

## Chapter 17.72

### LANDSCAPING Revised 4/23

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#### **17.72.010 Purpose.**

This chapter establishes landscaping standards to enhance the aesthetic appearance of developed areas in Capitola and to promote the efficient use of water resources. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

#### **17.72.020 Applicability.**

A. Multifamily and Nonresidential Projects. The following multifamily and nonresidential projects shall comply with all requirements of this chapter:

1. Construction of new structures.
2. Additions that increase the floor area of a multifamily or nonresidential structure by three thousand square feet or more.

B. Single-Family Residential Projects.

1. New single-family homes shall comply with all requirements of this chapter.
2. If existing landscaping is disturbed or new landscaping is added as part of a remodel or addition to an existing single-family home that requires a design permit, the new landscaping shall comply with the standards in Section 17.72.060 (Landscape standards). The city will evaluate compliance with these standards based on the plans and materials submitted as part of the design permit application. Submittal of a landscape plan for the entire site in accordance with Section 17.72.040 (Landscape plans) is not required.

C. Coastal Development Permit. A proposed development that is located in the coastal zone may require a coastal development permit (CDP) as specified by Chapter 17.44 (Coastal Overlay Zone) and the findings for approval of a CDP as specified in Section 17.44.130 (Findings for approval). (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

#### **17.72.030 Water efficient landscape design and installation ordinance.**

In addition to the requirements of this chapter, all applicable development in Capitola shall also comply with the applicable water provider's (i.e., the city of Santa Cruz water department or Soquel Creek Water District) landscape water use efficiency ordinance. If conflicts occur between the applicable water provider's landscape water use efficiency ordinance and the zoning code, the more restrictive policy to conserve water shall control. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

#### **17.72.040 Landscape plans.**

A. Landscape Plan Required. Projects subject to the requirements of this chapter shall submit a landscape plan as part of planning permit applications (e.g., design permit/coastal development permit applications) and subsequent building permit applications.

B. Required Contents. Landscape plans shall include the following features and information:

1. Site boundaries.

2. Existing conditions on the property, including contours and existing structures.
3. Structures immediately adjacent to the property.
4. New structures and improvements proposed as part of the development project.
5. Existing landscaping, trees, and vegetation to be retained specifying plant location, species, and size. Details of all existing trees shall also include tree diameter measured forty-eight inches above existing grade and outer limit of tree canopy and a label identifying if the tree will remain or be removed.
6. New landscaping proposed as part of the development project specifying plant location, species, and size.
7. Irrigation plan specifying the location, type, and size of all components of the irrigation system.
8. Proposed grading.
9. Additional information as determined by the community development department to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

C. Review and Approval. The community development department shall review all landscape plans to verify compliance with this chapter. Landscape plans shall be approved by the review authority responsible for approving the planning permits required for the proposed project.

D. Changes to Approved Landscape Plans.

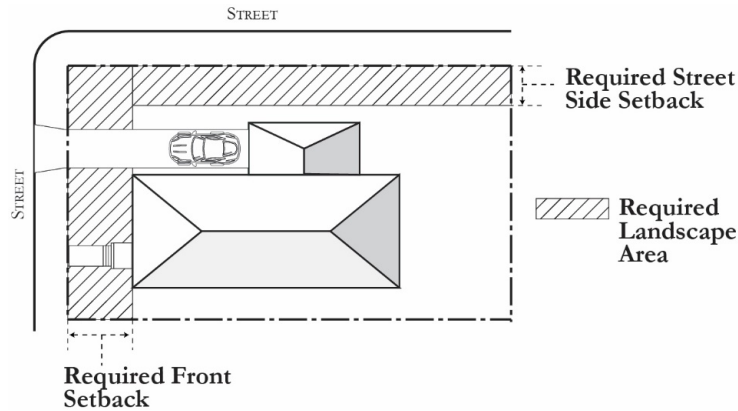
1. Substantial modifications to an approved landscape plan shall be allowed only by the review authority which approved the landscape plan.
2. The community development director may approve minor modifications to a landscape plan previously approved by the planning commission. Minor modifications are defined as changes to a landscape plan that do not alter the general design character of the landscaped area or alter a feature of the landscaped area specifically required by the planning commission. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

**17.72.050 Required landscape areas. Revised 4/23**

A. Residential Zoning Districts.

1. All required front and street side setback areas, excluding areas required for access to the property, shall be landscaped and maintained. See Figure 17.72-1.
2. Landscaping may consist of any combination of living plants, such as trees, shrubs and grass with related natural features, such as rock, stone, or mulch; and may include patios, courtyards, and outdoor dining areas. Artificial grass may be used within required landscaping areas. Decorative hardscape featuring pervious materials is permitted within required landscaping areas when combined with natural vegetation.

