

CHAPTER 106.34 - LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

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106.34.010 - Purpose

This Chapter establishes requirements for landscaping to enhance the appearance of development, provide shade, reduce heat and glare, control soil erosion, conserve water, screen potentially incompatible land uses, enhance the quality of neighborhoods, improve air quality, and improve pedestrian and vehicular traffic and safety.

106.34.020 - Applicability

The provisions of this Chapter apply to all development and land uses as follows:

- A. **New projects.** Each new nonresidential and multi-unit residential project shall provide landscaping in compliance with this Chapter. Each single dwelling subdivision of five or more parcels shall provide street trees in compliance with Section 106.34.050.B.2.d(2).
- B. **Existing development.** The approval of a Minor Use Permit, Use Permit, Minor Variance, Variance, or application for Design Review for physical alterations and/or a change in use within an existing development may include one or more conditions of approval requiring compliance with specific landscaping and irrigation requirements of this Chapter to the extent determined by the review authority to be feasible. Changes to existing development that require only Zoning Clearance are not required to comply with this Chapter unless the Director determines that existing landscaping is not being properly maintained.
- C. **Timing of installation.** Required landscape and irrigation improvements shall be installed prior to final building inspection. The installation of landscaping may be deferred for a maximum of 90 days in compliance with Section 106.64.060 (Performance Guarantees).
- D. **Alternatives to requirements.** The review authority may modify the standards of this Chapter to accommodate alternatives to required landscape materials or methods, where the review authority first determines that the proposed alternative will be equally effective in achieving the purposes of this Chapter.

106.34.030 - Landscape and Irrigation Plans

- A. **Preliminary Landscape Plan.** A Preliminary Landscape Plan shall be submitted as part of each application for new development, or the significant expansion (i.e., a total of 25 percent or more of floor area over a two-year period), or redevelopment of an existing use, as determined by the Director.
- B. **Final Landscape Plan.** After land use approval, a Final Landscape Plan shall be submitted as part of the application for a Building Permit. A Final Landscape Plan shall be approved by the Director prior to the start of grading or other construction, and prior to the issuance of a Building Permit.

- C. **Content and preparation.** Preliminary Landscape Plans and Final Landscape Plans shall contain the information required for landscape plans by the Department. Each landscape plan shall be prepared by a California licensed landscape architect, licensed landscape contractor, certified nurseryman, or other professional determined by the Director to be qualified, based on the requirements of State law.
- D. **Review and approval.** After initial application, the Director shall review each Preliminary Landscape Plan and Final Landscape Plan to verify its compliance with the provisions of this Chapter. The Director may approve the submittal in compliance with this Chapter, or may disapprove or require changes to a submittal if it is not in compliance.
- E. **Statement of surety.** When required by the Director, security in the form of cash, performance bond, letter of credit, or certificate of deposit, in an amount equal to 150 percent of the total value of all plant materials, irrigation, installation, and maintenance shall be posted with the City for a two-year period. The Director may require statements of surety for phased development projects, a legitimate delay in landscape installation due to seasonal requirements (including adverse weather conditions) and similar circumstances where it may not be advisable or desirable to install all approved landscaping before occupancy of the site.
- F. **Minor changes to standards.** Landscape plan approval may include the Director authorizing minor changes from the requirements of this Chapter.

106.34.040 - Landscape Location Requirements

Landscaping shall be provided in all areas of a site subject to development with structures, grading, or the removal of natural vegetation, as follows.

- A. **Setbacks.** The setback and open space areas required by this Zoning Code, and easements for utilities and drainage courses shall be landscaped, except where:
1. Occupied by approved structures or paving;
 2. A required single dwelling residential setback is screened from public view; or
 3. They are retained in their natural state, and the review authority determines that landscaping is not necessary to achieve the purposes of this Chapter.
- B. **Unused areas.** Any area of a project site not intended for a specific use, including a commercial pad site intended for future development, shall be landscaped unless retained in its natural state, and the review authority determines that landscaping is not necessary to achieve the purposes of this Chapter.

