



EPHRATA PLANNING COMMISSION
AGENDA
Thursday, July 25, 2019

Board: Joe Dennis
Jo Maedke
Tom Moncrief
Don Guillemette
David Spencer

- A. Regular Commission Meeting: Open to the Public.
- B. Ephrata City Hall - 121 Alder Street S.W.
- C. Call meeting to order - 7:00 p.m.
- D. Roll Call
- E. Approval of Commission Minutes: July 11, 2019
- F. Correspondence:
- G. Additions and/or revisions to Published Agenda:

Business:

- 1. Discussion of allowing or prohibiting the use of artificial grass/turf to meet City of Ephrata landscaping requirements
- 2. Zoning Code, Chapter 19.07 Landscaping Regulations- Review of draft revisions.

Adjourn

Please contact Stacy Hooper at 754-4601 extension 123 if you will not be able to attend this meeting.



CITY OF EPHRATA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
121 ALDER STREET SOUTHWEST
EPHRATA, WASHINGTON 98823

PHONE: 509-754-4601
FAX: 509-754-0912

VOICE: 1800-833-6384
TDD: 1800-833-6388

July 19, 2019

Subject: Planning Commission discussion of allowing or prohibiting the use of artificial grass/turf to meet City of Ephrata landscaping requirements.

In response to the artificial grass/turf discussion at the July 11th Planning Commission meeting, Planning Staff has compiled a list of some of the pros and cons of using artificial grass/turf.

Attachment:

1. List of pros and cons of artificial grass
2. Draft of proposed changes to EMC 19.07, Landscaping

Action: The Planning Commission should consider and discuss the information contained in the two attachments along with any other pertinent information relating to EMC 19.07. The Commission should then direct staff how to proceed with any changes.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Leavitt
Community Development Director
City of Ephrata

List of Pros of Artificial Grass

1. It requires very little maintenance.

All you need is to prep the space, lay down the synthetic lawn and voila! You have a green, perfectly manicured lawn. You can practically enjoy this evergreen beauty and never have to worry about weeding or mowing ever again. If a patch gets destroyed, you simply replace it with a new patch. Artificial grass doesn't attract animals that like to feed on it, such as voles, gophers, or grubs. It also doesn't get diseases, isn't affected by drought, and doesn't become dormant in the winter.

2. It does not need pesticide or fertilizer.

Because your lawn is made of synthetic grass, it does not require you to apply any pesticide or fertilizer. You don't have to worry about your yard turning bald and brown. It's always green and lush, and ready to provide you with a space for entertaining guests or for family fun.

3. It does not need water.

Well, it does need a couple of splashes for cleaning up, but not for watering the grass to keep it alive. The grass is, after all, non-organic and non-living, so it does not need watering. According to the EPA, up to 60% of the water used in a household may be solely through landscape irrigation. Considering that the average person does overwater their grass, that's not too surprising of a statistic.

4. It is long lasting and durable.

Unlike natural grass dies and withers with prolonged use, artificial grass provides longer playability. No need to place those rather offensive signs that say: Keep Off the Grass. Anyone, even pets and kids can play on your yard without you worrying about it having slippery patches of mud or loose soil.

5. It helps prevent slips and falls.

As long as there is turf cover on your yard, it remains playable. Grass keeps slips and falls less disastrous, especially for athletic people and playful tots. The artificial turf serves as cushion.

List of Cons of Artificial Grass

1. It may contains hazardous chemicals.

Most artificial grass contains harmful levels of lead and zinc. Exposure to high levels of lead heightens risk of severe mental retardation, stunted growth and death, while exposure to high levels of zinc causes cardiovascular problems. There is a big debate on whether the recycled tire rubber is a carcinogen, as well. Tests have not been conclusive, but there are arguments for both sides.

2. It's harmful chemicals may cause toxic runoff.

During rain or cleaning, some of the harmful chemicals contained in the artificial turf drains off to public sewage systems, which may contaminate ground and drinking water.

3. It poses other health risks.

Exposure to synthetic grass has health risks including asthma and Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), which starts as ordinary lesions or boils and turns into deep abscesses.

Dust particles from artificial grass exacerbate respiratory problems like asthma. Artificial grass is often made from ground up tires, which creates air-borne dust that becomes harmful when inhaled.

