

Staff Report

LANDSCAPE STANDARDS TEXT AMENDMENT UPDATE

April 11, 2017

At the November 15, 2016 City Council meeting the Council directed staff to redirect efforts from creating a "points based system" ordinance to a more traditional, standards based approach for updating the City's landscape standards. The proposed revisions are a comprehensive rewrite of the standards found within the Zoning Ordinance as Chapter 29 Article 4 Development Standards (29.403). In addition to Article 4, there are related landscape standards that apply to specific base zoning districts and overlays that will be modified in relation to the Article 4 changes as necessary.

The City's current landscaping standards, in essence, are based upon the concept of screening rather than quality aesthetics and visual interest. The current standards provide two options for screening with shrubs and trees and include requirements for perimeter parking lot landscaping, internal parking lot landscaping, and apartment building front foundation landscaping. Additionally, parking lots require tree islands or medians based upon the configuration of the parking lots and number of aisles. Most commercial and industrial base zoning districts also require a minimal amount of landscaped area (15%-20%) on a site, for which any type of landscaping will count towards meeting this requirement (e.g., parking lots, front yards, detention areas). The findings from the past year of research and analysis are that our current standards are similar to how many cities approach landscaping requirements with a focus on screening and some parking lot landscaping requirements, but that the City's planting requirements do not generally succeed in providing for high quality landscaping. As a result, staff and the development community believe changes to the standards could be beneficial to all interests.

Staff has prepared a set of draft standards for the City Council's review as Attachment D. Attachment D reflects the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation and is formatted to reflect a draft ordinance for public review. If City Council directs staff to proceed with the draft standards, a final draft ordinance will be prepared and formatted for inclusion within the Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to the draft ordinance, staff has prepared a matrix of standards and categorized landscape issues to assist in the evaluation of why certain standards are proposed to be changed (Attachment B). The matrix consists of five categories representing the main areas of the updates – Screening, Plant Vitality, Visual Interest & Aesthetics, Sustainability, and Designer Flexibility.

The overall approach to the new standards is an emphasis on yard landscaping for buildings and parking lots, increased parking lot tree shading and landscaping, plant variety, allowances for stormwater treatment measures, and flexibility in administration by staff.

The complete package of proposed changes *deemphasizes* screening of parking lots in an effort to promote flexibility and visual interest. **Current screening requirements that are frequently employed within the City would be eliminated for commercial and industrial sites to focus on front yard and interior parking lot requirements.** Residential sites would maintain their requirements for screening, but the overall planting standards for these sites would be adjusted to add site landscaping requirements and modify the front yard planting standards.

Work Group

In the time since the City Council gave direction in November, staff conducted two outreach meetings with the landscape ordinance workgroup in January and March. At the January workgroup meeting staff presented a list of proposed standards to the workgroup that focused on landscaping of front yards and parking lots for commercial areas. The standards included eliminating side and rear yard requirements in favor of 10% parking lot area landscaping, large tree plantings for parking lots, and a decorative shrub and grass requirement for front yard areas between buildings and streets. Staff also discussed the widening of the minimum front yard planter to 10 feet from 5 feet and how to address parking lot configuration issues. The proposed standards allow the Planning Director to waive up to 10% of required parking to add landscaping to a site. Staff worked to further refine the standards from the work group meeting for the first Planning & Zoning Commission review on February 1st.

The Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed commercial requirements on February 1st and then discussed residential options at three following meetings. After reviewing the standards with the Planning & Zoning Commission in February, developers expressed concern on residential sites over potential increases in landscaping required for the site overall and specifically within the front yards. Justin Dodge of the Hunziker Companies represented their interests in the landscaping standards updates and had concerns about increased requirements and costs overall for residential planting requirements. Additionally, they felt it was important to step into the changes and be open to reviewing the new requirements after a year to see how they work out.

The Planning & Zoning Commission requested that staff meet with the work group representatives again to further discuss residential standards. Staff met with the work group on March 1st to receive feedback and worked to develop new front yard planting regulations targeted specifically at residential sites. At the March 15th Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, staff presented a new set of residential standards along with a draft landscape ordinance for Section 29.403 of the Municipal Code. At its April 5th meeting, the Planning & Zoning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the proposed commercial parking lot and front yard standards and residential standards

presented in March. More complete discussion of the Commission's discussion is included within the review of the residential standards.

Proposed Standards

The proposed draft ordinance divides the requirements into a complete list of commercial site standards and residential site standards, due to differences in how some of the standards would be applied. Additionally, there are general requirements for plantings, inspections, etc. that apply to all types of sites.

Commercial

Current commercial site landscape standards primarily deal with parking lot screening and internal parking lot landscaping for 20 or more interior parking spaces. Parking lot screening requirements vary based on neighboring zones and distance of the parking lot from the street.

The proposed package of commercial parking lot and site landscaping changes affects all elements of a site. The proposed changes are based on the premise that front yard landscaping is a priority for all sites and that, with a redefined 10% parking lot area landscaping requirement, many of the objectives of the landscape standards update can be achieved. Development flexibility is granted through the configuration of landscape areas, elimination of required perimeter plantings, and substitution plantings for shrubs. The landscape plantings are enhanced by new requirements for a minimum 10-foot front yard landscaping area (not just for parking areas), emphasis on planting of large overstory shade trees, allowances for storm water treatment in landscaped areas, and minimum soil quality standards. The parking lot landscaping requirements will also require more trees to be planted within a parking lot, rather than just along the perimeter, and eliminate practices of parking lot configurations that reduced landscape requirements. The proposed planting ratios in commercial front yards are 8 shrubs per 1000 square feet of required landscape area and 12 grasses per 1000 square feet of required landscape area. This applies all across the frontage of a commercial site within the front yard area. The planting requirements are approximately 25% more than the current L1 screening standard adjacent to parking lots, and are a completely new standard for yards in front of buildings. The tree spacing is the same as today, but requires larger trees.

