TREE BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Webinar and/or Town Council Chamber
3 S. Timber Ridge Parkway, Severance, CO 80550

AGENDA
TREE BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Monday, October 23, 2023, at 6:00 PM

A. CALL TO ORDER

The Goal of Work Sessions are to have the Town Council receive information on topics of Town business from the Town Manager, Town Attorney and Town Staff in order to exchange ideas and opinions regarding these topics.

1. **Roll Call**

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comment**

   The purpose of the Public Comment is for members of the public to speak to the Tree Board on any subject not scheduled on the Agenda. To accomplish scheduled agenda items, comments should be limited to three- minutes for those attending in person or an appropriate time as deemed by the Chair. The Tree Board is not obligated to make decisions or take action on comments but may choose to schedule the matter for a later discussion. Those addressing the Tree Board must state their name and address for the record and sign-in.

4. **Consent Agenda**

   The Consent Calendar is intended to allow the Tree Board to spend time and energy on the important items and not routine actions. A Tree Board Member may request an item on this calendar to be 'pulled' off the Consent Calendar and considered separately as a Regular Agenda item. Items remaining on the Consent Calendar will be approved by Tree Board with one vote.

   a. 5.23.23 Minutes

B. REGULAR MEETING

1. **Franklin's Place**
   - Legislative
   - Staff Presentation: Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst

2. **2024 Draft Work Plan**
   - Legislative
   - Staff Presentation: Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst

3. **Native Grass Ordinance Review**
    - Legislative
    - Staff Presentation: Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst

C. COMMUNICATIONS

Board approval may be sought for administrative actions in association with staff reports.

1. Town Staff
2. Town Management
3. Board Members
4. Chair

D. ADJOURN

Tree Board MEETING

Monday, October 23, 2023, 6:00 PM (MDT)

Registration URL
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_c-Svkm6iTN2JoOhczP0uKg

The Town of Severance does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in the provision of services. For disabled persons needing reasonable accommodation to attend or participate in a town service, program, public meeting, or activity, call 970-686-1218 at least 72 hours in advance. Disabled access is available from the front entrance of the Town Hall.

TREE BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Zoom Webinar and/or Town Council Chamber
3 S. Timber Ridge Parkway, Severance, CO 80550

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, May 22, 2023, at 6:00 PM

Present:

Chair:	Rodney Simpson
Vice-Chair:	Georgia Perry
Board:	Mike Thompson Erik Peter

Absent: Savannah Waggoner

Audience: NONE

Staff:

Nicholas Wharton, Town Manager
Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst
Brad Davison, Parks Supervisor
Leah Vanarsdall, Town Clerk

A. CALL TO ORDER

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1. **Roll Call**

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NONE

4. **Consent Agenda**

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MOTION WAS MADE BY Board Member Peter , seconded by Vice-Chair Perry to Approve the Consent Agenda. All Board Members present voting Yes,

MOTION PASSED

a. 2.27.23 Minutes

5. **Approval of Agenda**

MOTION WAS MADE BY Board Member Peter, seconded by Board Member Thompson to Approve the Agenda. All Board Members present voting Yes,

MOTION PASSED

B. REGULAR MEETING

1. **Sunset Ridge Request**
   - Legislative
   - Staff Presentation: Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst

   NO ACTION TAKEN

2. **Northgate Lake Preliminary Plat Landscape Plans**
   - Legislative
   - Staff Presentation: Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst

   NO ACTION TAKEN

3. **2023 Tree Board Work Plan Update**
   - Discussion
   - Staff Presentation: Nicholas Wharton, Town Manager

   DISCUSSION presented by Brad Davison, Public Works

C. COMMUNICATIONS

Board approval may be sought for administrative actions in association with staff reports.

1. Town Staff

2. Board Members

D. ADJOURN

6:48

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM	SUBMITTED BY	PRESENTED BY
Franklin's Place	Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst	Nicholas Wharton, Town Manager

ACTION REQUESTED

Town Staff asks that the Severance Tree Board review, discuss, and forward a recommendation to the Severance Planning Commission and Severance Town Council regarding the Franklin's Place Site Plan Landscape. Actions that may be taken: 1. Forward a recommendation of approval to the Severance Planning Commission and Town Council for the Franklin's Landscape Plan 2. Forward a recommendation of approval to the Severance Planning Commission and Town Council for the Franklin's Place Landscape Plan with recommendations and conditions. 3. Take no action.	**Action Requested**

BRIEF SUMMARY

Franklin's Place has been submitted for a site plan in the Town of Severance. A Landscape Plan will be presented tonight for review by the Severance Tree Board. Any comments will be communicated to the applicant and addressed as needed with a resubmittal.

PUBLIC SUPPORT/CONCERN

None at this time.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Town staff asks that the Severance Tree Board review, discuss, and forward a recommendation of approval to the Severance Planning Commission and Town Council for the Franklin's Place Landscape Plan with all recommendations and conditions discussed.

