

Chapter 15.570 LANDSCAPING

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15.570.010 Purpose.

- A. Promote well-conceived and attractive landscaping that reinforces the architectural and site planning concepts in response to site conditions and context;
- B. To enhance environmental conditions;
- C. To maintain and enhance the character of the area;
- D. To reduce negative potential impacts between adjacent and neighboring uses;
- E. To encourage the use of attractive and drought tolerant [plant](#) materials native to eastern Washington;
- F. To ensure that [plants](#) will quickly achieve their intended visual objectives;
- G. To promote [tree](#) retention and the protection of existing native vegetation;
- H. To define, break up, and screen parking areas to reduce potentially negative impacts on adjacent uses;
- I. To provide for the long-term establishment and health of new landscape plantings; and
- J. To ensure the long-term maintenance and attractiveness of landscape plantings. [Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.570.020 Applicability.

The standards herein apply to nonresidential and [multifamily](#) development unless otherwise noted herein. [Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.570.030 Plant material standards.

- A. Native and Naturalized [Plant](#) Species. New landscaping materials shall include species native to eastern Washington or hardy, waterwise, and noninvasive species appropriate in the climatic conditions of eastern Washington (decorative annuals are an exception). Washington State University maintains a list of [trees](#), shrubs, vines, ground covers, perennials, grasses, bulbs, and annuals that are appropriate for eastern Washington (link: <http://public.wsu.edu/~lohr/wcl/>). The selection of [plant](#) species should include consideration of soil type and depth, the amount of maintenance required,

spacing, exposure to sun and wind, the slope and contours of the site, compatibility with existing native vegetation preserved on the site, water conservation where needed, and the impact of landscaping on visibility of the site for purposes of public safety and surveillance.

B. Tree Standards and Guidelines. Unless otherwise noted herein, required trees shall meet the following standards at time of planting:

1. Required trees within parking areas shall be a minimum caliper of one inch (as measured six inches above the root ball) and a minimum height of 10 feet at the time of planting.
2. Required deciduous trees (other than street trees) shall be fully branched, have a minimum caliper of one and one-half inches (as measured six inches above the root ball), and a minimum height of six feet at the time of planting.
3. Required evergreen shall be fully branched and a minimum of six feet in height, measured from the treetop to the ground, at the time of planting.
4. If the reviewing authority decides reducing the minimum size of trees will not detract from the desired effect of the trees, the minimum size of trees (other than street trees) may be reduced if the applicant submits a written statement by a licensed Washington landscape architect or Washington-certified professional horticulturist (CPH) certifying that the reduction in size at planting will not decrease the likelihood the trees will survive.

C. Shrub Standard. Shrubs, except for ornamental grasses, shall be a minimum of one gallon size at the time of planting.

D. Ground Cover Standards and Guidelines.

1. Ground covers shall be planted and spaced to result in total coverage of the required landscape area within three years, or as per recommendations by a licensed Washington landscape architect or CHP as follows:
 - a. Four-inch pots at 18 inches on center.
 - b. One-gallon or greater sized containers at 24 inches on center.
 - c. A bed of flowers in place of ground cover plants. A reduction in the minimum size may be permitted if certified by a registered landscape architect or CHP that the reduction shall not diminish the intended effect or the likelihood the plants will survive;
2. Grass is acceptable as ground cover in landscaped areas, but generally not preferred for water conservation and maintenance purposes (lawn areas designed as play areas are an exception); and
3. Ground cover areas shall contain at least two inches of composted organic material at finished grade.

E. Soil Augmentation and Mulching.

1. Existing soils shall be augmented with a two inch layer of fully composted organic material tilled a minimum of six inches deep prior to initial planting.
2. Landscape areas shall be covered with at least two inches of mulch to minimize evaporation. Mulch shall consist of organic materials such as bark chips and wood grindings or [yard](#) waste, sawdust, and/or manure that is fully composted. Washed rock can also be used as a mulch.
3. Berm/Mound Standards. Berms or mounds shall be no steeper than 3(H):1(V). Any slopes steeper than 3:1 (: 1 is maximum permitted by the [city](#) for [fill](#) slopes) need erosion control netting or other erosion control methods in planting areas not covered by grass (e.g., rockery).
4. Tree/Shrub [Height](#) and Location. The landscape plan should plan for the mature size of [trees](#) and major shrubs to avoid interference with windows, decks or lighting. [Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.570.040 Landscaping types.

