

Memorandum

City of Lawrence

Planning & Development Services

TO: David L. Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Planning Staff

CC: Scott McCullough, Director of Planning and Development Services
Sheila Stogsdill, Assistant Planning Director

Date: For May 3, 2011 City Commission meeting

RE: Text Amendment Initiation to permit the use of synthetic turf to meet landscaping requirements in Article 10 of the Development Code

A request was made by Paul Werner Architects to initiate a text amendment to the *Land Development Code* to include 'synthetic turf' in the list of landscape materials that may be used to meet the landscape requirements in Article 10 and to revise the definition of 'Landscaping' in Article 17 to include 'synthetic turf'. The request is being made in order to maintain recently installed synthetic turf at the apartment complex being constructed at the intersection of Trail and Frontier, formerly known as the Boardwalk Apartments. While the site plan was approved with code compliant landscape materials (sod, seed), a routine inspection of the site yielded the installation of the synthetic turf. The owner was informed of the non-compliant installation and was provided options to conform to the code, including installing the approved plant material, seeking a variance, or requesting a text amendment to revise the applicable sections of the code. The applicant would like the city to consider revising the Development Code to permit the use of synthetic turf for this and potentially future projects.

The code emphasizes the use of living landscape materials and states the following about landscaping (non-exclusive list):

Section 20-1009 Landscape Material Standards – (b) Artificial Plants – No artificial plants or vegetation may be used to meet any standards of this section.

Section 20-1009 Landscape Material Standards – (e) Grass Seed and Sod – Turf areas shall be planted with species suitable as permanent lawns in Lawrence. Turf areas may be sodded or seeded.

Section 20-1010(a)(2) – All Landscape Material, including trees, plant material and structural elements, shall be in place and healthy prior to issuance of a final Certificate of Occupancy. The Planning Director may authorize issuance of a temporary Certificate

of Occupancy prior to installation of required Landscaping, when seasonal conditions render installation impractical...

Section 20-1701 Definitions

Landscape Material – Such living material such as trees, Shrubs, Ground Cover/vines, turf grasses, and non-living material such as: ricks, pebbles, sand, bark, brick pavers, earthen mounds (excluding pavement), and/or other items of a decorative or embellishing nature such as: fountains, pools, walls, fencing, sculpture, etc.

Landscaping – Any combination of living plants such as trees, Shrubs, plants, vegetative Ground Cover or turf grasses...

Ground Cover – Living Landscape Materials or living low-growing plants other than turf grasses, installed in such a manner so as to provide a continuous cover of the ground surface and which, upon maturity, normally reach an average maximum Height of not greater than 24 inches.

The application noted that synthetic turf is low maintenance and may be appropriate in some locations. The application also identified synthetic turf as a 'green building option' as it does not require watering, mowing, or the use of fertilizers or pesticides. The application is attached for your reference.

If the text amendment is approved, it will be necessary to revise the Community Design Manual as well for landscaping requirements within the Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts for consistency.

Staff recommends that the Commission initiate the amendment so that careful consideration can be given to the request and so that the pros and cons of using synthetic turf to meet the values of landscaping requirements can be discussed by the community stakeholders.

Action requested: Initiate a text amendment to Article 10 and Article 17 of the Land Development Code – Code of the City of Lawrence, Kansas regarding landscaping and landscape materials and associated revisions to the Community Design Manual, if appropriate.



REQUEST FOR INITIATION of a TEXT AMENDMENT

APPLICATION FORM

APPLICANT/AGENT INFORMATION

Contact Joy Rhea
Company Paul Werner Architects
Address 1918 Edgelea Road
City Lawrence State KS ZIP 66044
Phone (785) 832-0804 Fax (785) 832-0890
E-mail joyr@paulwernerarchitects.com Mobile/Pager ()
Pre-Application Meeting Date 4-1-11 Planner Scott McCullough

Are you submitting any other applications? If so, please state which one(s).

