

1 July 21, 1980

Proposed Ordinance #: 378

2 Introduced by: Gary Grant

3  
4  
5  
6 ORDINANCE NO. 5003

7 AN ORDINANCE relating to zoning; establish-  
8 ing a new chapter in the Zoning Code; setting  
9 forth requirements for landscaping and screen-  
ing in all zones.

10 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

11 SECTION 1. Purpose. The purposes of the landscaping and  
12 screening requirements of this chapter are to increase compatabil-  
13 ity between different intensities of land uses, by providing  
14 visual barriers, visually interrupting the barren expanse of paved  
15 parking lots, screening undesirable views which have a blighting  
16 impact on surrounding properties, and providing a visual separa-  
17 tion and physical buffer between varying intensities of abutting  
18 land uses; to implement the Comprehensive Plan and adopted Com-  
19 munity plans; to encourage the retention of significant existing  
20 vegetation to the extent feasible; to reduce erosion and water  
21 runoff; to conserve energy; to preserve and promote urban wildlife  
22 habitats; to minimize impacts of noise, light and glare; and to  
23 aid in regulating vehicular circulation.

24 SECTION 2. Application.

25 1. The Manager of the Building and Land Development Division  
26 shall review and may approve, approve with modifications, or dis-  
27 approve site landscape development plans for all new developments  
28 in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The Manager  
29 may permit alternative landscaping (as set forth in Section 5 of  
30 this chapter) when the overall site development plan as proposed  
31 by the applicant provides as good or better results than required  
32 by this chapter.

1           2. Developments involving additions or alterations to exist-  
2 ing structures in which the cost of the additions or alterations  
3 exceed fifty percent of the value of the existing structure(s)  
4 shall be subject to the provisions of this chapter, with the fol-  
5 lowing exceptions and modifications:

6           a. Where existing structures are situated so as to pre-  
7 clude installation of required landscaping, such required land-  
8 scaping shall be waived.

9           b. Where the compliance with the provisions of KCC  
10 21.50, loading areas and off-street parking requirements, for ex-  
11 isting structures conflicts with the requirements of this chapter,  
12 the required landscaping shall be waived, or modified in accord-  
13 ance with Section 5 of this ordinance. Any addition of floor area  
14 requiring additional loading area or off-street parking shall be  
15 subject to the provisions of this chapter for the approximate area  
16 of the addition and associated surface loading area and surface  
17 off-street parking area only.

18           SECTION 3. Location of Required Landscaping. Landscaping  
19 shall be provided in all developments subject to this chapter as  
20 set forth below. Where the width of a required planting strip  
21 exceeds the setback requirement for any structure subject to this  
22 chapter, the setback shall be increased to provide the full width  
23 of planting strip unless otherwise modified in accordance with  
24 Section 5.

25           1. The following table sets forth the type and width of  
26 landscaping required along side and rear property lines not  
27 abutting public streets, for the use proposed. Except as pro-  
28 vided in b. and d. below, the proposed use must buffer less in-  
29 tensive zones adjacent to it, and in those instances when adja-  
30 cent zoning is not listed opposite the proposed use in the table,  
31 no landscaping is required:

Proposed Use	Adjacent Zoning	Type of Landscaping	Minimum Width of Planting Area
a. Mobile Home Park, Multi-family and Townhouse	RS or S	Type II	20'
b. MOBILE Home Park, Multi-family and Townhouse	RMHP, RM, RT or RD, Public or Institutional Uses	Type III	5'
c. Office in RM zones	RS, RD, RM, RT, RMHP or S (except RM used for office)	Type II	10'
d. Office in RM zones	Office (RM used for office only), Public or Institutional Uses	Type III	5'
e. Uses permitted in B or C zones, and Public or Institutional uses (except parks or playgrounds) in all zones, unless proposed in an M zone	RS or S	Type I	20'
f. Uses permitted in B or C zones, and Public or Institutional uses (except parks or playgrounds) in all zones, unless proposed in an M zone	RM, RT or RD, Public or Institutional Uses	Type I	10'
g. Any use proposed in M or QM zones	R or S, Public or Institutional Uses	Type I	20'
h. Any use proposed in M or QM zones	BN, BC, CG, or G	Type II	10'

2. The following landscaping is required adjacent to all arterial and local access streets, as defined in the King County Comprehensive Plan, except where permitted structures and driveways are proposed:

1 a. Within all developments to be located in an RS, RD,  
2 RM, RMHP, or RT zone a type III landscaping strip with a minimum  
3 width of twenty feet shall be provided;

4 b. Within all developments to be located in a BN, BC,  
5 CG, ML or MH zone a type III landscaping strip with a minimum  
6 width of eight feet shall be provided;

7 c. Within all developments to be located in an MP zone  
8 a type III landscaping strip with a minimum width of twenty-five  
9 feet shall be provided;

10 d. Within QM zones a type II landscaping strip with  
11 a minimum width of twenty-five feet shall be provided;

12 e. The plantings shall not violate the sight area re-  
13 quirements at a street intersection, as set forth in KCC 21.48.130.

