Today, I would like to discuss the application of principles of landscape architecture and tourism to the development of roadside markets.

Contrary to popular belief, landscape architecture as a profession is concerned with more than posey-planting. Certainly, those of us in the profession are interested in how plants can improve the settings for buildings. But, we also concern ourselves with many more aspects of the total environment. We see no point in using plants as only cosmetics.

Proper site design, in our way of thinking, involves thorough understanding of both the site and intended use. Only by knowing about the soils, climate, topography, special assets of the site and the way in which the site is to be used can we create the esthetic qualities and functions needed.

The field of tourism includes understandings of travelers and planning for their needs and desires. Travelers along modern freeways have developed certain habits that are important in considering highway-oriented business. The physiology and
psychology of roadside perception are just now being studied. These new findings are of help in designing roadside sites for marketing.

If I were to take on the interesting task of landscape design for a roadside market where would I start? I think I could apply our first approach to all landscape design— that of setting design objectives. This is opposite to the popular approach of merely building a structure and stocking it with produce. Many of the failures of roadside development I have observed can be traced to the lack of setting clearly the objectives for making all landscape changes—drives, parking, buildings, signs, background and protection of valuable site assets. If, for example, we fail to consider the possibility of our doubling our business in a few years, we might spend a lot of money wastefully on the wrong location of entrance drives or even on the wrong site.

Let me apply landscape design objectives to the establishment of roadside markets. We have found five objectives to be very important: owner-manager, physical use, structural, esthetic, and social and legal.

**Owner-Manager Objectives**

My first step would be to raise questions for you, as owner-manager, to answer. I would ask questions, such as what seasons do you expect to be open and what has led to your selection of
the site? Are you interested in only one line of produce or will you offer a great variety of products? Do you anticipate enough volume to have someone directly on the site at all times or will you operate from your home nearby? Do you anticipate that your trade will be primarily from tourists or local suburbanites? As owner, are there special design requirements I should know about before I start thinking about the planning of the marketplace?

Physical Use Objectives

Certainly a basic physical use consideration for roadside markets is the maneuvering of cars into and out of the market area. How can I meet this objective to provide greatest safety, convenience and efficiency? In my experience, I have seen many a near-miss accident because entrance and exit drives were not properly designed or parking was too close to the highway.

Within my search for physical use objectives I would include the needs of service vehicles as well as customer cars. Will there be large trailer trucks delivering wholesale produce? Will there be other trucks picking up waste?

I will want to know how many people will be walking and standing near displays in order to plan for "people-space". Frequently, I have nearly been run over by a car backing from an improperly designed customer service area.
How much storage as well as display space will you require? Designing the display space is not merely a building design problem. It is a site problem as well because visibility from a distance is so very critical to roadside marketing. We cannot willy-nilly pick a building plan out of a catalog without considering how well it will relate to site physical functions of the people who are going to use it.

There is no point in building fancy landscape planters and installing expensive nursery stock for beautification if it will be run over by cars or trampled by people. Several times I have seen beautiful shade trees completely destroyed because car bumpers girdled them. The existing assets of your property can be retained only if the physical use has been planned to do so.

As you can see, I would want to set many physical use objectives before beginning to plan.

**Structural Objectives**

Whatever you spend on construction and plant materials should last. These investments should hold up over time. Very often I have seen beautiful produce on display but went on by because the structure appeared ready to collapse. Paint peeling off the wood and rotting timbers suggest equally poor produce.

Our structural objectives should force us to select building materials and types of construction that will withstand attack
by sun, rain, wind and snow. A roof that leaks may not seem very important until we realize it is causing decay in the basic structure, reducing the life of some of the merchandise or making puddles that the customer must dodge, taking his attention off your produce. I resent the sign "Don't lean on the counter". Counters should be built to lean on and take a great deal of heavy use.

How about water runoff from the site? This is a structural problem for many sites. Whenever we add buildings and drives, we often interrupt existing water runoff. Furthermore, if landfill is used it may settle unevenly. For most drives, parking areas and walks we cannot depend upon percolation through the soil and must provide for surface runoff, either into ditches or underground drains.

For most of North America if we operate in winter, we must include snow removal in our structural objectives. Piles of snow can completely change patterns of parking. The painted divider lines are no longer visible and heaps of snow can reduce parking and car maneuvering space. Delicate plantings can be ruined by snowplows and by using great amounts of salt to cut the ice.

Virtually all of our structural difficulties could be avoided by setting proper structural objectives at the start.

**Esthetic Objectives**

So we could build the roadside market that meets all of the owner-manager objectives, the physical and the structural
objectives and yet not satisfy the customer. Without considering the esthetic objectives we could end up with a drab, unappealing and less profitable establishment. Here is where the art of the landscape enters in.

