

ARTICLE 26. LANDSCAPING AND BUFFER REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 2601. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide requirements for the landscaping and buffering of developments and for the protection of existing trees in all zoning districts, in order to enrich the urbanized and natural environment of Pike County.

- A. General requirements for landscaping a development site are set forth in section 2604. Requirements for landscaped buffers are set forth in section 2605.
- B. It is the intent of the county to reduce the adverse visual, environmental, and aesthetic effects of development in order to:
 - 1. Minimize the rate of stormwater runoff.
 - 2. Maximize the capability of groundwater recharge in urban or suburban areas.
 - 3. Increase air filtration and the removal of particulate and gaseous pollutants through plant materials.
 - 4. Provide shade and noise attenuation.
 - 5. Filter and reduce the glare of headlights and reflected sunlight from parked automobiles onto the public street rights-of-way and adjacent properties.
 - 6. Improve the appearance of parking areas and vehicular surface areas; and
 - 7. Minimize the visual blight created by large expanses of paved surface area.

Sec. 2602. Applicability and Provision of Landscape Plans.

- A. The requirements of article 26 shall apply to all properties to be used, developed, or redeveloped within the county, except as may specifically be exempted in subsection 2602 (C), below.
- B. In order to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this chapter, a landscaping plan shall be submitted with applications for development approval for all development subject to these standards.
- C. The following types of development are exempt from the requirements to provide a landscaping plan:
 - 1. Single-family dwellings.
 - 2. Duplex buildings; and
 - 3. Applications for accessory uses, accessory structures, or temporary uses.

Sec. 2603. Maintenance requirements.

- A. All landscaped areas in commercial developments shall be maintained to ensure that plant materials are healthy and thrive. Any diseased or dead plant materials shall be replaced as soon as reasonably possible based on the growing season, but not later than six (6) months following identification of the need for replacement.
- B. Necessary trimming and maintenance shall be performed to maintain the health of the plant materials, to provide an aesthetically pleasing appearance, and to assure that the landscaped and buffer areas serve the intended purpose.

Sec. 2604. Landscaping requirements.

2604.1 Landscape standards for nonresidential development.

- A. Required landscaped areas, including general landscaping, parking lot landscaping, perimeter landscaping, and buffer areas shall not be disturbed by grading, property improvements, or construction activities, except where necessary to prevent a nuisance, or to thin natural growth which is too dense to permit normal growth, or to remove diseased, misshapen, or dangerous and decayed timbers.
- B. All landscaped areas, including general landscaping, parking lot landscaping, perimeter landscaping, and buffer areas, shall utilize existing natural vegetation in an undisturbed state provided that the existing vegetation is appropriate for inclusion.
- C. A minimum of twelve (12) percent of the total buildable area in any parcel shall be devoted to landscaping.
- D. The requirement to provide landscaping is in addition to any buffers as required in section 2605.
- E. The site design standards for landscaping are shown in the following table:

Table 2604.1(E) Site Design Standards for Nonresidential Landscaping

Location of Landscaping	Minimum Number of Plants	Type of Plants
Front yard setback	1 tree per 40 linear feet of frontage Full coverage of disturbed areas	50 percent large trees Grass or ground cover
Side yard setback	1 tree per 25 linear feet of frontage Full coverage of disturbed areas	50 percent large trees Grass or ground cover
Rear yard setback	1 tree per 25 linear feet of frontage Full coverage of disturbed areas	Grass or ground cover

2604.2. Residential landscape standards.

- A. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, any parcel of land for which a building permit has been requested shall have preserved or planted trees, meeting the following standards:
 - 1. The minimum dbh is one and one-half (1½) inches.
 - 2. A minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of preserved or planted trees shall be hardwoods.
 - 3. All recorded lots within a subdivision shall have planted or preserved the required number of trees according to the zoning district, as set forth in subsection 2604.2 (B).
 - 4. Requirements for planting or preserving trees are in addition to requirements for landscaping and buffer areas but can be included in the landscaping and/or buffer areas.
- B. Tree planting requirements.

Table 2604.2 (B) Tree Planting Requirements

Zoning District	Number of Trees Planted or Preserved
RR, R1, and R-2	4 trees per parcel

2604.3 Landscape requirements for parking lots.

- A. Perimeter landscaping for parking lots. A minimum of a ten-foot wide strip of land, located between the property line and a parking lot shall be landscaped. Width of sidewalks shall not be included within the ten-foot wide front setback perimeter landscape area.
- B. Interior landscaping.
 - 1. Parking lots with twenty (20) or more parking spaces shall provide interior landscaping.
 - 2. Interior planting areas may be located in tree islands, at the end of parking bays, or between rows of parking spaces. Planting areas may also be located within driveway medians, provided the median is a minimum of ten (10) feet wide.
 - 3. There shall be one (1) tree required for each two hundred fifty (250) square feet of internal landscape areas.
 - 4. Parking lots shall be designed so that no more than twelve (12) parking spaces occur in an unbroken row.
 - 5. Landscape islands, peninsulas, or medians shall conform to the planting area specifications set forth in subsection 2604.4(C).
 - 6. Vehicle stops or curbing shall be used to ensure that vehicles do not overhang in the required landscaped areas.

