



Denver Resilient Landscapes

Advisory Committee #5

3:00pm to 5:00pm

December 1, 2025



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Agenda

1. **Project Update** (5 minutes)
2. **Final Draft Recommendations Review** (20 minutes)
 - **Discussion** (25 minutes)

-Bio break if needed-
3. **Implementation Discussion** (15 minutes)
4. **Programs & Incentives** (10 minutes)
5. **Landscape Symposium** (20 minutes)
6. **Time for Additional Feedback from the Committee** (10 minutes)
7. **Next Steps** (5 minutes)

Project Updates

This last month:

- ✓ Drafted the rules & regs outline
- ✓ Analyzed recommendations applicability to various sites
- ✓ Created draft recommendations
- ✓ Workshopped draft recommendations with the Advisory Committee & Working Group & Interagency Leadership
- ✓ Got feedback on recommendations from Council Sponsor
- ✓ Further refined recommendations
- ✓ Started work on the Programs & Incentives report to support community in changing existing property
- ✓ Started working on the spring landscape symposium



Draft Recommendations

Where we landed after various input. Still in draft form and may be refined further

Organization of Rules & Regs (simplified)

- Intent
- Applicability
 - Restating authority as identified in DRMC
- General standards applying to all development
- Standards specific to each context & use
 - Turf & Artificial Grass
 - Water & Irrigation
 - Stormwater
 - Street Trees
 - Adjoining Development Buffer
 - Surface Parking Lots
 - Landscaping in Right of Way
 - Tree Preservation
 - Maintenance
 - Definitions

Building in Context

- Requirements may be organized by Blueprint context & use, not zone district.
- More user friendly as applicants know 'what they are building' but don't always know zone district.
- Zoning code today is organized by context.

Neighborhood Contexts

Places work together to promote complete neighborhoods. Each place expresses itself differently depending on the neighborhood context where it is located. The following table illustrates which places are found within each of the neighborhood contexts.

	S UBURBAN PAGE 189	URBAN E DGE PAGE 205	URBAN U PAGE 221	GENERAL URBAN G PAGE 237	URBAN C ENTER PAGE 251	D OWNTOWN PAGE 265	DISTRICTS PAGE 284
CENTERS	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	LOCAL COMMUNITY REGIONAL	AIRPORT CAMPUS CIVIC HEAVY PRODUCTION VALUE MANUFACTURING INNOVATION/ FLEX REGIONAL PARK
CORRIDORS	LOCAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY	LOCAL COMMUNITY	
RESIDENTIAL AREAS	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	LOW HIGH-MEDIUM HIGH	
STREET TYPES	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET MIXED USE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL LOCAL	

Topics of Draft Recommendations



Turf
Standards



Water Use
Standards



Plant Species



Landscape
Area



Tree
Planting +
Preservation



Parking Lots



Turf Maximums

For All Uses

- **Kentucky Bluegrass & Artificial Turf prohibited in non-functional spaces**, only allowed in functional spaces (schools, parks, fields, etc.)
- Rules will clarify that native grasses and warm season hybridized grasses do *not* count towards turf maximum and will not be defined as 'turf'.

Single and Two Unit Uses

- **500 sf** Kentucky Bluegrass 'turf' maximum

All Other Uses

- **25%** turf maximum

What we heard last committee:

- Front/back yard approach doesn't work
- Need to allow for some cool season turf based on grow ability of space
- Schools, parks and other spaces should be exempt from this ban



Recommendation: Prohibit or Require Permitting for Kentucky Bluegrass

* native grass



Trees

All Uses and Contexts:



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

- Trees must still retain existing soil volume requirements via a structural cell and/or complimented with living ground cover (may include wood mulch).



