

**Land
Development
Code**



**City of
Hickory, NC**

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 9.14.10 of the Land Development Code and the Manual of Practice for more information about tree topping and proper tree pruning.

9.14.5 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 9.14.9 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

When a buffer is required, opaque wooden 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.
- 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 and Two Family | Multi-Family | | Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
| | | 2-6 UPA | 7+ UPA | | | |
| 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 |

9.14.6 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.

B. Screening of Mechanical Equipment

All nonresidential uses shall screen from view from public places and neighboring properties if in a different Land Use Group, all mechanical equipment such as, but not limited to, ground or roof-mounted air conditioners or pumps through the use of features such as berms, fences, false facades or dense landscaping.

9.14.7 Landscape Requirements for Parking Areas

A. General Requirements

- (1) All parking areas with six (6) or more spaces, except those located entirely underground or within structures, shall comply with the requirements of this section.
- (2) Parking area shall be defined as all vehicular use areas, including all parking spaces, vehicle storage areas, access and maneuvering areas.
- (3) Planted areas next to pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, streets, private driveways, parking aisles, or the approach to any street intersections shall be maintained or plant material chosen to maintain a clear zone. See the Manual of Practice for site triangle requirements.
- (4) Refer to Section 9.14.9 for plant specifications and to the Manual of Practice for recommended plant species and other information.
- (5) Additional parking area landscape standards are required for developments within center and several overlay districts. Refer to those sections for additional requirements.
- (6) When calculating the number of trees and shrubs required, any fraction of a number shall be rounded up to the next whole number.

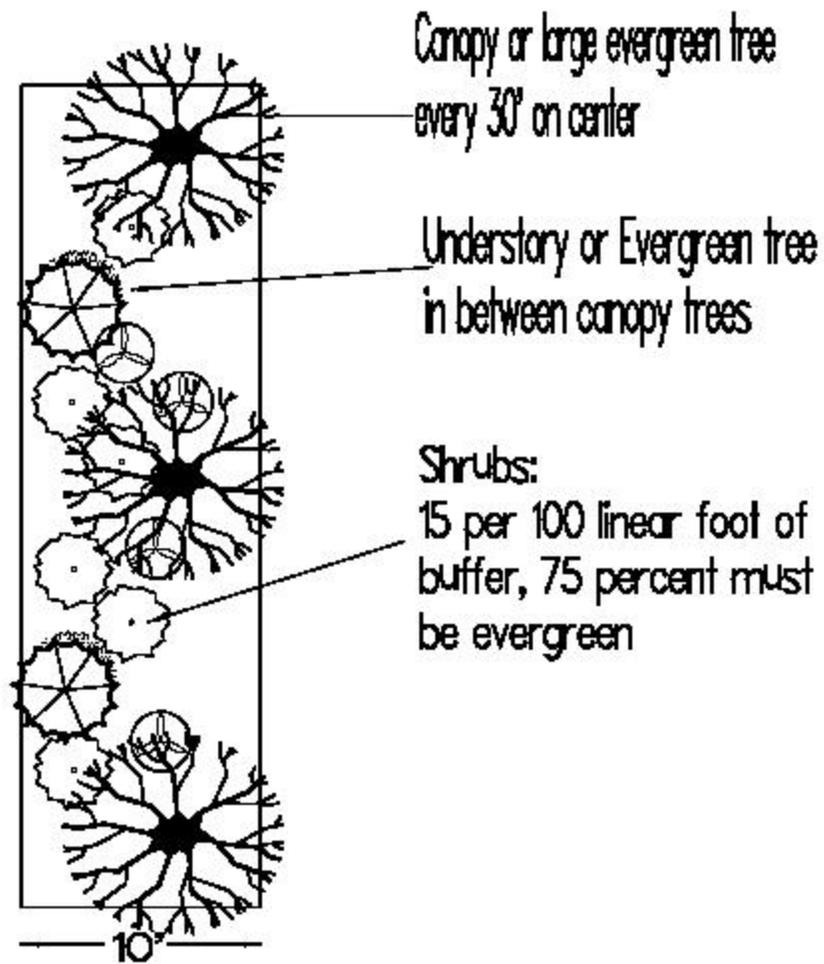
B. Perimeter Parking Area Buffer Requirements

- (1) Parking areas shall be separated and screened from all adjoining properties, streets, and rights-of-way by a landscape buffer. The buffer area shall be at least five (5) feet in width along all street rights.
- (2) Within the buffer area, canopy trees must be planted an average of thirty (30) feet on center and shrubs must be planted an average of every five (5) feet on center. Along road frontages, shrub spacing shall be every three (3) feet on center in order to form a continuous hedge.

