

# City of El Campo

## LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

*(This document is provided to give an overview of the requirements based on City Landscaping Ordinance No. 2015-11, § 1, 3-23-2015.  
Please consult the full document for complete details)*

- Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) all screening and landscaping must be in place in accordance with the Landscape Plan approved as part of the Site Plan.
  - All landscape materials shall be installed according to American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA) standards.
- 1) New Development Exemptions:
    - a) The restoration of a building with a historic designation;
    - b) The remodeling of the interior of a building or the facade of a building that does not alter the location of exterior walls;
    - c) Development of a building site owned and operated by a governmental entity; or
    - d) The expansion, repair, or renovation of a single-family or two-family dwelling.
    - e) The standards and criteria contained within this subsection are deemed to be minimum standards and shall apply to all new construction or any construction that increases the existing square footage of a structure by less than 30 percent.
  - 2) Single Family and Two Family Residential Development:
    - a) The front yard of the premises must have one large tree.
    - b) The front yard shall have a minimum of 50 percent of open space.
    - c) The front yard requirement for a home built in a cul-de-sac shall have a minimum of 30 percent of open space.
  - 3) All Development Other Than Single Family/Two Family Residential:
    - a) Ten percent (10%) of area not covered by building or structure of all developments.
    - b) At least fifty percent (50%) located within the parking lot as an island or as a peninsula.
    - c) The remaining 50 percent (50%) located forward of the rear building line of the primary structure and be visible from the public street.
    - d) The ten percent (10%) landscaping requirement for multifamily or nonresidential developments may be reduced to 8.5 percent (8.5%) when 70 percent (70%) of the total required landscaping is devoted to any combination of the following:
      - i) Undisturbed natural areas or undisturbed existing trees;
      - ii) Xeriscape landscape design;
      - iii) Incorporate porous hose, deep pipe, clay pot lid, porous capsule, perforated drain pipe, micro-catchment, drip, wick or other comparable alternative irrigation systems;
      - iv) Utilize reclaimed, recycled, gray water, nonpotable surface water, rainwater or alternative water harvesting systems in accordance with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) standards and the adopted city plumbing code;
      - v) Incorporation of raised landscape islands and landscape beds into the building design in the sidewalk and pedestrian access areas immediately around the building foundation in a manner that promotes public seating and interaction; or
      - vi) Landscaping that when mature will reduce the apparent scale of large buildings.

**The required number of trees on the developed land of the building site:**

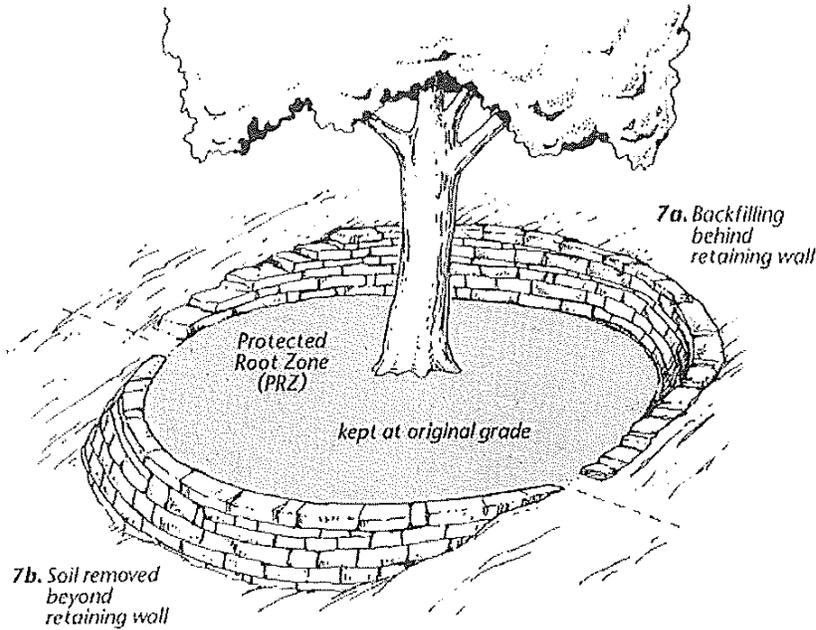
Area Not Covered by Building Required	Trees
< 7,000 square feet	1
> 7,000 square feet	1 + 1 per each additional 7,000 SF, rounded to the next highest tree

- Trees planted to meet the requirements of this article must have a minimum diameter of two-inch caliper measured at six inches above ground level at the time of planting.

