

Article 6. Landscaping, Screening and Lighting

Sec. 14-6-1 Landscape Plan

(a) When Required

- (1) A landscape plan is required for all exterior construction and development activity that requires site plan review.
- (2) A landscape plan is not required for existing uses that are not proposing redevelopment or exterior improvements that require site plan review in accordance with Article 11. Landscape plans must comply with the requirements of this section and must be reviewed and approved by the plan commission.

(b) Landscape Plan Contents

A required landscape plan must include the following information:

- (1) The location and dimensions of all existing and proposed buildings, structures, property lines, easements, parking lots, driveways, roadways, sidewalks/bike paths, fences/walls, ground signs, refuse disposal areas, light poles, freestanding mechanical equipment, drainage and stormwater management facilities.
- (2) The location, quantity, size, and name (both botanical and common names) of all existing plant materials on the site, and any plant material in the public right-of-way, indicating which plant material will be retained or removed.
- (3) The location, quantity, size, and name (both botanical and common names) of all proposed plant material including, but not limited to shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreens, shrubs, groundcovers and turf area.
- (4) The existing and proposed grading of the site indicating contours at one-foot intervals, including any proposed berming.
- (5) Elevations of all proposed walls, fences and retaining walls, including elevations for proposed screening for refuse disposal areas.
- (6) Details for proposed lighting, including specifications as to the height, type of lamp and shielding.
- (7) The location of all off-street loading areas, including an indication of whether loading docks will be enclosed and methods of proposed screening.
- (8) Locations of hose connections and other water system sources or devices, if any.
- (9) The location and placement of all proposed water lines and sprinkler heads of proposed irrigation systems.
- (10) The location of existing and proposed utility easements and the type of utilities anticipated for placement within proposed easements and existing utility lines, both above and below ground.
- (11) Delineation of the required intersection visibility triangle, where applicable.
- (12) Other elevations and details as determined necessary by the zoning administrator.

(c) Changes to Approved Landscape Plans

Any change to an approved landscape plan requires the approval of the plan commission, unless the zoning administrator determines that proposed change is minor in nature. Examples of minor

changes to approved landscape plans are minor rearranging of plant material on a site and substitution of plant materials that are of a similar species and/or equivalent size as the approved materials.

(d) Design Standards

Landscape plans must be prepared, evaluated, and approved, based on the following design criteria:

- (1) The scale and nature of landscaping materials must be appropriate to the size of the structures on the site. For example, larger-scale plants should generally be used to complement larger buildings. Plant material should be selected for its form, texture, color, pattern of growth and suitability to local conditions.
- (2) Existing plant material should be incorporated into the landscape treatment of a site. Effort should be made to preserve and protect existing trees with trunk diameters of more than 12 inches. These trees and their root systems must be protected from construction equipment and activity by the installation of fencing materials at the dripline of the trees.
- (3) Plant material should be placed intermittently against long expanses of building walls, fences, and other barriers to create a softening effect.
- (4) Detention/retention basins and ponds should be landscaped with shade and ornamental trees, evergreens, shrubs, turf, groundcover and/or other plant materials. Non-structural methods of detention planted with native plant materials are preferred.
- (5) Plant material should be used to reduce energy consumption needs by placing deciduous trees on the south and west sides of buildings for shade and placing evergreens on the north and west sides of buildings to dissipate the effect of winds.

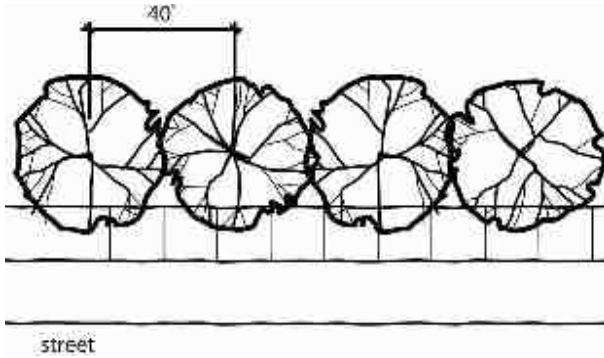
Sec. 14-6-2 Turf

All required setbacks in all zoning districts within the city must be landscaped primarily with turf or other groundcover plantings. The pavement of yards other than for parking or loading purposes is prohibited. Turf may be established through installation of sod or seeding.

