



LANDSCAPE PLAN SUBMITTAL GUIDE

INFORMATIONAL PACKET

QUESTIONS?

Additional information regarding the planning process can be obtained at the Planning Counter at 630 Garden Street (805) 564-5578, PlanningCounter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov



WHEN IS A LANDSCAPE PLAN REQUIRED?

Landscaping is an integral part of a project's design. Landscaping can enhance the city's natural beauty and complement new development as well as provide neighborhood cohesiveness. A landscape plan is required for these types of projects:

- **New Buildings.** All new buildings require a landscape plan. Demolition and reconstruction (substantial redevelopment) also require a landscape plan for the altered site.
- **Substantial Additions or Alterations.** Projects involving substantial additions or alterations require a landscape plan if landscaped areas are altered or new areas are proposed.
- **Residential Terracing.** A landscape plan is required for terracing projects in hillside areas to ensure fire hazard issues are addressed and to stabilize and beautify graded areas.
- **Grading Permit or Hillside Vegetation Removal.** Projects proposing landscaping changes because of a grading permit or Hillside Vegetation Removal require a landscape plan.
- **Environmental Review.** A landscape plan may be required to complete environmental review when a proposed improvement involves historic, archaeological, or environmental resources or hazards, or to lessen potential project impacts to public scenic views.

ARE ANY PROJECTS EXEMPT?

Yes, minor projects, small parking areas, or landscaping not visible to the public may be exempt from providing a formal separate landscape plan. In these instances, any proposed landscaping may be shown on the site plan.

WHO CAN PREPARE LANDSCAPE PLANS?

Only a licensed landscape architect, registered or licensed engineer, architect, land surveyor, or landscape contractor who is contracted to install the landscaping may prepare final landscape plans. The [California Business & Professions Code §5641](#) allows exemptions for unlicensed persons to prepare landscape plans for single family dwellings, or if no grading or drainage plan is required, or if property owners are preparing plans for their own property.

CHANGES TO APPROVED PLANS

Once a landscape plan is approved, Chapter [22.11](#) of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code requires the trees, plants, irrigation system, and other improvements to be maintained. Any substantial change to an approved landscape plan that alters the design, character, or plant coverage at maturity, requires a permit issued by the Community Development Department.

CAN I REPLACE ANY PLANTS WITHOUT A PERMIT?

- ✓ Yes, existing plants may be with plants of the same size and species, or are substantially similar to those being replaced, without a permit or design review
- ✓ “Substantially similar” means the new plant has similar characteristics to the existing plant (height, foliage, flowers, water use) and achieves the original planting purpose (privacy, shade, visual interest)
- ✓ Replacement trees must be less than 12" in diameter and less than 20 feet tall.
- ✓ Replacement plants must be less than 1,000 sq. ft. in front yard and < 20% of total area.
- ✓ A permit is required to replace plants that may have an environmental impact: native species, environmentally sensitive habitat area, plants on slopes of 30% or more, or within 50 feet of a coastal bluff or creek bank.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

Design Review Projects. When a project requires a new landscape plan, submit it online along with your complete [Planning \(PLN\) Application](#). Conceptual landscape plans must be submitted prior to Project Design Approval; a final landscape plan is required prior to Final Approval. Prior to preparing a landscape plan, applicants are encouraged to review the [Landscape Design Guidelines Checklist](#) and identify as many of the design techniques and approaches used to achieve the guideline objectives.

Minor Tree Removals. If the project is limited to a Minor Tree Removal request to remove one to three (1-3) protected trees, a complete landscape plan is not required. Please see the separate [Minor Tree Removal](#) application for submittal requirements.

HOW TO SUBMIT

All building permit and planning applications, including all supporting plans and documents, are accepted online via our [Accela Citizen Access Portal \(ACA\)](#). More information: [Electronic Submittals](#).



WHAT INFORMATION MUST BE ON MY PLANS?

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Landscape plans must be complete, accurate, legible, and to scale. The minimum scale for landscape plans is: 1/8-inch = 1-foot scale; or 1-inch = 10-feet, unless the project is too large to accommodate that scale. If submitted as part of a plan set, the landscape sheets (L-sheets) must be coordinated with the most recent civil engineering plans and the architectural site plan. If any new structures are proposed (fences, walls, spas, barbecues, arbors) these items must comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

TITLE BLOCK

Every set of plans should contain a title block on each sheet that includes the project address, the property owner’s name and plan preparer’s name and contact information (email and phone number). Include the date the plans were prepared, the drawing scale, the sheet number, a sheet index, and the plan preparer’s signature or a professional certification stamp, if appropriate.

