

CHAPTER 13: LANDSCAPING REGULATIONS

Division 13.1: General Provisions

Sec. 13.100 Title and Purpose

The following Sections in this Chapter shall be known as the Landscaping Regulations. The purpose of these provisions is as follows:

- (a) To provide guidelines for landscape harmonious with the local identity and master planned traditions. These traditions seek to sustain and indeed replenish native flora to protect and enhance Sunset Valley's nature-based values.
- (b) To protect and conserve our finite natural resources and ecological balance. Development is to be designed to cause the least degradation or disruption of the ground, water, air and Sunset Valley's natural cool, quiet ambiance.
- (c) To enhance Sunset Valley's property values by protecting the local physical and aesthetic natural elements. This includes design which integrates elements of visual buffering from within and around a site.
- (d) To safeguard the guidelines and balance necessary for public health, safety, and the general welfare of the community.

Sec. 13.101 Application

- (a) The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to the following:
 - (1) Except as otherwise provided below, this Chapter shall apply to the owners of all land located within the corporate limits of the City of Sunset Valley. Such landscaping requirements shall become applicable as to each individual lot at such time as an application for a site plan or watershed development permit on such lot is made.
 - (2) A common development which includes more than one lot shall be treated as one lot for the purposes of satisfying the landscaping requirements of this Chapter. Split ownership, planning in phases, construction in stages, and/or multiple building permits for a project shall not prevent it from being a common development as referred to above. Each phase of a phased project shall comply with the requirements of this Chapter.
- (b) This Chapter shall not apply to the following:
 - (1) Building permits for single family residences where only one such structure is constructed per lot.
 - (2) Building permits for the substantial restoration within a period of twelve (12) months of a building which has been damaged less than 50 per cent by fire, explosion, flood, tornado, riot, act of the public enemy, or accident of any kind.
 - (3) Building permits for remodeling as long as the exterior walls of the building remain in the same location.

Sec. 13.102 Procedures

- (a) Landscape Site Plan Information Requirements. When an application is made for a building permit on any land where the landscaping requirements of this Chapter are applicable, such building permit application, including site plans, shall be accompanied by a landscape site plan containing the information listed in subsections (1) through (13) below. In the event that a preliminary building site plan is amended or finalized, an amended or finalized landscape site plan containing the information listed in subsections (1) through (13) below shall be submitted simultaneously with the amended or finalized building site plan.
- (1) The date, scale, north arrow, title and name of owner.
 - (2) The location of existing boundary lines and dimensions of the tract.
 - (3) The approximate center line 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, species, type (tree, shrub, groundcover, or grass), spacing, and quantity of proposed landscaping in proposed landscaped areas; and the location and size of proposed landscaped areas.
 - (5) The location and species of all existing trees having trunks six inches (2") or larger DBH and the approximate size of their crowns.
 - (6) An inventory and location of the site's plant communities.
 - (7) An indication of whether understory vegetation is present under the tree canopy of all existing trees, and the identity of all dominant species constituting such understory vegetation.
 - (8) Information necessary for verifying whether the required minimum percent of landscaped area has been met under Section 13.200 and whether a particular area qualifies for 125% credit under Section 13.203 hereof.
 - (9) An indication of how the applicant plans to protect the existing trees and understory vegetation, which are proposed to be retained, from damage during construction, including but not limited to: a showing of critical root zones, required work space, location of fences during construction, and permeable paving areas, if applicable. Protection during construction shall be provided by fencing. No storage of materials or vehicular traffic is to be permitted in this area in order to prevent compaction of soil.
 - (10) The proposed irrigation system as required by Section 13.200(n) below.
 - (11) The location, material used, and height of any walls or fences.
 - (12) All plans necessary to show compliance with the applicable provisions of the sign provisions of this Code which are in effect at the time of submission of the landscape site plan.
 - (13) The certification of a landscape architect, professional building designer, or certified landscape professional that the plans satisfy the requirements of this Chapter. Provided, however, that for a

common development or project which is greater than one acre in size, such plans and certification shall be made by a landscape architect only.

