



***Memorandum***

**To:** **Town Council**  
**From:** **Thomas Dansie, Director of Community Development**  
**Date:** **January 9, 2026**  
**Re:** **Public Hearing: Ordinance 2025-19 Amending Chapter 10-18 of the Town Code by Adding a Requirement for Enhanced Buffering and Screening on Commercial Properties Adjacent to Residential Uses.**

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***Introduction and Background***

Land Use and Town Appearance Sub-Goal F1 of the General Plan directs the Planning Commission to develop enhanced screening and buffering standards for new commercial development adjacent to residential uses. The Commission has discussed this topic in previous work meetings and has recommended proposed ordinance language to add to the Town Code.

The Planning Commission's proposed ordinance would add a requirement for "buffer yards" where commercial property is developed adjacent to residential properties. A buffer yard is a requirement for enhanced setback plus landscaping intended to mitigate the negative impacts of commercial uses adjacent to residential uses. They are a common element in many land use codes from communities across the nation. The Commission used examples from other communities as well as best practices currently observed in Springdale to develop the proposed buffer yard ordinance.

The Council should review the proposed ordinance language, hold a public hearing to accept public comment, then make a decision whether or not to adopt the proposed ordinance.

***Summary of Proposed Changes***

The landscape ordinance currently has minimal standards that require use of landscape to screen certain components of a development (e.g. parking, mechanical equipment, etc.). However, there are no quantifiable standards for such screening. Additionally, there are other more general impacts associated with commercial uses (noise, light, general activity, etc.) that are not addressed by the Town's current landscape screening standards. The proposed ordinance will add specific requirements to use a combination of enhanced landscape and setbacks to help mitigate the general impacts of commercial uses adjacent to residential properties.

The proposed ordinance contains three options a property owner can choose from to satisfy the buffer yard requirement on the property. These three options vary in the width of the buffer and the amount of landscape required. Option One is a narrow buffer with a tall fence and dense tall vegetative screening requirement. Option Two is a wider buffer with a requirement for a combination of berm and fencing, with a moderate amount of vegetative screening. Option Three is the widest buffer, and requires more landscaping and no fence.

These three options are described in detail below.

Buffer Yard Option 1

This buffer yard is the narrowest concept. It is intended to allow development flexibility on smaller lots that don't have enough space for a larger buffer. Given the narrow nature of the buffer, it requires a taller fence and more dense vertical vegetation to mitigate the negative impacts of the commercial use.

Buffer Yard Option 2

This option requires a mix of berms, fences, and vegetation. The average required width is 20 feet, however the buffer yard can vary in width from a minimum of 15 feet to a maximum of 25 feet to allow flexibility and creativity in design. (Note: the property owner could choose to make the buffer wider than 25 feet, but would only get credit for 25 feet of width. This prevents a situation where a property owner could use a very wide section of buffer to average out more narrow buffers and still meet the 20 foot average requirement.)

Buffer Yard Option 3

This is the widest buffer. It uses additional width and increased vegetation to mitigate the impacts of the adjacent commercial use. Like Option 2, the width of the buffer yard can vary, as long as the average is 35 feet.

The three buffer yard options are presented in conceptual sketches intended to accompany the written ordinance language.

The proposed ordinance allows a property owner to choose which buffer yard option to develop. However, the ordinance also requires the owner of the commercial property where the buffer yard is located to consult with the owner of the adjacent residential property regarding the buffer yard style. The adjacent residential property owner cannot dictate which buffer yard to use. But a requirement to consult with the adjacent residential property owner will allow for more open communication and hopefully result in better buffer yard design.

As originally proposed, the buffer yard requirement would have applied to all commercial property adjacent to residential property. During the public hearing review of the ordinance the Commission discussed a public comment letter that suggested the buffer zone requirement should not apply if the commercial property in question were developed with a residential use (residential uses are allowed in the commercial zones). The writer of the comment felt that commercial property developed with a housing use, including transient lodging, should not be subject to the buffer yard requirement. The Commission agreed that a buffer yard should not be required between two properties developed with a residential use. However, they did feel a property with a transient lodging use should be required to have a buffer from the adjacent residential property. The version of the proposed ordinance included with this report reflects the revisions the Commission made at the meeting.

### **General Plan Direction**

According to section 10-3-2(A), the Town should only make amendments to the land use ordinance when such amendments will support the goals and objectives of the land use ordinance and General Plan. Thus, the Council should consider whether or not the proposed buffer yard requirement for commercial properties adjacent to residential properties will promote these goals and objectives.

The General Plan emphasizes the primacy of the residential character of the Town. The General Plan also contains multiple statements about promoting village atmosphere. One of the fundamental tenants of the Plan is to guide new development to preserve the Town's village character and residential feel. The buffer yard requirement is intended to help protect residential properties adjacent to commercial properties and to promote a residential feel in the community.