SCOPE OF WORK

Provide a written project description. Describe any trees or vegetation proposed to be removed and the proposed method to remove vegetation (mechanical or hand cutting). Reproduce any conditions of approval or Tree Protection Notes (see page 8) on plans, if applicable. Water conservation exception requests must include documentation of equivalent or greater water conservation.

PROJECT DATA

Provide grading amounts of cut and fill in cubic yards. In the project data, provide the total site landscape and hardscape area in square feet and percentages. Include water-wise and non-water-wise planting areas in square feet and as a percentage of total area landscaped with plants. See example:

LOT COVERAGE INFORMATION	EXISTING		PROPOSED	
Building Footprint:	Sq. Ft.	%	Sq. Ft.	%
Hardscape (<i>impermeable</i> : concrete, asphalt):	Sq. Ft.	%	Sq. Ft.	%
Water-Wise Landscape (<i>permeable</i> : plants, gravel):	Sq. Ft.	%	Sq. Ft.	%
Non-Water-Wise Landscape (<i>permeable</i> : lawn/turf):	Sq. Ft.	%	Sq. Ft.	%
TOTAL:	Sq. Ft.	100 %	Sq. Ft.	100 %

SITE PLAN

Show complete property lines with dimensions, and any significant site features including creeks, topography, building and structure locations, parking and driveway location and materials. Include information on street or right-of-way improvements, and show applicable zoning requirements like

setbacks, open yard, fence and hedge heights. Show compliance with parking lot landscape standards if applicable. Indicate the dimensions and area in square feet of all landscaped areas, and non-landscaped or hardscape areas, and describe materials (dirt, gravel, concrete, pavers, bricks). Note areas that are permeable or impermeable. Indicate any existing landscaped areas to remain unaltered.

PLANTING PLAN

Indicate the size (in gallons), number, species, botanical name, and common name of existing and proposed trees, shrubs, plants, and turf grass. Indicate the height, diameter (measured at 4'-6" above the ground), driplines, and root zones of all existing trees. Trees proposed for removal indicate with an "X." Provide existing and proposed landscaping for street parkway strips fronting the subject property.

Desirable Species. For each plant in the planting plan, you may indicate if it is one of the following:

- Water-Wise Plants: [Water Use Classifications of Landscape Species](#) (WUCOLS)
- Fire-Resistant Plants in the High Fire Hazard Area: [Desirable Plant List](#)
- City Street Parkway Plants: [Suggested Parkway Plantings](#)
- California Native Species: [Santa Barbara Botanic Garden](#)
- Mediterranean Species in a Historic/Landmark District: [EPV Suggested Plants List](#)

Prohibited Species. Planting plans prohibit plants found on these lists:

- Invasive Species: [California Invasive Plant Council](#) (Cal-IPC)
- Flammable Species in the High Fire Hazard Area: [Prohibited Plant List](#)

IRRIGATION PLAN

The irrigation plan should be at the same scale as the landscape plan. No major irrigation system components may be located in the public right-of-way. Show location and size of service laterals, meters, and submeters. Show location, size, and type of all irrigation components including, but not limited to: smart controller, central controller, master valve, flow sensor, backflow prevention device, ball valves, anti-drain check valves, pressure supply (main) line, lateral lines, pipe sizing, valves, spray heads, rotors, drip, low volume irrigation equipment, gallons per minute, pressure regulators, and pumps. Show individual hydrozones based on plant water needs and sun/shade requirements.

