

Article 3 Development Standards

Figure 64-3- 12 Stoop Frontage Type



Stoop (cutaway & plan view)

(a) Requirements:

- (1)** Stoops shall be between 4 and 6 feet deep.
- (2)** Partial walls and railings on stoops shall comply with the current Building Code adopted by the City of Mobile.

7. Storefront

(a) Requirements:

- (1)** The storefront area is calculated by multiplying the width of the building frontage by the ground floor height.
- (2)** Storefronts shall provide transparent windows for at least 50% of the storefront facade, calculated separately for each building frontage.

Sec. 64-3-7 Landscaping & Tree Requirements

A. Landscaping

1. Applicability

- (a)** This Section applies to each building site subject to an application for a building permit. This Section does not apply to property zoned R-1, Single-Family, and R-2, Two-Family.
- (b)** To encourage the renovation, upgrading and maintenance of existing structures, this section applies to sites with an existing structure(s) if the total gross floor area of the presently existing structure(s) is increased or decreased by fifty (50) percent. Increases or decreases can occur by either additions or deletions to existing structure(s), or the placement or removal of structures on the site.
- (c)** Development in the Downtown Development District and the Springhill Overlay are subject only to Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.5 (Installation) and Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.5 (Landscape plans) below. Where landscaping is required by the Architectural Review Board and/or the Community Development Block Grant Program/Mobile Housing Board

Article 3 Development Standards

that exceeds the standards within this subsection, if the provisions are in conflict, the higher standard shall prevail.

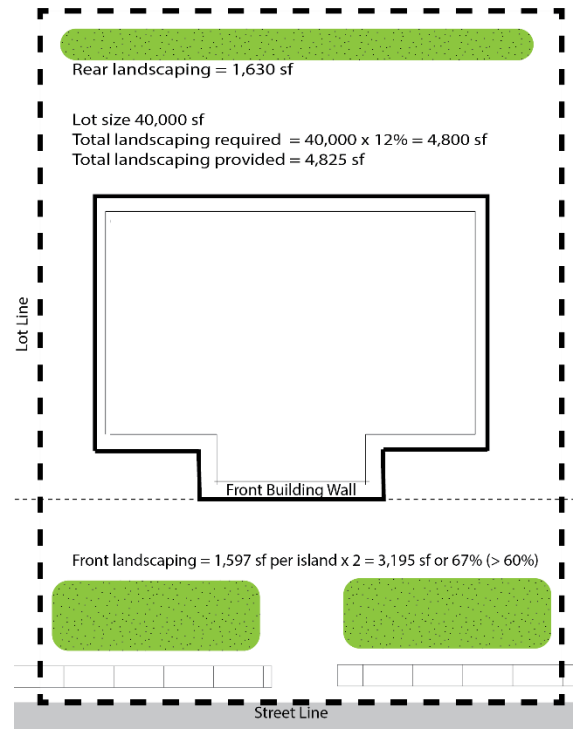
- (d) Existing landscaping on sites with existing structures or areas suitable for landscaping shall not be reduced below the landscape requirements established in this Section.
- (e) These requirements remain with any subsequent owner.

Figure 64-3- 13 Landscape Percentage Requirements

2. Building Site

(a) Landscaping Percentage Requirements

- (1) **Building Site Landscape Area.** The zoning district regulations indicate the minimum percentage of the total building site that shall be landscaped.
- (2) **Front Lot Landscape Area.** At least 60% of the landscaping percentage required shall be located on the building site between the street facing property line and the building wall(s) facing the street, or from the nearest portion of a parking lot along a street frontage (if further from the street than the building), as illustrated in Figure 64-3- 13 Landscape Percentage Requirements.



(b) Tree Requirements

(1) Frontage Trees.

- a. Where a front lot landscape area is required, the front setback must contain at least 1 plant unit for every 40 feet of road frontage, with at least one overstory tree per 50 feet of road frontage.
- b. Existing trees within the right-of-way between the back of curb and sidewalk or property line may count towards the frontage tree planting requirements if:
 - 1. The trees exist when a landscape plan is filed (and are depicted on the plan), and the plan otherwise complies with the requirements of this section.

