CHAPTER 21

LANDSCAPING AND SITE DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

SECTION:

10-21-1: **EXTERIOR LIGHT FIXTURES:** Exterior light fixtures should be simple in design, and shall comply with the Victor's Lighting Ordinance. Light fixtures should enhance the architecture and overall project design. Street lighting shall be in accordance with the City's approved street lights.

10-21-2: **DESIGN OF FENCES**: The design of fences and walls should harmonize with the site and the buildings on it in scale as well as in materials.

A. Walls and fencing may be required elements in a site design for privacy, property line delineations, or screening.

B. Low walls for seating are also encouraged as an amenity in pedestrian areas; these should be capped with a surface at least 12 inches wide.

C. The placement of walls and fences should respect existing land forms and follow existing contours and fit into existing land massing rather than arbitrarily following site boundary lines.

D. Fencing should not dominate the buildings or the landscape. Planting may often be integrated with fencing scheme in order to soften the visual impact.

E. The tops of fences should generally be maintained horizontal. If the ground slopes the fence should be stepped.

F. Fences intended to provide private areas should be kept close to building so as not to adversely impact common open area.

G. Fencing which is away from buildings should be of a more open character than fences intended to provide privacy close to houses.

H. Fencing materials should be compatible with the materials and color of the surrounding or the prevailing building materials and color in adjacent developments.

10-21-3: **RETAINING WALLS**: Retaining walls should be compatible in form, scale, and materials with the architectural details and materials of nearby buildings.

A. Retaining walls may not be faced with any material disallowed for buildings. Rock facing on walls should be applied in a manner that makes the rock appear as a structural element rather than a veneer.

B. Textured, specially formed and sand blasted concrete are encouraged wall materials. Retaining walls over 24" high may require railings or planting buffers for safety. Low retaining walls may be used for seating if capped with a surface of at least 12 to 16 inches wide.

10-21-4: **PAVING PATTERNS:** The use of conservative paving patterns and texture to delineate function and give variety to the setting is encouraged, provided it is consistent with the overall concept of the development. Other streetscape appurtenances (i.e. street lighting fixtures, trash receptacles, benches, etc.) shall be designed and installed according to adopted City Standards where such standards exist.

The specific design requirements of all public sidewalks are outlined following these guidelines.

10-21-5: **HARMONY IN SITE DESIGN:** Consider all the elements of a landscape. A landscape plan should provide or create a pleasing site or landscape character for an area. A harmony of all the various elements of a landscape must be retained or developed.

A. Exploit the natural features in the landscape such as water, view, and orientation. Design these features into the scheme and orient them.

B. On those sites where the existing vegetation is considered a significant attribute of the site, the siting and design of buildings shall retain the existing vegetation wherever possible.

C. In those developments which adjoin native vegetation, the landscape should reflect the native vegetation patterns and plant materials. Outward orienting portions of the landscape shall be planted with the same species of plants which are found on the adjacent undisturbed areas.

D. New plantings would blend in with the existing landscape so that several years hence all traces of the site disturbance will have disappeared.

E. Proper landscaping transition to adjacent properties and natural areas should be provided without strong demarcation.

F. All disturbed areas must be re-vegetated.

G. Landscaped areas should be planned as an integral part of the project and not simply located in leftover space on the site.

10-21-6: **SITE CONDITIONS:** Consider site conditions, drought tolerance, and hardiness when selecting plant species.

A. Soil conditions, exposure, wind, temperatures and other factors vary within different areas of the City, and these factors should be considered in the choice of plant materials.

B. Plant species selected should be compatible with the activity of the particular areas.

C. In landscape plans including more than 10 trees, a minimum of 10% of the trees shall be at least 4-inch caliper, 20% shall be at least 3-inch caliper, and 20% shall be at least 2 ½ -inch caliper.

D. Drought tolerant plant species shall be used wherever possible to reduce water demand. High water demand plant materials shall be kept to a minimum and confined to areas adjacent to patios and entries, in active sports areas, and in natural water courses.

E. Only plant materials hardy to Victor's environment shall be used. A maximum of 20% of any single tree species may be used in any landscape plan (excluding street trees). Any tree listed in the City of Victor Tree Selection and Planting Guide may be used. Trees not listed in this Guide may be used upon approval by staff.

