

CHAPTER 913 Landscaping Requirements¹

Sections:

913.01 INTENT.

The intent of this chapter is to improve the appearance of vehicular use areas and property abutting public right-of-way; to require buffering between noncompatible land uses; and to protect, preserve and promote the aesthetical appeal, character and value of the surrounding neighborhoods; to promote public health and safety through the reduction of noise pollution, air pollution, visual pollution, air temperature and artificial light glare.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)

913.02 PURPOSE.

It is further the purpose of this chapter to specifically promote the preservation and replacement of trees and significant vegetation removed in the course of land development, and to promote the proper utilization of landscaping as an easement between certain uses to minimize the opportunities of nuisances.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)

913.03 CITY AND LANDSCAPE BOARD RIGHTS.

- (a) The City shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenue, lanes and other rights-of-way or easements as may be necessary to insure public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty.
- (b) The Director of Public Service and Engineering and/or Director of Parks and Recreation and/or their designees may cause or order to be removed any tree or part thereof which is in an unsafe condition or which by reason of its nature is **injurious** to sewers, electric power lines, gas lines, water lines, **sidewalks**, **multi-use paths** or other public improvements, or is affected with any **injurious** fungus, insect or other pest. This section does not prohibit the planting of street trees by adjacent property owners provided that the selection and location of such trees is in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.
- (c) The Director of Public Service and Engineering and/or Director of Parks and Recreation and/or their designees will notify in writing the owners of such trees. Removal shall be done by such owners at their own expense within 60 days after the date of service of notice.
- (d) In the event of failure of owners to comply with such provisions, the City shall have the authority to remove such trees and charge the cost of removal on the owner's property tax notice.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11; Ord. No. 0032-2016, § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-16; Ord. No. 0096-2018, § 1(Exh. A), 12-3-18)

¹Cross reference(s)—Power to regulate shade trees and shrubbery - see Ohio R.C. 715.20;Assessment for tree planting or maintenance - see Ohio R.C. 727.011;Injury or destruction - see GEN. OFF. 541.06Cross reference(s)—

913.04 DEFINITIONS.

- (a) The following words and phrases when used in this chapter shall, for the purpose of this chapter, have the meanings respectively ascribed to them in this section. When not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future, words in the singular number include the plural, words in the plural number include the singular; "occupied" includes arranged, designed or intended to be used; "shall" is always mandatory and not merely directive; "may" is permissive; "lot" includes plot or parcel:

- (1) *Accessory use or building* means a use or a structure subordinate to the principal use or building on a lot and serving a purpose customarily incidental thereto.
- (2) *Board* means the City Landscape Board.
- (3) **Injurious plants** means ~~the following list of trees~~ that are prone to disease, seek water (trouble for water and sewer lines), are soft wood trees, and prone to pest and need room for roots to grow and a curb lawn does not provide enough room. Some of the trees have thorns and some won't tolerate snow, salt and sand that could affect it during the winter: (Refer to the Comprehensive Landscape Plan for a list of injurious or prohibited plants)

Box Elder	Silver Maple
Dogwood	Redbud
Buckeye	Catalpa (Except Seedless)
Mulberry	Willow species
Black Locust (Except Purple Robe)	Ginko (Female)
Siberian Elm	Tree-of-heaven
Fruit Trees	Cottonwood
Evergreens	Crabapple Species (Limited)
Poplar species	Ash species
Hawthorns (Except Thornless Species)	
Honey Locust (Except Thornless Species)	

- (4) *Interior landscaping* means the use of landscape materials within the innermost boundaries of the landscape buffer zone and perimeter landscaping.
- (5) *Landscape buffer zone* means that area adjacent to any vehicular use area or along common boundaries in which the perimeter landscape requirements are to be met.
- (6) *Large tree* means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height in excess of 50 feet.
- (7) *Medium tree* means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height of between 25 feet and 50 feet.
- (8) *O.F.T.* means or fraction thereof.
- (9) *Opacity* means an imaginary vertical plane extending from the established grade to a required height of which a required percentage of the vertical plane shall be visually screened from adjacent property use.
- (10) *Park trees* means those trees, shrubs, bushes and all other woody vegetation in public parks which have individual names, and all areas owned by the City or to which the public has free access to as a park.
- (11) *Parking area or structure* means an off-street area or structure, for required parking or loading spaces, including driveways, accessways, aisles, parking or loading spaces, including driveways, accessways, aisles, parking and maneuvering space, but excluding required front yard or public right-of-way.

