
Article 9 | Landscaping and Screening

Sections:

- Sec. 9.1** **General**
- Sec. 9.2** **Landscaping Standards**
- Sec. 9.3** **Screening Standards**

Sec. 9.1 - General

Paragraphs:

- 9.1.1** **Purpose**
- 9.1.2** **Applicability**

9.1.1 Purpose

This article provides standards for landscaping and screening to promote the general welfare of the City. The purposes of these standards are to:

- A. Improve the appearance of the community by requiring landscaping on public and private Sites;
- B. Generate and preserve community identity to reinforce a sense of place that is unique to the City;
- C. Encourage the use of native or adapted plant species and demonstrate appropriate design and maintenance techniques;
- D. Ensure appropriately designed and maintained landscaping elements that aid in screening intense activities; and
- E. Provide environmental improvements such as mitigating air and storm water pollution, providing shade and reducing the effects of the urban heat island.

9.1.2 Applicability

- A. New Development: This Article's standards shall apply to all new development except as otherwise provided.
- B. Expansion of Existing Development: This Article shall apply to existing developments, as follows:
 - 1. Large Structures - On Sites where the Gross Floor Area of the existing Building(s) is more than 10,000 square feet, expansion in square footage of Site Area, Gross Floor Area, Lot Coverage, or Parking Area require the following:
 - a. If the expansion is less than 25%, the standards of this Article apply only to the proposed expansion. The Site's existing Development is subject to the

zoning standards in effect at the time the existing Development was developed;

- b. If the expansion is 25% or greater or if expansions as of the Effective Date cumulatively result in a 25% or greater expansion in Site Area, Gross Floor Area, Lot Coverage, or Parking Area, the standards of this section apply to the entire Site.
2. Other Structures - On Sites where the Gross Floor Area of the existing Building(s) is less than or equal to 10,000 square feet, expansion in square footage of Site Area, Gross Floor Area, Lot Coverage, or Parking Area require the following:
- a. If the expansion is less than 50%, the standards of this Article apply only to the proposed expansion. The Site's existing Development is subject to the zoning standards in effect at the time the existing Development was developed.
 - b. If the expansion is 50% or greater or if expansions as of the Effective Date cumulatively result in a 50% or greater expansion in Site Area, Gross Floor Area, Lot Coverage, or Parking Area, the standards of this section apply to the entire Site.
- C. Exceptions: This Article shall not apply to the following:
- 1. Single family residences or duplexes (on single or separate Lots);
 - 2. The establishment of an accessory use on the same Lot as an existing primary use, with no expansion of Gross Floor Area or outdoor occupied area; or
 - 3. A change in occupancy of a Building that does not involve a change in Use.

Sec. 9.2 - Landscaping Standards

Paragraphs:

- 9.2.1 Required Landscaping Areas**
- 9.2.2 Street Landscape Border Standards**
- 9.2.3 Perimeter Landscape Border Standards**
- 9.2.4 Parking Area Landscape Standards**
- 9.2.5 General Landscaping Standards**
- 9.2.6 Installation and Maintenance**
- 9.2.7 Landscape Plan**

9.2.1 Required Landscaping Areas

- A. All applicable Development shall provide landscaping as follows:
 - 1. Street Landscape Borders shall be provided pursuant to Sec. 9.2.2;

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2. Perimeter Landscape Borders shall be provided pursuant to Sec. 9.2.3;
 3. Parking Area Landscape shall be provided pursuant to Sec. 9.2.4.

