

**Landscaping**  
**Land Development Code**  
**Section 4.6**

**CITY OF GUNNISON**  
**DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PACKET**

This Development Assistance Packet has been prepared for your convenience and assistance in processing land use applications in the City of Gunnison. You should note that this Development Assistance Packet contains excerpts from the *City of Gunnison Land Development Code (LDC)*. Please be advised that the *LDC* is amended from time to time and such amendments may not be included within the Development Assistance Packet. It is your responsibility to review the entire *LDC* and all amendments thereto, which are maintained in the office of the City Clerk, to determine if you have all of the current ordinances related to the *City of Gunnison Development Code* and what effect, if any, the *LDC* has on your property, project, or application.

Prepared by the City of Gunnison  
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2. **On a Designated Trail Alignment.** In the case of new subdivisions and common interest community plats, dedication of a minimum 15 foot-wide easement to the City may be required if the development site is on a designated trail alignment defined by the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*.
3. **Design and Construction Specifications.** Design and construction of multi-use trails shall be in accordance with the specifications defined in the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*, as it may be amended.

#### §4.6 LANDSCAPING, BUFFERING AND SCREENING

- A. **Purpose and Intent.** The intent of this Section is to establish standards to protect and enhance the city's appearance by the installation of appropriate landscaping and buffering materials; to encourage the preservation of native plant communities and ecosystems; to maintain and increase the value of land by providing for restoration of disturbed areas and by incorporating adequate landscaping into development; to restrict the spread of invasive plant species that disrupt and destroy native ecosystems; to encourage skilled installation and continued maintenance of all plant materials; and, to establish procedures and standards for the administration and enforcement of this Section.
- B. **Applicability.** These landscape and buffer standards shall apply to subdivisions created after the adoption of this *LDC*, and to all development where development plan review is required by Section 6 (Development Review Procedures).
- C. **Approval of Landscaping and Buffering Plan**
  1. **Approved Landscape and Buffering Plan Required.** No development plan required under this *LDC* shall receive final approval unless a landscaping and buffering plan meeting the requirements of this Section has been submitted and approved. Landscaping plans may include provision for phasing. Refer to Appendix B - Landscape Submittal Requirements.
  2. **Alternative Specifications.** Alternatives to the specifications concerning minimum plant sizes and quantities set forth in this Section may be authorized by the City, provided that the applicant submits a detailed landscaping plan and that the City determines that the proposed landscaping satisfies the purpose and intent of this Section.
  3. **Final Inspection.** No certificate of occupancy shall be issued unless the following criteria are fully satisfied with regard to the approved landscaping and buffering plan:
    - a. Such plan has been fully implemented on the site and inspected by staff.
    - b. Such plan, which cannot or will not be implemented immediately because of seasonal conditions or phasing, has however, been guaranteed by an improvement agreement (or included in an approved development agreement) in a form agreeable to the City and secured by a letter of credit, cash escrow or other instrument acceptable to the City, in an amount equal to 115 percent of the cost of materials and labor for all elements of the landscape plan.
    - c. A landscaping as-built plan, including sizes and quantities, details regarding revegetation,

and irrigation, shall be submitted to staff prior to inspection.

**D. General Landscaping Design Standards and Guidelines.** The following minimum standards shall apply to all landscaped areas developed under the requirements of this Section. See Subsections E through I below for additional specific landscaping requirements for multi-family, nonresidential and industrial developments.

**1. Aesthetic Enhancement Guidelines.** Landscaping should be utilized in the design to enhance the aesthetic quality of the property by adding color, texture and visual interest while obscuring views of parking and unsightly areas and uses. In locations where new development alters visually attractive and distinctive natural landscapes, the selection and arrangement of new plantings should be designed to complement and enhance the natural landscape character of the site.

