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# Denver Resilient Landscapes

Advisory Committee #4

3:00-5:00 pm

*November 3rd, 2025*



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# Agenda

1. **Recap from last meeting** (5 minutes)
2. **Project Updates** (5 minutes)
  - **What we've accomplished since last time**
3. **Public Engagement (Survey Results)** (5 minutes)
4. **Overview of Potential Ways to Regulate** (30 minutes)
5. **Recommendations Break Out Groups** (45 minutes)
6. **Discussion** (20 minutes)
7. **Next Steps**

# Meeting Purpose

1. To inform the committee what has been accomplished since last meeting.
2. To work together to identify a path forward for the recommendations and key definitions before code drafting begins.



# Previous Advisory Committee Recap

## Connecting Community Priorities to Outcomes – What we Heard:

- **Plant types:** the rules should make native and adaptive species the norm and turf the outlier.
- **Trees:** provide recommendations on what site conditions are best for trees (size of planted area, soil volume, etc.). Write the rules to ensure maximum success of tree establishment.
- **Landscape materials:** consider a max for materials like mulch, cobble, and rock.
- **Barriers to better landscape:** cost, maintenance, and education.

# The Value of your Feedback

What will your feedback and direction inform?



The priorities for the city to focus on



The details of what we will require



How we measure success



The framework of the code; what it looks like



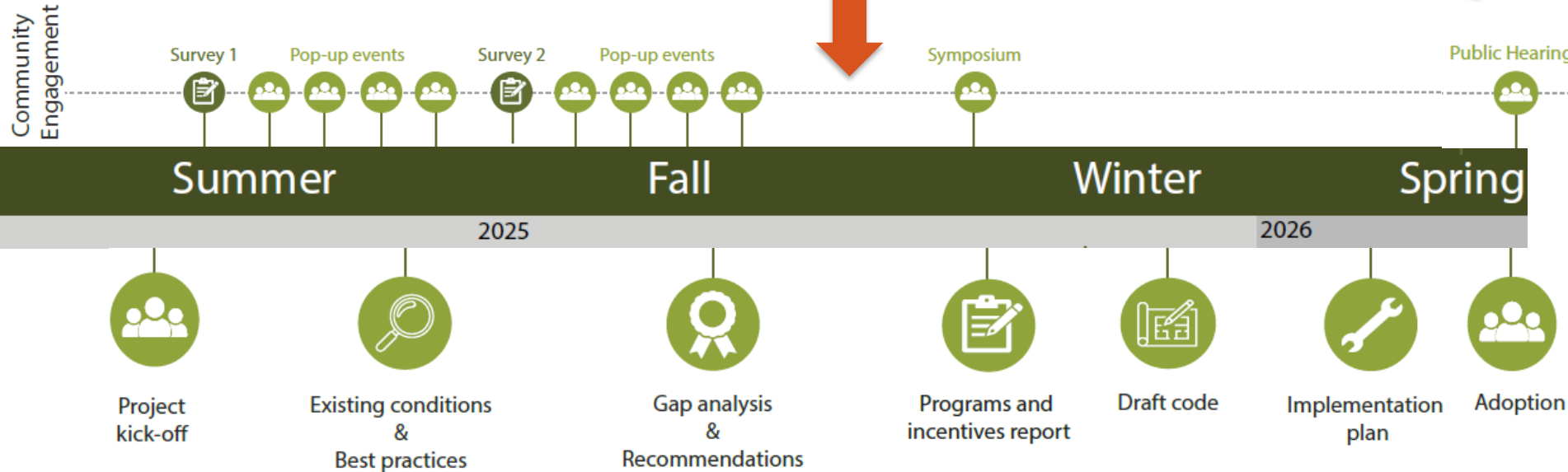
The path forward



This meeting will focus on providing feedback on potential recommendations and assessing how the proposed requirements can support the desired project outcomes.

# Project Schedule

Now estimated in June for Council adoption



# Project Updates

- **This last month:**
  - ✓ Wrapped up Best Practices & Peer City Research Report
  - ✓ Finished engagement phase II including Survey #2 and several pop-up events
  - ✓ Consultant team analyzing various ways we can regulate different topics → potential recommendations we're working through today
  - ✓ Identified a new potential regulatory 'framework' for the landscape & irrigation requirements. *Rules & Regulations document* was prioritized by interagency leadership, staff and city attorneys' office.
  - ✓ Coordination on documents & process needed to remove existing landscape requirements from codes, rules, regs, policies, ordinances, and UDSGs
  - ✓ Working toward outline for the landscape & irrigation rules & regulations

