

ARTICLE 24
Landscape Standards

§ 170-24.1. Intent

The intent of this article is to provide minimum standards for the design, installation and maintenance of landscape elements throughout the township. Landscaping is viewed as a critical element to promote the desired image of the community, enhance the visual appearance, articulate outdoor spaces, preserve natural features, improve property values and reduce impacts generated by certain land uses.

§ 170-24.2. Applicability

- A. The standards contained herein shall apply to all parcels requiring site plan review, special land use review, administrative review, subdivision plat review or land divisions/reconfigurations.
- B. The requirements in this Article are minimum requirements and shall not preclude the developer and the township from mutually agreeing to additional landscape.
- C. Standards shall be required independently of each other and shall not be double counted to fulfill the requirements of different required landscape elements.
- D. When a building and/or parking area is increased by 25% or more over the original site plan, the site shall be brought into full compliance with the landscape standards.
- E. For improvements or expansion of an existing site not meeting the criteria in D above, landscaping shall be brought into compliance with current standards to the extent possible

§ 170-24.3. Incentive for preserving existing trees

The standards below are intended to encourage the preservation of trees that are not regulated by Article 23, Tree and Woodlands Replacement.

- A. Credit may be given for preserving healthy non-regulated quality trees when the design intent of this article is met. The credit for tree preservation shall be applied at the rate of one (1) tree for each existing tree between 2.5 to 7.9 inches DBH.
- B. Trees requested as credit must be inspected by the township to ensure the trees are high quality and will fulfill the requirements of this article.

- C. Trees preserved for landscape credit shall be clearly indicated on the grading and landscape plans. Tree protection methods shall comply with Article 23, Tree and Woodlands Replacement.
- D. To protect and encourage the continued health of the preserved trees, the ground area within the drip line of the trees shall be maintained as vegetation or other approved pervious surface.

§ 170-24.4. Greenbelt

A greenbelt is the land abutting a public street, private street or access drive that shall be reserved as a landscaped area to serve as an obscuring screen, noise abatement and visual enhancement along roadway corridors.

- A. Greenbelts are measured from the edge of a public street right-of-way, private road easement or access drive/easement.
- B. The greenbelt shall include one (1) canopy tree and six (6) shrubs per 40 linear feet of road frontage. The frontage calculation shall include any openings for driveways, sidewalks or easements.
- C. A 35' wide greenbelt is required for residential zoning districts, unless additional width is approved for a PUD, HPUD or OSC development.
- D. For nonresidential zoning districts, the width of the greenbelt shall be equal to the required parking lot setback.
- E. The township may approve substitution of evergreen trees for up to 50% of the required greenbelt trees if the intent is to provide a more effective buffer and provided a mixture of other species are included.
- F. The greenbelt plantings shall be designed to simulate a natural appearance and include a variety of species. Upright shrubs shall be the dominant type to provide the greatest visual impact, low or spreading varieties may be used as an accent material.
- G. The greenbelt shall include only living materials except approved pathways, walls, fences or other similar ornamental features.
- H. Gates, functioning or ornamental, are not permitted.

- I. Public right-of-ways and easements adjacent to greenbelts shall be planted with grass or living ground cover. Plant material and other improvements located within the right-of-way must be approved by Wayne County.

§ 170-24.5. Buffer zones

A buffer zone is a landscaped area located adjacent to a residential use and intended to reduce negative impacts on adjacent residential properties.

- A. A buffer zone shall be required on any parcel that abuts a residential zoning district or use. Buffers shall include landscape and a wall or a berm in accordance with the following table. The Planning Commission shall determine whether a wall or berm is most appropriate in consideration of the proposed use, physical area available and impacts to be abated.

