

**TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN
COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER
O-9-25**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 253 OF THE CODE OF FRANKLIN
TOWNSHIP TO REVISE STANDARDS FOR BUFFERING BETWEEN
RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL USES CONSISTENT WITH THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN THE 2024 MASTER PLAN
REEXAMINATION REPORT**

WHEREAS, the Franklin Township Committee recognized a need to reexamine the municipal Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Franklin Township Committee, in order to accomplish this goal, consistent with the Municipal Land Use Law, requested that the Township Planning Board reexamine the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Board prepared a Master Plan Reexamination Report that contained various recommended revisions and updates to the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Board held a public hearing on the report at the regularly scheduled September 17, 2024 meeting at which time the Planning Board considered and discussed the report and entertained and considered all comments made by the numerous members of the public who attended the meeting; and

WHEREAS, at the September 17, 2024 public hearing the Planning Board adopted the Master Plan Reexamination Report and;

WHEREAS, the Township Planning Board adopted a Memorializing Resolution to approve the 2024 Master Plan Reexamination Report at the October 15, 2024 Planning Board meeting; and

WHEREAS, this land development ordinance amendment is consistent with and drafted specifically to implement Recommendation number 26 regarding landscape buffers in the recommendations contained within the Master Plan Reexamination Report adopted by the Planning Board; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, THAT THE TOWNSHIP LAND DEVELOPMNET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

(Deleted language is stricken, added language is underlined and in bold and italic type):

Section 1. Article XII Buffers

§253-102 "Buffer strips required" is amended as follows:

All lots or part of lots in the following districts, which are improved with a commercial or industrial use and whose side or rear lines are adjacent to a residential ~~district or a pre-existing, nonconforming residential~~ use, shall be screened from such residential ~~district or~~ use by landscaped buffer strips ~~or other such screening~~ along said side or rear lines as may be approved by the Planning Board:

- A. NC Neighborhood Commercial.
- B. HC Highway Commercial.
- C. LM Light Manufacturing.
- D. IC Interchange Commercial.
- E. Malaga Village.

F. Franklinville Village.

Section 2. General buffer strip regulations.

§253-103. is amended as follows:

A. Within the required buffer areas, a solid and continuous landscape screen shall be planted and maintained. Said landscaping shall consist of massed evergreen ***trees*** and shrubs or a combination of evergreens, shrubs and deciduous trees. Deciduous trees shall have at least a two-inch caliper at planting. Size of evergreens and shrubs shall be allowed to vary depending on setting and type of shrub. Only nursery-grown plant materials shall be acceptable; and all trees, shrubs and ground covers shall be planted according to acceptable horticultural standards. The buffer is to be planted so as to continually restrict a clear view beyond said buffer strip, ~~provided that such planted strip shall be located within the buffer strip furthest from the adjacent residential district.~~ The portion of any naturally forested buffer strip that does not need to be cleared to establish a "solid and continuous landscape screen" should be left undisturbed.

B. Arrangement of plantings in buffers shall provide maximum protection to adjacent properties and avoid damage to existing plant material. Possible arrangements include planting in parallel, serpentine, or broken rows. If planted berms are used, the minimum top width shall be four feet, and the maximum side slope shall be 2:1. ***A minimum of 1/2 of the required landscape buffer strip width shall be planted with evergreen trees and shrubs as described in paragraph A above, with a minimum height at the time of planting of 8 feet.***

C. The plant species selected should be hardy for the particular climatic zone in which the development is located (Zone 6b) and appropriate in terms of function and size. In the event that any of the plantings in accordance with the above requirements do not live, they shall be replaced within six months.

D. The required height of the planted strip shall be measured in relation to the elevation of the edge of the adjacent area to be screened. In such cases as the ground elevation of the location at which the screen is to be planted is less than the elevation of the edge of the adjacent area, the required height of the screen shall be increased in an amount equal to the said difference in elevation, and in such cases that the ground elevation of the location at which the screen is to be planted is greater than that at the edge of the adjacent area, the required height of the screen may be reduced in an amount equal to said difference in elevation, provided that in no case shall the required height be reduced more than two feet.

E. The entire buffer strip shall be graded and planted with grass seed or sod and such other shrubbery or trees. The entire area shall be attractively maintained and kept clean of all debris and rubbish by the person responsible for providing such buffer strip. No buildings, structures, storage of materials, signs or parking shall be permitted within the buffer area. The sole use shall be to provide vegetation or fencing as screening.

F. The site plan or subdivision plat will not be signed until such time as the landscaping requirements, buffer strips and/or other approved dividers, as required by this chapter and as approved by the Planning Board, are either actually installed in full compliance herewith, or, in the event that the season is not appropriate, a performance guarantee is required as per § 253-41.

~~G. In required buffer areas where a natural planter strip is considered by the Planning Board to be impracticable or inappropriate, an opaque fence may be substituted in whole or in part for a natural buffer, provided that its specifications are approved by the Planning Board. Reserved~~

~~H. A buffer strip shall consist of additional landscaped area over and above that otherwise required by this chapter and shall be maintained by the owner required to provide such buffer area. Reserved~~

I. The location and height of buffer strip planting may be adjusted if the same will impede vehicular traffic safety.

J. No buffer strip planting will be required if the natural growth within the required buffer strip will adequately screen the residential use ~~district~~ from adjacent commercial and industrial districts uses

K. No buffer strip will be required if the improved commercial or industrial ~~district use~~ is screened from the adjacent residential use district by flood districts, a stream, a lake, a wooded conservation area or combinations thereof with a total width of not less than that required by the commercial or industrial use.

L. No signs shall be located in buffer strips.

M. Buffer strips between residential uses and non-residential uses shall have a minimum width as follows:

~~(1) Property within the Neighborhood Commercial, Highway Commercial, Malaga Village, and Franklinville Village Districts shall be a minimum of 50 feet up to 150 feet in width. Buffers between a commercial restaurant, or retail use and a residential use shall have a minimum width of 50 feet.~~

~~(2) Light manufacturing and Interchange Commercial Districts shall be a minimum of 100 feet up to 300 feet in width, depending on the uses and characteristics of the area. Buffers between any use categorized as a light industrial or manufacturing use and a residential use shall have a minimum width of 150 feet.~~

~~(3) For pre-existing, nonconforming residential uses, the buffer width shall be a minimum of 25 feet up to 50 feet maximum, depending on the proposed use.~~

Section 3. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent with the provisions hereof, are hereby repealed insofar as said inconsistency exists.

Section 4. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final passage and publications required by law.

Attest:

Township of Franklin

BARBARA FREIJOMIL, RMC

JOHN BRUNO, MAYOR

CERTIFICATION

I, Barbara Freijomil, Clerk of the Township of Franklin, County of Gloucester, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced at the regular meeting of the Township of Franklin held on July 8, 2025 and thereafter duly advertised in the legal newspaper of the Township at least seven (7) days prior to it being considered for final passage and adoption at a subsequent meeting to be held on August 12, 2025 at which time any person interested therein will be given an opportunity to be heard.

BARBARA FREIJOMIL
Township Clerk

Introduced July 8, 2025

Name	Motion		Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Bruno							
Doyle							
Fiorella							
Keen							
Marsh							

Adopted August 12, 2025

Name	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Bruno						
Doyle						
Fiorella						
Keen						
Marsh						