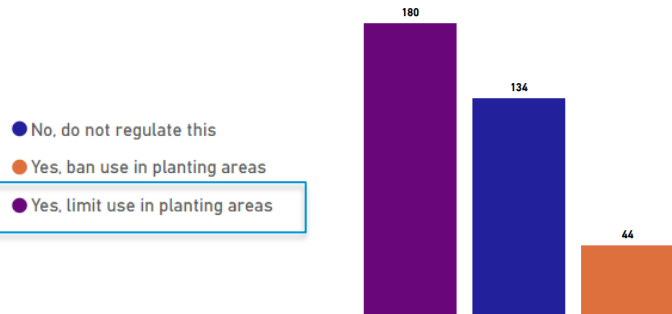


# Project Updates

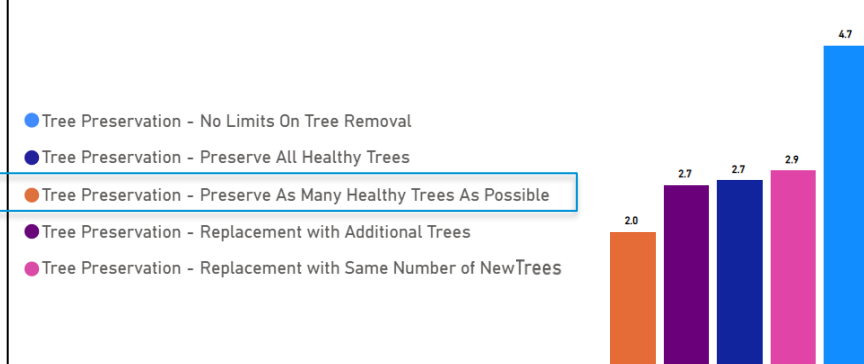
## Survey #2 Results (just the highlights)

- Tree preservation preference to preserve as many healthy trees on site as possible.
- New trees prioritized in front yards and multifamily/condo buildings. Backyards were least important. Streets and sidewalks were prioritized over other areas
- Plant List was ranked as most useful for tool for changing landscapes.
- Majority support for native species and/or low-water plants requirements in development.
- Majority support for encouraging but not requiring edible plants in development.
- Limit (do not ban) rock/cobble, plastic sheeting, synthetic turf, non-natural wood mulch.

Do you support limiting or banning rocks or cobble during new development or redevelopment?



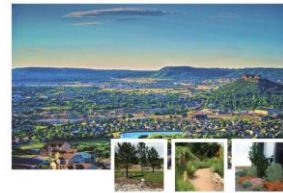
Which approaches to tree preservation are most important to you? Please rank from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important).



# Rules & Regulations

- The rules would be contained in a Landscape and Irrigation Rules and Regulations document.
- Document could be very visual and include examples, pictures, drawings, definitions, etc.
- Rules are central, easy to update, and make it easy to define the authority of each agency.
- Will address context-based requirements (downtown requirements different from suburban requirements)

*Example of Castle Rock's Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual*



TOWN OF CASTLE ROCK  
**Landscape  
and Irrigation  
Criteria Manual**  
February 6, 2025



100 W. Main St., Castle Rock, CO 80104

Town of Castle Rock Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual

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Questions or thoughts on updates,  
survey or rules & regs approach?

# Potential Recommendations

# Overview of Potential Recommendations



Turf  
Standards



Water Use  
Standards



Plant Species



Landscape  
Area



Tree  
Planting



Parking Lots

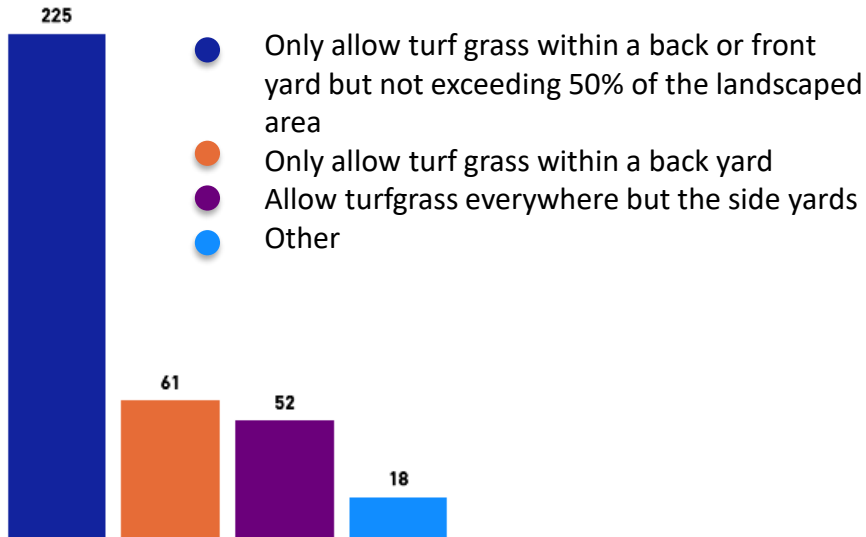


# Turf Standards



# Turf Standards – What We’ve Heard

What do you think is a good way to meet state requirements for reducing outdoor water use in residential areas?



