

ORDINANCE NO. C 34913

AN ORDINANCE relating to Residential Zoning Code and Site Planting Standards; amending SMC section 17C.200.040.

WHEREAS, this ordinance amends the landscaping requirements of the Spokane Municipal Code to clarify that attached and detached single family residences are exempt from the street frontage and perimeter landscaping requirements; and

WHEREAS, the street frontage and perimeter landscaping requirements are not necessary for attached and detached single family residences because there are minimum front yard landscaping requirements for new residential lots that are less than 40 feet wide; and

WHEREAS, the street frontage and perimeter landscaping requirements are necessary for larger commercial, industrial and multifamily residential development particularly when they are located adjacent to single family residential neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, this amendment to the landscaping section of the Spokane Municipal Code is a part of the amendments to the residential zoning categories related to improving the opportunities for the development of infill housing that is compatible with established residential neighborhoods;

Now, Therefore

The City of Spokane does ordain:

Section 1. That SMC section 17A.020.070 is amended to read as follows:

**17C.200.040 Site Planting Standards**

Sites shall be planted in accordance with the following standards:

A. Street Frontages.

1. The type of plantings as specified below shall be provided inside the property lines:
  - a. along all commercial, light industrial, and planned industrial zoned properties except where buildings are built with no setback from the property line: a six-foot wide planting area of L2 see-through buffer, including street trees as prescribed in SMC 17C.200.050. Remaining setback areas shall be planted in L3.

- b. along all downtown, CC1, CC2, and CC4 zoned properties except where buildings are built with no setback from the property line: a five-foot wide planting area of L2 see-through buffer, including street trees as prescribed in SMC 17C.200.050, Street Tree Requirements. Remaining setback areas shall be planted in L3. Living ground cover shall be used, with non-living materials (gravel, river rock, etc.) as accent only. In addition, earthen berms, trellises, low decorative masonry walls, or raised masonry planters (overall height including any plantings shall not exceed three feet) may be used to screen parking lots from adjacent streets and walkways.
  - c. in the heavy industrial zone, along a parking lot, outdoor sales, or
  - d. outdoor display area that is across from a residential zone: a six-foot wide planting area of L2 see-through buffer, including street trees as prescribed in SMC 17C.200.050. Remaining setback areas shall be planted in L3.
  - e. in industrial zones, all uses in the commercial categories (see chapter 17C.190 SMC, Use Category Descriptions, Article III, Commercial Categories) are subject to the standards for uses in the general commercial (GC) zone.
  - f. along all RA, RSF, RTF, RMF, and RHD zones, except for attached and detached single-family residences and duplexes: six feet of L3 open area landscaping, including street trees as prescribed in SMC 17C.200.050. For residential development along principal and minor arterials, a six-foot high fence with shrubs and trees may be used for screening along street frontages. The fence and landscaping shall comply with the standards of SMC 17C.120.310 for the clear view triangle and must be placed no closer than twelve feet from the curb line. A minimum of fifty percent of the fence line shall include shrubs and trees. The landscaping is required to be placed on the exterior (street side) of the fence.
2. Plantings may not exceed thirty inches in height or hang lower than ninety-six inches within the clear view triangle at street intersections on corner lots and at driveway entries to public streets. The clear view triangle is defined in SMC 17C.120.310. The director of engineering services may further limit the height of plantings, landscaping structures, and other site development features within the clear view triangle or may expand the size of the clear view triangle as conditions warrant.



**B. Other Property Perimeters.**

Except for attached and detached single-family residences and duplexes, a ((A)) planting strip of five feet in width shall be provided along all other property lines except where buildings are built with no setback from the property line or where a parking lot adjoins another parking lot. The type of planting in this strip varies depending upon the zone designation of the properties sharing the property line (with or without an intervening alley) as indicated in the matrix below. Where properties with dissimilar zones share a common boundary, the property with the more intense zone shall determine the required type of planting. The owners of adjacent properties may agree to consolidate their perimeter plantings along shared boundaries. Therefore, instead of each property providing a five-foot wide planting strip, they together could provide one five-foot wide planting strip, so long as the required planting type, as indicated in the matrix, is provided.

