



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
**LANDSCAPING AND
SCREENING POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES**

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The following policies and procedures, which supplement landscaping and screening standards in Section 21.301.15 of the Bloomington City Code, set forward landscape plan submittal requirements, establish landscape bond rates and procedures, and offer material and design recommendations. In the event of a conflict between the policies and procedures and the City Code, the provisions of the City Code shall prevail. The City acknowledges that the guidance provided within this document is intended to provide design recommendations that are relevant to most, but not all, sites depending on site and building location, orientation, and land use type.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING PLAN SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

When a landscape plan is required by City Code Section 21.301.15(b)(1), the following information must be included:

A. General Project Information.

1. Name of project, owner and developer
2. Street address of project
3. Name, address, phone number of plan preparer and, if applicable, Minnesota license/certification number of the Landscape Architect or Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional (CNLP)
4. The square feet of “Developable Landscaping Area” (see City Code Section 21.301.15(c)(2))
5. The number of retained existing trees for which credit is requested (see City Code Section 21.301.15(c)(2)(D))
6. The total number of trees and shrubs required (see City Code Section 21.301.15(c)(2)) and provided
7. A design narrative that includes text and/or graphics that provide detail on the design concept employed and key features of the landscaping design. The narrative should address but not be limited to the relationship of the pattern and species of plants to buildings and other structures on the site, the relationship of the proposed design with surrounding properties, a description of special purpose plantings such as screening, erosion control, etc., and methods of attaining year-round seasonal interest.
8. The anticipated schedule for installation of landscaping features.

B. Plan Features.

1. Scale (not less than one inch = 30 feet) and north arrow
2. Locations of existing and proposed buildings and all other structures
3. Location and height of lighting fixtures
4. Above and below ground utilities and easements
5. All existing and proposed property lines
6. Parking, driveways and sidewalks
7. Locations of existing and planned widened right-of-way lines plus curb lines
8. Location, height and materials of any screening
9. Locations of exterior special use areas, trash enclosures and any outside storage areas
10. Final grades with contour lines at no less than two-foot intervals
11. Location, identification and sizes of existing trees, shrubs and other vegetation that are to be retained as part of the landscaping
12. Proposed and retained existing plant material labeled and shown on the plan at the normal mature spread for this hardiness zone or existing spread if already mature
13. Irrigation system plan, if appropriate
14. Typical sections and details of fences, walls, planter boxes, and landscaped islands
15. Location, width and height of all earth berms and retaining walls
16. Areas planned for snow storage
17. Portions of the site not counted as “Developable Landscaping Area” (see City Code Section 21.301.15 (c)(2))
18. Soil mix and depth for parking lot islands
19. Seed mixes for turf, long grass and native prairie areas
20. Any other existing or proposed features that relate to or affect site finish and landscaping.

- C. **Planting Schedule. Provide separate planting schedules for proposed and retained existing plant material.**
1. Plant key (if used)
 2. Botanical and common plant names
 3. Quantity of plants for each species. Include separate schedule totals for both trees and shrubs.
 4. Sizes or height of plants at time of planting and anticipated heights and spread at maturity
 5. Root specifications
 6. Any other relevant information

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

- Prior to application, review the City Code requirements (Section 21.301.15) and discuss landscaping and screening issues with the planner assigned to the project.
- Prepare a landscape plan to be submitted as part of a complete application package.
- The landscape plan will be reviewed in conjunction with other required plans (site plan, utilities plan, grading plan, etc.). There may be conditions of approval that apply specifically to the landscape plan. Approvals will include a standard condition that the final landscape plan be approved by the Planning Manager prior to issuance of a building permit.
- After zoning approvals have been granted, prepare a final landscape plan to submit in conjunction with the building permit application. The final landscape plan must be based on the approved development plans, must respond to any changes made to the development plans during the approvals process and must incorporate any conditions of approval related to landscaping. The planner assigned to the project should discuss with the plan preparer any needed landscaping or screening modifications prior to preparation of the final landscaping plan. Submit the landscape plan electronically to the Planning Division.
- The planner assigned to the project will review the final landscape plan and work with the applicant to resolve any issues. Once the landscape plan is approved by the Planning Manager, the stamped, approved landscape plan will be stored in the Planning Division's project case file and also attached to the City's copy of the complete building permit set. Building permits will not be issued until a final landscape plan is approved.
- For any landscaping proposed in the public right of way in conjunction with an adopted City streetscape plan, apply for appropriate right of way permits through the Public Works Department.

