



Memorandum

To: Collier County Planning Commission (CCPC)
From: Jeremy Frantz, AICP, LDC Manager
Date: June 13, 2018
Re: Commercial Landscaping Land Development Code (LDC) Amendment

On May 17, 2018, the CCPC reviewed a proposal to modify commercial landscaping requirements in the LDC and suggested the following edits and additional research before a recommendation could be made. Staff's revisions to the amendment and additional research are described below. This amendment is scheduled for Board of County Commissioners review on July 10, 2018.

CCPC Discussion

- Modify the replacement tree standards table to include only two categories of sizes: eight to 12 inches and greater than 12 inches. The replacement tree sizes should be limited to five and six-inch calipers.
 - The revised amendment includes this change.
- Remove the provision allowing multiple smaller trees to satisfy the replacement tree size requirements.
 - The revised amendment includes this change.
- Add a cross-reference to existing standards for the clustering of trees.
 - This change was not made since the provision in question was removed.
- Determine the availability of trees with a five to six-inch caliper.
 - See description of price and availability below.

Availability and Pricing Research

Staff interviewed seven local and statewide suppliers of landscaping trees to determine the availability of native trees with a five to six-inch caliper. These discussions revealed the following:

- The current requirement for three to four-inch caliper trees within the vehicular use area in shopping centers (20,000 square feet or more of floor area) is already difficult to find at this time. The availability of native trees with a five to six-inch caliper, as proposed by this amendment, will be even more difficult to find.
- The suppliers suggested that a five to six-inch caliper requirement may limit tree selection to species such as: Gumbo Limbo, Southern Slash Pine, Bald Cypress, and Live Oak.
- The selection of larger trees that are likely to be available may not meet the County's quality requirements which may further limit available supply.



- Hurricane Irma has greatly reduced available nursery stocks generally statewide.

Staff also interviewed landscaping suppliers, nursery supply websites, and the County's Road Maintenance Division regarding pricing. Landscaping professionals indicated that five to six-inch calipers may increase costs significantly. Due to the amount and quality of the information available, few direct cost-comparisons were available. However, one comparison of quotes for Live Oak trees from several vendors listed on www.plantsearch.com is shown in the table below. Please note that given the limited nature of pricing data, these examples may not be representative of the market generally.

Caliper (inches)	Price	Quantity Available
3.75 – 4.00	\$495	10
5.00 – 5.50	\$1,250	--
6.00 – 7.00	\$1,750	--

Several sources also suggested that while prices typically fluctuate with changes in supply and demand, Hurricane Irma has caused highly competitive pricing.

Public Outreach

The Board of County Commissioners requested a thorough outreach process. To that end, staff outreach throughout the amendment review process included notification to:

- Property managers and developers,
- The typical community distribution list used for all other LDC amendments,
- Landscape architects, and
- The local and statewide landscaping suppliers referenced above.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
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(239) 252-2305

Land Development Code Amendment Request

ORIGIN: Board of County Commissioners

AUTHOR: Zoning Division Staff

LDC SECTIONS: 4.06.01 Generally
4.06.02 Buffer Requirements
4.06.03 Landscaping Requirements for Vehicular Use Areas and Rights-of-Way
4.06.05 General Landscaping Requirements

SUMMARY: This amendment increases the size of required landscaping trees and modifies the standards at shopping centers that remove mature canopy trees within the vehicular use areas (VUAs) and “Type D” buffers through a landscaping plan change.

DESCRIPTION:

Board Direction:

Over several years, residents have petitioned the Board regarding perceived aesthetic impacts on surrounding residential neighborhoods when mature canopy trees are removed from shopping centers and replaced with the LDC’s minimum tree planting requirements.

On January 23, 2018, Zoning Division staff presented to the Board background information regarding landscaping changes in shopping centers, and potential LDC changes that could mitigate the perceived impacts due to the loss of mature canopy trees on the surrounding community. The Board directed staff to draft LDC standards that maintain the ability to change existing landscaping plans while also ensuring any changes would retain mature canopy trees and maintain an aesthetically pleasing community appearance.

