

# Ohio Department of Transportation

## Prebid Questions

Project No. 070359

Sale Date - 7/18/2007

Question Submitted: 7/11/2007

Question Number: 1

On page 5 of 37 on the plans, under General Notes, Excavation, Embankment, Aggregate Base and Topsoil; there is the statement "topsoil (from the top of the embankment to the height shown on the landscaping plans" and there is mention of item 653 Top Soil, furnished and place with a quantity of 342 Cu. Yds. This subject is further continued on page 25 of 37 - Item 653 Topsoil Furnished And Placed and it states "The contractor (we are assuming and wish to have this clarified, that this means the General Contractor) shall provide topsoil in the entire median area. Topsoil shall be free of Johnson Grass and shall be a friable loam, containing at least 3% decayed organic matter (humus). It shall be taken from a well drained, arable site. It shall be reasonably free of subsoil, stones, earth, clods, sticks, roots or other objectionable extraneous matter or debris. It shall contain no toxic materials. Topsoil may be altered, upon approval of the engineer, by adding approved conditioners to correct the deficiencies. Topsoil and conditioners shall conform to item 653 as determined by the engineer. Before placing topsoil, remove rock or other foreign material of 3" or greater in any dimension." Just above this note, under Landscape Construction Notes, it states, "Preparation of subgrade in landscaped areas: Prior to the placement of topsoil and the establishment of the finished grade, the contractor ( and again we are asking for clarification that this means the General Contractor)... and goes on to talk about possibly moving the plant placements. It continues by stating, "Where locations cannot be changed, the unsuitable material or obstruction shall be removed to a depth no less than 6" below bottom of the root ball when the plant is properly set at the required grade. The additional excavation shall be filled with a suitable clean soil material free of rock and construction debris and suitable for the planting subgrade as determined by the engineer." Because we have had so many ODOT projects where the topsoil has ended up being of substandard quality, full of debris, doesn't drain properly and/or been proven to not be healthy or suitable for plant growth we have encountered many problems with this issue. In the past when we bring it to either the General Contractor's or ODOT's attention, we have been instructed to "plant as directed by the engineer" and nothing has ever occurred to correct the topsoil being unsuitable. So we have proceeded with planting in substandard topsoil and have done so only to have many of the plants not survive or have an extremely difficult time becoming established. Because of these experiences, we are relieved that on this particular project, there are more details towards the direction and specifications of the exact type and kind of topsoil that is to be placed in the entire median where the planting is to take place, BUT there is no mention anywhere of who is to pay for the possible removal of unsuitable topsoil and the cost to buy and place the proper topsoil, should this occur. So, would it perhaps be a good suggestion that there be topsoil testing added to the bid AND also if it is discovered and shown that the topsoil that is first placed in the median and when the planting is scheduled to begin and it is discovered that the topsoil is not suitable for planting, then who is paying for, providing and doing the work to remove the unsuitable topsoil and place the appropriate topsoil - our question is who will pay to remove the unsuitable topsoil, (if it occurs) and who will pay for the materials and labor to replace it with suitable topsoil? We are in agreement and want to thank ODOT for recognizing that this is a serious problem with installing landscape plants, but when the problem arises, who will "foot the bill" to correct the problem?

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Question Number: 2

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## Ohio Department of Transportation Prebid Questions

Question Submitted: 7/11/2007

Question Number: 3

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**First of all, whenever "the contractor" is referred to in a plan note it is in reference to the contractor performing the work. The general contractor is ultimately responsible for compliance to the plan requirements but he has the option of placing the topsoil himself or making this part of the subconsultants contract. Testing of the topsoil is incidental to the topsoil pay item just as it is for aggregate, concrete, asphalt and other materials. Refer to Item 653 in the Construction and Materials Specifications Book. The contractor's question states that "there is no mention anywhere of who is to pay for the possible removal of unsuitable topsoil and the cost to buy and place the proper topsoil, should this occur." The "Landscape Construction Notes" refer to the removal of unsuitable subgrade, not topsoil. Given the requirements for topsoil which is to be furnished and placed, if unsuitable topsoil needs to be removed, it should not have been placed to begin with and will be the contractor's responsibility to correct (i.e. remove and replace with suitable topsoil). The "Landscape Construction Notes" also mentions that any unsuitable subgrade "shall be removed to a depth no less than 6" below the bottom of the root ball when the plant is properly set at the required grade." This does not mean that the entire area needs to be excavated and replaced. It just means that when the hole is dug for the plant and it is found that the subgrade is unsuitable, then the hole is to be dug another 6" and suitable topsoil is to be placed in the hole. This being the case the removal of unsuitable subgrade is incidental to the planting and the placement of suitable topsoil will be included in the topsoil pay item. If the topsoil quantity placed is different than the quantity shown in the plans then the pay quantity will be adjusted accordingly. The subgrade mentioned in the "Landscape Construction Notes" is referring to the existing subgrade, so the certified landscape technician from the landscape contractor cannot be present when it is placed, it already exists.**

Question Submitted: 7/9/2007

Question Number: 4

Ref 24, Curb Type 2 B detail sheet 3 shows type 1 detail. Detail shows 6" curb sitting on finish asphalt. Should this be tied to something? Specs use dowels in concrete base but does not say anything about asphalt. Thanks

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