



## **ADOPT-A-ROAD PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### PURPOSE

The Adopt-A-Road Program is a public participation program of Snohomish County Public Works, which encourages volunteer involvement and community service in the control and reduction of litter and enhancement of general environmental quality along Snohomish County roadways. Adopted roadways are county roads located in unincorporated Snohomish County. The program does not apply to federal and state highways, city streets, or private roads. This document describes policies and procedures for the program.

### POLICY FRAMEWORK

RCW 47.40.100 directs the Washington State Department of Transportation to establish a statewide adopt-a-highway program, and sets requirements for that program. RCW 47.40.105 authorizes local government legislative authorities to enact local adopt-a-highway sign programs which are not inconsistent with state or federal law. Snohomish County's Adopt-A-Road Program was established by Ordinance 08-078, enacted June 25, 2008. This ordinance added Chapter 13.150, Adopt-A-Road Program, to Snohomish County Code.

### DEFINITIONS

**Adopted Section:** The portion of county roadway on which the Volunteer Group has agreed to control litter and, if applicable, conduct other roadside improvement or clean-up activities approved by Public Works. Adopted Sections cleaned by volunteers are only in the Snohomish County right-of-way and do not include bridges, overpasses, medians, traveled portions of roadways, and narrow shoulders.

**Adopt-A-Road Agreement (adoption agreement):** Contractual agreement entered into and signed by a Public Works representative and the Volunteer Group's Representative (Group Leader) authorizing the group to participate in the Adopt-A-Road Program, setting the terms and conditions for that participation, and assigning a section of county roadway to the group.

**Clean-Up Event:** Period of time when a volunteer group is removing roadside litter and, if applicable, conducting other roadside improvement or clean-up activities, in participation with the Adopt-A-Road Program.

**Hazardous Materials:** Items that may be found in the road right-of-way which may potentially cause injury. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, petroleum products, chemicals, paints, solvents, propane tanks, gas canisters, car batteries, vehicle parts, appliances, heavy objects, dead animals, broken glass, needles, drug paraphernalia, and unidentified containers.

**Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form:** Form signed by the legal parent or guardian of a minor volunteer (less than eighteen years of age), which informs the parent/guardian and volunteer of the risks associated with participation in the program, and in which the parent/guardian grants permission for the minor to participate in the program and agrees to hold Snohomish County harmless for any liability or damages resulting from participation in the program.

**Participant Roster:** Form completed by the Volunteer Group, which reports the completion of a Clean-Up Event, names of participating volunteers, hours worked, quantities of litter collected, and other relevant information.

**Program Coordinator:** Public Works employee who manages the program and provides liaison and support between Public Works and the Volunteer Group's Leader and Volunteers.

**Recognition Sign:** Placard fabricated and installed by Public Works, which includes the Adopt-A-Road Program logo and the name of the Volunteer Group completing the clean-up events for their adopted section.

**Registration Form:** Form signed by an adult volunteer (eighteen years of age or older), which informs the volunteer of the risks associated with participation in the program and their responsibility to conduct clean-up activities in a safe manner, and in which the volunteer agrees to accept the risks and hold Snohomish County harmless for any liability or damages resulting from participation in the program.

**Volunteer:** Person acting on their own behalf and participating in the Adopt-A-Road Program.

**Volunteer Organization/Group:** Person or persons who have agreed to adopt a section of county roadway under the program.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### 1) Program Eligibility

- a) Volunteer organizations/groups are eligible to participate in the Adopt-A-Road Program if Public Works is satisfied that the group will fulfill its obligation under the program in a safe and responsible manner, and provided that there is an available section of county road which in Public Works' judgment can be safely assigned to the group.
- b) Volunteer groups eligible to participate in the program may be individuals, families, civic and non-profit organizations, churches, service clubs, other organizations, and volunteers from commercial and private enterprises.
- c) A volunteer group is not eligible to participate in the program if its name:
  - i) Endorses or opposes a particular candidate for public office;
  - ii) Advocates a position on a specific political issue, initiative, referendum, or piece of legislation; or
  - iii) Includes a reference to a political party.
- d) Volunteer groups that have been denied participation in the program due to a lack of compliance to a previous adoption agreement shall not be eligible to participate for a period of five years following the termination of the previous agreement.
- e) Each volunteer group must have a designated Representative/Group Leader who functions as the group's primary liaison with the County. The group leader must be an adult (eighteen years of age or older).

### 2) Minors

- a) All volunteers shall be fifteen years of age or older.
- b) Volunteers under the age of eighteen shall have a Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form completed before participating in any program activity
- c) For every eight volunteers under the age of eighteen participating in a clean-up event, there shall be one adult supervisor (eighteen years of age or older).

