

**CHAPTER 530
Landscaping, Screening and Outdoor Lighting Regulations**

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Sec. 530.1 PURPOSE.

Landscaping and screening shall be provided for the following purposes:

- A. To remove, reduce, lessen or absorb the impact between one use or zone and another;
- B. To soften the outline of buildings and to break up and reduce the impact of large parking areas;
- C. To provide interest and lessen the monotony of the streetscape;
- D. To create a visual and/or physical barrier between conflicting, incompatible and/or visually undesirable land uses and to obscure the view of outdoor storage, rubbish areas, dumpsters, parking and loading areas;
- E. To provide protection from soil erosion; and
- F. To screen glare and reduce noise levels emanating from a site.
- G. Outdoor lighting design and fixtures shall be harmonious with surrounding community design.

Sec. 530.2 APPLICABILITY.

- A. The minimum landscaping, screening and buffering requirements set forth in this Chapter shall be applicable to all development set forth below:
 - 1. All new commercial development on vacant lands;
 - 2. All new development of conditional uses;
 - 3. All new residential developments. (Revised 09/10/09)
 - 4. Whenever additional buildings or building additions are proposed for a site that is currently developed with a commercial, conditional, attached single-family use; or,
 - 5. Whenever currently developed sites are to be modified by any change in use, vehicular circulation, and/or parking area design.

- B. Sections 530.4 through 530.10 establish numerical requirements and standards that carry out the purposes of Chapter 530. However, it should be recognized that existing vegetation and other natural features may also adequately achieve the intended standards and objectives of each section, and precise compliance with all of the numerical standards may be preempted or unnecessary because of existing or proposed conditions on the site or adjacent property. Therefore, when complying with this Chapter the Township may permit, as determined by the Zoning Commission, the flexible arrangement of the plant material to best achieve the intent of this Chapter and the purposes of the numerical standards, to preserve existing natural features, and to assure that other health and safety objectives and standards of the Township or any other regulatory agency are not compromised.

Sec. 530.3 LANDSCAPING PLAN SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.

A development listed in Section 530.2 shall submit for review and approval a landscaping and screening plan in accordance with the final development plan submission requirements set forth in Sec. 720.5.

- A. Landscaping and screening plans shall be prepared by a person knowledgeable in landscape design and construction such as a professional nurseryman, a professional landscaper or a landscape architect.

- B. All walls, fences, deciduous trees, evergreens, hedges and shrubs used to fulfill the requirements set forth in this Chapter shall be so indicated and identified on the landscaping and screening plan.

Sec. 530.4 LANDSCAPING ALONG STREETS IN COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

The area within the required building and parking setback, excluding driveway openings, shall be landscaped and maintained with the following minimum requirements:

- A. A landscaping strip shall be provided along any portion of a lot that abuts a street right-of-way, interrupted only by points of vehicular or pedestrian access.
- B. The minimum width of the landscaping strip on all non-residential streets shall be:
 - 1. 30 feet for lots in non-residential districts;
 - 2. An elevated earth berm with a minimum height of three (3) feet measured from the finished elevation of the street centerline.
- C. Within this area, the following plant material shall be provided:
 - 1. Four (4) deciduous trees and thirty (30) shrubs shall be planted for every 100 linear feet of lot/development frontage or fraction thereof, not including drive entrances.
 - 2. An elevated earth berm with a minimum height of three (3) feet measured from the finished elevation of the street centerline planted with three (3) deciduous trees and six (6) shrubs may be provided as an alternative.
- D. All areas not otherwise devoted to trees and shrubs shall be planted with grass, ground covers or other live landscape treatment, excluding paving or gravel.
- E. Plantings or earthen berms along a public street shall not block or interfere with sight distance at street/drive intersections or corner lots in accordance with Section 330.3, nor shall any such plantings or earthen berms contribute to the additional accumulation of snow within the public right-of-way.
- F. Landscaping materials used along streets and sidewalks shall not be fruit or nut bearing nor shall they have thorns or briars that interfere with pedestrians.
- G. Additional Screening Required. Whenever the lot required to provide screening and buffering has a lower elevation than the abutting street, the height of the required screening shall be sufficient to adequately screen the site. The Zoning Commission may, in its review of the landscaping plan, require more than the minimum requirements specified in this section in order to accomplish the desired screening effect.

Sec. 530.5 INTERIOR PARKING LOT LANDSCAPING.