Staff has prepared a table as Attachment A to provide a comparative assessment of landscaping for a prototypical 80-space parking lot site that does not require medians. The comparative table helps to describe the current basic requirements and the proposed front yard and 10% of parking lot area standards. Staff settled on this example as a representative scenario of how commercial development would be significantly impacted by the proposed changes. Staff reached this conclusion after reviewing a number of recent site development plan approvals, such as the North Grand Avenue Super Wal-Mart, 3505 and 3515 Lincoln Way Mixed Use, and industrial sites along east Lincoln Way and South Bell.

An 80 space parking lot could serve a 24,000 square foot office/retail building or a 9,000 square foot sit-down restaurant. Such a development would likely be a medium sized project that requires 1 to 3 acres of land. Staff believes that larger parking lots that have required 15-foot medians (e.g. Super Wal-Mart) will be substantially the same in their design layout with the new standards. Smaller sites will vary greatly because of dimensional differences of each lot and how the reductions in side and rear landscaping, along with the increase in other landscaping, will affect a site. However, smaller sized parking lots will have internal tree requirements that do not currently exist.

Sustainability for parking lots was one of the primary purposes of the update. This factor was identified in the process principally for addressing heat island effect, storm water runoff, and at a secondary level plant health and maintenance needs. The primary standards addressing sustainability are the 10% of parking lot area and the requirement for planting large canopy trees. Staff has also adjusted the tree planting requirement of a minimum dimension of 7 feet to help encourage trees reaching their full maturity at a quicker rate. A parking lot overhang allowance of 18 inches is proposed to allow for a reduced parking stall depth when the abutting landscape planter is a minimum of 7 feet in width. Staff has also included the option for 10% of required parking to be waived to meet landscape requirements in parking lots.

Finally, screening is addressed in very few instances in this proposal. One of the main comments from the work group was whether there was a need to require shrubbery based screening along all property lines where there is parking. Most screening requirements are gone in the draft proposal. Screening is addressed through allowing the use of berms/small walls in front yards as well as providing appropriate screening between commercial and residential zones if it is needed. Staff will need to exercise more discretion in site plan review for when screening may be important, rather than require it with all projects. Staff also has some discretion to make adjustments to plantings requirements due to unique conditions, such as overhead power conflicts and topographic conditions. It is recognized that discretion at the staff level could become problematic in ensuring consistency over time. Other options for flexibility would be to allow ZBA minor exceptions for defined circumstances.

Residential

The priorities for residential landscaping include parking lot sustainability, parking lot screening, visual interest, softening of building mass and height, and livability with on-site open space or amenity areas. The proposed residential landscape changes incorporate the same standards for parking lot landscaping as are proposed for commercial sites, but provide a separate set of standards for front yard landscaping.

The City's current standards for multi-family residential property are focused on apartment foundation plantings and parking lot screening. Apartments are permitted uses within the RH, RM, and FS-RM zoning districts. The standards are applied to group living or sorority and fraternity buildings as well. Apartments built as part of mixed use commercial development have been treated as commercial sites, rather than residential sites (e.g. Campustown, Lincoln Way Mixed Use).

The proposed residential standards require trees across the entire site at one tree per 50 linear feet (LF) and create two separate front yard standards. The first front yard component involves a calculation of 12 shrubs for every 50 linear feet along the parking lot front yard. The second front yard planting component is similar to a building foundation planting requirement. The planting standard is a ratio of 9 shrubs per 50 linear feet of total street frontage, exempting parking area frontage.

One difference between this standard and the current foundation plantings is that it does not emphasize plantings up against the buildings. Plantings near the building will still be permitted and would also be allowed to include rock mulch when within 5 feet of the building. Grasses are allowed to be substituted with shrubs at a 3 to 1 planting ratio. The required plantings are still allowed to be placed in various configurations and clusters throughout the yard area while being discouraged from being a uniform row of shrubs or grasses.

Staff has also calculated real project comparisons of the planting quantities from current requirements to the proposed plantings in *Attachment C*. Four of these sites are “RH” Residential High Density sites and two are “RM” Residential Medium Density sites. The sites vary in size from multiple acres to slightly less than half an acre. Each site was looked at using the site layout as approved with regard to general site layout and did not presume the plan would be done differently with new standards. The table illustrates the difference in planting densities of shrubs and trees along with listed site size and developed density.

Additional on-site landscaping was considered as a separate landscaping requirement beyond front yards and parking lot landscaping for residential sites. The Commission considered adding a base zone minimum landscape percentage to RH or to consider adding a usable open space requirement. After a lengthy discussion of the effects of the new parking lot standards on adding internal landscaping, trade-offs of requiring more green space and planting materials compared to building space, and comments on increased costs from the development community, the Commission ultimately chose not to recommend additional new standards for overall site based landscaping beyond the new parking lot and front yard requirements.

Industrial Buffer

A unique issue to the General Industrial interface with residential is the L4 buffer requirement. This is a developer concern for a handful of properties along Bell Avenue. Current requirements for a high wall screen (L4 Standard) call for an 8-foot high masonry wall with trees every 50 linear feet within a 10-foot planter when a GI zone borders a residential zone. Developers would prefer an option to widen the buffer and use berms and landscaping in lieu of a masonry wall. This could be accomplished in consideration of how a site is developed and the proximity of active areas to the abutting residential. Generally, the closer the uses are to the residential site, the more restrictive the screening design would need to be. The further away uses are located

from one another, the more flexibility in screening options would be allowed. A wall may still be needed if the uses are located close together near property lines, but a combination of other screening methods may be appropriate at a great distance, such as with larger rear or side yards or when an outlot exists between the uses.

General Requirements

One element that has been carried over from the points based system research is the need to have higher quality soil as part of landscape planters to support plant vitality. The proposed standards include language that requires 5% organic content as a landscaping standard. The organic content in soil is the chief ingredient in helping to ensure plants thrive in a timely and healthy manner. Proof of organic content or use of top soil will be required from an applicant prior to building occupancy.

Staff has also included new general standards that address tree spacing to ensure the required larger trees have space to thrive on a site. This includes spacing of between 10 and 15 feet from buildings and a minimum of 3 feet from paving. The L3 planter requirement is essentially the same with new language to promote a fence or the use of high shrubs, especially abutting single-family homes. One common problem on infill sites is that a site may be raised for development and the perimeter planter is not level, which results in a very poor environment for plantings to meet their screening purpose. The landscape standards now indicate that a planter area must be level to ensure that fences and plants remain upright after installation.

