

ARTICLE 14. LANDSCAPING, BUFFERING, AND SCREENING

Section 14-1: Purpose of Buffers

The standards established in this Section are intended to preserve, protect, restore and enhance the aesthetic appeal and scenic beauty of this Town; provide adequate buffering between land uses; reduce noise and air pollution; reduce stormwater run-off; filter and reduce glare from artificial light sources; provide shaded areas along streets, sidewalks, and in parking lots; provide a continuity of vegetation throughout the Town; encourage the preservation of existing trees and vegetation; safeguard and enhance property values; and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Section 14-2: Applicability

A. New Developments: All new developments (except for infill single family detached or infill duplex residential uses) shall be designed in accordance with the requirements of this Section.

B. Renovation to Existing Development: Any “change of use” as defined by the North Carolina Building Code or if the total repairs and/or renovations to an existing building and/or parking area within a five (5) year period enlarge the footprint twenty-five (25) percent or more or collectively cost more than fifty (50) percent of the tax value as recorded in the Harnett County Tax Record at the date of application, such development shall be required to meet the minimum requirements set forth to the fullest extent technically feasible, excluding the removal of asphalt, to install the required landscaping, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

Section 14-3: General Landscaping Standards

A. In the event that the unusual topography or elevation of a site that would negatively impact the property or make it physically impossible to install and maintain the required landscaping, the Planning Board may alter the requirements of this Section provided the spirit and intent of this Section is maintained.

B. Existing vegetation and natural wooded areas shall be retained and incorporated into the landscape and/or development plan to the greatest extent possible. Existing preservation can count toward landscaping requirements when a site plan illustrating trees to be saved is submitted prior to grading the site, provided such trees are mature and in good health, and located in the approximate area as required herein, at the discretion of the Zoning Administrator. Protective fencing or flagging shall be located along the outer perimeter of the tree preservation area during construction.

C. All structures or land having a slope of greater than two (2) horizontal feet from every vertical foot or steeper shall not have any of the required vegetation within five feet of the outer edge of the structure or steep land area. Stormwater detention structures, excluding swales that do not prevent the installing of landscaping, shall be prohibited in buffer areas. Stormwater detention ponds shall be located a least twenty (20) feet from the road right of way and shall be fenced and screened with evergreen shrubs.

D. No landscaping materials shall be located or planted on property subject to utility or drainage easements without written consent of the Town and the easement holder.

E. All open space areas that are not landscaped or non-constructed shall be at a minimum graded and seeded with grass or other appropriate ground cover.

F. All landscaping material shall be installed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. A written request to defer the installation of landscaping due to the installation of the plant material at the time of the request would jeopardize the health of the plants (planting May through September not encouraged) may be approved for no longer than six months if submitted to the Zoning Administrator prior to a request for a certificate of occupancy on condition that the recipient provides a performance bond or other security satisfactory to the Town Manager to ensure that all of the requirements of the Ordinance will be fulfilled within a reasonable period (not to exceed 12 months) as determined by the Town Manager.

G. Any irrigation system connected to the Town of Lillington public water system shall require the installation of a double backflow prevention device.

H. On a corner lot in any district, no hedge, shrubbery, tree, natural growth, sign fence, wall, or other obstruction shall be placed or maintained within the sight triangle.

Section 14-3: Maintenance Standards

A. The owner(s) of the property shall be responsible for the installation, preservation, mulching, weeding, and maintenance of all landscaping and physical features required under this Section, and any other provision listed in this Section.

B. All new and existing plant materials used to satisfy requirements in this Section shall be suitable for climatic characteristics of Lillington. All new and existing plant material shall be of good quality, disease free, and shall be properly installed and mulched (3-4" layer). All plant

material used to meet the requirements of this section shall be suitable for use in an urban environment. See Section 14-5: Recommended Plant List.

