

# **ARTICLE VIII LANDSCAPING AND BUFFERING<sup>1</sup>**

## **SECTION A. LANDSCAPE PLAN REQUIRED**

1. Landscape plans are a required component of all Site plan Submissions.
2. When Site Plans involve new construction or the expansion of an existing structure involving more than 3,000 square feet of gross floor area, the Zoning Commissioner may require the applicant to submit a landscape plan prepared by a Landscape Architect, registered in the State of Ohio.

## **SECTION B. MINIMUM LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS**

All landscaping improvements (landscape materials, operable irrigation systems, screening walls, etc.,) shall be installed by the developer on the site in accordance with the approved final landscape plan prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance for the building or use.

1. **PERFORMANCE BOND TO ENSURE THE INSTALLATION OF LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**  
When considered advisable, upon presentation of a cash bond, cash deposit, or assured letter of credit in an amount sufficient to guarantee installation of the landscaping and irrigation system, the Zoning Inspector may approve a delay in the immediate installation of the required landscaping improvements for a period not to exceed six (6) months. In the case where the Zoning Inspector approves a delay in the installation of the required landscape improvements, a Temporary Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall be issued for the building or use conditioned upon the satisfactory installation of the required landscape improvements within the time period approved by the Zoning Inspector.
2. **GENERAL LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS**
  - a. Landscaping shall be provided as part of the Site Plan. It shall be conceived in a total pattern throughout the site, integrating the various elements of the site design, preserving and enhancing the particular identity of the site, and creating a pleasing site character.
  - b. Landscaping may include plant materials such as trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials and annuals, and other materials such as rocks, water, sculpture, art, walls, and fences.
  - c. The plan shall identify existing and proposed trees, shrubs, and ground covers; natural features; and other landscaping elements. The plan shall show where they are or will be located and planting and/or construction details.
  - d. Service courts, storage areas, and loading docks shall be screened along the entire rear lot line and side lot lines as necessary. Screening shall consist of walls, hedges, fences, vegetation, or an acceptable combination of these elements, provided that screening must be at least seven (7) feet in height.

## **SECTION B. MINIMUM LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS (Contd.)**

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<sup>1</sup> HISTORY: Amended Effective March 2, 2004

- e. Trash containers designed to service more than one (1) residential unit or to service a nonresidential structure shall be screened on three (3) sides by walls, fences, or natural vegetation or an acceptable combination of these elements. The height of such screening shall be at least six (6) feet. The maximum height of walls and fences shall not exceed ten (10) feet. Vegetation shall have a minimum opaqueness of seventy-five (75) percent at all times within two (2) years of planting. Vegetation shall be a variety and size that will attain six (6) feet in height within two (2) years of planting.
- f. An irrigation plan with construction details shall be included with the landscape plan.<sup>2</sup>

**SECTION C. OFF-STREET PARKING AREA LANDSCAPING**

Landscaping within parking areas, whether ground cover or upright plant material, is necessary not only to reduce the generation of heat and water runoff, but to visually break up the expanse of paved areas. The use of parking islands or peninsulas strategically placed throughout the parking lot is required to landscape parking lot interiors. The use of shade trees in these landscape areas is encouraged. Any open parking area containing more than six thousand (6,000) square feet of area or fifteen (15) or more parking spaces shall provide the following interior landscaping in addition to the required perimeter screening:

- 1. A specified percentage of the parking area must be landscaped and permeable. The specific amount of area that is to be landscaped and permeable shall be determined as follows:

<b>Interior Parking Landscape Requirements For Parking Areas Exceeding the Minimum Required Number of Parking Spaces</b>	
Parking Requirement	Required increase in the Amount of Interior Landscaping
The parking area represents 100 percent of the minimum required parking spaces pursuant to Article IX, Section B.2., or less.	5% of the parking area must be landscaped with islands and peninsulas.
The parking area represents over 100 but less than 200 percent of the minimum required parking spaces pursuant to Article IX, Section B.2.	5% of the parking areas must be landscaped with islands and peninsulas. Additionally, this landscaped area shall be proportionately increased, such that for every percent increase in parking provided beyond minimum requirements, the minimum interior landscaping shall increase proportionately. As an example; if a parking area contained 150 percent of the minimum parking requirements, required interior landscaping would be 7.5% (calculated by multiplying 1.5 x 5%)
The parking area represents over 200 percent of the minimum required parking spaces pursuant to Article IX, Section B.2.	The application shall demonstrate how the use of extensive landscaping and creative site design effectively interrupts large expanses of parking area to the satisfaction of the Zoning Commission.