District or Use	Landscape Buffer	(Height of wall or berm)
MF and SH	B	4.5' to 6'
OS, B-1, B-3 and NRMU	B	4.5' to 6'
ORT, I and CI	A	5' to 8'
Off-street parking	B	4.5'
Service and loading areas	A	5' to 8'
Public utility buildings	B	6'
Mining and quarrying	A	6'

- Landscape buffer A: Two (2) trees and four (4) shrubs per 20 linear feet.
 - Landscape buffer B: One (1) tree and four (4) shrubs per 20 linear feet.
- B. The buffer shall be required on the subject site, even if the adjacent site is unimproved land.
- C. The width of the buffer shall be equal to the required setback.
- D. The height of the wall or berm shall be measured from the surface of the parking area or land on the nonresidential side of the wall or berm.

- E. When the subject site abuts two districts with different height requirements for a wall or berm, the height of the wall or berm shall be determined by the Planning Commission based on the best option for minimizing off-site impacts.
- F. Standards for walls.
 - (1) Walls shall be located on the lot line except where underground utilities interfere or where an alternate location provides a better opportunity for screening.
 - (2) Walls shall be constructed of brick or comparable decorative materials that match the primary building material used on the site. Wood or wood products are not permitted.
 - (3) Walls shall be contiguous except for approved pedestrian or vehicular connections.
- G. Standards for berms.
 - (1) Berms shall have a minimum four (4') wide crest on the top of the berm.
 - (2) The exterior face of the berm shall be constructed as an earthen slope. The interior face of the berm may be constructed with a retaining wall or terrace.
 - (3) Sides of the berm shall not exceed a one-on-four (1:4) slope.
 - (4) Side slopes shall be established with grass or other ground cover. If slopes are seeded, they shall be protected until the seed germinates and a permanent lawn is established.

§ 170-24.6. Parking lots

- A. In the Industrial, Office and Research and Technology Districts, one (1) canopy tree shall be required for each 3,000 square feet of the total paved surface, including parking, loading and driveways.
- B. In districts other than Industrial, Office and Research and Technology, one (1) canopy tree shall be required for each 2,000 square feet of the total paved surface, including parking, loading and driveways.
- C. At least two (2) parking lot trees shall be provided on each site.

- D. Required parking lot trees shall be placed within the parking lot envelope, defined as the area including the parking lot surface and extending 18' from the edge of the pavement.
- E. At least one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of the required trees shall be placed within the paved portion of the parking lot.
- F. Trees shall be protected from automobiles with curbing or other suitable device.
- G. Trees shall have a minimum clearance of four (4) to six (6) feet between the ground and the lowest branches.
- H. Landscape shall shield views of parked cars. Upright shrub varieties shall be utilized.
- I. Landscape islands shall be dispersed throughout the parking lot to break up the pavement area and help direct vehicular circulation.
- J. Parking lot islands shall comply with the following requirements.
 - (1) Minimum 150 square feet; 75 square feet if irrigated.
 - (2) Minimum ten (10) feet wide.
 - (3) Depth shall be two (2) feet shorter than adjacent parking space.
 - (4) Radii shall be minimum ten (10) feet at ends facing main circulation aisles and a minimum one (1) foot for others.
- K. Parking decks shall be screened along all sides by deciduous trees placed 25' on center and a contiguous row of shrubs and/or hedges along the foundation of the structure.

§ 170-24.7. Building fronts and interior grounds

- A. For all uses except single-family residential, 15% of the site, exclusive of right-of-way, road easements and required landscape elements (greenbelt, buffers and parking lots) shall be maintained as landscaped in accordance with the following standards:
 - (1) One (1) deciduous or evergreen tree per 400 square feet of required interior landscape area.
 - (2) One (1) shrub per 250 square feet of required interior landscape area.

- (3) Detention facilities may account for up to 50% of the interior landscape requirement.
- B. Interior landscaping shall be grouped near building entrances, at building foundations or along pedestrian walkways to articulate circulation and reduce the visual impact of the building scale.
- C. Planting beds shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet wide.

