



Planning and Building Agency
Planning Division
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COMMERCIAL AREA LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

REFERENCED FROM SEC. 41-372 (d)

OBJECTIVE

The landscape should be designed to satisfy the following criteria:

- To create an aesthetically pleasing commercial/retail property utilizing the use of trees, shrubs, vines, annual color, ground cover, and turf.
- To create a buffer between on-site parking and the street and/or noncommercial property.
- To provide vertical and horizontal dimensions to the site.

A blend or integration of plant material should be achieved throughout the landscape design even though each part serves a different function.

STREET FRONTAGE REQUIREMENTS

The buffer strip is designed to serve as a visual barrier between the sidewalk/street, and the property facing the street.

- The buffer strip shall be a minimum of 15 feet wide.
- The buffer strip shall have one 24-inch canopy tree per 25 lineal feet. The trees can be placed in groups in order to achieve a particular design.
- Trees generally regarded as having invasive or surface roots shall be installed in root control planters as specified in the City of Santa Ana Tree Planting Standard No. 124.
- Six (6) five-gallon size shrubs per 25 lineal feet, either clustered or linear.

NOTE: As an alternative, the use of three (3) five-gallon size shrubs and ten (10) one-gallon size shrubs is acceptable provided the plant material adds color and variety to the design.

Annual color is encouraged but is not considered part of the shrub requirement.

- Redwood chips, decorative stone, and other organic materials are not acceptable substitutes for ground cover or turf.
- Berms can add height and screen a parking area; however, any grade over 4:1 must be planted in ground cover; turf is not acceptable.
- All appurtenances, i.e., transformers, backflow preventors, trash enclosures, signage, etc., shall be landscaped.
- Parked vehicles are not allowed to encroach into the landscape.
- Ground cover, including turf grass, is only acceptable in conjunction with the above.

STREET TREES

Each street in Santa Ana has one or more designated species of street tree. Contact Street Maintenance at 647-3308 for specific information.

Existing or required street trees must be indicated on the submitted landscape plan, and are considered part of the overall design.

The use of drought tolerant plant material is encouraged. A list of plant material taken from the California Department of Water Resources Bulletin 209 is available from the Planning Division.

ON-SITE LANDSCAPE

The following areas are included in this category: existing trees, parking areas, store fronts, easements, etc.

EXISTING TREES

Trees on the site should be identified as to species, size, height and general condition. On-site trees should be incorporated into the landscape design wherever possible.

PARKING AREAS

In general, the landscape in a parking lot should be located throughout the area rather than confined to the edges. A design incorporating islands of landscape can accomplish traffic control, reduce glare, soften the expanse of hardscape, and provide necessary shade. The island planters must be provided with a six (6) inch concrete curb (redwood bender board or similar material is unacceptable). The intent of trees in island planters is to provide shade throughout the parking area.

PARKING LOT REQUIREMENTS

Parking lot planters are defined as planting areas bordered on two sides (minimum) by parking area.

A landscape planter not less than one designated parking stall, 8½ feet wide by 18 feet long, including the thickness of the raised curb, shall be required in all parking areas for every ten (10) parking spaces; each planter will require one 15-gallon size tree, eleven (11) five-gallon size shrubs and ground cover or annual color to serve as filler material. Redwood chips, decorative stone, and other organic materials are not acceptable substitutes for ground cover or turf.

Pavers should be utilized for pedestrian access where plant materials form a barrier in landscape areas or pedestrian traffic will create unsightly bare spots in the landscape.

STORE FRONTS

Buildings should be designed to incorporate landscape planters into store frontage. This can be done by means of raised planters, sidewalk cutouts, or portable planters. Building setbacks that vary can easily accommodate landscape planters. Annual color, shrubs, vines, and ground covers are well suited to these sites.

BUFFER AREAS

Various elements in the landscape require screening. This can be accomplished by vertical hedges, the use of vines on a wooden enclosure or trellis, and espaliered shrubs/trees. The use of solid masonry walls to buffer between adjacent properties requires specific needs depending upon the desired impact. If a tall vertical screen is needed to buffer two or three story structures, a fast growing evergreen tree is the best choice. A combination of vines on the wall in pockets with groupings of trees can also be used unless a complete buffer is necessary.

BUFFER AREA REQUIREMENTS

Where parking areas abut residential properties, the buffer requirement is a minimum five (5) foot width. These are to be planted areas, excluding hardscape.

- Provide one (1) 15-gallon tree and five (5) five-gallon shrubs per thirty (30) linear feet.
- Provide mature trees and shrubs capable of acting as an effective buffer.
- Vertical vines are encouraged to soften walls. Flowering vines are encouraged over those that are primarily foliage or deciduous.

EASEMENTS

Existing easements can alter landscape requirements. In some cases, trees and shrubs are not permitted so that access can be provided to the easement. However, the use of turf, ground cover, or vines can be used in such areas. Any restrictions referring to easements should be determined by checking with Public Utilities and stating the restrictions that apply as a footnote on the submitted landscape plan.

TREATMENT OF SLOPES

Any property with more than a 5:1 slope must have a copy of the grading plan with existing and proposed topographical lines submitted with the landscape. Retaining walls, jute mesh, or other erosion prevention materials should be indicated on submitted plans. Turf is unacceptable for grades over 25 percent. Ground covers and fibrous rooted shrubs are to be specified for these areas.

COLOR IN THE LANDSCAPE

Annual color should be incorporated into the landscape plan. Color is not limited to annuals. Careful selection of flowering trees and shrubs can provide seasonal color all year. The use of evergreen and deciduous plant material, bark color, seeds, and fruit (berries) that persist can provide additional color to the landscape.

CONTINUAL MAINTENANCE

Normally, there is a stated guarantee designated by the landscape architect for replacement of dead plant material within a specified period. Plant materials must be maintained and replaced, if dead, according to the City of Santa Ana Code Section 41-609. This requirement goes beyond any guarantee period for installation of the landscape and applies to the perpetual life of the development.

Plant materials will be maintained and dead material replaced as specified in the City of Santa Ana Code Section 41-609.