

Application Package for Site/Landscape Plan

City of Aiken

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Revised June 2002 to reflect changes to the Zoning Ordinance adopted April 8, 2002

1.

The Process at a Glance

- *Before a grading or building permit can be obtained to begin work, site/landscape plan approval must be received.
- *Site/landscape plan approval is handled by staff unless a variance is required from the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance which must be considered by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA).
- *Plans (6 copies), application, and fee are submitted to the Planning Department located in the Municipal Building at 214 Park Avenue SW, Room #202.
- *Planning Department distributes the plans to other City departments for review.
- *A letter with review comments from City staff is normally sent to the applicant within one week.
- *If necessary, the applicant submits revised plans and/or additional information to the Planning Department.
- *Once all staff comments are addressed, the plans are approved and the applicant is eligible to receive a Building Permit once the requirements for those permits are met. All trees to remain on the site must be staked with protective tree fencing before the Grading permit will be issued.

Questions regarding the status of an application should be directed to the Planning Department at 214 Park Avenue, SW, (803) 642-7608.

PLEASE READ THE REST OF THIS APPLICATION PACKAGE CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS.

2.

How to Obtain Approval of a Commercial or Multi-family Residential Development

Pre-Application Meeting

The first step should be informal meetings with City staff to discuss your project and to determine whether other approvals will be required such as a subdivision, rezoning, zoning variance, a special exception, or approval from the Historic Preservation Commission. Direct contact with City staff early in the process can prevent problems and unexpected delays. The Building Inspector, City Engineer, and Planning Department should be contacted. Special care should be taken to comply with all ordinances and regulations; such compliance is the applicant's responsibility.

Additional Approvals

A rezoning requires review by the Planning Commission and two readings before City Council. A variance from the Landscape Provisions or other sections of the Zoning Ordinance requires a public hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Traffic Impact Study. A Traffic Impact Study may be required for applications for approval of a site plan, annexation, rezoning (to a category that allows more intense uses), major subdivision, or concept plan for PUD and PC where the traffic to be generated meets a certain minimum as determined by the Planning Director. A Traffic Study will be accepted only if prepared by a firm on a list of approved firms approved and maintained by the Planning Department.

Site/Landscape Plan Approval

For a commercial, institutional, or multifamily residential project, site/landscape plan approval is required in order to obtain a grading or building permit. Site/landscape plans including all supporting information must be submitted to the Planning Department for review; application procedures are provided in Section 3 of this package. The Planning Department distributes plans to other City departments for review. Approval can be granted by City staff unless a variance from the Tree Protection and Landscaping provisions of the Zoning Ordinance is required; staff approval can usually be obtained within two weeks unless there are major revisions needed.

Grading Permits

A grading permit application (which allows the beginning of site work) is submitted to the Planning Department. The applicant must also submit grading plans to the local office of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) at 218 Beaufort Street NE which must approve issuance of a grading permit. Once approvals are received from DHEC, the Department of Engineer/Public Works, and the Planning Department, site/landscape plans have been approved, and the Zoning Official confirms that protective barriers have been installed around trees to remain, the Planning Department may issue the grading permit. Please note that the Zoning Official needs at least 48 hours notice to inspect tree protective barriers.

Building Permits

Applications for building permits are submitted to the Building Inspection office in the Municipal Building at 214 Park Avenue, SW. Fees are based on the cost of construction. Although a building permit application can be submitted at the same time or even before the application of site/landscape plan approval, a building permit cannot be issued until the site/landscape plan has been approved.

Payment of Impact and Other Fees

Prior to issuance of a building permit, the sanitary sewer impact fee and utility fees are paid at the Building Inspection office.

Certificate of Occupancy

A new building or addition cannot be occupied until a Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the Building Inspector after a final inspection. A request for final inspection should be made at least 24 hours in advance. A Certificate can be issued only if the installation of required landscaping materials has been approved by the Planning Department or a performance guarantee covering the cost of the uncompleted landscaping has been submitted to the Planning Department. Please note that the Planning Department needs least 48 hours notice to inspect the site layout and landscaping.

Addresses, Telephone Numbers, and Fax Numbers

The mailing address for all City Departments:

PO Box 1177, Aiken, SC 29802

Building Inspection Office

Room 201, Municipal Building, 214 Park Avenue, SW; 642-7675; fax 642-7672

Planning Department

Room 202, Municipal Building, 214 Park Avenue SW; 642-7608; fax 642-7727

City Engineer

Engineering and Public Works Administration Building, 245 Dupont Drive; 642-7610;
fax 642-7717

City Horticulturist

Public Works Center, 250 Dupont Drive NE; 642-7613

3.

