

# Article 10: Landscaping Standards

## 10.01 PURPOSE

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The purpose of landscaping, buffering and screening regulations are to:

- (A) Promote attractive development and preserve the appearance and character of the surrounding area using effective landscaping methods;
- (B) Eliminate or minimize conflicts between potentially incompatible, but otherwise permitted land uses on adjoining lots using a suitable combination of setbacks, natural buffers and physical barriers;
- (C) Prescribe standards for the installation and maintenance of trees, plantings, walls and fences;
- (D) To encourage the enhancement of the visual environment, ensure public safety, moderate the micro-climate; and
- (E) To protect surrounding property values.

## 10.02 APPLICABILITY

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- (A) The requirements of this article shall apply to new property development and any collective, substantial expansion or change in land use, except for single family and two-family dwellings.
- (B) Substantial expansion or modification of the existing structures shall be defined based on the criteria established in Table <> below.

(C)

TABLE <>: ADDITIONS AND ENLARGEMENT	
When the Existing Structure is:	A Substantial Expansion is:
(D) 500-1,000 sq. ft.	(E) 50% or greater
(F) 1,001-10,000 sq. ft.	(G) 40% or greater
(H) 10,001-25,000 sq. ft.	(I) 30% or greater
(J) 25,001-50,000 sq. ft.	(K) 20% or greater
(L) 50,001 sq. ft. and larger	(M) 10% or greater

- (N) Any collective expansion of 500 square feet or less shall be exempt from the requirements of this article. Collective expansion shall include the sum of all expansions of the original structure or building, regardless of when they occur.
- (O) If a building or structure covers the entire lot, landscaping and screening alternatives must be proposed to the Architectural Review Board for review and approval that meet the purpose and intent of this article.

## 10.03 MODIFICATIONS

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Modifications to the standards of this article may be modified either through approval of a variance or as approved modification of the design standards reviewed and approved as a part of the site plan review process.

## **10.04 MINIMUM MATERIALS AND STANDARDS**

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The following identifies the minimum landscape, buffering and screening standard requirements for all developments.

### **(A) General Requirements**

#### **(1) Plant Materials**

- (a)** All plant material shall be sound, healthy, live plants installed and maintained in accordance to acceptable nursery industry procedures.
- (b)** All plant materials shall be installed immediately, or within nine months after a building or site is developed. If plant materials cannot be immediately installed, the procedure in Section <> (Delayed Planting), shall be followed.
- (c) Trees**
  - (i)** Evergreen trees shall be installed at a minimum height of six feet if used for screening purposes.
  - (ii)** Shade (deciduous or canopy) trees shall be installed at a minimum Distance at Breast Height (DBH) caliper of two inches.
  - (iii)** Ornamental trees shall be installed at a minimum caliper of one and one-half (1½) inches.
- (d) Shrubs**

Shrubs shall be installed at a minimum height of three feet if used for screening purposes.
- (e) Species Diversity**

To curtail the spread of disease or insect infestation in a plant species if a new development contains over 20 trees, the application should include diversity in plant choices.

#### **(2) Fencing and Walls**

- (a)** All fences used to meet the screening or buffering requirements of this article shall extend to within two inches of the ground grade.
- (b)** All fencing or walls used for screening purposes shall not exceed eight feet in height in industrial or commercial areas and shall be 100 percent in opacity.
- (c)** The finished face of fencing and wall materials must face the adjacent property. Materials and colors shall be similar or complementary to the primary building.
- (d)** Acceptable fence or wall materials include weather resistant wood, PVC vinyl or other weatherproof composite material, brick, natural stone, spit faced block, pre-cast stone or other similar material as approved by the township. Alternative materials may be approved by the Architectural Review Board.
- (e)** All fencing shall be subject to all applicable standards of Section <> (Fences and Walls) unless otherwise specifically stated in this article.

#### **(3) Mounds and Berms**

- (a)** Earthen mounds and berms shall have a maximum slope of 3:1, (three feet of horizontal space is required for each one-foot vertical change in elevation).

- (b) The crest or top of the mound shall be rounded with elevation changes maintained one foot off the centerline of the mound.
- (c) Earthen mounds or berms shall be designed and constructed with variations in physical alignment throughout the length of the mound or berm.