C. Landscaping shall be maintained in a good condition so as to present a healthy, neat, and orderly appearance. Property maintenance shall include watering, weeding, mowing, mulching, fertilizing, and pruning. Pruning shall consist of removal of dead, dying, diseased, interfering, obstructing and weak branches as well as selective thinning to lessen wind resistance and improve appearance. All vegetation located under overhead utility lines shall be pruned to not encroach upon the utility lines. All landscaped planting areas shall be stabilized from soil erosion immediately upon planting.

D. All dead, substandard and unhealthy plant materials shall be removed and replaced in conformance with the standards of this Section and the approved landscape or site plan. In the event that any vegetation required by this Section is damaged due to weather or a natural catastrophe, the owner shall have one hundred eighty (180) days to replace the affected plant materials.

Section 14-3: Landscaping Types

The standards of this Section are designed to accommodate the varying styles of development and the impact of such development on the appearance, health, and financial well-being of the community. The standards are broken into two (2) landscaping categories:

A. Buffers

B. Parking Lot Landscaping

Section 14-3(A): Buffers

1. Buffers shall be located around the outer perimeter of a lot or parcel, extending to the lot or parcel boundary line and shall not be located on the property line or any portion of an existing or dedicated public or private street right-of-way. Trees shall be located at a minimum of 4 feet from sidewalks and paved pedestrian surfaces.

2. If the buffer area is located under overhead utility lines, the small tree or large shrub height shall be between 8 feet and 15 feet in height.

3. Minimum shrub size shall be three (3) gallons in size or the minimum height shall be 3 feet at the time of installation. Minimum perennial or ground cover size shall be one (1) gallon.

Buffer Requirements

	Commercial / Multi-Family (Side & Rear Yards)	Industrial (Front / Street, Side, Rear)	Commercial / Multi-Family (Front / Street Yards)	Residential (Single Family Yards)
Buffer Width	15 Feet	30 Feet	10 Feet	Within the setback area
Required Screening	<p>A 15 foot wide strip of naturally wooded land or a staggered row of small trees (10' to 30' in height) spaced not more than 15 feet apart; and</p> <p>Option 1: A row of evergreen shrubs placed not more than 4 to 6 feet apart which will grow to form a continuous hedge of at least 6 feet in height within 2 years of planting; or</p> <p>Option 2: A masonry wall located within the required buffer area; a minimum of 6 feet in height and, if a block wall, it shall be painted on both sides; or an opaque vinyl fence 6 feet in height, finished side of fence must face out; or</p> <p>Option 3: A berm (maximum of 3:1 slope) and planting combination of trees, shrubs, and other plantings which will, when combined with the berm, achieve a minimum height of 6 feet and 75 percent opacity within 2 years.</p>	<p>A 25 foot wide strip of naturally wooded land or a staggered row of large trees (30' or taller) spaced not more than 30 feet apart; and</p>	<p>A staggered row of small trees (10' to 30' in height) spaced not more than 30 feet apart, supplemented by 5 low growing shrubs for every required tree.</p>	<p>Yard trees are required for every residential subdivision (5 or more lots); and</p> <p>The subdivider shall plant at least 1 tree in any front, side, or rear lot abutting an existing or proposed right-of-way. The tree shall be located behind the sidewalk and outside of the public right-of-way. Maintenance of the trees shall be the responsibility of the individual property owner; and</p> <p>A buffer width of 20 feet in addition to the normal lot depth required shall be provided adjacent to all highways, industrial, and commercial areas, including a staggered row of large trees, spaced not more than 20 feet apart. The buffer shall be part of the platted lots stating "This vegetative buffer strip is reserved; the building of structures herein is prohibited."</p>
Ground Cover	Low-growing evergreen shrubs, evergreen ground cover, ivy, bedding plants, low growing vines, or mulch covering the balance of the buffer.			

Section 14-3(B): Parking Lot Landscaping

1. Parking areas located adjacent to public rights-of-way shall provide a landscape strip between the parking area and its point of intersection with the right-of-way.
2. Parking lot landscaping is required within all parking lots except automobile sale display areas.
3. A minimum of (one) 1 shade tree (10' – 30' in height) located in a curbed tree island shall be located every 14 spaces for each row.
4. Planting areas shall be protected with concrete curbing.

