

# CHAPTER 1372

## Landscaping

The process of development may require the alteration of existing topography and soil structure, the disruption of native vegetation and the expansion of impervious surface area over the development site. The cumulative effects of the land-altering process extend far beyond the property lines of an individual development site and if development is not undertaken within the context of the broader community, it will not only degrade the individual development, but also the community of which it is a part. It is, therefore, the intent of this Chapter to protect and manage vegetation to:

- (a) Aid in the stabilization of the environmental balance through air purification, oxygen regeneration, groundwater protection and recharge and the control of stormwater runoff.
- (b) Safeguard and enhance private and public property values and encourage continued investment in the community.
- (c) Enhance community appearance, identify unique natural beauty, and promote quality development at a suitable scale.
- (d) Provide visual screens between land uses of differing character and use intensities.
- (e) Prevent reductions in the City's urban forest.
- (f) Provide for the preservation of larger native trees which are valuable amenities to the urban environment that, once destroyed, can only be replaced after generations; and
- (g) Ensure that the local stock of native trees and vegetation is replaced.

It is recognized that alternative design concepts exist which, if adopted, could exceed the results envisioned using these development standards. It is intended that the requirements of this chapter be flexible and permit latitude in site design and the use of plant materials when it can be shown that variation from the requirements will provide a development substantially better than that achievable using the minimum standards of this Chapter. The provisions of this chapter shall be considered the minimum development standards and not a design goal.

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### CROSS REFERENCES

Zoning and planning in home rules cities - MCLA 117.4i  
 Uses of land or structures not conforming to ordinances; powers of legislative bodies; acquisition of property - MCLA 125.583a

### **1372.01 COMPLIANCE REQUIRED.**

- (a) In all districts except RC, R-1a, R-1b and R-2 and for public parking areas in the C-4 district, compliance with this Chapter shall be required for:
  - (1) Any new building, rebuilding, conversion, enlargement or structural alteration requiring a building permit and having a value of \$50,000 or more;
  - (2) Land clearing as described in this Zoning Code.
- (b) Any time there is compliance required with Chapter 1374, *Circulation and Parking*, landscaping requirements internal to parking areas shall be required except for private parking areas in an RC, R-1a, R-1b and R-2 district.

**1372.02 ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE.**

The Planning Director may approve variations from strict compliance with this Chapter when an applicant can demonstrate that the following apply to a specific development site:

- (a) When topography, shape, size or other natural features make full compliance impractical or impossible.
- (b) When space limitations or prevailing development patterns in the surrounding neighborhood justify alternative compliance for in-fill projects and redevelopment in older established areas of the City.
- (c) When safety considerations warrant alternative compliance.
- (d) When there is not an alternative in the practical siting of a building, location of site access or the location of underground utilities to service the site.
- (e) When the alternative compliance plan is equal to or superior in its ability to fulfill the intent of this Chapter.

**1372.03 STANDARDS AND MATERIALS.**

- (a) **General Performance Standards** The following general performance standards shall apply whenever compliance is required:
  - (1) All areas not covered by buildings, parking areas, driveways, walkways, pedestrian plazas or other pedestrian-oriented impervious surfaces or water surfaces shall be planted with living vegetation, including canopy trees, shrubbery and ground covers. The combination of plant materials selected shall be placed in harmonious and natural associations and represent the approved indigenous landscape materials and their cultivars listed in Appendix 3.
  - (2) Not less than 80 percent of any landscape area shall be covered by plant materials. Stone and other mulches, grass and other ground covers, pedestrian walks, other impervious surfaces or water surfaces may cover the remaining 20 percent of the landscape area.
  - (3) The general site topography and any natural landforms unique to the property shall be maintained and made part of the development whenever possible to reinforce the local and regional character.
  - (4) All trees shall be located to allow sufficient room for growth.
  - (5) Landscape materials shall not obstruct access to or view of fire hydrants or other fire connections.
- (b) **Landscape Materials.** The following landscape material requirements shall

apply whenever compliance is required:

- (1) All landscape plant materials preserved or used pursuant to the provisions of this Code shall be healthy and compatible with local climate, site soils characteristics, drainage and available water supply.
  - (2) Deciduous canopy trees required by this Code shall not be less than 2 1/2 inches diameter at breast height.
  - (3) Coniferous trees required by this Code shall be at least six feet in height when planted.
  - (4) All shrubs required shall be of a size generally known in the nursery industry as requiring a five gallon container.
- (c) **Irrigation and Maintenance Standards.** The following irrigation and maintenance standards shall apply whenever compliance is required:
- (1) All landscape plant materials required by this Code shall be supplied with a watering system sufficient to maintain the plants in a healthy condition.
  - (2) All plant materials shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition. Dead and unsalvageable plant materials shall be replaced with the same size and variety of plant materials originally required on the site development plan within 30 days of the "Notice to Replace" issued by the City. Replacement may be delayed if the Planning Director determines that circumstances beyond the control of the property owner prevent timely replacement.
- (d) **Utilities.** All utility lines such as electric, telephone, cable television and other similar lines shall be installed underground. All utility junction boxes, access boxes and pad-mounted fixtures shall be appropriately screened with landscape materials.
- (e) **Existing vegetation.** The following standards shall apply to existing site vegetation whenever compliance is required:
- (1) Existing healthy trees, of an approved species listed on Appendix 3, shall be preserved and incorporated into the final development plan.
  - (2) Existing healthy trees and shrubs located within required setbacks and areas not required for development shall be preserved.
  - (3) Trees to be preserved shall be pruned to remove dead, diseased or irregular branching, but the crown form characteristic of the respective species shall be maintained.
  - (4) Preserved trees shall be protected with sturdy, highly visible barriers around the tree or group of trees, at approximately the critical root zone or drip line and a tree preservation plan shall be submitted and approved by the Planning Director.
  - (5) The critical root zone of the tree shall remain undisturbed by cutting, filling or storage of materials and equipment during the development process.
  - (6) Healthy, younger trees on development sites shall be preserved wherever possible to allow normal succession as older trees are lost.

