

**TOWN OF RIDGWAY, COLORADO
ORDINANCE NO. 03-2025**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF RIDGWAY, COLORADO
AMENDING SECTION 7-4-8 “LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS” OF
THE RIDGWAY MUNICIPAL CODE**

WHEREAS, the Town of Ridgway, Colorado (“Town”) is a home rule municipality existing pursuant to the laws of the Colorado Constitution, the Colorado Revised Statutes and the Town's Home Rule Charter; and

WHEREAS, the zoning and land use powers conferred upon the Town by the State of Colorado as a Home Rule Municipality empower the Town to manage land use to ensure the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Town currently regulates land uses within the Town limits in accordance with Chapter 7 “Land Use Regulations” of the Ridgway Municipal Code (“RMC”), adopted pursuant to its Home Rule Constitutional authority and the Local Government Land Use Control Enabling Act of 1974, as amended, §§29-20-101, et seq. C.R.S; and

WHEREAS, the Town has determined that it is appropriate to amend RMC Subsection 7-4-8 “Landscape Regulations” to conform with Senate Bill 24-005 and adopt the Prohibition of Nonfunctional Turf, Artificial Turf, and Invasive Plant Species; and

WHEREAS, the Town has determined that it is appropriate to amend RMC Subsection 7-4-8 “Landscape Regulations” to provide additional clarity in our regulations; and

WHEREAS, modifications to the Town’s Landscape Regulations will help advance ***POLICY ENV-3.2: Water Supply*** in the Town of Ridgway Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, modifications to the Town’s Landscape Regulations will help advance ***POLICY ENV-3.6: Water Conservation*** in the Town of Ridgway Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, modifications to the Town’s Landscape Regulations will help advance ***POLICY GRO-3.6: Hazards and Climate Change Considerations*** in the Town of Ridgway Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, Town staff held a Text Amendment public hearing at the duly noticed Regular meeting of the Ridgway Planning Commission on August 20, 2025, and received recommendations from the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Ridgway Town Council finds that this ordinance furthers and is necessary to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the Ridgway community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIDGWAY, COLORADO the following:

Section 1. Recitals Incorporated. The above and foregoing recitals are incorporated herein by reference and adopted as findings and determinations of the Town Council.

Section 2. Amendment of Section 7-4-8. Section 7-4-8 of the Ridgway Municipal Code is hereby repealed and reinstated to read as set forth in ***Exhibit A***.

Section 3. Severability. If any provision of this Ordinance, or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is for any reason held to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable. The Town Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each provision thereof, even though any one of the provisions might be declared unconstitutional or invalid. As used in this Section, the term “provision” means and includes any part, division, subdivision, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase; the term “application” means and includes an application of an ordinance or any part thereof, whether considered or construed alone or together with another ordinance or ordinances, or part thereof, of the Town.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after the date of final passage in accordance with Article 3-7 of the Ridgway Charter.

Section 5. Safety Clause. The Town Council hereby finds, determines and declares that this Ordinance is promulgated under the general police power of the Town of Ridgway, that it is promulgated for the health, safety and welfare of the public, and that this Ordinance is necessary for the preservation of health and safety and for the protection of public convenience and welfare. The Town Council further determines that the Ordinance bears a rational relation to the proper legislative object sought to be obtained.

Section 6. No Existing Violation Affected. Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed to release, extinguish, alter, modify, or change in whole or in part any penalty, liability or right or affect any audit, suit, or proceeding pending in any court, or any rights acquired, or liability incurred, or any cause or causes of action acquired or existing which may have been incurred or obtained under any ordinance or provision hereby repealed or amended by this Ordinance. Any such ordinance or provision thereof so amended, repealed, or superseded by this Ordinance shall be treated and held as remaining in force for the purpose of sustaining any and all proper actions, suits, proceedings and prosecutions, for the enforcement of such penalty, liability, or right, and for the purpose of sustaining any judgment, decree or order which can or may be rendered, entered, or made in such actions, suits or proceedings, or prosecutions imposing, inflicting, or declaring such penalty or liability or enforcing such right, and shall be treated and held as remaining in force for the purpose of sustaining any and all proceedings, actions, hearings, and appeals pending before any court or administrative tribunal.