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

- No tree is to be planted at a location which is adjacent to a street right-of-way where overhead utility lines are present.
  
- 4) Irrigation:
  - a) All landscaped areas shall be irrigated with an approved automatic underground irrigation system unless the landscaped area has been designed utilizing xeriscaping methods. All irrigation systems shall be designed and sealed in accordance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and shall be professionally installed. Irrigation shall not be required for undisturbed natural areas or undisturbed existing trees.
  
- 5) Public Right of Way (ROW):
  - a) All unpaved portions of public ROW must be planted with an approved grass.
  
- 6) Tree Preservation.
  - a) Applies to all development in the corporate limits of El Campo EXCEPT:
    - i) Minor plats, development plats, or amending plats or a residence as a homestead.
    - ii) Agricultural or timber harvesting property within the city limits
    - iii) Residence of three (3) acres or less who uses the residence as a homestead
  - b) The replacement of preserved tree provisions chapter shall not be required under any of the following circumstances:
    - i) Damaged/diseased trees. The tree is dead, diseased, damaged beyond the point of recovery.
    - ii) Utility service interruption.
  - c) Exempt Businesses:
    - i) Landscape Nursery
    - ii) Golf Course
  
- 7) Replacement/Protection of Existing Trees:
  - a) Tree Preservation Plan must be submitted with Preliminary Plat or Site Plan
  - b) A Tree Plan or Survey Plan must be submitted with Preliminary Plat or Site Plan
  - c) When a protected tree is proposed to be removed, and prior to any Plan approval:
    - i) Staff will seek a design solution to preserve the protected tree. City Staff may seek a variance from any El Campo City Code and approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and City Council should the tree's preservation be in the public interest.
    - ii) When design solutions are not available to preserve protected trees, the developer or subdivider must:
      - (1) Preserve mature non-protected trees
      - (2) To replace the protected tree species with the aggregate replacement caliper equal or greater than the existing aggregate caliper of protected trees to be removed with:
        - (a) many small protected trees,
        - (b) a few larger protected trees or
        - (c) a single protected tree.
  - a) Protected/replacement trees should be located in common homeowner association-maintained greenbelts or a part of sedimentation and erosion control buffer
  - b) Existing trees or providing effective buffer or screen may be required to preserve.
  - c) Retaining wall with natural grade raised or lowered: the tree well shall be designed in accordance with the design concepts depicted below:

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY



d) Tree preservation credit.

- i) Landscape plans that preserve existing trees will be given credit toward the total number of trees required as shown below:

Diameter of Existing Tree	Credit Against Tree Requirement
1"–3"	2.0 trees
3½"–9"	3.0 trees
9½"–15"	5.0 trees
15½" or greater	10.0 trees

- ii) If a credited tree dies, it must be replaced

8) Buffering and screening.

a) Non-residential or multi-family

- i) Adjacent to or directly facing a single-family property must provide a minimum 20 feet landscape buffer adjacent to the property line of the residential use or residentially used property.
- ii) A minimum of one shade tree shall be planted for each 50 linear feet of landscape buffer.
- iii) A minimum of ten shrubs shall be planted for each 50 linear feet of landscape buffer.
- iv) All other areas within the landscape buffer shall be covered with grass or another solid vegetative cover approved at the time of site plan approval.
- v) The buffer wall standards below shall also be applicable.
- vi) If the nonresidential use is heavy commercial with outdoor storage or outdoor operations, or industrial, the required buffer shall be a minimum of 40 feet with 20 shrubs in double rows.

b) Nonresidential, non-industrial

- i) Adjacent to or facing a multifamily development must provide a minimum ten (10) foot landscape buffer adjacent to the property line of the residential use or residentially used property.

9) Industrial Uses:

- a) R required to install a 40-foot buffer
- b) A minimum of one shade tree shall be planted for each 50 linear feet of landscape buffer.

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

- c) A minimum of 20 shrubs shall be planted in double rows for each 50 linear feet of landscape buffer.
- d) All other areas within the landscape buffer shall be covered with grass or another solid vegetative cover approved at the time of site plan approval.
- e) The buffer wall standards below shall also be applicable.
- f) The buffer width shall increase to 30 feet if the nonresidential use is heavy commercial with outdoor storage or outdoor operations, or industrial.

