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CHAPTER 9 – LANDSCAPING, HARDSCAPE, FENCING AND OUTDOOR LIGHTING

OVERALL CONCEPT

Landscaping, hardscape, fencing and outdoor lighting affect the project site and surrounding area. These elements should relate to the project site and neighborhood through the use of appropriate plantings, pervious surfaces and a minimal amount of low-wattage shielded lighting fixtures. A "landscape plan" shall be required by the South Board of Architectural Review during the "Preliminary Review" and/or "Final Review" of a residential project. Major concerns for the SBAR to consider are aesthetics, neighbors' privacy, public and private views, erosion and grading.

URBAN AND RURAL

Summerland contains two distinct land use areas. The Urban area is characterized by varying densities of residential development which are in close proximity to each other and located on a south-facing hill adjacent to the ocean and Highway 101. The Rural area is characterized by residential uses located on or near large lots and agricultural uses. Each area contains its own microclimate, vegetation, drainage areas and wildlife. Landscaping, hardscape, fencing and outdoor lighting are integral elements of any development and should be design and installed with thoughtful consideration.

LANDSCAPING

Mature trees and landscaped yards help define the character of a neighborhood and also act as a transition area between public and private areas and can provide for privacy in the Urban area. Landscape design should enhance the Urban area of the community and preserve the character of the Rural area of Summerland. Landscaping can be used to accent the design of a dwelling and add to the harmony of existing neighborhood landscaping, trees and vegetation. Select plant materials for their effectiveness with respect to erosion control, fire resistance, and drought tolerance. The following sections provide guidelines for firewise and resource-efficient landscaping, and the use of screening plants, fences, and walls. (Agricultural operations are exempt from these guidelines.)

Project site landscaping within the Urban area of Summerland serves numerous functions such as a transition from public to private areas within the front yard, architectural accents for existing and new structures, and privacy and screening. The topography of the Urban area creates smaller microclimates, each of which can sustain unique vegetation and

animal life. In addition, the unique topography requires careful consideration when designing a new landscape palette or simply adding to an existing palette. Whenever possible, the use of native landscaping is encouraged.

The Rural area also contains unique topography and microclimates in addition to public trails, creeks, agriculture and native and environmentally sensitive habitat. Landscaping design should be sensitive to the rural and natural character and be sensitive to the surrounding environment. Native and noninvasive plantings are strongly encouraged in the Rural area to minimize potential impacts to surrounding habitats from nonnative and invasive species.

LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

- 9-1 Plant materials appropriate for the California coast should be used, including native and drought tolerant plantings.
- 9-2 Plants should be spaced according to their mature size, allowing for maturation without crowding or root damage to hardscape areas.
- 9-3 Planting mature height potential should be considered to avoid unnecessary pruning and hedging, especially under windows and eaves, along property lines, and power lines.
- 9-4 Use screening plants on side and rear property lines to create privacy between neighbors and to screen living areas.
- 9-5 **Urban** – Where appropriate, select low screening plants in the front to maintain visual openness in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood and maintain pedestrian passage on the street.
- 9-6 [road right-of-way landscaping guidelines and maintenance]
- 9-7 **Rural (and lots over 1 acre, adjacent to Rural)** – use appropriate landscaping in street frontage.
- 9-8 Use screening plants to shield dwelling features, such as windows and balconies, that create direct views between neighbors.
- 9-9 Plant materials near intersections or adjacent to driveways should be low growing and maintained properly to ensure adequate visibility. Also refer to LUDC section X.X for clearance requirements.
- 9-10 The mature height and growth habits of plantings should be taken into account and consideration should be given to adjacent homes to provide privacy while not impeding the views from public rights-of-way or the views of your neighbors.

FIREWISE LANDSCAPING

Landscape design and maintenance should minimize fire vulnerability in Rural and Urban areas of Summerland. Fire safe planting, defensible space principles, and regular clearing and pruning of vegetation are essential. Landscape maintenance must include the removal of dead or overgrown vegetation, dropped branches, leaves and needles, dried grasses and weeds, and vegetation debris piles. Use green recycling options, such as green waste pick up, whenever possible.

