



Landscape Guidelines

2019 Update

City Council
February 23, 2019

Landscape Guidelines Background



Origin and Purpose

- Enabled through the Zoning Ordinance to ensure “adequate minimum landscaping”
- Applies to projects from Grading Plan (staff approval) through Development Special Use Permits (Council approval)
- First adopted in 1997, updated in 2007

Reasons for the Update

- Incorporate current best practices and technologies
- Address issues raised through other City processes, policies, and plans
- Improve the structure to facilitate applicant process



Update Process

Interdepartmental Staff Review and Update

- Staff consisting of landscape architects, arborists, horticulturalist, operations managers, stormwater specialists, engineers, and planners provided input to the document

Outreach to Professionals

- Engaged in discussion sessions with design professionals, contractors, and nurseries

Public Outreach

- Reviewed the draft document with the following through public hearings:
 - Park and Recreation Commission
 - Environmental Policy Commission
 - Alexandria Beautification Commission
 - NVBIA/NAIOP
- Gathered input via online public comment

Significant Updates

Document Organization

- Layout follows the Development Process
- Applicants able to utilize only their relevant sections
- References and technical information moved to online library
 - Direct link to source material
 - Allows ongoing update to keep up with best practices



Significant Updates

Tree Protection

- Enhanced protection measures
- Improved practices and details

Invasive Species Management

- Specification of invasive species removal depending on site conditions
- Ongoing management to ensure protection of resources and adjacent properties



Significant Updates

Canopy Cover

- Amendments to the following to encourage additional canopy cover
 - Incentive for retention of significant existing trees
 - Above-structure trees provide full credit with adequate soil
 - Street tree requirements amended to provide more trees in the Right of Way
 - New mechanism for projects that fall short of requirement with increased contribution



Significant Updates

Plant Diversity

- New standards to ensure sufficient diversity to prevent loss due to pest and disease outbreaks
 - Ex. Dutch Elm Disease, Emerald Ash Borer

Native Species

- Specification of native plant species on plans
- Percentages tailored to type of plant
- Graduated implementation addresses concerns raised by industry



Significant Updates

Soils

- New standards for soil composition
- Amended soil volumes for consistency and best practices

Plant Materials

- New standards for location of source of plant materials
- Size of plant materials amended to reflect best practices
- Revised planting details and best practices





Anticipated Benefits

- Updated layout will improve applicant's process
- Updated standards to match best practices will result in higher-quality installations
- New standards such as tree protection and native planting addresses community concerns of quality and sustainability
- Online references allow for regular updates of technical materials
- Furtherance of City-wide plans and policies such as improved urban tree canopy coverage
- Improved health of urban forest
- Improved natural resources management, including suppression of invasive species
- Applies to Grading Plans, Concept and Completeness Plans submitted after March 1, 2019.



Conclusion

Staff and the Planning Commission recommend Approval of the 2019 update to the Landscape Guidelines and is available to answer questions.