10) Buffer Wall

- a) Fences and walls as a buffer must have a minimum height of six feet: maximum height of 8 feet.
  - i) A fence installed on top of a berm, the height is measured from the grade level of the berm not from natural grade.
  - ii) The height restriction shall not apply to decorative or architectural ornamental elements
  - iii) Fencing and walls shall not be placed within a required sight triangle.
  - iv) Fences and walls must be constructed of high quality materials.
  - v) The use of chain link fencing, may not be used as a screening wall or fence.
  - vi) Breaks may be made to provide pedestrian connections or access to maintain the buffer wall or required landscaping.
  - vii) a combination of trees and shrubs and/or an earthen berm may be installed to satisfy the minimum six-foot height.
  - viii) If vegetation is used for screening, trees shall be a minimum of eight feet tall and shrubs a minimum of three feet tall at the time of planting.
  - ix) Vegetation shall create an opaque barrier immediately at the time of planting.
  - x) Earthen berms shall be constructed with a maximum 1:3 (one vertical to three horizontal) slope.
  - xi) The entire length of the berm shall be vegetated with dense evergreen plant material.
  - xii) The incorporation of screening mesh, shade cloth or other acceptable screening techniques may also be considered.
  - xiii) Depending upon the height of the items being screened, the distance from the buffer of items being stored and the proximity of residential lots, staff reserves the flexibility to increase or decrease these standards based upon site specific circumstances.
  - xiv) An applicant may appeal the final decision of the city with respect to this requirement to the planning commission.

11) Landscape plan, tree preservation plan, tree protection and planting plan.

- a) A landscape plan demonstrating compliance with all landscaping requirements shall be submitted to the city for approval. The landscape plan may be submitted as a part of the site plan.
- b) Qualifications to prepare landscape plans.
  - i) For all lots greater than three acres in area, landscape plans shall be prepared by a registered landscape architect.
  - ii) For lots less than three acres in area, a landscape designer or landscape contractor, knowledgeable in plant materials and landscape design, may prepare the landscape plan.
  - iii) Irrigation plans shall be prepared by a licensed irrigator or landscape architect.
  - iv) The city may reject plans if deemed of insufficient quality or completeness and require that plans be prepared by a registered landscape architect or a licensed landscape contractor.
- c) The landscape plan shall meet the following standards and contain the following information:
  - i) Sheet size 24 inches by 36 inches, or as approved.
  - ii) Acceptable scale: one inch equals ten feet, one inch equals twenty feet, or as approved.
  - iii) North arrow, graphic and written scale in close proximity.
  - iv) Appropriate title (i.e., "Landscape Plan").
  - v) Title block shall include the project street address, project name, date of plan preparation.
  - vi) Name and contact information of firm preparing plan.

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

- vii) Property boundaries and dimensions, existing/proposed utilities and easements
- viii) Required buffer yards and screening improvements.
- ix) Location, caliper size and name of existing trees to be preserved, or removed, with a tree preservation plan and tree protection plan and calculation showing how protected trees to be removed will be replaced.
- x) Plant schedule showing the location, quantity, size and name of all existing and proposed plant materials and spacing intervals.
- xi) Provide required/provided bufferyard, landscaping and tree calculations.
- xii) Show required visibility triangles.
- xiii) Location and footprint of proposed/existing buildings, sidewalks and parking lots.
- xiv) Any berms delineated with one-foot contour intervals.
- xv) Type of irrigation system and location of watering source (irrigation, sprinkler, or hose bib).
- xvi) Description of how existing trees will be protected during construction (see subsection (c) of this section).
- xvii) All general landscaping notes listed below:

12) *Landscape Plan General Notes*

- a) Contractor shall stake out tree locations and beds for owner approval prior to installation.
- b) Contractor is responsible for verifying locations of underground utilities prior to construction.
- c) It is the responsibility of the contractor to advise the owners of any condition found on-site which prohibits installation per these plans.
- d) All shrub and groundcover beds shall have a minimum of two inches of mulch.
- e) Landscape edging shall be located as depicted on landscape plan.
- f) Trees shall be planted a least 30 feet from any overhead utility line and outside all utility and drainage easements. A three-foot clear diameter around fire hydrants is required.
- g) Any tree planted within five feet of a curb, walk or drive must include an approved rigid plastic root barrier.
- h) Trees overhanging walks and parking areas shall have a clear trunk height of seven feet.
- i) Trees planted on slopes will have the soil stain at average grade of slope.
- j) Multi-trunk and ornamental trees will be allowed in the city's right-of-way subject to city approval, but must be located out of clear sight visibility areas.
- k) A visibility triangle must be provided at all intersections as required by the El Campo Landscape Ordinance.
- l) Plant materials shall be maintained in a healthy and growing condition and be replaced with plant material of similar variety and size, if damaged, destroyed or removed.
- m) Landscape areas shall be kept free of trash, litter and weeds.
- n) All signs and fencing are contingent on the issue of permits and inspections.

13) *Tree preservation plan.* At a minimum, a tree preservation plan shall include:

- a) Existing/proposed topography.
- b) Location of property lines, easements, approaches, rights-of-way, setbacks, parking areas, and sidewalks.
- c) Location, species, and size in DBH of each heritage tree and each protected tree except those located inside the footprint of proposed structures (for commercial development). Driveways and parking facilities are included as structures.
- d) Tree inventory that summarizes total number of DBH inches to be removed and to be preserved (trees down to one inch and one-half inch DBH can be used to calculate preservation diameter inches).
- e) Tree protection and planting.
  - i) Tree protection improvements will be installed before any site work is initiated and shall be maintained for the duration of construction. Tree protection will consist of the following:
  - ii) It will consist of fencing (orange mesh or chain link) placed around the RPZ.
  - iii) No vehicles or construction materials/debris will be allowed in the RPZ.
  - iv) No equipment shall be cleaned or other liquids deposited within the limits of the drip line of any protected tree. This includes, but is not limited to, paint, oil, solvents, asphalt, concrete, mortar or other materials.

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

- v) No signs, wires, or other attachments, other than those of a protective nature, shall be attached to any protected tree.
  - vi) Trespassing or throwing trash into a protective fence area is prohibited.
  - vii) Any damage done to tree crowns or roots will be repaired immediately and any wounds on oak or pecan trees will be painted with pruning paint within 60 minutes to prevent oak wilt or other disease or infestation to the tree.
  - viii) Wells or retaining walls around the RPZ will be used if proposed finished grades will raise or lower the natural RPZ grade by more than six inches.
  - ix) The finished RPZ will be pervious.
  - x) For commercial, multifamily and other developments: a minimum of 25 percent of the total DBH must be preserved.
  - xi) For single-family residential development of single or contiguous lots: contiguous lots include three or more lots, a minimum of 50 percent of total DBH must be preserved.
- 14) Replacement of existing landscape development plan.
- a) Any major modification to the existing landscape development plan must be in accordance with this article and must be approved by the city's building official.
- 15) General planting standards.
- a) When located within a visibility triangle, trees shall be headed to a minimum height of seven feet, and shrubs shall be maintained at a maximum height of 30 inches, as measured from the surrounding soil line.
- 16) Public/private schools, churches and institutional use landscaping credits.
- a) School and church development may have considerable open space devoted to playgrounds, ball fields, outdoor recreation or areas for future expansion of facilities. Landscaping credit may be granted toward fulfilling the landscaping requirements of this article subject to the following criterion:
    - i) Open space is landscaped with approved turf grass designated by this article;
    - ii) Open space contains recreational facilities, including, but not limited to, playgrounds and tennis courts, on pervious or impervious surfaces;
    - iii) More substantial tree and shrub landscaping is planted along the perimeter of the school or church property lines;
    - iv) Landscape plan complies with all landscape buffer requirements of this article for protected uses.