Next Steps:

Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on acceptance of the new standards before proceeding to finalize an ordinance and publish notice of a public hearing. With City Council's direction to proceed, staff would work to have the first reading of the ordinance for new landscape standards on the May 24th City Council agenda.

Attachment A- Commercial Parking Lot Summary

Commercial Prototype Parking Summary

80 parking space lot (200x140) 28,000 sq. ft., site size 1 to 3 acres

| Requirement | Current | New |
|---|---|--|
| Landscape Area % of Parking Lot | 10% of total parking, exclude loading areas | 10% of total, including loading areas |
| Parking lot 15-foot median | if 3 double loaded aisles | same, adjusted area allowances |
| Islands w/trees** | 1/20 (interior only) | 1 per 200 sq. ft. of the 10% required landscape area |
| Perimeter trees** | 1 per 50 LF | None, parking trees may be planted on perimeter |
| Perimeter shrubs (L2 5-foot wide) | 1 per 4 feet | none |
| Front Yard trees** | 1 per 50 LF of parking | 1 per 50 LF of entire site |
| Front Yard shrubs (L1 at 10 feet) | approx. 9/1,000 | 8/1,000* |
| Front Yard ornamental grasses | none | 12/1,000* |
| Est. Canopy Coverage for parking lot shading (mature avg. 30 ft diameter) | 5%-14% | 25% |
| Est. Landscape Area (Req. Parking and Front) | 10-12% | 15-17% |
| Total Landscaping Front and Parking Area | <u>Total Trees:</u> 12 Front 4, Parking 8 <u>Shrub Total:</u> 88 front 18, side 70 | <u>Total Trees:</u> 18 Front 4, Parking 14 <u>Total Shrubs:</u> 16 <u>Total Grasses:</u> 24 |

Front means the area between both parking and building, minimum of 10 feet planter area proposed, whereas L2 at 5 ft or L1 at 10 ft parking only is allowed now

**New ratios and Developer may substitute plantings of shrubs and grasses.*

*** Current requirements do not specify tree size, large canopy vs. ornamental. New requirements focus on large canopy trees for shading*

Attachment B
Comparative Evaluation of Landscape Changes

| <u>Parking Lot and Front Yard Landscaping</u> | <u>Screening</u> | <u>Landscape Planting Vitality</u> | <u>Visual Interest & Aesthetics</u> | <u>Sustainability</u> | <u>Designer Flexibility</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Front yard planters changed to be at least 10 feet in depth, Planning Director may reduce to 7 feet in certain circumstances, such as meeting required parking (<i>previously as low as 5 feet for parking, none required in front of buildings</i>) | | X | X | | X |
| 10% of parking lot area and loading area required to include landscaping | | | X | X | |
| Perimeter side and rear landscaping changed to <i>no required</i> screening between commercial and industrial properties with a 3-foot setback (<i>Prior L2 standard of 5 feet and shrubs planted 4 feet on center with trees</i>) | | | | | X |
| Parking lot landscaping area of 10% does not include required front yard landscaping, only islands, side or rear planters, or medians count towards the 10% | | | X | | X |
| The required parking lot landscaping must include 1 tree per 200 square feet of required landscape area. Tree plantings must continue to be dispersed across the parking lot area. (<i>prior requirement of 1/20 stalls interior plus perimeter trees 1/50 LF</i>) | | X | X | X | |
| New plant diversity requirement with no more than 50% of one type | | X | X | | X |
| Discretion for Planning Director to approve alternative designs for unique site conditions. | | | X | | X |
| Allow vehicle overhang of 18-inches into enlarged 7-foot planter areas (<i>effectively making paved parking stall 17.5 feet rather than 19 feet</i>) | | X | | X | X |

| <u>Parking Lot and Front Yard Landscaping</u> | <u>Screening</u> | <u>Landscape Planting Vitality</u> | <u>Visual Interest & Aesthetics</u> | <u>Sustainability</u> | <u>Designer Flexibility</u> |
|---|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tree planting require large canopy trees, unless reduction for stormwater treatment features. | | | X | X | |
| All trees must be planted in areas no less than 7 feet in any one direction, interior islands minimum of 150 sq. ft. <i>(previously 5 feet on sides, 9x16 for islands)</i> | | | X | X | |
| Parking lot landscaped median of 15 feet required when there are 3 double loaded parking aisles changed to allow alternative configuration of the 15-foot landscape median by substituting an equal area formatted as oversized landscape islands, e.g the square footage of median landscaping may be dispersed within the parking lot in the pattern of parking spaces minimum sized islands of 400 sq. ft. | | | X | X | X |
| Landscaped 15-foot medians changed to be equal to the average length of double loaded stalls. Require 30% of the landscaped median to be decorative or ornamental plantings rather than just ground cover (turf). Trees still required at 1 per 50 linear feet, in addition to other required tree planters. | | X | X | X | |
| If treating stormwater in parking lot, required parking lot landscaping can be reduced by 20%. At least 30% of stormwater must be treated within or abutting the parking lot as part of a bio-swale, rain garden, etc. <i>Detention ponds would likely not meet this on their own.</i> | | | X | X | X |
| Planter areas less than 5 feet in width with turf do not count as required landscaping in base zone requirements. | | X | X | X | |

| <u>Parking Lot and Front Yard Landscaping</u> | <u>Screening</u> | <u>Landscape Planting Vitality</u> | <u>Visual Interest & Aesthetics</u> | <u>Sustainability</u> | <u>Designer Flexibility</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Allowing shrubs or grasses to be planted in parking lot landscaping if not able to fit within the front yard. | | | X | | X |
| Transitional screening between residential and commercial properties requiring a high screen or 6-foot fence rather than shrubs. | X | | | | |
| Front yard landscaping planting ratios will only be calculated on the first 30 feet of the depth of the yard, regardless of actual setback of building or parking further than 30 feet. 'Yard' is the area from the property line to the edge of paving or façade. | | | X | | X |
| Front yard landscape ratios will be calculated on a 1 per 50 lineal foot standard for trees and a 8 per 1000 square foot standard for shrubs and a 12 per 1000 square foot standard grasses. Allow for substitutions of shrubs and grasses. | | X | X | | X |
| Front yard landscaping required between buildings and the street and parking lots and the street. Landscaping can include front foundation plantings along commercial and industrial properties and wrap corners of site if constrained. | X | X | X | | |
| Modify all planting requirements for the front yards and allow for grass, shrubs, clustering, etc. Include substitution options. | | | X | | X |
| Berms with trees planted on them can count as a substitution for the standard landscape ratios. | X | | X | | X |
| Landscaping required in areas underneath overhead utilities will allow substitution of understory trees and replacement landscaping. | | | | | X |
| Planning Director discretion to require additional plantings for screening of a site when adjacent to residential use or other sensitive commercial user. | X | X | X | | |