Types of landscaping to be provided in planting strips alongside and rear property lines:

ZONE OF SUBJECT PROPERTY (vertical)	ZONE OF ADJACENT PROPERTY (horizontal)												
	RA	RSF	RTF	RMF	RHD	O & OR	NR & NMU	CB	GC	CC	LI, PI	HI	DOWNTOWN ZONES
RA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
RSF	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
RTF	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
RMF	L2	L2	L2	L3	L2	L2	L2	L1	L1	L1	--	--	L1
RHD	L2	L2	L2	L2	L3	L2	L2	L2	L2	L2	--	--	L2
O (Office) & OR (Office Retail)	L2	L2	L2	L2	L2	L3	L2	L2	L2	--	--	--	L2

NR (Neighborhood Retail) & NMU (Neighborhood Mixed Use)	L2	L1	L2	L2	L2	L2	L3	L3	L2	--	--	--	L3
CB (Community Business)	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2	L2	L3	L3	L3	--	--	--	L3
GC (General Commercial)	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2	L2	L2	L3	L3	--	--	--	L3
CC (Center and Corridor)	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
LI (Light Industrial) & PI (Planned Industrial) [1]	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2	--	--	--	--	--	--
HI (Heavy Industrial) [1]	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downtown Zones	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L2	L2	L3	L3	--	--	--	--
[1] In the industrial zones, all uses in the commercial categories (see chapter 17C.190 SMC, Use Category Descriptions, Article III, Commercial Categories) are subject to the standards for uses in the general commercial (GC) zone.													

C. Planning Director Discretion.

The planning director shall have the discretion to waive or reduce the requirements of subsections (A)(1) and (B) of this section based on the following factors:

1. No useable space for landscaping exists between the proposed new structure and existing structures on adjoining lots or alleys because of inadequate sunlight or inadequate width.
2. The building setback provided in front of the new structure is less than six feet or is developed as a plaza with decorative paving/pavers, trees, planters, or other amenities.
3. Xeriscape landscaping is utilized in designated stormwater control areas.
4. When existing trees and other vegetation serves the same or similar function as the required landscaping, they may be substituted for the required landscaping if they are healthy and appropriate for the site at mature size. When existing trees are eight inches or more in diameter,

they shall be equivalent to three required landscape trees. If necessary, supplemental landscaping shall be provided in areas where existing vegetation is utilized to accomplish the intent of this chapter.

D. Other Areas.

All other portions of a site not covered by structures, hard surfaces, or other prescribed landscaping shall be planted in L3 open area landscaping until the maximum landscape requirement threshold is reached (see SMC 17C.200.080).

E. Parking Lot Landscaping Design.

1. Purpose.

To reduce the visual impact of parking lots through landscaped areas, trellises, and/or other architectural features that complement the overall design and character of developments.

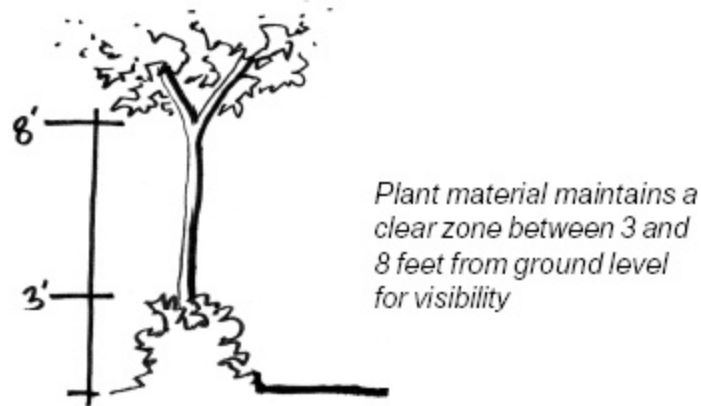
2. Parking Lot Landscaping Design Implementation.

This section is subject to the provisions of SMC 17C.120.015, Design Standards Administration.



