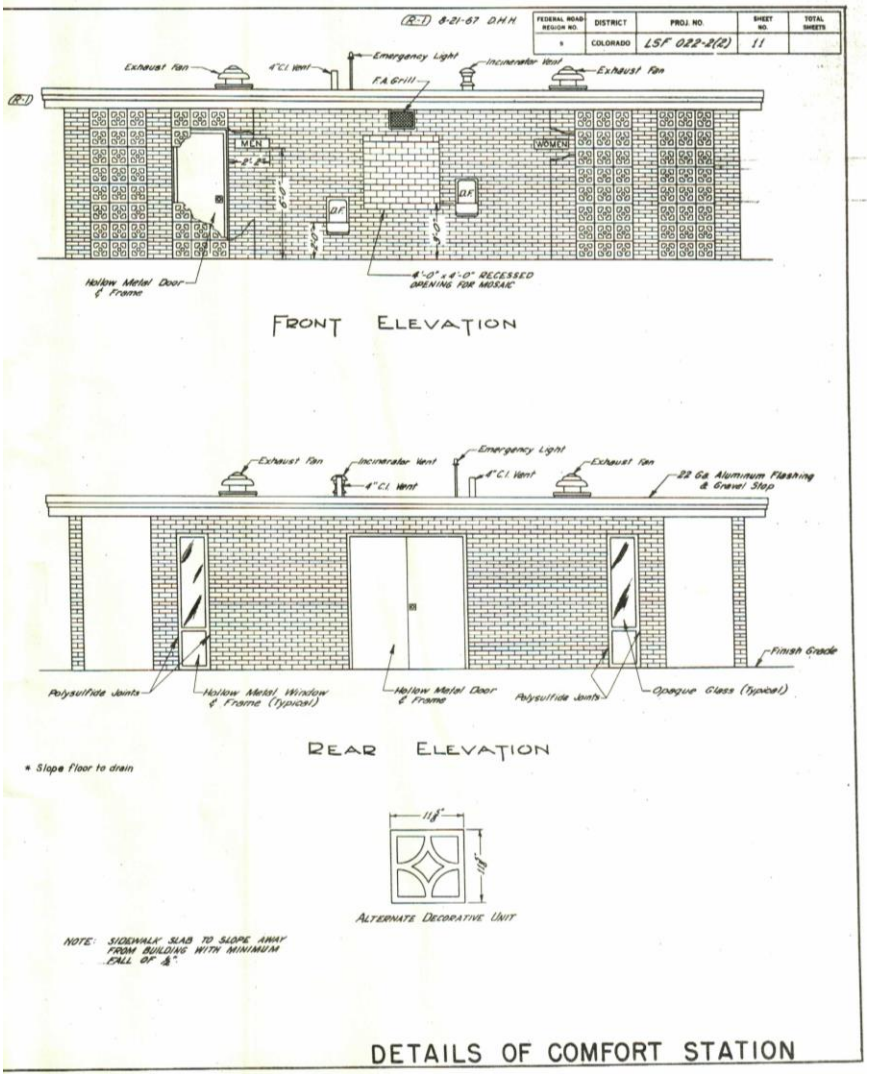
[192] American Association of State Highway Officials, *A Guide on Safety Rest Areas for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*.



Figures 65 and 66: Safety Rest Area Design and Layout Examples. (Source: AASHO, *A Guide On Safety Rest Areas For The National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, 1968.)

The new safety rest areas were generally larger than their predecessors, with additional parking for trucks and more arbors for motorists to stop, relax, and eat, if desired.[193] As noted above, the comfort station, usually located in an enclosed steel frame and masonry structure, increasingly became a focal point for rest areas (see Figures 67 and 68). The United States, including Texas, followed these guidelines for safety rest areas.

[193] Dowling, *Rest Area History.org*; HHM, Inc., 40.



Figures 67 and 68: Typical comfort station in Wise County, Texas (top), and plan drawing of the same comfort station (bottom), 1967 per plans. (Sources: top image: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas; bottom image: Texas Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas.)

Site selection for safety rest areas was made concurrently with highway location and right-of-way acquisition. Rest areas were planned at entrances to urban areas to "provide the motorist with a place to obtain information, read maps or make phone calls." Safety rest areas in urban areas were constructed one to five miles from the outskirts of a city, and only on the side of the road that served traffic entering the city. Truck parking was a focus of urban safety rest areas so that trucks would have a place to park to avoid rush hours. Figure 69 shows suitable layouts for urban safety rest areas.[194]

[194] HHM, Inc., 40.

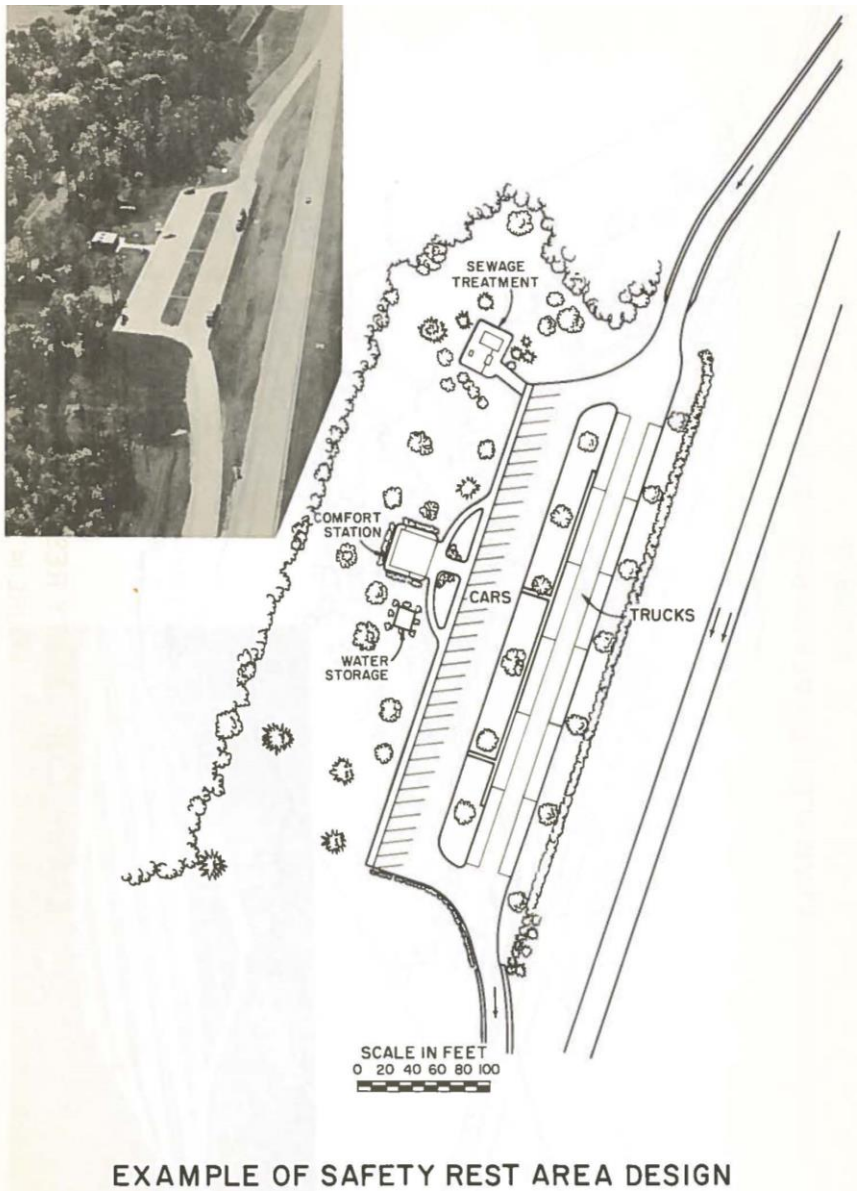


Figure 69: Suitable urban safety rest area siting. (Source: AASHTO, *A Guide On Safety Rest Areas For The National System of Interstate And Defense Highways*, 1968, Image 13.)

Safety rest areas in rural areas had a slightly different set of criteria. They were placed at crossroads with low traffic volumes, serving both the freeway and crossroad traffic. The diamond-type interchange was thought to be most suitable for the placement of a rural safety rest area, though some partial cloverleaf interchanges were also used.[195] The initial 1958 AASHO rest area guidance allowed for placement of rest areas within the interchange itself, located between the

[195] HHM, Inc., 40.

main freeway lanes and the exit ramp. The 1968 guidance modified such designs to place the rest area just outside of the interchange with primary access from the intersecting crossroad. Figure 70 shows this type of layout.

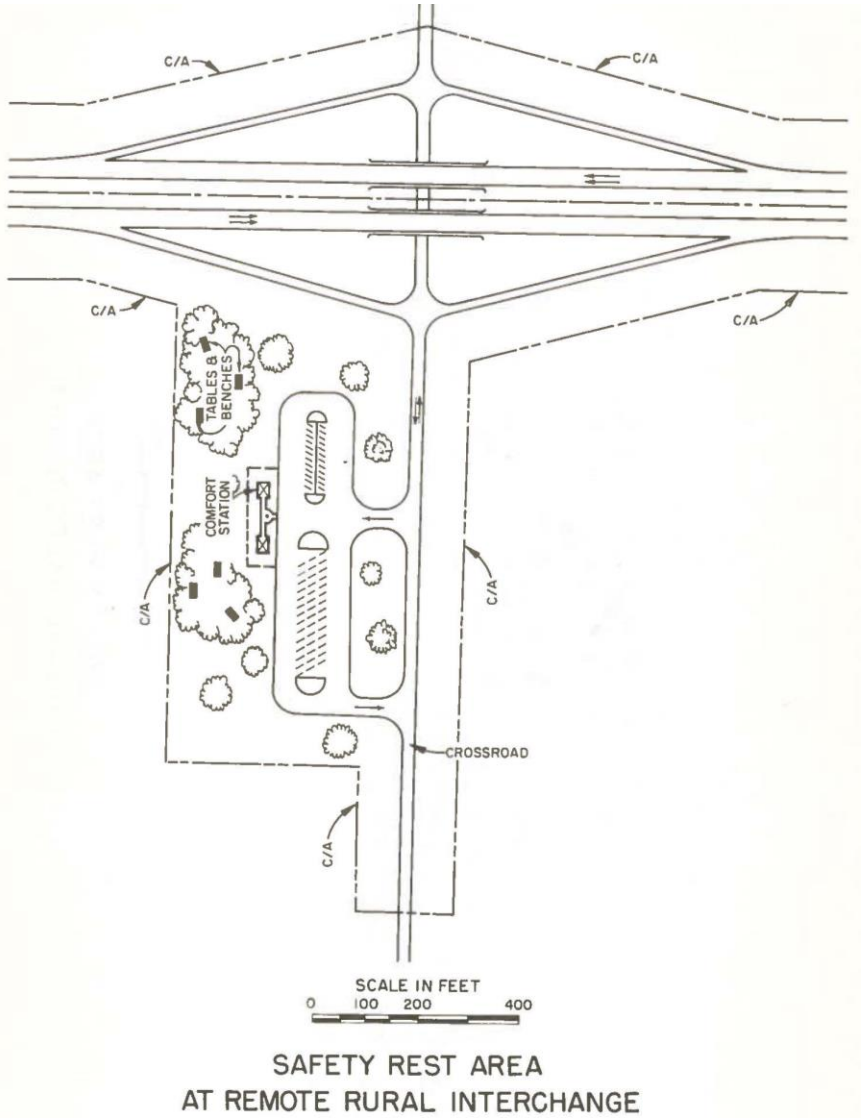


Figure 70: Suitable rural safety rest area siting. (Source: AASHTO, *A Guide On Safety Rest Areas For The National System of Interstate And Defense Highways*, 1968, Image 10.)

Following AASHO's guidance on both safety rest areas and landscape beautification and conservation, states continued to construct sites in both modern and regional architectural styles. Early in their developmental history, the construction of safety rest areas "design aesthetics moved in the tradition of roadside architecture that defined American highways in previous decades. Thus

safety rest areas emerged as unique and colorful expressions of regional flavor and modern architectural design."[196] Safety rest areas of the late 1960s were built to reflect regional styles including teepee shelters in Texas (see Figure 71) and colonial brick safety rest areas in the northeast. Noted rest area historian Joanna Dowling has remarked that:

> The use of regional characteristics in the design of safety rest area buildings and structures is one of the most prolific design concepts used during the mid-century period. This aesthetic was commonly used in picnic shelters but can also be identified in toilet building design. Regional design is characterized by the use of programmatic imagery that reflects culturally historic or landscape characteristics of a particular region.[197]

Figure 71: Hudspeth County "tee-pee" safety rest area on IH 10 east of Fort Hancock, built in the late 1960s. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Beginning in the 1960s, rather than park design trickling down to roadside facility design, safety rest area design instead began to impact architecture in state parks. A safety rest area in Kansas was designed as a modern picnic shelter with a quad-foil concrete structure, creating a broad concrete umbrella on a central support. This design was quickly adopted and used throughout the

[196] Joanna Dowling, "Safety on the Interstate: The Architecture of Rest Areas," *Society for Commercial Archeology Journal* (Spring 2008), 20.

[197] Dowling, *Rest Area History.org*.

Kansas and Missouri state park systems.[198] By the mid-1960s, states nationwide, including Arkansas, Arizona, California, Florida, Iowa, New Hampshire, and New Mexico, began designing safety rest areas using both mid-century modern and regional architectural designs.[199]

The new AASHO guidelines had several other recommendations. As previously stated, each safety rest area was designed with a separate parking area for cars and trucks. High traffic areas did not have safety rest areas placed in the median. The simplest design for safety rest areas included connecting roadways that led into and away from an elongated parking area that provided parallel parking spaces for trucks and 45-degree parking spaces for cars. A sidewalk was located along the parking area that led to a comfort station. More complex safety rest areas included the same parking scheme, but added arbors with picnic facilities, including trash facilities and barbeque pits, and information panels, lighting, and an incinerator and water storage tank.[200]

The evolving design of safety rest areas was couched in a broadening understanding of overall roadside development. According to the AASHO's 1961 publication *A Policy on Landscape Development for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways,* "Landscape development, to be effective, should begin with an analysis of the land use prevailing along the proposed route, looking toward the possibilities for conserving all desirable landscape features and land values."[201] That passage illustrated the emerging ideas on conservation and beautification along highways. To complement newly constructed safety rest areas, the beautification and conservation movement that had begun in the 1950s became a national focal point, largely due to President Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife, Lady Bird Johnson. President Johnson announced the America the Beautiful initiative in January 1965. The initiative was the cornerstone of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, the goal of which was to:

- Control outdoor advertising, including sign removal along the Interstate system and the Federal-Aid primary system.[202]
- Remove or screen junkyards along the interstate and Federal-Aid system.
- Encourage scenic enhancement and roadside development.[203]

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[198] Joanna Dowling, "Kansas Safety Rest Areas – The Progress of Rest," *Kansas Preservation Magazine* 30, no. 5, September/October 2008, 3.

[199] Dowling, Rest Area History.org.

[200] Dowling, Rest Area History.org.

[201]American Association of State Highway Officials, *A Policy on Landscape Development for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways*, 7.