Interior landscaping of parking lots shall be provided in accordance with the following requirements:

- A. For any parking area designed to accommodate 40 or more vehicles, a minimum of five percent (5%) of the parking lot shall be planted as landscaped island areas.
- B. Landscaped islands shall be developed and distributed throughout the parking lot to define major circulation aisles and driving lanes; and to provide visual and climatic relief from broad expanses of pavement.
- C. Each island shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet in any horizontal dimension;
- D. There shall be a minimum of one deciduous tree provided for every 12 parking spaces; such trees shall be planted within the required landscaped islands.
- E. Shrubs or low, spreading plant materials may be planted within the required landscaped islands provided there is no impairment to the visibility of motorists or pedestrians.
- F. Landscaped areas adjacent to the perimeter of the parking area shall not be counted as interior parking lot landscaped areas.
- G. For the purpose of this Section, the area of a parking lot shall be the total vehicular surface area including circulation aisles.

Sec. 530.6 SCREENING OF LOADING AREAS, OUTSIDE STORAGE AREAS AND OTHER SERVICE AREAS.

The following accessory uses/areas shall be screened from any adjacent street or adjoining property in order to prevent direct views of loading areas, outdoor storage areas, service areas, and associated service driveways from adjacent properties or from the public right-of-way when viewed from ground level.

- A. Each loading area and outdoor storage area shall be screened along any perimeter that faces a street right-of-way or adjoining property. Screening shall consist of:
 - 1. An opaque ornamental fencing or wall that is architecturally compatible with the principal building on the lot, having a minimum height of six (6) feet, or
 - 2. Dense staggered evergreen planting consisting of a double row of evergreen trees, spaced a minimum of 15 feet on center, of sufficient quantity and having a minimum height of six (6) feet, to completely screen the above areas.

- B. Dumpsters shall be enclosed on all four sides by an opaque fence or wall having a minimum height of six (6) feet.

Sec. 530.7 BUILDING FAÇADE LANDSCAPING.

Every building in commercial, districts and conditional uses in residential districts shall be provided with landscaped materials along its façade according to the following (Revised 09/10/09):

- A. At least 75% of the building façade shall be landscaped, and such landscaping shall be located within 20 feet of the building façade.
- B. Landscaping materials shall include a combination of deciduous trees, evergreens, hedges, shrubs, annual and perennial flowers, and ground cover plantings.
- C. Deciduous trees shall be planted at a rate of three (3) trees for every 100 lineal feet of building façade.
- D. All portions of the landscaping strip not otherwise devoted to trees and shrubs shall be planted with grass, ground covers or other live landscape treatment, excluding paving or gravel, except that the area may be broken by entrance walks.

Sec. 530.8 OUTDOOR LIGHTING REGULATIONS.

The purpose of this section is to regulate the placement, orientation, distribution patterns and fixture types of outdoor lighting in the commercial districts and all nonresidential conditional uses, the mixed-use overlay district, and PRDs in the R-R, R-1, R-2, and R-3 Districts in order to preserve, protect and enhance the character of the Township and the lawful nighttime use and enjoyment of property located within the Township. (Revised 09/10/09; 10/11/24)

- A. Appropriate site lighting, including lights for signs, buildings and streets, shall be arranged so as to:
 - 1. Provide safety, utility and security.
 - 2. Control light trespass and glare on adjacent properties and public roadways.
 - 3. Reduce atmospheric light pollution.
- B. For the purpose of this Section, the following definitions shall apply.
 - 1. Footcandle. A unit of illumination produced on a surface, all points of which are one foot from a uniform point source of one candle.

2. Full-shielded or full cut-off type fixture. An outdoor lighting fixture that is shielded or constructed so that all light emitted is projected below a horizontal plane running through the lowest light-emitting part of the fixture. See illustration below.

Illustration: Full cut-off lighting.



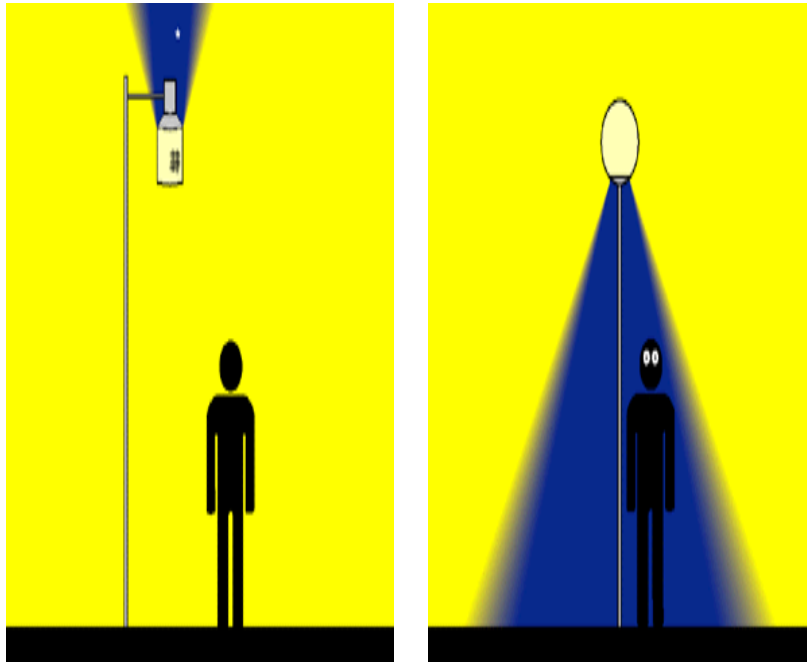
Full cut-off lighting directs light down and to the sides as needed.