LANDSCAPE SURETY AMOUNT AND PROCEDURES

The City Code requires a landscape surety to be submitted prior to issuance of building permits (see City Code Section 21.301.15(h)(5)). The purpose of the surety is to ensure that landscaping and screening is installed as proposed and survives through at least one full growing season. The amount of the surety is determined by multiplying the Developable Landscaping Area (see City Code Section 21.301.15(c)(2)(C) for a definition) by the current Landscape Surety Rate. The Landscape Surety Rate, which reflects average market rates for providing, installing and warranting typical landscaping and screening materials in Bloomington, is currently \$0.50/square foot of Developable Landscaping Area. The surety may be in the form of a performance bond (see attached form) or cashier's check.

Alternatively, the Planning Manager, at their discretion, may require a surety not to exceed 125% of the value of the project bid, which includes material and installation costs. Official bids must be submitted by a professional installer.

Once the landscaping and screening has been in place through one full growing season, staff will review the landscaping on site. If site conditions match the approved landscape plan and all material is healthy, the surety will be released. If landscaping or screening is missing, incorrectly placed, or some material is not in a healthy condition, the owner will be contacted and given an opportunity to correct these issues. The surety amount may be reduced commensurate with the level of outstanding issues. Once the issues are resolved, the landscape surety will be released. If landscaping and screening issues are not resolved, the surety may be called and the proceeds used for installation of approved landscaping and screening materials.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION AND REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE PLANS

The following guidelines are intended to assist in the plan preparation and review process, both by the project designer and by City staff in conducting plan reviews:

- Planting plans should consider the location of underground utilities, particularly water, sewer and storm sewer lines. Trees should generally not be placed in utility easements.
- Planting areas should be large enough for specified plantings in order to avoid overhang problems. Plantings adjacent to sidewalks need to be located such that they don't obstruct pedestrian movement or sidewalk maintenance.
- Planting locations should be coordinated with the location of irrigation controls, utility boxes, electrical hand holes, and similar obstructions. Where possible, locate such above ground obstructions in planting beds rather than turf areas in order to avoid trip points.
- Accommodate vehicle overhang (2½ - 3 feet) in the placement of plants around parking areas.
- Coordinate planting plans with lighting plans to avoid conflicts.
- Maintain adequate vehicular and pedestrian sight lines. Shrub and perennial plantings should be maintained below driver eye level. Massed tree plantings should not obstruct sight lines nor interfere with required clear sight triangles.
- Accommodate adequate snow storage for areas that will be cleared. Avoid plantings in snow storage areas.
- Select plant materials based on site conditions. Consider susceptibility to salt damage, drought tolerance, shade tolerance, soil types, winter wind exposure, moisture tolerance, etc.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

ALONG THE SITE PERIMETER

- Landscaping should add visual interest.
- Landscaping should contribute to visual quality and continuity within and between sites.
- Landscaping should provide a transitional area between different uses and help define the property boundary.
- Limit evergreens to 25 percent of trees provided, unless satisfying screening requirements.
- Limit ornamental trees to 25 percent of trees provided.

WITHIN THE PARKING LOT

- Landscaping should visually break up large areas of paving.
- Landscaping should provide shade in the summer months.
- Landscaping should help define the parking area.
- Parking lot islands should include landscaping such as trees, shrubs, perennials and/or ornamental grasses. Turf is discouraged in small parking lot islands but may be appropriate in larger islands.
- Landscaping features in parking lot islands should have a maximum height of 3.5 feet above the adjacent driving surface except for trees, which should have a minimum height of 7.5 feet above the adjacent driving surface to the lowest branches at maturity.
- Parking lot islands should include an 18-inch area clear of trees, shrubs, or perennials along each curb edge.
- Irrigation systems are not required for parking lot islands, but provisions should be made for watering vegetation as needed. City Code Section 21.301.15(h) requires replacement of dead landscape materials.
- Soil for parking lot islands should be composed of a 1:1:1 mix of soil, compost and sand. The existing soil should be excavated to a minimum depth of two feet and be replaced with the approved soils mix.

