



## M E M O R A N D U M

To: City Planning Commission Ordinance Revisions Committee

FROM: Alexis DiLeo, Principal Planner

DATE: February 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Amendments to Chapter 55 (UDC) Related to Solid Waste Terms

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City Council recently approved Ordinance 25-35 to amend Chapter 26 Solid Waste Management and the Public Services Administrator recently approved a series of amendments to the Solid Waste Regulations, incorporated into Chapter 26 by reference for implementation. These actions updated and added new definitions on solid waste containers and points of collection; removed information provided in the Solid Waste Regulations and brought outdated information up to date throughout Chapter 26. The Solid Waste Regulations were revised to align with the new definitions of Chapter 26, correct conflicting information, and reformatted to be consistent with City Code and other regulations

Planning staff were advised of this work and consequently propose amendments to Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) to coordinate with the amendments to Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations.

### **Solid Waste Term Alignment**

Chapter 26 now uses **Solid Waste** as the generic, encompassing term for **refuse, rubbish, garbage, recyclables**, and **compostables**. **Solid Waste Container** is now used as the generic, encompassing term for **curb carts** and **dumpsters**. Refuse, rubbish, garbage, recyclables and compostables, plus curb carts and dumpsters, are each defined in Chapter 26 and later in this memo.

The UDC uses these terms as well but inconsistently, and sometimes wholly, sometimes partially, and sometimes with unique combinations not previously or currently found in Chapter 26. Staff propose to amend the UDC to use the appropriate term from Chapter 26 correctly throughout. The necessary amendments are described below and a draft ordinance is attached.

## Descriptions of Proposed Amendments

### 1. Section 5.18 Special Dimensional and Site Layout Standards, Paragraph 5.18.1.B.2.a

This paragraph addresses structures that may be located anywhere on a lot in residential zoning districts – in other words, things that are permitted in the front, side and rear setback areas of R districts. The proposed amendment changes the reference from *solid waste container* to *curb cart*. The specific change to curb carts means those alone may be stored anywhere on the residentially zoned lot; dumpster storage must meet the front, side and rear setback standards for the district.

### 2. Section 5.20 Landscaping, Screening and Buffering, Subsection 5.20.6

This subsection requires screening and buffering for solid waste containers. It currently references *refuse/recycling/compost containers* and is proposed to be changed to *solid waste containers* and clarify that screening from view of a public right-of-way (excluding an Alley), a private street, a public park, or a parcel in a residential zoning district is required as well as a buffer strip. As currently, screening and buffering is not required for curb carts of single-family or two-family dwellings.

### 3. Section 5.29.1 Zoning Permits

This subsection requires a zoning permit for fences and dumpsters for recycling. It will be changed to reference the placement *solid waste container points of storage*, consistent with the terms in Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations, except for placement of curb carts on a parcel with a single-family or two-family dwelling.

### 4. Section 5.29.8 Required Plan information, Paragraph 5.29.8.D Dimensional Plan Layout and Paragraph 5.29.8.H Landscape Plan

These two paragraphs provide required information shown on site plans. The references to *solid waste enclosure* and *refuse containers and enclosures* will be changed to *solid waste container points of storage and points of collection*.

### 5. Section 5.37.2.O, Specific Terms

The definition of **Open Space** in this section will change from *refuse facilities* to *solid waste container storage*.

## APPENDIX

### Chapter 26 Solid Waste Management

#### Key Terms and Definitions Applicable to UDC

*(slightly edited for brevity)*

**Solid Waste** – refuse, rubbish, recyclables, and compostables discarded by customers and which qualifies for removal by the city.

**Refuse** – all rubbish and garbage which is not deemed recyclables or compostables.

**Rubbish** – miscellaneous non-putrescible waste material.

**Garbage** – all putrescible food wastes, and the paper or containers containing food wastes.

**Recyclables** – all containers, paper, cardboard and others specifically designated as recyclable.

**Compostables** – leaves, brush, small tree limbs, vegetative prunings, other garden or yard waste, and other organic materials.

**Solid Waste Containers** – containers permitted by the Solid Waste Regulations including curb carts and dumpsters for deposit of solid waste.

**Curb Cart** – a lightweight plastic container that the city or its contracted solid waste hauler have provided and require to be used.

