

Sec: 117- Landscaping and buffering

(A) Purpose and Intent. The purpose of this chapter is to clearly express the city's intent for all properties to be landscaped and maintained with great care. Properties shall be landscaped to express sensitivity to environmental conditions as well as the aesthetic needs of the general public. This section applies to all properties located in the B-1, B-2, H-1, E-1, E-2 and E-3 Zoning districts.

1. The requirements of this chapter are intended to guide landscaping within commercial, and industrial zoning districts. All plantings installed by property owners in addition to the standards required by this chapter do not need to comply with plant size specifications.

2. All landscaping must be designed to add visual beauty to the property and provide a high level of aesthetic value. The quantity and quality of the design should be compatible with each zoning district and the intended use of the property. Landscaping shall also be consistent with areas which have established unique design concepts, patterns, and any applicable overlay districts.

3. The preservation of desirable vegetation is a goal which should be addressed prior to the vegetation removal for grading, construction and/or expansion of an existing use.

(B) Site landscaping.

1. Minimum landscaping requirements. All open space areas of a lot which are not used or improved for required parking areas, drives or storage shall be landscaped with a combination of overstory trees, ornamental trees, shrubs, flowers, ground cover, decorative walks, or other similar site design materials in a quantity and placement suitable for the site. A reasonable attempt should be made to preserve as many existing trees as is practicable and to incorporate them into the development. For each existing significant tree retained one overstory tree can be deducted from the minimum requirements. Credit for preserved trees apply only to those trees that are located within the front and sides of the site, rather than the rear of the site.

2. Number of plantings. The minimum number of overstory trees on any given site shall be as indicated below. These are minimum requirements that are typically supplemented with other understory trees, shrubs, flowers and ground covers deemed appropriate for a complete quality landscape treatment of a site.

	Business Districts
Deciduous/coniferous trees	1 per 50 lineal feet of site perimeter, or 1 tree per 1,000 square feet of building footprint, whichever is greater. For expansions to buildings, 1 additional tree is required for each 1,000 square feet of additional building footprint area.
Shrubs	1 per 30 feet of site perimeter or 1 per 300 square feet of building

	footprint area, whichever is greater.
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3. Minimum size of plantings. Landscaping material shall be of the following minimum planting size:

Landscape Material	Size
Deciduous trees	2.5 inches diameter
Coniferous trees	6 feet in height
Deciduous shrubs	2 feet in height
Evergreen shrubs	2 feet in height or 2 feet in width, whichever applies
Ornamental trees	1.5 inches diameter

4. Building Perimeter Landscaping: At least fifty percent (50%) of the total building perimeter shall be sodded or landscaped with approved ground cover, shrubbery and trees in an area of no less than six feet (6') in width.

5. Planting types.

- (i) Acceptable plantings shall be determined by the City of Ramsey Tree Book.
- (ii) The compliment of trees fulfilling the landscaping requirements shall be not less than 25 percent deciduous and not less than 25 percent coniferous. No more than 25 percent of the required plantings shall consist of ornamental trees.
- (iii) For every 35 feet of public road frontage, one overstory tree shall be planted on the private property adjacent to the public road right-of-way.

(C) Topsoil. All exposed ground areas of a site not occupied by building, parking or storage, excluding natural areas that are left undisturbed, shall be covered with ~~six~~ four (4) inches of topsoil, as defined in [section 117-1](#), or an approved alternative as referenced in [section 117-348](#).

(D) Sodding and ground cover. All areas not otherwise improved in accordance with approved site plans shall be finished with sod up to the edge of improved streets. Any alternative to the sod requirement shall require city council approval.

(E) Irrigation.

- 1. All landscaping areas required under this section shall include underground irrigation systems.
- 2. Exceptions include natural areas that are left undisturbed.
- 3. All irrigation systems shall include soil moisture and rain sensors to conserve water.

(F) Maintenance: All landscaped areas shall be maintained by the property owner and kept neat, clear and uncluttered, and where landscaping is required as part of city approvals, any plant material which is diseased or dies shall be replaced with like kind of the original size by the property owner. No landscaped area shall be used for the parking of vehicles or for the storage or display of materials, supplies or merchandise, unless specifically approved by the city.

(i) Replacement of landscape materials, plantings and screening shall be consistent with the original landscape/screen design or as approved by the city.

(ii) All repair or replacement shall be done within forty five (45) days of written notification from the city.

(iii) The responsibility for tree and plant growth and maintenance rests upon the property owner.

(G) Bufferyards. This section is intended to be minimum requirements to achieve screening between differing uses with varied intensities and impacts that are not always complementary when adjacent to one another. When a bufferyard is required under this section, the yard space and planting requirements are not to be reduced for other purposes such as future parking and driveways, building expansions, or other activities that are not in keeping with the purposes of buffering and screening.

1. Bufferyards are intended to provide additional screening of businesses that are adjacent to residential areas. The following table details the width of the bufferyard along the common adjacent property line. An additional increase of landscape plantings would be required in the bufferyard. That increase is expressed in the table below as a percentage of the total required site landscaping:

Proposed Development	Existing Adjacent Development		
	R-1	R-2	R-3
B-1 District Bufferyard width	40 ft.	30 ft.	20 ft.
% increase in plantings required	25%	20%	20%
B-2 Bufferyard width	50 ft.	40 ft.	30 ft.
% increase in plantings required	30%	25%	20%

Proposed Development	Existing Adjacent Development				
	R-1	R-2	R-3	B-1	B-2
E-1 and E-2 Districts	60 ft.	60 ft.	60 ft.	35 ft.	35 ft.

Bufferyard width	30%	30%	30%	20%	20%
% increase in plantings required					

- As an alternative method for screening, fences that are 100 percent opaque may be used to mitigate the impacts of businesses or industrial buildings that are adjacent to residential areas. Fences shall be subject to the provisions found in all applicable ordinances. When a fence is used for screening purposes, the bufferyard planting requirements may be reduced by ~~ten~~fifty percent from the stated minimum requirement.

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