ADJACENT TO THE BUILDING

- Landscaping should visually break up the mass of structures.
- Landscaping should provide shade in the summer months.
- Landscaping should help define building entrances while not interfering with lighting and CPTED objectives (see below)
- The recommended separation between a tree and building is 12 feet for ornamental trees, 15 feet for over story trees and 20 feet for evergreen trees.
- Fifty percent of the frontage of a building facing a public street should be landscaped with foundation plantings.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

- *Natural Surveillance.* Landscaping should encourage easy observation of surroundings from buildings and sidewalks, thereby placing more “eyes on the street”, a phenomenon that can reduce criminal activity. Landscaping should not obstruct views from doors, windows and sidewalks, should encourage outdoor activity by helping to make walkways pedestrian friendly, and should not obscure appropriate nighttime lighting.
- *Territorial Reinforcement.* Landscaping design and placement should help to convey a sense of territorial control so that potential offenders, perceiving this control, may be discouraged. This concept includes features that define property lines and distinguish private spaces from public spaces using landscape plantings, pavement designs, gateway treatments, signage, and open fences.
- *Natural Access Control.* Landscaping features should be used, where appropriate, to assist in controlling access to potential crime targets and in creating a perception of risk for offenders. Landscaping should help to clearly indicate public routes and discourage access to private areas.
- *Maintenance.* Landscaping should be well maintained in accordance with its intended purpose. Deterioration and blight indicate less concern and control by the intended users of a site and indicate a greater tolerance of disorder. Proper maintenance prevents reduced visibility due to plant overgrowth and obstructed or inoperative lighting, while serving as an additional expression of territoriality and ownership. Inappropriate maintenance, such as over pruning shrubs, can prevent landscape elements from achieving desired CPTED effects. Communication of design intent to maintenance staff is especially important for CPTED related ideas to be effective.
- *Avoid Entrapment Areas.* Landscaping should be placed in a manner that avoids the creation of entrapment areas.

MISCELLANEOUS

- *Berms.* Berms should have a minimum crown width of two feet and should be planted with vegetation. The height, slope, and area of the berm should be appropriate to the prevention of erosion and to facilitate safe maintenance of the berm.
- *Developable Landscaping Area.* For the purpose of determining Developable Landscaping Area as discussed in City Code Section 21.301.15(c)(2)(C), site area devoted to rain gardens, stormwater management ponds and infiltration basins must be counted toward Developable Landscaping Area.
- *Lakescaping.* A minimum ten to 20 foot or greater strip of unmowed native vegetation should be provided around natural water bodies and storm water management ponds for the purpose of minimizing erosion, creating a natural appearance, improving water quality and promoting wildlife habitats.
- *Landscape Edging.* A landscape edging of either black plastic, steel, stone, formed concrete or brick paving units should be provided along the perimeter edges of the planting beds that are immediately adjacent to lawn areas.
- *Lawn Areas.* Designated lawn areas may be sodded, seeded with grasses, or planted/covered with approved ground covers.
- *Mulch.* All plants except for turf should be mulched. Organic mulch is preferable, but mulch such as loose stones or rocks is allowed. No impermeable material, such as black plastic, should be used over the soil in a landscape plan.
- *Native prairie and long grasses.* To promote water conservation, add visual interest, stabilize steep slopes and provide wildlife habitat, the use of native prairie and long grasses is encouraged in appropriate areas.
- *Ornamental grasses.* The use of ornamental grasses is encouraged as a way to add visual interest to a site.
- *Rain gardens.* To assist in the efficient control and treatment of storm water as well as to promote groundwater recharge, the use of rain gardens is encouraged.

- *Root Specifications.* Required shrubs should be moved onto the site in pots or balled and burlapped. Required trees should be moved onto the site in pots, balled and burlapped or with a tree spade. When bare rooted, trees must be a minimum of 1.5"-2.0" caliper in size.
- *Species Diversity.* Landscape plans should promote species diversity within a site and between neighboring sites.
- *Xeriscaping.* To promote water conservation, xeriscaping design strategies are encouraged, including using decorative rock as ground cover, limiting turf areas, selecting low-water-use plants, designing efficient irrigation systems and using mulch.

LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING MATERIALS RECOMMENDATIONS

It is in the interest of the City of Bloomington and private land owners to install landscaping that is suitable for its given environment. Placing appropriate plant materials in appropriate locations minimizes both ongoing maintenance and plant mortality. The following lists of plant materials are offered as guides in the selection of plants for specific situations. The plants contained in these lists have been compiled from a variety of industry sources and references. In including general species and/or specific plants on these lists, the City of Bloomington offers no guarantee as to their actual hardiness or suitability.

TREES PLACED NEAR STREETS

Acer rubrum	Red Maple
Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple
Celtis occidentalis	Hackberry
Ginkgo biloba (male trees)	Ginkgo
Gleditsia triacanthos and cultivars	Honeylocust
Gymnocladus dioica	Kentucky Coffeetree
Ostrya virginiana	Ironwood
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
Tilia americana and cultivars	American Linden
Tilia cordata and cultivars	Littleleaf Linden
Ulmus americana	Elm (Dutch Elm Disease resistant varieties)

SALT TOLERANT TREES AND SHRUBS - MODERATELY TOLERANT (MT) TO TOLERANT (T)

Evergreens:

Abies species (MT)	Fir
Juniperus species (MT)	Juniper
Picea glauca densata (T)	Black Hills Spruce
Picea pungens (T)	Colorado Spruce
Pinus nigra (T)	Austrian Pine
Thuja occidentalis species (MT)	Arborvitae

Deciduous Trees:

Amelanchier species (T)	Serviceberry
Betula species (MT)	Birch
Crataegus species (MT)	Hawthorn
Ginkgo biloba (T)	Ginkgo
Gleditsia triacanthos	Honeylocust
Gymnocladus dioica (T)	Kentucky Coffeetree
Ostrya virginiana (MT)	Ironwood
Populus tremuloides and cultivars (MT)	Aspen
Salix species (MT)	Willow
Ulmus species (MT)	Elm

Deciduous Shrubs:

Amelanchier species (MT)	Serviceberry
Aronia melanocarpa species (T)	Chokeberry
Cotoneaster species (T)	Cotoneaster
Forsythia species (MT)	Forsythia
Hamamelis virginiana (MT)	Witchhazel
Hydrangea species (T)	Hydrangea
Ilex verticillata cultivars (MT)	Winterberry
Philadelphus species (MT)	Mockorange
Potentilla fruticosa (T)	Potentilla
Prunus cistena (T)	Purpleleaf Cherry
Ribes alpinum (T)	Currant
Syringa vulgaris species (MT)	Lilac
Tamarix ramosissima (T)	Tamarisk
Weigela florida cultivars (MT)	Weigela

TREES AND SHRUBS FOR PARKING LOT AREAS

Trees:

Acer platanoides ‘Deborah’	Deborah Schwedler Maple
Acer platanoides ‘Pond’	Emerald Lustre Maple
Catalpa speciosa	Northern Catalpa
Celtis occidentalis	Hackberry
Crataegus species	Thornless Hawthorn
Gymnocladus dioica	Kentucky Coffeetree
Maackia amurensis	Amur Maackia
Malus species	Crabapple
Phellodendron sachalinense ‘His Majesty’	Amur Corktree (male only)
Populus tremuloides	Quaking Aspen
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
Syringa reticulata	Japanese Tree Lilac
Tilia species	Linden
Ulmus species	Elm (Dutch Elm Disease resistant varieties)

Shrubs:

Lonicera xylosteum ‘Claveyi’	Clavey’s Dwarf Honeysuckle
Rhus aromatica ‘Gro-Low’	Gro-Low Fragrant Sumac
Rosa species	Shrub Rose
Spiraea species	Spirea

TREES AND SHRUBS FOR SCREENING

Trees:

Abies concolor	White Fir
Juniperus virginiana	Red Cedar
Malus baccata	Siberian Crabapple
Picea glauca densata	Black Hills Spruce
Picea pungens	Colorado Spruce
Pinus ponderosa scopulorum	Ponderosa Pine
Salix pentandra	Laurel Willow
Thuja occidentalis	American Arborvitae

Shrubs:

Cotoneaster lucidus	Hedge Cotoneaster
Forsythia ovata	Early Forsythia
Physocarpus opulifolius	Common Ninebark
Prunus virginiana 'Schubert'	Chokecherry
Syringa chinensis	Chinese Lilac
Syringa vulgaris	Common Lilac
Viburnum dentatum	Arrowwood