



City of Biddeford Sustainability Commission

October 20, 2025 at 5:30 PM

City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/96353671193?pwd=9hJlbDLbYJLcZU7LqeUbC6VcFZb8L1.1>

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 963 5367 1193

Passcode: 085254

1. Declaration of Quorum
2. Introduction of New Members
 - 2.a Mikaela Greenwald
 - 2.b Brad Crickard
3. Old Business
 - 3.a Landscape Ordinance
4. Discussion
 - 4.a Drought in Maine
[Current Map | U.S. Drought Monitor](#)
 - 4.b Adopt a Park
315 Main Street,
Others? Shevenell, Canopy, Water Street, Mechanic's, Washington Street
 - 4.c Dune grass project for spring?
5. Adjourn

Landscape Standards

Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide minimum requirements for landscaping of proposed development to maintain a base standard of quality of life and general appearance for private and public properties in the City.

It is the intent of this ordinance to encourage the use of landscaped areas to promote Low Impact Development (LID), stormwater management systems, and to reduce the amount of impervious surface heat islands in urban areas, both of which are recommended strategies in the Biddeford Climate Action Plan.

Applicability

All landscaping approved after the effective date of this Ordinance shall comply with these requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, new landscape, replacement planting, or any other landscaping proposed through the Site Plan Review or Subdivision Review process.

Definitions

Balled-and-Burlapped Plants: Balled-and-burlapped (or B&B) trees and shrubs are grown in nursery rows.

Bare-Root Plants: Bare-root plants are grown in the field, then harvested. The soil is washed or shaken from their roots after digging. Nearly all are dormant.

Buffer: A combination of physical space and vertical elements, such as but not limited to plants, berms, fences or walls, the purpose of which is to separate and screen incompatible land uses from each other.

Container Grown Plants: Container-grown refers to a plant that has been grown in a container or one that has been transplanted into a container from the field.

Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): DBH is the diameter of a tree measured 4.5 feet above the ground.

Greenspace: Greenspaces are pervious areas of grass, trees or other vegetation, for recreation or aesthetic purposes.

Groundcover: Low-growing, spreading vegetation.

Impervious surface: The total area of a parcel that consists of buildings and any associated structures as well as roads, driveways, and parking areas, whether paved or unpaved and any additional area that is covered with a low-permeability material such as asphalt, stone or concrete or compacted through design or use to reduce permeability

Invasive Species: an organism not native to the region and one that is likely to cause harm to the environment, infrastructure, or public health. For the purposes of this ordinance, invasive

species are those enumerated in the Advisory List of Invasive Plants by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry.

Landscape Plan: A component of a development plan which shows the quantity, species, and size of all proposed vegetation.

Landscape Planter strip: A vegetated area (naturally vegetated and/or landscaped) located adjacent and parallel to a road or street and designed to visually and functionally separate the roadway from the abutting property upon which it is located.

Native Plants: A native or indigenous plant species is one that occurs in a particular place without the aid of humans. They are well adapted to the climate, light, and soil conditions that characterize their ecosystem. Species native to North America are generally recognized as those occurring on the continent prior to European settlement.

Open space: All dedicated portions of a parcel that has vegetated surfaces or is in an undisturbed natural state, such as a wetland or forested area. Vegetated rooftops or portions of a parking area that are landscaped are considered open space per this definition. Areas designated as outdoor storage are not considered open space.

Outdoor Storage Area: a designated space outside of a building for the storage of commercial inventory including but not limited to equipment, vehicles, construction materials, or packaged goods.

Screening: A method of significantly reducing the impact of noise and unsightly visual intrusions with less offensive or more harmonious elements, such as plants, berms, fences, walls, or any appropriate combination thereof. This is accomplished either by a strip of dense existing or planted vegetation at least four feet in height, an opaque wall of at least six feet in height, or a uniformly covered fence at least six feet in height

Street Tree: A tree that grows within a right-of-way or twenty-five feet from the edge of a right-of-way, intended to provide shade for pedestrians and a separation between the property and abutting streets and structures.

General Landscaping Requirements

Landscaping shall be designed as an integral part of an overall site or subdivision plan with the purpose of enhancing building design, public views and spaces, while also providing buffering and screening to abutting properties and roads when appropriate.

Native species should be selected for their benefits of conserving water, protecting soil from erosion, creating habitat and providing food for many different animals including birds, pollinators, and small mammals, thereby generally promoting plant and animal biodiversity. Invasive species (as outlined below) are prohibited.

