LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENTS

Using this guide
The intent for the bufferyard and landscape guide is to create a user-friendly tool to assist the development community and citizens of Auburn better understand the landscape portion of the Zoning Ordinance and its application for non-residential and performance residential projects. This guidebook is not intended to be a substitute for the provisions within Section 422 through 432. The graphics and corresponding text within this manual are interpretations of the standards and are intended to be used as examples of those standards. The City of Auburn recognizes the importance that buffering and landscaping has on the environment and the visual attractiveness of our City.

Why Landscaping?
The purpose of landscaping is to create a visual separation between uses and to enhance the beauty of Auburn. This is accomplished through preservation, protection, and planting of trees, particularly those trees recognized herein as canopy and understory trees. The intent is to derive all the benefits of having trees, shrubs and other plant materials. Among the benefits are: deterring erosion, promoting native wildlife, allowing for infiltration of surface water into ground water resources and reducing the quantity and improving the quality of storm water discharge. All of these benefits contribute to a higher quality of life and enhance the appeal and economic value of both residential and business properties in Auburn.
BUFFERYARDS (Section 424)

Bufferyards are to be located on the outer perimeter of a lot or parcel, extending to the lot or parcel boundary line. Bufferyards cannot be located on any portion of an existing or dedicated public or private street or right-of-way, but may be placed in easements if approved by City staff.

1. **Bufferyard Requirements**: The requirements are stated in terms of the width of the buffer and type and quantity of planting materials. All bufferyards shall consist of plantings, including but not limited to turf grass, trees, shrubs and seasonal color, as well as stone, rocks, mulch and other appropriate landscaping materials.

2. **Placement of Plants and Structures**: The exact placement of required plants and structure types will be the decision of the developer or landscape designer; however, no less than 40% of the ‘general landscape’ material required must be located in a buffer area.

3. **Bufferyard Widths**: The width of a bufferyard is determined by the proposed land use, the adjacent land use and the use of the property across the street and the street classification. Buffer width averaging is permitted along individual property lines as long as the total area (in square footage) is maintained. The width of a buffer cannot be less than five (5) feet wide at any point.
The City of Auburn uses a tree inches per acre system to determine the number and types of trees required on a development site. See Table 4-8 in the zoning ordinance to determine the required tree inches per acre and the required number of shrubs based on the size of the development site. If the size of the development site is not a whole number (i.e. between 1.1 acres to 1.9 acres), round up to the nearest whole number (2) to find the factor on the chart.

To determine the number of canopy trees and understory trees, a 60:40 ratio (canopy trees to understory trees) is applied to the tree inches. To figure the number of canopy trees, take the total number of tree inches and multiply by 60% and then dependent upon using a 2” or 3” caliper tree, divide the number by 2 or 3 to determine the number of canopy trees required on the entire site. To calculate the number of understory trees required, take the total number of tree inches and multiply by 40%. That is the number of understory trees to be planted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Size (Acres)</th>
<th>Required Inches per Acre (Trees)</th>
<th>Required Shrubs per Acre (Each)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Auburn Bank
Calculations of Planting Requirements:

Site Size: 1.26 Acres

Tree Inches:
53 X 1.26 acres = 66.78 tree inches
67 after rounding off to the nearest whole number (use this)

Canopy Trees:
67 X 60%/2 (caliper of the tree) = 20 canopy trees

Understory Trees:
67 X 40% = 27 understory trees

Shrubs:
84 X 1.26 acres = 106 shrubs

Note: All calculations done are as per Table 4-8 in the zoning ordinance, factor multipliers.
STREET FRONTAGE LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS (Section 426.02)

The table in Section 426.02 shows the requirements for calculating street frontage bufferyard requirements based on the required width of the bufferyard. The plants are calculated per 100 linear feet, but are not required to be planted per linear foot. The landscape architect or designer has the flexibility to design the landscaping in groups, clusters or spaced as long as the required number of plants are within the bufferyard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required buffer width</th>
<th>Canopy Trees</th>
<th>Understory Trees</th>
<th>Shrubs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(See Table 4-7)</td>
<td>Per 100 feet</td>
<td>Per 100 feet</td>
<td>Per 100 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 feet</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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RESIDENTIAL BUFFER LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS (Section 426.03)

Additional planting materials will be added to the landscaping requirements for property that abuts a conventional subdivision. Twenty (20) inches per 100 linear feet of buffer area is added to the inches per acre requirements for any property lines abutting conventional residential development.

Performance Subdivisions: The perimeter of a performance subdivision requires a bufferyard width based on the land use intensity of the adjacent property. The calculation for the plantings is based on a percentage of the tree inches for the overall acreage of the subdivision. The amount of plantings is 10% of the canopy trees; 20% of the understory trees and 20% of the shrubs required divided by the number of lots on the perimeter of the subdivision. For example, a subdivision with 31 acres would require 620 tree inches and 930 shrubs (based on Table 4-8). Based on the percentages, the subdivision would require 19 canopy trees, 50 understory trees and 186 shrubs. In this example, there are 20 lots on the perimeter of the subdivision. Each lot would require 1 canopy tree, 3 understory trees and 10 shrubs. [Numbers are rounded up to the nearest whole number].

