

Chapter 16.152

FENCING AND SCREENING

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16.152.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this Chapter is to prescribe standards for fencing and screening to protect public security and safety, conserve and protect property, and improve the general appearance of the City of Ripon. (Ord. 606, § 1, 1999)

16.152.020 Fencing Materials.

A. Fencing materials must meet any criteria for sturdiness and construction established by other City regulations.

B. Fencing materials of sheet metal, metal building, siding, roofing material, corrugated metal/aluminum, corrugated plastic/fiberglass, barbed wire, chicken wire, plywood, scrap wood, scrap metal, canvas, nylon, or other non-rigid material or fabric, cast-off, secondhand or other materials not originally intended to be used for constructing or maintaining a fence, are specifically prohibited. Unless otherwise approved by the Planning Director. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.030 Fencing Height Measurements.

A. The height of a fence shall be measured from the overall finished grade of the lot to the highest point of the fence, inclusive of any lattice, mesh or anything added to the top of the fence. When two adjacent lots are different elevations, the fence height shall be established by taking measurements from the higher elevation lot.

B. Columns and Gates used in fencing, such as brick columns, stone columns, etc. may extend an additional one (1) foot above the maximum fence height. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.040 Fencing Standards - Residential Zones.

Unless otherwise specified, fencing will be permitted, but not required, and shall comply with the provisions of this Section. For additional clarification of residential fencing standards, there is a brochure available at City Hall entitled, "A Quick Guide to Residential Fences".

A. Placement. Fences may be constructed along the property lines or within the required yard areas of any residential lot.

1. Interior Lot Standards

a. In any front yard area (usually the area between the back of sidewalk and the front of the house) fencing may be erected up to 3'-0" tall up to the back of sidewalk.

b. 7'-0" tall fencing may only be erected behind the front setback of the property (usually no closer to the street than the front of the house).

2. Corner Lot Standards

a. In any front yard area or street side yard area (the area between the back of sidewalk and the front and side of the house) fencing may be erected up to 3'-0" tall up to the back of sidewalk.

b. 7'-0" tall fencing may only be erected in the following areas:

i. Front yard area of a house - 7'-0" tall fencing may only be erected behind the front setback of the property (usually no closer to the street than the front of the house).

ii. Street side yard area of a house - 7'-0" tall fencing shall not be located any closer than 15'-0" to the back of sidewalk for all residential zones, except R1-E and R1-R zones, which shall comply with the street side setbacks for their zone as listed in Table 16.16.3 of the Ripon Municipal Code, unless otherwise approved by the Planning Director.

3. Exceptions to the corner lot fence setbacks for older residential homes where the main house may be constructed closer to the back of sidewalk than 15'-0", a 7'-0" tall street side yard fence shall not be located any closer to the back of sidewalk than the existing house.

4. Any fence that was legally constructed closer than 15'-0" to the back of sidewalk shall be considered legal non-conforming and shall be "Grandfathered In". Any such fence may be fully reconstructed in its current location.

5. If sidewalk does not exist, please verify the appropriate setback by contacting the Planning Director of the City of Ripon.

B. Height Limits in Required Yards.

Fencing shall not exceed the height limits in required yards as specified below per zoning designation.

1. Fencing Heights in all Residential Zones, except Extremely Low Density Zones (R1-R).

a. In any required front or street side yard, fencing shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.

b. In any required rear or non-street side yard, fencing shall not exceed seven (7) feet in height.

2. Fencing Heights in Extremely Low Density Zones (R1-R).

a. In any required front or street side yard, an open fence, up to seven (7) feet in height may be permitted, upon approval by the Planning Director.

b. In any required rear or non-street side yard, fencing shall not exceed seven (7) feet in height.

C. Tolerances for purposes of Code Enforcement.

1. For purposes of fence setbacks, a fence will be deemed in compliance with this code if it is within six (6) inches of the required setback.

2. For purposes of fence height limits, a fence will be deemed in compliance with this code if it is within three (3) inches of the required height. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.050 Fencing Standards - Office and Commercial Zones.

Unless otherwise specified, fencing will be permitted, but not required unless it is a condition of a project approval and shall comply with the provisions of this Section.

A. Fencing Heights in Office and Commercial Zones.

1. In any required front or street side setback area, fencing shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.

2. In any rear or non-street side setback, fencing shall not exceed seven (7) feet in height. If an office or commercial project abuts a residential zone, an area shown on the General Plan for residential use, or an existing residential use, a solid masonry wall eight (8) feet in height shall be erected along the abutting property line. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.060 Fencing Standards - Mixed Use and Industrial Zones.

Unless otherwise specified, fencing will be permitted, but not required unless it is a condition of a project approval and shall comply with the provisions of this Section.