First of all we should be sure that we eliminate or visually screen all objectionable parts of the landscape. Old lumber piles or collections of rusting farm equipment may not seem important to the landowner but may be very detracting to the travelers. In fact, it has been demonstrated that it is difficult for an owner to really be objective about his site. Because he is so familiar with everything he no longer sees it as does the traveler.

We should strive toward matching the image held by travelers toward roadside businesses. Although I have not researched this problem, my guess is that the traveler expects fresher and cheaper produce than in the city. Therefore, a fresh clean appearance of a simple and straightforward landscape should be our design objective. If close association with the farm is the image of the customer, the market place should be incorporated in the site of the farmstead.

The landscape design and selection of plant materials can go a long way toward supporting this image. In the north, where lilacs, spiraea and hollyhocks were typical in the traditional farm setting, they can be effective in supporting the farm image. In the south, where youpon, sagebrush and crape myrtle were more
typical, their use can be equally effective if properly placed. The use of exotic plants or a high degree of formality in the design are as much out of place as a Tuxedo at a country fair.

All the times that the market will be open must be considered in the development of the landscape appeal. For example, in winter, the use of evergreens—both shrubs and trees—and the careful selection of colors for the buildings and signs are important. The use of shrubs with colorful berries, such as pyrocantha, can make a beautiful display in winter. The selection and placement of lighting is very important if we are to be open at night.

In order to meet the desired esthetic objectives a degree of skill and experience is needed. If these talents are not available within your family, you may need to seek outside assistance.

**Social-Legal Objectives**

In addition to those described above, we must meet another set of objectives in all roadside design—those that are social and legal.

More and more we are establishing zoning controls even in rural areas. These are legal requirements that are made for better land use. They often regulate building setback, size and lighting of signs. Often highway regulations control the design
and construction of entrance drives and access to roads. Lighting, noise, and odor regulations are intended to create a better environment. Sometimes we think that they are overly restrictive. There may be instances where they need to be modified to meet your special needs. Generally, however, it is to our advantage to meet the legal objectives that are set down for roadside development.

Regarding social objectives, I refer to those things that may not be controlled by law but are desired by society. Everywhere we go we have neighbors. If we are to gain the support of neighbors we need to consider their feelings and attitudes in our developments. Even if no regulations force us to consider what might be appropriate in a neighborhood, we should strive to do it anyway. For example, if a beautiful grove of trees has been admired by local people and travelers for many years perhaps we should think twice before we cut them down for a roadside market. Perhaps it will be just as easy and just as profitable to select another site that already is more open.

**Clustering--A Tourism Principle**

The more that we study tourism, the more we begin to see the merits of the principle of clustering. It seems that modern travel modes and the traveler's interests are fostering groups of activities rather than a scatter of separate functions.

We now see the trend toward larger and more diverse attraction clusters. The isolated tourist attraction is giving up to
large tourist complexes. Both commercial complexes, such as the Disney World types, and public agency offerings, such as national parks, are clusters of many things to see and do. Apparently, it is easier for the traveler to take in more items once he has stopped than to make many stops for the same attractions.

The same trend is taking place for services. Where we see one brand of motel franchise, we often see all the others. The bunching of lodging, food service and service stations is becoming commonplace—evidence that clustering is a successful roadside merchandising pattern.

While I have no proof that this is equally applicable to roadside marketing, I believe that it is worthy of consideration.

Accomplishing Good Design

Proper design of a roadside establishment requires consideration of a good many factors of both the site and its use. After setting some objectives, the creative designer would then study many characteristics of both the site and your intended use of it. He would then create some functional diagrams to make sure that the site can be designed for its intended use and that your objectives can be met. This very important step saves sketching and planning in detail prematurely. Only after you and he have agreed upon functional relationships should he proceed with detailed designing.
This may sound like a costly process. Sometimes it is. However, considering the importance of an attractive roadside market, it may be well worth the investment in some professional talent. Some professional offices may turn you down because they take on only very large projects. Others may surprise you with what they can do for you at relatively low cost. Occasionally, your Cooperative Extension Office is able to assist in certain aspects of developing roadside market plans. Universities with landscape schools frequently take on such projects for student study and experience. Certainly I would want to investigate all these avenues for assistance before proceeding on my own.

Recently, the study of roadside graphics has shown interesting facts about the physiology and psychology of seeing. The more that we can know about how the traveler sees his roadside, the better that we can design roadside facilities. An excellent summary of this research, together with recommendations for legal control of roadside graphics is contained in the book, Street Graphics, published by the American Society of Landscape Architects Foundation.