DOCUMENTATION

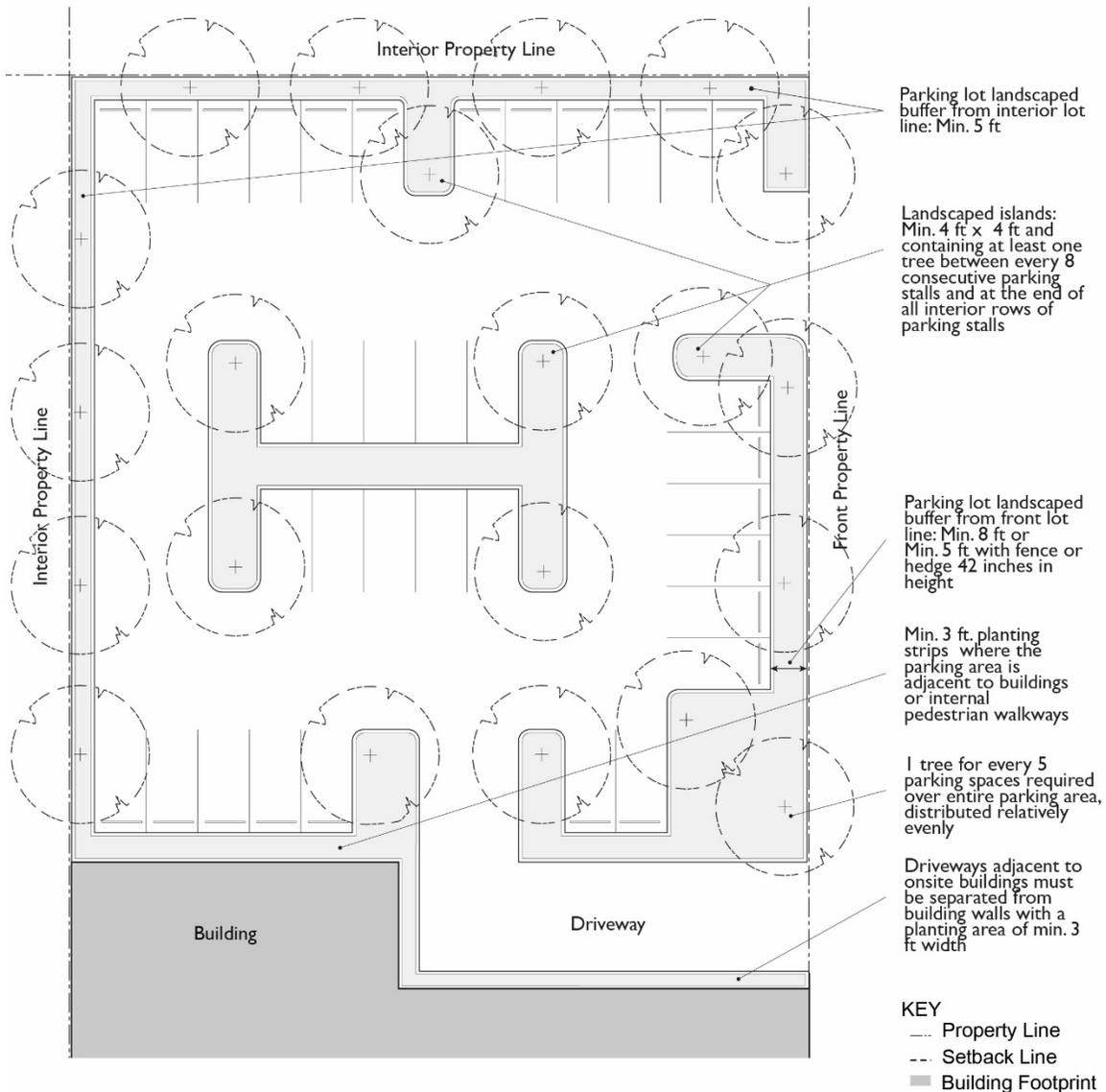
- ✓ **Statement of Compliance.** The landscape plan must include a statement signed by the person who prepared the plans certifying that the landscape design complies with the City's mandatory water conservation elements. See page 6.
- ✓ **Determination of Conforming Installation.** After the landscape is installed, the person who prepared the landscape plan is required to inspect the site and certify in writing that the installation substantially conforms to the approved landscape plan.



WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR PARKING LOT LANDSCAPE?

INTRODUCTION

Parking lots for new multi-unit residential, nonresidential, or mixed-use development must provide and maintain fences, planters, and trees according to the standards in the Santa Barbara Municipal Code §30.175.080 / 28.90.045. A waiver may be approved by the design review bodies for variations to the minimum requirements if necessary to accommodate existing site constraints, or to achieve a better design. Existing sites must also provide conforming landscaping for any parking areas that are altered.





WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR WATER CONSERVATION?

INTRODUCTION

Water is a precious and limited resource, especially in drought-prone Santa Barbara. As a result, water efficiency is a significant part of the City's water supply planning and are an important priority for the City. There are many cost-effective ways to save water, including high efficiency plumbing fixtures, water wise landscaping, and efficient irrigation systems. The City's adopted Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation includes mandatory measures for all required landscape plans.

WATER-WISE LANDSCAPING

Limit Your Lawn

1

Turf grass is prohibited on all commercial projects, and in parkways, narrow areas, and sloped areas. Residential projects should only use turf grass when it serves a purpose, such as play or entertainment areas. Consider replacing existing turf grass areas with permeable hardscape or native plants, adding interest and color to your yard.

Plant Water-Wise

2

Select plants with low-water or very-low-water requirements and those that are appropriate to our Mediterranean climate. See the [WUCOLS](#) database for a list of appropriate plants. Residents are encouraged to use California native plants, which generally have lower water requirements than other plants.

Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

3

A 3 to 4-inch layer of mulch will reduce water evaporation, protect roots from heat, reduce competitive weeds, and help build healthy soil. A good mulch layer can reduce irrigation need by about 50%. Make sure it is reapplied when it gets sparse, generally every year.

Irrigate Efficiently

4

Efficient irrigation methods can help keep plants healthy during dry periods while also limiting water use. Install a drip system. Replace sprinkler heads with low-flow options. Avoid sprinkler overspray. Group plants according to water needs. Install a smart irrigation controller with a rain shut-off sensor and use Watering % Adjust tool to adjust your irrigation schedule.

Minimize Steep Slopes

5

Slopes can be challenging because of the potential for erosion and runoff. Sloped landscape area should encourage water retention and infiltration with swales and depressions. If slopes cannot be avoided in your landscape design, install plantings with deeper root zones such as native ground covers and shrubs to provide stabilization and prevent erosion.

CREDIT: University of California Master Gardeners Program, and United States EPA Water Sense website.



LANDSCAPE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

The person who prepared the landscape plan must sign this checklist and include it on the landscape plans. Check each box to verify compliance and add sheet references or indicate N/A if “not applicable”.

1) Limit Your Lawn

Sheet # _____

- Commercial projects have no lawn or turf grass areas _____
- No turf grass is in parkways, medians, or other areas with any dimension of less than 8 feet _____
- No turf grass is located on slopes of 20% or greater _____

2) Plant Water-Wise

Sheet # _____

- Commercial projects are designed with 100% water-wise plants _____
- Residential, mixed-use, and institutional are designed with minimum 80% water-wise plants _____
- Plant list includes botanical name, common name, and WUCOLS designation _____
- Plans show total square feet and percent of water-wise, medium, high-water-using landscaping _____

3) Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

Sheet # _____

- All appropriate landscaped areas will be covered with at least 3 inches of mulch _____

4) Irrigate Efficiently

Sheet # _____

- Drip irrigation, using emitters with < 2 GPH, is provided on at least 25% of the landscaped area _____
- Valves are separated for hydrozones based on plant water needs and sun/shade requirements _____
- A weather-based irrigation controller with a rain shutoff sensor is provided _____
- Areas less than 8 feet are irrigated with bubblers, pop-up rotating nozzle, sub-surface, or drip _____
- Irrigation systems are designed to avoid overspray and runoff _____
- Sprinklers have matched precipitation rates within each valve and circuit. _____
- Sprinklers have uniform distribution, head-to-head spacing, and setbacks from paved areas. _____
- Check valves are provided at the low end of irrigation lines to prevent unwanted draining. _____
- Pressure regulators are provided for mainline, if necessary; inline regulators at each valve. _____

5) Minimize Steep Slopes

Sheet # _____

- Slope allows for water retention, creates swales, mimics natural flow, and maintains flow width. _____

I certify that the foregoing is true and correct and that verification will be necessary upon final inspection.

Signature

Name

License # and Exp. Date



WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE HIGH FIRE HAZARD AREA?

INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Barbara has been subject to numerous damaging wildland fires, influenced by the weather, terrain, and the surrounding landscape. Strategies to reduce fire hazards, such as defensible space requirements, are required on all parcels within a [High Fire Hazard Area](#). Plantings along driveways must be shown on landscape plans and are required to have vegetation planted or trimmed to provide a vertical clearance of 13'-6" and a 10-foot horizontal clearance. Vines and climbing ornamental plants on structures are prohibited, as well as rooftop gardens and vegetated roofs.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Vegetation within defensible space zones, native or otherwise, must be maintained to create an effective fuel break by thinning dense vegetation and removing dry brush, flammable vegetation, and combustible growth. The City of Santa Barbara uses a four-zone fire landscape concept. Landscape plans must delineate zones around all structures based on the defensible space for your property:

ZONE	DISTANCE	DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIREMENTS
ZONE 1	0 – 30 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigated ground covers not more than 12 inches in height or succulents. Use non-flammable materials for paths, patios, and mulch. Trees should be planted at least 15 feet away from a structure. No plantings may be connected or trellised to the structure.
ZONE 2	30 – 50 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrubs up to 3 feet in height with clusters no more than 10 feet in diameter with at least 18 feet spacing between other shrubs or other trees. Do not plant shrubs underneath canopy of trees. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet apart.
ZONE 3	50 – 70 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigated native and Mediterranean plantings no higher than 4 to 6 feet. Shrubs up to 3 feet in height with clusters no more than 10 feet in diameter with at least 18 feet spacing between other shrubs or other trees. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet apart.
ZONE 4	70 – 150 feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plantings once established need no irrigation. There is no limit to height. Shrubs planted in this area should have 18 feet spacing or be planted in clusters with at least 18 feet spacing. Trees should be spaced at least 30 feet apart.
SLOPES >30%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If additional vegetation modification is required on slopes over 30% vegetation should be reduced through thinning of existing plants, pruning, removal of dead material, and removal of fire ladders.



