

Sec. 6-3. Landscaping, buffering, and screening.

6-3.1. General.

- (A) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of landscaping, buffering, and screening requirements is to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment for property owners and residents of the city and other members of the public. The requirements are intended to maintain and enhance property values, enhance the appearance of all developments, provide adequate buffers between different land uses, improve the character, appearance, and micro-climate of the city, improve heat and noise abatement, and reduce erosion and stormwater runoff.
- (B) *Applicability.* These regulations shall apply on a citywide basis for the following proposed development plans:
 - (1) Subdivision, construction, or reconstruction of all residential and nonresidential developments.
 - (2) Construction of a parking structure or a vehicular use area.
 - (3) Expansion of a nonconforming parking lot pursuant to the provisions of section 9-6, nonconforming landscaping, buffering, and screening.
 - (4) Demolition of a structure within the C-3 district resulting in a vacant lot.
 - (5) Change of use pursuant to the provisions of section 9-6, nonconforming landscaping, buffering, and screening.
- (C) *Exemptions.*
 - (1) These regulations shall not apply to lots containing a single-family detached or two-family dwelling. See section 6-4.2(B)(2) for tree protection and replacement requirements.
 - (2) Industrial developments in an M-2 zoning district shall be exempt from the requirements of Sec. 6-3.6, street buffer yards, and Sec. 6-3.4, interior parking lot landscaping.
- (D) *Landscape plan required.* A landscape plan shall be submitted as part of a site plan permit application for all developments listed in subsection 6-3.1(B). The landscape plan shall meet the requirements listed in the administrative manual.
- (E) *Maintenance.* The owner of the property where landscaping is required shall be responsible for the maintenance and protection of all plant and screening material for the duration of the premises.
 - (1) All landscape material, maintenance, and management shall conform to the minimum standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations.
 - (2) Landscaped areas shall be maintained in good condition and kept free of dead plants, weeds, or debris. Failure to maintain or replace dead, damaged, or diseased plant material or to repair a broken wall or fence within 30 days of notification shall constitute a violation of this section. If a catastrophic event occurs which destroys a large quantity of vegetation, the owner or lessee shall replant within a reasonable time period determined by the administrator, normally during the next planting season, which is November through March. Replaced plant material must be in compliance with the minimum size, spacing, and quantity standards of this section.
 - (3) Trees may not be severely trimmed beyond the standards of ANSI A300 Standards for Tree Care Operations. If aggressive trimming occurs, the property will be considered nonconforming and the property owner will be required to replace the trees with trees meeting the minimum size, spacing, and quantity standards of this section.
 - (4) Buffer and screening material shall be maintained to meet the minimum size, spacing, and quantity standards of table 6-3-2.
- (F) *Species variety.*
 - (1) In order to prevent loss of all trees in the event disease or pests target certain species, a variety of tree species variety shall be included on the landscape plan based on the number of trees planted. The following minimum quantities shall be in the form of genus diversity:

| Table 6-3-1: Tree Species Variety | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Required Number of Trees | Minimum Species |
| 1—5 | 1 |
| 6—10 | 2 |
| 11—20 | 3 |
| 21+ | 4 |

- (2) In the case of unusual site limitations, an exception may be requested, and a different mix and number of species may be proposed for review and approval. A description of the unusual site limitations and the reasons for the proposed actions must accompany the request upon submittal of the landscape plan.

6-3.2. Landscaping requirements.

(A) *General.*

- (1) All planting areas shall be protected from vehicle damage by the installation of concrete curbing or other methods approved by the administrator. Alternative barrier designs which provide improved infiltration or storage of stormwater are strongly encouraged.
- (2) The plant materials used in and around parking lots and adjacent to street rights-of-way and pedestrian ways shall be designed to ensure visibility at intersections and safety of pedestrians.
- (3) All planting areas shall be stabilized with ground covers, mulches, or other approved materials to prevent soil erosion and to allow rainwater infiltration. Rubber mulch is not acceptable.
- (4) All plant and other materials used to comply with this section shall be placed in such a manner as to ensure maintenance access, to maintain unobstructed sight distances, to avoid encroachment on neighboring property, and shall be a species suitable for the proposed location, including conflicts with all utility easements and rights-of-way.
- (5) Plant height refers to the height of plants measured from the top of the root flare and does not include the root ball or the plant's container.
- (6) The entire planting area must be scarified and contain amended on-site soil or a soil mix to a depth of 18 inches.
- (7) Rain sensors for irrigation systems.
 - (a) *New installation.* All automatic irrigation systems installed after January 1, 2018, shall include rain sensors.
 - (b) *Required maintenance.* All rain sensors shall be adjusted and set so that they automatically shut off the irrigation system after more than one-fourth inch of rainfall has occurred. All rain sensors shall be installed according to manufacturer's instructions in a location that will provide full exposure to rainfall such that accuracy of operation is ensured and shall be maintained in good working condition. No person shall, with the intent of circumventing the purpose of this section, adjust either the rain sensor or irrigation system so that the rain sensor is not able to override and turn off the irrigation system after one-fourth inch of rain has fallen.