Landscaping Plan Required

Unless otherwise directed by the Approval Authority (Planning Board, City Planner or Staff Review Committee) a landscaping plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect is required for the following proposed projects. At the Planner's discretion, a qualified professional other than a licensed landscape architect may create such plan:

1. Projects requiring Site Plan review per Part III, Article XI, Site Plan Review;
2. Projects requiring Subdivision review per Part II, Chapter 66, Subdivisions;
3. The construction of 20,000 or more square feet of outdoor storage area;
4. The expansion of an existing parking lot by greater than 20% of total spaces measured over a five-year period, unless the number of existing spaces is fewer than 10 spaces;
5. The expansion of an existing impervious surface area by greater than 20% of the total area, measured over a 5-year period, unless the area of impervious surface is fewer than 4,000 square feet;
6. The expansion of an existing outdoor storage area by greater than 20% of the total area, as measured over a 5-year period.

The required landscape plan may be waived by the Approval Authority (Planning Board, City Planner or Staff Review Committee) under special circumstances:

1. The preservation of unique wildlife habitat
2. The preservation of mature vegetation or natural areas
3. Compliance with easements such as providing public access, conservation, or utility maintenance.
4. Redevelopment of existing properties where the requirements in this title are impossible to meet
5. Insufficient distance between an existing structure and a property line for required landscaping
6. Unique sites such as including vegetation that provides food or medicinal properties.

Minimum Landscaping Required

A minimum percentage of the total area being developed shall be landscaped in accordance with the following percentages, except where pre-existing impervious surface prevents:

Multifamily dwellings (5 or more units):	15%
Mixed-use buildings, commercial, retail and lodging use:	10%
Office and professional uses:	15%
Institutional and civic uses:	15%
Industrial and manufacturing uses:	10%

Tree and shrub requirements for multi-family, commercial, institutional and civic uses:

- a. For every 500 square feet of landscaping required, or portion thereof, at least two (2) large trees and two (2) shrubs are required.
- b. Four (4) small ornamental trees may be substituted for two (2) required large trees, not to exceed 50% of the required large trees.

Tree and shrub requirements for industrial and manufacturing uses:

- a. For every 1,000 square feet of landscaping required, or portion thereof, at least one (1) large tree and two (2) shrubs are required.
- b. Two (2) small ornamental trees may be substituted for one (1) required large tree, not to exceed 50% of the required large trees.

Each development shall provide at least two (2) different species. No more than 50% of all trees, per development, shall be of the same species. This standard applies only to trees being planted to meet requirements, not to existing trees.

Ground cover is required. Landscaped area that is not planted with trees and shrubs must be planted in ground cover plants, which may include grasses and lawn areas. Mulch (as a ground cover) must be confined to areas underneath plants and is not a substitute for ground cover plants.

The retention of existing and healthy shade trees or plantings, not identified by the State of Maine as an invasive species, shall be permitted to achieve this requirement.

Deciduous trees shall be a minimum of one and one-half (1 1/2) inch caliper at the time of planting. Evergreen trees shall be minimum six (6) feet high at planting. Tree spacing shall be as appropriate for the species.

Ground covers are low-growing vegetative materials with a mound or spreading manner of growth. Spacing is dependent on the type and size of the plant material and must be adequate to provide total coverage of the landscape area within three (3) years. Ground cover plants, other than grasses, must be at least the four (4) inch pot size at time of planting.

Shrubs shall be a minimum of eighteen (18) inches in height, or two (2) gallon container size, at the time of planting.

Stormwater treatment areas including retention and detention areas shall not be counted toward the required minimum landscaped area.

Buffers and Screening

- A. Parking Lot Screening along Public Right-of-Way. Where all or a portion of a surface parking area is located within 30 feet of a public right-of-way, and is not separated from the public right-of-way by a structure, the parking area shall include a buffer area five feet in width and utilize one of the following screening methods within five feet of the street line comprising a continuous line of shrubs that achieves 80% opaque screening 30-48" in height during summer months.