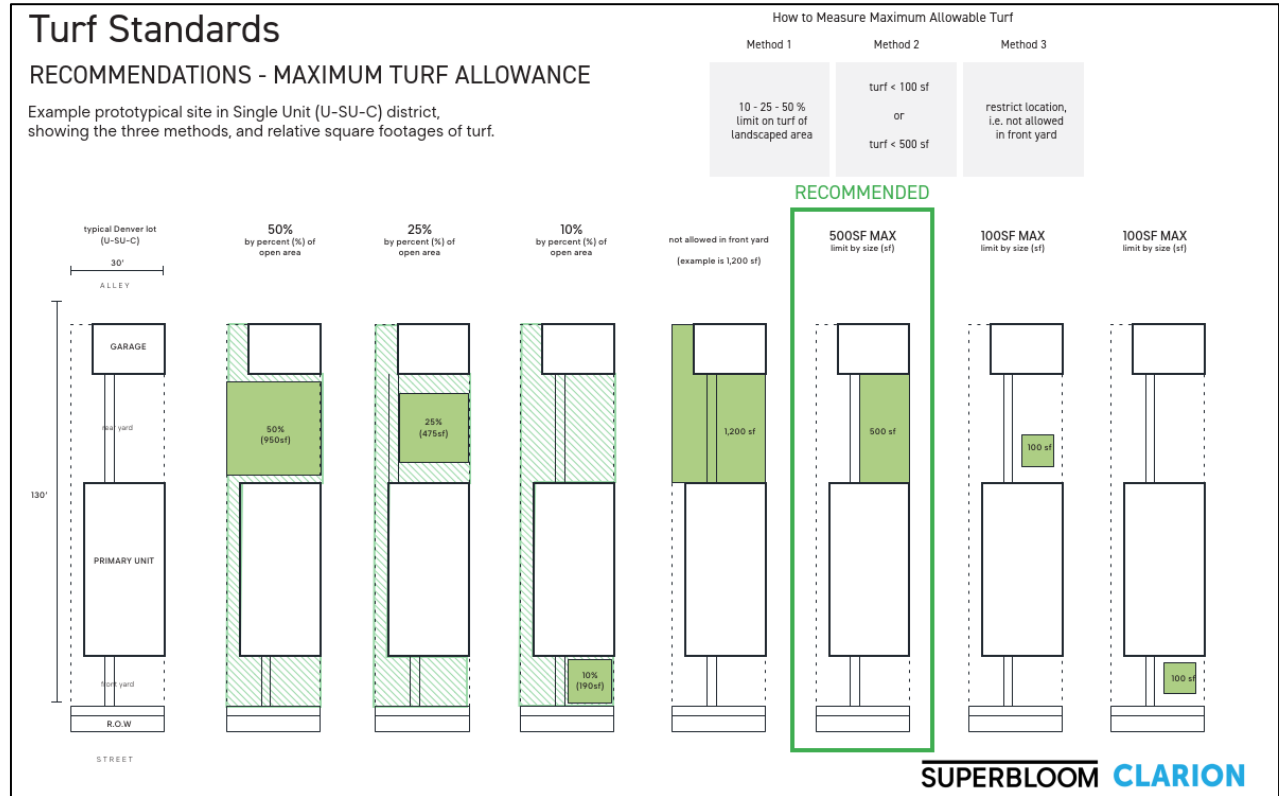
## What else we’ve heard:

- Strong support for native plants
- Native and low water use plants should be the norm, and turf should be the outlier.
- Support for grass species that use less water

# Potential Recommendations Analysis

Consultant team provided an analysis on the way that each topic can be required

Example ways for setting a turf maximum →





# Turf Standards – Potential Recommendations

## Single and Two Unit

## All Other Uses

- **Back yard:** can be warm season turf
- **Front yard:** cannot exceed 30% hardscape and must have mix of species (can't do all warm season turf)

