

Sec. 6.5 / Landscaping and Screening

6.5.1 / Purpose

This article provides standards for the installation and maintenance of landscaping, walls and screening devices in order to preserve and enhance the natural environment and beauty of the city, to minimize the adverse effects of development, and to promote the general welfare of the citizens of Prescott. Landscaping materials, including ground cover, shrubs, and trees facilitate the control of erosion and the reduction of glare and dust, and soften the visual impact of building masses. Walls and screening devices allow the separation of potentially incompatible uses and the buffering of road noise and intensive activities.

Commentary:

The goal of these regulations is to create pedestrian shade, screen parking lots and provide a high quality appearance along the public rights-of-ways.

Landscaping, walls and screening devices together, help to effectuate privacy, logical development, and enhancement of property values. In order to preserve the unique natural character of the city, these standards emphasize the retention of native trees, shrubs, rock formations, and other natural site features. To conserve water resources, use of drought tolerant plant materials and efficient irrigation systems are required. See Section 6.5.5.C.

Commentary:

Expansions, remodeling and renovations should provide commensurate landscaping. For example, an addition that represents a 25 percent increase in floor area relative to the existing improvements shall prompt a requirement to provide a 25 percent increase in the lot or building tract's deficient landscaping and screening.

6.5.2 / Applicability

This Section shall apply to:

- A. All new multi-family and nonresidential development;
- B. Change of use from residential to nonresidential where City approvals are required;
- C. Change of use from single-family to multi-family residential where City approvals are required; and

D. Expansion, remodeling, and renovation of existing buildings on a lot or building tract, or a related or stand alone parking lot shall provide an amount of landscaping and screening commensurate with the level or scale of the improvements.

6.5.3 / General Requirements

A. Landscape and Site Plan

All proposed buildings and uses shall be shown on a landscape and site plan prepared by an individual or firm registered with the Arizona Board of Technical Registration, unless waived by the Community Development Director. Landscaping shall be installed per approved plan unless otherwise modified by the Community Development Director. All landscape and site plans shall indicate:

1. Location of existing and proposed buildings, parking areas, drainage and street improvements;
2. Location of existing trees outside of building footprints;
3. Locations and general types of landscaped treatment areas -- i.e., lawn areas, low-water use areas, and inorganic areas;
4. Proposed plant or inorganic materials to be used in each treatment area;
5. Underground irrigation systems to be used in each planted area; and
6. Curbs, walls and screening devices.
7. Permanent slope stabilization requirements.
8. Plant palette reflecting low-water use plants from the ADWR Prescott Active Management Area Plant List http://infoshare.azwater.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-10086/FINAL%20PRAMA_LWUPL%20_2014%20for%20Web.pdf

B. Location of Utilities and Drainage Facilities

1. Existing and proposed utilities shall be located, when possible, so that their installation will not adversely affect vegetation to be retained on a site.

2. Drainageways and detention basins may be located within landscaped areas when designed compatible with the planted area and plant species, in accordance with the City of Prescott General Engineering Standards.

C. Installation

Landscaping, underground irrigation systems, walls and screening structures shall be installed in accordance with the approved landscape or screening plan prior to issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy for the building or use. The Building Official may grant a temporary Certificate of Occupancy for up to 6 months when a performance bond is provided by the applicant to guarantee the completion of any incomplete landscape or screening improvements.

D. Maintenance Requirements

1. Unless otherwise specified, the maintenance of landscaping in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, whether an individual, corporation, or homeowner's association.
2. Landscaped areas shall be reasonably maintained by the owner or the lessee of the property, including pruning, trimming, weeding, and other requirements necessary to create an attractive appearance for the development. Lack of maintenance of required landscaping material shall constitute a violation of this Code.
3. Plant materials not surviving shall be replaced within 90 days of its demise.

E. Landscaping in Rights-of-way

Approval of the Public Works Director is required prior to placing landscaping and other improvements in rights-of-way.

Commentary:

Xeriscape plants, high water use plants and inorganic materials (like gravel) obviously have different irrigation needs. This section reminds the reader that respective water requirements of alternative landscape materials should be taken into consideration when designing irrigation systems. See also Appendix C for drought tolerant plants required within public rights-of-way.

F. Irrigation

All required landscaped areas shall include a permanent, underground water irrigation system including an EPA WaterSense approved programmable timer to insure the long-term health and growth of the landscape. Irrigation system design shall take into consideration the water-demand characteristics of plant or landscape materials used. Alternative irrigation systems may be approved the Community Development Director subject to proven effectiveness.

