

# **CHAPTER XI**

## **STREETSCAPE ELEMENT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Mill Creek has applied streetscape standards since 1992 to establish roadway buffers and cutting preserves along collector and arterial streets throughout the City. The application of these standards has contributed greatly to the attractive appearance of streets throughout the City and created a safer pedestrian environment for Mill Creek residents.

The purpose of the Streetscape Element is to establish general policies and design guidelines for the aesthetic improvements within and adjacent to the City's major street right-of-ways and City entrances. The Streetscape Policies are intended to guide the treatment of roadway buffers to achieve their function, provide a visual buffer between development and the street, create a comfortable street space for vehicles and pedestrians, maintain continuity of the City's unique natural design concepts and preserve existing natural vegetation.

### **STREETSCAPE ISSUES**

As the City of Mill Creek and the region as a whole continue to develop, existing roads will have to be upgraded to carry more traffic, providing the opportunity to improve the design and appearance of such roads and streets. The addition of tastefully designed landscaping, screening and buffers adds to the appearance of the streets as well as protecting residences from roadway noises.

Impervious surfaces, such as roadways, contribute to the amount of stormwater runoff that flows into area streams. This can be minimized by planting landscaping along roadways that slows the flow of the water and allows it the opportunity to filter into the soil rather than to run off onto paved surfaces.

The present design characteristics of Village Green Drive and Trillium Boulevard represent a design image that could be applied to other arterial and collector streets in the City.

### **STREETSCAPE POLICIES**

This section of the Streetscape Element identifies specific roadways within the City MUGA that are subject to the Streetscape design standards and policies established in this chapter. These roads include all arterial and collector streets identified on the Transportation Map in the Transportation Element and include:

- **SR 527:** extending south from 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE (SR 96) to 183<sup>rd</sup> Street SE.
- **164th Street SE:** extending east from Interstate 5 to SR 527.
- **Mill Creek Road/Seattle Hill Road:** extending east from SR 527 to SR 96.
- **State Route 96:** extending east from Interstate 5 to Seattle Hill Road.
- **North Creek Drive:** extending north from Heatherwood Drive to Dumas Road.
- **Dumas Road:** extending west from SR 527 to SR 96.
- **35th Avenue SE:** extending from 132nd Street SE to the southern MUGA limits.

If the City determines that a street proposed within the MUGA, but not identified on the above list, will be classified as an arterial or collector street, the City will revise this element to include the additional roadway and will apply the established Streetscape Element policies to said street.

A section drawing has been prepared for each of the above streets, indicating number of lanes, sidewalk widths and locations, street tree locations, medians and turn lanes. These illustrations are intended to be used as the basis for designing road improvements through City capital facility projects or as improvements made in conjunction with private development.

The following policies are broad objectives that will be implemented through specific standards incorporated into the City's development regulations.

### **General Policies**

#### *Policy 1.01*

Development proposals and capital facility projects for road improvements adjacent to identified roadways shall incorporate applicable elements of the Streetscape Plans depicted on Figures XI-1 through XI-7 during the design and construction of the affected roadway section. Additional right-of-way shall be dedicated along collectors and arterials where necessary to achieve the planned street section.

#### *Policy 1.02*

The City shall incorporate specific Streetscape Standards into the Subdivision Ordinance in order to provide exact requirements for improvement and construction of the City's collector and arterial street network.

## **Right-of Way Policies**

### *Policy 2.01*

Landscaping within the street right-of-way should consist primarily of deciduous street trees, shrubs and sod and/or groundcover. Desirable street trees are those that are well suited to the urban environment and create a canopy as they mature.

### *Policy 2.02*

Five-foot minimum landscaped planting areas within the right-of-way or roadway buffer shall be provided between the curb and sidewalk, where possible and practical (applies to both sides of the street).

### *Policy 2.03*

Landscaped medians shall be provided in the center of collector and arterial street right-of-ways where practical and appropriate. Suitable locations include areas where adequate right-of-way is available, where access to existing and future local collector and neighborhood streets will not be impaired, where they create a sense of entry into neighborhoods or commercial areas and where traffic calming would be beneficial.

### *Policy 2.04*

All street trees and landscape installation shall meet all applicable City requirements for sight line distance and sight triangles.

### *Policy 2.05*

Sidewalks shall conform to all applicable City Standards and be installed as depicted on Figures XI 1 - 7.

## **Roadway Buffer Policies**

### *Policy 3.01*

Buffer widths shall be as follows, and shall be measured from the edge of the right-of-way along all collector and arterial streets:

- Commercial areas: 35 feet
- Residential areas: 50 feet

The purpose of these buffers is to protect existing stands of healthy significant trees and understory vegetation, separate pedestrian activity from the street and enhance with appropriate vegetation where the existing vegetative stands are of poor quality or non-existent.

### *Policy 3.02*

To the greatest extent possible, existing vegetation within roadway buffers shall be retained, and may only be removed if significant trees are diseased or hazardous as

determined by a certified arborist, or if invasive vegetation is present. In commercial districts, selective removal of vegetation is allowed to promote visibility of commercial uses.

*Policy 3.03*

Landscape treatment of the roadway buffers shall include one or more of the following forms, depending on the presence and condition of existing vegetation, adjacent uses (e.g., residential versus commercial), and the landscape treatment of existing buffers in the immediate area. In general, buffers in residential areas should provide greater screening and privacy from roadways and utilize treatments that are more natural in appearance. In commercial areas, landscaping should utilize a more formal treatment.

**Native Growth:** The retention and preservation of existing topography and undisturbed vegetation. Existing vegetation may be enhanced with native species where edges have been disturbed by construction, or to achieve a consistent density of plant materials throughout the buffer.

**Natural Plantings:** The retention of suitable existing vegetation (healthy, non-invasive) supplemented with areas of new vegetation selected to complement the existing vegetation, including trees, shrubs, groundcover and sod. The use of native plants is encouraged to achieve a more informal planting scheme. Minor changes to existing topography may be made to achieve a naturalized planting scheme. Such changes shall avoid impacts to the driplines of existing significant trees.

**Formal Plantings:** The removal of the majority of natural vegetation, grading and re-vegetation with trees, shrubs, groundcover and sod to achieve a more formal/manicured appearance. In this landscape scheme, plant materials can consist of more formal, ornamental species.

*Policy 3.04*

Where there is a significant grade change in the land adjacent to the street, appropriate landscaping and retaining structures, where necessary, shall be used.

Streetscape Sections