(B) *Minimum planting size/height requirements.* All landscape planting materials shall conform to the minimum size or height standards in table 6-3-2 at the time of planting as well as meet the standards of ANSI Z60.1 American Standard for Nursery Stock.

- (1) For newly planted trees the caliper measurement of the trunk shall be taken six inches above the top of the root flare up to and including four-inch caliper size. If the caliper at six inches above the top of the root flare exceeds four inches, the caliper shall be measured at 12 inches above the top of the root flare.
- (2) For existing trees, the diameter measurement of the trunk shall be taken at DBH (diameter at breast height) 4.5 feet above the average ground level.

| Table 6-3-2: Minimum Planting Size/Height Requirements/Spacing | |
|--|---|
| Type of Planting Material | Minimum Size/Height/Spacing |
| Shade trees | 3-inch caliper, 14-foot height, 6-foot clear trunk |
| Shade trees for single-family lots | 2-inch caliper, 10-foot height, 5-foot clear trunk |
| Ornamental and understory street trees | 2-inch caliper, 10-foot height, 5-foot clear trunk |
| Multi-stemmed street trees | 2-inch caliper, 3 canes minimum, 10-foot height, 5 feet clear trunk |
| Evergreen buffer vegetation | 6-foot height, plant spacing 5 feet on-center |
| Evergreen shrubs | 18-inch height, plant spacing 3 feet on-center |
| Deciduous shrubs | 24-inch height, plant spacing 3 feet on-center |
| Additional screening requirement | 48-inch height, evergreen, plant spacing 4 feet on-center |

6-3.3. Street trees. Street trees shall be provided and maintained within, or adjacent to, all existing and proposed public street rights-of-way in accordance with the following requirements:

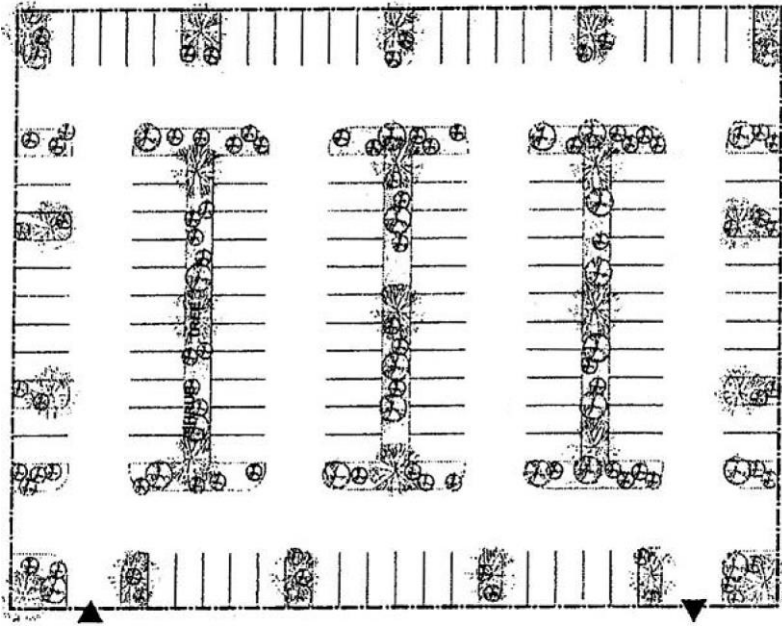
- (A) Street trees shall include only those trees listed in the approved list of tree species unless use of an alternative species is approved by the administrator.
- (B) Street trees shall be located in an area no further than ten feet from the existing or proposed street right-of-way line.
- (C) Street trees shall be planted at a spacing of 40 feet on-center for shade trees or 20 feet on-center for ornamental and understory trees along the entire length of the street frontage of the proposed development or as approved by the administrator based on the development plans. Ornamental and understory trees shall be used as street trees only when there is an overhead obstacle which would preclude the use of taller-growing shade trees. A list of acceptable street trees is available in the administrative manual.
- (D) Preserved existing trees of a three-inch DBH or greater may be used to satisfy the street tree requirement. Preserved existing trees shall meet all the requirements outlined in section 6-4, tree protection, be of an acceptable species as listed in the administrative manual and be alive and healthy at the time of final inspection.
- (E) Trees used to comply with street tree requirements shall not count toward the minimum number of trees required to meet interior parking lot landscaping.