§ 170-24.8. Detention ponds, retention ponds and sedimentation basins

- A. Ponds shall be configured into the natural topography or shaped to emulate a naturally formed depression.
- B. The edge of the pond shall consist of sculptured landforms to filter and soften views of the pond.
- C. Plantings shall replicate a natural environment. Trees and shrubs shall be clustered around the perimeter and contain a variety of plant material.
- D. Plantings shall be provided at a ratio of one (1) deciduous tree, one (1) evergreen and ten (10) shrubs for every 50 linear feet of pond.
- E. Trees and shrubs shall be planted above the freeboard line. If shrubs are proposed below the freeboard line, they must be tolerant of wet or moist soil conditions.
- F. The side slopes and bottom of the pond shall be planted with water tolerant native plant material above the permanent high water mark. If the pond does not hold water, the side slopes and bottom must contain vegetative cover that is consistent with the perimeter of the pond.
- G. Mown lawn shall not be permitted within a 15' buffer around the perimeter of the pond. This area shall contain native flowers and grasses maintained in a natural condition.
- H. Landscape shall be arranged to provide access for and minimize disruption of plant material during routine pond maintenance.

§ 170-24.9. Street trees, medians, cul-de-sacs and driveway entrances

- A. Street trees shall be provided within all public rights-of-ways and private road easements at a rate of one (1) tree per 40 linear feet of road frontage.

- B. Medians and boulevard entrances shall be planted with one (1) canopy tree or two (2) ornamental trees per 30' linear feet.
- C. Cul-de-sacs shall be planted at a rate of one (1) canopy tree or two (2) ornamental trees per 1,000 square feet.
- D. Cul-de-sacs, site entrances and boulevard medians shall be landscaped with species tolerant of roadside conditions. The landscape plan shall take into consideration sight distance, size of planting area, location of pathways, maintaining adequate overhead clearance, accessibility to fire hydrants, visibility of approved signs and compatibility with the visual character of the surrounding area.
- E. Driveways to a residential development having four (4) or more dwelling units and other nonresidential developments shall be identified with a combination of plant material, identification sign, low-intensity lighting and architectural features to the extent permitted by other sections of this chapter.
- F. Public rights-of-way and easements shall be planted with sod or other suitable live plant material and shall be maintained by the abutting property owner or occupant. Medians, cul-du-sacs and other similar common areas shall be maintained by the property owner or association.

§ 170-24.10. General requirements

- A. When the required plant material results in a fraction, the number of required trees and shrubs shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
- B. All plant material shall be hardy to Northville Township, be free of disease and insects and conform to the American Standard for Nursery Stock of the American Association of Nurserymen.
- C. The root collar shall be set at the same height as the adjacent ground or just slightly higher.
- D. Burlap, wire, nails and twine shall be removed from the top and sides of the root ball. If the root ball is wrapped in a vinyl product or treated burlap, it must be removed from beneath the ball.
- E. All landscaped areas shall be irrigated.

- F. Plant material shall be installed so at maturity it does not obscure traffic signs or lighting, obstruct access for emergency vehicles, interfere with adequate sight distance for motorists or disrupt drainage patterns on the site or on adjacent properties.
- G. Undeveloped portions of each site shall be covered by grass or other living ground cover.
- H. Berms shall undulate both vertically and horizontally to provide a natural appearance. Additional plant material may be required to diminish the appearance of the berm.
- I. The minimum plant size shall be in accordance with the following standards.

Type	Minimum Plant Size
Deciduous canopy tree	3" to 3 ½" caliper DBH
Deciduous ornamental tree	2" caliper DBH tree form / 6' height clump form
Evergreen tree	8' height
Deciduous shrub	30" height (B & B)
Upright evergreen shrub	30" height (B & B)
Spreading evergreen shrub	24" spread

