

**CITY OF UNION CITY
LANDSCAPE STANDARDS POLICY STATEMENT**

The following objectives, standards and criteria are a guide for developers, and are to be used by the City Council, Planning Commission and staff in evaluating landscaping of proposed development in Union City.

GOAL

To maintain and improve the quality of development currently being established in the City of Union City and upgrade the aesthetics and function of existing developments; buffer incompatible land uses; provide an attractive streetscape to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists; minimize or soften the visual impact of buildings, structures or parking lots; preserve the integrity of neighborhoods; reduce or eliminate heat and glare; prevent soil erosion; and minimize surface runoff.

APPLICABILITY

The standards and criteria listed in this policy statement shall apply to development projects that include new landscaping or modifications to existing landscaping.

There are additional landscape requirements listed in the Union City Municipal Code Chapter 18.112 *Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance*. These additional requirements apply to development projects which include new landscape areas or rehabilitated landscapes that are greater than two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet. In the event of a conflict between the provisions listed in Chapter 18.112 and the standards and criteria listed in this policy statement, the provisions of Chapter 18.112 shall apply.

Projects that include new or modified landscaped areas measuring less than two thousand five hundred (2,500) square feet and are associated with a site development review approval or administrative site development review approval are required to comply with this policy statement. The Economic and Community Development Director may waive this requirement for second-story additions to existing single-family residences if the existing landscaping meets the coverage requirements and is in good condition and no new landscaping is proposed.

OBJECTIVES

A. GENERAL STANDARDS

- A.1. Two sets of detailed landscape and irrigation plans shall be submitted to the Economic and Community Development Department for review and approval. Landscape and irrigation information may also be shown on one plan as long as details remain legible. At its discretion, the City shall hire a licensed landscape architect, at the applicant's or property owner's expense, to review the submitted landscape plan in conformance with the Union City Municipal Code and the Landscape Standards Policy Statement
- a. Minimum standards for the landscape plan are as follows:
1. The landscape plan shall be drawn to a scale that matches the architectural plan, site plan or civil plan. The property lines, utility lines, easements structures, parking and paved areas shall be accurately shown.
 2. The landscape plan shall indicate the botanical name, common name,

size, number and location of proposed plants. All proposed planting, existing plants/trees to remain, and trees to be removed shall be accurately drawn on the plan. In addition, plans shall indicate all hydrozones. The plan shall address all site areas, including any easements within the parcel, and shall provide landscaping for the area between the street curb line and the property line.

3. The landscape design shall incorporate trees, shrubs, and groundcover throughout the landscape plan.
4. Trees planted shall be a minimum 15- gallon container initial size. In some instances, the Planning Commission or the City Council may require larger than 15-gallon trees when more mature landscaping is desired. Street trees shall be reviewed and approved by the City.
5. Shrubs shall be a minimum 5-gallon container initial size.
6. Live groundcover shall be spaced a minimum of 12" on center unless otherwise dictated by best horticultural practices. Live groundcover varieties shall be used in place of manufactured materials or processed matter such as "tan bark".
7. Root barriers are required on all trees planted within ten (10) feet of paved areas.
8. Landscaping necessary to satisfy clean water requirements shall also be shown on the landscape plan.
9. Landscape and irrigation plans shall be prepared by a licensed landscape professional. At its discretion, the City may require the applicant to hire a licensed landscape architect to prepare a landscape plans for projects that propose substantial modification to an existing site or have high visibility. A licensed landscape architect is required to prepare all landscape and irrigation plans for new developments. Projects that include the construction of owner-occupied single-family residences or second-story additions to existing single-family residences are exempt from this requirement.

b. Minimum standards for the irrigation plan are as follows:

1. Automatic irrigation shall be provided to all planting areas.
2. The plan shall be drawn to the same scale as the landscape plan and hydrozones shall be indicated.
3. The plan shall accurately indicate the location and size of all meters, hose bibs and quick couplers.
4. Backflow prevention devices shall be provided at all meters.
5. The location and size of all irrigation pipes shall be accurately shown.

