

## **Section 7: Landscaping and Screening**

### **7.1 General Provisions**

- 7.1.1 The purpose of these provisions is to enhance the visual appearance of Strathcona County, be consistent with the objectives of Strathcona County's *Open Space Development Standards*, and to mitigate potential land use conflicts.
- 7.1.2 The regulations of this Section apply in all districts except the AG, AR, AU, RA and RC districts. Only the provisions of Section 7.4.4 apply in the RE, RH, R1A, R1B, R1C, and R2A districts. Where there appears to be a conflict with the regulations in other Sections, these landscaping regulations apply unless those Sections specifically exclude or modify these landscaping regulations.
- 7.1.3 Where landscaping is required by this *Bylaw*, no development shall be commenced unless:
- a) a Development Officer has approved a landscaping plan or a reclamation plan has been approved pursuant to Section 9.8 or 9.9; and
  - b) the required security for landscaping pursuant to Section 7.2 or reclamation pursuant to Section 9.8 or 9.9 has been submitted to the satisfaction of a Development Officer.
- 7.1.4 A landscaping plan shall contain the requirements of Section 3.2.4 and shall be prepared by a landscape architect who is a full member, in good standing, of the Alberta Association of Landscape Architects. (**Bylaw 14-2008**)
- 7.1.5 Unless covered by the provisions of a development agreement, any landscaping area between the property line and the existing curb must be incorporated into the landscape plan and shall be landscaped concurrently by the development to the standard of landscaping required by Strathcona County's *Open Space Development Standards*.
- 7.1.6 Existing landscaping or natural vegetation should be conserved as shown on the landscape plan and will be used to meet the requirements of this Section unless removal, in the opinion of a Development Officer, is necessary to efficiently accommodate the proposed development. Where practical, vegetation should be relocated on site.
- 7.1.7 The Engineering and Environmental Planning Department and the Recreation, Parks, and Culture Department may review landscaping plans and provide advice to a Development Officer as to the suitability of the landscaping plans.
- 7.1.8 In the event that plant material required in an approved development is inappropriate or fails to survive, a Development Officer, in consultation with Strathcona County's landscape architect, may allow or require alternative materials to be substituted.

### **7.2 Landscaping Security**

- 7.2.1 The owner or the owner's representative, based on the information provided on the landscape plan, shall calculate the landscaping costs. If a Development Officer does not accept the costs identified by the owner or the owner's representative, a Development Officer may determine a different landscaping cost figure for the purpose of determining the value of the landscaping security.
- 7.2.2 A Development Officer may require, as a condition of a development permit that the owner provide a guaranteed security to ensure that landscaping is provided and maintained for two growing seasons. The security may take the following forms:
- a) cash to a value equal to 110% of the established landscaping costs; or

