

§ 174-13. Landscaping. [Amended 4-11-2005 ATM, Art 39]

A. Purpose and Applicability

- (1) Purpose - The purpose of this section is to preserve and protect the community's ecological resources and to improve the appearance, environment, character, and value of the total community; and to protect nearby properties, thereby promoting the public health, safety and general welfare. It is intended to establish minimum standards for the design of landscapes for all land development projects requiring Planning Board approval. This section also ensures that any development will make landscaping an integral part of that plan.
- (2) Applicability – The requirements of this section shall apply as specified below to any new building, addition, or change of use in an existing structure that requires a parking increase of five (5) or more spaces, or is subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. In performing site plan review under §174-10, the Planning Board may authorize alternatives to the following specifications, taking into consideration existing vegetation, topography, soils and other site conditions, provided that equivalent screening, shading and articulation are achieved.
- (3) Exceptions - The requirements of this section do not apply to developments or renovations in the Business Village District. However, the Planning Board may require landscaping as part of the site plan or special permit application within the Business Village District.

B. Landscape Standards and Specifications.

1. All submissions for projects subject to this section shall include a comprehensive landscape plan and planting schedule.
2. The developer shall furnish and install all plant materials listed on the approved landscaping plan.
3. Plant materials shall conform to the requirements described in the latest edition of *American Standard for Nursery Stock*, which is published by the American Association of Nurserymen.
4. Shade trees must be a minimum of three (3) inches in caliper six (6) inches above grade, be of a species common in the area and be ones which reach an ultimate height of at least thirty (30) feet. Ornamental trees must be a minimum of eight (8) feet at the time of planting. (Eight (8) feet from the top of the root ball to the top of the tree). Shrubs must be at least thirty-six (36) inches in height at the time of building occupancy, reach an ultimate height of at least five (5) feet and be of a species common in the area.
5. Do not use staking materials unless absolutely necessary. If staking is necessary, then the developer/property owner must remove staking materials after one full growing season.
6. Property owners ensure the survival and health of required trees. If any plant material dies, the property owner must replace it within one hundred eighty (180) days.

7. All plant materials required by this chapter shall be maintained in a healthful condition. Any and all fences required for screening shall be properly maintained.
8. All planting areas shall be mulched with a three (3) to four (4) inch layer of bark mulch or other similar material to cover the complete planting area. However, in no case shall more than 25% of the planting area be strictly bare mulch.
9. A permanent water supply system, or other acceptable watering method, shall be provided for all planting areas. In order to protect the Town's water supply, and encourage sound landscaping practices, the Town of Southborough recommends sustainable watering systems, such as: rainwater recycling systems, automatic shut-off devices, drought-tolerant native plant material, and careful irrigation scheduling, among others.

Plantings shall consist of at least one (1) tree per forty (40) linear feet of planting area length, except one (1) tree per twenty (20) linear feet of street planting area abutting Route 9, and at least one (1) shrub per three (3) feet. Plantings preferably will be grouped, not evenly spaced, and shall be located or trimmed to avoid blocking egress visibility. The planting area shall be unpaved except for access drives and walks essentially perpendicular to the area and shall be located wholly within the lot.

Applicants are encouraged to specify salt-tolerant species for street trees to prevent early plant loss due to winter road salt.

Invasive plants, as defined by the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Group, are "plants that have spread into native or minimally managed plant systems in Massachusetts. These plants cause economic or environmental harm by developing self-sustaining populations and becoming dominant and/or disruptive to those systems." (Under this definition all synonyms, species, subspecies, varieties, forms, and cultivars of that species are included unless proven otherwise by a process of scientific evaluation.) The Town of Southborough encourages the use of native species in all landscaping plans. Please note that many of the invasive species listed below have native counterparts that could be considered.

The following invasive species of plants are prohibited from being planted:

<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree of heaven
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese barberry
<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Asian or, Asiatic bittersweet, oriental bittersweet
<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Autumn olive
<i>Frangula alnus</i>	European buckthorn, glossy buckthorn
<i>Lonicera x bella</i> Zabel [morrowii x tatarica]	Bell's honeysuckle
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese honeysuckle
<i>Lonicera morrowii</i>	Morrow's honeysuckle
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple loosestrife
<i>Phragmites australis</i> (Ceav.) Trin. ex Steud.	common reed
<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	Common buckthorn
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	Black locust
<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Multiflora rose
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore maple
<i>Euonymus alatus</i>	Burning bush
<i>Ligustrum species</i>	Privet
<i>Spirea japonica</i>	Japanese spirea

