

## Land Development Code

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<b>Sec. 6.18.1</b>	<b>Purpose and intent.</b>

The purpose and intent of this division is to provide landscaping guidelines establishing minimum standards and criteria for the design, installation, and maintenance of landscaping which enhances the aesthetic appearance of Marion County, complimenting the natural and built environments, reducing noise and glare, improving air and water quality, providing shade and habitat, and buffering the aspects of development.

**Sec. 6.18.2** Landscape plan requirements.

- A. The landscape division shall apply to all development except for single-family homes and

duplexes.

- B. A landscape plan which indicates the following shall be submitted:
- (1) All existing landscaping, indigenous open space, and natural features;
  - (2) Locations of existing protected trees, labeled and with sizes provided, groups of trees, landscaping and other vegetation to be preserved or removed;
  - (3) Vegetation and tree protection barricades;
  - (4) All replacement trees as required per **Division 8 of this article**;
  - (5) All proposed landscape areas, labeled and with sizes provided;
  - (6) Construction details as applicable, including but not limited to:
    - (a) Tree protection;
    - (b) Tree, palm, and shrub installation;
    - (c) Details for specialized installations;
    - (d) Elevation drawings of walls proposed for buffers and/or screening; and
    - (e) Cross section of proposed walls/berms/combinations for buffers.
  - (7) Plant schedule:
    - (a) A key matching the plants being specified (may be plant symbols or written)
    - (b) Quantities of plants being specified
    - (c) Common plant names
    - (d) Scientific plant names
    - (e) Plant specifications including height, spread, and spacing
    - (f) Native status
  - (8) Calculations for required landscaping:
    - (a) Tree preservation and replacement
    - (b) Shade tree requirements
    - (c) Buffers
    - (d) Parking areas
    - (e) Vehicle use areas
  - (9) Notes including installation instructions and special requirements related to licensing, **tree protection, maintenance**, fertilizer use, and watering.
  - (10) Notes pertaining to **tree protection** shall also be provided on the Site Plan and the Grading and Drainage Plan.

**Sec. 6.18.3** Protected trees to be preserved shall be properly integrated into the overall landscape of the proposed development. Only trees with favorable assessments, as required in **Division 8 of this article**, shall be included in the overall landscape and counted towards any landscape requirement.

**Sec. 6.18.4** Landscape design standards.

- A. Landscapes in Marion County shall be designed to protect the County's unique natural resources by conserving water, reducing waste and pollution, creating wildlife habitat, and preventing erosion by implementation of **Florida-Friendly Landscaping** (FFL) by UF/IFAS and FDEP, including but not limited to:

- (1) Right plant, right place;
- (2) Water efficiently;
- (3) Fertilizer appropriately;
- (4) Mulch;
- (5) Attract wildlife;
- (6) Manage yard pests responsibly;
- (7) Recycle yard waste;
- (8) Reduce stormwater runoff; and
- (9) Protect the waterfront.

- B. All plant species listed as “Prohibited” in the [UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-native Plants](#) (Central Zone) shall be removed from proposed development sites. Plant species listed as “Invasive – Not Recommended” shall be removed from all proposed development sites outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB); they may remain within the UGB with authorization from the County Landscape Architect.
- C. Landscaping within public rights-of-way shall require approval by the County Engineer, or designee.
- D. Trees shall not be located in areas that will cause conflict with overhead or underground utilities. Large trees shall not be located within 30’ of powerlines. Alternative design strategies may be approved by the County Landscape Architect where utility conflicts cannot be avoided.
- E. When used, irrigated turfgrass shall comply with Irrigation Coverage Limits in Division 19.