9.2.2 Street Landscape Border Standards

- A. Street Landscape Borders: Landscape Border shall be provided along all street frontages in the area between the public sidewalk (or if no public sidewalk the public right-of-way line) and any Buildings, parking, loading, or storage areas. The Landscape Border shall average at least ten (10) feet along each street frontage, and provide at least the minimum landscaping required by this Article.
- B. Located on Site: Street Landscape Borders shall be located entirely on Site, except that, if approved by the Director or his/her designee, up to five feet of the required Street Landscape Border may be placed within the adjacent right-of-way area of a Major Street. Landscape Borders and vegetation located within the right-of-way shall be maintained by the adjacent property owner.
- C. Street Landscape Border Canopy Trees shall be provided as follows:
 1. At least one Canopy Tree is required for every 40 linear feet of Street Landscape Border or fraction thereof, excluding vehicular ingress or egress points.
 2. A minimum of one Canopy Tree is required for any Street Landscape Border.
 3. Trees may be planted at varying distances apart rather than being spaced every 40 feet. Canopy Tree location and spacing shall comply with the purposes of this Article, and final approval of tree location and spacing shall occur as part of the Development Package approval.
 4. Landscape Border Canopy Trees shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) gallons, or six (6) feet in height, or one and one-half (1.5) inches caliper at time of planting.
 5. Trees shall be located outside of the City right-of-way, except when the Director approves a portion of the Landscape Border to be in the adjacent right-of-way.
 6. Where trees are planted near utility lines or facilities, trees species shall be chosen that will not interfere with those utility lines or facilities.
- D. Residential Subdivisions: Street Landscape Borders shall only be provided for residential Subdivisions of eight or more Lots. Residential Subdivisions with eight or more Lots shall conform with the Street Landscape Border standards except as modified by the following:
 1. Street Landscape Borders are only required along the exterior boundaries of Subdivisions. Landscape Borders are not required along front yard street frontages.

2. Residential Subdivision Street Landscape Borders fronting on Local Streets may be reduced to a minimum of five feet.
3. The Landscape Border shall be recorded as common area and maintained by the Subdivision homeowners' association (HOA). The Subdivision CC&Rs shall reference and require compliance with the maintenance standards in this Article. The Director may allow the recording of a public use easement with the Subdivision Plat in cases where the standards of this Section are the only reason for the creation of an HOA. The public use easement shall require the abutting property owner to install and maintain a Landscape Border in accordance with the standards in this section.

9.2.3 Perimeter Landscape Border Standards

A. Perimeter Landscape Borders: Landscape Borders are required as a buffer and visual transitions along common Property Lines as follows:

1. Landscape Borders shall be placed between adjacent Land Uses and Zoning Districts as described in Table 9.2.3:

Table 9.2.3 – Perimeter Landscape Borders						
Districts/Land Uses	Adjacent Streets/Zoning Districts/Land Use					
	Residential	Office	Commercial	Industrial	Multi-Family	Mobile Home Park
Residential Subdivision*	X	--	--	--	--	--
Office	X	--	X	--	X	X
Commercial	X	X	--	--	X	X
Industrial	X	X	X	--	X	X
Multifamily	X	X	X	X	--	X
Mobile Home Park	X	X	X	X	X	--

*Eight Lots or more.

B. Perimeter Landscape Border Canopy Trees: The following applies to all Perimeter Landscape Borders.

1. At least one Canopy Tree is required for every 40 linear feet of Perimeter Landscape Border or fraction thereof.
2. A minimum of one Canopy Tree is required for any Perimeter Landscape Border.

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3. Trees may be planted at varying distances apart rather than being spaced every 40 feet. Canopy Tree location and spacing shall comply with the purposes of this Article, and final approval of tree location and spacing shall occur as part of the Development Package approval.
 4. Landscape Border Canopy Trees shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) gallons, or six (6) feet in height, or one and one-half (1.5) inches caliper at time of planting.
 5. Where trees are planted near utility lines or facilities, trees species shall be chosen that will not interfere with those utility lines or facilities.
- C. The minimum required width of a Perimeter Landscape Border is the lesser of ten (10) feet or the width of the Building Setback required for the proposed Use.
- D. Where Vehicle Parking Spaces or Parking Aisles are located next to the Property Line or where the Perimeter Landscape Border conflicts with a utility easement, a Perimeter Landscape Border is not be required if all of the following requirements are met:
1. An equivalent number of trees are planted elsewhere on the Site between the Building(s) and the Property Line, or if the use on the Site does not include Buildings, the required Canopy Trees are located between the Principal Use and the Property Line;
 2. The trees are evenly distributed over the Site; and
 3. The minimum planting area required in Section 9.2.4.A.3, Planter Area, is provided for each Canopy Tree.
- E. Exceptions: Perimeter Landscape Borders are not required as follows:
1. Where not required by Table 9.2.3;
 2. Around Development pads on a Site's interior or between adjacent Sites that share a common Access Lane or Parking Area, have common access easements, or are considered a single, unified Development;
 3. Where an alley, drainageway, or other right-of-way that is ten (10) feet or more in width physically separates the Site from an adjacent property; or
 4. Between two similar Land Uses, whether or not within the same Zoning District if approved by the Director.