G. Site Disturbance

Any portion of a site disturbed by site preparation and/or construction, especially cut or fill slopes, shall be adequately re-vegetated and stabilized, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy in accordance with the City of Prescott General Engineering Standards.

Commentary:

For example, if a total of 20 inches of tree caliper are removed from outside the building footprint, a minimum of 10 inches must be replaced; preserving and/or transplanting 5 inches would meet the replacement requirement.

6.5.4 / Existing Vegetation - Replacement and Credits

A. To the extent practical, existing significant landscape features shall be preserved and incorporated into the final landscape and site plans. Existing landscaping may be used to meet the requirements of this Code if it meets the purpose and intent of this article and is included on the approved landscape plan. Such vegetation shall be protected during all phases of site development and given sufficient area and means for growth and water absorption. A credit of up to a 200 percent may be allowed toward shrubs otherwise required pursuant to Sec. [6.5.5](#), Minimum Landscaping Standards; Sec. [6.5.8](#), Screening Standards; and Sec. [6.5.6](#), Parking Area Landscaping, for every shrub greater than 2 square feet that is preserved or transplanted.

B. The tree replacement requirement shall be 50 percent of the total caliper of trees removed from outside of the building envelope. A 200 percent credit toward the tree replacement requirement shall be granted for retaining and preserving healthy trees 4" or greater in caliper size, excluding invasive species as defined by the City. This tree credit shall also count toward required landscaping in Sec. [6.5.5](#), Minimum Landscaping Standards; Sec. [6.5.8](#), Screening Standards; and Sec. [6.5.6](#), Parking Area Landscaping. Trees to be preserved shall be adequately protected from vehicles, undermining or collapse.

6.5.5 / Minimum Landscaping Standards

All undeveloped areas of each lot or tract and the adjacent right-of-way or parkway shall be landscaped with trees, shrubs, grasses, ground cover and other organic and assorted inorganic materials that create an attractive appearance in accordance with the requirements of this Section; provided, however, smooth concrete or asphalt surfaces are not landscaping. Clustering of trees and shrubs is encouraged. In addition to the applicability listed in LDC § 6.5.2, this section also applies to subdivisions as defined by LDC § 11.2.5.

A. Trees, Shrubs, and Grasses

Required plant materials for on-site landscaping are listed in the Arizona Department of Water Resources Low Water Use /Drought Tolerant Plant List http://infoshare.azwater.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-10086/FINAL%20PRAMA_LWUPL%20_2014%20for%20Web.pdf. Minimum landscaping shall include the following frequency and size of plantings:

1. Trees

One tree shall be utilized per 25 linear feet (in no case closer than 25 feet apart) of required landscaped area.

2. Shrubs

Four shrubs per 250 square feet (or fraction thereof) of required landscaped area shall be provided.

3. Grasses, ground covers, and inorganic materials

Any combination of grasses, ground covers, and inorganic materials may be used for the balance of the required landscaping at the developer's discretion, however, a dressing of gravel, decomposed granite or mulch shall be required to hold moisture, slow runoff, and restrain weed growth. Such dressing material shall be selected and sized to withstand potential removal by wind and stormwater flows.

B. Plant Types/Minimum Plant Sizes

The following minimum plant size requirements shall apply in all cases:

Table 6.5.5B

PLANT TYPE/ MINIMUM PLANT SIZES	
Deciduous Trees	One to 1.5 inch caliper (measured one foot above ground)
Evergreen Trees	5 feet tall
Shrubs	5-gallon container size + 18 inches tall
Woody Ground Cover	1-gallon container with 12 inch spread

C. Landscape Plant List

1. All Applicable Properties and Public Rights-of-Way

Plants used to satisfy landscape requirements shall be limited to those listed in the current Arizona Department of Water Resources Low Water Use/ Drought Tolerant Plant List.

6.5.6 / Parking Area Landscaping

Parking lot landscaping shall be subject to the following minimum standards:

A. Parking Lot Perimeters

1. Street Frontages

a. All parking lots adjacent to a street shall be landscaped with a minimum width of 10 feet on site (measured from the right-of-way edge), with plantings as specified in Sec. [6.5.5](#), Minimum Landscaping Standards. Right-of-way edges shall be cleaned up and integrated with the street frontage landscaping. The minimum landscape strip may be reduced along part of the frontage provided an average landscaped width of 10 feet is maintained along the overall frontage.

b. In addition, parking areas with street frontages longer than 200 feet shall be screened from street view to a height of 3 feet with a masonry wall, berm or dense landscaping, or a combination of 2 or more of these elements. Such walls shall utilize materials and otherwise be designed to be compatible with the architecture of the principal structure on the site. Landscaping shall be

provided adjacent to the outside of such walls with plantings as specified in Sec. [6.5.5](#), Minimum Landscaping Standards.

