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SIDEWALK LANDSCAPING PERMIT INFORMATION SHEET

Green spaces are vital to San Francisco's quality of life as they provide a range of environmental benefits and bring beauty to our neighborhoods and commercial districts. A permit is required to ensure that landscaping in sidewalk areas is properly constructed and maintained in order to maximize environmental benefits, protect public safety, and limit conflicts with infrastructure.

Permit Application Materials

Submit the following materials by mail to: City and County of San Francisco, P.O. Box 7461, San Francisco, CA 94120-7461

- Completed application form signed by the property Owner or Owner's agent.
- A plan drawing of the proposed sidewalk plantings. *See the Sidewalk-Landscaping Permit Application Form and Sample Drawing for requirements.*
- \$215 non-refundable fee per property if submitted individually; \$185 if submitted jointly with 2 – 4 neighboring properties; \$160 if submitted jointly with 5 or more neighboring properties (Neighboring properties must be within the same block or intersection.) Check shall be payable to: CCSF-DPW- BUF

Permitting and Construction Process

1. Submit the Application Materials as noted above.
2. Call 415-641-2676 to schedule the required pre-construction site inspection to evaluate the proposed landscape plans in relation to existing infrastructure, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines, California Building Code Title 24 and other regulatory codes and guidelines. **Schedule an inspection at least two (2) weeks before the anticipated start of construction.** Attend the scheduled pre-construction site inspection.
3. Issuance of permit is **subject to staff approval**. Applicant will be notified of any required changes or receipt of permit at the conclusion of the onsite inspection.
4. **Call Underground Service Alert at 800-227-2600 at least two (2) days prior to digging** to check for the location of your underground utilities. There is no charge for this service. See www.USAnorth.org for further details.
5. Proceed with demolition and installation. It is recommended to use a licensed and insured contractor. Work may be conducted by Owner as general contractor.
6. Call 415-641-2676 at least (1) one week in advance to schedule a final inspection to be conducted once work is completed. Attend the scheduled post-construction site inspection.
7. DPW staff will sign-off on the project or inform the applicant of any changes required to comply with the plans as permitted. If changes are necessary, an additional post-construction site inspection will be required.

KEEP THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR REFERENCE

SEE REVERSE FOR PERMEABLE SIDEWALK-LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

For more information call the Bureau of Urban Forestry at 641-2676

"IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SAN FRANCISCO"

We are dedicated individuals committed to teamwork, customer service and continuous improvement in partnership with the community.

Customer Service

Teamwork

Continuous Improvement

SIDEWALK LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

1. In no case shall new landscaping result in an unobstructed sidewalk width of less than 48 inches, or increase the cross-slope of the portion of the sidewalk designated as an accessible path-of-travel for ADA purposes, in many cases 72 inches will be required.
2. Street tree plantings are also strongly encouraged. A separate permit is required for street trees and may be submitted together with the sidewalk landscaping permit. *For information on planting a street tree, call DPW-BUF at (415) 641-2676 or go online at <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/sfdpw/buf/StreetTreeGuidelines.pdf>.*
3. Plant species and layout are subject to staff approval. Plants shall not pose a hazard to public health. To conserve water, plant species requiring minimal irrigation and adapted to local site and climate conditions are recommended. Planting within 3 feet of the trunk of trees less than 3 years old or near the root crown of established is not advisable.
4. For environmental and accessibility reasons, raised planters are discouraged. In locations where in-ground plantings are not allowed, raised planters may be permitted. It is recommended that an applicant desiring raised planters contact SFDPW to discuss this option.
5. A minimum of 24-inch from the face of the curb shall remain accessible and clear of landscaping where curbside parking exists
6. For each curbside parking space (approximately 20 feet of curb), a minimum 48-inch wide accessible path is required to pass perpendicularly from the curb to the sidewalk path-of-travel. This path shall be located at the approximate centerline of each curbside parking stall, and must be made of concrete, pavers or brick and must be set on a firm base.
7. Surfaces other than the curbside parking path in item #6 may be made of pavers, permeable pavers, bricks, compacted crushed stone, concrete, permeable concrete or other firm and level material clear of tripping hazards. Any such material must be set on a firm base.
8. Sidewalk-landscape plantings may not exceed 3 feet in height in the following locations:
 - a. Within 25 feet in front of a **traffic sign or signal**
 - b. Within 25 feet of the property line on the **approach to an intersection** and 10 feet of the property line on the **exit from an intersection** as the traffic flows, if property is within 25 feet of a street intersection.

These guidelines are subject to change by the DPW Director.

9. A raised edging treatment is required at both ends of the landscaped area to indicate the presence of landscaping to visually-impaired pedestrians. The edging treatment must be at least 6 inches and no more than 15 inches high from the grade of the sidewalk and allow water to flow around or through into the landscape. It may be made of wood, stone, decorative metal or other material, subject to staff review.
10. Other raised structures, decorative and/or protective fencing may require additional permits.
11. The grade of the planted area shall be at least one inch lower than the grade of the sidewalk, and shall be terraced on sites with significant slope to avoid soil erosion and spillage onto the sidewalk. Landscaping and edging treatments shall allow water to drain from the sidewalk into the landscaped area. In areas with a known high-water table and other subsoil issues, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission may review sites as to their appropriateness for permeable landscaping.
12. Any parking signs, street lights, utility poles or other above-ground infrastructure must remain set within concrete for adequate anchoring.
13. Street lights, utility poles, mailboxes, trash receptacles, bike racks, and other street fixtures with the exception of parking meters must remain accessible by a 36-inch clear path perpendicular to the curb, as measured from the centerline of the fixture.
14. Points of access to underground utilities must remain unobstructed. Plantings adjacent to such points of access shall be kept a minimum of 6 inches clear from all sides.
15. Sidewalk-landscape plantings are NOT permitted in the following cases:
 - a. If the existing sidewalk is less than 7 feet wide.
 - b. Adjacent to existing Bus Zones where the sidewalk is less than or equal to 15 feet.
 - c. Adjacent to an existing designated Blue (Handicap) Parking Zone.
 - d. Adjacent to an existing Crosswalk Zone.
 - e. Within curb return (the curved portion of the sidewalk at intersections).
 - f. If impacting existing or potential curb ramp locations.
 - g. Within 5 feet of a fire hydrant.

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16. The permit holder is responsible for maintaining the sidewalk landscaping in a condition that is safe to pedestrians and vehicular traffic, free of litter and unsightly weeds, and for maintaining the health of plants with appropriate pruning, watering, and other care as needed, and ensuring that landscaping does not encroach into the 48-inch accessible path of travel as described in #1 above.
17. The property owner shall check for the presence of underground utilities in the area of proposed plantings and shall be solely responsible in avoiding interference with or damage to electric or telephone conduits, sewers and other utilities.

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