3. The parking lot landscape shall reinforce pedestrian and vehicle circulation, especially parking lot entrances, ends of driving aisles, and pedestrian walkways leading through parking lots. (P)

4. Planted areas next to a pedestrian walkways and sidewalks shall be maintained or plant material chosen to maintain a clear zone between three and eight feet from ground level. (R)



5. Low walls and raised planters (a maximum height of three feet), trellises with vines, architectural features, or special interest landscape features shall be used to define entrances to parking areas. Where signs are placed on walls, they shall be integrated into the design and complement the architecture or character of other site features. (P)
6. Landscape plant material size, variety, color, and texture within parking lots should be integrated with the overall site landscape design. (C)

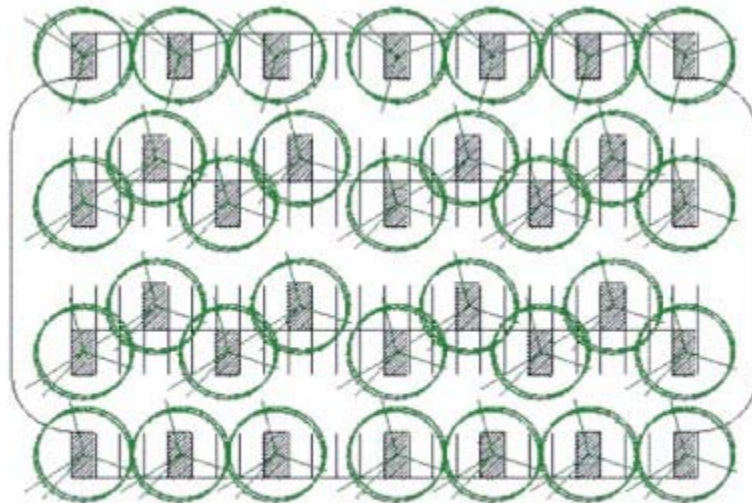
F. Parking, Outdoor Sales, and Outdoor Display Areas.

1. In residential, commercial and center and corridor zones, a six-foot wide planting area of L2 see-through buffer landscaping shall be provided between any parking lot, outdoor sales, outdoor display area, and a street right-of-way. Living ground cover shall be used, with non-living materials (gravel, river rock, etc.) as accent only. In addition, earthen berms, trellises, low decorative masonry walls, raised masonry planters, or L1 visual screen landscaping shall be used to screen parking lots from adjacent streets and walkways (overall height including any plantings or structures shall not exceed three feet). Trees required as a part of the L2 landscape strip shall be located according to the standards for street trees in SMC 17C.200.050, Street Tree Requirements.
2. In residential, commercial and center and corridor zones all parking stalls shall be within sixty feet of a planted area with L3 open area landscaping. All individual planting areas within parking lots shall be at least one hundred fifty square feet in size.
3. In residential, commercial and center and corridor zones all paved parking areas on a site with more than fifty cumulative parking spaces shall have plantings that satisfies one of the following options:
  - a. Option 1.

Interior landscaping consisting of L3 open area landscaping, including trees amounting to at least ten percent of the total area of the paved parking area, excluding required perimeter and street frontage strips. A minimum of one interior tree shall be planted for every six parking spaces.

b. Option 2.

Tree plantings shall be spaced in order that tree canopies cover a minimum of seventy percent of the entire paved area of the parking lot within fifteen years of project completion. Canopy coverage shall be measured in plan view, and be based on projected mature size of the selected tree species. All individual planting areas within parking lots shall be a minimum of eight feet in width, be at least one hundred fifty square feet in size, and in addition to the required trees, shall be planted with a living groundcover. See the "Landscape Plants for the Inland Northwest" issued by the Washington State University Cooperative Extension and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, available from the City planning services department, for acceptable mature tree size to be used when calculating canopy size.

