



Memorandum

To: The Planning Commission
From: Niall Connolly, Director of Community Development
Date: April 10, 2026
Re: Land Use Ordinance Amendment Application

Introduction

Noel Benson has submitted an application for a Land Use Ordinance Amendment. The purpose of this application is to propose a revision to Title 10 (Land Use Ordinance) of the Springdale Municipal Code. Specifically, the proposal would amend Section 10-18 (Landscaping) of the Code. The Planning Commission should review the proposed amendment, and make a recommendation to the Town Council to either adopt, or not adopt the proposed amendment.

Land Use Ordinance Amendment Applications compared with Ordinance Revisions

The Planning Commission advises the Town Council on planning policy, and this often takes the form of proposing ordinance revisions. Land Use Ordinance Amendment Applications are different from this, because the proposed changes come from a member of the community, rather than the Planning Commission. The applicant proposes specific ordinance verbiage for the Commission to consider. Rather than having a broad discussion about the general topic, the Planning Commission’s role in this case is to review the specific ordinance language that has been submitted, and make a recommendation to the Town Council to either adopt the proposed changes, or not to adopt the proposed changes.

Proposed Revisions to Title 10

Mr. Benson’s proposal is to make a change to the table in section 10-18-4(A) of the Town Code. He also proposes a small change to the introductory paragraph. The existing table, with introductory paragraph, is compared to the proposal below. This is also provided in the appendix.

The proposal introduces a tiered landscape requirement for the Village Commercial zone. Currently, the landscape requirement for all Village Commercial zone properties is the same (60% either landscaped or natural open space, with a minimum of 30% landscaped). The proposal would introduce a tiered requirement, based on the size of the property, as shown in the table below. Tiered landscape requirements currently exist in the Valley Residential and Central Commercial zones.

General Plan

Any ordinance revision should be supported by the goals of the General Plan. The applicant has provided some discussion in his submission relating to this. In addition, staff recommend that the Planning Commission may refer to Chapter 1 (Land Use and Town Appearance) and Chapter 4 (Economic Development) in its deliberations.

The existing table in the Code is compared with the proposed table below:

- A. *Landscape areas:* A minimum percentage of the area of all properties is required to be either landscaped or retained as natural open space. The following chart establishes the percentage of properties required to be landscaped or retained as natural open space:

Zone	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Either Landscaped Or Natural Open Space	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Landscaped
FR	80	0
VR-S	75	15
VR-A	60	15
VR-B	40	15
AG	50 of nonagricultural land	30 of nonagricultural land
VC	60	30
PU	50	30
CC:		
Properties 1.5 acres and greater	40	30
Properties 0.5 to 1.5 acres	35	25
Properties less than 0.5 acre	30	20

Figure 1. Table as existing

- A. *Landscape areas:* A minimum percentage of the area of all properties is required to be either landscaped or retained as natural open space. The following chart establishes the percentage of properties are required to be landscaped or retained as natural open space:

Zone	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Either Landscaped Or Natural Open Space	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Landscaped
FR	80	0
VR-S	75	15
VR-A	60	15
VR-B	40	15
AG	50 of nonagricultural land	30 of nonagricultural land
VC	60	30
Properties 0.5 acres or greater	60	30
Properties 0.25 to < 0.5 acres	50	25
Properties less than 0.25 acres	40	20
PU	50	30
CC:		
Properties 1.5 acres and greater	40	30
Properties 0.5 to 1.5 acres	35	25
Properties less than 0.5 acre	30	20

Figure 2. Table as proposed

Planning Commission Action

The Planning Commission should discuss the proposed ordinance amendment and determine whether or not to recommend approval to the Town Council. The Commission may wish to use the following sample language:

The Planning Commission recommends that the Town Council approve/ deny the ordinance amendment proposed by Mr Noel Benson, which would revise section 10–18 of the Town Code by introducing a tiered landscaping requirement in the Village Commercial zone. This is based on the following findings:

(List Findings):

Appendix:

Applicant's submittal

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REQUEST

Subject: Tiered Landscape and Open Space Requirements – Village Commercial (VC)

PURPOSE

This proposal requests adoption of tiered landscape and open space requirements for properties zoned Village Commercial (VC), based on lot size.

