

ARTICLE 24. LANDSCAPING

Sec. 15-371 Statement of intent

The purpose of this article is to promote public health, safety, and welfare by establishing guidelines to preserve and plant vegetation to enhance residential and commercial real estate values; mitigate noise, glare, wind and heat; conserve energy; mitigate storm water runoff; and provide habitats for wildlife. Furthermore, this article requires landscaping of certain parking lots in order to reduce the harmful effects of wind and air turbulence, heat, and glare from motor vehicle lights; and to provide shade and enhance appearance. This article also requires buffers between agricultural or residential properties and more intense districts such as commercial or industrial districts.

Variety in vegetation with a mixture of evergreen and deciduous materials is encouraged. Preservation of existing trees and use of native plants are also encouraged.

Sec. 15-372 Landscape plan

A landscape plan must be submitted and approved with the plan of development for all uses that have a land disturbance area greater than 10,000 square feet. Landscape plans are required to be drawn to scale and show the following:

- A. Site improvements
- B. Limits of clearing and grading
- C. Property lines
- D. Utilities and associated easements and rights of way
- E. Fire hydrant locations
- F. Final grading plan
- G. Outdoor lighting
- H. Stormwater basins
- I. Identification of all zoning proffers relating to buffers, landscaping, screening, erosion and sediment control, and water quality maintenance or protection
- J. Buffer areas and dimensions
- K. Limits of wetlands, streams, and 100-year floodplain
- L. Landscape requirements, including those required for each buffer, yard, parking lot, or streetscape
- M. Plant schedule with genus and common names, quantity, and plant symbol or abbreviation
- N. Location of any tree-save areas with appropriate protection measures
- O. Overlay district landscape requirements, if applicable.

Sec. 15-373 Landscape standards along roadways and access easements

A buffer at least 10 feet wide must be maintained along all road frontages and access easements. The following standards are required:

- A. The buffer is measured from the property line.

- B. No parking area or structure, except for permitted signage, may be located within the buffer. Buffers may include sidewalks, but not best management practices.
- C. The buffer must contain:
 - (1) Two trees (minimum of two-inch caliper) per one 100 linear feet, and
 - (2) A continuous row of evergreen shrubs, at least 18 inches high when planted.
- D. Vegetation must not interfere with overhead or underground utility lines when fully grown.
- E. Driveways and utility lines should generally be located perpendicular to the buffer.
- F. Plantings cannot impede the sight distance triangle. See Sec. 15-510.

Sec. 15-374 Parking lot landscaping standards

Parking lots with less than 10 spaces do not require landscaping. Parking lots with 10 or more spaces must have the following additional perimeter and interior landscaping:

- A. At the perimeter:
 - (1) A six-foot wide buffer between the parking lot and abutting property lines, except for driveways or other openings, where impractical. Where the buffer would adversely separate functional parking areas and reduce efficiency and vehicular circulation, an equivalent number of plant materials may be provided in landscape islands.
 - (2) At least two trees for each 100 linear feet of perimeter. One tree must have at least a two-inch caliper and one must be at least six feet high when planted.
 - (3) A continuous row of shrubs, at least 18 inches high when planted, but not if Sec.15-373.C.2 applies.
 - (4) When parking area is located within 50 feet of a residential lot, additional landscaping is required under Sec. 15-333.H.
- B. In the interior:
 - (1) At least 10% of the total parking lot area must be landscaped.
 - (2) Islands must be at least nine feet wide and at least 162 square feet in area, and must contain at least one two-inch caliper shade tree.
 - (3) Continuous rows of parking spaces require a landscape island at least every 18 spaces.

Sec. 15-375 Buffers adjacent to residential and agricultural districts

When a commercial or industrial property is adjacent to a residential or agricultural district, the following must be provided:

- A. A 30-foot buffer of existing vegetation and/or new plantings.
- B. Existing mature vegetation located within required buffers must be maintained unless removal is approved by the community development director. The vegetation must be supplemented, if necessary, to meet this section's requirements. Any healthy existing tree or shrub may be credited towards the requirements of this section.
- C. Where there is no existing vegetation, then a double row of six-foot evergreen trees, a two- to four-foot berm with four-foot evergreen trees, or equivalent landscaping approved by staff.