[202] The Federal-aid primary system (FAP system) is defined as a system of connected main highways, selected by each state highway department encompassing routes of the Interstate Highway system and other important routes serving essentially through traffic with their urban extensions, including important loops, belt highways, and spurs.

[203] Federal Highway Administration, "How the Highway Beautification Act Became a Law," https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/beauty.cfm (accessed 16 August 2013).

Figure 72: Overflowing trash bin at roadside park. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

While roadside beautification was a mandated priority at the federal level early in Johnson's second term, the importance placed on it was initially met with resistance at the state level. It was only after a meeting of state highway administrators in February 1965 that states began to make it a priority as well. AASHO president M.L. Shadburn passionately convinced those in attendance that the entire future of the federal highway aid program would be affected if states failed to perform on this issue. To help states with funding for the beautification movement, the BPR began giving grants to states to preserve attractive scenery along highways.[204]

While beautification efforts in the 1950s centered solely on trash clean up, sign removal, and removal of junkyards along the newly created Interstate, focus in the 1960s expanded to cover conservation of natural landscape features. The shift from simply removing clutter and distracting trash to a more holistic, landscape design-oriented approach was evident in all areas of the beautification movement. Engineers began coordinating with landscape architects to reduce disturbances to trees, streams, and other natural features. Providing shade at safety rest areas through the retention of trees whenever possible was also encouraged.

2. Texas Trends

Texas was in the forefront of the national trend transitioning from roadside parks to safety rest areas, planning and constructing its first safety rest areas in the early 1960s. Figure 73 shows the proposed locations of safety rest areas along Texas Interstates, as initially envisioned in January 1960.

[204] Sam Acheson, "Beauty on Roads Termed a Must," *The Dallas Morning News*, 5 April 1965.

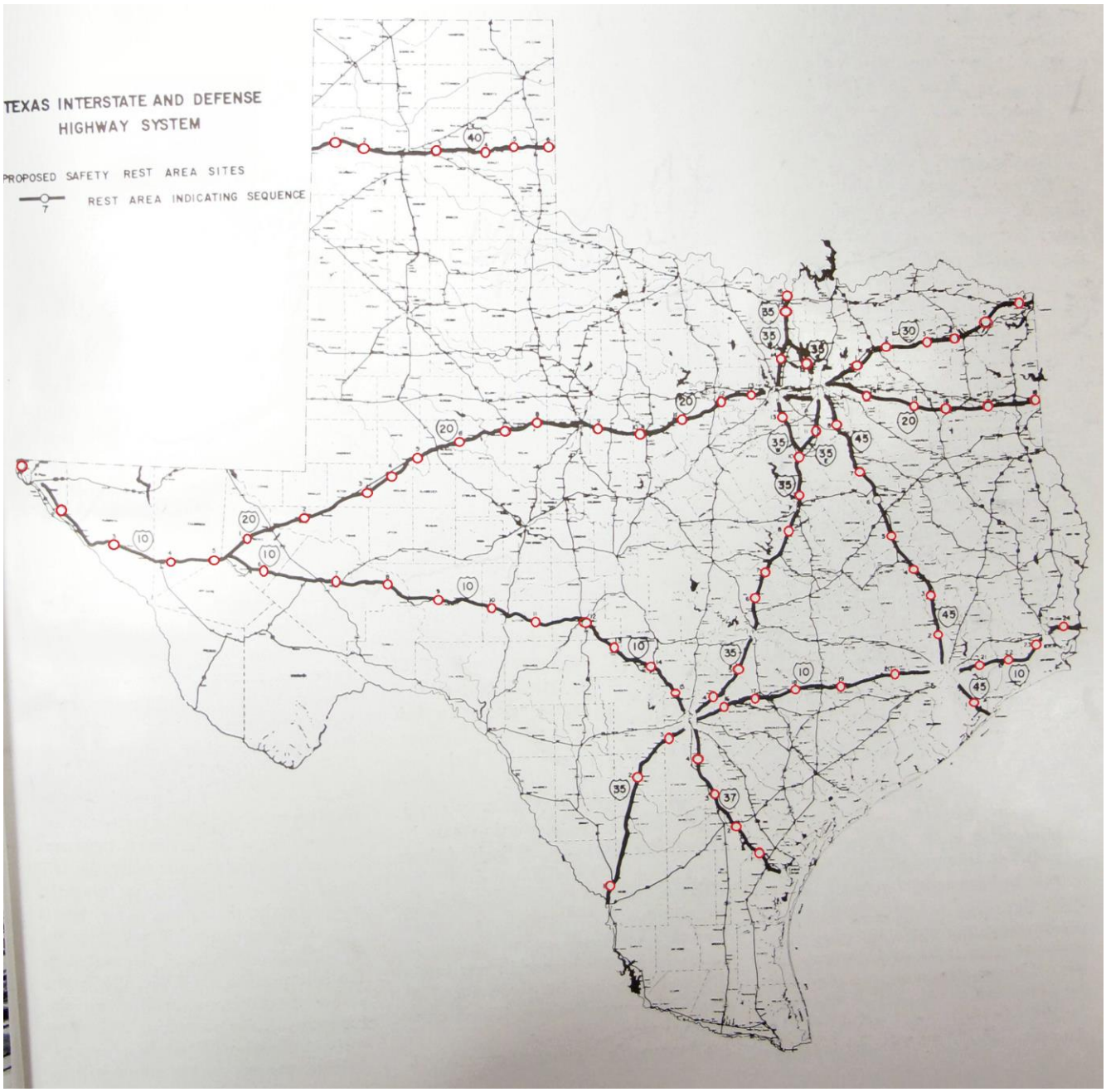

Figure 73: Proposed locations for safety rest areas (red circles) along Texas Interstates, January 1960.

(Source: *Texas Highways* 7, no.1, January 1960)

Figure 74: Example of modern safety rest area near Round Rock, Texas, c.1968.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

The Interstate rest areas received careful design, often displaying a more modern interpretation on the traditional arbor and picnic table scheme. The first Interstate-related safety rest areas in the state were completed in 1963 on either side of IH 10 in Guadalupe County, about 10 miles east of San Antonio. The IH 10 rest areas featured a distinctive "bat-wing" arbor, with an angled three-cornered steel-frame roof, supported by a brick pier on one end with tubular steel supports on the other.[205] The safety rest area, located south of Randolph Air Force Base was described as follows:

> The huge, new rest area is really two parks, one on each side of the road. Each one is 1,200 feet long and 107 feet wide with four "bat wing" arbors spaced to allow for future additional arbors. Each arbor contains a fireplace, fire wood, an incinerator, a concrete table and a planter box.[206]

A 1963 article compared the Guadalupe County "bat-wing" safety rest areas to a "rocket base," and they were coined by THD as the "Jet Park."

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[205] *Texas Highways* 10, no. 7 (July 1963), 7-9

[206] "New Interstate Rest Area Looks Like Rocket Base," *Wood County Democrat*, 70th Year, No. 23, 4.

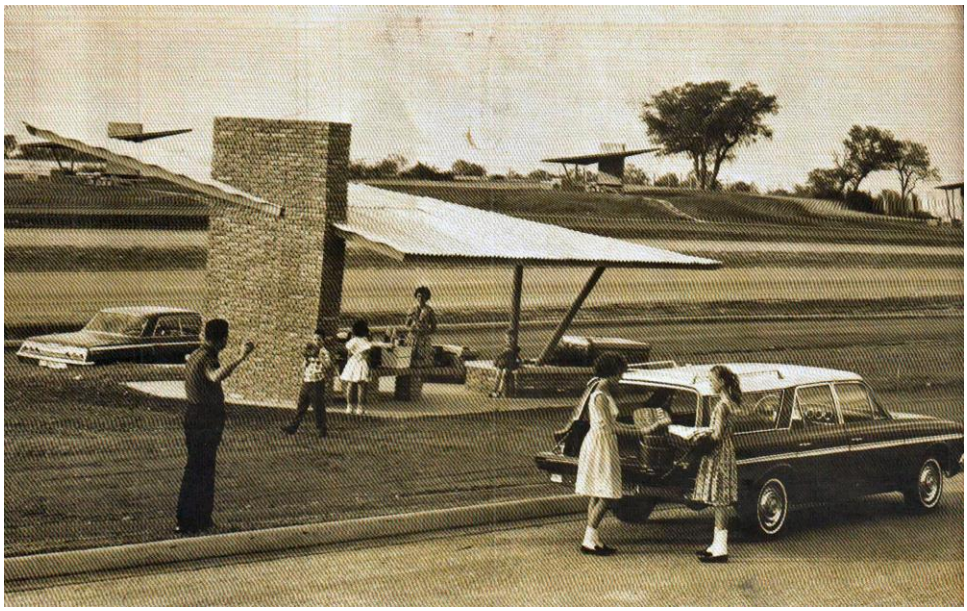

Figure 75: "Bat wing" arbor at a safety rest area on IH 10 east of San Antonio. This arbor design allowed for further expansion of the picnic area at the roadside park.
(Source: *Texas Highways* 14, September 1967.)

By 1965, the THD counted more than 1,100 roadside parks, turnouts, and safety rest areas, with the latter numbering no more than 85.[207] Safety rest areas in Texas continued to be constructed in the Mid-century Modern style, while also at times exhibiting regional architectural characteristics.

The THD focused on finding sites for rest areas that were "pleasant and inviting," and that presented pleasing views and large shade trees. If trees were scarce, shelters were built with corrugated roofing materials.[208] Texas followed national trends for the design of safety rest areas, albeit with a distinctly regional flair. Beginning in the late 1950s, and increasingly in the 1960s, roadside buildings around the nation were designed with a distinctive flair, often to illustrate the use of the building (such as the Zillah teapot gas station on IH 82 in Washington). THD designers quickly followed suit. In addition to the "Jet Park," THD opened a pair of rest areas near Tyler in 1968 on IH 20 built to resemble oil derricks. The steel-frame structures were easy to see from miles away, and were a nod to the state's oil history.[209] The THD utilized this design at one known non-Interstate location: on SH 64, 1.5 miles east of SH 42 and 5.3 miles northwest of Henderson city limits in Rusk County, built in 1973. The Rusk County park incorporated in its boundaries a local park dedicated to the area's oil history, so the use of the oil derrick design was apropos. Other examples of Texas safety rest areas that displayed regional characteristics were a wagon wheel-

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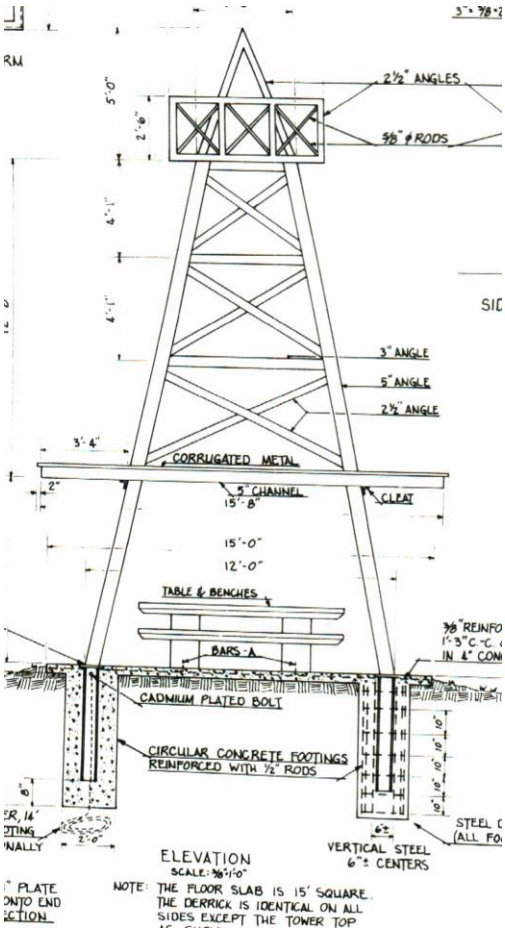
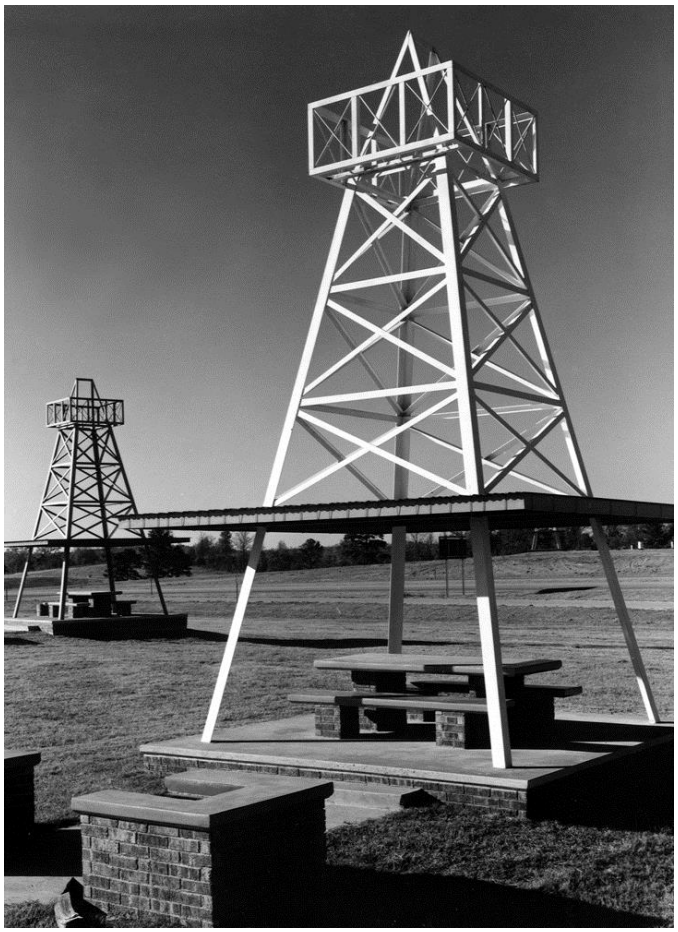
[207] *Texas Highways* 12, no. 8 (August 1965), 6-7.

[208] "Drivers Always Near Rest Area," *The Dallas Morning News*, 15 September 1963.

[209] *Texas Highways*, June 1968, 2.

themed rest area along IH 10 west of Sonora and rest areas with tee-pee arbors on IH 10 near Sierra Blanca and on FM 170 near Presidio. For the Sonora rest area, giant, 10-foot wheels, made of concrete and steel, were designed to support picnic arbors. These western themes were designed to make rest areas fit their surroundings.[210]





Figures 76 and 77: Template for oil derrick arbor (left) and oil derrick-styled rest area on IH 20 approximately 14 miles northeast of Tyler in Smith County.
(Sources: left image: Texas Environmental Affairs Division, Austin, Texas; right image: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

While the Interstate was the primary focus for roadside development and improvements in this period, roadside parks along other highway types were also being constructed. Some of these even used the flair-filled designs also used on the Interstates, such as the Oil Derrick design. Most, however, continued the trends of the modern, yet simple, metal arbors with brick picnic table/bench sets.

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[210] Inside Photo and Caption, *Texas Highways* 17, No. 8, August 1970.