14 3. A type II landscaping strip with a minimum width of  
15 twenty-five feet shall be provided adjacent to freeways within all  
16 developments to be located in all RM, RMHP, RT, B, C, M and QM  
17 zones. Landscaping required for development along freeway rights-  
18 of-way may be partially located in the freeway right-of-way if  
19 permitted by the Washington State Department of Transportation  
20 and approved by the manager.

21 4. Type IV landscaping shall be provided within all surface  
22 (open air) parking lots, as follows:

23 a. At least three percent of the parking area, exclud-  
24 ing any other required landscaping, shall be utilized for land-  
25 scaping when said areas exceed thirty parking stalls;

26 b. At least one tree for every five parking stalls  
27 shall be provided, to be reasonably distributed throughout the  
28 parking lot;

29 c. No parking stall shall be more than sixty feet from  
30 some landscaping;

31 d. Permanent curbs and/or structural barriers shall be  
32 provided to protect the plantings from vehicle overhang;

33

1 e. A minimum of forty percent of the trees shall be  
2 evergreen.

3 f. When the ground elevation of the site exceeds six  
4 hundred feet above mean sea level, the above requirements may be  
5 modified or waived by the manager, to facilitate snow removal.

6 5. All public or institutional uses, including churches,  
7 commercial and non-commercial recreation facilities (e.g., country  
8 clubs, golf courses, tennis courts, yacht clubs), community clubs,  
9 schools, charitable and fraternal organizations, hospitals, public  
10 utility facilities, sewage transfer plants, governmental facili-  
11 ties, museums, libraries, fire stations, retirement homes, nursing  
12 homes, and similar uses shall provide landscaping as prescribed  
13 by paragraphs 1-e, 1-f, 1-g, 1-h, 2-b, 3 and 4 of this section,  
14 unless otherwise modified by this chapter.

15 6. Proposed landscaping shall reflect consideration of micro-  
16 climate of the site and surrounding properties, by manipulation  
17 of sun, shade and wind for increased energy efficiency of the  
18 development and for maximum comfort of the users of the site.

19 SECTION 4. Types of landscaping required. The following are  
20 types of landscaping as required in Section 3; all proposed plant  
21 material, sizes and characteristics shall be in accordance with  
22 the American Association of Nurserymen Standards (ANSI 2601 -1973):

23 1. Type I: Screen. Type I landscaping shall generally  
24 consist of a mix of predominantly evergreen plantings including  
25 living trees, shrubs and ground covers. Evergreen trees shall  
26 be a minimum height of four feet at time of planting. Plantings  
27 shall be chosen and spaced so as to grow together within three  
28 years sufficient to obscure sight through the barrier. The entire  
29 planting strip shall be landscaped; however, those plantings used  
30 to achieve the sight obscuring screen shall cover at least five  
31 feet of the width of the strip, and shall be located farthest from  
32 the property line. Existing vegetation, architectural barriers  
33

1 (including walls, planters, and fences) or grading (with a maximum  
2 slope of 3:1) may be incorporated into the landscape design as set  
3 forth in Section 5, and shall be considered acceptable in lieu of  
4 new plantings, provided they contribute to achieving the intent of  
5 this paragraph..

6 2. Type II: Visual Buffer. Type II landscaping shall con-  
7 sist of a mix of evergreen and deciduous plantings including  
8 living trees, shrubs and ground covers. Plantings of shrubs and  
9 ground covers shall be chosen and spaced to result in a total cov-  
10 ering of the landscape strip. Shrubs shall be of a type that  
11 achieve a height of approximately six feet within three years, and  
12 effectively screen views along the length of the planting strip.  
13 Deciduous trees shall have a minimum trunk diameter of one and  
14 three-quarters inches at time of planting; evergreen trees shall  
15 be a minimum four feet tall at time of planting. All trees shall  
16 be spaced at intervals resulting in touching of branches after ten  
17 years of normal growth. Trees shall be staggered in two or more  
18 rows when the minimum width of the landscaping strip is twenty  
19 feet or more. Existing vegetation, architectural barriers or grad-  
20 ing (with a maximum slope of 3:1) may be incorporated into the  
21 landscape design as set forth in Section 5, and shall be considered  
22 acceptable in lieu of new plantings, provided they contribute to  
23 achieving the intent of this paragraph.