(2) Perimeter Trees.

- a. Where a building site is required to provide landscape area, the building site must contain 1 plant unit for every 50 feet of the outside lot perimeter, less those plant units required in the front setback.
- b. The plant unit mix for perimeter plants shall be at minimum 1/2 overstory trees.

Article 3 Development Standards

- c. Building sites located within, ML, MH, I-1 or I-2 zoning districts are exempt from the requirements of this subsection.

(3) **Parking Lot Trees.**

- a. One (1) tree for every 20 parking spaces, with a minimum of 1/3 of the trees to be overstory trees and the remainder may be understory trees.

(4) **Tree Requirement Waivers.**

- a. If the Urban Forester determines that the number of trees required by this Section, after the application of credits, is inappropriate for the site involved, the Urban Forester may:
 - 1. waive any number of trees required, and
 - 2. require the applicant to donate the trees waived to the Mobile Tree Commission to be planted as public trees.

- (c) **Frontage/Perimeter Exclusion.** When calculating plant unit requirements, the frontage (see Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.2(b)(1) and outside lot perimeter (see Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.2(b)(2) used to calculate required plant units may exclude the following:

- (1) those areas within an overhead high voltage power easement;
- (2) those areas within a drainage / utility easement; and
- (3) that portion of a lot line occupied by a driveway; and
- (4) that portion of the frontage that is underneath the canopy of an existing tree planted in the right-of-way; and
- (5) that portion of the perimeter that abuts commercially-zoned properties.

- (d) **Frontage/Perimeter Planting Locations.** When preparing the landscape plan, proposed trees shall not be planted in the following locations:

- (1) those areas within an overhead high voltage power easement;
- (2) those areas within a drainage / utility easement;
- (3) underneath the canopy of an existing tree;
- (4) in detention ponds, except where provided by Chapter 17 of the City Code; or
- (5) within 15 feet of a monument or freestanding sign.

