

Landscaping Example in Commercial Zoning Districts

(14) Landscaping and buffering.

a. 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.
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.

3. Minimum size of plantings. Landscaping material shall be of the following minimum planting size:

Landscape Material	Size
Deciduous trees	2.5 inches diameter as measured three feet above ground
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 as measured three feet above ground

4. 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 lot 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.
- b. *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 four inches of topsoil, as defined in [section 117-1](#), or an approved alternative as referenced in [section 117-348](#).
  - c. *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.

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- d. Irrigation.
  - 1. All landscaping areas required under this section shall include underground irrigation systems.
  - 2. Exceptions include natural areas that are left undisturbed.
- e. Parking lot landscaping. All parking lots are required to provide internal overstory tree plantings in an effort to shade parking surfaces and provide visual relief. Plantings are required at the following minimum schedule. The planting schedule is established to provide an acceptable number of plantings that may be planted in regular symmetrical patterns or irregular clusters or groupings.
  - 1. 1 tree per every ten parking spaces.
  - 2. Every overstory tree planting shall be provided with a planting area of 162 square feet.
  - 3. Acceptable ground cover materials include sod, mulch, and other natural ground cover. Landscaping rock and plastic underlayment is not allowed.
  - 4. All parking lot planting areas shall include underground irrigation systems.
- f. 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:

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

- 2. As an alternative method for screening, fences that are 100 percent opaque may be used to mitigate the impacts of businesses 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 percent from the stated minimum requirement.