

**Project Title:** Text Amendment to Update Landscaping and Buffers

**Petition No.:** PLNPCM2025-00461

**Version:** Planning Commission Draft

**Date Prepared:** 2/19/26

**Planning Commission Action:** 2/25/26

<p><b>APPROVED AS TO FORM</b> Salt Lake City Attorney's Office</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>By: _____ Attorney Name, <i>Senior City</i></p>
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This proposed ordinance makes the following amendments (for summary purposes only):

- Creates Subsection 21A.48.C, which specifies that public infrastructure projects within the right-of-way need to follow landscaping requirements, but allows for modifications based on unique conditions, such as safety issues or creating a healthy environment for trees or other plants.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.030.A to clarify the Zoning Administrator's ability to modify landscaping requirements due to unique circumstances related to the property; the Engineering Division would also be added as a group the Zoning Administrator may request to review modification requests.
- Amends Subsections 21A.48.040.C.4, 21A.48.050.E, and 21A.48.060.B to make grammatical or technical changes.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.A to align with changes to State Code related to when a landscape plan is required and to exempt new construction of single-family and two-family dwellings from providing a landscape plan.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.D.1 to clarify the requirements of a planting plan.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.F
- Deletes Subsection 21A.48.050.G as a Certificate of Occupancy may not be withheld due to landscaping.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.060.D to clarify which zoning districts are affected by a landscape buffer and when the Zoning Administrator may modify a landscape buffer. Additionally, the landscape buffer and freeway landscape buffer standards have been relocated from 21A.48.060.D.1 to 21A.48.060.D.2 and 21A.48.060.D.3.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.070.C to eliminate parking lot landscaping requirements when abutting buildings.
- Amends Subsection 21A.48.080.B.4 to allow artificial turf in required landscape yards under select circumstances. It would not be allowed to be installed in required landscape buffers or park strips. In addition, 33% of required landscape yards would still need to be live vegetation. Other standards regulate where it could be located, add protection for existing trees and plants, and outline qualifications for artificial turf.

Underlined text is new; text with strikethrough is proposed to be deleted. Modifications made as part of the Planning Commission recommendation are highlighted in yellow. All other text is existing with no proposed change.

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If adopted by the City Council, the Salt Lake City Council ordains the following, in substantial compliance with the following:

1       1. *Creates Subsection 21A.48.020.C as follows:*

2       C. Public infrastructure projects within the right-of-way that are unable to meet required  
3       landscaping standards due to the design of the project, safety issues, or the inability to  
4       provide sufficient park strip width to allow for healthy conditions for vegetation or trees are  
5       exempt from the standards of this chapter. Turf and artificial turf are prohibited and  
6       minimum rock or gravel size standards apply in these areas.

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8       2. *Amends Subsection 21A.48.030.A as follows:*

9       A. The requirements of this chapter may be modified by the zoning administrator, on a  
10       case-by-case basis due to unique property conditions where ~~innovative a~~ landscaping design  
11       ~~that~~ furthers the purpose and intent of this chapter is implemented, ~~or in response to input~~  
12       ~~from:~~ For the purpose of making modifications as authorized by this section, unique  
13       property conditions shall be related to the dimensions or shape of the property, topography,  
14       existing easements, or safety impacts. The need for the adjustment shall not be created by  
15       the actions of the applicant. Any request for a modification under this section may be  
16       reviewed by the following to determine if the modification is justified:

- 17       1. Police Department;  
18       2. Public Utilities; ~~or~~  
19       3. Urban Forestry; Or  
20       4. Engineering.  
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22       3. *Amends Subsection 21A.48.040.D.4.a as follows:*

23       a. When a ~~Landscaping~~ landscape plan is required, as described in Section 21A.48.050,  
24       street trees shall be irrigated with a permanent automatic irrigation system.

