

ORDINANCE NO. 006, 2026
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
ADOPTING NONSUBSTANTIVE RELETTERING OF THE
LANDSCAPE AND TREE PROTECTION SECTION OF THE LAND
USE CODE

A. Council adopted seven tree policy ordinances in October and December of 2025.

B. Because of all of those changes, reorganizing the subsections of Land Use Code Section 5.10.1 is necessary in order to clarify and create a better flow of this Code Section.

In light of the foregoing recitals, which the Council hereby makes and adopts as determinations and findings, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS as follows:

Section 1. Section 5.10.1 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins is hereby amended to read as follows:

5.10.1 LANDSCAPING AND TREE PROTECTION

...

(FD) Tree Preservation and Mitigation. Existing significant trees (six (6) inches and greater in diameter) within the LOD and within NHBZs must be recorded in a tree inventory and preserved to the extent reasonably feasible and may help satisfy the landscaping requirements of this Section as set forth below. Such trees shall be considered "protected" trees within the meaning of this Section, subject to the exceptions contained in Subsection **(FD)(24)** below. Streets, buildings and lot layouts shall be designed to minimize the disturbance to significant existing trees. All required landscape plans, demolition plans, grading plans, building plans, engineering plans, and utility plans shall accurately identify the locations, species, size and condition of all significant trees, each labeled showing the applicant's intent to either remove, transplant or protect.

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(1) **Mitigation Trees.** A significant tree that is removed shall be replaced to mitigate the loss of contribution and value of the removed significant tree(s). The following mitigation values by size class are as follows:

Existing Tree Diameter Range	Mitigation Value Equivalent
6" - 14"	1 tree
15" - 19"	2 trees
20"-24"	3 trees
25" – 29"	5 trees
30" – 39"	10 trees
40" and greater	20 trees

Mitigation trees shall meet the minimum size requirements defined in Subsection (D)(1)(d)(I).

- (2) **Street Trees.** All existing street trees that are located on City rights-of-way abutting the development, and not approved for removal, shall be accurately identified by species, size, location, and condition on required landscape plans, and shall be preserved and protected in accordance with the standards of Subsection (E).

...

(E) **Tree Protection During Construction.** The following tree protection specifications shall be followed for all projects with protected existing trees. Any development activity that may cause injury to the existing trees set be preserved shall be enforced as provided under Section 2.14.1.

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- (10) **Ribboning Off.** Large property areas containing protected trees and separated from construction or land clearing areas, road rights-of-way and utility easements may be "ribboned off," rather than erecting protective fencing around each tree as required in Subsection (E)(35) above. This may be accomplished by placing metal t-post stakes a maximum of fifty (50) feet apart and tying ribbon or rope from stake-to-stake along the outside perimeters of such areas being protected.

- (11) **Soil Disturbances.** Soil disturbances in proximity to trees must comply with the distances in Table 5.10.1-(61) below, Tree Diameter to Soil Disturbance Distance. Soil disturbances include, but are not limited to, soil loosening or amending, augering or boring, tunnelling, irrigation installation, or excavation within the critical root zone (CRZ). CRZ is defined as the area of soil around a tree where the roots necessary for the tree's health and survival are located, extending one (1) foot for every inch of the tree's