MATERIALS SUBMITTED

The following materials were submitted and included in this packet:
1. Pages from 20230829 Franklin Place Site Plan

LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE

QUANTITY	SYMBOL	BOTANIC NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	HEIGHT	SPREAD
DECIDUOUS TREES						
10		ACER NEGUNDO 'SENSATION'	SENSATION BOXELDER	2" CAL./B&B	40-50'	30-40'
18		CATALPA SPECIOSA	NORTHERN CATALPA	2" CAL./B&B	50-60'	30-40'
10		CELTIS OCCINDENTALIS	HACKBERRY	2" CAL./B&B	40-60'	40-60'
14		GLEDITSIA TRIACANTHOS INERMIS	THORNLESS HONEYLOCUST	2" CAL./B&B	40-50'	35-45'
10		GYMNOCLADUS DIOICA 'ESPRESSO'	ESPRESSO KENTUCKY COFFEETREE	2" CAL./B&B	50-60'	30-35'
17		QUERCUS SHUMARDII	SHUMARD OAK	2" CAL./B&B	60-75'	50-60'
8		QUERCUS MACROCARPA	BUR OAK	2" CAL./B&B	50-60'	35-45'
18		QUERCUS MUEHLENBERGII	CHINKAPIN OAK	2" CAL./B&B	40-50'	40-50'
11		ULMUS 'ACCOLADE'	ACCOLADE ELM	2" CAL./B&B	65-75'	60-70'
7		ULMUS 'MORTON SELECT'	MORTON SELECT ELM	2" CAL./B&B		
ORNAMENTAL TREES						
16		ACER GRANDIDENTATUM 'ROCKY MOUNTAIN GLOW'	ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGTOOTH GLOW MAPLE	1.5" CAL.	20-25'	12-15'
6		MALUS X 'SPRING SNOW'	SPRING SNOW CRABAPPLE	1.5" CAL.	20-25'	20'
4		PRUNUS MAACKII	AMUR CHOKECHERRY	1.5" CAL	25-35'	20-30'
18		SORBUS AUCUPARIA 'MICHRED'	CARDINAL ROYAL MOUNTAIN ASH	1.5" CAL.	20-30'	15-20'
5		SYRINGA RETICULATA	JAPANESE TREE LILAC	1.5" CAL.	20-25'	20-25'
EVERGREEN TREES						
22		JUNIPERUS SCOPULORUM 'WOODWARD'	WOODWARD COLUMNAR JUNIPER	6' HT.	15-20'	4'
48		PICEA ABIES 'CUPRESSINA'	COLUMNAR NORWAY SPRUCE	6' HT.	20-30'	7'
3		PICEA PUNGENS	COLORADO BLUE SPRUCE	6' HT.	80-100'	25-30'
30		PICEA PUNGENS 'BABY BLUE EYES'	BABY BLUE EYES SPRUCE	6' HT.	15-20'	8-12'
18		PICEA PUNGENS 'FASTIGIATA'	COLUMNAR COLORADO SPRUCE	6' HT.	40'	10'
6		PINUS FLEXILIS 'VANDERWOLF'S PYRAMID'	VANDERWOLF'S LIMBER PINE	6' HT.	20-25'	10-15'
DECIDUOUS SHRUBS						
87		CARYOPTERIS X INCANA	BLUE MIST SPIREA	5 GAL.	3-4'	2-3'
87		CORNUS SERICEA 'ISANTI'	ISANTI DOGWOOD	5 GAL.	4-5'	4-7'
62		PEROVSKIA ATRIPLICIFOLIA	RUSSIAN SAGE	5 GAL.	4-5'	4-5'
67		PRUNUS BESSEYI 'PAWNEE BUTTES'	PAWNEE BUTTES WESTERN SAND CHERRY	5 GAL.	1-2'	5-6'
70		RHUS AROMATICA 'GRO-LOW'	GRO-LOW SUMAC	5 GAL.	2-3'	6-8'
110		RIBES AUREUM	GOLDEN CURRANT	5 GAL.	3-6'	3-6'
28		VIBURNUM LENTAGO	NANNYBERRY	5 GAL.	12-16'	8-12'
ORNAMENTAL GRASSES						
214		MISCANTHUS SINENIS 'GRACILLIMUS'	MAIDEN GRASS	1 GAL.	5-6'	5-6'

LANDSCAPE NOTES:

1. ALL LANDSCAPING AND PLANTS TO BE LOCATED NOT TO INTERFERE WITH EXISTING OR PROPOSED UTILITIES CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY LOCATION OF ALL UNDERGROUND UTILITIES, LINES AND STRUCTURES PRIOR TO EXCAVATION OR TRENCHING. DAMAGE TO THESE UTILITIES SHALL BE REPAIRED BY THE CONTRACTOR AT NO COST TO THE OWNER OR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.
2. ALL PLANT MATERIALS SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH AAN (AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSERYMEN) SPECIFICATIONS FOR NUMBER ONE GRADE.
3. PLANT QUANTITIES SHOWN FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY, CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY ALL QUANTITIES.
4. ALL TREE AND SHRUB LOCATIONS SHALL BE STAKED BY CONTRACTOR AND APPROVED BY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.
5. PLANT SUBSTITUTIONS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WITHOUT APPROVAL FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.
6. PLANTS SHALL BE INSTALLED IMMEDIATELY UPON DELIVERY TO SITE, IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, PLANTS SHALL BE HEELED IN AND WATERED TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION.
7. SOIL AMENDMENT:
   SOD AREAS - 4 C.Y. PER 1,000 S.F. OF COMPOST TILLED INTO 4" OF EXISTING SOIL. APPLY DIAMONIUM PHOSPHATE (18-46-0) AT ONE HUNDRED (100) POUNDS NITROGEN PER ACRE.
   SHRUB AND PLANTING BEDS - 4" OF COMPOST TILLED INTO 6" OF EXISTING SOIL.

   ACCEPTABLE PRODUCT: CLASS I COMPOST. COMPOSTED MATERIAL SHALL CONSIST OF AGED ORGANIC MATTER, FREE OF WEED OR OTHER NOXIOUS PLANT SEEDS, LUMPS, STONES, OR OTHER FOREIGN CONTAMINANTS HARMFUL TO PLANT LIFE, AND HAVING THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS BASED ON A NUTRIENT TEST PERFORMED NO LONGER THAN 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO ITS INCORPORATION INTO THE PROJECT:
   A. ORGANIC MATTER: 25% MINIMUM.
   B. SALT CONTENT: 5.0 MMHOS/CM MAXIMUM
   C. PH: 7.5 MAXIMUM.
   D. CARBON TO NITROGEN RATIO OF 10:1 TO 20:1
8. SOD TO BE REPLACED OVER ALL TRENCHED IRRIGATION LINES.
9. INSTALL 4" OF ORGANIC WOOD MULCH IN EXISTING PLANTING BEDS AND TREE PLANTING PITS THAT HAVE BEEN DISTURBED OR ENLARGED. MULCH TO MATCH EXISTING.
10. ALL DAMAGED OR DEAD PLANT MATERIAL TO BE REPLACED. CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE WATER THROUGHOUT CONSTRUCTION PERIOD.
11. THE FOLLOWING SEPARATIONS SHALL BE PROVIDED BETWEEN TREES/SHRUBS AND UTILITIES:
    10 FEET BETWEEN TREES AND WATER, SANITARY AND STORM SEWER MAIN/ SERVICE LINES
    5 FEET BETWEEN SHRUBS AND WATER, SANITARY AND STORM SEWER MAIN /SERVICE LINES
12. PERMANENT IRRIGATION TO BE PROVIDED TO ALL LANDSCAPE AREAS. SPRAY IRRIGATION TO BE USED FOR ALL LAWN AND SEEDED AREA AND DRIP IRRIGATION TO ALL SHRUB BEDS.
13. IRRIGATION IS PROVIDED BY TAILHOLT METRO DISTRICT NON-POTABLE WATER SYSTEM.

IRRIGATED SOD
(3 TYPE BLUEGRASS HYBRID/20% TEXAS BLUEGRASS)

IRRIGATED COOL SEASON SEED MIX:
(Drill seed rate 2-5 lbs/1,000 SF) (SEEDING TO HAPPEN DURING JULY-AUGUST WITH IRRIGATION PROVIDED)

20% SLENDER WHEATGRASS
20% BLUEBUNCH WHEATGRASS
20% THICKSPIKE WHEATGRASS
20% STREAMBANK WHEATGRASS
15% WESTERN WHEATGRASS
5% ROCKY MOUNTAIN FESCUE

