



MEMORANDUM

TO: Barb McBeth, Deputy Director of Community Development
From: David R. Beschke, City of Novi Landscape Architect
Subject: Parking Lot Landscape Requirements
Date: August 19, 2014

In order to clarify the requirements for parking lot island landscape please consider the following information.

The requirements of the Ordinance and Landscape Design Manual have been developed in order to assure parking lots are attractive and more environmentally sensitive. The current parking lot landscape standards of the Ordinance have been in place since adoption in 2003. Breaking up any parking lot with greenery immediately makes the space more inviting and more in keeping with human scale. Studies have shown that intermittent traffic calming spaces have the effect of slowing and controlling traffic, thereby making the lots safer for pedestrians. The standards apply for any sites that dictate required parking such as commercial, industrial and office uses.

Parking lot landscape requirements are specified in Section 2509 – Landscape Standards of the Ordinance as well as criteria within the Landscape Design Manual. In general the following are required for all parking lots:

- No more than 15 contiguous parking spaces are allowed without being broken up with a landscape island. This is to assure that no vast expanse of pavement is allowed without greenery.
- Parking lot end islands are required to control maneuvering and to clearly delineate vehicle spaces. These also provide for more vegetation within the lots.
- Parking islands are required based mathematically upon the size of the parking area as a whole. This is an effective means to providing green spaces based upon the mass of the lot.
- Canopy trees are required based upon the amount of proposed pavement. The canopy trees provide vertical design elements and provide shade. Acceptable species are based upon salt tolerance as well as durability for snow storage.

- A requirement for perimeter parking lot trees serves to soften the lot and provide additional shade. Trees are required at one per 35 LF of lot edge but may be placed as groves.
- Except for canopy trees, all plantings are to remain within 2' to 3' high in order to maintain clear and safe site lines. No large evergreens are allowed within parking areas.
- All approved parking lot plantings must be maintained indefinitely and must be replaced if failed.
- Green lots further help the environment by cooling temperatures and allowing for ground water infiltration.

Through surveys Novi residents have consistently cited the natural environment and planned landscapes within Novi as a significant positive feature within the City. Continued support of the requirements for parking lot landscape is strongly encouraged. By enforcing and supporting parking lot landscapes, Novi continues to enhance and expand those features that keep Novi green.

DRB