Landscaping & Open Space

Low-Impact Development Code Update

Thurston County
Community Stakeholder Group
October 29, 2015
Background: Landscaping

• Landscaping requirements developed for aesthetics
• Most landscaped areas could be used for stormwater, if designed appropriately
• Landscaping requirements can be combined with goals for tree preservation, open space, connectivity, and critical area protection
Focus on Landscaping

• Can vegetation planted within LID facilities count toward landscaping requirements?
• Do design requirements allow landscaped areas to be used for stormwater facilities?
• Can screening requirements be revised to include provisions for retaining native vegetation or replanting?
• Are minimum tree canopy or vegetation requirements specified for parking lots?
Recommendations

• Add language emphasizing goal of retaining native vegetation and providing for control of stormwater
• Increase required landscape buffer around commercial uses from 5 feet to 8 feet to allow for easier stormwater use
• Stronger language on maintenance
• Increased detail on what is required in a landscape plan
  ➢ Must be prepared by a professional
  ➢ Detail on location of plants
  ➢ Detail on timing of preparation and installation
  ➢ Detail on long-term maintenance of plants
  ➢ Only applies to 5+ lots
Recommendations

• Parking lots
  ➢ Lots larger than 5,000 sq ft or that add 10 or more spaces must have interior landscaping – 10% of parking area
  ➢ Should be designed to be used for stormwater, where feasible
  ➢ Islands should be minimum 8 feet wide

• Amount of landscaping can be reduced
  ➢ By 20%, if site design emphasizes retention of existing vegetation and trees or is connected with other open space or critical areas
  ➢ By 50% if parking area is surfaced with 5% pervious surfaces
Thurston County Community LID Workgroup
Proposed Changes to Landscaping – Thurston County Code
October 29, 2015

Conceptual Examples for Landscaping Discussion Only.

Current Standard

| Hypothetical 60,000-square-foot site (1.36 acres). |
| Hypothetical 6,000-square-foot building shown. |

Commercial use has a minimum 3-foot buffer strip along public right-of-way or adjacent residential districts or uses.

No landscaping required within parking areas.

Proposed Standard

| “Standard Option” |
| 6,000 square feet of landscaping shown. |
| Landscaping may be clustered to preserve vegetation on site. |

8-foot buffer. Wider buffer will allow for use as a stormwater facility.

Where parking areas exceed 5,000 square feet or that add 10 or more spaces, 10% of site must be landscaped. This encourages use of interior landscaping for bioretention and other stormwater treatment and control.

“Retain & Connect Vegetation Option”

| Required landscaping may be reduced by 20% if design emphasizes retention of native vegetation or connectivity with open space. |
| 8-foot buffer. Wider buffer will allow for use as a stormwater facility. |
| Landscaping area is sufficient to support bioretention. |

“Pervious Surface Option”

| Porous concrete surface shown. |
| 8-foot buffer. Wider buffer will allow for use as a stormwater facility. |
Discussion

- Are there additional credits of incentive that would offset the requirements or encourage retention of trees?
- Other thoughts and feedback?
Background: Open Space

- Open space requirements specify a % of area to be set aside in a subdivision
- Open space can be used for green space, or for active or passive recreation
Background: Open Space

• Currently outside North UGAs, open space required:
  ➢ Subdivisions of 10+ acres
  ➢ Only in zones: RL 2/1, R 3-6/1, R 4-16/1 (Grand Mound UGA)
  ➢ 10% of land must be set aside
  ➢ 30% of this is for active recreation

• Lacey and Tumwater UGAs: 10 or more lots = 10% open space
Focus on Open Space

- Does a minimum percentage of open space have to be managed in a natural condition?
- Can the open space requirement be increased?
- Are open space areas required to be consolidated into larger units?
- Are allowable and prohibited uses for open space defined?
- Can LID BMPs such as bioretention count toward open space?
- Are native vegetation areas that integrate pervious areas, stormwater dispersion facilities or restoration projects allowed?
Recommendations

• Extend 10% open space requirement to all residential zoning districts for subdivisions of 5 or more lots
• 30% of open space to be maintained in a natural condition
• In Grand Mound UGA only, 30% for active recreation
• Encourage location of open space downslope
• 50% of open space must be contiguous, potentially with other parks, critical area buffers, other open space
• Up to 25% of open space can be used for stormwater facilities
  ➢ Use for dispersion is unlimited
Discussion

• Are there additional credits of incentive that would offset the requirements or encourage retention of trees?
• Other thoughts and feedback?