



DeKalb County Government

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030

Agenda Item

File #: 2019-4397
File Status: Preliminary Item

11/7/2019

Public Hearing: YES NO **Department:** Planning & Sustainability

SUBJECT:

COMMISSION DISTRICT(S): ALL DISTRICTS

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability for a text amendment to amend Table 5.2 to clarify buffer width requirements when adjacent to “R” districts whether adjoining use is single family attached or detached.

PETITION NO: N12. TA-19-1243554

PROPOSED USE: Residential Buffer Requirements

LOCATION: County Wide

PARCEL NO. : N/A

INFO. CONTACT: Marian Eisenberg

PHONE NUMBER: 404-371-4922

PURPOSE:

Application of the Director of Planning and Sustainability for a text amendment to amend Table 5.2 to clarify buffer width requirements when adjacent to “R” districts whether adjoining use is single family attached or detached.

RECOMMENDATION:

COMMUNITY COUNCIL: CC-1 APPROVAL with a CONDITION; CC-2 FULL-CYCLE DEFERRAL; CC-3: NO QUORUM; CC-4 APPROVAL; CC-5 NO QUORUM.

PLANNING COMMISSION: PENDING

PLANNING STAFF: APPROVAL

STAFF ANALYSIS: This text amendment seeks to amend Table 5.2 by adding and clarifying buffer width requirements when adjacent to “R” districts whether adjoining use is single family attached or single family detached. A 20 ft undisturbed buffer is proposed when adjacent to “R” districts for single family attached or single family detached residences.

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE: Pending

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COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOTE/RECOMMENDATION: CC-1 Approval with a condition (3-0-0) that the proposed buffer be 30 ft instead of 20 ft. CC-2 Full Cycle Deferral (6-0-0); CC-3 No Quorum; CC-4 Approval (9-0-0); CC-5 No Quorum.

Sec. 5.4.5. - Transitional buffers.

- A. *Intent.* Transitional buffers are intended to create a visual screen in order to diminish the potential negative impacts of non-residential and mixed land uses on adjacent residential land uses. Similarly, transitional buffers diminish the potential negative impacts of higher intensity residential development on adjacent single-family residential land uses.
- B. *General requirements.* Natural or planted transitional buffers required by this article shall be established and permanently maintained by the property owner as follows:
1. The required transitional buffer shall be depicted in detail on each site plan or plat prior to final approval. Type and location of natural and planted vegetation shall be included.
 2. Within the transitional buffer, the natural topography of the land shall be preserved and existing growth shall not be disturbed except where necessary to remove dead or diseased trees and undergrowth or to enhance the buffer with additional landscaping in order to provide a screen so as to prevent view of the higher density development from the lower density development.
 3. Grading or construction adjacent to the transitional buffer zone shall not disturb or encroach upon the transitional buffer zone.
 4. Notwithstanding subsection 3., if grading is required in the transitional buffer in order to prevent or control erosion, the area of such grading shall cover no more than twenty (20) percent of the required transitional buffer, shall be immediately replanted upon completion of easement improvements and shall avoid disturbance of the soil within the dripline of trees within the transitional buffer.
 5. Any approved utility crossings shall be perpendicular to the transitional buffer.
 6. A pedestrian walkway, a maximum width of five (5) feet, may be located in the buffer to provide pedestrian access to the adjoining property. Where a pedestrian walkway is provided, a gate shall be installed in the required screening fence.
 7. If existing vegetation in a buffer area does not meet the transitional buffer standards, a five-foot high, landscaped berm may be installed subject to the approval of the county arborist. Grading to construct the berm shall not remove significant plants designated by the county arborist as part of the approval of the landscaped berm.
- C. *Buffer planting and materials.* When the conditions of the existing natural topography and vegetation are insufficient to achieve the visual screening required by this section, a landscape planting plan to enhance the transitional buffer shall be prepared and implemented to supplement existing natural growth or to provide new plant materials of such growth characteristics as will provide a screen meeting the standards below:
1. *Planting height.* Proposed planting as part of an enhanced transitional buffer shall have a height of at least six (6) feet at the time of planting and planted in a minimum of two (2) rows, with staggered on center spacing such that a continuous opaque screen is created within two (2) years of planting.
 2. *Plant types.* Plant species in an enhanced transitional buffer shall be evergreen, native, naturalized or other species well-adapted to the local climate and rainfall patterns, disease and pest-free, healthy and vigorous, and meet standard for American Nursery Stock, ANSI Z60.1.
 3. *Plant functions.* Plants shall be approved from a list made available from the planning department, but shall not be exclusive of other plants which may be suitable, provided they can provide a continuous opaque screen.
 4. *Fences.* Fences are required with transitional buffers and shall meet the requirements of section 5.4.7.
 5. *Wall and fence finishes.* Walls and fences shall be constructed with the finished or decorative side facing outward from the property.

