



Memorandum

Meeting Details: August 3rd, 2026 – Planning Commission Meeting
Prepared For: Planning Commission
Staff Contact: Community Development Department – Joseph Petraglia, CFM, Planner II
Subject: ORD 2026-10 - Chapter 106, Vegetation

Background:

The City's landscaping regulations have remained largely unchanged since their adoption in the early 1980s. Staff have identified several provisions that are outdated, conflict with other sections of the City Code, have been subject to varying interpretations over time, or have proven difficult to administer and enforce consistently. In addition, evolving landscaping practices and changing site conditions have highlighted areas where the current code may no longer reflect industry standards or the City's desired development outcomes. The primary reasons for this ordinance are challenges meeting the strict greenspace requirements of the current code, lack of regulation in city right-of-way, conflicting regulations, and new state legislation pre-empting certain portions of the existing code.

It is important to note that Policy 5.2.4.1 of the city's comprehensive plan states that impervious surfaces must not cover more than 70 percent of any lot, and Policy 5.2.1.2 states that alterations and repairs exceeding 25% of the structure's value should adhere to such stormwater management requirements.

Discussion:

The Planning Commission recommended approval of this ordinance at the last meeting in August; however, after the meeting, staff recognized an oversight regarding the hedge requirements for perimeter landscape buffers. As recommended by the city attorney, the change is being presented to the Planning Commission tonight before the ordinance moves forward. The previously approved wording inadvertently added five-foot-tall hedge requirements for all required landscape buffers. The new proposed language restores the current hedge requirements while consolidating regulations and resolving conflicts with other code provisions. The three-foot minimum height requirement comes from the code's definition of a hedge, which is pasted below. The title of the section has also been modified. No other changes are proposed from the last meeting.

Hedges means any installation or placement of plants, structural elements, feature art, ornaments or objects that together form a row, boundary or screen that extends more than three feet before a break (open space) of at least three feet horizontally and six feet vertically. Hedges can be installed in conjunction with or in lieu of fences, except those fences required by the Florida Building Code, and must meet the same height

restrictions as fences and walls except in the rear yard where the natural plant material of the hedge may be allowed to grow to natural height.

Fiscal Impact:

Any proposed amendments can be implemented using existing departmental resources. Staff anticipate that clarifying and modernizing landscaping requirements may result in minor administrative cost savings by reducing permit review issues, failed landscaping inspections, repeat inspections, and delays associated with permit closeout and certificate of occupancy issuance. No significant fiscal impact is anticipated.

Recommendation(s):

Staff recommends the Planning Commission provide a recommendation of approval to allow the ordinance to proceed to first reading at the next regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting.

Attachments/Corresponding Documents:

- ORD 2026-10, Chapter 106, Vegetation
- Sec. 106-35. Perimeter Landscaping as presented at August 3rd Planning Commission Meeting
- ORD 2026-10, Business Impact

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