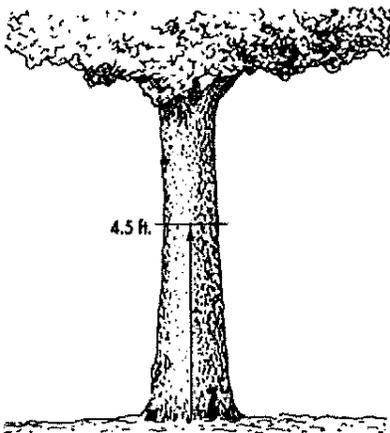
**Definitions:**

- b) [The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:]
- i) *Building site* means the tract, parcel or lot of land area being developed.
  - ii) *DBH (diameter-at-breast-height (caliper))* means tree trunk diameter measured in inches at a height of 4.5 feet above the ground. If a tree splits into multiple trunks below 4.5 feet, the tree shall be measured in two places, the narrowest point beneath the split and one-half the sum of the calipers of the trunks immediately above the split. Whichever is the greater measurement is to be the measurement applied. If there is no single trunk above ground level to measure, the measurement shall be the sum of the main trunk, plus one-half of all other branches of the calipers of the various trunks at breast height.
  - iii) *Developed land* means that portion of real property that has been altered from its natural landscape by the construction or reconstruction of any structure, parking lot, or other improvement.
  - iv) *Diameter* means the measurement of a tree at 4.5 feet above ground level. Trees under four-inch trunk diameter are measured at six inches above ground level.
  - v) *Drip line* means the periphery of an area underneath a tree, which would be encompassed by the perpendicular line dropped from the outermost edges of the crown of the tree.
  - vi) *Government entity* means the City of El Campo, independent school districts, state and county property; property owned by the United States of America or other federal agencies. Examples of this would include City Hall, public parks, Corps of Engineers property, state R.O.W., library, fire stations, water tower sites or similar properties.
  - vii) *Ground cover* means a spreading plant, including sods and grasses of less than 18 inches in height, which may be used for erosion control.
  - viii) *Ground cover plants*. No minimum size shall be required, but the planting is to be performed so as to develop full coverage within 18 months.
  - ix) *Impervious surface* means any surface area that prevents infiltration of water into the soil. Impervious surface may include, but not be limited to, those surfaces covered by asphalt, concrete, crushed stone, clay, bedrock, limestone and compacted soil.
  - x) *Landscape development* means trees, shrubs, ground cover, vines or grass installed in planting areas having a minimum of ten square feet of actual plantable area and a minimum inside dimension of 18 inches on any side.
  - xi) *Multi-trunk tree* means a tree with more than one trunk arising at or near the ground.
  - xii) *Permeable area* means an area that is not covered with asphalt or concrete, or other impervious material.
  - xiii) *Pervious* means water will permeate the surface.
  - xiv) *Private property* means any industrial, commercial, business, multifamily or townhouse site development.
  - xv) *Protected tree* means a living and healthy tree with a trunk size of at least 12 inches DBH.
  - xvi) *Protective fencing* means snow fencing, chain link fence, wire fence, orange vinyl construction fencing or other similar fencing with a four-foot approximate height.
  - xvii) *Public property* means any land owned by any governmental entity, including street rights-of-way and yards around public buildings.
  - xviii) *Right-of-way* refers to any parcel of land occupied, or intended to be occupied, by a public road, street or alley or some other public purpose, such as drainage. Where appropriate, right-of-way may include other facilities and utilities such as sidewalks; electrical, communication, oil and natural gas lines and facilities; and water and sanitary and storm sewer facilities. The use of right-of-way shall also include parkways and medians outside of the paved portion of the street. The usage of the term "right-of-way" for land platting purposes shall mean that every right-of-way hereafter established and shown on a final plat is to be separate and distinct from the lots or parcels adjoining such right-of-way.
  - xix) *Root protection zone (RPZ)* means the area of undisturbed natural soil around a tree defined by a concentric circle with a radius equal to the distance from the trunk to the outermost portion of the drip line. As a practical matter, this is the acute portion of the tree's root system. Approximately 90 percent of the tree's root mass occurs within the top three feet of the soil and most of the fine feeder roots which collect

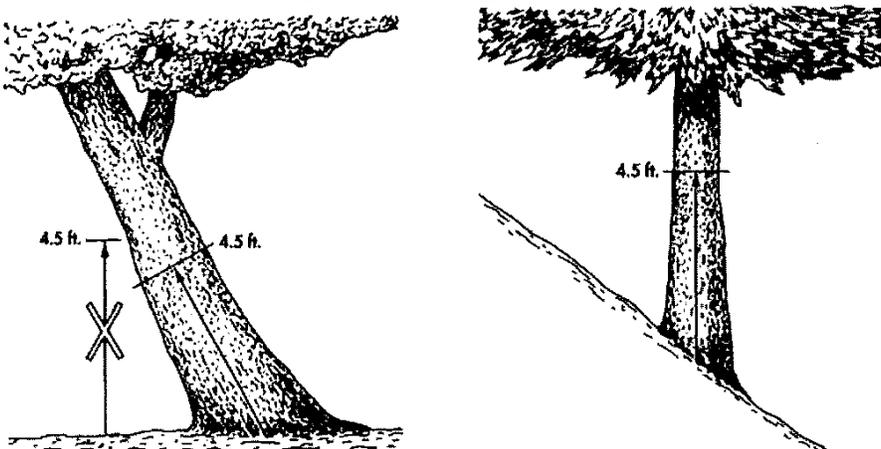
City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