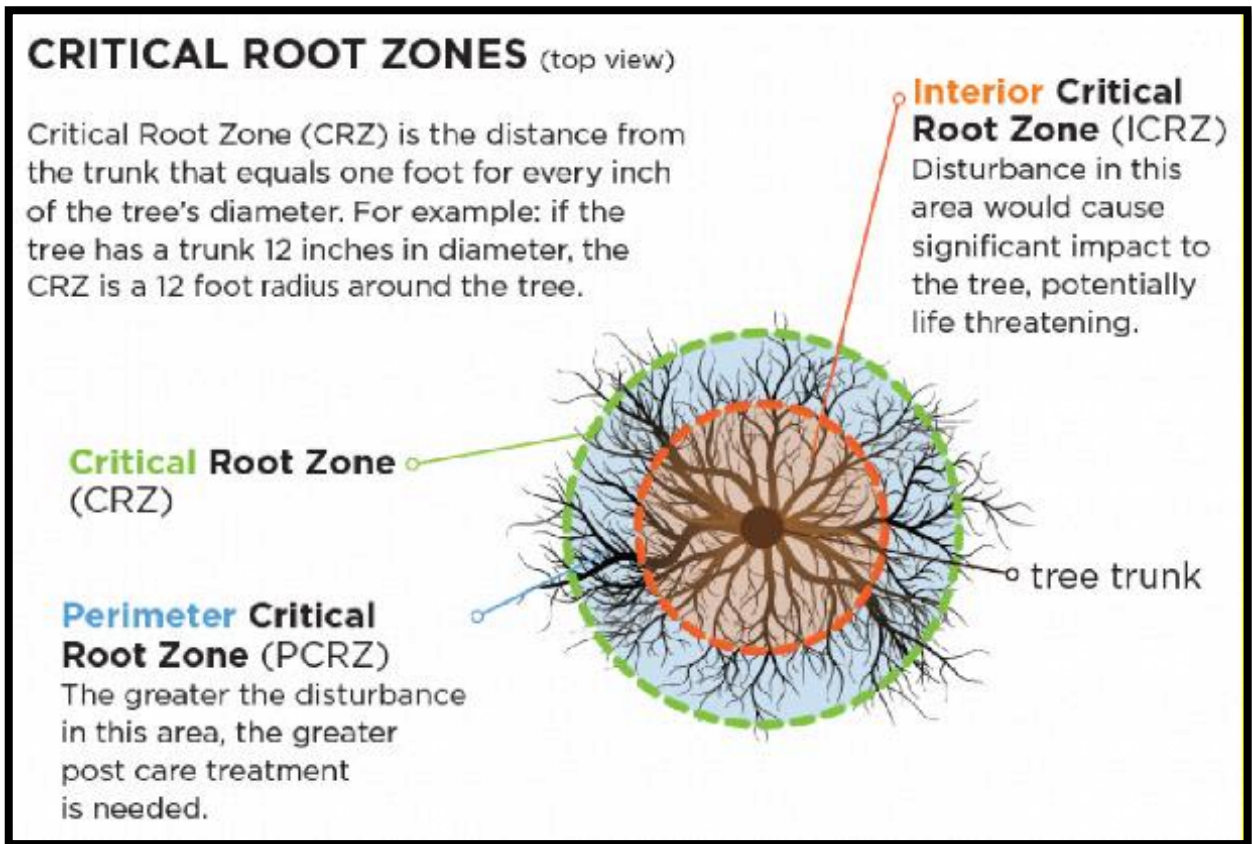
diameter measured at the Diameter at Standard Height (DSH), typically four and one-half (4½) feet about ground. Soil loosening and amending shall be pursuant to City Code Section 12-132.

- (12) **Underground Facilities Installations.** Underground Facilities Installations. The installation of utilities, irrigation lines or any underground fixture requiring excavation deeper than six (6) inches shall be accomplished by boring under the root system of protected existing trees at a minimum depth of twenty-four (24) inches and not directly under the trunks of trees. Low pressure hydro excavation, air spading or hand digging are required to help reduce impact to the tree(s) root system when excavating at depths of twenty-four (24) inches or less. Refer to the CRZ diagram, Figure 5.10.1-(31), for root protection guidelines. The CRZ shall be incorporated into and shown on development plans for all existing trees to be preserved.

Table 5.10.1-(61) – Tree Diameter to Soil Disturbance Distance Table

Tree Diameter at Breast Height (Inches)	0" to 9"	10" to 14"	15" to 19"	Over 19"
Soil Disturbance Distance from Face of Tree* (Feet)	5 feet	10 feet	12 feet	15 feet
*The soil disturbance distance shall be measured from the edge of disturbance to the face of the tree.				

Figure 5.10.1-(31) - Critical Root Zone Diagram.



...

(DF) **Landscape Planning and Design.** Any landscape plan required must meet at least the standards in this Subsection.

(1) **Tree Planting.**

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- (b) **Minimum Tree Stocking Requirements.** All developments must establish groupings of trees along all city streets, in and around parking lots, and in landscape areas shown in the landscape plan. These stocking requirements outline the required minimum tree canopy and are in addition to requirements for preserving existing trees, parking lot landscape requirements and required tree mitigation. These stocking requirements are not intended to limit additional tree plantings in any remaining portions of the development. Required tree stocking comprises:

...