FRANKLIN PLACE

TJB Partners, Inc.
2120 S. College Ave. Unit 5
Fort Collins, CO 80525

russell+mills

REV.	COMMENT	DATE

FINAL
SITE PLAN

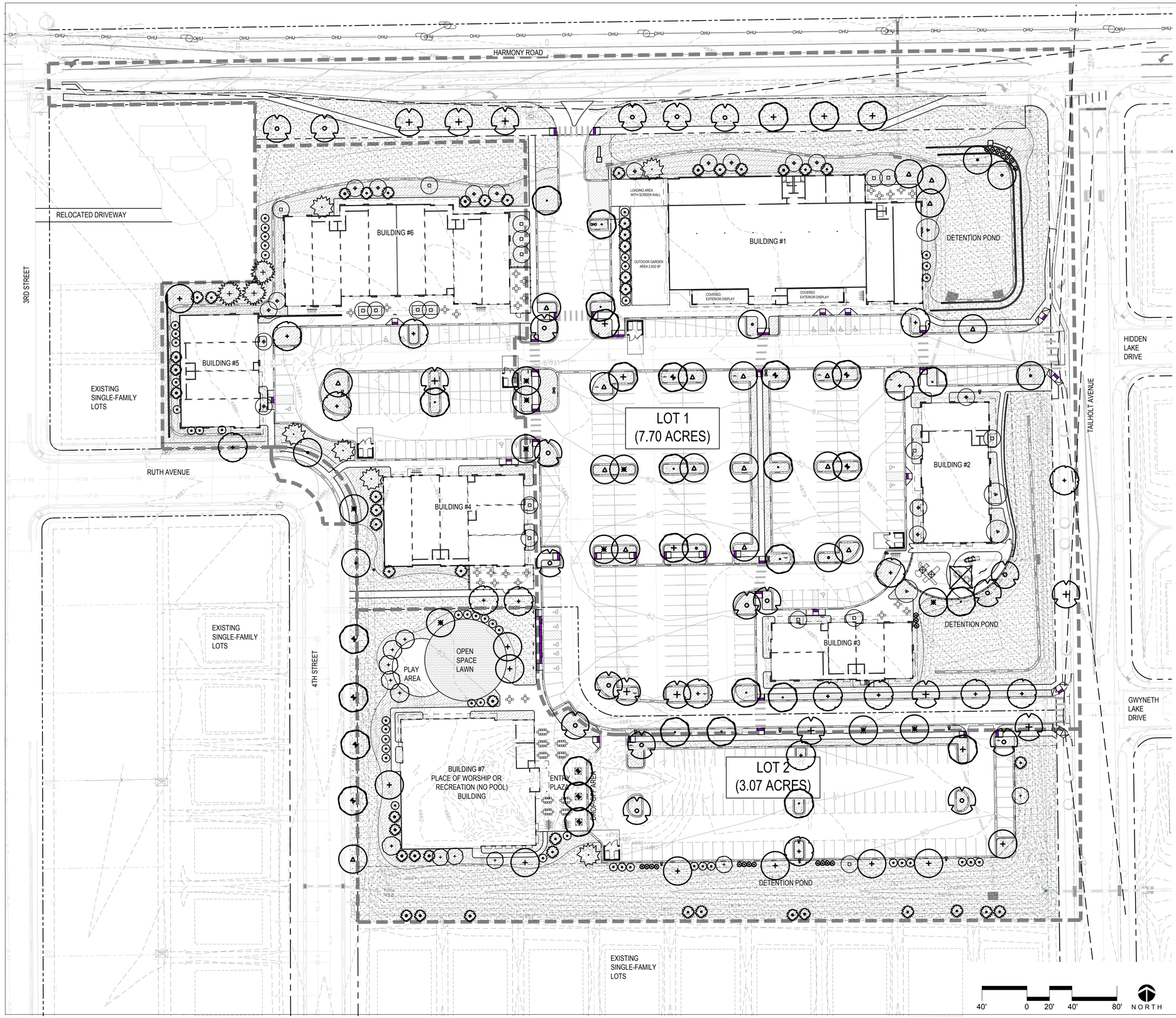
Date: 08.28.2023
Drawn By: SL
Checked By: PM

Sheet Name

LANDSCAPE SCHEDULE & NOTES

Sheet

54



LANDSCAPE LEGEND:

- PROPERTY / RIGHT-OF-WAY
- LOT LINE
- PHASE LINE
- EASEMENT LINE
- (80%) 2"-4" COBBLE ROCK (20%) 4"-8" COBBLE ROCK, W/ WEED BARRIER
- IRRIGATED SOD (REFER TO LP001)
- IRRIGATED COOL SEASON MIX (REFER TO LP001)
- ROLL TOP STEEL EDGER
- RETAINING WALL (REFER TO CIVIL PLANS FOR MORE INFORMATION)
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REFER TO LP101-LP104 FOR SHRUB AND ORNAMENTAL GRASS LAYOUT