<sup>2</sup> HISTORY: Amended Effective February 17, 2011

**SECTION C. OFF-STREET PARKING AREA LANDSCAPING (Contd.)**

2. Whenever possible, large parking areas of thirty thousand square feet (30,000 sq. ft.) or larger shall be designed so as to break up their visual expanse and create the appearance of smaller parking lots. This distinction or separation can be achieved by interspersing yard space and buildings in strategic areas and by taking advantage of natural features such as slope, existing woodland or vegetation, drainage courses, and retention/detention areas that contain water throughout the year.
3. Landscaping in parking areas shall be dispersed throughout with peninsulas or islands. The minimum island or peninsula size shall be one hundred eighty (180) square feet in area and should have a minimum width of ten (10) feet. Island or peninsula shall have a two (2) foot minimum distance between all trees or shrubs and the edge of pavement where vehicles overhang. Islands shall typically be located every ten (10) to twelve (12) parking spaces and may be curbed.<sup>3</sup>
4. The required plant materials for the interior of parking areas shall be one (1) deciduous tree for every three thousand (3,000) square feet. Where site distance or maneuvering conflicts exist, trees shall have a clear trunk of at least five (5) feet above the ground, and the remaining required landscape areas shall be planted with shrubs or ground cover not to exceed two (2) feet in height.
5. Areas located between any parking area and public right-of-way shall be landscaped with elements such as mounding, trees, ground cover, and shrubs.

**SECTION D. BUFFER YARDS**

The buffer yard is a portion of a lot, together with required planting/fencing, that will serve to diminish land use conflicts. Buffer yards shall be required to separate different land uses from each other in order to eliminate or minimize potential nuisances such as dirt, litter, noise, glare of lights, signs, and unsightly buildings or parking areas, or to provide spacing to reduce adverse impacts of noise, odor, or danger from fires or explosions.

**1. APPLICABILITY**

Nonresidential buildings or uses shall not be located or conducted closer than fifty (50) feet to any lot line of a residential district or residence, except where minimum yard requirements, specified in Article V, Table 5.1 require greater distances.

**2. LOCATION**

Buffer yards shall be located on the outer perimeter of a lot or parcel, extending to the lot or parcel boundary line. Buffer yards shall not be located on any portion of any existing or dedicated public or private street or right-of-way. In any district or instances where a buffer yard is required, it shall be maintained in such a manner that the visibility is unobstructed from intersecting streets within eighty (80) feet in each direction from the intersection of the street centerline.

**3. VISUAL SCREENING**

Screening shall be required when nonresidential buildings or uses, except those uses or buildings exempted under ORC 519.21 and 519.211, are proposed to be located next to land that is zoned in a residential category. The following options are available in meeting the Township's screening requirements:

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<sup>3</sup> HISTORY: Amended Effective January 16, 2013