| <u>Parking Lot and Front Yard Landscaping</u> | <u>Screening</u> | <u>Landscape Planting Vitality</u> | <u>Visual Interest & Aesthetics</u> | <u>Sustainability</u> | <u>Designer Flexibility</u> |
|--|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Soil quality requirements of 5% organic content and conditioning within required planter areas. | | X | X | X | |
| Allow Planning Director to waive up to 10% of required parking within parking lots that exceed 30 spaces to increase landscape area. | | | | X | X |
| Require a minimum of a 3-foot setback of parking and maneuvering areas from side and rear lot lines. None require along alleys. | | | | | X |
| Apartment front yard landscaping increase for shrubs to 9 per 50 LF from 6 per 60 LF | | | X | | X |
| Maintaining the perimeter L3 high shrub fence requirement for residential. | X | | | | |
| Requiring Highway frontage tree plantings for apartments. | X | | X | | |
| Require Improvements to planters and parking areas with non-conformities. | | X | X | | |
| Allow major site plans and special use permits to permit alternative landscape plans for a site. | | | X | | X |
| Planning & Housing Director may reduce or modify plantings for unique conditions or outlots. | | | | | X |
| Modify the L4 general industrial buffer requirement to allow incorporation of berms and vegetation based on use separation. | | | | | X |

Attachment C- Residential Landscape Standard

Summary of current residential standards:

1. Parking lot minimum planting area along sides and rear: 5-foot "L3" High Screen Buffer (6 Feet in height) with a tree every 50 feet.
2. No parking between the building and the street
3. Parking lot front yard screening minimum of L1 or L2 buffer for street side of parking, requires low shrubs and trees.
4. Parking lot interior landscaping follows commercial requirements that are dependent upon configuration of two double loaded aisles, or more, to require tree islands. Without double loaded interior spaces, no internal trees required.
5. Building foundation plantings required for every 60 feet of frontage, 50% of building façade must be screened by the plantings, includes evergreen and deciduous trees with multiple options for tree plantings for every 60 feet of frontage.

In addition to these universal standards, the FS-RM zoning district requires a 10% usable open space area within the development in addition to the high screen, perimeter parking screen and foundation screening requirements. The 10% usable open space has been accommodated on-site or off-site in a common area. Notably, the University Impact Overlays require 150% of additional landscaping beyond base requirements.

Comparison Table (next page)

Approved Site Plans Comparison Table

| <u>Address</u> | <u>Site Size</u> <small>1 acre=43,560 sq ft</small> | <u>Number of Units</u> | <u>**Current Required Base Vegetation total of parking and front yards</u> | <u>*** Proposed New Standards</u> |
|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 135 Campus Drive (RH-UIO-West) | 19,774 Square Feet | 9 Units/24 bedrooms (20 du/ac) | 7 Trees, 61 Shrubs | 9 trees, 66 shrubs |
| 1407 South Grand Ave (RH) "The Grove" | 573,685 Square Feet | 217 Units/560 bedrooms (16.5 du/ac) | 97 trees/ 474 Shrubs | 119 Trees, 530 Shrubs |
| 4130 Lincoln Swing (RH) | 164,657 Square Feet | 85 Units/260 bedrooms (20du/ac) | 25 trees/ 143 Shrubs | 48 trees, 163 shrubs |
| 3920 Maricopa Drive (RH) | 74,573 Square Feet | 48 Units/60 bedrooms (28du/ac) | 9 Trees/ 91 Shrubs | 16 trees, 95 Shrubs |
| 2105 Cottonwood (FS-RM) | 33,798 Square Feet | 12 Units/20 bedrooms (15.5du/ac) | 7 trees/ 31 Shrubs ****7 trees/ 43 Shrubs (*L3) | 9 trees, 37 shrubs |
| Mortenson Heights (FS-RM) | 384,399 Square Feet | 180 Units/345 bedrooms (20.4 du/ac) | 34 Trees/ 120 Shrubs ****91 Trees/ 325 Shrubs(*L3) | 94 Trees, 123 Shrubs |

** The developed sites may contain additional landscaping that exceeds the current minimum standards and are not necessarily accounted for in this table
 *L3 screening was not required at 2105 Cottonwood & Mortensen Heights due to garages and location of parking. 2105 Cottonwood & Mortensen Heights approved under major site development plans.
 *** Proposed standard tree planting totals assume L3 planting areas and parking lot landscape areas can be combined together.
 **** 2105 Cotton & Mortensen Heights approved under Major Site Development Plan with additional landscaping.

CHAPTER 29 ARTICLE 403

29.403 Landscaping Standards

Purpose:

The purpose of this section is to protect and promote the public health, safety and general welfare by requiring landscaping in relation to development of property in such a manner to ameliorate effects of wind, heat, and glare; to act as a valuable component of natural drainage systems, to improve storm water runoff quality, to help clean and refresh air by returning oxygen to the atmosphere, to conserve and stabilize property values through screening of incompatible uses and activities, and to promote a healthy and aesthetically interesting natural environment as part of the City to create an attractive and desirable community for the City's many visitors, residents, and employees.

