

ARTICLE XII. LANDSCAPING

Sec. 5-421. Purpose.

The purpose of landscaping and screening requirements is to improve certain setback and yard areas, including off-street vehicular parking and open-lot sales and service areas, for all uses other than one family, duplex, triplex or fourplex residential uses in Fredericksburg and to aid in stabilizing the environment's ecological balance by contributing to the process of air purification, oxygen regeneration, groundwater recharge and storm water runoff retardation, while at the same time aiding in noise, glare and heat abatement, and to protect and preserve the appearance, character and value of surrounding neighborhoods.

(Code 1992, § 3.901)

Sec. 5-422. Definitions.

The following specific definitions shall apply to the landscaping and screening regulations contained in this article:

Landscaping . Landscaping shall consist of any of the following or combination thereof: materials such as, but not limited to, grass, ground covers, flowers, vines, hedges, trees, native plant materials, planters, brick, stone or natural forms, water forms, aggregate or other landscape features, but not including the use of smooth concrete or asphalt. The use of brick, stone, aggregate or other inorganic materials shall not predominate over the use of organic plan materials.

Shrubs . Self-supporting, woody, evergreen species as normally grown in Gillespie County.

Drip line . The periphery of the area beneath a tree that would be encompassed by perpendicular lines dropped from the farthest edges of the crown of the tree.

(Code 1992, § 3.902)

Sec. 5-423. Landscaping requirements for certain yard areas and off-street parking.

- (a) *Areas to which this section applies* . All areas used for the display or parking of any and all types of vehicles, boats or heavy construction equipment, whether such vehicles, boats or equipment are self-propelled or not (here referred to as "off-street parking areas"), and all areas upon which vehicles traverse the property as a

function of the primary use (hereinafter referred to as "other vehicular use areas"), including, but not limited to, activities of a drive-in nature such as filling stations, grocery and dairy stores, banks and restaurants shall conform to the minimum landscaping requirements herein provided. Exceptions include: areas used for parking or other vehicular uses under, on or within buildings; parking areas and other vehicular use areas serving one family, duplex, triplex or fourplex uses, as normally such residential areas are voluntarily landscaped; and expansions and changes in use of existing improved properties.

- (b) *Installation* . All landscaping shall be installed in a good workmanship-like manner and according to accepted good planting procedures with the quality of plant materials as herein described. All elements of landscaping, except plant materials other than hedges, shall be installed so as to conform to all other applicable ordinances and city codes. Landscaped areas shall require protection from vehicular encroachment as herein provided.
- (c) *Maintenance* . The owners, tenants and their agents, if any, shall be jointly and severally responsible for the maintenance of all landscaping provided for under this article. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition so as to present a healthy, neat and orderly appearance and shall be kept free from refuse and debris. All landscaped areas shall be provided with either a readily available water supply with at least one outlet located within 100 feet of all plant materials to be maintained, or an underground sprinkler system. Landscaped areas adjacent to pavement areas shall be protected with curbs or equivalent barricades.
- (d) *Plant materials.*
 - (1) *Crowns* . Trees shall be species having an average mature spread of crown of at least 15 feet and having a trunk(s) which can be maintained in a clear condition over five feet of clear wood. Trees having an average mature spread crown less than 15 feet may be substituted by grouping the same so as to create the equivalent of a 15 foot crown spread.
 - (2) *Species* . Tree species shall be a minimum of seven feet overall height immediately after planting.
 - (3) *Shrubs and hedges* . Shrubs shall be a minimum of 15 inches in height when measured immediately after planting. Except as provided for herein, hedges shall be planted and maintained so as to form a continuous, unbroken, solid, visual screen within a reasonable time after planting.
 - (4) *Vines* . Vines shall be a minimum of 24 inches in height immediately after planting and may be used in conjunction with fences, screens or walls to meet physical barrier requirements as herein specified.