Below are described four landscaping types. These landscaping types may be required by different sections of code within this chapter and elsewhere in this division.

A. Type A Landscaping.

1. Type A landscaping shall function as a full screen and visual barrier. This landscaping is typically found between residential and nonresidential areas and to screen unwanted views;
2. Type A landscaping shall minimally consist of:
 - a. A mix of primarily evergreen [trees](#) and shrubs generally interspersed throughout the landscape strip and spaced to form a continuous screen;
 - b. Predominately evergreen [trees](#);
 - c. [Trees](#) provided at the rate of one [tree](#) per 300 square feet or one [tree](#) per 30 linear feet, whichever is greater, of landscape strip;
 - d. Predominately evergreen shrubs provided at the rate of one shrub per 20 square feet of landscape strip;
 - e. Groundcover; and
 - f. The selected [plant](#) materials and configuration will be able to completely screen 70 percent of the unwanted views within five years of planting and fully screen the unwanted view within six years. This requirement will account for the size of materials planted and their typical growth rate;

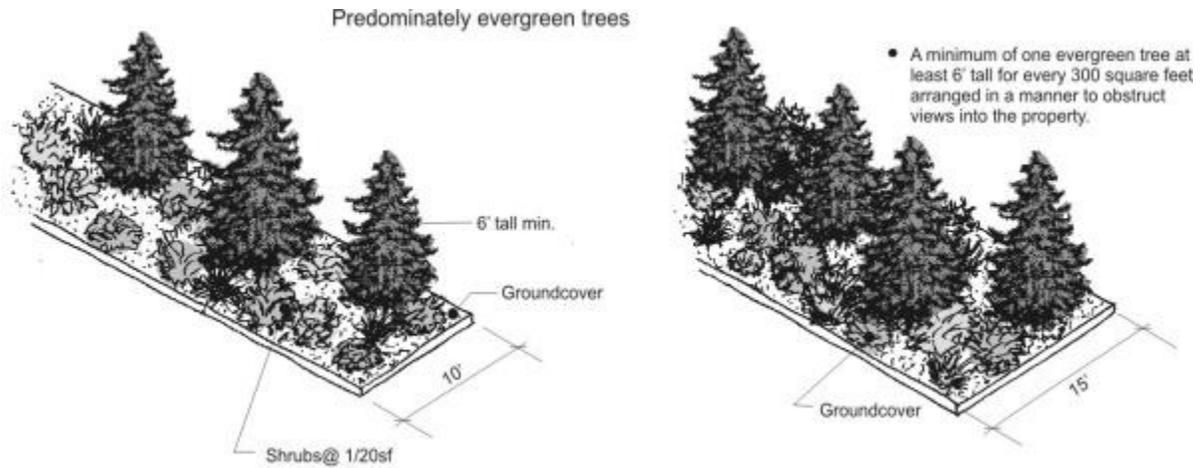


Figure 15.570.040(A). Type A landscaping standards.

B. Type B Landscaping.

1. Type B landscaping is a “filtered screen” that functions as a visual separator. This landscaping is typically found between differing types of residential [development](#), and to screen unwanted views from the pedestrian environment;
2. Type B landscaping shall minimally consist of:
 - a. A mix of evergreen and deciduous [trees](#) and shrubs generally interspersed throughout the landscape strip spaced to create a filtered screen;
 - b. At least 50 percent deciduous [trees](#) and at least 30 percent evergreen [trees](#);
 - c. [Trees](#) provided at the rate of one [tree](#) per 300 square feet or one [tree](#) per 30 linear feet, whichever is greater, of landscape strip;
 - d. Shrubs provided at the rate of one shrub per 20 square feet of landscape strip and spaced no more than eight feet apart on center;
 - e. Groundcover; and
 - f. The selected [plant](#) materials and configuration will meet the purpose of the standards within five years of planting. This requirement will account for the size of materials and the growth rate;