- (II) Street tree planting in accordance with the *Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards* and the street tree planting as defined in Subsection (D)(1)(e) below;

...

- (V) Full tree stocking under this Subsection (D)(1)(b) shall mean formal or informal groupings of trees planted according to the following spacing dimensions depending on species and desired degree of shading of the ground plane:

Table 5.10.1-(12) – Spacing

Tree Type	Minimum/Maximum Spacing
Canopy shade trees	20'—30' spacing
Coniferous evergreens	20'—30' spacing
Ornamental trees	Maximum 30' spacing

- (VI) Exact tree locations and spacings may be adjusted at the option of the applicant to support patterns of use, views and circulation as long as the minimum tree stocking requirement under this Subsection (D)(1)(b) and the minimum species diversity requirement under Subsection (D)(1)(c) are met; and

- (VII) Canopy shade trees must constitute at least fifty percent (50%) of all tree plantings required in Subsections (D)(1)(b)(I) or (II) above.

- (c) **Minimum Tree Species Diversity.** No more than three (3) consecutive trees of the same cultivar or variety may be planted in a row, including corners and groupings. The following minimum requirements apply to any landscape plan.

Table 5.10.1-(23) – Species Diversity Table

Number of trees on site	Maximum percentage of any one species
10—19	40%
20—39	30%
40—59	20%
60 or more	10%

(d) **Tree Species and Minimum Sizes.** The City Forester shall provide a recommended list of trees that are acceptable to satisfy the requirements for landscape plans, including approved canopy shade trees that may be used as street trees.

(I) **Minimum Size.** The following minimum sizes shall be required (except as provided in Subsection (D)(1)(d)(II) below):

Table 5.10.1-(34) – *Minimum Size Table*

Type	Minimum Size
Canopy Shade Tree	2.0" caliper balled and burlapped or equivalent
Evergreen Tree	6.0' height balled and burlapped or equivalent
Ornamental Tree	1.5" caliper balled and burlapped or equivalent
Shrubs	5 gallon or adequate size consistent with design intent or 1 gallon may be permitted if planting within the Critical Root Zone of existing trees

Any tree plantings that are in addition to those that are made as part of the approved landscape plan are exempt from the foregoing size requirements.

(II) **Reduced Minimum Sizes for Affordable Housing Projects.** In any affordable housing project, the following minimum sizes shall be required:

Table 5.10.1-(45) – *Affordable Housing Minimum Tree Size Table*

Type	Minimum Size
Canopy Shade Tree	1.0" caliper container or equivalent
Evergreen Tree	4.0' height container or equivalent
Ornamental Tree	1.0" caliper container or equivalent
Shrubs	1 gallon

(e) **Street Trees.** Planting of street trees shall occur in the adjoining street right-of-way. Except as described in Subsection (D)(1)(e)b. below, the street tree plantings in connection with the development shall occur as described in Subsections (D)(1)(e)a. through e. below:

(I) **Placement:**

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- b. **Behind attached sidewalk.** Canopy shade trees shall be established in an area ranging from three (3) to seven (7) feet behind the sidewalk at the spacing intervals as required in Subsection (D)(1)(e)(I)a. above.

