

**CHAPTER 21
LANDSCAPING CODE¹**

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21.01 PURPOSE

It is the intent of this Chapter 21 to establish regulations limiting the removal and ensuring the replacement of trees from property within the City and, in doing so, safeguard the ecological and aesthetic environment of the community. These regulations are further intended to serve to dissuade the unnecessary clearing and disturbing of land so as to preserve, insofar as practical, the existing natural vegetation with plant material indigenous to the region, and preserve existing landscape buffers to minimize the impact of adjoining differing land uses, enhance and protect the integrity of roadway corridors, and reduce the surface heat and negative visual impact of vehicular use areas.

21.02 DEFINITIONS

In addition to those terms defined in Appendix A of this Code, the following terms are applicable to this Chapter 21:

Annual: A plant which completes its life cycle in one year or less.

Berm: An earthen mound designed to provide screening of undesirable views, noise reduction, etc.

Buffer: A combination of physical space and vertical elements, such as plants, berms, fences or walls, the purpose of which is to separate and screen conflicting land uses.

Deciduous: A plant with foliage that is shed annually.

Evergreen: A plant with foliage that persists and remains green throughout the year.

Fence: A structure used as a boundary, screen, separation, means of privacy, protection or confinement.

Fence, open: A open fence is one where visibility at right angles to any surface thereof is not reduced

¹ Established by Ordinance 02-8-6, 8/26/02

by more than 50 percent.

Fence, solid: A fence including gates which conceals from view of adjoining properties open storage of materials and/or operations conducted behind fenced areas.

Ground cover: A plant that grows near the ground densely and spreads. Generally an herbaceous perennial, sometimes a woody shrub or vine.

Hedgerow: A row of shrubs and/or trees which occur in a row, like a hedge. Sometimes purposely planted for wind control in agricultural areas. More commonly an area along a road or field boundary which, left uncut, has grown up with various plants, seeded by wind, water, birds or other natural methods.

Landscape: An area of land including preserved natural vegetation on which has been located lawns, trees, shrubs, other plants, water areas and other features such as, but not limited to, walks, signs, lighting, parking lots, patios, decorative walls and fences.

Landscape architect: A professional who has graduated from an accredited university program in landscape architecture.

Landscape designer: An individual with experience in landscape design.

Landscape screen/buffer, full: Maximum landscape buffer between two conflicting land uses.

Landscape screen/buffer, partial: Selective landscape screening between similar land uses.

Landscape yard: A area of ground required to be landscaped for the purpose of screening and buffering a development site.

Native plant: A plant which is known to have originated in and is characteristic of Illinois.

Ornamental tree: A deciduous tree planted primarily for its ornamental value or for screening. May be any size at maturity but will tend to be smaller than a shade tree.

Parkway: The space between a sidewalk and the street generally planted with grass and street trees.

Plant preservation credit: Credit given for the preservation of existing vegetation meeting the functional requirements of this ordinance, in lieu of required new landscaping.

Prairie: A grassland or meadow, usually with native plant species; or a planting of grasses and wildflowers characteristic of the native Illinois prairie.

Screen: A method of reducing the impact of visual intrusions through the use of plant materials, berms, fences and/or walls or any combination thereof. Screening blocks that which is unsightly or offensive with a more harmonious element.

Shade tree: A deciduous (rarely, an evergreen) tree planted primarily for its high crown of foliage or overhead canopy.

Shrub: A woody plant, smaller than a tree, which consists of a number of small stems from the ground or small branches near the ground. May be deciduous or evergreen.

Shrub, low: Any shrub which attains a mature height of 4 feet or less when left un-pruned.

Shrub, tall: Any shrub which attains a mature height of 5 feet or more when left un-pruned.

Street tree: A tree planted in close proximity to a street in order to provide a canopy over the street, to give the street a sense of spacial definition and human scale, to provide shade and soften the street environment.

Tree: A large, woody plant having 1 or several self-supporting stems or trunks and numerous branches. May be deciduous or evergreen.

Turf grass: Grasses planted, by seeding or sodding, to establish a lawn, which is usually maintained by mowing.

