

400.1907 - Landscaping and screening. Sec. 1907.

1.

Intent. Landscaping, greenbelts, and screening are necessary for the continued protection and enhancement of all land uses. Landscaping and greenbelts are capable of enhancing the visual image of the Township, preserving natural features, improving property values, and alleviating the impact of noise, traffic, and visual distraction associated with certain uses. Screening is important to protect less-intensive uses from the noise, light, traffic, litter and other impacts of more intensive, non-residential uses. Accordingly, these provisions are intended to set minimum standards for the design and use of landscaping, greenbelts, and screening, and for the protection and enhancement of the Township's environment. These provisions are also intended to encourage creativity on the part of the project owner in the designing and installation of landscape materials. More specifically, the intent of these provisions is to:

a.

Improve the appearance of off-street parking areas, vehicular use areas, and property abutting public and private roads;

b.

Protect and preserve the appearance, character, and value of the neighborhoods which abut non-residential areas, parking areas, and other intensive use areas, thereby protecting the public health, safety and welfare;

c.

Reduce soil erosion and depletion; and

d.

Increase soil water retention, thereby helping to prevent flooding.

Whenever there shall be required in this Ordinance a greenbelt, landscaping, screening (but if walls are required, they are controlled by Section 1911 [Section 400.1911]), or planting, or a site plan controlled by Section 1913 [Section 400.1913], or a plot plan controlled by Section 2102 [Section 400.2102], the following provisions relating to landscaping and/or screening shall be met, and the site plan or plot plan shall show the landscaping and/or screening required:

2.

Scope of application. These requirements shall apply to all uses which require a site plan as required by Section 1913 [Section 400.1913] of the Zoning Ordinance. No site plan shall be approved unless it shows landscaping and screening consistent with the requirements of this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907]. Where landscaping and/or screening is required, a building permit shall not be issued until the required landscape plan is submitted and approved, and a certificate of occupancy shall not be issued unless provisions set forth in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907] have been met or a performance guarantee has been posted in an amount equal to ten percent of the total cost of installing the landscape material.

3.

Minimum requirements. The requirements of this Section are minimum requirements, and under no circumstances shall they preclude the developer and the Township from agreeing to more extensive landscaping and/or screening.

4.

Design creativity. Creativity in landscape design is encouraged. Landscaping materials should include a variety of plant species to prevent the spread of plant disease. Required trees and shrubs may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings, depending on the designer's visual effect. Clustering of trees and shrubs, rather than "formal" designs involving placement of trees and shrubs at uniform intervals is encouraged.

5.

General site requirements. All developed portions of the site shall conform to the following general landscaping standards, except where specific landscape elements, such as a greenbelt, berms, or screening are required:

All permanently undeveloped portions of the site shall be planted with grass, ground cover, shrubbery, crops, other suitable live plant material, or left in a natural state. This planted area shall extend to any abutting street pavement edge and shall also comply with Section 1907.8 [Section 400.1907.8]. Existing plant material on the property may be used. Grass areas in the front yard of all non-residential uses shall be planted with sod or be planted by hydro seeding or seeded with some similar method of quickly producing healthy and permanent grass growth.

6.

Parking lot landscaping. In addition to a required screening, all off-street parking areas, including, but not limited to a Vehicular Parking District, shall also provide landscaping as follows:

a.

Landscaping ratio. Off-street parking areas equal to or greater than 150 spaces shall be provided with interior landscaping in accordance with the following table.