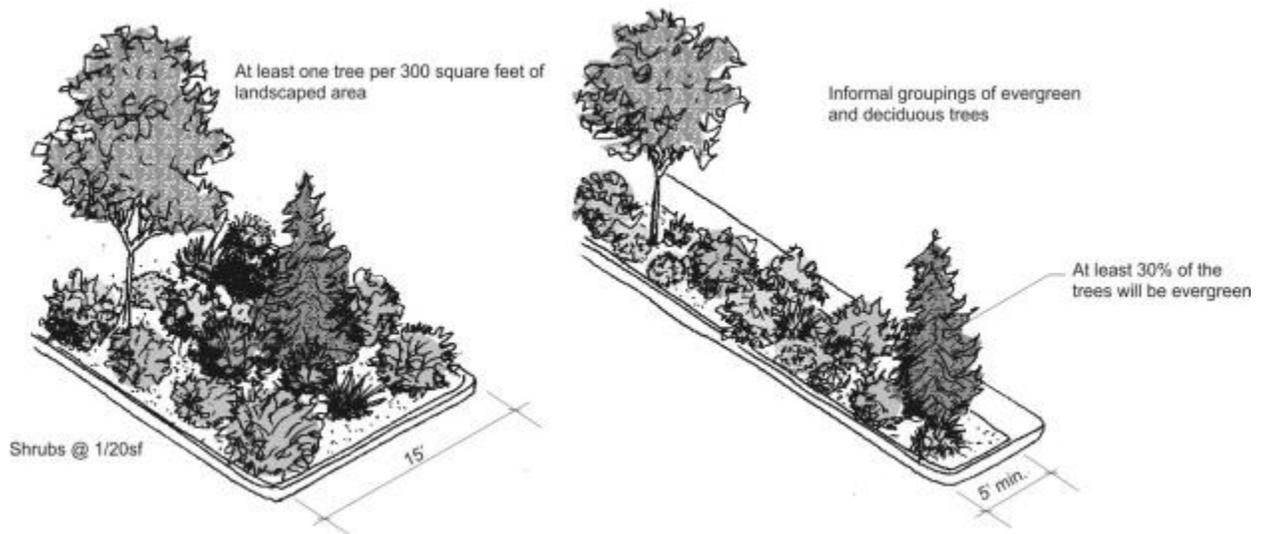


Figure 15.570.040(B). Type B landscaping standards.

C. Type C Landscaping.

1. Type C landscaping is a “see-through screen” that functions as a partial visual separator to soften the appearance of parking areas and building elevations. This landscaping is typically found along street frontage or between multifamily developments;
2. Type C landscaping shall minimally consist of:
 - a. Primarily deciduous trees generally spaced to create a continuous canopy that extends well beyond the landscaped area;
 - b. At least 70 percent deciduous trees;
 - c. Trees provided at the rate of one tree per 300 square feet or one tree per 30 linear feet, whichever is greater, of landscape strip;
 - d. Shrubs provided at the rate of one shrub per 20 square feet of landscape strip and spaced no more than eight feet apart on center;
 - e. Groundcover;
 - f. Maintain trees and shrubs to maximize pedestrian visibility (generally between three and eight feet above grade); and
 - g. The selected plant materials and configuration will meet the purpose of the standards within five years of planting. This requirement will account for the size of materials and the growth rate.