Sec. 14-6-3 Street Trees

(a) Street Tree Requirements

- (1) Street trees requirements for proposed residential subdivisions are specified in Sec. 14-9-11.
- (2) Property lines along public street frontages on multi-family residential and nonresidential sites must be planted with street trees at a rate of 1 tree for every 40 linear feet. These trees must be located between the building line and front and corner side property lines. Driveway widths may be excluded from the calculation of the required number of street trees. Flexibility in locating trees is provided where it is not possible to locate street trees 40 feet apart due to the location of driveways.
- (3) The trees must be located within 10 feet of the front and corner lot lines, but are not permitted to be planted within the public right-of-way.
- (4) A list of allowable street tree species is on file with the City of Princeton. To reduce the risk of disease and/or insect infestation, no more than 50 percent of the street trees in any individual development may be of one species.



(b) Other Landscape Materials in the Public Right-of-Way

No plant material or barrier, except as specified in this article, may be located in a dedicated public right-of-way without the approval of the city’s street superintendent. The remainder of the ground surface within the public right-of-way between the street and sidewalk must be planted with turf, with the exception that driveways, sidewalks, and bike paths are permitted in all public rights-of-way. Materials prohibited within the public right-of-way, unless approved by the street superintendent, include other groundcovers, shrubs, brick pavers, gravel, stone, asphalt and concrete; except those used for driveways, sidewalks, and bike paths.

Sec. 14-6-4 Parking Lot Landscaping

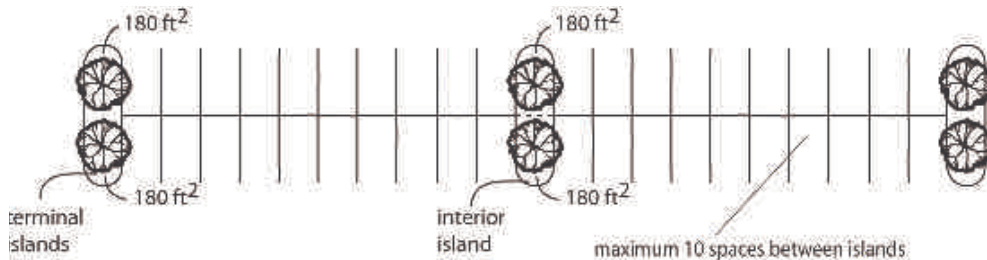
(a) Interior Parking Lot Landscaping

(1) Applicability

- a. Interior parking lot landscaping must be installed in all new parking lots that contain 10 or more parking spaces. The interior landscaping must be in addition to the required perimeter parking lot landscaping.
- b. When existing parking lots are expanded, interior parking lot landscaping is not required except in the B2 district when the expanded area contains more than 50 parking spaces or more than 17,500 square feet of parking area. In such cases, the Plan Commission is authorized to require interior parking lot landscaping for the entire expanded area and/or retrofitting of the existing parking lot to comply with the interior parking lot landscaping requirements to the maximum extent feasible.

(2) Number of Landscape Islands

Landscape islands with at least one shade tree must occur at a minimum of one island for every 10 parking spaces in a row. Islands are required at each end of a row of parking spaces. Flexibility in placement of landscape islands may be allowed for creative parking lot design and preservation of existing trees and vegetation.



(3) Landscape Island Size

Interior parking lot islands must be a minimum of 180 square feet in area and a minimum of 8 feet in width, as measured from back of curb to back of curb within the island.

(4) Landscape Island Design

Interior parking lot landscaping must consist of planting islands at least 8 inches above the surface of the parking lot that are protected with concrete curbing.

(5) Landscape Material

The primary plant materials used in parking lot islands must be shade tree species. Ornamental trees, shrubs, and other plant materials may be used to supplement the shade tree plantings, but cannot be the sole source of parking lot landscaping. Mulch may be used around the base of shade trees and other plant material, provided it is applied at a thickness of at least 2 inches.

(6) Visibility

To ensure proper visibility within the parking lot, shrubs must be no greater than 30 inches in height and the branches of trees must have a minimum clearance of 6 feet above the pavement except in areas that do not affect driver visibility.