Site/Landscape Plan Application Procedures

Summary

Approval of a site/landscape plan must be obtained prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit for a commercial or multifamily residential project. Plan approval is granted by City staff unless a variance is required from the Tree Protection and Landscaping provisions of the Zoning Ordinance which can only be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) after a public hearing. In addition, a grading permit may not be issued until the Zoning Official confirms that protective barriers around existing trees to remain are in place. Details regarding water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management should be submitted with the site/landscape plan. It is strongly encouraged that an informal review meeting with staff be held prior to submission of an application.

Standing to Apply

The owner, contract purchaser, or anyone providing the written consent of the owner may apply.

Submission Requirements

Application. The attached application must be completed and submitted.

Site/Landscape Plan. Six copies of the plan folded to 8 1/2" x 11" including the information on the attached checklist must be submitted. Plans must conform to all applicable City ordinances and to federal and State requirements for barrier-free design. If a variance from the Tree Protection and Landscaping provisions of the Zoning Ordinance is being requested from the BZA, and the plan is larger than 8 1/2" x 11", a reduced copy of the plan must be provided.

Fee. An application fee of \$200 for the 1st 4 acres and \$50.00 per additional acre or portion thereof with a maximum of \$2500.00 is required for a project area. Checks are to be payable to the "City of Aiken".

A plan revision fee of \$50.00 is required for each re-submittal.

If an application is withdrawn, the application fee may be returned if requested within five business days of the submission date.

Variance from the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance. A variance from the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance can only be granted by the BZA. A letter explaining the justification for the variance must be submitted along with the \$200 application fee at least 35 calendar days prior to the meeting at which the variance is to be considered. The BZA meets the fourth Tuesday of each month. A public notice sign will be posted on each street frontage at least 20 days prior to the BZA meeting.

Site Visits

Please be aware that consideration of an application may require site visits by the staff and members of the appropriate boards or commissions. These visits will be made during daylight hours. If the

application is approved, the Zoning Official or other staff member may check the site for compliance with the terms of the approval.

Site/Landscape Plan Checklist

Drawings must be to a minimum scale of 1"=100', folded to 8 1/2" x 11" and include the following:

General

1. name of the project and proposed use
2. tax parcel number
3. acreage or square footage of the lot or parcel on which the project is to be located
4. acreage or square footage to be disturbed or included in the project area
5. dimensions of the lot or parcel on which the project is to be located
6. north arrow
7. graphic scale
8. name, address, and telephone number of the property owner and plan preparer
9. zoning of the property
10. location map at a scale sufficient to depict the exact location of the subject property
11. names of existing streets
12. height of proposed building

Parking, Circulation, Buffers and Engineering Information

1. a calculation showing the number of off-street parking spaces required and provided including the basis for the calculation
2. typical parking stall dimensions
3. location and width of existing and proposed driveways
4. handicapped access information including location and dimensions of parking spaces, location of curb ramps, and the following statement: "This project will comply with all applicable federal, State and local regulations regarding handicapped access including ANSI standards.
5. location and height of buffers or screening devices
6. where applicable, engineering information including
 - plans and profiles of and calculations for all utilities bearing the signature and seal of a licensed engineer
 - storm sewers, detention ponds, and erosion control plans prepared by a licensed Tier B surveyor
 - location of fire hydrants
 - an explanation of how garbage collection will be handled including the location of collection boxes, as applicable

Site/Landscape Plan Checklist

(continued)

Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance

1. calculation of the total project area required to be landscaped and the total landscaped area provided
2. for every project one of the following Tree Surveys must be submitted at the same scale as the site plan and shall include items 1-11 in the “General” section of this checklist.
 - a. A detailed tree survey of the entire site depicting the DBH , variety, and location of all Significant and Grand Trees; or
 - b. A detailed tree survey depicting the DBH, variety, and location of the Grand Trees on the entire site and the Significant Trees in the yard area and a listing of all Significant Trees in the buildable area including DBH and variety, and, if required by the Planning Director, a tree survey of selected areas or other additional information where it is necessary to make a determination about the feasibility of saving Significant Trees.
3. a statement of the total caliper of the replacement trees required and the total caliper of those provided
4. clear delineation of the limits of clearing
5. location and names (common and botanical) of plants to be installed including
 - a. the caliper of required trees
 - b. shrubbery
 - c. a clear indication of the areas to be seeded or sodded
6. the following notation: “Protective measures for trees, installation methods for new plant material, and maintenance of landscaped areas will comply with the standards established by the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance and Manual and the City Horticulturist.”
7. a statement that all landscaped areas will be irrigated
8. the following notation: “Tree maintenance shall take into account the natural shape and growth patterns of the tree. Trees intended to grow to the ground shall not be limbed up; trees shall not be topped or pruned to grow as shrubs or bushes.”
9. other information as required by City staff to facilitate review.

