

Date: September 8, 2016
To: Wisconsin Rapids Planning Commission
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Subject: Wisconsin Rapids zoning code rewrite project - Standards for parking, outdoor lighting, and landscaping

When we first started the project we held various scoping sessions and one of the things we consistently heard is that the City needs to have better landscaping requirements. As it stands, the City's zoning code has landscaping standards, but they only apply in the General Mixed Use (B-5) district (Section 11.04 (h)).

Before we begin drafting landscaping standards, we want to have a discussion in terms of what those standards could look like. Along those same lines, there are some policy questions related to outdoor lighting and parking that we should discuss before we start drafting code language.

Below are some key considerations we will discuss at our meeting on September 19, 2016. While this narrative is not an exhaustive list of all the issues, it will help us hone in on solutions that meet your objectives.

Landscaping

What kind of landscaping? Landscaping requirements can be required for four different areas of a parcel being developed.

1. **Street Trees** These are shade trees planted within the street right of way between the edge of the street and front property line.
2. **Foundation Plantings** As the name suggests, these are plantings around the perimeter of a new building. The intent is to create a pleasant transition from the building to the ground surface. Low growing plants and shrubs are the primary plant material and are generally clustered in various locations around the building.
3. **Parking Lot** These are plantings around and within a parking lot. The primary intent is to soften the visual dominance of a parking lot and to provide some shade. Shade trees and decorative trees are the dominant plant material.
4. **Interior Lot** This is landscaping to fill in between the other landscaping elements. A variety of plant types (e.g., trees, decorative trees, and shrubs) can be used for this purpose.

When is landscaping required? After establishing the various kinds of landscaping that must be provided, the next logical question relates to when landscaping must be provided.

Landscaping is generally required for new development projects and major additions (to be defined), but not for single-family or duplexes. Excluding these residential uses assumes that subdividers are required to provide for the installation of street trees as part of the subdivision process.

And for obvious reasons, landscaping is not required in downtown areas.

How much needs to be provided? This issue can be handled several ways. The proposed solution is built around a point-based system. The first part of that is to establish an overall landscaping level for each of the different landscape types. The second part is the assignment of point values to a range of plant types.

This approach allows the property owner a comparatively high degree of flexibility in terms of picking and choosing which plant types can be used, while maintaining the target levels. Below are some examples of the standards.

Street trees A minimum of __ landscape points must be provided along a public street for every 100 feet of frontage.

Foundation planting A minimum of __ landscape points must be provided for every 100 lineal feet of building foundation.

Parking lots A minimum of __ landscape points must be provided for every 10,000 square feet of paved area.

Interior lot A minimum of __ landscape points must be provided for every 1,000 square feet of building floor area.

The table below shows an example of how point values can be assigned.

Exhibit 16-2. Classification of plants

| Type and point value | Botanical name | Common name |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Tall deciduous trees (30 points) (40-100 feet) | <i>Acer</i> spp. | maple: Norway, red [1], silver [1], sugar [1] |
| | <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | Hackberry [1] |
| | <i>Fraxinus</i> spp. | ash [2] |
| | <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> | ginkgo |
| | <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> | honey locust [1] |
| | <i>Gymnocladus dioica</i> | espresso Kentucky coffeetree |
| | <i>Quercus</i> spp. | oak: red [1], white [1], pin, bur [1] |
| | <i>Tilia</i> spp. | linden: basswood [1], littleleaf, redmond |
| | <i>Ulmus</i> spp. | accolade, cathedral, new horizon (hybrids only) |
| Medium deciduous trees (15 points) (30-40 feet) | <i>Aesculus glabra</i> | Ohio buckeye |
| | <i>Betula</i> spp. | birch: river [1], paper [1] |
| | <i>Phellodendron amurense</i> "Macho" | Macho amur corktree |
| | <i>Prunus</i> spp. | cherry: choke [1], pin [1] |
| | <i>Prunus Mackii</i> | amur chokecherry |
| Low deciduous trees (10 points) (15-30 feet) | <i>Acer ginnala</i> | amur maple |
| | <i>Amelanchier</i> spp. | serviceberry |
| | <i>Crataegus</i> spp. | hawthorn: cockspur [1], dotted [1], downy [1], Washington |
| | <i>Malus</i> spp. | crabapple spp. |
| | <i>Sorbus</i> spp. | mountain ash: European, showy [1] |
| | <i>Prunus americana</i> | American plum |
| | <i>Ostrya virginiana</i> | Ironwood |
| Tall evergreen trees (40 points) | <i>Abies concolor</i> | white fir |
| | <i>Picea</i> spp. | Spruce: Norway, white |
| | <i>Pinus</i> spp. | pine: red [1], white [1], Scots |
| | <i>Tsuga canadensis</i> | Canada hemlock |
| Medium evergreen trees (20 points) | <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> | American arborvitae |
| Low evergreen trees (12 points) | <i>Juniperus</i> spp. | juniper: mounbatten, redcedar [1] |
| | <i>Thuja</i> spp. | arborvitae: pyramidal, techny |
| Tall deciduous shrubs (5 points) | <i>Cornus</i> spp. | dogwood: gray [1], pagoda, red [1] |
| | <i>Rhus</i> spp. | sumac: smooth [1], staghorn [1] |
| | <i>Syringa</i> spp. | ilac: Chinese, hyacinth |
| | <i>Viburnum</i> spp. | viburnum: arrowwood, wayfaringtree, nannyberry [1] |