**(4) Location**

- (a) When screening or landscaping is required between parcels under the same ownership, landscape and/or screening materials may be placed on either parcel or on the boundary line.
- (b) When the subject property is adjacent to other common boundaries, landscape materials shall be entirely located on the subject property requiring the screening or landscaping. The landscaping or screening may be placed on the boundary lines if all property owners agree, in writing, to the arrangement, and if the agreement is filed with the Zoning Inspector as a public record.
- (c) Perimeter landscaping, buffering and/or screening landscaping shall be a minimum of five feet in width.

**(B) Delayed Planting**

If plantings cannot be completed prior to building occupancy due to weather or other conditions that prevent planting, the township may require a financial guarantee in the amount of 120% of the estimated cost of landscaping and or screening required, including installation costs. The financial guarantee must be approved by the township's legal counsel prior to acceptance.

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## **10.05 STREET TREE AND LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS**

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**(A) Interior Landscaping for Off-Street Parking Areas**

Interior landscaping for off-street parking area shall include groundcover and other plant materials located within an off-street parking area and shall be regulated as identified in this section.

**(1) Applicability**

All off-street parking lots shall require landscaping and screening as identified below:

<b>TABLE &lt;&gt;: INTERIOR LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS</b>			
<b>Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces</b>	<b>Requirements</b>		
	<b>Perimeter Landscaping/Screening</b>	<b>Interior Islands</b>	<b>Interior Peninsulas</b>
Less than 25 spaces	✓		
25-50 spaces	✓	✓	
More than 50 spaces	✓	✓	✓

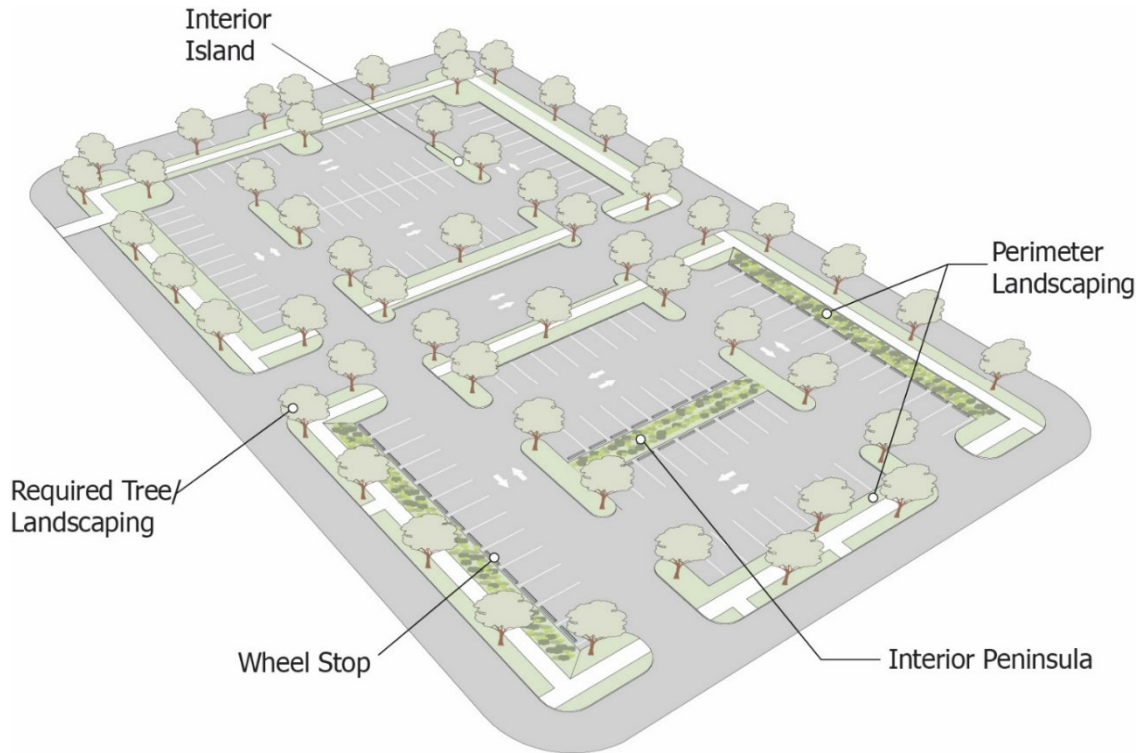
**(2) Minimum Requirements**

- (a) The layout and design of interior landscaping shall be at the discretion of the applicant but shall be approved by the Architectural Review Board.
- (b) Space required for interior landscaping that is located in an interior or peninsula island shall be in addition to any required front, side or rear yard or any required perimeter or screening landscaping requirements.