Currently, all VC parcels are subject to a flat 60% landscaping requirement (30% of which can be open space), regardless of lot size. Basically, this means that a 10,000 square foot lot would have about 4,000 square feet for a building, parking lot, drive isles, signage, etc. At this small scale it can be extremely limiting.

This amendment would introduce proportional standards consistent with those already used in surrounding zones:

- **½ acre or larger** – 60% landscape / 30% open (no change)
- **¼ acre to ½ acre** – 50% landscape / 25% open
- **¼ acre or smaller** – 40% landscape / 20% open

The 60/30 requirement would remain in place for larger parcels. Smaller lots would be governed proportionally.

EXISTING FRAMEWORK

Springdale already applies tiered landscape requirements in other zones.

Valley Residential:

- VR-S ¾ acre minimum – 75% landscape / 15% open
- VR-A ¼ acre minimum – 60% landscape / 15% open

- VR-B 5,000 sq ft minimum – 40% landscape / 15% open

Central Commercial:

- 1½ acres or larger – 40% landscape / 30% open
- ½ to 1½ acres – 35% landscape / 25% open
- ½ acre or smaller – 30% landscape / 20% open

Below is the existing table for landscape requirements with the proposed addition in red.

● Zone	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Either Landscaped Or Natural Open Space	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Landscaped
FR	80	0
VR-S	75	15
VR-A	60	15
VR-B	40	15
AG	50 of nonagricultural land	30 of nonagricultural land
VC:	60	30
Properties 0.5 acres or greater	60	30
Properties 0.25 to < 0.5 acres	50	25
Properties less than 0.25 acres	40	20
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These tiered systems reflect the Town’s determination that lot size is a relevant factor in establishing landscape standards.

If proportional landscape requirements were inconsistent with the General Plan or municipal code, they would not already be embedded in Town ordinances.

Village Commercial is the only valley zone that applies a flat requirement regardless of lot size.

Even the Public Use zone requires 50% landscaping. This means town-owned parcels operate under a lower proportional standard than Village Commercial parcels and are therefore easier to develop than privately owned VC property.

STRUCTURAL CONSISTENCY

Village Commercial functions as a transition between residential and commercial areas, the zones that already have the tiered systems in place.

Many VC parcels were created prior to 1992 and do not meet current minimum lot size standards.

Applying a single 60/30 requirement to all lot sizes, while surrounding zones use proportional standards, creates an internal inconsistency within the zoning framework.

Adopting tiered standards in VC would restore alignment with the structure already used in Valley Residential and Central Commercial, while still preserving very substantial landscaping requirements.

CONSISTENCY WITH TOWN POLICY

Municipal Code §10-1-2 states that zoning regulations exist to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the Town.

The Springdale General Plan also provides direction relevant to this proposal. Under **Land Use and Appearance Goals – Sub-goal A**, the Plan states:

- **A.6** – The Planning Commission will use zoning and land use regulations strategically to minimize vacant commercial buildings along SR-9.
- **A.7** – The Town Council will develop strategies to help vacant and underutilized properties along SR-9 be put to productive use in a manner that enhances community character.

Applying proportional landscape standards in the Village Commercial zone would be consistent with these objectives by allowing smaller legacy parcels to be improved and reinvested in while still maintaining substantial landscape requirements. The Town has already determined that proportional landscape systems are compatible with these policy objectives, as demonstrated by the existing tiered frameworks in Valley Residential and Central Commercial.

The Town’s ordinance allows zoning amendments when they correct a manifest error or when they promote the objectives of the General Plan and the purposes of the land use regulations. This proposal satisfies both standards. The absence of proportional landscape requirements in the Village Commercial zone, while surrounding zones already employ tiered systems, represents a structural inconsistency within the code. Adopting proportional standards in VC would correct that inconsistency while also advancing the General Plan objectives identified above.

CONCLUSION

This amendment:

- Maintains the existing 60/30 requirement for larger VC parcels
- Applies proportional standards to smaller lots

- Aligns VC with Valley Residential and Central Commercial
- Promotes consistent application of zoning standards across town

This proposal is not parcel-specific. It would apply uniformly to all Village Commercial properties based on lot size.

