

PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: HONORABLE CHAIRMAN & MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

THROUGH: Elliot Kampert, Director

FROM: Planning & Development Review Staff

SUBJECT: Changes to Land Development Code, Landscaping Requirements, Department of Growth Management

DATE: August 11, 2016

BCC DISTRICT: (2) Commissioner Ketchel, (5) Commissioner Windes

PLANNING COMMISSION DISTRICT: (2) Larry Patrick, (5) John Collins

PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of changes to the Land Development Code (LDC) as submitted by the Department of Growth Management amending Chapter 6 “Development Design Standards”, Section 6.05.00 “Landscaping”, Subsection 6.05.02 “Landscape Area Requirements.” The purpose of this amendment is to allow use of certain palm trees for landscaping on Okaloosa Island and the unincorporated area of Destin/Moreno point

STAFF FINDINGS:

- Subsection 6.05.021, LDC currently requires use of “shade trees” for front perimeter landscape areas.
- The LDC defines “shade tree” as *Any self-supporting woody plant of a species that is well-shaped, well-balanced and well-foliated which normally grows to a height of at least 25 feet and normally develops an average mature spread of crown greater than 20 feet in Okaloosa County, Florida.*
- Subsection 6.05.022, LDC currently requires use of “canopy trees” for parking lot landscaping.
- The LDC defines “canopy tree” as *A tree, either single stemmed or multi-stemmed (clump form) which has a height at planting of at least eight feet and, if single stemmed, a diameter of at least two inches (measured six inches above grade) at the time of planting; and, is of a species which at maturity, can be expected to reach a height of at least 35 feet.*
- The preceding definitions preclude use of palm trees due to crown size or height stipulations.
- The limitations described above resulted in four requests for variances during recent years where the applicant asked for substitution of palm trees for required shade or canopy trees on either Okaloosa Island or the Destin/Moreno Point area. In each case the Board of Adjustment (BOA) granted the variance request. Based upon evidence

presented at the variance hearings the BOA requested that staff amend the LDC to allow palm trees to meet landscaping requirements.

- The beaches area represents special conditions and circumstances not generally found in other areas of the County. These include, but are not limited to: sandy, well to moderately drained soils; salt air conditions; the tourist destination/resort character with related significant economic impact, and; aesthetic considerations shared with the City of Destin. In consideration of this, special landscaping requirements are appropriate.
- The proposed change would allow palm trees adaptive to northwest Florida as acceptable required trees only on Okaloosa Island and the unincorporated area of Destin/Moreno Point.

STAFF POSITION: Staff strongly supports the proposed LDC change.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Board consider the facts presented herein, as well as any facts that may be presented at the public hearing, and then make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Scheduled for September 6, 2016 at 6:30 PM in the City of Crestview Commission Meeting Room.

ATTACHMENTS:

A – Proposed LDC text change

TJ/tj

ATTACHMENT A

6.05.02 Landscape Area Requirements: Except for land zoned I-1 or I-2, all land uses not specifically exempted by Section 6.05.011 hereof shall devote a minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the total developed area to landscape improvement. Landscaping within I-1 and I-2 zoning districts shall be provided as required by sections 6.05.021 through 6.05.13 without a minimum percentage requirement.

6.05.021 Perimeter Requirements:

1. Front Perimeter Landscape Areas: A minimum of a ten (10) foot wide strip of land, located between the front property line and the vehicular use area shall be landscaped on all new construction, except in permitted access-ways. Width of sidewalks shall not be included within the ten (10) foot wide front setback perimeter landscape area. This provision shall not apply to land located within the I-1 or I-2 zoning districts except in instances where the street along which the front property line is located abuts a non-industrial zoning district.

2. Material Requirements in Perimeter Area:

a. Tree Count: The total tree count requirement within the front setback perimeter landscape area shall be determined by using a ratio of one (1) tree for each twenty-five (25) linear feet of lot frontage or major portion thereof with fifty (50) percent of the trees being **shade trees¹**.

b. Ground Cover: Grass or other ground cover shall be placed on all areas within the front, and other landscape areas not occupied by landscape material.

c. Use of Perimeter Landscape Areas:

I. Overhang Areas: Vehicles shall overhang no more than two (2) feet into perimeter landscape areas.

II. Accessways: All accessways through the perimeter landscape areas shall meet the following aisle width maximums and minimums: Not over fifteen (15) foot one-way drives, no less than ten (10) feet apart, and not over twenty-seven (27) foot two-way drives, no less than twenty (20) feet apart. Maximum widths shall be measured from the back of curb of the driveway aisle, excluding radii required for safe vehicle movement between the driveway and the connecting roadway. If the Board of Adjustment determines that accessway separation minimum or aisle width maximum requirements will create a hardship, such minimum may be varied by the Board of Adjustment. Public Fire and Life Safety facilities and Public Transit facilities may exceed the above maximum with concurrence and approval from the Public Works Department, Department of Growth Management, and the applicable fire district.

6.05.022 Parking Lot Landscaping: This section shall be applicable only to non-residential development which is both greater than one (1) acre in total proposed site area and will have a total of twenty-five (25) or more parking spaces. This requirement does not apply to land within the I-1 or I-2 zoning districts.

1. Quantities: Landscaping for parking lots for any single use and group development with twenty-five (25) or more parking spaces, including any queuing spaces associated with a drive-thru, shall be as follows (any fractional shall be rounded to the nearest whole number):

- a. **Canopy Trees¹** - 1 per 15 spaces; and
- b. Understory Trees - 1 per 10 spaces; and
- c. Shrubs - 1 per 4 spaces.

2. Existing Trees: Existing canopy and/or understory trees located within thirty (30) feet of the parking or driveway surface may be counted toward the requirements of this section provided that they are located on the subject property. All distances are to be measured from the nearest face of the tree trunk. Existing canopy trees with a caliper of at least ten (10) inches measured at twelve (12) inches above the root crown may count as two (2) trees. The use of existing trees shall be noted on the landscape plan.

3. Distribution: The required landscaping shall be generally distributed throughout the parking area provided that a minimum of twenty-five (25) percent of the required total for each plant category (large canopy trees, understory trees and shrubs) shall be planted on interior features such as islands, peninsulas or medians.

4. The remaining seventy-five (75) percent of the required total plantings may be distributed between interior features; areas within thirty (30) inches of the outside boundary of the parking and/or driveway surface; areas between a parking surface and any principal building of the site; or in planters on any ground generally enclosed by a combination of building area, pedestrian facilities and/or parking surface.

¹[Cabbage Palm \(Sabal palmetto\), Pindo Palm \(Butia capitata\), Date Palm \(Phoenix dactylifera\) or other similar salt tolerant, cold-hardy species adaptive to northwest Florida and grows to a height of at least 20 to 35 feet may be substituted for required shade or canopy trees on Okaloosa Island and the unincorporated area of Destin/Moreno Point provided such species are not listed as invasive or noxious by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council.](#)