- (c)** Interior landscaping shall be provided at the ratio of one shade tree for every 20 parking spaces or fraction thereof. For parking lots with more than 200 parking spaces, interior landscaping shall be provided at the rate of 1.5 shade trees for every 20 parking spaces for fraction thereof.<sup>96</sup>
- (d)** Other landscape materials, such as grass and shrubs, may also be used in addition to the required shade trees.
- (e)** The minimum soil area or pervious surface area per tree shall be the size of one parking stall or 180 square feet, whichever is greater.
- (f)** To encourage the required interior landscape areas to be properly dispersed, no individual landscape area shall be larger than 800 square feet in size.
- (g)** The shortest distance to a tree in an interior landscaped area from the edge of pavement where vehicles overhang shall be three feet.
- (h)** To retain visibility within the off-street parking area, trees shall have a clear trunk of at least five feet above the ground.
- (i)** Pervious surfaces not containing a tree shall be landscaped with shrubs (not exceeding three feet in height), and/or groundcover, including grass.
- (j)** All landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy condition, kept free of weeds and debris, and replaced as needed.
- (k)** Interior landscaped areas shall be sufficiently protected from damage from vehicles through the use of wheel blocks or another similar device.

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<sup>96</sup> We are revisiting how to best accomplish this type of requirement while providing options for the applicant.



*Figure 10.05-A: Illustration of interior landscaping options*

## **(B) Perimeter Landscaping**

Perimeter landscaping shall be required to soften the edges of the off-street parking areas. Perimeter landscaping shall not constitute "screening" of an off-street parking area or between incompatible land uses required in Section <> (Screening).

### **(1) Side and Rear Yard Requirements**

- (a)** In any R-2, R-3, or nonresidential zoning district, perimeter landscaping is required in all side and rear yards where off-street parking areas exist.
- (b)** Landscaping shall include trees and a combination of grass, shrubs or earthen mounds.
- (c)** Where existing vegetation occurs outside of the right-of-way, adjacent to off-street parking areas where perimeter landscaping is required, such vegetation may be used as part of the required perimeter landscaping if the vegetation meets the plant material requirements of this article and any spacing or location requirements of this subsection.
- (d)** Trees used for perimeter landscaping shall meet the following spacing requirements:
  - (i)** Shade trees: Two per 50 lineal feet
  - (ii)** Evergreen trees: Two per 50 lineal feet
  - (iii)** Ornamental trees: Three per 50 lineal feet

- (e) The above trees and shrubs may be distributed evenly throughout the perimeter area or may be clustered together.
- (f) Shrub materials used for landscaping shall be confined to common planting beds. There shall be four shrubs for every 10 lineal feet of the portion of the parking area that the shrub is landscaping. The shrubs may be clustered or separated within that 10-foot area.
- (g) All areas not occupied by off-street parking areas, planting areas, trees or shrubs shall be planted and maintained with grass.

**(2) Front Yard Requirements**

All areas within the required building and parking setback, excluding driveway openings, shall be landscaped and maintained with the following minimum requirements:

- (a) Within this area, three deciduous trees and ten shrubs for every 100 lineal feet of street frontage, not including drive entrances.
- (b) Areas not devoted to trees and shrubs shall be planted with grass, ground cover, or other live landscape treatment, excluding paving or gravel, including land in the street right-of-way that is not occupied by street or sidewalk pavement, or mulch.
- (c) Landscaping materials shall not be fruit or nut bearing nor shall they have thorns or briars.
- (d) Landscaping materials may be placed in any manner and do not have to be equally spaced. Applicants are strongly encouraged to locate trees and shrubs in a manner that will prevent damage from salt and other materials used to melt snow from roads and parking lots.