## **2. Plant Materials**

**a. Use of Native or Adaptive Plant Materials.** Refer to Appendix A for lists of plant materials considered native or appropriate. In order to further water conservation and to assure adequate growth and survival of new plantings, all landscape plans shall be comprised entirely of native or adapted plants that reflect the surrounding plant materials and environment. All proposed plant materials shall be chosen from Appendix A unless the Director approves an equivalent alternative.

**b. Existing Plant Materials.** Healthy existing trees, grasses and shrubs shall be incorporated into the landscape to the maximum extent feasible. These existing plants shall be shown on the landscape plan and labeled as “existing”. Similarly, existing and retained trees shall be listed on the plan’s plant list with their current size shown.

**i. Landscaping Credit.** Existing trees and shrubs shall be credited against landscaping requirements, provided that they meet applicable standards such as size and location requirements.

**ii. Preservation of Existing Trees and Shrubs.** If located between the edge of curb and gutter and the property line, no existing tree of four inches diameter at breast height (DBH) or greater, or dense stand of trees or shrubs of four or more feet in both depth and height shall be removed, unless dictated by plant health, access, safety or identification of the premises, all as determined by the Director.

**iii. Root Zones.** Design of the landscape shall take existing trees and shrubs into consideration with an adequate area provided around each tree that is free of impervious material to allow for infiltration of water and air. This pervious area shall be equal to the drip line of the tree. Root zones of existing trees and shrubs to be preserved shall be protected from unnecessary disturbance due to cut or fill grade changes. The location of underground utility lines shall be carefully planned to avoid unnecessary disturbance of root zones that would threaten the survival of existing trees and shrubs to be preserved. (See also Appendix B for protection of trees/vegetation during construction activities.)

**c. Tree Canopy and Species Mix Guideline.** Species variation is encouraged for all landscape plans because species uniformity can result in disease susceptibility and eventual demise of a large portion of a landscape at one time. Landscape plans shall

exhibit species variation, which shall increase based on the number of trees proposed in the landscaping plan.

- d. Plant Sizes.** At the time of installation, plants shall be no smaller than the following:
  - i.** Deciduous trees: minimum of two-inch caliper
  - ii.** Evergreen trees
    - a) Fifty percent (50 percent) of amount on site: six feet tall
    - b) Fifty percent (50 percent) of amount on site: four feet tall
  - iii.** All shrubs: two-gallon
- e. Plant Quantity.** See Subsections E through G below for the quantity of landscaping required for each specific use category subject to this Section's requirements.

### **3. Location and Arrangement of Required Landscaping**

- a.** The selection and arrangement of new plantings shall be planned to create visual appeal, to provide effective screening, to define site circulation and to enhance the use of the site.
- b.** All required landscaping elements shall be located on the property they serve. Landscaping located on adjacent properties shall not count toward the minimum landscaping area requirements established in Table 2-4 and Table 2-5.
- c.** All required landscaping shall be located outside of any adjacent right-of-way unless it is associated with a street buffer.
- d.** Trees shall be planted to allow for normal growth in height and shape without the need for excessive pruning.
- e.** Trees shall be planted no closer than seven feet from any structure and shall be installed with at least 55 square feet of non-paved area around the trunk.
- f.** No trees shall be planted within five feet on either side of water or sewer main lines.
- g.** Plantings with a mature height of more than 25 feet shall not be planted under utility lines.
- h.** Plantings that will exceed six inches in height shall not be planted within three feet of a fire hydrant.
- i.** No trees shall be located within 25 feet of street intersections or 10 feet from fire hydrants and utility poles.

- 4. Restoration and Revegetation of Disturbed Areas.** All portions of the site where existing vegetative cover is damaged or removed, that are not otherwise covered with new improvements, shall be successfully revegetated with species identified in Appendix A or approved by the Director. The density of the reestablished vegetation after one growing season shall be adequate to prevent soil erosion and invasion of weeds.

5. **Irrigation.** All newly installed landscapes shall include a properly functioning watering system. A functional irrigation system is required for final approval of installed landscaping and release of associated collateral or assurances.

