

**ARTICLE 21-A**  
**LANDSCAPING REQUIREMENTS**

Created 5-4-13  
Updated 4-14-19

**Section 21A.01 Purpose.**

The purpose of this Article is to promote the public health, safety and welfare by establishing minimum standards for the design, installation and maintenance of landscaping in parking lots, as greenbelts between uses and along roadways. Landscaping is considered by the Township to be an important element of land development and is a critical factor in maintaining an attractive community character and conserving the value of land and buildings in the Township. Landscaping also serves to buffer incompatible land use, moderate harsh or unpleasant sounds, remove air pollutants, reduce the glare from vehicle headlights and separate vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

The landscape standards of this Article are considered the minimum necessary to achieve the objectives noted above. In several instances, the standards are intentionally flexible to encourage flexibility and creative design. Applicants are encouraged to provide additional landscaping to improve the function, appearance and value of their property.

**Section 21A.02 Applicability.**

A. The standards contained in this Article shall be applicable to any Site Plan, Special Land Use request, or PUD submitted for review and approval under this Article.

- B. The regulations of this Article shall not apply to individual single-family and two-family dwelling unit.
- C. Modification of Required Landscaping. For existing and proposed uses that require Site Plan approval to either expand or be built, landscaping shall be installed insofar as practical. The Planning Commission in its review of the Site Plan has the authority to increase, decrease or otherwise modify the requirements of this Article. In doing so, the Commission shall consider the following criteria:
1. The amount of space on the site available for landscaping.
  2. Existing landscaping on the site and on adjacent properties.
  3. The type of use on the site and size of the development.
  4. Existing and proposed adjacent land uses.
  5. The effect the required landscaping would have on the operation of the existing proposed land use.
  6. Whether additional landscaping is necessary to mitigate the adverse effects of adjoining land uses, to reduce headlight glare, reduce noise and to otherwise achieve the objectives of this Section.

**Section 21A.03 General Regulations.**

- A. To the extent feasible, the approved landscaping shall be installed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
- B. Landscaping shall be installed within 180 days of occupancy of the building or structure unless a longer period is permitted in writing by the Zoning Administrator.
- C. All landscaping shall be hardy plant materials and maintained thereafter in a neat, healthy and orderly manner. Withered and/or dead plant materials shall be replaced within a reasonable period of time but no longer than one growing season.
- D. The current property owner shall be responsible for the maintenance of the landscaping as originally approved and installed. This requirement includes the mowing of grass, weeding, irrigating, fertilizing, and pruning. Grass areas landscaped in conjunction with buildings or parking lots shall not exceed four inches in height. Ground cover areas designed for future development shall not exceed eight (8) inches in height.
- E. All landscaping areas shall be kept free of refuse and debris and shall be provided with irrigation sufficient to maintain such areas in a healthy and growing condition. In particular, an underground irrigation system shall be installed and operated to serve all grass areas including grassed landscape islands, to ensure that all areas are maintained in a healthy and growing

condition. Underground irrigation systems shall comply with the requirements of Section 24.05F7.  
*(Ord. # 2019-5, Eff. 4-14-19)*

- F. For the purpose of this article, a corner lot is considered as having a front yard along each street, and the required landscaping shall be provided for both front yards.
- G. Landscaping shall be arranged so as not to obscure traffic signs, fire hydrants, or obstruct drivers' sight distance within the parking area and at driveway entrances. A clear space of not less than five (5) feet shall be provided in front of and completely around all fire hydrants, manholes, service boxes, and valve boxes. The clear space shall be free of all obstructions such as parked cars, landscaping at maturity, utilities, service vehicles, construction work, snow and similar items.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
- H. Types of trees permitted to be planted within the required landscaped areas shall include but not be limited to the following:
  - 1. Canopy trees examples: Maples, Honey Locust, Sycamore, Oak, Linden, and Callery Pear.
  - 2. Ornamental tree examples: Redbud, Hawthorn, Crabapple, Dogwood, Plum, Serviceberry.
  - 3. Evergreen tree examples: Norway Spruce, Austrian Pine, White Pine, Colorado Spruce, Hemlock.