Understory Requirements: Trees may not be within a bed of rock mulch or other hardscape materials and must have wood mulch or live plant materials for both ROW & private lot side



Preservation:

- At least **50% of existing trees must be preserved within the setback required for all land uses.** If trees cannot be preserved, the city forester may approve additional trees to be planted elsewhere on site. If setback is smaller than the area required to preserve the tree, the tree spacing requirements will apply.
- **4" minimum**, excludes diseased/hazard/invasive
- Option for **fee in lieu** (with very clear stipulations on what type of 'burden' would allow this)

What we heard at last committee:

- Support to expand tree preservation requirements to all setbacks all uses
- Support for fee in lieu or mitigation option for 'flexibility' if burden is presented
- The need to be very *clear* about what trees apply, consider health/size/species
- Spacing & soil volume considerations, consider groupings or flexibility to get more in one space



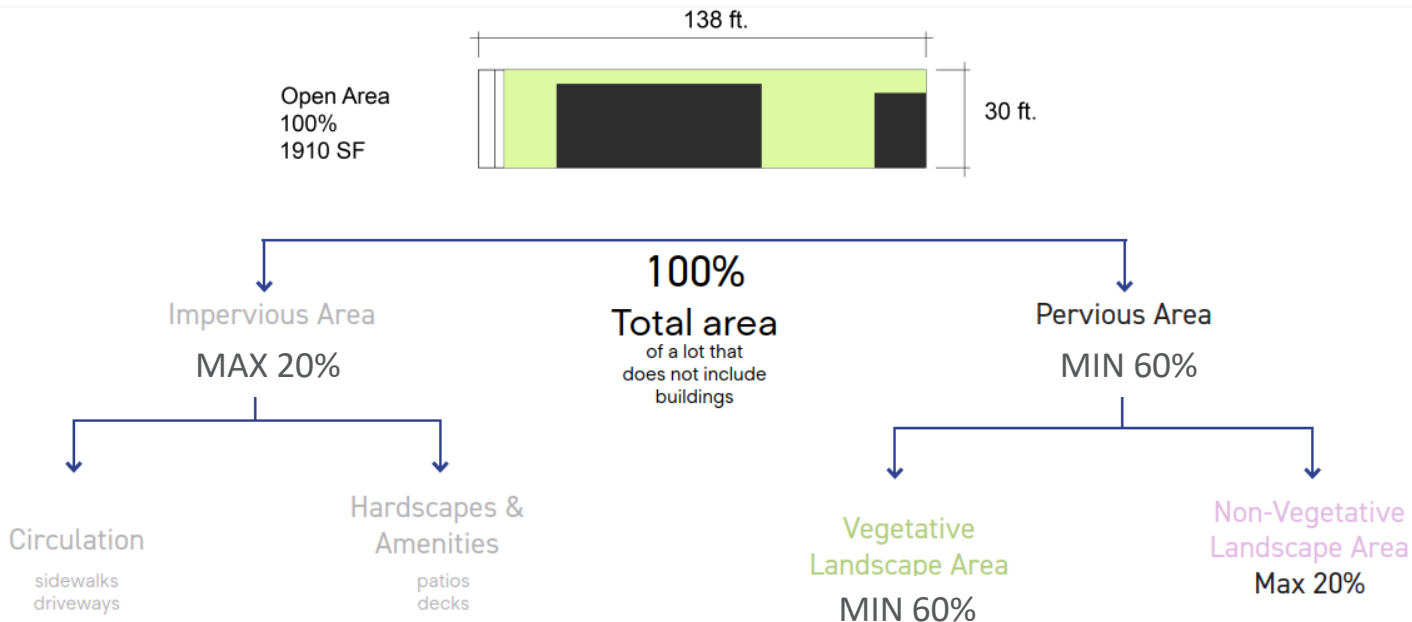
Landscape Area & Hardscape Maximums

What we heard at last committee:

- Support to make impervious surface maximums and landscaped area minimums
- Support to go beyond what we get today (50% vegetated)

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 apply to all uses not downtown.