In PBO, PBO-1, C-1, C-2, & C-3 zoning districts:

1—149 parking spaces	No interior landscaping required
150 and over parking spaces	1,250 square feet of interior landscaping required for the first 150 spaces plus 25 square feet of landscaping for each additional parking space over 150

In R-1 through R-3, RT, RM-1, RM-2, and RME zoning districts:

1—149 parking spaces	No interior landscaping required
150 and over parking spaces	500 square feet of interior landscaping required for the first 150 spaces plus 10 square feet of landscaping for each additional parking space over 150

In any case where the required parking spaces are not less than 250 and not more than 299, a minimum of five landscaping islands totaling no less than 400 square feet shall be provided. For required parking spaces of 300 or more, the five landscaping islands totaling no less than 400 square feet shall be provided, plus for every additional 50 parking spaces or any fraction of 50, a minimum of one landscaping island containing no less than 80 square feet shall be provided. The landscaping islands shall be spaced proportionately throughout the parking area to the extent reasonably possible. The square footage for said landscaping islands shall be considered as being included in the overall interior landscaping requirements in the table above.

In the case of an expansion of an existing parking lot to include additional parking equal to or greater than 150 parking spaces, the interior landscaping requirements of this Section 1907.6a [Section 400.1907.6a] shall apply for those additional parking spaces, but the Planning Commission may modify the parking lot interior landscaping requirements and consider the existing landscaping on site to meet the parking lot interior landscaping requirements.

Whenever possible, parking lot landscaping shall be designed to improve the safety of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, guide traffic movement, and improve the appearance of the parking area.

b.

Other landscaping. Landscaping elsewhere on the parcel can be counted in meeting the parking lot interior landscaping requirements (see Section 1907.19a [Section 400.1907.19a]).

c.

Plantings within parking lots shall comply with the requirements for unobstructed site distance set forth in corner clearance/clear vision zone in Section 1910 [Section 400.1910] . The landscape plan shall indicate the types, sizes, and quantities of plant material proposed for such area.

7.

Screening.

a.

General screening requirements. Unless otherwise specified, wherever an evergreen or landscaped screen is required, evergreen screening shall consist of appropriately spaced plantings which can be reasonably expected to form a complete visual barrier that is at least eight feet above ground level within five years of planting.

b.

Screening of ground level utility substations and mechanical equipment, and refuse containers or dumpsters. Refuse containers or dumpsters for other than one-family or two-family residential uses shall be screened from view from any adjacent property, and from any public or private road or service drive when a residential use or residential district is across from said service drive. The screening shall be high enough to block the view of the refuse container, or ground level mechanical equipment, such as air compressors, pool pumps, transformers, air conditioning units, sprinkler pumps, utility substations and similar equipment and consist of a wall or fence or landscape material. Insofar as practical, said screening shall exceed the vertical height of the equipment being screened by at least six inches within two years of planting. Refuse containers are not required to be screened from view from uses permitted in Section 1301.2 [Section 400.1301.2] through Section 1301.14 [Section 400.1301.14], and Section 1302 [Section 400.1302] of the C-3, General Commercial district.

8.

Landscaping of rights-of-way. Public rights-of-way located adjacent to required landscaped areas and greenbelts shall be planted with sod or other live ground cover, and shall be maintained by the owner or occupant of the adjacent property as if the rights-of-way were part of the required landscaped areas or greenbelts. No plantings except grass or ground cover shall be permitted closer than three feet from the edge of the road pavement.

9.

Maintenance of unobstructed visibility for drivers. No landscaping shall be erected, established, or maintained on any parcel or in any parking lot, which will obstruct the view of drivers. Accordingly, all landscaping shall comply with the provisions concerning corner clearance/clear vision zone in Section 1910 [Section 400.1910].

10.

Potential damage to utilities. In no case shall landscaping material be planted in a way which will interfere with or cause damage to underground or overhead utility lines, public or private roads, or other public facilities. Species of trees whose roots are known to cause damage to public roadways, sewers, or other utilities shall not be planted closer than 15 feet from any such roadways, sewers, or utilities.

11.

Landscaping of divider medians. Where traffic on driveways, maneuvering lanes, private roads, or similar vehicle access ways is separated by a divider median, the median shall be curbed and have a minimum width of 12 feet as measured from the back of curb. A minimum of one deciduous or evergreen tree shall be planted for each 30 lineal feet or portion thereof of median. Trees may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings, but in no instance shall the center-to-center distance between the trees exceed 60 feet.

