

ARTICLE 6 LANDSCAPING

6-1. Statement of Intent

The purpose of this Article is to promote the public health, safety and welfare by providing for the preservation, installation and maintenance of trees and plant materials which will:

- 6-1.1 Ensure development which is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan related to natural resources, environmental and land use standards, Greenbelt Roads, and function and form;
- 6-1.2. Retain the historic, rural and natural character of Westmoreland County by reducing the visual impact of signs, parking lots, buildings and structures and protecting, preserving and enhancing its natural physical wooded character with emphasis on preserving the existing tree canopy and other indigenous vegetation and providing such canopy and vegetation where it does not exist;
- 6-1.3. Minimize the environmental and land use impacts of developments associated with noise, glare, dust, and movement; changes in appearance, character and value of neighboring properties; and effects on air and water quality, stormwater runoff, groundwater recharge and soil erosion by preserving existing tree canopies and indigenous vegetation and restoring such canopies and vegetation and providing other landscape features;
- 6-1.4. Promote traffic safety for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians by controlling views, minimizing glare and visually defining circulation patterns; and
- 6-1.5. Provide more comfortable exterior spaces and conserve energy by preserving and providing tree canopies and other landscape features which provide shade and windbreaks.
- 6-1.6. Provide for the proper transition of uses and separation of activities that are not compatible through screening and buffering using natural vegetation as a soft boundary between uses.

6-2. Applicability, Administration and Procedures

6-2.1. Landscape area requirement compliance and landscape plans

A landscape plan meeting the requirements of this article and compliance with that plan is required for development applications for which a site plan or plan of development is required including the enlargement of any parking lot, but does not include the resurfacing of any existing parking lot. This Article applies to the construction of any parking lot with more than five (5) spaces and to the construction, extension or widening of any public or private street..

6-2.2 Plan requirements and determinations

Where requirements of this Article are based on zoning or planning designations, such designations must be *as set forth in* the County Zoning District Map, Comprehensive Plan and Six-Year Secondary Road Plan, and the official planning and zoning documents of the adjoining jurisdiction if applicable.

Required landscape areas must be located outside of any planned future right-of-way as designated on the Comprehensive Plan, Six-Year Primary or Secondary Road Plan or any road plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

6-2.3. Installation of required landscaping, performance guarantee

Where a landscape plan is required, landscaping must be installed and existing trees must be preserved in conformance with the approved landscape plan. A Certificate of Occupancy shall not be issued until all landscaping has been installed in accordance with the approved landscape plan unless the installation of any uncompleted landscaping is guaranteed, as provided in *this Article*.

6-2.4 Review Procedures

The Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for the review of all landscape plans in accord with the procedures and time frames for review of site plans as set forth in Articles 9 and 10. The Zoning Administrator must approve or disapprove the plan with notice provided in writing and addressed to the applicant, identified on the site plan application documents.

6-3 Landscape Plan Required

6-3.1. A landscape plan meeting the requirements of this Article is required for all site plans required under Article 9 of this Ordinance. Every landscape plan required by this Article must be prepared by a landscape design professional and must contain the information set forth in Section 6-3.2.

6-3.2. Information Required on Landscape Plan

1 Scale. Plans must be drawn to a scale of not less than thirty (30) feet to the inch on sheets no less than eighteen by twenty-four inches (18" X 24") or greater than thirty-six by twenty-four inches (36" X 24"). The Zoning Administrator may modify this scale requirement if a different scale would aid the County's review and processing of the application due to the size and/or configuration of the site. In no case shall the scale be less than one hundred (100) feet to the inch.

2 Contents. Plans must illustrate with sufficient detail the location of all existing trees of six inches caliper or greater (a group of trees constituting a wooded area may be shown as a single entity), proposed construction including streets, driveways, parking areas, curbs, sidewalks, utility lines, structures, fences, walls and landscape areas. Landscape areas must indicate dimensions and all proposed locations of trees and plants, cross-referenced to the plant schedule required in 6-3.2 (C).

3 Plant Schedule. Plans must be accompanied by a schedule of plants proposed, including the number proposed, their height, caliper, or gallon size, and both the common and botanical names.