**Figure 17.72-1: Required Landscape Area in R-1 Zoning District**



**B. Nonresidential Zoning Districts.**

1. Except in the I zoning district, all required front and street side setback areas shall be landscaped, excluding areas required for access to the property and public or quasi-public open space such as courtyards and outdoor seating.
2. The minimum landscaped area on a site is shown in Table 17.72-1.
3. In the MU-V and MU-N zoning districts, up to seventy-five percent of the minimum landscaped area may be occupied by outdoor dining areas, courtyards, and other similar quasi-public areas with planning commission approval. Hardscape areas counting towards landscaping requirements must contain aboveground planters and other similar features that incorporate greenery and plantings into the space design. In all other zoning districts these areas may not count toward landscaping requirements.

**Table 17.72-1: Minimum Landscaped Area in Nonresidential Zoning Districts**

Zoning Districts	Minimum Landscaped Area
MU-V, MU-N, C-R, C-C, CF, I	5%
P/OS, PD, -VS	As determined by the permit approval process

**C. Visitor Serving Properties.** Minimum required landscaping for visitor serving properties are shown in Table 17.72-2. Minimum landscaping requirements are intended to ensure harmony with adjacent development in accordance with architectural and site approval standards.

**Table 17.72-2: Minimum Landscaped Area for Visitor Serving Properties**

Property	Minimum Landscaped Area
Rispin site	75% as either landscaped areas in developed areas of the site, or unlandscaped natural areas in areas subject to conservation easements
Shadowbrook restaurant parcel and visitor serving El Salto and Monarch Cove parcels	50% landscaped area or undeveloped open space
All other visitor serving properties	5%

(Ord. 1057 § 2 (Att. 1), 2022; Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

**17.72.055 Parking lot landscaping.** Revised 4/23

A. Landscaping Defined. Except as otherwise specified in this section, parking lot landscaping and landscaped areas shall consist of plant materials, including any combination of trees, shrubs, and ground cover.

B. Interior Landscaping. All areas within a parking lot not utilized for parking spaces or access/circulation shall be landscaped. For parking lots with more than fifteen spaces, the minimum amount of interior landscaping is specified in Table 17.76-5. "Interior landscaping" is defined as any landscaped area surrounded on at least two sides by parking spaces or drive aisles, and excluding areas around the perimeter of the parcel or development site.

**Table 17.76-5: Minimum Required Parking Lot Landscaping**

Number of Required Parking Spaces	Percent of Surface Parking Area to Be Landscaped
16 to 30	10%
31 to 60	15%
Over 60	20%

C. Shade Trees.

1. One shade tree shall be provided for every five parking spaces in a parking lot.
2. Shade trees shall be a minimum twenty-four-inch box in size and shall provide a minimum thirty-foot canopy at maturity.
3. Shade trees shall be of a type that can reach maturity within fifteen years of planting and shall be selected from a city-recommended list of canopy tree species.
4. Shade trees shall be arranged in a parking lot to provide maximum shade coverage (based on a thirty-foot canopy) on August 21st. The arrangement should approximate nearly fifty percent shade coverage.
5. The planning commission may grant an exception to the required tree plantings if the fifty percent shade coverage exists within the parking lot.

D. Concrete Curbs.

1. All landscape areas shall be separated from parking spaces, drive aisles and driveways by a continuous, raised concrete curb. Raised concrete curbs shall be a minimum of four inches high by four inches deep.
2. The city may approve alternatives to raised concrete curbs as needed to comply with any mandatory storm water drainage standards.

E. Parking Space Landscaping. A maximum of two feet at the front end of a parking space may be landscaped with low shrubs or ground cover in which a vehicle could extend over in lieu of paving surface. This landscaping may not count toward minimum required parking lot landscaped area.

F. Timing. Landscaping shall be installed prior to the city's authorization to occupy any buildings served by the parking area, or prior to the final inspection for the parking lot.