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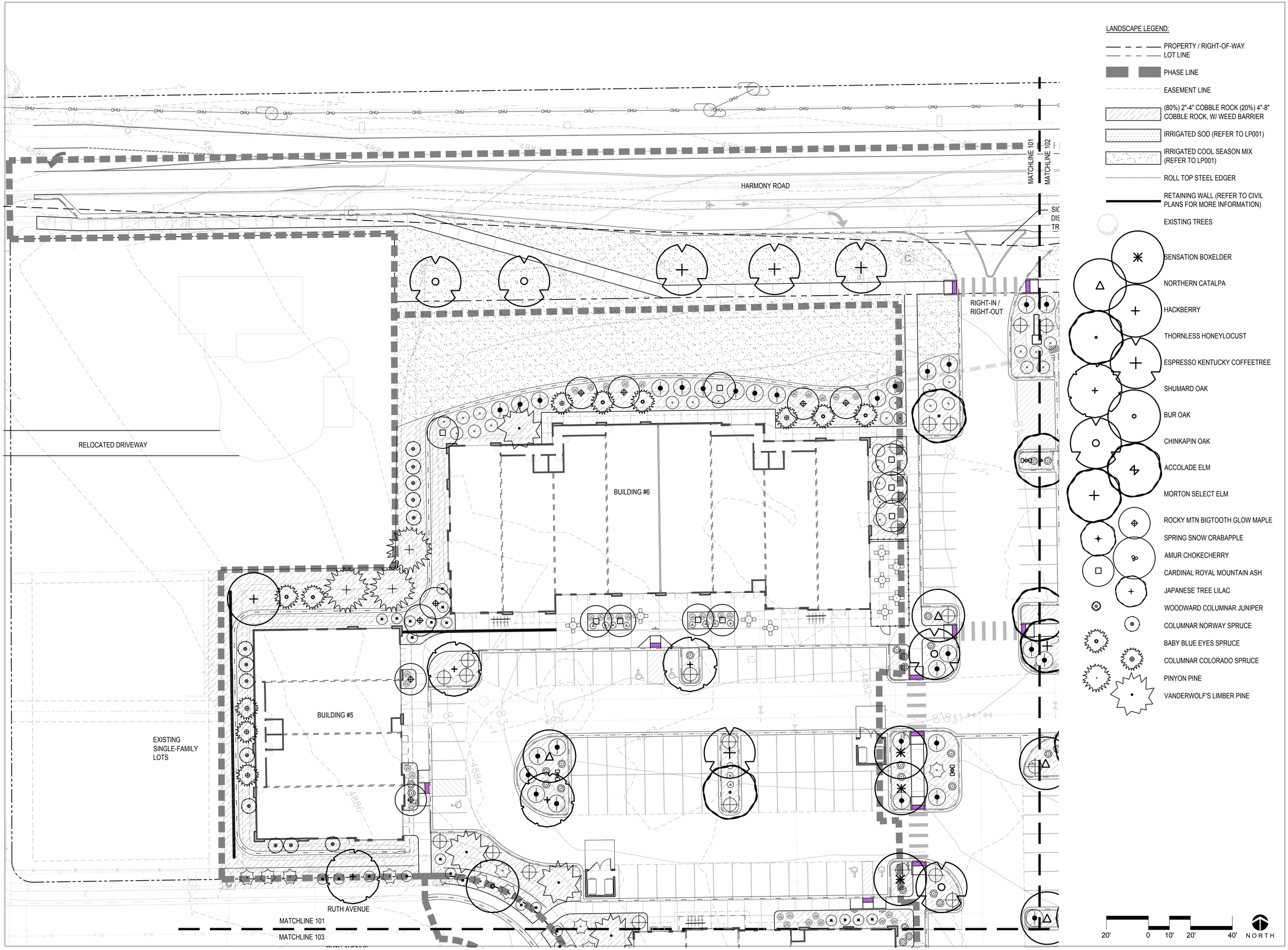
OVERALL LANDSCAPE PLAN

Sheet

55



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20' 0 10' 20' 40' NORTH

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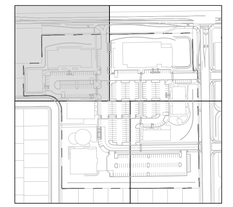