2604.4 Landscape plant material standards.

- A. Trees, shrubs groundcover and grasses for landscaped and buffer areas can be any tree, shrub, ground cover or grasses selected by the owner/developer as long as they are not listed on the prohibited species list below:
 - 1. No plants listed on the Invasive Species List for North America shall be utilized in landscaping areas or buffer design and installation, including but not limited to common landscape plants such as: carpet bugle, bamboo, clematis, winter creeper, ivy (Hedera), sunflower, privet, monkeygrass, honeysuckle, loosestrife, passionflower, Pennisetum, firethorn, kudzu, and Wisteria.
 - 2. Silver Maple
 - 3. Sweetgum
 - 4. Tree-of-Heaven
 - 5. Crabapple
 - 6. Mimosa
 - 7. Poplar
 - 8. Catalpa
 - 9. Bradford Pear
 - 10. Ginkgo
 - 11. Locust
 - 12. Black Walnut
 - 13. Willow

*Note: The Director of Planning and Development reserves the right to prohibit any other tree, shrub, ground cover or grass species not listed here. Certain prohibited trees, shrub, ground cover, or grass

species may be used in natural, undisturbed buffers at the discretion of the Director of Planning and Development.

- B. All plant materials shall meet the following general requirements:
 1. All plant material shall be nursery grown, number 1 grade, and installed according to accepted planting procedures.
 2. All plant materials shall meet current American Association of Nurseryman Standards.
- C. Plant materials shall meet the following specifications for size and location:

2604.4(C) Plant Material Specifications

Plant	Size at Planting	Maximum Spacing
Large trees	2 inches, dbh	40 feet apart, on center
Medium and small trees — single trunk	1 inch, dbh	25 feet apart, on center
Medium and small trees — multiple trunks	5 feet in height	25 feet apart, on center
Large screening shrubs	4 feet in height	5 feet apart, on center
Shrubs	18 inches in height	24 inches apart, on center
Ground cover	Installed in a manner that presents a finished appearance and complete coverage	
Grass	Sodded, sprigged, plugged, or seeded, except that solid sod shall be used in drainage swales or other areas subject to erosion. Lawn grasses shall be planted so as to achieve complete coverage within 2 calendar years from the time of planting.	

- D. Where both large and medium/small trees are planted, they shall be planted in a double staggered row, alternating large and medium/small trees.
- E. Spacing requirements for trees shall include consideration of trees planted on abutting properties. Trees may be grouped, so long as a sufficient planting area is provided as set forth in paragraph G, below.
- F. Trees shall be planted to avoid septic tanks and drain fields.
- G. Planting areas shall meet the following specifications:
 1. A planting area of one hundred twenty-five (125) square feet shall be required for each medium or large tree.
 2. A planting area of ninety (90) square feet shall be required for each small tree.
 3. The minimum dimension of any side of a planting area shall be ten (10) feet.

Sec. 2605 Buffer requirements.

2605.1. Purpose and intent.

The intent of these requirements shall be to enhance the visual and aesthetic appearance of the county. The purpose of these buffer requirements is to:

- A. Provide space definition and landscape continuity within the built environment;
- B. Provide screening and relief from traffic, noise, heat, glare, odor, and the spread of dust and debris;
- C. Reduce the impact of development on the drainage system and reduce flooding;
- D. Provide for a sense of privacy;
- E. Provide for reduction or elimination of incompatibility;
- F. Reduce the visual impact of unsightly aspects of adjacent development; and
- G. Provide for the separation of spaces.

2605.2 Location, measurement, and design of buffers.

- A. Buffers shall be located on the outer perimeter of a lot or parcel, extending to the lot or parcel boundary line. Buffers shall not occupy any portion of an existing, dedicated, or reserved public or private street, or right-of-way.
- B. Buffer width is normally measured from the property line; however, design variations are allowed. Average width shall be measured at the two (2) end points of the buffer and two (2) additional points which are each approximately one-third (1/3) of the total linear distance from the end point.
- C. The buffer shall be designed to avoid or minimize plantings within drainage, utility, or other easements.
- D. Buffers shall be designed taking into consideration the site's soils conditions, topography, and natural resources. Native vegetation shall be used for landscaping and buffering unless the applicant demonstrates that the use of non-native, drought-resistant plants would best serve the site.
- E. Buffers shall be established by the owner of the proposed development site.
- F. Buffers shall be maintained by the property owner.

2605.3. Buffer area standards.

Table 2605.3 Buffer Area Standards

Proposed Land Use	Adjacent Zoning District	Minimum Buffer Area
Professional Office Institutional Commercial Industrial	A-R, RR, R-1, R-2	40 feet

2605.4 Plant materials in buffers.

- A. Buffers required for nonresidential uses: Buffers shall be planted with a combination of plant materials.
- B. Existing plants within the designated buffer area shall not be removed, unless the plants are dead or diseased. Where the administrator determines the existing buffer to be inadequate the following plant materials are required for each fifty (50) linear feet of buffer:
 - 1. One (1) large tree.
 - 2. Two (2) medium or small trees.
 - 3. Ten (10) screening shrubs.
- C. Buffer areas shall meet the standards for landscape plant materials set forth in section 2604.4.