**Dumpster** – a metal or plastic container that is able to be mechanically lifted and emptied into a collection truck.

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE  
(Solid Waste Terms)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTIONS 5.18, 5.20, 5.29, AND 5.37 OF  
CHAPTER 55 (UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE) OF TITLE V OF THE CODE OF THE  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR

The City of Ann Arbor ordains:

Section 1. That Section 5.18.1.B of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

**B. Exceptions**

**1. All Zoning Districts**

The following types of structures may be located anywhere on a lot, including in any required setback area:

- a. Open and unroofed terraces, patios, stoops and steps, ramps for building access
- b. Awnings
- c. Flagpoles
- d. Trellises
- e. Retaining walls
- f. Fountains
- g. Outdoor cooking equipment
- h. Sidewalks
- i. Mailboxes
- j. Light poles
- k. Fences in accordance with Section 5.26 .
- l. Parking lots and driveways if permitted by Sections 5.19 and 5.21

## 2. Residential Zoning Districts

In Residential Zoning Districts, the following types of structures may be located anywhere on a lot except in the front required setback area:

- a. ~~Solid waste containers (unless approved under Section 2.4 of Chapter 26); Curb carts consistent with Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations~~
- b. Fire escapes; ~~and~~
- c. Mechanical equipment; ~~and~~

## 3. Architectural Feature Projections

Certain architectural features, such as cornices, eaves, gutters, bay windows, and chimneys may project up to two feet into any required setback areas.

## 4. Front Porches

Unenclosed porches, decks and platforms covered by a roof or canopy which do not extend above the first floor of a residential structure, nor extend more than eight feet in depth from any point along the principal building, and located in an R1A, R1B, R1C, R1D, R1E, R2A, or R4C District may project up to eight feet into the front required setback area. No unenclosed porch, deck, or platform shall be located within five feet from the front lot line. For premises on which such encroachment occurs, the principal established front building line will continue to establish the existing front required setback.

Section 2. That Section 5.20.6 of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

### 5.20.6 Refuse/Recycling/Compost Container Screening-Solid Waste Containers

~~Containers, carts, and dumpsters for solid waste, recycling or compost, Solid waste container points of storage, stored outside of a building shall provide the following screening and buffering be screened from view and buffered from a public right-of-way (excluding an Alley), a private street, a public park, or a parcel in a Residential Zoning District by the following elements:~~

#### A. Screening Wall or Fence

~~A six-foot high opaque wall or solid fence. Gates may be used if required screening conditions interferes with access to the solid waste containers. -surrounding the storage area of the containers, carts, and dumpsters.~~

#### B. Buffering Strip

~~A buffer strip at least 15 feet in width with one tree for each 15 feet or fraction thereof. Trees shall be spaced between 15 and 30 feet apart and shall be at least 50% evergreen when more than one tree is required. In addition to the screening as required above, for storage areas of containers, carts and dumpsters visible from a public right-of-way,~~

~~excluding an Alley, adjacent to a public park, or adjacent to a Residential Zoning District, a buffer consisting of the following shall be provided:~~

~~1. — Width~~

~~A buffer strip at least 15 feet in width.~~

~~2. — Trees~~

~~One tree for each 15 feet or fraction thereof spaced between 15 and 30 feet apart. At least 50% of the trees shall be evergreen.~~

**C. Single-Family and Two-Family Dwelling Exception**

~~Screening or buffering is not required for containers or Curb carts points of storage stored on a parcel containing a single-family or two-family dwelling do not require screening or buffer strips.~~

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**5.20.6 Solid Waste Containers**

Solid waste container points of storage, as provided in Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations, shall be screened from view and buffered from a public right-of-way (excluding an Alley), a private street, a public park, or a parcel in a Residential Zoning District.

**A. Screen Wall or Fence**

A six-foot high opaque wall or solid fence. Gates may be used if required screening conditions interferes with access to the solid waste containers.

**B. Buffer Strip**

A buffer strip at least 15 feet in width with one tree for each 15 feet or fraction thereof. Trees shall be spaced between 15 and 30 feet apart and shall be at least 50% evergreen when more than one tree is required.

**C. Single-Family and Two-Family Dwelling Exception**

Curb cart points of storage on a parcel containing a single-family or two-family dwelling do not require screening or buffer strips.

