

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING DIVISION LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

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This bulletin explains the landscaping requirements that may be required as a State Environment Policy Act (SEPA) threshold determination for a project. They will be applied as mitigation measures to address probable significant adverse impacts from noise, light, glare, aesthetics, scenic resources, vehicular and pedestrian safety, recreation, and wildlife. Illustrations of the different types of landscaping are included for review.

What is the Purpose of Landscaping Requirements?

Landscaping requirements were developed and have evolved over the years because of the many benefits associated with appropriate uses of landscaping within a community. Carefully designed landscaping can preserve the aesthetic character of communities or even improve the aesthetic quality of the built environment. Landscaping can screen undesirable views, interrupt the barren expanse of large parking lots, and relieve the scale of large buildings. Well-chosen landscaping can improve the compatibility between different types of intensities of land uses by providing a visual buffer. It can also deter erosion, promote native wildlife, allow for infiltration of surface water into groundwater resources and reduce the quantity and improve the quality of storm water discharge.

What Areas Are Subject To the Landscaping Provisions of the Zoning Code?

All new development that is subject to the provisions of Grays Harbor County Code 18.08 governing the SEPA review process may be required to utilize these landscaping procedures as mitigation measures to address adverse impacts from the project. These projects include multiple-family residential development, commercial development, industrial development, and land use actions involving zone reclassifications, conditional use permits, shoreline substantial development permits, subdivisions, and planned unit developments.

The specific landscaping and tree retention provisions for projects will be determined during the project's SEPA review process.

The location and type of landscaping required for any particular site depends on adjacent zoning or land use, and

a project's adverse impact to the elements of the environment; such as, noise, light, glare, aesthetics, scenic resources, vehicular and pedestrian safety, recreation, or wildlife. Landscaping requirements utilized as SEPA mitigation measures may involve the following locations on a project site:

- Street frontages;
- Interior lot lines;
- Surface parking areas; and
- Areas adjacent to freeway Right-of-Ways.

PLEASE NOTE: The entire text of the Grays Harbor County Code is available via the Grays Harbor County website at www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us.

Why Does the County Encourage the Use of Native Species In Landscaping?

By definition, "native" species refers to those species that have not been introduced to an area recently, but have existed in the area for many centuries. These species usually do not need human intervention to grow or reproduce. Examples of native species include Salal, Oregon Grape, Pine, Wild Rose, Mock Orange, and Huckleberry.

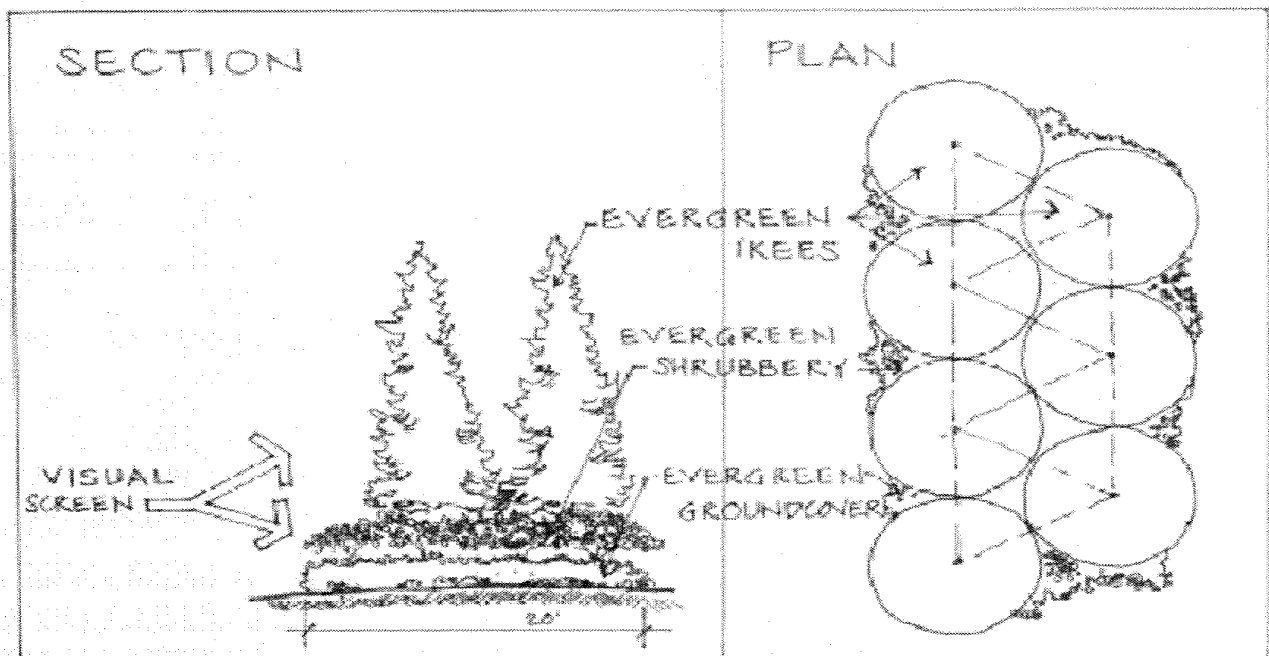
There are several reasons for wanting to retain or plant native species:

- Northwest native plants tend to be drought-tolerant and well-adapted to the local climate of rainy winters and dry summers. Following an initial season or two of irrigation, many native species become established and have little or no need for additional irrigation beyond natural rainfall. Native species such as the Big-Leaf Maple also have extensive root systems that help them tolerate and survive drought conditions. Finally, unlike the leaves of many deciduous trees, the leaves of Conifers (cone-bearing trees such as Pine) are coated with a waxy substance minimizing water loss.
- Retention of existing or planting of native species in landscaping prevents the disturbance of soil and, thus, provides good erosion control.
- The native species typically do not require pesticides or fertilizers, since they have developed natural immunities to insect attacks, diseases, and low levels of nutrients.
- Native plants promote wildlife preservation by providing habitat, food, cover, and breeding areas.

What Types of Landscaping Are Required?

Depending on the land use for which a proposed parcel is intended, and its impact on adjacent properties and their uses, one of three types of landscaping will be required. They are summarized in the text and graphics to follow:

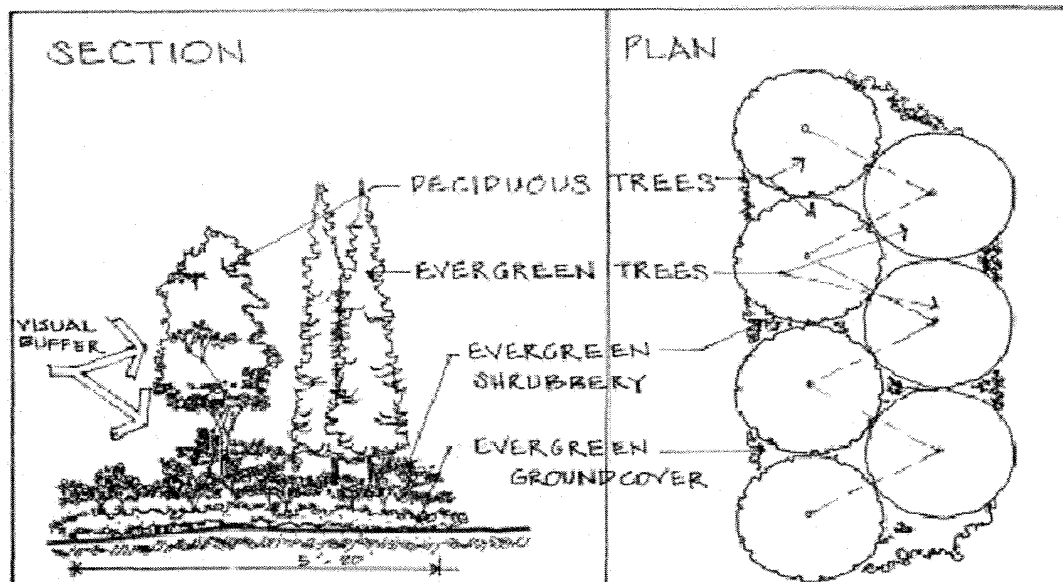
TYPE I LANDSCAPING (Full Screen)