- D. *Buffer dimensions and specifications.* Table 5.2(a) identifies the transitional buffer class required for each zoning district based on the zoning district to which it is adjacent. Table 5.2(b) summarizes the minimum width of the required transitional buffer for each transitional buffer class (A-E).

Table 5.2(a): Transitional Buffer Class by District

| Transitional Buffer Class by District | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Districts | Adjacent District | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Residential Districts | R ¹ | MHP | RNC | RSM | MR-1 | MR-2 | HR-1-3 | MU-1 | MU-2 | MU-3 | MU-4 | MU-5 |
| MHP | C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| RNC | B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mixed Residential Districts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| RSM ² | A | C | A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| MR-1 ² | B | C | B | B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| MR-2 ² | C | C | C | C | C | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| HR-1-3 ² | C | C | C | C | B | B | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Mixed-Use Districts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MU-1 | B | B | B | B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| MU-2 | C | B | B | B | B | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| MU-3 | C | C | C | B | A | B | B | B | B | - | - | - |
| MU-4 | C | C | C | B | A | B | B | B | B | - | - | - |
| MU-5 | C | C | C | B | A | B | B | B | B | - | - | - |
| Non-Residential Districts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OI | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | B | B | B | - | - |

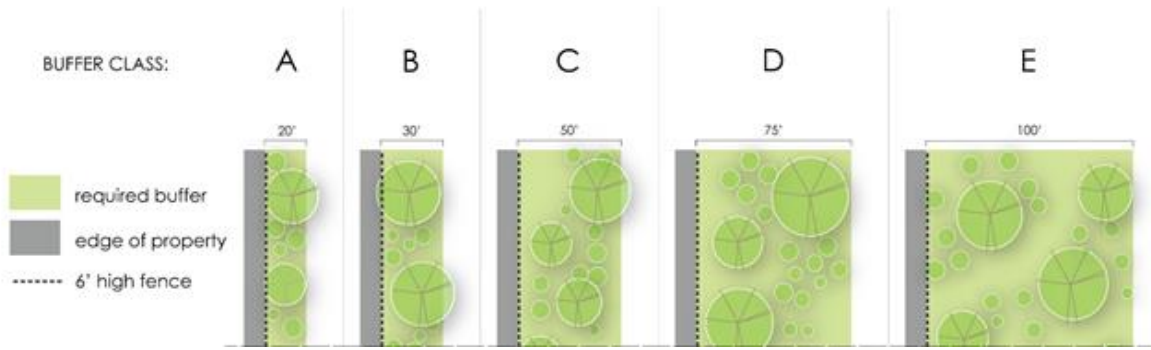
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|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OIT | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | B | B | B | - | - |
| NS | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | A | A | A | - | - |
| C-1 | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | B | B | B | - | - |
| OD | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| C-2 | C | C | C | C | C | C | C | B | B | B | B | B |
| M | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D | D |
| M-2 | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |

1 R= RE, RLG, R-100, R-85, R-75, R-60 (except when R-60 use is single-family attached)

2 Where ~~the Mixed Residential District has detached~~ single-family units ~~along an adjacent~~ are located adjacent to a residential (R) use ~~boundary~~, then a transitional buffer is not required. If single-family attached adjoins single-family detached, a 20-foot buffer is required.

Table 5.2(b): Transitional Buffer Minimum by Buffer Class

| Transitional Buffer Minimum Width by Buffer Class | |
|---|-----------------|
| Buffer Class | Width |
| A | 20' |
| B | 30' |
| C | 50' |
| D | 75' |
| E | 100' with fence |



Transitional Buffers Figure

([Ord. No. 15-06](#), 8-25-2015)