

**Land
Development
Code**



**City of
Hickory, NC**

- (4) Zoning designation and use of all adjacent properties.
- (5) Location and description of all landscape improvements, including all perimeter landscape areas and perimeter and interior parking lot landscaping.
- (6) Table of all plants used with botanical and common name, quantity and size of all proposed landscape material.
- (7) Location of all other landscape improvements, including berms, walls, fences, courtyards, lights, and paved areas.
- (8) Required open space, and all streams, wetlands, and associated setback buffers.

9.13.4 Tree Preservation

- A. The preservation of existing trees on a site can improve the aesthetic quality of the site, improve property values, provide environmental benefits, and mitigate the impacts of development. Existing vegetation shall be preserved whenever feasible and must be preserved in certain circumstances as outlined below.
- B. Where a natural perimeter buffer exists, it is to remain undisturbed, except for the removal of dead wood and invasive vines and plants. No limbing up is allowed and understory shall not be removed. The Planning Director may require the retention of other existing mature vegetation on a site wherever such vegetation contributes to required screening and buffering or for the preservation of significant trees.
- C. Existing trees and wooded areas may be counted toward buffer and screening and parking area landscape requirements. Existing trees may be counted for fulfilling parking area requirements if they are located within 100 feet of the parking area. Existing trees shall be credited at the following rate according to the diameter measured at four and a half (4.5) feet above the ground:

Existing Tree Diameter	Tree Credit Earned
6" – 12"	2
13" – 18"	3
19" – 24"	4
> 25"	5

- D. When using existing trees, they must be protected and undisturbed during the entire construction process using, at a minimum, the techniques proved in the City of Hickory Manual of Practice and as may be required by the City Arborist or designee. Applicants shall seek the assistance of a professional urban forester or landscape architect to properly preserve existing trees for credit. If protective measures are not used during construction, existing vegetation cannot be counted toward landscape requirements.
- E. For all trees required by this Land Development Code, tree topping is prohibited. See Section 9.13.10 of the Land Development Code and the Manual of Practice for more information about tree topping and proper tree pruning.

9.13.5 Perimeter Landscape Buffer Requirements

- A. A perimeter landscape buffer is a strip of land around the outer perimeter of those portions of a lot adjacent to other land uses that may only be occupied by screening, underground utilities, retention areas and landscape materials. If underground utilities need to be located along a property line where a buffer is required, the utility lines shall be located along the edge of the buffer. A wider buffer may need to be provided, if necessary, to accommodate required vegetation and utilities.

B. General Buffer Requirements

- (1) Screening and buffering shall be required as outlined below and further described in the City of Hickory's Manual of Practice.
- (2) Screening, such as hedges, fences or walls, as described, shall not be over four (4) feet tall within front yards unless otherwise expressly allowed in the Land Development Code.
- (3) Where a natural buffer exists, it shall remain undisturbed, except for the removal of dead wood and invasive vines and plants. In cases where topography or other site conditions make it unfeasible to retain the natural buffer, a waiver of the requirements may be given by the Planning Director. No limbing up is allowed and understory shall not be removed. Additional trees and shrubs may be required to bring the natural buffer up to the full perimeter buffer requirements.
- (4) All exposed areas of soil within the buffer area must be covered with mulch, groundcover vegetation or grass.
- (5) Refer to Section 9.13.9 of the Land Development Code and the City of Hickory's Manual of Practice for plant specifications for recommended plant lists and planting diagrams.
- (6) Buffer Types

(a) Ten-Foot Buffers

For buffers required to be ten (10) feet in width, screening shall consist of at least the following measures, together with any additional specifications which may be required as a condition of a development permit:

- i. A row of canopy trees and/or large evergreen trees planted an average of thirty (30) feet on center; and
- ii. One (1) understory tree or evergreen tree planted between each canopy tree; and
- iii. Fifteen (15) shrubs, per 100 linear feet of buffer, interspersed among the trees, at least 75%, of which shall be evergreen. A mix of shrub species may be used to create visual interest and diversity (see Manual of Practice).

(b) Fifteen-Foot Buffers

For buffers required to be fifteen (15) feet in width, screening shall consist of at least the following measures, together with any additional specifications which may be required as a condition of a development permit:

- i. A double, staggered row of evergreen trees planted no more than ten (10) feet apart; or
- ii. A mixed buffer which for every 100 linear feet contains at a minimum:
 - four (4) canopy trees, spaced approximately every twenty-five (25) feet apart, and
 - four (4) understory trees or evergreen trees interspersed between the larger trees, and
 - fifteen (15) shrubs (at least 75% evergreen).

A fifteen-foot mixed buffer shall be designed to form a densely planted semi-opaque visual buffer. Plants shall be spaced to cover the length of the entire buffer area. See the Manual of Practice for plant spacing.