Another development in park design was the inclusion of "comfort stations" at safety rest areas beginning in 1966. These buildings contained male and female restrooms inside and information centers, dubbed "Infobords," outside (see Figures 78 and 79). The four-color Infobords illustrated historical, scenic, and recreational attractions of nearby towns and cities. The Infobords were only located at rest areas that had complete facilities (such as picnic tables and pavilion, cooking grills, drinking water, rest rooms, and landscaped grounds).[211]

Figure 78: Infobord display at safety rest area, c.1970.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

[211] "Motivating the Tourist," *Texas Highways* 21, no. 8, August 1974, 24.

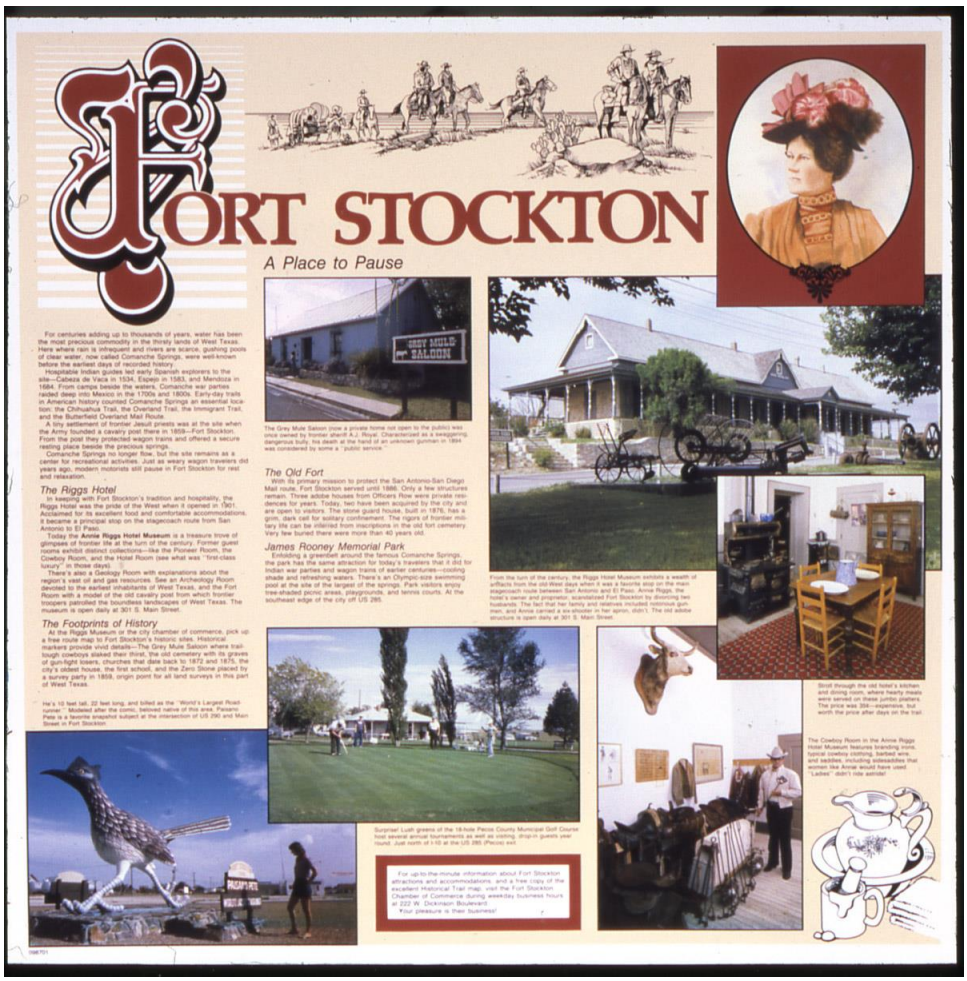

Figure 79: Fort Stockton Infobord display, c.1980.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

The first comfort station was constructed in 1966 along IH 35 north of Round Rock in Williamson County, and its design received national acclaim. The Maintenance Operations Buildings Section, responsible for the design, was commended by the U.S. Department of Public Roads in a "laudatory memorandum" which stated that the structure "shows good balance, scale, proportion, and selection of materials." The building was constructed using brick, concrete, masonry, and field stone, but the design could be adapted for metal panels or precast concrete panels. Possible roof materials included pre-cast concrete slabs and beams, corrugated metal, or plastic panels on metal frame. The roof was also designed to be partially open or skylighted. The award was accepted by Travis Brown, head of the Buildings Section, who stated:

> The ultimate design of the comfort stations now being used was no accident…In coming up with a design for the comfort stations the Buildings Section tried to avoid the feeling of being enclosed in a stuffy, dingy building. An enclosed structure was also avoided to discourage travelers from using it as a camp site or motel. The final design provided maximum privacy with a maximum open air effort.

The THD staff also designed a standard plan for comfort stations that could be used throughout the state. The stations had to include water and sewer facilities, and needed to be vandal-resistant. The stations were also designed to require minimal maintenance. Terrazzo floors were sloped away from toilet facilities for drainage, each stall partition was made of marble and walls were painted with epoxy. Each comfort station also had a heated water closet to keep water from freezing in cold weather.

Figure 80: Comfort station, built in 1968, in safety rest area in Johnson County, IH-35W Southbound, built in 1963 (no longer extant; removed in 2014). (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

In his explanation of the design philosophy, Brown stated "There is a difference between a public restroom and a comfort station."[212] The comfort stations were connected to the typical picnic units via landscaped walkways, creating a unified whole. Where rest areas and roadside parks had frequently been designed to ramble organically, comfort stations provided a visual focal point and

[212] Bill Bardon, "Comfort Stations Win Praise," *Texas Highways* 9, 1968, 19.

locus of activity from which picnic areas extended. Comfort stations were added to previously chosen safety rest area sites, but not installed at non-Interstate roadside parks until 1969.[213] The overwhelming success of comfort stations propelled the THD to commission 11 new ones on non-Interstate roads. As a result of a survey by the Planning Survey Division into how people used comfort stations, the THD, led by Maintenance Operations Division landscape architect Roy Rodman, made subtle changes to the new stations. According to Rodman, drinking fountains were overwhelming popular. The other survey result that impressed Rodman was the sheer number of travelers stopping at comfort stations: 4.4% of total traffic stopped in the parks, and the THD expected usage to increase.[214] The anticipated rise in number of visitors meant that THD maintenance staff and designers had to work even harder to ensure that safety rest areas were clean, well-maintained, and pleasant for visitors. With this information, the rising Texas beautification movement became even more important for safety rest areas and roadside parks.

3. Lady Bird Johnson and Texas Beautification

In addition to the development of safety rest areas and roadside parks along the state's emergent postwar highways and Interstates, the THD played an important role in the state's efforts to beautify highways.[215] Texas received $2,956,859 in federal funding in 1965 for constructing roadside parks, planting trees and shrubs, and carrying out other highway beautification projects.[216] By 1967 the THD was coined the "Biggest Gardener in Texas," and was maintaining 840,000 acres of grass, trees, and wildflowers along the state's highways.[217] Texas's wildflower planting program won a beautification certificate of merit from the U.S. Department of Transportation. According to Texas Highway Commission Chairman D.C. Greer:

> We feel that attention to preserving and promoting the growth of wild flowers is of particular merit at this time as a result of the current national program on the appearance of highways. You should use care in your mowing operations to permit the flower seed to mature.[218]

By the end of the 1960s, the THD's growing maintenance and beautification program required an annual operating budget of $104,000,000 and employed 275 maintenance foremen overseeing

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[213] Some Interstate rest areas still did not include comfort stations in their designs even into the 1970s. Two examples of this are the paired IH 37 parks northwest of Corpus Christi in San Patricio County, built in 1972.

[214] "Parks are for the People," *Texas Highways* 4, 1969.

[215] Beaumont, Penny, et. al., *Anywhere to Everywhere: The Development of the Interstate Highway System in Texas* (August 2006), 35.

[216] "Roadside Beauty Aid on the Way," *The Dallas Morning News*, 5 November 1965.

[217] "State Highway Department 'Biggest Gardner in Texas'," *The Victoria Advocate*, 30 November 1967, 178.

[218] D.C. Greer, Administrative Circular No. 22-65: Wild Flowers and The Appearance of Highways, Texas Highway Department, 17 March 1965, np.

9,000 workers.[219] This effort to beautify Texas roadsides trickled down to safety rest areas and roadside parks, which benefited from the increased focus on roadside features. It meant that roadside parks and safety rest areas were well maintained, with new plantings, maintenance of existing foliage, and trash facilities so they would remain attractive to visitors. An example of this emphasis on beautification is found in San Patricio County. This roadside park features an arbor and picnic area on a raised concrete platform surrounded by planter boxes of plantings.

Figure 81: Roadside park on SH 35, 3.5 miles north of Gregory in San Patricio County, built in 1955 and renovated in 1964, illustrating an emphasis on plantings and beautification. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

A comprehensive program aimed at keeping litter out of roadside parks was a result of the beautification movement. In the mid-1960s the THD conducted a survey of all districts to determine how many litter barrels were available in roadside parks and highway turnouts. With this information, the THD encouraged districts to place litter receptacles at parks, and by 1965, 16 districts had installed 334 litter barrels at strategic locations.[220] In addition to the addition of litter barrels, the THD also began to remove incinerators at some existing parks or not build them at all in new parks.

The emphasis on Texas highway beautification was solidified in the late 1960s by the Lady Bird Johnson Award for Beautification. In 1970 Johnson established an award geared toward THD district maintenance personnel honoring their contributions to Texas highways. The annual $1,500 award was first awarded to Joe Derrick, Sr., a retired Maintenance Construction Foreman from

[219] *Texas Highways*, September 1967, 131.

[220] Frank Lively, "Litter Barrels for Texas Highways," *Texas Highways*, 1965, 3.

District 2 (now Fort Worth District). Derrick worked extensively in roadside parks, spreading wildflowers, rebuilding Depression-era parks and constructing new parks and safety rest areas.[221]

Throughout the 1960s and into the early years of the 1970s, the Interstate program flourished, and along with it construction of safety rest areas. Texas continued to be a national leader in construction and maintenance of roadside parks, claiming roughly 15 percent of the nation's roadside parks, safety rest areas, and scenic turnouts in 1974.[222]

[221] HHM, Inc., 40.

[222] "Making Travel Easier," *The Victoria Advocate*, 2 May 1974.

H. Late-Twentieth-Century Trends, 1970s – 1990s

1. Role of Safety Rest Area's in Roadside Development

As roadway construction progressed into the 1970s, designers began taking a more holistic approach to highway design, incorporating the environmental effects of highway construction in their planning. According to the AASHO Operating Committee on Roadside Development's *A Guide for Highway Landscape and Environmental Design*:

> It is essential that the highway be considered as an element of a total environment, not apart from it or in conflict with it. All highway-oriented disciplines should collaborate at all stages of highway corridor selection, location, and design in order to obtain the maximum beneficial potential of the highway, its roadsides, and its environment.[223]

The introduction of all-encompassing roadside development coincided with a nationwide focus on tourism. Though it had slowly been gaining traction throughout the 1960s, the emphasis on tourism and its impact on roadside development was obvious by the mid-1970s, when the program had been in place for 15 years. Safety rest areas began to give way to travel information centers, which were staffed stopping points where travelers could receive information and maps when entering a state.

Beautification efforts also shifted to control of outdoor advertising. The Highway Beautification Act of 1965 continued to be used as a method to control outdoor advertising into the 1970s, with an emphasis on regulating roadside billboards and signage.

While efforts focused on beautification, the Interstate program was not completed in 1975 as originally intended, which meant that safety rest areas continued to be constructed. Design trends for safety rest areas continued to follow the 1968 AASHO guidelines. Safety rest areas were constructed primarily along Interstates and included comfort stations, picnic arbors, parking, barbeque facilities, and other amenities for the weary traveler to recharge. Regionally themed safety rest areas usually demonstrated local designs in picnic arbors (see Figures 82 and 83). In some cases comfort stations were designed to match the theme of the picnic arbors. Regional characteristics were reflected in local building materials.[224] The original portion of the Interstate program, as authorized by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, was completed in 1991, 35 years after its start date.

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[223] American Association of State Highway Officials, *A Guide for Highway Landscape and Environmental Design* (Washington, D.C.,: AASHO, 30 June 1970), ii.

[224] Dowling, *Safety Rest Areas.org*.

Figures 82 and 83: Examples of safety rest areas designed in the regional theme, c.2000. (Source: left image: New Mexico DOT; right image: Virginia DOT).

2. Regional and State Trends

Texas outpaced most other states in road construction and traveler amenities in the 1970s, including safety rest areas and tourist bureaus. In the early years of the decade, several miles of new Interstate, divided highways, and the accompanying rest areas and comfort stations were constructed. For example, a 1973 Official Highway Travel Map of Texas showed 125 miles of new Interstate, State, and U.S. divided highways, 26 new safety rest areas, and six new comfort stations within safety rest areas completed that year. By the mid-1970s Texas had 3,208 miles of completed Interstate Highways and 5,950 miles of U.S. and State divided highways.[225]

Continuing on earlier trends from the late 1950s and 1960s, tourism grew increasingly important to the Texas economy, and THD was instrumental in promoting the state to visitors. By 1975 Texas had the third largest tourism industry in the nation. The number of out-of-state visitors grew at a steady pace, showing a 43 percent increase between 1965 and 1975."[226] By 1975 tourism ranked as an income generator ahead of farm products or livestock sales.[227]

The tourist bureaus that were originally designed in 1936 had long outgrown their original size. Beginning in the 1960s new facilities were constructed or large-scale renovations took place. The focus on tourism and beautification, while complimentary programs to roadside park construction, was nonetheless a change in thinking. A new tourist bureau opened in Amarillo in 1968 featuring a pedestrian ramp over IH-40 and a speaker system so motorists could communicate with counselors

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[225] "1973 Travel Map – More Rest Areas, Comfort Stations," *Texas Highways* 20, no. 2, February 1973, 22.

[226] Tommie Pinkard, "Fun in the Friendship State," *Texas Highways* 25, no. 2, February 1978, 25.

[227] Pinkard, 18.

without crossing the road. This bureau also featured individual counters inside so that visitors could meet with travel counselors, which became standard practice at all THD tourist bureaus. Another bureau opened in Texarkana in April 1968 featuring a comfort station and a park. In November 1968 the Judge Roy Bean Visitor Center, a combination museum and tourist information bureau, opened.[228] The tourist bureau at Orange, which was one of the original 13 locations of the Depression-era "information stations," was the state's busiest, serving 187,000 of the 1,366,000 visitors stopping at Highway Department tourist bureaus in 1971. The Orange facilities, which had been rebuilt in 1960, were upgraded in 1972. Updates included the addition of new wings to the sides of the building and a 10-foot expansion across the back (doubling the floor space) of the building. The original log cabin built in 1936 was still in use, and served as office space.[229] The new tourist bureaus of the 1960s and 1970s can be considered the precursor to today's tourist information centers.

