

## CHAPTER 7 – LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

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### Section 10-7-1: Purpose:

- A. The purpose of this Chapter is to ensure development is consistent with the goals and objectives of and Comprehensive Plan. To provide landscaping guidelines and policies that will enhance the aesthetic appearance of development sites, our streets, parking areas, and to provide guidelines that will adequately provide visual screening and buffer incompatible land uses.
- B. This Chapter will strive to preserve existing healthy trees and rare plants while encouraging the use of native species and drought tolerant landscape materials with the intent providing visually attractive landscaped area that conserve water, break up large areas of pavement, and provide shade in parking areas and around structures with the intent to promote energy conservation.

### Section 10-7-2: Applicability:

- A. The standards in this Chapter shall apply to all projects requiring master site plan review unless otherwise exempt under Section 10-7-2 (B) this Ordinance.
- B. All development shall be required to comply unless specifically exempt as listed below:
  - 1. Principally permitted accessory uses with no specific requirements listed in this Ordinance; and

2. Any requirement of this Chapter may be waived or modified by the Director, Commission or Board for good cause; and
3. Single-family residences on individual lots or parcels that are not part of a multi-family or condominium developments shall be exempt from this Chapter; however, existing Multi-family or condominium developments when adding new or renovating landscaping within Elmore County shall comply with the intent of this Ordinance.

**Section 10-7-3: Review Process:**

- A. Landscaping plans shall be previewed in compliance with master site plan reviews and approval.
- B. The Director, Commission or Board may approve, or recommend approval of, alternative landscaping and screening standards, as set forth in this Chapter, when the following findings can be made:
  1. The overall design, as proposed by the applicant, meets or exceeds the intent and the requirements of this Chapter; and
  2. The existing conditions on or adjacent to the site including, but not limited to, differences in elevation, existing vegetation, or the location of existing structures or utilities would render application of the requirements of this Chapter ineffective; and
  3. That the alternative designs shall not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare.

**Section 10-7-4: Landscape Design and General Standards:**

- A. General Provisions: All land development applications shall be accompanied by an appropriate landscape plan as herein defined. Building permit applications for individual single-family residences will not require landscape plans unless they are part of a multi-family or condominium development that is proposing new or renovated landscaping in which case a plan would be required. All plans shall comply with the intent of this Chapter:
  1. Site Landscape Design: Landscape improvements shall be designed to complement and enhance the character of the development and neighborhoods and shall follow these specific guidelines:
    - a. Landscaped areas shall be configured to maximize their interconnectivity within the site, the natural areas and existing landscaped areas abutting the site and in adjacent developments.

Small, isolated islands of landscaping should be avoided except as required in parking lots and for screening along roadways; and

- b. Enhance functional open space through the creation of outdoor rooms. This can be accomplished through a combination of plantings, fencing, berms and by using natural features on the site; and
  - c. Landscape improvements in all developments shall be consistent with the character of the proposed development and the surrounding area to reinforce neighborhood identity; and
  - d. Landscape design shall enhance natural features, drainage ways and environmental resources; and
  - e. All landscape improvements shall be designed for mature landscapes and shall provide appropriate visibility for cars and pedestrians; and
  - f. All landscape improvements shall preserve and frame views both into and out of the neighborhood; and
  - g. All landscape improvements shall incorporate the elements of gateway, path and destination into the design of landscapes; and
  - h. Landscaping shall be no more than thirty (30") inches high when located in a vision triangle of street intersections.
3. Water-efficiency in Landscape Design: Landscape improvements shall be designed with water-efficiency as a goal. Landscape water-efficiency shall be measured by an annual water budget to facilitate water conservation. Landscapes shall use xeriscape design principles to facilitate water conservation whenever possible or as directed by this Ordinance. The following guidelines shall apply to the design of all regulated landscapes, all landscape improvements shall:
- a. Have well-planned planting schemes; and
  - b. Appropriate turf selection to minimize the use of bluegrass; and
  - c. Use of mulch to maintain soil moisture and reduce evaporation; and
  - d. Zoning of plant materials according to their microclimatic needs and water requirements; and
  - e. Improvement of the soil with organic matter if needed; and
  - f. Efficient irrigation systems; and