12.

Storm water detention ponds. Detention ponds shall be designed as an integral part of the overall site plan and shall be considered a natural landscape feature having an irregular or curvilinear shape. Maximum slopes and depths of any proposed pond shall conform to the Township of Bedford Development Design Standards Ordinance, Ordinance 65, or any similar successor ordinance, and any other Township engineering specifications. The following standards shall be considered minimum requirements for the landscaping of detention ponds:

a.

Groundcover - The side slopes and bottom of the pond shall be sodded or seeded. If seeding is proposed, a seed mat or seed blanket shall be installed to prevent erosion and seed washing. The Township shall withhold a portion of the required landscape bond until the sides and bottom of the pond have grown in adequately.

b.

General landscaping - All proposed ponds shall be landscaped in accordance with the following standards:

1.

One deciduous shade or evergreen tree and ten shrubs shall be planted for every 100 lineal feet of pond perimeter as measured along the top of bank elevation.

2.

The required trees and shrubs shall be planted in a random pattern or in groupings and placement or required landscaping is not limited to the top of the pond bank.

13.

Specific requirements for office, commercial districts. In addition to the general landscaping requirements set forth above in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907], all lots or parcels of land located in PBO, PBO-1, C-1, C-2, and C-3 zoning districts shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:

a.

Landscaping adjacent to roads. All front, side, or rear yards adjacent to roads shall be landscaped in accordance with the following standards:

When the use is across from a residential use or residential zoning and the use includes front yard parking, a visual barrier a minimum of 3-feet high consisting of a wall or landscape material or both is required. Landscape material may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings. This requirement does not apply to outdoor display areas adjacent to the road such as automobile dealerships.

When the use is across from PBO, PBO-1, C-1, C-2, or C-3 zoning there shall be a minimum of one ornamental tree for every 50 lineal feet or portion thereof of road frontage, plus one shrub for every 20 lineal feet of frontage. Dwarf species of shrubs may be utilized at the rate of 1.5 times the base shrub requirement. For the purpose of computing the length of road frontage, openings for driveways and sidewalks will not be counted. Landscaping may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings.

b.

Foundation landscaping. Foundation plantings are required along the road frontage in PBO and PBO-1 zoning districts and is encouraged along the road frontage in C-1, C-2, and C-3 zoning districts.

c.

Landscaping variety. In order to encourage creativity in landscaping and minimize tree loss caused by species-specific disease, a variety of tree species is recommended.

14.

Specific requirements for multiple-family districts and elderly housing. In addition to the general landscaping requirements set forth above in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907], all lots or parcels of land located in RM-1 and RM-2 Multiple Family Residential Districts and RME Elderly Housing Residential Districts shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:

a.

General site landscaping. A minimum of one deciduous shade or evergreen tree, one ornamental tree, or two shrubs shall be planted per each two dwelling units. Unless otherwise specified, required landscaping elsewhere in the multiple-family development shall not be counted in meeting these requirements for trees.

b.

Protective screening requirements. Protective screening in the form of an obscuring wall, fence, or landscaping shall be required wherever development in a RM-1, RM-2 or RME district abuts directly upon land zoned or used for single family residential purposes. If a wall is to be installed, the requirements of Section 1911 [Section 400.1911] shall be complied with. If a fence is used instead of a wall Section 1912 [Section 400.1912] shall be complied with.

c.

Landscaping adjacent to roads. The front, side, or rear yards adjacent to roads shall be landscaped in accordance with the following standards:

A minimum of one ornamental tree for every 50 lineal feet of frontage, plus one shrub for every ten lineal feet or portion thereof of frontage. Dwarf species of shrubs may be utilized at the rate of 1.5 times the base shrub requirement. For the purpose of computing the length of road frontage, openings for driveways and sidewalks will not be counted. Landscaping may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings.

d.