- C. **Requirements by land use type.** The minimum area of each site to be landscaped with materials permeable to water shall comply with Table 3-6:

TABLE 3-6 - AMOUNT OF LANDSCAPING REQUIRED

Land Use Type	Minimum Area of Landscaping Required
Single dwelling	Front yard and all common areas. Street trees in compliance with Section 106.34.050.B.2.
Other residential (duplex and multi-unit)	All usable open areas not occupied by decks or patios Street trees in compliance with Section 106.34.050.B.2.
Commercial	20 percent of net site area, except for a reduction approved by the review authority due to parcel size or zero lot line construction. Street trees in compliance with Section 106.34.050.B.2.
Industrial	20 percent. Street trees in compliance with Section 106.34.050.B.2.
All others	At the discretion of the review authority.

- D. **Parking areas.** Parking areas shall be landscaped as follows.
1. **Landscape materials.** Landscaping shall be provided throughout the parking lot as a combination of ground cover, shrubs, and trees.
 2. **Curbing.** Areas containing plant materials shall be protected in compliance with Section 106.36.080.I (Wheel stops/curbing).
 3. **Perimeter parking lot landscaping.** All surface parking areas shall be screened from streets and adjoining properties, and the open areas between the property line and the public street right-of-way shall be landscaped.
 - a. **Adjacent to streets.**
 - (1) A parking area for a nonresidential use adjacent to a public street shall be designed to provide a minimum 10-foot wide landscaped planting strip between the street right-of-way and parking area.
 - (2) A parking area for a residential use, except for a single dwelling or duplex, shall be designed to provide a landscaped planting strip between the street right-of-way and parking area equal in depth to the setback required by the applicable zoning district.
 - (3) The landscaping shall be designed and maintained to screen cars from view from the street to a minimum height of 36 inches, but shall not exceed any applicable height limit for landscaping within a setback.
 - (4) Screening materials may include a combination of plant materials, earth berms, solid decorative masonry walls, raised planters, or other screening devices which meet the intent of this requirement.
 - (5) Shade trees shall be provided at a minimum rate of one for every 30 linear feet of landscaped area.

- (6) Plant materials, signs, or structures within a traffic safety sight area of a driveway shall comply with Section 106.30.060.E (Height Limit at Street Corners).
- b. **Adjacent to side or rear property lines.** A parking area for a nonresidential use or a multi-unit residential project shall provide a perimeter landscape strip at least eight feet wide (inside dimension) where the parking area adjoins a side or rear property line. The requirement for a landscape strip may be satisfied by a setback or buffer area that is otherwise required to be eight feet or greater. Trees shall be provided within the landscape strip at the rate of one for each 30 linear feet of landscaped area.
- c. **Adjacent to structures.** When a parking area is located adjacent to a nonresidential structure, a minimum eight-foot wide (inside dimension) landscape strip shall be provided adjacent to the structure, exclusive of any building entries, or areas immediately adjacent to the wall of the structure that serve as pedestrian accessways. A landscape strip of at least three feet shall be provided adjacent to a trash enclosure. The Director may modify these requirements where the Director determines that the small area of a site makes compliance infeasible.
- d. **Adjacent to residential use.** A parking area for a nonresidential use adjoining a residential use shall provide a landscaped buffer setback with a minimum 10-foot width between the parking area and the common property line bordering the residential use. A solid, continuous decorative masonry wall or fence and landscape buffer shall be provided along the property line, except for approved access points, to address land use compatibility issues (e.g., nuisance noise and light/glare), as determined by the review authority to be necessary. Trees shall be provided at the rate of one for each 30 linear feet of landscaped area. The Director may modify these requirements where the Director determines that the requirements are unnecessary because of site conditions, or that alternative designs will be equally effective in satisfying the objectives of this Section.
4. **Interior parking lot landscaping.**
- a. **Amount of landscaping.** Multi-unit, commercial, and industrial uses shall provide landscaping within each outdoor parking area at a minimum ratio of 10 percent of the gross area of the parking lot. Trees not less than five feet in height and 15-gallon container in size shall be planted throughout the parcel and along any street frontage. Trees shall be planted in parking areas so that 50 percent shading of parking lot pavement is achieved within 10 years. Street trees shall shade 30 percent of the street and sidewalk within 10 years. At a minimum, one shade tree shall be provided for every five parking spaces.