24 3. Type III: See-through Buffer. Type III landscaping  
25 shall consist of a mix of evergreen and deciduous plantings inclu-  
26 ding living trees, shrubs and ground covers. Plantings of shrubs  
27 and ground covers shall be chosen and spaced to result in a cover-  
28 ing of the landscape strip within three years. Shrubs shall be  
29 of a type that do not exceed a height at maturity of approximately  
30 three to four feet. Deciduous trees shall have a minimum trunk  
31 diameter of one and three-quarter inches at time of planting, and  
32 be spaced so as to result in touching of branches after ten years  
33

1 of normal growth. Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of four feet  
2 tall at time of planting and spaced so as to result in a space be-  
3 tween trees approximately equal to the mature spread of the trees  
4 used. Existing vegetation, architectural barriers, or grading  
5 (with a maximum slope of 3:1) may be incorporated into the land-  
6 scape design as set forth in Section 5, and shall be considered  
7 acceptable in lieu of new plantings, provided they contribute to  
8 achieving the intent of this paragraph.

9 4. Type IV: Open Area Landscaping. Type IV landscaping  
10 shall consist of canopy-type deciduous trees or spreading ever-  
11 green trees planted in wells or strips, with a mix of living ever-  
12 green and deciduous ground covers and low shrubs. Shrubs shall  
13 be of a type that do not exceed a height at maturity of approxi-  
14 mately three to four feet. Planting wells or strips shall be a  
15 minimum of thirty-two square feet in area, with the narrowest  
16 dimension not less than four feet. Deciduous trees shall have a  
17 minimum trunk diameter of one and three-quarter inches at time of  
18 planting. Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of four feet tall  
19 at time of planting. Existing vegetation, architectural barriers,  
20 or berms may be incorporated into the landscape design as set  
21 forth in Section 5, and shall be considered acceptable in lieu  
22 of new plantings, provided they contribute to achieving the intent  
23 of this paragraph.

24 SECTION 5. Modification of landscaping requirements.

25 1. The manager may authorize reduced width of plantings or  
26 waive some or all landscaping requirements in the following  
27 instances:

28 a. In Business/Commercial and Industrial zones, where-  
29 ever a building is proposed to be placed up to the rear or side  
30 property line not abutting a public street, and the wall surface  
31 above ground level is textured concrete, brick, or stone and the  
32 height of the wall does not exceed eighteen feet above the grade  
33

1 of the abutting lot; provided mechanical venting through such  
2 walls is prohibited, and roof top mechanical venting and other  
3 machinery which would be visible from abutting, less intensively  
4 zoned properties is screened;

5 b. Whenever a building utilized for business or office  
6 purposes is proposed to be placed within ten feet of the street  
7 right-of-way and there are no loading docks on such street, and  
8 at least fifty percent of the wall length is utilized for window  
9 and door construction, and the setback is utilized in effect as a  
10 sidewalk; provided approved street trees are planted within the  
11 ten foot setback or within the street right-of-way, not more than  
12 twenty-five feet on center. In those instances where King County  
13 is committed to maintaining other landscaping within street  
14 rights-of-way within the same block as street trees planted in  
15 accordance with this subsection, King County shall assume re-  
16 sponsibility for maintenance of those plantings approved within  
17 the right-of-way.

18 c. When architectural barriers or berms are incorporated  
19 into the design of the landscaping and contribute to the intent  
20 of the type of landscaping required and the minimum width of  
21 planting is not reduced by more than fifty percent;

22 d. When application of requirements of this section  
23 would result in more than fifteen percent of the site area being  
24 landscaped, in which instance the manager shall modify those  
25 requirements such that not more than fifteen percent of the site  
26 must be landscaped, provided the landscaping and corresponding  
27 setbacks required are those most beneficial to the public;

28 e. When the inclusion of significant existing vegeta-  
29 tion located on the site would result in as good as or better  
30 satisfaction of the purposes of this chapter;

31 f. When, in the case of required perimeter landscaping  
32 adjacent to public street rights-of-way, the ultimate street  
33



1 improvements for that right-of-way have been installed or will be  
2 installed as a requirement of approval of the development, and  
3 the Department of Public Works and the Real Property Division  
4 determines that the proposed landscaping of that portion of the  
5 right-of-way between the property line and sidewalk is acceptable,  
6 the manager may allow such landscaping in lieu of required land-  
7 scaping within the development; provided the type and area of  
8 planting is comparable to that normally required and adequate pro-  
9 visions are made for permanent maintenance;

10 g. When existing conditions on or adjacent to the site,  
11 including differences in elevation, existing vegetation, location  
12 of existing structures or utilities would render application of  
13 requirements of this Chapter ineffective or result in scenic view  
14 obstruction.