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3. Glare. Direct light that causes annoyance, discomfort or loss in visual performance and visibility.
4. Illuminance. The quantity of light arriving at a surface divided by the area of that surface, measured in footcandles.
5. Light trespass. Light emitted by a lighting fixture that falls beyond the boundaries of the property on which the fixture is installed.
6. Lumen: The unit of luminous flux. A measure of the perceived power of visible light emitted by a source. (Effective 10/11/24)
7. Recessed ceiling fixture. An outdoor lighting fixture recessed into a canopy ceiling so that the bottom of the fixture is flush with the ceiling.

8. Uplighting. Any light source that distributes illumination above a 90-degree horizontal plane. See illustration below.

Illustration: Uplighting



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C. General Requirements

1. All outdoor lighting fixtures regulated according to this Section, including but not limited to those used for parking areas, buildings, building overhangs, canopies, signs, billboards, displays and landscaping, shall be full cut-off type fixtures
 - a) Full-cut off fixtures shall be installed and maintained so that the shielding is effective as described in subsection B.2. above.
 - b) Automobile-oriented uses such as gasoline stations, service stations and drive-through facilities shall install recessed ceiling fixtures in any canopy.

- c) Signs that are wholly illuminated from within and freestanding signs that are externally illuminated with an exposed lamp not exceeding 200 lumens do not require shielding. (Revised 10/11/24)
 - 2. Light trespass over a commercial property line shall be limited to no more than 0.5 footcandles at the property line. All on-site lighting of buildings, lawns, parking areas and signs shall be designed so as not to shine onto any adjacent property or building, or to cause glare onto any public street or vehicle thereon.
 - 3. Measurement.
 - a) Light levels shall be measured in footcandles with a direct reading, portable light meter. Readings shall be taken only after the cell has been exposed long enough to take a constant reading.
 - b) Measurements shall be taken at the commercial property line, along a horizontal plane at a height of three and one-half (3.5) feet above the ground.
 - 4. All non-essential outdoor lighting fixtures, including parking, sign, display and aesthetic lighting, shall be turned off after business hours. Only that lighting needed for safety or security may remain lit after close of business, in which case the lighting shall be reduced to the minimum level necessary.
 - 5. Light poles shall not exceed a height of twenty (20) feet.
 - 6. Mercury lighting shall be prohibited. (Revised 5/28/09)
- D. Exemptions.
- 1. Decorative outdoor lighting fixtures with bulbs of less than 200 lumens, installed seasonally, are exempt from the requirements of this Section. (Revised 10/11/24)
 - 2. Temporary construction or emergency lighting is exempt from the requirements of this Section. Such lighting shall be discontinued immediately upon completion of the construction work or abatement of the emergency necessitating such lighting.
 - 3. All outdoor lighting fixtures existing and legally installed prior to the effective date of this Section of the Zoning Resolution shall be exempt from the requirements of this Section. When existing lighting fixtures become inoperative, their replacements are subject to the provisions of this Section.
 - 4. Nothing in this Section shall apply to lighting required by the FAA or any other federal regulatory authority.

Sec. 530.9 LANDSCAPING BETWEEN NON-SINGLE-FAMILY USES.

Whenever a non-single-family use abuts another non-single-family use, the areas adjacent to any side or rear lot line that abuts the non-single-family use shall be landscaped and maintained with the following minimum requirements:

- A. A landscaping strip with a minimum width of ten (10) feet and a minimum length of 35 feet shall be provided adjacent to such side or rear lot line for every 70 feet of linear length of such side or rear lot line. Within each landscaping strip, one (1) deciduous tree or two (2) evergreen trees, and 30 shrubs shall be provided.
- B. Where existing vegetation occurs along the perimeter that satisfies the intent of this Section, a preservation strip with a minimum width of 15 feet may be substituted, provided no building or pavement is located within 25 feet of the preservation strip.
- C. Between adjoining commercial uses, landscaping beds shall be coordinated in order to provide a continuous landscaping strip along the perimeter. (Revised 09/10/09)

Sec. 530.10 SCREENING AND BUFFERING OF RESIDENTIAL USES.