4. It is ideal habitat for bacteria.

Failure to clean or wash artificial lawns promotes bacteria to thrive, especially staph that causes MRSA and staphylococci. These bacteria live on polyethylene plastic for more than 90 days and cause various forms of infections.

5. It always looks artificial, no matter what.

No matter how natural-looking synthetic grass may be, it will always remain synthetic. Over time, it will lose its natural appeal and will become plain plastic and dull. It does not provide cool, oxygen-rich space that natural grasses do. In fact, it aggravates the heat during a hot day.

6. It gets hot.

Artificial grass has heat absorbing property that makes it very hot to play on an incredibly warm weather. Under a 98° day, the heat on the artificial grass can rise to over 120 degrees. Brigham Young University research found that the temperature of the surface was 37 ° higher than air temperature. This is because natural grass has water inside it that helps to keep it cool. Whereas artificial grass is usually made of recycled tire rubber. However, some artificial grass is made with organic coconut fibers that don't get as hot.

Chapter 19.07
LANDSCAPING REGULATIONS

Sections:

- 19.07.010 Purpose and intent.
- 19.07.020 Applicability.
- 19.07.030 General requirements.
- 19.07.040 Specific requirements.
- 19.07.050 Landscape buffers—Types and descriptions.
- 19.07.060 Submittal requirements.
- 19.07.070 Approval of landscape plan and installation of landscaping.
- 19.07.090 Maintenance requirements.
- 19.07.100 Prohibited plants.
- 19.07.110 Alteration of landscape requirements.
- 19.07.120 Deviations.
- 19.07.130 Enforcement.

19.07.010 Purpose and intent.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish landscaping provisions to achieve the following:

- A. Provide a smooth transition between adjacent properties and buffer different intensities of land uses.
- B. Maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the city.
- C. Soften the visual impact of paved surfaces and blank building walls.
- D. Reduce the effects of light, noise, glare, exhaust fumes, heat, wind, dust, all forms of erosion, and other adverse effects.
- E. Provide shade.

19.07.020 Applicability.

- A. Other than the exceptions listed in subsection (b) of this section, the requirements of this chapter shall apply to all of the following:
 - 1. New development.
 - 2. Any change in the use of a property requiring a land use permit.

3. Any change in the use of a property requiring a change of occupancy permit.
4. Any addition, remodel, alteration, or repair of a structure that increases the gross floor area by more than fifty percent or where the cost of the addition, remodel, alteration, or repair exceeds fifty percent of the existing assessed value of the structure.

B. Exceptions.

1. This chapter does not apply to any use or development in the C-1 zone and the Bomanite Paving District area, other than parking lots.
2. An individual one- or two-family dwelling unit on an individual lot that is not part of a subdivision or planned development district application is only required to comply with the following sections of this chapter:
 - a. Section 19.07.040(c)(1), residential front yard setbacks;
 - b. Section 19.07.090, Maintenance requirements;
 - c. Section 19.07.100, Prohibited plants.

19.07.030 General requirements.

All required landscaped areas shall comply with the following:

- A. Landscaping shall consist of combinations of trees, shrubs, and ground cover. Nonliving natural features may also be incorporated.
- B. Required landscape plantings shall be suited to the climate, location, and physical conditions of the site. The use of drought-tolerant species is encouraged.
- C. All landscaped areas shall be graded to prevent erosion and to facilitate the installation, growth, and maintenance of the landscaping. All turf areas located in public rights-of-way shall have a grade of no greater than 4(h):1(v).
- D. Trees and shrubs shall be chosen and located to avoid interference with underground and overhead utility lines or public improvements.
- E. Landscaping shall be designed to ensure adequate visibility and safety of vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users, on and off the proposed site.

Height and/or spacing of landscaping may be modified to accommodate sight distances.

F. Other than a fence around an individual one-or two-family dwelling, all fences shall be placed on the inward side of any required perimeter landscaping.