Summary of City of Aiken Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance

NOTE: This summary is intended to provide an overview of the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance and **not** as a substitute for reading the actual Ordinance and the “Site/Landscape Plan Checklist”. Any questions regarding the Ordinance should be addressed to the Planning Department.

Protection of Existing Trees

Two Types of Protected Trees

Significant. A Small Tree (Dogwood, etc.) with a DBH (trunk diameter) of 4” to 8” or a Large Tree (Oak, Pine, etc.) with a DBH of 8” to 24”.

Grand. A Small Tree with a DBH of 8” or more or a Large Tree with a DBH of 24” or more.

Undeveloped Land

On land zoned to permit any use other than single-family residential, Significant and Grand Trees may not be removed without demonstrating good reason to the City Horticulturist.

For Proposed Development

1. Survey. A tree survey must be submitted for commercial or multifamily residential projects. (See *Tree Protection and Landscape Ordinance (2) on the Site/Landscape Plan Checklist*)

Protected Areas.

Planting Strip. A planting strip must be provided along each street right-of-way the depth of which shall be based on the following scale:

<u>Lot Depth</u>	<u>Planting Strip Depth</u>
up to 200 ft.	10 ft.
200 to 500 ft.	5% of depth
more than 500 ft.	25 ft.

The maximum required depth under this provision shall be 25 ft. but a deeper planting strip may be provided. All Grand and Significant Trees in the strip must remain except to allow a driveway, sidewalk, sign, or essential utility.

On the site, only 80% of the Significant Trees may be removed and all of the Grand Trees must remain. All trees removed must be replaced with an equivalent DBH unless there is inadequate room as determined by the City Horticulturist; at which point a contribution to the tree fund must be made. Trees planted to meet other requirements may be counted as replacement inches. The DBH of any Grand or Significant hardwood tree from the Approved Tree List which is saved may be counted as double replacement inches.

Tree Fund

If there is insufficient room on the site to plant the required replacement DBH inches, a payment-in-lieu-of-planting shall be made to the Tree Fund to be used for planting trees on City property. The amount shall be determined by the City Horticulturist based on the retail value of the trees, but in no case shall the total exceed \$500 per acre of the site.

After Development.

No Significant or Grand Trees may be removed without the approval of the City Horticulturist.

New Landscaping

Total Area Required. The minimum area to be landscaped (not covered by buildings and pavement) is 20% for a commercial project and 40% for a multi-family residential project.

In the Planting Strip. The maximum possible number of trees are required in the Planting Strip along the street as determined by the City Horticulturist though existing trees may count if large enough. Crape Myrtles are not permitted along street frontages.

Planting Areas Along Side and Rear Property Lines. Planting Areas at least five feet in depth are required along the entire side and rear property lines. The maximum possible number of trees must be planted as determined by the City Horticulturist.

In Parking and Vehicular Use Areas. Parking areas are to be defined by linear landscaped areas at least 8 feet in width with canopy trees to define driveways and control traffic flow. Canopy trees are required in such areas.

Islands Between Parking Spaces. In each double bay of parking spaces, no more than ten spaces are allowed in a row without a landscaped island of at least 300 square feet with a minimum width of 8 feet. Each island will have at least one canopy tree. The islands are to be offset so that they are evenly distributed in the parking area.

Islands at the Ends of Rows. A landscaped island of at least 100 square feet shall be provided at the end of each single row of parking spaces closest to the building. Each such island will have a 2-foot high berm planted with groundcover, or where there are two such islands together totaling at least 200 square feet, at least one small tree shall be planted. A landscape island of at least 150 square feet shall be provided for each single row of parking closest to the street. Where there are two such islands together totaling 300 square feet, there shall be at least one canopy tree.

Trees in islands. Islands shall be located to preserve the maximum number of existing trees. The maximum number of trees shall be planted taking into account the size at maturity.

Screening of Dumpsters. Dumpsters, utility boxes and similar structures must be screened by evergreen shrubbery at least three feet high after pruning at the time of planting and reaching a mature height of 7 feet.

Buffer or Screening Device. An undisturbed, 10-foot deep landscaped buffer strip is required where any nonresidential or multifamily residential use abuts an area zoned or used residentially. Evergreen vegetation shall be planted (and possibly additional measures taken) where needed to form an effective screen.

Detention Ponds and Lakes. A detention pond may be counted as landscaped area if approved by the City Engineer and Planning Director. Each pond shall be screened.