- b. **Location of landscaping.** Landscaping shall be evenly dispersed throughout the parking area, as follows.

- (1) Orchard-style planting (the placement of trees in uniformly-spaced rows) is encouraged for parking areas with more than 50 spaces. The planting of trees in landscape islands that extend the full length of parking spaces is preferred over trees in smaller planting areas between spaces. See Figure 3-34.

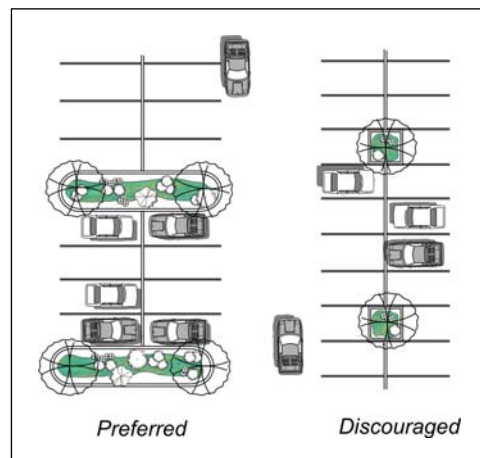


Figure 3-34 - Preferred Method for Parking Lot Tree Planting

- (2) Parking lots with more than 50 spaces shall provide a concentration of landscape elements at primary entrances, including, at a minimum, specimen trees, flowering plants, enhanced paving, and project identification.
 - (3) Landscaping shall be located so that pedestrians are not required to cross unpaved landscaped areas to reach building entrances or pedestrian walkways from parked cars. This shall be achieved through proper orientation of the landscaped fingers and islands, and by providing pedestrian access through landscaped areas that would otherwise block direct pedestrian routes.
- c. **Groundwater recharge.** The design of parking lot landscape areas shall consider, and may, where appropriate, be required to include provisions for the on-site detention of stormwater runoff, pollutant cleansing, and groundwater recharge.
- E. **Subdivisions.** A new subdivision shall be designed and constructed to provide landscaping as follows.
- 1. **Residential subdivisions.** A residential subdivision shall provide landscaping in the form of one street tree for each 25 feet of street frontage, in the planter strip or other location approved by the review authority, landscaping with irrigation facilities for any common areas or other open space areas within the subdivision, and any additional landscaping required by the review authority. The species of street trees shall be as required by the review authority, and the plantings shall comply with the City's standard specifications.
 - 2. **Nonresidential subdivisions.** Nonresidential subdivisions shall be provided landscaping as required by the review authority.

106.34.050 - Landscape Standards

- A. **Landscape design.** The required landscape plan shall be designed to integrate all elements of the project (e.g., buildings, parking lots, and streets) to achieve their aesthetic objectives, desirable microclimates, and minimize water and energy demand.
- 1. **Plant selection and grouping.** Plant materials shall be selected for: low water demand and drought tolerance; use of appropriate native species; adaptability and relationship to the Citrus Heights environment, and the geological and topographical conditions of the site; color, form, and pattern; ability to provide shade; and soil retention capability, in compliance with Section 106.34.060 (Water Efficient Landscaping), below.
 - a. Plants having similar water use shall be grouped together in distinct hydrozones.
 - b. The protection and preservation of native species and natural areas is encouraged, and may be required by conditions of approval.
 - 2. **Minimum dimensions.** Each area of landscaping shall have a minimum interior width of five feet within the residential, commercial, and industrial zoning districts. Wherever this Zoning Code requires a landscaped area of a specified width, the width shall be measured inside of any bordering curb or wall.
 - 3. **Height limits.** Landscape materials shall be selected, placed on a site, and maintained to not:
 - a. Exceed a maximum height of 30 inches within a required traffic safety visibility area (Section 106.30.060.E - Height limit at street corners), except for trees with the lowest portion of their canopy maintained at a minimum height of eight feet above grade; or