**E. Landscaping Requirements for all Zone Districts**

1. **Minimum Requirements.** The minimum number of trees and shrubs shall be provided per required landscaped area in zone districts according to Table 4-11.

TABLE 4-11 MINIMUM TREE AND SHRUB PLANTINGS	
Zone District	Number of Trees and Shrubs per Required Landscape Area
Central Business District (CBD)	N/A
Commercial (C)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 200 sq. ft.
Business Professional (B-1)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 850 sq. ft.
Industrial (I)	N/A
Single-Family Residential (R-1)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 2000 sq. ft.
Single-Family Residential Modified (R-1M)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 2000 sq. ft.
Duplex Residential (R-2)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 1200 sq. ft.
Residential Mixed Use (RMU)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 600 sq. ft.
Multi-Family Residential (R-3)	1 tree and 2 shrubs per 500 sq. ft.
Note: The above required trees may be counted toward street tree requirements of §4.6.F.4.	

2. **Types of Materials except in CBD and Industrial Zone Districts.** The landscape area in all zone districts except the CBD and Industrial zone districts must contain living plant materials, mulch, washed rock or permeable surface used for stormwater drainage. Living materials shall comprise no less than 50 percent of the required landscape area.
3. **Types of Materials in Industrial Zone District.** The 10 percent landscaped area in the Industrial zone district, as required by Table 2-5 must be covered by a combination of xeriscape plants, mulch, permeable surface used for stormwater discharge control, planters, planting pots or other coverage approved by the Director.

**F. Buffering and Screening**

1. **Purpose.** Buffering is intended to help mitigate the physical, visual and environmental impacts created by development on adjacent properties. Buffering and screening creates a visual buffer between incompatible or differing land uses.
2. **Waivers.** A waiver from these buffer and screening standards may be granted by the Commission (§9.4 G). A waiver application shall include a site plan showing the building footprint, driveways, parking, landscaping and utility lines. The waiver application will be considered at a regular meeting and does not warrant a public hearing notice. Waivers shall only be granted if the applicant demonstrates that there are not adequate rights-of-way from the curb edge to the building front. The Commission may consider other site-specific circumstances not contemplated herein, and are not the result of previous development

constraints initiated by the applicant.

