

Native Species Percentages

Under the 1996 General Plan Policy 7.4.5.2, at least 50 percent of plant material had to be native species predominant to the area. The 2004 General Plan Policy 7.4.4.2 requires native species to be utilized in landscaping, but does not specify a percentage amount. Staff recommends that drought-tolerant plant material from the approved plant lists on file in the department be incorporated into landscape plans in conformance with this policy. Staff proposes that a minimum requirement of 50 percent native species be included as a standard in the updated ordinance.

Shading

The current landscape standards only apply to discretionary and ministerial applications for commercial, industrial and multi-family development that have parking requirements. Yet, parking lot shading standards are only required in the R&D zone district (Exhibit A). Staff recommends the updated ordinance include shade coverage requirements for all commercial/industrial/multi-family zone districts. In turn, the shade coverage requirements should be revised to one basic standard for simplification of design and review.

Screening and Buffering

Landscaping is currently being required to screen parking areas that front roadways or adjacent properties under different ownership, only. The updated ordinance should increase the site requirements by applying them to other areas besides parking. Landscaping should be required along all property lines, as well as around buildings and structures for aesthetics, screening and water quality/stormwater mitigation purposes. This revision can be applied in the form of a required percentage of landscaping over and above that required for parking lot buffering and shade.

The required parking buffers along roadways should be increased from a minimum of 5 feet in width, exclusive of any curbs, to at least 10 feet in width as measured from the edge of right-of-way. All other required buffers should be a minimum of five feet in width as measured from the property line, except where industrial, commercial, civic or utility uses abut residentially zoned lots, in which case the required landscape buffer should be at least 10 feet in width with a 6-8 foot tall fence of solid material installed at the property line.

Under the current Ordinance, 3 trees and 6 shrubs are all that is required for every 100 linear feet. This vegetation requirement should be doubled at least in the required landscape buffers adjacent to roadways, as well as along property boundaries. Landscaping within a parking facility other than for buffering should have the minimum width and area increased from 4 feet and 20 square feet respectively, to dimensions that will provide sufficient space to allow adequate shade trees and insure their viability. In addition, evergreen and deciduous plant material ratios should be included in the updated Ordinance in order to maintain year-round screening and buffering.

Erosion Control and Stormwater Runoff

The Department of Transportation is currently in the process of revising the *Design and Improvement Standards Manual* to incorporate storm water runoff best management practices (BMP's), such as grassy swales, detention basins and runoff dissipaters, into development standards. The revised landscape ordinance should dovetail into these requirements either by referencing the manual or citing them explicitly. In addition, a low impact development (LID) approach utilizing alternative methods of land development should be codified into the Ordinance. LID methods include reducing hardscape and impervious surfaces, creating bio-retention cells/rain gardens, and installing alternative rainwater drain systems (Exhibit E).

Water Conservation

Irrigation systems and water conservation methods must be addressed in compliance with Policies 5.2.1.10, 5.2.1.12, and corresponding implementation measure PS-H, as well as in codification of Board Resolution 69-93 establishing water conserving landscape standards. Currently under this resolution, we have been requiring a maximum applied water allowance statement (MAWA) for any plan involving 2,500 square feet or more of landscaping that is located on a parcel below the 3,400 foot elevation. Exceptions include, but are not limited to homeowner-installed single and multi-family development, and sites with recycled water systems (Exhibit C). The MAWA formula should be reviewed for adequacy in promoting water conservation, as most approved discretionary development has not even come close to exceeding the maximum. The provisions and/or standards should be reviewed for further clarification and/or revision, if necessary, as part of the update process.

Aesthetics

To insure plant diversity and aesthetic appeal, limits should be placed on plant material in order to increase variety. Credits for artwork could be exchanged in lieu of planting material subject to review and approval of the hearing authority. Consideration could be given to the establishment of a county-wide design review committee to review proposed landscape plans prior to project approval. A separate landscape design manual could be developed as a guideline to assist the design professional as well as the public.

Streamlining Review Process

Methods for streamlining landscape plan review could be instituted based on the San Diego County model (Exhibit D). Under their ordinance, plans submitted by a licensed landscape architect who has certified each page to be compliant with all applicable codes, laws and policies would not require further site plan review on the part of Planning staff. In cases where plans have been prepared by other defined landscape professionals, implementation of the revised landscape requirements could be insured through design certification and approval of the landscape plan under discretionary or ministerial site plan review. In either case, installation would require certification by the designer prior to final occupancy. Enforcement, if necessary, would then only require a site visit to determine compliance with the certified plan. Incentives could be incorporated into the revision, to include public acknowledgement and listing by the

County of those landscape professionals who demonstrate consistent conformance with the requirements of the Ordinance.

