From:	Elizabeth Decker
To:	Teresa Hardy
Cc:	Mark Leed; Jose Alvarez; Susan Ellinger; Ross Hoover; David Stipe; Sue Marshall; Glen Yung; Wil Fuentes; Michelle Belkot; Matt Little
Subject:	Re: Landscaping and Recreation 40.260.150.- Comp Plan
Date:	Thursday, September 3, 2026 11:11:31 AM

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Hi Teresa,

I can offer some background about how the code was developed and the intent. To start with terminology, the proposed term "amenity areas" rather than "outdoor recreation areas" is intended to be more inclusive of the range of spaces that are currently and are proposed to be required with multifamily developments, which include private outdoor amenity areas (porches, patios, decks, etc), common outdoor amenity areas (active or passive recreation spaces like sport courts or gardens), and indoor common amenity areas (rec room, etc). All three types of facilities continue to be addressed in the code section, but the broader term "amenity areas" is proposed to better describe them collectively. This is a loss of "recreation" in name only because the standards continue to address the same kinds of indoor and outdoor spaces.

Changes to the multifamily amenity area standards were identified with the Housing Options and Study Plan (HOSAP), begun in 2020 and adopted in 2022. Strategy HO-10 identified:

Revise open space and recreation area requirements for larger multifamily projects (13+ units), to reduce competition for site area on the highest density projects while focusing on the quality and accessibility of the open spaces to incentivize higher density development. Exempt any units over the minimum density or over 30 units/acre from triggering additional open space area. (HOSAP, pg 31)

This strategy was developed with stakeholders during HOSAP that included a Project Advisory Group drawn from government representatives, nonprofits, for-profit developers, and community representatives. (HOSAP, pg 7). The code concepts and specifics, which you can see have evolved from the original strategy, were refined with a forum group consisting of a subset of HOSAP PAG members. We have not had specific representation of renters but have included affordable housing developers and representatives from the VHA. We did not hear any specific feedback on the concept of multifamily amenity areas at the County comp plan open houses in 2025.

The proposed code was also informed by comparative research across the state. From my research, there were no universal best practices that I found about the amount or configuration of open space, recreation and amenity spaces with multifamily development. Requirements for common open space or landscaping are often a percentage of the site or the usable floor area, but some are tied to number of units. Some jurisdictions focus more narrowly on specific amenities such as children's play areas, and others allow a range of private, common and landscaping amenities to meet requirements. As one comparison point, the City of

Vancouver's new code requires 15% minimum open space area for multifamily buildings, which can include landscaped setbacks and any amenity spaces, with no additional requirement for amenity areas. (VMC 20.420.120.C.1.d) The proposed County code is one of the most detailed among County jurisdictions.

The two-fold goal for code amendments has been to better align the quantity of amenity space required with on-site demand, especially for higher density projects that the County hasn't seen developed and which are important to other goals for meeting housing needs, reducing sprawl and creating more compact communities, and to improve the quality of that amenity space. These changes have been considered over the course of five forum group meetings beginning in 2023 and continually revised to create the draft discussed at the July 22 Council work session, with a few further refinements to the draft proposed to at the August 20 PC hearing.

To address quantity, we looked broadly at related requirements on a site: overall site landscaping (previously 20%), required landscaping buffers in setbacks (varies based on surrounding land uses, many are 5-10 ft), and the specific amenity spaces (previously 48-SF private space per ground-level unit plus 200-300 SF per unit shared space). A related code goal was to provide clarity about whether and how some of these spaces could overlap, or if they all had to be counted separately, in order to ensure consistent and effective implementation. Under previous code, much of the amenity space could overlap with the overall site landscaping (though this interpretation was not always consistently applied), which created an incentive to provide only amenity areas that could also count as landscaped areas, rather than specific amenity improvements like play structures, in order to reduce the total amount of landscaping+amenity area on site.