4 Table of Open Space and Plant Calculations. Plans must include a table calculating the amount of open space and/or parking lot area and the number of plants and trees required by the Ordinance and the amount of open space, trees and plants provided.

5 Protection of Vegetation. Any existing vegetation proposed to be saved shall be identified on the Landscape Plan by name, location, and size. Methods of protecting the vegetation during construction activities must be illustrated and/or explained on the Landscape Plan or on an attachment.

6-4 Maintenance of Landscaping

The owner, or owner’s agent, shall be responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of all landscaping materials, fences and barriers as may be required by the provisions of this Section.

All plant materials, including existing trees preserved to meet the requirements of this Section, must be tended and maintained in a healthy growing condition, replaced when necessary, and kept free of refuse, disease, infestation, and debris.

All unhealthy or fifty (50) percent or more dead plant materials must be replaced within one year or by the next available planting period, whichever comes first.

Maintenance should include cultivation, fertilization, mulching, pruning, resetting plants to proper grades or upright position, restoring planting area, watering, and weeding. Trees and shrubs must be allowed to attain their normal size and shall not be severely pruned in order to permanently maintain a reduced width or height.

Replacement material must conform to the original intent of the approved landscape plan and any replacement planting shall meet the minimum requirements of this Section.

The owner or agent, upon written notification by the Zoning Administrator, must repair or replace any landscape materials, fences, berms, or walls not meeting the requirements of this Section within thirty (30) days of receipt of said notice.

6-5 Planting Procedures

All trees to be planted must meet the specifications of the American Association of Nurserymen. The planting of trees must be done in accordance with the standardized landscape specifications adopted by the Virginia Nurserymen's Association. -At a minimum, all trees planted must have rootballs adequate to enclose the entire root system, all trees must be mulched and staked, and all plants must be watered at the time of installation, and continued until the plant can be sustained from natural water sources.

6-6 Tree Protection

6-6 .1 Conservation Checklist Required.

All trees to be preserved must be protected before, during and after the development process in accordance with specifications contained in the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook. The applicant must include a conservation checklist for review and approval by the Administrator which shall ensure that the specified trees will be protected in accordance with these specifications.

6-6 .2 Tree Protection Zones Required.

Tree protection zones must be established for all trees and woodlands designated for retention on the site development plan. The tree protection zone must extend radially for fifteen (15) feet from the trunk of the tree to be retained, or the distance from the trunk to the dripline, whichever is greater. The owner or developer is responsible for implementing such protection methods. Tree protection zones must meet the following requirements:

1. Grade changes and excavations must not encroach upon the tree protection zone.
2. No toxic materials, including petroleum based or derived products, shall be stored within one hundred (100) feet of the tree protection zone.
3. The area within the tree protection zone must not be built upon, nor shall any materials be stored, either temporarily or permanently. Vehicles and equipment must not be parked within the zone.
4. Tree stumps located within ten (10) feet of the tree protection zone must be removed by means of a stump grinder.
5. Severed tree roots adjacent to the tree protection zone must be cut by a trenching tool that can safely prune the roots without causing undue damage to the root system, such as a "ditch witch" or similar equipment, aligned radially to the tree. Roots shall not be cut in such a way as to cause lateral movement of the root systems. All severed roots must be covered within four (4) hours and covered with moist peat moss, moist burlap, or other moist biodegradable material until permanent cover is installed.
6. Sediment, retention, and detention basins must not be located or discharged into the tree protection zone.
7. Trees or groups of trees to be preserved must be clearly marked in the field. All specimen trees must be clearly marked. Groups of trees must be preserved rather than single trees.
8. Trees and groups of trees to be preserved must be enclosed by a substantial, temporary fence or barrier located and maintained outside the drip line before commencement of clearing or grading. The fence or barrier must remain throughout construction and any subsequent grading or excavation unless otherwise approved on a clearing and grading plan. In no case shall materials, debris, fill, vehicles or equipment be stored within this enclosure, nor shall the topsoil layer be disturbed except in accordance with tree protection standards approved as part of the conservation checklist. The developer is responsible for ensuring these areas are protected in accordance with this Section.
9. Where changes from the existing natural grade level are necessary, permanent protective structures such as tree walls or wells shall be properly installed in accordance with the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook.