- (12) *Parking lot or structure* means an off-street area or structure, other than the parking or loading spaces or areas required or permitted under the Zoning Ordinance, for the parking of automobiles, and available to the public customarily for a fee.
- (13) *Perimeter landscaping* means the use of landscape materials within the landscape buffer zone to achieve the required opacity.
- (14) *Person* means any person, corporation, partnership, company, contracting firm or other entity.
- (15) *Pruning* means to cut branches, stems, etc. from a plant to improve shape and growth.
- (16) *Small tree* means any tree species which normally attains a full grown height under 25 feet.
- (17) *Street trees* means those trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation on land lying between property lines on either side of all streets, avenues or ways within the City.
- (18) *Topping* means the severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree.
- (19) *Treelawn* means that part of a street not covered by sidewalk or other paving, lying between the property line and that portion of the street right-of-way that is paved and usually used for vehicular traffic.
- (20) *Vehicular use area* means any area used by vehicles.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11; Ord. No. 0032-2016, § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-16)

913.05 SITE AFFECTED.

- (a) *New Sites.* No certificate of zoning compliance or occupancy permit shall be issued hereafter for any site development or the construction or improvement of any building, structure or vehicular use area except where landscaping for such development, construction or improvement shall have been approved as required by the provisions of this chapter.
- (b) *Existing Sites.* No building, structure or vehicular use area shall be constructed or expanded, unless the minimum landscaping required by the provisions of this chapter is provided for the property unless the alteration or expansion is substantial, (any additional construction equal to 25 percent of the existing area of the structure or new use area) in which case, landscaping shall be provided as hereafter required in this chapter.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)

913.06 LANDSCAPING FOR ACCESSORY BUILDINGS.

- (a) Any accessory building shall be screened whenever located in any professional office zone, commercial or office, commerce and technology zone or multi-family zone or when located on property abutting any residential zone, freeway or arterial street prohibiting driveway access. Structures may be grouped together; however, screening height requirements will be based upon the tallest of the structures.
- (b) *Location of Screening.* A continuous (having 100 percent opacity) planting, hedge, fence, wall of earth, which would enclose any accessory building on four sides with provisions for access by gate is required. The average height of screening material shall be one foot more than the height of the enclosed structure, but shall not be required to exceed ten feet in height. Whenever an accessory building is located next to a building wall, perimeter landscaping material, or vehicular use area landscaping material, such walls or screening material may fulfill the screening requirement for the side of the accessory building if that wall or screening material is of an average height sufficient to meet the height requirement set out in this section. Whenever accessory buildings are screened by plant material, such material may count towards the

fulfillment of required interior or perimeter landscaping. No interior landscaping shall be required within an area screened for accessory buildings.

- (c) Whenever screening material is placed around any trash disposal unit or waste collection unit which is emptied or removed mechanically on a regularly occurring basis, a curb to contain the placement of the container shall be provided within the screening material on those sides where there is such material. The curbing shall be at least one foot from the material and shall be designed to prevent possible damage to the screening when the container is moved or emptied.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)

