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SIDEWALK LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES:

1. Minimum Unobstructed Path Width: A 72 inch wide minimum unobstructed path in the throughway zone is required for most sidewalks. Narrow residential and alleyway sidewalks may be an exception. In no case shall new landscaping result in an unobstructed sidewalk width of less than 48 inches. The path of travel along the sidewalk shall be straight and continuous, without jogs or offsets. The sidewalk should provide adequate and comfortable pedestrian space in response to the pedestrian activity level of location.

2. Courtesy Strip: A courtesy strip is located in the Sidewalk Edge Zone between planting bed and curb. The courtesy strip is only required for sidewalks with curbside parking to provide a clear area for passengers to step on to the sidewalk. This strip, measured from the face of curb, shall remain accessible and clear of landscape planting. The width requirements vary with parking layout:

- 24 inch wide courtesy strip is required for sidewalks adjacent to parallel parking
- 32 inch wide courtesy strip is required for sidewalks adjacent to diagonal parking
- 48 inch wide courtesy strip is required for sidewalks adjacent to perpendicular parking.
- Sidewalks without curbside parking do not require the courtesy strip.

3. 4-Foot Accessible Path: For each curbside parking space (approximately 15-20 feet of curb length), a minimum 48 inch wide access path is required to pass perpendicularly from the curb to the sidewalk path-of-travel. This path shall be located at the approximate centerline of each curbside parking stall. The path must be made of accessible material, such as concrete or pavers set on a firm base, and not exceed a 2% cross slope where technically feasible. Path layout varies based on parking:

- For parallel parking, space a 4 foot path a maximum of every 18-20 feet
- For perpendicular and diagonal parking, space a 4 foot path a maximum of every 12 feet
- Areas without curbside parking do not require this additional path.

4. Planting Restrictions at Intersections: Landscape material shall not obscure traffic or parking signs/signals or vehicular sightlines. Landscape material, other than trees, may be planted up to the projected property line on sidewalks and medians provided that it does not exceed 42 inches in height measured from the street (36 inches above sidewalk). This restriction pertains to the following areas:

- Within 25 feet in front of a **traffic sign or signal**.
- Within 25 feet measured from the corner building property line towards the direction of oncoming street traffic's **approach to an intersection** and measured 5 feet off the property line on the street traffic's **exit from an intersection**, if property is within 25 feet of a street intersection.

5. Sidewalk Landscape Plantings are Not Permitted in the following cases:

- If the existing sidewalk is less than 7 feet wide and has curbside parking.
- Adjacent to existing Bus Zones where the sidewalk is less than 12 feet.
- Adjacent to an existing designated Blue (Accessible) Parking Zone, designated White (Accessible) Passenger Loading Zone and designated Green Parking Zone.
- Within curb return (the curved portion of the sidewalk at intersections).
- If impacting existing or potential curb ramp locations.
- Within 5 feet of a fire hydrant.
- In front of mailboxes, newspaper racks, police and fire call stations, payphones and parking meter boxes.

Guidelines 'A-E' may not pertain to planting opportunities that may exist along building front.

6. Grading and Drainage of Planting Beds: The grade of the planted area shall be a maximum of 1 inch lower than the grade of the sidewalk. Planted areas on steep sidewalks (greater than 10% slope) shall be terraced to avoid soil erosion and spillage onto the sidewalk and street. Select heavier mulch to avoid spillage in steep or windy areas. Landscaping and edging treatments shall allow water to drain from the sidewalk into the landscaped area. In areas with a known high-water table and other subsoil issues, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission may review sites as to their appropriateness for permeable landscaping.

Plant Materials: (Refer to 'Sidewalk Landscaping Recommended Drought Tolerant Plant List' and 'Links to Related Sources of Information' on DPW's Sidewalk Landscaping Permit website)

7. Street Tree Planting: Street tree plantings are also strongly encouraged for both their environmental benefits and aesthetic qualities. A separate permit is required for street trees and may be submitted together with the sidewalk landscaping permit. For information on planting a street tree, call SFDPW's Urban Forestry Permits and Policy at (415) 641-2676 or refer to the website <http://www.sfdpw.org>.