6. The type of sprinkler head or drip emitter and gallons per minute of the head shall be provided on the plan.
 7. The irrigation shall be adequately designed to minimize over spray.
 8. Applicants/property owners are encouraged to use reclaimed water in landscape irrigation whenever possible.
- A.2. The project landscaping shall be completed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or within ninety (90) days if no structure is involved. Non-residential projects, subdivisions, or multi-family projects are required to provide a certificate of deposit in the amount of fifty (50) percent of the estimated installation cost of the landscaping, up to \$ 10,000.00 in order to insure installation of the planting shown on the approved landscape plan. Installation costs shall be based on a written estimate from the landscape contractor. The applicant shall enter into a private landscape maintenance contract for the maintenance of the required landscaping for a minimum period of two years after installation.
- A.3. Property owners and occupants shall be responsible for ongoing maintenance of required landscaping in accordance with the approved landscape plan for the life of the project unless otherwise exempt. Dead or dying plants shall be replaced as needed.
- A.4. Property owners and occupants of single-family residences shall be responsible for ongoing maintenance of required front yard and street side yard landscaping. Dead or dying plants shall be replaced as needed.

B. BAY-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS

Bay-Friendly landscaping provides an integrated approach to environmentally-friendly landscaping. It is organized around these seven principles for protecting the environment:

- Landscape Locally
- Landscape for Less to the Landfill
- Nurture the Soil
- Conserve Water
- Conserve Energy
- Protect Water & Air Quality
- Create Wildlife Habitat

The Bay-Friendly landscaping program is managed by StopWaste.Org. StopWaste.Org is a public agency that functions as the Alameda County Waste Management Authority and the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board.

New or modified landscapes are required to comply with the Bay-Friendly Basics Landscape Checklist. The checklist includes nine (9) required practices that address the principles listed above. These practices are discussed below in more detail. For more information regarding Bay-Friendly landscaping or to access a copy of the checklist, please visit www.bayfriendly.org. Copies of the checklist are also available at the Planning Division public counter. Submitted landscape plans shall demonstrate compliance with the following provisions. A completed copy of the Bay-Friendly Basics Landscapes Checklist shall also be submitted with the landscape plan.

- B.1. All soil on site shall be protected with a minimum of three (3) inches of mulch after construction.

To be more green, use recycled or greenwaste mulch instead of landscape fabric. Trees that are approved for removal can be chipped and also used as mulch.

- B.2. Soil shall be amended with compost before planting to bring the soil organic matter content to a minimum of 3.5 percent by dry weight. Alternatively, soil can be amended by adding the equivalent of one (1) inch of compost for the entire surface area of the landscape area.
Purchase compost from a producer who participates in the U.S. Composting Council's Standard Testing Assurance (STA) program to ensure quality.
- B.3. Divert A minimum of fifty (50) percent of landscape construction and demolition waste, including hardscape, by weight shall be diverted from the landfill. Waste can be recycled, reused or composted.
- B.4. Planting species shall be selected and plants shall be spaced to allow them to grow to their natural size and shape.
- B.5. Those species identified as invasive in the San Francisco Bay Area by the California Invasive Plant Council (CAL-IPC) shall not be included in the landscape plan.
An invasive species is defined as a species that is non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. For a list of invasive plant species, please refer to the following website <http://www.cal-ipc.org/ip/inventory/weedlist.php> or see CAL-IPC handout entitled "Don't Plant a Pest".
- B.6. Turf (i.e. ground cover surface of mowed grass) shall not exceed more than twenty-five (25) percent of the required landscaping.
- B.7. A minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of the total number of plants in non-turf areas must be species that require no or little summer watering once established.
California native or Mediterranean species are strongly recommended.
- B.8. Weather-based irrigation controllers, soil moisture based controllers, or other self-adjusting irrigation controllers, shall be required for all irrigation systems.
- B.9. Sprinkler and spray heads shall not be installed in areas less than or equal to eight (8) feet wide to prevent overspray and runoff.
Acceptable alternatives include drip, subsurface drip, or bubblers.

