

Article 22 LANDSCAPING and SCREENING

Section 22.01 Purpose

The purpose of this Section is to promote the public's health, safety, and general welfare by: minimizing noise, air, and visual pollution; improving the appearance of off-street parking and other vehicular use areas; requiring buffering between incompatible land uses; regulating the appearance of property abutting public rights-of-way; protecting and preserving the appearance, character, and value of the community and its residential neighborhood areas; preventing soil erosion and soil depletion; and promoting soil water retention.

Section 22.02 Application

These requirements shall apply to all uses for which site plan review is required under Article 6, Procedures for Site Plan & Plot Plan Review, including commercial and industrial uses, 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 herein.

Section 22.03 Landscape Plan Required

A separate detailed landscape plan of a minimum scale of 1" = 100' shall be required to be submitted as part of a site plan review (see Article 6). The landscape plan shall identify include, but not necessarily be limited to:

1. The identification of the location, type, number and size of plant material to be planted.
2. Significant construction details to resolve specific site conditions, such as tree wells to preserve existing trees or culverts to maintain natural drainage patterns.
3. Identification of existing trees and vegetative cover to be preserved.

Section 22.04 Required Buffering/Screening

A. Side and Rear Yard Buffer Areas: All commercial and industrial land uses for which a site plan is required shall be screened by a buffer area along all adjoining side and rear yard boundaries with residentially zoned property or with other commercial or industrially zoned property located in a different district. The buffer area shall not be used for storage purposes or used in any other manner except for the purposes of a buffer.

1. The buffer area shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet wide. The buffer area shall be planted and maintained with, at a minimum, evergreens such as spruce, pines, or firs, and deciduous trees, at a rate of at least one (1) evergreen tree per fifty (50) feet and one (1) deciduous tree per one hundred fifty (150) feet. At the time of their planting, evergreen trees shall be a minimum of five (5) 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.
2. Where there is a need to provide a greater noise, visual, or dust barrier than that provided by (A)(1) above, the Township Board may require the placement of a fence or wall of at least five (5) feet within the buffer area in addition to the plantings required by (A)(1) above. Heights of walls shall be measured on the side of the proposed wall or fence having the higher grade.

B. Front Yard Buffer Areas: A strip of land with a minimum width equal to the front yard setback of its zoning classification shall be located abutting the right-of-way, and shall be landscaped with a minimum of one (1) tree not less than twelve (12) feet in height or a minimum caliper of 2 1/2 inches (whichever is greater at the time of planting) for each fifty (50) lineal feet, or major portion thereof, of frontage abutting said right-of-way. The remainder of the front yard buffer area shall be landscaped in grass, ground cover, shrubs, and/or other natural, living, landscape material. 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.

C. Parking Lot and Loading Area Screening:

1. Where a parking area containing more than ten (10) parking spaces is within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a dwelling, a vegetative screen or fence shall be installed to fully screen views to the parking area. This provision shall not apply to roadside stands or uses granted a temporary zoning permit.

2. All loading and unloading areas and outside storage areas, including areas for the storage of trash which abut another District or residential property or which face or are visible from residential properties or public thoroughfares, shall be screened.

Section 22.05 Minimum Standards of Landscape Elements

Plant material and grasses shall be of generally acceptable varieties and species, free of insects and diseases, hardy to the climate, conform to the current minimum standard 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 tendencies toward splitting of wood, such as boxelder, mulberry, and willows, are not permitted unless specifically authorized otherwise by the approving body.

Section 22.06 Installation, Maintenance And Completion

A. All landscaping required by this Ordinance shall be planted prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy or 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.

B. The owner of property required to be landscaped by this Ordinance shall maintain such landscaping in a reasonably healthy condition, free from 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 22.07 Waivers and Modifications

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

B. The Zoning Board of Appeals may require or waive any fencing, screening, landscaping or buffering as may be provided for in this Article as a condition of a variance or other authorization in whatever manner necessary to achieve an identified public purpose. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall record the reason for the condition and clearly specify what is required in any approval granted.

End of Article 22