KEY MAP

REV.	COMMENT	DATE

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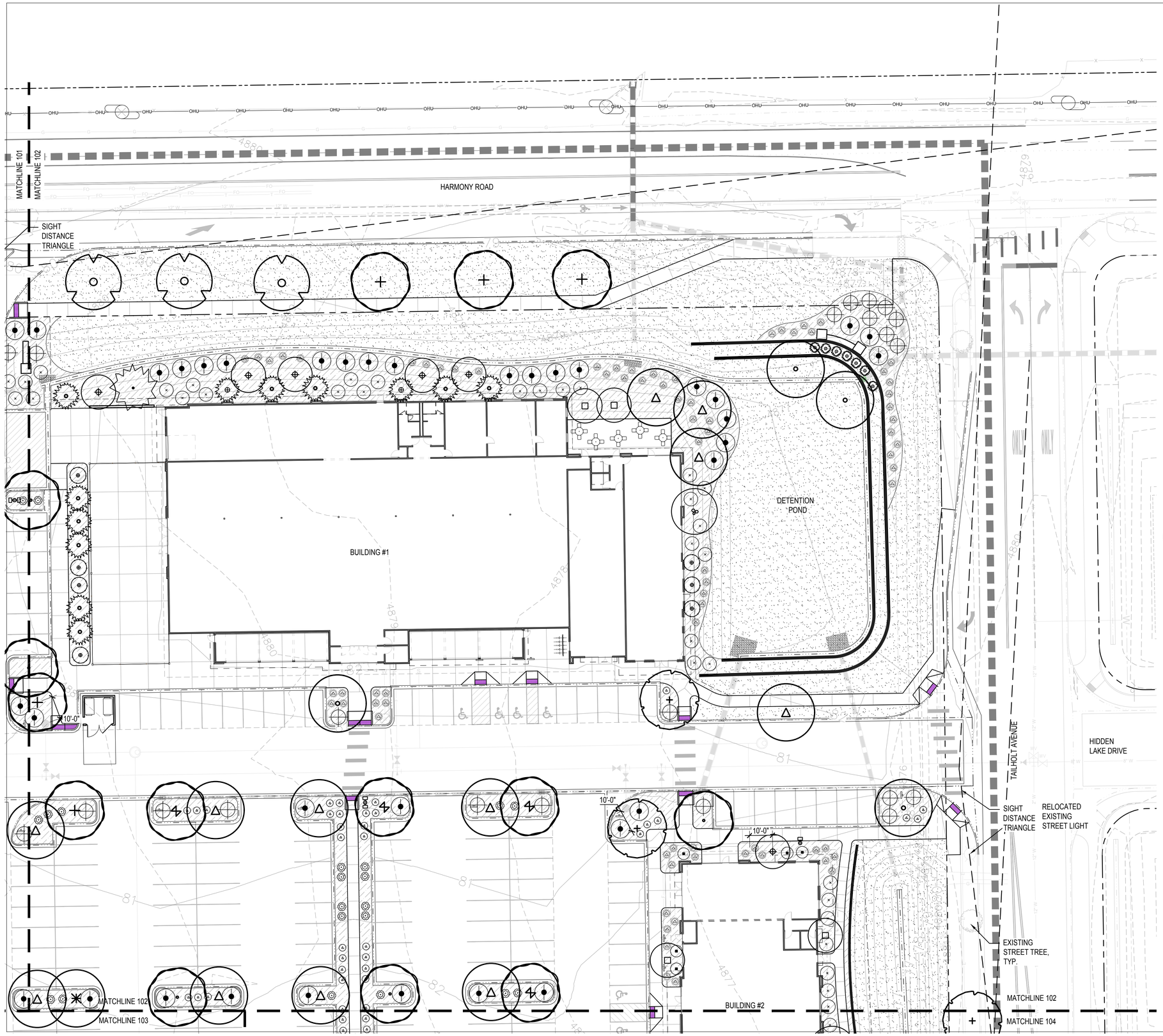
LANDSCAPE PLAN

Sheet

56



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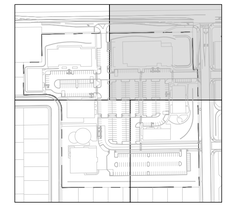

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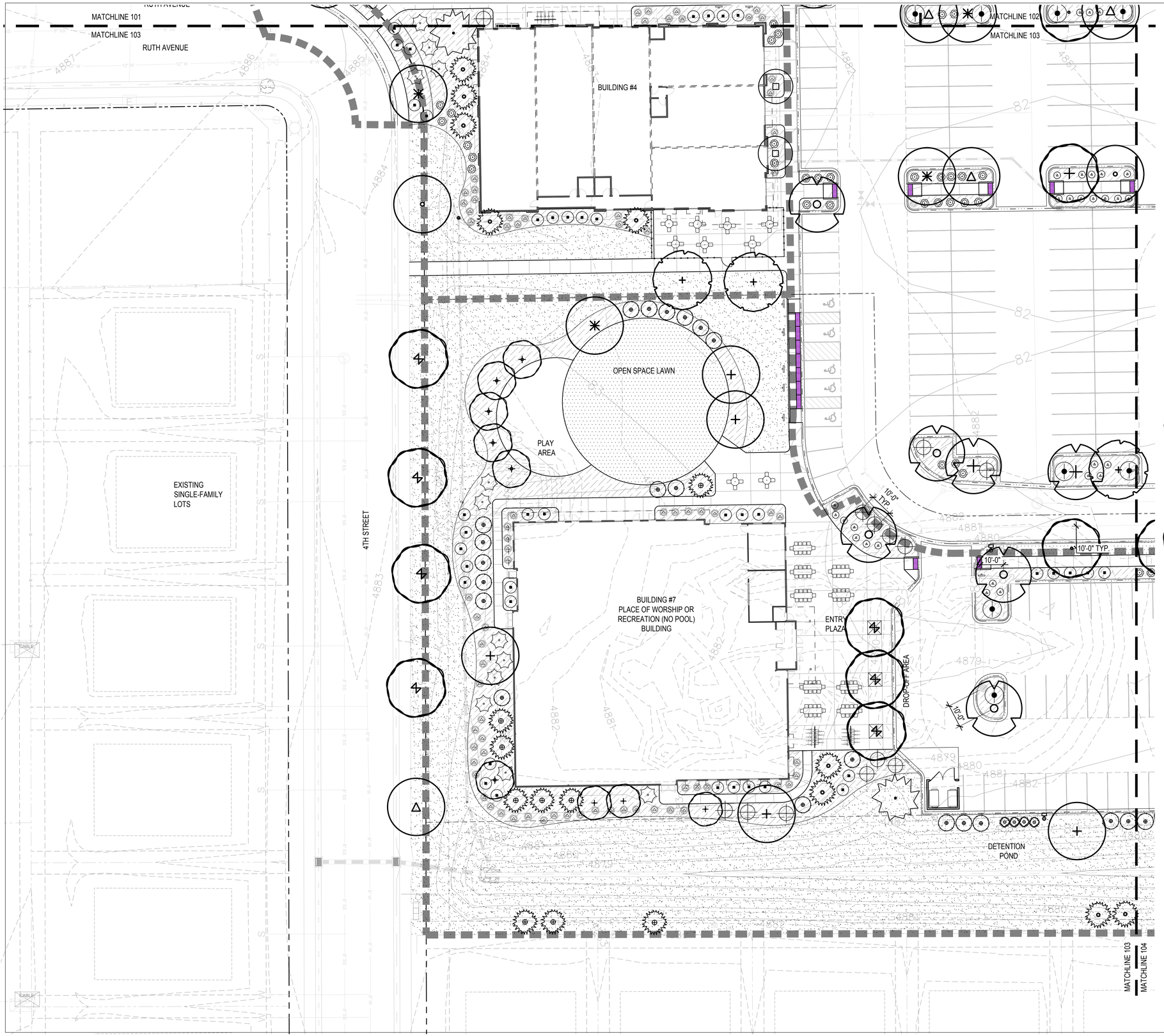

