

# STAFF REPORT REGULAR MEETING

**AGENDA DATE:** December 17, 2024

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Sustainability

**TITLE:**

Ordinance No. 2024-14 - First Reading – amending multiple sections of Chapter 23 “Land Development Regulations” to create a definition for artificial turf and establish regulations and performance standards for artificial turf

**SUMMARY:**

The proposed amendments to the City’s Land Development Regulations (LDRs) would allow for limited use of artificial turf within the City, subject to requirements related to location, quality, and installation.

**BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Due to public interest and the repeated installation of artificial turf, staff was directed in 2019-2020 to draft an ordinance regulating artificial turf. In October 2020, Ordinance 2020-15 was presented to the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), Historic Resources Preservation Board (HRPB), and the Tree Board. The PZB and HRPB unanimously recommended approval of the proposed amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDRs), excluding the artificial turf, and cited that additional public discussion was needed. The Tree Board voted unanimously not to approve the use of artificial turf in the City. At the City Commission meeting on November 17, 2020, the artificial turf section (Exhibit G) was excluded from Ordinance 2020-15.

The City Commission paused Code Compliance actions on all violations relating to groundcover including artificial turf beginning January 11, 2023, to hold a work session meeting to discuss the ordinances regarding artificial turf and the installation of groundcover in yards with mulch or rock. At the City Commission work session on April 13, 2023, the installation of artificial turf was discussed at length and the majority of the commission recommended creating an updated landscape ordinance with the strict prohibition for the usage of artificial turf. At the Special City Commission Meeting on May 9, 2024, staff was directed to come back with options for impermeable surfaces and clarifying the landscape code for both residential and commercial properties.

Requirements proposed in Ordinance 2024-14 include but are not limited to the following:

***Use and Location:***

The use and location of artificial turf shall be limited to:

1. Construction of non-city-owned athletic fields and playgrounds associated with a non-city-owned community center, park, school, daycare or university.
2. Single family and two-family properties, only in the rear and side yard areas not visible from the right-of-way and screened from view by continuous opaque fencing or hedge material with a minimum height of five feet. Artificial turf shall be prohibited in front yards, except for the limited use as a decorative grid design with maximum four-inch-wide strips used in conjunction with approved pavement materials for patio, walkway, and driveway or between parking strips as part of an approved a building permit.
3. On roof top terraces; or
4. In multifamily and/or mixed-use residential developments as part of a recreation or amenity area.

***Impermeable Surface Limits***

In all areas of installation, artificial turf shall be treated as an impervious surface. No more than ten percent (10%) of the allowed impermeable/impervious area for the parcel may be artificial turf meeting the specifications as provided in the ordinance.

**Standards and Permitting**

Artificial turf must meet minimum material standards as well as installation, maintenance, and repair standards. A permit for installation is required and an in-progress inspection shall be required to ensure that the appropriate base material has been installed in accordance with the manufactures' specifications. A final inspection shall also be required.

The **Planning & Zoning Board (PZB)** unanimously voted to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments at their November 6, 2024, meeting with the recommendation that the City Commission consider revisions to consider artificial turf to be a pervious material (while retaining the provisions that artificial turf is not to be considered a living landscape material).

The **Historic Resources Preservation Board (HRPB)** voted 3-3 on both a recommendation of approval and a recommendation of disapproval of the proposed text amendments at their meeting on November 13, 2024. The HRPB voted as follows:

- Three members of the HRPB were in favor of approval of the proposed ordinance as written.
- Two members of the HRPB were in favor of disapproval of the proposed ordinance, contending that the proposed ordinance did not adequately make considerations for negative environmental impacts of artificial turf or plans for long-term monitoring of compliance with the proposed artificial turf regulations.
- One member of the HRPB was in favor of disapproval of the proposed ordinance, contending that artificial turf should be broadly allowed within the City and should not be subject to as many limitations as are proposed in Ordinance 2024-14.

The **Tree and Landscape Board (TLB)** unanimously voted to recommend disapproval of the proposed text amendments at their meeting on November 14, 2024, due to concerns regarding negative environmental impacts of artificial turf.

**MOTION:**

Move to approve/disapprove Ordinance 2024-14 on first reading, and to schedule the second reading and public hearing for January 21, 2025.

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

Ordinance 2024-14  
PZB/HRPB/TLB Staff Report