

Presentation:

At the request of the Sullivan County Planning Commission/ Sullivan County Planning and Codes Department, the Kingsport Regional Planning Commission is requested to send a positive recommendation in support of the submitted zoning text amendment to the Sullivan County Commission. The proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Amend back to 15 foot buffer strip width to accommodate mature tree width and align with neighboring communities codes.

Comparison of the proposed changes with current City of Kingsport zoning regulations:

The City of Kingsport has a detailed Landscape and Land Use Buffers ordinance found in [Article VII](#) of the Municipal City Code which addresses landscape requirements, landscape materials, installation and maintenance.

The complete text changes are added at the end of this report with proposed changes highlighted in yellow.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends sending a positive recommendation to the Sullivan County Commission in support of the zoning text amendment. The proposed zoning text changes are more closely aligned to zoning allowances that currently exist for the City of Kingsport.

From: [Ambre Torbett](#)
To: [Cherith Young](#); [Heather Cook](#); [Ross Peters](#); [Steve Blankenship](#); [Weems, Ken](#); [Garland, Savannah](#); [McMurray, Jessica](#)
Cc: [Luke Meade](#)
Subject: ZTA for county - Buffer Code
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 3:14:27 PM
Attachments: [ZTA Buffer Code.pdf](#)
[Appendix G - TN Native Trees and Planting Guidelines.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Happy Friday all,

Can you please add this minor ZTA on your next available Planning Commission agenda. Luke has researched a lot on this and had included a new Appendix to our Zoning Resolution to help property owners select the appropriate tree for satisfying buffering requirements and landscaping.

I will be on vacation next week. If you have any questions, please contact Luke. He was my lead on this.

Thank you all so much,

Ambre M. Torbett, AICP

*Director of Planning & Community Development
Stormwater Administrator*

Sullivan County, Tennessee
Planning & Codes Department
3425 Hwy 126 | Historic Snow House
Blountville, TN 37617
Desk: 423.279.2603 | Main: 423.323.6440

SULLIVAN COUNTY ZONING RESOLUTION

TEXT AMENDMENT PROCESS AND CHECKLIST:

Date: May 16, 2023

Article Reference (Pg #):

8-107.1

Existing Zoning Resolution Text:

see attached

Proposed Zoning Resolution Text Amendment:

see highlighted words

Purpose and Need / Background Information: (Staff Report Attached)

amend back to 15-foot buffer width to accommodate mature tree width and align with neighboring communities codes

Initiated by:

Planning Director

Sullivan County Regional Planning Commission

Landowner/Developer

Review and Recommendation Timeline:

<u>Public Review</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Vote Tally</u>
Initial Discussion by SCRPC	<u>March 21, 2023</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>review</u>
2 nd Review by SCRPC	<u>May 16, 2023</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>8 yes / 1 abst</u>
Bristol Staff			
Bristol Regional PC			
Kingsport Staff			
Kingsport Regional PC			
Public Notice			
County Commission Public Hearing			
If CC Denies/Remands back for further Study – repeat full public review process			



F-2 **Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to Article 8-107 – Buffering and Landscaping Requirements, along with Proposed Appendix F – Tennessee Native Trees list.**

8-107 Buffering and Landscaping Requirements for all Commercial and Manufacturing Districts - Buffering and/or landscaping standards shall be required in order to visibly screen incompatible land uses from one another and to assist in the controls of stormwater run-off. The following minimum standards shall be required for all proposed commercial and manufacturing developments, as well as, any non-residential facility and multi-family housing complexes as stated in ARTICLE III:

8-107.1 Buffering Strip - A minimum of a fifteen (15) ~~an eight (8)~~ foot reserved portion of a parcel perimeter, which shall be free of all buildings, structures, signs, parking or other paved and hard surfaces for the purpose of buffering one land use from another, possibly incompatible land uses. Such strip shall be planted with year-round evergreen trees and shrubs a minimum of four (4) feet in height (when planted) on ~~ten (10)-foot~~ staggered centers to achieve a natural and full buffer depending on tree species. Total overall height of at least one (1) row of plantings shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet upon mature growth. Such buffer shall be maintained and free of debris with other specifications as may be required by the Planning Commission or Building Commissioner to ensure proper screening between properties, wherever required. In the case of undisturbed mature-growth trees, the Planning Commission or Building Commissioner may reduce additional plantings in areas specified so as to preserve the established trees. Furthermore, the selection of trees may be specified by the Building Commissioner or Planning Commission due to existing overhead utility lines, which may interfere with the mature height of such selected tree specification. Where appropriate a solid (opaque) wood, masonry and/or solid PVC fence, a minimum of six (6) feet in height, may be constructed in lieu of or part of a planned buffer strip. All buffer strips and/or fencing shall be maintained for the life of the use and/or improvements (*amended August 15, 2005*). Refer to Appendix G for the list of approved Tennessee Native Trees and list of prohibited invasive species.