**Sec. 6.18.5** For non-residential development, at least 20 percent of the land to be developed shall be landscaped.

- A. When a project area is less than the size of the overall parcel to be developed, the required landscape area calculation may be reduced to apply to the project area as authorized by the County Landscape Architect. All other requirements directed by the Board, DRC, or included in this division shall apply.
- B. Landscape areas shall include:
  - (1) Buffers;
  - (2) Landscaping required for parking and vehicular use areas;
  - (3) Building landscaping, and
  - (4) Service and equipment area screening.
- C. Landscape areas may also include the following:
  - (1) Planted stormwater management areas excluding the onsite, ultimate storage facility and other stormwater management facilities with a depth greater than 4’;
  - (2) Marion Friendly Landscape Areas;
  - (3) Groundwater Recharge Preservation Areas
- D. Credit towards the landscape area requirements may be allowed for all or part of preserved native habitat if the applicant demonstrates that it includes one or more of the following:
  - (1) Tree clusters including native vegetative communities are protected from development impact.
  - (2) Vegetative areas with native understory flora are protected from development impact.

- (3) Constitutes a perimeter buffer along any roadway, vehicular use area, or adjacent property.

**Sec. 6.18.6** For new residential developments, mixed use developments, and PUDs, landscape plans which meet the landscape design requirements are required for all common areas, including medians, recreation areas, buffer areas, and other open space.

- A. The developer shall prepare articles that clearly inform future owners, including but not limited to builders working within the development, that all permit applications for construction shall include a landscape plan which meets the requirements of this **division** and **Article 5 (Springs Protection Overlay Zone)**. These articles shall be incorporated into and made part of the developer's agreement and restrictive covenants.
- B. The developer shall also provide a comprehensive education program that promotes the practices and principles of FFL as described in the [Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook](#), as amended to be reviewed and approved by the County Landscape Architect. The program shall be incorporated into and made part of the restrictive covenants and clearly outline developer and HOA responsibilities. At a minimum the program shall include the following:
  - (1) Information about the applicable landscaping requirements under this **division** and under **Article 6.4**, including but not limited to aspects related to the use of turfgrass, drought tolerant plants, native plant communities, efficient irrigation systems, pesticides and fertilizers;
  - (2) Procedures to be implemented to ensure the development complies with the required landscaping covenants;
  - (3) Distribution of water conservation and FFL educational materials to all new homeowners; and
  - (4) Encourage residents to contact the Marion County Cooperative Extension Service's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program for additional information concerning landscaping, irrigation, and the proper use of fertilizers and other lawn chemicals.

**Sec. 6.18.7** Shade Trees.

- A. In all cases, the post-development ratio of shade trees to the area of the site shall be a minimum of one shade tree per 3,000 square feet.
- B. Shade trees shall meet the minimum size requirements as stated in **Section 6.18.13**.
- C. In Rural Village Districts (RVD) and Urban Neighborhood Districts (UND) shade trees shall be installed on both sides of all streets, either massed or evenly spaced along streets, or both.

**Sec. 6.18.8** Buffers.

- A. It is the intent of this section to eliminate or reduce the negative impacts of the adjacent uses upon each other such that the long term continuance of either use is not threatened by such impacts and the uses may be considered compatible.
- B. Buffers shall provide a year-round visual screen and provide an aesthetic quality, especially along public right-of-ways, which enhance travel corridors and screen unsightly areas from public view.
- C. Plant species shall be mixed to provide diversity and appeal.
- D. Buffers may consist of landscaping, fencing, walls, berms, or combinations thereof which work cohesively to achieve the intent of buffering.

