

## **ARTICLE VIII. LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING**

### **Sec. 1. Purpose.**

The purpose of this article is to insure [ensure] that adequate landscaping and screening are provided so that a pleasant visual environment is maintained throughout the City of Schertz.

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 1)

### **Sec. 2. Applicability.**

VIII.2.1. The provisions of this article apply to all developments within the corporate limits of the city.

VIII.2.2. When the requirements of this article conflict with the requirements of other provisions of this or other ordinances, this article shall prevail, provided however, that the provisions of this article shall be subordinate to the provisions of article X, Parking and Loading Standards.

VIII.2.3. Landscaping of off-street parking areas established by article X, Parking and Loading Standards.

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 2)

### **Sec. 3. Site design standards.**

VIII.3.1. *Watering system.* All areas which are landscaped with live plants shall be equipped with a watering system which will provide sufficient water to maintain plants in a healthy condition.

VIII.3.2. *Maintaining of plants.* All living plants shall be maintained in a live and healthy state. Dead or unhealthy plants shall be immediately replaced.

VIII.3.3. *Maintenance of fences and walks.* All fences, walls and similar structures shall be maintained in good condition. Chipped paint, missing fence pieces, leaning or fallen portions of a fence or other forms of deterioration shall immediately be replaced or repaired.

VIII.3.4. *Designing landscaping plans.* Design landscaping plans so that each plant serves a function, whether it be aesthetic, preventing soil erosion, unifying a site, screening outside storage, or buffering adjacent development. Xeriscape landscape designs are highly recommended.

- VIII.3.5. *Trees.* Intermediate trees should be employed for windbreak and visual interest. Intermediate trees can be used to divide site into smaller components. Shrubs are encouraged to be used for low level buffers and enclosure.
- VIII.3.6. *Plants.* Plants should be clustered in strategic areas rather than spread thinly around site, with the exception of buffer area improvements.
- VIII.3.7. *Mixing plants and shrubs.* The number of different species employed on any landscape plan should be limited for reasons of economy and design. A mix of species should be used, yet their number need not be large. Choose materials, which will provide some diversity and color year round.
- VIII.3.8. *Variety.* Appropriate varieties of plant material should be selected after considering size at maturity, location and intended use.
- VIII.3.9. *Planting design.* Planting design should be simple. Planting masses of shrubbery and ground cover of appropriate scale with a predominance of one species for unity is one approach to simplicity in planting design.
- VIII.3.10. *Planting area.* Planting areas should relate to and complement the architectural elements of the buildings on the site.

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 3)

#### **Sec. 4. Tree preservation/removal.**

- VIII.4.1. Trees having and 8" DBH (diameter at breast height-4 1/2 feet above existing ground level) are "Protected trees within the City of Schertz and it's ETJ. Trees with a 24" DBH are designated "Heritage" trees.
- A. A Tree Affidavit is used when there are no heritage or protected trees in the proposed development. Or, when no heritage tree will be damaged or removed; or when no protected tree will be damaged or removed except in that area inside the proposed building footprints (commercial development) or inside the building setbacks (residential development).
- B. An application for a Tree Preservation/Removal Permit is submitted when heritage tree will be removed and/or protected trees will be removed except inside the footprint of the building for commercial development or inside setbacks for residential development. A tree preservation plan with an inventory of existing trees is required in order to calculate diameter-inches that will be removed versus number of inches that will be preserved. In addition, the preservation plan includes notes on method of tree protection during construction and justification for removing Protected or heritage trees. This

permit will be issued after the planning and zoning commission has evaluated and approved the tree preservation plan.

**Note:** As a minimum, a Tree Preservation Plan includes: 1) Existing/proposed topography. 2) Location of property lines, easements, approaches, right-of-ways, setbacks, parking areas, and sidewalks; 3) Location, species and size in DBH of each heritage tree and each protected tree except those located inside the footprint of proposed structures (for commercial development). (Driveways and parking facilities are not included as structures.) 4) Tree inventory that summarizes total number of DBH inches to be removed and to be preserved (trees down to 1 1/2 " DBH can be used in calculating preservation diameter inches). 5) Location of each mitigation tree and total number of DBH inches to be planted for mitigation.

**Note:** Tree protection will be installed before any site work is initiated and maintained for the duration of the construction work. It will consist of fencing (orange mesh or chain link) placed around the Root Protection Zone (RPZ). RPZ is a circle around the tree at a distance from the trunk of the tree equal to 1/2 foot per inch of tree diameter (5 feet minimum). No vehicles or construction materials/debris will be allowed in the RPZ. Any damage done to tree crowns or roots will be repaired immediately and any wounds on live oaks will be painted with pruning paint within 30 minutes to prevent oak wilt. Wells or retaining wall around the RPZ will be used if proposed finished grades will raise or lower the natural RPZ grade by more than 3". The finished RPZ will be pervious.

1) For commercial, multifamily and other developments: A minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the total DBH must be preserved. As a reminder, even though the preservation standard is met, a permit is still required to remove heritage trees and most protected trees.

2) For single-family residential development of single or contiguous lots. Continuous lots include three or more lots, and 50% of the total DBH must be preserved. For Individual lots, 45% of the total DBH must be preserved.

3) Absolute minimum preservation is 10% of the total DBH on a site.

C. There is a Mitigation Requirement imposed for the removal of any and all heritage trees, and for the removal of any and all protected trees except those inside the building footprint (commercial/those inside setbacks (residential)). Protected trees are mitigated at a ratio of 1" to 1". Heritage trees are mitigated at a ratio of 3" for every 1" of removed tree. Mitigated trees will be of the same or more "valuable" class of tree, typical to the area from which the protected or heritage trees were removed and have a minimum DBH of 2". In commercial, multifamily, and other developments and in contiguous lot, single-family residential developments the mitigation trees may be used to meet the site plan, tree requirements (see paragraph 4.2 below). Or, an in-lieu-of payment to the

City of Schertz (as per fee schedule) will be used to place trees at public facilities and schools throughout the city.

