

**ORDINANCE NO. 20240530-136**

**AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING CITY CODE SECTION 25-8-700 RELATED TO REGULATING COMPATIBILITY BUFFERS AND WAIVING SECTIONS 25-1-501 AND 25-1-502 OF THE CITY CODE RELATED TO AMENDING TITLE 25 OF THE CITY CODE.**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

**PART 1.** City Code Section 25-8-700 (*Minimum Requirements for Compatibility Buffers*) is repealed and replaced to read:

**§ 25-8-700 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPATIBILITY BUFFERS.**

(A) Applicability; Intent.

- (1) This section applies to a site that is required to provide a compatibility buffer.
- (2) The intent of these requirements is to create a visual barrier between uses and to improve the urban environment for the future occupants of the development and surrounding neighbors while balancing these objectives with the provision of housing.

(B) In this section,

- (1) PROPERTY LINE means the property line that is shared with a triggering property; and
- (2) TRIGGERING PROPERTY means a property that:
  - (a) includes at least one dwelling unit but less than four dwelling units; and
  - (b) is zoned Urban Family Residence (SF-5) or more restrictive

(C) This subsection applies in all compatibility buffers.

- (1) Except as provided in this section, a compatibility buffer may not include vertical structures.
- (2) A compatibility buffer may include stormwater control measures and retaining walls.

- (3) A restricted zone within a compatibility buffer may include:
  - (a) landscaping or gardens;
  - (b) fences, walls, or berms;
  - (c) surface parking lots, driveways, alleys, or fire lanes;
  - (d) paths, walkways, or public use trails, including associated lighting;
  - (e) utility infrastructure
  - (f) refuse receptacles;
  - (g) bike racks, benches, and water fountains;
  - (h) ground-floor private common and private personal open space; and
  - (i) mechanical equipment.
- (4) A windowsill, belt course, cornice, flue, chimney, eave, box window, cantilevered bay window, or balcony may project two feet into the restricted zone.
- (5) A screening zone may include:
  - (a) landscaping or gardens;
  - (b) fences, walls, or berms;
  - (c) paths, walkways, or public use trails, including associated lighting and gates;
  - (d) utility infrastructure if a utility provider determines that it is necessary;
  - (e) bike racks, benches, and water fountains; and
  - (f) ground-floor private common and private personal open space.
- (6) In a compatibility buffer, vegetation must be:
  - (a) listed in Appendix N of the Environmental Criteria Manual; and
  - (b) irrigated, maintained, and certified in accordance with the Environmental Criteria Manual.

- (7) Nothing in this section requires an applicant to remove healthy and existing vegetation located within the screening zone.
  - (8) If existing conditions or proposed utility infrastructure or easements prevent full compliance with the requirements of this section, the director may approve an applicant's request for alternative methods of compliance that aligns with the intent of this section.
- (D) A compatibility buffer that is at least 25 feet in width must comply with this subsection.
- (1) The compatibility buffer shall include a screening zone and restricted zone.
  - (2) Screening Zone.
    - (a) The screening zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the property line, and extends ten feet into the property.
    - (b) At 25 linear feet intervals parallel to the property line that is shared with a triggering property, the screening zone must include a minimum of:
      - (i) 1 large shade tree;
      - (ii) 1 small understory tree; and
      - (iii) 10 shrubs.
  - (3) Restricted Zone. The restricted zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the edge of the screening zone, and extends an additional 15 feet into the property.
- (E) A compatibility buffer that is more than 15 feet but less than 25 feet in width must comply with this subsection.
- (1) The compatibility buffer shall include a screening zone and restricted zone.
  - (2) Screening Zone.
    - (a) The screening zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the property line, and extends ten feet into the property.

- (b) At 25 linear feet intervals parallel to the property line that is shared with a triggering property, a screening zone must include a minimum of:
    - (i) 1 large shade tree;
    - (ii) 1 small understory tree; and
    - (iii) 10 shrubs.
  - (3) Restricted Zone. The restricted zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the edge of the screening zone, and extends into the property to the maximum width of the compatibility buffer.
- (F) A compatibility buffer that is at least 10 feet but no more than 15 feet in width must comply with this subsection.
  - (1) The compatibility buffer shall include a screening zone.
  - (2) The screening zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the property line, and extends ten feet into the property.
  - (3) At 25 linear feet intervals parallel to the property line that is shared with a triggering property, the screening zone must include a minimum of:
    - (a) two small understory trees; and
    - (b) 10 shrubs.
  - (4) Restricted Zone. The restricted zone is parallel to the property line, begins at the edge of the screening zone, and extends into the property to the maximum width of the compatibility buffer.
- (G) A compatibility buffer that is less than 10 feet in width includes a screening zone that extends the width of the compatibility buffer and is parallel to the property line that is shared with a triggering property.

**PART 2.** The City Council waives City Code Sections 25-1-501 (*Initiation of Amendment*) and 25-1-502 (*Amendment Review*).

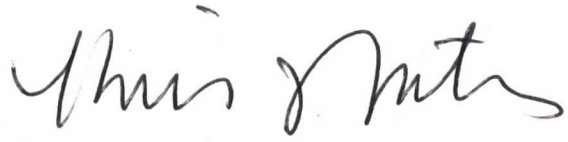


**PART 3.** This ordinance takes effect on June 10, 2024.

**PASSED AND APPROVED**

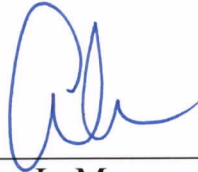
\_\_\_\_\_  
May 30, 2024

§  
§  
§



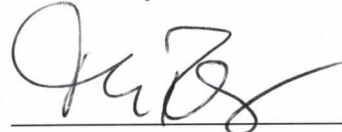
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kirk Watson  
Mayor

**APPROVED:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne L. Morgan  
City Attorney

**ATTEST:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Myrna Rios  
City Clerk