- (14) Information necessary for verifying how landscape buffering is to be accomplished under Section 13.200(r).
 - (15) The City Council approved plan shall specifically note in chart form elements which have been granted extra credit incentives.
- (b) Plan Approvals. Landscaping site plans approved by the City Council during the final site plan and landscape site plan review process shall not require further approval if the site plan approved contains all information listed in Section 13.102(a) above, unless the accompanying final site plan is later amended, in which case a landscape site plan, amended as necessary, shall be provided for the City Council's review and approval.
- (c) Inspection Fee. An inspection fee in an amount to be set by the City Council from time to time shall be collected at the time of submittal of landscape plan. Fees shall cover plan review, installation monitoring, initial inspection for Certificate of Occupancy, and a final inspection six (6) months after installation.
- (d) Inspection/Fiscal Posting. Fiscal posting is required prior to the issuance of the site development permit. All landscape installation must be completed prior to the landscape inspection. The City or its designated agent shall inspect each site to insure compliance with this Chapter. Prior to final landscape inspection, a sealed letter of concurrence shall be provided to the City from a licensed professional engineer, architect or landscape architect, which letter shall verify that the project has been implemented in accordance with the City approved plans. Calculation will be based on the criteria established in the landscape site plan application.

Sec. 13.103 Annual Inspection and Permit Renewal

On an annual basis the City or its designated agent shall inspect each site to insure continued compliance with the approved landscape plan. An inspection fee is an amount to be set by the City Council from time to time and shall be collected at the permit renewal.

Division 13.2: Requirements

Sec. 13.200 General Landscaping Requirements

- (a) The existing natural landscape character (especially native oaks, elms, pecan, cedar, and mesquite trees, native grasses, and geology) shall be preserved to the extent reasonable and feasible. In determining whether there is compliance with this subsection the City Council designate 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 existing natural landscape character; economic usefulness of the property without disturbance of its natural character; the nature and quality of the landscaping installed to replace it; and such other factors as may be relevant and proper. Indiscriminate clearing or stripping of the natural vegetation on a lot is prohibited.
- (b) Xeriscape Principles. It is the intent of this Chapter to assist the City in achieving water conservation through proper plant selection, installation and maintenance practices. The following Xeriscape principles serve as the primary means of achieving water conservation:

- (1) Appropriate planning and design
- (2) Limiting turf areas to locations where it provides functional benefits
- (3) Efficient irrigation systems
- (4) The use of soil amendments to improve water holding capacity of the soil
- (5) The use of mulches, where appropriate
- (6) The use of drought-tolerant plants
- (7) Appropriate and timely maintenance

(c) Site Design Standards.

- (1) Creative site development concepts for water conservation: Creative site development concepts shall be used in order to promote water conservation. Water requirements may be reduced by providing for:
 - (A) The preservation of existing plant communities.
 - (B) The re-establishment of native plant communities.
 - (C) Limited amount of lawn grass areas.
 - (D) The use of site specific plant materials (see Definitions).
 - (E) The use of shade trees to reduce transpiration rates of lower story plant materials.
 - (F) Site development that retains storm water runoff on site.
 - (G) The use pervious paving materials.
 - (H) Site development that addresses the carrying capacity of the land in its present form.
 - (I) Other environmentally sensitive site development concepts.
- (2) Preservation of existing plant communities: When existing natural plant communities occur on a parcel of land to be developed, at least twenty (20) percent of the required landscape area shall be in the form of preserved natural plant communities.

(d) Lawn grass areas.

- (1) General: A major portion of water demand used for landscape purposes is required for the irrigation of lawn areas. Portions of landscaped areas that have been customarily designed as lawns should be designed instead as:

- (A) Natural plant communities;
- (B) Redeveloped native areas;
- (C) Traditional mixes of trees, shrubs and groundcovers.

Properly managed non-grass landscape developments of site specific plantings will typically be able to survive on a reduced water requirement and survive drought conditions better than lawn areas.

- (2) Maximum Use Requirements for Allowable Lawn Grass: No more than 35% of the required landscape area shall be planted in lawn grass.

Turf Selection and Limitations

Proposed turf areas that receive more than six (6) hours of sunlight per day shall be planted with species from the Recommended Plant List.

(e) Required Management Plan.

