

ARTICLE IX

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The following Development Standards shall be applicable to newly developed properties, expansions to existing structures that require additional parking spaces and expansions of parking areas by five (5) parking spaces or more.

- 901) Off Street Parking
- 902) Bicycle Parking
- 903) Overflow Parking
- 904) Landscaping of Parking Lots
- 905) Lighting
- 906) Solid Waste
- 907) Access
- 908) General Landscaping
- 909) Utility Wiring
- 910) Sidewalks
- 911) Buffering and Screening

Section 901 Off-Street Parking

901.1 Purpose

The purpose of off-street parking and loading areas is to ensure adequate access to the use without adversely affecting existing traffic patterns. However, off-street parking areas should be designed to minimize breaks in the pedestrian environment along the public street and create a safe and comfortable passage for pedestrians along the street as well as within the parking area.

901.2 Design

- ❖ Uninterrupted areas of parking lot shall be limited in size. Large parking lots shall be broken by buildings and/or landscape features.
- ❖ Vehicular use areas, unless located on or within a structure, shall be separated from the exterior wall of a structure by a pedestrian walkway or landscaped planting strip at least 5 feet in width.
- ❖ Parking lot setbacks shall be fifteen (15) feet from all road right-of-ways and ten (10) feet from all other property lines and serve as a landscaping strip.
- ❖ Parking lots are to be treated as enclosed rooms for cars. For small lots (sixty spaces or less), landscaping shall be required at the perimeter; for large lots (greater than sixty spaces), landscaping shall be at the perimeter and placed to break the lot into modules no greater than sixty (60) spaces each.

- ❖ Parking lots shall be designed to allow pedestrians to move safely from their vehicles to the building. On small lots, this may be achieved by providing a sidewalk at the perimeter of the lot or building. On large lots, pedestrian corridors are delineated by a paving material which differs from that of vehicular areas and planted to provide shade. Small posts or bollards may be included.
- ❖ To maintain pedestrian comfort and calm the speed of entering traffic, driveways to parking areas should be no wider than thirty-six (36) feet. Driveways connecting to state roads shall meet NC DOT requirements. Where possible, driveways should be sited so to allow shared use with adjacent property and minimize the number of curb cuts.
- ❖ Except for single family and two family dwellings, each off-street parking area shall be surfaced with asphalt or concrete pavement or other durable dust less surface.
- ❖ Adjoining parking lots serving non-residential buildings shall be interconnected to allow vehicles to flow between uses without interfering with traffic on the primary roadway serving such uses. Furthermore, on lots that are developed for commercial and/or industrial use, stub outs shall be required, where practical, for interconnectivity to abutting lots or for future development of the remainder of the parcel.

901.3 Amount Required

Sufficient off-street parking must be provided to serve the particular needs of the building(s). The following minimum requirements apply:

Residential

2 spaces per dwelling unit

1 space per 4 beds in congregate housing

Commercial and Office

1 space per 500 sq. ft. for buildings greater than 15,000 sq. feet

1 space per 300 sq. ft. for buildings less than 15,000 sq. feet

1 space per 1,000 sq. ft. for furniture showrooms

Industrial and Warehouse

.25 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.

Civic/Churches/Places of Assembly

1 space per 3 seats

Exceptions:

- A. In the Central Business District (CBD), existing buildings which were legally constructed without the provision of off-street parking and infill housing on existing lots of record may meet requirements with on-street parking and will be construed conforming to parking. Such buildings are eligible for change of use permits for building upfits and expansion.
- B. Residential buildings may meet or contribute to meeting parking requirements with on-street parking, if individual driveways are minimized and the fronting street is specifically designed to meet the parking needs of the residential building.
- C. Where vehicular access is provided between adjoining non-residential sites and operating hours of adjoining uses do not overlap, the uses may share up to 50 percent of required parking spaces. Shared use of parking shall be guaranteed by a contract or other legally binding agreement.

Section 902 Bicycle Parking (optional)

All non-residential buildings should include an area for parking bicycles. This area may be a designated parking space within the parking lot near the building or an area outside the parking lot adjacent to the building. The bike parking area must include a bike rack with locking area.

Section 903 Overflow Parking

Off-street areas used for special event parking (to accommodate occasional overflow volumes) may be constructed of any dust free, compacted, pervious ground cover; the owner of the property shall be responsible for the maintenance of such parking in a clean and dust free condition. Grass and mulch are examples of pervious ground cover; gravel and pavement are examples of impervious ground cover.

Section 904 Landscaping of Parking Lots

Perimeter landscaping for all parking lots shall meet the following standards.