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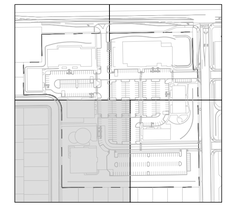

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LANDSCAPE PLAN

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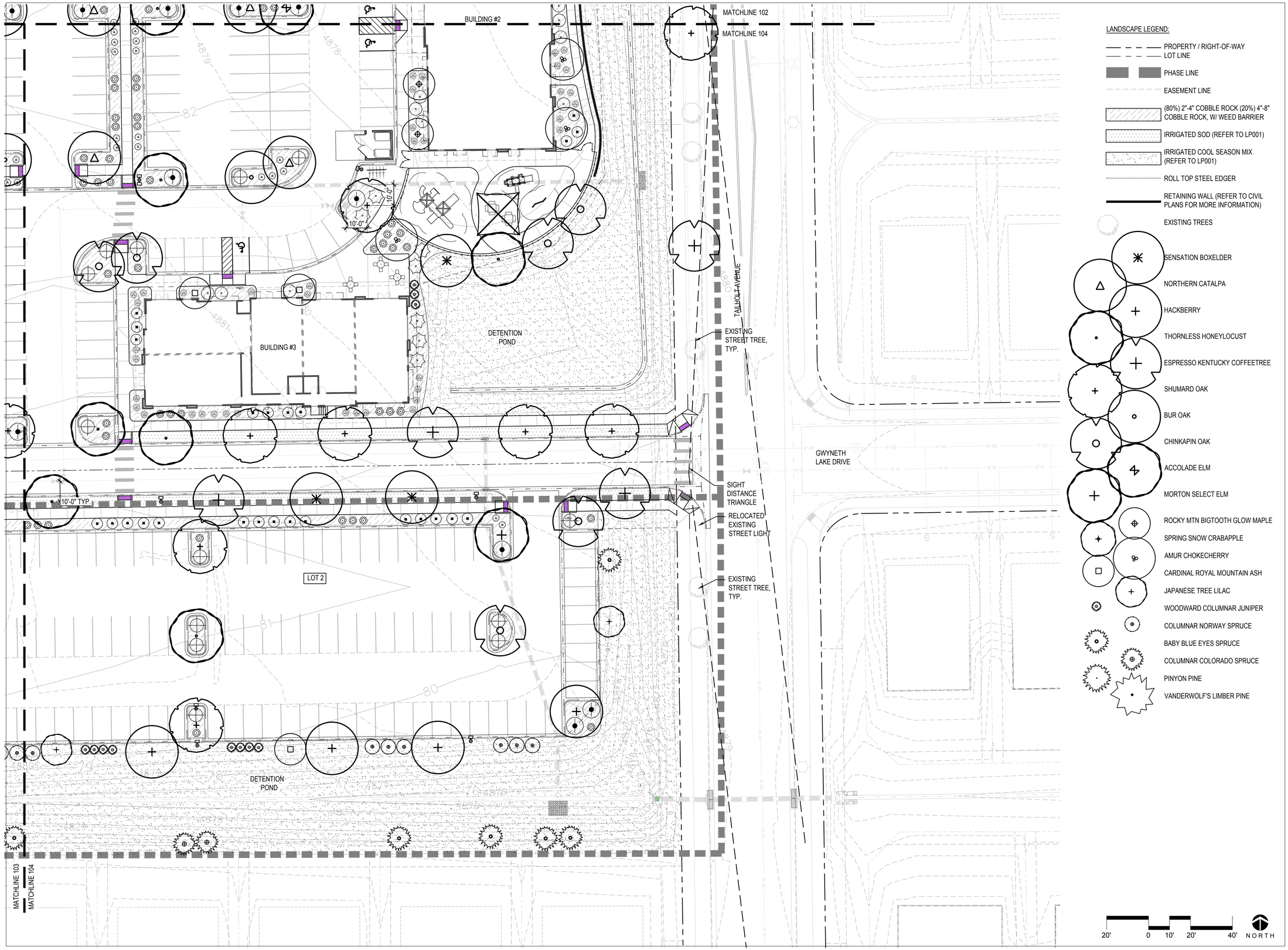
58