Maintenance

Continued landscape maintenance should be required either through a contract or maintenance agreement approved by the County that will not only protect the financial investment of the property owner, but will reduce impacts from future growth and development on the natural beauty of the County.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide staff with comments and direction regarding the working draft document.

ATTACHMENTS

- Exhibit A Landscaping Ordinance §17.18.090, R&D Ordinance §17.35.030(D4)
- Exhibit B General Plan Policies
- Exhibit C Water Conservation Landscape Standards
- Exhibit D Sample Ordinances:
- Placer County Design Guidelines
 - Nevada County
 - San Diego County Design Manual
- Exhibit E Low Impact Development Methods

Off-Street Parking and Loading Ordinance

17.18.090 Parking lot landscaping and buffering. At the time of development of any off-street parking lot required by this chapter, landscaping and buffers shall be required in accordance with the provisions of this section.

- A. Landscape Area Required. All open automobile parking areas that contain five or more parking spaces shall provide a landscape buffer along those property boundaries where the parking facility abuts or adjoins a public road, street or highway or abuts a property under different ownership or zoning district. Where a parking facility contains ten or more parking spaces, additional landscaping equivalent to five percent of the gross area used for parking and access purposes, exclusive of the landscape buffer, shall be devoted to landscaping.
- B. Landscape Plan Required. Prior to the issuance of any building permit which is subject to parking lot landscaping as required by this chapter, a landscape plan subject to the approval of the planning director shall be required. The landscape plan shall designate all areas to be landscaped and shall include the location, size, variety and number of all plant materials and water supply. All landscaping shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved landscape plan.
- C. Landscape Improvement Standards. Landscaping for parking lot facilities shall be required as follows:
 - 1. Landscaped buffers along a public road, street or highway or property under a different ownership or zoning district shall be a minimum of five feet in width, exclusive of any curbs, and shall be measured from the property line.
 - 2. Landscaping within a parking facility other than the landscape buffers, shall have a minimum dimension of four feet and a minimum area to twenty square feet, exclusive of any curbs.
 - 3. A minimum of three trees and six shrubs shall be provided per each one hundred feet in the landscape buffers required along the property boundaries and public roads, streets or highways. The size and species shall be approved by the planning director.
 - 4. At least one tree having a minimum size of fifteen gallons or equivalent shall be provided for each ten parking spaces exclusive of the landscape buffers.
 - 5. All plant materials shall be nonpoisonous and shall be maintained free from weeds, debris and undesirable materials. Plant materials showing damage from insects or disease shall be replaced in accordance with the approved landscape plan.
 - 6. Vehicles may overhang landscaped planters a maximum of two feet, providing that the landscape area maintains a minimum unobstructed width of three feet and permanent curbs, bumper or wheel stops or similar devices are installed.
 - 7. Landscaped areas shall emphasize the use of living plant material. However, the use of bark, decorative rock, water and similar materials or features may be utilized, providing such materials do not exceed thirty percent of the required landscape area.

EXHIBIT A

D. Requirements for Existing Parking Areas Not in Conformance with Landscaping Standards.

1. Whenever existing uses not in compliance with the parking or landscaping standards of this chapter are transferred to new owners or when new uses are initiated within existing structures that do not require, under this code, the provision of additional parking spaces, the landscaping improvements shall not be required.
2. Whenever the use of any premises which is not in compliance with the parking or landscaping standards of this code is changed so that this code requires the provision of additional parking spaces and landscaping, and the landscaping standards shall apply only to the additional parking area.
3. Whenever existing structures or development on a site, the use of which is not in compliance with the parking or landscaping standards of this code, is enlarged, modified, or redeveloped so that fifty percent or more of the coverage of the site is affected, the landscaping standards shall apply.
4. Where an application for a proposed change in use or alteration of an existing structure, as required by subdivisions 2 and 3 of this subsection, does not comply with the required landscaping standards of Section 17.18.080 and the applicant believes that the intent of the landscaping requirements can be met in an alternative manner, then the applicant may apply for a special use permit for approval of such alternative. Such permit shall only be approved if the planning director or planning commission makes all of the findings of Section 17.18.040D2 of this chapter. In considering requests for the reduction or substitution of landscaping requirements, the approving authority shall consider:
 - a. Adjacent land use(s);
 - b. The nature of the proposed change in use or alteration of existing structure(s) and existing site conditions;
 - c. The suitability of alternatives, if any, proposed by the applicant to meet the intent of landscaping requirements. (Ord. 3775 (part), 1987)