- b) an irrevocable letter of credit having the value equivalent to 110% of the established landscaping costs.
- 7.2.3 Where security has been submitted pursuant to Section 9.8 and 9.9 for a reclamation plan, the landscaping security of Section 7.2.1 is not required.
- 7.2.4 Where a site is to be developed in phases, landscaping need only be provided on that portion of the site to be approved in each phase. Landscaping shall be required in subsequent phases on the remainder of the site at the time these are approved and developed.
- 7.2.5 If cash is offered as the landscaping security, interest may be payable, and it shall be held by Strathcona County, until the landscaping has been installed, successfully maintained for two growing seasons and a Development Officer is satisfied through site inspection that this has occurred. **(Bylaw 13-2003)**
- 7.2.6 If a letter of credit is offered as the landscaping security, it shall be in a form satisfactory to Strathcona County. The initial term of the letter of credit shall be one year. The letter of credit shall be renewed for a further one-year term by the owner 30 days prior to expiry. This process shall be repeated as many times as is necessary so that the letter of credit is maintained until the installation of landscaping has occurred and maintenance of the landscaping has been carried out for two growing seasons, as determined by and to the satisfaction of a Development Officer.
- 7.2.7 The owner shall notify Strathcona County 30 days prior to the expiry date of the letter of credit, in order to provide sufficient time for a Development Officer to inspect the site and to determine if the landscaping is well maintained and development in accordance with the regulations of this *Bylaw*. If landscaping conditions are satisfactory to a Development Officer, the letter of credit may be released. If inspection cannot be made within this 30-day period due to weather conditions or other extenuating circumstances, a Development Officer may require renewal of the letter of credit until a satisfactory inspection can be made.
- 7.2.8 Upon application by the owner's representative, a letter of credit may be amended to a reduced amount, for attachment to the original letter of credit, at the discretion of a Development Officer, when any of the following events occur and are to the satisfaction of a Development Officer:
- a) the required landscaping has been properly installed;
  - b) notwithstanding Section 7.2.5, the required landscaping has been well maintained and is in a healthy condition after one growing season; and
  - c) the required landscaping has been well maintained and is in a healthy condition after two growing seasons. In this last case, the letter of credit shall be fully released.
- 7.2.9 Any letter of credit shall allow for partial draws. If the landscaping is not completed in accordance with the approved landscape plan within one growing season after completion of the development or if the landscaping is not well maintained and in a healthy condition two growing seasons after completion of the landscaping, Strathcona County may draw on a cash security or a letter of credit and the amount thereof shall be paid to Strathcona County for its use absolutely. All expenses incurred by Strathcona County to renew or draw upon a letter of credit shall be reimbursed by the owner to Strathcona County by payment of invoice or from the proceeds of the letter of credit.
- 7.2.10 In the event the owner does not complete the required landscaping, or if the owner fails to maintain the landscaping in the healthy condition to the satisfaction of a Development Officer for the specified periods of time and the cash or the proceeds from the letter of credit are insufficient for Strathcona County to complete the required work, should it elect to do so, then the owner shall pay such deficiency to Strathcona County immediately upon being invoiced therefor. Strathcona County shall provide an accounting to the owner indicating how the proceeds of the letter of credit were applied, within 60 days of completing or maintaining the landscaping.

- 7.2.11 Upon receipt of a written request from the parties involved in the development, including but not limited to the property owner, condominium association or the issuer of the letter of credit, an inspection of the finished landscaping may be scheduled by a Development Officer. Inspections may be made during the normal growing season, approximately April 15 through October 15. All reasonable effort shall be made by a Development Officer to perform the inspection within 10 working days of receipt of the inspection request.

### **7.3 Landscape Requirements for Parking & Storage**

- 7.3.1 A parking area having 8 or more parking spaces and which is visible from an adjacent site in a residential district or from a road other than a lane shall be fenced or have a screen planting. The location, length, thickness and height of such fence or screen planting shall be in accordance with the landscaping plan approved by a Development Officer.
- 7.3.2 Where off-road parking for 30 or more vehicles is provided at grade on a site, there shall be landscaped open space within the parking area, unless otherwise decided by a Development Officer. Landscaped open space in the parking areas shall be provided in the minimum amount of 2.0 m<sup>2</sup> for each parking space. The required landscaping shall not be located in one area and shall be placed within the parking area so as to provide visual relief and break up large areas of parking into smaller cells.
- 7.3.3 A garbage collection area, an open storage area, or an outdoor service area, including any loading and vehicular service area, which is visible from an adjacent site in a residential district or from a public road other than a lane, shall be fenced and/or have a screen planting. The location, length, thickness and height of such fence or screen planting shall be in accordance with the landscaping plan approved by a Development Officer. Such fence and/or screen planting shall be maintained to provide effective screening from the ground to a height of 2.0 m.
- 7.3.4 For bulk outdoor storage, including but not limited to auto wrecking, lumber yards, pipe storage and similar uses, where because of height of materials stored, a screen planting would not be sufficient, a fence, earth berm or combination thereof, with sufficient height to substantially block the view, shall be substituted for the requirements of Section 7.3.3.
- 7.3.5 Where, because of conditions not conducive to good horticultural practices, a screen planting cannot reasonably be expected to survive, a Development Officer shall require a masonry wall, wood fence, earth berm, or combination thereof, to be substituted for the requirements Section 7.3.3.
- 7.3.6 Any screen planting required shall consist of landscaping provided in accordance with the specifications contained in Section 7.6. All screen plantings shall be maintained to provide effective screening from the ground to a height of 2.0 m.
- 7.3.7 In commercial and industrial districts, a landscaped strip of at least 4.0 m shall be provided in front yards and flanking side yards.