Section 3. That Section 5.29.1.C of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

**C. Fences and ~~Dumpsters~~Solid Waste Containers**

A zoning permit is required for the construction of fences consistent with Section 5.26 and for the placement ~~of locations for dumpsters~~solid waste containers points of storage used for commercial recyclables per Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations and

~~related with required screening and buffering per consistent with~~ Section 5.20.6 and Chapter 26, Section 2:5(4), except curb carts placed on parcels containing a single-family or two-family dwelling.

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**C. Fences and Solid Waste Containers**

A zoning permit is required for the construction of fences consistent with Section 5.26 and the placement of solid waste container points of storage per Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations with required screening and buffering per Section 5.20.6, except curb carts placed on parcels containing a single-family or two-family dwelling.

Section 4. That Section 5.29.8.D of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

**D. Dimensional Layout Plan – For Site Plans Only**

Drawings and written descriptions of the proposed development must be provided on the plans, demonstrating compliance with all applicable development standards such as building area, height and placement, off-street parking, Streets and access including the following:

1. Existing and proposed lot lines.
2. Minimum and maximum required setback lines, including established front building line and required increases to the normal minimum required side and rear setback lines, if applicable; existing and proposed front, side and rear yards.
3. Existing and proposed buildings.
4. Vehicle parking spaces, aisles and driveways. Identify any “no parking” areas or fire lanes and indicate any proposed signage.
5. Bicycle parking spaces, including detail of facilities.
6. Curb cuts, drive approaches and curb radii dimensions, including all curb cuts on the opposite side of the Street from the site. Dimensions of all Fire Department access roads or lanes, if applicable, including width at hydrant, dead end lengths, turn-around location, turning radii, etc.
7. ~~Solid waste enclosure, including dimensioned detail. Solid waste container points of storage and points of collection consistent with Chapter 26 and the Solid Waste Regulations.~~
8. Open space and active open space.
9. Wetland and watercourse buffer area.

10. Buffers and screening.
11. Perspective sketch of building showing streetwall height and offset, if applicable.

**Section 5.** That Section 5.29.8.H of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

**H. Landscape Plan**

Drawings and written descriptions of proposed landscaping, screening and buffers demonstrating compliance with applicable development standards such as interior landscaping of vehicular use areas, right-of-way screening, buffers and screening, and natural features mitigation in order to determine compliance with applicable development standards must be provided on the plans, including the following:

1. Location, size and species of existing trees and vegetation, and natural features.
2. Location of light poles, ~~refuse containers and enclosures~~ [solid waste container points of storage and points of collection](#), mechanical equipment and hydrants.
3. Limits of vehicular use area and notation of its size in square feet.
4. Proposed locations of required landscaping, screening and buffers, Street trees and plantings.
5. Table identifying vehicular use area, interior landscape islands, right-of-way screening, buffers and screening, and Street tree planting requirements and proposed plantings and areas to satisfy requirements.
6. Proposed plant list, including caliper sizes, root type, height of material, botanical and common name, type and amount of mulch, ground cover and grasses.
7. Notation of requested modifications if any.
8. Planting and staking details in accordance with the standards established by the PSA Administrator.
9. Specification for treatment of compacted soil on the entire site.
10. Specification for planting media in landscape areas.
11. Irrigation plan or water outlets (hose bibs).
12. Landscape maintenance program, including a statement that all diseased, damaged, or dead material shall be replaced in accordance with this chapter by the end of the following planting season as a continuing obligation for the duration of the site plan.

13. Identification of snow storage areas, including a statement that snow shall not be pushed onto interior landscape islands unless designed for snow storage.
14. Berms, retaining walls, screen walls, fences, tree wells to preserve existing trees, culverts to maintain natural drainage patterns, or any other construction details necessary to resolve specific site conditions.

**Section 6.** That the definition of Open Space in Section 5.37.2.O of Chapter 55 (Unified Development Code) of Title V of the Code of the City of Ann Arbor be amended as follows:

**Open Space**

The unenclosed portion of a lot that is devoted to space for recreation, greenery, and household activities. Open space area may include, but shall not be limited to, lawns, landscaping and gardens, wooded areas, sidewalks and walkways, active and passive recreational areas, unenclosed accessory structures used for recreation purposes, permanent or seasonal water surfaces, and protected natural areas. It shall not include areas covered by parking lots, driveways, ~~refuse facilities~~solid waste container points of storage or points of collection, or enclosed accessory structures.

**Section 7.** This ordinance shall take effect and be in force on and after ten days from legal publication.