



**Planning & Development Services Dept.**

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER# 000114-092410**

### **CODE INTERPRETATION**

### **CODE SECTION: SMC 20.50.470 Street frontage landscaping - Standards**

#### **I. ISSUE**

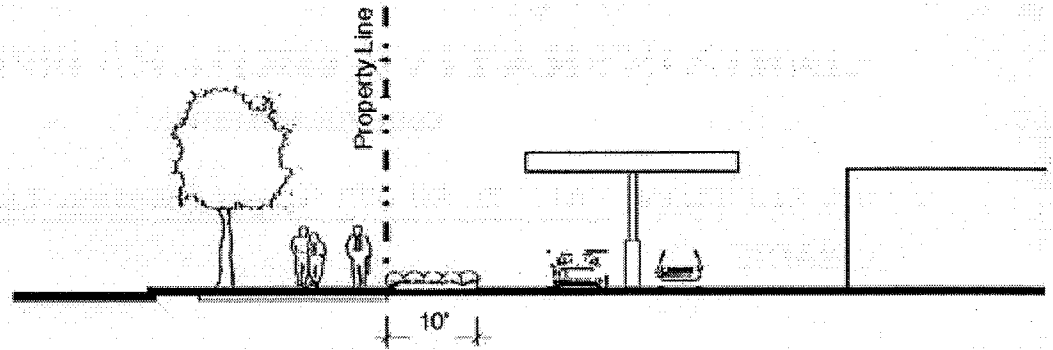
1. How does SMC 20.50.470 apply to uses located in the MUZ such as car dealerships, used car lots and large equipment rental stores where the product for sale or rent is traditionally kept outside?
2. Can frontage landscaping requirements in MUZ be substituted with street trees?
3. Can frontage landscaping requirements be satisfied using public rights-of-way in portions unused by frontage improvements?

#### **II. FINDINGS**

1. The following are the sections of code in question:
  - a. Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) **20.50.470(D) Street frontage landscaping – Standards.**  
All parking, outdoor storage, and equipment storage areas serving new development in the MUZ shall be screened from the public right-of-way. These uses shall be located behind buildings, within underground or structured parking, or behind a 4-foot masonry wall with a 10-foot Type II landscape buffer between the wall and the property line.
  - b. Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) **20.50.470(C) Street frontage landscaping – Standards.**  
For buildings located consistent with the provisions of SMC 20.50.230, Exceptions to Table 20.50.230(1) the width of frontage landscaping between the building and the property line may be reduced in commercial zones if two-inch caliper street trees are provided. The maximum spacing shall be 40 feet on center. Institutional and public facilities may substitute 10 feet of the required 20 feet with street trees.
  - c. Exceptions to Table 20.50.230:

- (1) Front yard setback may be reduced to zero feet if adequate street improvements are available or room for street improvements is available in the street right-of-way.

**Front Yard (Street) Setback:** Residential developments (excluding mixed-use developments), parking structures, surface parking areas, service areas, gas station islands, and similar paved surfaces shall have a minimum 10-foot-wide, fully landscaped separation measured from the back of the sidewalk.



Example of landscaped setback between the sidewalk and a gas station.

- 2 Requiring uses in the MUZ such as car dealerships, used car lots and large equipment sale/rental establishments to locate their products behind buildings, in underground or structured parking or behind a four foot masonry wall with 10 feet of Type II landscaping between the back of the wall and the back of the sidewalk would obscure the products for sale from public view.
- 3 Traditionally car dealerships, used car lots and large equipment sale/rental establishments have outdoor showrooms to display and store products, often within view of the public right of way.
- 4 SMC 20.50.470.A. states that a 10-foot width of Type II landscaping located on site along the front property line is required for all development including parking structures, surface parking areas, service areas, gas station islands, and similar paved surfaces. See 20.50.470(D) for street frontage screening standards in the MUZ zones.
- 5 SMC 20.50.280.B states that buildings in commercial zones must have a minimum of 50 percent of the first floor facing the street treated with transparent windows or doors.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

1. SMC 20.50.470.D is not intended to obscure or totally screen car dealerships, used car lots and large equipment sale/rental establishments in the MUZ from the public right of way. The intent of SMC 20.50.470.D. is to screen outdoor storage of products, supplies and equipment that are not intended for outdoor use and are of a size and shape that can be stored and displayed inside a building.

Outdoor storage is not the same as an outdoor showroom. An outdoor showroom is more like a "similar paved surface" as called out in SMC 20.50.470.A, and Exceptions to Table 20.50.230(1).

The transparency requirement under SMC 20.50.280.B is intended to add visual interest to the streetscape by having businesses display their product. Complete or substantial screening of wares would conflict with the intent of this provision.

2. SMC 20.50.470.C does not allow street frontage landscaping to be reduced on site for parking structures, surface parking areas, service areas, gas station islands and similar paved surfaces.

#### IV. DECISION

1. Car dealerships, used car lots, large equipment sale/rental establishments and similar uses where the retail product is large and primarily intended for outdoor use are not required to have their product be located behind buildings, in underground or structured parking, or behind a four-foot masonry wall with a 10-foot width of Type II landscaping between the wall and back of sidewalk as stated in 20.50.470.D. The following street frontage screening is required for outdoor showrooms for car dealerships, used car lots, large equipment sale/rental establishments in the MUZ:
  - a. 10-foot width of Type II landscaping without trees; or
  - b. 4-foot tall masonry wall that may be extended up an additional 4 feet using a mostly open style of metal fencing as approved by the Director. Solid wood, chain link, razor wire, cyclone or barbed wire fencing are not permitted.

In addition, when outdoor showrooms are adjacent to single-family residential, a 20-foot width of Type I landscaping is required along the interior lot line as stated in 20.50.490.D. Note: If a car dealership, used car lot, large equipment sale/rental establishment or similar use located in the MUZ has surface parking, outdoor storage or equipment storage in addition to the outdoor showroom, these parking areas must comply with SMC 20.50.470.D.

2. 20.50.470.C does not apply to paved surface uses and therefore cannot be interpreted to allow street frontage landscaping to be substituted by street trees.
3. Required site improvements such as frontage landscaping must be met entirely on the private site.

Director's Signature

Date

