



Native Landscape Policy

The Importance of Native Plants:

Native plants play a very important role in our ecosystems. Biologists and entomologists have shown, native plant species are more favorable for supporting local wildlife, including insects such as bees and butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Native plants provide food and shelter for the creatures at the bottom of the food web that then provide meals for animals on the next ring of the web.

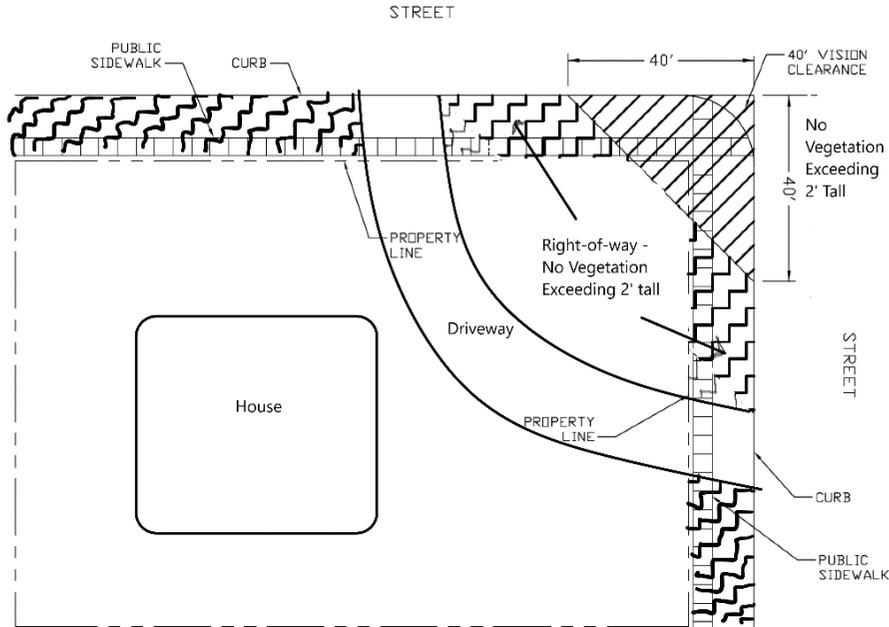
Designing a Successful Native Planting Landscape:

A diversity of plant material is essential to provide both nectar and pollen to support a healthy ecosystem. A successful native planting would include plants that provide pollen and nectar sources for early spring to late fall. A diversity of plants, flower shapes, and flower sizes will draw many different types of pollinators. The addition of water and shelter would complete the native landscape and be as easy as adding a shallow dish of water or leaving ornamental grass over winter for shelter. (University of Nebraska Extension)

In addition to providing resources for local wildlife, native plant species evolve for survival. Consequently, they tend to be more naturally adapted to local growing conditions and often require fewer inputs (for example, fertilizer or water) for successful establishment. That can mean reduced maintenance – more time to enjoy your yard instead of working in your yard. (Ecological Landscape Alliance)

Determine the limitations of your site so you can choose the right native plants. Consider the drainage, soil type, soil pH, water availability, and the amount of full sun your site receives.

All plantings need to be located on private property. Keep the landscape bed outside the right-of-way and vision clearance triangle at any intersection or driveway to protect pedestrians. See the diagram below.



Maintaining Planting:

The use of conservation practices such as the removal of invasive weeds, mulching, controlling pests naturally by encouraging beneficial insects, watering plants only when necessary, and providing winter shelter by delaying clean-up until spring can lessen the maintenance of the natives. (University of Nebraska Extension)

Remember to be a good Neighbor. It should be said here that developing a more relaxed approach to native planting should NOT be seen as an excuse to allow our home landscape to look ragged or unkempt. In a neighborhood, where we're counting on each other to maintain property values and exhibit good social decorum, it's especially important for our landscapes to look purposeful and well-managed. Nobody wants to live next to a place that appears weedy and abandoned.

Ecologically beneficial native plantings still require regular management, including watering, fertilizing, and weed control as necessary. With that in mind, however, we should also see "good neighborliness" in setting an example for our fellow environmentally conscious citizens to follow. The entire neighborhood will benefit –



including our pollinator friends - if native plantings catch on. (Justin Evertson, The Seed, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum)

How Policies Regulate These Native Plantings in the City of Kearney:

If the City receives a complaint about the number of weeds or any vision obstructions/safety concerns, our Code Enforcement Officer will conduct a site assessment. If the property is found to be in violation, a letter will be mailed to the property owner explaining the steps to come into compliance. If steps are not taken to correct the violation, within 5 days of receipt of the letter, the City has the right to correct the violation, at the owner's expense. If two complaints are received within the same year, the applicant may be terminated from the program. If the property is terminated from the program, the property owner must comply with all current City code requirements which include keeping all landscape areas mowed to under 12 inches.