Landscaping variety. In order to encourage creativity in landscaping and minimize tree loss caused by species-specific disease, a variety of tree species are encouraged.

15.

Specific requirements for non-residential uses in residential districts. In addition to the general landscaping requirements set forth in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907], above, all non-residential uses developed in residential districts shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:

a.

Protective screening requirements. Protective screening in the form of an obscuring wall, fence, or landscaping shall be required wherever a non-residential use in a residential district abuts directly upon land zoned for residential purposes. Walls must comply with the requirements of Section 1911 [Section 400.1911]. Fences must comply with the requirements of Section 400.1912 [Section 400.1912].

b.

Landscaping adjacent to roads. The front, side, or rear yards adjacent to roads shall be landscaped in accordance with the following standards:

A visual barrier a minimum of three-foot high consisting of a wall or landscape material or both. Landscape material may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings.

c.

Landscaping variety. In order to encourage creativity in landscaping and minimize tree loss caused by species-specific disease, a variety of tree species is encouraged.

16.

Specific requirements for industrial uses adjacent to land used or zoned for residential uses. In addition to the general landscaping requirements set forth in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907], above, all industrial uses developed adjacent to land used or zoned for residential purposes shall comply with the following landscaping requirements:

a.

Protective screening requirements. Protective screening in the form of a landscaped berm shall be required wherever an industrial use abuts directly upon land zoned for residential purposes. The berm shall be measured from the natural grade and shall be constructed with slopes no steeper than one foot vertical for each three feet horizontal. The landscape screening shall consist of appropriately spaced plantings which can be reasonably expected to form a complete visual barrier that is at least eight feet above ground level within five years of planting. Existing industrial uses are not required to comply with this section when any additions or expansion of the use is not toward the residential zoned property. Walls must comply with the requirements of Section 1911 [Section 400.1911]. Fences must comply with the requirements of Section 400.1912 [Section 400.1912].

b.

Landscaping adjacent to roads. The front, side, or rear yards adjacent to roads shall be landscaped in accordance with the following standards:

A visual barrier a minimum of three-foot high consisting of a wall or landscape material or both. Landscape material may be planted at uniform intervals, at random, or in groupings.

c.

Landscape variety. In order to encourage creativity in landscaping and minimize tree loss caused by species-specific disease, a variety of tree species is encouraged.

17.

Standards for landscape material. Unless otherwise specified, all landscape materials shall comply with the following standards:

a.

Non-living plant material. Plastic and other non-living plant materials shall not be considered acceptable to meet the landscaping requirements of this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907].

b.

Plant material specifications. The following specifications shall apply to all plant material proposed in accordance with the landscaping requirements of this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907].

1)

Deciduous shade trees. Deciduous shade trees shall be a minimum of 1½ inches in caliper measured six inches above grade.

2)

Deciduous ornamental trees. Deciduous ornamental trees shall be a minimum of two inches in caliper measured six inches above grade.

3)

Evergreen trees. Evergreen trees, except when used for ornamental application, shall be a minimum of four feet in height from the top of the root ball when planted.

4)

Shrubs. Shrubs shall be a minimum of two feet in height when planted; except upright yew, juniper and arborvitae shall be a minimum of three feet in height. Low growing

shrubs shall have a minimum spread of 24 inches when planted. Dwarf shrub species may be used in landscaping adjacent to roads to achieve a specific design goal and shall have a minimum 18 inches height or spread.

5)

Hedges. Hedges shall be planted and maintained so as to form a continuous, unbroken, visual screen within two years after planting, barring unusual growing conditions, such as drought or disease. Hedges shall be a minimum of two feet in height when planted.

6)

Ground cover. Ground cover used in lieu of turf grasses in whole or in part shall be planted in such a manner as to present a finished appearance and reasonably complete coverage after one complete growing season. The Planning Commission may allow an alternative ground cover.

