

Landscaping Requirements in Sangamon County in Brief

SPRINGFIELD-SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION INFORMATION SERIES

Purpose of the Sangamon County Ordinance

The complete landscaping and lighting requirements for Sangamon County can be found in Chapter 17.51 of the Sangamon County Zoning Ordinance. The landscape requirements are intended to provide buffering between single-family and duplex uses and multiple-family, community facility, office, commercial, and industrial uses. The overall impact of these requirements is intended to enhance and protect property values for the benefit of both public and private investment, and improve the image of Sangamon County as a good place to live and work.

Applicability

The landscape requirements apply to multiple-family, office, commercial, or industrial buildings but are not applicable to single-family or duplex structures, or any structure in the Agricultural zoning district. These requirements pertain to the front yards, parking lots, and in some cases transitional buffer yards. Transitional buffer yards are those side or rear yards required where a commercial property adjoins a residential district. The ordinance also establishes lighting requirements for larger parking lots, but specifies standards to minimize light pollution and "spill-over" which could adversely affect traffic safety and nearby residential uses.

Review Procedures



Standard point system: The landscape ordinance is based on a point system in order to give the project designer considerable flexibility in developing a landscape plan that will meet the landscape requirements. Within the guidelines set by the ordinance, the project designer is able to select plant materials and ground covers best suited to the site.

Alternative compliance: Even with a flexible system for landscape requirements, not every property or business may be able to comply with the Standard Point System. When there are unique site factors and the basic intent of the ordinance can be met, the developer may propose a design that will comply with the alternative compliance provision of the ordinance.

Calculation of Required Landscaping

While one should review the ordinance for full details, we can provide an example as to how points are calculated.

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Step 1: Landscaping for Front Yard.

- 1) Measure the length of the property line along the front yard of the property. For example, assume that this measurement is 220 feet.
- 2) Divide this number by 2 ($220/2=110$). This number represents the number of points to be achieved in the front yard.
- 3) One-half of the required points (55 points in this example) must come from trees, while the other one-half must come from shrubs or ground cover. Evergreen and deciduous trees count for the same number of points.
- 4) In this example, the project designer selects one shade tree (18 points) and 3 small ornamental trees ($3 \times 12 \text{ points} = 36 \text{ points}$), resulting in a total of 54 points for trees. Although this is one point less than the total required for trees, the designer can request alternative compliance and make up that point with shrubs and groundcover.

Step 2: Landscaping for a side yard fronting a street

Repeat the process in Step 1 for a front yard, but note that the entire length of this yard is not measured. The portion of the side yard equivalent to the required front yard is double counted because it already has landscaping assigned to it by Step 1.



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Step 3: Parking lot landscaping

- 1) The number of spaces in the parking lot(s) represents the number of required landscaping points.
- 2) In lots of less than 100 parking spaces the landscaping may be placed within 10 feet of the parking lot or in curbed parking islands within the lot.
- 3) In lots of 100 or more parking spaces, one-half of the required points must be from shade (medium-tall) trees located within curbed parking islands within the parking lot itself. The other one-half of the required points may be planted within 10 feet of the edge of the parking lot.

Step 4: Landscaping of transitional yards

Where transitional yards are required, the length of the property line is equal to the number of landscape points required.

For additional assistance with Sangamon County landscaping requirements, contact the County's Department of Zoning and Building Safety or the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission.

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For more detailed information, please refer to the appropriate sections of Sangamon County code. County ordinances change over time, so please refer to the current code of ordinances. Municipal jurisdictions located in Sangamon County have their own regulations, so these local codes should be consulted.

If you are unsure about jurisdiction, or seek additional information, please contact the Planning Commission at 217-535-3110, or e-mail us at sscrpc@co.sangamon.il.us.

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