(b) Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping

Perimeter parking lot landscaping provides for the enhancement and screening of parking lots by providing a uniform scheme of landscaping and/or screening along all public streets and adjacent to residential uses.

(1) Applicability

- a. All new parking lots must install perimeter parking lot landscaping according to provisions of this section.
- b. When existing parking lots are expanded, perimeter parking lot landscaping must be provided adjacent to the expanded area only.

(2) Parking Lots Abutting Public Streets

Where a parking lot abuts a public right-of-way (whether a street or an alley), a minimum 6-foot wide continuous landscape strip must be provided along 100 percent of the right-of-way, exclusive of driveways. Screening installed within this landscape strip must have a minimum height of 3 feet. The screening may consist of shrubs, ornamental trees, berming, low pedestrian walls and/or fencing which through their arrangement create the desired screen. In addition to the 3-foot screen, 1 shade tree must be provided for every 40 linear feet along that portion of parking lots that abut public streets (alleys are excluded). These trees may be clustered or spaced linearly.

(3) Parking Lots Abutting Residential Property

Where a parking lot abuts a property zoned or used for residential purposes, a solid wood fence, wall, dense hedge, or comparable screen must be provided across 100 percent of the property line. Fences and walls must be 6 feet in height, and hedges and other screens must be a minimum height of 6 feet in height. In addition, 1 shade or evergreen tree must be provided for every 40 linear feet along that portion of the parking lot that abuts residential property. Additional shrubs, trees, and/or berming may be installed to supplement the required screening.

(c) Alternative Compliance

- (1) Alternative methods of compliance with the standards of this section may be authorized by the Plan Commission when one of the following conditions exist:
 - a. Topography, soil, vegetation, space constraints or other site conditions are such that full compliance is impossible or impractical, or improved environmental quality would result from the alternative compliance.
 - b. Safety considerations make alternative compliance necessary.
- (2) In order to be approved, an alternative compliance landscape plan must equal or exceed strict compliance in terms of visual effect. Alternative compliance is limited to the specific site under consideration and does not establish precedent for landscaping on other sites.
- (3) A request for alternative compliance must be submitted along with the landscape plan as part of the site plan review process. The request must include sufficient justification, through written and/or graphic means, to allow evaluation and decision by the Plan Commission.

Sec. 14-6-5 Transition Yards

- (a) A transition yard is landscaped open space, free of any building or paved area. Transition yards are intended to lessen the impact of incompatible land uses on adjacent properties.
- (b) All transition yards must be planted with one shade tree per 30 linear feet and must have a continuous screen consisting of a berm, hedge, fence or wall with a height as required by this section. The following lists the transition yard width and screening height required:

Developing Lot's Zoning	Adjacent Lot's Zoning			
	R Districts	B1, B3	B2	B4, M1, M2
A, RE, R1, R1A and R2 (Residential uses)	None	None	None	None
A, RE, R1, R1A and R2 (Nonresidential uses)	width: 10 feet screen height: 4 feet	None	None	None
R3	width: 10 feet screen height: 4 feet	None	None	None
B1, B3	width: 6 feet screen height: 5 feet	None	None	None
B2	width: 15 feet screen height: 6 feet	None	None	None
B4, M1 and M2	width: 20 feet screen height: 6 feet	width: 10 feet screen height: 4 feet	width: 10 feet screen height: 4 feet	None

- (c) Existing vegetation may be used to meet all or some of the transition yard requirements. The landscape design may include areas where trees and shrubs are clustered or spaced linearly as long as the desired screen is achieved. Evergreen trees may be substituted for shade trees and three ornamental trees may be substituted for one shade tree. All other areas within transition yards must be maintained with turf or other groundcover.
- (d) When both a transition yard and perimeter parking lot landscaping would be required between a parking lot and a residential use, the stricter standard applies. Sites are not required to provide both types of landscaping and screening.
- (e) It is recognized that providing full transition yards may not be possible on small or irregularly-shaped sites. When there is not adequate space to meet transitional yard requirements without creating additional nonconformities on the site with respect to setbacks, parking, etc. the plan commission is authorized to approve alternative screening and/or a reduced transitional yard area.

- (f) Alternative compliance with transition yard requirements is permitted according to the standards of Sec. 14-6-4(c).