6-3.4. Interior parking lot landscaping.

- (A) In addition to all other landscape requirements, all parking lots subject to this section 6-2 shall provide and maintain landscaped planting areas within the interior of the parking lot. These standards shall not apply to multi-level parking structures. Each planting area shall consist of at least 180 square feet, or as approved by the administrator.
- (B) In cases where the area required for the construction of the minimum parking spaces as required by section 6-1, off-street parking requirements, would cause the removal of a historic or heritage tree, the administrator may modify the landscaping requirements and/or the parking requirements in order to preserve the affected historic or heritage tree.
- (C) Planting areas shall be designed within parking areas as:
 - (1) Islands located at the end of parking bays;
 - (2) Islands located between parallel rows of cars, used to visually separate parking areas into pods;
 - (3) Driveway medians, which shall have a minimum width of six feet;
 - (4) Other options may be approved by the administrator.
- (D) Each parking lot shall include one shade tree and eight shrubs for every 2,500 square feet, or portion thereof, of the total parking lot area, including drives and service areas.
- (E) Not more than ten continuous parking spaces shall be allowed in a row of parking without separation by a 180-square foot median containing at least one shade tree.

- (F) Shade trees are not to be located closer than 25 feet apart measured from trunk to trunk.
- (G) Proposed shade trees being used to meet the interior parking lot landscaping requirements shall be located no further than ten feet and no closer than four feet from the edge of pavement.
- (H) Existing shade trees may be used to meet the interior parking lot landscaping requirements at the discretion of the administrator if the trees meet the intent of the interior parking lot landscaping requirements and the tree protection requirements.
- (I) Trees used to comply with interior parking lot requirements shall not count toward the number of trees required to meet the street tree requirements.
- (J) No more than 25 percent of required shrubs may be deciduous.

Figure 6-3-1: Illustration of interior parking lot landscaping



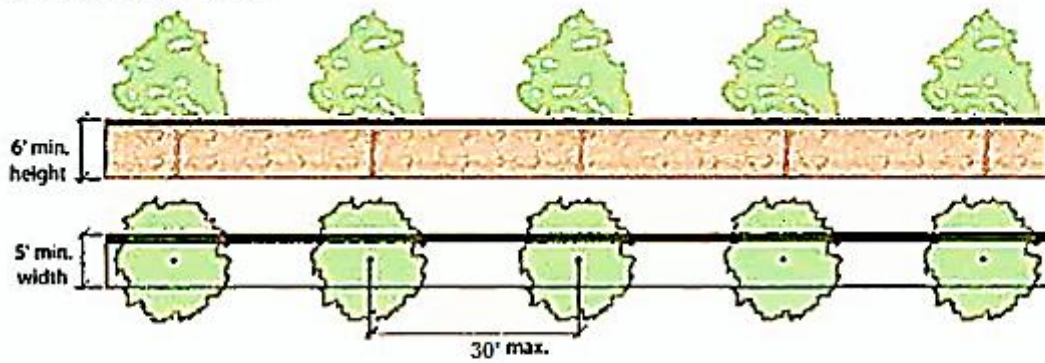
6-3.5. Perimeter buffering and screening requirements.