B. Buffer Standards.

1. General. Where required, buffer areas shall comprise existing trees and vegetation, new landscaping or a combination thereof to create a dense, mixed buffer incorporating both understory and tree canopy layers. Such screening should also effectively provide screening when viewed from upper floors of surrounding properties, where applicable.
2. Vegetative buffers. New shrubs shall be spaced six (6) to eight (8) feet apart. Buffers between contrasting land uses may incorporate earthen berms not exceeding 4:1 slope, opaque fencing of high architectural quality, masonry wall or a combination thereof, in addition to landscape plantings. Where fencing or masonry wall is proposed as part of a buffer, less landscaping density is acceptable; however, buffers shall still include trees, shrubs and other vegetation.
3. Parking areas. Landscaping shall be incorporated into the development of surface parking to reduce adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts, to shade pavement to reduce heat island effect and to screen parking areas from public view. Plant materials shall be selected for appearance, durability, and tolerance to salt. Figures IV-6a and IV-6b provide examples of parking lot screening.
 - a. Landscaping that abuts areas of vehicular use shall be adequately protected and separated from vehicles. Protection should take the form of physical or visual separation, such as curb stops, bollards, or continuous curbing. Protection shall be designed with adequate visibility and durability in order to withstand normal snow plowing operations.
 - b. Landscaped islands shall be curbed and a minimum of eight (8) feet in width, not including curbing. The incorporation of bio-retention into landscaped islands is strongly encouraged.
4. Snow storage. Snow storage areas may be located in landscaped areas provided that appropriate landscape materials are selected which can withstand such snow storage. Snow storage shall not be located in a stormwater treatment measure, shoreland zoning setback buffers, or where it would adversely impact the

C. Installation and Maintenance of Plantings.

1. No plant shall be moved after the bud break. Planting periods are between April 1st and July 1st and/or September 1st and November 1st.
2. Tree planting and other landscaping for subdivisions that cannot be installed prior to the release of the performance guarantee must be insured by a defect bond as described in **Article 13 of the City Land Use Code**.
3. All bare soil areas shall be vegetated and/or mulched prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
4. New vegetation that shows signs of construction damage within a one-year period following construction, including but not limited to bark damage or excessive root damage, grade changes other than those originally indicated in the approved grading

plan, soil compaction due to heavy equipment traversing closely, or general decline due to mechanical or natural conditions shall be rejected and must be replaced prior to the release of any defect guarantee.

5. Landscaping required in accordance with the provisions of this ordinance or any addition or amendments to this ordinance, or in accordance with the provisions of any previous code or ordinance of the city, the landscaping shall be permanently maintained in such a manner as to accomplish the purpose for which it was initially required. All landscaping which, due to accident, damage, disease, lack of maintenance, or other cause, fails to show a healthy appearance and growth shall be restored, or replaced with the same type of landscaping elements and in the same location as required in the approved landscape plan.
6. Slopes with between a 5% and 50% grade change shall incorporate installation of a mixture of vegetation, organic mulch and/or erosion control seed mix. Stabilization of slopes greater than 50% must incorporate biotechnical and/or structural methods including but not limited to terracing rip rap or retaining walls in addition to vegetation.

Incentives

To help facilitate the goals of the 2023 Biddeford Climate Action Plan, development review applications may receive modifications to density, setback, lot size, and/or height requirements if the development meets all requirements of the landscaping plan as well as one or more the following additional benefits:

1. Ensure at minimum 50% of the plantings are pollinator friendly, drought resistant and/or invasive pest tolerant.
2. Use open space areas for food production such as greenhouses, community gardens, or food plots.
3. Provide public access easements, conservation easements, or public access trails on the site.
4. Provide landscaping beyond the requirements of this ordinance, to the satisfaction of the Approval Authority.

Wells Drying Out in Drought Conditions in Maine: Overview

Introduction

The summer of 2023 in Maine has been marked by significant drought conditions, leading to a range of impacts, including the distressing phenomenon of wells drying out. This situation has raised concerns among residents, particularly those who rely on groundwater for their daily needs. Understanding the causes, implications, and possible responses to this issue is crucial for effectively managing water resources and ensuring community resilience.

Causes of Drought in Maine

1. ****Climate Factors****: The summer of 2023 experienced below-average rainfall, with some regions receiving significantly less precipitation than normal. This lack of rainfall, combined with higher-than-average temperatures, has contributed to reduced groundwater recharge.
2. ****Increased Water Demand****: During dry periods, water demand often increases as residents water lawns, gardens, and crops. This elevated usage can strain local aquifers, particularly in areas where groundwater levels were already low.
3. ****Hydrological Cycle Disruption****: Extended periods of drought disrupt the natural hydrological cycle. When rain is scarce, the replenishment of aquifers is hindered, leading to lower water tables and increased chances of wells running dry.

Impact of Drying Wells

1. ****Household Challenges****: Many residents, particularly in rural areas, depend on private wells for their water supply. When wells dry up, families face immediate challenges, including limited access to drinking water, sanitation issues, and increased costs associated with finding alternative water sources.
2. ****Economic Consequences****: The drought and resulting well failures can have broader economic impacts, especially in agricultural sectors. Farmers with dry wells may struggle to irrigate crops, leading to reduced yields and potential financial losses.
3. ****Community Health and Safety****: In extreme cases, prolonged well shortages can lead to public health concerns. Lack of access to clean water can increase the risk of waterborne diseases and create challenges for hygiene and sanitation.
4. ****Environmental Impact****: Drought conditions can also affect local ecosystems. Lower water levels in streams, rivers, and ponds can harm aquatic habitats and reduce biodiversity, impacting both wildlife and recreational opportunities.

