

This bulletin is for information only and can change at any time.

Purpose

To clarify the City of Vernon's bylaws and regulations as they pertain to landscaping. Please refer to the [Zoning Bylaw](#) for complete regulatory information.

Irrigation Requirements

Irrigation is generally required for new developments as plants may struggle to establish in the community's hot and dry climate. However, fully automatic irrigation systems are not required for:

- Existing areas of undisturbed native vegetation.
- Landscaping specifically designated as xeriscape or with drought resistant vegetation.

Xeriscape vs. Drought Resistant Vegetation

Xeriscape is a specific landscaping method designed to reduce water use through native and drought resistant vegetation in combination with techniques like mulching. By considering factors such as sun, shade, and drainage in yard design, xeriscaping strives to conserve water and improve biodiversity.

In contrast, drought resistant vegetation refers to plants that can survive in dry conditions.

Distance from Buildings

Due to the increased fire-risk resulting from a hot and dry climate, new landscaping is required to follow minimum wildfire-risk mitigation standards based on [FireSmart BC](#) guidance:

Immediate Zone (0 – 1.5 m)

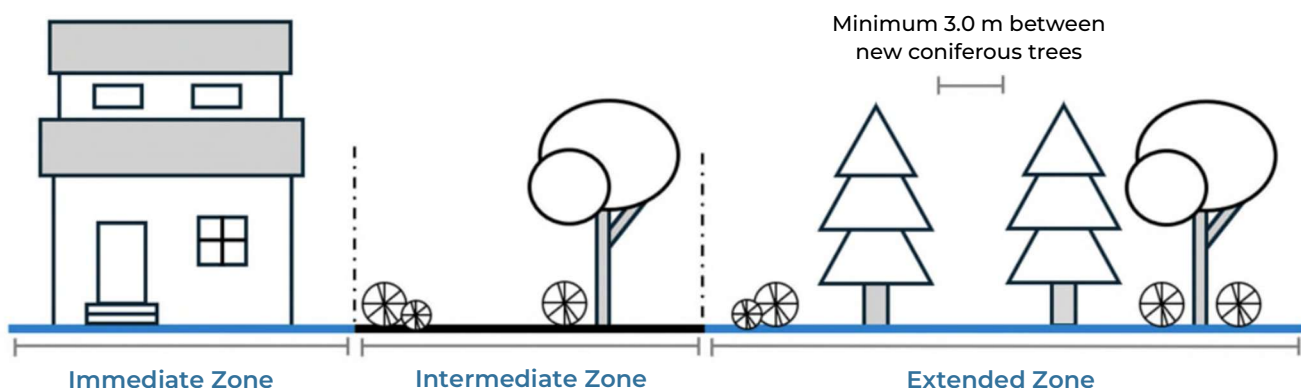
- No new combustible mulch including bark mulch, wood chips, or pine needles.
- No new coniferous trees or coniferous shrubs, including cedar and juniper hedges.

Intermediate Zone (1.5 – 10.0 m)

- No new coniferous trees unless spaced a minimum of 6.0 m from the nearest building with non-combustible exterior finishes and other coniferous trees, and lower branches pruned to a minimum of 2.0 m in height.
- No new coniferous shrubs, including cedar and juniper hedges.

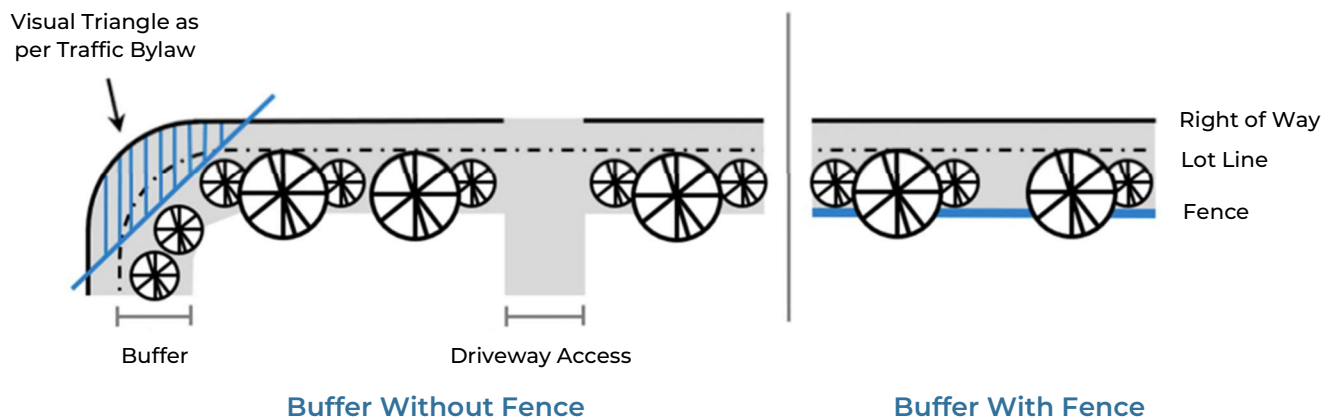
Extended Zone (10.0 – 30.0 m)

- New coniferous trees or coniferous shrubs shall be planted to ensure 3.0 m spacing at maturity.



Landscape Buffers

Landscape buffers are required for new developments in certain zones to act as a transitional area between different land uses. These buffers reduce noise transfer, promote stormwater management, improve biodiversity, and beautify the landscape.



For more information on landscape buffer requirements, refer to Section 6.7 of the [Zoning Bylaw](#).

Permit Requirements

A permit is not required for landscaping provided it complies with the [Zoning Bylaw](#) and is located outside the environmentally sensitive areas identified in DPA 1 – Terrestrial Ecosystem and DPA 2 – Aquatic Ecosystem of the [Official Community Plan](#).

If proposed landscaping does not comply, a Development Variance Permit and/or Development Permit is required. These permits must be applied for and issued prior to landscaping taking place.

Note: The [Tree Protection Bylaw](#) protects most trees greater than 8 cm in diameter when measured at 1 m above the ground. If a tree meets this criteria, or is located within an environmentally sensitive area, it is recommended to contact Planning Department staff before engaging in tree removal as a Tree Cutting Permit may be required.

Helpful Resources

- [FireSmart BC Fire-Resistant Plant Guide](#) – index of fire-resistant plants which can be filtered type, mature height, water use, and climate.
- [Okanagan Xeriscape Association Plant Database](#) – index of plants suited to the Okanagan which can be filtered by type, mature height, and features such as deer resistance.
- [RDNO WaterWise Gardening & Irrigation Handbook](#) – guide for reducing landscape water use through intentional design, plant selection, and irrigation practices.

Where can I learn more?

For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 250-550-3634 or planning@vernon.ca. Staff are also available at the Community Services Building (3001 32nd Ave) during business hours.

