

Unified Development Code – Landscape Requirements (Palm Trees)

Request	Hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to City Council on revisions to Chapter 125 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of League City, Article 4, entitled “Site Development Standards”, to revise regulations related to landscaping requirements.
Applicant	City of League City
City Council	Public Hearing & First Reading – <i>January 9, 2024</i> ; <i>Second Reading – January 23, 2024</i>
Attachments	1. Redlined Ordinance

Background

November 2023 – Councilmember Cones and Mayor Long co-sponsored the proposed amendments to the Unified Development Code.

November 17, 2023 – Notice of the public hearings was published in the paper.

December 4, 2023 – The Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to hold a public hearing and make a recommendation to City Council.

January 9, 2024 – City Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing and hear the item on first reading.

January 23, 2024 – Subject to approval on first reading, City Council is scheduled to hear the item on second reading.

Changes to the Ordinance

The following changes to the ordinance are proposed.

- Allow for required shade trees to be substituted with palm varieties.
- Create minimum requirements for palm varieties.

For additional information, you may contact Kris Carpenter, Planning Director at 281-554-1098 or at Kris.carpenter@leaguecitytx.gov.

Chapter 125: Article 4. Site Development Standards

4.20 Landscaping and Buffer Yards

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4.20.2 Landscaping. These provisions are intended to promote attractive development and preserve the appearance and character of area surrounding new development. These provisions apply to all development for which landscaping is required under this Ordinance and to Planned Developments.

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j. Special Landscape Setback Requirements.

1. **Applicability.** The landscape setback requirements in this subsection shall apply to the following districts: Commercial and Mixed Use, Industrial, Public and Semi-Public, and Open Space Districts and the Commercial Revitalization Overlay District. A minimum 10-foot wide landscaped setback is required along all street frontages. The landscape setback shall consist of the following:

i. One shade tree for every 30 feet of linear street frontage, excluding driveways. Trees may be planted in clusters or spaced linearly rather than being on 30-foot centers. The minimum size of the tree should be 1 ½ - inch caliper (15 gallons) upon installation. Shade trees may be substituted for Palm varieties subject to the regulations listed in subsection (m); and

ii. A continuous hedge consisting of shrubs that are not less than 3 feet or more than 4 feet in height and planted in 3- or 5-gallon container stocks upon installation. The landscape hedge shall be set back a minimum of 3 feet and a maximum of 6 feet from the perimeter of any parking space, driveway, or any access aisle.

iii. In lieu of a landscape hedge noted above, a berm measuring not less than 3 feet or more than 4 feet in height from finish grade of the parking lot may be utilized. The berm shall be set back a minimum of 3 feet and a maximum of 6 feet from the perimeter of any parking space, driveway, or any access aisle. The maximum slope shall not exceed 4:1.

2. In lieu of providing a landscape setback as described in j.1 above, the following may be utilized:

i. 50% of the ground floor of the building shall be built to the property line;

ii. Parking shall be located behind or at the side of buildings, except for passenger drop-off areas which may be located at the building entry;

iii. Loading areas shall be screened so as not to be visible from public streets; and

- iv. Where the building abuts a residential district, the preferred location of loading facilities shall be the side away from the residential district boundary.

k. **Percent of Landscaped Area.** The zoning districts listed in the table below require a percent of the area to be landscaped. The minimum percent of landscaped area is provided in the table.

Zoning District	CN	CG	CO	CM	IL	IG	PS	OS	CRC
Minimum % Landscaped Area	10	15	15	15	10	10	10	50	15

l. **Screening of Parking Areas.** Parking areas and parking access aisles parallel to and within 75 feet of rights-of-way shall be screened from view from those rights-of-way, public parks and public buildings with one of the following:

1. **Landscape Screening.** Where landscaping is used as a substitute screening method, hedges shall be installed as described in j.1. of this section. Additionally, the hedges shall not be located in public rights-of-way. Plant materials shall be an evergreen species. Ground cover and shrubs planted within sight distance triangles shall not exceed a height of 24 inches at maturity.
2. **Berms.** Where a berm is used as a substitute screening method, berms shall meet the requirements described in j.1.ii above. Berms shall not be located in public rights- of-way.
3. **Parking Screen Fences.** Fences shall be not less than three (3) feet nor more than four (4) feet measured from finish grade of the parking lot. Fences shall be set back a minimum of three (3) feet and a maximum of six (6) feet from the perimeter of any parking space, driveway, or any access aisle, as measured from the back of the curb. Fences shall not be placed in public rights-of-way or on top of any retaining walls. Fences shall be constructed of decorative block, brick, stone, or similar materials and finished on both the interior and exterior elevations.

4. **Shade-Parking Lot Trees.** Shade trees shall be planted in the parking lot at a ratio of 1 tree for every 8 spaces. Trees shall be dispersed throughout the parking lot to maximize the shading effect on the parking spaces. These trees are exclusive of trees planted around the perimeter of the parking lot. Parking lot trees, when planted, shall have a minimum trunk height of 6 feet and a minimum 2-inch single trunk caliper measurement or 1.5-inch average trunk caliper for multiple trunk trees, measured 4 feet above grade. This size of tree is generally referred to as a 24-inch box. The minimum trunk height of parking lot trees shall be 6 feet. The end spaces in a row of parking spaces shall be separated from drive aisles by landscape islands or peninsulas that ate a minimum width of 6 feet. The landscape planter for any parking lot tree shall have a minimum area of 50 square feet and a minimum interior width of 5 feet. Shade trees may be substituted for Palm varieties

subject to the regulations listed in subsection (m)

m. Palm Varieties

- i. The following palms are suitable for our climate, and may be used:
 1. Texas Sabal Palm (*Sabal texana*)
 2. Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*)
 3. Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*)
 4. Pindo Palm (*Butia capitata*)
 5. Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*)
 6. Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*)
- ii. Any palm substituted for a required shade tree must be at least 12 feet in height at time of planting with at least 8 feet of clear trunk.
- i-iii. No hurricane cut palms are allowed.

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