



# ZONING MEMORANDUM

**June 10, 2025**

Prepared for  
Town of Howey-in-the-Hills  
Attn: Sean O'Keefe, Town Manager



## **Hillside Groves- Phase 1B Landscaping Plans**

**Applicant: Meritage Homes Corporation**

Planning staff reviewed the proposed Landscaping Plans for Hillside Groves Phase 1B. The following revisions and information will be needed before the plans can be scheduled for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Board and Town Council. Please provide a response to each item and revise the Plan Set accordingly.

**Please revise the landscaping plans for Phase 1B to comply with the following requirements of the Land Development Code (LDC) Chapter 7.**

1. Please provide the applicable tree survey overlay and data for this section of the Hillside Groves (Reserve) development, indicating the number and type of trees being removed and provide replacement data consistent with LDC Chapter 7 requirements and identify how the proposed landscaping plan is consistent with that data.
2. All required landscaping and irrigation shall be installed and maintained to be consistent with the water-efficient landscaping requirements established herein. Landowners are additionally encouraged to follow Waterwise Florida Landscapes, Florida Water Star Program, and Florida Irrigation Society Standards. Please add a note to this effect on the plans.
3. Landscape plants shall be selected based on appropriateness to the site considering conditions such as soil type, moisture, and sunlight using the principle of “right plant – right place,” as described by the Florida Friendly Landscaping program. The plants shall be grouped and irrigated by hydrozone in accordance with their respective water needs. A list of appropriate plants and plant resources is contained in The Plant List for Lake County. Please add a note to this effect on the plans.
4. Synthetic Lawns and Plants: Synthetic or artificial turf, trees and plants shall be prohibited from use in lieu of required live plantings. Please add a note to this effect on the plans.



5. For each individual lot, irrigated turf grasses may be installed on a maximum of sixty (60) percent of the pervious (landscape) area of any lot or parcel and shall be placed so that it can be irrigated separately. Please add a note to this effect on the plans.
6. For single family lots that are one half acre or less in size, a minimum of three (3) canopy trees is required. Each such single-family lot will be required to have one (1) tree with a caliper of at least four inches (4") and two (2) trees each with a caliper of at least two- and one-half inches (2½"). These trees shall have a minimum height of 10 feet at time of planting. These trees should be canopy trees as listed in LDC Chapter 7.
7. One of the canopy trees on each such single-family lot shall be planted in the front yard, no less than 7.5 feet and no more than 10 feet from the sidewalk or lot line. Canopy trees planted within 10 feet of a sidewalk must have root barriers. These trees will help to form a canopy over the sidewalk and street sides. Corner lots are required to provide two such trees, one on the front and one on the side of the lot. Additionally, if the lot is more than 100 feet wide at the sidewalk, then the lot will be required to have two such trees.
8. A minimum of two (2) understory trees are required for single family lots of one-half acre or less in size.
9. A maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the landscaped area may be covered with sod. Other ground covers should be used to the extent possible.
10. Shrubs and other plants shall be used as foundation plants along the outline of the house, except where doors or patios are located. Alternate plantings may be permitted if the architectural style of the house warrants it.
11. A minimum of two areas of the yard that have at least 400 square feet of non-turf plantings in a row or cluster, not including the foundation plantings, is required. For single family lots greater than one half acre in size, an additional 400 square feet of non-turf plantings in a row or cluster, not including the foundation plantings, is required for each additional eighth of an acre, or portion thereof.
12. At least 60% of the landscaped area for each single-family lot shall be drought tolerant or Florida Friendly plants. Florida Friendly plants require a minimum of irrigation and shall be grouped together on the lot in order to reduce the irrigation requirement for those zones. Turf area may exceed 40% if the turf area over 40% is unirrigated.
13. Please identify which trees are canopy, which are understory, and which are street trees. All canopy trees are required to be 10 feet in height at the time of planting. Understory trees are required to be a minimum caliper of 2.5 inches at time of planting. Canopy trees are required to be a minimum caliper of 4 inches at time of planting.
14. All trees shall be staked and guyed at the time of planting for a period of one growing season.



15. Live Oak, Sweet Bay Magnolia, and Southern Magnolia are the three approved Street Tree species. Drake Elm and Sweet Bay Magnolia may be used where planting space is at a premium. Winged Elm is not, and Crepe Myrtle is not.
16. Please identify what type of wood is used for the “Designer Brown Hardwood Mulch.” Cypress mulch is discouraged.
17. Hardscape components that serve particular functions are required. Each site shall incorporate functional elements including, but not limited to, the following: a. Decorative benches for seating areas b. Arbors or trellises for additional shade in pedestrian or entrance areas c. Decorative trash receptacles d. Decorative lighting fixtures e. Decorative pavers to outline pedestrian walkways. Please identify how the proposed meets these requirements. The proposed elements shown on the plan appear limited with no shade provided, nor decorative elements such as arbors, trellises, fountains, or pavers.
18. Please provide details for the “Park” area abutting Lot 161. Currently, only two benches are shown.
19. The Irrigation plans state that irrigation will be done by a previously approved irrigation system. Please provide a copy of this approval and list the specific reference on the plans.
20. Please identify what is going in the area between the sidewalk and shrubs around the perimeter of Phase 1B and Road “A”.
21. Please provide details of the “natural/vegetative upland buffers and any other buffers that are within the area of Phase 1B.
22. Please provide details of any stormwater management facilities proposed to be designed with amenities or which will be wet ponds. Comprehensive Plan Policy 1.1.4 Interpretation of Open Space and Density Designations provides that Open space and parks and recreation requirements are figured on the Gross Land Area and Open space may include landscaped buffers and stormwater facilities if they are designed to be a park-like setting with pedestrian amenities and free form ponds. Open space may be passive or active. Open space may include public recreational components of developments. The majority of the open space shall be permeable; however, up to 10% may be impervious (plazas, recreational facilities, etc.). Wet ponds are not counted as part of that 10%.