moisture and nutrients are located in the top six inches of the soil. Typically, a tree's root system extends as much as two to three times the distance from the trunk to the drip line.

- xx) *Screening* means any method of visually shielding or obscuring one land use from another, and shall meet minimum requirements that provide a yearround visual obstruction.
- xxi) *Shrubs* means self-supporting, woody, evergreen species that normally will grow in Wharton County.
- xxii) *Tree* means any self-supporting wood plant of a species that normally grows to an overall height of a minimum of 15 feet in Wharton County.
- xxiii) *Tree crown* means parts of the tree above the trunk including leaves, branches, limbs and scaffold: the uppermost part of the tree.
- xxiv) *Tree trunk measurement*. Tree trunks shall be measured in accordance with the following criteria:
  - (1) *Straight trunk*. Trees with fairly straight, upright trunks should be measured 4.5 feet above the ground as shown below:

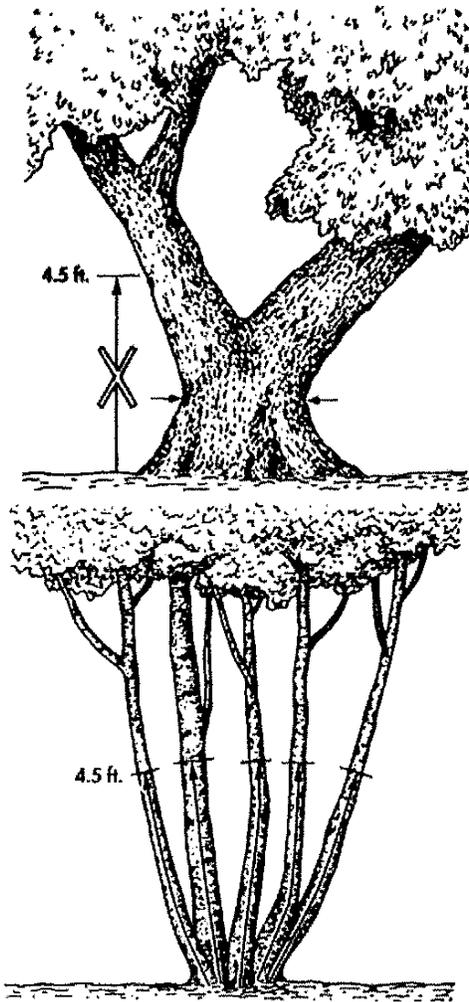


- (2) *Trunk on an angle or slope*. The trunk is measured at right angles to the trunk 4.5 feet along the center of the trunk axis, so the height is the average of the shortest and the longest sides of the trunk, as shown below:



- (3) *Multi-trunk trees*. To determine the diameter of a multi-trunk tree, measure each tree trunk larger than one inch. Determine the diameter of the largest tree trunk. The diameter of the multi-trunk tree is then computed as the diameter of the largest tree trunk plus one-half of the composite diameters of each smaller tree trunk greater than one inch. A multi-trunked tree is differentiated from individual trees growing from a common root stock if there is a visible connection between the trunks above ground.

City of El Campo  
LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY



*Visibility triangle* means the triangular area adjacent to the intersection of any public street or public alley within which no obstruction may be placed that would block the sight lines for vehicular traffic. The triangle is established by measuring a distance of 45 feet from the intersection of the extended curb or edge of the pavement of major thoroughfares, and 25 feet from the extended edge of the curb or pavement of local streets. A straight line connecting the ends of each measured distance, which forms the hypotenuse, shall establish the visibility triangle. The visibility triangle shall not contain any visual or physical impediments or obstructions to the vertical view between 24 inches and seven feet in height.

(Ord. No. 2015-11, § 1, 3-23-2015)

Secs. 38-120—38-139. - Reserved.