Wetlands: Those areas periodically inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration under normal circumstances sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, wet meadows, ponds and similar areas as defined by the Corps of Engineers.

21.03 SCOPE OF REGULATIONS

The provisions of this Chapter 21 shall apply to the following:

1. New construction (multiple-family, business and manufacturing districts only).
2. Parking Lots
3. Transitional
4. Free standing and monument signs

21.04 APPROVAL PROCESS

When a landscape plan is required, the plan shall be submitted to the City with the application for a building permit.

21.05 PLAN PREPARATION

All landscape plans required by this Chapter 21 shall be prepared and signed by a professional landscape architect or landscape designer.

21.06 SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The submittal package for a landscape plan shall include planting and site information. The landscape plan may be submitted on a separate sheet or superimposed on a single sheet with the site plan. The submittal package must include the following information:

1. Site elements: Title block including the name of the project, designer's name, scale of the plan (no smaller than 1" = 50' for plans with trees only; and no smaller than 1" = 20' for plans with shrubs and smaller plants), north arrow and date of the plan;

Property lines;

Name, location, right-of-way and paving widths of all abutting streets;

Note zoning and use of all abutting properties;

Natural features such as ponds, lakes and streams; delineation of 100-year floodplain and

wetland boundaries;

Existing and proposed storm water management ponds and areas;

Required landscape yard width;

Location, height, dimensions and use of all existing and proposed buildings and other structures, including parking lots, sidewalks and other paved areas; fences and walls; and recreational equipment;

Approved grading plan at one-foot contour interval, with slopes of 4:1 labeled.

2. Planting elements. Location, general type and quality of existing vegetation, specimen trees and natural areas.

For plant preservation credits: vegetation areas to be saved, including accurate locations noted and a list of typical species. Note methods and details for protection of existing vegetation during construction. Location and keyed labels of all proposed plants.

Location of all proposed areas to be seeded and/or sodded.

Plant list or schedule to include key symbols, quantity, correct botanical and common names, size and condition of all proposed plants.

Plant names used shall be identified in accordance with *Hortus Third*, by L. H. Bailey, 1976.

All plant sizes and conditions listed shall conform to the *American Standards For Nursery Stock* as published by the American Association of Nurserymen, latest edition.

Location and description of other landscape improvements, such as earth berms, walls, fences, screens, sculptures, foundations, street furniture, signs, lighting and paved areas.

Planting installation details as necessary to ensure conformance with *American Association of Nurserymen's Standards*, latest edition; and standards as specified in this Chapter 21.

General and specific notes to indicate or explain the design and construction procedures to be used.

3. Cost estimate and notification to permitting body. Upon approval of the landscape plan, a cost estimate prepared by a recognized landscape contractor shall be submitted.

A conditional occupancy permit will be issued when the project's buildings may be occupied but landscaping has not been installed due to weather conditions. A final occupancy permit will be issued upon completion of all landscaping

21.07 LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

Appropriateness: The landscape plan should consider the type of use the development will receive and use plants which will integrate the development site into the surrounding area. Adjacent existing uses will determine the type and extent of screening and buffering required.

Screening: Materials may consist of evergreen trees and shrubs; ornamental trees and deciduous shrubs with dense branching; shade trees; and fences, walls and berms. Planted screens shall be arranged in clusters of plants to create optimum screening according to site conditions and as the designer sees

fit. Excepting limited space for full screening, plants should not be spaced out equally in a line within the required landscape yard length.

Fences and Walls: Screening fences and walls should be built of materials compatible with that of the main building. The use of corrugated metal, corrugated fiberglass, sheet metal, chain link or wire mesh shall not be counted as a screen in landscape yard calculations.

Berms: Screening may be accomplished with the use of earth berms in combination with plants. The minimum height required shall be 2.5 feet, with a minimum width of 12 feet. Taller berms require more width so slopes do not become too steep. Slopes shall not exceed 4:1. Berms should be designed with gently curving slopes so they are not susceptible to erosion. Staggering berms allow for drainage and provide visual variety. Ground cover plants may be used to reduce mowing on berms.