(c) Thirty-Foot Wide Buffers

For buffers required to be thirty (30) or more feet in width, screening shall consist of at least the following measures, together with any additional specifications which may be required as a condition of a development permit:

- i. A double, staggered row of evergreen trees planted no more than ten (10) feet apart; and
- ii. four (4) canopy trees planted approximately every twenty-five (25) feet on center; planted on the outward-facing side of the property; or
- iii. A mixed buffer which for every 100 linear feet contains at a minimum:
 - four (4) canopy trees, and
 - seven (7) understory trees or evergreen trees, interspersed between the larger trees, and
 - Thirty (30) shrubs (at least 75% evergreen).
- iv. A mixed buffer shall be designed to form a densely planted, substantially opaque visual buffer. Plants shall be spaced to cover the full length of the buffer area. See the Manual of Practice for plant spacing.

(d) Fences, Walls, and Berms (TA 18-01)

When a buffer is required, opaque fences, walls and/or berms may be substituted for half of the vegetation requirements outlined above. If a fence is provided, the required width of the buffer shall be reduced by 33 percent.

- i. All fences shall be a minimum of six (6) feet high with the finished side facing outwards. Chain-link fencing shall not be used.
- ii. Walls shall be stone or brick-faced and shall be six (6) feet high, unless built in combination with an earthen berm.
- iii. If provided, berms shall not exceed a slope with a maximum rise of one (1) foot to a run of two (2) feet, a maximum height of four (4) feet and a maximum width of forty (40) percent of the required buffer width. All berms shall be stabilized with ground cover (mulch or vegetation) that provides permanent slope retention.

C. Buffer Matrix

The type of buffer to be provided along the side and rear property lines is described below. The type of landscaping required varies depending upon the intensity of proposed use. In the case of mixed-use projects or vacant land the most intense use shall be used to determine the buffer type. Land use groups are determined in Subsection D.

Proposed Use	Abutting Use Buffer Type				
	Single	Multi-Family	Group	Group	Group

	and Two Family	2-6 UPA	7+ UPA	1	2	3
Multi-Family (<6 UPA)	10					
Multi-Family (7+ UPA)	10	10				
Group 1 Use	10	10	10			
Group 2 Use	15	15	15	10		
Group 3 Use	30	30	30	30	15	

UPA = Dwelling Units per Acre

D. Land Use Groups

Land uses shall be assigned to land use groups in accordance with the standards of this section. In the case of uses not listed, the Planning Director shall make a determination of the group appropriate for such uses. In reaching the determination, the Planning Director shall be guided by the requirements for similar uses having comparable impacts.

Land Use Groups	
Group 1	
Daycare	Parks and Playgrounds
Cemetery	Religious Institutions
Community Recreational Uses	Schools
Group 2	
Agriculture	Medical Centers
Amusement Facilities	Mini-storage Facilities
Drinking Establishment	Office and Personal Services
Colleges	Public Facilities
Commercial Parking	Retail Sales and Service
Cultural Facilities	Vehicle Repair
Marina	Wireless Communication Facilities
Group 3	
Airports	Manufacturing and Production
Adult Business	Mining
Detention Facilities	Open Storage, Principal Use
Industrial Service	Railroad Yards
Junkyards and Recycling Facilities	Warehouse and Freight Movement
Kennels	Waste Related
Major Event Entertainment	Wholesale Sales