913.07 LANDSCAPE MATERIALS, SPACING AND LOCATION.

The City Landscape Board approval must be obtained prior to execution of landscaping. The proposed landscape materials should complement the form of the existing trees and plantings, as well as the development's general design and architecture. The type of shade or sun should be considered in selecting plant materials. Landscaping materials shall consist of, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) *Walls and Fences.* Walls and fences should comply with Chapter 1171 of the Codified Ordinances of Gahanna. For any proposed new building, residential or otherwise, where stone fencing exists, such stone fencing shall be retained and improved as part of the approved landscaping.
- (b) *Earth Mounds.* Earth mounds shall be physical barriers which block or screen the view similar to a hedge, fence or wall. Mounds shall be constructed with proper and adequate plant material to prevent erosion. When earth mounds are combined with walls or fences, the combined height shall not exceed six feet. A difference in elevation between areas requiring screening does not constitute an existing earth mound, and shall not be considered as fulfilling any screening requirement.
- (c) *Plants.* All plant materials shall be living plants (artificial plants are prohibited) and shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Quality.* Plant materials used in conformance with provisions of this chapter shall conform to the standards of the American Association of Nurserymen and shall have passed any inspections required under state regulations.
 - (2) *Deciduous trees.* Deciduous trees, those which normally shed their leaves in the fall, shall be species having an average mature crown spread of greater than 15 feet in Central Ohio and having trunk(s) which can be maintained with over five feet of clear wood in areas which have visibility requirements, except at vehicular use area intersections where eight foot clear wood mature spread of crown less than 15 feet may be substituted by groupings of the same so as to create the equivalent of a 15 foot crown spread. A minimum of ten feet overall height or a minimum caliper (trunk diameter, measured six inches above ground for trees up to four inches caliper) of at least one and one-fourth inches immediately after planting shall be required. Trees of species whose roots are known to cause damage to public roadways or other public works shall not be planted closer than 15 feet to such public works, unless the tree root system is completely contained within a barrier for which the minimum interior containing dimensions shall be five feet square and five feet deep and for which the construction requirements shall be four inches thick, reinforced concrete.
 - (3) *Evergreen trees.* Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of six feet high with a minimum caliper of one and one-fourth inches immediately after planting.
 - (4) *Shrubs and hedges.* Shrubs and hedges shall be at least 18 inches in average height when planted, and shall conform to the opacity and other requirements within four years after planting.
 - (5) *Vines.* Vines shall be at least 12 inches or 15 inches high at planting, and are generally used in conjunction with fences.

- (6) *Grass or ground cover.* Grass (of the fescus (Gramineae) or Bluegrass (Poaceae) family) shall be planted in species normally grown as permanent lawns in Central Ohio, and may be sodded, or seeded; except in swales or other areas subject to erosion, where solid sod, erosion reducing net, or suitable mulch shall be used, nurse-grass seed shall be sown for immediate protection until complete coverage otherwise is achieved. Grass sod shall be clean and free of weeds and noxious pests or diseases. Ground cover shall be planted in such a manner as to present a finished appearance and 75 percent of complete coverage after complete growing seasons, with a maximum of eight inches on center. In certain cases, ground cover also may consist of rocks, pebbles, sand, and similar approved materials.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11; Ord. No. 0032-2016, § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-16)

913.08 INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE AND PRUNING.

All landscaping materials shall be installed in a sound, workmanshiplike manner, and according to accepted, good construction and planting procedures. The owner of the property shall be responsible for the continued proper maintenance of all landscaping materials, and shall keep them in proper, neat and orderly appearance, free from refuse and debris at all times. All unhealthy or dead plant material shall be replaced within one year, or by the next planting period, whichever comes first; while other defective landscape material shall be replaced or repaired within three months. Violation of these installation and maintenance provisions shall be grounds for the Building Department to refuse a building occupancy permit or institute legal proceedings.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)

913.09 PROTECTION OF TREES.

- (a) All trees and shrubs on any street or other publicly owned property near any excavation or construction of any building, structure or street work, shall be guarded with a good substantial fence, frame or box, not less than four feet high and eight feet square, or at a distance in feet from the tree or shrub equal to the diameter of the trunk in inches at five feet above grade, whichever is greater. All building material, dirt or other debris shall be kept outside the barrier and shall be removed upon completion by the company or person doing such work.
- (b) No person shall excavate any ditches, tunnels, trenches or lay any drive within a radius of ten feet from any public tree or shrub without first obtaining written permission from the City.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11; Ord. No. 0032-2016 , § 1, 4-18-16)

913.10 STREET TREE PLANTING REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) These requirements shall apply to ER-1, ER-2, SF-1, SF-2, SF-3, MR-1, AR, SO, CC, CS, PCC, PID, and all planned districts, as well as all public lands within the City limits.
- (b) The subdivider or developer of property within the City shall pay a fee for the planting of street trees. This fee shall be placed in a Street Tree Fund and shall be used for the sole purpose of street tree planting and maintenance within the City. This fee shall be based on the amount of linear lot front footage for the subdivision, plus any lot front footage on existing streets. This fee shall be established as five dollars (\$5,00) per linear foot of lot front footage as measured at the public right-of-way. This fee shall be placed in a Street Tree Fund established by the City, and the money in this Fund will be used for yearly bid contracts for the planting of street trees as shown on the approved street tree plans for approved subdivisions within the City, as well as areas in need of street trees as indicated by the Landscape Board. The fee shall be paid by the developer prior to the acceptance of the appurtenances and improvements of the subdivision by Council. No funds shall be expended for other areas until the approved street tree plan has been completed for the

approved subdivision. Funds shall be held for a two-year period after completion of the subdivision before funds can be used for other planting purposes.