- D. Required buffer areas cannot be used for best management practices, off-street parking, or loading areas.
- E. Access drives and utility easements must generally be located perpendicular to the buffer.

Sec. 15-376 Additional landscape standards for certain uses

- A. The following uses require additional landscaping to screen such uses from public roads and adjacent properties:
 - (1) Automobile/motor vehicle storage lot
 - (2) Building and landscaping supplies and equipment with outdoor storage
 - (3) Inoperable vehicles
 - (4) Commercial vehicles parked in residential areas
- B. View of the above uses must be obscured from all public roads and adjoining properties by dense evergreen vegetation, or by an opaque, solid fence, or wall of treated wood, brick, stone, masonry, or similar solid material and construction. The screening, fencing, or enclosure must meet all applicable zoning ordinance and building code requirements, and be maintained to ensure that permanent screening is provided to hide the items from view.

Sec. 15-377 Residential, Office district (R-O) landscape standards

Landscaping is required within required setback areas, as follows:

- A. To adequately screen permitted uses from adjacent dwellings, landscaping must, at a minimum, consist of a double row of six-foot evergreen trees, or a two- to four-foot berm with four-foot evergreen trees, or an equivalent landscape treatment approved by staff. The evergreen trees must be planted 10 feet on center.
- B. For off-street parking incidental to an office, landscaping must, at a minimum, consist of a three-foot evergreen hedge, or a two- to four-foot berm with two-foot evergreen hedge, or an equivalent buffer.
- C. Front yard:
 - (1) One two-inch caliper tree per 1,000 square feet and one 15-18-inch tall shrub per 150 square feet. Front yard landscaping is determined by multiplying the road frontage by the front yard setback.
 - (2) Vegetation planted in the streetscape buffer must be of a type and planted so as not to interfere with overhead or underground utility lines when fully grown. Landscaping must not impede the sight distance requirements as determined by the Virginia Department of Transportation.
 - (3) Streetscape buffers may also contain sidewalks, utility easements, and signs, but not best management practices.
- D. Any side yard adjoining or adjacent to a residential district must provide a 15-foot wide buffer with, at a minimum, a double row of six-foot evergreen trees, a two- to four-foot berm with four-foot evergreen trees, or equivalent landscaping approved by staff.
- E. Any rear yard adjoining or adjacent to a residential district must provide a 25-foot wide buffer with, at a minimum, a double row of six-foot evergreen trees, a two- to four-foot berm with four-foot evergreen trees, or equivalent landscaping approved by staff. No required landscaped area can be used for a driveway, walkway, or off-street parking.

- F. Existing trees having a six-inch caliper or greater located in any setback can be maintained except as necessary for entrances, sight distance, utilities, sidewalks, and signs.
- G. All vegetation must be maintained. Any plants that die or are destroyed must be replaced by the next growing season.

Sec. 15-378 Credits for existing trees and shrubs

Existing vegetation that is adequately protected during construction can be used as a credit toward landscape requirements. All vegetation must be alive and in a healthy condition, be of sufficient size, and conform to the standards of the most recent edition of the "American Standard for Nursery Stock," published by American Horticulture Industry Association d/b/a AmericanHort an ANSI-accredited Standards Developing Organization. In order to qualify for credit toward the minimum road frontage landscape requirements, vegetation must be of the size and type defined as small deciduous trees, large deciduous trees, evergreens or medium shrubs. See Sec. 15-435.A.5.a for definitions.

Sec. 15-379 Maintenance

- A. All required landscape areas and materials must be maintained. All vegetation must be tended and maintained in a healthy growing condition, replaced when necessary, and kept free of refuse and debris. Vegetation that dies or is destroyed must be replaced by the next growing season.
- B. Fences, walls, and screens, including gates and doors, must be maintained in good repair.
- C. Nothing except groundcover can be planted within three feet of a fire protection system, without the consent of the utility provider, easement holder, or the county, as appropriate.

Sec. 15-380 Exceptions

The community development director may approve deviations from the landscape requirements if the property's topography, configuration, or other unique circumstances prevent full compliance with the requirements, and, in so doing, may impose conditions that will accomplish the purpose of the requirements to the maximum extent practicable.

Secs.15-381 through 15-390. Reserved.