6-7 Site Landscaping Requirements

- 6-7.1 General landscape standards. Existing trees must be retained to the maximum extent practical in all landscape areas, and shall be credited toward landscaping requirements in accord with Section 6-8.1.7. Such trees may be removed to accommodate necessary utilities or drainage structures, or where necessary to abate demonstrable public health or safety hazards.
1. All required landscape areas, other than landscape areas adjacent to buildings and within parking lots, must contain a number of trees equal to at least one (1) tree and two (2) shrubs per four hundred (400) square feet of total landscape area provided.
 2. At least twenty-five (25) percent of the total required trees must be canopy trees as defined in this Ordinance.
 3. At least twenty five (25) percent of the total required trees must be evergreens as defined in this Ordinance.
 4. At least twenty five (25) percent of the total required shrubs must be evergreen.
 5. All shrubs must be at least twelve (12) inches in height from final grade and width at time of planting. All canopy trees must be a minimum of twelve (12) feet in height at the time of planting. All ornamental and evergreen trees must be a minimum of six (6) feet in height at the time of planting.
 6. All required plantings must conform with the most recent edition of American Standard for Nursery Stock published by the American Association of Nurserymen and shall be planted in accordance with the most recent edition of Guidelines for Planting Landscape Trees and Planting and Care of Trees and Shrubs published by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. Required planting materials shall be of a species approved by the Zoning Administrator, based upon evidence and justification provided by the applicant and other research that the Administrator may choose to undertake.
 7. Each mature existing tree may be counted toward meeting the required minimum number of trees, with one viable mature tree substituting for two planted trees and one viable specimen tree substituting for three planted trees. However, no credit will be given for any mature tree or specimen tree which is not protected in full compliance with accepted tree protection standards. In such cases, planted trees must be provided as required above.
 8. Planted trees and shrubs must be reasonably distributed throughout the site singly or in groups, with an appropriate mix of planting types and species which achieves the purposes of this Section. Required landscape areas must be designed so as to not create vehicular and pedestrian hazards by disrupting or interfering with views of motor vehicle movements.

6-7.2 . Landscape areas adjacent to buildings.

1. A landscape area which is a minimum of ten (10) feet wide must be provided adjacent to buildings and calculated based on the perimeter of the building regardless of walks, driveways and other areas customarily associated with a building and not typically containing landscaping.
2. Up to fifty (50) percent of this area may be transferred elsewhere on the site to supplement existing natural areas to be preserved or other required landscape areas.
3. This area must contain a number of trees and shrubs equal to at least one canopy tree or two ornamental trees per fifty (50) linear feet on average and two (2) shrubs per tree.
4. Landscaping that would otherwise be located along rear facades of buildings may be located instead on the side and/or front facades; however, the total requirement for landscaping shall remain the same.

6-7.3 Landscape area along right-of-way.

1. A landscape area having an average width of thirty (30) feet must be provided adjacent to any existing or planned public road right-of-way. Any required landscape area along a right-of-way shall have a minimum width of ten (10) feet.
2. All landscape areas along a right-of-way must contain a minimum amount of square footage which shall be determined by multiplying the applicable average width requirement above times the length of the right-of-way frontage.
3. In no case may any portion of any landscape area located more than fifty (50) feet from the right-of-way be counted toward meeting the requirements of this paragraph.
4. All landscape areas along right-of-ways must be continuous along the road right-of-way frontage except where driveway, utility or other breaks are necessary, and must be designed in a manner that achieves the intent of this Section.
5. All existing viable trees or specimen trees must be preserved within this landscape area and protected in accordance with accepted tree protection standards as required in Section 6-6.2.
6. This area must contain a number of trees and shrubs equal to at least one canopy tree or two ornamental trees per fifty (50) linear feet on average and two (2) shrubs per tree.

6-7.4 Off-Street parking lot landscaping.