(Revised 09/10/09 and 11/7/19)

Screening and buffering along the entire length of the common boundary shall be provided in accordance with the following regulations.

- A. When Required. A buffer area shall be required when:
 - 1. A lot in any Commercial District abuts a Residential District;
 - 2. A lot is developed as part of a PRD; or
 - 3. A conditional use is located in a residential district.
- B. Width of Buffer Area. Each required buffer area shall have a minimum width as set forth below:
 - 1. When a Commercial District abuts a Residential District, the buffer area shall have a minimum width of 25 feet.
 - 2. When a lot is developed as part of a PRD, the buffer area shall have a minimum width of fifty (50) feet.
 - 3. When a conditional use is located in an R-R, R-1, R-2, or R-3 District, the buffer area shall have a minimum width of 20 feet.

- C. Screening. Screening within the buffer area shall consist of one (1) or a combination of two (2) or more of the following in order to form a solid continuous visual screen:
1. A dense vegetative planting incorporating deciduous trees, evergreens, and/or hedges of a variety that shall be equally effective in winter and summer.
 2. A non-living opaque structure such as a solid masonry wall, or a solid fence that is compatible with the principal structure.
 3. A fence with openings through which light and air pass together with a landscaped area at least ten (10) feet wide.
 4. A maintained, landscaped earthen berm at least ten (10) feet wide.
 5. Maintenance of the existing natural vegetation that, in its natural state, forms a screen with a height not less than six (6) feet and shall be equally effective in winter and summer.
- D. Height of Screening. The height of screening shall comply with the following:
1. Visual screening walls, fences, or earthen berms and fences in combination shall be a minimum of six (6) feet high measured from the natural grade, in order to accomplish the desired screening effect.
 2. Vegetation shall be a minimum of six (6) feet high measured from the natural grade, in order to accomplish the desired screening effect. The required height shall be achieved no later than twelve months after the initial installation.
- E. Placement of Screening. The location of the wall, fence, or vegetation shall be placed within the buffer area to maximize the screening effect. Trees, evergreens and/or hedges shall be adequately spaced and appropriately staggered to meet the screening objectives within two years after the initial installation. The landscaping plan shall indicate the specific type of option(s) to be used.
- F. Additional Screening Required. Whenever the lot required to provide screening and buffering has a lower elevation than the abutting residential parcel, the height of the required screening shall be sufficient to adequately screen the site from the adjacent residential lot, and the Zoning Commission may, in its review of the landscaping plan, require more than the minimum requirements specified in this Section in order to accomplish the desired screening effect.

Sec. 530.11 LANDSCAPING MATERIALS AND STANDARDS.

Walls, fences, plants, and mounds, when provided to meet the landscaping and screening requirements set forth in this Section shall comply with the following, subject to review and approval by the Zoning Commission.

- A. Walls and Fences. Walls and fences shall be constructed of weatherproof materials, including pressure treated, redwood or cedar lumber and aluminum or galvanized hardware. Except as specifically noted, chain link fences with or without wooden or synthetic slat material shall not be allowed when used to satisfy landscaping and screening requirements.

- B. Plants. All plants shall be living and hardy within the United States Department of Agriculture's Hardiness Zone 5, and thriving in Medina County. Plant materials used in conformance with the provisions of this section shall conform to the standards of the American Association of Nurserymen and shall have passed any inspection required under state regulations. Trees shall be balled and burlapped or in containers. Shrubs, vines and ground covers can be planted as bare root as well as balled and burlapped or containers. All landscaping materials shall be free of noxious weeds, disease and pests. Nursery stock identification tags shall not be removed from any planting prior to inspection and approval of final installation by the Township. The Township may seek the assistance of qualified landscape design professionals during the inspection of planted materials, when deemed necessary.
 - 1. **DECIDUOUS TREES.** Deciduous trees shall have a clear trunk height of at least six (6) feet and a minimum caliper of two (2) inches conforming to acceptable nursery industry procedures at the time of planting. For the purpose of these regulations, a deciduous tree shall be a tree normally growing to a mature height of 20 feet and a mature spread of at least 15 feet.
 - 2. **EVERGREEN TREES.** Evergreen trees shall be a minimum of six (6) feet in height at the time of planting. Evergreen plantings shall be designed to provide an effective, dense screen within two (2) years of planting. White pine trees are not acceptable trees for screening/buffering purposes.
 - 3. **HEDGES.** Hedges shall be at least 36 inches in height at the time of planting. All hedges shall be designed to provide an effective, dense screen and mature height of at least six (6) feet within four (4) years after the date of the final approval of each planting when used for perimeter landscaping or screening applications.
 - 4. **SHRUBS.** A shrub shall be defined as a woody plant smaller than a tree consisting of several small stems from the ground or small branches near the ground. Shrubs shall be at least 20 inches in height at the time of planting and have a mature height of not less than 36 inches.