9.2.4 Parking Area Landscape Standards

- A. All applicable Development that has five or more Vehicle Parking Spaces shall provide landscaping in its Parking Areas as follows:
1. Canopy Trees: Within a Parking Area, one Canopy Tree is required for each five Vehicle Parking Spaces or fraction thereof, as follows:
 - a. Canopy Trees shall be evenly distributed throughout the vehicular use

area. Every Vehicle Parking Space shall be located within 50 feet of the trunk of a Canopy Tree (as measured from the tree's center).

- b. Fifty percent of the Canopy Trees required for Street or Perimeter Landscape Borders located within ten feet of the paved portion(s) of a Parking Area may be counted towards both the minimum Parking Area Canopy Tree standard and the Landscape Border Canopy Tree standard.
2. In Development where it is necessary to bring the existing Parking Areas into conformance with these regulations, the tree coverage/distribution requirement may be modified by a Director's decision provided that at least the minimum required number of Canopy Trees are placed within or adjacent to the Parking Area with coverage that is as uniform as possible.
 3. Planter Area: Each Canopy Tree required by this Section shall have a planter area with a minimum unpaved area of 34 square feet and a four-foot minimum width.
 4. Plant Protection: Areas where plants are susceptible to injury by vehicular or pedestrian traffic shall be protected by appropriate means, such as curbs, bollards, or low walls.
 - a. The planter area shall have a raised border four inches high to prohibit the tires of the vehicle from encroaching onto the planter. Raised borders may include cuts that allow stormwater to flow into the planter areas for rainwater harvesting purposes.
 - b. Standard wheel barriers are acceptable but not encouraged, as they can be easily moved and could allow damage to the tree.

B. Exemptions

1. Any Site with four or fewer Vehicle Parking Spaces;
2. Home Occupations;
3. Vehicle Storage;
4. Covered Parking Areas; or
5. For expansion of an existing Development, the existing Parking Areas are exempt from the Canopy Tree standard if the existing Parking Area is subject to an approved Development Package approved on or before the Effective Date, regardless of the expansion provisions of Section 9.1.2.B.

C. Alternative Standards

1. In lieu of the number of canopy trees required by this Section, a Site may provide the number of Canopy Trees needed to create a shade pattern caused by the Site's

Canopy Trees at maturity and Buildings that covers 50% of the Parking Area's paved area from 9:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on June 21st.

2. Industrial In-lieu Fee: For Industrial Zoned Sites only, an Applicant may submit to the Director a request to eliminate the Parking Area Landscape Standards in exchange for paying an in-lieu fee to the City equivalent to the cost of landscaping the Parking Area, including all landscaping, hardscaping and curbing, and associated labor cost. This fee shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. Request for the in-lieu fee shall be made at the time of Development Package submittal and shall include a written estimate of the cost of the Parking Area landscaping.
 - b. The Director has sole discretion to approve or deny the in-lieu fee request, including the amount of the in-lieu fee. The Director may request from the Applicant any additional information to justify the fee amount.
 - c. If approved, the Applicant shall pay the in-lieu fee to the City at the time of Building Permit issuance.
 - d. The City shall use the in-lieu fee to fund landscaping enhancements within the rights-of-way of any City Major Street.
 - e. This alternative standard applies only to the Parking Area Landscaping Standards in this Section, and shall not be used to modify or reduce any other requirements in this Article.

9.2.5 General Landscaping Standards

The following standards apply to all Landscape Borders and Parking Area planter areas.

- A. Vegetative Ground Cover: Fifty percent or more of a Site's landscaping area shall be covered with shrubs or vegetative ground cover. The required ground coverage shall be achieved within two years from the date of planting.
- B. All vegetation, shrubs, and Canopy Trees shall comply with the Arizona Department of Water Resource's Low Water Use, Drought Tolerant Plant List.
- C. Inorganic Ground Cover: All ground surfaces in planting beds, planters, medians, or tree wells within a landscaped area that are not covered with shrubs, accent plants, vines, ground cover, or other vegetation shall be covered with an appropriate inorganic ground cover, such as decomposed granite.
 1. A minimum two-inch layer of organic or inorganic material (i.e., decomposed granite, rock mulch, or other material) is required as ground cover under and around the vegetation in landscaped areas to help cool soil areas, reduce evaporation, and retard weed growth.