City of Hickory
Landscape Ordinance
And Tree Preservation
Handbook

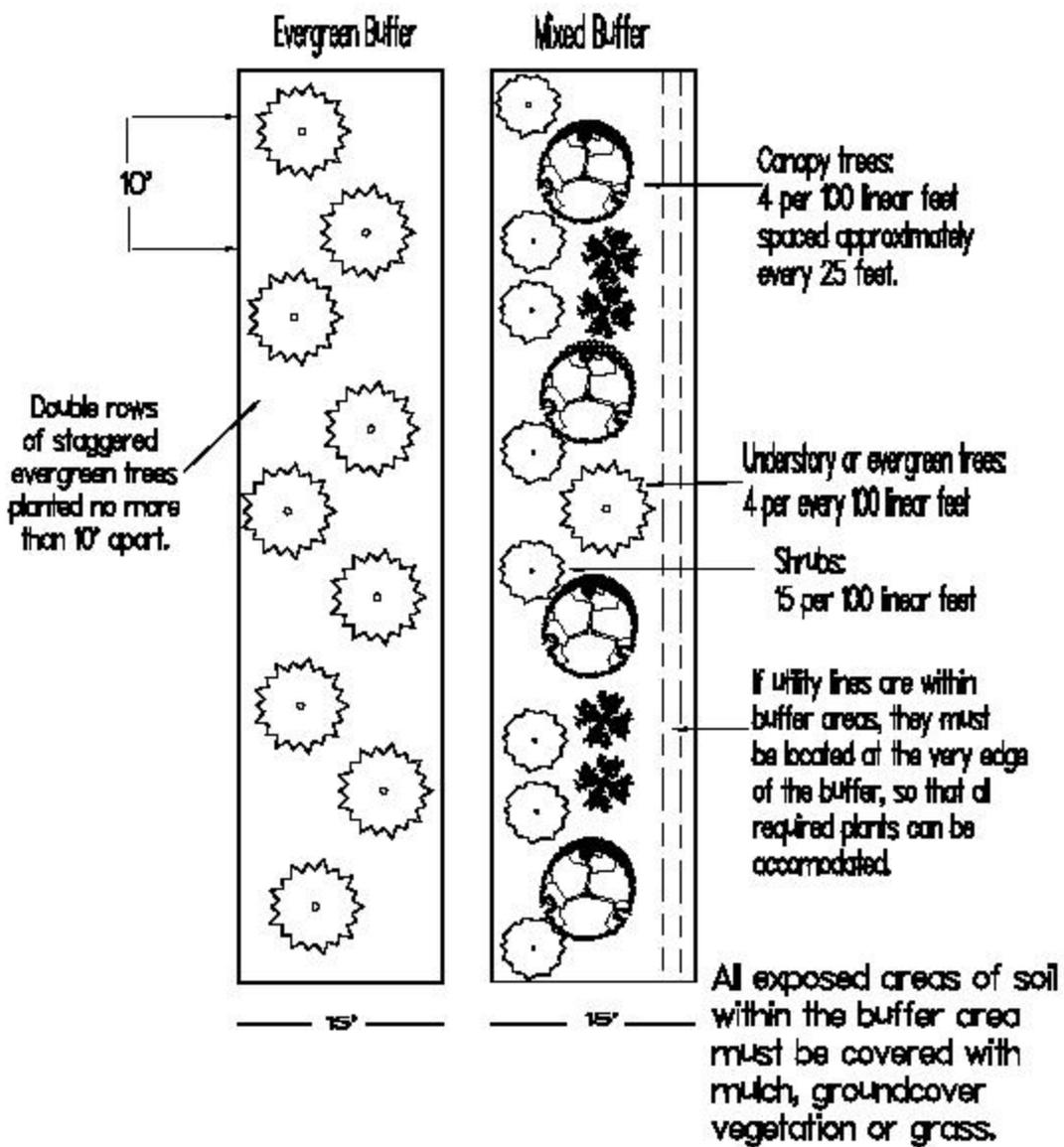


10-Foot Perimeter Landscape Buffer



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