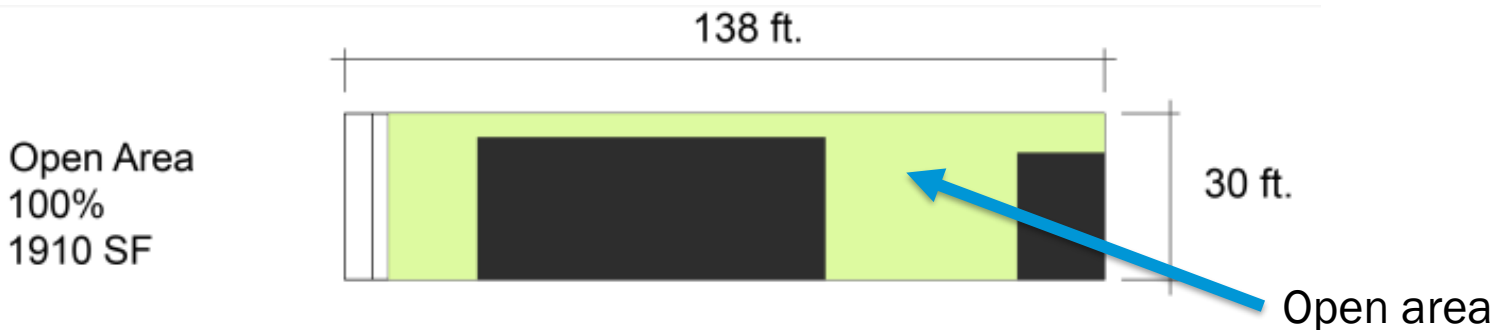


RESIDENTIAL LOT
REQUIREMENTS



Landscape Area & Hardscape Maximums

- “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.
- At least 10% of the non-buildable area would need to be landscaped (can be met within setbacks)





Landscape Area & Hardscape Maximums

What we are trying to avoid:





Water Use

For All Uses

- **Hydrozone plan required** (maximum water budget noted in plans as gallons per sf average across site)
 - Would have flexibility for food growing spaces
- Plants must be low or very low water species
- Must comply with turf maximums
- Smart weather controller or soil moisture sensor required

Single and Two Unit Uses

- Exploring this as an **exception for an irrigation plan** and requiring low water use plants to dictate overall water use.

All Other Uses

- **Simplified irrigation plan** signed by irrigation designer required
- Noting irrigation system used, specifications around re-use or graywater (point to DW or DDPHE)

Was not discussed at breakout with committee

Example of a simplified residential hydrozone plan





Plant Species & Diversity

Was not discussed at breakout
with committee

All Projects:

Landscape plan should include a 'plant schedule' with the following info:

- Plant Diversity (same as Denver Green Code 'optional' requirement")
 - Minimum of 5 grasses or shrubs
 - Retain existing diversity for trees: 1 per 10
 - Minimum of 10 species types listed for landscaped areas over 500 sf
 - Minimum of 20 species types for landscaped areas above 1,000 sf
- Identify water use of plant species (very low, low, moderate)
- Scientific name and common name
- Allowable 'equivalent species' in case of issue of finding species at nursery.
- 75% must come from approved list (will include edible, low water, pollinator friendly, climate adaptive & native, salt tolerant, & more)





Parking Lots and Soil Health

Was not discussed at breakout
with committee

Parking Lots for All Uses

- 1 landscape island for every 6 spaces that is the equivalent of a full parking spot.
- 1 tree required per every 6 spaces to be located within the parking lot (in islands or clustered throughout)
- Must include swale which serves a **stormwater and water quality benefit**.
- May not include majority hardscape – **must be majority living plant material (% TBD)**
- Parking lots under 10 spaces to be exempt

Soil

- On every plan set, a note regarding soil amendments should be included identifying the need to amend soil for health and longevity



Additional Topics

Was not discussed at breakout with committee. Topics were added based on feedback from committee & staff working group

Median Requirements

- Low maintenance, developer required medians

Plant bed supportive infrastructure

- Low landscaping fencing & planters

Pet friendly landscaping

- Requirements for single family attached, multifamily or mixed use with residential to provide space for pets.