G. Green Parking Exemptions. Parking lots that incorporate solar panels, bioswales, and other similar green features into the parking lot design are eligible for reduced parking lot landscaping requirements with planning commission approval of a design permit.

H. Exceptions. The planning commission may grant an exception to the parking lot landscaping requirements in this section with the approval of a design permit upon finding that:

1. Full compliance with the requirement is infeasible or undesirable;

2. The project complies with the requirement to the greatest extent possible; and
3. The project incorporates other features to compensate for the exception and create a high-quality design environment. (Ord. 1057 § 2 (Att. 1), 2022)

**17.72.060 Landscape standards.**

A. General Standards. The following standards apply pursuant to Section 17.72.020 within all zoning districts:

1. Plant Selection. A minimum of ninety percent of plants and trees shall be drought-tolerant as defined by the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS). Native plants adapted to the local climate are preferred.
2. Plant Selection Along Blufftop, Beach, or ESHA. Native plants adapted to the local climate shall be required within fifty feet of the blufftop edge, the beach, or ESHA. See Chapter 17.64 (Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas) for habitat requirements.
3. Storm Water Management. The landscape plan shall incorporate storm water management controls in compliance with the Regional State Water Resources Control Board.
4. Turf Lawns.
  - a. Turf areas shall be limited to twenty-five percent of the landscaped area. The planning commission may approve larger areas if the lawn area provides functional open space.
  - b. Drought-tolerant grass species shall be used exclusively.
  - c. Turf shall not be used on berms, slopes, or median islands where runoff is a problem.
5. Slopes. Turf and high water use plants shall not be planted on berms and slopes greater than twenty-five percent.
6. Plant Groupings. Where irrigation is proposed, plants shall be grouped in separate hydrozones (i.e., plants within each irrigation valve area shall have the same watering requirements).
7. Water Features. Decorative water features (e.g., fountains, ponds, waterfalls) must be approved by the planning commission and shall have recirculating water systems. Automatic fill valves are not recommended for use within water features.
8. Watering Times. Watering shall be limited to between eight p.m. and ten a.m.
9. Public Safety. Plant species shall be selected and located so that at maturity they do not interfere with pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicular circulation or safety and do not conflict with overhead lights, or utility lines.

B. Irrigation and Water Efficiency. Irrigation systems shall be designed to avoid runoff, low head drainage, overspray, and other similar conditions where water flows outside of landscaped areas. Irrigation systems shall feature the following equipment:

1. Irrigation systems shall meet a minimum irrigation efficiency standard of the applicable water provider.
2. Separate landscape water meters for landscape areas exceeding ten thousand square feet for single-family residential uses and five thousand square feet for all other uses.
3. Irrigation controllers capable of percent adjustment, multiple programming, and rain sensor.
4. Overhead sprays shall have a precipitation rate of no more than three-quarters of an inch per hour.
5. Separate valves and circuits based on water use and sun exposure. Separate valves for turf and nonturf and berm areas are required.

6. Sprinkler heads and emitters selected for proper area coverage, application rate, operation pressure, adjustment capability, and ease of maintenance.
7. Rain-sensing override devices are required for all irrigation systems.
8. Drip or bubble irrigation is required for all trees. Bubblers should not exceed a flow rate of one and one-half gallons per minute.
9. State-approved backflow prevention devices shall be installed on all irrigation systems.

C. Timing of Installation. Landscaping systems shall be installed prior to final building permit inspection or certification of occupancy. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

**17.72.070 Landscape maintenance.**

The following landscape maintenance requirements apply to multifamily and nonresidential properties:

- A. General. Landscape areas shall be maintained in a neat and healthful condition at all times.
- B. Mulch. Mulch shall be periodically added to the soil surface in all landscape areas.
- C. Replacement of Dead or Dying Plants. Plants that are dead or severely damaged or diseased shall be replaced by the property owner.
- D. Removal of Landscaping. Any removed mature landscaping shall be replaced with landscaping of similar size and maturity as that which was removed. Trees may only be removed and/or replaced in accordance with the city's tree ordinance, Chapter 12.12.
- E. Irrigation Systems. Irrigation systems shall be maintained in a fully functional manner as approved by the city and required by this chapter. Watering schedules should be adjusted periodically to reflect seasonal variations. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)