- (A) *Purpose.* Perimeter buffer yards and screening are required in order to reduce the impact of a use of land on adjacent uses that are of a significantly different character, density, or intensity, and to reduce the visual impact of service facilities. A buffer yard shall not include underground utilities and stormwater facilities. Perimeter buffer yards and screening shall be required in addition to any other landscaping requirement listed in this section.
- (B) *Applicability.* Perimeter buffer yards and screening shall be installed and maintained by the developer of:
 - (1) A nonresidential development adjoining a residential zoning district;
 - (2) A multi-family residential development adjoining lots used as or zoned for single-family detached dwellings.
- (C) *Permitted screening materials.* The following items are permitted for use as screening materials. Alternative screening materials that are not listed may be used if approved by the administrator.
 - (1) Evergreen buffer vegetation that is listed on the acceptable evergreen screen/buffer shrub species list, in the administrative manual, and meet the minimum planting height and spacing requirements of table 6-3-2.
 - (2) An earth berm may be used to achieve a portion of the minimum required six-foot height. Berms shall be covered with grass or mulch and shall be planted with other landscaping materials designed to meet the requirements of subsection 6-3.2(A) and (B). The slope of the berm shall not exceed the ratio of 3:1.
 - (3) A solid fence measuring at least six feet in height, but not more than eight feet in height. If wood is used, only treated or rot resistant wood is acceptable. Chain link, barbed wire, stock wire, chicken wire, and similar type fences are not permitted.

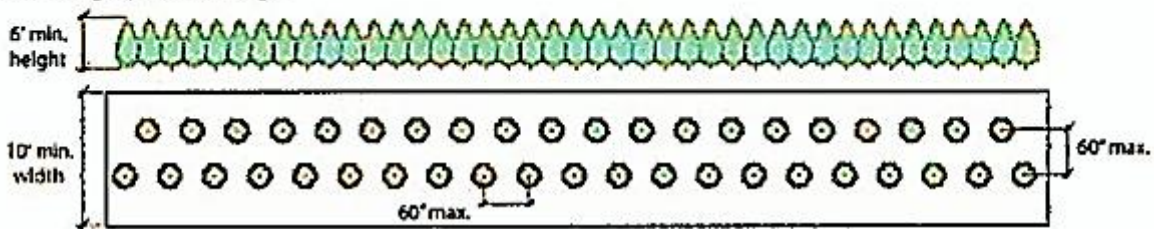
- (4) Masonry walls measuring at least six feet in height, but not more than eight feet in height. Walls shall be finished with brick, stone, textured concrete masonry units, or stucco. Natural and painted concrete block walls are not permitted.
- (D) *Screening standard.* With the approval of the administrator, a developer may use any combination of the screening materials referenced in subsection 6-3.3(C), provided the screen provides complete opacity pursuant to the requirements of this section.
 - (1) Developments for which perimeter buffer yards and screening is required shall provide one of the following screening treatments along all lot lines abutting single-family detached dwellings (see Figure 6-3-2):
 - (a) A buffer yard with a minimum width of five feet that includes a solid masonry wall measuring at least six feet in height, meeting the requirements of section 6-6.1(A)(10), and shade trees, meeting the requirements of table 6-3-1, planted along the inside perimeter with a maximum on-center spacing of 30 feet; or
 - (b) A buffer yard with a minimum width of ten feet that includes an alternating double row of a variety of evergreen shrubs and may include a berm to achieve a minimum height at time of planting of six feet, planted a maximum of 60 inches on-center; or
 - (c) A buffer yard with a minimum width of 20 feet that includes vegetative screening meeting the following standards per 100 linear feet and the requirements of table 6-3-1:
 - i. Eight shade trees (at least two evergreen); and
 - ii. Four understory trees (at least one evergreen); and
 - iii. 30 shrubs (at least 21 evergreen shrubs).

Figure 6-3-2: Options for buffering residential districts and single-family detached dwellings