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2. Existing areas of undisturbed native vegetation retained on the site are not required to have the soil mulched or amended.
- D. Dust Control: All disturbed, grubbed, graded, or bladed areas not otherwise improved must be landscaped, reseeded, or treated with a layer of inorganic or organic ground cover to help reduce dust pollution, as follows:
1. Unless maintained as undisturbed natural desert, all portions of a Site not occupied by Buildings, Structures, Parking Areas, pedestrian circulation areas, or required landscape elements must be landscaped with vegetation from the Arizona Department of Water Resource's Low Water Use/Drought Tolerant Plant List, reseeded with a native seed mix, or treated with an inorganic ground cover and maintained in a clean condition.
 2. Unless maintained as undisturbed natural desert, future building pads within a phased Development must be temporarily landscaped with vegetation from the Arizona Department of Water Resource's Low Water Use/Drought Tolerant Plant List, reseeded with a native seed mix, or treated with an appropriate inorganic ground cover and maintained in a clean condition.
- E. Existing Plants: Existing plants, including Canopy Trees, may be incorporated into a landscaped area.
- F. Water Retention Basins: All Landscape Borders and Parking Area planters may also be used as water retention basins. Basins within a Landscape Buffer shall maintain slopes no steeper than four to one (4:1), except as otherwise approved by the City Engineer, and shall comply with [Cross reference DRAINAGE SECTION]. Retention Basin's within a landscaped area shall comply with the minimum Canopy Tree and vegetation standards.
- G. Low Water Use: With the exception of residential Subdivision common areas intended for active recreational use, individual single-family residential units, parks of less than ten (10) acres in total area that are intended for use and enjoyment of the general public, whether or not such parks are owned by the City or by a private entity, and Turf-related Facilities, all new Development shall conform to the following criteria:
1. Landscape installations applicable in this Article shall limit the area of water intensive landscape (including bodies of water, water features, and Turf) to no more than ten percent (10%) of landscaped area.
 2. New hotels and motels shall limit the area of water-intensive landscape to no more than twenty percent (20%) of the landscaped.
 3. Turf areas of ten acres or more are regulated by the State. The Arizona Department of Water Resources shall be notified of cases where proposed Turf or other high water uses exceed ten acres.

9.2.6 Installation and Maintenance

- A. Canopy Tree Planting: All Canopy Trees shall be planted and staked as shown in Figures A, B, and C of this Section, or as otherwise approved by the Director.

Fig. A – Tree Pocket in Pavement (Side)

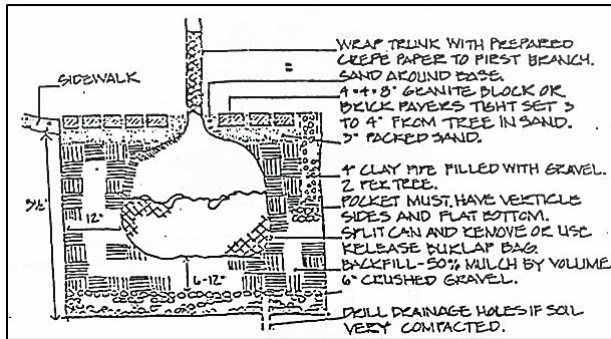


Fig. B – Tree Pocket in Pavement (Plan View)

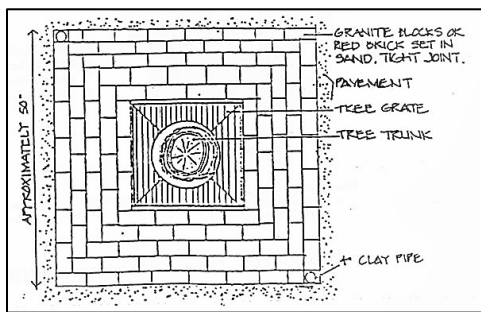
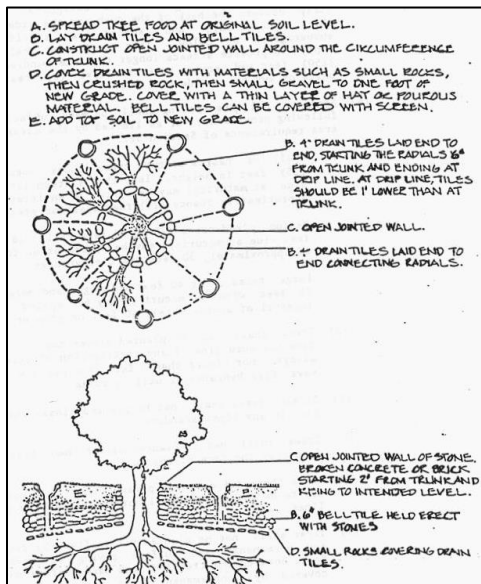