- 904.1 Evergreen shrubs shall be installed along the perimeter of the parking lot. Maximum separation is six (6') feet on center with a minimum height of twenty-four (24") inches at installation. The screen may be penetrated for access between parking lots.
- 904.2 In addition, large maturing canopy trees shall line the parking lot; they shall be planted at a maximum separation fifty (50') feet on center. Tree planting strips shall be a minimum of ten (10') foot wide at parking lot perimeter, and fifteen (15') foot wide when abutting a street right-of-way. Only where pre-existing overhead utility lines prevent the use of large maturing trees, then small maturing trees may be used with a thirty (30') foot on center spacing.

904.3 Existing vegetation which meets landscaping requirements and/or tree standards may be applied toward landscaping requirements. (See Section 908.3 for credit of existing trees).

904.4 Interior landscaping of parking lots shall consist of small maturing canopy trees placed such that each section of parking, up to sixty (60) spaces per section, is enclosed by a continuous landscaping strip planted with a maximum spacing of fifty (50') feet on center. Landscaping strips within parking lots shall be at least seven feet wide, edged with a curb or wheel stop at least six inches in height, and designed to minimize damage to trees by parking or moving vehicles. Only where pre-existing overhead utility lines prevent the use of large maturing trees, then small maturing trees may be used with a thirty (30') foot on center spacing.

904.5 Lots with less than 5 parking spaces are not subject to the parking area landscaping provisions of this section.

Section 905 Lighting

Lighting of parking lots shall be on metal poles ranging from 8' to 25' in total overall height with full spectrum bulbs. Illumination shall not be directed upward or allowed to shine on to adjacent residential districts, nor allowed to shine into public right-of-ways as to impair the visibility of passing drivers. Illumination shall not exceed 1 foot candle at property boundary when abutting a residential district.

Section 906 Solid Waste

Dumpsters shall be allowed only within the rear yard of a development. Where a dumpster or other trash receptacles can be seen from a public right-of-way, they shall be set on a concrete bed and shall be screened on 3 sides by a solid wall no less than six (6') feet in height and on the fourth side by a an opaque fence of sufficient height to fully screen the bin and other appurtenances. The gate and wall shall be maintained in good working order and shall remain closed except when trash pick-ups occur. Wherever used, fences and walls shall be constructed to match the architectural detail of the main building(s).

Section 907 Access

Access points to the development (such as curb cuts or driveways) shall be restricted. There shall be no more than one (1) street or driveway access for each public street frontage of the entire development. Except that, where a public street frontage exceeds five hundred (500) feet, there may be two (2) such accesses which must be separated by at least three (300) hundred feet as measured along the public street. If the public street frontage exceeds one thousand (1,000) feet, three (3) such street or driveway accesses may be allowed which be separated by at least three hundred (300) feet as measured along the public street. Three (3) access points shall be the maximum allowed. Negative access easements shall be required between all allowable street or driveway accesses.

No driveway, except single family residential driveways, shall be allowed within thirty (30') feet of the side property line of any property or development except where a mutual

joint access agreement exists between adjoining property owners. Prior to final approval to begin construction, any planned mutual joint access agreement shall be submitted and reviewed by the Town of Granite Falls Town Planner.

Section 908 General Landscaping

908.1 Purpose

These regulations are established to protect and enhance the natural landscape of Granite Falls and ensure appropriate use of plant material in new construction. It is the intent of these regulations to preserve natural tree cover and include new tree planting with development in order to:

- Reinforce community identity
- Reduce blight and noise
- Increase building and property values
- Prevent soil erosion and stormwater runoff, thereby preserving water quality
- Increase groundwater recharge
- Create shade and reduce solar overheating, thereby reducing energy costs
- Improve and protect local and regional air quality

908.2 Street Trees

Street trees shall be planted along both sides of all public streets with the exceptions of lanes, alleys, and parkways where street trees shall be installed along the side of the street opposite of the park. Street trees shall be large maturing canopy species that reach a maturity height of at least thirty-five (35') feet. Street trees shall be planted a maximum of 40' on center, and at the time of planting shall be two inches (2") or greater in diameter measured six inches (6") above ground level, and a minimum of 8' in height. Crepe Myrtles are not permitted for use as street trees. Small maturing trees planted 30' on center may be used to meet street tree requirements only where overhead utility line along existing streets prevent maturing of canopy trees. On any street for which a streetscape plan has been adopted by the Town Council, the streetscape plan shall control. Tree planting requirements may be modified where extreme topography would require excessive grading to meet specific standards above.