This approach is very objective - either the project has enough points or it doesn't.

Bufferyards

Some zoning codes require a bufferyard between different land uses to soften the impacts of a dominant land use (e.g., industrial) on an adjoining land use (e.g., residential). The proposed approach is also a point-based system and defines the width of the bufferyard and the amount of screening that is required.

When is a bufferyard required? A matrix indicates when and how much of a bufferyard is required.

In this example, there are four different levels to account for the degree of "conflict" between adjoining uses (A=lowest level, D=highest level).

Exhibit 16-7. Standards for a bufferyard between different zoning districts

| Other zoning district | Zoning district allowing the greatest intensity or density | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| | R-1 | R-2 | R-6 | R-8 | R-9 | C-1 | C-2 | C-3 | MUW | I-1 | L-1 | M |
| R-1 | | - | - | - | - | - | A | B | B | D | - | D |
| R-2 | - | | - | - | - | - | A | B | B | D | - | D |
| R-6 | - | - | | - | - | - | - | A | C | - | - | D |
| R-8 | - | - | - | | - | - | - | B | B | C | - | D |
| R-9 | - | - | - | - | | - | - | B | B | C | - | D |
| C-1 | - | - | - | - | - | | - | A | C | - | - | C |
| C-2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | | - | B | - | - | C |
| C-3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | A | - | - | B |
| MUW | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | A | - | A |
| I-1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | - | - |
| L-1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | - |
| M | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |

The standards for each level (i.e., A, B, C, D) are also defined. The graphic below shows three options for bufferyard "A." The developer is able to select the width along with the minimum number of points that are required.

Exhibit 16-8. Detailed bufferyard requirements

| A | Width | Points per 100 feet | Required fence or berm [1] | Example schematic [2] |
|-----|-------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| A-1 | 10' | 200 | - | |
| A-2 | 15' | 150 | - | |
| A-3 | 20' | 125 | - | |

Outdoor Lighting

Outdoor lighting issues relate to the following:

1. Lighting levels at the property boundary line (i.e., light trespass).
2. Maximum lighting levels (i.e., total lumens) for an overall property. For example, ___ lumens per acre.
3. Type of lighting fixtures.
4. Height of parking lot lights
5. Light curfews (i.e., lighting levels when a business is not open at night)

Generally, outdoor lighting standards are included in the zoning code, but not always. Some communities have an outdoor lighting ordinance (outside of the zoning code) because enforcement is much easier for the community. We can discuss what will work for the city.

Parking

Of all the zoning requirements, parking has historically been pretty straightforward. In recent years though, there has been a significant push to "right size" the standards. In other words, many communities have been requiring more parking than what is actually needed. Obviously, this takes up land and there are costs for the developer in terms of initial construction and on-going maintenance.

Having said that, some developers still want to provide more parking than what is actually required. Some communities establish an upper limit on the number of parking spaces that can be located onsite (e.g., 115 percent of the minimum number). Instead of that approach or as a compliment provision, we can include an enhanced standard for landscaping for any parking lot exceeding 115 percent of what is required.

Finally, we can talk about standards for bicycle parking for certain types of development. These could be a recommended standard or a requirement.