- (1) General: For all areas of preserved plant communities larger than one acre in area, the owner shall submit for the approval of the City, a narrative management plan indicating the manner in which the owner will preserve the native plant communities. The narrative shall include:

- (A) Whether or not the existing vegetation is to be preserved in the existing composition.
- (B) If applicable, the manner in which the composition of existing plant material is to be preserved (hand removal of invasion species, etc.).
- (C) The maintenance schedule for the removal of exotic species.
- (D) The maintenance schedule for the removal of debris.
- (E) Other information that may be required by the City that is reasonable and necessary to a determination that the management plan meets the requirements of this Chapter.

- (2) Requirement for the Maintenance of Preserved Plant Communities. The owner shall maintain the preserved plant community in accordance with an accepted management plan.

- (f) Ninety percent (90%) of the total species of the required vegetation shall be plants included in the Recommended Plant List available at the Sunset Valley City Hall. Should a plan approved plant not be available at time of installation, a plant within the same category in the Recommended Plant List may be substituted with the approval of the City Landscape Architect.

- (g) Landscape Minimum. At least 25% of the area of the street yard shall be landscaped area. All of the required landscaped area shall be located in the street yard.

- (h) Tree Requirements. For areas within the street yard, trees of not less than one and one-half inches (1½") in caliper and six (6) feet in height (either existing or planted) shall be required as per the following ratios: No more than 35% of planted trees will be from the same species within a specific genus. No more than 25% of

planted trees will be from the same genus. A minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of all required trees shall be shade trees.

- (1) In street yards less than 10,000 square feet, 2 trees per 1,000 square feet, or fraction thereof.
 - (2) In street yards greater than 10,000 square feet, 2 trees per 2,500 square feet, or fraction thereof, of street yard area over 10,000 square feet is added to the requirement of 20 trees.
- (i) Shrub Requirement. A maximum of 20% of the 25% required landscaped area in the street yard shall consist of shrub plantings and shall be more or less evenly distributed throughout the street yard so as to not create a geometric alignment. Hedgerows and straight lines of plantings are discouraged.
- (j) Vegetative Setback Requirement. There shall be a vegetative buffer zone of twenty-five (25) feet next to the right-of-way lines of all streets and roadways. No improvements, including parking areas, shall be allowed in the vegetative setback zone. Except for clearing necessary to provide utilities access and site line visibility to the site, no clearing of vegetation shall be permitted within the vegetative setback zone. In cases where the buffer area has previously been substantially disturbed, it shall be revegetated to provide a varied landscape buffer utilizing trees, shrubs, and grasses in accordance with the other provisions of this Chapter.
- (k) Existing Trees. A surveyed or planted tree which is at least six inches (6") in diameter and at least fifteen feet (15') tall shall be considered as two trees for purposes of satisfying requirements of this subsection. Up to one third of the required trees may be *Juniperus Virginiana* or *Juniperus Ashei*, the native eastern and western cedars, respectively; and/or *Prosopis Chilensis*, the native mesquite.

The impervious cover within the area encompassed by the dripline of any tree in a required landscaped area may not exceed fifty (50) percent of such area if such area is to receive 125% credit under Section 13.203 below.

- (l) The Proposed Trees. Newly planted trees of at least four inches (4") in diameter and at least twelve feet (12') tall shall be considered as 1½ trees for purposes of satisfying the requirements of this Section. All newly planted trees shall be planted in a permeable area whose minimum dimension is no less than fifteen (15) feet wide from the inside of the curb.
- (m) Parking Areas.
- (1) Vehicular use areas, parking areas, service areas, parking lots and their parked vehicles shall have 1 buffer point of landscape buffering for each linear foot of required landscaping along the property line. If non-residential vehicular use areas, parking area, service area, or parking lot abut adjacent residential property, compatibility and buffering standards shall apply. These standards are separate and apart from the landscape Code Provisions requirements. Refer to the Land Development Code section entitled "Regulations for Adjoining District" for specific requirements.
 - (2) A minimum total area of 180 square feet of landscaped islands, peninsulas and medians is required for each 16 parking spaces anywhere on the site, including the streetyard.
 - (3) The number, size, and shape of islands, peninsulas, and medians in both street yards and non-street yards shall be at the discretion of the owner; however, no parking space shall be located further than 50 feet from a permeable landscaped island, peninsula, or median. This distance should be measured from the curb line of the landscaped island, median or peninsula and should encompass

the entire parking space. All islands, peninsulas and medians required in the areas stated above, shall be more or less evenly distributed throughout such parking areas, respectively; however, the distribution and location of landscaped islands, peninsulas, and medians may be adjusted to accommodate existing trees or other natural features so long as the total area requirement for landscaped islands, peninsulas, and medians for the respective parking areas above, is satisfied.