Non-Residential Landscaping Standards

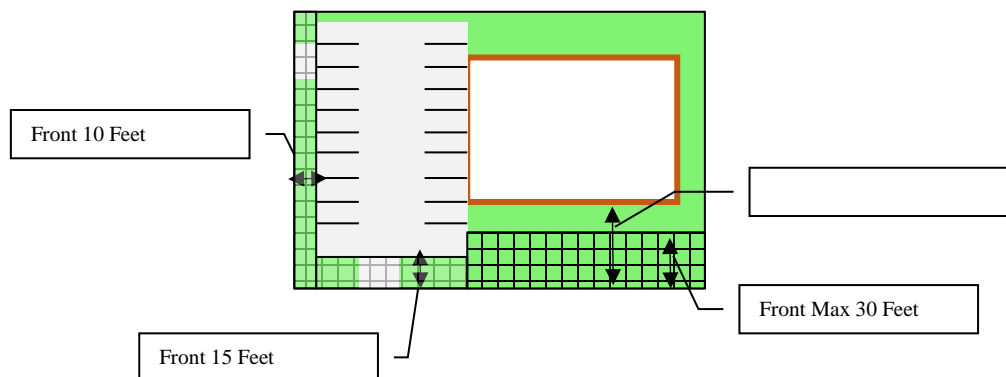
Non-residential landscaping standards are designed to be applied on commercial, industrial or other non-residential sites. The minimum areas required to be landscaped are listed in the Zone Development Standards Tables for Base Zones. In the case of Special Purpose Districts and Overlay Zones, landscaping, screening and buffer standards are set forth in the applicable Article. Required landscaping and screening of Article IV must meet the levels referenced in each applicable Zone Development Standards Table, supplemental standards, and general development standards of Chapter 29.

A. Front Yard Landscaping

Front yard landscaping standards are designed to provide decorative and well thought out landscaping between streets and parking lots and between streets and non-residential buildings. These landscape standards are a combination of low level decorative plantings and significant trees arranged in various styles that complement and enhance the general site. The front yard, for the purposes of calculating front yard landscaping, is defined as the area between the building and any abutting street and the area between the street and a parking area.

1. Front Yard Planting Requirements

- a. The landscaped front yard for parking lots shall be a minimum of 10 feet in depth from the property line to the first edge of paving unless the base zone specifies a greater setback. The Planning Director may approve a reduction in the front yard planter area depth to 7 feet in certain circumstances in order that a site may achieve dimensional requirements of parking stalls for required parking. When a reduction is approved, the minimum landscaped area shall be calculated by the original 10 foot requirement. The maximum depth of landscaped front yard for the purpose of calculating landscaping is 30 feet.
- b. The minimum landscaped front yard in relation to buildings shall conform to the requirements of the base zone. The maximum depth of landscaped front yard for the purpose of calculating landscaping is 30 feet.



- c. The front yard landscaped area requires minimum base plantings of 1 overstory tree per 50 lineal feet of street frontage and for the plantings of a combination of 8 shrubs and 12 decorative grasses per 1,000 square feet of required front yard area. The front yard area is calculated across the entire frontage of a site regardless of interruptions, such as walkways, encroachments, or driveways.

In some circumstances where screening of residential properties are a priority for the front yard, the planting requirements may be increased for either a denser planting of materials or to require larger planting materials of an L3 nature to provide a taller and denser screen of site activities and parking.

Alternatively, substitution planting choices may be approved by the Planning Director as outlined below. Additionally, if overhead utilities are in place, the Planning Director may approve for overstory trees to be substituted with alternative locations for planting of trees or for the planting of smaller trees. The property owner may propose substitute planting plans for the trees and shrubs as follows.

2. Alternative Front Yard Plantings

In order to promote design interest and diversity, a property owner may propose substitution of landscaping to enhance the front yard area. Substitutions that promote sustainability, color and texture are desirable. Arrangement of plantings and use of substitution landscaping that diminish any necessary parking lot screening effects will not be approved.

- a. Front yard plantings must contain a minimum of four (4) overstory trees within each front yard of a site before allowing for substitutions. For sites that exceed 200 linear feet of frontage, ornamental trees may be substituted at a rate of 2 for every 1 overstory tree for every required tree after the first four trees. No more than 50% of the total trees planted to meet 1 per 50 linear foot standard shall be ornamental. For example, a 300 foot frontage would require either 6 overstory trees or as few as 4 overstory trees with 4 ornamental trees. A 500 foot frontage would require 10 overstory trees or as few as 7 overstory trees with 6 ornamental trees.
 - i. Evergreen trees may be used in place of ornamental trees. No more than 30% of the total trees shall be evergreen trees unless specifically required to assist in screening of a site.
- b. Storm Water Treatment Features
When a site includes a landscaped based stormwater treatment feature of a bio-cell, rain garden, or bio-swale, an alternative configuration of ground cover and shrubs and grasses can be approved when the design provides for storm water quality treatment and includes plantings with visual interest within and along the feature.



c. Shrub/Grass Substitutions

- i. Front yard shrub or ornamental grass plantings may be substituted by up to 5% of the total plantings with flower species of similar size or coverage.
- ii. Large landscaped undulations or berms may be incorporated into the landscape design with an allowance for a 35% reduction in required plantings of shrubs and grasses.
- iii. Additional Ornamental grasses may be substituted for shrubs at a 3 grass to 1 ratio. No more than 75% of required front yard decorative plantings may be ornamental grasses.
- iv. Decorative landscape planters with decorative ground covers, flower beds, or similar plantings with interesting color and textures may be substituted at a rate of 40 square feet for 4 shrubs or 6 grasses.

c. Design and Configuration

- i. Required front yard landscaping is encouraged to take on a variety of configurations including clustering, layered rows, alternating patterns or other designs. Front yard plantings are to be arranged in manner that is well dispersed throughout the yard area, may be clustered for interest, and needed parking lot screening. Although clustering and creating areas of interest is encouraged, some landscaping shall be dispersed throughout a yard and not all materials may be shifted or concentrated to one area of the yard.
 - ii. *Plantings may be provided in any areas between the building or parking lot and the street when the landscaping is primarily arranged to be publicly visible from the street or upon immediate entry to a site.*
 - iii. In circumstances where there is a constraint on plantings due to space, the Planning Director may authorize front yard landscaping to be placed in areas near side property lines, wrapped around buildings, or placed within parking lot islands closest to the front yard.
- d. Front yards shall be maintained with landscaping however, walkways, plazas, ornamental features, are permitted within the front yard, but they do not allow for a reduction in the calculated front yard landscaping.
- e. Diversity requirements
Required front yard landscaping must contain no more than 50% of one type per plant family. A minimum of 4 types of plants per required plant family are required in a yard area. A plant family is defined for the purposes of diversity requirements as a shrub, ornamental grass, tree or groundcover.