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(II) **Planting:**

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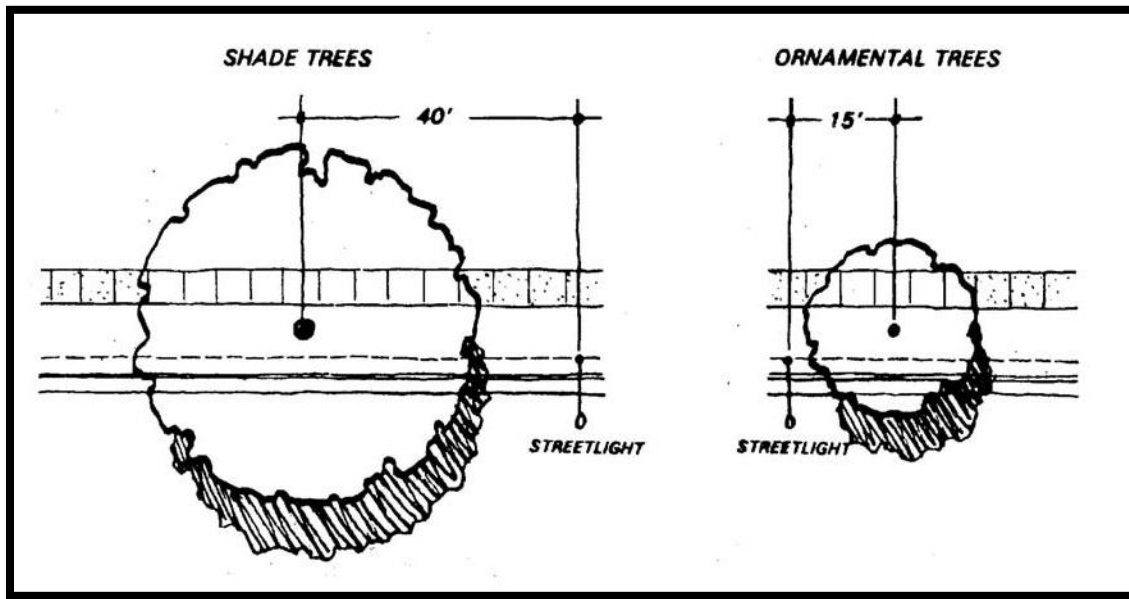
- d. **Three-year establishment period.** The establishment period of three full growing seasons (March through November) begins once all street trees in a phased planting as specified in (D)(1)(e)(II)(b) have been permitted and planting has been approved by City of Fort Collins Forestry Division and Zoning Department, and the following applies:

...

- (f) **Utilities and Traffic.** Landscape, utility and traffic plans shall be coordinated. Minimum dimension requirements for the most common tree/utility and traffic control device separations are shown below. Exceptions to these requirements may occur, as approved by the Director, where utilities or traffic control devices are not located in their standard designated locations. Tree/utility and traffic control device separations shall not be used as a means of avoiding the planting of required street trees. Required separations are:

- (I) Forty (40) feet between shade trees and streetlights. Fifteen (15) feet between ornamental trees and streetlights. (See Figure 5.10.1-(12).)

Figure 5.10.1-(12) – Tree/Streetlight Separations



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- (2) **Landscape Area Treatment.** Landscape areas shall include all areas on the site, including entryways, that are not covered by buildings, structures, paving, impervious surface, or patios. Landscape areas shall consist only of landscaping, which includes any combination of living plants, and may include built features such as fences, benches, works of art, reflective pools, fountains, or the like. Landscaping shall also include irrigation systems, mulches, topsoil, soil preparation, revegetation, and the preservation, protection, and replacement of existing trees.

...

- (b) **Grouping and Placement.** A landscape plan must group landscape materials based upon hydrozone and irrigated accordingly (as described under Subsection (DE)(3) of this Section and based on light (e.g. full sun, shade, partial sun) requirements.
- (c) **Irrigated Turf grass.** Irrigated turf grass areas may only be planted according to planned use. Any landscape plan that includes irrigated turf grass must indicate the intended use of all turf grass areas.
- (l) Irrigated turf grass with a high water requirement may only be planted according to planned use, only in areas or spaces used for recreation or for civic or community purposes. Such purposes may include playgrounds, sports fields or other athletics programming, picnic grounds, amphitheaters, portions of parks, and playing areas of golf courses. Such

purposes do not include, and irrigated turfgrass with a high water requirement must not be planted in, parking lots or medians. Irrigated turf grass with a high water requirement may only be planted for recreation, civic or community purposes and is limited to areas of heavy foot traffic. Irrigated turf grass with a high water requirement refers to high- or moderate-hydrozone sod forming grasses including species such as *Poa pratensis* (Kentucky bluegrass), and turf-type tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) and their varieties and cultivars. See the hydrozone table (Table 5.10.1-(56)) at Subsection (D)(3) of this Section for descriptions of hydrozones.

...