- E. Every development, with the exception of the construction of a single-family residence on an individual parcel of record, shall provide sufficient buffering when topographical or other barriers do not provide reasonable screening.
- F. Buffers shall be measured along each property line, and shall exclude driveways and other access points.
- G. No buildings, structures, storage of materials, or parking shall be permitted within the buffer area.
- H. Buffers shall not be located on any portion of an existing or dedicated right-of-way or easement.
- I. For developments which exceed 40 acres in size, a preliminary buffering plan shall be submitted with the initial submittal to the DRC. The DRC shall provide a recommendation to the Board.
- J. Required buffer types between land uses.
  - (1) Specialized Commerce Districts include a mix of both commercial and industrial land uses, therefore, buffer requirements shall apply only to lots on the perimeter of the district
  - (2) Buffer installation and maintenance shall be provided concurrently with the development of the more intense land use, with the following deviations:
    - (a) When a new but less intense land use is developed adjoining a pre-existing developed site with a higher intensity use, the new use is subject to providing the required land use buffer.
    - (b) When a new but less intense land use is responsible for providing the required land use buffer, the developer may reduce the required buffer by one buffer type with acknowledgement of the buffer reduction clearly noted on the development plan.
    - (c) The development of an individual single family residence or duplex is exempt from providing the required buffer.
  - (3) In interpreting and applying the provisions of buffers, development is classified into categories shown in **Table 6.18-1**.
  - (4) Table 6.18-2 provides the type of buffer required between a proposed use and an existing use, or in the absence of an existing use

**TABLE 6.18-1. Land Use Categories for Buffers**

<b>AG</b>	Agriculture, Rural Lands, Natural Reservation
<b>SFR</b>	Single family, duplex residential
<b>MF</b>	Multi-family residential
<b>COM</b>	Commercial, RV parks, Commercial Recreation
<b>IND</b>	Industrial uses
<b>PUB</b>	Public Use, Government, Institutional, Professional Office
<b>ROW</b>	Arterial or Collector Right-of-Way or Road Easement

**TABLE 6.18-2. Buffer Type Requirements**

Proposed Use	Permitted or Existing Use							
	AG	SFR	MF	COM	IND	PUB	ROW	
AG	-	E	E	E	E	E	-	
SFR	E	-	C	A	B	C	A	
MF	E	A	-	A	B	C	A	
COM	D	B	B	-	B	C	C	
IND	B	B	B	B	-	B	D	
PUB	E	B	C	C	C	-	C	
ROW	D	D	D	D	D	D	-	

- K. Description of buffer classifications. The content and composition of each buffer type is described in the following items. The design professional shall use these requirements to design buffers that are thoughtfully designed and enhance perimeter of the development site. Visual screening shall be achieved through the use of proper plant material, arrangement, and layering.
- (1) A-Type buffer shall consist of a 30' wide landscape strip without a wall. The buffer shall contain at least three shade trees and five accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 50 percent of the required buffer area and shall form a layered landscape screen with a minimum height of 3' achieved within one year of planting.
  - (2) B-Type buffer shall consist of a 20' wide landscape strip with a wall. The buffer shall contain at least two shade trees and three accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 50 percent of the required buffer.
  - (3) C-Type buffer shall consist of a 15' wide landscape strip without a wall. The buffer shall contain at least two shade trees and three accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 50 percent of the required buffer and form a layered landscape screen with a minimum height of 3' achieved within one year.
  - (4) D-Type buffer shall consist of a 15' wide landscape strip with a wall. The buffer shall contain at least two shade trees and three accent/ornamental trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall comprise at least 25 percent of the required buffer.
  - (5) E-Type buffer shall consist of a 5' wide landscape strip without a wall. The buffer shall contain at least four shade trees for every 100 lineal feet or fractional part thereof. Shrubs shall be planted in a double-staggered row and be capable of reaching a maintained height of 6' within three years. Groundcovers and/or turfgrass shall not be used in this buffer.
- L. Arrangement of plantings in buffers shall provide maximum protection to adjacent properties, avoid damage to existing trees and plant material, and take mature growing sizes into consideration regarding shade, root damage, and interference with nearby utilities.
- M. Walls, fences, and berms.
- (1) No wall/berm/combination shall be constructed or installed in a manner which creates a

threat to public safety or interferes with vehicular circulation.