Existing standards:

When trees are replaced in the VUAs or “Type D” buffers at shopping centers, the replacement trees are required to meet the same minimum standards for landscaping material required for new developments. The minimum tree height, caliper, and canopy spread required at the time of installation are:

- Height: 10 feet,
- Caliper: 1 ¾ inches, and
- Canopy spread: four feet.

Additionally, for buildings that are a minimum of 20,000 square feet, LDC section 4.06.03 B.9 requires that trees in the VUAs be a minimum of:

- Height: 14 to 16 feet,
- Caliper: three to four inches,
- Canopy spread: six to eight feet, and
- Clear trunk height: six feet high.

Proposed changes:

The proposed standards for shopping centers when replacing non-palm species trees through a landscaping plan change are as follows:

- A new table to determine the minimum size of replacement trees is provided. The replacement trees shall have a caliper of 5 or 6 inches depending on the size of the removed tree(s) within the VUAs and “Type D” buffers.
- New tree spacing standards within “Type D” buffers to provide better visibility to shopping center buildings and wall signage. This new standard would:
 - Allow an increase to tree spacing from 30 feet on-center to 60 feet on-center in limited situations, per the new LDC Section 4.06.03 D.3.
 - Require three trees on both sides of the 60 foot on-center spacing within the “Type D” buffer to have a minimum of a 30-foot crown spread per tree.
- Slash pine and bald cypress trees shall be prohibited in new landscape plans and changes to existing landscape plans within the VUA and “Type D” buffer area due to their ineffectiveness to provide an adequate canopy and flourish in irrigated areas of a site.
- Adds submittal requirements to the landscaping plan to include the caliper of existing trees to facilitate review of these new requirements.
- Lastly, the amendment adds cross-references to the new standards in LDC section 4.06.02.

These changes are intended to balance the aesthetical value of mature canopy trees with the surrounding neighborhoods, and property owners with the need to redesign and update the appearance of shopping centers. The standards are intended to provide options for compliance, and flexibility in site design and an alternative to replacing trees or maintaining the existing mature trees.

Public comments received by County staff to date are included in Attachment A.

DSAC-LDR RECOMMENDATION: The DSAC-LDR Subcommittee reviewed the amendment on April 18, 2018. Lacking a quorum, the Subcommittee members present, as well as a regular member of the DSAC, made several suggestions and observations for further review at the regular DSAC meeting.

DSAC RECOMMENDATION: The DSAC unanimously recommended denial of this amendment on May 2, 2018. The DSAC members indicated that the amendment was too problematic for adoption.

FISCAL & OPERATIONAL IMPACTS: The amendment will increase costs to shopping center owners when updating landscaping plans by virtue of replacing non-palm tree species with trees that are larger than the existing minimum tree planting requirements of the LDC.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPACT: There are no anticipated growth management plan impacts associated with this amendment.

Amend the LDC as follows:

1 **4.06.01 Generally**

2 E. Landscaping Plans Required.

- 3 1. Landscape summary. A landscape summary in matrix form which shall include:
- 4 a. Graphic symbol to indicate each type of plant material.
- 5 b. Botanical name.
- 6 c. Common name.
- 7 d. Total number of each type of plant material.
- 8 e. Height and spread of each type of plant material.
- 9 f. Spacing of each type of plant material.
- 10 g. In accordance with LDC section 4.06.03 D., caliper of existing and
- 11 replacement trees for shopping centers when replacing non-palm tree
- 12 species within the vehicular use areas and Type D landscape buffers
- 13 through a landscaping plan change.