### 3) Adopt-A-Road Agreements

- a) The program requires a two-year commitment by volunteer groups. Adoption agreements will normally run for a minimum of two years. Public Works may, at its discretion, allow agreements that run for less than two years.
- b) After the initial two-year commitment has been fulfilled, a volunteer group will be considered active until the group requests to end their participation in the program or ceases to fulfill their responsibilities under the program.
- c) If a volunteer group appears to have ceased to fulfill their program responsibilities, the program coordinator will try to contact the group leader by phone. If the group leader cannot be reached by phone, the coordinator will mail a letter to the address on file to remind the group of their commitment and request that they contact the coordinator. If the group does not contact the coordinator within thirty calendar days of the date of the letter, the adoption agreement will be terminated and the group's recognition signs removed. The signs will remain the property of the County.
- d) Volunteer groups shall provide, at a minimum, litter control for adopted sections. Public Works may, at its discretion, include additional responsibilities such as planting and maintaining vegetation, controlling weeds, graffiti removal, and other roadside improvement or clean-up activities.
- e) Volunteer groups shall submit a written proposal to Public Works for any roadside improvement or clean-up activity proposed in addition to litter control. The proposal shall include a complete description of the activity proposed, materials and techniques to be used, and a schedule of work detailing all aspects of the proposal. The County may require the group to prepare a plan or sketches to adequately describe the scope and detail of work. A traffic control plan shall be required. The County may require the group to prepare and submit a landscape plan. All work shall be in conformance with Public Works' *Engineering Design and Development Standards*, current edition, and *Roadway Landscape Standards*, current edition. No work shall commence prior to the County's approval of the group's proposal and signed approval of the Adopt-A-Road Agreement with Exhibit A – Special Provisions.
- f) Public Works may, at its discretion, temporarily suspend an adoption agreement because of road maintenance or construction along an adopted section. Public Works will notify the group leader of the suspension. After these activities are completed, Public Works will restore the agreement and notify the group leader.

#### 4) Adopted Sections

- a) Adopted sections shall be county roads.
- b) Public Works will conduct a traffic safety review before assigning a section for adoption and may, at its discretion, decide that the section is not appropriate for adoption.
- c) Adopted sections will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. If a section of county road has already been adopted by a group, it is not eligible for adoption by another group.
- d) Adopted sections will generally be one mile in length, but the length of any particular adopted section will be at Public Works' discretion.

#### 5) Adopting More Than One Road

- a) Volunteer groups that are currently fulfilling the responsibilities of an existing adoption agreement may be allowed to adopt additional roadway sections at the discretion of Public Works.
- b) If there is high demand for adoption of roads in a particular area, preference will be given to interested volunteers that do not yet participate in the program to maximize opportunities for public participation and community service.

#### 6) Frequency of Clean-up Events

- a) Volunteer groups shall clean-up their adopted section at least two times per calendar year. If a group has more than one adopted section, each section must be cleaned-up at least two times per calendar year.
- b) Additional clean-ups should be completed as needed to maintain a neat appearance.

#### 7) Volunteer Group Leader

- a) The Group Leader shall sign the Adopt-A-Road Agreement and act as the Volunteer Group's primary liaison with the County.
- b) The Group Leader is responsible for:
  - i) Ensuring that the Volunteer Group complies with the provisions of the adoption agreement and the program's safety guidelines and other rules;
  - ii) Attending county-provided safety training;

- iii) Ensuring that each volunteer receives the appropriate training;
- iv) Making sure that each volunteer receives and reviews safety training materials and aids provided by the County before participating in any program activities;
- v) Organizing and scheduling clean-up events;
- vi) Ensuring that clean-up events are conducted in a safe manner;
- vii) Ensuring that each adult volunteer (eighteen years of age or older) completes the Registration Form before participating in any program activity;
- viii) Making sure that each volunteer under the age of eighteen has a completed Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form before participating in any program activity;
- ix) Filing all required reports and forms with the Program Coordinator; and
- x) Reporting any injuries incurred by volunteers during clean-up events to the County, and communicating with the Program Coordinator as necessary to ensure smooth conduct of the program.

## 8) Program Support

- a) Public Works will provide:
  - i) A standardized application form, registration form, and adoption agreement;
  - ii) Safety training for group leaders;
  - iii) Safety training materials and aids for the Volunteer Group to use in training volunteers;
  - iv) Safety equipment and supplies for clean-up events; and
  - v) Staff support for the program.
- b) Public Works will remove litter collected by the Volunteer Group during clean-up events and arrange for the removal of those hazardous materials noted on the Participant Roster.
- c) In recognition of the Volunteer Group's work, Public Works will fabricate and install signs recognizing the group.

## 9) Recognition Signs

- a) Recognition signs shall follow a standard design, including size and color, selected by Public Works. The standard design will include the name of the Volunteer Group and the Adopt-A-Road Program logo. Adjustments to the standard design will not be accommodated.
- b) Recognition signs shall only include the name of the Volunteer Group or similar identifier. Signs shall not include addresses, phone numbers, e-mail or website addresses, pictures or other images, or logos, except for the Adopt-A-Road Program logo.
- c) Signs will typically be placed at the beginning of the adopted section, on the right shoulder. Sign location shall be determined by Public Works.
- d) If the Volunteer Group is responsible for both sides of an adopted section, one sign shall be placed for each direction of travel. For adopted sections with only one side, one sign will be installed in the direction of travel. If the Volunteer Group is responsible for a neighborhood area with more than one adopted section, a maximum of four signs will be installed.

## 10) Recycling

- a) Recycling is encouraged, but not required.
- b) Proceeds from the sale of recyclable items shall belong to the Volunteer Group.

## 11) Hazardous Materials

- a) Volunteers shall not handle hazardous materials or materials they suspect to be hazardous (see list in definitions section).
- b) Volunteers who encounter anything they suspect to be hazardous must not touch it or pick it up, but must take appropriate precautions and report the location and description of the material to Public Works on the Participant Roster.

## 12) Illegal Signs in Right-of-Way

- a) Volunteers shall not remove any signs found in the right-of-way.
- b) Volunteers should report the location and description of any signs they suspect to be illegally placed in the right-of-way to Public Works on the Participant Roster.