

GUIDELINES FOR LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

As detailed throughout the 2025 Fresno General Plan and accompanying community and specific plans, landscaped open space is imperative for enhancing the quality of life for residents while also enhancing the image and desirability of the city as a whole as well as at the neighborhood level. Open space is often necessary to protect environmentally sensitive areas and also provides for the psychological and physical well-being of residents by offering an opportunity for relaxation and exercise. For example, landscaped open space provides an opportunity for neighbors to socialize, strengthening the sense of community while also allowing individuals to engage in some form of physical activity. It is now well-established that open space is connected to public health. Studies show that public health is improved with adequate provision of open space, which is increasingly important to combat today's health problems related to stress and sedentary lifestyle. Other landscaped open space opportunities include pedestrian walkways and paths that may lead to a destination such as a local school, a neighborhood retail center, a buffer around unique areas, a public park or simply to enhance the area's visual image.

This policy document is intended to clarify current efforts by the city to increase landscaped open space opportunities and provides the framework to implement the appropriate policies of the 2025 Fresno General Plan. Landscaped open space and pedestrian/bike path/trails related policies are found in the Urban Form, Public Facilities, and Open Space/Recreation Elements of the general plan text. Under the Image topic of the Urban Form Element, relevant objectives/policies are C-19, C-19-a through C-19-d, C-21, C-21-c, and C-21-f. Within the Transportation topic of the Public Facilities Element, pertinent objectives/policies include E-1, E-1-j, E-1-l, E-1-m, E-1-p, E-4, E-4-a, E-13, E-13-c, E-14, E-14-k, E-15, E-15-j, E-15-k, E-15-l, E-15-w, and E-15-x. The Open Space/Recreation Element contains related objective/policies within the Master Parks Plan topic including F-1, F-1-e, F-1-h, F-2, F-2-b, F-3, F-3-b, F-3-d, F-5, and F-5-f.

These landscaped open space guidelines to the various forms of open space are intended to improve the overall appearance of residential development and to encourage alternative modes of transportation as well as improve the public health by encouraging active lifestyles and outdoor activities. These guidelines will also facilitate the aesthetic enjoyment of those who pass through or by a project. These guidelines are at least partly resultant from the Fresno City Planning Commission endorsed policy of February 15, 2006, that single family residential subdivisions need to provide a minimum 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space which may consist of common passive/active open space in the form of aggregated open space, trails, pedestrian ways, etc.

While these policies provide some flexibility in the implementation thereof, all other applicable city policies, ordinances, and regulations shall be complied with. Noted below is the applicability of any credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirements for each subdivision. Also noted below is the applicability of any credit toward the City's Park Facilities Fee (authorized by Article 4.7, Chapter 12, of the Fresno Municipal Code

(FMC) adopted by the City Council as Ordinance No. 2005-113 and Resolution No. 2005-427 on September 27, 2005) and toward the City's Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act) (authorized by Section 12-1027 of the FMC adopted by the City Council as Ordinance No. 2005-112 and Resolution No. 2005-426 on September 27, 2005).

A. LANDSCAPING ALONG MAJOR STREETS

1. The FMC currently requires that all double frontage lots provide a minimum landscape easement 10 feet in width and a 6-foot high solid masonry wall located abutting but outside the landscape easement along the major street (ref: Section 12-1011-f-3 of the FMC). For this reason, the initial 10 feet of landscaping will not be credited with meeting the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement.
2. **Any additional landscaped width added to this easement that is more than the minimum 10-foot wide landscaped open space easement shall be applied to the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision.**
3. Landscaping located within the public street easement shall not be applied toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement.
4. Landscaping provided within this category shall not be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee or Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act).

B. ENTRYWAYS INTO A SUBDIVISION FROM A MAJOR STREET

1. Provide a minimum 10-foot wide landscape strip in the form of a pedestrian and planting easement on the local street side of the proposed lots abutting the entry street to the subdivision. This landscape easement shall extend to the front yard setback of the abutting lots.
2. Provide a 6-foot high solid masonry wall located abutting but outside the required 10-foot wide landscape easement noted above.
3. **This 10-foot wide landscape easement shall count as a credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision.**
4. Landscaping provided within this category shall not be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee or Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act).

