

## **Chapter 17.28** **LANDSCAPING**

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### **17.28.010 Purpose.**

- A. The purpose of this chaptersection is to improve the aesthetic quality of the built environment, encourage the retention and protection of existing vegetation, reduce the impacts of development on environmentally sensitive areas and the natural environment, enhance the value of current and future development, and increase privacy for residential zones by:
1. Providing for on-site landscaping in all multifamily and nonresidential developments;
  2. Providing vegetated screening between single-family residential areas and adjoining land uses;
  3. Providing visual relief of parking areas in the multifamily, commercial, and industrial zones;
  4. Encouraging the retention of existing vegetation, tree stands and significant trees by incorporating them into the site design; and
  5. Incorporating native vegetation, drought-resistant plant material, and low impact development stormwater features into landscaping, as appropriate.

### **17.28.020 Applicability.**

- A. A landscaping plan shall be required for all proposed development activities, including new construction, the expansion of existing structures, subdivisions, binding site plans, and master plans in accordance with the provisions of this section; provided, that:
1. The construction of a single-family residence, duplex, triplex, or fourplex is exempt from the provisions of this section.

2. In the event of a conflict between the requirements of the city's shoreline master program or the regulations to protect environmentally sensitive areas (critical areas), and the provisions of this section, the city may waive or modify the provisions of this section.
3. In the event of a conflict between the requirements of the West Main pedestrian overlay, or the West Kelso multifamily design standards, and the provisions of this section, the city may waive or modify the provisions of this section.
4. The landscaping requirements and standards for parking lots may be found in the Kelso Engineering Design Manual.
5. The city may approve alternative methods or standards; provided, that they meet or exceed the required standards and are consistent with the intent of this section.

~~6. The city may approve variances from the standards in this section in accordance with the provisions of this title.~~

#### **17.28.030 Administration.**

- A. All landscaping plans shall conform to the following general provisions:
  1. All plans must be prepared or approved by a landscape architect licensed by the state of Washington, a Washington certified nursery professional, or a Washington certified landscaper, ~~unless waived~~ or other qualified professional as determined by the city.
  2. The landscaping plan shall be submitted in a format prescribed by the city and may include:
    1. Property lines, easements, rights-of-way, and setbacks, streets and utilities within the subject property;
    2. Environmentally sensitive areas, jurisdictional shoreline areas, and required buffers;
    3. Existing and proposed grades of at least five-foot intervals;
    4. Location of all existing and proposed buildings, structures and improvements within the property;
    5. Existing and proposed stormwater management features including low impact development features;

6. Existing vegetation and significant trees to be retained; a plant list for all proposed new planting delineating quantities, common names and sizes;
7. A planting plan specifying:
  - i. Tree protection strategies;
  - ii. Vegetation clearing strategies;
  - iii. Topsoil protection and reuse strategies;
  - iv. Native soil amendment strategies;
  - v. Planting times and physical limits of construction;
  - vi. Areas that require temporary or permanent irrigation; and
  - vii. Low impact development facilities.
8. Significant trees and mature landscaping are encouraged to be retained. If not retained, they should be replaced.
9. The retention of significant trees may contribute to meeting the low impact development requirements in the Kelso Engineering Design Manual.
10. Areas not devoted to landscape required by this chapter, parking, structures and other site improvements are encouraged to be planted or remain in existing vegetation.
11. New plant materials shall include native species or nonnative species that have adapted to the climatic conditions of western Washington as adopted by the [city Washington Native Plant Society and referred to within their database of plant lists](#).
12. New plant materials shall consist of drought-resistant species, except where site conditions within the required landscape areas assure adequate moisture for growth.
13. When the width of any landscape strip is twenty feet or greater, the required trees shall be staggered in two or more rows.
14. Existing vegetation may be used to augment new plantings to meet the standards of this chapter.

15. Grass may be used as a ground cover where existing or amended soil conditions assure adequate moisture for growth.
16. Stormwater facilities such as retention/detention ponds and swales [shall be designed to be consistent with the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington \(SMMWW\)](#) [and](#) should be landscaped with water tolerant, native plants.
17. Low impact development stormwater features may be located in required setbacks and landscaping areas and may contribute to meeting the landscaping requirements.
18. Irrigation systems shall be required in all new landscape areas to assure the proper establishment of and continued growth of landscaping, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the city that irrigation is not required.