- (5) *Ground covers* . Ground covers used in lieu of grass, in whole or in part, shall be planted in such a manner as to present the appearance of reasonably complete coverage within three months after planting.
 - (6) *Lawn grass* . Grass areas shall be planted in species normally grown as permanent lawns in Fredericksburg. Grass areas may be sodded, plugged, sprigged or seeded, except that solid sod shall be used in swales or other areas subject to erosion. In areas where other than solid sod or grass seed is used, rye grass seed shall be sown for immediate effect and protection until coverage is otherwise achieved.
- (e) *Required landscaping adjacent to public rights-of-way* . On the site of a building or open lot use providing an off-street parking area or other vehicular use area, where such area will not be entirely screened visually by an intervening building or structure from any abutting right-of-way, excluding dedicated alleys, there shall be provided landscaping between such area and such right-of-way, as follows:
- (1) A strip of land at least five feet in depth, located between the abutting right-of-way and the off-street parking area or other vehicular use area which is exposed to an abutting right-of-way, shall be landscaped. Such landscaping shall include one tree for each 50 lineal feet or fraction thereof of right-of-way (street) frontage. Such trees shall be located between the abutting right-of-way and off-street parking area or other vehicular use area and shall be planted in a planting area of at least 25 square feet, with each dimension at least five feet in length. In addition, a hedge, wall or other durable landscape barrier of at least two feet in height shall be placed along the perimeter of such landscaped strip. If such durable barrier is of nonliving material, for each ten feet thereof, one shrub or vine shall be planted abutting such barrier but need not be spaced ten feet apart. Such shrubs or vines shall be planted along the street side of such barrier, unless they are of sufficient height at the time of planting to be readily visible over the top of such barrier. The remainder of the required landscape areas shall be landscaped with grass, ground cover or other landscape treatment, excluding paving.
 - (2) 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 grass or other ground cover.
 - (3) Necessary access ways from the public right-of-way through all such landscaping shall be permitted to service the parking or other vehicular use areas.
- (f) *Perimeter landscaping related to abutting properties* . On the site of a building or structure or open lot use providing off-street parking areas or other vehicular use area, where such areas will not be entirely screened visually by an intervening

building or structure from abutting property, that portion of such area not so screened shall be provided with a wall or fence or hedge or other durable landscape barrier, not greater than eight feet in height nor less than 3-1/2 feet in height, to form a continuous screen between the off-street parking area or other vehicular use area and such abutting property. Such landscape barrier shall be located between the common lot line and the off-street parking area or other vehicular use area exposed to the abutting property, provided the purpose of screening the off-street parking areas and other vehicular use areas is accomplished. If such barrier consists all or in part of plant materials, such plant materials shall be planted in a planting strip of not less than 2-1/2 feet in width. In addition, one tree shall be provided for each 75 lineal feet of such landscape barrier or fractional part thereof. Such trees shall be located between the common lot line and the off-street parking area or other vehicular use area. Each such tree shall be planted in at least 25 square feet of planting area, with each dimension at least five feet in length. Each such planting area shall be landscaped with grass, ground cover or other landscape material, excluding paving, in addition to the required tree. The provisions of this subsection shall not be applicable in the following situations:

- (1) Where a property line abuts a dedicated alley, or to those portions of the property that are opposite a building or other structure located on the abutting property.
- (2) Where a proposed parking area or other vehicular use abuts an existing hedge, wall or other durable landscape barrier on an abutting property, said existing barrier may be used to satisfy the landscape barrier requirements of this subsection, provided that such existing barrier meets all applicable standards of this article and protection of hedges against vehicular encroachment is provided.
- (3) Where the abutting property is zoned for business uses, only the tree provision with its planting area as prescribed in this section shall be required; however, the number of trees may be reduced to one tree for each 125 lineal feet or fractional part thereof.

(g) *Parking area interior landscaping* .