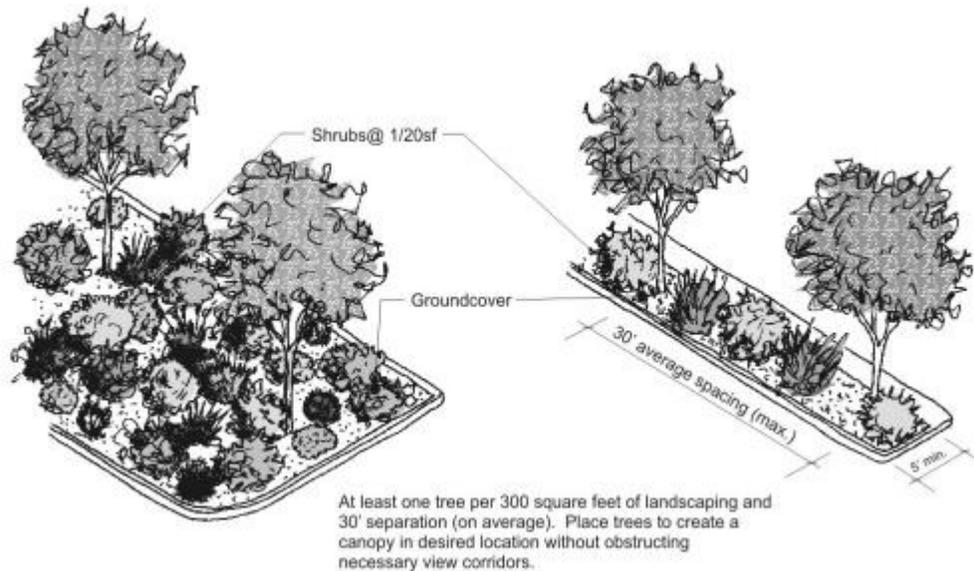


Figure 15.570.040(C). Type C landscaping standards.

D. Type D Landscaping.

1. Type D landscaping refers to all other landscaped areas that do not qualify as Type A-C landscaping. While native and low maintenance [trees](#) and shrubs are encouraged in these areas, lawn areas may be used for recreational or design purposes. These areas also could include flower beds and perennial beds.
2. Type D landscaping may include any combination of [plant](#) materials provided they comply with ECC [15.570.030](#). [Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.570.050 Landscape site design standards.

A. Surface Parking [Lot](#) Landscaping.

1. Purpose. To minimize potential negative impacts of parking [lots](#) on downtown's visual character, pedestrian environment, local water quality conditions, and adjacent uses.
2. Parking [Lot](#) Perimeters.
 - a. For parking [lots](#) adjacent to public [streets](#), use Type C landscaping at least six feet deep and no less than the minimum applicable [building](#) setback (whichever is more).
 - b. For parking [lots](#) along internal private roadways in commercial areas, provide a planting strip at least six feet wide with Type C landscaping.
 - c. For parking [lots](#) along internal [lot lines](#), use Type A or B landscaping at least 10 feet deep. [Departures](#) to the landscaping standard will be considered pursuant to ECC [15.210.060](#) provided the alternative landscaping design meets the purposes of the standards in this section.
3. Internal Parking [Lot](#) Landscaping.

- a. Twenty square feet of planting area utilizing Type C landscaping is required for each parking space. Parking [lots](#) containing less than 40 spaces are exempt from this standard;
- b. At least one [tree](#) is required for every planting island within a parking [lot](#);
- c. All parking spaces shall be within 50 feet of a planting island with a [tree](#);
- d. Planting islands must be at least six feet deep and wide to be used in planting area calculations;
- e. Wheel stops, curbs or walkways shall be used to protect planting islands from [vehicles](#);
- f. Canopy type [trees](#) shall be utilized;
- g. Rain gardens and swales may be integrated into required planting areas (see Section 4 of the [public works development standards](#) for related standards); and
- h. [Departures](#) to the landscaping standard will be considered pursuant to ECC [15.210.060](#) provided the alternative landscaping design meets the purposes of the applicable standards.

B. Side/Rear [Yard](#) Screening. See ECC [15.520.020](#) for applicable standards.

C. Foundation Planting. All street-facing [elevations](#) must have landscaping along any exposed foundation. The landscaped area may be along the outer edge of a porch instead of the foundation. This landscaping requirement does not apply to portions of the [building](#) facade that provide access for pedestrians or [vehicles](#) to the [building](#). The foundation landscaping must meet the following standards:

1. The landscaped area must be at least three feet wide;
2. There must be at least one three-gallon shrub for every three lineal feet of foundation; and
3. Ground cover [plants](#) must fully cover the remainder of the landscaped area.

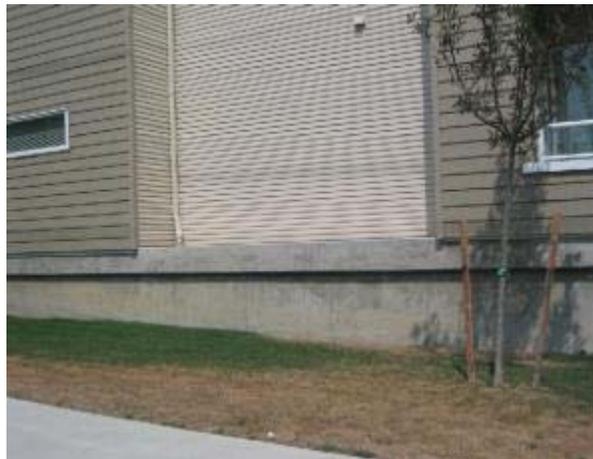


Figure 15.570.050(C). Foundation plantings would be required along the exposed concrete foundation.

[Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.570.060 Installation and maintenance.

- A. Timing of Installation. The applicant shall install landscaping and screening required by this title consistent with the approved site plan or an approved modification thereto before the city issues an occupancy permit or final inspection for the development in question; provided, the reviewing authority may defer installation of plant materials for up to six months after the city issues an occupancy permit or final inspection for the development in question if the reviewing authority finds doing so increases the likely survival of plants.
- B. Installation Standards. The applicant shall show and comply with the following:
1. Plant materials will be installed to current nursery industry standards.
 2. Plant materials shall be properly supported to ensure survival. Support devices such as guy wires or stakes shall not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian movement.
 3. Existing trees and plant materials to be retained shall be protected during construction, such as by use of chain link or other sturdy fence placed at the dripline of trees to be retained. Grading, topsoil storage, construction material storage, vehicles and equipment shall not be allowed within the dripline of trees to be retained.
- C. Verification of the Installation of Landscape. Required planting/irrigation shall be installed within six months of the date of final construction permit approval or the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, whichever is later. For development sites 20,000 square feet in area (this includes the entire lot or parcel or applicable portion of site being developed including buildings, parking and storage areas, landscaping, etc.) or larger, the applicant shall submit a copy of the approved landscape plan(s) with a letter signed and stamped by a Washington-licensed landscape architect or CPH certifying that the landscape and irrigation (if any) have been installed in accordance with the attached approved plan(s) and verifying that any plant substitutions are comparable to the approved plantings and suitable for the site. Any substituted plants shall be no smaller than those shown on the approved plan(s) and shall have similar characteristics in terms of height, drought tolerance and suitability for screening.
- D. Maintenance Standards. All landscape areas shall be maintained in accordance with the following standards:
1. All landscaping shall be maintained with respect to pruning, trimming, mowing, watering, insect control, fertilizing, or other requirements to create a healthy growing condition and attractive appearance and to maintain the purpose of the landscape type. Vegetation shall be controlled by pruning, trimming or otherwise so that it will not interfere with the maintenance or repair of any public utility, restrict pedestrian or vehicular access, or obstruct sight distance at intersections;
 2. Dead, diseased, stolen, vandalized, or damaged plants shall be replaced within three months with the plants indicated on the approved landscape plan;

3. All landscaped areas shall be maintained reasonably free of weeds and trash; and
4. All required landscaping that is located within public rights-of-way shall be maintained by the abutting property owner.

E. Irrigation Standards. The purpose of this standard is to ensure that plants will survive the critical establishment period when they are most vulnerable due to lack of watering.

All required landscaped areas in the city must comply with at least one of the following:

1. A permanent built-in irrigation system with an automatic controller will serve the landscape area in question, and the system will be installed and operational before the city grants an occupancy permit or final inspection for the development in question.
2. A temporary irrigation system will serve the landscape area in question; provided the applicant can successfully demonstrate that the proposed temporary irrigation system will provide sufficient water to ensure that the plant materials to be planted will survive installation and, once established, will survive without watering other than natural rainfall.
3. A permanent or temporary irrigation system will not serve the landscape area in subsection (C) of this section; provided:
 - a. The reviewing authority finds the landscape area otherwise fulfills the requirements of this section; and
 - b. The applicant submits the following with the site plan application:
 - i. A statement from a Washington-licensed landscape architect or CPH certifying that the materials to be planted will survive without watering other than natural rainfall, and
 - ii. A plan for monitoring the survival of required vegetation on the approved site plan for at least one year and for detection and replacement of required vegetation that does not survive with like-kind material or other material approved by the reviewing authority, and
 - iii. A statement from the applicant agreeing to install an irrigation system if the reviewing authority finds one is needed to ensure survival of required vegetation, based on the results of the monitoring plan. [Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

The Ellensburg City Code is current through Ordinance 4671, passed March 17, 2014.

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's Office has the official version of the Ellensburg City Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's Office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.