8-107.2 Vegetative Reserve Green Strip A minimum of a ten (10) foot vegetative reserve green strip shall be maintained on all road frontages in order to control vehicular access, sight visibility and to assist in the stormwater run-off from the parking lot and other impervious surfaces. Such reserve strip shall be free from all structures and parking. Such reserve strip may be planted with any type of shrubs and/or grasses that, at mature growth, do not exceed three (3) feet in height, so as to not interfere with vehicular sight visibility. Such requirement may be waived for all new developments within the B-2 district should alternative access controls and stormwater designs be implemented.

G. **NEW BUSINESS:** *- Sub Regs.*

G1. **SEPTIC CERTIFICATION FOR EXISTING SYSTEMS WITH NO TDEC RECORD**

LOT ***** is improved with a structure utilizing an existing septic system. No evaluation, testing, or verification of the functionality of the septic system or adequate area for duplication has been completed by the Division of Groundwater Protection of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. The Sullivan County Regional Planning Commission makes no certification or guarantee to the viability of the septic system. Any purchase of this lot should verify to their satisfaction the viability of sewage disposal for the property prior to purchase.

CERTIFICATE OF EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEM

I hereby certify that Lot ***** contains a separate properly functioning septic system and that the septic tank, field lines, and duplication area with each system are located entirely within each lot.

DATE:

OWNER SIGNATURE:

PRINT NAME:

APPENDIX G

TENNESSEE NATIVE TREES & PLANTING GUIDELINES

Sections

F-101 Statement of Purpose

F-102 Buffering and Landscaping Requirements for all Commercial and Manufacturing Districts

F-103 Native Tree Recommendations

F-101 Statement of Purpose - Appendix G serves the purpose of providing updated regulations for buffering strips and suggesting native trees suitable for planting in local yards. To reduce the risks of damage to sidewalks and infrastructure, the updated regulations encourage planting of native trees with deep root systems that can anchor themselves. To further enhance the ecological and aesthetic benefits of the urban forest, the updated buffering strip regulations also aim to provide more privacy and natural separation between neighboring properties of different zonings and land uses. Native trees recommended in Appendix G were selected based on their adaptability to local conditions and their ability to support local wildlife and ecosystem services. By promoting the planting of these trees, shall result in a healthier and more resilient urban forest that provides numerous benefits to community health and well-being, such as shade, air and water purification, and greater aesthetic value. Included are clear guidelines and resources to help property owners and local authorities transition to more sustainable, resilient, and native landscaping practices.

F-102 Buffering and Landscaping Requirements for all Commercial and Manufacturing Districts

(See Zoning Article 8-107.1 and 8-107.2)

F-103 Tennessee Native Tree Recommendations In order to ensure biogeographical synchronization, and ensure previous minimums are met, the following species of trees are recommended:

F-103.1 Evergreen trees that are suitable for planting in buffer strips:

Eastern Hemlock (Tsuga Canadensis)

Average Height: 40-70 feet

Maximum Height: 100 feet

Average Width: 25-35 feet

Maximum Width: 40 feet

Average Trunk Diameter: 1-2 feet

Maximum Trunk Diameter: 3 feet



White Pine (*Pinus Strobus*)

