



City of Stratford

LANDSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Landscape Guidelines

Preface

In association with the Building and Planning Department, the following document has been created to clarify the expectations of the City of Stratford with regards to developments within its boundaries.

Site Plan Approval processes from a number of cities and towns have been sourced and reviewed. This document reflects many of the established landscape guidelines outlined in the Site Plan Approval Process. Landscaping is a critical component of any development. Attractive and functional design is expected for all developments. Higher design expectations are expected for designated Gateway Entrances to the City of Stratford. These include Ontario, Huron and Erie Streets, which are the major arterial roads as well as Lorne Ave., Romeo, Mornington and Downie Streets that at the present time may be considered as secondary arterial roads.

Any detailed submission should be preceded by a review of this document with other relevant policy sources and preliminary consultation with staff.

Intent of this Document

The following document has been compiled to assist applicants in preparation of landscape plans in new developments and redevelopment projects. It is not intended to remove or replace established or approved processes or regulatory framework, but rather to enhance the environment through quality, well planned landscaping in conjunction with the site plan process. It has been assembled to assist the landscape professional, developers and contractors in the preparation and execution of landscape plans.

This is intended as a guideline for site landscaping and landscape buffers in development proposals. Minimum standards have been set, which the City of Stratford requires the developer to meet. The Site Plan Development Committee encourages proposals that exceed these requirements. Guidelines have been prepared for site plan agreements for commercial/institutional, industrial and large scale residential developments. This document outlines the requirements for drawings, submissions, cost estimates and security deposits.

In instances where landscape standards may be higher (i.e. arterial entrances), applicants are encouraged to contact the Building and Planning Department to discuss landscape design guidelines and site-specific issues prior to submitting a site plan application.

Departmental Contacts

Applicants may contact the following departments regarding requirements for Site Plan submissions:

Community Services Department

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Building & Planning Department

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1.0 Landscape Design

Landscaping should be used as a major visual element to unify the proposed building, existing streetscape and the surrounding environment as an entity and functionally for directing the circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. It must mitigate the visual impacts of parking areas, loading docks, garbage containers, storage areas, etc.

The landscape plan must be designed as such to create the image of well-developed buildings in an appropriately landscaped area. An aesthetically pleasing view from the street is essential. Guidelines outlined represent principles for landscape design:

- Encourage excellence in landscape design in consideration with the distinct character of this community and the natural features of the landscape.
- Preservation of existing trees, woodlots and features wherever possible.
- Diversity of plant material and naturalizing wherever possible in appropriate areas.
- Ensure integration with storm water management features.
- Preserve the heritage of such resources as archeological sites and landscapes of historical significance.
- Enhance the public perception of a proposed development in terms of aesthetic quality, comfort and convenience of pedestrians and screening of less attractive elements of the development (screening of parking, service & storage areas, privacy areas, etc.). This may be accomplished through the use of landscaped islands and buffer planting strips.
- Contribute to the overall city image.

2.0 Design Guidelines

- Provide landscaping at the streetline, which contributes to the continuity of landscaping between adjacent properties.
- Maintain unobstructed visibility to building entrances, key architectural features, signage and public spaces. Locate plant material in a manner that provides adequate sight lines for both motorists and pedestrians.
- Group trees and shrubs to frame building elevations and to add visual interest to blank facades and open spaces.
- Install landscape elements that provide colour and decoration, having regard for local seasonal changes.
- Install plant material to soften building elevations, maintain a pedestrian scale and provide definition to public walkways and open spaces.
- Provide landscaping to screen and buffer parking areas, open storage and other site service elements.
- Provide protection from excessive summer sun and cold winter winds, especially adjacent to outdoor areas where people congregate.
- Stabilize steep embankments through the use of soft and hard landscape material, such as retaining walls, ground cover and trees.
- Select plant materials that are ecologically sound, appropriate for the existing and future site conditions and suitable for all seasons.
- Incorporate drought resistant plant material in order to reduce long term maintenance requirements and conserve water (xeriscaping).
- Select native plant materials where appropriate and avoid the use of invasive plant species.

3.0 Landscape Plan Requirements

- A landscape plan will be required.
- All plans should be submitted with metric measurements and a key plan indicating the exact location of the site with a north arrow.
- Planting detail including installation and support will be illustrated on landscape plan.
- Landscape plans must conform to the Site Plan.
- All landscape plans for sites in excess of 100 meters frontage onto an arterial road (as designated in the Official Plan) shall be prepared by a qualified landscape architect that is a member of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA).
- All landscape plans for sites not fronting onto an arterial road can be prepared by an OALA or any other landscaping professional satisfactory to the Community Services Department.
- Landscape plans must take into account adjacent lands. Buffer requirements may include any combination of the following: landscape width, plantings, fencing and birms.