- (4) Only landscaped islands, peninsulas, and medians in the street yard shall count toward fulfilling the requirements of Section 13.200(g) above, as applicable.
 - (5) Each parking aisle shall be terminated with an end island whose minimum dimension is fifteen feet (15') from the inside of the curb.
 - (6) Special Provisions for Large Parking Lots. The above paragraph (m)(3) does not apply if this subsection (m)(6) is required. For parking lots with more than three (3) parking modules, a 12 foot minimum width median (measured from inside of curb) will be required for every third parking module. Trees within the median must be located so that one (1) tree shall be located within 25 feet of each parking space adjacent to the median. No additional islands shall be required to satisfy Section 13.200(m) except for end islands for each parking module. (See Figure A)
 - (7) A minimum 3' wide pedestrian walkway shall be provided within the boundaries of each twelve foot wide (minimum) median. The walkway shall provide pedestrian access connecting the parking lot and the commercial establishment's entry(ies).
- (n) Irrigation. All irrigation systems shall be provided with anti-siphon devices satisfactory to the City Building Inspector. All required landscaping shall be irrigated by one of the following methods:
- (1) An underground sprinkling automatic irrigation system - either a conventional spray, bubblers, drip emitters, drip tubing, porous pipe or other similar system with turf zones separated from planting zones.
 - (2) A hose attachment within 100 feet of all street yard required landscaped areas and plant materials where there is no road or parking pavement between the hose attachment and landscaped areas and the site plan area is no larger than 1.0 acre.
 - (3) Landscape areas planted with native grasses and wildflowers may use a temporary and above ground irrigation system in accordance with the design criteria outlined herein and shall be required to provide irrigation only for the first two (2) growing seasons.

The irrigation methods used shall:

- (A) Provide a moisture level in an amount and frequency adequate to sustain growth of the plant materials on a permanent basis;
- (B) Be in place and operational at the time of the final landscape inspection unless an alternative method is approved under Section 13.204;
- (C) Be maintained and kept operational at all times to provide for efficient water distribution;
- (D) Be described in the landscape plans by a detail, a drawing or by specification in a note on the site plan, indicating the nature and location of the irrigation methods which will be used. The description should be specific enough to show that adequate irrigation will be

provided to all required landscape areas and plant materials and that there is no disturbance to the critical root zones of existing trees.

- (4) Automatic irrigation systems shall comply with the following guidelines. These guidelines (A - G) shall be noted on the Site Development Permit Submittal and shall be implemented as part of the landscape inspection.
- (A) Adjustable flow controls shall be required on circuit remote control valves. Pressure regulation component(s) shall be required where static pressure exceeds manufacturer's recommended operating range.
 - (B) Valves and circuits shall be separated based on water use, so that turf areas can be watered separately from shrub and groundcover areas.
 - (C) Sprinkler heads shall have matched precipitation rates within each control valve circuit.
 - (D) Serviceable check valves shall be required where elevation differential may cause low head drainage adjacent to paving areas.
 - (E) Sprinkler head spacing shall be designed for head-to-head coverage or heads shall be spaced as per manufacturer's recommendations and adjusted for prevailing winds. The system shall be designed for minimum run-off and minimum overspray onto non-irrigated areas (i.e., paving and structures).
 - (F) All automatic irrigation systems shall be equipped with a controller capable of dual or multiple programming. Controllers shall have multiple cycle start capacity and a flexible calendar program, including the capability of being set to water every five days. All automatic irrigation systems shall be equipped with a rain sensor shut-off device.
 - (G) Irrigation construction plans shall include a water budget. A laminated copy of the water budget shall be permanently installed inside the irrigation controller door. Water budgets shall include:

Estimated monthly water use (in gallons per application) and the area (in square feet) irrigated.

Precipitation rates for each valve circuit.

Monthly irrigation schedule for the plant establishment period (first three months) and recommended yearly watering schedule, including seasonal adjustments.

Location of emergency irrigation system shut-off valve.