- g. Proper maintenance and irrigation schedules; and
- h. Plants of any water need may be used in the landscape, providing the total annual water use does not exceed the water allowance (water budget), which shall be ten (10) gallons, per square foot, per season; and
- i. Plants having similar water use shall be grouped together in distinct hydrozones, which shall be shown on the Landscape Plan; and
- j. High hydrozones shall be separated from low and very low hydrozones by moderate hydrozones whenever possible; and
- k. Plants shall be selected appropriately based upon their adaptability to the climatic, geologic, and topographical conditions of the site. Protection and preservation of native species and natural areas is encouraged. The planting of trees is encouraged wherever it is consistent with the other provisions of this Ordinance; and
- l. Planting strips less than eight (8') feet wide shall be landscaped with low or very low drought tolerant plants that have low or very low water consumption requirements.
- m. All plantable areas not covered with turf shall be covered with a minimum of four (4") inches of a suitable mulch to retain water, and inhibit weeds. Exceptions for low and very low water consumption areas may be considered; and
- n. Soil preparation shall be suitable for the all plants. This generally means adding organic material for high and moderate water zones, but not for low and very low water zones. Soil preparation shall include scarification to six (6") inches, with organic or other planting soil as specified by the landscape designer or landscape architect.
- o. Recirculating water shall be used for decorative water features and
- p. Artificial plants, artificial grass, and other artificial plant material are discouraged as a means of achieving water-efficient landscapes.

**Section 10-7-5: Environmental Design Considerations and Standards:**

- A. All landscapes shall strive to maximize the use of native species. Where native material is not appropriate for the intended use or appearance, plant species that are regionally adapted and noninvasive may be used.

- B. Buildings and parking areas shall be located to preserve and promote the health of existing trees, environmental resources and natural drainage ways. This requirement is not intended to prevent the removal of unhealthy trees in conjunction with site development.
- C. Trees shall be located to provide summer shade and limit winter shade on walks and streets.
- D. A combination of plantings, berms, walls and fences shall be used as appropriate to buffer sensitive habitat.
  - 1. Use buffers to protect the physical integrity of riparian ecosystems. Try to preserve vegetation and trees in streamside zone and middle zone. Encourage grass and landscaping in outer zone to filter runoff from backyards, parking areas, roads, etc; and
  - 2. Plants shall be selected to blend with the native vegetation for projects at the interface between urban areas and natural open space (non-irrigated). Locally recognized invasive introduced plants shall be unacceptable. Plants with low fuel volume and/or low flammability shall be emphasized; and
  - 3. All areas disturbed by construction shall be reseeded to prevent erosion. Native, noninvasive grasses shall be used for re-vegetation where practical. Weed control is the responsibility of the landowner on all reseeded areas and all open-space preservation areas.

**Section 10-7-6: New Buildings and Paved Areas Design Considerations and Standards:**

- A. New buildings and paved areas shall include the following design standards:
  - 1. Anchor structures in the landscape through the use of trees, shrubs and groundcover. The size and intensity of plantings shall be appropriate to the size and context of the improvements; and
  - 2. Integrate adjacent land uses of different intensities through a combination of berming, plantings and fencing. Use opaque screening only when necessary to mitigate the impact of noise, light, unattractive aesthetics and traffic. A fence shall not be the only screening material used; and
  - 3. Use landscaping to provide a transition from developed, managed landscape to more natural vegetation; and
  - 4. Provide a tree canopy by installing shade trees within and adjacent to paved areas.

**Section 10-7-7: Plant Material Standards:**

- A. The minimum planting sizes on all required landscaping shall be two (2") inch caliper deciduous trees, one and one-half (1½) inch caliper ornamental trees, six (6') foot tall evergreen trees and five (5) gallon shrubs less than twenty-five (25%) percent may be one (1) gallon shrubs.
- B. Required plant materials shall be grown in a recognized nursery in accordance with proper horticultural practice. Plants shall be healthy, well-branched vigorous stock with a growth habit normal to the species and variety and free of diseases, insects and injuries.
- C. All plants shall conform to American Nursery Association specifications for measurements, grading, branching, quality, ball and burlapping.