Sec. 14-6-6 Refuse Containers

- (a) This section applies to all uses except single-family and two-family dwellings. Single-family and two-family dwellings may utilize refuse containers with a maximum 45-gallon capacity, not to exceed 50 pounds in weight when filled.
- (b) When refuse containers and grease storage containers are not enclosed within a principal or accessory building, they may only be placed in a rear or interior side yard, and must be screened within an enclosure, subject to the following requirements:
- (1) The enclosure must be constructed of an opaque wood fence or masonry wall on 3 sides with a minimum height equal to or greater than the height of the refuse container. One side of the storage area must be furnished with an opaque, lockable gate. No refuse material may be visible above the enclosure.
 - (2) The enclosure area must be kept free of debris. Refuse containers must be emptied regularly and kept closed when not in use so that containers do not attract vermin.

Sec. 14-6-7 Loading Areas

Loading areas in all zoning districts must be screened from the public right-of-way and abutting properties that are zoned or used for residential purposes. Appropriate methods of screening include walls, fences, berms, and landscape plantings that are a minimum of 6 feet in height.

Sec. 14-6-8 Outdoor Storage and Work Areas

Outdoor storage and work areas must be screened from the public right-of-way and abutting properties that are zoned or used for residential purposes. Appropriate methods of screening include walls, fences, berms and landscape plantings. Walls and fences must be 6 feet in height; landscape screens must be a minimum of 6 feet in height. No stored materials may be visible above the fence or landscape screen.

Sec. 14-6-9 Mechanical Equipment

Mechanical equipment such as transformers and heating and air conditioning (HVAC) units must be located and or screened so that they are not visible from any property line.

(a) **Ground-mounted equipment**

Ground-mounted equipment in all nonresidential development must be screened with a dense hedge that is of sufficient height to screen the mechanical unit on all sides visible from any property line.

(b) **Roof-mounted equipment**

Roof-mounted mechanical equipment in all nonresidential and multi-family residential development must be screened on all sides visible from any property line. Screening may include parapet walls or other opaque roof elements similar and compatible in color and texture to the exterior building materials on which the unit is located.

Sec. 14-6-10 Freestanding signs

Landscape material must be installed around the base of the freestanding signs consisting of shrubs, perennial/annual flowers, and/or ground cover. The required landscaping area must be a minimum of 3 feet wide on all sides of the sign base. Where the area around the base of the sign is insufficient in size for all of the required landscaping, the zoning administrator may permit installation of a portion of the required landscaping at an alternate location on the site.

Sec. 14-6-11 Plant Materials

(a) Selection

All planting materials must be good quality and of species capable of withstanding the climate of central Illinois and individual site microclimates. Size and density of plant material, both at the time of planting and at maturity, are additional criteria that must be considered when selecting plant material. The use of drought tolerant and salt tolerant plant material is preferred. Trees and shrubs may be balled and burlapped or container grown.

(b) Minimum Planting Sizes

Minimum planting sizes for all required landscape materials are as follows:

Type	Size
Shade Trees	2" caliper
Ornamental Trees	6' height unless true dwarf species
Evergreen Trees	6' height
Deciduous Shrubs	2' height
Evergreen Shrubs	2' height

(c) Installation

- (1) Required landscaping and screening must be completely installed prior to the issuance of a letter of occupancy.
- (2) All landscaping materials must be installed in accordance with the current planting procedures established by the American Association of Nurserymen.
- (3) All plant material must be free from disease and installed in a fashion that ensures the availability of sufficient soil and water to sustain healthy growth.
- (4) Plant material must be installed in a manner that is not intrusive to utilities or pavement.
- (5) Plant materials identified on approved landscaping plans must be installed, whenever feasible, within the growing season following approval of the applicable building permits for the subject site. Where the it is not feasible to install all required landscaping within that growing season due to weather constraints, the zoning administrator has the authority to grant a letter of occupancy for the building, provided that all required landscaping will be installed the next growing season. If determined necessary by the zoning administrator, a performance guarantee may be required to be posted by the property owner to ensure installation of all required landscape materials within the next growing season.

(d) Planting Methods

This subsection outlines general guidelines for the installation of all landscape material.