Changes in safety rest designs also reflected the THD's emphasis on tourist information. A practice instituted in the 1960s to encourage tourism, the installation of Infobords continued to gain in popularity. By 1974 they were located at 48 safety rest areas or roadside parks along Texas highways. That year, there were a total of 105 panels representing nearly 50 cities, towns, Indian reservations, and associations.[230]

The focus on landscaping and highway beautification (and away from roadside park construction) remained into the mid-1980s, when, on April 18, 1985, the State Highway and Public Transportation Commission passed an order authorizing the Landscape Development Matching Program and providing funding necessary to support landscape development and plant establishment activities throughout Texas.[231] This was a continuation of previous beautification efforts in the state.

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the emphasis of roadside development continued to be on attracting tourists and making roads user friendly for visitors. Smaller 1930s-era roadside parks were maintained, but some fell into disrepair or were given to local municipalities and cities, especially where the cities' boundaries had grown to such an extent to now take in the roadside park.[232] Funding shifted almost completely to the construction of large-scale tourist bureaus, safety rest areas, and in the later years of the 1990s, on Travel Information Centers. New construction

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[228] Pinkard, n.p.

[229] Herman Kelly, "Bring on the Tourists," *Texas Highways* 19, no. 7, July 1972, 2. The 1972 upgraded tourist bureau has since been demolished.

[230] "Motivating the Tourist," *Texas Highways* 21, No. 8, August 1974, 24.

[231] M.G. Goode, "The Landscape Development Matching Program," Administrative Circular No. 80-85 (State Department of Highways and Public Transportation), 12 November 1985.

[232] Andy Keith, Interview with Megan Ruiz, Mead & Hunt, Inc., 30 August 2013.

included a "state-of-the-art" safety rest area on US 59 in Victoria County. Completed in 1990, the rest area was described as a "picturesque state park on U.S. Highway 59 south of Inez" that included oak trees surrounding brick facilities situated on both sides of the highway. The park had two men's and two women's restrooms, a large arbor with tables, and numerous smaller arbors on both sides of the roadway.[233] The park cost $2,072,800, and the site was selected based on traffic figures. Another recently constructed facility, the Brooks County Rest Area, won an award in 1998 from the Texas Society of Architects Design Awards. The facility was designed by Richter Associates Architects of Corpus Christi. David Dillon, in describing the facility in *The Dallas Morning News* stated:

> Instead of just another pullout with toilets and trash cans, the architects made a genuine place by tucking four simple brick-and-stone buildings among spreading oak trees, then connecting them with gravel paths and a bird-watching trail. At the center sits a rectangular courtyard that adds a civic dimension to an otherwise utilitarian commission…Public design of this quality used to be commonplace; now it's so rare that it wins prizes. 'A quality project that would stand up with any piece of architecture in any awards program,' said the jury.[234]

This park began the trend towards larger parks with more visitor amenities, a trend that continues to the present. As the Interstate program came to completion in 1991 and TxDOT (the successor agency to the THD) moved towards the twenty-first century, focus returned to the safety rest area program.

In contrast to new construction, the 1970s through the 1990s continued the trend of upgrading parks for safety purposes. These safety upgrades consisted of the closure or removal of fireplaces and incinerators, and their replacement with barbeque grills and litter barrels. Incinerators were either removed from the picnic areas or had their openings welded shut. The introduction of litter barrels, as noted previously, began in the 1960s. While this lessened the risk of fire, it also introduced a large maintenance requirement at roadside parks.

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[233] "Top-of-Line Park Nears Completion," *The Victoria Advocate*, 11 January 1990, 144th Year-No. 248.

[234] David Dillon, "Awards Laud Selective Few – Subtlety of Projects Wins Praise of Texas Society of Architects," *The Dallas Morning News*, 3 October 1998.

Figures 84 and 85: Picnic area in Karnes County on US 181, 2 miles north of BU 181-D, showing removal of fireplace (left) and incinerator welded shut (right).

A second round of safety upgrades occurred in the mid-1990s due to the enforcement of the ADA requirements for access. In order to provide access to picnic areas within roadside parks, several changes could have been required. Minimally, wheelchair access to the picnic area was needed, which could include curb cuts and ramp construction to reach picnic areas. The picnic areas also needed to accommodate wheelchairs, and this was achieved by either the extension of the picnic table or removal of one bench. For roadside parks where these changes could not be achieved easily, a new, access-friendly picnic area could be constructed. The guidance for these new picnic areas was that they were to be located in parts of the park that least impacted the original design and layout.

Figure 86: Roadside park in Cottle County on US 70, 6.8 miles northeast of Paducah, illustrating new ramp for ADA access. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

Figure 87: Roadside park in Motley County on US 62, 1.0 mile east of the Floyd County line, illustrating the use of table extension for ADA access. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

Figure 88: Roadside park in Newton County on SH 63, 7 miles east of Burkeville, illustrating the removal of benches for ADA access. (Source: Mead & Hunt, Inc.)

Some districts experimented with materials in order to minimize maintenance during this period. One plan included replacing the district's aging concrete and brick tables and benches with metal catwalk or grid material. This design was originally introduced in the San Angelo District and discussed in the internal TxDOT publication *Transportation News*.[235] It became an accepted design and has been used in other TxDOT districts. This work was all necessary in order to bring the roadside parks into the twenty-first century and enable them to continue to be used.

[235] Gene Hirschfelt, "Grid Construction Eases Table Maintenance," *Transportation News*, Feb 1990, 3.

I. Recent developments, 2000s – present

1. National Trends

At the start of the twenty-first century, states increasingly confronted financial shortfalls. As a result, state departments of transportation were faced with closures of the nearly 2,500 rest areas along the Interstate. In Virginia, nearly half of highway rest areas were barricaded shut and the electricity was shut off. Between 2000 and 2009 Louisiana closed 24 of its 34 rest areas.[236]

In addition to park closures, states looked at how to maximize the utility of rest areas. The idea of travel centers that showcased regional influences took hold in several states. Iowa replaced a rest area with a new one designed to look like a large red barn with a gift shop that sold Norwegian CDs and corn fiber socks, a reflection of the areas Norwegian heritage. [237] Alabama designed a welcome center to look and feel like a plantation house, complete with wrap-around deck and rocking chairs.[238] The new welcome centers and travel centers often were placed at entry points to states along the Interstate or well-traveled State Highways. Safety rest areas no longer needed to be placed at 25- to 35-mile intervals because of urban sprawl and development, and higher traffic speeds, but each new rest area was still designed with the intention to have weary travelers stop, explore, and rest.

2. Texas Trends

Like the rest of the nation, Texas was exploring ways to address budget shortfalls while still keeping roads safe for travelers. Texas, more than many states, had long segments of roads that stretched across open country. According to Andy Keith, the TxDOT Director of Maintenance Contracts, "[Texas has] a lot of long, isolated roadways…where there's really nothing else available…our department believes pretty strongly that these rest areas are needed for safety."[239] Keith conceptualized the transition from safety rest areas to large-scale travel centers (though TxDOT still uses the terms interchangeably) in the late 1990s in response to complaints from the public regarding rest areas that were built in the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly about their cleanliness, lack of air conditioning, stainless-steel sanitary facilities, and graffiti. Keith put together a proposal to use federal funding, including transportation enhancement funding, to

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[236] Mike Esterl, "R.I.P.: Budget Woes Spell Doom for Roadside Rest Stops," *The Wall Street Journal,* 3 July 2009, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124656938899088487.html (accessed 5 September 2013).

[237] Esterl.

[238] Jill Pixley, "Rest Areas: On the Endangered List?" *The Examiner,* 8 September 2009, www.examiner.com/article/rest-areas-on-the-endangered-list (accessed 5 September 2013).

[239] Scott Farwell, "Unlike Other States, Texas Isn't Hitting Brakes on Roadside Rest Stops," *Tribune Business News*, 25 July 2009, http://search.proquest.com/docview/457904802?accountid=14199 (accessed 6 June 2013).

develop a program using context-sensitive solutions in the construction of new travel centers. The primary design concepts that were applied to travel centers and included in the work program were:

- To be placed no more than one hour apart.[240]
- Located along major long distance travel corridors.[241]
- Using consistency throughout all centers, including the TxDOT seal and the same basic amenities, while also making them unique though interpretive exhibits and regional influences.[242]

Figure 89: Travel Center sign showing TxDOT Seal, 2003.
(Source: TxDOT Photo Library.)

The design process included public participation from local communities. Many safety rest areas that were located near towns were closed, and there are now approximately 80 travel centers (some newly constructed and some existing safety rest areas from the 1960s and early 1970s) and 12 tourism bureaus throughout the state. The travel centers are staffed with personnel, have video

[240] If a city or town was located within one hour from a travel center, that counts as a stopping point without a need for another travel center.

[241] Major long-distance corridors have a daily traffic average (ADT) of 5,000 vehicles per day.

[242] Andy Keith, Interview with Megan Ruiz, Mead & Hunt, Inc., 30 August 2013.

surveillance, and include large playgrounds, walking trails, interactive interpretive exhibits, and wireless internet access.[243]

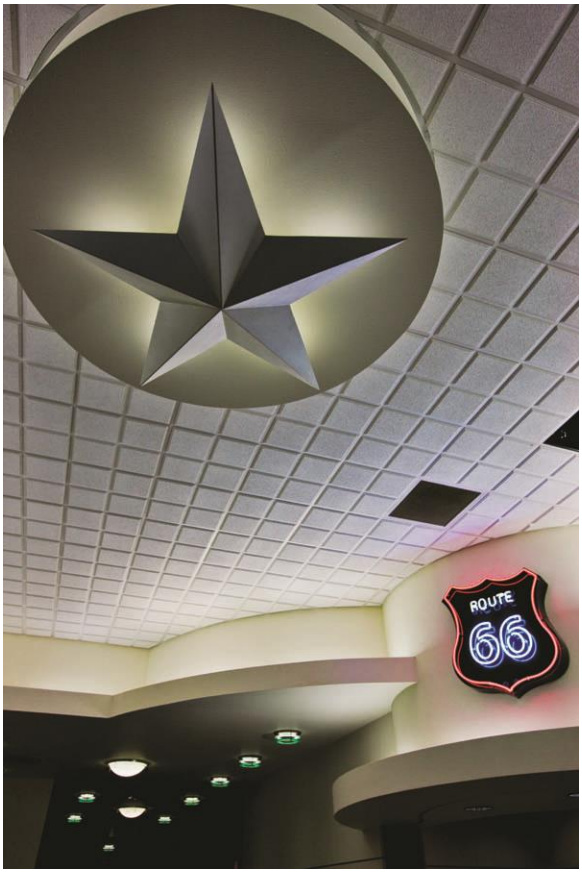

Figure 90: Interior of Travel Center with interpretive exhibits and wireless internet, 2003. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library.)

Each travel center tries to bring local culture to the roadway, and it is designed to reflect local history. An example is the travel center built in 2003 on US 287 northwest of Childress in Donley County. The nearby town of Hedley was historically a railroad hamlet, and the travel center was designed to look like a railroad station, complete with cattle cars. Another travel center on IH 40 east of Amarillo in Donley County is a "playful representation of the Art Deco architecture

[243] KFDA News 10, "Texas Adding New Rest Stops," www.newschannel10.com/Global/story.asp?S=10806967 (accessed 25 June 2013).

associated with Route 66."[244] The travel center in Gillespie County on US 290 is designed to be reflective of early German-styled buildings popular in nearby Fredericksburg.

Figure 91: US 287 Travel Center near Headley, 2003. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library.)

[244] Texas Department of Transportation, "Safety Rest Area General Information," http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/maintenance/rest-areas.html?CFC__target=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dot.state.tx.us%2Fapps-cg%2Fsafety_rest_areas%2Fmap.htm (accessed 5 September 2013).

Figure 92: IH 40 Travel Center near Amarillo, 2003. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library.)

TxDOT's current practice for roadside parks and older safety rest areas is to manage them at the district level. Many have been closed in the last 15 years, and there are now 648 roadside parks. The decision to close roadside parks and older safety rest areas is made at the district level in consultation with TxDOT headquarters. When a roadside park is closed, TxDOT offers the local community the opportunity to take over jurisdiction of the park.

As in the past, TxDOT's current program for the construction of travel centers is a national leader and an example for other states to follow. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, many states were faced with budget cuts and were forced to shut down roadside parks. At the same time, Texas was instead investing millions into the construction of new rest areas and renovations of older ones.[245] In 2000s TxDOT constructed a number of new safety rest areas in the name of increased safety, as well as proving amenities such as free WiFi connectivity.[246] TxDOT honors its past through continued maintenance of its historic roadside parks, while at the same time looks forward to accommodating the needs of today's travelers.

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[245] "Texas Adding New Rest Stops," News Channel 10, www.newschannel10.com/Global/story.asp?S=10806967 (accessed 25 June 2013).

[246] Camille Wheeler, "Highway Havens," *Texas Co-Op Power,* July 2007, http://www.texascooppower.com/texas-stories/life-arts/highway-havens (accessed 7 April 2015).

An example of the new travel centers is located in Kenedy County. This roadside park was reconstructed in 2001 on the original site of a roadside park. It utilizes a median location, which means only one facility needs construction for both directions of the traveling public. Its primary focus is its large, air-conditioned comfort station, which incorporates offices, travel information, and vending machines along with the expected toilet facilities. It also features covered and uncovered picnic areas, as well as playground areas for children. This safety rest area was designed by Richter Architects, and won the Texas Society of Architects Honor Award in 2002.[247]

The design seeks to enhance the travelers' experience by artfully highlighting the heritage and culture of South Texas. The buildings' vaulted bent pipe trusses support planked wood roof decks, recalling ranch gates made from salvaged oilfield pipes, and the spreading branches of the oak mot and the undulating grapevines that draped the site. The design also incorporates brands of the area's ranches that provide land for the construction of the highway.[248]

Since the rise of the automobile in American history, Texas has been at the forefront of roadside development and traveler amenities. While not the first to implement the idea of roadside parks, Texas was the first to utilize them in a widespread manner, due to its large area and number of highway miles. Motivated by the 1936 Texas Centennial, Texas recognized the value of tourism, and consistently incorporated national ideas for beautification of its roadsides. From the beginning, roadside parks and their successive safety rest areas and travel centers utilized architectural themes that reflected their surroundings, be it through rustic, naturalistic design or an interpretation of the local architectural history.

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[247] "Awards," *Richter Architects,* N.d., http://www.richterarchitects.com/awards.asp (accessed 7 April 2015).

[248] "Kenedy County Safety Rest Area," *Richter Architects,* N.d., http://www.richterarchitects.com/projdetails.asp?id=42 (accessed 7 April 2015).

Part II National Register Requirements

A. Introduction

Since the early 1930s Texas has proudly featured its roadside parks as a focal point of its road system, serving both day-to-day highway travelers and tourists visiting the Lone Star State. The design, materials, and overarching philosophy behind the construction of these resources were closely linked to prevailing state and national trends in park and highway design. Roadside parks meld highway engineering with park-oriented design and landscape architecture.

The purpose of this document is to present the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation criteria that apply to the roadside parks in Texas. Roadside parks, which are fully defined in Section 2 below, are evaluated as sites under the NRHP criteria for evaluation.

There are three primary steps in the process to evaluate a roadside park for NRHP eligibility. Each step is summarized below and discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections of this report.