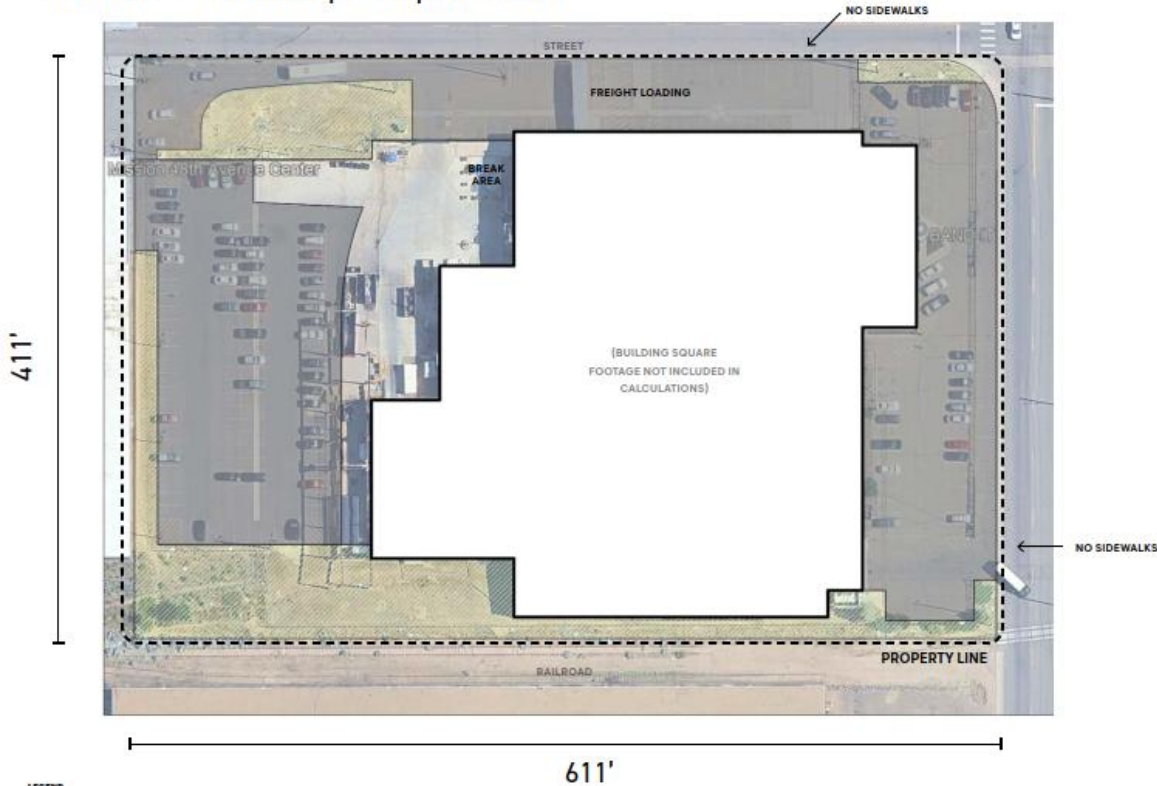
Testing the Recommendations

Industrial Lots

Address: 4799 Dahlia St, Denver, CO 80216

Zone District: I-B

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



Industrial Landscape Requirements			
	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	1 tree per 35 Linear Feet	2	50
	1 tree per 1,500 sf		
	1 tree per 6 parking spots		
hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area 1 landscape island per 6 parking spots	25%	39%
turf maximum	1,000 sf maximum	0 sf	1,000 sf
parking	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots (contributes to landscape area minimum) 1 tree per 6 parking spots (contributes to trees)	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum

■ = non-compliance

*Requirements will not apply to existing development. Analysis was conducted to see how the new requirements would look on various existing sites throughout the city.

Industrial Lots

Address: 4799 Dahlia St, Denver, CO 80216
 Zone District: I-B

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



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landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area	25%	39%
	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots		
turf maximum	1,000 sf maximum	0 sf	1,000 sf
parking	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots (contributes to landscape area minimum)	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum
	1 tree per 6 parking spots (contributes to trees)		

■ = non-compliance

LEGEND

	Existing Landscape Area		Parking (Asphalt)
	Additional Landscape Required		Existing Tree
	Paved Area		Proposed Tree

Commercial Lots

Address: 545 S Broadway, Denver, CO 80209
 Zone District: C-MS-5

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



Commercial Landscape Requirements

	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	1 tree per 35 Linear Feet 1 tree per 1,500 sf 1 tree per 6 parking spots	16	48
hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area 1 landscape island per 6 parking spots	22%	27%
turf maximum	1,000 sf maximum	0 sf	1,000 sf
parking	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots (contributes to landscape area minimum) 1 tree per 6 parking spots (contributes to trees)	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum

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EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