## **10.06 SCREENING**

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**(A) Screening of Off-Street Parking Lots from Residential Uses**

- (1) The screening requirements of this subsection shall be required when:
  - (a) An off-street parking lot in a nonresidential zoning district is located within 50 feet of a lot that is in a residential zoning district or is used for residential purposes; or
  - (b) An off-street parking lot in an R-2 or R-3 zoning district where the off-street parking lot is located within 40 feet of a lot in a residential zoning district other than the R-2 or R-3 zoning district.
- (2) The screening shall only be required between the residential uses and the applicable off-street parking lot.
- (3) **Height**
  - (a) The screening of any off-street parking space or stacking space in the applicable off-street parking lot shall have a total height of not less than 36 inches above grade.
  - (b) The screening of any off-street loading space shall have a total height of not less than eight feet above grade.
  - (c) If the loading space is located in a dock that is partially below grade, the total height may be reduced to five feet above the top of the dock or bay.

**(4) Materials**

- (a)** Screening may consist of walls, fences, natural vegetation, earthen mounds, or a combination thereof with an opacity of 100 percent.
- (b)** Where natural vegetation is being used for screening, there shall be a minimum opacity of 75 percent in all seasons.

**(5) General Standards**

- (a)** Screening shall be reasonably uniform in height and opacity along its entire length.
- (b)** When natural vegetation screening is installed, either alone or in combination with other materials, the plants shall be:
  - (i)** Mature to a minimum height of two feet at the time of installation;
  - (ii)** Selected for year-round, dense foliage adequate to shield residences from headlight glare;
  - (iii)** Selected to achieve the height and density required within three years of installation; and
  - (iv)** Maintained in a healthy, live state and replaced as needed to comply with the original site plan and the specifications and standards outlined in this section.
- (c)** When screening from a public right-of-way, screening shall be maintained between two and one-half and three and one-half feet in length.

**(B) Screening of Off-street Parking Lots from Rights-of-Way**

When an off-street parking lot is located adjacent to a public street right-of-way, screening shall be provided to reduce the visual impact of the off-street parking lot. A landscaped screening shall be installed between the parking lot and public rights-of-way per the following requirements:

- (1)** A landscaped screen shall be located directly adjacent to the off-street parking lot and be no less than 10 feet in width in all districts. The buffer shall be composed of a continuous evergreen hedge or dense planting of evergreen shrubs.
- (2)** The screening shall be at a height of no less than three feet at the time of installation. The screening may be placed upon a earthen mound to achieve the required height at planting. The minimum screen height requirement shall not apply when the grading of the site results in an elevation of the adjacent street which is three or more feet higher than the off-street parking lot.
- (3)** A fence or a wall may be incorporated into the landscape buffer per the fence requirements of the applicable zoning district. See Section <> (Fences and Walls).

**(C) Screening of Service Areas**

In addition to the other forms of required landscaping, screening shall be required to conceal specific areas of high visual or auditory impact or hazardous areas from adjacent, less intense uses and from views from public rights-of-way. Such areas shall always be screened, unless otherwise specified, regardless of adjacent uses, districts, or other proximate landscaping material.

**(1) Screened Items**

The following areas shall be screened in accordance with this section:

- (a) Large waste receptacles (e.g., dumpsters and cardboard recycling containers) and refuse collection areas;
  - (b) Outdoor service areas that are necessary to support common business operations (e.g., outdoor freezer or refrigeration units, storage units, etc.);
  - (c) Ground-level or façade-mounted mechanical equipment; and
  - (d) Roof top equipment that is not otherwise hidden by the roofline, parapet wall, or other similar feature; and
  - (e) Utility structures shall be subject to the screening requirements of this section unless the utilities are exempt from this resolution as established in Section <>.
- (2) Screening shall not be required if any of the above items are not visible from adjacent rights-of-way or from adjacent lots in residential zoning districts.
- (3) All sides of the item shall be screened with the exception that one side of the item may be screened with a gate or other similar feature to allow access while screening the item when access is not necessary.
- (4) **Screening Methods**
  - (a) The following items are permitted for use as screening materials, and more than one method may be used on a lot or site.
    - (i) Vegetative materials that provide a fully opaque screen to the minimum height necessary to fully screen the facility from off-site views;
    - (ii) An opaque fence or wall consistent with the standards of Section; or
    - (iii) Integration into the building design (e.g., false walls or other architectural screening) that utilizes the same building materials and colors as the principal building.
  - (b) The required screening shall have a height sufficient enough to screen the applicable item(s) provided it is in accordance with any other applicable sections of these regulations.
  - (c) To the maximum extent feasible, pipes, conduit, and cables should be located along the rear facade of buildings if conditions do not allow for them to be enclosed within the building itself. Pipes, conduit, and cables shall be located as far away from public view as practical and shall be painted a similar color as the building façade to further reduce visibility.
  - (d) In all cases, fences and walls are limited to the heights allowed by Section <> unless the wall used for screening is an extension of the principal building, in which case, the wall may be the same height as the principal building wall that is an extension from.





*Figure 10.06-A: Use of a wall and fencing for screening that is architecturally compatible with the principal building.*



*Figure 10.06-B: The above image illustrates a vegetative screen that hides HVAC equipment and a dumpster.*

#### **(D) Screening between Land Uses**

This section shall provide for the screening of land uses that may be of a different intensity, or otherwise incompatible, for the purposes of mitigating impacts such as parking areas, noises, and other potential effects.

##### **(1) Screening Types**

Screening of land use shall be established in the following manner:

- (a)** Locate the proposed use and adjacent existing use(s) in Table <> on the following page. Adjacent uses include uses on adjacent lots with shared lot lines and uses on lot across the street.
- (b)** Identify the letter which indicates the screen type required.
- (c)** Find the screen type in Table <> on the following page, which identifies the minimum screen to be established as required in this article.
- (d)** If a wall, fence or mound is selected, only one of these elements are required.

TABLE <>: SCREENING BETWEEN LAND USES								
		Adjacent Existing Use						
		Single-Family Detached Dwellings	Single-Family Attached Dwellings	Multi-Family Dwellings	Office Uses	Public and Institutional Uses	Commercial Uses	Industrial Uses
Proposed Use	Single-Family Detached Dwellings	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
	Single-Family Attached Dwellings	A	None	None	None	None	None	None
	Multi-Family Dwellings	B	A	None	None	None	None	None
	Office Uses	C	C	B	None	None	None	None
	Public and Institutional Uses	C	C	B	B	None	None	None
	Commercial Uses	D	D	C	B	B	None	None
	Light Industrial Uses (Completely Enclosed)	D	D	D	D	D	C	None
	Heavy Industrial Uses	E	E	E	E	D	C	None

TABLE <>: SCREENING TYPE STANDARDS						
Screen Type	Minimum Width	Wall or Fence Height	Mound Height	Shrubs	Shade or Evergreen Tree	Ornamental Tree
				Number per 50 linear feet		
A	10' or 20' if no fence or wall	6'	4' min. to 6' max.	6	2	2
B	15' or 30' if no fence or wall	6'	4' min. to 6' max.	8	4	3
C	20' or 30' if no fence or wall	6'	5' min. to 7' max.	10	6	4
D	25' or 40' if no fence or wall	6'	5' min. to 7' max.	15	6	4
E	30' or 50' if no fence or wall	6'	6' min. to 8' max.	20	8	6

## **10.07 MAINTENANCE**

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- (A)** All landscaping materials shall be installed and maintained according to accepted nursery industry procedures. The owner of the property shall be responsible for the continued property maintenance of all landscaping materials, and shall keep them in a proper, neat and orderly appearance, free from refuse, debris, and weeds at all times.
- (B)** All unhealthy or dead plant material shall be replaced within one year, or by the next planting period, whichever comes first.
- (C)** No plant material required by these regulations shall be removed for any reason unless replaced with like kind and size at the time of removal. If replaced with a like kind and size of material, no approvals shall be required.
- (D)** Any changes to an approved landscaping plan shall require approval in the same manner as landscaping plan was original approved.
- (E)** Violation of these provisions shall be subject to the enforcement provisions of Article <> (Enforcement and Penalties).