4. Deciduous shrub examples:  
Viburnum, Euonymus, Spiraea,  
Forsythia.
  5. Evergreen shrub examples: Yew,  
Juniper, Inkberry, Arborvitae.
- I. The surface area immediately above public utilities such as water mains and sanitary sewers, shall remain clear and free from landscape plantings and other obstructions for a minimum distance of ten (10) feet from each side of the utility infrastructure.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
- Section 21A.04 Greenbelt Requirements.**
- A. A greenbelt shall be provided as follows:
1. Wherever a non-residential zoning district or a non-residential use in a PUD zoning districts abuts an AG, RE, Residential, MHP, a PUD Zone containing residential uses or an area recommended for residential land use in the Township Master Plan.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
  2. Wherever a non-residential zoning district abuts a parcel containing a residential use such as a dwelling in a Commercial or Industrial Zone.
  3. Wherever a non-residential use, such as a church, school, hospital, or governmental service building which may be allowed in a residential zone, abuts a parcel containing a residential use or a Residential, MHP or PUD Zone containing residential use or a residential land use in the Township Master Plan.
4. Wherever multi-family buildings abut an R1, R2, R3, MHP or PUD Zone containing single and two family dwellings or an area recommended for single or two family land use in the Township Master Plan. See Section 21A.05 for specific landscaping requirements.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
- B. The greenbelt shall be installed between the different zoning districts or uses.
- C. The greenbelt requirements of this Section shall not apply where adjacent zoning district or uses are separated by a public or private street. In such case, the front yard landscaping requirements of this Article shall apply.
- D. Width and Planting Requirements for Greenbelts.
1. A greenbelt shall be a minimum of fifteen (15) feet wide.
  2. For each 20 linear feet abutting the adjacent property, one tree shall be planted within the greenbelt. Trees shall be a mixture of evergreen, canopy and ornamental trees. Two shrubs shall be planted for each tree and each shrub shall be a minimum of thirty (30) inches at planting and reach a minimum height of five feet at maturity.
- E. Plant Spacing and Size Requirements.
1. Plant materials shall not be placed closer than eight (8) feet to a fence line or property line.

2. Evergreen trees shall be planted not more than 20 feet on center and shall be not less than four (4) feet in height at planting.
3. Ornamental trees or tree-like shrubs shall be planted not more than ten (10) feet on center and shall not be less than four (4) feet in height at planting.
4. Deciduous shrubs shall be planted not more than four (4) feet on center and shall not be less than thirty (30) inches in height at planting.
5. Deciduous trees shall be planted not more than twenty five (25) feet on center and shall not be less than two (2) inches in caliper measured at breast height at planting.

**F. Front Yard Landscaping.**

Except for necessary driveways, frontage roads, service drives or walkways, the front yard shall be landscaped according to the following minimum requirements.

1. For each one hundred fifty (150) feet or whole increment in length of road frontage two (2) deciduous or evergreen trees or combination thereof, two (2) ornamental trees, and three (3) shrubs for each tree shall be planted within the front yard.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
2. Earthen berms may be permitted within the required front yard landscape area. Credit of up to twenty five (25%) percent may be received against providing the required

plantings through the use of berms two (2) to three (3) feet in height.

3. Planting and berms shall be located so as not to obstruct the vision of drivers entering or leaving a site.
4. For multi-family developments which abut the front yard the landscaping requirements of section 23.06 shall apply.

**G. Off Street Parking Area Landscaping Requirements.**

1. All parking areas having twenty (20) or more parking spaces shall be landscaped according to the following minimum requirements;
  - (i) A minimum of twenty (20) square feet of landscaping for each parking space shall be provided. The required landscape area shall consist of a combination of islands within the parking lot and landscaping located on the perimeter of the parking lot outside of the street right of way. Such landscape areas shall consist of grass, mulch, ground cover shrubs, or trees and be protected from vehicle access by the installation of raised concrete curb, parking blocks, or other similar methods.
  - (ii) Landscaping islands shall generally be placed at the end of parking rows to better define driving lanes and create safe sight lines for drivers. Where practical such islands shall also be dispersed throughout the parking lot in order to break up large expanses of

- paved surfaces and provide areas for shade trees. Each landscape island shall be a minimum of six (6) feet wide and shall contain at least one (1) canopy tree. Landscape islands containing a fire hydrant shall be at least ten (10) feet wide.
- (iii) One (1) canopy or ornamental tree for every twenty (20) parking spaces, with a minimum of two (2) trees, shall be planted adjacent to and within the parking area.
2. In addition to the front yard landscaping requirements of this Section, except for multi-family projects pursuant to Section 23.06 herein, all front yard parking areas shall be screened from view from the road right-of-ways by the following measures:
- (i) A continuous landscaped hedge with a minimum height of twenty-four (24) inches at planting with a minimum height of three (3) feet at maturity consisting of plant material that will maintain its green foliage year round along the entire length of the parking area or;
- (ii) A solid wall not less than three (3) feet high which shall consist of brick, block, stone, or materials similar to the exterior materials of the building on the site or;
- (iii) A combination of (i) and (ii) above.
3. Landscaping that is required for green belts and front yard landscaping and which abuts off-street parking areas may substitute for up to fifty (50%) percent of the required parking lot landscaping.
4. Trees shall be located to prevent damage by motor vehicles.
5. All parking lot landscaped areas shall be located so as not to impede drainage or traffic circulation.  
*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*
- H. Berms, Walls, and Fences.
1. If a berm is used for all or part of the greenbelt, required plant material quantities may be reduced by twenty five (25%). The berm shall comply with minimum standards contained in the Article. All plant materials shall be placed along the top and exterior side slope of the berm. The greenbelt width shall be increased as needed to accommodate maximum berm side slopes of one (1) foot vertical rise to three (3) feet horizontal.
2. A screen wall or solid fence may be used for all or part of the greenbelt. If a solid fence or screen wall is used, the following regulations shall apply.
- (i) Required quantities of plant materials may be reduced by fifty (50%) percent for that area abutting the fence or wall.
- (ii) The fence or wall shall comply with the applicable regulations of the Ordinance.
3. Minimum Standards for Berms
- (i) Wherever a berm is used to meet the minimum requirements of this Article, it shall have a maximum height of five (5) feet above grade.