2. Other Parking Perimeters

Non-frontage perimeters of a parking lot shall be landscaped with a 5 foot wide landscape strip with plantings as specified in Sec. [6.5.5](#), Minimum Landscaping Standards. This minimum landscape strip may be reduced to 3 feet when a minimum 3-foot high wall is provided in accordance with Sec. 6.5.6A.1.b., above.

3. Transfer of Required Landscaping

The Community Development Director may approve the transfer of required parking area landscaping from required locations to other locations on the site, provided the purpose for this section is achieved.

4. Landscape Protection

All landscaped areas adjacent to vehicular parking and access areas shall be protected by 6-inch vertical concrete curbing, 6-inch pre-cast bumpers, or similar materials in order to control storm water flows and minimize damage by vehicular traffic. Curb cuts and curb borings should be utilized to direct stormwater to the planting areas. Vehicles may overhang landscaped areas up to 2-feet into landscaped areas that are at least 5-feet wide, but may not overhang sidewalks and other pedestrian walkways. This provision applies equally to vehicle display areas.

B. Landscaped Islands

Parking lots with more than 50 spaces shall provide landscaped parking islands according to the following standards:

1. All landscaping parking islands shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide and contain a minimum of 40 square feet in area; provided, however, landscape islands may be aggregated into fewer and larger islands that meet overall planting and area standards.
2. A minimum of one tree and 2 shrubs for every 10 parking spaces shall be preserved or planted within the parking lot.
3. No parking space is farther than 100 feet from a landscaped area.

4. These requirements may be modified upon approval of the Community Development Director where exceptional design of the parking lot merits such modification and where the intent of the standard is met through alternate design schemes.

6.5.7 / Foundation Plantings

One small (under-story) tree and 4 shrubs per 50 linear feet of building wall shall be required within 4 foot minimum width planters along all building walls that are 50 feet or longer; provided, however, that this requirement shall not apply where other required landscaping adjoins the building or where such walls are not visible from surrounding streets.

6.5.8 / Screening Standards

Where screening is required by this Code, minimum screening in accordance with the following standards shall apply in addition to other applicable requirements. Existing vegetation or natural conditions may be used to satisfy these requirements (See Sec. [6.5.2](#), Applicability).

A. Screening Materials

Screening may be accomplished by the use of plants, earth berms, solid walls, or trees and shrubs in combination as necessary to produce an effective screening from view off-site of the use or facility requiring screening within a reasonable time.

B. Screening Plant List

Plants used to satisfy any required screening standards shall be limited to plants with a mature height of between 6 and 15 feet and foliage characteristics similar to those of the recommended plants for this purpose (see "Commentary" below).

C. Height of Screening Devices

The height of screening devices shall be measured from the highest finished grade adjacent to the screening device to maximize effectiveness in accordance with the maximum fence height requirements of Sec.

Commentary:

The City of Prescott prefers and encourages ground mounting of mechanical equipment, instead of roof mounting in order to minimize the potential for glare, reduce noise, and otherwise promote attractive rooflines.

2.7.3E.1.c. D. Outdoor Storage Areas

All outdoor storage areas for materials, heavy equipment, or other similar items shall be screened from street view by a minimum 6-foot high screening device. Such screening device shall consist of plant material and/or a wall constructed of or finished with materials compatible with the principal structure on the site.

D. Outdoor Storage Areas

All outdoor storage areas for materials, heavy equipment, or other similar items shall be screened from street view by a minimum 6-foot high screening device. Such screening device shall consist of plant material and/or a wall constructed of or finished with materials compatible with the principal structure on the site.

E. Mechanical Equipment

1. Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened from view from the adjoining street(s) or alley(s) in a manner integrated with the roof structure and color.
2. Ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from off-site view by a screening device consisting of either plant material, a wall constructed of or finished with materials to match the principal structure on the site, a lattice, or other similar containment.

F. Dumpsters and Solid Waste Receptacles

Dumpsters and receptacles shall be built in accordance with City of Prescott Standard Detail 144P, Sanitation Dumpster and completely screened from view of adjacent property in a more restrictive zoning district by a minimum 6-foot high screening wall that is at least one foot taller than the dumpster or solid waste receptacle.

Commentary:

The preferred location for loading areas is along the side or rear of buildings.

G. Loading Area

Loading areas shall be screened from view off-site on 3 sides by a solid, fence, finished wall, or hedge at least 6 feet in height.