Section 14-4: Enclosure Requirements

A. Screening Requirements for Outdoor Storage, Waste Containers, and Mechanical Equipment

1. This section shall not apply to single family residential developments.
2. Service areas, loading and delivery docks, dumpsters, trash / recycling containers, HVAC units and outdoor storage areas shall be screened from off-site views and shall not be located in the front yard of any structure to achieve a complete visual barrier. This opaque screen may consist of fencing, walls, evergreen landscaping, raised roofs (for roof-mounted HVAC), or other methods approved by the Zoning Administrator.
3. Dumpster screening shall be 6 feet in height and provide opaque gates that also serve to screen the dumpster. Dumpsters exceeding 6 feet in height shall be screened by fencing, walls, or landscaping equal to the height of the dumpster.
4. Any fencing used to fulfill the requirements of this section shall be supplemented with landscaping. Chain link fence with slats shall not be used to meet the requirement of this section.
5. All screens shall utilize building materials and design which are compatible with those used for the exterior of the principal building.

B. Outside Storage

1. In residential districts, all outside storage of governmental or commercial inventory or equipment is prohibited.
2. In commercial and industrial districts all business, servicing, processing, or storage, except off-street parking and loading shall be within completely enclosed buildings, or enclosed by a wall or fence (including entrance and exit gates) not less than six (6) feet in height. Such fences or walls shall not be less than forty (40) feet from the front lot line, not less than ten (10) feet from the side lot lines, and not less than twenty (20) feet from the rear lot line. In automobile wrecking yards and similar types of used material industries such fence or wall shall not be less than one hundred (100) feet from any street line and not less than fifty (50) feet from any property line.
3. In the C-1 district, no storage or service of goods will be permitted outside of buildings that can be viewed from the street except outside display and sale of goods will be permitted in front of businesses but a four foot wide area of sidewalk must be kept clear of any object or vegetation to allow pedestrian movement.

Section 14-5: Recommended Plant List

The following list contains some plant species that are native to the Lillington area or are known to be suitable for the climate of the Lillington area. Applicants seeking landscape approval shall not be required to select materials from the following list, but shall be required to select plant species that are known to be suitable for the climate of the Lillington area.

Large Deciduous Trees (30' or larger)

- American beech
- Dawn Redwood
- Japanese zelkova
- Poplar
- Southern magnolia
- White Oak
- Bald Cypress
- Elm
- Live oak
- Red maple
- Southern sugar maple
- Willow Oak
- Black gum
- Ginkgo
- Pecan
- Red oak
- Sycamore
- Catalpa
- Hickory
- Pin oak
- River birch
- Water Oak

Large Evergreen Trees (30' or larger)

- Carolina cherry laurel
- Cryptomeria
- Live oak
- Eastern red cedar
- White cedar
- Laurel oak

Small Trees (10' – 30' tall)

- American holly (many hollies are suitable)
- Crabapple
- Flowering dogwood
- Japanese maple
- Crape myrtle
- Fringe tree
- Kousa dogwood
- Carolina silver bell
- Eastern redbud
- Golden-rain tree
- Osmanthus
- Chastetree
- Flowering apricot
- Ironwood
- Red Cedar

- Saucer magnolia
- Various Viburnum
- Smoketree
- Wax myrtle
- Southern magnolia
- Yaupon holly
- Star magnolia

Shrubs

- Abelia
- Barberry
- Dwarf yaupon holly (many hollies are suitable)
- Hydrangea
- Nandina
- Various Viburnum
- Anise
- Beautyberry
- Indian Hawthorn
- Redtips
- Wax myrtle
- Azalea
- Boxwood
- Juniper
- Rosemary
- Weigela
- Banana shrub
- Camelia
- Gardenia
- Loropetalum
- Spirea
- Winterberry