- Step 1: Determine significance
- Step 2: Assess historic integrity
- Step 3: Establish NRHP eligibility

The evaluation process is based on the NRHP evaluation criteria to recognize associations and features that may make a roadside park significant. Significant associations and features are identified based on *A Historic Context for Texas Roadside Parks and Rest Areas* (Mead & Hunt, Inc., 2014). Understanding and defining the property type is an important component of the first step to determining NRHP significance. Section 2 below provides an overview of the property types. Section 3 presents an overview of the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation, discusses the application of NRHP *Criteria A* and *C* to roadside parks, and then provides guidelines for determining the period of significance. In Section 4, guidance for assessing historic integrity is presented. The method for determining contributing and non-contributing features is presented in the last section.

It should be noted that, in accordance with Section 6007 of Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), roadside parks that are currently on the Interstate Highway (IH) system are exempted from the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process. However, the evaluation process presented in this document can be applied: 1) to roadside parks on non-IH system, limited access highways, and other types of roadways; 2) to roadside parks on former Interstate Highways that have reverted to non-IH designation; or 3) in cases of evaluation of IH system roadside parks outside of the Section 106 process to understand relative significance.

B. Overview of the Property Types

Texas retains a considerable number of historic-age roadside parks: nearly 600 as of early 2013.[249] These resources provide a highly visible and tangible reminder of the state's transportation past, and continue to serve a vital function for driver safety and comfort. Perhaps indicative of the wide range in construction periods, intended functions, and geographic placement of the resources, various sources have used several different terms when describing them. The term "roadside park" is generally used throughout this document to avoid confusion. While the term is used generically in this document, it also has a specific definition under the historic themes identified in the context, as further discussed below. When evaluating a roadside park for potential NRHP significance, the following definitions of the types of roadside parks, roadside park features, and roadside park layouts should be used to determine the appropriate NRHP evaluation criteria and historic context themes for evaluation, and to identify essential physical features. Essential physical features are the aspects of each type of roadside park that serve as tangible representation to convey potential historic significance.

1. Definitions of roadside park types

Roadside park – A roadside area designated as a stopping place for motorists' use, generally constructed between the early 1930s and mid-1970s. These can be found on U.S. Highways, State Highways, and Farm-to-Market roads. Roadside parks range anywhere from one to four acres in size, and were located on additional right-of-way beyond typical roadway right-of-way. They are typified by a distinct drive or entryway into the facility from the roadway. A requirement to meet the definition of a roadside park is the inclusion of picnic facilities.

Turnout – An indistinct small area for motorists' use as a stopping place. Turnouts were generally established in the 1930s and the 1940s. These are small areas, usually less than 0.5 acres, that are directly adjacent to the highway, usually located within the right of way, and do not have picnic facilities.[250]

Scenic overlook – A general term for a roadside park or turnout constructed in response to exceptional natural scenery or views visible from the overlook. In these cases, the purpose of the park is to take advantage of the landscape, while also providing the typical features and amenities of the roadside park or turnout. This is different than a roadside park designed to incorporate and blend with the park-specific landscape, a common characteristic of a roadside park through the 1950s.

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[249] Number of roadside parks and rest areas extrapolated from database information, provided to Mead & Hunt, Inc. from TxDOT Environmental Affairs Division and TxDOT Maintenance Division, April 2013.

[250] Although turnouts are discussed in the 2014 *A Historic Context for Texas Roadside Parks and Rest Areas* for comparative purposes, they are not classified as roadside parks. It is not expected that turnouts would have a cohesive collection of physical features to convey historic significance under the registration requirements presented in this document.

Safety rest area or rest area – These terms are commonly used interchangeably for areas designated as a stopping place for motorists' use that were generally built along Interstate Highways or other limited-access freeways from the late 1950s to the present. They are typically two to four acres in size, with entry and exit via ramps to freeway lanes as well as separate car and truck parking. Like the roadside park, picnic areas are also a requirement of the safety rest area. For late-1960s and early-1970s rest areas located on the Interstate, the comfort station is a central focus, but this is not true for all rest areas in Texas. TxDOT now uses the term travel center for safety rest areas constructed from late 1990s to the present with much larger size and a wide range of amenities such as: architecturally unique building housing restrooms, travel information kiosk, and vending area; exercise areas or paths; playground equipment; picnic facilities; designated dog-walking area; and separated parking areas for cars and trucks. TxDOT uses the terms "travel center" and "safety rest area" interchangeably for these facilities.

Travel information center – A building constructed at key entry points to the state, specifically for travelers to receive maps, brochures, and other visitor information. Travel information centers are staffed during daytime hours by TxDOT employees. Picnic tables and park-like areas are present at some travel information centers. Travel information centers were preceded in the 1930s by small "information stations" constructed by the Texas Highway Department (THD). A new generation of centers was constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and was known as "tourist bureaus" until receiving their current name of travel information centers.[251]

2. Types of roadside park features

Roadside parks are comprised of one or more features. The following provides a summary of the features and sub-features that may be found at a roadside park.

Picnic area

The primary feature of a roadside park is its picnic area(s). For evaluation purposes, a roadside park must have at least one picnic area. A roadside park is defined by the presence of picnic facilities, which distinguishes it from the turnout. The rest area and the scenic overlook are specific subtypes of roadside parks.

A picnic area must include a least one table/bench set. These are usually set on a concrete pad. A picnic area may also possess other sub-features, such as an arbor, fireplace, barbecue grill, or trash barrels. These sub-features, described and illustrated below, usually indicate a specific period or method of construction.

[251] Travel information centers are not evaluated as roadside parks under this evaluation system. They are defined here due to shared contextual history with roadside parks and the possible presence of picnic facilities adjacent to the travel information center.

Figure 1: Picnic area without arbor, on US 79 4.2 miles east of Milano, Milam County, Bryan District

Figure 2: Picnic area with arbor, on SH 19, 5 miles north of Athens, Henderson County, Tyler District.

Table/bench set

For evaluation purposes, roadside park picnic areas, by definition, are required to have at least one table/bench set. Typical construction materials are brick, concrete, stone, or metal. Historically, the choice of construction material was made at a regional level and utilized local materials. In almost all cases the bench and table tops are made of concrete, while the table and bench supports are usually brick, stone masonry, concrete, or concrete block. A table/bench set usually consists of a rectangular table and two benches. Larger sets were also designed with a round or square table and four benches or a hexagonal table and six benches.

Typically, the supports of table/bench sets built in the Depression-era (before 1945) were constructed of stone masonry. The other materials used during this period were concrete and wood. Depression-era table/bench sets and other sub-features created of wood were often replaced and are likely no longer extant. Table/bench sets built after World War II predominantly feature brick supports, though stone masonry and concrete block were also used.

In order to accommodate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, this sub-feature may have been altered. ADA-related alterations are usually limited to one table/bench set in a roadside park. Common ADA alterations to table/bench sets are the removal of one bench or the extension of the table, often with metal or concrete. Another common ADA alteration is the addition of a concrete ramp to provide access between the parking area and the table/bench set that meets ADA requirements.

Figure 3: Depression-era stone masonry table/bench set, on SH 37 north of Mineola, Wood County, Tyler District. Concrete pad likely added in a later park rehabilitation project.

Figure 4: Postwar stone masonry table/bench set on FM 1007, Jasper County, Beaumont District.

Figure 5: Postwar brick and concrete table/bench set illustrating ADA table extension, on US 77, Milam County, Bryan District.

Arbor

For those roadside parks that lack natural shade, picnic areas often include arbors. In terms of Texas roadside park construction, an arbor is defined as an open-air shelter shielding a table/bench set from direct sunlight and precipitation. An arbor consists of a roof, frame, and supports. Depression-era roadside parks occasionally featured arbors, usually limited to simple wooden frames with thatch, wood, or corrugated metal roofs. Depression-era parks in wooded areas rarely included arbors. In contrast, post-World War II picnic areas often included arbors, with supports usually set into the picnic area's concrete pad. Arbor design evolved through the postwar period, often representing a roadside park's most visually distinctive feature. THD landscape architects developed many different arbor designs and their use for roadside parks became standardized, with variations based on their region and materials. Simple "four-poster" designs similar to those of the 1930s and early 1940s were replaced by geometric Modern angled-roof designs in the late 1950s and 1960s, giving way to regionally influenced designs in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Like the table/bench sets, arbors are often constructed of multiple materials. Roof materials are usually metal (corrugated or standing seam) or corrugated asbestos. A common alteration in recent decades has been the replacement of corrugated asbestos with metal roofing. Wood or plywood roofs are less common roofing materials. Arbor supports are usually steel pipe, arranged vertically or sloped at an angle. Supports may terminate directly into the concrete pad or may rest in a support base, usually concrete with a brick or stone masonry veneer topped with a concrete cap.

Figure 6: Picnic area with a Type 66 arbor, on IH 37, San Patricio County, Corpus Christi District.

Figure 7: Postwar handmade "Mexican" brick Type 59 arbor with windows; bench removal illustrates ADA modification. On US 281, Hidalgo County, Pharr District.

Figure 8: Postwar Type 6 arbor with attached walls, incinerator, and fireplace in handmade "Mexican" brick. On US 59 south of George West, Live Oak County, Corpus Christi District.

Figure 9: Regionally influenced oil derrick arbor design of the late 1960s and early 1970s, on SH 64, Rusk County, Tyler District.

Fireplace

One sub-feature of the picnic area is the fireplace, also known as the barbecue pit. Historic-age fireplaces were most often constructed of brick or stone with a concrete cap. They are square in shape and include an interior metal grate. They are usually approximately 2 feet in height and 4 feet in width. These are a typical feature constructed in parks from the 1930s through the 1960s. A fireplace may also be found as an individual feature outside the picnic areas. Many historic-age fireplaces have been removed and replaced with a metal barbecue grill, or removed and not replaced.

Figure 10: Fireplace constructed of brick with concrete cap, US 59 south of George West, Live Oak County, Corpus Christi District

Barbecue grill

In addition to the fireplace/barbecue pit, many roadside parks have an added metal barbecue grill (also known in THD plans as a parkstove or cooker). The grill is usually set atop a metal pole or as part of a utensil or skillet rest. If the grill was directly attached to the utensil rest, THD plans tended to called it a cooker. Some of these barbecue grills may also be found separate from any picnic area within the roadside park. Some of the grills are no longer extant, though the pole and/or grill table may be extant. These metal barbecue grills were a 1950s evolution for roadside parks and installed after that date, including in new park construction. For roadside parks constructed from the 1950s and later, barbecue grills may represent an original park feature. However, in many cases they represent a replacement for historic-age fireplaces.

Figure 11: Barbecue grill in roadside park on SH 332, Brazoria County, Houston District.

Utensil or skillet rest

The utensil rest or skillet rest is a less common picnic area sub-feature and provides a place to set pans and utensils while using the barbecue grill. The utensil or skillet rests are generally about 2 feet in height and constructed of concrete, often with brick or stone veneer, with a concrete cap. As noted under the barbecue grill section, these utensil rests could also include a barbecue grill. Utensil rests are most commonly associated with postwar roadside parks; however, they may also be found at Depression-era parks. The most common changes to this sub-feature are the removal of the barbecue grill or complete removal of the utensil rest from the picnic area.

Figure 12: Utensil rest in park with remnant of barbecue grill support visible, on US 83, Zapata County, Pharr District.

Figure 13: Concrete utensil rest (right) adjacent to former barbecue grill base, on US 82 west of Guthrie, King County, Childress District.

Incinerator

Another sub-feature of the picnic area is the incinerator. Incinerators were included in roadside park designs from the 1930s into the 1960s as the primary trash disposal method. Similar to the fireplace or barbecue pit, the incinerator is often square in shape and made of brick or stone with a

concrete cap. It has two metal doors, one on top of the metal cap for inserting trash and one near the bottom on one side for ash removal. A second design consisted of a round incinerator, often constructed of concrete block or brick, with two metal doors in the same location as the square design. Incinerators were gradually removed from use from the 1960s onward and replaced with trash barrels. Because of the conversion to the use of trash barrels, most extant incinerators have had their doors welded closed. Incinerators have also been removed from many parks.

Figure 14: Incinerator in roadside park on US 281, Hidalgo County, Pharr District.

Figure 15: Round incinerator in roadside park on SH 146, Liberty County, Beaumont District.

Trash barrel

In the late 1960s and 1970s the THD instituted a major program to add trash barrels to roadside parks. In many cases trash barrels replaced the incinerators previously used for trash disposal. Originally made of metal, these barrels were usually bolted into the concrete pad using two metal supports and were often placed at a 30-degree angle to the ground. Other types of trash barrels have been added in more recent years, and vary in material and design. Trash barrels can also be found outside picnic areas.

Figure 16: Trash barrel in rest area on IH 37, San Patricio County, Corpus Christi District.

Trash receptacle

In some parks trash receptacles were constructed in place of the simple addition of trash barrels. These receptacles are usually square in shape and constructed with the same materials as the other parts of the picnic area. A metal or plastic trash barrel fits within the receptacle and is accessed via metal doors at the top and one side of the receptacle.

Figure 17: Trash receptacle in roadside park on SH 6 south of Benjamin, Knox County, Childress District.

Figure 18: Historic photograph of trash receptacle at a roadside park. (Source: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Texas.)

Other features outside the picnic area

Driveway

There are four primary driveway designs used in roadside park development: U-shaped, linear, circular, and curvilinear. Driveway designs are distinct from overall park layouts or parcel shapes. Park layouts are discussed in greater detail in Section 2. C. Often, the design of the driveway emulates the purpose of the park; a roadside park from the Depression-era with a curvilinear driveway was more a recreational area designed for leisurely stops, while a 1960s roadside park was largely designed for brief stops and to rest safely off the high-speed highway and utilized a linear driveway to facilitate easy on-off access from the highway. Curvilinear driveway designs were uncommon in roadside parks, and almost unknown in postwar roadside park design. Originally the driveways were surfaced in gravel or shell, and are now surfaced in asphalt. Some roadside parks do not have a driveway, but instead utilize the shoulder as a pulloff.

Wall or walls

Walls, constructed of brick, stone, or concrete, are often found near the entrances of roadside parks or as boundary-delineating features. The THD designed and distributed plans for roadside park walls in the postwar period. Similar walls are also found in Depression-era parks, but no standard plans from that period are known to exist. Similar to other park features, Depression-era walls were usually constructed of stone masonry, while brick and concrete are the predominant materials for entry or boundary walls in the postwar period.

Figure 19: Single entry wall feature at roadside park on US 79 east of Milano, Milam County, Bryan District

Historic markers

Donor plaque

Metal donor plaques, used to honor those individuals who donated land to the THD for a roadside park, were often placed at the site of the roadside parks from the beginning of their establishment. Often these plaques are set on stone, brick, or concrete plinths. These plinths often are constructed of the same materials used in the picnic areas of the roadside park.

Figure 20: Donor plaque on concrete plinth. Roadside park on US 69 southeast of Alba, Wood County, Tyler District.