Commercial Landscape Requirements

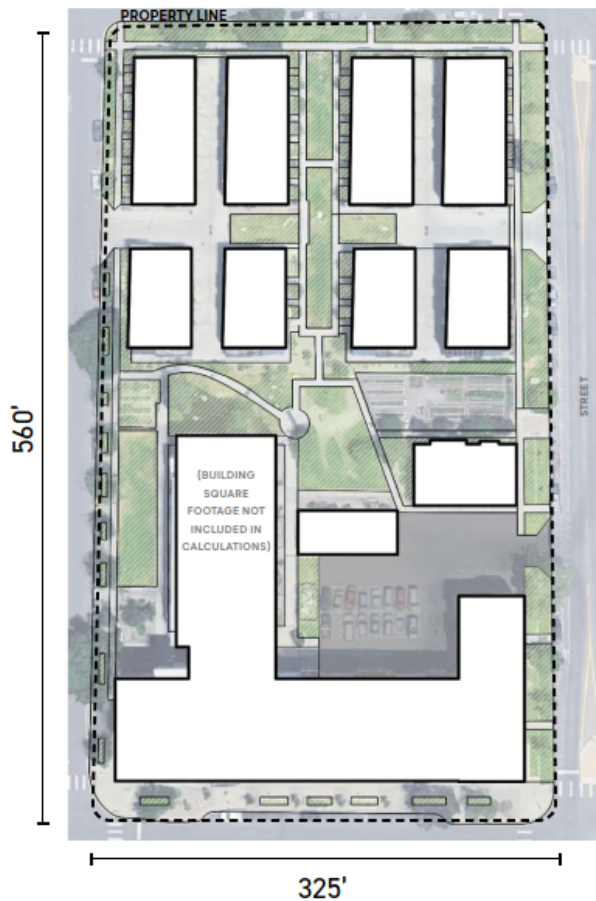
	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	1 tree per 35 Linear Feet 1 tree per 1,500 sf 1 tree per 6 parking spots	16	48
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landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area 1 landscape island per 6 parking spots	22%	27%
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■ = non-compliance

Multi-Family / Mixed-Use Lots

Address: 1236 W 11th Ave, Denver, CO 80204
 Zone District: C-RX-5

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



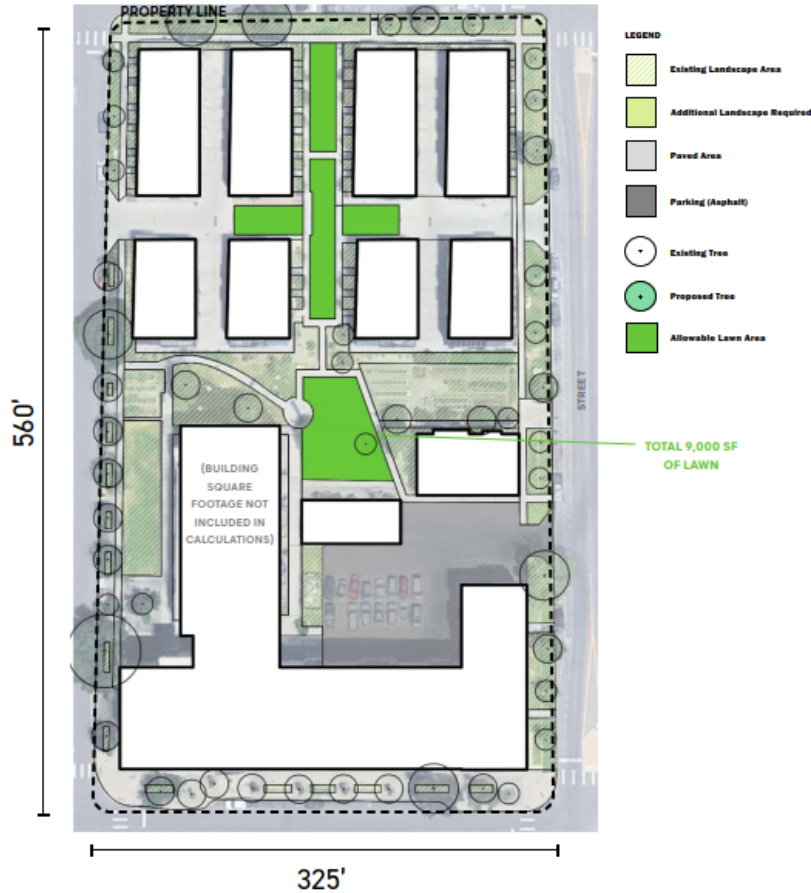
Multi-Family / Mixed-Use Landscape Requirements			
	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	1 tree per 35 Linear Feet 1 tree per 1,500 sf 1 tree per 6 parking spots	49	49
hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area 1 landscape island per 6 parking spots	37%	37%
turf maximum	25% maximum turf of landscaped area	75%	25%
parking	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots (contributes to landscape area minimum) 1 tree per 6 parking spots (contributes to trees)	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum

■ = non-compliance

Multi-Family / Mixed-Use Lots

Address: 1236 W 11th Ave, Denver, CO 80204
 Zone District: C-RX-5

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



Multi-Family / Mixed-Use Landscape Requirements

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hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	30% minimum vegetated landscaped area 1 landscape island per 6 parking spots	37%	37%
turf maximum	25% maximum turf of landscaped area	75%	25%
parking	1 landscape island per 6 parking spots (contributes to landscape area minimum) 1 tree per 6 parking spots (contributes to trees)	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum	Refer to trees and landscape area minimum

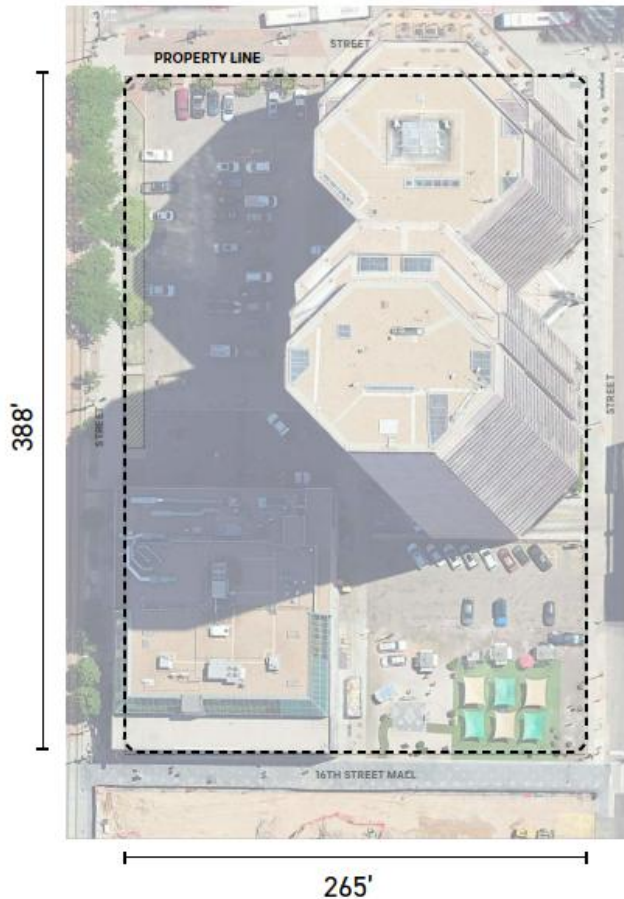
■ = non-compliance

Downtown Lots

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements

Address: 17th Street & California St. , Denver, CO

Zone District: D-C



NOTE: WE ARE TREATING THIS STUDY AS A NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDY PURPOSES.