- (III) Irrigated turf grass species with a low water requirement may be located on a site as appropriate for the species and planned activity. Well-maintained irrigated turf grass with a low or very-low water requirement according to hydrozones in Table 5.10.1-(56) at Subsection (D)(3) of this Section or the *City of Fort Collins Plant List* and that also does not meet the definition of “turf” set forth in C.R.S. 37-60-135(2)(i) and well-maintained regionally adapted or native grass species are not subject to the irrigated turf grass limits in Subsection (D)(2)(c)(I) of this Section.

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- (k) **Visual Clearance or Sight Distance Triangle.** Except as provided in Subsections (D)(2)(k)(I) and (II) below, a visual clearance triangle, free of any structures or landscape elements over twenty-four (24) inches in height, shall be maintained at street intersections and driveways in conformance with the standards contained in the *Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards*.

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- (3) **Water Budget and Hydrozones.** Landscape plans must also contain estimated water use, including:

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- (b) **Hydrozones.** A hydrozone plan view diagram that identifies each hydrozone category assigned per planted area and that sums the total area of each category per hydrozone. The hydrozone plan view diagram shall provide an accurate and clear visual identification of

all hydrozones using easily distinguished symbols, labeling, hatch patterns, and relationships of hydrozone plan elements.

Hydrozones are defined in Section 7.2.2 and according to the following categories:

Table 5.10.1-(56) – Hydrozones

HYDROZONE	WATER CONSUMPTION PER YEAR
High Hydrozone	18 gallons/square feet/year
Moderate Hydrozone	14 gallons/square feet/year
Low Hydrozone	8 gallons/square feet/year
Very Low Hydrozone	3 gallons/square feet/year

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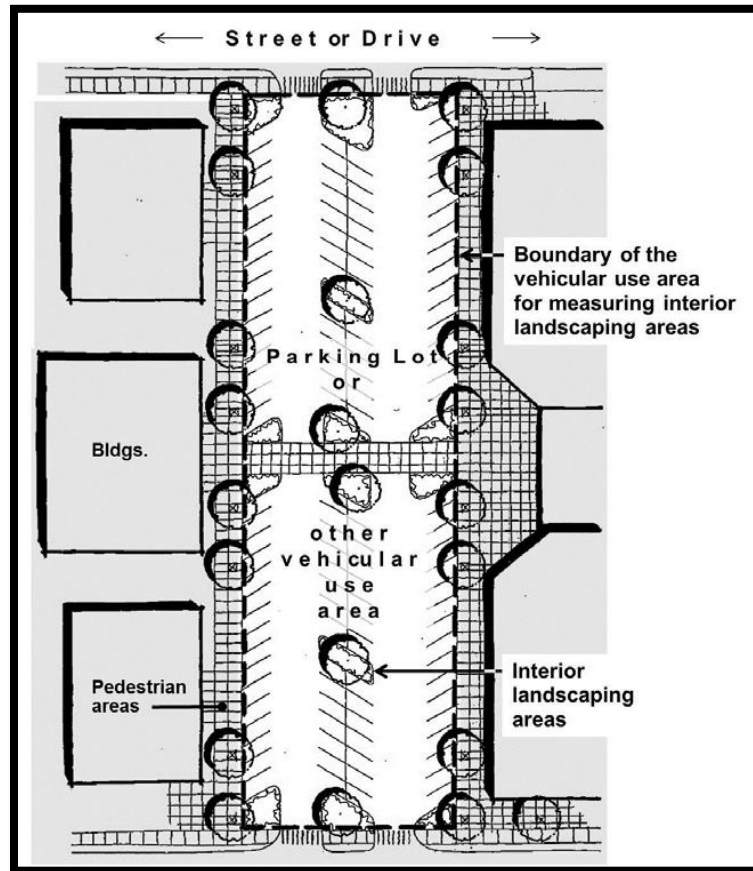
- (5) **Parking Lot Interior Landscaping.** Six percent (6%) of the interior space of all parking lots with less than one hundred (100) spaces, and ten percent (10%) of the interior space of all parking lots with one hundred (100) spaces or more shall be landscape areas. (See Figure 5.10.1-(23)). All parking lot islands, connecting walkways through parking lots and driveways through or to parking lots shall be landscaped and irrigated according to the following standards in addition to the other requirements in this Section:

- (a) **Visibility.** To avoid landscape material blocking driver sight distance at driveway-street intersections, no plant material greater than twenty-four (24) inches in height shall be located within fifteen (15) feet of a curb cut. This requirement does not apply to trees, for which visibility requirements are provided in Subsection (D)(2)(k)(II) of this Section.