Parking areas, accessory or otherwise, containing five (5) or more parking spaces must contain landscaping and landscape areas in accordance with all of the following:

1. Landscape area. Total landscape area within the parking lot, exclusive of any perimeter landscape areas or any landscape areas around the building, must not be less than ten (10) percent of the surface area of the parking lot, including drives and circulation areas.
2. Planting requirements. Landscape areas within a parking lot must contain a minimum of one ornamental tree and two shrubs for each two thousand (2000) square feet of parking area or canopy tree and two shrubs for each 4,000 square feet of parking area. Each mature existing tree or specimen tree may be counted toward meeting the required minimum number of trees, with one viable mature tree substituting for two planted trees and one viable specimen tree substituting for three planted trees. No credit will be given for any mature or specimen tree which is not protected in full compliance with accepted tree protection standards as provided for in this Ordinance.
3. Parking areas must have a continuous planting strip of shrubs along the internal drives and along any edge of the lot that abuts a public right-of-way.

6-7.5 Screening

1. Transitional screening. Transitional screening between conflicting land uses and districts must be provided. Such screening areas must be supplemented where necessary with additional plantings to provide an effective visual screen in accord with the table in Section 6-8. Such areas must be continuous except where driveways, utilities, and other breaks are necessary. All breaks must cross transitional screening areas at right angles. Where such breaks are necessary, different design requirements may be imposed to achieve an equivalent screening effect. Transitional screening areas must not contain accessory structures, storage, parking or loading.
2. Utilitarian features. Utilitarian features must be visually screened by landscaping or architectural barriers from adjacent residential districts, agricultural districts which are designated for residential use on the Comprehensive Plan, and public streets. Utilitarian features may include, but are not limited to the following: refuse areas, storage yards, loading areas, detention ponds, satellite dishes, trash receptacles, and heating and cooling units.
3. Historic landmarks and buildings. Screening in accord with Table 6-8 must be provided on development sites adjacent to property listed on the Virginia Historical Landmarks Register, to mitigate the visual impact of new development on the historic properties.
4. Multiple frontage lots. Lots with multiple frontages shall have screening provided between the rear of the principal use or building and the public right-of-way.

6-8 Landscape Requirements by Land Use

The following table establishes the minimum landscaping required between different land uses for development that requires Site Plan approval. These standards apply to all zoning districts except for the Planned Village Development (PVD) District. The Proposed Land Uses listed in the left column must provide the required landscaping

along the border with the Contiguous Land Uses listed in the column to the right, in conjunction with Site Plan approval.

Proposed Land Use	Contiguous Land Use (Existing or permitted by the zoning district)	Minimum Width on Side and Rear Boundary	Minimum Required Landscaping
Retail, Office, other Commercial Uses, Public and Institutional Uses	Residential Uses; Virginia Historic Register Sites	25 feet	Staggered, double row of evergreen trees, with the trees in each row planted at fifteen (15) feet on center, and a row of evergreen shrubs planted ten feet on center.
Industrial Uses	Residential Uses; Virginia Historic Register Sites	50 feet	A fence, wall or earthen berm at least six feet in height, with a single row of evergreen trees planted at fifteen (15) feet on center on the residential side.
Single-Family Attached dwellings, Multi-Family Dwellings, Dormitories	Single-family Detached Residential Dwellings; Virginia Historic Register Sites	25 feet	Staggered, double row of evergreen trees, with the trees in each row planted at fifteen (15) feet on center

6-9 Unacceptable Tree Species

Certain varieties of trees are not acceptable for meeting the requirements of this Ordinance, due to the tendencies of such species to negatively impact on native plant communities, damage to nearby structures and infrastructure, or possess inherent physiological traits that cause such trees to structurally fail. If the Zoning Administrator determines that any proposed species is inappropriate due to any of the above three characteristics, the Zoning Administrator may prohibit that species and require the applicant to submit an acceptable alternative.

The following species are not acceptable for meeting the requirements of this Ordinance: Ashes, Norway Maple, Washington Hawthorn, American Plum, Bradford Pear and Pin Oak. Sycamores and London Planes are not appropriate for planting near paved areas.

6-10 Penalties for Unauthorized Removal

Unauthorized removal will be considered a violation of this Zoning Ordinance and will be subject to the penalties as set forth in Article 11.