



Landscaping, Signs, and Parking Reviews

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Landscaping

Landscaping is required on certain permits to meet minimum landscaping development and buffering requirements. The benefits of landscaping include:

- Maintaining and protecting property values;
- Enhancing the appearance of development;
- Protecting aesthetic assets of the community;
- Providing screening between incompatible land uses;
- Reducing erosion and stormwater runoff;
- Providing pervious surface for ground water recharge;
- Promoting energy conservation;
- Reducing heat, air, and noise pollution; and
- Promoting safety through reduced glare and visual separation of traffic movement.

Landscaping is required for all permitted and conditional uses except for the following:

- Farms and accessory uses associated with farming;
- Single-family houses and duplexes and their accessory uses when not developed as part of an overall complex;

- Subdivision(s), short subdivision(s) and binding site plans;
- Remodels representing less than 50 percent of the assessed valuation of the structure; and
- Conversions of uses requiring less than five parking stalls.

Whatcom County Code 20.80.300 addresses many aspects of landscaping. Furthermore, there are additional landscaping requirements and guidelines in the designated zoning sections.

Signs

Signs are also regulated by the Whatcom County Code 20.80.400. While some signs are exempt from application, others can require conditional use permits, depending on the project and the zone. For specific information on signs check the Whatcom County Code 20.80.400 and in the appropriate zoning section of Title 20.

Parking

In Whatcom County no building or structure shall be erected, substantially altered, or its use changed unless permanently maintained off-street parking and loading spaces have been provided. Section 20.80.500 of Whatcom County Code addresses the exact requirements such as number of spaces, dimensions, setbacks, lighting, drainage, surfacing and other aspects.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES HANDOUT SERIES

Information

Due to the administrative complexity of these regulations, it is usually best to visit with PDS staff or contact our Planner to answer any additional questions.

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