B. Performance Assurance.

1. All required landscaping shall be installed and inspected by the city prior to the issuance of the certificate of occupancy. The Washington landscape architect, Washington certified nursery professional or Washington certified landscaper shall submit a landscaping declaration to the city to verify installation in accordance with the approved plans.
2. The time limit for compliance may be extended to allow installation of landscaping during the next appropriate planting season as approved by the city; provided, that a performance assurance device, for a period of not more than one year, will adequately protect the interests of the city. The performance assurance device shall be for one hundred fifty percent of the cost of the work or improvements covered by the assurance device. In no case may the property owner delay performance for more than one year.
  - a. If the required landscaping is not installed prior to completion of the approved development activity a temporary certificate of occupancy shall be issued and the final certificate of occupancy shall not be issued until the required landscaping has been installed and inspected by the city.
3. The city may require that the project sponsor provide a performance bond or another form of financial guarantee to ensure that required landscaping is properly installed, will become established, and be adequately maintained for at least two years after planting. The form and type of the performance assurance device shall be determined by the city.

4. All required maintenance shall be maintained by the property owner on an ongoing basis. Failure to maintain landscaping may result in a code violation.
  - a. The property owner shall replace any unhealthy or dead plant materials in conformance with the approved planting plan.
  - b. Landscape areas shall be kept free of trash.
  - c. All plant material shall be managed by pruning so that plant growth does not conflict with public utilities, restrict pedestrian or vehicular access, or create a traffic hazard.

#### 17.28.040 Landscaping.

A. Landscaped Area Requirements. All development activities including new construction, the modification of existing structures, subdivisions, binding site plans, and master plans must provide at least the following amount of on-site landscaped areas (including required landscaping in parking lots), unless otherwise provided in this section:

1. Residential multifamily zone (RMF, RMD): ~~fifteen~~ thirty percent of the lot(s);

2. Commercial zones (NC, GC, RC): ~~fifteen~~ twenty percent of the lot(s);

2-a. General Commercial (GC) Zone. Except where it is not practical within the downtown area when bordered by buildings placed on each side of the property line.

3. Industrial zones (LI, GI): fifteen percent of the lot(s).

B. On-Site Landscaping Requirements. A combination of deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, and ground covers shall be used for all planted areas, unless otherwise specified above. The selection plantings shall be based on local climate, exposure, water availability, and drainage conditions, and nonnative, invasive plants shall be prohibited.

1. Deciduous trees shall have a caliper size of two inches (DBH) or greater, or be at least ten feet tall at time of planting. Trees selected for on-site landscaping shall be non-fruit bearing.

2. Evergreen trees shall be at least six feet tall at time of planting and have a low-branching habit with dense foliage.

3. Shrubs ~~or perennials~~ shall be planted from two-gallon containers or larger, and be at least twelve inches tall at time of planting.

~~3.4.~~ Perennials should be planted from one-gallon containers or larger. ~~may be planted from one-gallon containers if two-gallon containers are not available.~~

~~4.5.~~ Plant ground covers and bark mulch, chips, ~~aggregate,~~ or ~~other nonplants~~ similar ground covers are encouraged to be used around trees and shrubs in landscaped areas.

C. Perimeter Landscaping Buffer Requirements. In addition to the on-site landscaping requirements, all development ~~activities including new construction, the modification of existing structures, subdivisions, binding site plans, and master plans~~ in the multifamily residential zone (RMF), the commercial zones (NC, GC, RC) and the industrial zones (LI and GI) shall also provide an additional landscaped buffer along any property lines abutting a single-family residential zone (RSF-5/10 or RMD) in accordance with the following provisions:

1. ~~A minimum width of twenty feet; and~~ Zoning districts abutting single-family residential zones (RSF) shall meet the minimum landscape buffering standards of the following table:

<u>Abutting Zoning Districts</u>	<u>Minimum Landscape Buffer</u>
<u>RMF to RSF</u>	<u>5 feet</u>
<u>GC to RSF</u>	<u>5 feet</u>
<u>RC to RSF</u>	<u>10 feet</u>
<u>LI to RSF</u>	<u>20 feet</u>
<u>GI to RSF</u>	<u>20 feet</u>

2. The buffer shall contain at least one evergreen tree and ten shrubs which are predominantly evergreen, but may include some deciduous shrubs, distributed per twenty-five linear feet.

