

Article 11

LANDSCAPING and SCREENING

Section 11.1 Purpose

It is the purpose of this Article is to establish standards and requirements to assure adequate 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 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.

Section 11.2 Uses Subject to This Article

The requirements of this Article shall apply to those uses for which site plan approval is required under Article 14, Site Plan Review, and any other use so specified in this Ordinance. This Article shall not apply to single family and two-family dwellings. See Section 20.9 for additional provisions addressing fences and walls.

Section 11.3 Landscape Plan

A. Required Plan and Content: A landscape plan is required to be submitted as part of a site plan (see Article 14). The plan shall be prepared at a minimum scale of 1" = 50' and shall identify all buffer areas. See Sections 11.4 and 11.5. The landscape plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the clear delineation of the following:

1. Proposed plant location, spacing, size, common and botanical name, and growth habit of each plant type proposed.
2. Identification of grass and other proposed ground cover, including common and botanical name.
3. Existing and proposed contours at no greater than two-foot (2') 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.
5. Identification of existing trees and vegetative cover to be preserved.

Section 11.4 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 off-street parking, storage or used in any other manner except for the purposes of a buffer.

1. **Width:** The buffer area shall extend from the respective lot line for a minimum width equal to the required setback for the principal building on the lot except that the minimum side and rear yard buffer width in Business Districts shall be ten (10) feet, and shall be increased to twenty (20) feet when adjacent to a lot in an Agricultural or Residential District.
2. **Plantings:** In the case of a proposed use on a lot in an Agricultural or Residential District or otherwise adjacent to an Agricultural or Residential District, the buffer area shall be planted and maintained with evergreen trees 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. 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 ten (10) feet in height. Where a solid wall or fence is part of the buffer area, a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the required plantings shall be located on the exterior side of such wall or fence.
3. **Berm, Wall and/or Fence:** In the case of a proposed use on a lot in an Agricultural or Residential District or otherwise adjacent to an Agricultural or Residential District, the buffer area shall include a minimum five (5) foot high berm or solid wall or fence, or a combination thereof, where the Planning Commission determines during site plan review proceedings that the buffer width and plantings required by subsections (1) and (2) above do not adequately mitigate negative impacts. A berm, wall and/or fence shall not eliminate the requirement for plant material required by subsection (2) above.
 - a. A berm or solid wall or fence, or combination thereof, shall not be required along any portion of a lot line where there exists such features in the adjacent yard on the adjacent lot unless the Planning Commission determines during site plan review proceedings that such additional buffering measures are necessary.

4. Corner Lot: In the case of a corner lot, the buffer requirements of this subsection (A) shall equally apply to all yards adjacent to a road.

B. Front Yard Buffer Areas: A buffer area shall be established along all front lot lines. The buffer area shall not be used for off-street parking, storage or in any other manner except for the purposes of a buffer.

1. The buffer area shall extend from the respective lot line for a minimum width of twenty (20) feet except that such buffer width shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet in a Business District. The buffer area shall be landscaped with a minimum of one (1) tree meeting the minimum size requirements specified in Section 11.4(A)(3) 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 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 11.5 Parking Lots

A. Landscaping/Screening Required: Parking lots shall be landscaped and screened according to the following:

1. Interior and Periphery: 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 of a minimum eight (8) feet in width or within ten (10) feet of the edge of the parking lot. A minimum distance of three (3) feet shall be maintained between proposed tree or shrub plantings and the edge of curbing and pavement. In the case of a parking lot with a capacity of forty (40) or more vehicles, a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the required plantings shall be located within parking islands reasonably evenly distributed throughout the parking lot.
2. Proximity to Public Road or Residential District: Where a parking lot contains ten (10) or more parking spaces and is within one hundred (100) feet of a Residential District or public road, a berm, fence, wall and/or vegetative screen shall be installed to screen views to the parking area. All berms and plant material, either individually or in combination, shall be of such height and spacing to provide a minimum fifty percent (50%) screen of the parking lot border to a minimum height of four (4) feet at the time of berm and plant material installation. Shrub materials shall be of evergreen or otherwise densely-branched screening character.

Section 11.6 Minimum Standards of Landscape Elements

A. Quality and Composition: Plant material shall be free of insects and diseases, and hardy to the climate. 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 prohibited unless specifically authorized by the site plan approving body based on the manner in which the plant material is to be used or located. A mixture of plant material shall be required to protect against insect and disease infestation.

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 fencing, 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 that meet Ordinance requirements. Such replacement trees shall be planted at a rate of one (1) tree per two (2) inches of tree caliper of the tree cut down, damaged, or otherwise destroyed.

Section 11.7 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 Zoning Administrator 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 11.8 Fencing and Walls Construction

A. General: All required fencing and walls shall be constructed and maintained in a sound manner to assure long-term structural integrity and visual character. Site plans shall include all necessary construction details to illustrate compliance with this requirement. The finished side of fencing shall face abutting properties.

B. Section 20.9: See also Section 20.9 for additional provisions regarding fences and walls.

Section 11.9 Waivers and Modifications

A. Authority to Waive or Modify Requirements: Any of the requirements of this Article may be modified through site plan review proceedings, provided the approving body makes a finding that identifies characteristics of the site, site modifications and/or site vicinity that would make required landscaping, buffer areas, fencing, walls, or screening unnecessary, inappropriate, or ineffective.

1. **Examples:** Examples of conditions that may warrant waivers and/or modifications include:
 - a. The reliance on existing protected woodlands or other vegetated areas that serve as an adequate screen due to their particular location and/or character.
 - b. In the case of a large lot where only a comparatively small portion of the lot is to be developed, applying the landscaping and screening provisions to only that portion of the lot to be developed and not requiring landscaping/screening along all segments of the lot's boundaries.

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