B. Landscaping Requirements for Surface Parking and Loading Areas.

Parking lot landscaping standards are designed to provide an aesthetically pleasing parking lot design combined with the support and encouragement of sustainability through increased shading from trees and allowing for stormwater treatment design within parking lots.

1. Surface Parking Lot Landscaped Area

- a. Parking lots must contain landscaped area equal to 10% of the total gross parking lot and loading areas. The total gross area of a parking lot is defined as the gross area of the paved surface measured from the back of the curb.
 - b. Overstory shade trees must be planted at a rate of 1 tree for every 200 square feet of required landscape area. Trees must be dispersed across the entire parking lot area and not over concentrated to any one area of the parking lot.
- 2. All shade trees must be planted in landscape planters/islands no less than 150 square feet in area.
 - a. Perimeter planters abutting a parking lot that are 5 feet in depth or greater may count towards the 10% area requirements. Note that to meet the dispersal requirement a site may need to exceed 10% landscaped area in and abutting a site.
- 3. Perimeter parking tree planter areas must be at least 7 feet in depth in any one direction may satisfy the tree planting requirement. If parking lot landscaping is placed in perimeter parking areas the landscaping must be located within 10 feet of the edge of paving to count towards the required 10% area.
 - a. Front yard landscaping shall not count toward parking lot landscaping. Evergreen trees are not permitted as a required parking lot landscape tree.
 - b. The Planning Director may waive up to 10% of required parking stalls within parking lots that exceed 30 spaces to increase landscape area.
 - c. The Planning Director may approve a reduction of up to three required parking stalls to accommodate a vehicular cross-access route to adjoining properties.
- 2. Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping and Bufferyards
 - a. Side and rear perimeter bufferyard landscaping is required for screening of the parking lot and use of a site when it abuts a dissimilar use or zoning.
 - 1. When abutting a residential site high screen standard shall be applied (add cross reference). In some circumstances the base zone may require additional width or a greater level of buffering.
 - 2. During Site Development Plan review the City may require additional bufferyard plantings when a commercial zoned or industrially zoned lot is used for a dissimilar use.
 - b. When a perimeter buffer is not required, parking areas must be setback a minimum of three from all side and rear property lines.
 - c. Perimeter planter areas are required to be landscaped. Planter areas less than five feet in width shall not include turf grass.
 - d. In single aisle double loaded parking lots with 3 or less required trees, the trees may all be placed on the perimeter.
- 3. Parking Lot Medians

In addition to the 10% landscaped area requirement, a landscaped median is required for every 3 continuous double loaded parking drive aisles.

 - a. A required median must be a minimum of 15 feet wide with a minimum length equal to the average drive aisle length of the double loaded aisles.

- b. A landscaped median must include 1 overstory shade tree for every 50 linear feet of median. The trees must be located within an area that is a minimum of 7 feet in any one direction and totals 150 sq. ft. of area with impervious surfaces.
 - c. Landscaped medians must include a minimum of 30% of the area of the median landscaped with ornamental or decorative landscaping that does not include turf.
 - d. The median may include a walkway when it does not encroach upon the placement of trees.
 - e. Landscape medians may be configured into oversized landscape islands with a minimum size of 400 square feet for each island and a total area of all oversized islands that equal the required area of the median. The oversized islands must be located within the parking lot and may not be configured along perimeter of a parking lot.
2. Stormwater Treatment Credit in Parking Lots
If treating stormwater within a parking lot landscaped area, the required parking lot landscaping in this ordinance may be substituted by up to 20%. To be eligible for this reduction, the storm water treatment features must treat at least 30% of total site storm water volume needed to meet storm water quality standards of Chapter 5b. The storm water measures must be within or abutting the parking lot as part of a bio-swale, rain garden or other bio-retention treatment process. Detention ponds are excluded from this consideration.
 3. Parking Overhang Allowance
In circumstances where a reduced parking stall depth is desired an 18 inch overhang allowance may be granted to allow for a parking stall depth of no less than 17.5 feet (17 foot stall plus 6 inch curb) when the abutting planer area is a minimum of 7 feet in width. An overhang allowance is not permitted for compact parking spaces. (Note this will be added to the parking section)
 3. Loading Areas
As part of the parking lot requirements, a loading area shall require landscaping equal to 10% of the loading area. The required landscape area shall be provided adjacent to or in the impervious space where the loading area is located. A loading area is defined as an impervious area used for maneuvering vehicles but not considered parking or drive aisle. Loading areas are typically areas used principally for the loading or unloading of trucks.
 4. Detention Ponds
Detention ponds must be unfenced and contain decorative landscaping elements such as tiered retaining walls, decorative rock features and plantings to be eligible to be counted toward base zone landscape percentage. On 'wet' detention ponds the area of water may not count towards the base zone landscape percentage.

Landscaping Requirements for Apartment Dwellings.

A. Front Yard

Front yard landscaping standards are designed to provide decorative and well thought out landscaping between streets and parking lots and between streets and non-residential buildings. These landscape standards are a combination of low level decorative plantings and significant trees arranged in various styles that complement and enhance the general site. The front yard, for the purposes of calculating front yard landscaping, is defined as the area between the building and any abutting street and the area between the street and a parking area.