A. Fencing Heights in Mixed Use and Industrial Zones.

1. In any required front or street side setback area, fencing shall not exceed three (3) feet in height. Upon approval of Director, a fence up to seven (7) feet in height may be permitted. Any such fencing permitted shall be constructed of woven wire, wrought iron, or similar open material and shall not obstruct vehicular site distance.

2. In any rear or non-street side setback area, fencing shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height. If a mixed use or industrial project abuts a residential zone, an area shown on the General Plan for residential use, or an existing residential use, a solid masonry wall eight (8) feet in height shall be erected along the abutting property line. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.070 Miscellaneous Fencing Standards.

A. Play Courts in residential areas.

The seven (7) foot fence height limit may be waived for play courts, if the play court is located in a side yard or rear yard and open type sport court containment netting is used. All sport court containment netting shall obtain written approval by the Planning Director.

B. Arbors above gates and/or fences.

Arbor type structures are allowed above gates and fences so long as they do not exceed nine (9'-0") in height and do not extend or overhang any property lines. Such structures shall require written approval by the Planning Director to ensure the intent of the code is being served. Any such structure proposed to be constructed higher than seven (7) feet in height is required to obtain an appropriate building permit.

C. Swimming Pools.

All pools shall be enclosed per the requirements of State Law.

D. Security Fencing.

Barbed wire security fencing not to exceed two (2) feet in height may be erected on top of required or permitted fencing, except for fencing adjacent to planned or existing residential areas. Electrical fencing adjacent to planned or existing residential areas is strictly prohibited. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.080 Screening Standards for Residential Zones.

Screening may be used in any residential zone, provided a safe sight distance is

maintained. All screening required by this Chapter shall comply with the provisions of this Section.

A. Screening Materials.

1. Screening Materials may include the installation and maintenance of one (1) or more of the following elements: plant materials; walls; architectural landscape elements (i.e. arbors, trellises, etc.); or berms.

2. Screening Materials of corrugated plastic, corrugated iron, corrugated steel, and corrugated aluminum, are specifically prohibited. Unless otherwise specified, barbed wire fence is prohibited.

B. Placement.

Screening, other than plant materials, shall not be attached to or adhered to any fencing, and at no time shall non-plant material screening cover more than fifty percent (50%) of any given fence line.

C. Height Limits in Required Yards.

Screening shall not exceed the height limits in required yards as specified below.

1. In any required front or street side yard, non-plant screening materials shall not exceed three (3) feet in height, unless approved otherwise by the Planning Director.

2. In any required rear or non-street side yard, non-plant screening materials, shall not exceed nine (9) feet in height. Any screening, other than plant material, proposed to be constructed higher than seven (7) feet in height, shall obtain an appropriate building permit for such structure.

D. Written Approval Required.

Any non-plant screening material shall require written approval by the Planning Director to ensure that all requirements of the code are being met and that the intent of the code is being served. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.090 Screening Standards for Non-Residential Zones.

Screening may be used in any non-residential zone, provided a safe sight distance is maintained. All screening required by this

Chapter shall comply with the provisions of this Section.

A. Screening of Storage Areas.

1. All storage materials and related activities, including storage areas for trash, exterior electrical panels/cages, storage tanks, etc. shall be screened so as not to be visible from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way. Outside storage is not permitted in front setback areas, street side setback areas, or in front of main buildings, unless approved otherwise within the context of a project approval by the Planning Commission or City Council.

2. Screening shall not be required for an industrially zoned property's storage area that abuts an existing industrially zoned property, provided the storage area is not adjacent to a public street.

B. Screening of Roof Equipment.

1. All roof-mounted mechanical equipment, tanks, ventilating fans, or similar equipment must be visually screened from view from adjacent properties and public rights-of-way at grade. Required screens shall be architecturally compatible with the building or structure on which they occur.

2. Screening of Roof Equipment shall not be required for Heavy Industrial zoned properties (M-2).

C. Exceptions to Height Requirements.

The requirements of this Chapter do not apply to uses permitted in any industrial zone which are required to maintain visual screens to a height greater than specified in this Development Code.

D. Maintenance.

All required screening materials must be maintained in good condition by the property owner and, whenever necessary, repaired or replaced. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

attenuation requirements must be developed in response to the noise level and source affecting specific property. Where noise attenuation walls are required, height and yard restrictions for walls may be waived by the Planning Director as required for effective noise reduction. (Ord. 606 § 1, 1999; Ord. 758 § 2 (part), 2007; Ord. 901 § 1, 2020)

16.152.100 Noise Attenuation Walls.

Walls, fences, berms, or landscaping for the purpose of noise attenuation may be required in any zone when adjacent to a high noise generator such as a major roadway or railroad. Noise