Section 7. Codification of Amendments. The Town Clerk, as the codifier of the Town’s Municipal Code, is hereby authorized to make such numerical and formatting changes as may be necessary to incorporate the provisions of this Ordinance within the Ridgway Municipal Code. The Town Clerk is authorized to correct, or approve the correction by the codifier, of any typographical error in the enacted regulations, provided that such correction shall not substantively change any provision of the regulations adopted in this Ordinance. Such corrections may include spelling, reference, citation, enumeration, and grammatical errors.

Section 8. Publication. The Town Clerk is ordered to publish this Ordinance in accordance with Article 3-7 of the Ridgway Charter.

INTRODUCED AND REFERRED TO PUBLIC HEARING on September 10, 2025, and setting such public hearing for October 1, 2025, at Ridgway Town Hall, located at 201 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado.

BY:

John Clark, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pam Kraft, Town Clerk

ADOPTED on October 1, 2025.

BY:

John Clark, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pam Kraft, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Bo James Nerlin, Town Attorney

Exhibit A:

Amendment of Section 7-4-8 “Landscape Regulations”.

7-4-8 LANDSCAPE REGULATIONS.

(A) Intent.

- (1) The purpose of this Section is to provide clear landscaping requirements that will contribute to high quality development and sustainable, water-saving practices. Landscaping is an important element of the character of the Town of Ridgway that is both functional and aesthetic. Ridgway's objective is to prioritize design that incorporates low water use and regionally appropriate materials while increasing fire resilience in the community. In addition to these regulations, applicants should consider the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code in landscape design. These landscaping regulations will endeavor to achieve the following:
 - (a) Preserve and enhance the quality and character of the community through landscaping;
 - (b) Conserve water resources;
 - (c) Provide visual buffers and screening;
 - (d) Provide separation between pedestrian and vehicular uses;
 - (e) Mitigate adverse effects of stormwater and weeds; and
 - (f) Allow for creativity and flexibility in landscape design.
- (2) Drought-tolerant, native, and water-wise plants are to be used whenever possible and appropriate. Water-wise is a term used throughout this chapter to describe the method of planting which works to promote water conservation by minimizing the amount of native vegetation removed, limiting new vegetation to native and drought tolerant species, limiting the amount and type of irrigation, and other related measures to conserve water and create a native landscape.
- (3) Landscaping that is sustainable, visually appealing, and regionally appropriate is required for all new development. Landscaping should be used to promote the visual aesthetic of a development from pedestrian spaces and travel corridors. Buffers and medians are encouraged as a means to facilitate drainage during storm events and provide areas for snow storage during the winter.

(B) Applicability.

- (1) This chapter establishes minimum landscaping standards which apply to all properties within the Town of Ridgway.
 - (2) The following projects shall comply with the landscaping standards set forth in this chapter:
 - (a) Projects which require a site plan review;
 - (b) New commercial, residential, or mixed use construction;
 - (c) Projects that result in a disturbance of more than fifty percent (50%) of the aggregate landscape area;
 - (d) Change of use; or
 - (e) Public rights-of-way improvements.
 - (3) A building permit for new construction shall not be issued until a conforming Landscape Plan is approved by the Town. A permanent Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued until the Town determines that the landscaping included in the approved plan has been properly installed.
 - (4) All standards and policies adopted within the Town of Ridgway Water Conservation and Management Plan, Master Plan, and Land Use Regulations should be implemented with the landscape regulations.
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(5) Where conflict exists between these regulations and an adopted Wildfire Resiliency Code, the Wildfire Resiliency Code shall govern.

(C) Site and Landscape Plan Development.

(1) Landscape Plan Requirements.

- (a) The landscape plan shall be drawn to scale of one inch equals 40 feet, or larger, and may be included on the Site Plan. The landscape plan shall include the following information:
 - (i) Property lines and dimensions;
 - (ii) Building footprint, driveways, and vehicle circulation;
 - (iii) A grading plan with contour lines depicting existing elevations and proposed finished grade;
 - (iv) North arrow and scale;
 - (v) Name of applicant and landscape consultant or architect (if applicable);
 - (vi) Legend indicating all proposed plant materials with botanical names, indication of drought tolerant plants, size (maturity) maximum spacing, caliper size, and quantities;
 - (vii) The existing or proposed method of establishing and maintaining plant materials;
 - (viii) Surface drainage characteristics and structures, including, but not limited to, inlets, retention/detention ponds, swales, permeable surfaces, down spouts;
 - (ix) Location of all plant material
 - (x) Other natural features, including, but not limited to, wetlands, water bodies, rock outcroppings, detention areas, retaining walls, and buildings and paved areas (existing and proposed);
 - (xi) Plantings should be shown as they would be at full maturity;
 - (xii) Clearly labeled locations and calculations for amounts of required landscaping, including the square footage and percentage of required landscape area, live materials, and non-live materials.
 - (xiii) Identify any existing trees, shrubs, or live groundcover that will remain on the property and how they will be protected from damage during construction;
 - (xv) Construction debris storage and staging areas; and
 - (xvi) Additional information as may be required by the Town.

