



Memorandum

To: COA Environmental Planning Commission, Planning Department, and Council Services

From: Jacqueline Fishman, AICP

Date: February 16, 2021

Re: IDO Amendments – Amendment to 4-3(B)(7)(a); Exhibit 5-11(D); and New Subsection 5-2(D)

Consensus Planning has reviewed the three proposed amendments to the IDO and have consolidated our comments into a single document. In reviewing the amendments, we had concern regarding the origin of some of the new provisions and wondered what problems these provisions are trying to fix, who would be responsible for reviewing some of the more subjective provisions, and unintended consequences. Some of the provisions appear to be a result of a specific project or issue that has arisen during review. The landscape regulations continue to change, not necessarily for the better.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if Planning or Council Services staff have any questions or would like to discuss our comments. Thank you for your consideration.

Amendment to 4-3(B)(7)(a)

On page 154 of the IDO, revise as follows:

4-3(B)(7) Dwelling, Multi-family

4-3(B)(7)(a) In addition to meeting all applicable standards in Section 14-16-5-6 (Landscaping, Buffering, and Screening), this use shall meet the following landscape standards:

1. Except in DT-UC-MS-PT areas, this use shall provide, somewhere on the lot, at least 1 tree per ground floor dwelling unit, and at least 1 tree per second floor dwelling unit; no additional trees are required for additional dwelling units on the third or higher floors. ~~2.~~ At least 50 percent of the trees required ~~by Subsection 1 above~~ shall be deciduous canopy-style shade trees or coniferous trees capable of attaining a mature canopy diameter of at least 25 feet.
2. In DT-UC-MS-PT areas, only ground floor dwelling units are used to calculate the required street trees.
3. Except in DT-UC-PT-MS areas, 25 percent of the net lot area shall contain landscaping; playground area may count up to 10 percent of net lot landscaping. Tree canopies and ground-level plants shall cover a minimum of 75 percent of the total landscaped area and the maximum a tree canopy shall count toward this requirement is 600 square feet.
4. Except in DT-UC-PT-MS areas, cool season grasses are restricted to 20 percent of the landscape area. Warm season grasses may cover up to an additional 70 percent of the landscape area.

Comments: Why do only playgrounds count - why not sport courts, pools, spas?

The tree canopy proposal artificially limits tree canopies (600 SF is not a particularly large tree) and only for multi-family, but not for mixed-use or non-residential? What problem are we trying to fix here? It would be better to go back to requiring a certain percentage of shrubs if that is the intent of these regulations.

4-3(B)(7)(b) Except in DT-UC-PT-MS areas, no more than 40 percent of required usable open space can be private to a household or occur on or under upper stories of the project buildings unless the site is located no more than 660 feet in any direction of an NR-PO zone district or Major Public Open Space.

Comments: What problem is this trying to solve – was there a specific project that was the impetus for adding this specific level of design control rather than letting the design be based on the site and related limitations? The 40% appears arbitrary. We have never seen any project come close to 40% in balconies or private patios.

660 feet excludes many urban sites that may be appropriate for a less suburban development form. For example, redevelopment of any MX zoned property near the intersections of Lomas/ San Mateo, Menaul/San Mateo, and nearly all of Montgomery Blvd would be limited to suburban-style apartments only, which would be contrary to planning policy and inappropriate along some of the most frequent, transit-accessible locations in the City. We request a GIS analysis of the distance to NR-PO and MPOS and ask that more rationale be provided to explain why this is necessary. At a minimum, AC and MT areas should be excluded.

On page 529 of the IDO, include the following new definitions, in Part 7-1, and create a new for “Landscaping” to include these terms:

Cool season grasses: Cool season grasses are grass types that grow exceptionally well between 65 and 80°F. These grasses are durable and require ample watering during high summer temperatures. Examples are Kentucky blue-grass, perennial ryegrass, and tall fescue.

Warm season grasses: Warm-season grasses are grasses that thrive when temperatures are over 75 degrees. These grasses are native and drought tolerant and have lower water requirements than cool season grasses. Examples are buffalo grass, blue grama, Indian rice grass, and sand dropseed grass.

Comment: Good definitions.

Note: The text shown in black and underline shows proposed revisions to the IDO. The text shown in red and underlined has been revised from the original EPC submittal dated November 30, 2020.

Note: Acceptance of these proposed revisions will supersede the text proposed in the Citywide Text Amendments spreadsheet lines #1 and #2 on page 3 of 19.

[New Subsection 5-2(D)]

5-2(D)

SITE DESIGN TO RESPOND TO CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

All multi-family residential development containing more than 25 dwelling units and all non-residential development, except industrial development, shall comply with all of the standards in this Subsection 14-16-5-2(D).

5-2(D)(1)

Climatic Responsiveness

The site design process shall include a sun and shade analysis of daily and seasonal position of the sun. The site analysis shall be included with applications for Site Plan.

5-2(D)(1)(a) Building layout and window placement shall be evaluated to reduce summer heat and glare and to capture winter sun.

