

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT POLICY ON LANDSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION

January 1, 2009

This compilation of selected portions of the Public Facilities Manual is intended to summarize and clarify regulations pertaining to the implementation of landscape plans on development sites subject to review and inspection by the County. Included are regulations governing the most common areas of noncompliance experienced by staff in the course of conducting landscape inspections, and a brief summary of the policy regarding seasonal landscape deferrals.

Tree Species and Size

1. Trees and shrubs that are planted shall be of the species and size specified on the approved plans. There shall be no deviations from the approved sizes specified except as approved by Fairfax County Urban Forest Management (UFMD). (PFM 12-0705.1A)
2. All trees and shrubs shall meet the standards for sizes and quality specified in the American Association of Nurserymen's American Standard for Nursery Stock, (ANSI Z60.1-1996). See attachment #1. (PFM 12-0705.1B)

Species Substitutions

3. Species substitutions within the tree categories listed in Table 12.19 are generally accepted unless otherwise specified by proffered conditions, development conditions, special exceptions, or special permits. Any tree substitution shall also be in conformance with the following. (PFM 12-0705.1C)
 - a. **Plant Diversity** - The use of substitutions shall not result in any species making up more than 10 percent of the total number of trees required to be planted on the site. (PFM 12-0514.1L)
 - b. **Authorization** - A letter signed by the permittee shall be provided to UFMD acknowledging any proposed substitutions to trees and shrubs shown on the approved plans. (PFM 12-0705.1C(2))
 - c. **Substitutions Outside of Tree Category** - Substitution of a tree shown on the approved plan from one tree category, as listed in PFM Table 12.19, with a tree from a different category shall require a revision to the approved plan. (PFM 12-0805.1C(3))
 - d. **Species Suitability** - Substituted species must be suited to the post-development conditions of the planting location for which it is intended. (PFM 12-0601.1E)
 - e. **Additional Tree Cover Credit** - In cases where additional tree cover credit has been given, no tree substitutions shall be made except as approved by the Urban Forest Management. Examples of additional credit include the following:

Air Quality, PFM 12-0509.4B(1)
Energy Conservation, PFM 12-0509.4B(2)
Water Quality, PFM 12-0509.4B(3)
Wildlife Benefits, PFM 12-0509.4B(4)
Native Trees, PFM 12-0509.4B(5)

Planting Locations

4. Planting locations of all trees on the site shall be in substantial conformance with the approved plan. UFMD acknowledges that not all trees may be optimally located, as shown on the plan, and encourage input from Permittees and their landscape professionals regarding proposed improvements that might be implemented. Any substantive deviations from the approved plan that are made in the field must be approved by UFMD and shall be in conformance with the following:
 - a. **Planting Area** - At least the minimum size planting area shall be provided for each tree according to its projected 10-year tree cover area as found in Table 12.7. (PFM 12-0601.1B)
 - b. **Environmental Conditions** - Light, moisture, and other conditions affecting the health and viability of the tree at the field location shall be suitable for the species. (PFM 12-0601.1E)

- c. **Compacted Soil** – If planting in areas that have been previously compacted, the soil shall be properly prepared (tilled and amended as needed based on soil samples) to a depth of 12 inches, prior to installation of landscape material. Soil within individual planting holes shall not be amended. (PFM 12-0705.3B)
- d. **Restrictive Barriers** - Trees shall be planted no closer than four feet from any restrictive barrier. (PFM 12-0509.4E(5))
- d. **Spacing** - Trees shall be spaced so that the outer limit of their projected 10-year tree cover area, as indicated in Table 12.19, does not significantly overlap; or as determined appropriate by UFMD for site conditions and to promote long-term survival. (PFM 12-0509.4E(6))
- e. **Easements** - Trees for tree cover credit shall not be planted within any existing or proposed public utility easement or within five feet of storm drainage easements that contain pipes. In addition, trees shall not be planted in an area that will interfere with existing or proposed utilities or with maintenance of the utility, as determined by the Director of DPWES. (PFM 12-0514.6B)

Staking and Guying

- 5. Staking and guying should only be implemented where site conditions warrant their use. Planted trees should be assessed individually and staking and guying installed only as required. Conditions where staking and guying may be necessary to ensure stability include: windy locations, steep slopes, or where vandalism may be a concern. All staking and guying material must be removed within one year of plant installation (PFM 12-0705.3C)

Seasonal Landscape Deferrals

- 6. A Seasonal Landscape Deferral may be granted when seasonal or weather-related conditions, such as excessively wet soil, extended periods of drought, or frozen ground, substantially reduce the survivability of the plant material, as determined by the Urban Forest Management. A request for a landscape deferral will not be granted for landscaping required prior to the issuance of a RUP or Non-RUP when seasonal or weather-related conditions on the site plan do not preclude planting. Lack of species availability may justify the approval of a Seasonal Landscape Deferral when specific plant species are required by proffers or conditions.
- 7. The party responsible for the placement of the performance bond and conservation deposit for the project shall act as the Applicant for this seasonal deferral. Seasonal Landscape Deferral request forms can be obtained from the Environmental and Facilities Inspections Division or the Urban Forest Management.
- 8. At the time of final inspection for release of performance bond and conservation deposit, all of the plant material is inspected. Plant material previously inspected, as part of the process to release any deferral deposit that may have existed, is not exempt from this final inspection. All plant material must be healthy and in good condition.

Requirements Prior to Approval of RUP/Non-RUP

- 9. The landscaping and screening requirements of Article 13 or of any approved proffered condition, special permit, special exception or variance must be completed prior to approval of any Residential or Non-Residential Use Permit; provided, however, that completion of the requirements may be delayed when justification satisfactory to the Director is provided; such justification shall include an agreement and bond with surety satisfactory to the Director for completion in accordance with a firm schedule for timely completion. (ZO 18-704.3) See Seasonal Landscape Deferrals above.