

Proposed Changes to Landscape Ordinance

Landscaping – Diversity, Plant List, Alternate Plants – (Section 30-10-4.1)

- Incorporating plant diversity and native species into the required planting yards;
 - Intent: Current ordinance allows for the installation of monocultures, which are susceptible to intense disease and insect infestations. Installing several species, including some that are native to this area, would provide for more resilient, lower maintenance landscaping.
- Reviewing the plant list to make sure the suggested plants meet the definition of canopy tree, understory tree and shrub along with the removal of any invasive species.

CBD / Urban Landscaping and Tree Conservation – (Section 30-10-3.1)

- Evaluating the need for and incorporating required landscaping and tree planting for sites located in the Central Business District;
 - Intent: Current ordinance has no requirements for landscaping or saving trees in CBD. Trees would mitigate heat island effect, improve air quality, landscaping improves attractiveness to visitors, businesses and residents.
- Evaluating the use of Urban Landscape Regulations for street yards on constrained sites and for other developments located in an urban environment;
 - Intent: Parcels in or near downtown but not in CBD may be able to use the more flexible standards for landscaping.

Parking Lots – (Section 30-10-2.5)

- Addressing the current conflict between parking lot lighting (light poles) and trees to be planted in landscape islands;
 - Intent: Trees planted in the same island as light poles may obscure light, prompting topping, improper pruning, or removal.
- Evaluating whether the number of canopy trees required in parking lots is sufficient or if the rate should be increased;
 - Intent: Additional trees would further mitigate heat island effect, provide shade for users.

Single Family – (Section 30-10-1.3)

- Including provisions to document loss of tree canopy and the requiring of reforestation within single family subdivisions;
 - Intent: Capturing data on tree removal helps understanding of urban forest health, aids in grant applications and directing mitigation efforts. Low income neighborhoods disproportionately experience heat island and poor air quality due to lack of trees.

Tree Conservation - Notice and Flexibility – (Article 12)

- Incorporating provisions for the protection of specimen trees and for integrating them into the overall design of the site;
 - Intent: Allows saving large trees that might otherwise be removed, maintaining diversity and benefits of mature canopy.
- Platting of tree conservation areas;
 - Intent: Would provide a permanent, accessible record of TCA for future development and for urban canopy data.
- Evaluating provisions to allow the submission of a “Fee in Lieu” for tree conservation areas;
 - Intent: Would provide flexibility for sites where reforestation isn’t practical, or other circumstances where TCA is difficult.

Enforcement

- Penalties beyond requiring replacement for topped or excessively trimmed trees.
 - Intent: Would aid in education efforts and reduce the likelihood of topping.
- Maintenance agreement for IMUDs for keeping TCA and landscaping in compliance with ordinance.
 - Intent: Would establish parameters for property managers for minimum maintenance for landscaping and TCA, and provide continuity of knowledge within an organization.

Work in Conjunction with Water Quality

- Incorporating tree conservation into some form of credit for the required water quality and water quantity improvements (BMP’s);
 - Intent: Would provide additional opportunities for preserving trees.