**1372.04 SCREENING REQUIREMENTS FOR PARKING AREAS.**

Except in RC, R-1a, R-1b or R-2 zoning districts, parking areas shall be screened from

the alley and from neighboring residential properties whenever parking is developed according to the following:

- (a) Unless waived by the Planning Director, screening shall be provided within a required setback area and the screening shall establish an opaque screen at least five feet in height as measured from the finished parking area grade where it adjoins the setback.
- (b) Required screening of parking areas shall be achieved through the use of a decorative masonry screenwall, earth berms and landscape plant materials, either in combination or independently.
- (c) Specific screening elements may be relocated, redesigned or partially eliminated at the direction of the City Engineer to correct clear vision or other safety considerations.
- (d) Required screening may be interrupted to provide reasonable pedestrian or bicycle access to a property from a public right-of-way.

**1372.05 LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT INTERNAL TO A PARKING AREA.**

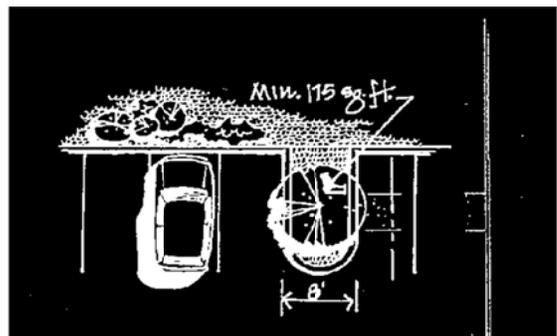
Any use providing or requiring 30 or more parking spaces or 10,000 square feet of impervious surface, whichever is less, shall supply internal landscaping not less than eight percent of the off-street parking area, including access and egress drives and such landscape areas shall comply with the following standards:

- (a) No required landscape area shall contain less than 175 square feet or provide any dimension of less than eight feet.
- (b) All internal landscape areas shall be protected from vehicular encroachment by permanent granite, concrete curb or curb and gutter, except that portions of the curb maybe omitted where approved by the Planning Director to accommodate the secondary use of landscape areas for stormwater detention and snow storage.
- (c) For the purpose of calculating the amount of required internal landscaping in any parking area, pedestrian walks are excluded if the walks are constructed using a separate and contrasting paving material which provides a durable surface.

**1372.06 LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS FOR STREET RIGHTS-OF-WAY.**

The following landscape requirements for street rights-of-way shall apply when compliance is required:

- (a) With the approval of the City Forester, canopy trees shall be provided along the public street in a planting area provided in the treelawn and at a maximum distance of 50 feet between trees. The trees shall be planted so as not to interfere with utilities, streets, sidewalks, street lights, sight distances, clear vision areas, and shall not be planted closer than eight feet to fire hydrants.
- (b) All trees shall have a minimum size of 2 1/2 inches caliper diameter at breast height.
- (c) Subsequent or replacement trees shall conform to the type of existing trees in a given area, provided that, if any deviation is anticipated, it must be done only with



the permission of the City Forester. In a newly planted area, only one type of tree may be used on a given street unless otherwise specified by the City Forester.

- (d) Tree varieties which exhibit desirable characteristics such as full symmetrical form, deep non-invasive root systems and tolerance of drought and road salt should be utilized.
- (e) Trees shall be of sufficient size to be pruned to a seven-foot branching height with one main stem upon planting.
- (f) If existing trees can be preserved within the tree lawn, the requirement for additional street tree plantings may be reduced or eliminated by the Planning Director.

**1372.07 LANDSCAPE PLAN.**

Where compliance is required, a landscape plan shall be required for any development requiring a site plan and no building or land use permit shall be issued until a landscape plan has been submitted to and approved by the Planning Director. All landscape plans shall utilize the required site plan as a base sheet and shall include the following additional information:

- (a) A tree survey, sealed by a landscape architect, surveyor, engineer or architect licensed to practice in the State of Michigan. The survey shall establish the location, species and assessment of the general health and condition of all trees with a six inch or greater diameter at breast height, their approximate height and spread or crown diameter in the disturbed area of the site.
- (b) A calculation verifying the minimum percentage of landscape area has been met and the percentage of landscape area dedicated to pedestrian ways and inorganic mulches.
- (c) A detailed description of either written or graphic form, indicating the applicant's plans to protect the existing trees to be protected from damage during site development and construction.
- (d) Contour lines at minimum two foot intervals shall be shown for sites with grades in excess of six percent slope; otherwise, proposed and existing elevations at sufficient locations on the site to clearly show drainage patterns.
- (e) Description of the type of equipment and methods to be used to irrigate the required landscape areas.
- (f) Location, height, elevation/section and material of proposed screening walls, fencing, retaining walls and berming. Berms are to be delineated by one-foot contours and designed with slopes not to exceed 1:3 gradient, a minimum of two feet between contour at the top of the berm, and slopes protected with sod, shrubs, or other types of natural ground covers.
- (g) Complete description of plant materials shown on the plan, including common and botanical names, quantities, container or caliper sizes, heights, spread and spacing at installation.

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