Approval Procedure

Projects Requiring Approval. Landscape plan approval is required for any new commercial or multifamily project or the area involved in the expansion of an existing project. Renovations of the project in any one-year period totaling 50% or more of the appraised value would require the entire project to comply.

Approval Authority. The Planning Director may approve all landscape plans within 20 business days of a receipt of a complete application, including revisions. **No grading or building permit may be issued without site/landscape approval.** An applicant may appeal the Planning Director's decision to the Board of Zoning Appeals. No Site/Landscape plan goes to the Board of Zoning Appeals unless a variance is requested from the Zoning Ordinance.

Installation and Maintenance

No Certificate of Occupancy may be issued until the landscaping is installed or a performance guarantee posted; the landscaping must be maintained in good condition.

Enforcement

The Zoning Official is charged with enforcement.

Violations and Penalties

Removal of each tree in violation of the Tree Protection and Landscaping Ordinance constitutes a separate offense. The Planning Director may require replacement of the trees removed. If the Zoning Official determines that there is a maintenance violation, he will notify the property owner in writing that he has 30 days to correct it before action is taken. Failure to comply constitutes grounds for suspension or revocation of the business license. There are also restrictions on pruning of trees.

Existing Conditions and Tree Replacement Calculations

General

Number of Grand Trees (Must remain) _____

Total DBH inches of Grand Trees on site _____ inches

Total DBH inches of Significant Trees on site _____ inches

Tree Removal and Replacement

Total DBH inches to be removed _____ inches (A)

Total DBH inches to remain _____ inches

 from approved list _____ inches X 2 = _____ inches (B)

 not on approved list _____ inches

Total inches to be planted (from Approved Tree List) _____ inches (C)

Inches to be removed _____ inches (from line A)

Tree save credit - _____ inches (from line B)

Subtract inches of newly planted X 2 - _____ inches (from line C)

Inches owed = _____ inches

Application No. _____

Tax Parcel No. _____

Application
Planning Department
City of Aiken

Type of Application

___ Annexation ___ Site Plan ___ City Services
___ Rezoning ___ Landscaping Plan ___ Other
___ Concept Plan (PR) ___ Concept Plan (PC)

Applicant

Name _____
Mailing Address _____ zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____
Interest if other than owner _____

Property Owner

Name _____
Mailing Address _____ zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Main Contact (if different from applicant)

Name _____
Mailing Address _____ zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Subject Property

Project Name _____
Address or location _____ Acreage _____
Zone _____ Existing Use _____ Proposed Use _____

Are there restrictive covenants that would prohibit or restrict the proposed use of the property? _____

If you replied yes, please attach a certified copy of the restrictive covenants to this application.

I certify by my signature that this application is accurate and complete.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print or type name _____ Title _____

Attach the name, address, and telephone number of anyone other than the applicant, owner and plan/plat preparer who should receive copies of correspondence or be contacted if additional information is needed.

Comments:

Site/Landscape Notations

City of Aiken Planning Department

Please place the following tables and notes on the landscape page of all site/landscaping plans.

Site Data

			Required	Provided
tax parcel #		number of parking stalls		
proposed use		basis for determining required parking		
total acreage		parking stall dimensions	9X18	
scale of drawing		% area to be landscaped		
zoning		automatic irrigation system	yes	
building area		underground wiring	yes	
building height				

Required statements:

1. "This project will comply with all applicable federal, state and local regulations regarding handicapped access including ANSI standards."
2. "Protective measures for trees, installation methods for new plant material, and maintenance of landscaped areas will comply with the standards established by the Tree Protection and Landscape Ordinance manual and the City Horticulturist."
3. "No topping or heading back of a tree shall be permitted which involves the cutting of limbs back to a stub, bud, or lateral branch not large enough to assume the terminal role. Crown reduction shall be used to reduce the size of a tree and is best accomplished by cutting limbs back to laterals that are at least one-third the diameter of the parent limb."
4. "Existing trees to be saved will be mulched with at least 3 inches of mulch (pine straw, bark or other organic material)."
5. "An automatic irrigation system must be installed to water all new landscaped areas. The system must remain operational and have a timer to water plantings to keep them alive."

Existing Conditions and Tree Replacement Calculations

General

Number of Grand Trees (Must remain) _____

Total DBH inches of Grand Trees on site _____ inches

Total DBH inches of Significant Trees on site _____ inches

Tree Removal and Replacement

Total DBH inches to be removed _____ inches (A)

Total DBH inches to remain _____ inches

from approved list _____ inches X 2 = _____ inches (B)

not on approved list _____ inches

Inches to be removed _____ inches (from line A)

Tree save credit - _____ inches (from line B)

Subtract inches of newly planted X 2 - _____ inches

Inches to be replaced = _____ inches

Revised 7/03