5-2(D)(1)(b) Living landscape elements shall be evaluated for placement in the most beneficial microclimates and/or to provide the best cooling conditions to mitigate heat gain.

5-2(D)(2) Geographic Responsiveness

5-2(D)(2)(a) The site design process shall include an analysis of the ability to capture views of prominent geographic features. The site analysis shall be included with applications for Site Plan.

5-2(D)(2)(b) The placement and orientation of buildings, windows, balconies, and patios shall be evaluated to capture available views of prominent geographical features, such as the Sandia mountains, the Bosque/Rio Grande, the Volcanoes/Northwest Escarpment.

Note: This entire section is a new proposed addition to the IDO. The text shown in red and underlined has been revised from the original EPC submittal dated November 30, 2020.

Exhibit 5-11(D)

5-11(D) MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

All multi-family residential development outside UC-MS-PT areas containing more than 25 dwelling units shall comply with all of the standards in this Subsection 14-16-5-11(D). Standalone parking structures and the above-ground portion of parking structures incorporated into a building with multi-family residential uses shall comply with the design standards in Subsection 14-16-Error! Reference source not found. (Error! Reference source not found.).

Comments: This amendment pulls multi-family residential development within MX zones (and already regulated by similar requirements to these in 5-11(E)) into this section and merges it with multi-family development in residential zones. Does multi-family within UC-MS-PT areas still get regulated by 5-11(E)? If so, staff needs to make sure that section is not amended to unintentionally exclude all multi-family.

5-11(D)(1) Building Entrances

Primary pedestrian entrances to each primary building shall be emphasized and provide weather protection through variations in the façade, porticos, roof variations, recesses or projections, or other integral building forms.

Comment: How is this evaluated? What if the design includes an interior vestibule instead of an exterior design element?

5-11(D)(2) Façade Design

Façades shall be designed to provide a sense of human scale. Building facades shall meet all of the following requirements or provide justification that the intent of this section is achieved by an alternative design approach.

Comment: This should be focused on the ground floor and the pedestrian realm. Who is responsible for reviewing and approving the alternative design approach? Is there a process for this - like a waiver or deviation? Or is it outside of those existing processes?

5-11(D)(2)(a) Windows

A façade shall have windows as a prominent feature.

1. The ground floor of each street-facing façade shall contain a minimum of 20 percent of its surfaces in transparent ~~display~~ windows and doors.
2. ~~Windows on the ground floor for portions of the building that are not residential dwellings, i.e., halls and common spaces, must have interior space visible to a depth of 2 feet from the façade.~~
3. Windows on the upper floors shall be recessed not less than 2 inches and/or shall be surrounded by a window casing ~~or frame~~ not less than 2 inches wide, except for portions of the façade that are ~~storefront systems or curtain walls or for workforce housing developments.~~
4. Windows facing west shall use ~~sun-blocking~~ heat mitigation features.

Comment: How does this relate to requirements in the new Energy Code? Seems like this is more of a building code issue and not a zoning requirement.

5-11(D)(2)(b) Articulation

Facades shall change in massing and form as specified below to

visually break up the building. Each front and side façade shall meet all of the following requirements or provide justification that the intent of this section is achieved by an alternative design approach.

Comments: Change in terminology - "street-facing facade" is used throughout the IDO – why the change since side facade is not a defined term? Does this include the front and sides of buildings that are located interior to large sites with multiple buildings that are not readily visible from off-site? "Alternative design approach" - who makes this determination and what criteria do they use?

1. The façade shall have at least one recessed or projecting element of 2 feet in dimension for every 30 feet of facade length.
2. Each street-facing façade shall be designed with more than one building finish material or color.
3. Art, such as murals or sculpture, that is privately-owned or coordinated through the City Public Arts Program, may count toward requirements in 1 or 2 above.
4. Balcony massing, material, or color shall vary to create visual interest. Solid balconies shall not obscure the street-level view of required glazing transparent windows and doors.
5. For projects that use 75 percent or more of the ground floor as parking, these standards apply to the stories above the parking level.

Comments: This needs to be balanced with privacy concerns for the residents of ground floor units. Consider a limit to the height of a solid wall to 4 feet, which will allow privacy for someone sitting in their patio, but people walking on the public sidewalk can see a portion of the facade.

5-11(D)(3) Roof Design

Rooflines longer than 60 feet shall include at least one vertical or horizontal elevation change of at least 2 feet. Roofs with a pitch of less than 2:12 shall be screened by a parapet wall.

Comments: From what vantage point - from the adjacent street frontage? By a pedestrian?

5-11(D)(4) Garages and Carports

5-11(D)(4)(a) Garages and carports shall not be located between any street-facing façade of any primary multi-family dwelling and an abutting street, but shall instead be internalized within building groups so as not to be directly visible from the street frontage.

5-11(D)(4)(b) Where the ground floor of the project is 75 percent or more of parking, vehicular ingress/egress to a parking garage at ground level shall include a planter.

Comments: Only one planter – how big does the planter have to be? What are we trying to achieve with this and are planters the only option? This regulation needs to be coordinated with clear sight triangle requirements.

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