- b. Interfere with the proper operation of solar energy equipment or passive solar design on adjacent parcels.
4. **Safety requirements.** Landscape materials shall be located so that at maturity they do not:
- a. Interfere with safe sight distances for vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic;
 - b. Conflict with overhead utility lines, overhead lights, or walkway lights; or
 - c. Impede pedestrian or bicycle ways.
- B. **Plant material.** Required landscape plans shall include ground covers, shrubs, and trees, which shall be selected and installed in compliance with Section 106.34.060 (Water Efficient Landscaping), below, and as follows.
1. **Size at time of planting.** Plant materials shall be sized and spaced to achieve immediate effect and shall not be less than a five-gallon container for specimen shrubs, a 15-gallon container for trees, and a one-gallon container for mass planting, unless otherwise approved by the review authority.
2. **Trees.** Tree planting shall comply with the following standards. Existing trees shall be retained and preserved where feasible.
- a. A tree shall not be planted under a structure that may interfere with normal tree growth (e.g., an eave, overhang, balcony, light standard, or other similar structure).
 - b. Root barriers shall be provided for trees in landscape planters less than 10 feet in width or located five feet or closer to a permanent structure.
 - c. Trees shall be staked in compliance with standards provided by the Department.
 - d. Number of trees:
 - (1) Parking area: refer to Section 106.34.040.D., above.
 - (2) Street trees: one per 25-foot length of right-of-way. The review authority may modify this requirement depending on the chosen tree species and its typical spread at maturity.
3. **Groundcover and shrubs.** Landscape areas shall include the following types of plant materials:
- a. Groundcover, shrubs, turf, or other types of plants that are predominantly drought tolerant.
 - b. A minimum of two, five-gallon size shrubs shall be provided for every six feet of distance along street frontages, or as approved by the review authority.
 - c. Groundcover shall be provided throughout the landscaped area and shall be spaced to achieve full coverage within one year.
 - d. Artificial groundcover or shrubs shall not be allowed.
 - e. Redwood chips, pebbles, stone, and similar materials shall be allowed up to 15 percent of the total required landscape area.
 - f. Non-turf areas (e.g., shrub beds) shall be top dressed with bark chip, mulch, or approved alternative.

4. **Turf.** Turf shall be limited to 25 percent of the total landscaped area on the site. A corner lot, or other parcel with more than one street frontage may be approved with turf up to 35 percent of the landscaped area on the site. No turf shall be allowed:
 - a. In any area of six feet or less in width; or
 - b. On any slope exceeding 10 percent. A level buffer zone of 18 inches shall be provided between bermed turf areas and any hardscape (e.g., any street, walkway, or similar feature).

Where allowed, all turf shall be a drought tolerant variety.

5. **Soil testing and preparation.**

- a. A soil test for horticultural suitability shall be required at time of landscape installation in each landscaped area.
- b. The soil shall be prepared and/or amended to be suitable for the landscape to be installed, in compliance with Section 106.34.060.D. (Soil conditioning and mulching), below.

- C. **Irrigation system requirements.** All landscaped areas shall include an automatic irrigation system, designed and installed in compliance with Section 106.34.060 (Water Efficient Landscaping).