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16 **4.06.02 Buffer Requirements**

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18 C. Types of buffers. Within a required buffer strip, the following types of buffers shall be
19 used based on the matrix in table 2.4. (See Figure 4.06.02.C-1)

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- 21 4. *Type D Buffer:* A landscape buffer shall be required adjacent to any road right-of-
- 22 way external to the development project and adjacent to any primary access
- 23 roads internal to a commercial development. Said landscape buffer shall be
- 24 consistent with the provisions of the Collier County Streetscape Master Plan,
- 25 which is incorporated by reference herein. The minimum width of the perimeter
- 26 landscape buffer shall vary according to the ultimate width of the abutting right-
- 27 of-way. Where the ultimate width of the right-of-way is zero to 99 feet, the
- 28 corresponding landscape buffer shall measure at least ten feet in width. Where
- 29 the ultimate width of the right-of-way is 100 or more feet, the corresponding
- 30 landscape buffer shall measure at least 15 feet in width. Developments of 15
- 31 acres or more and developments within an activity center shall provide a
- 32 perimeter landscape buffer of at least 20 feet in width regardless of the width of
- 33 the right-of-way. Activity center right-of-way buffer width requirements shall not
- 34 be applicable to roadways internal to the development.
- 35 a. Trees shall be spaced no more than 30 feet on center in the landscape
- 36 buffer abutting a right-of-way or primary access road internal to a
- 37 commercial development. However, for shopping centers replacing non-
- 38 palm tree species within a Type D buffer through a landscaping plan
- 39 change, see LDC section 4.06.03 D.

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42 **4.06.03 Landscaping Requirements for Vehicular Use Areas and Rights-of-Way**

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44 D. Standards for shopping centers. The following standards apply when replacing non-palm

45 tree species within the vehicular use areas and Type D landscape buffers through a

46 landscaping plan change.

- 47 1. The following table shall determine the minimum size of replacement trees at
- 48 time of installation.
- 49 a. Table 4.06.03 D.1.a. – Required minimum caliper for replacement trees.

Existing tree (DBH)	Required minimum caliper for replacement tree
8 to 12 inches	5 inches
Greater than 12 inches	6 inches

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 2 2. To provide additional visibility into shopping centers, the required trees within
 3 Type D buffers may be spaced no more than 60 feet on center and shall have at
 4 least three consecutive trees, spaced no more than 30 feet on center with at
 5 least a 30-foot crown spread per tree, on both sides of any spacing greater than
 6 30 feet.

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 9 **4.06.05 – General Landscaping Requirements**

10 D. Plant Material Standards

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12 2. Trees and palms. All required new individual trees, shall be species having an
 13 average mature spread or crown of greater than 20 feet in the Collier County
 14 area and having trunk(s) which can be maintained in a clean condition over five
 15 feet of clear wood. Trees adjacent to walkways, bike paths and rights-of-way
 16 shall be maintained in a clean condition over eight feet of clear wood. Trees
 17 having an average mature spread or crown less than 20 feet may be substituted
 18 by grouping the same so as to create the equivalent of 20-foot crown spread. For
 19 code-required trees, the trees at the time of installation shall be a minimum of 25
 20 gallon, ten feet in height, have a 1¼-inch caliper (at 12 inches above the ground)
 21 and a four-foot spread.

22 a. A grouping of three palm trees will be the equivalent of one canopy tree.
 23 Exceptions will be made for Roystonea spp. and Phoenix spp. (not
 24 including roebelenii) which shall count one palm for one canopy tree.
 25 Palms may be substituted for up to 30 percent of required canopy trees
 26 with the following exceptions. No more than 30% of canopy trees may be
 27 substituted by palms (or palm equivalent) within the interior of a vehicular
 28 use area and within each individual Type D road right-of-way landscape
 29 buffer. Palms must have a minimum of 10 feet of clear trunk at planting.

30 b. All new trees, including palms, shall be of a species having an average
 31 mature height of 15 feet or greater.

32 c. As of {Effective date of this Ordinance}, all new landscaping plans or
 33 existing landscaping plans that are replacing or removing required trees
 34 within the vehicle use areas or “Type D” buffers shall not include slash
 35 pine (Pinus elliottii) or bald cypress (Taxodium distichum).

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