- a. The evergreen trees shall be at least six feet at the time of planting;
- b. Deciduous trees shall have a caliper of at least two inches (DBH) at the time of planting;
- c. At least twenty percent of the trees shall be native species and drought-resistant; and
- d. Evergreen shrubs at least twenty-one inches in height at the time of planting, spaced no more than three feet on center, to achieve minimum four feet height at maturity. (Ord. 3992 § 4 (Exh. B), 2023; Ord. 3889 § 3 (Exh. A), 2017)

**17.28.050 Fences, hedges and walls.**

- A. Fences, hedges and walls shall comply with the maximum height limits as specified in Table ~~17.30~~17.28.050 based on the zoning of the subject parcel; provided, that:
1. On corner lots, No sight-obscuring fence, hedge or wall shall be permitted ~~on corner lots in accordance with the provisions for within~~ sight triangles as regulated within in the Kelso Engineering and Design Manual.
  2. Height of fence, hedge or wall shall be measured from finished grade at the exterior side of the fence. No person may construct a berm upon which to build a fence, hedge or wall unless the total height of the berm plus the fence does not exceed the maximum height allowable for the fence if the berm were not present.
- B. No fence, hedge or wall shall be allowed to contain barbed, razor or other types of wire designed to cause injury to persons or animals except within the LI and GI zones.

**Table ~~17.22.080~~17.28.050 Maximum Heights and Setbacks for Fences, Hedges, and Walls**

Zone Class	Maximum Height <u>within the Front</u> Yard Setback	Maximum Height <u>within the Rear and</u> Side Yard Setback
RSF-5, -10	42"	6'
RMF	42"	6'
RMD	42"	6'
NC	42"	6'
GC	6'	8'
RC	6'	8'
LI	8'	8'
GI	8'	8'
OPN		6'

17.28.060 Clearing and grading.

- A. The purpose of this provision includes but is not limited to promoting public health, safety and welfare by regulating the preconstruction clearance of vegetation and trees in order to preserve and protect natural vegetation, wetlands, watercourses and wildlife habitat; minimize erosion and sedimentation; minimize adverse effects on ground and surface waters; enhance the appearance and character of the city; and to comply with state and federal regulations.
  
- B. The following clearing and grading activities require city review and approval through the issuance of a clearing and grading permit, building permit, or other permit(s) issued by the city, unless specifically exempted:
  - 1. Land disturbing activities which are commonly referred to as:
    - a. Clearing (the act of vegetation removal from the land surface by mechanical or chemical means);
    - b. Grubbing (the act of root vegetation removal from beneath the surface of the earth usually in association with clearing);
    - c. Excavation (the mechanical removal of earth material);
    - d. Filling (deposition of earth material placed by artificial means);
    - e. Grading (excavation or filling or combination thereof);
    - f. Compaction (densification of earth material by artificial means, including that associated with stabilization of structures and road construction);
    - g. Stockpiling (temporary deposition of earth material placed by artificial means); and
    - h. Stabilizing (counteracting the actions of gravity, wind, or water).
  
- C. The following activities do not require a permit from the city, unless they involve an environmentally sensitive area, jurisdictional shoreline area, or required buffer:
  - 1. Routine vegetation management that does not involve the use of heavy equipment such as bulldozers or excavators;
  - 2. Routine yardwork maintenance and gardening activities such as lawn mowing and gardening;



3. The removal of diseased, damaged, or unwanted trees from an existing yard or landscaped area;
  4. The excavation of less than fifty cubic yards of material over the life of a project;
  5. The placement of less than fifty cubic yards of fill ef-over the life of a project;
  6. The storage or stockpiling of less than fifty cubic yards of material such as fill, gravel, sand, beauty bark, etc.
- D. For the applicable clearing and grading standards please refer to the Kelso Engineering and Design Manual as well as the International Building Code as adopted by the city of Kelso. (Ord. 3889 § 3 (Exh. A), 2017)