- (1) Off-street parking areas shall have at least ten square feet of interior landscaping for each parking space, excluding those spaces abutting a perimeter for which landscaping is required by other sections hereof and excluding all parking spaces which are directly served by an aisle abutting and running parallel to such a perimeter. In addition, other vehicular use areas shall have one square foot of landscaped area for each 100 square feet or fraction thereof of paved area for the first 50,000 square feet, excluding the first 5,000 square feet of paved area, plus one square foot of landscaped area for each 200 square feet or fraction thereof of paved area

for all paved area over 50,000 square feet; provided, however, in areas zoned for industrial use, these requirements shall be reduced by 50 percent. Where the property contains both parking areas and other vehicular use areas, the two types of areas may be separated for the purposes of determining the other vehicular use by first multiplying the total number of parking spaces by 400 and subtracting the resulting figure from the total square footage of the paved area. Each separate landscaped area shall contain a minimum of 50 square feet, with each dimension at least five feet in length, and shall include at least one tree having a clear trunk at least five feet in height, with the remaining area adequately landscaped with shrubs, ground cover or other authorized landscaping material not to exceed three feet in height.

- (2) The total number of trees shall be not less than one for each 100 square feet or fraction (over one-half) thereof of required interior landscaped area. Such landscaped areas shall be located in such a manner as to divide and break up the expanse of paving.
 - (3) In other vehicular use areas, where the strict application of this section will seriously limit the function of such area, the required landscaping may be located near the perimeter of the paved area including such perimeters which may be adjacent to a building on the site. Such interior landscaping that is relocated as herein provided shall be in addition to the perimeter landscaping requirements of subsection (e) of this section.
 - (4) The front of a vehicle may encroach upon any interior landscaped area where such area is at least 3-1/2 feet in depth adjacent to the abutting parking space and protected by wheel stops or curbing. Two feet of such landscaped area may be part of the required depth of each abutting parking space.
 - (5) Parking lot storm drainage shall be designed so as to direct water from the paved areas to the landscaped areas to allow absorption into the permeable ground prior to discharge into a public street or storm drainage system. This should be accomplished in a manner not likely to result in erosion.
- (h) *Traffic sign distance for landscaping adjacent to public rights-of-way and points of access* . When an access way intersects a public right-of-way, all landscaping within the triangular areas described below shall provide unobstructed cross visibility at a level between three feet and six feet in height; provided, however, trees having limbs and foliage trimmed in such a manner that no limbs or foliage extend into the cross-visibility area may be allowed if they are located so as not to create a traffic hazard. Landscaping, other than grass or ground cover, shall not be located within three feet from the edge of any access way pavement. The triangular areas above referred to are:

- (1) The areas of property on each side of an access way formed by the intersection of the access way and the public right-of-way line, with two sides of each triangle being ten feet in length from the point of intersection along the access way and public right-of-way lines respectively, and the third side being a line connecting the ends of the two other sides.
 - (2) The area of property located at a corner formed by the intersection of two or more public rights-of-way, with two sides of the triangular area being 25 feet in length along the public right-of-way lines, measured from their point of intersection, and the third side being a line connecting the ends of the other two lines.
- (i) *Landscape preservation* . The existing natural landscape character (especially native oaks, elms and pecan trees) shall be preserved to the extent reasonable and feasible. In an area containing a stand of trees, the owner and developer shall use best good faith efforts to preserve such trees. In determining whether there is compliance with this section, the building official shall consider topographical constraints on design, drainage, access and egress, utilities, and other factors reasonably related to the health, safety and welfare of the public which necessitated disturbance of the land's natural character, the nature and quality of the landscaping installed to replace the existing natural landscaping, and such other factors as may be relevant and proper. Indiscriminate clearing or stripping of the natural vegetation on a lot is prohibited.

(Code 1992, § 3.903)

Sec. 5-424. Credits toward landscaping requirements.

In instances where healthy plant material exists on a site prior to its development, in whole or in part, for purposes of off-street parking or other vehicular use areas, the building official may adjust the application of the herein-described standards to allow credit for such plant material if, in his/her opinion, such an adjustment is in keeping with and will preserve the intent of this article. Any credit shall be in accordance with the following:

- (1) Each square foot of landscaped area which is permeable and within the area encompassed by the drip line of a tree of at least four inches in trunk diameter, measured four feet above the ground level, shall count 1 1/2 square feet of landscaped area for the purpose of satisfying the minimum requirements of subsection 5-423(f) of this article.
- (2) Each square foot of landscaped area which is permeable and within the area encompassed by the drip line of a tree of at least eight inches in trunk diameter, measured four feet above the ground level, shall count as two

square feet of landscaped area for the purpose of satisfying the minimum requirements of subsection 5-423(f) of this article.

