



Alden Road Improvement

McHenry County Division of Transportation

Functions of Shoulders Summary Stakeholder Group Meeting on May 24, 2010

Shoulder widths can vary between 4 feet to 12 feet depending on the highway classification. They also provide many structural and operational advantages. Where wide enough shoulders are not available, a stopped vehicle often disrupts traffic in all lanes in that direction. Therefore, a width of 8 feet is desirable to accommodate passenger vehicles and 10 feet for trucks. The following are some of the important functions of shoulders:

- Provides structural support for the roadway
- Prevents pavement edge drop-offs
- Provides space for emergency stops
- Provides a recovery area for run-off-the-road vehicles
- Improves sight distance around curves
- Provides a sense of openness
- Facilitates snow removal and storage
- Provides additional clearance of roadway signs
- Facilitates pavement drainage
- Provides space for mailbox turnouts

Source: IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, Section 34-2.02.