- (c) The Landscape Board shall have the responsibility for the review of the street tree plans for the City, and the creation of tree planting standards. The developer of subdivisions shall propose his/her own plan for approval by the Landscape Board. The developer shall submit ten sets of plans to the Zoning Officer at the time of the final plat, who shall forward them to the Landscape Board for approval. The street tree plan shall be approved prior to the construction of the subdivision. The Landscape Board shall notify the City Engineer of approval of any street tree plan.
- (d) The following information shall be present on any street tree plan:
 - (1) Street and lot layout of the subdivision.
 - (2) Tree location showing minimum and maximum spacing.
 - (3) Type of tree(s) proposed for the subdivision by street.
 - (4) Landscape plan for entry features or cul-de-sac circles if in public right-of-way.
 - (5) Proposed utility locations.
 - (6) Width of tree lawn.
 - (7) Any other information deemed necessary by the Landscape Board.
- (e) The following minimum requirements shall be followed for any proposed street tree plan, unless the Landscape Board finds that the minimum requirements cannot be met:
 - (1) The minimum spacing between this and other trees is 45 feet (large trees), 35 feet (medium trees) and 25 feet (small trees).
 - (2) A street tree shall be planted one-half the distance between the curb and the sidewalk.
 - (3) The tree location is to be at least 20 feet from driveways and street intersections and ten feet from fire hydrants and utility poles. Cul-de-sac street trees will be located at the individual appropriate discretion of the City Landscape Board.
 - (4) A small tree is to be used when planting under or within ten lateral feet of overhead utility wires. A small or medium tree is to be used when planting within ten or 20 lateral feet of overhead utility wires.
 - (5) The trees should be of the same shape, texture and size with up to three different species planted continuously on any given street.
 - (6) The trunk caliper measured at six inches above the ground for all street trees shall be no less than one and one-half inches and no longer than two and one-half inches.
 - (7) The maximum spacing for large trees shall be 50 feet, for medium trees, 40 feet, and 30 feet for small trees.
 - (8) The Street Tree Landscape Plan shall not include any trees on the **injurious** plants list (913.04).
- (f) *Height of Limbs Over Sidewalks and Streets.* Any portion of a tree extending over a sidewalk shall be trimmed to such an extent that no portion of the same shall be less than eight feet above the sidewalks. Any portion of a tree extending over streets shall be trimmed to a minimum of 15 feet so as not to interfere with the normal flow of traffic.
- (g) *Utilities.* The Landscape Board shall determine those species of trees, shrubs and plantings which may be planted and maintained under or within ten feet laterally of any overhead utility wire, or above or within five feet laterally of any underground water line, sewer line, distribution line or other public utility service on public property or utility or drainage easements within the City.

No tree, shrub or other planting shall be located so as to prevent or hinder proper access to water and gas shut-off valves, fire hydrants, sanitary and storm sewer manholes, communication system terminals, electric service disconnects or other controls and devices to which immediate access may be required under emergency conditions.

