

Utilities

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 13, 2023

TO: Mayor Arndt and City Councilmembers

FROM: Katie Collins, Water Conservation Specialist ^{DS} KC
 Mariel Miller, Water Conservation Manager ^{DS} MM

THROUGH: Kelly DiMartino, City Manager ^{DS} KD
 Kendall Minor, Utilities Executive Director ^{DS} KM

RE: January 10, 2023, Work Session Summary: Land Use Code Changes to Address Xeriscape and Soil Amendment

Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, and Councilmembers Canonico, Pignataro, Gutowsky, and Ohlson were present. Staff members present were Katie Collins, Mariel Miller, Danielle Reimanis, Gretchen Stanford, Kathryne Marko and Jesse Schlam.

The purpose of this item was to seek Council feedback on four proposed code update opportunities that support water-wise landscaping in Fort Collins. The four proposals presented were:

1. Less turf in new development and redevelopment (three options)
2. Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios
3. Expand irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency
4. Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy

Summary

Overall: Councilmembers expressed general support for proposals 1, 3, and 4. Councilmembers were not in support of proposal 2.

- All Councilmembers indicated support for a turf limit between 15 – 30% maximum of the landscape area of new and redeveloped residential and commercial properties. Several councilmembers request more exploration of turf minimums and maximums across all property types.
- All Councilmembers expressed significant concern for updating code to allow the installation of synthetic turf in Fort Collins. Of most concern is the PFAS content of synthetic turf material.
- Council indicated support for an update to irrigation efficiency standards. Councilmembers are in favor of proposed soil amendment code changes related to smaller, more “micro” landscape changes and best practices. Council requests additional evaluation of current inspection and enforcement processes, and of opportunities for improvement on larger, more “macro” landscape changes (e.g. new development).

Questions

- *How are front yards and recreation defined and identified?*



- *How would larger, estate lots be evaluated and are there incentives to keep some area more natural?*
- *Would landscape standards override HOA rules?*
- *Will properties irrigated with hose-end sprinklers be subject to the proposed watering window?*
- *How does the city enforce current soil amendment code?*
- *Has Utilities considered adjusting the top tier water rate for those that use the most water?*
- *Can the Xeriscape Incentive Program be expanded to include other water districts?*
- *What additional costs are associated with proposed landscape and irrigation standards?*

Next Steps

- Q1-Q3 2023: Continue internal/external outreach and engagement and identify, communicate additional resource needs (i.e. budget, education campaigns)
- Q2 2023: provide answers to the above questions via a memo to Council, which will include detail on the following:
 - cost impact analysis for landscape and irrigation proposals
 - soil amendment program information and cost and resource analysis to scale up soil amendment inspections
- Q3 2023: Incorporate feedback and draft code updates for first reading, scheduled for September 19, 2023