

City of Watertown Zoning Code Rewrite

Overview of Article VIII Landscaping Standards and

Article X Administration and Procedures

September 28, 2026

Article VIII – Landscaping Requirements. Article VIII establishes the City’s landscaping standards for new development and applicable expansions. It addresses landscaping around buildings, parking and paved areas, street frontages, yards, and transitions between potentially incompatible zoning districts through bufferyards. The Article uses a points-based system to provide flexibility in plant selection and site design while establishing consistent expectations for the amount and location of landscaping.

Article X – Administration and Procedures. Article X establishes how the Zoning Ordinance is administered and how development and zoning applications move through the City’s review and approval process. It defines the responsibilities of the Zoning Administrator, Plan Commission, Common Council, and Zoning Board of Appeals and establishes procedures for applications such as rezonings, conditional uses, site plans, planned developments, variances, and other zoning approvals. This section provides a clear framework for who reviews each type of application, what process applies, and what body takes final action.

Two key changes compared to existing City processes are noted below for advance consideration before discussion at the Plan Commission meeting:

- Public hearings for Planned Developments currently occur at Plan Commission with public hearings for rezoning and CUPs occurring at Common Council before returning to Plan Commission for a recommendation or action. The draft moves all public hearings to the Plan Commission.
- The existing Site Plan Review Committee would be removed as a formal entity. This is replaced with administrative procedures for reviewing site plan applications, starting with pre-application guidance from the zoning administrator, followed by zoning administrator coordination to obtain comments from other city departments.

A PowerPoint presentation will be provided at the Plan Commission meeting to summarize the major provisions, explain how the standards would operate, and highlight key issues for Commission discussion. Staff will use the Commission’s direction to refine these two Articles and prepare for final draft review.