G. Minimum Plant Sizes at Installation:

Type of Plant	Minimum Size at Installation
Street trees and other deciduous trees	Two-inch caliper
Multi-stemmed trees, e.g., vine maple	Six feet tall
Evergreen trees	Six feet tall
Small shrubs	Twelve inches tall
Medium and tall shrubs	Eighteen inches tall

H. Living ground covers shall provide at least fifty percent coverage at the time of planting and one hundred percent coverage within three years, except that grass sod areas shall provide one hundred percent coverage at installation.

I. If approved by the city, required street frontage landscaping may be placed in city right-of-way. This area shall be maintained by the owner of the property that abuts the right-of-way. The city and other public services shall have the right to remove landscaping placed on city right-of-way for repair, replacement, or installation of utility services. The city will not accept liability for damages to said landscaping from future street expansion, meter reading, or utility installation, inspection, or repair.

J. All required landscaping shall be served by irrigation systems appropriate for the plants. Use of drip-irrigation is encouraged when practical.

K. The incorporation of existing vegetation, especially healthy trees, is strongly encouraged. Where existing trees and associated vegetation serve the same or similar function as the required landscaping, they may substitute for the required landscaping, provided trees are healthy, not included in the prohibited species list and appropriate for the site at mature size. When necessary, existing vegetation

shall be supplemented with new plantings to accomplish the specific intent and purpose of this chapter.

- L. In the event of a conflict between the content of this chapter and other regulations, the more restrictive regulations shall apply.
- M. All trash containers shall be screened from abutting properties and streets by a one hundred (100%) percent sight-obscuring fence or wall and appropriate landscaping. (Ord. 18-09, 2018)
- N. Landscaping may be included within stormwater facilities such as a swale, provided it does not impede the functionality of the stormwater facility.
- O. No disturbed ground shall be left exposed. Live groundcover, decorative rock, or mulch shall cover all disturbed areas that are not built upon or paved.

19.07.040 Specific requirements.

- A. Buffers. When adjacent to the uses listed, the subject property shall provide the type and width of landscaping listed in the table below along the entire property line between the subject property and the adjacent use, except for vehicular and pedestrian access points.

ADJACENT USE	SUBJECT PROPERTY USE				
	1 & 2 Family Subdivision	Multifamily	Manufactured Home Park	Commercial/ Institutional	Industrial
Highway	Type I 20 feet wide	Type I 20 feet wide	Type I 20 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide
Street frontage	Type III 5 feet wide	Type III 5 feet wide	Type I 5 feet wide	Type III 10 feet wide	Type II 20 feet wide
1 & 2 Family or vacant land zoned R-1, R-3 and S-R		Type II 5 feet wide	Type I 10 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	Type I 15 feet wide
Multifamily or vacant land zoned R-2, R-4 and R-5	Type II 10 feet wide	Type III 5 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	Type I 15 feet wide
Manufactured Home Park	Type I 10 feet wide	Type III 5 feet wide		Type II 10 feet wide	Type I 15 feet wide
Commercial/Institutional or vacant land zoned C-1 or C2	Type II 10 feet wide	Type II 5 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide		Type II 10 feet wide
Industrial or vacant land zoned I-L	Type II 10 feet wide	Type I 5 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	Type II 10 feet wide	

- B. All parking areas of over twenty thousand (20,000) square feet shall have a minimum of ten (10) percent of the parking area, maneuvering area, and loading space landscaped as a means to reduce the barren appearance of the lot and to

reduce the amount of stormwater runoff. Perimeter landscaping, required adjacent to property lines, shall not be calculated as part of the ten(10) percent figure. No parking-area landscaping is required for the Airport Zones and Industrial Zones.

C. Residential Landscaping.

1. Front Yard Setback. The required front yard setback of all residential uses shall be landscaped within one year of occupancy and maintained. For the purposes of this section, "landscaping" shall be defined as the addition of lawn, trees, plants, shrubs, and other natural and decorative features. A semi-circular driveway may be located in the front yard setback provided that no less than 25% of the remaining front yard area is landscaped as defined in this section.
2. Multifamily Structures. Multifamily residential uses shall also landscape the required open space areas so that they are usable for outdoor recreation.
3. Manufactured Home Parks. All areas not in hardscape, hardscape meaning built structures, roadways, paved and gravel pathways and utility facilities, within the boundaries of the manufactured home park shall be landscaped. All lawns, trees, landscaping, occupied and unoccupied manufactured home spaces, recreation areas, and open space areas shall be continually maintained. A permanent irrigation system shall be installed and maintained for planted common areas.