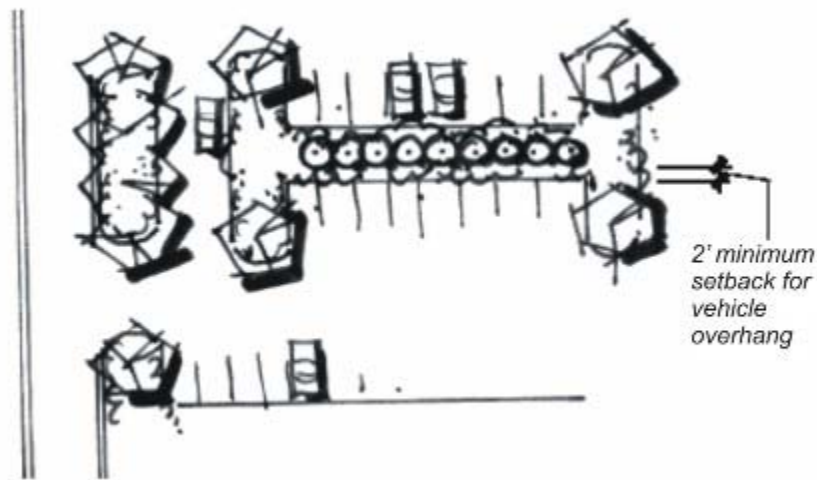


**Example of 70% shade cover option.  
(8.4% interior space used)**

4. Where parking lots are located between the building and a street, the amount of required interior landscaped area shall be increased by fifty percent and the minimum amount of tree shade cover shall increase to eighty percent. Where parking lots are behind buildings, the amount of interior landscaping may be decreased by fifty percent of what the code

requires and the minimum amount of tree shade cover shall decrease to fifty percent.

5. A planting strip of five feet in depth with L1 visual screen landscaping or site-obscuring decorative wood, iron, etc. fences or masonry walls at least six feet in height shall be installed along property lines where any adjacent single-family residential zone would have views of parking or service areas.
6. A minimum of two-foot setback shall be provided for all trees and shrubs where vehicles overhang into planted areas.



*Landscape used to define vehicular circulation*

7. In industrial zones, parking lots, outdoor sales, and outdoor display areas that are abutting or across the street from residential zones are subject to all of the requirements of subsections (E) and (F) of this section.
8. In industrial zones, all uses in the commercial categories (see chapter 17C.190 SMC, Use Category Descriptions, Article III, Commercial Categories) are subject to the standards for uses in the general commercial (GC) zones.
9. In downtown zones an applicant must demonstrate to the director that the following required elements meet the intent of the Downtown Design Guidelines. Key design elements for these features include integrating storm water facilities, improving the pedestrian environment, and adding public amenities next to surface parking; outdoor sales and outdoor



display areas so that they help to define space and contribute to a more active street environment.

- a. **Surface Parking Lot Liner Walls in the Downtown Zones.**  
Surface parking lots must have a solid, decorative concrete or masonry wall adjacent to a complete street and behind a sidewalk. The wall must have a minimum height above the surface of the parking lot of two and one-half feet and a maximum height of three feet. The wall shall screen automobile headlights from surrounding properties. A wrought iron fence may be constructed on top of the wall for a combined wall and fence height of six feet. An area with a minimum width of two feet, measured from the property line, must be provided, landscaped and maintained on the exterior of the required wall. Such walls, fences, and landscaping shall not interfere with the clear view triangle. Pedestrian access through the perimeter wall shall be spaced to provide convenient access between the parking lot and the sidewalk. There shall be a pedestrian access break in the perimeter wall at least every one hundred fifty feet and a minimum of one for every street frontage. Any paving or repaving of a parking lot over one thousand square feet triggers these requirements.



Parking Liner Walls With Plantings Contribute an Interesting Pedestrian Environment. This parking liner wall and screen is enhanced by larger wall sections near automobile crossing points and a change in sidewalk scoring pattern. Both give cues to pedestrians and drivers.



- b. Surface parking lots in the Downtown zones are subject to the interior parking lot landscaping standard sections (F)(2) through (F)(6).
- c. The exterior boundary of all surface parking lots adjacent to any public right-of-way must include trees spaced no more than twenty-five feet apart. The leaves of the trees or any other landscaping features at maturity shall not obscure vision into the parking lot from a height of between three and eight feet from the ground. The species of trees shall be selected from the city's street tree list. If street trees exist or are provided consistent with SMC 17C.200.050 then this landscaping strip may be omitted.
- d. Outdoor sales and display areas shall contribute to an interesting streetscape by providing the following:
  - i. Monument Features or Artistic Elements Along the Street Edge between the Outdoor Display Area and the Sidewalk. These shall be integrated with display area lighting and pedestrian amenities.
  - ii. Additional Streetscape Features in the Sidewalk Environment. Items may include elements that improve the health of street trees and plantings, improve storm water management, or artistic features that improve the pedestrian environment. This may include items such as permeable pavers in the

pedestrian buffer strip, increased soil volumes for street trees, suspended sidewalks around the street tree to increase the amount of uncompacted soils, and engineered soils to support larger and healthier trees.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President

Attest:

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date