106.34.060 - Water Efficient Landscaping

- A. **Purpose.** The provisions of this Section are intended to ensure efficient water use by establishing standards for landscape design appropriate to Citrus Heights' climate, soils, water resources and land uses.
- B. **Applicability.** Except as provided below, this Section shall apply to all applications that are subject to Design Review in compliance with Section 106.62.040. The Director may modify the requirements of this Section where the Director determines that a specific requirement would be infeasible or ineffective.
1. This Section shall not apply to the following:
 - a. Landscaping in single-family residential projects, other than front yard landscaping of model homes;
 - b. Any landscaped area which is irrigated with reclaimed water;
 - c. Registered historical sites;
 - d. Irrigation of crops; and
 - e. Ecological restoration projects that do not require permanent irrigation systems.
 2. Cemeteries, golf courses, parks, playgrounds, schools, and sports fields are exempt from the turf area limit of this Section. Turf will be allowed for these uses in all areas where the functional need for turf can be demonstrated. The other provisions of this Section shall apply to these uses.
- C. **Water features.** Decorative water features (e.g., fountains, ponds, pools) shall have recirculating water systems.

D. Soil conditioning and mulching.

1. A minimum one-foot depth of non-mechanically compacted soil shall be available for water absorption and root growth in planted areas.
2. In areas with spray irrigation (as opposed to bubbler or drip irrigation), organic amendment shall be incorporated into the soil to a minimum depth of six inches at a minimum rate of five cubic yards for each 1,000 square feet of landscape area, or as specified by amendment recommendations from a soils laboratory report.
3. A minimum of a two inch layer of porous mulch shall be applied to all exposed soil surfaces of non-turf areas within the landscaped area. Nonporous material (e.g., plastic sheeting), shall not be placed under the mulch; however, porous landscape fabric is allowed.

E. Irrigation. Water-efficient systems (e.g., with drip, mini-spray, bubbler-type, or similar point application methods) shall be used unless determined to be infeasible by the review authority. Any alternative system shall require review authority approval.**1. Equipment requirements.**

- a. All landscaped areas shall be irrigated with automatic controllers with repeat start-time potential. Dual or multi-program controllers with separated valves and circuits shall be used when the project contains more than one type of landscape treatment (e.g., turf, ground cover, shrub, tree areas), or a variety of sun exposures.
- b. Soil moisture-sensing devices and rain sensors/shut-off devices shall be used on larger projects (e.g., 10,000 plus square feet of landscaped area) to minimize or eliminate over-watering.
- c. Check valves are required where elevation differential may cause low head drainage.
- d. Pressure regulation shall be installed to effect correct operating pressure for each type of irrigation head or drip method.
- e. Low-flow sprinkler heads with precipitation rates matched within 20 percent of one another shall be used on each irrigation circuit when spray or rotor-type heads are specified for watering shrubs and ground cover areas. Pressure compensating bubbles may be included in circuits serving shrub areas.

2. Installation. Irrigation delivery systems shall be installed so that water does not run off or overspray onto adjacent pavement, sidewalks, structures, or other non-landscaped areas.**3. Scheduling of irrigation.** Watering shall be scheduled at times of minimal wind conflict and evaporation loss.**F. Documentation for compliance.** The following documentation shall be submitted to the City as part of the requirements of this Section.

1. **Preliminary landscape statement.** The preliminary landscape statement shall contain a brief description of the planting and design actions that are intended to meet the requirements of this Section.

2. **Final Design Review.** The following shall be submitted with the Building Permit application.
 - a. A landscape planting design plan that accurately and clearly identifies and depicts: new and existing groundcovers, shrubs, trees, turf, and any other planting areas; plants by botanical name and common name; plant sizes and quantities; property lines, new and existing building footprints, driveways, sidewalks, streets, and other hardscape features; and water features.
 - b. An irrigation design plan which indicates irrigation methods and design actions that will be employed to meet the irrigation specifications of this Section.
3. **Completion of installation.** Upon completion of installation of the landscape, the landscape design principal or owner shall submit to the Building Department a certificate of completion and a certificate of conformance, stating that the project has been installed as designed, or with documentation of suitable substitutions.