From this source we learn that we should strive for four objectives in the development of our roadside graphics. By graphics, I am including all the visual symbols, signs and even the building fronts and the grounds.
Expressive of Identity

All roadside graphics should be expressive of the individual proprietor's or the community's identity. The owner can indicate, by the style, color and general design of all the landscape, buildings and signs, his individuality and special characteristics of his business. Some shopping centers and some entire communities are adopting special color or letter style standards for their designs. However, we should not be carried away by using strange, illegible or gimmicky designs just because we like them. If we use a certain symbol or lettering style on our advertising folders, matchbooks or letterheads, we should carry out the same styles on the buildings and grounds.

Appropriate to Activity

A good designer will select those colors and designs that are appropriate to the type of business activity. For example, the symbols, styles and colors used for theater marquees or gas service stations probably would not be appropriate for a roadside market. Within a certain radius of a community, all might agree upon a certain style of lettering and color combinations for roadside markets. This uniformity could assist the traveler in knowing that this combination always means markets.

Compatibility With Surrounding Area

No roadside business is seen alone. It is part of a roadside scene. Therefore, it cannot be designed in isolation. The
surrounding landscape and other roadside activities must be considered. As we will see in a moment, the extent of this surrounding area varies with the speed of the traveler. What may be considered adequate for slow speed streets may be entirely inadequate for high speed highways.

Legibility As Seen

It is not enough for a sign to be legible when seen in the sign shop. Its place is a real roadside setting can make a great deal of difference to its legibility. For example, a white background of sign may provide good contrast against a dark colored landscape of trees and buildings but may not be seen at all against a landscape of white buildings, sand or snow. The number of items of information on the sign, the clarity of the lettering and the relationship to the entire landscape can increase or decrease the legibility of roadside graphics greatly.

Design is Related to Driving Speed

In addition to these four factors, research has shown that driving speed is very critical to all roadside graphics. As driving speed increases, the driver's ability to observe roadside graphics deteriorates on several counts.

As driving speed increases, concentration increases. More attention is demanded from the driving process. Therefore, a more relaxed comprehension of all about him is increasingly less available to the driver.
As driving speed increases, the point of concentration recedes. For example, at 30 mph, the natural focusing point is about 700 feet ahead of the car. At 45 mph, it is about 1200 feet ahead. At 60 mph, the driver can see detail only between 110 and 1400 feet. Since this distance is traveled in less than 15 seconds, it follows that elaborate detail in highway graphics is totally meaningless.

As driving speed increases, peripheral vision decreases. In other words, those roadside landscape details, important to your business, may no longer be in the driver's visual comprehension at higher speeds. For example, his field of vision is about 90° at 30 mph. If the speed is increased to 45 mph, the angle of vision has narrowed to 65° and by increasing the speed to 60 mph, the angle is only 40°.

As driving speed increases, foreground details fade. As the point of concentration moves down the highway with increased speed, the details in the foreground tend to be not seen at all.

As driving speed increases, the perception of space and speed deteriorates. The driver's judgment becomes more and more dependent upon visual clues picked up along the highway.

Information Has Limits

Furthermore, the study of roadside graphics shows that the amount of information that a traveler can see, digest and react to is extremely limited. Few of our roadside developments have
recognized this fact. When each businessman thinks only of his own establishment he is inclined to forget how his business appears in combination with his neighbors. Therefore, most suburban roadsides offer many times more information than a traveler can grasp.

Studies have been made concerning the reaction to our senses. For example, study of the "span of absolute judgment", "span of attention", has produced some interesting conclusions. The amount of information that an observer can receive, process and remember is approximately seven items. For roadside graphic purposes, an item is defined as a syllable, symbol, abbreviation, broken plane, or discontinuous odd shape. This means that at any one instant, along a roadside, more than seven items displayed to the traveler may not even be seen and comprehended. Certainly this fact should stimulate all roadside merchants to study their roadside offerings for the need of possible redesign of the entire roadside. In a recent check, I found that most individual signs were overloaded with information, to say nothing of the number of items within a city block. Some roadside signs have as many as 30 items of information--many more than the traveler will see even at slow speeds.

Conclusions

1. Very critical to all roadside design is the speed of the traveler.
2. There is a great need for limiting the information displayed; too much is distracting as well as superfluous.

3. All roadside design demands understandings of color, texture, form and attention to style—usually only available from a specialist.

4. Good roadside design encompasses the entire landscape—not just the signs or buildings.

5. For the good of both the businessman and the traveler, greater control of roadside graphics is needed. Each merchant wants to be as findable as the next and uniform rules give each an equal chance.

6. Roadside markets may gain greatly by being located and designed with other clusters of traveler services and products.