D. Building Facade Landscaping. Blank building facades more than twenty feet in height or fifty feet in width or length shall be landscaped with Type III landscaping to provide visual relief and soften the effect of the new building on the surrounding area.

19.07.050 Landscape buffers—Types and descriptions.

	<u>Type I Solid Screen</u>	<u>Type II Visual Screen</u>	<u>Type III Visual Buffer</u>
<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Type I landscaping is intended to provide a solid sight barrier to totally separate incompatible uses.</u>	<u>Type II landscaping is intended to create a visual separation that is not necessarily one hundred (100) percent sight-obscuring between incompatible uses.</u>	<u>Type III landscaping is intended to provided visual separation of uses from streets and main arterials and between compatible uses so as to soften the appearance of streets, parking lots and building facades.</u>
<u>Description</u>	<u>Type I landscaping shall consist of evergreen trees or tall shrubs with a minimum height of six (6) feet at planting, which will provide a one hundred (100) percent sight-obscuring screen within two (2) years from the time of planting; or a combination of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs backed by one hundred (100) percent sightobscuring fence.</u>	<u>Type II landscaping shall be evergreen or a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees with large shrubs and ground cover interspersed with the trees. (See also A, B, and C below)</u>	<u>Type III landscaping shall be evergreen and deciduous trees planted not more than thirty (30) feet on center interspersed with large shrubs and ground cover. Where used to separate parking from streets, plantings must create a visual barrier of at least forty-two (42) inches in height at time of planting and form a solid screen two (2) years after planting. (See also A, B, and C below)</u>

Additional requirements for Types II, and III are as follows:

- (A) Evergreen trees shall be an average height of six (6) feet at planting. Deciduous trees shall be the following sizes based on their spacing:
 - (1) One (1) inch caliper: Ten (10) feet on center.
 - (2) Two (2) inch caliper: Twenty (20) feet on center. (3) Three (3) inch caliper: Thirty (30) feet on center.
 - (4) Three and one-half (3 1/2) to five (5) inch caliper: Forty (40) feet on center.
- (B) Ground cover shall be of sufficient size and spacing to form a solid cover within two (2) years from the time of planting.
- (C) The plantings and fence must not violate the sight area safety requirements at street intersections.

19.07.060 Submittal requirements.

A landscape plan shall be prepared by a person experienced in the selection and installation of plants. For multifamily projects with five or more units and nonresidential projects with more than twenty thousand square feet of gross floor area, the landscape plan shall be prepared by one of the following: licensed landscape architect, Washington State Certified Nurseryman, or Washington State Certified Landscaper. A landscape plan shall accompany all development applications and shall contain the following information at a minimum:

- A. Name and address or location of project.
- B. Date of the plan.

- C. North arrow and scale (one inch equals fifty feet or larger).
- D. All property lines, rights-of-way, streets, walks, vehicular drives, parking lots, curbing, existing and proposed structures, building entrances, overhead and underground utilities, freestanding lights, service or loading areas, signs, open spaces, plazas, and recreation amenities, with materials noted.
- E. Proposed location of all trees, shrubs, ground cover, and any proposed or existing physical elements, such as fencing, walls, curbing, or benches, that may affect the overall landscape.
- F. A plant schedule which indicates the common names, quantities, spacing, and sizes at planting and maturity for all plants in the landscape plan.
- G. Areas with existing vegetation that will be retained should be marked and described.
- H. A legend which shows symbols and types of plant.
- I. Location and details of irrigation system. The source of water and type of irrigation system shall be noted.

19.07.070 Approval of landscape plan and installation of landscaping.

- A. After receipt of a complete landscape plan, all development applications shall be reviewed by the planner for compliance with this chapter concurrently with and as a part of the review process of the principal use or structure and prior to issuance of any grading, building, or land use permit or approval.
- B. No certificate of occupancy, or final inspection approval if no certificate of occupancy is required, shall be issued until one of the following occurs:
 - 1. The required landscaping is installed.
 - 2. A bond or some other form of cash surety acceptable to the city is submitted at a value of one hundred fifty percent of the estimated cost to complete the landscaping according to the approved landscape plan. Upon completion of the landscape installation, the city shall promptly release the surety. If the required landscaping improvements are not made within six months of occupancy of the building, the city may use the surety to install the landscaping.