Article 3 Development Standards

Figure 64-3-14 Summary of Building Site Planting Requirements



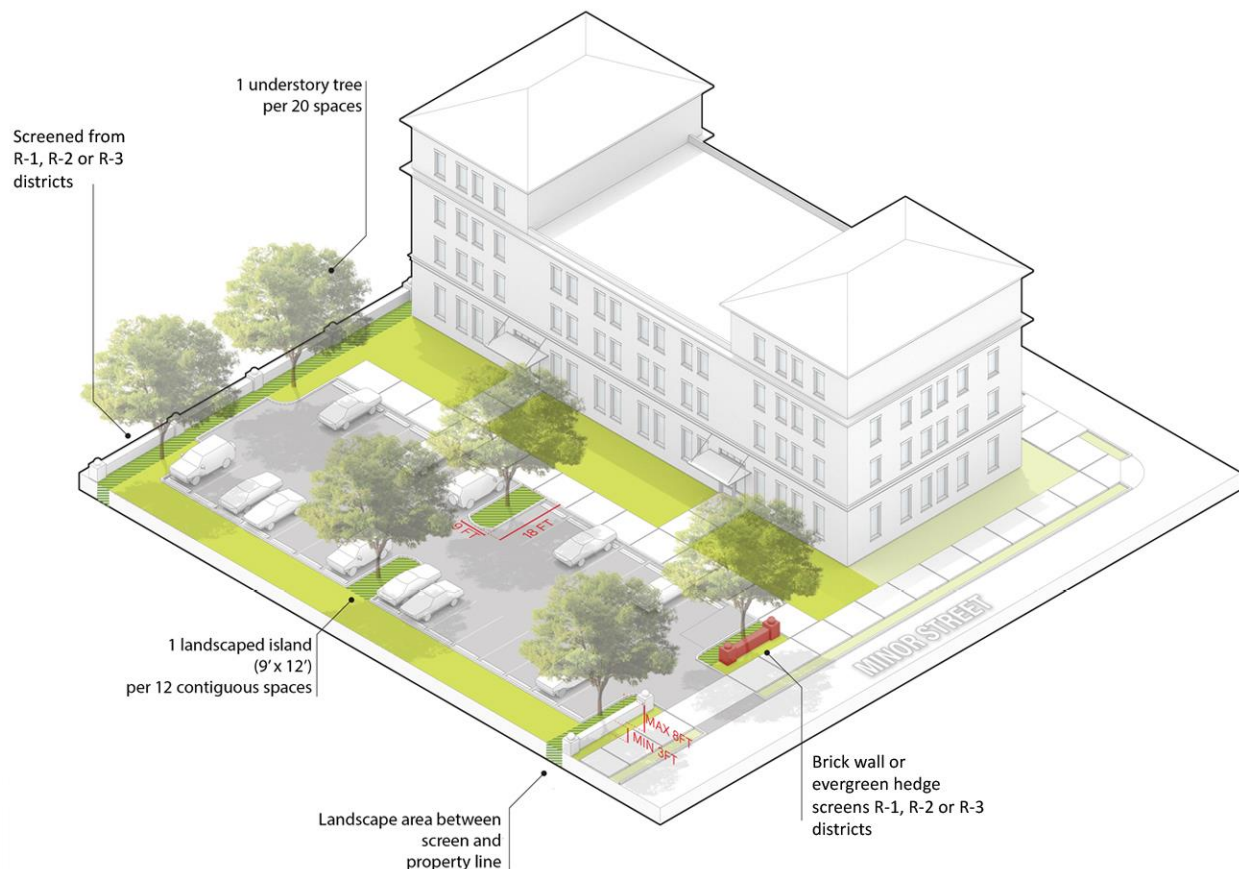
3. Parking lot landscaping

- (a) **Applicability.** Parking lot landscaping shall be provided in parking lot use areas having uncovered parking at street level. Parking lots located within ML, MH, I-1 or I-2 zoning districts are exempt from this subsection. Vehicular parking areas for the storage of inventory/fleet vehicles are also exempt from this subsection.
- (b) **Generally.** The landscaping shall be provided in a way that breaks up the expanse of paving, facilitates the safe circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and provides shade valuable for pedestrians and/or vehicles.
- (c) **Parking with 10 or More Spaces.** Self-parking that provides more than 10 uncovered parking spaces at street level shall include landscaping as follows:
 - (1) **Parking lot screening.**
 - a. A parking area separated from R-1, R-2 and R-3 districts by a minor street shall have a masonry wall (with a finish such as brick, stucco, split face, or evergreen vines), metal fence, wooden fence, evergreen hedge ("screen"), or other materials as determined by the Director, as follows:
 - 1. The screen shall have a minimum height of 3 feet and a maximum of 4 feet.
 - 2. The screen shall be placed within 5 feet from the edge of the parking lot.

Article 3 Development Standards

3. The area between the screen and the property line shall be landscaped.
- (2) **Interior Landscaping.** Parking lots must be landscaped in the interior of the lot to break up the expanse of paving. The following minimum plantings are required:
- a. Parking lots shall have trees planted on maximum 75-foot centers;
 - b. Any part of the parking lot not used for parking stalls, roadways or pedestrian walks shall be landscaped with a living groundcover (grass, vines, annuals, perennials), shrubs and trees; and
 - c. One (1) landscaped island of at least 9 by 18 feet (162 square feet) or larger (based upon the selected planting materials) for every 12 contiguous spaces.

Figure 64-3- 15 Summary of Parking Lot Landscaping Requirements



4. Credits Toward Landscaping Requirements

(a) Generally

- (1) Credits toward overall landscaping requirements are available as provided below.

Article 3 Development Standards

- (2) Total on-site landscaping requirements shall not be reduced below five (5) percent except:
 - a. in cases of hardship as determined by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, developments in historic districts, or professional buildings with specific site criteria.

