

ARTICLE X

LANDSCAPING, SCREENING AND BUFFERING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Section 1000. PURPOSE

The standards of this section provide for the preservation of existing vegetation and for the installation and maintenance of new vegetation and other landscape and architectural features. The purpose of these standards is to:

- A. Improve property and community appearance without compromising community safety, including minimization of the offsite visual impact of extensive land disturbance;
- B. Allow for the ecological benefits provided by plant materials, including protection of land from unnecessary erosion and watercourse sedimentation, reduction of stormwater runoff, improvement of air quality, and provision of wildlife habitat;
- C. Reduce the urban heat island effect;
- D. Enhance the beauty of the built environment; and
- E. Enhance the privacy and welfare of citizens by separating incompatible land uses.

Section 1001. SCREENING

1001.1 Applicability

1. This section shall apply to the following:
 - (A) Air handlers and similar mechanical equipment in multifamily or nonresidential development.
 - (B) Outdoor storage;
 - (C) Loading areas;
 - (D) Trash handling facilities, including dumpsters and recycling.
2. The features and uses listed above need not be screened from similar features and uses on adjacent lots and within the Community Shopping District and Highway Commercial District, except where district boundary buffers would be required pursuant to Sec. 1004.4, Buffer Standards.

1001.2 Standards

Features and uses specified above shall provide a visual obstruction from adjacent properties. Landscaping and Screening Requirements in conformance with the following standards:

1. Except as otherwise required under Sec. 1001 Screening, the screen may be composed of view-obscuring vegetation used individually, or in combination with a wall, semi-opaque fence, or berm. The screen height shall be eight feet from the ground, except that utilities and trash handling facilities shall be screened to the height of the facilities plus six inches.
2. When vegetation is the primary source of screening. An opacity that obscures views from the ground to the height of the object being screened shall be attained.
3. Plant materials shall be at least two feet tall at the time of installation and reach the desired height within three to five years of planting.
 - a. Except for screening around roof-top equipment, one upright shrub of an evergreen species shall be installed per four linear feet of any wall or fence that faces off-site.
4. All trash handling facilities shall be completely screened from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties pursuant.
5. A wall, solid wood fence, evergreen hedge, earth berm, or any combination thereof may be provided to obscure such facilities.

Unless otherwise stated, the owner of any property where landscaping or buffering is required shall be responsible for the maintenance of all required plant material (including street trees located off-site), fences and walls. Maintenance responsibilities shall include the clearing and replacement of required material that is dead and/or dying.

Section 1002 PRUNING

1. **General** - Trees and shrubs shall be kept trimmed back from doors, windows, and walkways.

2. **Standards** - Necessary pruning and trimming shall be in accordance with the American National Standards for Tree Care Operations: Tree Shrub and Other Woody Plant Maintenance -- Standards Practices (Pruning), and shall not be interpreted to include topping of trees through removal of crown material or the central leader, or any other similarly severe procedures such as lollipopping, meatballing, or hatracking that cause irreparable harm to the natural form of the tree, except where such procedures are necessary to maintain public overhead utilities. Any such activity shall be a violation of this Ordinance and additional plant material may be required by the Planning Director or designee to replace or supplement the damaged plant material.

Section 1004. LANDSCAPING

1004.1 Design Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to ensure that the safety of residents and visitors is not compromised through poor landscape design. These guidelines shall be balanced against other objectives of landscaping, such as sheltering, buffering and screening purposes in the review of landscape plans.

- A.** Landscaping should contribute to the livability of the environment.
- B.** A “water-wise” approach to landscape materials (including mulch), design and installations is encouraged. The amount of irrigation and maintenance required for landscaping should be minimized.
- C.** Landscaping should be selected, installed and maintained in compliance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles so that it allows unobstructed views of vulnerable doors and windows from the street and other properties and avoids blind spots and hiding spaces.
- D.** Landscaping within the Municipal Limits of West Jefferson should be clustered to provide a natural feeling. Landscaping in the Community Shopping District (Downtown West Jefferson) may be arrayed more formally.
- E.** Landscape materials should be selected and arranged to add variety and visual interest.
- F.** Site landscaping and streetscapes should be compatible and complement one another.
- G.** Site landscaping should not conflict with utility placement.
- H.** Landscaping should be used to define property lines and private areas with planting areas, pavement treatments, or walls and fences.