Fig. C – Tree Well Planting Detail



- B. Maintenance: Unless otherwise stated, the owner of any Site where landscaping is

required shall be responsible for the maintenance of all required plant material (including Canopy Trees located off-site), fences and walls. Maintenance responsibilities shall include:

1. Dead plants materials shall be replaced with living plant materials within three (3) months after notice from the City, and replacement plants shall be equal to that of the original approved Site Plan or Development Package.
 2. Trees shall be pruned to provide at least eight (8) feet of clearance above sidewalks and twelve (12) feet above roadway surfaces.
- C. Irrigation: All landscape areas with plant materials that require water shall be irrigated with a water-conserving irrigation system, as follows:
1. Irrigation shall be an underground, automatic water system designed by a certified landscape architect or other professional with a proficiency in designing water-conserving irrigation systems.
 2. Irrigation systems shall be maintained and replaced as necessary to continue to conserve water. Detection and repair of leaky or broken pipes, valves, and fittings and malfunctioning and/or misaligned heads, emitters, and bubblers shall be part of a regular maintenance program for the Site.
- D. Easements
1. Trees or shrubs may be planted in access or utility easements, including stormwater and maintenance easements, provided that they are a plant species appropriate for the nature of the easement and do not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the easement, and the following approvals occur:
 - a. The entity/utility or City Department responsible for the easement shall approve in writing the location of the trees/shrubs proposed for planting.
 - b. The applicant shall comply with any additional requirements by the responsible entity/utility or City Department.
 2. If the entity responsible for an existing easement denies the location of landscaping material that is otherwise required by this Article, the required landscaping location can be modified by the Director to the minimum extent necessary to avoid conflict with the easement.
- E. Landscaping Extensions: To ensure the best chance for landscaping vegetation survival, an applicant may submit to the Director or designee a letter requesting a Landscaping Extension to allow the installation of landscaping at a later date that is more appropriate for planting, as follows:
1. The letter shall state the reasons the request is being made and the schedule for installation of vegetation, which shall not exceed 90 days from the request date. The letter shall also acknowledge that failure to install landscaping shall prevent

the issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy for the Site.

2. The Director or designee may grant the Landscaping Extension if the Applicant shows that the extension will benefit the proposed landscaping's chances for survival. In times of extreme drought or other unforeseen weather conditions, the Director may grant a second 90-day Landscaping Extension.
3. A Conditional Certificate of Occupancy may be issued to allow for Landscaping Extension. No Final Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued while there is a pending Landscaping Extension unless a performance guarantee (such as a letter of credit or performance bond) sufficient to cover 125% of the installed landscaping costs has been posted with the City.

9.2.7 Landscape Plans

- A. Landscaping Plans shall be submitted with the Development Package or Site Plan. Landscaping Plans shall be prepared by certified landscape architects or other professionals with a proficiency in preparing landscaping plans.
- B. Certification: The Director, or designee, may authorize licensed landscape architects to certify that landscape plantings have been installed in conformance with the approved Landscape Plan, including planting sizes, species, and installation techniques, in lieu of inspection by the Planning and Development Department.

Sec. 9.3 – Screening Standards

Paragraphs:

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|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 9.3.1 | Purpose |
| 9.3.2 | General Screening Standards |
| 9.3.3 | Mechanical Screening Standards |

9.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Section is to include buffers and screening in new Development in order to reduce the impacts on adjacent uses.

9.3.2 General Screening Standards

- A. Screening for individual Land Uses and Zoning Districts shall be provided in accordance with Table 9.3.3, Screening Standards, and in addition to the required Landscape Borders.