(b) Preservation Credit

- (1) If natural features and amenities such as trees, water courses, historic sites, and similarly irreplaceable assets exist on a building site prior to development and the applicant provides a legally enforceable commitment to permanently preserve those natural features and amenities, up to 100% may be credited toward the landscaping percentage requirement for the total building site (see Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.2(a)(1) if the Director determines that the credit satisfies all purposes, objectives and requirements of this section.
- (2) If at least 75% of the Front Lot Area includes an existing continuous tree canopy that is preserved, no additional frontage tree plantings (see Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.2(a)(2) are required.

(c) Tree credit

- (1) Preservation of existing trees included on the plant list can be credited toward the tree planting requirements of this Section according to the following ratio:
 - a. the number of credited trees is determined by measuring the DBH of each preserved tree and dividing the sum by 6:

$$\text{Preservation Credit} = (\text{SUM DBH}) \div 6$$

- (2) To be included in the computation for credit for preserved trees, each preserved tree must be at least 3 inches DBH.
- (3) Credits for preserved trees located outside of the frontage area or right-of-way shall not eliminate the frontage tree planting requirements (see Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A.2(b)(1).

(d) Protection of trees claimed for preservation credit

- (1) Credited trees shall be uniformly encircled by a protected ground area of a minimum distance of 10 feet from the trunk, or more if required by the Urban Forester, to ensure the health of the tree. During any construction on the site, the protected ground area shall be clearly marked with a protective barrier.
- (2) No credit will be allowed for any tree proposed to be retained if there is any encroachment within the "protected ground area" defined by a circle which has as its center the trunk of the tree, or if the tree is unhealthy or dead.
- (3) If any preserved tree being used for credit dies or fails to thrive, the owner shall plant new trees equal to the number of credited trees and the replacement trees will be of the same species or variety as the credited tree(s) lost.

- 5. **Installation.** All landscape material shall be installed in accordance with horticulturally sound principles and best practices and with the landscape plan, as finally approved. In addition, the planting, installation and maintenance of planting material shall conform to the specifications below.

Article 3 Development Standards

6. Plant Selection

- (a) New trees planted to meet this section must be selected from the Approved Plant List. Size specifications and landscape materials shall conform to the American Standard for Nursery Stock.
- (b) Monocultures are not permitted where nine (9) or more new trees are required; new trees shall be a mixture of at least three (3) species.
- (c) The Urban Forester may permit substitutions if:
 - (1) the applicant submits a recommendation for the substitution from an Alabama registered landscape architect or horticulturist; or
 - (2) if a listed species is infested by fungi, disease or pests.

7. **Dimensions.** New trees planted to meet this section must have a caliper and height at the time of planting as follows:

Table 64-3- 2 Tree Planting Specifications

| Tree Category | Caliper | Height (<i>minimum</i>) |
|---------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Overstory | 3 inches | -- |
| Understory | 2 inches | -- |
| Palm | -- | 6 feet (<i>clear trunk</i>) |
| Multi-stemmed | 1 inch per stem (<i>minimum 3 stems</i>) | 10 feet |

8. **Warranty.** New landscape materials planted to meet this section must have a warranty of at least one (1) year.

9. Minimum Planting Area and Spacing

- (a) The minimum planting area and spacing for each new tree is required to ensure adequate space for tree growth, and is designated in the Approved Plant List.
- (b) The minimum planting area for a new tree is defined by a circle whose minimum planting dimension is centered at the center of the tree's trunk and terminates in any direction at the outer boundary of the area that must be landscape area to ensure tree survival.
- (c) A planting area may vary from a concentric shape if:
 - (1) Trees are planted between the back of curb and a sidewalk (subject to a Right-of-Way Permit), or the Urban Forester determines that site or topographical conditions require a plant area configuration different than a circle, and
 - (2) The planting area has the minimum dimension defined in the Approved Plant List.
- (d) The minimum canopy spacing for a new tree is defined by a circle whose diameter is centered at the center of the tree's trunk and terminates in any direction. New trees must be planted so that they do not infringe upon the minimum spacing of other trees required or claimed for credit.