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Keep dry chipped vegetation and compost piles at least 30 feet away from all structures and keep compost piles moist. These techniques can be integrated with a homeowner’s aesthetic preferences and the functional needs of the property. California Public Resources Code (PRC §4291) requires 100 feet of defensible space to be maintained around buildings and structures, whether habitable or non-habitable (i.e. barns and garages) in the High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Defensible space does not mean complete clearance; rather, it requires properly trimmed and maintained vegetation. Property owners are responsible for clearance to their own property lines. When a structure is located closer than 100 feet to the property line(s), property owners should work with each other to maintain 100 feet of defensible space for the mutual benefit of everyone. An excellent resource for further information is “Living with Wildfire: A Guide for Homeowners in Santa Barbara County” published by the Fire Safe Council and State Farm Insurance (www.sbcfire.com).

FIREWISE LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

- 9-11 Select plants for their ability to reduce wildfire hazards. Please refer to Chapter 11, Supplemental Materials, Section X, Firewise Landscaping Plant list. This is especially important for plants between structures, near property lines and native habitat or riparian areas.
- 9-12 Develop an irrigation and planting plan to maintain appropriate plant moisture. The first 30 feet from the structure should be well irrigated. Plantings beyond 30 feet should be irrigated, but to a lesser extent. From 70–100 feet should be native or other plantings that require little or no irrigation but are fire resistant.
- 9-13 Place plants with adequate spacing and use permeable hardscape features to break up continuous dense cover of shrubs and trees.
- 9-14 Avoid landscaping which promotes ladder fuels (vegetation that allows fire to move from lower growing plants to taller ones).
- 9-15 Add guideline specific for urban/small lots landscapes (with Fire district assistance)

RESOURCE EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

Resource efficient landscape design typically makes use of slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants that require less water and maintenance, significantly reducing water consumption. Native California plants and well-adapted non-native plants can be combined in wildlife-friendly and visually attractive landscapes. Lawns require more water than other plants during dry periods, and their use should be minimized. Locate landscape features to collect runoff from impervious areas such as roofs and driveways, lower or depress landscape beds to encourage infiltration, and use appropriate mulch that binds tightly and won’t float away (Figure X). Plants with similar water requirements should be grouped into common irrigation zones which match precipitation heads and emitters. Drip irrigation should be used for trees, shrub beds, and areas of groundcover to eliminate waste, runoff, and evaporation losses.

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Figure X – Landscape Bedding Example

In order to reduce the use of fertilizer, test soils to determine their nutrient content, organic matter, and necessary soil amendments. Adding mulch and compost to soils prior to any major landscaping palette change is a must. Supplemental mulch and compost should be added at least once a year to continuously add nutrients to the soil; however, keep dry mulch and compost piles away from structures. Avoid fertilizing during dry periods, as this activity can stimulate vegetative growth and increase water needs.

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Resource efficiency also encompasses appropriate types of landscape plants for use in different microclimates. For example, the exposed ridgelines and hillsides of the Rural area require hardy, drought-tolerant species while the more marine-influenced areas of the Urban area can use plant species better adapted to higher humidity and slightly cooler temperatures.

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RESOURCE EFFICIENT GUIDELINES

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9-16 Select drought-tolerant, fire-resistant plant species that require little or no fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.

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9-17 Use plants appropriate for the site’s microclimate characteristics—exposure, wind, moisture, soil types, and existing vegetation. Shady or creekside areas, for instance, will have a very different microclimate than sunny hillsides.

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9-18 Install efficient drip irrigation systems to reduce water consumption.

9-19 Use non-invasive plant species, particularly near creeks or existing native vegetation. Please refer to Chapter 11, Supplemental Materials, Section X.

HILLSIDE LANDSCAPING AND RETAINING WALLS

Good landscaping in hillside areas softens the appearance of new dwellings, additions, and retaining wall components. Choose plants that preserve views of the hillsides, harmonize landscaping with the surroundings, prevent soil erosion, and minimize or eliminate fire ladders.

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Retaining walls should be designed to blend into the surroundings by use of color and texture to match adjacent soils or stone, and visually softened with landscaping where appropriate; a retaining wall should be made of natural boulders, cut stone or other materials as appropriate to the site and surroundings. The visible portion of a retaining wall, above finished grade should not exceed a height of six (6) feet unless a higher wall would further the intent of protecting the hillside and watershed, would promote better structural and/or architectural design, or would minimize visual or aesthetic impacts.