TYPE I LANDSCAPING (Full Screen) continued

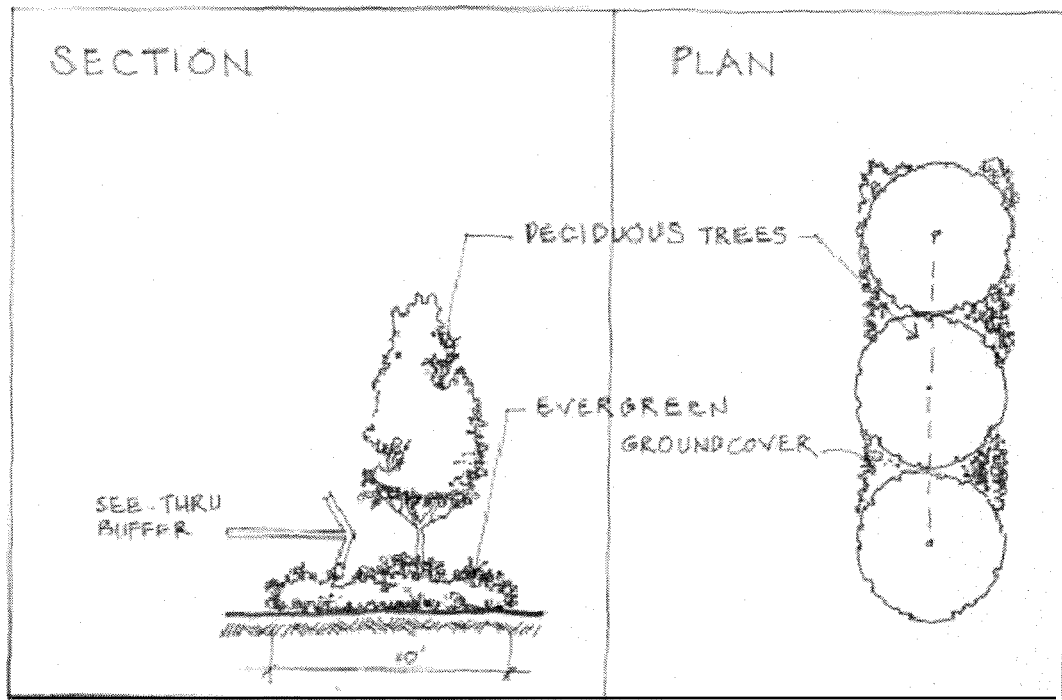
- Acts as a visual barrier;
- Is typically found in the following places:
 - (1) Adjacent to freeways; and
 - (2) Between residential and non-residential areas.
- Minimally consists of the following:
 - (1) A mix of primarily evergreen trees and shrubs generally interspersed throughout the landscape strip, spaced to form a continuous screen;
 - (2) At least 90-percent evergreen trees;
 - (3) Trees provided at the rate of one per ten-linear-feet of landscape strip;
 - (4) Evergreen shrubs provided at the rate of one per four-linear-feet of landscape strip; and
 - (5) Ground cover, such as Salal, Kinnikinnik, or Oregon Grape.

TYPE II LANDSCAPING (Filtered Screen)



- Functions as a visual separator;
- Typically found or used:
 - (1) Between commercial and industrial uses;
 - (2) Between differing types of residential development; and
 - (3) To screen industrial uses from the street.
- Minimally consists of the following:
 - (1) A mix of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs generally interspersed throughout the landscape strip and spaced to create a filtered screen;
 - (2) At least 70-percent evergreen trees;
 - (3) Trees provided at the rate of one per 20-linear-feet of landscape strip;
 - (4) Shrubs provided at the rate of one per four-linear-feet of landscape strip; and
 - (5) Ground cover, such as Salal, Kinnikinnik, or Oregon Grape.

TYPE III LANDSCAPING (See – Through Screen)



- Functions as a partial visual separator;
- Softens the appearance of parking areas and building elevations;
- Typically found in the following areas:
 - (1) Along street frontages; and
 - (2) Between apartment developments.
- Minimally consists of the following:
 - (1) A mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees generally interspersed throughout the landscape strip, and spaced to create a continuous canopy;
 - (2) At least 70-percent evergreen trees;
 - (3) Trees provided at the rate of one per 25-linear-feet of landscape strip;
 - (4) Shrubs provided at the rate of one per four-linear-feet of landscape strip; and
 - (5) Ground cover, such as Salal, Kinnikinnik, or Oregon Grape.