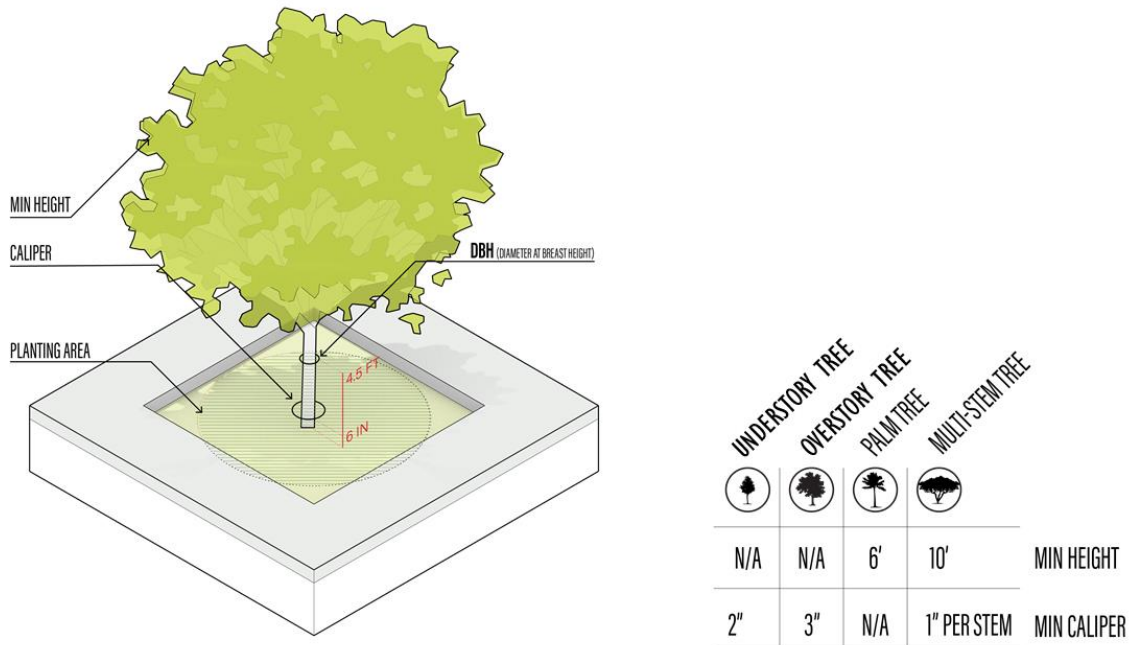


Figure 64-3- 16 Minimum Planting Dimensions and Planting Area

10. Maintenance

(a) Generally

- (1) All landscaped areas shall be maintained by the property owner at all times.
- (2) Maintenance includes the prompt replacement of all dead or damaged landscaped material to ensure continued compliance with the landscaping requirements of this section.

(b) **Right-of-Way / Median.** Required maintenance applies to right-of-way and median maintenance for developers who elect to take credits toward landscaping requirements. Any property owner whose predecessor in interest took credits for right-of-way and median maintenance must continue to maintain that right-of-way or median in compliance with these landscape provisions.

(c) **Irrigation.** All landscaped areas shall be provided with an adequate water supply through the use of appropriate methods of irrigation, including hose bibs and/or automatic or manual irrigation systems and/or any other appropriate methods.

(d) **Sight Visibility.** Landscape material shall not create an obstruction to visibility at intersections as required in Sec. 64-3-1A.

(e) Protection of Landscaped Areas

- (1) All landscaped areas shall be protected by the use of barriers along the minimum planting area.
- (2) A barrier in the right-of-way requires a Non-Utility Use Agreement from the Engineering Department.
- (3) Barriers may include protective tree grates, concrete curbs, wheel stops, continuous border plants of hedgerows, landscape timbers, or other suitable barriers to allow sufficient percolation of water and air to the root system of living

Article 3 Development Standards

landscape material and to protect from damage due to heavy foot traffic or vehicular encroachment, subject to provisions of the approved Right of Way Non-Utility Use Agreement and right-of-way permit from the Engineering Department, where applicable.