25       4. *Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.A as follows:*

26       A. ~~Landscaping Plan Required~~ Applicability: A landscape plan shall be submitted for all  
27       landscaped areas of a property and adjacent rights-of-way unless the requirement to submit  
28       a landscape plan is exempt under Utah Code 10-20 or by this Title. All landscaped areas  
29       shall comply with the requirements of this Chapter, including when a landscape plan is not  
30       required. A landscape plan shall be required for the following:

- 31 1. New construction of a ~~primary principal~~ structure. Single-family and two- family  
32 dwellings are exempt from this provision.  
33 2. Any addition, expansion or intensification of a ~~property~~ use that increases the floor  
34 area by 50% or more, increases the number of parking stalls required by 50% or more, or  
35 modifies any required landscaping by 50% or more shall bring the entire property into  
36 compliance with this chapter. ~~Single-family and two-family uses dwellings~~ are exempt  
37 from this provision.  
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39 5. *Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.D.1 as follows:*

- 40 1. Planting Plan:  
41 a. Property lines, easements, and street names.  
42 b. Location and dimensions of existing and proposed structures such as, parking lots,  
43 drive aisles, and sidewalks, bicycle paths, fencing, ground signs, refuse and recycling  
44 containers, freestanding electrical equipment, and all other structures. ~~fencing.~~  
45 c. ~~Location of existing and proposed sidewalks, bicycle paths, ground signs, refuse~~  
46 ~~disposal, freestanding electrical equipment, and all other structures. Sight distance~~  
47 ~~triangles, as defined and illustrated in Chapter 21A.62.~~  
48 d. The location of existing buildings, structures, and trees on adjacent property within  
49 20 feet of the ~~site-subject property line.~~  
50 e. The location, size, and common names of all existing trees.  
51 f. ~~Sight distance triangles at curb cuts or corners, as defined and illustrated in Chapter~~  
52 ~~21A.62. The location, quantity, size at maturity, and name (botanical and common) of~~  
53 ~~proposed plants and trees.~~  
54 g. Root Zone Protection Plan required when construction work will occur near a street  
55 tree or other protected tree and is subject to approval from the Urban Forestry Division.  
56 h. Minimum tree soil standards set by the Salt Lake City Urban Forestry Division.  
57 i. ~~The location, quantity, size at maturity, and name (botanical and common) of~~  
58 ~~proposed plants and trees.~~  
59 j.i. Summary table that specifies the following for each landscaping location separately:  
60 (1) Area and percentage of each required landscape location.  
61 (2) Area and percentage of each landscape location covered in turf grasses, impervious  
62 surfaces.  
63 (3) Area and percentage of each landscape location covered in adapted or native plant  
64 species and adapted or native trees at maturity.  
65 kj. A signature by a Landscape Architect licensed with the State of Utah, or an US-EPA  
66 WaterSense certified professional verifying planting plan compliance with the standards  
67 of this chapter.  
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- 69 6. *Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.E as follows:*

70 E. Specific Landscape Regulations: ~~Various zoning districts in this title have specific~~  
71 ~~landscaping regulations in addition to the requirements found in this chapter. Refer to the~~  
72 ~~respective zoning district for specific landscaping regulations.~~ Landscape plans for  
73 properties subject to zoning district specific landscape regulations shall be in compliance  
74 with all applicable landscape and district specific requirements.

75 7. Amends Subsection 21A.48.050.F as follows:

76 F. Compliance Certification: A letter of compliance shall be prepared and submitted to the  
77 city ~~upon completion of the landscape plan installation and prior to the issuance of a~~  
78 ~~certificate of occupancy, or commencement of the use of the property within 90 days of~~  
79 ~~landscape installation or within one year after the landscape plan is approved, whichever~~  
80 ~~comes later.~~ Compliance certification shall be signed by a landscape architect licensed with  
81 the State of Utah, or an US-EPA WaterSense certified professional verifying that all  
82 landscape plan elements have been installed in compliance with the approved landscape  
83 plan. Failure to submit a letter of compliance within 8 months upon completion of the  
84 landscape plan installation and issuance of a certificate of occupancy shall result in written  
85 warning notice to the property owner, notifying the property owner of the violation of this  
86 title, the intent to enforce on the violation, and a specific date the violations must be  
87 corrected by. Failure to submit a letter of compliance within 8 months after issuance of a  
88 certificate of occupancy shall be a violation of this title, and subject to the fines and penalties  
89 established in [Chapter 21A.20](#).