F. Street trees must be approved by staff.

G. The City of Victor Tree Selection and Planting Guide is recommended for use by applicants, and is incorporated in its entirety .

H. Keep lawn areas to a minimum in projects surrounded by native vegetation.

1. Projects surrounded by native vegetation may have turf in areas with limited public visibility (i.e. enclosed courtyards), active play areas or small maintained portions of a project.

2. Excessive amounts of turf in these “native” areas will not be allowed. Instead, native, drought tolerant grasses and vegetation should be used to help the project blend in with the surrounding vegetation.

3. Projects in more urban areas with small yard areas may use turf and non-native plant materials more extensively.

10-21- 7: **BUFFERS AND SCREENS:** When plant materials are used to screen areas such as mechanical equipment, parking lots, loading docks or storage areas which are adjacent to natural sites, the plant materials should be massed in groups rather than located in a straight line. Straight rows of trees or shrubs create an unnatural, formal, maintained appearance in a mountain environment surrounded by native vegetative patterns. Mass the plant materials in groups which reflect the native landscape. Although the informal or natural design is preferred there may be some urban areas that are appropriate for formal design. Some examples might be urban plazas, and some streetscapes.

10-21-8: **UTILITY LINES:** The long range goal is to bring all types of utility lines underground. The clutter created by poles and overhead lines is unacceptable. Utilities, cables, phone lines and electrical must be underground.

10-21-9: **STORM WATER RETENTION:**

A. Provide areas to store snow, with accessible and usable snow storage areas totaling at least 15% of the improved parking and circulation areas of the site.

B. Choose plant material that can tolerate chemicals and the weight of stacked snow. Do not plant materials directly under roof eaves that do not have gutters.

10-21-10: **PARKING LOT TREATMENTS:** Use landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of parking lots.

A. Well placed groups of appropriate trees and shrubs can improve the appearance of these vast expanses of hardscape. It is recommended

that at least one-fourth of any such parking area larger than 5,000 square feet be shaded by planting trees and shrubs. The object is to create a park or architectural form in what is otherwise a waste land.

10-21-11: **IRRIGATION SYSTEM REQUIRED:**

A. Landscape plans must include an irrigation system. Items of most importance include full coverage; water conservation through proper design; and automatic systems for commercial, industrial, condominium and large-scale residential projects.

B. Low water consumption irrigation systems are encouraged.

C. Wherever possible, overhead spraying systems should be avoided to prevent water loss through evaporation.

D. In particular, island areas and sidewalk borders are susceptible to overspray and water waste.

E. Storm water runoff shall be retained on the site wherever possible and used to irrigate plant materials.

F. Even native, drought tolerant plant materials need water to become established. Projects which use all native, drought tolerant plant materials must provide, at a minimum, a temporary irrigation system which must fully operate for at least two complete growing seasons.

G. All native plant materials are not drought tolerant and those that are not will require irrigation on a permanent basis.

10-21-12: **PRESERVING EXISTING VEGITATION:** Significant existing vegetation is an attribute to any site and the vegetation should be retained wherever possible. Protected areas may be established on building sites because of important or sensitive environmental or physical characteristics. Areas that are not disturbed do not have to be revegetated and projects which retain existing vegetation are much more desirable. In addition, the more area left undisturbed as a result of construction, the less erosion problems will be produced from the site.

A. Builders and developer should avoid the following hazardous situations, all of which can kill trees:

1. Placing back fill into protected areas or on top of roots of trees be saved.

2. Felling trees into protected areas.

3. Driving construction equipment into or through protected areas.

4. Bumping into trees with construction equipment or driving over the top of their roots.

5. Burning in, or in close proximity to protected areas.

6. Staking or storing supplies in protected areas.

7. Changing site grades which cause drainage to flow into, or to collect in protected areas.

8. Changing soil elevation on existing trees which causes the roots be exposed or the trunks to be covered with soil.

B. Existing trees greater than 6" caliper are considered a resource in the City of Victor and the removal of any are subject to review.

1. Proposed site plans shall inventory and delineate to scale all existing plant material to be saved.

2. Removal of trees larger than 6" caliper requires approval.

3. Any tree or other plant material destroyed or mortally injured after previously being identified to be preserved, or removed without authorization, must be replaced with a large specimen of the same or similar species and variety.