Provided, however, that irrigation shall not be required for natural areas or existing trees which are not disturbed or affected by the proposed development.

- (o) Protection of Landscape. All landscaping which is in required landscaped areas and which is adjacent to pavement shall be protected with anchored concrete curbs or equivalent anchored barriers (such as car bumpers, railroad ties are prohibited) when necessary to protect landscaping.
- (p) Siteline Visibility. Landscaping in landscaped areas shall not obstruct the view between the street and the access drives and parking aisles near the street yard entries and exits, nor shall any landscaping which

creates an obstruction of view be located in the radius of any curb return. A maximum mature plant height of three feet (3') will be permitted within fifteen (15) feet of the intersection of dedicated rights-of-way or the intersection of a driveway and a dedicated right-of-way.

(q) Architectural Buffering Requirements.

- (1) Compatibility and buffering are required wherever a property other than residential abuts adjacent residential property. The buffer shall comply with the requirements outlined in the Code entitled Regulations for Adjoining Districts.

(r) Landscape Buffering Requirements.

(1) Non-Residential Property Adjacent to Residential Property

- (A) Wherever a vehicular use area, parking area, service area, utility appurtenances, or parking lot serving a non-residential property abut adjacent residential property, the requirements outlined in this Land Development Code entitled "Regulations for Adjoining Districts" shall first apply.
- (B) Landscape buffering requirements outlined under the requirements for "Non Residential Property" shall also apply if detention ponds, sedimentation ponds and filtration and utility appurtenances are located in such a manner that they are not effectively buffered under the requirements of "Regulations for Adjoining Districts."

(2) Non-Residential Property Adjacent to Non-Residential Property

- (A) Landscape buffering of non-residential property adjacent to non-residential property is a site specific requirement that shall be evaluated by the City or its designated agent based on viewer distance and angle of view from the areas or site features requiring buffering. Such areas or site features requiring landscape buffering include, but are not limited to, vehicular use areas, parking lots and their parked cars, detention ponds, service areas, sedimentation ponds, and filtration and utility appurtenances. Buffer design shall also consider the amount of view obstruction required and the type and mixture of design elements used in the buffer.
- (B) To be considered effective, a combination of buffering elements shall be used to provide a partial view obstruction of those items to be buffered (pavement, parked cars, etc.).
- (C) Landscape buffers shall contain at least two (2) or more of the following elements:
Trees
Shrubs
Berms
- (D) Plants and trees used as buffering elements shall be planted in a permeable landscape area at least fifteen feet (15') wide, measured from inside of curb or pavement to the property line. All plantings shall conform to the provisions of this Chapter.

- (E) To determine the quantity of elements to be included in a buffer, the following point system, should be used. This system assigns a point value to each landscape element listed above.

BUFFERING POINT SYSTEM

<u>Buffer Description</u>	<u>Points</u>					
Plant Classification	1-1½ caliper		2-2½ caliper		3-3½ caliper	
	Recommended Species (R)/Other Species (O)					
	R	O	R	O	R	O
Large Tree	3 pts.	1 pt.	6 pts.	2 pts.	9 pts.	3 pts.
Small Tree	3 pts.	1 pt.	6 pts.	2 pts.	9 pts.	3 pts.
Plant classification	1 gallon		5 gallon			
	R	O			R	O
Large Shrub	1 pt.	1/3 pt.			3 pts.	1 pt.
Medium Shrub	1 pt.	1/3 pt.			3 pts.	1 pt.
Small Shrub	½ pt.	1/6 pt.			2 pts.	2/3 pt.

No more than 35% of the trees or shrubs shall be from the same species within a specified genus. No more than 25% of planted trees, shrubs and groundcover shall be from the same genus.

Berm per linear foot (3 ft. min. at no greater than 4:1) 1 pt.

For each linear foot of buffer area required, one (1) point of buffering element as listed above should be provided within the buffer area. The buffer area does not have to be planted at the same density throughout. However, the elements should be combined so that no more than 1/4 of the buffer area is absent of elements and no less than two (2) elements are used for more than 50 percent of the buffer length (see Figure 1).