Texas Highway Department Centennial marker

One impetus of the roadside park program in Texas was the 1936 Texas Centennial celebrations. Hundreds of historical markers were erected as part of the Centennial celebrations, including a series of markers sponsored by the THD. Sometimes placed in roadside parks, these markers were carved from pink granite and include either a bronze plaque or a carved inscription, as well as a bronze Texas star-in-circle design. However, there is a known history of moving these markers, so markers within the roadside park may not date from the original roadside park's construction.

Figure 21: Centennial marker with bronze plaque on non-original plinth. In roadside park on SH 6 north of Crowell, Foard County, Childress District

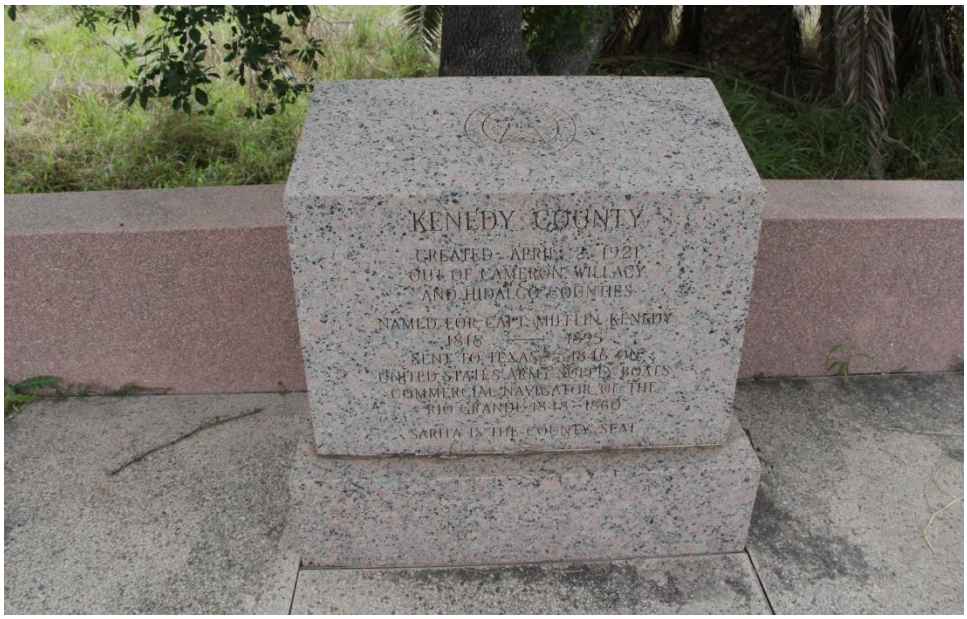

Figure 22: Centennial marker with inscribed text and surrounding pink granite landing. In roadside park on US 77, Kenedy County, Pharr District

State Board of Control Centennial marker

These gray granite markers were placed in historical locations to celebrate the 1936 Texas Centennial by the Texas State Board of Control. These markers are gray granite with a pedimented top and inscribed text. The markers also typically include a small bronze star or a wreath. Unlike the pink granite highway markers, these markers often describe historical events. Like the highway markers, many Centennial markers are known to have been moved. Their location at a roadside park may not be original.

Figure 23: State Board of Control Centennial marker (right) on new concrete pad. In roadside park on US 62 west of Paducah, Motley County, Childress District.

Spring or pool

Because roadside parks were meant to take advantage of the surrounding natural landscape, the THD sometimes incorporated springs or pools into roadside park designs. They are not common, as they are dependent on the presence of natural springs, and are generally limited to Depression-era parks. For Depression-era parks, the springs were intended for use as a source of drinking water, to fill car radiators, and as a recreation location. The springhead or pool is usually enclosed by a low stone masonry wall and floor. The design often also included stairs to reach the spring or pool, as well as other related features. In the postwar period, the THD discouraged the design and use of natural springs due to maintenance costs and safety issues. Safety rest areas, with their drinking fountains and comfort stations, received water via underground well or treated water piped in from local water systems.

Figure 24: Pool with retaining wall and stairs, on US 287 northwest of Woodville, Tyler County, Beaumont District

Figure 25: Spring (now closed), on US 175, Anderson County, Tyler District.

3. Examples of roadside park layouts

Roadside park layouts are generally determined by the basic shape of the park itself as well as its design of the driveway and the overall access and circulation needs for the park. The layout is often associated with specific driveway designs, as previously noted in Section 2.B. The following section provides definition of the various layouts used for roadside parks.

Linear

This design is commonly seen with parks that do not have a distinct drive, but rather feature only a small pulloff in the typical highway right-of-way. The park features are generally adjacent to the pulloff area rather than being spread throughout the area of the park.

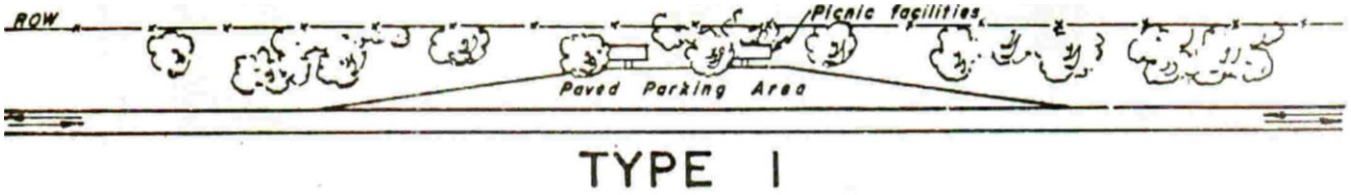

Figure 26: Typical roadside park layout with pulloff driveway.

Elongated linear

This design is commonly seen in safety rest areas or roadside parks along limited-access highways where the park includes distinct entrance and exit ramps or separates the park from oversized vehicle parking.

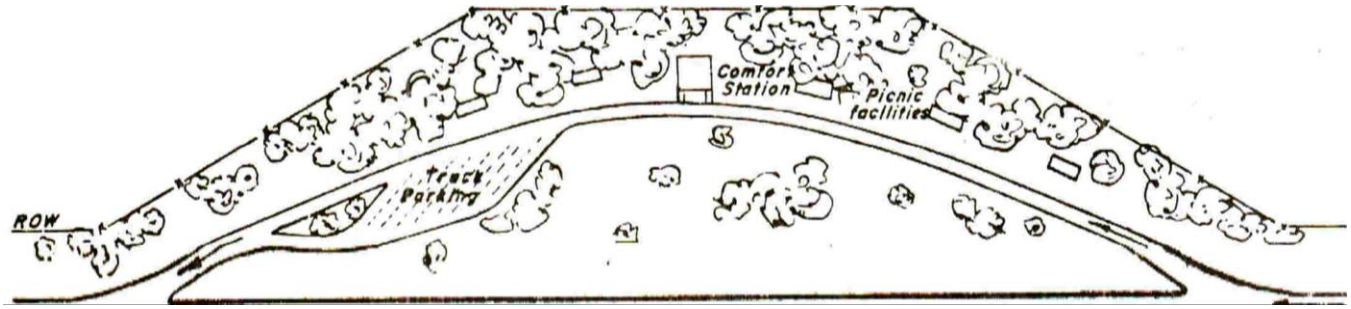

Figure 27: Elongated linear roadside park layout with linear driveway.

Circular

This design is commonly seen in conjunction with a circular drive around all or part of the park. There is usually a central, focal area that is separate from the highway access drive.

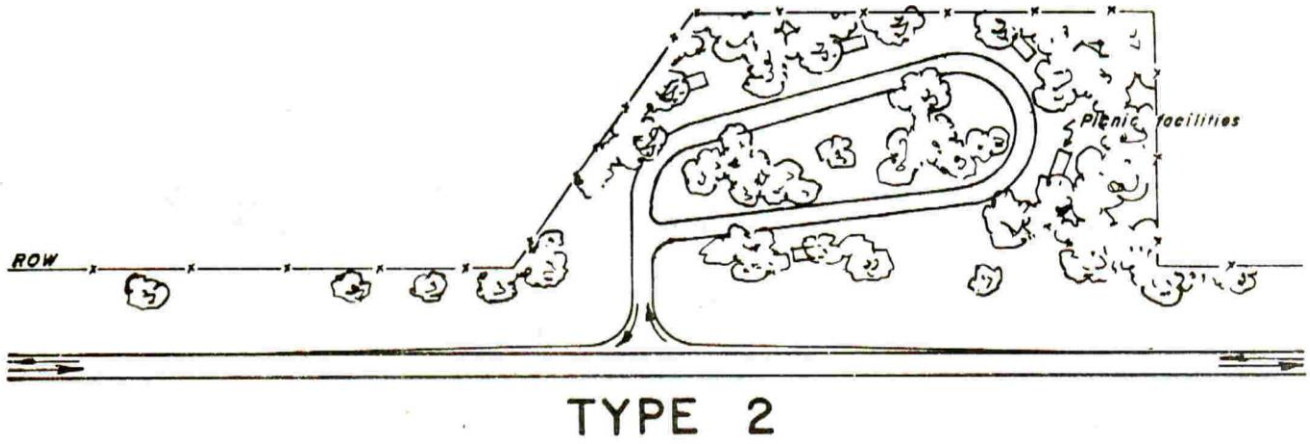

Figure 28: Typical roadside park layout with circular driveway.

U-shaped

The U-shaped park is the most common roadside park layout, due to the nature of its design, which removes the motorist from the highway. There are usually two access points to the driveway, usually also U-shaped, which lead to a separate area for the picnic areas and other park features. This design often concentrates the features along the driveway, regardless of the total park area.

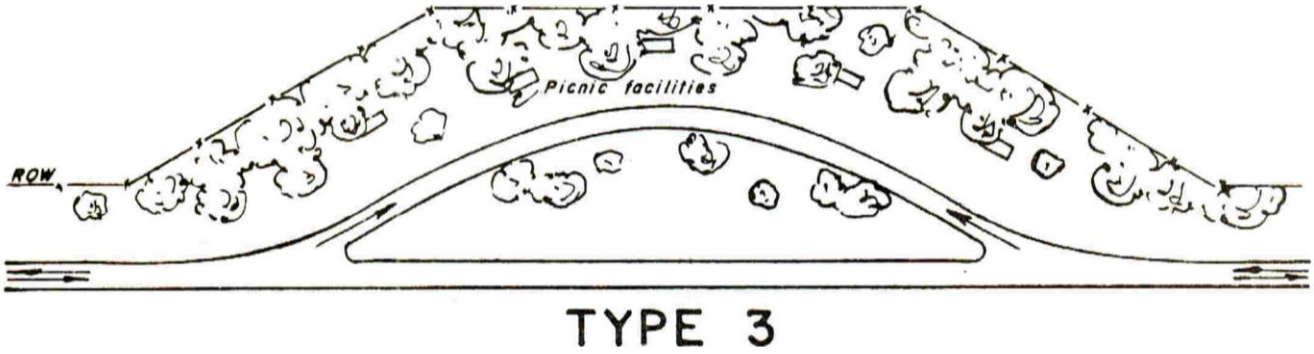

Figure 29: U-Shaped roadside park layout with U-shaped driveway.

Square or rectangular

Though this park usually includes a U-shaped driveway, the primary characteristic that separates it from the U-shaped park is that it utilizes additional open space beyond that adjacent to the driveway.

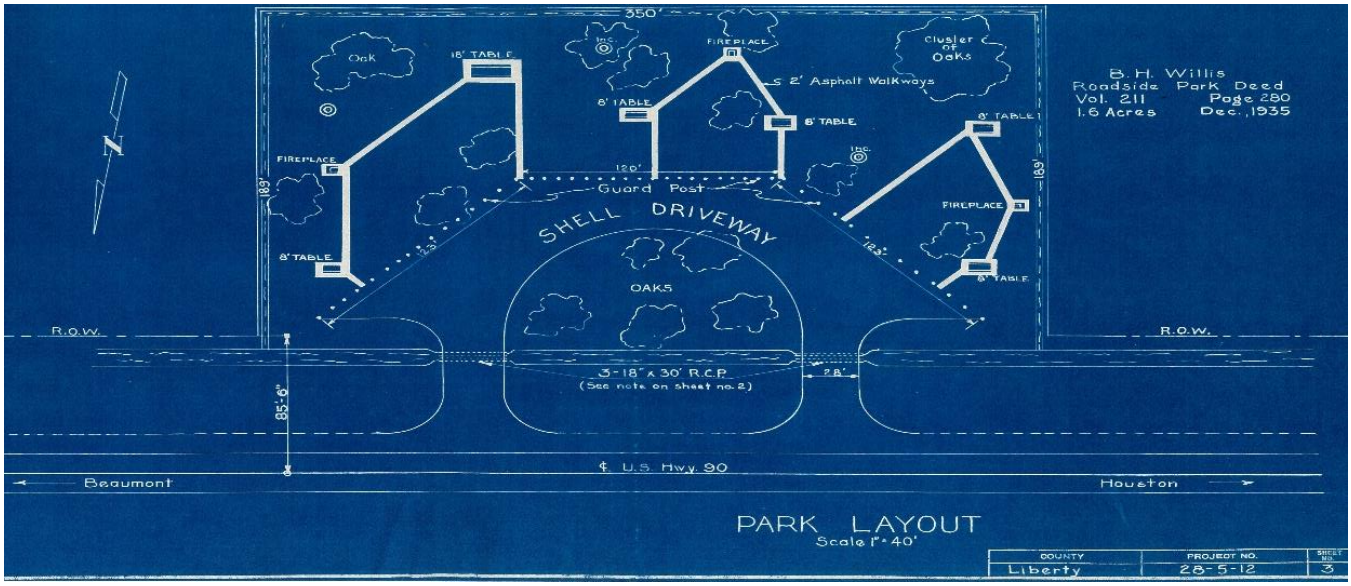

Figure 30: Square or rectangular park layout

4. Essential Physical Features by Development Period

The following provides a summary of essential physical features of roadside parks, organized by development period as identified in *A Historic Context for Texas Roadside Parks and Rest Areas*. Not all identified features in a development period are necessary for a roadside park to convey significance. For more discussion about identifying essential physical features, see *Section 4.A, Identifying essential physical features*.

- The Depression, 1930-1941
    - Physical features displaying the Rustic design aesthetic
    - Incorporation into surrounding landscape
    - Picnic areas with table/bench sets
    - Fireplaces
    - Reflect one of the typical roadside park layouts
    - Source of water, such as spring pool
    - Trails and footbridges
    - Retaining walls
    - Use of local materials and hand-labor construction methods
    - Centennial markers
- World War II Period, 1941-1945
    - Driveway layout
    - Table/bench sets
    - Fireplaces
    - Blue Star Memorial Highway markers
- Immediate Post World War II Period, 1945-1950s
    - Driveway layout
    - Table/bench sets
    - Basic arbors in areas that lack shade
    - Fireplaces
- Modernizing Designs, 1950s-1960s
    - Mid-century Modern design aesthetic or regional design or aesthetic influences
    - Picnic areas with table/bench sets and arbors constructed of more-permanent (than wood) materials, such as concrete and brick
    - Center median location on divided highways
    - Comfort station
- Interstate Highways and Safety Rest Areas, 1960s-1970s
    - Comfort station (required)
    - Typical driveway layout
    - Picnic areas with table/bench set, cooking grill, garbage receptacle, and arbor
    - Separate car and truck parking areas

    - Regional design or aesthetic influences
    - Infobords
- Late-Twentieth-Century Trends, 1970s-1990s
    - Tourist Bureau or Infobords in early part of this period; Travel Information Centers in late 1990s
    - Comfort station (required)
    - Typical driveway layout
    - Picnic areas with table/bench set, cooking grill, garbage receptacle, and arbor
    - Separate car and truck parking areas
    - Regional design or aesthetic influences
- Recent Developments, 2000s-present
    - Safety Rest Areas
    - Architecture reflecting regional history/culture
    - Interpretive exhibits
    - Tourist Bureau
    - Playgrounds
    - Walking trails
    - Picnic areas with table/bench set, arbor, and garbage receptacle

C. Determining Significance of a Roadside Park

To determine a roadside park's significance, an understanding of the four NRHP criteria for evaluation is essential. With the understanding of the four criteria, one can then review the historic context themes to apply the specific registration requirements to roadside parks. The following provides a summary of the four NRHP criteria for evaluation.