7)

Grass. Grass areas shall be planted using species normally grown as permanent lawns in Monroe County. Grass, sod, and seed shall be clean and free of weeds, pests, and diseases. Grass may be sodded, plugged, sprigged or seeded, except that sod shall be installed in swales or other areas that are subject to erosion, and in the front yard areas of all non-residential uses. When grass is to be established by a method other than complete sodding or seeding, nursery grass seed shall be sown for immediate effect and protection until complete coverage is otherwise achieved. Straw or other mulch shall be used to protect newly seeded areas.

8)

Mulch. Mulch used around trees and shrubs shall be applied at a minimum depth as recommended by the manufacturer or installer. Mulch should be treated with a pre-emergent herbicide, and installed in a manner as to present a finished appearance.

9)

Sod. Grass areas in the front yard of all non-residential uses shall be planted with sod or be planted by hydro seeding or seeded with some similar method of quickly producing healthy and permanent grass growth.

10)

The installation of drought resistant and local plant species is highly encouraged to minimize the need for supplemental irrigation.

18.

Installation and maintenance. The following standards shall be observed where installation and maintenance of landscape materials are required:

a.

Off-season planting requirements. If development is completed during the off-season when plants cannot be installed, installation of required landscaping shall be made in the next planting season, which is defined as April, May and June or September and October.

b.

Maintenance. Landscaping required by this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907] shall be maintained in a healthy, neat, and orderly appearance, free from refuse and debris. All unhealthy and dead plant material shall be replaced immediately unless the season is not appropriate for planting, in which case such plant material shall be replaced at the beginning of the next planting season. All constructed or manufactured landscape elements, such as but not limited to benches, retaining walls, edging, and so forth, shall be maintained in good condition and neat appearance. Rotted, deteriorated, or damaged landscape elements shall be repaired or replaced.

19.

Treatment of existing plant material. The following regulations shall apply to existing plant material:

a.

Consideration of existing elements in the landscape design. In instances where healthy plant material exists on a site prior to its development, the Planning Commission shall permit substitution of such plant material in place of requirements set forth previously in this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907], provided such substitution is in keeping with the spirit and intent of this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907] and the Ordinance in general.

b.

Preservation of existing plant material. Site plans shall show in general detail all trees, which are located on the site.

Existing trees shall be designated "To Be Removed" or "To Be Saved" on the site plan. If existing plant material is labeled "To Be Saved" on the site plan, protective measures should be implemented, such as the placement of fencing or stakes at the drip line around each tree. No vehicle or other construction equipment shall be parked or stored within the drip line of any tree or other plant material intended to be saved.

20.

Modifications to landscape requirements. In consideration of the overall design and impact of a specific landscape plan, and in consideration of the amount of existing plant material to be retained on the site, the Planning Commission may modify the specific requirements outlined herein, provided that any such adjustment is in keeping with the intent of this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907] and this Zoning Ordinance in general. In determining whether a modification is appropriate, the Planning Commission may base its decision on any one or more of the following circumstances which exist in connection with the site:

a.

Topographic features or other unique features of the site create conditions such that strict application of the landscape regulations would result in a less effective landscape design than an alternative landscape design.

b.

Parking, vehicular circulation, or land use are such that required landscaping would not enhance the site or result in the desired aesthetic effect.

c.

The public benefit intended by the landscape regulations could be better achieved with a plan that varies from the strict requirements of this Section 1907.

d.

Landscaping would restrict proper storm water drainage.

Performance guarantee. The Planning Commission may require a bond or other performance guarantee in a form as may be described in this Ordinance and/or similar in nature to that required in the Township Subdivision Regulation Ordinance, currently Bedford Township Ordinance No. 72, specifically Section 5.9 [Section 300.509], or any similar successor ordinance, to guarantee the installation of the landscaping required by this Section 1907 [Section 400.1907]. The bond or other performance guarantee shall be in an amount equal to ten percent of the total cost of materials.

(Ord. No. 44A-89, 4-4-89; Ord. No. 44A-213, 8-20-02; Ord. No. 44A-225, 11-18-03)