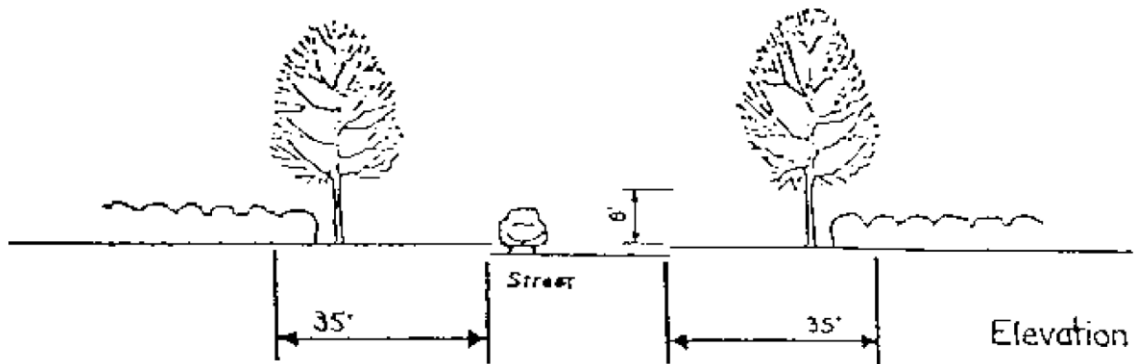
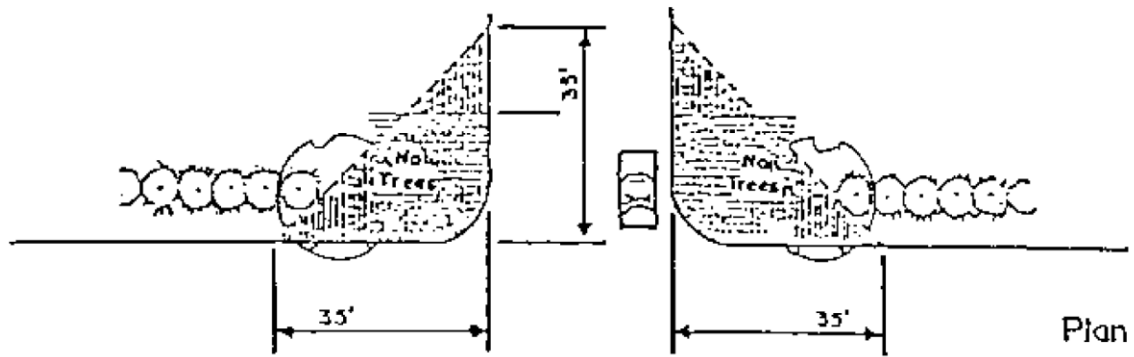
- (h) *Reducing Tree Lawn.* No person shall by any type of construction reduce the size of a tree lawn without first procuring permission from the Landscape Board.
- (i) **Species not Permitted** to be Planted on Public Property or Utility or Drainage Easements within the City. **Trees prohibited** The Landscape Board shall determine that poplar, willow, silver maple, and cottonwood trees shall not from being planted in the street tree lawn, or within a drainage or utility easement, **are defined in the City's Comprehensive Landscape Plan.** The City Landscape Board must approve, prior to planting, all species of trees to be planted in the street tree lawn. (Refer to Definitions, Section 913.04, for other "injurious plants".)
- (j) *Abuse or Mutilation of Trees.* It shall be a violation of this chapter to abuse, destroy or mutilate any tree, shrub or plant in a public tree lawn or any other public place, or to attach or place any rope or wire other than one used to support a young or broken tree. No signs of any kind shall be attached to any tree in a public tree lawn or other public place. No gaseous, liquid, or solid substance which is harmful to such trees, shrubs or plants shall be allowed to come in contact with their roots or leaves, or to set fire or permit fire to burn when such fire or heat thereof will injure any portion of any tree or shrub.
 - (1) No person shall deposit, place, store or maintain upon public places of the City, any stone, brick, sand, concrete, wood or other materials which may impede the free passage of water, air or fertilizer to the roots of any tree growing therein, except by written permit from the Landscape Board.
 - (2) No person, business entity, or City department shall top any tree located on public property unless such action is first specifically approved by the Director of Public Service and Engineering and/or Director of Parks and Recreation and/or their designees.
 - (3) A person or business entity who holds a grant of right-of-way by easement or otherwise or a City department may prune or top trees located on public property which might interfere with or endanger the safe and efficient operation of a service provided by such person, firm or City department.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11; Ord. No. 0069-2015 , § 1(Exh. A), 7-6-15; Ord. No. 0032-2016, § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-16)

913.99 PENALTY.

- (a) A person who removes, damages or causes to be removed a public tree, shrub or lawn cover from the tree lawn or other public place will be required to replace such trees at his own expense, with the replacement tree having a minimum diameter of two and one-half inches.
- (b) Whoever violates any provision of this chapter shall be guilty of a minor misdemeanor on a first offense, and shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the fourth degree upon the commission of any subsequent offenses.
- (c) Each tree, shrub or planting affected by a violation of this chapter shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. 0107-2011. Passed 6-20-11.)



(Ord. No. 0032-2016, § 1(Exh. A), 4-18-16)