

Sample Language for Water Conservation Ordinances

Many Municipalities have adopted language with similar intentions in their subdivision ordinances that apply only to new subdivisions. When possible, the language below should also be applied to existing lots when the landowner applies for a building permit.

Exemplified 1. Tree Ratios - Landscaping

Subd. At least one tree no less than six feet in initial height and no less than one and one-half inch caliper (either existing or planted) shall be included and replaced as necessary as per the following ratios:

1. In street yards less than 10,000 square feet, one tree per 1,000 square feet, or fraction thereof, of street yard.
2. In street yards of between 10,000 and 110,000 square feet, one tree per 2,500 square feet, or fraction thereof, of street yard area over 10,000 square feet is added to the requirement of ten trees.
3. In street yards over 110,000 square feet, one tree per 5,000 square feet, or fraction thereof, of street yard over 110,000 square feet is added to the requirement of 50 trees.
4. An existing or planted tree which is no less than eight inches in diameter, or no less than six inches in diameter and no less than 15 feet tall shall be considered as two trees for purposes of satisfying this subsection. All newly planted trees shall be planted in a landscaped area no less than eight feet wide.

Exemplified 2. Tree Ratios - Landscaping

Subd. In order to achieve an appropriate and complete quality landscaping of a site and to minimize lawn irrigation water volumes, the following minimum number of trees shall be provided as indicated below;

1. One over story deciduous shade tree for every two thousand square feet of total building floor area or one tree for every 100 feet of site perimeter, which ever is greater.
2. One coniferous tree for every 2,000 square feet of total building floor area or one tree for every two hundred feet of site perimeter, whichever is greater.
3. One ornamental tree for every two thousand square feet of building or one ornamental tree for every two hundred feet of site perimeter, whichever is greater.

Subd. Minimum size of plantings:

1. Over story deciduous – 2 ½ inch caliper.
2. Coniferous – 6 foot height.

3. Ornamental trees – 2 inch caliper.

Subd. Tree preservation and Credit:

1. it is the policy of the City with respect to retain, as far as practical, existing trees which should be incorporated into the site. Credit for retention of existing trees which are of the acceptable minimum size and location, may be given to satisfy the minimum landscaping requirements.

Example 3. Tree Ratios - Landscaping

Subd. Trees add value to the residential development, to the City as a whole, and reduce the volume of water needed for lawn irrigation. Trees shall be preserved in the design of subdivisions. No tree shall be removed from any subdivision until approval of the preliminary subdivision has been granted. All trees on the subdivision plan required to be retained shall be preserved and all trees, where required, shall be welled and protected against grade changes. The subdivision plan shall show the number and location of existing trees, and shall further indicate all those marked for retention, and the location of all proposed shade trees as required by this chapter

Subd. Shade trees planted by subdivider:

1. As a requirement of subdivision approval, the city may required that the subdivider plant shade trees on the property of the subdivision. Such trees are to be planted within five feet of the right-of-way of the roads within and abutting the subdivisions, or at the discretion of the city, within the right-of-way of such roads. An additional two trees shall be planted per platted lot as long as they are not identical species. Adjacent to the right of way, one tree shall be planted for every 40 feet of frontage along each road unless the council, upon recommendation of city staff, shall grant a waiver.
2. New trees to be provided pursuant to this chapter shall be approved by the city and shall be planted in accordance with the specifications of the city. Such trees shall have a minimum trunk diameter, measured 12” above the ground level, of not less than two inches. Only oak, honey locust, hard maples, gingko, ash or other long-lived shade trees acceptable to the city shall be planted.