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- (c) **Landscaped Islands.** In addition to any pedestrian refuge areas, each landscaped island shall include one (1) or more canopy shade trees, be of length greater than eight (8) feet in its smallest dimension, include at least eighty (80) square feet of ground area per tree to allow for root aeration, and have raised concrete curbs.

Figure 5.10.1-(23) – Interior Landscaping for Vehicular Use Areas:



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- (7) **Landscaping of Vehicle Display Lots.** Vehicle display lots for vehicle sales and leasing (as those terms are defined in Article 7) that abut an arterial or collector street shall feature landscaped islands along the street at an interval not to exceed every fifteen (15) vehicles or one hundred thirty-five (135) feet, whichever is less. Each landscaped island shall comply with the requirements of 5.10.1(EG)(5)(c).

(EG) Landscape Materials, Maintenance and Replacement.

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- (4) **Maintenance.** Trees and vegetation, irrigation systems, fences, walls and other landscape elements shall be considered as elements and infrastructure of the development in the same manner as parking, building materials and other site details. The applicant, landowner or successors in interest shall be jointly and severally responsible for the regular

maintenance of all landscaping elements in good condition. Required maintenance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

. . .

(d) Preserve and protect trees and the critical root zone (CRZ) designated for preservation. Preserving and protection includes but is not limited to avoiding damage to the tree and CRZ. Damaging actions include but are not limited to damaging the bark, excavating or trenching in the CRZ, storing heavy equipment on the CRZ, and over pruning.

(l) Damage to a tree or CRZ that interferes with the long-term health of the tree requires mitigation according to the Tree Mitigation Requirements under Subsection (GE) of this Section.

. . .

(6) **Mitigation.** Healthy, mature trees that are removed by the applicant or by anyone acting on behalf of or with the approval of the applicant shall be replaced per Subsection (FD) to mitigate the loss of value of existing canopy.

(7) **Revegetation.** When the development causes any disturbance within any natural area buffer zone, revegetation shall occur as required in Subsection 5.6.1(E)(2) (Development Activities Within the Buffer Zone) and subsection 5.10.1(FD) (Tree Preservation and Mitigation).

. . .

(H) **Irrigation.** Irrigation systems must be designed, operated, and maintained to prioritize water conservation and water efficiency. Systems should be designed to water deeply and infrequently to develop greater drought tolerance.

. . .

(2) **Irrigation Plan Specifications.** For any development within the City, an irrigation plan as part of the landscape plan must be submitted to and approved by the Director, and by the Parks Department if a streetscape to be turned over to the City is involved, before a building permit is issued, or if no building permit is required, then before commencement of construction. Any major deviation from an approved irrigation plan, resulting from construction, requires an as-built amendment to the irrigation plan. As determined by the Director, minor redevelopment or change of use projects may not be required to submit an irrigation plan as part of the landscape

plan. In such cases, a written statement shall be submitted describing the type of irrigation system proposed. The irrigation plan shall incorporate the City of Fort Collins Irrigation System Standards for Water Conservation set forth in this Subsection. The irrigation plan must include a water use table organized by irrigation zone for each irrigation tap, corresponding to the hydrozone plan view diagram and aligning with the water budget chart in the landscape plan (Subsection(DF)(3) of this Section), and showing the total annual water use. The irrigation plan must also depict on the hydrozone plan view diagram in each watering area by hydrozone, the location/point of irrigation tap connections with the water system, the proposed peak gallons per minute and tap size for each tap, and the layout of irrigation main lines proposed. In addition, as provided below in Subsection (I) of this Section, the irrigation system must be inspected for compliance with the approved irrigation plan before the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

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Section 2. City Council hereby directs the codifier of the Land Use Code to update accordingly all cross-references to Section 5.10.1 contained in the Land Use Code.

Introduced, considered favorably on first reading on January 20, 2026, and approved on second reading for final passage on February 3, 2026.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Effective Date: February 13, 2026
Approving Attorney: Stefanie Boster

Exhibit: None