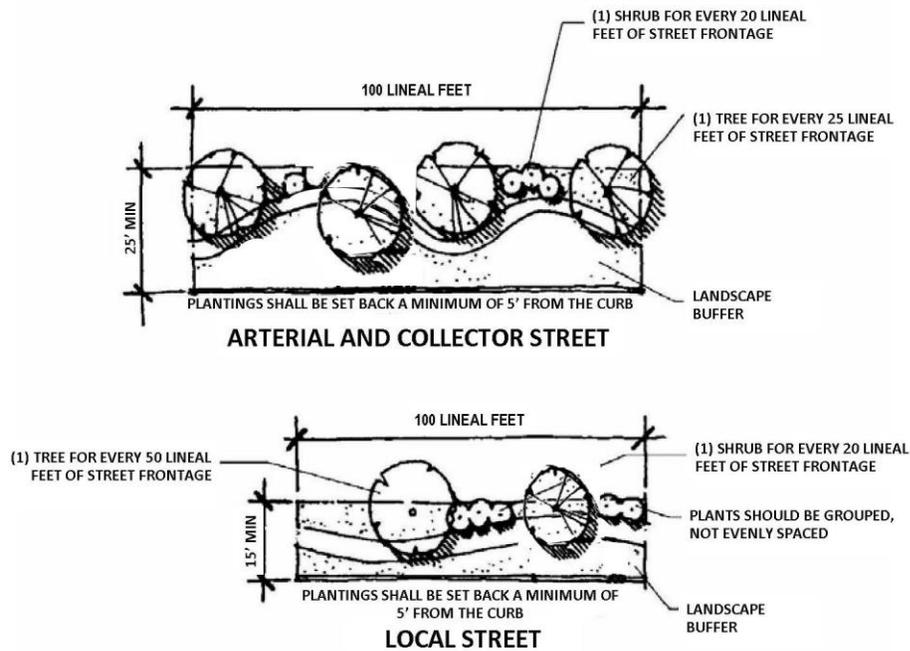
### 3. Zone District Boundaries

- a. A landscaped buffer shall be planted on the boundary between the zoning districts set forth below, unless the abutting property is determined by staff to be unbuildable or visually separated by topographic features. Zone district buffers shall not be required for areas where street frontage buffer requirements are met.
- b. The buffer shall be 20 feet wide and planted directly adjacent to the zone district boundary.
- c. A minimum buffer consisting of eight evergreen trees and 10 shrubs per one hundred linear feet of zone district boundary shall be installed between the following zoning districts:
  - i. an Industrial zone district and any other zoning district;
  - ii. a Commercial zone district and any Residential zone district; or
  - iii. all Multi-family Residential zone districts (RMU/R-3) and any other Residential zone district.

### 4. Street Frontage Buffers

- a. **Purpose.** Landscaping in areas located adjacent to streets is intended to create tree-lined streets, provide shade, improve air quality and enhance property values through improved views for the traveling public.
- b. **Exemption.** The following shall be exempt from these street frontage buffer requirements:
  - i. Development in the CBD zone district; but parking lots developed in the CBD shall comply with Parking Lot Landscape Standards (§4.6 G).
  - ii. Development in the Industrial zone district fronting on a local street is exempt from buffer requirements; a collector street shall comply with non-arterial buffer standards.

**c. Planting Requirements** (see Figure 16) (Ordinance 4, 2014)



**FIGURE 16 BUFFERING REQUIREMENTS**

**d. Buffer Width.** The buffer width shall be measured from the back edge of the curb or road shoulder and shall meet minimum dimensional standards shown on Figure 17.

**e. Arterial and Collector Street Frontage Buffers**

- i.** All development on property abutting an arterial and collector street shall provide a landscaped buffer with a minimum width of 25 feet along the entire street frontage (see Figure 16 and Figure 17).
- ii.** One tree shall be planted for each 25 lineal feet of street frontage and one shrub for each 20 lineal feet of street frontage, positioned to adequately buffer developed frontage as viewed from adjacent street or right-of-way as determined by the Community Development Director. Plantings shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the curb edge to accommodate winter maintenance of the right-of-way. (Ordinance 4, 2014)

**f. Local Street Frontage Buffers**

- i.** All development on property abutting a local street shall provide a landscaped buffer with a minimum width of 15 feet along the entire street frontage (see Figure 16).
- ii.** One tree shall be planted for each 50 lineal feet of street frontage and one shrub for each 20 lineal feet of street frontage, positioned to adequately buffer developed frontage as viewed from adjacent street or right-of-way as determined by the

Community Development Director. Plantings shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the curb edge to accommodate winter maintenance of the right-of-way.

- g. **No Development in Street Frontage Buffer Area.** Within the street frontage buffer, there shall be no development or parking, except for driveway access to the portion of the site not in the buffer, which is approximately perpendicular to the right-of-way, underground utility installation, pedestrian and bicycle paths, allowable signs and necessary lighting.
- 5. **Service Areas.** See §4.6 I.2.
- 6. **Loading Areas.** See §4.6 I.3.
- 7. **Berms.** Berms may be utilized as part of street frontage landscaping, but shall vary in height over the length of the berm.
- 8. **Responsibility for Buffering.** Buffering shall be the responsibility of new development. Existing land uses may be required to provide buffering if the use is changed, expanded, enlarged or in any other way increases the impacts on adjacent properties or rights-of-way over what is present at the time this regulation is adopted. It shall be the responsibility of the expanded or changed land use to evidence what the uses and impacts were at the time of adoption of this regulation.
- 9. **Method of Calculation.** Figure 17 shall serve as a guide for the calculation of buffer requirements. (Ordinance 4, 2014)

