

Sec. 5.04.00. - Landscaping/Trees.

Section 5.04.01 *General criteria.*

- A. Emphasis shall be placed upon landscaping as a means of achieving beauty in the community. It will be required on all projects, and in some projects and areas, it will be the primary tool available.
- B. Landscape design and planning shall be integrated with the overall area design concept and not be considered merely as an after thought. Toward this end, proposed landscaping schemes will be evaluated as to their relationship to the existing natural landscape, developed and other proposed landscape, including those on adjacent properties and street rights-of-way and the building or buildings existed and proposed.
- C. The existing natural landscape character shall be preserved whenever possible. As an example of this, in an area containing a stand of trees, the developer should preserve as many of these trees as possible and further landscape in a complementary manner, rather than destroy the existing trees and replant with a type of vegetation foreign to the immediate natural environment.
- D. Landscaping includes not only trees and plantings, but paving, benches, fountains, exterior lighting fixtures, fences, and any other item or exterior furniture. All items of the landscape are to be selected not only for their functional value but for their aesthetic value, and must complement the whole.
- E. One (1) of the uses of landscaping will be to screen. It is the masking out or concealing of any objectionable area. The achievement of this is left to the designer, whether by walls, fences, mounds of earth, or vegetation. It must be complimentary to the whole as outlined above. Screening shall be employed in parking lots, and to mask from the public view of adjacent properties such service areas as trash and garbage areas, outside equipment of unaesthetic character, and accessory buildings or areas not enhancing or in keeping with the aesthetics of the project or neighborhood. Screening of air conditioning units and other mechanical equipment shall be accomplished in a manner that does not interfere with the proper operation and/or maintenance of such equipment.
- F. Landscaping shall be designed in such a manner as to impact its aesthetic character when viewed from any area accessible to the public or from adjacent properties. This is to include view from high rise and bridges.
- G. All landscaping and plantings designated on the plans approved by the planning and architectural review board shall be installed in accordance with the specified height, spread and quality before a certificate of occupancy is issued.
- H.

Xeriscape landscaping techniques using native vegetation shall be required landscaping for all new construction.

- I. Plant materials used shall conform to the standards for Florida No. 1 or better as given in "Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants", Part I, Current Edition, and Part II, State of Florida, Department of Agriculture, Tallahassee, or equal thereto. Grass sod shall be clean and reasonably free of weeds and noxious pests or diseases.
- J. Grass areas may be sodded, plugged, spread or seeded except that solid sod shall be used in swales or other areas subject to erosion. Seed where used shall be of a variety which will produce complete coverage within ninety (90) days from sowing. Where other than solid sod or grass seed is used, nurse grass seed shall be sown for immediate effect and protection until coverage is otherwise achieved.
- K. Installation—All landscaping shall be installed in a sound workmanlike manner and according to accepted good planting procedures with the quality of plant materials as described. All elements of landscaping shall be installed so as to meet all other applicable ordinances and code requirements.
- L. Landscaped areas shall require protections from vehicular encroachment. Car stops shall be placed at least three (3) feet from the edge of such landscaped areas. Where a wheel stop or curb is utilized, the paved area between the curb/wheel stop and the end of the parking space may be omitted, provided it is landscaped in addition to the required landscaping provided. Car stops shall be located so as to prevent damage to any trees, fences, shrubs or landscaping by automobiles.
- M. Maintenance—The owner, occupant, tenant and the respective agent of each, if any, shall be jointly and severally responsible for the maintenance of all landscaping. Landscaping shall be maintained in a good condition so as to present a healthy, neat and orderly appearance at least equal to the original installation and shall be kept free from refuse and debris. Any dead vegetation and landscaping material shall be promptly replaced with healthy, living plantings.
- N. All landscaped areas shall be provided with an approved irrigation system.
- O. Drainage—Adequate drainage is the responsibility of the property owner and must be accomplished according to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and wherever possible through natural means such as grassy swales.
- P. All landscaping materials shall be either bonded or guaranteed by the owner of the premises for a period of one (1) year after the approval or acceptance thereof by the city.

Section 5.04.02 *Criteria for parking lots and vehicular use areas.*

(A)

Parking lots and other vehicular use areas are to be designed as an aesthetic asset to a neighborhood and to the building, group of buildings, or facility they serve. A parking lot is to be considered an outside space, a transitional space which is located between the access (such as roads) and the building, group of buildings or other outside spaces, which it serves. The parking lot, because it is viewed from above as well as at eye level, should be designed accordingly.

