

Planting and Open Space Requirements in the NR District

Green spaces provide a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including improved air and water quality, enhanced biodiversity, and aesthetic value. They also play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of urbanization such as heat islands and stormwater runoff while contributing to the overall health and well-being of communities.

Table 2 Bulk Standards in All Zoning Districts includes planting and open space requirements in all zoning districts. For the NR district, the requirements are as follows:

“Minimum of 15% of gross lot area dedicated to planting and beautification area; a minimum of 50% of this requirement shall be located in front yard.”

The code does not include a definition for either “planting” or “beautification,” and without better specificity, some approaches to satisfying the requirements may reduce the yard space dedicated to natural plantings. The Charter and Code Committee has recommended changes to the planting and open space requirements in the NR district that are intended to increase the requirements for plantings.

The recommended changes are:

- Add a definition for Green Space
 - Green Space is defined as vegetation, such as grass, trees, shrubs and other plants which are permanently planted into the ground.
- Total greenspace shall be 25% of the total lot area in the NR district.
- For the NR district, all front yard area shall be green space except for a 20x18 space for a driveway and 4x18 space for a walkway.
- The remaining green space area shall be distributed between the two side yard and backyard areas.
- Driveways and walkways shall have borders that contain the materials for those surfaces within the driveway and walkway spaces.
- Existing front yard spaces covered with non-green space materials may remain, but, except for driveways and walkways, any renewal or replacement of these materials must convert these areas to green space.