3.1 The Landscape Plan will identify and Document the Following Information

- Locations of all proposed plant material, planting beds and sod areas.
- A plant list clearly labeled with a key system with the following information: deciduous or conifer, size, quantity, spacing, planting detail and specifications, etc.
- Location of existing vegetation to be retained or removed must be clearly identified. All existing trees/vegetation to be preserved or removed are to be accurately located on the plan and clearly specified as to the current condition, deciduous or conifer, and diameter at breast height.
- Location and type of protection measures for existing vegetation to be retained.
- Location of storm water management landscape features.
- Location, height and material of all fences, screen walls and retaining walls.
- Existing and proposed grades along the property line and elevations at the base of trees to remain. Finished ground floor elevations of all buildings.
- Location and material of all hard surface areas (driveways, walkways, parking areas).
- Any other landscape element that contributes to site development.
- Snow storage.

3.2 Landscape Standards – Plant Material and Landscape Specifications

- All plant material must conform to the Canadian Nursery Trades Association specifications and standards.
- All sod to conform to the Canadian Nursery Sod Growers specifications.

- Minimum acceptable size for plant material are:
 Deciduous Trees – 50 mm caliper
 Coniferous Trees – 150 cm height
 Shrubs – 60 cm height
- Shrubs required for screening must have a minimum height of 125 cm. All trees should be wire basket, B & B or container grown.
- Deciduous trees planted in a row will be centered at 11 metres maximum. Smaller flowering trees and ornamentals will be centered at 5 – 7 metres maximum.
- Where existing trees on City road allowance are to be removed the trees must be replaced to the satisfaction of the City of Stratford.
- Coniferous trees will be centered at 4 – 8 metres depending on desired effect.
- All shrubs are to be planted in continuous planting beds.
- Planting beds will be mulched to a minimum depth of 75 mm and will be maintained weed free. All mulch will be shredded bark except for planting beds located against buildings.
- Plantings consisting of trees and shrubs will be a minimum of 50% coniferous plantings.
- Where landscaped planting areas are abutting public roads a minimum buffer width in accordance with the Zoning By-law must be maintained from inside property line.
- All berming and finished grades should be a maximum slope of 3:1 for maintenance and landscape purposes.
- The Parks & Forestry Manager and/or his designate will carry out inspections of finished landscape areas.
- Landscape areas (not including grassed areas) will be maintained free from snow storage.

4.0 Tree Preservation Plan

Site Plan submissions for woodlots over 0.2 ha (1/2 acre) in size will require a professionally prepared Tree Preservation Plan (Landscape Architect and/or Certified Arborist). “Woodlots” are defined as land with at least:

- i) 1,000 trees per hectare (405 trees per acre) of any size, or;
- ii) 750 trees per hectare (304 trees per acre) measuring more than 5cm (2 inches) in diameter at a point 1.37m (4.5 feet) from the ground, or;
- iii) 500 trees per hectare (202 trees per acre) measuring more than 12cm (5 inches) in diameter at a point 1.37m (4.5 feet) from the ground, or;
- iv) 250 trees per hectare (101 trees per acre) measuring more than 20cm (8 inches) in diameter at a point 1.37m (4.5 feet) from the ground.

A Tree Preservation Plan requires the following information in the form of a detailed Tree Management Plan:

- location of existing vegetation to be retained, removed or relocated
- plant list showing species, quantity, size, height, condition
- proposed grades, existing grades along the property lines and elevations at the base of trees to remain
- trees/vegetation within three metres of subject property
- location and type of protection measures for the existing vegetation to be retained
- all existing trees allotted for preservation should be properly tagged on site in accordance with the detailed Tree Management Plan
- a detailed explanation will be required for all trees scheduled for removal

Landscape Plan Check List

- ❑ Title block located in lower right corner (titled as Landscape Plan) with subdivision name, block and lot numbers, survey name and abstract number and preparation date.
- ❑ North arrow and scale appropriate for the level of detail - multiple sheets may be required.
- ❑ Property - dimensions (metes and bounds of the boundary of the site).
- ❑ Adjacent property - subdivision names, land use and zoning.
- ❑ Existing or proposed buildings on the property, access points on and adjacent to the property (list number of units for multi-family requests).
- ❑ Location and width of existing and proposed streets and sidewalks.
- ❑ Existing and proposed easements (utility, drainage, visibility and maintenance, etc.).
- ❑ All existing and proposed utilities - fire hydrants, water and sewer mains and lines with pipe size valves and manholes within and immediately adjacent to the tract.
- ❑ Existing Trees, Trees to be Removed and Trees to be Preserved - location, size and species.
- ❑ Landscaping materials - location, size, etc. (i.e. all plants, paving, benches, screens, fountains, statues, earthen berms, ponds including depth of water, or other landscape features).
- ❑ Proposed plant materials - location, species, spacing (if applicable), size (at time of planting and at maturity).
- ❑ Existing and proposed topography, with berms at *0.5 metre* contours with % of slope indicated.
- ❑ Parking computations showing required and provided parking spaces.
- ❑ Distance of trees/shrubs from sidewalks, curbs, screening walls and utilities.
- ❑ Screening - materials, location, type and height.
- ❑ Legend if abbreviations or symbols are used.
- ❑ Description of maintenance provisions.
- ❑ Detailed structural designs of entryway features (separate sheet including easements and utilities).
- ❑ Layout and description of irrigation, sprinkler or water systems including placement of water sources, irrigation connections, meter locations and size with check valve vaults indicated (as a separate sheet to include all easements and utilities).
- ❑ Additional information as needed for clarity.