Ames Landscape Ordinance Update

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION - 9/7/16
Current Standards

• The City’s existing landscape standards are arranged in 3 separate primary categories ranging in design status from L1 through L3.

• Current Standards are prescriptive, complicated and provide little or no flexibility.

• Linear footage and parking screening guide the vast majority of current standards.

• Little consideration is given to urban application of current standards. (Downtown/Campustown)

• No language addressing sustainability in current standards.

• Current standards do not incentivize creativity or thoughtful design.
Landscape Ordinance Update

September/November 2011 Council Referral
- Review landscaping objectives and performance
- Incorporate storm water measures
- Consider changes to planting requirements and locations
- Review plant list for suitability to Ames
- Establish a work group to review landscaping issues
Summary of Landscape Ordinance Update

• Mutual interest (Staff, Council, Developers) in updating landscape requirements and prioritized on Work Plan for 2016
  • Options to enhance the quality, aesthetics, and vitality of landscaping
  • Developers seeking flexibility in plantings and arrangement of landscaping

• Confluence hired as a landscape architect consultant on the project

• Staff has held 3 stakeholder workshops in January, March and May

• April 2016 Staff provided an update on feedback from the work group and options for new ordinance
  • City Council directed staff to develop a weighted ‘score based’ system.

• Staff has refined a draft points based landscape system and completed text case examples.

• The City Council has directed staff to continue refining the scoring system with stakeholders in workgroup.
Current Standards- Examples

• L1 Standard- Designed for larger open areas. Allows shrubs and trees based on a frontage calculation. Also allows some grouping of shrubs.
Current Standards- Examples

• L2 Standard- Allows for plantings in 5 foot wide planting areas. This standard requires closely arranged low shrubs at 4 foot on center with trees every 50 lineal feet.
Current Standards - Examples

L3 Standard- Requires a high shrub screen with minimum 6 foot high shrubs spaced no more than 6 feet apart with trees every 50 feet.
Scoring System

• Basic requirements are part of pre-requisites

• Scoring System includes six (6) separate categories
  • 5 Mandatory Categories
  • 1 Optional/Bonus Category

• Developers would need to achieve a minimum score per mandatory category and an overall point total
  • Total points would exceed the combined minimum points of the five (5) categories.
  • Differentiates point totals between large and small sites (< 0.5 acres)

Large Site approval requires a total of 50 points
Small Site approval requires a total of 33 points