- (s) All required landscaping must be accomplished within the boundaries of the site being developed. Landscaping accomplished in any dedicated right-of-way shall not be included in meeting the landscaping or buffering requirements imposed by this Chapter. Landscaping areas preserved or planted for the purpose of preserving or creating drainage ways, detention ponds, or sedimentation ponds shall not be included in satisfying the landscaping requirements provided by this Chapter, except that the top one-third (1/3) of the depth of such landscaped drainage way, detention pond, or sedimentation pond may be included in satisfying landscaping requirements.
- (t) All mowable turf shall be separated with edging from other landscaped areas in order to prevent encroachment from the adjacent grassed areas.
- (u) Fifty percent (50%) of proposed landscaped plantings must be conspicuous, e.g., blooming material from the Recommended Plant List.

Sec. 13.201 Landscape Material Quality and Species Requirements

- (a) Shrubs, Vines and Ground Cover. Shrubs, vines and ground cover planted pursuant to this Chapter should be good, healthy nursery stock normally grown for or found growing in the Travis County area. Plant

materials which are native or naturalized and have low water requirements are highly recommended. Shrubs must be, at a minimum, a one (1) gallon container size.

- (b) Lawn Grass. Traditional grass areas are not required in Sunset Valley. The City invites innovative and environmentally appropriate alternatives to turfgrass monocultures. Such areas may be established in native diverse species which have low water requirements. Grass areas using grass not listed on the Recommended Plant List are not credited as landscaped area. If shaded turf areas (areas that receive less than six hours of sunlight per day), St. Augustine grass may be used. Areas may be sodded, plugged, sprigged, or seeded except that solid sod shall be used in swales or other areas subject to erosion.
- (c) Synthetic Lawns or Plants. Synthetic or artificial lawns or plants shall not be used in lieu of plant requirements in this Chapter.
- (d) Architectural Planters. The use of architectural planters or impervious cover shall not be permitted in fulfillment of landscape requirements.
- (e) Drainage. Drainage ways shall be designed and maintained so as to maximize the use of native vegetation on the bottoms and sides.

Sec. 13.202 Installation and Maintenance

General Minimum Requirements: The following standards shall be considered the minimum requirements for the installation of all landscaping within Sunset Valley.

- (a) Installation requirements. All landscape materials shall be installed according to American Association of Nurserymen (AAN) standards. This requirement will be monitored by City Council designate.
- (b) Plant quality standards. Plants installed pursuant to this Chapter shall conform to or exceed the minimum standard as provided in the most current edition of American Standards for Nursery Stock recommended for general use and adoption by the American Association of Nurserymen, Inc. Another accepted standard may be used if it equals or exceeds the quality of the American Standards for Nursery Stock.
- (c) Plant ball sizes. Ball sizes on all transplanted plant materials shall conform to or exceed the minimum standards as noted in the most current edition of "Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Part I and II" prepared by the State of Texas Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (d) Anti-transpirants - General. In order to reduce the transpiration rate of plant material during the installation process, anti-transpirants shall be used. Anti-transpirants reduce the amount of water loss through the leaves of plant material during installation, thereby reducing the amount of water required for the survival of the plants. Anti-transpirants shall be used on all permitted landscape installation projects.
- (e) It shall be the responsibility of each private property owner to remove any dead, diseased or dangerous trees or shrubs, or parts thereof, which overhand or interfere with traffic control devices, public sidewalks, rights-of-way or property owned by the City. The City shall have the authority to order the removal of any such trees of shrubs.
- (f) Watering.
 - (1) General: All watering of planted areas shall be managed so as to:

- (A) Maintain healthy flora.
- (B) Make plant material more drought tolerant.
- (C) Avoid excessive turf growth.
- (D) Minimize fungus growth.
- (E) Stimulate deep root growth.
- (F) Minimize leaching of fertilizer.
- (G) Minimize cold damage.
- (H) Minimize runoff.