(D) Water Conservation.

- (1) Water Conservation Planting: Landscaping should be designed to incorporate water conservation materials and techniques through the application of water-wise landscape principles. In general, water-wise landscaping with drip irrigation is required, while large, irrigated areas requiring spray heads are strongly discouraged.
- (2) Regionally Appropriate: All landscaping should be regionally appropriate, and materials shall be suitable for local soil conditions and climate
 - (a) Preferred Species: Lists of recommended species for use in Colorado is available from the Ouray County Weed Manager and the Colorado State University Extension Service. The lists are not all inclusive but do recommend a variety of plants known to do well in our region of

Colorado. In general, plants that are not recognized as hardy or suited to the local climate should be kept to a minimum. Water-wise, drought-tolerant plants are to be used whenever possible. Regionally appropriate or native species are preferred.

(b) Prohibited Species.

(i) Invasive Plant Species are prohibited. Siberian elm and Chinese elm (*Ulmus*); Cottonwoods that bear cotton (*Populus*); Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum slaicaria*); Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*); and Kentucky Blue Grass (*Poa pratensis*) are included in the prohibited species.

(ii) Trees with aggressive root structures that are incompatible with pavement should be avoided in areas that are paved or may become paved. Narrowleaf Cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and Lanceleaf Cottonwood (*Populus x acuminata*) shall not be installed in areas in close proximity to sidewalks, streets, paved pathways, etc.

(ii) The Town Manager or designee is authorized to prohibit additional species with nuisance properties.

(E) Landscaping Required.

(1) Purpose: The purpose of this section is to establish minimum landscaping requirements. This section is not intended as a build/install-to

(a) All areas on a lot must be landscaped. At least 25 percent of the minimum required landscape area shall be provided in the front yard of the property.

(b) Landscaped area may include a combination of trees, shrubs, groundcovers (live and non-live), planters/planting beds, decorative landscape stone or rock, or other landscaping material that does not conflict with other provisions of this Chapter.

(i) Live ground cover is considered to be material such as native grasses, wildflowers, functional turf, and planting beds.

(ii) Non-live ground cover is considered to be material such as mulch, flagstone, rock, gravel, permeable pavers, etc. If mulch or other flammable materials are proposed, the applicant should consider fire risks. Fire resistant material is encouraged

(iii) The landscaping requirements table below demonstrates the required landscape area for all parcels in all zoning districts.

Landscaping Requirements					
Zoning District	Min.Area ² Requiring Landscaping	Min. % of Live Ground Cover of the Area Requiring Landscaping	Min. % of Non-Live Ground Cover of the Area Requiring Landscaping	Min. # of Trees for the Area Requiring Landscaping ³	Min. # of Shrubs for the Area Requiring Landscaping ⁴
Residential Use Zones					
R	50%	20%	30%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,000 sq. ft.
HR	40%	20%	20%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,000 sq. ft.
MR	30%	20%	20%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,000 sq. ft.
FD ¹	50%	20%	30%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,000 sq. ft.
DS	50%	20%	30%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,000 sq. ft.
Nonresidential or Mixed-Use Zones					

EXHIBIT A

HB	See 7-4-8(E)(3) Below				
GC	30%	10%	20%	1 per 2,000 sq. ft.	2 per 3,500 sq. ft.
LI	30%	5%	15%	1 per 2,500 sq. ft.	2 per 4,000 sq. ft.
GI	30%	5%	15%	1 per 2,500 sq. ft.	2 per 4,000 sq. ft.

¹ See Subsection 7-4-8(I)(2) for exemptions for uses that are nonresidential in the FD zoning district.

² For all residential uses that are single-family and duplex dwellings, a maximum of one acre of area shall be used to calculate the minimum required landscape area.

³ The minimum number of trees is a sum of all required trees. Any additional tree requirements (such as street trees) shall be counted as part of this minimum number of required trees.