- J. A minimum four (4) inches of topsoil, meeting the ASTM standard for topsoil composition, shall be provided for all lawn areas, ground covers and planting beds.
- K. A minimum three (3) inches of wood chips or similar (non-stone) natural material shall be provided within planting beds.
- L. Planting beds shall be limited to the area immediately surrounding the plant material.
- M. Plant materials shall be located at least four (4) feet from a fence line or property line.
- N. Trees and shrubs shall be located ten (10) feet from the edge of a vehicular route and five (5) feet from a pedestrian route.
- O. Plantings within 15' of a fire hydrant shall not exceed six (6) inches in height.
- P. Mechanical equipment, such as ground mounted HVAC units, air compressors, pool pumps, transformers, satellite dish antennas, utility substations and similar equipment

shall be screened on at least three (3) sides. Where practical, height of the screen shall be equal the vertical height of the equipment at the time of planting.

- Q. The overall landscape plan shall not contain more than 33% of any one species.
- R. The use of native plant materials is strongly encouraged.
- S. Dwarf, globe, pendulous species are not permitted.
- T. Ornamental trees may be used to fulfill the tree requirement, provided two (2) ornamental trees shall be equivalent to one (1) required tree.
- U. Signs shall not be placed on, or within, berms.
- V. Landscape screening shall consist of tightly spaced plantings that can be reasonably expected to form a complete visual barrier within three (3) years of planting. Deciduous plant materials may be used to supplement evergreens, provided a complete visual barrier is maintained throughout the year.
- W. The following trees are not permitted as they split easily, their wood is brittle, their roots may cause maintenance issues or they are unusually susceptible to disease or insect pests. These trees may however be permitted when native to and associated with an appropriate ecosystem, such as a wetland area.
- Ash
 - Black locust
 - Box elder
 - Cottonwood
 - Elm
 - Ginkgo (female)
 - Honey locust (with thorns)
 - Honey locust (with thorns)
 - Horse chestnut (nut-bearing)
 - Mulberry
 - Poplar
 - Silver maple
 - Tree of heaven
 - Willow
- X. If a project is constructed in phases, the landscape may also be finalized in phases. The Township shall determine the extent and timing of landscaping within each phase based on the necessity to buffer the proposed development from adjacent uses, anticipated

commencement on subsequent phases, building heights and physical characteristics of the site such as topography or existing vegetation.

§ 170-24.11. Inspection and maintenance

- A. Upon completion of the landscape installation and prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the owner shall provide written certification by a landscape architect, registered in the State of Michigan, that all plant material has been installed as designed and shown on the landscape plan approved by the Township. The Township will then conduct the final inspection.
- B. Landscape must be inspected and approved by the Township prior to issuing a final certificate of occupancy. For residential projects, landscape will be inspected and approved in conjunction with the project being transferred to a homeowners' association.
- C. During winter months, installation of landscaping may be deferred, provided a performance guarantee is posted with the Township.
- D. Landscaped areas and plant materials shall be kept free from refuse, debris and invasive species. Plant materials, including lawn, shall be maintained in a healthy growing condition, neat and orderly in appearance. If any plant material dies or becomes diseased, it shall be replaced within 30 days of written notice from Northville Township or within an extended time period as specified in said notice.
- E. Tree stakes, guy wires and tree wrap must be removed after one (1) year.

§ 170-24.12. Waiver or modifications of requirements

- A. The Planning Commission may determine existing plant materials which are intended to be preserved, would meet the intent of this article. The Planning Commission may also determine that dimensional conditions unique to the parcel would prevent development of required greenbelts, buffer zones, parking lot landscaping or interior requirements. If such determination is made, the Planning Commission may waive or modify the landscaping provisions of this article in consideration of, but not limited to, the following criteria:
 - Presence of existing natural vegetation.
 - Topography.
 - Existing wetland, floodplain and poor soils areas.
 - Existing and proposed building placement.

- Building heights and views.
- Types and distance to adjacent land uses.
- Dimensional conditions unique to the parcel.
- Provision of adequate sight distances for motorists.
- Future land use proposed in the Township Master Plan.
- Drainage conditions.
- Health, safety and welfare of the Township.