What Landscaping Provisions Pertain To Surface Parking Areas?

For surface parking areas with forty or more parking stalls, parking area landscaping is required to provide shade and to diminish the visual effect of large paved areas. The amount of required landscaping varies with the type of development and typically includes the following:

- For residential developments with common parking areas, planting areas must be provided at the rate of 20-square-feet per parking stall;
- For commercial, industrial, or institutional developments, landscaping must be provided at the rate of 20-square-feet per parking stall when there are 40 or more parking stalls.

Trees are required and must be distributed throughout the parking area at the following rate:

- For residential or institutional development, one tree for every ten parking stalls; and
- For commercial or industrial development, one tree for every five parking stalls.

In addition to the requirements mentioned above, the maximum distance between any parking stall and landscaping must be no more than 100-feet. Permanent curbs or structural barriers are also required to protect the plantings from vehicle overhang.

The types and dimensions of required landscaping are as follows:

- Canopy-type deciduous trees, evergreen trees, evergreen shrubs, and ground covers planted in islands or strips are required;
- At least 70-percent of the trees must be evergreen;
- Shrubs must not exceed a height of 42-inches;
- Planting islands or strips are required in areas of at least 100-square-feet each, with dimensions of no less than five feet;
- Native ground cover, such as Salal or Oregon Grape; and
- Permanent curbs or structural barriers must be provided to protect plantings from vehicle overhang.

What is Width Averaging?

The street and perimeter landscaping requirements are stated in terms of “average” widths. This means that the actual width of a required landscape strip may vary to accommodate features in the landscape plan such as topography or existing vegetation. For example, if a ten-foot-wide landscape strip is required along 100-feet of property line, a total landscape area of 1,000-square-feet must be provided. The width of the landscaping may vary in width from five to 15-feet, as long as the total area (in square footage) of landscaping remains the same.

What Alternative Options Are Allowed For In Landscaped Areas?

Grays Harbor County may approve alternative landscaping options if the option accomplishes equal or better levels of screening when compared to the types of landscaping described above, or when existing conditions on or adjacent to the site cause strict application of these requirements to be ineffective. Existing conditions may include significant topographical differences, vegetation, structures, or utilities. Strict application of these requirements occasionally results in obstructions in scenic views or other undesirable situations. Alternative options are sometimes allowed to preserve the historic character of a rural place, or to encourage the use of native species typically associated with Grays Harbor County. For an alternative landscape option to be approved, the applicant must show that a superior result can be achieved.

What is Required For Landscaping Plans, Plan Review, and Installation of Landscaping?

The plan must be drawn on the same base map as the development plans and must identify the following:

- The total landscape area;
- The names and sizes of all landscape materials;
- Property lines;
- Impervious surfaces;
- Natural or man-made water features or bodies;
- Existing or proposed structures, fences, and retaining walls;
- Natural features or vegetation left in a natural state; and
- Designated recreational open-space areas, if any.

What Requirements Pertain To Maintaining Landscaping After It is Installed?

After landscaping is installed, the following requirements pertain to maintenance and upkeep:

- All landscaping must be maintained for the life of the project;
- All landscaping must be pruned and trimmed, as necessary, to maintain a healthy growing condition or to prevent primary limb failure;
- Diseased, damaged, or stolen plantings must be replaced within three months, or during the next planting season, if the loss does not occur within a planting season (unless these plantings are retained to provide wildlife habitat); and
- Landscaped areas must be kept free of trash.

Are Financial Guarantees or Other Securities Required For Landscaping? Performance bonds or other appropriate securities may be required to ensure proper installation, establishment, and maintenance.

Where To Find More Information?

If applicants need additional information after reviewing this bulletin, please contact Grays Harbor County at (360) 249-5579.

**Grays Harbor County
Planning & Building Division**
Public Services Department
100 W Broadway Suite 31
Montesano, WA 98563
360-249-5579
360-249-3203 (fax)



**pbd@co.grays-harbor.wa.us
www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us**