5. GRASS or GROUND COVER. Grass of the fescue, bluegrass or perennial rye families shall be planted in species normally grown as lawns in Medina County. In swales or other areas subject to erosion, solid sod, erosion reducing net or suitable mulch shall be used and grass seed shall be sown for immediate protection until complete coverage is achieved. Grass sod shall be clean and free of weeds and noxious pests or diseases. Ground cover shall be planted in such a manner as to provide 75% complete coverage after two growing seasons.
- C. Existing Material. The Zoning Commission may approve the use of existing plant material to comply with the landscaping and screening requirements of this Chapter. In reviewing such proposals, the Zoning Commission shall consider whether the existing material is capable of performing the landscaping or screening functions required by this Chapter, by reason of its size, density, location, deciduous or evergreen foliage, and other characteristics. The Zoning Commission shall also consider the likelihood that the plant material will survive construction-related disruptions, including soil compaction and changes in grading and drainage. Existing vegetation shall be preserved in accordance with acceptable nursery industry procedures.
- D. Mounds. Mounds or berms may be used as physical barriers that block or screen a view. Differences in elevation between areas requiring screening do not constitute a mound. Mounds shall conform to the following standards:
1. The maximum side slope shall be three (3) feet horizontal to one (1) foot vertical (3:1). The design shall be reviewed to ensure that proper erosion prevention and control practices have been utilized and that irrigation or other means are provided to insure plant material will have sufficient moisture for survival.
 2. Mounds shall be designed with physical variations in height and alignment throughout their length.
 3. Landscape plant material installed on mounds shall be arranged in an irregular pattern to accentuate the physical variation and achieve a natural appearance.
 4. The landscape plan shall show sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with the above provisions, including a plan and profile of the mound, soil types and construction techniques.
 5. Mounds shall be located and designed to minimize the disturbance to existing trees located on the site or adjacent thereto.
 6. No part of any mound shall be elevated more than 30 inches above natural grade within ten (10) feet of any right-of-way or property line, and the toe

of such mound shall be located a minimum of three (3) feet from any right-of-way or property line.

7. Adequate ground cover or mulch shall be used and maintained to prevent erosion.

Sec. 530.12 MAINTENANCE OF LANDSCAPING.

- A. Required yards and all other portions of the lot not covered by permitted structures shall be landscaped with grass, trees, shrubbery and/or other appropriate ground cover or natural landscaping, which at all times shall be maintained in good and healthy condition.
- B. All landscaping materials shall be installed and maintained according to accepted nursery industry procedures. The property owner shall be responsible for continued, perpetual maintenance of all landscaping materials, and shall keep them in a proper, neat and orderly appearance, free from refuse, debris, and noxious and unsightly weeds at all times.
 1. All unhealthy or dead plant material shall be replaced within one year, or by the next planting period, whichever comes first. Replacement material shall conform to the original intent of the landscape plan.
 2. Vehicle parking shall not be permitted in landscaped areas.
 3. All screening shall be free of advertising or other signs, except for legally placed directional or instructional signs for the efficient flow of vehicles.
- C. Violation of these installation and maintenance provisions shall be grounds for the Zoning Inspector to require replacement of the landscape material or institute legal proceedings to enforce the provisions of this Section.

Sec. 530.13 APPROVAL PROCESS FOR REQUIRED LANDSCAPING, FENCES AND WALLS.

The location of proposed landscaping, fences or walls shall be reviewed and approved as part of a development plan pursuant to Chapter 720. However, when a fence or wall is proposed at a separate time from any other development for new construction, additions or site renovation, a fence or wall may be approved administratively by the Zoning Inspector when the Zoning Inspector determines that the proposal:

- A. Complies with the requirements of this Chapter;
- B. Is consistent with any previously approved plan;
- C. Is compatible with the current site development if there is no approved plan; and

D. Will have a minimal adverse impact to the surrounding areas.

If, because of the nature and location of the proposed fence or wall, the Zoning Inspector does not make such a determination, the request shall be referred to the Zoning Commission and considered by the Commission according to the development plan review procedures in Chapter 720.