- (1) Most small, deciduous trees may be moved bare rooted unless otherwise indicated. Roots of bare rooted trees must be protected against drying out.
- (2) All coniferous trees must be moved balled and burlapped. Balled roots should be prevented from drying out at the surface of their ball, and they should be protected from freezing.
- (3) Pits dug for the planting of bare root plants must be at least 12 inches larger in diameter than the diameter of the root system in order to accommodate the roots without crowding. For balled trees, the pits should be a minimum of 12 inches larger than the diameter of the ball of soil to allow proper backfill of soil.

- (4) Plants must be planted no deeper than previously grown with due allowance for settling.
- (5) In planting containers, artificial drainage must be provided for the root system of any species intolerant of wet sites, or species tolerant to wet sites must be used.
- (6) Top soil, compost, peat moss or an acceptable soil mixture may be placed around the roots of bare root stock or in the backfill around balled stock. When the planting is completed, the entire root system must be thoroughly saturated with water and cord and burlap wrapping must be cut and/or removed.
- (7) Trees and planting beds must be mulched around the base of plant material with shredded bark, feather rocks, or similar organic materials to hold moisture. Mulch cannot be used as a substitute for turf or required plant materials.
- (8) Although pruning should be done to develop a balance with the root system, excessive pruning at the time of transplanting should be avoided.
- (9) Tree trunks must be suitably wrapped and guyed, or supported in an upright position, according to accepted arboricultural practices. The guys or supports should be installed so that they will not girdle or cause serious injury to the tree or endanger public safety.

(e) Maintenance

- (1) While irrigation systems are not required for landscape areas, where installed irrigation systems are installed they must be designed to conserve the use of water.
- (2) All landscaping materials must be continually maintained in good condition to present a healthy, neat and orderly appearance, and be kept free of refuse and debris. Fences, walls and berms must be maintained in good condition and neat appearance. Plant material, berms, walls and fences must be protected from damage by motor vehicles through use of concrete curbing or wheel-stops.
- (3) All landscaping should be periodically trimmed so that it does not obstruct a public right-of-way. Diseased and dead plant material must be replaced in accordance with the approved landscape plan.
- (4) The owner and occupants of a property are jointly responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of all plant materials, fences, walls and other landscape improvements.

Sec. 14-6-12 Fences, Walls and Berms

Fences and walls must be designed in accordance with the following standards:

(a) Location

Fences and walls, including all posts, bases and other structural parts must be located completely within the boundaries of the lot on which it is located. No fence or wall may be located closer than 2 feet to a public sidewalk.

(b) Measurement

The height of fences and walls is measured from the ground level at the base of the fence to the highest point on the fence or wall.

(c) Maximum Height and Maximum Opacity

Yard	R and A Districts	B Districts	M Districts
Front and corner side	4 feet/50% opaque	6 feet/100% opaque	6 feet/100% opaque
Side	6 feet/100% opaque	6 feet/100% opaque	8 feet/100% opaque

Yard	R and A Districts	B Districts	M Districts
Rear	6 feet/100% opaque	6 feet/100% opaque	8 feet/100% opaque

(d) Design and Construction

(1) Permitted Materials in Residential and Agricultural Districts

The following materials are permitted:

- a. wood;
- b. wrought iron;
- c. vinyl (that is designed to look like wood or wrought iron);
- d. brick;
- e. stone;
- f. chain link, except in the front and corner side yard; and
- g. other similar materials approved by the plan commission.

(2) Permitted Materials in Business and Manufacturing Districts

The following fence and wall materials are permitted:

- a. wood;
- b. wrought iron;
- c. vinyl (that is designed to look like wood or wrought iron);
- d. brick;
- e. stone; and
- f. chain link. When chain link fencing is used along a front or corner side lot line in a business or manufacturing district, the side of the fence nearest the street right-of-way must be planted with shrubs a minimum of 3 feet in height.

(3) Finished Side

All fences and walls must be constructed with the finished surface facing the exterior of the property with support posts placed to the inside, except in such cases where the posts or support columns are an integral part of its aesthetic design.

(4) Barbed Wire and Electric Fences

Barbed wire, razor wire, concertina, and the electrification of fencing are prohibited.

(5) Swimming Pools

Swimming pools must be enclosed with security fences in accordance with the building code.