### **7.4 Landscape Requirements for Open Space**

- 7.4.1 In addition to the landscaping of off-road parking and vehicular use areas, all remaining open spaces on any developed lot shall conform to the following minimum requirements:
- a) Grass, ground cover, shrubs, and other landscape materials shall be used to cover all open ground within 6.0 m of any building or paving or other use such as storage.
  - b) All structures shall be treated with landscaping so as to enhance the appearance of the structure and to screen any unsightly appearance.
  - c) Landscaping shall take into account the need for winter storage of snow.

- d) In all non-residential districts, the required front yard setback shall be landscaped in accordance with this Section 7. (**Bylaw 4-2002**)
- e) Trees shall be included on the landscaping plan and planted in non-vehicular open space to meet the following requirement:
- (i) One tree for each 25 m<sup>2</sup> and one shrub for each 15 m<sup>2</sup> of required yards in non-industrial districts;
  - (ii) One tree for each 46 m<sup>2</sup> of any required yard in industrial districts; and
  - (iii) One tree for each 15 m<sup>2</sup> and one shrub for each 10 m<sup>2</sup> of required parking area island provided that there will be at least one tree per parking area island.
- 7.4.2 When commercial or industrial development abuts residential development, a Development Officer may require that some of the trees be provided along the yard abutting the residential development.
- 7.4.3 When existing trees that are retained on a development site are at least 15 cm in caliper, they may count double towards meeting the tree requirements of this Section. When existing trees are at least 25 cm in caliper, they may count triple towards meeting the tree requirements of this Section.
- 7.4.4 In the RE, RH, R1A, R1B, R1C R2A districts, and Direct Control (Residential) Districts, the owner of the property is responsible for the placement and proper maintenance of landscaping on the site for all yards visible from a road. All yards visible from a road shall be seeded with grass or sodded within 18 months of occupancy. Alternative forms of landscaping may be substituted for seeding or sodding, provided that all areas of exposed earth are designed as either flower beds or cultivated gardens. (**Bylaw 13-2003**)

## **7.5 Specifications for Landscape Construction**

- 7.5.1 All specifications and procedures for the acquisition, installation and maintenance of the landscape are to be done in manner consistent with good horticultural practice as illustrated by the latest version of Strathcona County's *Open Space Development Standards*.
- 7.5.2 All plant materials shall be hardy to Strathcona County and to the location on the site where they are planted. The *Horticultural Standards* of the Canadian Nursery Trades Association shall be used as a reference for plant selection.
- 7.5.3 Existing landscaping or natural vegetation that is to be retained must be protected to the furthest extent of the drip line and the final grading of the site should not alter the existing grade within the root zone more than 20 cm.
- 7.5.4 All landscaping required by Section 7 shall conform to the following at installation:
- a) tree species at maturity shall have an average spread of crown greater than 5.0 m. Trees having a lesser average mature crown of 5.0 m may be grouped so as to create the equivalent of 5.0 m or greater crown at maturity.
  - b) deciduous trees shall be at least 60 mm caliper;
  - c) coniferous trees shall have a minimum height of 2.5 m,
  - d) coniferous shrubs shall have a minimum spread of 450 mm; and
  - e) deciduous shrubs shall have a minimum height of 450 mm.

## **7.6 Fencing**

- 7.6.1 Fences shall be consistent with the character and quality of the design and materials of the principal building.
- 7.6.2 A development officer may require a fence to be installed where commercial or industrial development is proposed to abut residential development. Where noise is a potential nuisance, a Development Officer may specify that the fence be designed to attenuate noise.
- 7.6.3 A fence shall not be higher, measured from the ground level 0.5 m inside the property line of the site, than:
- a) 2.0 m for the portion of a fence that does not extend beyond the foremost portion of the building abutting the front yard, nor beyond the foremost portion of the building where it abuts a side yard abutting a public road other than a lane; and **(Bylaw 13-2003)**
  - b) 1.0 m for the portion of a fence that does extend beyond the foremost portion or portions of the building on the site, provided that a Development Officer may allow a fence to be erected to not more than 2.0 m in height if, in the opinion of a Development Officer, it will not prejudice the safety or amenities of the adjoining lots.
- 7.6.4 Notwithstanding Section 7.6.3, a Development Officer may approve a higher fence or a fence with barbed or other security features for public safety, privacy, security, or buffering reasons.
- 7.6.5 In the case of double fronting sites, fences shall be of a height satisfactory to a Development Officer having regard to the location of fences in the surrounding area and the requirement for screening.