C. All final grading and drainage is required to comply with that of the Public Works Standard Specifications and Drawings and be approved by the City engineer. Make sure there is positive drainage away from buildings and that the final grade meets the provisions prior to the installation of irrigation systems and plant materials. Guarantees will not be released until the final grading and drainage is found to be acceptable.

D. Maintenance Program: Once the irrigation system and plant materials have been installed, a maintenance program must begin.

1. Be sure to program funds for maintenance costs into the project budget.

2. Guarantees and/or retainers for landscaping (letters of credit or escrow agreements) will not be released until the project appears in a well maintained condition (i.e., all weeds removed, dead plant materials removed and replaced).

3. Expect to apply an extensive weeding program to the project for the first three years.

4. For optimum efficiency and coverage, irrigation systems must be periodically tested and adjusted.

5. All dead plant material must be replaced as soon as practical. It may be necessary to re-stake trees and repair broken branches on trees in the spring.

6. Periodically, plant materials should be fertilized and checked for insect infestation and disease.

10-21-13: **SIDEWALKS:**

The City standard for public sidewalks is a 5' (Central Business Zone) or 8' (General Business Zone) wide cast in place concrete sidewalk with score lines and expansion joints as per city standards. The Victor City Council may, as part of their review of any development, approve public sidewalks which vary from this standard. The council will ensure that variations from the City standard meet the following criteria:

A. Acceptable Material: All proposed sidewalk installations which vary from City standards must be installed in such a manner that the color, texture, pattern or other design feature of the material directly integrates with both the proposed development and City sidewalks. All materials must be installed to City standards as approved by the City Engineer. Compaction of base materials for any public sidewalk must meet City standards. The following materials may be approved.

1. Cast in place concrete. (with broom finish for traction)

2. Colored and imprinted; or colored, imprinted, and textured cast in place concrete. Colors shall be integrated into the concrete prior to the pour.

3. Hardened concrete pavers or flat stone on a compacted sand base.

4. Tile, ceramics, or stone installed in cast in place concrete.

5. Asphalt paths 10' wide, only in residential, recreational, or industrial areas, and physically separated from automobile travel lanes.

6. Other surfaces which meet the approval of the City. Said surfaces must be durable, attractive, low – maintenance and must not be smooth or slippery.

B. Surfaces: All public sidewalks installed shall meet the American National Standard for accessible facilities as found in CABO, ANSI A117.1 – 1998, or as amended or modified.

C. Heating: Electric or heated – liquid sidewalk snow melt systems may be integrated with any sidewalk snow melt systems may be integrated with a sidewalk installed by the developer. The city shall not assume maintenance or operation of any system of this type.

D. Trees: Any street trees planned or required for integration within the sidewalk shall be placed in such a manner as to not obstruct either pedestrian traffic or motor vehicle visibility. Trees must be a minimum 2" caliper at chest height, must be a species approved by the City, and must be placed in a planter area covered by a cast iron or steel grate.

The tree grate should integrate with the design of the project and have no opening, exclusive of that for the tree, more than ½" wide. Landscaping for sidewalks could be furniture.

E. Process: Any applicant proposing a sidewalk which varies from City standards shall provide the City with a plan showing dimensions, materials, colors and patterns for the proposed sidewalk.

F. That plan shall include a drawing of the adjacent sidewalks. The applicant shall also provide a cross section of the planned improvement which depicts and provides standards for sub base, base and surface materials and compaction. The applicant will also provide a written statement assuming responsibility for maintenance of the sidewalk. The City shall review the proposed sidewalk to ensure that it will meet the criteria of this section.

10-21-14: **PLANT UNIT**: A basic measurement of plant material required to fulfill a landscaping requirement based on the standards of this ordinance. Plant units are required for new commercial development, and subdivisions development. Numbers of units required are found in the zoning district regulations. The following are options available.

A. Alternative A:

1 - 3" caliper canopy tree
6 - 6' to 8' large shrubs or multi-stem trees
4 - #5 container shrubs

B. Alternative B:

2 - 3" caliper canopy tree
2 - 6' to 8' large shrubs or multi-stem trees
3 - 8' high evergreen trees

C. * Alternative C:

3 - 6' to 8' large shrub or multi-stem trees
3 - 8' high evergreen trees
2 - #5 container shrubs

D. *Alterative D:

3 - 8' high evergreen trees
3 - 6' to 8' large shrubs or multi-stem trees
3 - #5 container shrubs

*Preferred for year-round screening