- (2) The design and materials for all proposed walls or fences that are part of any required buffer shall be compatible with existing and proposed site architecture.
  - (3) When a wall is required as part of buffer, the wall shall be situated within the buffer limits and any required landscaping shall be installed on the public view side of the wall.
  - (4) When a wall is required, a wall, a berm, or a combination of a wall and berm may be used together to achieve a minimum final elevation of 6' in height.
  - (5) Walls/berms/combinations must be constructed to ensure that historic water flow patterns are accommodated and do not interfere or obstruct any stormwater facilities.
  - (6) Walls/berms/combinations may be intermittent to provide bicycle and pedestrian access, although openings shall be minimal and arranged to limit visibility into the proposed development.
  - (7) If planted berms are used, the top of the berm shall have a 4' wide flat maintainable area. The maximum side slope for a berm planted with shrubs and woody groundcovers shall be 3:1. The maximum side slope for a berm planted with turfgrass shall be 3.5:1. Planting trees or shrubs on the very top of a berm is discouraged.
- N. Buffer plantings shall be irrigated appropriately for the specific plant species and characteristics of the site to promote healthy growth.
- O. Buffer areas shall be kept free of all trash and debris.

**Sec. 6.18.9** Parking areas and vehicular use areas.

- A. A minimum 5' wide landscape area consisting of shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall be provided around the perimeter of parking areas to form a landscape screen with a minimum height of 3' achieved within one year of planting. A land use buffer that abuts a parking area may satisfy this requirement.
- B. Landscaping adjacent to parking areas and vehicular use areas shall be protected. Landscaping at the end of parking stalls shall be offset away from the parking stall to allow for vehicle overhang. The area between the landscape screening and the end of the parking stall shall be mulched and contain no vertical irrigation components.
- C. A landscaped parking lot island shall be located every ten parking spaces which will provide sufficient root growth space to accommodate the planned shade canopy size and meet the following minimum size requirement:
  - (1) A minimum size of 200 square foot, or
  - (2) A size matching the adjacent parking stalls.
- D. Trees within parking areas.
  - (1) All trees required for parking areas and vehicular use areas shall be shade trees, unless required otherwise by provisions in this section.
  - (2) All parking lot islands shall contain one shade tree unless site lighting fixtures are proposed in said island. In parking lot islands with site lighting fixtures, an arrangement of one or two accent/ornamental trees shall be installed depending on the size and configuration of the island.
  - (3) Parking lot islands with control signage may contain other tree (or palm) species, in lieu of shade trees, which will not conflict with the visibility of such signage.
- E. Each row of parking spaces shall be terminated by a landscaped island.

- F. Divider medians may be used to meet parking area landscape requirements.
  - (1) The minimum width of a divider median shall be 8’.
  - (2) One shade tree shall be provided per 50 lineal feet of divider median.
- G. For paved parking areas within a Primary SPZ, including those with permeable or porous surfaces, parking lot islands shall be planted with shrubs or groundcovers; the use of turfgrass is prohibited.
- H. To offset heat gain from paved surfaces, in all uses other than residential or industrial uses, an area or combination of areas equal to 10 percent of the collective area of the vehicular use areas, exclusive of parking areas, shall be devoted to internal landscaping. Vehicular use areas include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Ancillary drive aisles
  - (2) Access drives
  - (3) Loading and services areas
- I. Landscaping required within or around any proposed parking area is exclusive of other landscaping requirements. Shade trees as required in **Section 6.18.7** may be integrated into the parking area and/or vehicular use area landscaping.
- J. All landscaping in parking areas, vehicle use areas, and on the street frontage shall be placed so that it will not obstruct any sight triangle.

**Sec. 6.18.10** Building landscaping.

- A. Landscape plantings shall be provided along the public view sides of all proposed structures to reduce the monotony of large blank walls, reduce heat gain and glare, and enhance the aesthetic appearance of the building.
- B. Landscape areas shall be provided adjacent to or within 25’ from the building walls and shall extend along 60 percent of the total length of the wall, excluding those areas required for access to the building.
- C. Landscape areas shall be a minimum of 5’ wide allowing for a minimum distance of 2’ from the façade to the innermost plants.
- D. Large trees shall not be located within 20’ of a building. Accent/ornamental trees shall be located sufficiently to allow for healthy growth and to minimize the need for pruning.