Average Height: 50-80 feet

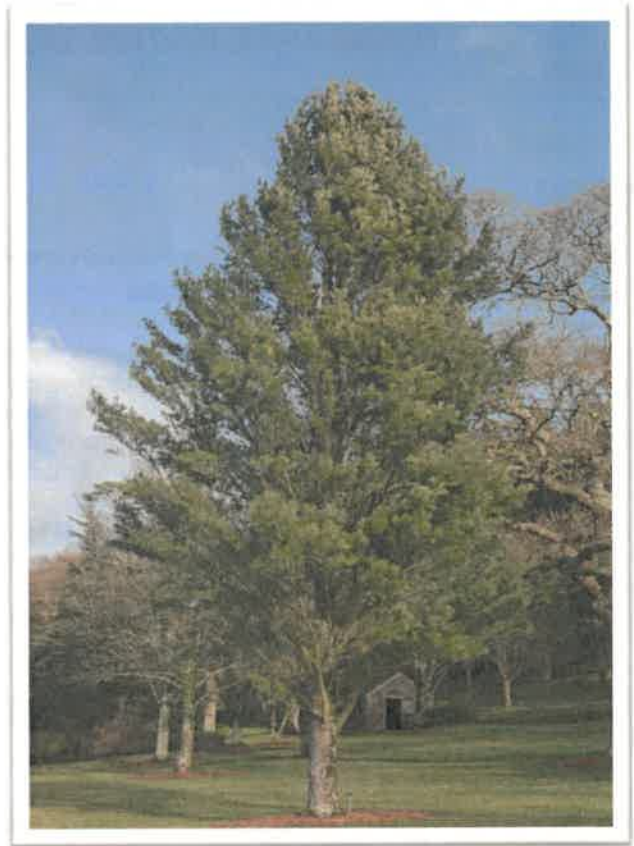
Maximum Height: 150 feet

Average Width: 20-40 feet

Maximum Width: 50 feet

Average Trunk Diameter: 2-3 feet

Maximum Trunk Diameter: 5 feet



Red Cedar (*Juniperus Virginiana*)

Average Height: 20-40 feet

Maximum Height: 90 feet

Average Width: 8-20 feet

Maximum Width: 30 feet

Average Trunk Diameter: 1-2 feet

Maximum Trunk Diameter: 4 feet



American Holly (Ilex Opaca)

Average Height: 15-30 feet

Maximum Height: 50 feet

Average Width: 10-15 feet

Maximum Width: 25 feet

Average Trunk Diameter: 1-2 feet

Maximum Trunk Diameter: 3 feet



Fraser Fir (Abies Fraseri)

Average Height: 30-50 feet

Maximum Height: 80 feet

Average Width: 15-25 feet

Maximum Width: 40 feet

Average Trunk Diameter: 1-2 feet

Maximum Trunk Diameter: 4 feet



F-103.2 Native Tree Recommendations

Native Trees without invasive tendencies:

- American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)
- Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
- Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
 - Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
 - Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)
- Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
- Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
 - White Oak (*Quercus alba*)
 - White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)
- Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)

Native trees to Northeast Tennessee with shallow root systems:

- Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)

Native trees to Northeast Tennessee that might not be suitable for yards under 1 acre:

- Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)
- Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
 - Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
- Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
 - White Oak (*Quercus alba*)
 - White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Native trees to Northeast Tennessee that are well-suited for rocky or clay soil:

- American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)
- Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*)
 - Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*)
 - Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
- Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)
- Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
 - Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)
- Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)
- Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
 - White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

Source Materials

1. "Abies fraseri." Missouri Botanical Garden, www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=b409.
2. "Eastern Hemlock." The Morton Arboretum, mortonarb.org/plant-and-animal-collections/tree-plant-descriptions/eastern-hemlock.
3. "Ilex opaca." Missouri Botanical Garden, www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=b611.
4. Juniperus virginiana." University of Tennessee Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, fwf.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/juniperus-virginiana.pdf.
5. "Native Trees of Tennessee." Tennessee Department of Agriculture, www.tn.gov/agriculture/forests/forestry-promotion/natural-heritage-program/native-trees-of-tennessee.html.
6. "Pinus strobus." USDA Forest Service, www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/pinstro/all.html.
7. "Red Cedar." USDA Forest Service, www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/junvir/all.html.
8. "Shade Trees for the Landscape." North Carolina State University Department of Horticultural Science, content.ces.ncsu.edu/shade-trees-for-the-landscape.
9. "Tennessee's Urban Trees." Tennessee Department of Agriculture, www.tn.gov/agriculture/forests/forestry-promotion/urban-forestry-program/tennessee-s-urban-trees.html.
10. "Tree Selection for Buffer Strips in Tennessee." University of Tennessee Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries, fwf.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Tree-Selection-for-Buffer-Strips-in-Tennessee-FWF-1.pdf.
11. "Tsuga canadensis." USDA Forest Service, www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/tsucan/all.html.
12. "Types of Roots System in Trees." Home Guides, homeguides.sfgate.com/types-roots-system-trees-56535.html.

