
Sec. 117-364. Landscaping.

- (a) *Intent.* The City of Ramsey recognizes the advantages that landscaping and screening can provide, including enhanced health, safety, aesthetic, ecological and economic value. The intent of this section is to:
- (1) Enhance the quality of life within the city;
 - (2) Enhance aesthetic view of development(s) from public roads;
 - (3) Maintain and enhance property values;
 - (4) Aid in both physical and mental human health;
 - (5) Improve air quality and buffer against noise, glare, and heat;
 - (6) Reduce the potential for crime and violence;
 - (7) Improve energy efficiency;
 - (8) Add visual interest to blank building facades and soften appearance of hardscaping and buildings with accent plantings;
 - (9) Complement adjacent land uses;
 - (10) Improve the visual quality and continuity within and between developments;
 - (11) Reduce storm water runoff;
 - (12) Encourage the establishment and/or restoration of native landscapes.
- (b) *Goals and objectives.* Landscaping for any project is intended to achieve the following goals and objectives:
- (1) Provide immediate aesthetic enhancements to a development site while also considering space and input needs of plantings well into the future;
 - (2) Encourage a healthy environment and landscape in the future;
 - (3) Ensure a diverse mixture of species to protect against future pests and pathogens;
 - (4) Encourage native landscapes in suitable locations with appropriate management plans.
- (c) *Ramsey Tree Book.* The city has developed the Ramsey Tree Book, which includes landscape design and maintenance principles and promotes the use of appropriate plant materials.
- (1) The Ramsey Tree Book includes lists of preferred, acceptable, and prohibited trees and shrubs.
- (d) *Landscaping requirements.*
- (1) *Topsoil and ground cover.* All exposed ground areas, including boulevards and areas not devoted to off-street parking, driveways, sidewalks, trails, patios or other such impervious improvements, shall be landscaped with turf, shrubs, trees, native grasses and wildflowers and/or other ornamental landscape materials within six months of the date of issuance of the certificate of occupancy.
 - a. *Topsoil.* In all zoning districts, a minimum of four inches of topsoil, as defined in section 117-1, shall be applied across all exposed ground areas to the edge of improved streets, sidewalks, driveways and other impervious surfaces, excluding natural areas that are left undisturbed, whenever a building permit is issued for the construction of a principal building.
 1. The depth of topsoil at the time of inspection shall be not less than four inches.

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2. Alternatives to the import of topsoil, such as compost or other soil amendments known to improve soil water holding capacity may be permitted, but only with the prior approval of the city engineer.
 - b. *Required ground cover.* In all zoning districts except R-1, all portions of a site not covered by structures, concrete, or asphalt, but excluding natural areas that are left undisturbed, shall be finished with sod and plantings, up to the edge of improved streets and other impervious surfaces. Any alternative to the sod requirement shall require City Council approval.
 1. In the R-1 Residential District, sod is required in all boulevards, excluding those areas devoted to sidewalks, trails and driveways.
 2. The remainder of a yard may be established with sod, seed, natural ground cover and/or native grasses and wildflowers.
 3. A landscape escrow, in an amount to be determined by the building official, shall be deposited for all required landscaping, including topsoil, sod and trees, which is not established at the time of issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Installation of required landscaping, including topsoil, sod (or seeding where permitted by this Code) and trees, shall be completed within six months of the issuance of the certificate of occupancy, weather permitting. The city may draw upon the escrow to install the required landscaping if said work is not completed within six months of the date of issuance of the certificate of occupancy.
- (2) *Irrigation.* If a landscape irrigation system is provided, the system shall be equipped with the following:
- a. Technology that inhibits or interrupts operation of the irrigation system during periods of sufficient moisture (rain sensor).
 - b. One or more water efficient technologies. This could include, but is not limited to, WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers, soil moisture sensors, and/or evapotranspiration (ET) sensors.
- (3) *Existing trees.* A reasonable attempt shall be made to preserve as many existing trees as is practicable and incorporate them into a development (see division 5, Tree Preservation for inventory and preservation requirements). For each healthy significant tree retained on site and not identified on the city's list of prohibited trees, one overstory tree, or the equivalent canopy square footage, can be deducted from the minimum planting requirements.
- (4) *Planting types.* Acceptable planting types shall be determined by the Ramsey Tree Book [or, if not in the Ramsey Tree Book, have approval of the city.](#) The complement of trees fulfilling the landscaping requirements shall not be less than 25 percent deciduous and not less than 25 percent coniferous. Not more than 25 percent of the required plantings shall consist of ornamental or understory trees. Projects should attempt to limit the planting of any one genus to no more than 20 percent of the total plantings.
- (5) *Tree stock.* Required plantings shall be free of insects, diseases, and mechanical injuries and shall have a straight trunk and form that is characteristic of the species.
- (6) *Minimum planting sizes.* The minimum planting sizes for all zoning districts shall be:
- a. Deciduous overstory tree: 2 inch caliper;
 - b. Deciduous understory/ornamental tree: 1.5 inch caliper;
 - c. Coniferous tree and multi-stem deciduous tree: 6 feet in height; and
 - d. Shrubs: twenty-four (24) inches in height or width, dependent upon growth characteristics.
- (7) *Planting requirements for the R-1 Residential District.*

Zoning District	Planting Type	Minimum Number Required
R-1 Residential (MUSA) — Villas	Overstory Deciduous and/or Coniferous trees	1 tree per lot, planted in the boulevard
R-1 Residential (MUSA) — SF Detached Homes	Overstory Deciduous and/or Coniferous trees	2 trees per dwelling, planted in the boulevard (or front yard depending on available space)
R-1 Rural Developing	Overstory Deciduous and/or Coniferous trees	2 trees per dwelling, planted in the front yard

- a. In the R-1 Residential (MUSA) — Villas sub-district, alternative planting locations, such as the backyard or common areas, will be considered if there is not sufficient space in the boulevard due to other improvements such as driveways, streetlights, hydrants, etc.