WHAT TREE PROTECTIONS ARE REQUIRED?

TREE PROTECTION AND REPLACEMENT

Chapters 15.20 and 15.24 of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code establish protections for City street trees and certain privately-owned trees. Removal of a protected tree requires a [Tree Removal Permit](#). Preservation and protection of existing significant trees is a primary goal of a landscape design.

Trees four inches (4") in diameter or greater measured at four feet six inches (4'-6") above grade should be replaced on site on a minimum 1:1 basis unless an alternative replacement ratio is deemed necessary as part of the environmental review process. Recommended replacement ratios are generally higher for native tree species, at 10:1 for oak trees and 3:1 for sycamore trees.

TREE PROTECTION NOTES

Proposed projects which may impact existing trees are required to submit **Tree Protection Notes** as part of the final landscape submittal. These notes must be included on all site or grading plans:

TREE PROTECTION NOTES

1. **Earth Disturbance Prohibition.** No earth disturbance is allowed in the circular area one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) the distance of the overall canopy/dripline as measured from the trunk. (For example, if the tree canopy is 30 feet, no work can be done in the first 10 feet from the outside edge of the trunk in all directions.) In other areas under the canopy/dripline, earth may only be disturbed with hand tools.
2. **Arborist's Report.** Any work within the general vicinity of the dripline of a tree may require an Arborist's Report. If an Arborist's Report is required, defer to the report's recommendations.
3. **Paving.** Paving and other non-permeable surface encroachment under tree canopy/driplines should be minimized. For oak trees, no paving is allowed under the canopy due to their sensitivity to paving. If paving or other non-permeable surfaces encroach within a canopy, no more than 25% of the total area beneath the canopy dripline can be covered, and paving may only be placed by hand or with hand tools.
4. **Distance from Structures.** The edge of the mature tree canopy/dripline should remain a minimum of five feet (5') from all new structures.
5. **Replacement Size/Dimensions.** If it is determined that a significant tree is to be removed, the diameter of the required replacement tree will be equal to or greater than one-quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) the diameter of the existing tree (e.g., a 12-inch-diameter oak will be replaced with one measuring no less than 3 inches). Smaller tree replacement sizes than this formula may be specified in some cases to ensure replacement tree availability.



DOES MY TREE OR LANDSCAPE REQUIRE A PERMIT?

Use this table to identify the decision-maker on tree or landscape projects.

PROJECT TYPE	PARKS & RECREATION	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
REMOVE STREET TREE	Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	NO
NEW/PRUNE ¹ STREET TREE	Staff-Level Approval	NO
REMOVE SETBACK TREE	<i>Outside Historic/Landmark District:</i> Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	<i>In Historic/Landmark District:</i> Historic Landmarks Commission
NEW/PRUNE ¹ SETBACK TREE	NO	NO
REMOVE HISTORIC TREE OR SPECIMEN TREE	<i>In the Right-of-Way:</i> Street Tree Advisory Committee + Parks & Recreation Commission	<i>On Private Property:</i> Historic Landmarks Commission
REMOVE DEAD, DISEASED, HAZARDOUS TREE ²	Staff-Level Approval	A permit for a replacement tree may be required within 30 days
TREE REMOVAL ORDERED BY FIRE DEPARTMENT	NO	NO
REMOVE PARKING LOT TREE	NO	Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission
REMOVE TREE ON AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Architectural Board of Review or Historic Landmarks Commission
SUBSTANTIAL ALTERATIONS TO AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Architectural Board of Review, or Historic Landmarks Commission, or Single Family Design Board
MINOR ALTERATIONS TO AN APPROVED PLAN	NO	Staff-Level Approval
VEGETATION REMOVAL PERMIT ³ REQUIRED	NO	Single Family Design Board

¹ It is unlawful to prune or significantly alter a protected tree in such a way that either: (1) its natural character is significantly altered; or (2) the height or spread of the tree crown is reduced by more than one-quarter within any 12-month period.

² Prior written notice of such condition must be provided to the Parks and Recreation Director at least 48 hours prior to removal of the tree. A permit for a replacement tree is required within 30 days if the removal is a parking lot tree or a tree on an approved plan.

³ A Vegetation Removal Permit is required for the removal of plants in the Hillside Design District, as defined in SBMC §22.10.040