908.3 Tree Preservation

During the development and construction of a subdivision or non-residential development, or any lot therein, adequate protective measures shall be provided to minimize damage to existing trees and other vegetation retained. The subdivider, developer and builder shall make every reasonable effort to protect and retain existing trees and shrubbery not actually lying in public roadways, drainage ways, building foundation sites and construction activity area equal to 20 feet around the building foundation, private driveways, paths and trails. Outside construction activity areas, all trees eight (8") inch or more in caliper measured at four (4') feet above grade should be preserved and protected. Subdivision plans and

commercial building plans shall show the location of areas of saved trees and location of tree protection fencing. To encourage the conservation of existing healthy trees, trees located on a development site within 100 feet of off-street parking areas may be credited towards required street or interior landscape trees.

- (1) 6-15 inches – 2 trees
- (2) 16 inches or more – 3 trees

908.4 Other Landscaping Regulations

- 1) If an existing tree dies within two years, it must be replaced with credited number of trees (Section 908.3) during next planting season. If the tree dies after three years, it may be replaced on a one to one ratio.
- 2) If any vegetation dies, it must be replaced during the next planting season.
- 3) Landscaping shall not obstruct the view of motorist using any street, driveway, parking aisle, or street intersection approach so to constitute a traffic hazard.
- 4) Final certificate of occupancy shall not be granted until all required vegetation has been installed by end of next planting season.

Section 909 Utility Wiring

Wiring for utilities such as telephone, electrical, cable television, etc. or related functions shall be placed underground. This requirement shall apply only to the property being developed.

Section 910 Sidewalks

Four (4') foot sidewalks shall be required to connect proposed developments to existing Town sidewalks, where Town sidewalks exist, on at least one (1) side of each public or private street within the development. Sidewalks shall be located within a public or private right-of-way, adequate for the purpose of maintenance and use of the sidewalk. The developer is responsible for maintenance of the sidewalk until such time as the Town of Granite Falls or other public agency accepts the sidewalk for maintenance. Developments may also be required to extend sidewalks, where in the opinion of the Town, a sidewalk extension will facilitate pedestrian access to a planned Town sidewalk, public or private facility, or other planned development. All sidewalks shall meet applicable Americans with Disabilities Act standards or North Carolina Building Code standards, whichever applies.

Section 911 Buffer Strips and Screening

Screening and buffering shall be used to mitigate adverse visual impacts, obscure outdoor storage areas, and to provide for compatibility between dissimilar adjoining uses. Special consideration will be given to the buffering and screening between residential uses and

commercial or industrial uses, and in visually sensitive areas. It is not the intent of this section to require screening or buffering of principal structures, or of products displayed for retail sale.

Screening and buffering may be accomplished by the use of sight-obscuring plant materials, earthen berms, walls, fences, building parapets, building placement or other design techniques. Corrugated metal, doors, tarps or similar “scrap” materials shall not be used for screening and buffering.

911.1 A buffer strip or screening as required by certain sections of this ordinance shall be one of or equal to the following:

- a. A six-foot high wood, basket weave type fence;
- b. A six-foot high solid picket type fence with the pickets being placed facing the adjoining property;
- c. A six-foot high chain link type fence with panel inserts;
- d. A six-foot high, open type fence with evergreen vegetation planted facing the adjoining property and completely blocking the view from one area to another;
- e. A six-foot high masonry wall;
- f. A row of evergreen vegetation (such as Leyland Cypress or Nellie Steven Holly) planted densely at a minimum height of six (6') feet (at time of planting) providing an opaque screen. Any evergreen species that drops its lower branches (white pines, loblolly pines, etc.) shall not be permitted as “evergreen” trees in a required buffer strip.
- g. An earthen berm, constructed so as not to create any stormwater drainage problems for adjacent property owners, in concert with evergreen vegetation to a minimum height of six (6') feet from the adjacent average grade.

Each application for a zoning permit or certificate of occupancy shall include for those use districts where a buffer strip or screening is required, information as to the location and type of buffer strip or screening to be erected. The Zoning Administrator shall make a determination as to how the buffer strip or screening should be accomplished. In some instances, a combination of screening measures may be necessary. Dense landscaping shall be used to the maximum extent practicable.

Once the buffer strip or screen is erected, it shall be properly maintained in a healthy growing condition, free of refuse and debris, in perpetuity. All plant materials and fencing shall be arranged and maintained so as not to obscure the vision of traffic. There shall be no parking of vehicles in areas used for screening and buffering.

(Pages 138 Through 145 Are Reserved For Future Use)