Kentucky Bluegrass and other cool season grasses prohibited

- No more than 25% of area not covered by building can be warm season turf



Recommendation: Prohibit or Require Permitting for Kentucky Bluegrass

\* native grass



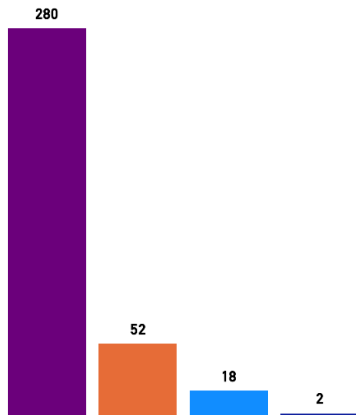
**Landscape Area**



# Landscape Area – What We’ve Heard

Are you familiar with any of these approaches to holding water on site and do you think they should be used in Denver? [Limit Impervious Paving]

- I’m familiar with this approach but would support it
- I’m not familiar with this approach and would support it
- I’m familiar and would not support it
- I’m not familiar and would not support it



## What else we’ve heard:

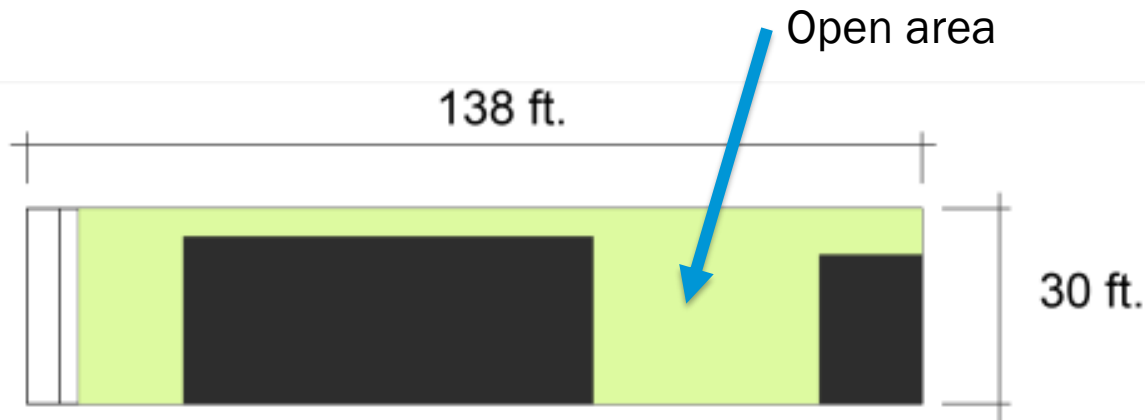
- There is a desire to get more landscape overall in Denver.
- There should be an emphasis on live plant material for helping to cool the city, aesthetics, and ecological performance.
- People don’t like when landscape is just rocks.



# Landscape Area – Potential Recommendations

- “Open Area” is any space on the lot that’s not covered by a building.
- This only includes areas on the ground and would not include green roofs or patio spaces.
- Landscape areas must be at least 3’ in width.