Research and Development Zone District

17.35.030 (D)

4. Landscaped Parking Areas.

- a. Parking lots of five spaces or more shall provide landscaped areas interior to the parking lot covering a percentage of the total parking area as follows:

% of Total Parking
Parking Spaces Required Area to be Landscaped

5 — 24 spaces	5.0% minimum
25 — 49 spaces	7.5% minimum
50+ spaces	10.0% minimum

- b. Parking lot landscaping shall include shade trees, from the list approved by the planning director, placed so as to cover a percentage of the total parking area with tree canopies within fifteen years of securing building permit, as follows:

% of Total Parking
Parking Spaces Required Area to be Landscaped

5 — 24 spaces	30% minimum
25 — 49 spaces	45% minimum
50+ spaces	50% minimum

- c. The provisions of Chapter 17.18 (off-street parking and loading) shall apply to all development within the research and development district, except where the provisions of this chapter are more restrictive.

- Policy 2.2.5.17 Criteria for locating churches and private schools in residential zones shall be established in the Zoning Ordinance. Minimum site development standards shall also be established.
- Policy 2.2.5.18 Standards in the form of setbacks and other requirements shall be added to the Zoning Ordinance to buffer incompatible uses (e.g., commercial adjacent to residential).
- Policy 2.3.1.2 The Zoning Ordinance shall include consideration of a standard for parking lot shading and provision of street trees in all new development projects.
- Policy 5.2.1.10 The County shall support water conservation and recycling programs and projects that can reduce future water demand consistent with the policies of this General Plan. The County will develop and implement a water use efficiency program for existing and new residential, commercial/industrial, and agricultural uses. The County will also work with each of the county's water purveyors to develop a list of the type of uses that must utilize reclaimed water if feasible. The feasibility of using reclaimed water will be defined with specific criteria developed with public input and with the assistance of the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), and will be coordinated with their ongoing reclaimed water (also referred to as recycled water) planning and implementation process. The County shall encourage all water purveyors to implement the water conservation-related Best Management Practices already implemented by EID and in compliance with the related criteria established by USBR.
- Policy 5.2.1.12 The County shall work with the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) to support the continued and expanded use of recycled water, including wet-season use and storage, in new subdivisions served by the Deer Creek and El Dorado Hills Wastewater Treatment Plants. To avoid the construction impacts of installing recycled water facilities, the County shall encourage the construction of distribution lines at the same time as other utilities are installed. Facilities to consider are recycled water lines for residential landscaping, parks, schools, and other irrigation needs, and if feasible, wet-irrigation-season storage facilities.
- Policy 5.9.2.2 The County shall provide incentives to encourage indoor and outdoor art to be incorporated into the development of new multiple family, commercial, and industrial projects, and in all civic projects.
- Policy 7.1.2.2 Discretionary and ministerial projects that require earthwork and grading, including cut and fill for roads, shall be required to minimize erosion and sedimentation, conform to natural contours, maintain natural drainage patterns, minimize impervious surfaces, and maximize the retention of natural vegetation. Specific standards for minimizing erosion and sedimentation shall be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

EXHIBIT B

- Policy 7.3.5.1 Drought-tolerant plant species, where feasible, shall be used for landscaping of commercial development. Where the use of drought-tolerant native plant species is feasible, they should be used instead of non-native plant species.
- Policy 7.3.5.2 A list of appropriate local indigenous drought tolerant plant materials shall be maintained by the County Planning Department and made available to the public.
- Policy 7.3.5.3 The County Parks and Recreation Division shall use drought tolerant landscaping for all new parks and park improvement projects.
- Policy 7.3.5.4 Require efficient water conveyance systems in new construction. Establish a program of ongoing conversion of open ditch systems shall be considered for conversion to closed conduits, reclaimed water supplies, or both, as circumstances permit.
- Policy 7.3.5.5 Encourage water reuse programs to conserve raw or potable water supplies consistent with State Law.
- Policy 7.4.4.2 Through the review of discretionary projects, the County, consistent with any limitations imposed by State law, shall encourage the protection, planting, restoration, and regeneration of native trees in new developments and within existing communities.
- Policy 7.6.1.3 The County shall implement Policy 7.6.1.1 through zoning regulations and the administration thereof. It is intended that certain districts and certain requirements in zoning regulations carry out the purposes set forth in Policy 7.6.1.1 as follows:
- E. Landscaping requirements in zoning regulations shall provide for vegetative buffers between incompatible land uses in order to maintain Purpose E in Policy 7.6.1.1.