If the Commission or Council determines not to adopt proportional standards in the Village Commercial zone, the applicant respectfully requests findings explaining the policy basis for treating Village Commercial differently from surrounding zones that already employ tiered landscape requirements.

NOTE: This proposal does not incentivize sub-dividing, as the decreased percentages start below the minimum lot size requirement.

10-18-4: LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS AND REGULATIONS:

These standards are the minimum requirements for all landscaping regulated by this chapter.

A. *Landscape areas:* A minimum percentage of the area of all properties is required to be either landscaped or retained as natural open space. The following chart establishes the percentage of properties are required to be landscaped or retained as natural open space:

Zone	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Either Landscaped Or Natural Open Space	Minimum Percentage Of Property To Be Landscaped
FR	80	0
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AG	50 of nonagricultural land	30 of nonagricultural land
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Note:

1. The majority of the area of properties in the AG zone should be dedicated to an agricultural use. The landscape areas required in the chart above shall apply to nonagricultural development on the property such as offices, retail sales areas, and employee housing.

1. Landscaped areas must meet the following criteria:

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- a. The area must meet all landscape regulations of this chapter and must contain the required amounts of vegetation established by this chapter.
 - b. The area must be irrigated in conformance with the requirements of this chapter, or be landscaped with vegetation that does not require supplemental irrigation.
 - c. The landscape area must be maintained such that the vegetation is healthy, and the area is primarily devoid of weeds.
 - d. Areas with an approved agricultural use, such as open pastures and irrigated fields, qualify as landscape areas if the agricultural use is integrated into the overall landscape design for the property.
 - e. In the VC and VR zones, maintained orchards reflective of the pioneer heritage of Springdale shall be considered landscaped area.
 - f. Pedestrian pathways, courtyards, pools and pool decks, decorative fencing, and other similar features may be counted as landscaped area, if specifically shown on an approved landscape plan and integrated into the landscape design for the property, per the standards below:
 - (1) The feature(s) must be visually and functionally linked to the vegetative landscape on the property.

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- (2) The feature(s) must add interest, diversity, and functionality to the overall landscape design.
 - (3) There must be a logical and functional transition between the feature(s) and the rest of the landscape area.
 - (4) Pathways and other pedestrian facilities must have vegetative landscape features at least two feet in width on both sides of the pathway.
 - (5) Courtyards, pool decks, patios and other similar features must be surrounded on at least 75 percent of their perimeter by vegetative landscape elements at least ten feet in width.
 - (6) Courtyards, pool decks, patios and other similar elements must have permanent vegetative landscape elements, such as planter areas, incorporated into the courtyard area.
 - (7) The total area of such feature(s) may not account for more than 15 percent of the total required landscape and natural open space area.

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2. Natural open space must be in its unaltered natural state, or must demonstrate at least one of the following characteristics:
 - a. Natural slopes of 30 percent or more.
 - b. Natural washes, watercourses, or riparian area.
 3. In determining if an area is in its "unaltered state" and thus eligible for designation as natural open space, all of the following standards apply:
 - a. The area:
 - (1) Has not been excavated, graded, leveled, or otherwise disturbed in the last 50 years, or
 - (2) Is at least 60 percent covered by vegetation that is either identical to or visually identifiable with natural vegetation existent on adjacent undeveloped properties, undeveloped fields, or undeveloped hillsides, provided that the majority of the plant species in the area appear on the Town's recommended plant species list.
 4. Bare ground, areas devoid of natural vegetation, and areas that have been used for storage of materials or vehicles do not qualify as natural open space.
- B. *Acceptable plant species:* Water-conserving plants shall constitute at least 80 percent, by area (including areas covered by turf), of the total landscape area on a site.

Developments located in the foothills shall utilize plant species appropriate to less fertile soils. A list of recommended water-conserving plant species, as adopted by resolution of the Town Council, will be available in the Town Office.