The proposed code more specifically pulls the landscaping and amenity space apart: 15% landscaping and 5% amenity space, to set the stage for more specific requirements about how to develop each of them. Depending on the site, this wouldn't necessarily result in a significant decrease in the total landscaping and amenity space required, since many recent developments have located much of the amenity space within the landscaping space to keep the total closer to 20% of the site, same as proposed here. (proposed 40.220.020.C.9, 10, 40.260.150.C)

The proposed code also addresses problems seen in the past few years around poor quality of spaces, such as small spaces with limited access or in isolated locations such as a corner of the parking lot, and limited improvements for residents such as pet exercise areas improved only with bark chips. The proposed code provides significant detail about size, location and improvements required within the amenity spaces, to ensure that the 5% of site area is used to its fullest potential rather than treated as leftover area. (proposed 40.260.150.E) I'm excited that this will support creation of higher quality spaces that better meet residents' needs.

The amenity areas are not intended to address the same needs as the Parks Plan, but to provide smaller scale spaces for immediate residents, akin to a backyard or porch or other spaces that may (or may not) be included with a single-unit home. I don't see the specific value in considering these amenity spaces at the same time as the Parks Plan, as they aren't intended to function as small private parks, like perhaps may be incorporated into a subdivision. There could be an opportunity for further revisions to the multifamily amenity area standards if something does come out of the Parks Plan, or other issues arise with implementation.

Thanks,
Elizabeth

On Wed, Sep 2, 2026 at 1:07 AM Teresa Hardy <teshardy31@gmail.com> wrote:

> Elizabeth,
>
> The following questions were sent and received a response that you were out off the office. Hopefully, you have had a chance to look them over and can provide feedback.
> LooWit, the local Sierra Club, has been following the attempts to change the Landscaping and Recreation code by DEAB since 2022. There are some parts that still
> are unclear. It would be helpful to know who the "Stakeholders" were and when they met in regards to the proposed changes. (Memo August 5th, 2026)
> Hopefully they were representative of renters who live in apartments and the recent 7/15/2026 Draft, that has added transitional housing and permanent supportive housing developments.
> With the live, work, play, concept or 15 minute neighborhoods reducing landscaping to 15%, changing "Recreation" to Amenity, and significantly reducing that to 5% raises question of livability, mental health, overall needs and how that can be best accomplished given the deficit in parks and funding in the county.
>
> Approving these changes under the Comp Plan seems hasty and questionable, especially given these concerns and concerns of Chair Marshall and Councilor Yung at the 7/22/26 Work Session.
>
> > Did combining Landscaping and Recreation changes move forward under the Multifamily Housing options? Who provided the language for the additional changes besides the DEAB and the Tech Forum(DEAB, developers, ….)?
> > When the additional changes in language and code requirements were developed, was public comment provided in drafting the changes to address equity? Lots of children live in apartments.
> >
> > Can you please clarify these changes and the impact/loss to Landscaping and **Recreation** for Multifamily Housing from the original code language 40.260.150 prior to the 7/5/2022 Council meeting?
> > Recreation has been struck and "Amenity" has replaced it. Why, by who, and for what purpose?
> > What are the proposed climate implications with the loss of

landscaping and outdoor recreation space?

What implications does this have on providing outdoor Recreation space for households below 60% of the AMI for Multifamily Housing. (Apartments, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing) at the **Sites**, not just Amenities…"benches, tables, pedestrian -scale lighting, gazebos, art or water features…. ‘, especially since indoor amenity areas may be provided and counted towards the total amenity area?

Have unintended consequences been considered for sustainability, and community resilience?

STRUCK?

- **Usable recreation space shall be provided in residential development for the shared or common use of all residents in the following amounts:**
  a. Studio size up to and including two-bedroom units, two hundred (200) square feet per unit; and
  b. Three (3) or more bedroom units, three hundred (300) square feet per unit.

LooWit urges the Planning Commision to not recommend these Code changes and Council not approve under the Comp Plan, so additional feedback can be considered in align

with the Parks ongoing work to elicit participation in Focus Groups that will help inform the creation of the 2028- 2035 Clark County Park System Plan.

Teresa Hardy