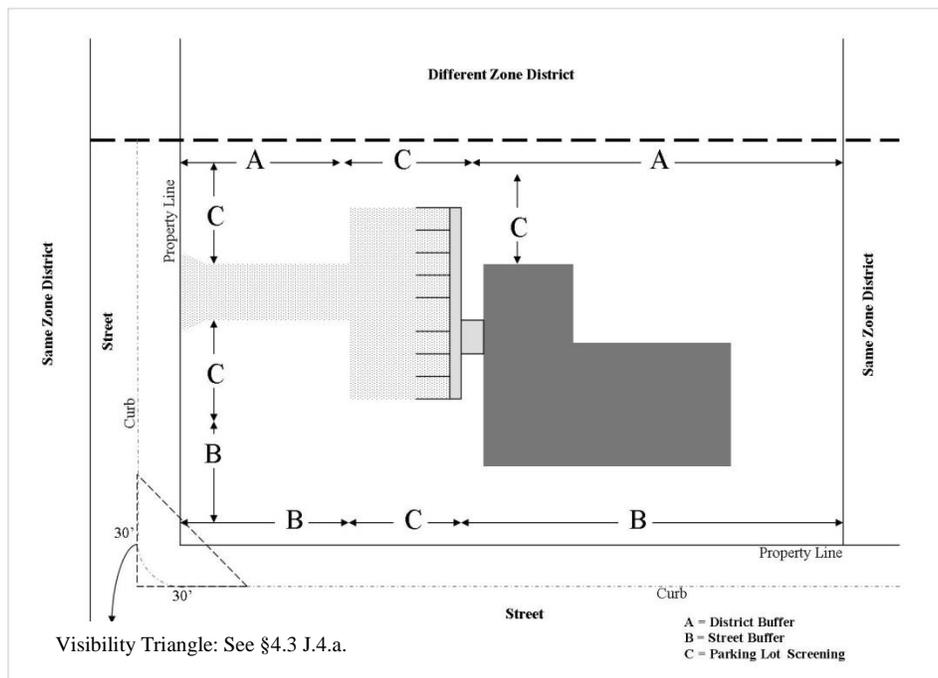


FIGURE 17 GUIDE FOR BUFFER CALCULATIONS

## G. Parking Lot Landscaping

1. **Purpose.** Parking lot landscaping is intended to improve the views from adjacent properties and public use areas, alter the microclimate of parking areas by providing shade and reducing reflected heat, breaking up large areas of impermeable surface and allowing areas for water infiltration.

### 2. Perimeter Landscaping

a. **Applicability.** All parking lots containing four or more spaces shall provide perimeter landscaping pursuant to the General Requirements below, except where abutting property is determined by the Director to be unbuildable or visually separated by topographic features. Parking lots in the Industrial, R-1, R-1M, and R-2 zone districts shall be exempt from these Perimeter Landscaping standards (see Figure 18).

#### b. General Requirements (see Figure 18)

- i. All parking areas shall be separated from the back of the curb or outermost edge of the street shoulder by a planting area at least 25 feet wide on arterial streets and by a planting area at least 15 feet wide on other street property lines.
- ii. All parking areas shall be separated from side and rear property lines by a planting area at least eight feet wide.
- iii. All parking lots or areas shall be separated from the high water mark of all river banks by a minimum setback of 50 feet. The required perimeter landscaping shall be provided within this setback area through retention of existing vegetation, or through additional new tree and shrub plantings as needed to meet the required minimum quantities of perimeter plantings.
- iv. Perimeter landscaping shall provide a semi-opaque screen during the winter season.

c. **Berms.** Berms may be utilized as part of perimeter landscaping, but shall vary in height over the length of the berm.

d. **Walls/Fences.** Where walls or fences are used, a minimum of one evergreen tree or three shrubs is required for every 40 linear feet of wall or fence and shall be planted on the side of the fence or wall facing the surrounding streets, walks, parks, trails or other public use properties.