1. National Register of Historic Places Evaluation Criteria Overview

The NRHP employs four criteria for evaluation: A, B, C, and D. *Criteria A* and *B* involve associative value, *Criterion C* involves design or construction value, and *Criterion D* involves information value. There are also special considerations, known as *Criteria Considerations*, that may be taken into account. This section provides a brief overview of the NRHP criteria and *Criteria Considerations* that apply to roadside parks in Texas.

- *Criterion A: Events* – Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. *Criterion A* recognizes roadside parks that have an important association with single events, a pattern of events, repeated activities, or historic trends that are significant within the themes identified in the historic context.
- *Criterion B: Persons* – Properties that are associated with the lives of a person significant in our past. *Criterion B* recognizes roadside parks that illustrate the important achievements of a person who was significant in the past. Roadside parks must be compared to other properties associated with the work of the individual to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Architects, artisans, and engineers are often represented by their works, which are typically evaluated under *Criterion C*. Therefore, the significant works of engineers or landscape architects are generally eligible under *Criterion C*, not *Criterion B*, and it is unlikely that roadside parks are significant under *Criterion B*.
- *Criterion C: Design/Construction* – Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. *Criterion C* recognizes roadside parks that have distinctive design or construction characteristics that demonstrate the following: (1) the patterns of features common to roadside parks, (2) the individuality or variation of features that occurs among the roadside parks, (3) the evolution of the roadside parks, and/or (4) the transition between the types of, or periods of development for, roadside parks.
- *Criterion D: Information Potential* – Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. *Criterion D* is most often applied to archeological properties and it is highly unlikely that any roadside parks would be eligible under *Criterion D*.

Because *Criteria B* and *D* are unlikely to apply, only a detailed discussion of *Criteria A* and *C* specifically applied to Texas roadside parks is provided. Within the discussion of *Criteria A* and *C*, this document identifies the conditions under which roadside parks may possess NRHP

significance based on themes in the historic context. Using the historic context study and NRHP criteria discussed below, these sites will primarily be evaluated at the state level of significance for their association and use as roadside parks. Evaluations under this study are confined to use as a roadside park and the state level of significance. Roadside parks may also possess significance at the local level if they served not only as a roadside park for highway travelers, but also as a gathering place or recreational spot for local residents. Significance under local historical themes should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. It is not anticipated that roadside parks will possess significance at the national level.

Criteria Consideration G: Properties Less than 50 Years Old

In some cases, NRHP *Criteria Consideration G,* may apply to the eligibility of roadside parks. No other criteria consideration is expected to apply to roadside parks.[252] *Criteria Consideration G* states that a property that has achieved its significance within the last 50 years must be of exceptional importance to be eligible for the NRHP. Properties meeting *Criteria Consideration G* should exhibit exceptional significance. A statement of exceptional significance should be included in the evaluation of properties that were constructed within the past 50 years

Criteria Consideration G applies to roadside parks whose period of significance began more than 50 years ago but extended into the less-than-50-year period; however, in these instances a case for exceptional importance does not have to be justified provided the property continued to operate in its original capacity and continued to be directly associated with the historic context themes. In these cases, the ending date of the period of significance may be less than 50 years.

While *Criteria Consideration G* may apply in a general sense, it was not applied for evaluations during this study. This study is intended to provide a long-term evaluation tool for an entire class of properties, and therefore includes roadside parks that have not yet reached 50 years of age. *Criteria Consideration G* was not applied to roadside parks less than 50 years old, and eligibility recommendations resulting from this study will be effective at the time the roadside park reaches 50 years of age.

2. Application of Criterion A to roadside parks

Under *Criterion A*, roadside parks may be significant if they are associated with important events or trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. *A Historic Context for Texas Roadside Parks and Rest Areas* provides important historical themes that influenced the development of roadside parks under *Criterion A* (e.g., transportation, politics/government, social history, and entertainment/recreation). Roadside parks may possess significance under *Criterion A* for relationships with more than one theme. They may also possess significance under both *Criteria A* and *C*.

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[252] *Criteria Consideration B* applies to properties that have been moved from their original or historically significant location. *Criteria Consideration B* is not expected to apply to roadside parks, because it is not anticipated that entire parks would have been moved. It is more likely that individual features of a roadside park—particularly historical markers—have been moved, but this scenario would be considered as a potential impact to integrity rather than through application of *Criteria Consideration B*.

Transportation

Most roadside parks are generally associated with roadway development but are not overtly associated with a specific, significant transportation program or initiative. Depression-era National Youth Administration (NYA) and Works Project/Progress Administration (WPA) roadside parks would be more appropriately evaluated under other areas of significance such as Politics/Government and Social History. A roadside park is significant if it possesses a demonstrated relationship to a major trend in roadside park development as it relates to the overall development of a transportation route or a type of roadway facility, such as Interstate Highways or limited-access freeways. In the era of Interstate Highway development, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) developed policies and guidelines for safety rest areas located on Interstate Highways, which influenced the site location, design and construction of safety rest areas in Texas. A roadside park with the documented use or application of AASHO policies and guidelines may possess significance under this theme. This theme is expected to apply only to the roadside parks located on the Interstate Highway system that are evaluated outside of the Section 106 process due to the SAFETEA-LU Interstate Highway exemption discussed in the introduction.

Politics/Government and Social History

In the context of Depression-era roadside park construction, the theme of *Politics/Government* is closely related to the theme of *Social History*. Combined, these areas of significance pertain to the state-level manifestation of the unprecedented national movement to provide relief to the unemployed during the Depression to stimulate the economy, while also initiating public works projects. Various levels of government, including states and municipalities, were involved in establishing and implementing the federal-relief programs, which served to promote the welfare of society during the Depression. Absent these federal-relief programs, very little transportation infrastructure would likely have been built during the period. The impacts of these programs on the transportation network, including roadside parks, touched all parts of the state, and they continue to be apparent today.

Figure 31: NYA-built roadside park on SH 6 in Foard County. (Note: Standing water is typically not present; however, the original design used the creek and mature trees to blend the park into natural scenery, typical of many Depression-era roadside parks.)

A roadside park may possess significance under these combined themes of *Politics/Government* and *Social History* as an important representation of the collaboration between federal relief administrators, project sponsors, and other parties. This collaboration provided the mechanism to establish roadside parks as a way to provide both unemployment relief and a scenic resting place for travelers. The roadside park must have a direct and documented association with one of the federal-relief programs. Sources to establish this association may include a plaque in the park, information from THD or TxDOT files, information from contemporaneous magazine or newspaper articles, or other sources. Examples of roadside parks that may possess significance under these combined themes are Depression-era roadside parks constructed by federal-relief programs such as the NYA and the WPA, and those roadside parks constructed specifically for the Texas Centennial Celebration.

Figure 32: Roadside park built for the Texas Centennial Celebration, with granite marker located on the driveway, on US 190 in Newton County.

Entertainment/Recreation

The theme of entertainment and recreation focuses on roadside parks purposely designed to incorporate amenities that facilitate leisure, recreation, and tourism.

Early roadside parks were designed as pleasure destinations with great consideration given to how a visitor would experience the roadside park in its natural setting. In addition to serving travelers, these early parks were often considered recreational destinations. They were designed to take advantage of their settings to provide a scenic and recreational experience for automobile travelers. Intended as longer-term traveler stops, early roadside parks provided recreational opportunities and picnic areas that afforded the opportunity to enjoy the surrounding views, and they incorporated amenities such as cookers, fireplaces, and water pumps. Scenic overlooks, constructed in response to exceptional natural scenery or views visible from the overlook, may be an element of these early roadside parks. The roadside park in Tyler County (Survey ID 20-299-RP001), 5 miles northwest of Woodville, is an example of a roadside park that conveys significance as a recreational destination.

Figure 33: Spring-fed pool in roadside park on US 287 northeast of Woodville in Tyler County.

By the 1950s, the concept of a roadside park as a destination for recreation and leisure became obsolete and roadside parks were being designed as brief resting stops. Nonetheless, tourism and recreation-related amenities continued to be incorporated in roadside park designs. Roadside parks also were developed for the expressed purpose of facilitating tourism in Texas, and included other amenities such as Infobords, travel counselor stations, and interpretive exhibits. In a few cases, such as the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop Highway, roadside parks were specifically intended as part of a larger auto-tourism-related attraction.

Figure 34: Example of a late 1950s roadside park on SH 70 in Hall County.

Figure 35: "Infobord" in rest area on IH 35 near Burleson in Johnson County (no longer extant).

3. Application of Criterion C to roadside parks

To possess significance under *Criterion C* a roadside park needs to reflect the distinctive characteristics of an overall design aesthetic, landscape architecture, engineering, or other design features or construction practices. This threshold can be achieved if a roadside park exemplifies one or more of the following requirements as outlined in the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation under *Criterion C*:

- Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction
- Possesses high artistic value
- Represents a distinctive work of a master

Distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction

To identify roadside parks that are significant for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, three considerations apply:

- Patterns of features common to a particular roadside park type
- Variation of roadside park features
- Evolutions and transitions in roadside park design and construction

All roadside parks have the ability to display patterns of features common to their particular type and can therefore generally serve as representative examples of roadside park designs. Under these registration requirements, mere representation of particular roadside park design standards is alone not sufficient to convey significance. A roadside park possesses significance only if it demonstrates the full range of features and sub-features, layout, and design principles typical of its period of construction, as described in *A Historic Context for Texas Roadside Parks and Rest Areas*. For example, a roadside park with multiple picnic areas, layout with linear drive, and Modern design principles in its built features demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of type and period of construction. However, a roadside park with a single table/bench set would not provide sufficient historic fabric to convey this significance.

Figure 36: A late example, this roadside park on IH 37 in San Patricio County was built in 1972. It features eight picnic areas, an elongated linear layout with linear drive, and uses Modern standard designs from the period.

Figure 37: This roadside park, constructed in 1960 on SH 152 in Wheeler County, illustrates many of the design principles of the period.

This aspect of *Criterion C* also takes into consideration a Depression-era roadside park that exhibits the full range of distinctive characteristics and fine craftsmanship of hand-labor construction and the use of local building materials, which were the hallmarks of the federal-relief programs. To employ the greatest number of people possible, projects completed under the auspices of one of the federal work-relief programs were labor-intensive, rather than machine-intensive, activities. This

intentional use of hand labor included the construction and finishing methods, as well as the quarrying and dressing of local materials for use on a project.

Figure 38: This roadside park on SH 37 in Wood County, originally built in the Depression era, features several table/bench sets with hand-laid stone masonry construction.

In addition to requirements for use of hand labor in the construction, an underlying principle of the federal relief programs such as the NYA was to construct structures using local materials such as stone. As a result, Depression-era roadside parks often reflected the rustic architectural style promulgated by the National Park Service. Depression-era roadside parks displaying the distinctive characteristics and fine craftsmanship of hand-labor methods reflect the unique approach of the federal-relief programs to provide employment to the greatest number of people possible coupled with the aesthetic principles of those programs. As such, these roadside parks would possess significance for the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction.

Figure 39: The same Wood County roadside park as above, illustrating a postwar picnic area addition with an original Depression-era table/bench set in far background.

Roadside parks that may possess significance for demonstrating the evolution or transition in roadside park design and construction are those that cross development periods or reflect a transition in highway design. For example, a roadside park that was initially developed in the Depression-era and expanded with additional picnic areas in the postwar period may have significance if the park retains features from both developmental periods. Another example is a roadside park that illustrates the documented first use of a particular type of feature or sub-feature. A third example is a roadside park designed as a "median park" on an Interstate Highway or other divided highway, reflecting the design transitions resulting from the new highway type. The THD issued specific guidance to accommodate this transition in design. Original plans or other documentation are generally required to support evaluations related to this area of significance.

Figure 40: An example of a "median park" on SH 31 in Henderson County, the roadside park was originally built with an elongated linear driveway in the Depression era and rehabilitated as a median park in the 1950s when SH 31 was upgraded to a divided roadway.

High artistic value

This consideration takes into account roadside parks that are an expression of an aesthetic design applied to what is usually a very functional property type. The overall design and form of the roadside park must reflect an aesthetic design intent versus limited or isolated application of ornamentation to a minimal number of features. Roadside parks that fully articulate an aesthetic ideal or architectural trend through the use of programmatic design may possess significance for high artistic value. An example is a roadside park that incorporates a programmatic design aesthetic to reflect the area's history and culture, such as oil heritage through the use of oil derricks or Native American culture through the use of teepee designs to adorn picnic areas. It should be noted that some of the "historical" roadside park designs of the late 1960s and early 1970s were not accurate in terms of historical appearance. For example, the teepee designs constructed at rest areas on IH 10 and a roadside park on RM 170 in far west Texas do not reflect the actual building traditions of Native Americans of the region.

Figure 41: Roadside park picnic table/bench set, built in 1968 at a rest area on IH 20 in Smith County, illustrating the relationship to the area's oil history.

Work of a master

This consideration takes into account evidence of a master's (landscape architect, designer, engineer, fabricator, or builder) important work. A roadside park recognized for its significance as the work of a landscape architect, engineer, or other landscape design master needs to be representative of a particular phase of the master's career. Since roadside parks largely display standardized design and construction methods, the influence of the work of a specific master is not expected to be demonstrated in Texas's roadside parks. While there were important designers in the history of Texas roadside park development identified through the historic context development, no evidence was found to suggest application of this area of significance.

4. Defining period of significance

The NRHP Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* states the period of significance is the "length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or person, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for NRHP listing." Identification of a roadside park's period of significance, based on an understanding of its area(s) of significance, is crucial for determining NRHP eligibility.

The period of significance for a roadside park may span many years to encompass its continued use and association with the area of significance under *Criterion A*. For example, a roadside park that possesses significance under the theme of *Entertainment/Recreation* as a roadside park that facilitated tourism would have a period of significance spanning from the time it was constructed to

the end of the period it was no longer used to facilitate tourism, or when the 50-year limit is reached. On the other hand, a roadside park that possesses significance for its association with the Texas Centennial would have a period of significance of 1936 as the year in which the important historical events occurred. If the roadside park continues to have importance or no more specific date can be determined, the period of significance closes at 50 years.