- (ii) Berms shall be constructed so as to maintain side slopes not to exceed a one (1) foot vertical rise to three (3) feet horizontal ratio.
- (iii) Berm areas shall be covered with grass or other living ground cover.
- (iv) Berms shall be constructed so as not to negatively affect drainage patterns on adjacent properties.

I. Stormwater detention/retention areas shall be permitted within greenbelts provided they do not reduce the screening effect.

J. Solid waste dumpsters may be located in greenbelts, provided they comply with the screening requirements contained in Article 24 herein.

**Section 21A.05 Drive-up, Drive-in, and Drive-through Restaurants.**

Drive-up windows and waiting areas for any terminal or intercom must be screened from adjoining properties and road rights-of-way by internal landscaping such as landscaped islands or other appropriate year around screening.

*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*

**Section 21A.06 Townhouse Developments, Mobile Home Development Sites Designed for Twenty-Five (25) or More Dwelling Units, or Other Major Residential Developments.**

All development sites must maintain a minimum fifty (50) foot wide front yard landscaped setback from all existing or proposed public streets or private roads, and a minimum twenty-five (25) foot wide landscaped setback from all adjoining properties. All landscaped setback areas

shall include a twenty (20) foot wide planting strip containing, at a minimum, all of the following:

1. All multi-family dwelling development sites shall provide a landscaped area as noted below. All such landscaped areas shall comply with the requirements of Section 21A.06.2 and 3 herein.

a. Front yard.

A minimum one hundred (100) foot wide landscaped front yard if the multi-family dwelling development is across the street from an R-1 zoned parcel or parcels or land which is recommended for Low Density Residential use in the Allendale Charter Township Master Plan.

b. Side and rear yards.

1) A minimum one hundred (100) foot wide landscaped area shall be provided along those side and rear lot lines which abut R-1 zoned parcels or land which is recommended for Low Density Residential use in Allendale Charter Township Master Plan.

2) A minimum fifty (50) foot wide landscaped area shall be provided along those side and rear lot lines which abut parcels which are not zoned R-1 and which contain existing single or two family dwellings.

3) A minimum twenty-five (25) foot wide landscaped area shall be provided along for all other side and rear lot line.

2. The required yard areas above shall be landscaped according to the following requirements:

- a. At least one straight or staggered row of trees with a minimum caliper of two (2) inches and a minimum height of six (6) feet at the time of planting and spaced not more than twenty (20) feet apart. Not more than one third (1/3) of the trees shall be of the same species and type. At least one half (1/2) of the trees shall create an evenly spaced visual buffer year round.
  - b. The number of shrubs required shall be a minimum of one half (1/2) of the number of trees required. At least two thirds (2/3) of the shrubs shall be at least three (3) feet high at the time of planting, spaced not more than eight (8) feet apart and which are expected to ultimately grow to be at least eight (8) feet in height.
3. All landscaped setbacks shall be free from encroachment from buildings, structures, decks, accessory structures, trash enclosures, water ponds, detention or retention areas, recreational facilities and fields, pedestrian or bicycle trails, parking and/or loading areas.
4. Multifamily buildings shall be oriented or constructed so that open balconies do not face abutting R-1 zoning districts even if the R-1 zone is across a public or private street or areas recommended for Low Density Residential use in the Allendale Charter Township Master Plan in order to limit the noise impact on nearby single family residents.
5. The applicable requirements of Article 21A herein shall apply to the above landscaping including Section 21A.02.C which allows modification of these landscaping requirements.

**Created 5-4-2013  
Ord. No. #2013-2**

**Ord. No. #2018-6  
Effective 7-1-18**

**Ord. No. #2019-5  
Effective 4-14-19**

*(Ord. # 2018-6, Eff. 7-1-18)*