21.08 PLANT MATERIALS STANDARDS *Amended, Ord. 04-3-1*

Plant material standards shall be as follows:

1. All plants shall conform to the *American Standards for Nursery Stock*, latest edition, and shall be installed according to the current standards of the American Association of Nurserymen.
2. Plant availability and hardiness: All plants used in landscape plans shall be readily available and shall be proven to be reliably hardy in USDA Zone 5. Plants shall have a vigorous root system and shall be free from defects, insects and diseases. Substandard plant material will be rejected.
3. Deciduous trees shall be fully branched, have a minimum caliper of 3 inches for nonresidential and 2½ inches for residential development measured 6 inches above ground level. Specimens shall be properly pruned to maintain a natural form.
4. Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of 6 feet in height and fully branched to the ground.
5. Shrubs shall be supplied in 1 gallon or larger containers or balled and burlapped and at least 18 inches in height or spread, whichever applies.
6. Ground cover plants shall be planted so that an effective covering is obtained within two growing seasons.
7. At the intersection of all streets and/or the intersection of any service entrance drive from a street to a zoning lot, line of sight easements shall be established within the triangular area formed: at the intersection of any two street right-of-way lines; and/or the intersection of any street right-of-way line with any service entrance drive (both sides of such drive), by a line drawn between such right-of-way lines, and/or such right-of-way line and service entrance drive line, at a distance along such line of 25 feet from the point of intersection thereof.
8. Plant materials, including deciduous and evergreen trees, shall not cause a hazard. Landscape plant material overhanging walks, pedestrian or bicycle paths and seating areas shall be pruned to a minimum height of 12 feet above parking lot aisles and spaces.
9. Landscape plant materials shall be selected which do not generally interfere with utilities above or below ground level at maturity.
10. Parking Lot Clearance: No shrub or tree shall be planted closer than 2 feet from any curb face.
11. Planting Space Required: Trees planted in cutouts, in walks or in pedestrian areas shall have a

minimum of 4-foot by 4-foot or a 5-foot diameter circle of open soil, and shall be protected by the use of tree grates of edging which does not pose a hazard to pedestrians.

12. Landscape plant materials shall be properly guyed and staked in accordance with current industry standards, where necessary. Stakes and guy wires shall not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
13. Landscape plant materials shall be protected from damage due to foot or vehicular traffic by protective tree grates, pavers, curbs or other suitable methods which prevent soil compaction.
14. Appropriate methods of care and maintenance of the landscape shall be provided by the owner of the property.
15. Additional landscape screening/buffering may be required when an incompatible use occurs which may have a high impact on adjacent development, as determined by the City. A high impact use is one which is expected to have a strong effect on adjacent properties, due to one or more of the following:

Noise;

Outdoor loading spaces;

Exterior storage, attractive nuisances and objectionable views;

Dust, fumes, odors and vibration;

Litter;

Bright lighting during the evening or at night or headlights from vehicles using the development at night;

Height of structures above the normally allowed height for the specific zone; or adjacent to development of a different zone or zones with a lower building height limit; or

Barrier screening/buffering required for safety and liability reasons.

21.09 MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT

The owner, occupant, tenant and agent of each property shall be individually and collectively responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of all landscaping, screening and curbing whether or not required by these regulations so as to preserve at least the same quantity, quality and screening effectiveness as initially installed.

21.10 PARKING LOT REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all parking lot landscaping:

1. Parking lot interior landscaping shall be provided for lots with 10,000 square feet or more of total parkway.
2. Planting islands shall be placed in the following areas of all parking lots:
 - A. End islands shall be provided at each end of all parking bays, except where corner

islands are provided.

- B. Intermediate islands shall be provided after every 12th space, or after every 8th parking space for single-aisle parking lots.
- C. Center islands shall be provided between head-in parking for the full length of every other parking bay unless there are 3 or fewer parallel aisles of parking.
- D. Corner islands shall be provided at the end of 2 perpendicular parking bays when these bays are at the edge of the parking lot.

In the event that the site geometry of the proposed parking lot does not allow strict adherence to the above requirements, alternate schemes will be required to provide at least 10 percent of the parking lot area in landscaped islands.