(6) Maintenance

It is the responsibility of the owner and/or occupant of the property where a fence or wall is erected to maintain the structure in good repair and structurally sound condition at all times, with no loose, rotting or rusting materials, and with all structural components attached in accordance with common building practices. If a fence is not in compliance with this section, the zoning administrator may order the fence to be repaired, replaced or removed.

(e) Berm Design

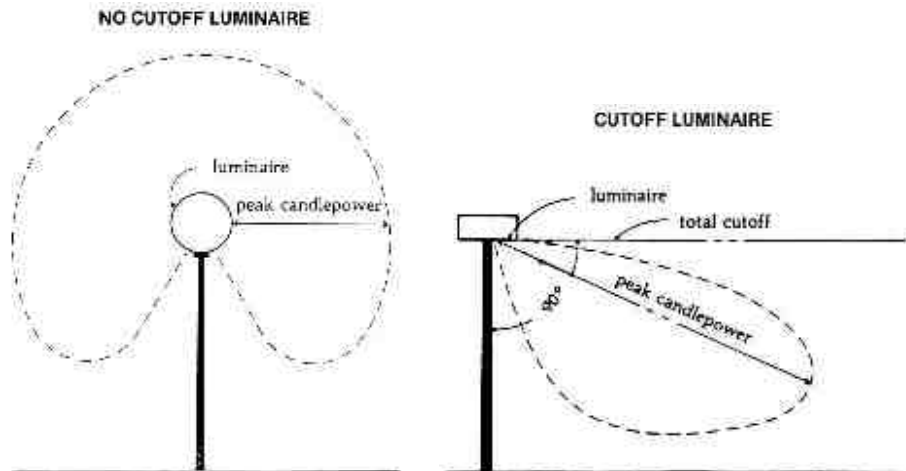
- (1) Perimeter parking lot and transitional yard landscaping may include installation of earthen berms for screening purposes.
- (2) Berms should not be designed in an unnatural, symmetrical pattern, but should be varied in both vertical and horizontal dimensions.
- (3) Berms may not exceed a maximum slope of 3:1.
- (4) All berms must be planted with landscaping to prevent their erosion. Plantings placed on top of berms must consist of species compatible with the terrain of the berm.

Sec. 14-6-13 Outdoor Lighting

All exterior lighting must comply with the following standards:

(a) Height

- (1) All exterior lighting fixtures must be designed, located and mounted at a maximum height of 15 feet above grade for non-cutoff lights, and 40 feet above grade for cutoff lights.
- (2) Parks, schools, and outdoor recreation facilities may have lights mounted at up to 70 feet, provided that the light pole is located at least twenty 20 feet from a residential property line.



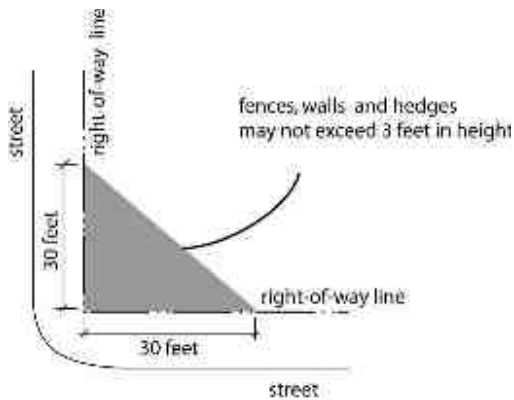
(b) Glare Reduction

- (1) Glare must be minimized by orienting lights away from the public right-of-way and abutting properties or by planting vegetation to block other properties from the glare.
- (2) All cut-off light fixtures must remain shielded and directed downward at all times, and must not be redirected to illuminate a building, sign, or other site features.
- (3) Gas station canopy lighting must be designed with recessed fixtures that are shielded and directed downward to prevent glare on adjoining properties and roadways.

Sec. 14-6-14 Intersection Visibility

- (a) No sign, fence, wall, shrub or other obstruction more than 3 feet in height may be located or allowed to grow within a visibility triangle.

- (b) A visibility triangle includes the area created by the street right-of-way lines extending 30 feet from their intersection.



- (c) When an arterial street intersects with another arterial street or a railway, the visibility triangle is increased to 50 feet from the intersection of the right-of-way lines.
- (d) The city is authorized to trim, remove or order removal of materials that violate this section.

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