C. PARKWAY STREETS

1. **Landscaping provided within a "parkway type" street (i.e., local residential street with sidewalks separated from the street by an enhanced landscape strip) shall be applied as a credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision.**

2. Landscaping provided within this category shall not be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee or Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act).

D. LANDSCAPING AT THE END OF INTERIOR BLOCKS

1. Provide a minimum 8-foot wide landscape strip in the form of a pedestrian and planting easement at the end of all blocks. This 8-foot landscape easement is to be located adjacent to the "sidewalk pattern" of the appropriate public street easement implemented for the subdivision.
2. Fences/walls shall be located abutting but outside the required 8-foot landscape easement noted above.
3. **The landscaping of this easement shall be applied as a credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision.**
4. Landscaping provided within this category shall not be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee or Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act).

E. LANDSCAPED PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS/WALKWAYS

1. Landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways shall be provided for all subdivisions in order to link neighborhoods and to provide residents the opportunity to reach destinations, including, but not limited to, bus stops, trails, parks (including, mini, neighborhood, community, regional parks, etc.), schools, shopping centers, other subdivisions, etc.
2. Landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways shall be in the form of an easement for such purposes.
3. Landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways shall be provided for any block in excess of 500 linear feet in length (i.e., mid-block connections).
4. Any required easement for landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways shall be a minimum of 23 feet in width.
5. Traffic calming devices (within public or private streets) and pedestrian connections/walkways shall be located proximate to one another in order to facilitate safe vehicle/pedestrian interfaces.
6. Pedestrian connections/walkways, to the extent feasible, shall be along the same alignment throughout a subdivision and especially as related to surrounding walkways already established.
7. Where feasible, cul-de-sac streets shall provide landscaped pedestrian connections to the adjoining neighborhoods, streets, or trails.

8. **All landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways shall be applied as a credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision.**
9. Landscaping provided within this category shall not be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee or Parkland Dedication/In-Lieu Fee (Quimby Act).

F. PLANNED TRAILS (PEDESTRIAN/BIKE/EQUESTRIAN)

1. All city-planned pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and multi-purpose trails shall be constructed in accordance with all Planning & Development Department and Public Works Department standards.
2. City-planned trails may be located within the public street easement or may be within a separate easement for such purpose to be deeded to the city in fee in a form acceptable to the City Engineer.
3. **Required trails shall be applied as a credit toward the 2 to 5 percent landscaped open space Planning Commission policy requirement for each subdivision and shall be applied as a credit towards the Park Facilities Fee pursuant to the requirements of Resolution No. 2005-427 adopted by the City Council on September 27, 2005.**

G. AGGREGATED OPEN SPACE

1. Aggregated open space is landscaped open space that is not linear in nature as defined in categories A-F, above, and is typically a minimum area of 10,000 square feet having minimum dimensions of 70 feet in width and 100 feet in depth.
2. Aggregated open space, to the extent feasible, shall be centrally located and shall be bordered by three streets to ensure adequate visibility of the open space from the surrounding residences (defensible space).
3. Aggregated open space, to the extent feasible, shall be linked with landscaped pedestrian connections/walkways.
4. For subdivision maps less than 10 net acres in area, aggregated open space is not required. However, landscaped linear open space shall be provided as described in categories A-F, above.
5. For subdivision maps proposing lot area of a minimum average of 7,500 square feet throughout the subdivision (having no proposed lot area less than a minimum of 6,000 square foot, or greater than one acre in area) aggregated open space is not required. However, landscaped linear open space shall be provided as described in categories A-F, above.
6. For subdivision maps 10 net acres in area or greater, a minimum of 2.5 percent of the site shall be developed with aggregated landscaped open space. This minimum 2.5 percent aggregated open space is in addition to the required linear open space noted in categories A-F, above.

7. Aggregated open space shall be deeded to the city in a form acceptable to the City Engineer.
8. **Aggregated open space shall be applied as a credit toward the Park Facilities Fee pursuant to the requirements of Resolution No. 2005-427 adopted by the City Council on September 27, 2005.**

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