Downtown Landscape Requirements

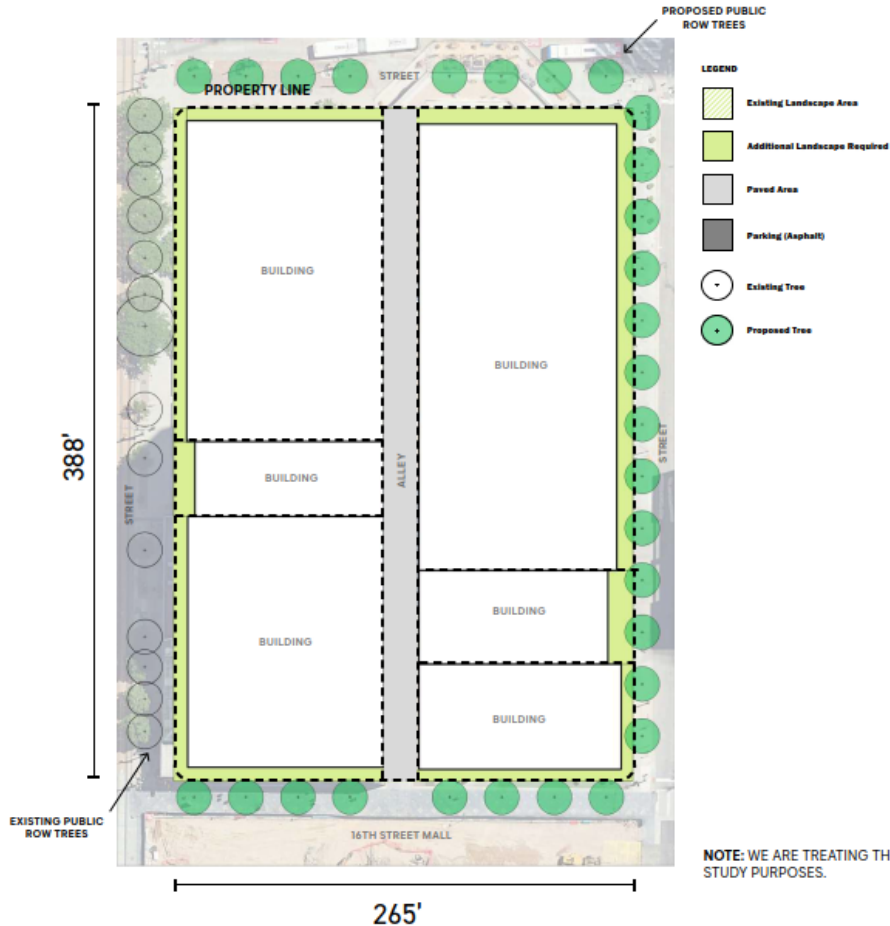
	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	Tree requirements should be met by city's ROW requirements (we are not proposing any additional tree requirements for downtown)	15	43 (if we are following the 1 tree per 30 lf)
hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	10% minimum vegetated landscaped area (not including building sf)	4%	59%
turf maximum	1,000 sf maximum	0 sf	1,000 sf
parking	We are assuming no new surface parking for downtown landscapes	N/A	N/A

■ = non-compliance

Downtown Lots

Address: 17th Street & California St. , Denver, CO
 Zone District: D-C

EXAMPLE – Landscape Requirements



NOTE: WE ARE TREATING THIS STUDY AS A NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDY PURPOSES.

Downtown Landscape Requirements

	Proposed Code	Existing	Proposed
trees	Tree requirements should be met by city's ROW requirements (we are not proposing any additional tree requirements for downtown)	15	43 (if we are following the 1 tree per 30 lf)
hardscaped area maximum	Not including parking lots and buildings, 10% of the open area must be landscaped		
landscape area minimum	10% minimum vegetated landscaped area (not including building sf)	4%	59%
turf maximum	1,000 sf maximum	0 sf	1,000 sf
parking	We are assuming no new surface parking for downtown landscapes	N/A	N/A

■ = non-compliance

Does this align with everything we discussed? What do we think?

Implementation



- Working toward an implementation plan to identify a cost/benefit analysis of what we need to implement.
 - New staff?
 - Self-certification?
 - Third party review?
 - Something else?

Purpose of implementation plan: As we balance budget shortfall and low staffing resources, what other options do we have to implement this successfully?

Implementation



Exploring the option of Self-Certification:

- Potential option where landscape and irrigation designers would submit plans and ‘certify’ that they comply with Denver’s rules.
- Would submit a form signed for both the plans and installation.
- Would alleviate staff time needed on review of plans and simplify inspection.
- Staff would do a ‘random inspection’ and review a handful of plans and complete a handful of detailed inspections.
- Examples of cities that do this today:
 - Bozeman (four units or less), Chicago, Phoenix, Boulder (for single family)

Would this be a direction that the committee would support?