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HILLSIDE LANDSCAPING AND RETAINING WALLS GUIDELINES

- 9-20 Select plants that visually diminish the structural mass of the dwelling, integrate into the hillside, and frame community views.
- 9-21 Select deep rooted plants to encourage slope stability.
- 9-22 Retaining walls should be stepped or terraced, and should blend into their surroundings, with height and length kept to a minimum. Generally, retaining walls should not exceed six (6) feet in height.

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HARDSCAPE

Hardscape materials for pathways, driveways, parking and patios can enhance the character of a structure and site landscaping. The use of pervious materials such as brick pavers, grass cell and other materials can soften the appearance of large areas of hardscape, making it contribute positively to the overall aesthetic of the site and neighborhood. The addition of hardscape can result in additional impervious surfaces resulting in increased run-off, which travels to the street and ultimately to the ocean, carrying with it oil, soil and other materials. The careful integration of hardscape and landscape can and should minimize the amount of run-off from a project site. As noted in Chapter 3, Site Design, the use of pervious surfaces can reduce the amount of off site run-off. Provide reference to Stormwater Permit and Best Management Practices.

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HARDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- 9-23 Hardscape run-off should be directed into landscaped areas to minimize offsite run-off. [add language specific to Summerland soil conditions]
- 9-24 Hardscape improvements should be constructed of elements that will help to soften the pedestrian traffic areas. The uses of pervious pavers and red brick are encouraged.
- 9-25 Hardscape areas should be consistent with the Water Management Guidelines contained in Chapter 3, Site Design.

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FENCING AND WALLS

Well-designed landscaped screening, fences, and walls contribute to the beauty of the neighborhood, protect privacy, and permit the movement of wildlife. Screening plants, fences, and walls enhance design while harmonizing the overall character of the neighborhood. They should be an integral part of the project, not an afterthought when the project is completed.

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Fences, walls, and gates shall not inhibit the passage of wildlife. A high wall or fence in the front yard setback not only presents an unwelcoming feature to the neighborhood and blocks a garden viewscape, it also creates a canyon-like experience for passing motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. A wall or fence in the front yard setback should be limited to

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3.5 feet in height and should be placed back several feet from the property line to maintain openness and to allow for on-street parking and pedestrian passage.

For specific guidance on fences and walls, including height limits and permitting requirements, please refer to the Land Use & Development Code Section 35.30.070.

[Add graphic/photos illustrating appropriate fence.]

FENCING AND WALLS GUIDELINES

9-26 Fences or walls are discouraged in the front yard setback. If walls or fences are used in the front yard, their height and length should be minimized and the setbacks adequate to allow ample room for on-street parking and pedestrian passage. Front yard walls and fences should be incorporated into a landscaping scheme that appears natural and follows the terrain.

9-27 Fences and walls shall not encroach into the public right-of-way.

9-28 Use earth-tone colors and native or natural materials such as sandstone for walls.

9-29 Rural (and lots over 1 acre, adjacent to Rural) – Long walls or fences shall be designed to allow for wildlife passage, where feasible.

9-30 Chain-link fencing shall be coated with black, dark green, or brown vinyl to integrate with the surroundings. Soften the appearance and create privacy with landscaping rather than tarps, canvas, plastic slats, or other materials.

9-31 Use fences which do not detract from public views and which promote the openness of streetscapes along public roads, property lines, and the rear of properties.

9-32 Rural (and lots over 1 acre, adjacent to Rural) – Fencing or walls should be set back from the roadway to maintain the rural character of the area.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting is often an integral part of a landscape plan and used to cast light on pathways, architectural elements of buildings, specimen plantings and driveways. Lighting can augment the character and safety of the community. Lighting fixtures should be of a design and size compatible with the structures and project site. The use of outdoor lighting should be restrained and handled in a way that is in keeping with the light-sensitive character of Summerland.

OUTDOOR LIGHTING GUIDELINES

9-33 The amount of outdoor lighting should not be excessive and should only be the amount that is reasonable and necessary.

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9-34 The use of outdoor lighting should not result in incident or ambient light rising over or falling on off-site areas in ways or at times that impact the use and enjoyment of those areas.

For more information, please see the Outdoor Lighting Regulations for the Summerland Community Plan Area.

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Urban and Rural

Summerland contains two distinct land use areas. The Urban area is characterized by varying densities of residential development which are in close proximity to each other and located on a south

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and overgrown vegetation, dropped branches, leaves and needles, dried grasses and weeds, and vegetation debris piles.

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