- VIII.4.2. Site plans should accommodate existing trees by providing islands in parking lots, grading, and landscaping surrounding structures. In commercial, multifamily, and other developments trees will be added to the landscape, as necessary, to have the equivalent of 4" DBH per fifty feet of street frontage. In [In] single-family residential developments each residence will have minimum of three trees; those added will have a 1 1/2 " DBH. All added trees will be of the oak, native elm, pistach variety (one of the three required for single-family, residential development additions may be of the "faster-growing", native variety). In some instances, an in-lieu-of payment may be appropriate. Compliance with this requirement will be noted on the site plan or the tree preservation plan.

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 4)

## **Sec. 5. Buffer areas.**

- VIII.5.1. *Location.* Buffer areas shall be located on the outer perimeter of a lot or parcel, extending to the lot or parcel boundary line.
- VIII.5.2. *Purpose of buffer area.* Buffer area shall be constructed to negate problems associated with traffic, noise, vibration, odor, glare, dust, smoke, pollution, water, vapor, conflicting land uses and density, height, layout of adjacent uses, loss of privacy, unsightly views and other potentially negative effects of development. Buffering may be achieved by altering setbacks, using landscaping, building fences, using berms, altering building location, and/or a combination of the above techniques.
- VIII.5.3. *Buffer material.* When a solid fence, eight (8') feet in height, is used to separate adjacent property from the site, the constructed fence should be stone or some other masonry material. To improve the bland appearance of solid fence, trees and shrubs should be planted along the fence. (See Illustration 1)
- VIII.5.4. *Vegetation buffer.* In some instances a vegetative-type buffer may be warranted. In these cases, the plants should be at least four (4') feet in height when planted and spaced to form a continuous solid screen at maturity. (See Illustration 1)
- VIII.5.5. *Buffer reduction.* Consideration will be given to the reduction of the current established front yard setback and/or buffer areas for a landscaped buffer area when off-street parking is placed in back and/or on the side of the structure. (See Illustration 2)

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 5)

### **Sec. 6. Screening of unsightly areas.**

- VIII.6.1. *Areas.* Unsightly areas, including, but not limited to, trash receptacles, loading docks, outside storage areas, utility boxes and open areas where machinery or vehicles are stored or repaired, shall be screened from public sidewalks, streets and other areas from which the property is visible.
- VIII.6.2. *Use of plants.* Whenever plants are used as a screen, the plants should provide an opaque screen of a minimum within three (3) years of the time they are planted.
- VIII.6.3. *Unsightly items.* Utility boxes, including, but not limited to, electric transformers, telephone pedestals and boxes should be screened on all sides not used for service access. (See Illustration 3)
- VIII.6.4. *Material and colors.* The material and colors of the screens should blend with the site and surroundings.
- VIII.6.5. *Refuse.* Areas reserved for refuse storage shall be screened by a solid nontransparent masonry wall or a standard screening fence. Said fence shall be a minimum of six (6') feet in height and shall be on all sides of the refuse storage area except the side used for garbage pick-up service. A staggered entrance to preclude visibility of the dumpsters may be allowed on one side other than the refuse side. The enclosure should be sited so that service vehicles have convenient access to the enclosure and have room to maneuver without backing onto a public right-of-way. (See Illustration 3)
- VIII.6.6. *Salvage yards.* The area on the premises where an auto salvage business is conducted shall be enclosed, except for entrances and exits with a solid vertical wall or fence of a minimum height of ten (10') feet measured from ground level.

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 6)

### **Sec. 7. Parking area screening.**

Standards. The standards for the landscaping of off-street parking areas can be found in article X, Parking and Loading Standards. (See Illustration 4)

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 7)

## **Sec. 8. Building area improvements.**

- VIII.8.1. *Areas.* Plant material, decorative material, or a combination of both, should be located near buildings on the site to aesthetically integrate each building into the overall site, to visually soften the massiveness of buildings, and to separate the buildings from the parking lot.
- VIII.8.2. *Use of plants.* Plant materials should be located where they will be visible from the public streets, sidewalks and other heavily used areas. (Illustration 5)

(Code 1976, art. VIII, § 8)

## **Sec. 9. Fencing.**

- VIII.9.1. *Fencing selection.* The final selection of fencing materials should be made according to the use it will serve and design character of adjacent area or adjoining fence.
- VIII.9.2. *Material.* The material selected for the fence shall be appropriate for its intended use and in harmony and compatibility with the architecture.
- VIII.9.3. *Fencing and residential areas.*
- A. Residential areas will be fenced from a business/industrial area by an eight (8') foot solid fence constructed from stone, some other masonry material, or metal. To improve the bland appearance of a solid fence, trees and shrubs may be planted along the fence.
  - B. Fencing along the front of a residential lot that has a public street on two sides will be permitted providing the fencing is no higher than thirty-six (36") inches.
  - C. Residential areas abutting a manufactured housing park will be separated by an eight (8') foot fence constructed from stone, some other masonry material, or metal.
  - D. Fence or surface structures surrounding a front yard shall not exceed forty-eight (48") inches in height.
- VIII.9.4. *Fencing of nonresidential areas.* Adjacent nonresidential areas or a public street may be separated from the site area by a buffer area of plant material. Plants used shall be at least four (4') feet in height when planted and spaced to form a continuous, solid screen at maturity. When appropriate, an earth berm of the location, height and design approved by the planning and zoning commission may be substituted for the required planting. (Illustration 6)