- C. Street planting area. Street planting is required for all nonresidential premises. Street plantings at the front of lots shall contribute to the creation of an impression of a separation of the street and the developed area of the site without necessarily eliminating visual contact between them. Street plantings adjoining or facing residential uses or residential zoning districts shall provide the strongest possible visual barriers between uses at the pedestrian level and a sense of separation. A landscaped buffer strip shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) feet in depth. The Planning Board may reduce or modify this requirement if in their judgment, strict compliance would create a hardship due to existing conditions such as lot size, location of existing buildings, or environmental conditions. Also refer to subsection H. Existing vegetation.
- D. Side and rear line planting area. A landscape buffer strip a minimum of ten (10) feet in width shall abut all side and rear property lines.
- E. Vehicular use area plantings. All new or expanded parking lots of five (5) or more spaces shall be required to comply with this Section. If an existing parking lot is expanded or improved to increase the number of spaces by five (5) or more, it shall comply with this Section within the expanded or improved portion.
1. Trees shall be planted at a rate of two (2) shade trees or three (3) ornamental trees for every ten (10) spaces or fraction thereof.
 2. Required trees shall be located within or adjacent to parking lots as tree islands, medians, and at the end of parking bays, traffic delineators, or between rows of

parking spaces in a manner such that no parking space is located more than sixty (60) feet from a tree.

3. Planting areas within parking areas shall provide a minimum of eighty-one (81) square feet per tree with a minimum inside dimension of nine (9) feet and a minimum prepared depth of eighteen (18) inches.

The exterior perimeter of all vehicular use areas shall be planted with a buffer strip at least five (5) feet in width, excluding accessways. Any vehicular use area abutting a lot that is residentially used or zoned shall be planted with a buffer strip at least ten (10) feet in width and shall be supplemented with an opaque fence or wall at least six (6) feet high, unless there is vegetation sufficiently dense to effectively obscure vision. Trees and soil plots shall be so located as to provide visual relief and wind interruption within the parking area and to assure safe patterns of internal circulation.

Ratios of Parking Spaces to Trees (choose one (1) column of trees only)

# of Parking Spaces	# of Shade Trees	or # of Ornamental Trees	or # of Mixed
10	2	3	3
15	3	5	4
20	4	6	5
25	5	8	6
30	6	9	7
35	7	11	8
40	8	12	9
45	9	14	10
50	10	15	11
55	11	17	13
60	12	18	14
65	13	20	15
70	14	21	16
75	15	23	18
80	16	24	19
85	17	26	20
90	18	27	21
95	19	29	23
100	20	30	24

To determine the number of trees needed for a number of parking spaces not shown on the chart above, use the following formulas (choose (1) only):

Shade trees: # of spaces x 20%

Ornamental trees: # of spaces x 30%

Mix of both: # of spaces x 25%

- F. Zoning District boundary planting area. A landscaped buffer strip, a minimum of twenty (20) feet in width is required on any nonresidential premises along the full length of any boundary abutting property that is residentially used or zoned except that in the Industrial Park District (IP) the buffer strip shall be a minimum of fifty (50) feet in width. The buffer strip shall contain existing vegetation and/or plantings that are sufficiently dense to adequately screen adjacent residential properties.
- G. Berms. When berms are used to meet the requirements for a buffer strip, they shall be planted with living vegetation. The minimum top width shall be five (5) feet with a minimum slope of 3:1. In no case shall more than 25% of the berm planting area be strictly bare mulch or non-living material.
- H. Existing vegetation. Wherever possible, the above requirements shall be met by retention of existing plants. If located within twenty-five (25) feet of a street, no existing tree of six (6) inches in caliper or greater [measured four (4) feet above grade], dense hedgerow of four (4) or more feet in both depth and height or existing earth berm providing similar visual screening shall be removed or have grade changed more than one (1) foot unless dictated by public health, access safety or identification of the premises.
- I. Exceptions. Where plant materials as required would harmfully obstruct a scenic view, substitution of additional low level plantings which will visually define the street edge or property line may be authorized, provided that proposed buildings are also designed and located to preserve that scenic view.
- J. Site distance restrictions. When an accessway intersects a public street or another access way, required plantings shall conform to the requirements of unobstructed site distance as outlined in the parking and loading regulations (§ 174-12F).
- K. Nonconforming landscaping and screening.
- (1) Any improvement along the property boundary, including landscaping, screening and fencing, legally erected and conforming to the requirement of this chapter when so erected, may continue to be maintained, even though as a result of changes to this chapter the boundary improvements no longer conform to its requirements, provided that such boundary improvements shall not be enlarged, redesigned or altered except so as to make them conform to said requirements, and further provided that any such boundary improvements which have been destroyed or damaged to such an extent that the cost of restoration would exceed fifty percent (50%) of the replacement value of the boundary improvements at the time of destruction or damage, shall not be repaired, rebuilt or altered, except so as to make said boundary improvements conform to the requirements of this chapter.
 - (2) The exemption for nonconforming landscaping and screening herein granted shall terminate with respect to any boundary improvements which shall:
 - (a) Have been abandoned; or
 - (b) Not have been repaired or properly maintained for at least sixty (60) days after notice to that effect has been given by the Building Inspector.