**Section 10-7-8: Guarantee of Installation:**

Required landscape improvements shall be installed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for all structures. If weather conditions prevent installation, the developer shall post a bond or surety in compliance with this Ordinance for the landscaping improvements. This guarantee shall be released upon completion of the installation of the landscaping.

**Section 10-7-9: Maintenance Standards:**

A regular maintenance schedule satisfying the following conditions shall be submitted as part of the landscape documentation package:

- 1. Landscapes shall be maintained to ensure water efficiency. A regular maintenance schedule shall include but not be limited to checking, adjusting, and repairing irrigation equipment; resetting the automatic controller; aerating and de-thatching turf areas (when needed); replenishing mulch; fertilizing; pruning, and weeding in all landscaped areas; and
- 2. Whenever possible, repair of irrigation equipment shall be done with the originally specified materials or their equivalents.

**Section 10-7-10: Minimum Landscaping Requirements**

- A. Groundcover: Live groundcover shall be provided as appropriate to the use and function of the area, including grass, trees, flowers, or shrubs. In commercial areas this area may be paved if it functions as pedestrian access to storefronts and is integrated into the overall design of the other improvements on the site.

- B. Landscaping for required common open space: Common and open space areas such as pocket parks and trails shall be appropriate to the use and function of the area and shall include trees, shrubs, groundcover, irrigation (where necessary) and paving and shall include:
1. A mechanism for funding and long-term maintenance of common open space and arterial and collector street right-of-way landscaping in compliance with this Ordinance.

**Section 10-7-11: Single-Family Residential Subdivision Development, Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Development Minimum Requirements:**

- A. Multi-Family, Mixed Use, Commercial and Industrial Development in addition to the landscaping requirements listed in the Chapter shall provide:
1. Create pedestrian friendly commercial areas; and
  2. Site Trees: A minimum of one (1) tree per one thousand (1,000') square feet of landscaped area distributed randomly and planted on the site. Planted trees shall be in conformance with the provisions of this Chapter; and
  3. Shrubs: A minimum of one (1) shrub per one hundred fifty (150') square feet of landscaped area shall be planted in compliance with the provisions of this Chapter. Where possible, group shrubs and distribute throughout the site. Trees may be substituted for up to one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the required shrubs at the rate of one (1) tree for ten (10) shrubs; and
  4. Groundcover: Irrigated turf maintained to appropriate standards for active recreation in areas that would function for active recreation shall be planted. Where appropriate, use native grass for areas that will not function as active recreation areas. Native grass must be weed free and maintained at an appropriate height according to species; and
  5. There shall be a minimum of fifty (50%) percent live materials between the front of the structure\house and the curb unless otherwise provided by this Ordinance; and
  6. Landscape setback to parking lots: There shall be a landscape setback of thirty (30') feet from arterials or twenty-five (25') feet from other streets. The purpose of the setback is to provide a buffer between street parking areas; and
  7. The parking lot shall be landscaped with planter strips and trees as

required by this Ordinance.

- C. Landscape and screening plans for the development listed in this Section shall be required as a component of a master site plan and shall meet the following requirements:
1. The landscape and screening plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape design professional and shall contain the following items:
    - a. The location, size, and type of all proposed landscaping and screening materials (including specific references as to the species of plant materials), and verification that minimum landscaping and screening requirements have been satisfied. All plants shall be shown at seventy-five (75%) percent mature growth; and
    - b. Existing vegetation to be saved shall be identified on the landscaping and screening plan along with protection measures to be used during grading and construction; and
    - c. If the proposed development project shall be completed in phases, the phases shall be noted on the landscape and screening plan; and
    - d. An irrigation plan in compliance with this Chapter; and
    - e. Any other requirements as required by this Ordinance.
- D. Noncompliance with the standards of this Chapter shall constitute a violation of the Ordinance.
- E. All development within the Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI) overlay district shall consider the WUI design standards and principles when developing a landscape plan in compliance with this Ordinance.