The required perimeter bufferyard is highlighted in the following example:
OFF-SHORE PARKING PLANTING REQUIREMENTS (Section 426.04)

The total landscaped area provided for off-street parking has to comply with one of the following options:

Option 1: One (1) contributing landscape island is required for every sixteen (16) parking spaces in a parking lot.

Option 2: A minimum of 10% of the interior parking lot shall be landscaped. Interior parking area is that area inside of the parking lot curb or edge of pavement consisting of parking spaces, drive aisles, driveways and immediately adjacent areas including all landscape areas. [Landscaping is required for sites with twelve (12) or more parking spaces].

A minimum of one (1) canopy tree will be required for each 304 square feet of required landscaped island or peninsula regardless of the tree credits received. The same is required per one hundred (100) linear feet in continuous planter strips.

The City of Auburn Planning Department (and/or Planning Commission) may vary the minimum off-street parking landscaping requirements if there are specific circumstances or site conditions warranting such actions.
REUSE OF EXISTING SITES (Section 426.07)

The requirements of the ordinance shall be met for all development sites and developments as defined in Article II. This includes vacant, redeveloped or developed sites that require a zoning certificate, that involve changes in land use category as defined in Sections 404 through 408, or that are subject to a conditional use permit. Sites that are nonconforming as per Article VII of the zoning ordinance and cannot physically meet the requirements of Article IV will be subject to Minimum Acceptable Bufferyard requirements of Section 707.
TREE PRESERVATION CREDIT (Section 427)

Credit will be given for specimen trees and any other trees that are successfully preserved and protected. In order for a tree to qualify for tree credit, it must be identified on the Landscape Plan, protected during land disturbance and meet all minimum standards. Only trees with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) measurement of 4 inches or greater and spaced appropriately for future growth shall be eligible for tree credit. A tree protection detail that illustrates how the trees will be preserved during construction is required to be submitted with the landscape plan in order to attain tree credit.

CERTIFIED LANDSCAPE PLAN (Section 432.01)

Landscape plans shall be prepared and certified by a Landscape Architect, Certified Landscape Professional, Licensed Landscape Designer or urban Forester. Other licensed professionals may be authorized by the Planning Director provided that they demonstrate competence.

Requirements to be shown on the landscape plan:

- The project name, street address, date, scale, North arrow, and the name and phone number of the person preparing the plan.
- Location and width of existing utility easements, driveways and sidewalks. Utilities (existing and proposed) will be shown with a bold line.
- The plan shall especially respect sight triangles and sight distances at all intersections.
- The size of the landscape islands, planter strips and peninsulas (if applicable) and their distances from the nearest planted areas.
- An outline of the parking area used for calculating the 10% landscaping requirement of the parking area, if using Option 2.
- Location of existing or proposed structures, paving, driveways, sidewalks, detention areas or fences.
- Location of existing trees and a tree protection plan (if credit for existing trees is requested).
- The planting schedules along with the proposed plant names, quantity & sizes.
Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I determine the landscape requirements for my project?
The landscape requirements are found in Sections 424-432 of The City of Auburn Zoning Ordinance. The Ordinance can be found at www.auburnalabama.org/zo. Call the Planning Department at 334-501-3040 and ask to speak with a Planner if you are having difficulty calculating the requirements.

Do I have to submit a landscape plan?
All site plans that are subject to the requirements of the ordinance must show the required bufferyard widths, planting strips, peninsulas and their distances to the nearest planted area. The final landscape plan with a plant matrix and the placement of the plant material must be submitted prior to the issuance of a building permit.

Is there any flexibility on the landscape requirements of the ordinance?
Waivers to the landscape requirements in terms of bufferyard widths and/or the number of required plantings can be sought before the Planning Commission. Bufferyard averaging is permitted provided the total square footage is met, and the width does not go below five (5) feet in any area. The City of Auburn Planning Department (and/or Planning Commission) may vary the minimum off-street parking landscaping requirements if there are specific circumstances or site conditions warranting such actions.

I have existing trees on the site. Can I get credit for saving them?
Existing trees within the development site that are properly protected, are at least 4 inches diameter at breast height and are spaced appropriately for future growth will be credited toward the tree planting requirements. No tree credits will be applied toward meeting the tree inches allocated to the street frontage and residential buffers unless the trees are located in these buffer areas. A tree protection detail must be provided.

The state is experiencing a drought and the City is restricting watering of plants, trees and lawns. Can I delay placing the required landscaping?
In the event of weather related issues or mitigating circumstances, landscape material may be bonded in accordance with procedures established by the Planning Department.

Are there any fees associated with the ordinance requirements?
There is no fee for landscape plan review or for the required inspection. A landscape inspection must be completed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.