**Sec. 6.18.11** Service and equipment areas.

- A. Utility areas and loading/unloading areas shall be screened as follows:
  - (1) A planting area a minimum of 3’ wide and shall form a continuous 3’ high landscape screen, or
  - (2) Opaque fencing with a minimum height of 3’.
- B. Garbage collection areas (dumpster pad) shall be screen with a wall, opaque fencing, or a landscape screen capable of reaching a minimum height of 6’ within three years.
- C. Landscaping shall be provided around irrigation backflow prevention devices to provide screening from public view.
- D. Trees and shrubs shall remain 8’ from any fire service connection.
- E. Exterior air conditioning components shall be screened by locating the equipment away from public view or through the use of a landscape screen with a minimum height of 3’.

**Sec. 6.18.12** Firewise Landscaping



In fire prone areas of the County, all new residential developments shall implement specific site design and landscaping which follow the UF/IFAS [firewise recommendations](#).

**Sec. 6.18.13** General planting requirements.

- A. All trees, palms, shrubs, and groundcovers shall be nursery grown and Florida No. 1 quality or better, as established by Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Department of Agriculture, State of Florida, included latest updates, as amended.
- B. Planting specifications are listed as follows:
  - (1) Native plant requirements:
    - (a) Within the UGB, a minimum of 25 percent of all proposed plant quantities, excluding turfgrass, shall be Florida native species suitable for use in Marion County.
    - (b) Outside of the UGB a minimum of 35 percent of all proposed plant quantities, excluding turfgrass, shall be Florida native species suitable for use in Marion County.
    - (c) All required shade trees shall be Florida native species. No more than 50 percent of the required shade trees for a development should be of one species.
  - (2) The use of invasive plant species is based on the [UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-native Plants \(Central Zone\)](#) as updated.
    - (a) Plant species listed as “Prohibited” are not permitted for use in any proposed development.
    - (b) Plant species listed as “Invasive – Not Recommended” are not permitted for use in any development outside of the UGB. This group of plants may be used within the UGB with subject to approval by the County Landscape Architect.
    - (c) Plant species listed as “Caution” may be used provided specific management strategies and monitoring are included in the project’s BMP manual.
  - (3) Trees
    - (a) Shade trees shall have a caliper of 3 ½” minimum with a minimum overall height of 12’ and a minimum spread of 4’ upon installation.
    - (b) Accent or ornamental (understory) trees shall have a minimum overall height of 8’ and a minimum spread of 4’ upon installation.
  - (4) Palms
    - (a) Not more than 25 percent of all required trees shall be palm trees unless a higher percentage is authorized as stated in **Division 6.8.13**.
    - (b) Additional palms may be provided in excess of the 25 percent threshold when three palms are used to substitute one required tree. Where specimen palms are specified, substitution may be a one-to-one ratio.
    - (c) Palm trees shall not be substituted for required shade trees.
    - (d) Palms shall have a clear trunk height of 10’ minimum.
  - (5) Shrubs shall be a minimum height of 18” spaced appropriately for the species and the required screening and maintenance height.
  - (6) Groundcovers shall be those species of plants with a mature growing height of 24” maximum and spaced up to 2’ – 3’ on-center.
  - (7) Vining groundcovers shall have a minimum of three runners per plant. Vines may be spaced accordingly for the proposed use.

- (8) Turfgrass may be of any variety which is adapted and suitable for use in Marion County. The use of rolled turf is prohibited on property with public access unless the supportive netting is removed and the integrity of the turf is not jeopardized during installation.