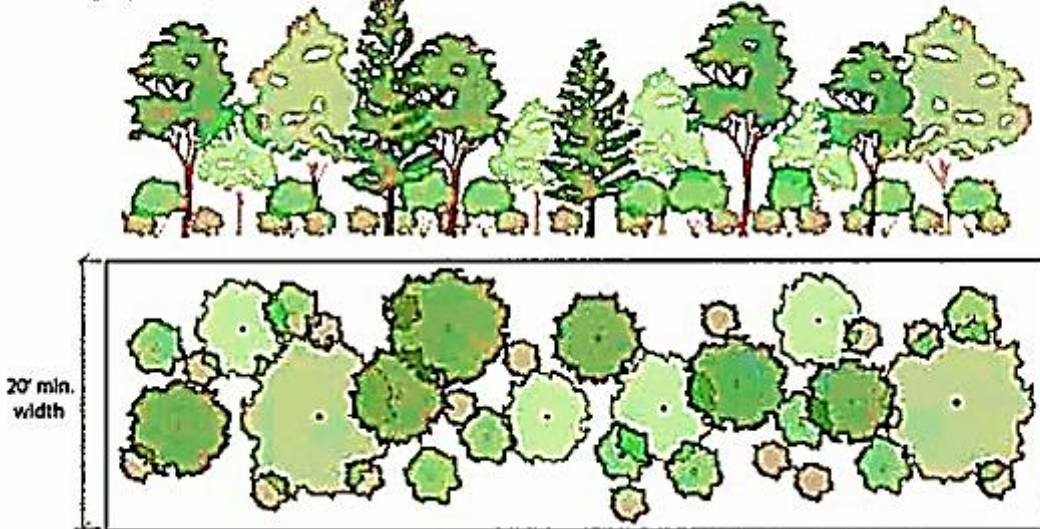
Screening Option 1 (Wall)



Screening Option 2 (Hedge)



Screening Option 3 (Planted Buffer)



6-3.6. Street buffer yards. In addition to the requirements of subsection 6-3.2, landscaping requirements, and subsection 6-3.3, buffering and screening requirements, all multi-family residential and nonresidential developments shall be buffered from streets and rights-of-way according to the following requirements:

- (A) The minimum width for any buffer yard shall be five feet with an average of ten feet measured along the property lines at ten-foot intervals. Properties developed with a zero front setback are exempt from these requirements. Parking structures located in the C-3 district shall be exempt from the buffer yard requirement when fences, walls, or similar structures are located between the ground level parking and the street or right-of-way.
- (B) All areas used for street buffer yards shall be located on the property. In unusual or extraordinary circumstances, as determined by the administrator, the public right-of-way may be used to meet the requirements of this section provided the property owner obtains permission from the owner of the right-of-way.

- (C) The street buffer yard shall have a continuous shrub border, maintained at 30 inches in height, along the entire street frontage of the lot, excluding driveways. 75 percent of the shrubs shall be evergreen. Plant material must meet the minimum planting height listed in table 6-3-1.
- (D) Unless waived by the administrator, vacant lots resulting from the demolition of buildings within the C-3 district shall provide a street buffer.

6-3.7. Additional screening requirements. In addition to the landscaping and screening required in this section, additional screening shall be required to conceal specific areas of high visual impact or hazardous areas.

- (A) Plants and a solid fence or wall, at least the height of the item being screened, but not more than eight feet tall, shall be installed around all sides, excluding access areas. Access gates to these areas shall be solid and, to the extent practical, not oriented to a public street. Plant material must meet the minimum planting heights listed on table 6-2-1 and shall be installed around the following areas:
 - (1) Loading and service areas.
 - (2) Dumpsters/ refuse collection points/ recycling drop-off centers.
 - (3) Ground level mechanical, heating, and air-conditioning equipment (except for single-family detached and two-family dwellings).
 - (4) Outdoor electrical or other above-ground utility equipment.
 - (5) Outdoor storage lots.
 - (6) Storage tanks.
 - (7) Ground level equipment associated with communication towers.
 - (8) Utility trailers and food trucks parked or stored in the C-3 district.
- (B) In addition to any fence that may be required by article 7, stormwater management, above-ground stormwater retention/detention facilities shall be screened with a continuous shrub border, maintained at 30 inches in height, along the entire perimeter of the facility, excluding access gates. 75 percent of the shrubs shall be evergreen. Plant material must meet the minimum planting height listed in table 6-3-1.

6-3.8. Alternative landscape plan. At the discretion of the administrator, alternate landscaping plans, plant material, planting methods, or landscape design may be used where unreasonable or impractical situations would result from application of landscaping requirements, or where necessary to protect existing vegetation, or where a more creative plan is proposed which substantially complies with the intent of these requirements. Landscaping requirements may be reduced if existing trees or other types of existing vegetation are preserved. Alternative plans, materials, or methods may be justified from natural conditions such as streams, natural rock formations, topography, and other physical conditions related to the site. Lot configuration and the presence and location of utility easements may justify an alternative landscaping plan.