90 8. Deletes Subsection 21A.48.050.G:

92 ~~—G. Planting Season Installation: The landscape plan installation may be delayed until the~~  
93 ~~next optimal planting season. A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) may be issued~~  
94 ~~and subsequent TCO fees waived between October 15 and the following April 1 where it is~~  
95 ~~not favorable to install landscaping. The landscape plan shall be installed, and a letter of~~  
96 ~~compliance submitted within 30 days following April 1. Temporary Certificate of Occupancy~~  
97 ~~fees pursuant to Section [18.32.035](#) of this code shall be reinstated where no letter of~~  
98 ~~compliance is submitted by the end of the 30-day period.~~  
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100 9. Amends Subsection 21A.48.060.B as follows:

Park Strips	
Street Trees	Minimum of 1 street tree planted on center between back of street curb and the sidewalk. Additional street trees shall be provided at the following rate per each frontage length: 1 small tree per 20 feet, or 1 medium tree per 30 feet, or 1 large tree per 40 feet. The largest tree that is appropriate to the park strip size shall be used. <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>
Street Tree Soil Volume	In the Downtown, Jordan River Fairpark, and Gateway zoning district ( <a href="#">Chapter 21A.30</a> ), street trees shall be planted in areas with adequate soil volume to promote street tree health and longevity. The soil volume surrounding a tree

	shall be a minimum of 750 <u>cubic feet</u> <sup>3</sup> per tree, provided that this area is exclusive of the soils volume calculation for adjacent trees. The soil volume may be reduced if underground utilities are present within the soil volume and the soil volume cannot be extended horizontally due to other obstructions or barriers. The urban forester may also approve a reduced soil volume below 750 <u>cubic feet</u> <sup>3</sup> if that volume is not necessary for the proposed tree health.
Vegetation	Minimum 33% coverage.
Turf and Artificial Turf	Prohibited
Impervious Surfaces	The combination of all paving materials shall not exceed 20% of the total park strip area.
1. Street trees shall be an appropriate species chosen from the Urban Forestry Street Tree List based on park strip size, shall have sufficient separation from public utilities, and shall be approved by the Urban Forestry Division.	
2. Park strips with a width of 36" or less are exempt from this provision.	

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102 *10. Amends Subsection 21A.48.060.D as follows:*

103 D. Landscape Buffer Standards:

104 1. Landscape Buffer Widths

District	When Abutting <sup>1</sup>	Required Landscape/ Freeway Buffer Widths
All districts (except <del>single- and two-family</del> R-1, R-2, Foothill, Special Development Pattern, FB-UN1, and those districts listed below that require a greater buffer width)	<del>Single- and two-family</del> R-1, R-2, FB-UN1, Foothill, & Special Development	10'
All districts	Freeway <sup>2</sup>	20'
All other non-residential districts (except MU-2, MU-3, <del>FB-UN1</del> , and those districts listed below that require a greater buffer width)	RMF-30, RMF-35, RMF-45, & RMF-75	10'
M-1 & M-1A	Any district that allows residential uses, AG districts, & OS	15'

M-2	Any district that allows residential uses	50'
	AG districts & OS	30'
BP & RP	All residential districts (in <a href="#">Chapter 21A.24</a> )	30'
EI	All districts	30'
MH	All districts	20'
1. Or when required elsewhere by this title.		
2. The zoning administrator may approve a reduced freeway buffer if there's an existing sound wall, or significant grade/elevation difference that mitigate visual or auditory impacts, or required off-street parking cannot be met. If such a reduction is necessary, the buffer may not be less than 10' in width.		
<b>Landscape Buffer Standards</b>		
<del>1 tree for every 30 linear feet of landscape buffer.</del>		
<del>1 shrub every 3 feet, with a mature height of no less than 4', along the entire length of the buffer.</del>		
<del>A 6-foot solid fence along the length of the required landscape buffer unless modified by the zoning administrator to better meet the fence height provisions in Section <a href="#">21A.40.120</a>.</del>		
<del>Turf is limited to active recreation areas.</del>		
<b>Freeway Landscape Buffer Standards</b> (buffer standards for those properties abutting a freeway)		
<del>1 tree for every 15 linear feet of required freeway landscape buffer. Trees shall be staggered along the length of the buffer.</del>		
<del>100% coverage required, may include adapted or native grasses, wildflower, and shrubs. Turf is prohibited.</del>		

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106 2. Landscape Buffer Standards