⁴ Four shrubs can be counted for one required tree. A minimum of one tree is always required per lot.

- (2) Historic Business (HB) District Exceptions. This district is intended to provide for zero lot lines and full lot coverage. Therefore, there is no minimum required landscaped area as defined in this chapter. However, the following shall apply:

- (a) Right-of-way landscaping shall be required pursuant to Subsection 7-4-8(H).
- (b) If a parking lot is provided on-site, parking lot landscaping shall be required pursuant to Subsection 7-4-8(G)
- (c) Required landscaped area for properties zoned HB is required for any area not used for a building or parking lot.

(F) General Landscape Standards.

- (1) Trees: Trees shall have a minimum caliper of one and one-half inches for deciduous trees and a five-foot minimum height for evergreens. In the case of fractional requirements for the number of trees, the number required shall be rounded up to the next whole number. Existing trees that are in good health, as determined by the Town Manager or designee, shall be counted as one and one-half trees for the minimum tree requirement.

- (a) Species Diversity: To prevent uniformity and insect or disease susceptibility, species diversity is required, and extensive monocultures of trees are prohibited. Species diversity does not apply to existing trees. The following requirements shall be met:

Number of required trees on site	Maximum percentage of any one species
1—3	No diversity
4—19	33%
20 or more	25%

- (2) Shrubs: Shrubs shall be a minimum three-gallon size. Decorative grasses in a minimum size of three gallons are to be counted as shrubs. In the case of fractional requirements for the number of shrubs, the number required shall be rounded up to the next whole number.
- (3) Groundcover: Area can be made up of vegetative materials, organic or inorganic mulch, flowerbeds, or other acceptable landscape material. Fire resistant material is encouraged. If mulch or other flammable materials are proposed, the applicant should consider fire risks. Groundcover must be adequate to ensure that dust cannot blow from the property and that the soil is stabilized to ensure that erosion is kept to a minimum, it must also remain free of noxious weeds as defined as Ouray County Weed Manager.

- (4) Turf: No more than 1,500 square feet or ten percent of area requiring landscaping, whichever is less, can be high water turf. High water turf should only be used in areas of high use, also known as “functional turf”. The limitation shall not apply to any public recreation area or sports field owned or operated by the town/city or any public or quasi-public entity.
 - (a) Artificial turf is prohibited except for use on any public recreation area or sports field owned or operated by the town/city or any public or quasi-public entity.
- (5) Irrigation: To ensure best practices for water conservation, all new landscaping shall comply with the following irrigation standards:
 - (a) Irrigation should be limited to between the hours of 6:00 P.M. and 9:00 A.M.
 - (b) All irrigation systems shall be automatic and have moisture sensors installed.
 - (c) Where possible, non-potable irrigation systems should be used to irrigate landscape.
- (6) Screening and Buffering:
 - (a) Screening and landscape buffers soften the less desirable impacts of development and can provide a certain element of safety in commercial areas where significant pedestrian interactions are more likely to occur. Buffers should be constructed to mitigate the view, light pollution (including light trespass and glare), noise, heat, and odor impacts of vehicles, pavement, and higher intensity uses, and other potential negative effects of development.
 - (b) Buffering shall be provided when a nonresidential use is adjacent to a residential use. It shall be the responsibility of non-residential use to provide the adequate buffer from the residential use in a manner consistent with these regulations. The buffer should include a mix of trees, fencing, landscape berms, and other materials appropriate to mitigate visual, audible, and other impact the nonresidential use may have on the residences.
 - (c) Mechanical Equipment: Ground-mounted or rooftop equipment shall be screened from public rights-of-way on all sides to its full height. Ground level mechanical equipment shall be screened with landscaping, berms, fences, or architectural walls. Rooftop units shall be screened with materials and colors to match the building.
 - (d) Storage Areas: All open storage areas shall be screened from public rights-of-way and adjacent property by use of landscaping, berms, fencing, or a combination of landscaping and other structural elements to a height of six feet. Fencing must meet the requirements of Section 7-4-6(F).
 - (e) Additional landscape screening above the minimum requirements of this Section may be required when it is determined by the Town Manager, Town Manager's designee, Planning Commission, or Town Council to be in the best interest of the affected properties.
- (7) Sight Triangles: All plant material, walls, fences, berms and/or structures shall not exceed 24 inches in height when located on any corner within a triangular area formed by the curb lines and a line connecting them at points 15 feet from the intersection of the curb lines.
- (8) Existing Plantings: Existing trees, shrubs, and live groundcovers that are in good health should be retained and not destroyed during the construction process. The health of the trees shall be determined by the Town Manager or designee. These plants will be counted towards the required landscaping.
- (9) Revegetation: Development activities should only disturb, clear, or grade the area necessary for construction. All areas disturbed by grading or construction, not being formally landscaped, shall be revegetated with native seeding and/or other approved plant materials in a method acceptable to the Town.