C. Mulch types shall be of a renewable resource. The use of cypress mulch is discouraged.

**Sec. 6.18.14** Landscape Installation.

- A. Any person providing landscape installation services for hire shall meet the licensing and certification requirements under [Section 6.18.19](#).
- B. All plantings shall be installed according to current best management practices.
- C. Trees and palms shall be properly planted and guyed or staked.
- D. All plantings shall be properly watered during installation and through the establishment period as recommended by UF/IFAS for healthy growth.
- E. Installation shall mean survival in perpetuity, and replacement if necessary, of all materials.
- F. Planting material shall be guaranteed for one year from date of the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Dead and/or dying plant material shall be replaced by the owner within 30 days of notification by the County.

**Sec. 6.18.15** Completion inspection requirements.

- A. Upon completion of the installation, the contractor shall request an inspection by the design professional. A [Landscape and Irrigation As-Built Certification](#) shall be signed and sealed by the design professional and submitted to the County Landscape Architect prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
- B. The design professional or Owner may request the inspection be conducted by the County Landscape Architect, or designee, in writing at least 48 hours prior to the requested inspection date.
- C. One year after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, a follow-up inspection shall be conducted by the County to verify that all required landscaping is established, healthy, and properly maintained.

**Sec. 6.18.16** Landscape Maintenance

- A. All landscape areas shall be maintained in accordance with the [Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries](#), UF/IFAS and FDEP.
- B. Trees or palms shall not be severely pruned or shaped. The natural growth habit of a tree or palm shall be considered during the design phase to avoid maintenance conflicts.
- C. Trees or palms which are guyed or braced shall have such guying or bracing removed once sufficient root growth has enable the tree or palm to support itself. Damaging trees with guying devices shall be considered a violation of this Code. Damaged trees shall be replaced at the expense of the owner.
- D. The alteration any required and approved landscape area without obtaining prior written approval from the County is prohibited. The expansion of drought tolerant landscaping, excluding the replacement of planted areas with turfgrass, or replacing dying or diseased plants with similar plant material is excluded.
- E. Buffers and screening plantings shall provide healthy appearance year round and be maintained at the required minimum heights.

- F. Unhealthy or dead plant material shall be replaced within 30 days in conformance with the approved landscape plan.

**Sec. 6.18.17** Fertilizers.

- A. Any person providing services for hire regarding any aspect of landscape maintenance that includes the application of fertilizer or pesticide shall meet the applicable state and County licensing and certification requirements pursuant to **Section 13 of the Marion County Ordinance for Florida Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes (Ordinance 08-35, adopted November 4, 2008).**
- B. If fertilizers are used, they shall be applied in accordance with the requirements of the Marion County Code of Ordinances, as applicable.

**Sec. 6.18.18** Hardscape materials.

- A. Design and choice of paving materials used in pedestrian areas shall consider such factors as accessibility, function, climate, characteristics of users, availability, cost, maintenance, glare, drainage, noise, appearance, and compatibility with surroundings.
- B. Acceptable materials shall include, but are not limited to, concrete, brick, cement pavers, asphalt, and stone.

**Sec. 6.18.19** Installation and maintenance licensing and certification.

- A. Landscape Installation Professionals. On or before October 31, 2009, Marion County shall establish an approved program to license landscape installation professionals. On or before April 30, 2010, all landscape installation professionals shall be landscape contractors licensed under such program.
- B. Landscape Maintenance Professionals shall possess a current Florida GI-BMP card.
- C. Training.
  - (1) Unless otherwise subject by Florida Statutes to certain continuing education requirements, professionals and contractors licensed to perform work under this Section shall annually complete a minimum of four professional development hours (PDH) in Florida-Friendly Landscaping and Irrigation practices from a continuing education organization designated by the Marion County Licensing Board. Fifty minutes of instruction equals a PDH.
  - (2) Marion County shall confirm compliance with these PDH requirements at the time of license renewal, or by an approved audit procedure.