Specifically, the Land Use and Town Appearance General Goal of the General Plan states:

*The Town will manage the type, size, scale, intensity (e.g., density), and appearance of new growth and development to enhance the unique character of Springdale's built environment, preserve views of the natural landscape, **reduce impacts on existing residents** and businesses, and protect natural and cultural resources. (emphasis added)*

Adding a buffer yard requirement to the Town Code is one strategy to help reduce the impact of new commercial development on the Town's existing residents.

General Plan Land Use and Town Appearance Sub-Goal F is even more direct regarding the need to protect residential neighborhoods from the impacts of commercial development. One of the strategies suggested in this Sub-Goal is:

*The Planning Commission will require enhanced screening and buffering on commercial properties adjacent to residential uses as a condition of development approval for new commercial development.*

The proposed buffer yard requirement is a direct implementation of this General Plan directive.

### **Public Comment**

The Planning Commission received one public comment letter regarding the proposed ordinance, referenced above. This comment letter is attached to this report. No further public comment has been submitted as of the date of this report.

### **Planning Commission Action**

The Planning Commission considered this item in the December 3, 2025 meeting. The Commission recommended approval of the proposed ordinance, as recorded in the motion below:

**Motion made by Jennifer McCulloch that the Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed ordinance revision to add buffer yard requirements for new commercial development adjacent to residential properties, as discussed in the Commission's December 3, 2025, meeting. This motion is based on the following findings:**

- 1. The ordinance revision fulfills Land Use and Appearance Sub-Goal F1 of the General Plan for the Planning Commission to develop enhanced screening and buffering standards for new commercial development adjacent to residential uses.**

**The motion includes the following conditions:**

- 1. Item A2 language is to read "Landscape buffer yards shall be located on the outer perimeter of a property with a commercial use, including transient lodging, when the property line is adjacent to a property in the Foothill Residential Zone (FR), Valley Residential Zone (VR), or an overlay zone with a primarily residential use. Landscape buffer yards shall extend to the property of the boundary."**

**Second by Paul Zimmerman.**

**Discussion of the motion:** There was no additional discussion.

**Vote on Motion:**

**Kenaston: Aye**

**Zimmerman: Aye**

**McCulloch: Aye**

**LaBorde: Aye**

**Bhatti: Aye**

**The motion passed unanimously.**



## ORDINANCE 2025-19

### **Amending Chapter 10-18 of the Town Code by Adding a Requirement for Enhanced Buffering and Screening on Commercial Properties Adjacent to Residential Uses**

**Whereas**, the Town of Springdale Planning Commission and Town Council find it necessary to the Town's village character to protect residential uses from the probable impacts of adjacent commercial uses, such as increased light and noise, loss of privacy, and other impacts, and

**Whereas**, the Town of Springdale General Plan directs the Planning Commission to develop strategies for enhanced buffering between commercial uses and residential uses to mitigate these impacts (see General Plan Land Use and Town Appearance Sub-Goal F), and

**Whereas**, in fulfillment of the General Plan direction the Planning Commission has proposed that all new commercial development be required to include a landscape buffer yard where the development is adjacent to residential property, and

**Whereas**, the Town Council desires to add the buffer yard requirement to the Land Use Ordinance as part of the landscape standards, and

**Whereas**, the necessary processes and procedures to amend the Land Use Ordinance, including the requirement to hold public hearings, have been satisfied,

**Now therefore be it ordained** by the Springdale Town Council that section 10-18-6.5 is added to the Land Use Ordinance and shall read as follows:

#### 10-18-6.5: LANDSCAPE BUFFER YARDS

A landscape buffer yard is required on all boundaries of a property in the CC or VC zone developed with a commercial use that is adjacent to any property in the FR or VR zone, including all FR and VR sub-zones, or any overlay zone with a primarily residential use. Landscape buffer yards shall meet the requirements of this section. The area of the landscape buffer yard shall be included when calculating the total amount of landscape on the property for compliance with section 10-18-4(A). The quantity of trees, shrubs, and groundcover in a landscape buffer yard shall be included when calculating the total amount of trees, shrubs, and groundcover on a property for compliance with section 10-18-4(C).

A. General Landscape Buffer Yard Requirements: All landscape buffer yards shall meet the following requirements:

1. Landscape buffer yards shall be located entirely within the commercial property to which they pertain. No portion of an adjacent property or right-of-way shall be considered part of the landscape buffer yard.
2. Landscape buffer yards shall be located on the outer perimeter of a property with a commercial use, including transient lodging, wherever the property is adjacent to a property in the FR zone, VR zone, or an overlay zone with a primarily residential use. Landscape buffer yards shall extend to the property boundary.
3. Properties in the CC or VC zone developed with a residential use are not required to include a landscape buffer yard.
4. The owner of the property where the landscape buffer yard is located shall be responsible for the ongoing care and maintenance of the landscape buffer yard. If any required vegetation in the landscape buffer yard dies, the property owner shall replace the vegetation with vegetation of the same type within four months.
5. A landscape buffer yard may be used only for the following uses and purposes:
  - a. Landscaping and buffering from adjacent properties.
  - b. Stormwater management, but only in conjunction with Low Impact Design stormwater management techniques.
  - c. Underground utility lines and appurtenances, but only when they do not impair the buffering function of the landscape buffer yard.
6. None of the following may be located in a landscape buffer yard:
  - a. Buildings or structures, except fences as required by landscape buffer yard standards.
  - b. Parking areas, including parking access lanes, backing space for parking areas, and other areas associated with parking.
  - c. Driveways, fire lanes, fire apparatus turnarounds, loading areas, storage areas, or other similar improvements.
  - d. Dumpsters, trash storage enclosures, recycling bins, composting bins, or similar items.
  - e. Mechanical or electrical equipment such as air conditioning units, generators, etc.
  - f. Recreation and leisure areas such as walkways, paths, benches, courtyards, patios, decks, and similar improvements.
  - g. Commercial uses such as outdoor dining, open air displays, signage, etc.

