

Design Standards for Plantings on Public Green Space (Neutral Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Public Rights-of-Way)

1. Information

- a. Identify who will be installing and who will be maintaining the planting.
- b. Explain the purpose of the planting.
- c. Indicate when the planting will be installed.
- d. Provide a schedule of change-outs if seasonal plantings are included.
- e. Provide a schedule for routine weeding.
- f. Identify water source, if any, and proposed watering method and schedule.

2. Layout Plan

- a. Indicate names, sizes, spacing and sources of plants.
- b. Show accurate dimensions of bed and bed locations, e.g. distance from curbs, intersections, trees, light standards. To avoid sightline conflicts, planting should be at least 35 feet from intersections and 5 feet from side curbs.

3. Materials

- a. A concrete border (pre-formed curbing) or steel edging is required for beds so that there is a clearly defined edge for mowing of the adjacent turf.
- b. Any existing turf grass and weeds within the bed must be completely removed and the soil tilled before planting.
- c. Plants must be of high quality, in good health, and must be planted using currently accepted horticultural standards. If plant material dies or is unhealthy, the Partner is expected to make replacements immediately.
- d. Organic mulch is required for beds – indicate what type is to be used. Pine straw is preferred.
- e. Trees should be of an appropriate size so as to be able to survive the conditions on a neutral ground. A minimum tree trunk caliper of two inches, and minimum height of ten to twelve feet, is required.
- f. Plastic trunk protectors, such as “Arbor Guard” brand, are encouraged at the base of all trees to prevent mower damage.
- g. Maintaining a ring of mulch around the base of trees will help the trees become established.
- h. Installation of a water bag at the base of the tree will allow for more efficient watering of the tree until establishment.

There are standards for planting on rights-of-way. Plant trees no closer than 25 feet from a corner intersection or 5 feet from a driveway so that the tree won't block visibility and become a traffic hazard. Allow at least 20 feet between a tree and a light pole. If the width of the planting strip is less than 5 feet, only a small size tree is allowed. Only small trees should be planted under utility wires. Keep plantings at least 10 feet away from a fire hydrant. Keep an area at least 4 feet in width by 7 feet in height clear for pedestrians along the sidewalk.

If the above guidelines are not followed and the planting becomes a problem area, the Department of Parks and Parkways will require that the installation be removed. This process takes time, but the investment in proper planning now will increase the probability of success of your project. We want to insure that the planting will be an asset for your neighborhood for years to come.