Please identify the section of the Development Code or Subdivision Regulations proposed to be amended. 20-1003(e) , 20-1009 (b), 20-1009(e)(4), 20-1701

Please provide proposed amendment. (Attach additional sheets if needed)

20-1003(e) In addition to required Shade Trees and Shrubs, landscape areas within the interior of off-street Parking Areas shall be planted with turf which can be synthetic or natural, Ground Cover, Ornamental Trees, or Shrubs.

20-1009(b) No artificial plants or vegetation other than synthetic turf may be used to meet any standards of this section.

ADD TO DEV CODE 20-1009(e)(4) Synthetic turf areas shall be installed per the manufactures specification as permanent lawns in Lawrence.

20-1701 - Landscaping: Such living material as trees, Shrubs, Ground Cover/vines, turf grasses, and non-living material suchas: rocks, pebbles, sand, bark, brick pavers, earthen mounds (excluding pavement), synthetic turf and/or other items of a decorative or embellishing nature such as: fountains, pools, walls, fencing, sculpture, etc.



Please respond to the following questions to the best of your knowledge. In reviewing and making decisions on proposed text amendments review bodies shall consider the following factors. (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

- 1. Does the proposed text amendment correct an error or inconsistency in the Development Code or Subdivision Regulations?** If so, please provide the specific error found and/or reference the specific section of the Development Code that is inconsistent with the section identified to be amended above.

The amendment does not correct an error or inconsistency but instead provides an alternative option to turf grass. Synthetic turf is a viable option for turf management in the right location.

This text amendment would give the Planning Department the ability to approve it.

- 2. Does the proposed amendment meet the challenge of a changing condition?**
If so, please explain.

With the increased awareness of providing green building options synthetic turf has its benefits which include using no irrigation, fertilizer or pesticides to maintain it. Synthetic turf also reduces emissions since it does not need mowed.

- 3. Is the proposed amendment consistent with Horizon 2020? Please explain.**

Horizon 2020 states on pages 5-22, 5-28 and 6-28, "Encourage the use of high quality materials in the construction of screening and landscape areas to decrease long-term maintenance costs." Synthetic turf falls into this category because it is a high quality material made of partly recycled materials and has no yearly maintenance cost such as irrigation systems, fertilizers or pesticides.

- 4. Is the proposed amendment consistent with the stated purpose of the Development Code? See Sec. 20-104 of the Development Code for the stated purpose.**

This amendment in no way endangers the health, safety and welfare of the public.



**City of Lawrence
Douglas County**

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Metropolitan Planning Office**

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<http://www.lawrenceplanning.org>

SIGNATURE

By execution of my/our signature, I/we do hereby officially apply to request initiation of the proposed text amendment as indicated above.

Signature(s):

Jan Blue

Date

4-18-11

Date

Date

STAFF USE ONLY

Application No. _____

Date Received _____

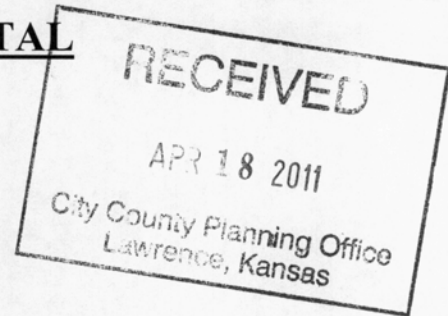
Planning Commission Date _____

Fee \$ _____

Date Fee Paid _____

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

FROM : Joy Rhea
TO : Scott McCullough
DATE : **April 18, 2011**
RE : Text Amendment for synthetic turf



We are Sending :

☒ Attached ☐ Per your request ☐ For your files

Items Transmitted Via :

☐ US Mail ☐ Overnight ☐ Courier ☒ Other

Items Transmitted are For Your :

☐ Information ☐ Use ☐ Approval ☒ Review

Items Transmitted are :

☒ Originals ☐ Disk (s) ☐ Shop Drawings ☐ Blueprints
☐ Specifications ☐ Samples ☐ Other _____

COPIES/ SETS:	DESCRIPTION:
1	Text Amendment Application

REMARKS :

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