1. Front Yard Planting Requirements

- a. The minimum landscaped front yard setback for buildings shall conform to the requirements of the base zone for principal buildings.
- b. Parking in residential areas may not be between the building and the street. The landscaped front yard for parking lots shall be a minimum depth equal to the building setback of the zone measured from the property line to the first edge of paving. The maximum depth of landscaped front yard for the purpose of calculating landscaping is 30 feet.
- c. The minimum front yard landscaped area requires base plantings of 1 overstory tree per 50 linear feet of street frontage. Up to 50% of required trees may be substituted at the following ratios:
 - Two (2) ornamental (understory) trees, or
 - Two (2) evergreen trees, or
 - One (1) ornamental (understory) tree and one (1) evergreen tree
- d. Front yards between the street and parking lot require a planting density that provide for a moderate level of screening with 12 shrubs per 50 linear feet of street frontage associated with parking areas. A pro rata share of plantings may be substituted with ornamental grasses at a 3 to 1 ratio of grasses to shrubs it provides for visual interest and the desired level of screening. No more than 75% of required front yard decorative plantings may be ornamental grasses.
- e. Front yards between buildings and streets and areas elsewhere in the front yard require the planting of shrubs at a rate of 9 shrubs with a mix of deciduous and evergreen for every 50 linear feet.

Up to 35% of required shrubs can be substituted with ornamental grass. A mix of shrub types is required between evergreen and deciduous. The majority of the building facade length should have plantings within 15 feet of the building. Uniform spacing along the foundation with a single row of plantings is discouraged, grouping and designated planter areas are preferred for the building front yard landscaping.

The Planning Director may approve an alternative front yard planting scheme in place of shrubs that includes larger shrub species and understory trees in lieu of low growing shrubs. The Planning Director may also approve decorative planter beds in lieu of some of the required shrub plantings.

- f. If overhead utilities are in place the Planning Director may approve for overstory trees to be substituted with alternative locations for planting of trees or for the planting of smaller trees.
- g. Required front yard trees may be placed within the public right-of-way if there is a City standard parking area along the street frontage and there are no street trees are located along the frontage of the site and no overhead utilities are in place. The Planning Director in consultation with the Streets and Maintenance Manager, or designee, must approve the proposed tree species as appropriate to the City's street tree standards and its placement.
- h. Large landscaped undulations or berms may be incorporated into the landscape design with an allowance for a 35% reduction in required plantings of shrubs and grasses.
- i. When a site includes a landscaped based stormwater treatment feature of a bio-cell, rain garden, or bio-swale, an alternative configuration of ground cover and shrubs and grasses can be approved when the design provides for storm water quality treatment and includes plantings with visual interest within and along the feature.

2. Design and Configuration

Required front yard landscaping are encourage to take on a variety of configurations including clustering, layered rows, alternating patterns or other designs. However, some landscaping shall be dispersed throughout a yard and not all materials may be shifted or concentrated to one area of the yard. In circumstances where there is a constraint on plantings due to space, the front yard landscaping may be placed in areas near side property lines, wrapped around buildings, or placed within parking lot islands closest to the front yard if additional space for required plantings is necessary.

2. Diversity requirements

Required front yard landscaping must contain no more than 50% of one type per plant family. A minimum of 4 types of plants per required plant family are required in a yard area. A plant family is defined for the purposes of diversity requirements as a shrub, ornamental grass, tree or groundcover.

B. Landscaping Requirements For Surface Parking Lots.

Parking lot landscaping standards are designed to provide an aesthetically pleasing parking lot design combined with the support and encouragement of sustainability through increased shading from trees and allowing for stormwater treatment design within parking lots. Increased parking lot separation is required along the boundaries of properties with one and two-family homes.

1. Surface Parking Lot Landscaped Area

- a. Parking lots must contain landscaped area equal to 10% of the total gross parking lot and loading areas. The total gross area of a parking lot is defined as the gross area of the paved surface measured from the back of the curb.
- b. Overstory shade trees must be planted at a rate of 1 tree for every 200 square feet of required landscape area. Trees must be dispersed across the entire parking lot area and not over concentrated to any one area of the parking lot.
 - i. All shade trees must be planted in landscape planters/islands no less than 150 square feet in area.
- c. Perimeter planters abutting a parking lot that are 5 feet in depth or greater may count towards the 10% area requirements. Note that to meet the dispersal requirement a site may need to exceed 10% landscaped area in and abutting a site.
 - i. Perimeter parking tree planter areas must be at least 7 feet in depth in any one direction may satisfy the tree planting requirement.
 - ii. If parking lot landscaping is placed in perimeter parking areas the landscaping must be located within 10 feet of the edge of paving to count towards the required 10% area.
- d. Front yard landscaping shall not count toward parking lot landscaping. Evergreen trees are not permitted as a required parking lot landscape tree.

2. Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping and Bufferyards

High Screen Side and rear perimeter bufferyard landscaping is required for screening of the parking lot and use of a site. A minimum of a five foot planter area is required along parking the side and rear property lines when abutting a one or two-family home, the parking lot buffer width shall be increased to 10 feet if relying upon landscape buffering. The buffer planter must be relatively flat to ensure fences and planter materials grow or stand upright and achieve the intended high screen. See general requirements below.

3. Parking Lot Medians

- a. In addition to the 10% landscaped area requirement, a landscaped median is required for every 3 continuous double loaded parking drive aisles.
- b. A required median must be a minimum of 15 feet wide with a minimum length equal to the average drive aisle length of the double loaded aisles.
 - a. A landscaped median must include 1 overstory shade tree for every 50 linear feet of median. The trees must be located within an area that is a minimum of 7 feet in any one direction and totals 150 sq. ft. of area with impervious surfaces.
 - b. Landscaped medians must include a minimum of 30% of the area of the median landscaped with ornamental or decorative landscaping that does not include turf.
 - c. The median may include a walkway when it does not encroach upon the placement of trees.
 - d. Landscape medians may be configured into oversized landscape islands with a minimum size of 400 square feet for each island and a total area of all oversized islands that equal the required area of the median. The oversized islands must be located within the parking lot and may not be configured along perimeter of a parking lot.

3. Stormwater Treatment Credit in Parking Lots

If treating stormwater within a parking lot landscaped area, the required parking lot landscaping in this ordinance may be substituted by up to 20%. To be eligible for this reduction, the storm water treatment features must treat at least 30% of total site storm water volume needed to meet storm water quality standards of Chapter 5b. The storm water measures must within or abutting the parking lot as part of a bio-swale, rain garden or other bio-retention treatment process. Detention ponds are excluded from this consideration.