- (B) Parking lots, vehicular use areas, and their parked vehicles are to be effectively screened from the public view and from adjacent property and in a manner that is attractive and compatible with safety, the neighborhood, and facilities served.
- (C) The atmosphere within the parking lot and vehicular use area is to be park-like rather than the harsh hardstand of paving. Trees are of primary importance in the landscape. They are not to be minimized in either height or quantity. The tree imparts, especially in a relatively flat area, a sense of three-dimensional space. It casts shadows that reduce the monotony of the expanse of paving and creates a refuge from the tropical sun. The pavement is to be more than wall to wall asphalt. It is recommended that pavement be varied in texture or color designating lanes for automobile traffic, pedestrian walks and parking spaces. Bright colored pavement is to be used only with restraint. In order to create a pleasant atmosphere it is recommended that consideration be given to sculpture, fountains, gardens, pools and benches. Design emphasis is to be given to the entrances and exits to the lot. Trash, refuse and unaesthetic storage and mechanical equipment should be screened from the parking lot.
- (D) Lighting is to be designed not only from the standpoint of safety and resistance to vandalism, but for visual effect. It should avoid any annoyance to the neighbors from brightness or glare. It should not impart a prison-like atmosphere. Low lights of a modest scale can be used along with feature lighting emphasizing plants, trees, barriers, entrances and exits. The fixtures are to be selected not only for their functional value but for their aesthetic qualities. They are to be considered furniture of the parking lot visible both day and night.
- (E) Minimum requirements for off-street parking and other vehicular use areas:
 - (1) All areas used for the display of parking of any and all types of vehicles, boats or heavy construction equipment, whether such vehicles, boats or equipment are self-propelled or not, and all land upon vehicles traverse the property as a function of the primary use, hereinafter referred to as "other vehicular uses," including but not limited to activities of a drive-in nature such as, filling stations, grocery and dairy stores, banks, restaurants, and the like, shall conform to the minimum landscaping requirements hereinafter provided.
 - (2)

Ten (10) percent minimum of the gross parking area is to be devoted to living landscaping, which includes grass, ground cover, plants, shrubs and trees. The gross parking area is to be measured from the edge of the parking and/or driveway paving and sidewalks, extended five (5) feet in all directions, but is not to include any area enclosed by the building or covered by a building overhang.

- (3) Perimeter screening: All parking lots and vehicular use areas shall be screened from all abutting properties and/or rights-of-way with a wall, fence, hedge or other durable landscape barrier. Any living barrier shall be established in a two-foot minimum wide planting strip. This living barrier shall be at least thirty (30) inches high at time of planting and shall attain a minimum height of three (3) feet one (1) year after planting. A non-living barrier shall be a minimum of three (3) feet high at time of installation. In addition, one (1) tree in each forty (40) linear feet or fraction thereof shall be provided in the perimeter landscape planting area. Trees referred to in this section shall be of a species common to North Central Florida and having an average mature spread of crown of greater than fifteen (15) feet and having trunk(s) which can be maintained in a clean condition over five (5) feet of clear wood. Trees having an average mature spread of crown less than fifteen (15) feet may be substituted by grouping the same so as to create the equivalent of a fifteen-foot crown of spread. Trees species shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet overall height immediately after planting. Hedges, where installed, shall be planted and maintained so as to form a continuous, unbroken, solid, visual screen thirty-six (36) inches high within a maximum of one (1) year after time of planting. The remainder of the required landscaped areas shall be landscaped with grass, ground cover, or other approved landscape treatment excluding paving. All property other than the required landscaped strip lying between the right-of-way and off-street parking area or other vehicular use area shall be landscaped with at least grass or other ground cover. This shall include the off-property swale between the actual pavement of a public street or alley and the right-of-way/property line.

Appropriate provisions of this section may be waived in the following situation:

Where a proposed parking area or other vehicular use area abuts an existing hedge, wall or other durable landscape barrier it may be used to satisfy the landscape barrier requirements of the subsection provided that said existing barrier meets all applicable standards of this ordinance and protection against vehicular encroachment is provided for hedges.

- (4) Interior landscaping: Interior areas of parking lots shall contain planter islands located so as to best relieve the expanse of paving. A maximum of twelve (12) parking spaces in a row will be permitted without a planter island.

Interior areas of vehicular use areas shall contain planter islands located so as to best relieve the expanse of pavement. This section may be modified under the following circumstances:

- (a) When a strict application of this section will seriously limit the function of an area the required landscaping may be relocated with the approval of the planning and architectural review board.
- (b) In an industrial project the planning and architectural review board may lower the overall landscape area from ten (10) percent to five (5) percent of the gross parking area. This reduction would apply only to the interior requirements. Perimeter minimums will not change.
- (5) Planter islands shall be a minimum of fifty (50) square feet in area and shall contain at least one (1) tree having a minimum clear trunk of five (5) feet and a minimum overall height of eight (8) feet. The remainder shall be landscaped with shrubs, lawn, ground cover or other approved material not to exceed three (3) feet.
- (F) Existing plant material: In instances where healthy plant material exists on a site prior to its development, the above-mentioned standards may be adjusted to allow credit for such plant material, if in the opinion of the planning and architectural review board, such an adjustment is in keeping with and will preserve the intent of this ordinance.

Section 5.04.03. *Buffers.*

Property owners shall be required to maintain a wetland buffer as designated in Section 4.00.06

Section 5.04.04 *Combined use building perimeter landscaping requirements.*

One (1) street tree per forty (40) linear feet or fraction thereof on the perimeter public sidewalk to include a tree grate and location approved by the city.

(Ord. No. 2005-02, § 5, 3-24-05; Ord. No. 2007-27, § 1, 8-9-07; Ord. No. 2009-14, § 4, 9-24-09; Ord. No. 2010-15, § 4, 11-18-10)