- (2) Watering of St. Augustine Grass Lawns: All watering of St. Augustine grass lawn areas shall be accomplished on an as needed basis as indicated by turf wilt. The amount of water applied in each application shall be so as to promote deep root growth.
- (3) Watering of other Grass Lawns: All watering of other grass lawn areas shall be accomplished on an as needed basis. Bermuda and Buffalo grass may not require watering even when wilting. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed so as to preclude the withholding of water from grass beyond the stage of turf wilt.
- (4) Promoting Deep Root Growth of Trees and Shrubs: Watering of plants and trees should always be in a sufficient amount to thoroughly soak the root ball of the plant and the surrounding area, thereby promoting deep root growth and tolerance.
- (5) Operation of Automatic Irrigation Systems: Whenever possible, automatic irrigation systems should be operated between the hours of midnight and 6:00 A.M. or as designated by the City of Sunset Valley. Irrigating during these hours reduces fungus growth and loss of water due to evaporation.
- (6) Maintenance of Irrigation Systems: Irrigation systems shall be constantly maintained to eliminate waste of water due to loss of heads, broken pipes or misadjusted nozzles; to adjust controller program to reflect weather changes.

- (g) Maintenance and Replacement of Dead Material. The owner of the building, or the manager or agent of the owner, shall be responsible for the maintenance of all landscape appearance at all times and landscaping shall be kept free of refuse and debris. Ongoing maintenance shall include the replacement of all dead plant material if that material was used to meet the requirements of this Chapter. Should a tree die or be removed from which credit has been obtained pursuant to the terms of Section 13.203, a smaller tree with a minimum caliper of 2" that will have a mature crown similar to the tree removed must be substituted within six months and the planting area or pervious cover provided for the larger tree retained.
- (h) Replacement Requirements. Vegetation which is required to be planted or preserved by this Chapter shall be replaced with equivalent vegetation if it is not living within one year of issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Preserved trees for which credit was awarded which subsequently die shall be replaced by the requisite number of living trees according to the standards established in Section 13.200.
- (i) The required mulch layer shall be maintained on all landscape projects.

Sec. 13.203 Extra Credit for Dripline Preservation and Native Plants Code Provisions Incentives

- (a) Dripline Preservation. Each square foot of landscaped area which is permeable and within the area encompassed by the dripline of a surveyed tree of at least two inches (2") in trunk diameter, measured DBH,

shall count as 1.25 square feet of landscaped area for the purposes of satisfying the requirements of Section 13.200 above provided that impervious cover in the dripline does not exceed 50%. The area for which credit is to be received shall be protected during construction. Trees for which extra credit is being applied shall be inspected prior to, during and at time of Final Inspection for healthiness and probability of survival. No storage of materials or vehicular traffic is to be permitted in this area in order to prevent compaction of soil.

- (b) The foregoing 125% credit shall be subject to the following limitations. Neither overlapping dripline areas nor areas contiguous to the dripline areas which overlap shall be counted twice. Moreover, a tree dripline area shall not qualify for credit under this subsection if (1) less than one-half of the dripline areas is permeable cover, (2) there have been any damaging changes in the original grade of the dripline under the tree, or (3) the total credit for the tree dripline exceeds the total footage within the dripline.
- (c) In no case shall the actual landscaped area in the street yard of a lot be less than eighty percent (80%) of the required minimum area, as applicable under Section 13.200 above.
- (d) Use of Recommended Plants. Landscape areas newly planted with a minimum of 90% of total species from the Recommended Plant List being native trees and shrubs will be given 5% additional credit toward square footage requirements. A list of native and naturalized plants is available at Sunset Valley City Hall. No more than 35% of planted trees, shrubs and groundcover will be from the same species within a specified genus. No more than 25% of planted trees, shrubs and groundcover will be from the same genus.
- (e) Landscape Maintenance Standards. Projects which voluntarily and perpetually comply with the City Landscape Maintenance Guidelines may reduce the shrub requirement by 50%.
 - (1) Enhanced pavement material: When at least 50% of all outdoor vehicular pavement area on the site consists of enhanced pavement, 5% additional credit toward square footage requirements will be granted.
 - (2) Pedestrian amenities: For each square foot of publicly accessible special pedestrian facilities and features such as plazas, covered walkways, fountains, lakes and decorative water ponds, seating areas and outdoor recreation facilities; such areas will reduce the amount of required landscaped area of the site by an equivalent square footage.
 - (3) Berms: Landscape areas incorporating berms a minimum of three feet in height will be given 5% additional credit toward square footage requirements.