- 3. Minimum dimensions of planting islands, including a six-inch curb:
 - A. End islands shall be a minimum width of 9 feet and a minimum length of 36 feet, 45 feet with a center island, for a double bay of parking.
 - B. Intermediate and half end islands shall be a minimum width of 9 feet and a minimum length of 18 feet, except in single aisle parking lots, where the minimum width shall be 13 feet. In the case of angle parking, the perpendicular length from the center line of the parking bay to the aisle shall be the minimum length.
 - C. Corner islands shall be a minimum of 18 feet square, except in the case of angle parking, where the perpendicular length of the stall from the center line of the parking bay shall be the minimum dimension.
 - D. Center islands between head-in parking shall be a minimum width of 9 feet, and the same length as the parking bay.
- 4. A curb shall be provided for all parking spaces adjacent to planting or pedestrian areas to prevent vehicle overhang, except in the case of handicapped access ramps.

21.11 LANDSCAPING REQUIRED

A predetermined number of plants are required to provide overhead and low screening of motor vehicles in parking lots. Shade trees and low shrubs or ground cover plants are specified for each type of landscape island. Turf grass may be used but will not be counted as part of the required plants. Ground cover plants may be substituted for any or all of the low shrubs at a ratio of 14:1 when perimeter landscape yards also provide off-site screening for the parking area. Required plantings are:

- 9 feet wide intermediate and half-end islands: 1 shade tree and 9 low shrubs or 126 ground cover plants (excluding turf grass) or some combination.
- 13 feet wide intermediate and half-end islands: 1 shade tree and 12 low shrubs or 168 ground cover plants (excluding turf grass) or some combination.
- 9 feet wide end islands: 2 shade trees and 15 low shrubs or 210 ground cover plants (excluding turf grass) or some combination.
- 18 feet corner islands: 1 shade tree and 21 low shrubs or 294 ground cover plants (excluding

turf grass) or some combination.

- 9 feet wide center islands: 3 shade trees and 36 low shrubs or 504 ground cover plants (excluding turf grass) or some combination; all per 100 linear feet of island.

21.12 TRANSITIONAL YARDS

A. **APPLICABILITY:** All non-residential and multiple-family residential developments shall provide lot perimeter landscaping in accordance with the provision of this Chapter 21.

B. **NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ABUTTING NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY:** Where non-residential property abuts property zoned for non-residential use, landscaping shall be provided as follows:

1. **Width:** A landscaped area a minimum of 10 feet in width shall be provided.
2. **Planting Materials.** A minimum of 50 percent of the required landscape setback shall be landscaped. Such landscaping shall consist of 25 percent evergreen trees a minimum of 6 feet tall, 25 percent shade trees a minimum of 3 inches in caliper, and ornamental trees a minimum of 6 feet tall and 50 percent evergreen and deciduous shrubs a minimum of 3 feet tall. Whenever possible, berms should be used in conjunction with the landscaping.

C. **GROUND COVER:** Except where occupied by planting beds, all perimeter landscaping areas shall be sodded or seeded.

D. **NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ABUTTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY:** Where non-residential property abuts property zoned for residential use, landscaping shall be provided as follows:

1. **Width:** A landscaped area a minimum of 15 feet in width shall be provided.
2. **Screening:** Solid landscape screening to a minimum of 6 feet in height above the grade of the subject property and in a design satisfactory to the Administrator shall be provided along the length of the abutting property line. If determined necessary by the City, due to topographical changes between the abutting commercial and residential property, the minimum height of the required screening may be increased to 8 feet. Any landscape materials used shall be made up of 25 percent evergreen trees a minimum of 6 feet tall, 25 ornamental trees a minimum of 3 inches in caliper or clumps 6 feet tall and 50 percent evergreen and deciduous shrubs achieving a minimum height of screening 6 feet at the time of planting. Whenever possible, berms should be used in conjunction with the landscaping.
3. **Shade Trees:** Shade trees shall be provided at the equivalent of not more than 30 feet apart along the abutting property line. Such trees may be clustered or spaced linearly.
4. **Ground Cover:** Except where occupied by planting beds, all perimeter landscaping areas shall be sodded or seeded.