B. Coordination with Adjacent Property Owners: There are three landscape buffer yard options available to a property owner to satisfy the landscape buffer yard requirement on a property. The owner of the property requiring the landscape buffer yard shall choose the landscape buffer yard option that provides the best buffering and screening to adjacent residential properties, based on the nature and character of both the commercial property and the adjacent residential property. Commercial property owners should work cooperatively with owners of adjacent residential properties to determine which of the landscape buffer yard options provides the most effective buffering. Ultimately, the commercial property owner is responsible for selecting

the landscape buffer yard option that will be developed on the property. However, as part of the landscape plan submittal required in section 10-18-3, the commercial property owner must submit documentation of all attempts to communicate and cooperate with all adjacent residential property owners regarding their opinions on the landscape buffer yard option selected.

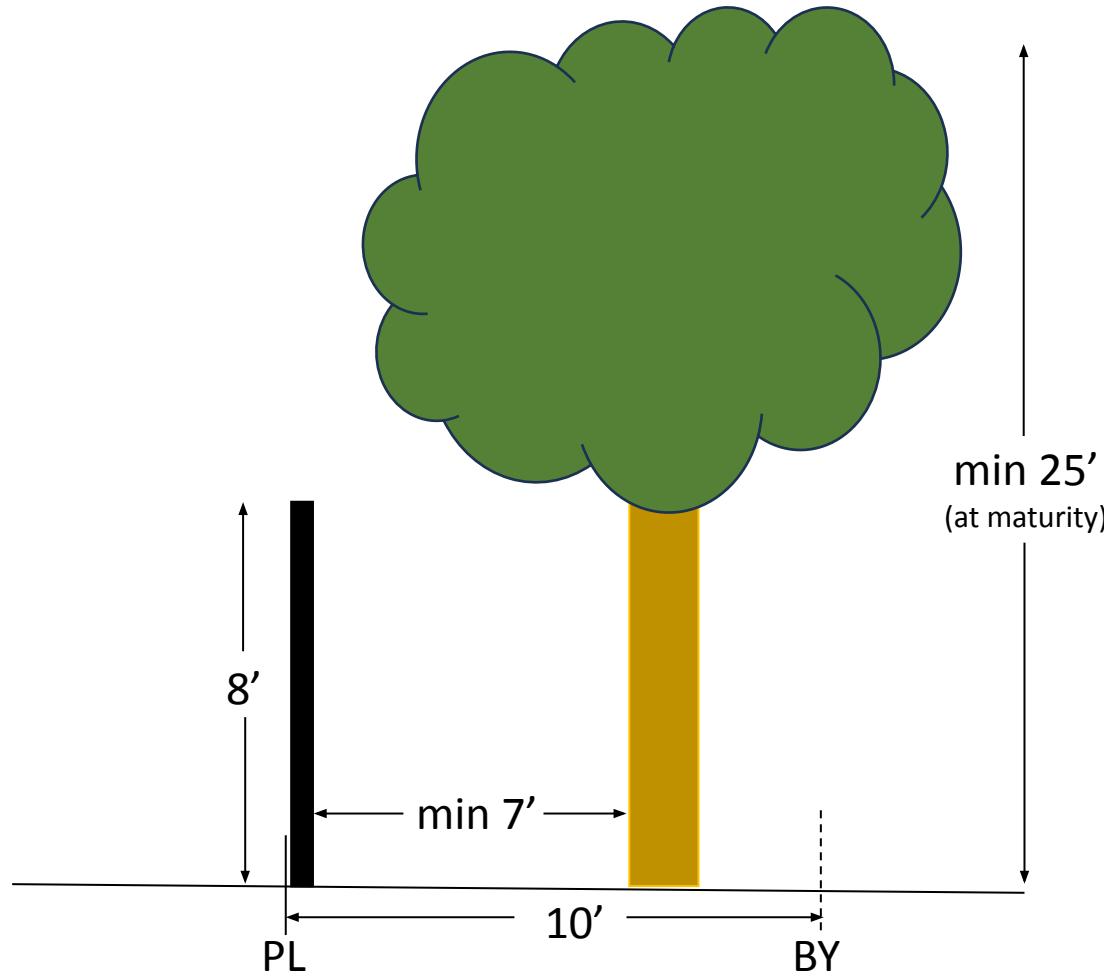
C. Landscape buffer yard Options: An owner of property that requires a landscape buffer yard may select any of the three following options to satisfy the landscape buffer yard requirement, subject to communication with the adjacent residential property owners as outlined in paragraph B above:

1. Option 1 - Wall or fence, and trees.
  - a. Landscape buffer yard width must be a minimum of 10 feet.
  - b. A fence or wall must be placed on the property line.
    - i. The wall or fence must be eight feet in height, unless the adjacent residential property owner requests a lower height. In no instance shall the wall or fence be less than six feet in height.
    - ii. The wall or fence must be completely solid and opaque.
    - iii. The wall or fence may not encroach onto the adjacent property.
    - iv. The wall or fence must be made of one of the following materials:
      1. Block or concrete with a stucco or stone veneer facing.
      2. Rusted metal.
      3. Wood.
  - c. A minimum of five canopy or evergreen trees must be planted within every 100 foot length of landscape buffer yard.
    - i. The trees must be a species selected from the Town's approved plant list.
    - ii. The trees must be projected to reach a minimum height of 25 feet at maturity, unless as provided below:
      1. If in the consultation and communication process established in section 10-18-6.5(B) the owner of an adjacent property requests trees with a mature height less than 25 feet, the trees required in the buffer yard may have a reduced height. Written evidence of the residential property owner's request for a tree of lower height must be submitted as part of the landscape plan.
2. Option 2 - Wall or fence, and berm.
  - a. Landscape buffer yard width must average a minimum of 20 feet within every 100 feet of landscape buffer yard length.
    - i. The landscape buffer yard may vary in width to better accommodate the natural or topographic nature of the property, or to provide more effective buffering to adjacent property.
    - ii. The minimum width of the landscape buffer yard may be no less than 15 feet.

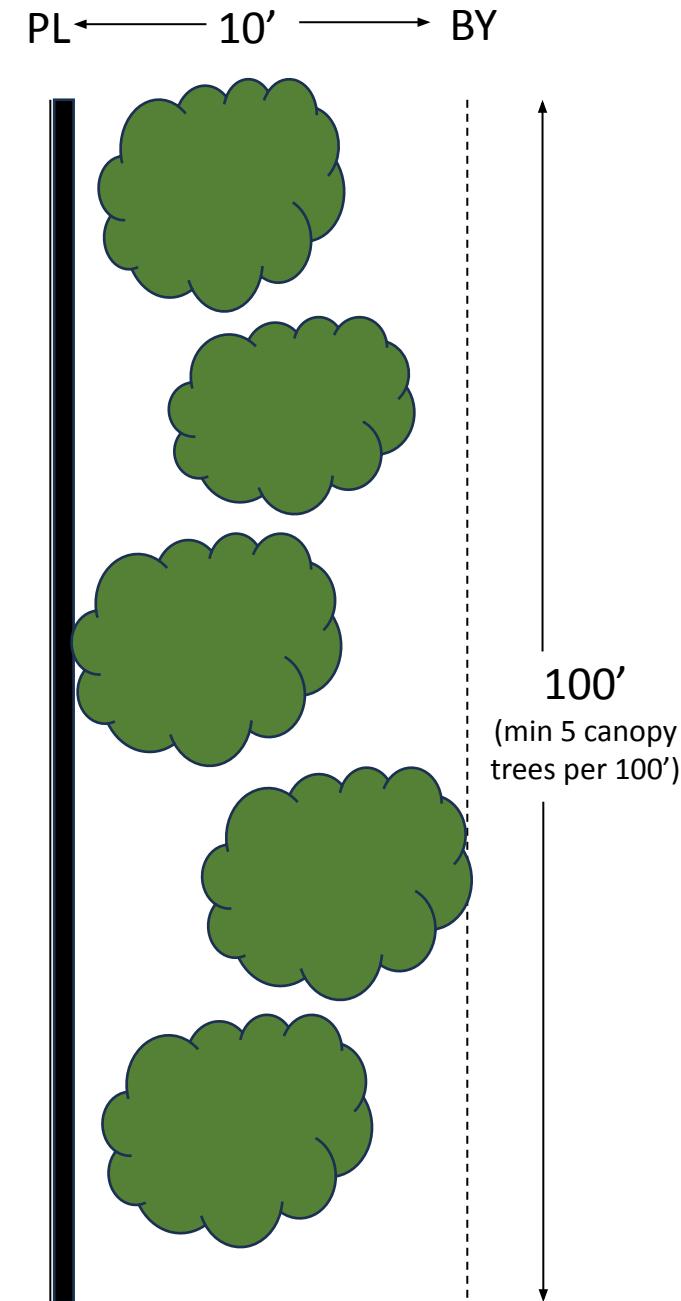
- iii. No more than 25 feet of landscape buffer yard width shall be used to calculate the average width.
  - b. A landscaped berm must run the entire length of the landscape buffer yard.
    - i. The berm must be a minimum of four feet in height.
  - c. A solid and opaque wall or fence must be placed on top of the berm.
    - i. The combined height of the wall or fence plus berm must be at least seven feet.
    - ii. The wall or fence must be made of one of the following materials:
      - 1. Block or concrete with a stucco or stone veneer facing.
      - 2. Rusted metal.
      - 3. Wood.
    - iii. The wall or fence must run the entire length of the landscape buffer yard, and must be discontinuous and staggered within the width of the landscape buffer yard.
      - 1. Each discontinuous section must have a minimum two foot overlap along the long axis of the landscape buffer yard with the subsequent section.
      - 2. The maximum distance between each discontinuous section as measured across the short axis of the landscape buffer yard is four feet.
  - d. The berm must be landscaped as follows:
    - i. A minimum of four canopy or evergreen trees must be planted within every 100 foot length of landscape buffer yard.
      - 1. The trees must be a species selected from the Town's approved plant list.
      - 2. The trees must be projected to reach a minimum height of 15 feet at maturity.
      - 3. Trees must be placed between the wall or fence and the nearest property boundary.
    - ii. A minimum of 40% of the area between the wall or fence and the nearest property boundary must be covered in low maintenance, drought tolerant shrubs and/or perennial flowers selected from the Town's approved plant list.
- 3. Option 3 - Wide landscape buffer yard
  - a. Landscape buffer yard width must average a minimum of 35 feet within every 100 feet of landscape buffer yard length.
    - i. The landscape buffer yard may vary in width to better accommodate the natural or topographic nature of the property, or to provide more effective buffering to adjacent property.
    - ii. The minimum width of the landscape buffer yard may be no less than 25 feet.