Responses and Mitigation Strategies

1. ****Monitoring and Assessment****: The Maine Geological Survey and local water management authorities have been monitoring groundwater levels and well conditions. Regular assessments can help identify areas at risk of drying wells and inform community responses.

2. ****Public Awareness Campaigns****: Educating residents about water conservation practices is crucial. Simple measures such as fixing leaks, using water-efficient appliances, and practicing mindful landscaping can help reduce overall water usage.
3. ****Emergency Water Supplies****: In response to the crisis, some municipalities and organizations have begun to offer emergency water supplies to households with dry wells. This can include water delivery services or establishing community water stations.
4. ****Long-term Planning****: Developing long-term water management plans that include strategies for drought resilience is essential. This could involve investing in infrastructure to enhance water storage, implementing rainwater harvesting systems, and exploring alternative water sources.
5. ****Policy and Regulation****: Policymakers may need to consider regulations that promote sustainable water use, including restrictions on non-essential water usage during drought conditions and incentives for water conservation practices.

Conclusion

The drying out of wells in Maine during the summer of 2023 highlights the urgent need for proactive water management strategies in the face of climate variability and drought. Understanding the causes and implications of well failures is critical for both individuals and communities. By implementing effective conservation measures and developing robust response plans, Maine can work towards ensuring sustainable water resources for

its residents, thereby enhancing community resilience in the face of future droughts. As the state navigates these challenges, collaboration between residents, local governments, and environmental organizations will be vital in addressing both immediate needs and long-term water security.



ADOPTION PROPOSAL AND AGREEMENT

Date: _____

Adopt A Park Group Name: _____

Group Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone (day): _____

Park Interested in Adopting: _____

If a large park, areas interested in maintaining: _____

What are the Adopter Group's responsibilities?

- AAP Group Contact to attend at least one monthly AAP meeting (dates t/b/d) during term of service
- Visit the park regularly (at least bi-monthly)
- Pick up litter and place in existing trash cans or designated pickup spot
- Manual weeding, pruning, sweeping, and raking
- Keep park signage clean and visible
- Monitor trees for signs of disease, dead limbs or dangerous hanging branches and report your findings
- Report any graffiti, safety issues, excessive dog waste, damaged park furniture or tree-related concerns to the Adopt a Park Team
- Submit any plans to Adopt a Park Team for approval by the Department of Public Works, the Recreation Commission, and the Heart of Bideford prior to adding:
 - any plantings such as flowers, shrubbery
 - public art
 - site furnishings

- new equipment (ex. Playground equipment)
- **Note: Chemicals are not to be applied by adopter group**

Please describe in detail any additional activities you would like to include in your adoption:

What are Adopt a Park Program staff's responsibilities?

- Be available via email and cellphone for any questions and/or concerns
- Assist with large cleanups and at other times as needed

What are the City's responsibilities?

- Mowing fields and other grassy areas
- Emptying trash cans and picking up piles of debris from Adopt a Park cleanups
- Providing tools such as brooms, rakes, shovels, loppers, on an as needed basis

Terms and Conditions:

1. Term: Subject to the City's right to terminate, this Agreement shall be in effect for one year beginning, _____. This Agreement shall automatically renew for additional one-year terms unless terminated by the Adopter Group or the City. Adopter Groups shall provide at least thirty (30) days written notice of termination.
2. Conditions:
 - a. Adopter Groups shall develop and follow a regular schedule of park maintenance as agreed upon by the Adopt a Park Coordinator and report any park hazards, damage or graffiti, to the Adopt a Park Coordinator.
 - b. The contact person for the Adopter Group shall report all hours volunteered to the Adopt a Park Coordinator.
 - c. The contact person shall email AAP Coordinator with questions and if help is needed.
 - d. Each individual participant must sign the City of Biddeford's Volunteer Acknowledgement and Release of Liability Agreement.
 - e. Participants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by at least one person over the age of 21.

- f. The City of Biddeford may photograph or videotape the events or activity in which a participant is participating for purposes of promoting the City of Biddeford and its services/programs with the understanding that no compensation of any kind will be paid to the participant.
3. Access: Volunteers are allowed access to City property for the purpose of carrying out the terms of this Agreement.

The City of Biddeford Reserves the right to terminate this Agreement at any time with or without cause.

ADOPT A PARK GROUP

CITY OF BIDDEFORD

Contact person signature

Signature