E. **MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY:** Multiple-family residential property shall be landscaped as follows:

1. Width: A landscaped area a minimum of 10 feet in width shall be provided.
2. Landscaping: A minimum of 50 percent of the required landscape setback shall be landscaped. Such landscaping shall be made up of 50 percent evergreen trees and ornamental trees a minimum of 6 feet tall and 50 percent evergreen and deciduous shrubs a minimum of 3 feet tall. Whenever possible, berms should be used in conjunction with the landscaping.
3. Shade Trees. Shade trees shall be provided at the equivalent of not more than 30 feet apart along the abutting property line. Such trees may be clustered or spaced linearly.
4. Ground Cover: Except where occupied by planting beds, all landscaping areas shall be sodded or seeded.
5. Building Perimeter Landscaping: Building perimeter landscaping in a minimum planting bed with a width of 8 feet shall be provided along 100 percent of all building facades except where sidewalks and driveways are located. Fifty percent of the landscape requirements shall be made up of evergreen trees and shrubs and 50 percent deciduous trees, ornamental trees and shrubs.

21.13 FREESTANDING, GROUND AND MONUMENT SIGNS

Every permit application for a freestanding, ground or monument sign shall be accompanied by a landscape plan meeting the standards hereinafter specified:

1. For every square foot of sign surface area, there shall be provided 1 ½ square feet of landscape area.
2. Any freestanding, ground or monument sign constructed or erected to a height in excess of 8 feet above the average surrounding grade shall be required to be improved with an additional 1 ½ square feet of landscaped area for each foot of height or portion thereof that said sign is constructed or erected above said 8 feet in height. As all such freestanding, ground or monument signs may not exceed a height of 12 feet above the average surrounding grade, the additional landscaping requirements set forth herein shall not exceed 6 square feet.
3. Sodded or seeded areas shall not qualify as such a landscaped area.
4. The required landscaped areas shall be improved with such plantings as hedges, conifers, flowering plants, evergreens, etc., of a size and in quantity proportionate to the size and height of the sign as judged by the Administrator.
5. In addition to the plantings herein described, the landscaped area shall also include ground protection such as, but not limited to, ground cover plants, landscaping bar, decorative stone or landscape timbers.
6. It shall be the duty of each party owning any lot or parcel improved or to be improved with the landscaping required herein to maintain said landscaping including, but not by way of limitation, the replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation, the trimming of any overgrown vegetation and the maintenance of any groundcover or protection provided in accordance with the terms hereof.

21.14 TREE PRESERVATION

Tree preservation is addressed in Section 6.24 of this Code.

21.15 PROHIBITED VEGETATION

The following vegetation is prohibited in the City:

TREES:

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	REMARKS
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box Elder	Weak wood; invasive
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree-of-Heaven	Weak wood; invasive
<i>Betula pendula</i>	European Birch	Borers; disease
<i>Catalpa species</i>	Catalpa	Weak wood; litter; invasive
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i> (Female) seeds	Female Ginkgo	Offensive fruit; seeds
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Torny Honeylocust	Thorns; seed pods; thornless varieties acceptable
<i>Maclura pomifera</i>	Osage-orange	Large fruit; thorns
<i>Morus species</i>	Mulberry	Weak wood; fruit; invasive
<i>Rhamnus frangula</i>	Buckthorn	Weak wood; fruit; invasive
<i>Robinia species</i>	Locust	Weak wood; litter; invasive
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	European Mountainash	Borers; disease
<i>Ulmus American</i>	American Elm	Disease; insects
<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	"Chinese" (Siberian) Elm	Weak wood; disease; insects invasive

Disease resistant varieties are acceptable upon prior approval.

SHRUBS AND HERBACEOUS PLANTS:

<i>Coronilla varia</i>	Crownvetch	Invasive; intolerant of other plants
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Highway/large embankments only

<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese Honeysuckle	Very invasive; crowds out; native understory vegetation
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	Very invasive; replaces native vegetation in wetlands
<i>Rosa multiflora</i> oints	Multiflora Rose	Very invasive; thorns