Under *Criterion C*, the period of significance for roadside parks may be relatively short, as it relates to the roadside park's date of construction or reconstruction. This date should reflect the year in which construction was completed on the majority of the roadside park's physical facilities. In some cases, the period of significance may correspond to the reconstruction date, rather than the original construction date, if the roadside park was fully reconstructed with new facilities. Another consideration in determining the period of significance under *Criterion C* is the inclusion of the date for subsequent improvements if they occurred in the historic period.

A roadside park with more than one area of significance may have varied (overlapping or discontiguous) periods of significance representing the time associated with the events or characteristics of significance. As an example, a significant Depression-era roadside park constructed in 1936 by the NYA to facilitate tourism in Texas and used to facilitate tourism until 1955 could have two periods of significance. Under *Criterion A*, the period of significance would extend from 1936 until 1955, and under *Criterion C*, the period of significance would be 1936.

D. Assessing Historic Integrity

To be eligible for the NRHP a roadside park must not only possess significance, but also retain historic integrity. According to the NRHP Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, historic integrity is "the ability of a property to convey its significance." Once it has been established that a roadside park possesses significance under *Criteria A* and/or *C* and the park's period(s) of significance has been defined, the next step is to assess whether or not the roadside park retains sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance.

The roadside park includes multiple built features, landscaping, layout, and the overall design intent. All these elements, particularly the essential physical features, must be considered together when assessing integrity. Other factors that must be taken into consideration are the magnitude and types of changes, and the cumulative nature of changes. Additionally, historic integrity does not necessarily equate to continued use as a roadside park. For example, a roadside park significant for its Modern design aesthetic may retain sufficient historic integrity to convey significance even if it is no longer in use.

Assessment of historic integrity of the roadside park involves the following:

- Identify the roadside park's essential physical features.
- Determine if the essential physical features are retained and visible enough to convey significance.

1. Identifying essential physical features

According to the NRHP Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,* "It is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity." An important part of establishing integrity is determining whether a roadside park retains the essential physical features that are character-defining and enable it to convey its historic integrity to its period of significance. To know if the roadside park retains its essential physical features, one must first identify them. The essential physical features convey why and when the roadside park was significant.

When identifying the essential physical features, the descriptions of roadside park types, features, and layouts discussed in Section 2 above should be taken into consideration in conjunction with the reasons the roadside park is significant. For most roadside parks, the primary essential physical feature will be the picnic area. Other essential physical features will be determined by the type of roadside park and the reasons it is significant. Roadside parks that do not exhibit the essential physical features cannot convey significance and are not eligible for the NRHP.

Retention of essential physical features is particularly important under Criterion C, relating to design significance. To demonstrate a full range of features, layout, and design principles for *Criterion C* significance, a roadside park must have:

- Original layout/driveway orientation – Important to the basic design and function of a park. See Section 2.C. above for information on general layout types. There is some overlap of layout types among periods of roadside park development, but the layout is a distinguishing feature (e.g., turnouts and U-shaped driveways predominated in the 1930s, reflecting slower speed of highway traffic and typical size and shape of parks from that era. In contrast, parks on limited-access freeways of the 1960s and 1970s are elongated rectangles with entry and exit via ramps to the freeway).
- Three or more picnic areas – Picnic areas are the defining feature of a roadside park. Three or more provide a cohesive collection of features at a scale sufficient to convey historic significance. There may be exceptions, such as in the case where a roadside park originally only had two picnic areas, but the picnic areas include the full range of features and sub-features of table/bench set, arbor, incinerator, and fireplace at each one (e.g., US 59 roadside park in Live Oak County, 17.7 miles south of George West).
- Historic-age table/bench sets along with at least one additional historic-age feature or sub-feature type (not counting markers, which generally do not contribute to a roadside park's design significance).
    - Table/bench sets + arbors
        - Arbors are generally not found in Depression-era parks, but if arbors were added they were typically constructed of timber or other rustic materials that deteriorated quickly and were replaced
    - Table/bench sets + fireplaces
        - Beginning in the late 1940s, metal barbecue grills were installed instead of fireplaces in some parks.
    - Table/bench sets + incinerators
    - Table/bench set + spring/pool
    - Table/bench set + retaining walls (when retaining walls are essential physical feature, such as in the case of a Depression-era park where the retaining walls reflect the hand-labor of the work-relief program crew that constructed the park)
    - Table/bench sets + comfort station (beginning in 1966)

This list is intended as a general guide to evaluate the *Criterion C* significance of a roadside park. Individual parks may contain unique or noteworthy features that make a park significant, even if the above standards are not met. Evaluators should take such situations into consideration when assessing significance.

2. Assessing historic integrity

Assessing historic integrity requires associating the information known about the roadside park's significance with its present appearance and assessing its ability to visually convey its significance.

The assessment of historic integrity for roadside parks deriving significance under *Criterion A* will differ from the assessment for integrity under *Criterion C*. If a property is significant under both *Criterion A* and *C*, integrity should be assessed separately under each criterion.

As previously mentioned, several considerations must be taken into account when assessing historic integrity. These considerations include understanding when alterations or changes to the roadside park occurred, as well as the type and magnitude or scale of the changes. When considering integrity, one should identify if the alterations and changes to the roadside park occurred during or after the roadside park's period of significance. This assessment determines if the alterations and changes impact essential physical features and the degree to which the changes diminish the aspects of integrity. Not all alterations, including those to essential physical features, will diminish a roadside park's historic integrity to the degree that it can no longer convey significance.

In addition to assessing individual changes to the roadside park's essential physical features, the cumulative effect of multiple changes to a variety of roadside park components, including essential physical features, may collectively diminish important aspects of historic integrity and hinder a roadside park's ability to convey significance. If there is a loss of the essential physical features and/or a loss of integrity to the level that the historic identity can no longer be conveyed, then the roadside park no longer retains integrity and is not eligible.

Within the concept of integrity, the NRHP criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The seven aspects of integrity are:

- *Design* – The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Design refers to the physical features that make up the roadside park.
- *Materials* – The physical elements that were used in the original design and construction of a roadside park. Materials are intimately connected with design.
- *Workmanship* – The physical evidence of the labor and skill of artisans or master craft persons used in the construction of a roadside park. Workmanship is reflected in the skilled craftsmanship, particularly the hand labor masonry construction of the Depression-era, used to construct manmade features in roadside parks such as table/bench sets, retaining walls, and arbors.
- *Location* – The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Location refers to the specific place where the roadside park was built.
- *Setting* – The physical environment of a historic property. Setting refers to the character of the place in which the roadside park played its historic role.
- *Feeling* – A roadside park's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The aspect of feeling results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the roadside park's historic character.

- *Association* – The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A roadside park retains association if it maintains its link to the transportation network and continues in its original function.

Historic integrity related to Criterion A

Criterion A relates to the significance a roadside park possesses through its historical associations. Therefore, integrity aspects of location, setting, feeling, and association play an important role in demonstrating the roadside park's significance. As a result, these aspects of integrity are weighed more heavily when evaluating NRHP eligibility under *Criterion A*. Integrity aspects of design, workmanship, and materials are also important, but alterations that affect these aspects may not result in the same level of diminished integrity for roadside parks significant under *Criterion A*. However, there may be certain circumstances where integrity of design, materials, and workmanship is equally weighed with the other aspects of integrity. An example is a Depression-era roadside park where its *Criterion A* significance is reflected in the use of hand labor methods and local materials.

Understanding each integrity aspect's relative importance for conveying a roadside park's significance under *Criterion A* will guide the evaluator in assessing extensive, minor, and cumulative impacts to a roadside park's historic integrity. Alterations need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the overall impact of these changes to the roadside park's historic integrity and if they detract from the ability of the roadside park to convey its historic identity.

Historic integrity related to Criterion C

Since *Criterion C* relates to the architectural and/or engineering significance of a roadside park, the integrity aspects of design, materials, and association are typically more important. Workmanship is also important for those roadside parks that possess significance as a result of the craftsmanship used to construct the facilities. These integrity aspects are more important because they allow a roadside park to convey its physical features and characterize the type, period, or method of construction. Location and setting are important under *Criterion C* when the design responds to the immediate environment. A change in location, setting, or feeling may result in diminished integrity.

Understanding each aspect of integrity's importance for conveying a roadside park's significance under *Criterion C* will guide the evaluator in assessing extensive, minor, and cumulative impacts to a roadside park's historic integrity. Alterations need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the overall impact of these changes to the roadside park's historic integrity and if they obscure or detract from the ability of the roadside park to convey its historic identity.

Table 1 summarizes examples of alterations and their relative importance to the loss of historic integrity for a roadside park to be eligible under *Criteria A* and *C*.

Table 1: Typical alterations and assessment of historic integrity under Criteria A and C

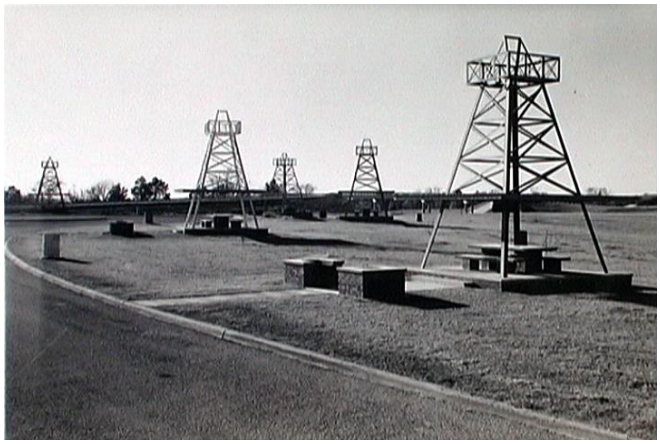
Example of typical alteration	Assessment of historic integrity
Alterations and/or removal of essential physical features	Alterations to elements of essential physical features that may result in a loss of aspects of integrity include additions to original elements, incompatible repairs, removal of original elements and architectural treatments, or incompatible replacement of original elements. Examples include: • Table/bench set extension and addition of ramps with handrails added to picnic areas for ADA modifications • Repointing of masonry with concrete on a Depression-era picnic area • Removal of the fireplace and/or incinerator • Modification to the overall driveway layout, if the layout is identified as an essential physical feature. (Change to driveway surfacing material is an generally acceptable alteration that does not compromise integrity.) • Removal of planned or natural trees or other landscaping if identified as an essential physical feature (when explicitly part of the original/historic design) • Blocking off water flow in a spring pool or fountain • Addition of non-historic-age arbors Alterations may result in an impact to the integrity of feeling, design, setting, and materials. Individual alterations noted above may not result in overall diminished integrity under Criterion A. Individual alterations noted above may result in diminished integrity under Criterion C if it impacts integrity of design and materials resulting in the ability of the roadside park to display the full range of features, layout and design reflecting the historic period. Alterations to multiple essential physical features that impacts various aspects of integrity and the ability of the roadside park to convey significance will result in a loss of overall integrity under Criterion A and C.

Table 1: Typical alterations and assessment of historic integrity under Criteria A and C

Example of typical alteration	Assessment of historic integrity
In-kind replacement of features	In-kind replacement of features, such as replacement of asbestos arbor roofs with visually and aesthetically compatible corrugated metal arbor roofs, is a common change associated with post-World War II roadside parks. In-kind replacement may diminish integrity of materials and design under *Criteria A* and *C* but taken alone this would not generally result in the loss of these aspects of integrity.
Removal or alteration of original architectural or ornamental treatment or craftsmanship on essential physical features	For roadside parks that possess significance for high artistic value under Criterion C, original architectural or ornamental treatments and design elements of essential physical features are the primary characteristics that convey historic significance. Removal of the original architectural or ornamental treatments may be of a sufficient degree or scale that the essential physical features can no longer convey significance under high artistic value and the roadside park may not retain aspects of historic integrity under *Criterion C*, such as design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. If the roadside park possesses significance for its association with a Depression-era federal-relief program demonstrating the use of hand labor and craftsmanship under Criterion C, integrity of workmanship may also be affected if the alteration impacts features displaying this craftsmanship.

Table 1: Typical alterations and assessment of historic integrity under Criteria A and C

Example of typical alteration	Assessment of historic integrity
Change to layout or physical environment of roadside park and relationship to surroundings	Significant changes to the roadside park's layout that result in modified circulation patterns, and reconfiguration of the orientation to associated roadways and the relationship to surroundings may alter the roadside park to such a degree that it impacts integrity of design, setting and feeling that the roadside park may no longer convey significance. This may result in a loss of overall integrity under Criteria A and C. Changes to the layout to accommodate a small number of additional parking spaces or dedicated ADA-accessible parking spaces will generally not have an impact on essential physical features to the degree that the roadside park can no longer convey its historic significance under *Criteria A and C*.
Closure of park	The closure of a roadside park may result in impacts to essential physical features if they are demolished or otherwise altered to limit continued access and use. If so, these impacts will likely result in a loss of integrity of design, materials, feeling and association that diminishes overall integrity under Criteria A and C. If the roadside park is barricaded at the entrance/exit points to prevent access but there are no other impacts, there may be an impact to the integrity of association because the roadside park is no longer in use. However, when taken alone, this does not generally result an overall loss of integrity under *Criteria A or C*.



Figures 42 and 43: The original construction of a picnic area in roadside park on IH 20 in Smith County included incinerators and fireplaces (left); these had been removed by the mid-1990s (right). (Sources: TxDOT Photo Library, Austin, Tex. (left) and Mead & Hunt, Inc. (right))

Figure 44: Roadside park on US 70 in Cottle County, illustrating ADA modifications to the picnic table/bench set, as well as a concrete ramp for Access to the picnic area.

Figure 45: Roadside park on SH 6 in Galveston County, illustrating replacement non-historic-age arbors.

Figure 46: Roadside park on US 190 in Tyler County, illustrating incompatible concrete patches to a picnic table/bench set.

E. Establish NRHP Eligibility

The final step in establishing a roadside park's NRHP eligibility is to identify the contributing and non-contributing features of the site, as defined by the National Park Service. Once the contributing and non-contributing features are identified, the roadside park's NRHP eligibility can be established. Roadside parks that possess significance, retain sufficient historic integrity, and have a sufficient number of contributing features to convey significance, are eligible for NRHP listing. The following discussion provides an overview of the process to determine the contributing and non-contributing features of the roadside park.

Each roadside park is comprised of components, some of which are considered essential physical features that help convey the roadside park's historic significance. Components may include manmade features such as picnic areas and comfort stations. They may also include landscape elements, such as topographical changes, vegetation, and water sources.

Features are categorized as contributing or non-contributing. Contributing features were built during the roadside park's period of significance, enable the roadside park to convey its historic significance, and retain historic integrity. A non-contributing feature is one that was built outside the roadside park's period of significance or no longer retains sufficient integrity to convey historic significance due to alterations.

The threshold for the number of contributing versus non-contributing features, which establishes whether or not the roadside park is eligible for NRHP listing, is flexible based on the reasons the roadside park is significant. For example, a significant roadside park where there are several intact picnic areas, but the alterations to a single table/bench set that make a picnic area a non-contributing feature, would not meet the threshold for a not-eligible recommendation. On the other hand, the threshold for a not-eligible recommendation may be met if a significant roadside park with only one or two picnic areas has an altered table/bench set that is non-contributing.

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