
16.40.060.2.1.2. Additional requirements for new and existing one- and two-unit residential properties.

- A. *Required permeable green space for yards abutting streets.* Required front yards and required side yards abutting streets shall be maintained as permeable landscaped vegetative green space with the exception of driveways, walks, patios and similar paved areas and non-organic mulch areas, which areas combined shall not exceed 25 percent of the required yard area for corner lots and 45 percent of the required yard area for inside lots. Facilities constructed to achieve compliance with ADA requirements shall be exempt from this surface calculation. Yards abutting streets which do not conform to the provisions herein and which existed as of August 25, 1977, are grandfathered and exempt from this subsection.
- B. *Ground cover, private property.* Permeable portions of private property including required yards shall be maintained with an herbaceous layer of sod or ground cover plant material. Installation of St. Augustine sod turf at a property with a new structure which receives construction permits is limited to a maximum of 50 percent of the permeable area of the lot.
- C. *Ground cover, rights-of-way.* Permeable portions within the adjoining rights-of-way shall be maintained in accordance with an approved streetscape plan or, where an approved streetscape plan does not exist, with an herbaceous layer of sod or ground cover plant material. Where landscaping material is used in the right-of-way within four feet of the curb or road edge and there is no approved landscape plan, the landscaping materials, excluding sod, shall not exceed 24 inches in height above the top of the adjacent curb, or if there is no curb, the road bed, provided that the landscaping material does not result in a hazard or impairment to public vehicular or pedestrian traffic or violate the visibility at intersection section.
- D. *Mulch.* Organic mulch is a beneficial addition to landscaping in many situations including providing a surface covering under shrubs, or where ground cover material is maturing. The intention of these regulations is to allow mulch within a landscape design while not allowing an entire yard to only be covered with mulch. The use of cypress mulch is discouraged.
1. *Installation standards.* Where used in lieu of sod or ground cover plant material, mulch shall be placed to a minimum depth of three inches. The top level of the mulch shall not exceed the height of the immediately adjacent ground surface. Mulch shall not be placed directly against a plant stem or tree trunk. Non-organic mulch including rubber, decorative gravel or crushed stone shall be allowed only in planting areas (e.g., in gardens or hedge areas).
 2. *Limits on installation on one- and two-unit residential properties.*
 - a. Organic mulch may be used without limit underneath shrubs and trees, provided the shrubs and trees or a combination thereof are planted and maintained at a cumulative ratio of at least one shrub or tree, planted within the mulch per each ten square feet of organic mulched area;
 - b. No more than 50 percent of the required front and street side yard may be covered with mulch;
 - c. Where a mulch parking surface has been permitted pursuant to the parking and loading design section, a separation consisting of an herbaceous layer of sod or ground cover of not less than eight feet in width shall be provided between the parking area and any adjacent mulch area allowed pursuant to this section.
 3. *Limits on installation in rights-of-way.* Organic mulch may be used in permeable areas of the right-of-way to keep moisture in the soil while other forms of approved ground cover plant material are maturing. Mulch is prohibited within four feet of the curb or road edge if there is no curb. Mulch in the right-of-way must be contained within borders sufficient to prevent flotation of mulch into the roadway. With the exception of permitted driveway or sidewalk materials, the use of shell, rock or other similar hardened non-organic mulch in the right-of-way is prohibited.

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- E. *Irrigation, existing one- and two-unit residential properties.* A permanent irrigation system is not required for existing one- and two-unit residential properties; however, where one is installed, it shall be designed to avoid runoff, overspray or other similar conditions where water flows onto or over adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, walkways, roadways or structures. Irrigation systems shall be maintained so there are no broken irrigation heads or leaks. Automatic sprinkler systems shall install a rain sensor device or switch which will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred.
 - F. *Vegetation, existing one- and two-unit residential properties.* Any one- or two-unit residential property that meets or exceeds the tree and/or shrub standards set forth in the previous section for new one or two unit residential properties, shall maintain the minimum standards for the property. This does not mean that existing one- or two-unit residential properties that do not meet the requirements set forth in the previous section for new one- or two-unit residential properties are required to install vegetation to meet those requirements.
 - G. *Landscaping adjacent to mechanical equipment on site.* Mechanical equipment, (e.g. backflow preventers, utility cabinets, air conditioners, etc.) visible from streets, excluding alleys, shall be landscaped with a continuous hedge comprised of shrubs planted no more than 30 inches on center or a decorative fence or architectural feature if the location is inadequate for landscape (e.g. too small, insufficient light). Landscaping shall be installed no less than three feet from the equipment to allow for access, maintenance and required air flow.
 - H. *Landscaping adjacent to fences, walls, or dumpster enclosures.* The exterior of any opaque fence or wall which exceeds 150 linear feet in length, visible from any street (not alley) shall be landscaped with a minimum of one shrub for every three linear feet and one under-story tree for every 25 linear feet.
 - I. Decorative objects, including, but not limited to, rocks and planter beds, shall not be located within four feet of the curb of the street or where there is no curb, the road edge.

(Code 1992, § 16.40.060.2.1.4; Ord. No. 893-G, § 44(16.40.060.2.1.4), 9-4-2008; Ord. No. 9347-G, § 3, 7-23-2009; Ord. No. 149-H, § 3, 12-18-2014; Ord. No. 195-H, § 1, 9-17-2015; Ord. No. 287-H, § 13, 7-20-2017)

Editor's note(s)—Ord. No. 195-H, § 1, adopted Sept. 17, 2015, renumbered the former § 16.40.060.2.1.4 as § 16.40.060.2.1.2 as set out herein. The historical notation has been retained with the amended provisions for reference purposes.