G. Alternative provisions. The review authority shall:

1. Consider and may allow the substitution of design alternatives and innovations that will lead to a greater reduction in water consumption than the measures identified in this Section; and
2. Accept documentation methods, water allowance determinations, and landscape and irrigation design requirements of the State of California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance in lieu of the requirements of this Section in cases where it is demonstrated that compliance with the requirements of the State's model ordinance will lead to a greater, or equivalent reduction in water consumption than the measures identified in this Section.

106.34.070 - Maintenance of Landscape Areas

- A. Maintenance required.** All site landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy and thriving condition at all times. Irrigation systems and their components shall be maintained in a fully functional manner consistent with the originally approved design and the provisions of this Chapter. Regular maintenance shall include:
1. Checking, adjusting, and repairing irrigation equipment; resetting automatic controllers; aerating and dethatching turf areas; adding/replenishing mulch, fertilizer, and soil amendments; pruning; trimming; and weeding of all landscaped areas;
 2. The trimming of vegetation as necessary, consistent with Subsection B. (Tree Pruning), to maintain the effective functioning of solar energy facilities and passive solar design features installed both on-site and on adjacent properties; and
 3. The trimming of vegetation as necessary to keep pedestrian and bicycle paths clear.
- B. Tree pruning.** Prior to pruning any tree on other than a lot with a single dwelling or duplex, a Tree Pruning Permit shall be approved by the Director. Tree Pruning shall be performed by a California Landscape Contractor (C-27 or C-61). The licensed contractor shall also be certified by the International Society of Arboriculture as a Certified Tree Trimmer or Certified Arborist or other qualified tree expert.
1. **Limitations on allowable pruning.** Tree pruning shall be allowed only for the following purposes:
 - a. Removal of dead wood and diseased, crowded, and weakly attached trunks and branches that create a hazard to private property and citizens;
 - b. Providing adequate clearance and visibility for safe use of parking stalls, travel ways and walkways for the passage of persons and vehicles;

- c. Eliminating traffic sign visibility obstructions;
 - d. Providing adequate visibility for security patrols;
 - e. Repairing split trees and limbs in order to save a tree and its appearance;
 - f. Removing or severing tree roots that are causing damage to public or private property, including curbs, gutters, sidewalk, drainage lines and parking lot surfaces;
 - g. Providing visibility for merchant signs and increasing parking lot lighting only when the aesthetics of the tree and parking lot shading will not be reduced.
2. **Application requirements.** A Tree Pruning Permit application shall include the following information.
- a. A site plan indicating the type of tree, size and location of the trees to be pruned;
 - b. Reasons for pruning;
 - c. Evidence that the pruning shall be performed by a Certified Arborist, Certified Tree Trimmer, or other qualified tree expert;
 - d. Number of trees to be pruned.
- C. **Tree removal.** City requirements for tree removal are in Chapter 106.39 (Tree Preservation and Protection).
- D. **Removal and replacement of landscaping.** All plant material removed from a project with an approved landscape plan shall be replaced with the following replacement sizes: shrubs - five-gallon; groundcover - flats. Trees shall be replaced as specified in Chapter 106.39 (Tree Preservation and Protection).
- E. **Water waste prohibited.** Water waste in existing developments resulting from inefficient landscape irrigation leading to excessive runoff, low head drainage, overspray, and other similar conditions where water flows onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, walks, roadways, or structures is prohibited. Efficient watering practices shall be conducted in compliance with Section 106.34.060 (Water Efficient Landscaping), above.
- F. **Enforcement.**
1. **Maintenance failure.** Failure to maintain landscape areas in compliance with this Section shall be deemed a nuisance, and shall be subject to abatement in compliance with the Municipal Code, and/or the applicable planning permit may be revoked.
 2. **Unpermitted pruning or tree removal.** The pruning or removal of a tree in violation of a requirement of this Chapter shall require that the property owner replace each affected tree with substantially larger (e.g., specimen trees rather than 15 gallon) and/or more trees, as required by the review authority.