- iii. No more than 45 feet of landscape buffer yard width shall be used to calculate the average width.
- b. A minimum of three canopy or evergreen trees must be planted within every 100 foot length of landscape buffer yard.
  - i. The trees must be a species selected from the Town's approved plant list.
  - ii. The trees must be projected to reach a minimum height of 15 feet at maturity.
- c. A minimum of 14 large shrubs must be planted within every 100 foot length of landscape buffer yard.
  - i. The shrubs must be a species selected from the Town's approved plant list.
  - ii. The shrubs must be projected to reach a minimum height of three feet at maturity.
- d. A minimum of six large sandstone boulders must be placed within every 100 foot length of landscape buffer yard.
  - i. The boulders must be a red or buff color, consistent with the color of naturally occurring sandstone visible from Springdale.
  - ii. The boulders must measure a minimum of 30 inches in their smallest diameter.
- e. A minimum of 30% of the area of the landscape buffer yard must be covered in low maintenance, drought tolerant shrubs and/or perennial flowers selected from the Town's approved plant list.

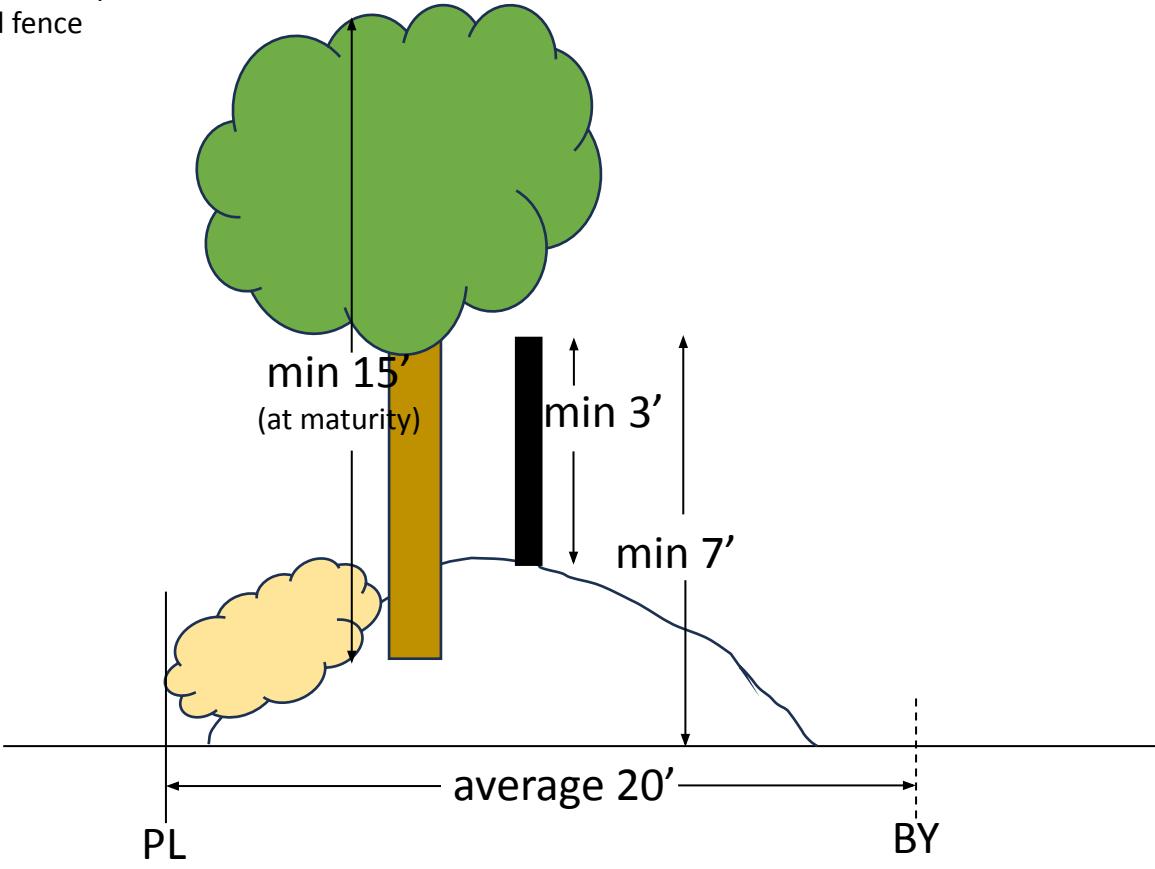
- Min 5 large canopy or evergreen trees per 100'
- Trees must be placed on the interior side of the wall/fence (relative to the subject property)
- Wall/fence must be completely solid and opaque, 8' in height, placed completely inside the subject property (i.e. not straddling the property line).
- Wall/fence options: block or concrete wall with stucco or stone face, rusted metal fence, wood fence



