

Article 24 LANDSCAPING and SCREENING

Section 24.01 Purpose

It is the purpose of this Article is to establish standards and requirements to assure adequate provisions are made for landscaping and screening so that land uses minimize noise, air, and visual pollution; improve the appearance of off-street parking and other vehicular use areas; assure adequate buffering between differing uses; support the desired community character along property adjoining public rights-of-way; prevent soil erosion and soil depletion; and protect and preserve the appearance, character, and value of the community as a whole and its residential and business areas.

Section 24.02 Application

The requirements of this Article shall apply to those uses for which site plan approval is required under Article 4, Site Plan Review, and any other use so specified in this Ordinance. No site plan shall be approved unless said site plan shall show landscaping, buffer areas, and screening consistent with the requirements set forth in this Article. This Article shall not apply to individual single family and two-family dwellings.

Section 24.03 Landscape Plan Required

A. A detailed landscape plan is required to be submitted as part of a site plan (see Article 4). The plan shall be prepared at a minimum scale of 1" = 100' and shall identify all buffer areas (see Sections 24.04 and 24.05). The landscape plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the clear delineation of the following items:

1. Proposed plant location, spacing, and size and descriptions for each plant type proposed for use to meet the requirements of this Article.
2. Identification of grass and other proposed ground cover and method of planting.
3. Existing and proposed contours.
4. Planting and staking details in either text or drawing form to ensure proper installation of proposed plant materials, including significant construction details to resolve specific site conditions, such as tree wells to preserve existing trees or culverts to maintain natural drainage patterns.
5. Identification of existing trees and vegetative cover to be preserved and those areas of trees six (6) inches or larger in diameter, measured five (5) feet from ground surface, to be removed.

Section 24.04 Buffer Areas

A. Side and Rear Yard Buffer Areas: A buffer area shall be established along all side and rear lot lines. The buffer area shall not be used for storage or used in any other manner except for the purposes of a buffer.

1. The buffer area shall extend from the respective lot line for a width equal to the required yard setback for the principal building, but in no case shall such buffer be less than ten (10) feet in width. The buffer yard shall include a berm or solid wall or fence or a combination thereof, and be of at least (5) feet in height. The buffer area shall be planted and maintained with evergreens such as spruce, pines, or firs, and deciduous trees. While such plantings need not be evenly spaced, the trees shall be provided at a rate of at least one (1) evergreen tree per thirty (30) linear feet and one (1) deciduous tree per fifty (50) linear feet. Heights of walls shall be measured on the side of the proposed wall/fence having the higher grade. At the time of their planting, evergreen trees shall be a minimum of six (6) feet in height and deciduous trees shall have a caliper of at least two and a half (2 1/2) inches, measured five (5) feet above the ground surface, and be a minimum of twelve (12) feet in height.
 - a. A buffer area need not include a berm, wall or fence where the abutting parcel is in the same District as the buffer yard, except where such a measure is determined necessary during site plan review proceedings to adequately mitigate negative impacts. However, all plant material required by (1) above shall be provided.

- B. Front Yard Buffer Areas:** The required front yard setback area for the principal building shall be reserved as a buffer area and shall be landscaped with a minimum of one (1) tree meeting the minimum size requirements specified in Section 24.04(A) above for each fifty (50) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage adjoining the road right-of-way. The remainder of the front yard buffer area shall be landscaped in grass, shrubs, trees and/or other ground cover. Access ways from public rights-of-way through required buffer areas shall be permitted, but such access ways shall not be subtracted from the lineal dimension used to determine the minimum number of required trees.

Section 24.05 Parking Lot Landscaping and Screening

- A.** Parking lots shall be landscaped and screened as follows:
1. There shall be provided a minimum of one (1) deciduous tree of at least two and a half (2 1/2) inch caliper for every eight (8) parking spaces or fifty (50) linear feet of parking lot edge, whichever is greater. Such trees shall be located within parking islands or within ten (10) feet of the edge of the parking lot. A minimum distance of three (3) feet shall be established between proposed tree or shrub plantings and the edge of curbing and pavement.
 2. Where a parking lot contains six (6) or more parking spaces and is within two hundred (200) feet of a Conservation or Residential District, or public road, a berm, fence, wall and/or vegetative screen shall be installed to screen views to the parking area. All shrub materials shall be such height and spacing to effectively screen a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the parking lot border to a minimum height of three (3) feet within two (2) years of their planting, based on reasonably anticipated growth patterns. Shrub materials shall consist of a mix of species of varying growth habits, including heights.

Section 24.06 Minimum Standards of Landscape Elements

A. Quality and Composition: Plant material and grasses shall be of generally acceptable varieties and species, free of insects and diseases, hardy to the climate, conform to the most current standards of the American Association of Nurserymen, and shall have proof of any required governmental regulations and/or inspections. Plant species which are generally considered undesirable due to limited disease tolerance, low wood strength and/or high wood-splitting tendencies, such as boxelder, mulberry, and willows, are not permitted unless specifically authorized otherwise by the site plan approving body. A mixture of plant material, such as evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, shall be required as a protective measure against insect and disease infestation. Plant materials shall be selected to ensure hardiness.

B. Existing Trees: If existing plant material is labeled "To Remain" on site plans by the applicant or required by the site plan approval body, protective techniques, such as, but not limited to, fencing or barriers placed at the dripline around the perimeter of the plant material, shall be indicated on the site plan. No vehicle or other construction equipment shall be parked or stored within the dripline of any plant material intended to be saved. In the event that existing healthy trees which are used to meet the minimum requirements of this Ordinance, or those labeled to remain are cut down, destroyed, damaged, or excavated at the dripline, as determined by the site plan approving body, the applicant shall replace them with trees which meet Ordinance requirements.

Section 24.07 Installation, Maintenance And Completion

All landscaping required by this Ordinance shall be planted prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy or, where the applicant can demonstrate to the site plan approving body that seasonal conditions prohibit the installation of the plant material prior to desired occupancy, the plant material shall be installed within six months of receipt of such Certificate. All landscaping and landscape elements shall be planted, and earth moving or grading performed, in a sound workmanlike manner and according to accepted good planting and grading procedures. All plant material shall be maintained in a healthy condition, and free of refuse and debris. All unhealthy and dead material shall be replaced within one (1) year of damage or death or the next appropriate planting period, whichever comes first.

Section 24.08 Fencing and Walls Construction

All required fencing and walls shall be constructed and maintained in a sound manner to assure long-term structural integrity and visual character, and be of such height to adequately mitigate the impacts for which the screening is deemed desirable. Site plans shall include all necessary construction details to illustrate compliance with this requirement. The finished side of fencing shall face abutting properties.

Section 24.09 Waivers and Modifications

Any of the requirements of this Article may be modified through site plan review proceedings, provided the approving body first makes a written finding that specifically identifies characteristics of the site or site vicinity that would make required buffer areas, fencing, or screening unnecessary, inappropriate, or ineffective, or where it would impair vision at a driveway or street intersection.

End of Article 24