#### e. Perimeter Planting Requirements

- i. A minimum of one tree per 20 lineal feet and one shrub per 10 lineal feet shall be planted along the perimeter of any parking lot area located adjacent to an Arterial or Collector street. A minimum of one tree per 30 lineal feet and one shrub per 10 lineal feet shall be planted along the perimeter of any parking lot area located adjacent to Local streets (see Figure 18).
- ii. Parking lot areas that are adjacent to a side or rear lot line shall have one tree per 30 lineal feet and one shrub per 10 lineal feet planted along the perimeter of any parking area located along the lot line.

- iii. Plants should be grouped, not evenly spaced.
- iv. Parking lots adjacent to a zone district boundary are subject to Zone District Buffer Standards (§4.6 F.3.).

### 3. Parking Lot Interiors

- a. **Applicability.** All parking lots with 30 or more parking spaces shall comply with these interior parking lot landscaping requirements. Interior parking lot landscaping requirements shall be in addition to all other landscaping requirements; no other landscaping requirement may be used to fulfill interior parking lot landscaping requirements.
- b. **Minimum Requirement:** A minimum of five percent of the total interior parking lot area shall be landscaped with planted islands. A minimum of one tree and two shrubs must be planted in interior islands for every 2,500 square feet of parking lot, exclusive of perimeter plantings (see Figure 18).
- c. **Landscaped Islands**
  - i. Individual landscaped islands shall include a minimum of one tree, a reliable water source and raised concrete curbs or other design needed for stormwater system function.
  - ii. Landscaped islands shall be at least 100 square feet in size, with the smallest dimension being six feet to allow for adequate root aeration and expansion (see Figure 18).
  - iii. Islands shall be arranged to maximize shading of parking spaces.
  - iv. Plantings shall be arranged so as not to interfere with driver vision, vehicle circulation or pedestrian circulation.
  - v. To the maximum extent feasible, landscape islands shall be incorporated in the stormwater management plan and located to break up large areas of impermeable surface, allowing areas for water infiltration.