15 h. When the site is less than an acre in area and was  
16 a legal building site prior to the effective date of this ordin-  
17 ance.

18 2. Where alternative landscaping is proposed the manager  
19 shall give all owners of property located within one hundred feet  
20 of any boundary of the subject property written notice of the pro-  
21 posed alternative landscaping within twenty days of filing of an  
22 application, and allow fifteen days for comment before making a  
23 decision. The decision of the manager regarding alternative land-  
24 scaping shall be made within forty-five days of filing of an appli-  
25 cation, shall be transmitted in writing to the applicant and all  
26 interested parties, and shall identify reasons for denial or re-  
27 quirements for modifications, if any. The decision of the manager  
28 regarding alternative landscaping shall be final unless an ag-  
29 grieved person appeals that decision to the Zoning and Subdivision  
30 Examiner pursuant to KCC 20.24.

31 SECTION 6. Plan requirements. The site plan shall be ac-  
32 curately drawn, using an appropriate engineering or architect  
33

1 scale, and showing the following:

- 2 1. Boundaries and dimensions of the site;
- 3 2. Location and identification of all streets, alleys and  
4 easements on or abutting the site;
- 5 3. Location and approximate dimension of all conforming  
6 structures within one hundred feet of the site on abutting  
7 properties;
- 8 4. Proposed location and dimensions of all on-site build-  
9 ings;
- 10 5. Existing and proposed topography at a maximum of five  
11 foot contours, or by an alternate method approved by the manager;
- 12 6. Proposed landscaping including location, species and  
13 size at time of planting;
- 14 7. Existing vegetation in general, and identifying all ever-  
15 green trees greater than eight inches in diameter and all decidu-  
16 ous trees greater than twelve inches in diameter, as measured  
17 four feet above ground level, if proposed to be removed;
- 18 8. Details of any proposed architectural barriers;
- 19 9. Location of existing and proposed driveways and parking  
20 surfaces, curbs and sidewalks.

21 SECTION 7. Installation and Security.

- 22 1. Landscaping required pursuant to this ordinance must  
23 be installed to the satisfaction of the manager, in accordance  
24 with the approved site plan, no later than three months after  
25 issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the project. The  
26 manager may extend the time limit for compliance up to six months  
27 after issuance of a certificate of occupancy when circumstances  
28 beyond the control of the applicant warrant an extension.
- 29 2. The manager may require performance bonds or other appro-  
30 priate security, including letters of credit and set aside letters,  
31 to insure landscaping will be installed and maintained for one  
32 year, according to the approved plan and specifications.

33

1            SECTION 8. Maintenance and Enforcement. All landscaped  
 2 areas required by this code shall be planted according to accepted  
 3 practice in good soil with a water source within 75 feet (except  
 4 for self-sustaining natural type growth commonly occurring in the  
 5 vicinity of development), and maintained with respect to pruning,  
 6 trimming, watering or other requirements to create an attractive  
 7 appearance and a healthy growing condition. Dead, diseased,  
 8 stolen or vandalized plantings shall be replaced within three  
 9 months. Property owners shall keep the planting area reasonably  
 10 free of weeds and trash. Lack of maintenance shall constitute a  
 11 violation of this code. The manager shall have the authority to  
 12 enforce the standards set forth in this ordinance and the condi-  
 13 tions attached to all permits for development pursuant to applica-  
 14 tion of this ordinance, in accordance with the provisions of  
 15 Title 23.

16            INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 28th day  
 17 of April, 1980.

18            PASSED this 21st day of July, 1980.

19            KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
 20            KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

21            Bill Ramos  
 22            Chairman

23            ATTEST:

24            Joseph M. Quinn DEPUTY  
 25            Clerk of the Council

26            APPROVED this 30th day of July, 1980

27  
 28  
 29  
 30            [Signature]  
 31            King County Executive