Sec. 13.204 Variances

- (a) The City Council may authorize a variance from these regulations when, in its opinion, undue hardship will result from requiring strict compliance. In granting a variance, the council shall prescribe only conditions that it deems necessary to or desirable in the public interest. In making the findings hereinbelow required, the council shall take into account the nature of the proposed use of the land involved, existing uses of land in the vicinity, the number of persons who will reside or work in the proposed subdivision, and the probable effect of such variance upon traffic conditions and upon the public health, safety, convenience and welfare in the vicinity. No variance shall be granted unless the Council finds:

- (1) That there are special circumstances or conditions affecting the land involved such that the strict application of the provisions of this Chapter would deprive the applicant of the reasonable use of his land; and
- (2) That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant; and
- (3) That the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to other property in the area;
- (4) **Alternative Compliance.** Notwithstanding all of the foregoing provisions of this Chapter a landscape site plan which is alternative to strict compliance with the various landscaping requirements of this Chapter may be approved by the City Council, if the Council finds that such plan is as good or better than a plan in strict compliance with the various landscaping requirements of this Chapter in accomplishing the purposes of this Chapter. Consideration should be given to preservation of large oak, elm and pecan trees which are not necessarily in required landscape areas. In no event, however, will landscaping or buffering within a dedicated right-of-way constitute alternative compliance with the requirements imposed by this Chapter, nor shall such landscaping or buffering be deemed to satisfy any requirement of this Chapter.

Alternative proposals should be clearly identified on the landscape plans and the site plan application should include a letter outlining the alternative proposal. Review of the alternative proposal will be in conjunction with the site plan review.

To establish some guideline equivalents for the major landscape requirements listed in Section 13.200, a list of alternative equivalent ratings are found below. These ratings assign relative values to the landscape elements of a design and should be used when formulating alternative proposals. Each basic requirement which cannot be achieved is assigned a negative point value and maybe compensated for with positive equivalents shown in the compensation list. An example using this concept is provided below:

These ratings are intended to provide guidance for proposing alternatives to strict compliance for unusual site specific conditions. However, other proposed equivalents may be accepted based on extremely unusual conditions, if approved by the City Council.

ALTERNATIVE EQUIVALENT RATINGS

Deficiencies

The following information should be used to formulate alternative proposals when a site design cannot conform to the basic landscape requirements as described in Section 189. Approved alternative compliance proposals must be from the Recommended Plant List.

Landscape Area as a Percent of Street Yard

Negative Points

<20 percent	-20
20 percent	-15
21 percent	-10
22 percent	- 8
23 percent	- 6
24 percent	- 4
25 percent	0

Landscape Area for Each 12 Parking Spaces

Negative Points

<60 square feet	-10
60 square feet	- 5
90 square feet	0

Landscape Area for Each 12 Parking Spaces

Negative Points

<60 square feet	- 5
60 square feet	0

Landscape Islands, Medians or Peninsula Placement

Negative Points

within 100 feet of each space	-10
within 75 feet of each space	- 5
within 50 feet of each space	0

Trees Installed in Parking Landscape Areas

Negative Points

within 100 feet of each space	-10
within 75 feet of each space	- 5
within 50 feet of each space	0

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE EQUIVALENT RATINGS

Deficiency Compensation

Trees:

Positive Points

All must be from Recommended Plant List.

Percentage of Installed Street Yard Trees	2” caliper	3” or greater caliper
10%	1 pt.	1 pt.

20%	2 pts.	4 pts.
30%	3 pts.	6 pts.
40%	4 pts.	8 pts.
50% or greater	5 pts.	10 pts.

Buffer:

Positive Points

Buffer Increased Above Minimum

10%		1 pt.
20%		2 pts.
30%		3 pts.
40%		4 pts.
50%		5 pts.

Special Landscape Features:

Positive Points

- *Covered walkways not attached to buildings, arbors, gazebos or shaded seating areas for public benefit. +5
- *Sidewalks, trails or pedestrian paths outside the public right of way +5
- *Approved rain water storage and irrigation distribution system +5
- *Sculpture, public art or ornamental water features +5
- *Herb or antique rose display gardens +5

Native Plant Credit:

Positive Points

All native plant materials +5

Water Conservation:

The installation of an automatic conventional spray type irrigation system in compliance with Section 13.200, for all landscape areas will compensate for three (3) negative points.

The installation of an automatic water saving drip system for all landscaped areas and in compliance with Section 189, will compensate for four (4) negative points.