1. None of the following plants or landscape elements may be placed anywhere on any property outside of a completely enclosed building:
 - a. Artificial trees, artificial shrubs, artificial plants, or artificial turf when visible from adjacent properties or a street.
 - b. Any plant listed as a prohibited plant on the Town's plant list, as adopted by the Town Council.
2. If any of the plant species or landscape elements listed in subsection B.1. of this section are on a site proposed for development and subject to this chapter, all such plants or landscape elements must be removed from the site in conjunction with the development.
- C. *Quantities required:* Landscape areas shall contain the following quantities of trees, shrubs, and ground cover.
 1. *Trees:*
 - a. For properties in commercial and public use zones: The greater of one tree for every 1,000 square feet of landscape area, or ten trees.

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- b. For properties in residential and agricultural zones:
One tree for every 1,000 square feet of landscape area.
 - 2. *Shrubs:*
 - a. For properties in commercial and public use zones:
The greater of four shrubs for every 1,000 square feet of landscape area, or 40 shrubs.
 - b. For properties in residential and agricultural zones:
Four shrubs for every 1,000 square feet of landscape area.
 - 3. *Ground cover:* At least ten percent of the landscape area must be covered with vegetative ground cover.
 - 4. *Design standards:* The quantities of plants required by subsections C.1., C.2., and C.3. of this section shall be placed and planted according to an overall landscape design for the property. The plants shall be distributed throughout the required landscape area in order to meet the landscape design standards of section 10-18-6 of this chapter.
 - D. *Minimum size when planted:* All required landscaping shall be of the following minimum sizes:
 - 1. *Trees:* Minimum when planted shall be ten gallons, five feet in height, one to one and one-half inch diameter, branch spread of four feet.

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2. *Shrubs:* Minimum when planted shall be five gallons. When certain shrubs are shown to not normally be available commercially in five gallon sizes, a smaller size may be acceptable.
 3. *Vegetative ground cover:* Minimum when planted shall be spaced to provide full coverage within two years of planting. Nonvegetative organic ground cover (such as bark, wood shavings, or wood chips) shall be used between the plantings to protect and screen the landscape underlayment on an interim basis.
- E. *Landscape underlayments:* Underlayments shall be placed for the purposes of weed control between plantings in landscaped areas. Underlayments shall be limited to water-permeable materials such as landscape fabric. Polyethylene sheet plastic and similar materials shall be used as landscape underlayment only in locations and applications specified by the geotechnical engineer for diverting water away from structure foundations or diverting water to specified drainage inlets or retention basins. Water retention areas shall be lined with water permeable materials unless otherwise specified by the geotechnical engineer or hydrologist for the project.
- F. *Public right-of-way landscaping:* Landscaping of public rights-of-way is encouraged. When landscaping of such areas is desired, an encroachment permit from the appropriate public authority owning or controlling such

right-of-way shall be submitted with the landscape plan. 50 percent of the area of the landscaped right-of-way shall be counted toward the total required landscape area for the property.

G. *Phased development:* If a project is developed in phases, required landscaping and screening must be completed in sequence with development phases and shown as such on the landscape plan and as detailed below:

1. *Phased new construction:* All areas included in each phase of development shall be landscaped such that each phase of the development meets all landscape standards independent from all other phases of the development.

2. *Additions or expansions to existing construction:* Any expansion or addition, or change in use of existing buildings that requires an increase in parking, shall require the site to be brought into landscape conformance as follows:

a. All new parking areas shall meet the landscape requirements established in this chapter.

b. In addition to the areas described in subsection G.2.a. of this section, the property shall be landscaped as follows:

(1) An area of the property shall be landscaped such that the total amount of improvement (footprint of the expansion or addition plus

the area of the new landscape) shall satisfy the landscape percentages listed in subsection A of this section. For example, a 2,500 square foot expansion on a property in the VR zone would require 7,500 square feet of additional landscape area (10,000 square feet of total improvement with 75 percent landscape). A 7,000 square foot expansion on a one and one-half acre property in the CC zone would require 3,000 square feet of additional landscape (10,000 square feet of total improvement with 30 percent landscape).

- (2) The landscape area should first be placed along the SR-9 frontage, or at the front of the property if there is no SR-9 frontage. Once the SR-9 frontage (or front of the property if there is no SR-9 frontage) is completely landscaped, the landscape area should be placed on the property in accordance with the design principles of this chapter.
- c. The landscaping described in subsections G.2.a. and G.2.b. of this section shall be required each time there is an expansion or addition on the property, until the property is in total compliance

with all landscape standards established in this chapter.