C. DESIGN GUIDELINES

- C.1. Plant materials shall be selected to provide a variety of seasonal color, leaf texture, and growth habit. 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 are encouraged.
- C.2. Where appropriate, plant materials shall be arranged in informal "clusters" rather than spaced at regular intervals to simulate natural growth patterns. Plants having similar water use shall be grouped together in distinct hydrozones.

- C.3. Railroad spur tracks shall be screened from public view by a decorative wall or substantial plantings of mature landscape elements.
- C.4. Trees and shrubbery shall be located and maintained so as not to obscure the visibility of doors and windows from the public street.
- C.5. All driveways and vehicular areas shall be clearly separated from landscaped areas by concrete curbing. Alternatives to curbing may be considered in order to comply with Clean Water requirements.
- C.6. Any property street frontage shall be landscaped between the sidewalk and parking or loading area. Further, all undeveloped areas shall be maintained for weed control.
- C.7. In the situation where a phased development is planned and only a portion of the parcel is developed, the entire parcel shall be kept clean and free from weeds and other debris at all times.
- C.8. All parking areas shall be adequately screened from public right-of-ways with trees, shrubs, and ground cover. Where appropriate, berms can also be installed to provide screening. Visibility shall not be so limited as to create a public safety hazard.
 - a. Recommended standards for landscape berms are as follows:
 - 1. Berm design shall be engineered to minimize run-off and erosion.
 - 2. Parking lots that are at or above street grade level shall strive to have berms a minimum of thirty (30) inches in height from the finished grade of the parking lot.
 - 3. Parking lots that are below street grade level shall strive to have berms a minimum of thirty (30) inches in height from the finished grade of the street.
 - 4. Where berms are not feasible, a decorative retaining wall and/or plantings shall be used to achieve the minimum 30-inch height.
- C.9. Planting areas on site should strive to be at least five (5) feet wide.
- C.10. A minimum of five (5) percent of the interior area of any parking lot, exclusive of any perimeter planting, shall be landscaped. Parking lot landscaping shall provide a total of one (1) tree for every six (6) parking spaces. Fifty (50) percent of the required parking lot trees shall be installed around the perimeter.
- C.11. Parking lot landscaping should be clustered in landscaped beds to improve the horticultural environment for the trees, visually break up the pavement areas, enhance pedestrian walkways, address clean water requirements and develop view corridors or provide screening as needed. Individual, separate tree wells spaced equidistant throughout the parking lot are discouraged.
- C.12. Where loading docks are required to face, adjoin or be located along the building frontage and/or street frontage, adequate screening along the public right-of-way shall be required.

C.13. All new single-family homes shall provide fully landscaped and irrigated front yards.

D. SITE COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS

D.1. The following table provides landscape site coverage requirements for various zoning districts. The amount of required landscaping is based on a percentage of the lot area.

Zoning District / Use	Coverage Requirements (% of lot area)	Zoning District / Use	Coverage Requirements (% of lot area)
CN, CC, CVR, CS, CUL	10 %	MS	15 %
CPA	15 %	RDC	15 %
Drive-Through establishments	20 %	PI	15 %
MG	10 %	RM 2500 and RM 3500	40 %**
ML	10 %	RM 1500	25 % **

* Pools, tennis courts, and other recreational facilities, as well as street furniture, kiosks, plazas and gathering areas can be included in the landscape calculation.

D.2. Projects that cannot meet the minimum landscape coverage requirements shall pay a landscape in-lieu fee in the amount set forth in the City’s Master Fee Schedule.

- a. Landscape in-lieu fee will be charged on a square footage basis and will be applied to the amount of landscaping necessary to satisfy the minimum landscape coverage requirements.