(8) Planting requirements for the R-2 Residential (Medium Density) and R-3 Residential (High Density) Districts.

- a. If the housing product is a detached style, the plantings shall consist of at least one tree per 50 feet of street frontage, planted in the boulevard.
 - 1. Alternative planting locations, such as the backyard or common areas, will be considered if there is not sufficient space in the boulevard due to other improvements such as driveway, streetlights, hydrants, etc.
- b. If the housing product is an attached style, the number of plantings shall be determined based on canopy cover. To fulfill the planting requirements, a combination of trees and shrubs shall meet or exceed the minimum required canopy cover square footage.
- c. The minimum canopy cover required shall be calculated as follows:
 - 1. Determine ratio of impervious area (including stormwater ponds) to entire site.
 - 2. Multiply the impervious area/site area ratio by the square footage of the pervious area to calculate the required canopy cover square footage for the project area.
 - 3. The following formula shall be utilized to determine the average canopy cover of a species: $[(\text{Minimum} + \text{maximum spread}) \div 4]^2 \times \pi \times (0.65 \text{ for preferred species or } 0.50 \text{ for acceptable species, as identified in the Ramsey Tree Book})$.

(9) Planting requirements for business, employment, and COR districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, Neighborhood Business, H-1, E-1, E-2, E-3, and COR).

- a. *Business districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, Neighborhood Business, and H-1).* The minimum number of trees required are outlined in the table below. These are minimum requirements and can be supplemented with other plantings, as well as flowers and various ground covers that would be appropriate to produce a complete and quality landscape.

Planting Type	Required Numbers
Deciduous/coniferous trees	1 tree per 50 lineal feet of site perimeter, or 1 tree per 1,000 square feet of building footprint, whichever is greater. For building expansions, 1 additional tree is

	required for each 1,000 square feet of new building footprint area.
Shrubs	1 shrub per 30 lineal feet of site perimeter or 1 shrub per 300 square feet of building footprint area, whichever is greater.

- b. *Employment and COR districts (E-1, E-2, E-3, and COR).* The minimum number of plantings required shall be determined based on canopy cover. To fulfill the planting requirements, a combination of trees and shrubs shall meet or exceed the minimum required canopy cover square footage. The minimum canopy cover required shall be as follows:
1. Determine ratio of impervious area (including stormwater ponds below the 100-year flood elevation) to entire site.
 2. Multiply the impervious area/site area ratio by the square footage of the pervious area to calculate the required canopy cover square footage for the project area.
 3. The following formula shall be utilized to determine the average canopy cover of a species: $[(\text{Minimum} + \text{Maximum Spread}) \div 4]^2 \times \pi \times (0.65 \text{ for preferred species or } 0.50 \text{ for acceptable species, as identified in the Ramsey Tree Book}).$
 4. Due to the unique nature of the COR district, flexibility with the minimum planting standards may be approved if space is a limiting factor.
- c. *Road frontage plantings.* For every 35 feet of public road frontage, one overstory tree shall be planted adjacent to the road right-of-way on private property. These plantings are credited toward the minimum planting requirements for the district.
- d. *Parking lot landscaping.* All parking lots are required to provide internal and/or adjacent overstory tree plantings in an effort to shade parking surfaces and provide visual relief. 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. Plantings are required at the following minimum schedule and are credited toward the minimum planting requirements for the district:
1. 1 tree per every ten parking spaces.
 2. Every overstory tree planting shall be provided with a planting area of at least 162 square feet (equivalent of a 9 foot x 18 foot parking stall).
 3. Acceptable ground cover materials include sod, mulch, and other natural ground cover. Landscaping rock and plastic underlayment is prohibited in planting islands.
- e. *Bufferyards.* Bufferyards help 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, 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 is required in the bufferyard. The table below outlines the minimum required additional plantings, expressed as a percentage of the total required site landscaping (the percentage is applied to the total number of trees and shrubs for the proposed development):

Proposed Development	Existing Adjacent Development		
	R-1	R-2	R-3
Business (B-1, B-2, B-3, H-1, NBD) Bufferyard width	40 feet	40 feet	40 feet
% increase in plantings	30%	30%	30%
Employment (E-1, E-2, E-3)	60 feet	60 feet	60 feet
% increase in plantings	30%	30%	30%

2. As an alternative method for screening **within the bufferyard**, fences that are 100 percent opaque may be used to mitigate the impacts of businesses that are adjacent to residential areas. Fences are 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 **fifty** percent from the stated minimum requirement.
 - f. Credit for preservation or establishment of native grasses and plant communities. The total number of required trees may be offset by the provision of native grasses and wildflowers. Establishment or preservation of native plant communities can reduce the required number of tree plantings by one tree per 500 square feet of native grass/plant community area. Credit may not exceed 50 percent of the total requirements.
 1. This area(s) must be shown on both the landscape plan and the grading plan.
 2. Species, quantities, and application method and rates, shall all be provided as part of the landscape plan.
 3. A three-year management plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the city as part of the civil plan set. Thereafter, an annual management plan shall be submitted to the city every year by March 1.

(Ord. No. 21-06, § 2, 6-8-2021)