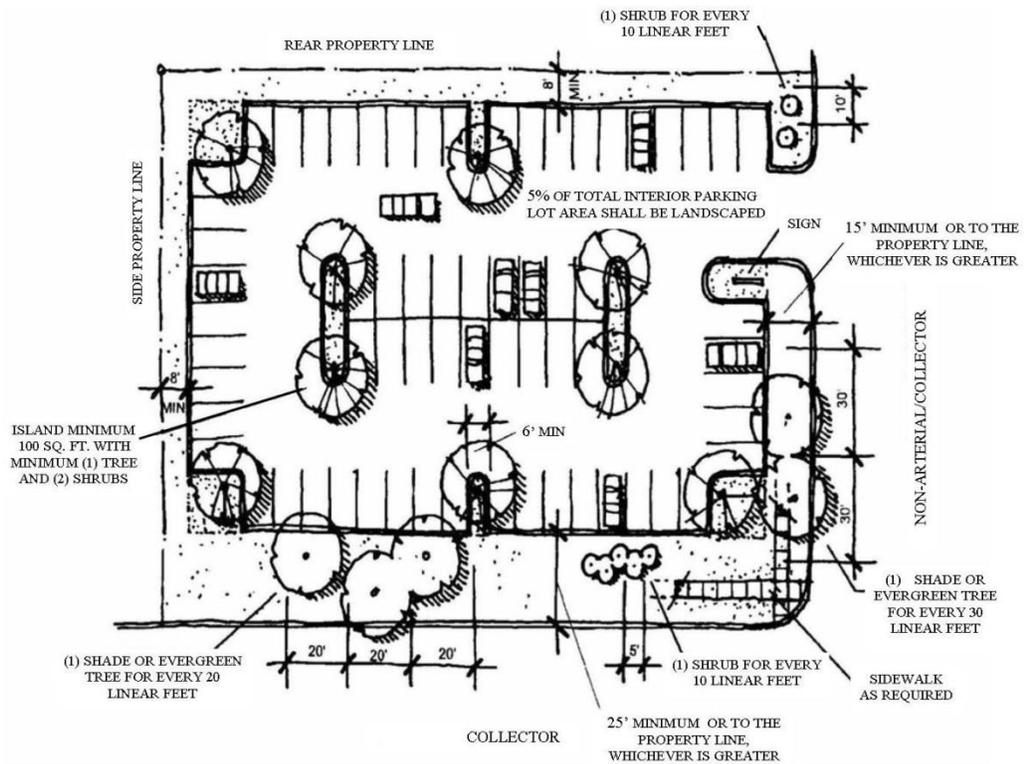


FIGURE 18 PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING

**H. Fences and Walls.** Fences and walls are permitted as elements of a landscape plan and, in some locations, may be used to conceal and/or screen storage or other unsightly or conflicting land uses. All fences or walls shall meet the following requirements:

1. **Materials.** Fences or walls shall be constructed of wood, stone, brick, decorative concrete block, wrought iron (or products created to resemble these materials), a combination of any of these materials, or other materials as approved by the Director.
2. **Finishing.** In all non-residential zone districts except the Industrial, all fencing shall be finished on all sides that are visible from off-site.
3. **Prohibited Applications**
  - a. Plywood, particle board, sheet metal, concrete slabs, concrete barriers or similar materials shall not be used for fencing or walls intended to provide screening or buffering.
  - b. Chain-link fencing shall not be used for screening or buffering purposes. Chain link fencing may be allowed for security purposes under the provisions of this Section.
  - c. Barbed-wire and similar fence materials may only be used in conjunction with permitted agricultural and security uses.

#### 4. Fence and Wall Standards

##### a. Height

- i. A fence or wall in any residential zone district front yard shall not exceed four feet in height.
- ii. Fences and walls over six feet in height require a building permit and must be constructed in conformance with the adopted *International Building Code*.
- iii. Excluding lots in the Industrial and Commercial zone districts not abutting another zone district, all fences and walls greater than eight feet in height shall comply with the setback requirements for structures in the various zoning districts.

**b. Adjacent to Streets.** The construction and maintenance of fences and walls shall comply with §4.3 J.4, Intersection and Driveway Visibility.

**c. Adjacent to Alleys.** Permitted fences and walls adjacent to alleys shall contain an offset section or other provision deemed appropriate by the City for trash containers located on the property.

**d. In City Right-of-Way.** Fences or walls located on City rights-of-way are subject to a license agreement which is authorized by City Council.

**e. Maximum Wall Length.** Walls shall have a maximum continuous length and uninterrupted plane of 100 feet. Wall breaks shall be provided through the use of columns, landscaped areas, transparent section or change in material.

**f. Plantings in Conjunction with Fences/Walls.** Where opaque or solid fencing/walls continue for more than 40 feet along a buffer zone, the buffer requirements shall be located between the fence/wall and the area to be buffered. Where opaque or solid fencing/walls continue for more than 40 feet of street frontage, a minimum of one evergreen tree and three shrubs shall be planted on the outer or public side of the fence/wall for each 40 linear feet of fence.

#### I. Screening

**1. Drive-Thru Facilities.** Drive-thru windows and lanes shall be designed to adhere to the following standards:

a. **Separation Distance Requirements.** Drive-thru windows and lanes placed adjacent to the right-of-way and/or alley shall comply with parking lot separation distance requirements (see Figure 18).

b. **Screening.** No drive-thru window shall be permitted on the side of a building adjacent to any residential zone district without a six foot opaque fence or wall and shall comply with Zone District Boundary Buffers (§4.6 F.3.).

**2. Service Areas**

- a. Location.** In all non-residential and multi-family zone districts, trash collection, trash compaction, recycling collection and other similar service areas shall be located on the side or rear of the building and shall be effectively screened. Alternative locations may be within the established parking lot, subject to approval by the Director.
- b. Approved Area.** All service areas shall be limited to the area shown on an approved site plan.

