



City of Clearwater

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Development Board

FROM: Jayme Lopko, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager *g2*

RE: TA2024-07002 – Community Development Code Amendments Related to Artificial Turf

DATE: December 12, 2024

At the November 19, 2024, Community Development Board (CDB) meeting, staff presented amendments to the Community Development Code (CDC or Code) related to artificial turf and nonliving landscape materials. After discussion, the CDB requested more information from staff through a workshop at their December 19, 2024, meeting and bringing the item back for public hearing at their January 21, 2025, meeting.

The CDB voiced concerns related to several items in Ordinance 9805-25. After discussion, staff decided to remove any amendments related to nonliving landscape materials and focus on the artificial turf amendments at this time. Staff will go over changes made to address CDB's concerns.

Pile height is the height of the fibers of grass of the artificial turf. Currently, the amendments required a minimum pile height of 1.5 inches for residential properties. There are some unique types of artificial turf used for putting greens and pet area application that would have a much shorter pile height that could possibly be used on residential properties. Staff is proposing to add language to allow the Community Development Coordinator to approve a pile height of less than 1.5 inches. This gives the flexibility for other uses or new types of artificial turf to be approved for used on residential properties.

There was discussion on how to handle disturbances under the dripline of trees. The amendments that were discussed at the meeting contained two different procedures, one for artificial turf and one for nonliving landscape materials. Staff believes this caused some confusion, which is one of the reasons amendments related to nonliving landscape materials have been removed. Currently, the placement of artificial turf under the dripline of trees may be permitted; however, a tree preservation plan will be required for a city arborist to evaluate each tree based on the species, size, and overall health of the tree. Each tree will be given a distance from the trunk where artificial turf will not be permitted based on the arborist's evaluation and common arboriculture practices.

The last item discussed was regard whether the installation of artificial turf would be considered pervious or impervious.

Staff is not proposing any changes to the current ordinance at this time. The amendments were drafted to give a pervious option for professional installation that is done per the requirements of the CDC.

If the CDB would like to consider other options, staff would recommend removing most of the installation requirements and count all artificial turf installations as impervious.