Open Area  
100%  
1910 SF

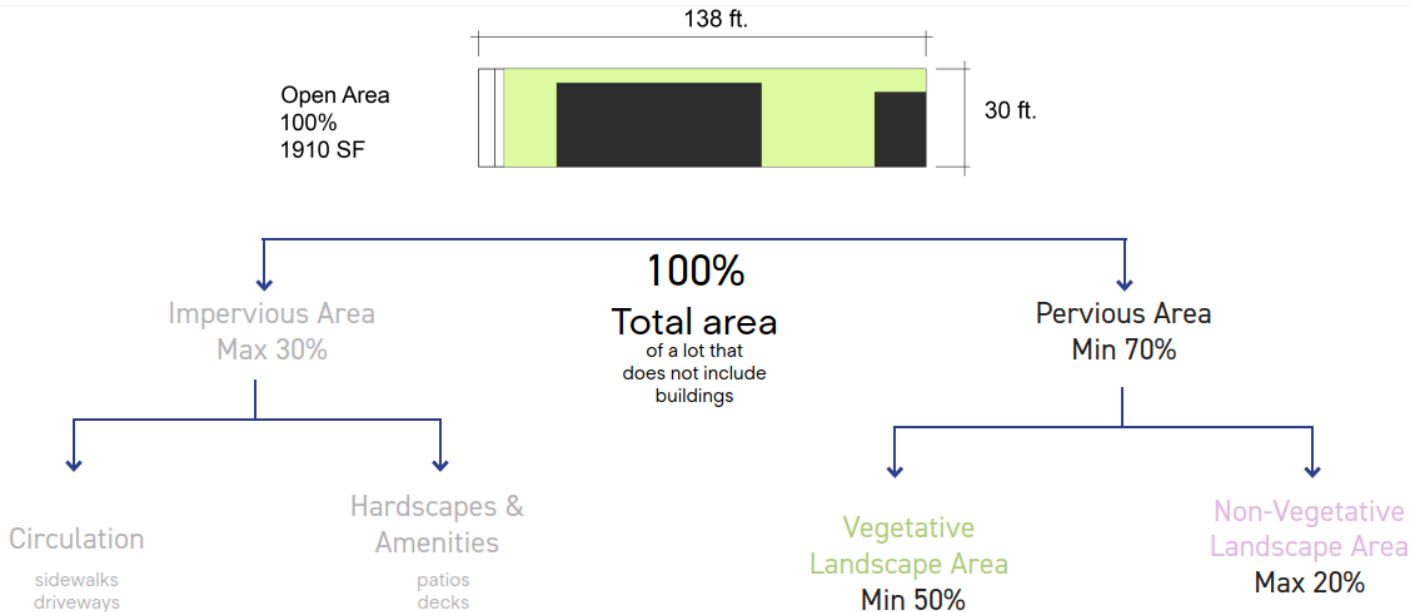




# Landscape Area – Potential Recommendations

## All Projects:

- ❑ Maximum and minimum requirements for:
  - Permeable space
  - Hardscape (patios, decks, concrete, etc.)
  - Non-vegetative (rocks, permeable pavers, gravel, etc.)
  - Live plant material
- ❑ Percentages will vary based on use and context.



A photograph of a landscaped area featuring a row of young, green trees planted in a grassy strip between a concrete sidewalk and an asphalt road. The trees are supported by stakes. In the background, there is a concrete wall, tall grasses, and a building. A black box with the word "Trees" in white text is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

Trees

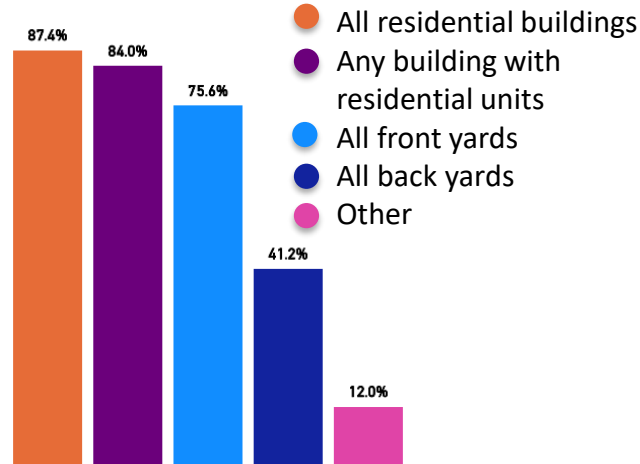


# Trees – What We’ve Heard

What areas are the most critical to get new trees? Please rank from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important).



Which types of new residential development do you think should be required to have a certain number of trees planted as part of their landscaping?



## What else we’ve heard:

- Trees are a top priority.
- Desire to preserve as many trees as possible.
- City rules should ensure the best chance of success for tree establishment.



# Trees – Potential Recommendations

## All Uses and Contexts:



1 tree for every 30-35 LF along publicly accessible paved areas.



Trees may not be within a bed of rock mulch or other hardscape materials and must have wood mulch or live plant materials.



At least 50% of existing trees must be preserved within the setback or open areas required for all land uses. If trees cannot be preserved, the city forester may approve additional trees to be planted elsewhere on site.

## Single and Two Unit

- Additional standards are being considered.

## Downtown

- Trees must be provided within a 5x10' space, silva cell and complimented with living ground cover (may include wood mulch).

# Questions before break out?



Turf  
Standards



Water Use  
Standards



Plant Species



Landscape  
Area



Tree  
Planting



Parking Lots

# Breakout Discussion

## Workshop direction for recommendations on key topics:

- Turfgrass limitations on single-unit vs. all other uses
- Landscape area percentage breakdown between vegetated vs non-vegetated for single-unit vs. all other uses
  - Tree preservation requirements
    - Defining 'turfgrass'

Come back together to share the recommendations each team landed on

# Share-Out

## Each team to share recommendations related to:

- Turfgrass limitations on single-unit vs. all other uses
- Landscape area percentage breakdown between vegetated vs non-vegetated for single-unit vs. all other uses
  - Tree preservation requirements
    - Defining 'turfgrass'

# Next Steps

- Finalize recommendations
- Start discussing implementation avenues such as a self-certification process for landscape professionals, staffing needs, etc.
- Next Meeting on 12/1 from 3-5 pm (IN PERSON)

**Thank you!**