Table 9.3.2 – Screening Standards

Districts/Land Uses	Adjacent Streets/Zoning Districts/Land Use							
	Major Street	Local Street	Residential	Office	Comm.	Industrial	Multi-Family	Mobile Home Park
Residential Subdivision*	--	--	6' Wall	--	--	--	--	--
Office	30" Screen	30" Screen	6' Wall	--	--	--	--	--
Commercial	30" Screen	30" Screen	6' Wall	5' Screen	--	--	6' Wall	6' Wall
Industrial	30" Screen	6' Wall	6' Wall	6' Wall	6' Wall	--	6' Wall	6' Wall
Multifamily	30" Screen	5' Screen	6' Wall	5' Screen	5' Screen	6' Wall	--	5' Screen
Mobile Home Park	30" Screen	5' Screen	6' Wall	6' Wall	6' Wall	6' Wall	5' Screen	--

*Eight Lots or more.

- B. Screening and walls are not required if the adjacent Land Use has provided the required screening or wall.
- C. Screening Materials: All screening required by this section shall comply with the following:
1. Walls – All walls required by this Section must be constructed of masonry material or masonry with a stucco or textured finish. Decorative openings may be incorporated into the upper 25% of an otherwise solid wall.
 2. Screens, Vegetation – Plants may be used for screening as follows:
 - a. Plants used for screening purposes may not be smaller than five (5) gallons when planted. The plants may be aligned, or unevenly spaced, but must provide a continuous screen at maturity within two years of planting.
 - b. Vegetative screens shall be planted in areas not less than three feet in width.
 3. Screens, Earth Berms – Earth Material may be used as a screen as follows:
 - a. The slope of an earth berm, used alone or in combination with a retaining wall, may not exceed one foot of rise for every three feet of linear distance (1:3). The width of an earth berm must be self-stabilizing.
 - b. Bermed areas, including the front and back sides, must be landscaped to comply with minimum standards of the Landscape Border area.
 - c. If berms are used in conjunction with vegetation or a retaining wall to

achieve the screen, the vegetation or wall has to occur at the area of the Landscape Border farthest away from the property line.

- d. If the toe of the berm slope abuts a pedestrian area, design precautions must be implemented to prevent water from washing debris, dirt, rocks, etc., onto the sidewalk or eroding the pedestrian path.

4. Screens, Wooden Fence – Wood fences may be used as a screen.

D. Screen Location: Screening shall be located as follows:

1. Interior Lot Lines: Along interior lot lines of the site, the required screening shall be located on the Property Line, except that the screening can be placed 20 feet or more to the interior of the Property Line if a landscaped area is provided between the screen and the Property Line. If a utility or drainage easement runs along a Property Line then the required screen may be located at the easement line.
2. Street Frontages: All screening along a street frontage, whether or not required by this Section, shall be located on the Development side of the Street Landscape Border so that they do not obstruct the view of the Street Landscape Border from the street.
3. Street Landscape Borders: Screening may be located within the Street Landscape Border if the following standards are met:
 - a. The Street Landscape Border is a minimum of 10 feet wide.
 - b. Vegetative Screens may extend up to three feet into the Street Landscape Border, taking into account the size of the vegetation at maturity.
 - c. Fences or walls constructed in a single continuous line may not extend into a Street Landscape Border more than the actual width of the fence or wall. Where a fence or wall incorporates offsets or similar design features, a screen may extend a maximum of three feet into the Street Landscape Border.
 - d. Where earth berms are used, the crest of the berm must be located on Site and no closer than one foot from the street Property Line.

E. Screen Height Measurement: The height of a screen adjacent to a property line or along a street frontage is the vertical distance measured on the Development side of the screen from the Design Grade at the base of the screen to the top of the screen.

F. Alternative Standards: In lieu of the standards in this Section, an Applicant may prepare an alternative plan for screening that will meet or exceed the buffering and screening required in this Section. This plan shall include detailed specifications of the buffering/screening elements, such as vegetation, walls, fences or other elements. This plan shall be submitted with the Site Plan or Development Package and shall be reviewed

and approved by the Internal Review Panel as part of the Development Package or Site Plan process

9.3.3 Mechanical Screening Standards

- A. All permanent outdoor storage areas used for materials, trash, mechanical equipment, vehicles, or other similar items shall be screened from view from a public street with a six-foot masonry wall.
- B. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from view from a public street by parapet walls or other screening devices at a height that is no lower than six inches below the height of the mechanical equipment being screened.

NOTE: Ask Frank if these apply only to non-residential (current Code does not specify).