4. Parking Overhang Allowance

In circumstances where a reduced parking stall depth is desired an 18 inch overhang allowance may be granted to allow for a parking stall depth of no less than 17.5 feet (17 foot stall plus 6 inch curb) when the abutting planter is 7 feet in width. An overhang allowance is not permitted for compact parking spaces.

5. Dwelling House, Two-Family, and Single-Family Attached Housing

When a site includes four or more parking stalls configured in manner to create individual parking stalls outside of garages spaces or driveways to four or more garage spaces, the impervious area used for parking and maneuvering shall meet landscape buffering setbacks and plantings requirements of L3 and front yard plantings for parking.

6. Side and Rear Yard Parking Lot High Screen.

-See General Requirements-

B. Residential Site Landscaping Standards in all other non-required landscape areas.

- a. When an apartment development consists of multiple buildings, landscaping with trees, grasses, flowers, or shrubs shall be planted in open areas and along foundations or near primary entrances.
- b. Parking lots located adjacent to outlots of a subdivision may qualify for reduced landscape screening based upon the spacing and use of the adjacent outlot and the properties abutting the opposite property line of the outlot. Use of lower growing shrubs or substitution of other equivalent materials may be permitted by approval of the Planning Director.
- c. **Decorative Highway Landscaping.** On residential sites abutting Highway 30 or Interstate 35 a landscape buffer consisting of evergreen plantings of 1 evergreen tree per 30 lineal feet of highway frontage must be provided. Plantings are not required to be placed on center. Up to 20% of the required evergreen trees may be substituted with deciduous overstory trees.

General Requirements All Sites

The following standards are required on all residential and non-residential sites.

1. Any required plant materials shall be rounded up to the next whole number when there is calculated fraction of a plant.
2. Soil Quality Standards. Soil located in required planting areas must be conditioned and tilled in the top 6 inches with at least a 5% organic compound makeup. Certification of the soil conditioning must be provided by a contractor, licensed engineer or landscape specialist.
3. Minimum planting standards.
 - a. Shrubs and Grasses. In all front yards where required, all shrub and grass minimum planting size must be no less than 18 inches in height above the soil. (Based on Type 2 container size for 3 foot growth) Any materials planted for the purpose of achieving screening shall be a variety that is a minimum 75% of the height of screened facility with the ability to mature to a full screening of 6 inches above the facility within three years.
 - b. Buffer Yard High Screen. In all required buffer yards, high screen shrubs must be planted at a minimum of size of 3' feet in height above the average grade of the planter or the top of the curb in a depressed planter.
 - c. Trees. In all required tree planters, all trees must be planted with a minimum 1.5" caliper tree. Any evergreen tree must be a minimum height of 6 feet at the time of planting.
 - d. Ornamental grass shall be of a species that in every growing season has a height that exceeds 24 inches. Grasses that are typically less than 24 inches in height and are intended for groundcover are categorized as decorative grasses.
4. Tree Spacing and Placement

Trees must be planted with recognition of the space needs for eventual growth and maturity. Small to medium trees may be planted no closer than 10 feet to a building. Larger trees require a minimum spacing of 15 feet from a building. Trees are to be located within and along parking lots in a manner that does not include parking lot lights within 15 feet of the a tree. Medium and large trees can be planted as close as 20 feet from another similarly sized tree on the same site. Large and medium sized trees must be planted a minimum distance of 3 feet from edge of paving.
6. L3, High Screen Dissimilar Use Transition and Parking Screen.
 - (i) Generally. The L3 landscape standard uses screening to provide physical and visual separation between uses or development. It is generally used in those instances where visual separation and a buffer of use is desirable.
 - (ii) Required Landscape Elements. The L3 standard requires high shrubs spaced at a maximum distance of 6 feet on center to form a screen 6 feet high. In addition, one Landscape Tree is required per 50 lineal feet of landscaped area or as appropriate to provide a tree canopy over the landscaped area. Ground cover plants must fully cover the remainder of the landscaped area. A 6-foot high wooden fence with the fence posts on the interior side unless the fence is finished on both sides may be substituted for some or all of the high shrubs. When a 6-foot high wooden fence is installed, high or low shrubs shall be planted at the rate of one shrub per 10 lineal feet and one Landscape Tree is required per 50 lineal feet or as appropriate to provide canopy over the landscape area. A 6-foot-high masonry wall may be substituted for the high shrubs spaced 6 feet on center, but the trees and ground cover plants are still required.

7. L4, High Wall Screen between Industrial and Residential Areas.

(i) Generally. The L4 standard is intended to be used in special instances where extensive screening of both visual and noise impacts is needed to protect abutting uses in areas where there is little space for separation.

(ii) Required Landscape Elements. The L4 standard requires an 8-foot-high masonry (but not non-decorative concrete block) wall along the interior side of the landscape area. One Landscape Tree is required per 50 lineal feet of wall or as appropriate to provide a tree canopy over the landscaped area. In addition, 3 high shrubs or 6 low shrubs are required per 30 lineal feet of wall. Ground cover plants must fully cover the remainder of the landscaped area.

(iii) Alternative Compliance. The L4 standard can be met alternatively for sites that provide a minimum of 30 feet of separation from the property line to the use of the site by providing a berm with a minimum height of 4 feet with evergreen shrubs placed on the slope of the berm with an aesthetically pleasing density and evergreen trees planted within 10 feet of the berm.

L1 Standard- Eliminated

L2 Standard- Eliminated

8. Alternative Design Approvals

i. Major Site Development Plan.

A landscape plan prepared by a certified Landscape Architect with alternative design and plantings may be approved under the requirements of a major site development plan after review and approval by the City Council when found to address the purposes of the ordinance and provides for a unique or high quality landscape environment that exceeds the quality of the base standards.

ii. The Planning Director may approve an alternative landscaping plan for unique conditions related to site constraints and topography that achieve necessary screening and aesthetic purposes of the landscape standards. The Planning Director may not approve reductions in landscaping based solely upon existence of existing vegetation on an adjacent site.

9. Required Landscaped Area Conditions

Required landscaped areas and buffer yards must have suitable soil conditions and depth exclusive of retaining walls, fill or other inorganic materials to permit the growth and maturity of the plant.