

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Does the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance apply to all of Lexington County?

A: Initially, the more rural portions of the County (Western and Southern) were not included in the Ordinance area. However, the Ordinance was expanded to the entire unincorporated area of Lexington County, effective July 1, 2010. Most municipalities within the County have their own landscape ordinances and requirements. Please check with your local City/Town Hall for information regarding their regulations.

Q: Where can I find the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance?

A: The Ordinance may be found at www.lex-co.com. Choose "Departments", select "Community Development", then "Ordinances". Look for "Landscape."

Q: If the trees that are a part of my landscape plan do not survive (newly planted or existing), should they be replaced?

A: Yes. You must replace all dead trees. The Landscape Administrator may determine the appropriate replanting period based on climactic or other planting conditions.

**Partial List of Tree Species
Suitable for Commercial Sites in Lexington County**

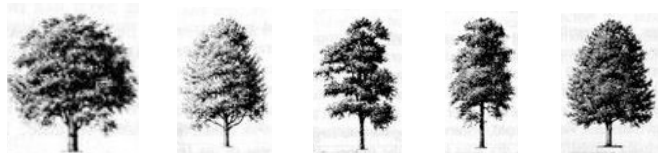
Canopy Trees

Burr Oak	Eastern Red Cedar
Live Oak	Willow Oak
Nuttall Oak	American Holly
Trident Maple	Deodar Cedar
Baldcypress	Blackgum

Understory Trees

Cherry Laurel	Eastern Redbud
Sweetbay Magnolia	Nellie Stevens Holly
Magnolia "Little Gem"	Yaupon Holly
Serviceberry	Chastetree
Fosters Holly	Arizona Cypress

For more information regarding specific varieties, growth characteristics, and/or planting specifications, please contact the Landscape Administrator or



CONTACT INFORMATION

Lexington County Administration Building
212 South Lake Drive, Lexington SC 29072

Suite 302

Addressing (Planning/GIS).....(803) 785-1454

Suite 401

Building Inspections(803) 785-8130
 Floodplain Management.....(803) 785-8121
 Landscape Office(803) 785-8121
 Subdivision Regulations (Plat Approval).....(803) 785-8121
 Zoning Office.....(803) 785-8121

Lexington County Public Works/Engineering Building
440 Ballpark Road, Lexington, SC 29072

Stormwater Management/Land Disturbance(803) 785-8201
 County Right-of-Way Encroachment(803) 785-8201

Army Corps of Engineers

Wetlands Delineation(803) 253-3444

Additional Resources

SC Forestry Commission(803) 896-8800
 Lexington Soil and Water Conservation Dist(803) 359-3165
 Clemson Extension Service, Lexington County
 Office(803) 359-8515

Landscape Permit Fees

Please visit <https://lex-co.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/Lexington%20County/Departments/Fee%20Structure/FeeSched2018.pdf> to view the current Community Development fee schedule.

Please note that fees are subject to change. If you have any questions, please contact the Community Development Department



LEXINGTON COUNTY



UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

**COUNTY OF LEXINGTON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
212 South Lake Drive, Suite 401
Lexington, SC 29072**

**Phone: (803) 785-8121
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LANDSCAPE and OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

What is the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance?

The Lexington County Landscape Ordinance was enacted in January 2001 and was amended to become the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance in January 2010. The purpose of the Ordinance is to protect and enhance the character, appearance, and image of Lexington County through attractive and creative landscape design and open space; to ensure the land-use compatibility through the use of vegetation and open space as transition areas and screening; and to preserve scenic, canopied tree corridors.

The Landscape and Open Space Ordinance applies to all residential attached activities, mobile home parks, all residential subdivisions, and all non-residential development in the designated portions of the unincorporated areas of Lexington County except as otherwise stated.

COMPONENTS OF THE LANDSCAPE and OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

Major components of the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance include:

- Trophy Trees
- Land Use Compatibility
- Parking Lots
- Service Areas/Utilities
- Transitional Buffers
- Building Design
- Road Corridors
- Scenic Corridor Protection
- Open Space Requirements

Trophy Trees

Trophy trees are defined as canopy trees that are greater than 24 inches D.B.H. Trophy trees must be identified and protected within new or expanding developments. In the event a trophy tree must be removed, new additional tree plantings are required at a ratio of one new canopy tree/two understory trees per 10 inches D.B.H. of the trophy tree removed. Trophy trees removed without prior authorization must be replaced with an equivalent number of additional canopy trees equivalent to the overall trophy tree D.B.H. removed. Yellow-poplar, sweetgum, sugar/hackberry, pines (except for longleaf), and ash are not protected as trophy trees. Trophy trees determined to be hazardous, in poor condition/health, and/or of an inappropriate species for the area may be removed without penalty if approval is granted by the Landscape Administrator.