9.13.6 Other Required Screening

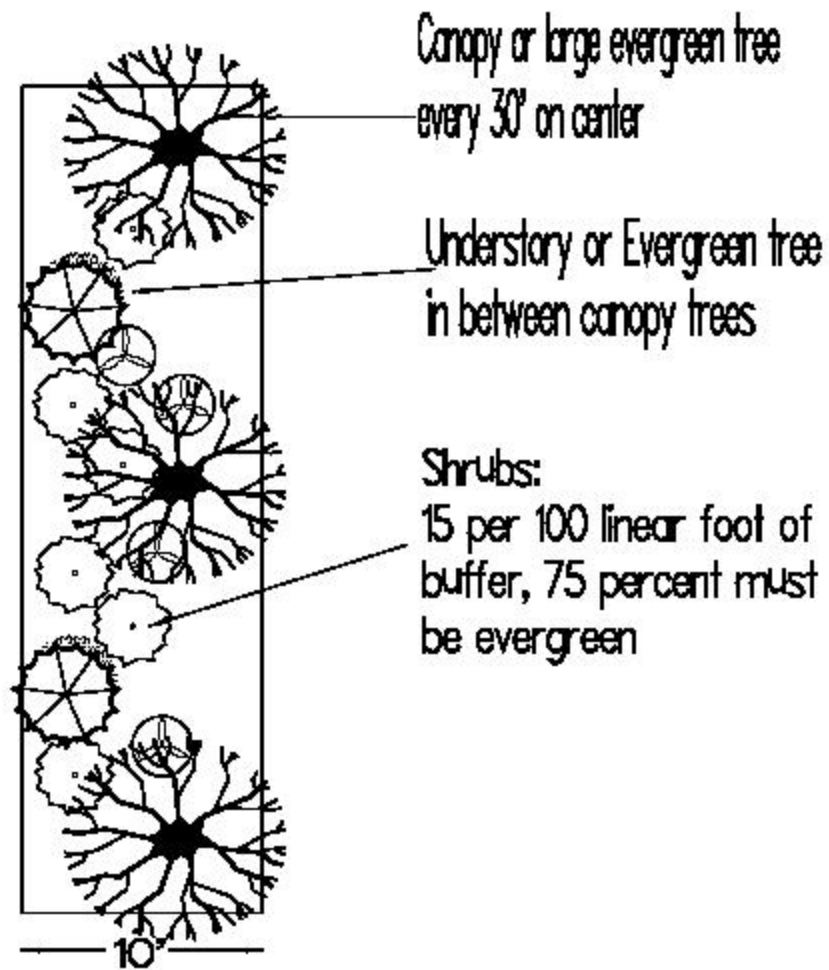
A. Screening of Open Storage

Permitted open storage areas, as a principal or accessory use, shall be screened from view of any major and/or minor transportation roadway as shown on the Hickory by Choice Future Land Use and Transportation Plan Map and from all residentially zoned properties as described in Sections 6.2.18 and 6.3.5.

City of Hickory
Landscape Ordinance
And Tree Preservation
Handbook

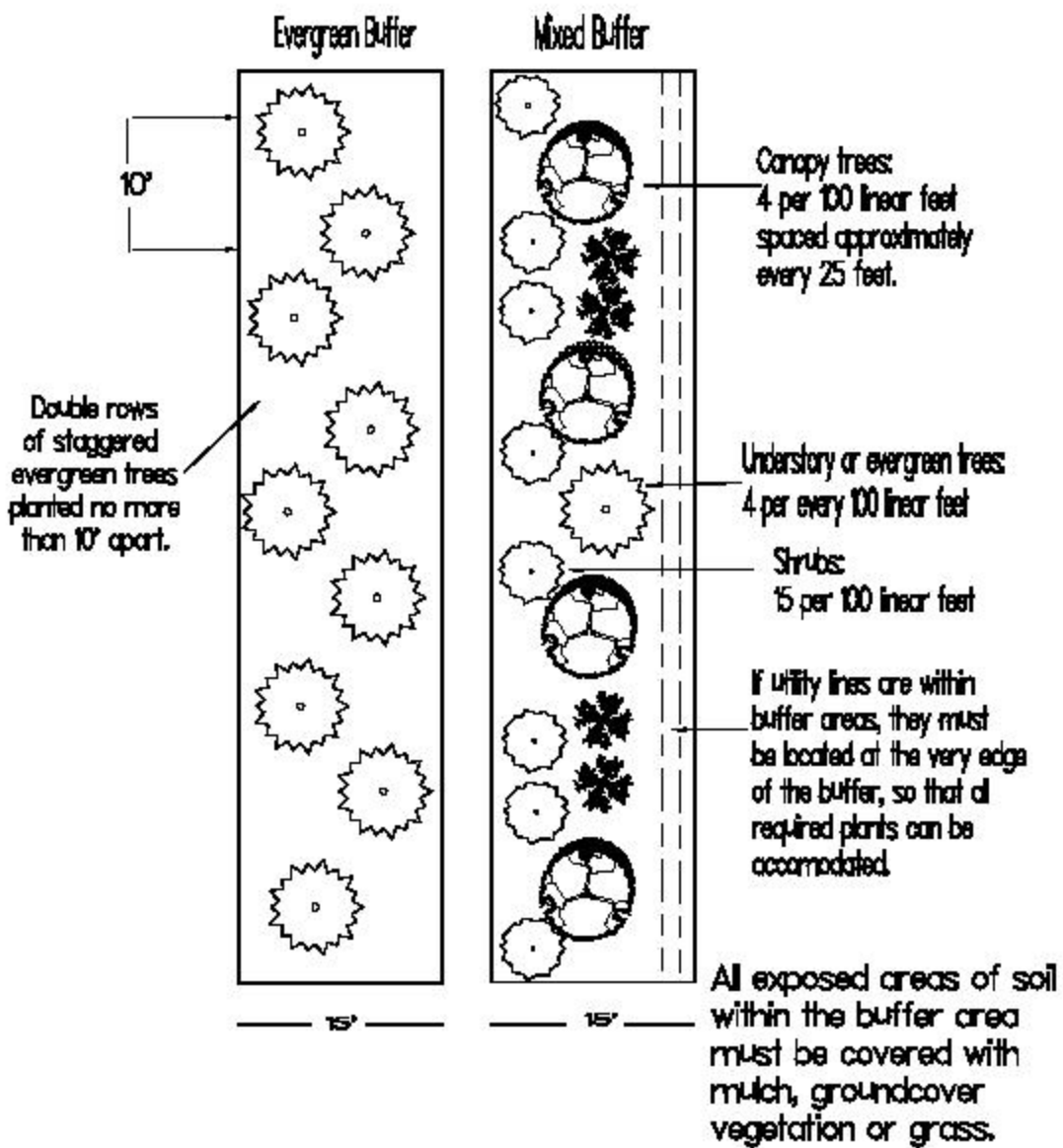


10-Foot Perimeter Landscape Buffer



All exposed areas of soil within the buffer area must be covered with mulch, groundcover vegetation or grass.

15-Foot Perimeter Landscape Buffer



30-Foot Perimeter Landscape Buffer

Example of Mixed Landscape Buffer

Example of Canopy Tree and Evergreen Buffer