I. Landscaping, fences, walls and paving treatments should be designed to guide visitors to desired entrances and away from private areas.

J. Plant placement in buffers may include clustering; however, such clustering should be reflected in plant placement that provides the maximum protection of neighboring properties.

K. Landscaping should be used to divide parking areas into smaller lots.

1004.2 Basic Plant Types

There are five basic plant types referred to in this section, and all shall require the use of locally-adapted plants. They include canopy trees, evergreen trees, deciduous understory trees, evergreen understory trees and shrubs, defined as follows:

A. Canopy Trees

Large deciduous shade trees with a mature height of 30 feet or greater and a mature spread of 30 feet or greater and a mature height of 20 feet or greater.

B. Evergreen Trees

Trees at least 20 feet tall at maturity that usually have green foliage throughout all seasons of the year.

C. Deciduous Understory Trees

Small deciduous trees or large deciduous shrubs with a mature height of 10 to 30 feet, except under overhead utilities, where lower heights at maturity may be required.

D. Evergreen Understory Trees

Trees or large shrubs at least 10 feet tall at maturity that usually have green foliage throughout all seasons of the year.

E. Shrubs (Deciduous and Evergreen)

Prostrate or upright woody plants, either evergreen or deciduous, with a mature height usually less than 10 feet. Evergreen shrubs usually have green foliage throughout all seasons of the year.

1004.2.1 Plant Material Requirements

Unless specified elsewhere in this Ordinance, plant material shall meet the minimum requirements listed below. When determining the quantity of plant material required, the quantity shall always be rounded up to the nearest whole number. All plant material shall meet or exceed size and shape relationships specified in the latest edition of The American Standard for Nursery Stock published by the American Association of Nurserymen.

1004.2.2. Mixing of Tree Species

When more than 20 trees are required to be planted on a site to meet these regulations, a mix of species shall be provided.

1004.2.3 Credit for Other Landscaping

Plant material in buffers between zoning districts may be counted towards the requirements of this section when located to serve both functions.

1004.3 Screening

a. Landscaping shall be installed in accordance with the landscape requirements listed in Subsection 1004.1 Design Guidelines.

b. Fences

1. No reduction in buffer width shall be provided based on the provision of a fence.

2. Fences shall be maintained in a structurally safe and attractive condition and with finished faces and plantings located towards the adjacent property with at least one upright shrub for every eight (8) linear feet of fence length. *(amended 6 July 2015)*

c. Berms

1. Existing earthen berms located within a buffer may be used to create an earthen berm that complies with this Article. Also, existing earthen berms shall permit a reduction in buffer width in between residential districts.

2. Berms shall have side slopes of not less than three feet horizontal for each one foot vertical and a minimum crown width of two feet. Prior to issuance of the first certificate of compliance, berms shall be planted to ensure coverage by live plant material within three to five years.

1004.4 Buffer Standards

1. General

No grading shall be allowed within land disturbance buffers except to provide reasonable access and for utility installation.

All zoning districts, which are adjacent to another zoning district, shall provide a perimeter buffer that is a minimum of fifteen (15) feet in width, measured perpendicular to the primary structure. The buffer shall be located within the required side and/or rear yard line. Such buffers shall consist of existing vegetation with supplemental vegetation added and an earthen berm that is no more than twenty (20) feet in width and no more than eight (8) feet in height and supplemental vegetation which shall be planted at least two feet from the bottom of the berm. The supplemental vegetation shall be at least three feet tall at the time of installation and reach the desired height of at least eight (8) feet within four years of planting. The earthen berm and existing vegetation/supplemental vegetation shall provide an opaque view from the adjacent district. (*amended 6 July 2015*)