**SECTION D. BUFFER YARDS (Contd.)**

- a. Obscuring Wall Option: An obscuring wall shall be either a solid masonry or solid wooden fence maintained in good condition and free of all advertising or other signs. When the height of the structure's wall is less than fifteen (15) feet in height, the obscuring wall shall be not less than one-half (1/2) of the height of the structure's wall. When the structure's wall is greater than fifteen (15) feet in height a landscaped mound shall be required.
- (1) The obscuring wall shall be constructed to completely obscure vision.
  - (2) Required walls shall be located on the lot line except where underground utilities interfere and except in instances where this Resolution requires conformance with front yard setback lines in abutting Residential Districts. Upon review of the Site Plan, the Zoning Inspector may approve an alternate location for the wall or may waive immediate installation for a period not to exceed six (6) months, if in specific cases it would not serve the purposes of screening the use effectively.
  - (3) Such walls shall have no openings for vehicular traffic or other purposes, except as otherwise provided in this Resolution and except such openings as may be approved by the Zoning Inspector. All walls herein required shall be durable, weather resistant, rustproof, and easily maintained.
  - (4) Masonry walls may be constructed with openings which do not in any square section (height or width) exceed twenty (20) percent of the surface. Where walls are so pierced, the openings shall be so spaced as to maintain the obscuring character required, and shall not reduce the minimum height requirement. The arrangement of the openings shall be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Inspector.
- b. Landscaping / Mounding Option. Earth mounds are preferable to walls or fencing as a physical barrier to buffer or screen views and noise. The landscaping/mounding option in lieu of the obscuring wall shall consist of a strip of land not less than twenty-five (25) feet in width, with undulating earthen mound(s) designed with physical variations in height and alignment throughout their length. Mounding shall average four (4) feet in height with slopes averaging 3:1 (horizontal to vertical distance). Plantings shall be arranged and installed on earth mounds in an irregular pattern to accentuate the physical variations in height and alignment and achieve a more natural appearance as set forth below. Ground cover shall be used and maintained to prevent erosion of the earth mound. In the event that the landscaping mounding provision is utilized, the following criteria shall be used by the Zoning Inspector to insure uniformity throughout the Township. The combined height of the plant materials and mounding shall be not less than one-half of the height of the wall most nearly parallel with the lot line that adjoins a residential district at the time of planting.<sup>4</sup>

**SECTION E. PLANT MATERIALS**

Whenever in this Resolution a planting is required, it shall be installed within six (6) months from the date of issuance of a Certificate of Zoning Compliance and shall thereafter be reasonably maintained with permanent, live plant materials to provide a screen to abutting properties. Suitable materials equal in characteristics to the plant materials listed with the spacing as required shall be provided. The use of a variety of plant materials is encouraged to create visual interest. Within three years, the combination of mounding and plant materials shall provide not less than fifty (50) percent opacity to a height not less than one-half (1/2) of the building wall most nearly parallel with the lot line.

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<sup>4</sup> HISTORY: Amended Effective February 18, 2005

**SECTION E. PLANT MATERIALS (Contd.)**

1. PLANT MATERIAL SPACING

- a. Plant materials shall not be placed closer than four (4) feet from the property line.
- b. Where plant materials are placed in two (2) or more rows, plantings shall be staggered in rows.
- c. Evergreen trees shall not be less than four (4) feet in height.
- d. Narrow evergreens shall be planted not less than four (4) feet in height.
- e. Tree-like shrubs shall be planted not more than ten (10) feet on centers, and shall not be less than six (6) feet in height.
- f. Large deciduous shrubs shall be planted not more than four (4) feet on centers, and shall not be less than four (4) feet in height.
- g. Large deciduous trees shall be planted not more than thirty (30) feet on centers, and shall not be less than two (2) inch caliper.

2. MAINTENANCE

Plant material shall be maintained in a healthy and growing condition and withered or dead plant materials shall be replaced within a reasonable time, but no longer than one growing season.

3. EXCEPTIONS

Other provisions within this Resolution such as screening and landscaping of parking areas and Article VII, Section S (Performance Requirements), may be waived should buffer yard provision be utilized and accepted by the Zoning Inspector.

**SECTION F. MODIFICATION**

The Zoning Commission may waive or modify the foregoing requirements where the future use of adjoining property may change.

- 1. In consideration of such request to waive all requirements between nonresidential and residential districts, the Commission shall refer the request to the Wood County Planning Commission for a determination as to whether or not the residential district is considered to be an area of change and will become nonresidential in the future.
- 2. In such cases as the Wood County Planning Commission determines the residential districts are in transition, the Zoning Commission may temporarily waive all requirements for an initial period not to exceed twelve (12) months. Granting of subsequent waivers shall be permitted, provided that the Wood County Planning Commission shall make a determination as herein before described for each subsequent waiver prior to the granting of such waiver.