- (10) Slopes: Removal of existing vegetation, including ground cover and trees, is strongly discouraged on slopes greater than 30 percent. Development on slopes greater than 15 percent shall maintain the maximum vegetative cover possible to protect soils, prevent land slippage, and retain wildlife habitat and open space resources. A minimum of 50 percent of vegetation on slopes greater than 15 percent shall not be disturbed during development.
- (G) Parking Lot Landscape Standards.
 - (1) Islands or Rain Gardens: A landscape island and/or rain garden shall be provided in parking lots along the ends of the parking rows. Islands shall be a minimum of six feet wide and as long as the adjacent parking space. Trees shall be incorporated with parking lot design to provide parking lot shading.
 - (a) Islands for parking lots in residential and mixed-use areas shall be used to separate rows of six or more parking spaces and shall include a minimum of one tree.
 - (b) For non-residential uses, islands shall be used to separate rows of 12 or more parking spaces and shall include a minimum of two trees.
 - (2) Catchment areas: Landscaped catchments areas and similar designs should be used for managing, controlling, and filtering parking lot and site drainage and should be included as part of an overall site drainage plan.
- (H) Right-of-Way Landscape Standards.
 - (1) Street trees: A landscape area shall be established along the public right-of-way for all non-residential uses and shall be a minimum of five feet wide. Such trees shall be placed in the center of the landscape area, not within the site triangle, and 20 feet away from any streetlight. A minimum of one tree per 50 linear feet of right-of-way is required. Street trees shall have a minimum caliper of two and one-half inches for deciduous trees and a six-foot minimum height for evergreens.
- (I) Exceptions or Deviations.
 - (1) Affordable Housing: Landscaping requirements for affordable housing projects may be reduced, based on the determination of the Town Manager or designee. Whenever possible, deviations from these standards for the purpose of preserving affordable housing or deed restricted housing should be identified and provided for in the appropriate document establishing the affordability and/or deed restricted provisions for the projects.
 - (2) Non-residential Uses on Properties Zoned FD: If the proposed use in the FD zone district is intended to be permanent, these landscape regulations shall apply. If, however, an existing use is intended to be redeveloped, the Town Manager or designee may waive these requirements until such time the property redevelops. Such a decision is the sole discretion of the Town Manager or designee.
 - (3) High-Water Turf: High-water turf may be allowed in areas of high-water contact such as drainages, swales, or downspout locations.
 - (4) Administrative approval for deviations from a required standard: Deviations from the landscape requirements may be granted by the Town Manager or designee for up to ten percent (10%) from the applicable requirement. To request a deviation, a letter explaining the unique situation or hardship preventing the project from meeting the minimum landscape requirements shall be submitted with the application material and will be subject to the sole discretion of the Town Manager or designee.
- (J) Installation Standards.
 - (1) Living materials shall be adequately watered and maintained to become established. Once established, watering should be minimized as appropriate.
 - (2) Trees should be installed in such a way that they will not infringe on solar access, views from the adjoining properties, or block a sight distance triangle.

- (3) Easements shall remain clear of all obstacles which may prevent such easement from operating within its intended purpose.
 - (a) Retaining walls are prohibited from being located in any established easement.
 - (b) Trees may only be permitted in utility easements upon written approval of the easement holder.
- (K) Maintenance Requirements.
 - (1) Following completion of the landscaping, the owner or occupant of the property shall maintain it in good condition thereafter. Failure to maintain the landscaping is unlawful and is hereby declared to create a nuisance.
 - (2) Where approved trees, shrubs, or other landscaping materials die or are removed, it shall be the responsibility of the property owner to replace them with materials of a comparable nature and size to those originally approved. This obligation shall continue until the property is redeveloped, at which time the redeveloper shall comply with the requirements of this code as they apply to the proposed development at that time.