<u>Tree</u>	<u>1 tree for every 30 linear feet of landscape buffer</u>
<u>Shrub</u>	<u>1 shrub every 3 feet, with a mature height of no less than 4 feet, along the entire length of the buffer.</u>
<u>Turf</u>	<u>Limited to active recreation areas.</u>
<u>Fence</u>	<u>6-foot solid fence along the length of the required landscape buffer unless modified by the zoning administrator to better meet the fence height provisions in Section <a href="#">21A.40.120</a>.</u>

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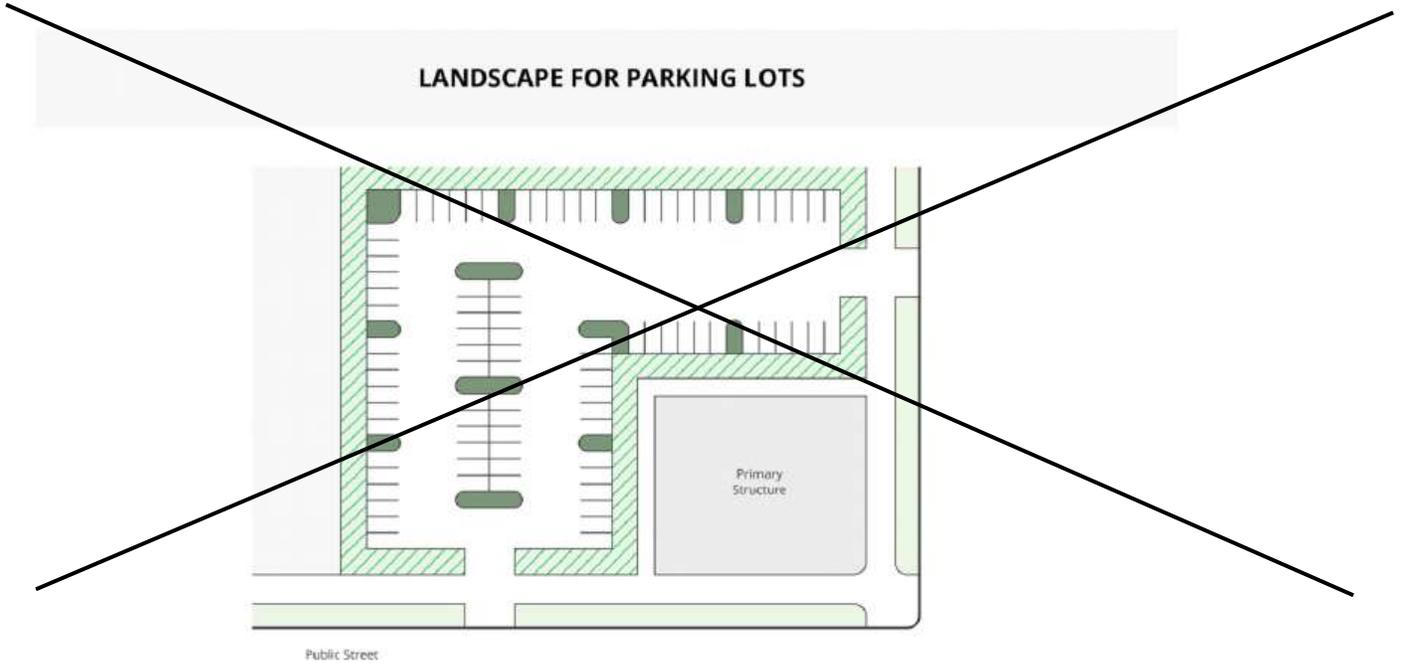
108 3. Freeway Landscape Buffer Standards (for those properties abutting a freeway)

<u>Freeway Buffer</u>	
<u>Tree</u>	<u>1 tree for every 15 linear feet of required freeway landscape buffer. Trees shall be staggered along the length of the buffer.</u>

<u>Vegetation</u>	<u>100% coverage required, may include adapted or native grasses, wildflower, and shrubs.</u>
<u>Turf</u>	<u>prohibited.</u>

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110 11. Amends Subsection 21A.48.070.B.4 as follows:

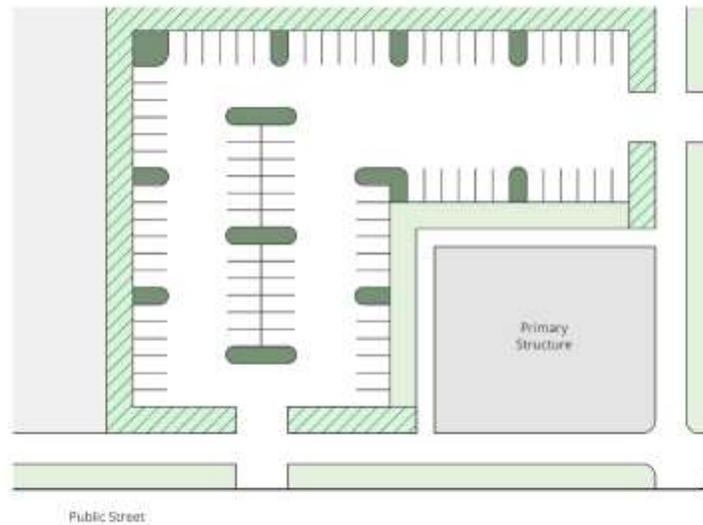


 Perimeter Parking Lot Landscaping | 
  Interior Landscaping Areas

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## LANDSCAPE FOR PARKING LOTS



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12. Amends Subsection 21A.48.070.C as follows:

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### C. Parking Lot Perimeter Landscaping:

1. Applicability: Landscaping along the perimeter of the parking lot shall be provided when the parking lot is located:
  - a. Within a required yard (where permitted in Sections [21A.44.060](#) or [21A.36.020](#)); or
  - b. Within 20 feet of a lot line; or
  - c. ~~Abutting a principal building.~~
2. Where both landscape buffers and perimeter parking lot landscaping are required, the more restrictive shall apply.
3. Where a surface parking lot is adjacent to another surface parking lot, on the same or separate parcels or lots, the perimeter parking lot landscaping provision may be waived by the zoning administrator if the required number trees are located elsewhere within the development.
4. Size:
  - a. In a required yard or within 20 feet of a property line: 8 feet in width, as measured from the back of the parking lot curb and extending into any parking space overhang area.
  - b. ~~Abutting a building on the same property: A minimum 5-foot wide required landscaping and 3-foot walkway shall be required to buffer buildings from parking spaces.~~

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13. Amends Section 21A.48.080.B.4 as follows:

- 4. ~~Artificial turf is prohibited in any location where landscaping is regulated by this chapter.~~  
Artificial turf is allowed subject to the provisions of this section:
  - a. All minimum vegetation requirements as required by this chapter are complied with.
  - b. Artificial turf shall have a minimum permeability of 30 inches per hour per square yard.
  - c. Artificial turf is not permitted in any park strip, required landscape buffer or freeway buffer, permanent drainage features (e.g., ponds, swales, and retention and detention basins) or elsewhere in a public right of way.
  - d. A minimum four-foot separation between artificial turf and tree trunks and two-foot separation between artificial turf and shrubs shall be maintained to ensure roots are not damaged with the installation of artificial turf and that the overall health of the living plant material is not compromised;
  - e. The use of indoor or outdoor plastic or nylon carpeting as a substitute or replacement for artificial turf or natural turf is prohibited;
  - f. Artificial turf shall consist of green lifelike individual blades of grass that:
    - (1) Emulate natural turf in look and color;
    - (2) Have a minimum pile height of 1.5 inches;
  - g. Artificial turf shall be cleaned regularly and maintained in an appropriate and neat manner. It shall be replaced if it is worn, uneven, discolored, or damaged.
  - h. Uses such as public parks, schools, athletic fields, playgrounds and similar uses are exempt from these standards.

Effective Date: This ordinance, if passed, shall become effective on the date of its first publication and shall be recorded with the Salt Lake City Recorder.

Is there a penalty for violating this ordinance? If so, please state penalty or reference another ordinance that prescribes the penalty here. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

If penalty for violation includes possibility of imprisonment, include the following statement:

Per Section 78B-22-301 of the Utah Code, Salt Lake City shall provide for indigent defense services, as that term is defined in 78B-22-102 of the Utah Code.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY RECORDER

Transmitted to the Mayor on \_\_\_\_\_.

Mayor's Action: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved. \_\_\_\_\_ Vetoed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY RECORDER

DRAFT