- (3) The foregoing credits shall be subject to the following limitations and conditions:
- a. Tree drip line area shall not qualify for credit under this section if:
 - 1. Less than one-half of the drip line is permeable cover.
 - 2. There have been any damaging changes in the original grade of the drip line under the tree.
 - b. The total calculated landscaped credit around the tree shall be limited to the total square footage of area within the drip line.
 - c. Neither overlapping drip line areas nor areas contiguous to the drip line areas which overlap shall be counted twice.
 - d. Permeable paving shall be considered a permeable cover.

(Code 1992, § 3.904)

Sec. 5-425. Screening requirements and standards.

- (a) Other areas not covered by subsection 5-423(e) of this article shall be subject to requirements of this section. Minimum landscaped screening requirements shall be provided in the following situations:
- (1) Multiple-family (greater than four units) and mobile home uses along property lines abutting a single-family district.
 - (2) Commercial use along property lines abutting any residential district.
 - (3) Civic use along property lines abutting a more restrictive district in which the use is not permitted.
 - (4) Surrounding multiple-family (greater than four units), commercial, industrial or civic trash storage areas or support services systems.
- (b) Screening shall be provided by installation and maintenance thereafter of a visual screen or buffer of one of the following types:
- (1) A solid wood and/or masonry fence or wall at least six feet but not greater than eight feet in height.

- (2) A hedge-like screen of evergreen plant materials capable of attaining a minimum height of eight feet at maturity, planted initially at a minimum of four foot centers and with a minimum height of 3 1/2 feet.

(Code 1992, § 3.905)

Sec. 5-426. Other applicable regulations.

The provisions of this article shall be subject to other applicable regulations, where such regulations are more restrictive and not otherwise inconsistent with the provisions of this article.

(Code 1992, § 3.906)

Sec. 5-427. Plan approval.

- (a) Prior to issuance of a building permit, a site plan of the tract involved shall be submitted to the building official. The site plan shall contain the following information:

- (1) The date, scale, north point, title and name of owner of the tract.
- (2) The location of existing boundary lines and dimensions of the tract.
- (3) The approximate centerline of existing water courses; the approximate location of significant drainage features; and the location and size of existing and proposed streets and alleys, existing and proposed utility easements on or adjacent to the lot, and existing and proposed sidewalks adjacent to the street.
- (4) The location, size and type (tree, shrub, ground cover or grass) of proposed landscaping in each proposed landscaped area; and the location and size of proposed landscaped areas.
- (5) The location and species of existing trees in the street yard and parking lots having trunks four inches or larger in diameter and the approximate size of their crowns.
- (6) Information necessary for verifying whether the required minimum landscaped area has been met under this section and whether a particular area qualified for credit under this article.
- (7) Statement as to the ratio of the total calculated impervious area to total lot area.

- (8) An indication of how the applicant plans to protect the existing trees, which are proposed to be retained, from damage during construction.
 - (9) The location of sprinklers and water outlets.
 - (10) The certification of a professional engineer, surveyor, landscape architect, or full-time professional building designer that the plans satisfy the requirements of this article.
- (b) The building official shall not issue a building permit or certificate of occupancy unless the requirements of this article are satisfied.

(Code 1992, § 3.907)

Sec. 5-428. Graphic application of landscaping requirements.

The graphic diagram, shown on Exhibit "A" of the ordinance creating this section,* depicts the requirements of this article. This diagram is designed as a guide only and shall not replace the other provisions of this article. Where there is a discrepancy or conflict between the diagram and the other provisions of this article, the other provisions of this article shall prevail.

(Code 1992, § 3.908)

***Note:** The graphic diagram Exhibit "A" has not been reproduced herein but is on file and available for inspection in the appropriate city offices.

Secs. 5-429--5-454. Reserved.