



***SITE PLAN & ARCHITECTURAL  
REVIEW INFORMATION HANDOUT  
APPENDIX C – LANDSCAPE DESIGN  
STANDARDS***

**Deposit for Minor or Major SPAR:  
[See Fee Schedule.](#)**

(The final fee is dependent on each project application. Please read and sign the [Cost Recovery Form.](#))

## **Landscape Design Standards**

The following standards were derived to provide minimum design criteria for the installation of landscaping and irrigation systems in all commercial, industrial, residential and multi-family residential developments.

1. Plants should be of the type which are proven successful in Petaluma's climate and soils.
2. Only landscaping will be permitted in yard areas, with the exception of driveways, sidewalks or other improvements approved by the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee.
3. All unusable areas in and around parking lots shall be landscaped where practical.
4. Landscaped areas shall be encouraged between asphalt areas and all building structures, fences and property lines. Hardscape may be used where pedestrian access is necessary as determined by the Site Plan and Architectural Review Committee.
5. Landscaping should be concentrated in highly visible locations where it will have the greatest visual impact. Specifically, areas around building entrances and site perimeters should be given extra consideration. Landscaping in parking lots should introduce bio-swale features into most areas not specifically required for driveways or parking spaces.
6. Attractive natural features of existing sites, including existing trees, shall be preserved whenever possible. Trees which must be removed should be documented by a certified arborist and an ASA value should be assigned. Such documentation should be reviewed and evaluated by the City Arborist. The mitigation shall be determined by the Director of Community Development or the Planning Commission (see [Implementing Zoning Ordinance Chapter 17.060 and 17.065](#)).
7. Parcels located along all arterial roads or highway entrances to the City (such as Petaluma Blvd., Lakeville Street, Washington Street, East Washington Street and U.S. 101, etc.) shall be designed with greater than average quality landscaping to visually accommodate the high volume of passing motorists.
8. Electrical transformer boxes and garbage enclosures should be screened with attractive fencing or walls constructed of materials consistent with those used on the primary structure(s).
9. Loading areas, vehicles, parking lots, meters, outdoor storage, etc., should be adequately screened whenever possible.
10. The improvement and dedication of island landscape areas within the public right-of-way in newly developing areas should be encouraged.
11. Plant type should be adaptable to the size and location of the space it is to occupy.
12. Use of recycled landscape materials shall be encouraged.

13. Alternative materials may be substituted for ground cover plantings. Where wood chips are used as part of the landscaping material, it should not be used where it will cause increased public maintenance problems. Appropriate planting material may also be required in addition to ground cover.
14. Trees planted under power or telephone lines shall be of a species which will not conflict with the overhead lines.
15. Motorist and pedestrian views of long expansive building walls, fencing or paving should be visually broken up with intermittently spaced and large groupings of trees, and additional plantings maybe required.
16. The variety of landscape materials should be consistent with the building architecture and street tree master plan and with that found in the surrounding areas. For example, desert or tropical plants would contrast with the downtown iron front buildings.
17. The design and materials used for fencing, street furniture, outdoor lighting and paving should be consistent with the architectural style of the building and the neighborhood.
18. Where appropriate, the areas between street curbs and sidewalks should be improved with street trees, shrubs, ground cover, brick, cobblestone or other decorative materials and shall be maintained by the property owner.
19. Landscape material planted on dedicated City property shall be of a drought resistant, low maintenance variety. Native or adaptive drought resistant plants are also encouraged in all private developments.
20. Unless an extraordinary amount of trees are to be planted (i.e., campground), all trees shall have a trunk diameter of at least three-quarter (3/4) inch as measured one foot above the ground, (fifteen gallon minimum size container). All trees shall be double staked in accordance with approved City standards. Street trees shall conform to the City Street Tree Ordinance. For growing purposes, street trees should be planted in the ground instead of in confined pots or planters. Any tree not on the approved street tree list may be approved for such use if approved by the Public Works Director after review by the appropriate departments and commissions. Application for use of a tree type shown on the approved list must be made on a form provided by the Park and Recreation Department with the applicant to provide all necessary information for appropriate review.
21. All shrubs not used as ground cover shall be at least five (5) gallons in size.
22. Ground cover shall be spaced to allow for complete infill within one (1) year of the date of planting (for example, ivy hypericum, wild strawberry, etc., should be spaced on twelve-inch centers). Loose stones and gravel should not be placed adjacent to streets, driveways, parking spaces or sidewalks.
23. The City reserves the right to inspect and reject any landscape material not in accordance with the approved plan, or if diseased.
24. Approved irrigation systems should be provided for all landscaping areas in accordance with the

25. All landscaping shall be maintained in healthy growing condition by the permit holder for a period of 90 days after receiving an occupancy permit.
26. All planting shall be maintained in good growing condition. Such maintenance shall include, where appropriate, pruning, mowing, weeding, cleaning, fertilizing, and regular watering. Whenever necessary, planting shall be replaced with other plant materials to insure continued compliance with applicable landscaping requirements (Implementing Zoning Ordinance Chapter 14.030).
27. Adequate soil preparation in accordance with accepted landscape industry practices should be a requirement for all landscape areas. Particular attention should be given to slopes or berm areas with a 5% slope or greater to prevent the loss of plant materials or slope erosion during the watering cycle or wet weather. Refer to the City's Water Resources and Conservation Department for additional conservation techniques which include but are not limited to:
  - A. Use of jute or other biodegradable mesh to hold the plant material in place.
  - B. Use of hydro-mulch which provides slope stabilization and adequate nutrients until the plant material has established itself.
28. Landscaping shall not be located where it will block visibility and create traffic hazards or sight distance problems (Implementing Zoning Ordinance Chapter 14.030).
29. Landscaping should be used in conjunction with required fencing as buffer between land uses where possible.
30. Tree plantings should encourage summer shade on walls, windows, roofs, parking spaces and drives, and walks to help improve energy efficiency and reduce temperatures.
31. Each project shall provide at least one on-site tree for each 500 square feet of open space and at least one tree for each 4 off street uncovered parking stalls. Those trees required, due to the amount of open space, shall be planted in the remainder of the site. Open space, for this purpose has been determined to include all open space areas existing on-site, but excludes parking or drive aisles.
32. Maintenance necessary for various types of plants will be considered in determining the appropriateness of landscaping.
33. Plants which drop seed pods or fruit should not be located where such droppings would cause maintenance or safety problems.
34. Landscaping shall be used to screen parking areas where possible.