Land Use Compatibility

When buffer and screening are required by the Zoning Ordinance, the plan must show the location of the buffer, proposed screening, and the location of existing forested or naturally vegetated areas within the buffer area. If a buffer must be cleared, it must be re-vegetated with an approved number of canopy/understory trees, large shrubs, or an equivalent combination of each.

Walls, fences, and/or berms required by the Zoning Ordinance for screening must have vegetation in front of at least 50% of the screening structure. Walls, fences, or berms not required by Zoning, but visible from the road and less than 500 feet from the road right-of-way or visible from adjoining properties must have vegetation in front of at least 50% of the structure. Vegetation must be placed on the protected property line side of the required screening, leaving sufficient space for access and maintenance of the vegetation.

Parking Lots

The Ordinance requires that there be at least one canopy tree per eight parking spaces, or portion thereof. No parking space can be greater than 50 feet from the trunk of a tree. A minimum of 160 square feet planting area is required per tree, unless smaller growing trees are utilized in the planting plan. Parking lots that are visible from roads and adjoining properties must be landscaped with evergreen vegetation, maintained at a height of two to four feet, that extends the length of the parking area. Vehicle storage areas and car sales lots are required to have trees around the perimeter of the storage area or sales lot and provide evergreen vegetation, as applicable.

Service Areas/Utilities

Service areas and equipment/structures related to garbage collection, utilities, and communication must be screened from public rights-of-way and adjoining property through the use of landscaping, berming, and/or fencing or a combination thereof. If fencing or a wall is used for screening, at least 50% of the structure must be softened with vegetation. Stormwater management structures, such as detention ponds, are also required to meet certain provisions of the Ordinance.

Transitional Buffers

Residential subdivisions may require perimeter buffers depending on the layout, design, location, and/or size.

Building Design

Large unadorned buildings that are greater than 100 feet in length and visible from and within 500 feet of a road right-of-way must be landscaped.

Road Corridors

Any road identified as an Arterial, Collector, or Local road by the Zoning Ordinance and frontages along Interstate highways shall be considered a road corridor. The Ordinance requires:

- Street frontage trees shall average one tree per 35 feet of frontage,
- Street frontage trees shall setback 10 feet, but not greater than 20 feet from the road right-of-way.
- Scenic Road Corridors will have additional requirements.

Landscaping shall not impact vision clearance, sight distance, or signage.

Scenic Corridor Protection

Scenic corridor provisions are established in order to preserve and protect the natural vistas of certain thoroughfares and byways within Lexington County. While development along these corridors shall be designed with the principal purpose of accommodating and preserving existing tree canopies, the intent of the Ordinance is not to prohibit extensive development along these corridors, but to retain the unique character during the process.

Three categories of scenic corridor designations have been established with different preservation requirements assigned to each category. The requirements for Scenic Corridor 1 are more restrictive while the requirements for Scenic Corridor 2 are less restrictive and Scenic Corridor 3 is the least restrictive. Road sections assigned scenic corridor designations also have special sign, entranceway, and other additional Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Open Space Requirements

Open space requirements are established in order to preserve and enhance existing vistas; improve appearance; offset the environmental impact of large expanses of impervious surfaces; improve ground water recharge; and promote adequate light, air, and open space for the residents of and visitors to Lexington County. The purpose of this component of the Ordinance is to provide guidelines for the establishment of suitable and usable open space within proposed residential subdivisions with at least ten lots or with lot sizes that average less than 1.5 acres, and also to address open spaces left by abandoned golf course activities.

LANDSCAPE SITE PLANS

The landscape site plan must show:

- Total acreage of property, Area/acreage to be developed
- Transitional Buffers
- Location and identification of trophy trees as defined in the Appendix of the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance.
- Location of proposed and existing structures, driveways, and parking areas.
- Proposed location of service areas (i.e., garbage collection stations, utilities, and detention/retention ponds).
- Buffer and/or screening as required by the Zoning Ordinance.
- Clearing plan for activities along scenic corridors shall include the location of protected trees and/or natural forested areas within the designated scenic corridor.
- Open space as required by the Landscape and Open Space Ordinance. Trees must be marked and protected as shown on the landscape plans.

Important Notes: A landscape plan must be approved and the appropriate fee received before a building permit can be issued. The vegetation as shown on the approved landscape plan must be installed, inspected, and approved prior to a final building inspection and the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.