What other avenues should we explore?

Programs & Incentives

WANT TO TRANSFORM YOUR LANDSCAPE ?

FROM → TO

High Water Use Lawn



Drought-tolerant, Vibrant, Biodiverse, Pollinator-friendly, Colorado Meadow



LEARN MORE ABOUT:

-  Funding Assistance
-  Conserving Water
-  Native / Drought Tolerant Plants

YOUR LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION

POCKET GUIDE

SCAN HERE FOR A COLLECTION OF LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION RESOURCES:



OR CODE




1 GETTING STARTED

Understand **what turf conversion involves**, how to remove existing lawn, prepare soil, and transition to low-water landscaping.

 Resource Central
 Denver Water DIY Guide

 CSU/PlantTalk Lawn Conversion

2 DESIGNING YOUR LANDSCAPE

Decide what you **want your yard to become** by choosing a design style, plant palette, and layout that fit your site and goals.

 Denver Water Xeriscape Plans
 Garden in a Box

 Native Plant Lists & Local Plant Sales

3 FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Find out which turf-removal or irrigation rebates you qualify for so you can **reduce the overall cost** of your project.

 Denver Water residential rebate
 Irrigation upgrade rebate

 Do you live in an HOA? Look into LTAP programs

4 INSTALLING THE LANDSCAPE

Remove your turf, amend your soil, update/install irrigation if needed, and plant your new water-wise garden or native grass area.



 Turf Removal (DIY or contractor)
 Mulch/Compost (free city giveaways)

 Native Grass & Plant Installation

5 MAINTAINING YOUR LANDSCAPE

Use simple seasonal watering, weeding, and plant-care routines to help your new landscape establish and **thrive long-term**.



 CSU Extension Care Tips
 Denver Water Workshops



DENVER
THE MILE HIGH CITY

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Symposium



Symposium: A Planning Document

Audience

- Open to everyone (DR)
- By invitation only

Goals

- Share Outcomes of DRL Project
- Inform/Announce re Programs & Incentives
- Lead Conversation re Future of Landscapes
- Convene community
- City represented as Leader of resilient visioning

Logistics

- Time of Day?
- Morning/Breakfast: coffee, breakfast tacos/pastries
- Afternoon/lunch: Sandwiches and sparking waters, 3/4 - 6 p.m.
- Would venue provide tables, lighting, projection?

Who to Connect With

- UCD Students working on Resilient Landscapes - connect with Jody
- Businesses
- Students
- Neighborhood Groups
- The Park People

Potential Speakers

- The Mayor Mike Johnston
- Michelle Cori (CPD)
- Someone from Colorado Water
- Deryn Davidson (CSU)
- Esther Perez or Lewish TallBull (Sacred Return)
- David Owen (Where the Water Goes) or other author on Colorado River

Denver Resilient Landscapes

Superbloom | Symposium: A Planning Document

Symposium: A Planning Document

Potential Spaces

- McNichols Building
- Downtown Library
- Rec Center

Pros/Cons

- McNichols
- Public Building
 - Ideally Free
 - Access
 - Centrally located (vs. CSU spur)
 - Contact: Alexis Moore at Arts & Venues
- Rec Centers
- Would also be Free
 - Could also be centrally located



Denver Botanic Gardens - Amphitheater



CSU Spur Moose Avenue



Denver Public Library - Downtown



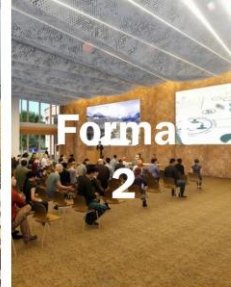
McNichols Building (Format 4 // Gallery Style)

Denver Resilient Landscapes

Superbloom | Symposium: A Planning Document



Format
1



Format
2



Format
3



Format
4

Denver Resilient Landscapes

Superbloom | Symposium: A Planning Document

Additional Thoughts?

Next Steps

- Finalize recommendations and begin drafting regulations
- Anticipating first public review draft in April
- Symposium in April
- Reconnect with Advisory Committee in March
 - Are we okay with an email update in January on progress as we work through internal review?

**THANK YOU ALL FOR
YOUR TIME AND
ENGAGEMENT!**