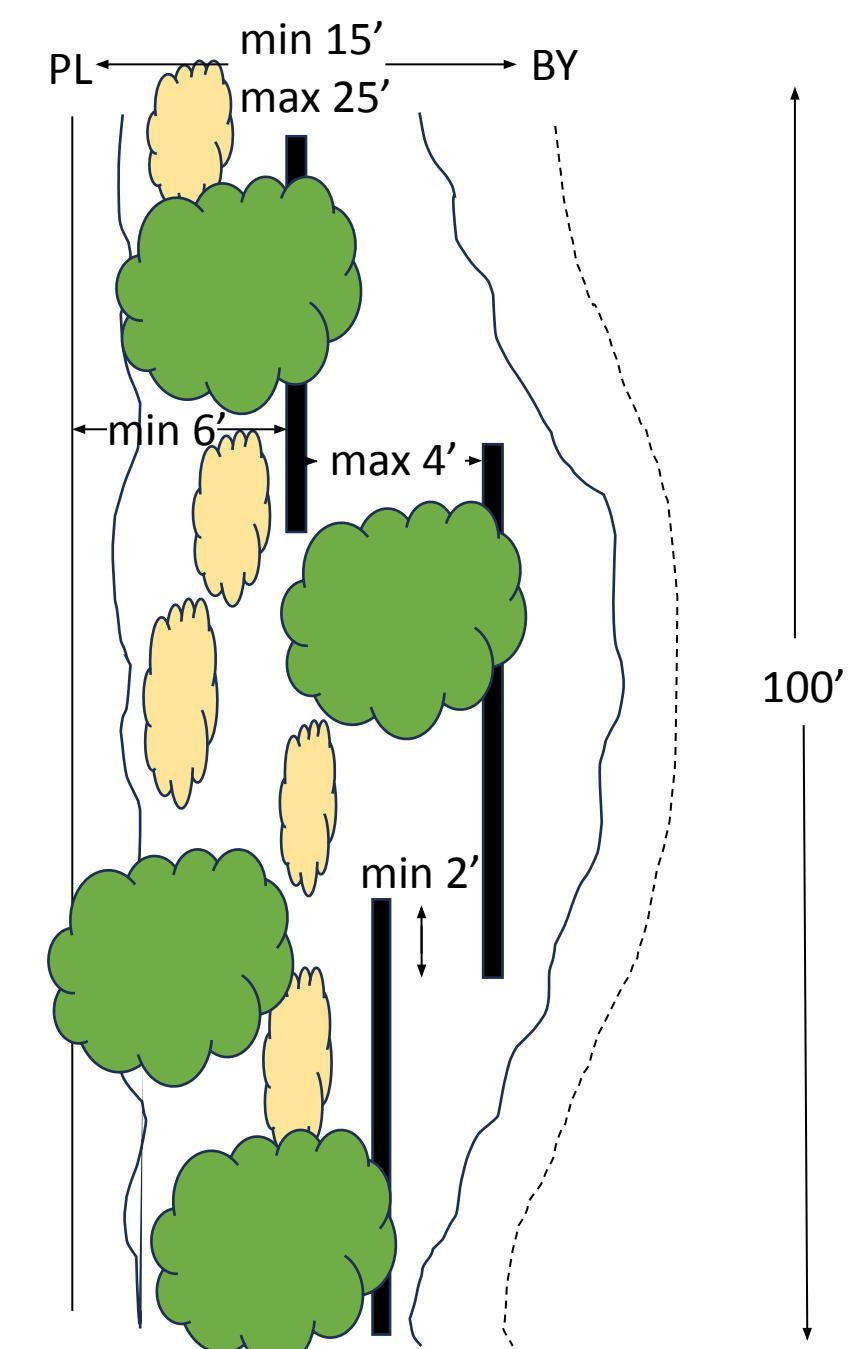
**OPTION 1**



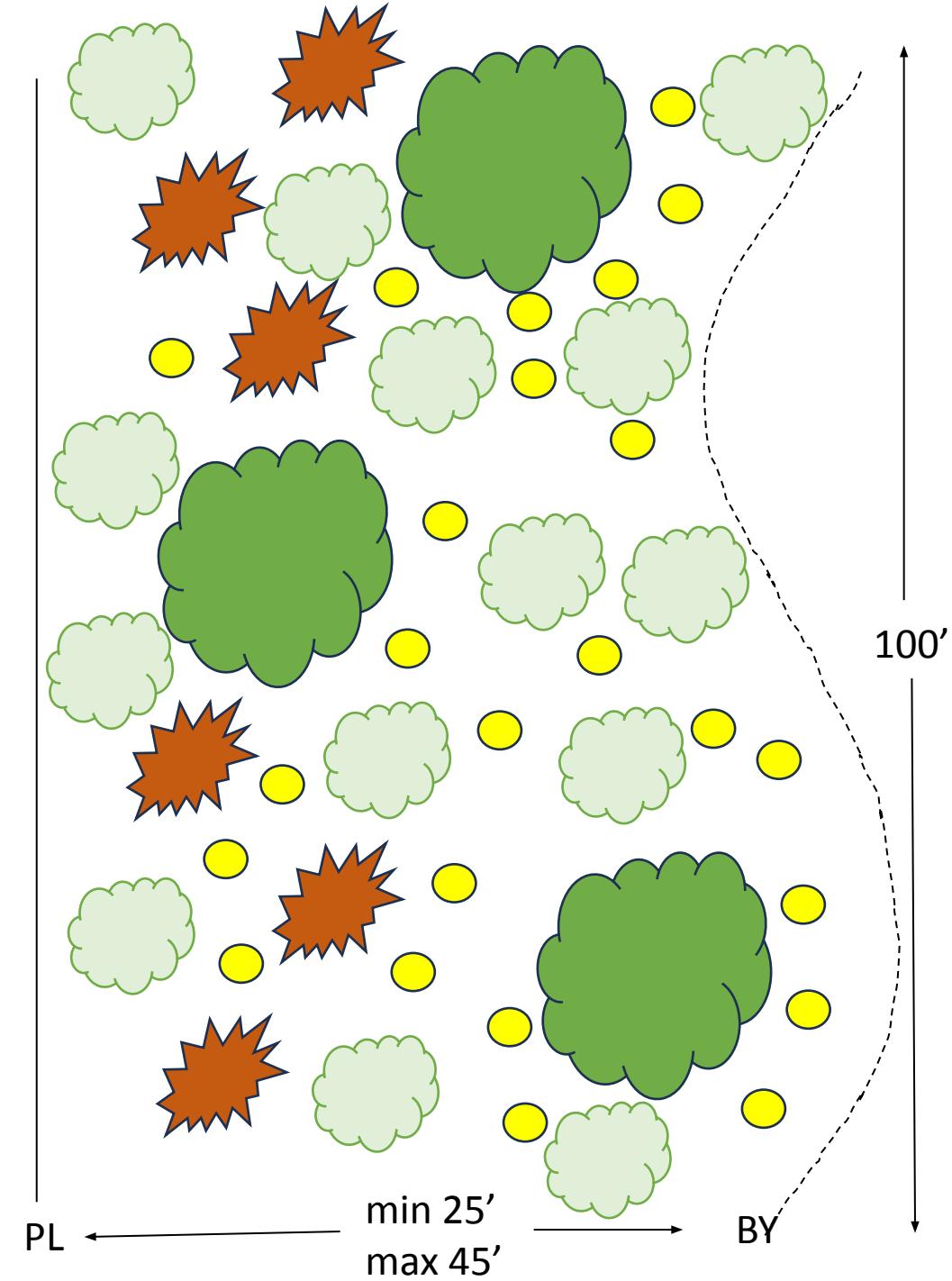
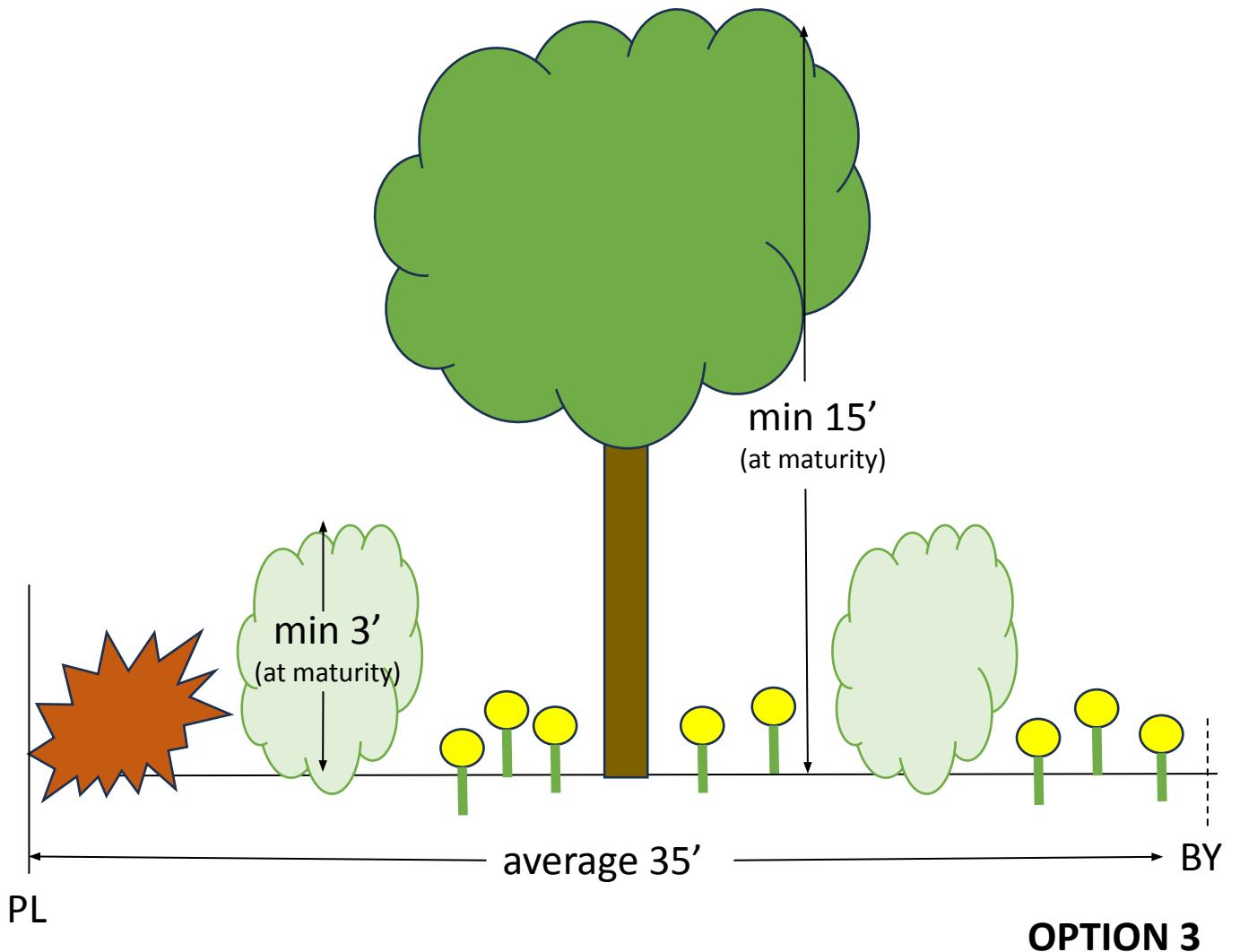
- Min 4 medium trees per 100'
- Trees must be placed on the berm, and on the exterior side of the wall/fence (relative to the subject property)
- Buffer yard width must average min 20' in every 100' length
- Min 40% of area on exterior of wall/fence covered with low maintenance, drought tolerant shrubs/flowers
- Wall/fence must be completely solid and opaque, minimum 3' tall – combination of berm and fence must be minimum 7' tall
- Wall/fence must be discontinuous. Discontinuous sections must have min 2' overlap and may not be separated from other sections by more than 4'
- Wall/fence options: block or concrete wall with stucco or stone face, rusted metal fence, wood fence



**OPTION 2**



- Min 3 medium trees (15' at maturity) trees per 100'
- Buffer yard width must average min 35' in every 100' length
- Min 14 vertical shrubs (at least 3' at maturity) per 100'
- Min 6 red/buff sandstone boulders (at least 30" in minimum diameter measurement) per 100'
- Drought tolerant groundcover/flowers must cover at least 30% of the total area of the buffer yard, distributed evenly through the entire buffer yard



Tom,

As I believe you know, I represent Zion Park Land, LLC and Zion Park Holding, LLC. We are aware of the proposed buffer zone ordinance that is going to be considered at the Planning Commission meeting tonight. In general, I think we are supportive of this ordinance. However, we wonder if it should apply to VC zoned properties that cannot be developed commercially, which is the case with most of the property currently owned by Zion Park Land on the east end of the campus that we refer to as Pod 3.

We would appreciate the Planning Commission's consideration of some sort of exemption from the buffer zone requirement if the development is housing related (which may or may not be used for nightly rentals), rather than commercial buildings.

Thank you,

**A. Craig Hale**

**HALE | WOOD PLLC**