**3. Loading Areas.** Loading areas shall be subject to the following screening requirements:

- a. Screening of Type B Loading Areas.** A minimum 100 percent year-round screen of all Type B loading areas visible from residential properties or public rights-of-way shall be provided.
- b. Screening Material.** This screen shall consist of berms, walls, fences, plant material or combination totaling eight feet in height at installation or completion of construction. Wall or fence materials shall be compatible with the primary structure.
- c. Location of Loading Areas.** All Type B loading docks not in the Industrial zone district shall be located at the side or rear of buildings a minimum of 50 feet away from any residentially-zoned property, unless the loading area is wholly within a closed building.

**4. Mechanical Equipment**

- a. Screening.** All roof-, ground- and wall-mounted mechanical equipment (e.g. air handling equipment, compressors, duct work, transformers and elevator equipment) shall be screened from view from residential properties or public rights-of-way at ground level of the property line.
- b. Roof-Mounted Screening Material.** Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be shielded from view on all sides, to the maximum extent feasible. Screening shall consist of materials consistent with the primary building materials, and may include metal screening or louvers which are painted to blend with the primary structure.
- c. Wall or Ground-Mounted Screening Material.** Wall- or ground-mounted equipment screening shall be constructed of:
  - i.** planting screens;
  - ii.** brick, stone, reinforced concrete, or other similar masonry materials; or
  - iii.** redwood, cedar, preservative pressure treated wood, or other similar materials.

**5. Utilities.** Above-ground utilities and appurtenances to underground utilities which require above-ground installation shall be screened by a continuous planting of shrubs, with a minimum mature height equal to that of the utility structure. Required accessways to these utilities are exempt from the screening provisions.

6. **Trash Receptacles.** Screening shall be provided for all trash receptacles of two cubic yards in volume or greater, and shall consist of landscaping or a structural visual barrier, such as a fence, to block the view of the trash receptacle and to keep trash contained. One side of the screening shall be designed for easy access for trash removal. Any landscaping so provided shall count toward the landscaping standards of this Section.

## J. Maintenance Requirements

1. **Maintenance Required.** Required landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy, growing condition at all times. The property owner is responsible for regular irrigating, pruning and weeding, mowing, fertilizing, replacement of plants in poor condition and other maintenance of all plantings as needed.
2. **Maintenance of Landscape Structures.** Where walls, fences or other structures are an integral part of the landscape plan, such structures shall be maintained in good repair. Fences that are leaning, broken, have missing pieces, peeling paint or are in any other way damaged shall be immediately repaired or replaced. Walls with missing bricks or blocks, crumbling mortar or other aesthetic or structural defects shall be immediately repaired.
3. **Replacement.** The following plant material conditions require plant removal and replacement:
  - a. **Deciduous Trees.** Deciduous trees and shrubs that fail to produce leaves on more than fifty percent of the plant by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year.
  - b. **Evergreen Trees.** Evergreen trees and shrubs with needle loss or browning over more than 50 percent of the tree.
  - c. **Damaged Vegetation.** Damaged plant materials that have split trunks, loss of major branch structure, loss of leader shoot or other damage that a certified nurseryman confirms will ultimately cause the premature death of the plant.
  - d. **Diseased Vegetation.** Diseased, insect-infested or parasite-infested plants that cannot be adequately treated to prevent premature death or to prevent contamination of other plant materials.
  - e. **Timing.** Removal and replacement shall occur during the same growing season in which plant material exhibits at least one of the above conditions. Where seasonal or adverse weather conditions make replanting or replacement within such a time period impractical, staff may grant an extension and may require adequate fiscal assurance, if needed, from the Applicant or owner to assure replacement.
4. **Enforcement.** All plantings shall be subject to periodic inspections to ensure compliance with this regulation and the approved landscape plan. Failure to comply with the Maintenance Plan shall be a violation of this *LDC*, subject to the enforcement and penalties provisions set forth in Section 15.