- (f) **Trees under power lines.** Trees shall not be planted underneath overhead power lines except where allowed in the Approved Plant List, or as approved by the Urban Forester.

11. Landscape Plans

- (a) A landscape plan shall be submitted for approval at the time that an application for a land disturbance or building permit is made.
- (b) The Director shall approve or deny allocations of credits, if any, and landscape plans. Any disagreement with the Director's determination shall be resolved by the Board of Zoning Adjustment.
- (c) After the landscape plan is approved, the Director or the Urban Forester may approve a minor modification to the landscape plan that involves a change in the species, location, number, size, and name of proposed landscape material, if:
 - (1) There is no reduction in the number of required plant units;
 - (2) The modification does not cause the landscape plan to violate any provision of this subsection o; and
 - (3) An As-Built plan is submitted to the Permitting office.

B. Alternative Compliance

- 1. **Request for Alternative Compliance Review.** Requests for alternative compliance may be granted for any permit application to which the landscape requirements apply, when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- (a) Improved environmental quality would result from alternative compliance.
- (b) Topography, soil, vegetation, drainage or other site conditions are such that full compliance is impractical.
- (c) Spatial limitations, unusually shaped pieces of land, unusual servitude requirements, or prevailing practices in the surrounding neighborhood may justify alternative compliance.
- (d) Public safety considerations make alternative compliance appropriate.
- (e) Public improvement projects make alternative compliance appropriate.
- (f) The site is part of a development for which a site plan or master plan has been submitted which makes adequate provision for landscaping.

2. Approval

- (a) Requests for alternative compliance shall be submitted with the landscape plan and accompanied by written explanation and landscape plan drawings. Depending on the size of the site, and at the discretion of the department, documentation shall be prepared and stamped by a State of Alabama Registered Landscape Architect.
- (b) If the alternative compliance modifies a provision of Article 3Sec. 64-3-7A (Landscaping) above or Article 3Sec. 64-3-8 (Buffers) below, the request may be approved by the Director and is appealable to the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Article 3 Development Standards

(c) Criteria for Approval

- (1) The proposed landscape plan is at least equivalent to one that complies with this section in terms of aesthetics, innovation, and creativity.
- (2) The proposed landscape plan shall achieve significant anticipated mature canopy coverage of the site's vehicular use area.
- (3) The landscape design may incorporate existing vegetation and topographical conditions.
- (4) The landscape plan shall buffer different uses of adjacent properties where appropriate.
- (5) The landscape plan shall use a variety of complementary species of trees and shrubbery where possible.
- (6) Alternative compliance is not allowed as a way to provide less landscape material than is otherwise required.

C. Tree and Plant List

The Planning Commission shall adopt, by resolution, an Approved Plant List for use in the selection of plants for landscaping, replacement trees, and buffers as required by this Section. The adopted Approved Plant List is incorporated by reference and made a part of this Section. All plantings shall comply with any applicable qualifications or conditions for the species as indicated in the Approved Plant List.

Sec. 64-3-8 Buffers

A. Applicability. Except as provided below, wherever the boundary of a building site in a T-B, H-B, B-1, LB-2, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, I-1, or I-2 district, or a commercially utilized building site adjoins a R-A, R-B, R-1, R-2, or R-3, the building site shall include a protection buffer strip at least 10 feet wide. Any required yard is counted as part of the protection buffer strip.

1. Composition of Buffer. The required buffer shall contain one or more of the following:

- (a) **Wall or fence.** A wall or fence provided as a protection buffer shall comply with the following:
 - (1) Within any required street facing yard, the wall or fence shall not exceed 3 feet in height in the required setback, and shall comply with any applicable requirements of Article 4 (Use Regulations).
 - (2) Within all other yards, at least 6 feet high.
- (b) **Screen Planting Strip.** A screen planting strip provided as a buffer shall:
 - (1) be at least 10 feet in width;
 - (2) planted with materials in sufficient density to afford protection to the residential district or residentially used building site from the glare of lights, from blowing papers, dust and debris, and visual encroachment, and to effectively reduce the transmission of noise;