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8. Plant Requirements: Plant species and layout are subject to SFDPW BUF's staff approval. Plants shall not pose a hazard to public health (avoid plants with spines, thorns or irritants). To conserve water, plant species requiring minimal irrigation and adapted to local site and climate conditions are recommended. Planting within 3 feet of the trunk of trees less than 3 years old or near the root crown of established trees is not advisable.

9. Maintenance: The permit holder is responsible for maintaining the sidewalk landscaping in a condition that is safe to pedestrians and vehicular traffic, free of litter and unsightly weeds. Plant health must be maintained with appropriate pruning, watering, and other care as needed. Trees in sidewalk shall be pruned to maintain 80" minimum clearance above sidewalk. Permit holder must ensure that planting does not encroach into the accessible path, throughway zone and into courtesy strip.

Paving Materials and Landscape Elements: (*Refer to 'Links to Related Sources of Information' on DPW's Sidewalk Landscaping Permit website*)

10. In-Ground versus Above Ground Planters: Above ground planters are not recommended because they do not collect storm water runoff from the sidewalk, may obstruct the sidewalk and may allow undesirable opportunities for vandalism and graffiti. In locations where in-ground plantings are not possible, (i.e. areas with sub-sidewalk basements), raised planters that are not permanently affixed to the pavement may be permitted. Planters that are permanently affixed to the pavement must obtain a Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit from Bureau of Street Use and Mapping (BSM).

11. Paving Material Options: Surface materials within sidewalk landscaping access path at curbside parking may be made of materials such as concrete or stone pavers, bricks, permeable concrete, concrete or other firm, stable and slip resistant material, and must be set on a firm base and clear of tripping hazards. The courtesy strip may be made of any of above mentioned materials in addition to unit pavers or compacted crushed stone over aggregate base (slopes must be less than or equal to 5% for crushed stone to be used). Materials are subject to SFDPW Urban Forestry Permits and Policy staff review.

12. Raised Edge Treatment: A raised edge treatment is required at both ends of the landscaped area to indicate the presence of landscaping to visually impaired pedestrians. Edging may be made of wood (pressure treated wood products must be free of arsenic and known carcinogens), stone, decorative metal or other sturdy material, subject to SFDPW Urban Forestry Permits and Policy staff review. All edging treatments must be at least 4 inches and at most 15 inches high, measured from the sidewalk. To maximize permeability and allow infiltration of stormwater, the edging must have weep holes, slots or gaps of ½ - 1 inch, or be set ½ - 1 inch into the landscape on the up-slope side of the landscape. Edging may not include sharp or pointed finials or pickets and should not be constructed of wire or filigree which may snare detecting canes of visually impaired pedestrians. Edging should be clearly visible to sighted pedestrians and solidly constructed to withstand typical sidewalk conditions.

13. Additional Landscape Elements may Require Permit: Other raised structures, decorative and/or protective fencing may require a Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Permit from Bureau of Street Use and Mapping (BSM).

Utilities:

14. Protect Utilities: The property owner shall check for the presence of underground utilities in the area of proposed plantings and shall be solely responsible in avoiding interference with or damage to electric or telephone conduits, sewers and other utilities. *Call Underground Utility Alert at 1-800-227-2600 at least 2 days prior to any demolition work to identify and locate all underground utilities.*

15. Utilities in Planters: Any parking signs, meters, and many other above-ground infrastructures must remain set within concrete for adequate anchoring. Street lights and Utility poles have adequate footings and therefore surrounding surface sidewalk concrete can be removed to expand planting bed.

16. Maintain Access to Above Ground Utilities and Sidewalk Fixtures: Street lights, utility poles, mailboxes, fire/police call boxes, pedestrian push buttons, trash receptacles, bike racks, and other street fixtures, with the exception of parking meters and parking signs, must remain accessible by a 48 inch wide clear path perpendicular to the curb, as measured from the centerline of the fixture. The accessible path to mailboxes, trash receptacles, bike racks and other such street fixtures is required from the sidewalk. The accessible path to utility poles and street lights is required from the edge of curb.

17. Maintain Access to Below Ground Utilities: Points of access to underground utilities must remain unobstructed. Plantings adjacent to such points of access shall be kept a minimum of 6 inches clear from all sides. Utility lids and boxes can lie within the planting bed and the portion of concrete sidewalk surrounding the utility box can be removed. Within the 6 inch clear area, install pavers or stone mulch around utility to keep plants from covering the lid.

These guidelines are subject to change by the DPW Director.