19.07.090 Maintenance requirements.

- A. **Required.** Whenever landscaping is or has been required in accordance with the provisions of this title or any addition or amendments to this title, or in accordance with the provisions of any previous code or ordinance of the city, the landscaping shall be permanently maintained in such a manner as to accomplish the purpose for which it was initially required, to include:
1. **Plant Maintenance.** The property owner shall maintain all landscape plant material for the life of the project. All unhealthy or dead plant materials shall be replaced within the next planting season, not to exceed one hundred eighty days from the date of loss. Trees and shrubs shall only be pruned and trimmed as necessary to maintain a healthy growing condition or to prevent a safety hazard. Planted areas shall be maintained free of trash and weeds.
 2. **Irrigation Maintenance.** All portions of any irrigation system shall be maintained in order to perform its original function. Uncontrolled emission of water from any pipe, valve, head, emitter or other irrigation device shall be considered evidence of lack of maintenance and a violation of this chapter.
 3. **Hardscape Maintenance.** Maintenance of all landscape areas shall also include the painting, repairing, reconstruction, and restoration of landscape structures such as fences, walls, trellises, etc.

19.07.100 Prohibited plants.

- A. The following trees are prohibited within public right-of-way, including planter strips: poplar, willow, cottonwood, sumac, fruit trees other than ornamental, nut trees, Siberian or Chinese elm, or any other tree species that may be declared a nuisance by the city for reasons of disease, exotic characteristics, or impairing or destroying property necessary to the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of the city.
- B. The following trees are prohibited within one hundred feet of a public sewer: poplar, willow, elm, cottonwood, or any other tree species with invasive roots.
- C. Any plant listed by the Grant County Weed District as a noxious weed is prohibited.

19.07.110 Alteration of landscape requirements.

The applicant may submit for consideration a landscaping plan that differs from the specific criteria set forth in this chapter. The applicant shall clearly and in detail state what adjustments of requirements are being requested and the reasons that such adjustments are warranted. The application shall be accompanied by supplemental

data, such as sketches, surveys, and statistical information, as is deemed necessary to support the adjustment. The planning commission may approve, modify, or deny the requested adjustment. In approving the alteration, the planning commission shall make the following findings:

- A. The alteration would be in keeping with and preserve the intent of this chapter; and
- B. The alteration would not be contrary to the public interest; and
- C. The alteration is justified based on at least one of the following:
 - 1. The requirements of this chapter would result in more than fifteen percent of the site area being landscaped. In such cases the planning commission may modify those requirements so that not more than fifteen percent of the site must be landscaped; provided, that the landscaping and corresponding setbacks required are those most beneficial to the public. More intensive landscaping may be required if the reduction in area would reduce the effectiveness of landscaping to a point where the intent of the landscaping type cannot be satisfied.
 - 2. The inclusion of significant existing vegetation located on the site would result in as good as or better satisfaction of the purposes of this chapter.
 - 3. Three-foot berms or six-foot architectural barriers are incorporated into the landscape design. Adjacent to the berm or barrier, the width of the perimeter landscaping strip may be reduced up to twenty-five percent if the landscaping materials are incorporated elsewhere on site.
 - 4. Existing conditions on or adjacent to the site, such as significant topographic differences, vegetation, structures, or utilities would render application of this chapter ineffective.
 - 5. An existing or proposed structure precludes installation of the total amount of required perimeter landscaping. In such cases, the landscaping material shall be incorporated on another portion of the site.
 - 6. The proposed landscaping represents a superior result or is more effective than that which would be achieved by strictly following requirements of this section.

19.07.120 Deviations.

A deviation from the regulations of this chapter may be obtained through the hearing examiner in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 19.12 entitled "Hearing Examiner."

19.07.130 Enforcement.

All violations of this chapter shall be deemed to constitute a public nuisance and shall be enforced by the Community Development Director or his/her designee in the same manner as violations of Ephrata Municipal Code Chapter 6.30. (Ord. 15-07, 2015)