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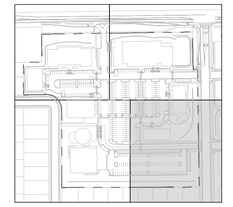

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LANDSCAPE PLAN

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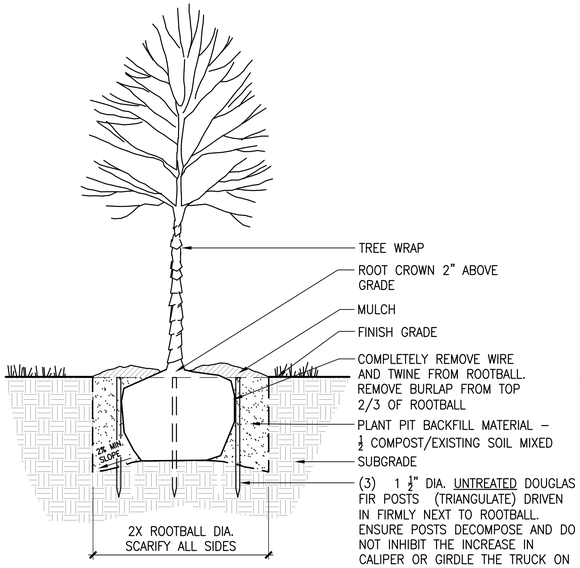
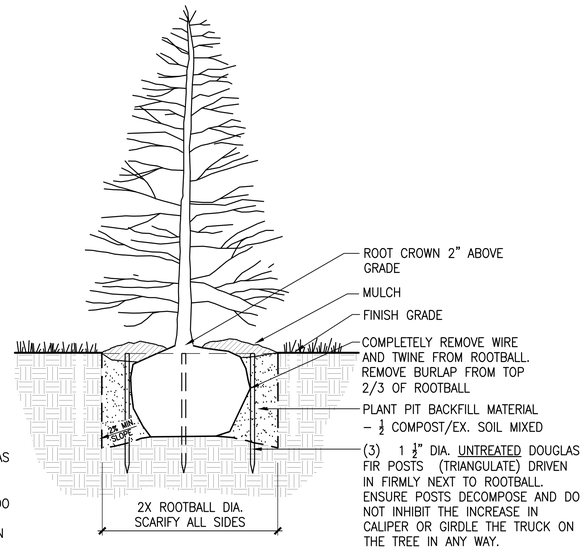


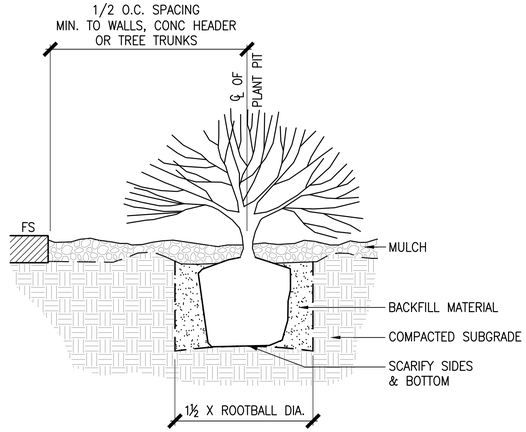
A DECIDUOUS TREE PLANTING

SCALE: NTS DT-PLNT-TREE-DECI-GRND-STAK



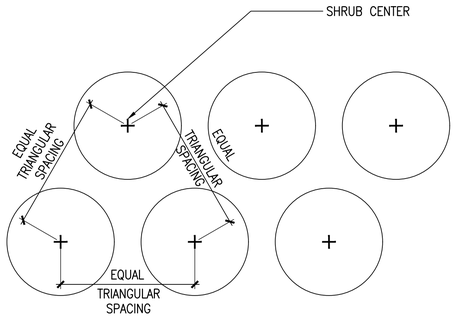
B EVERGREEN TREE PLANTING

SCALE: NTS DT-PLNT-TREE-EVER-GRND-STAK



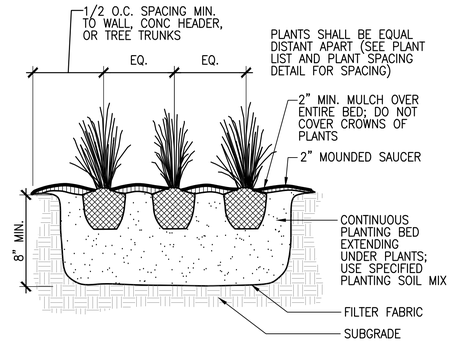
C SHRUB PLANTING

SCALE: NTS shrb.dwg



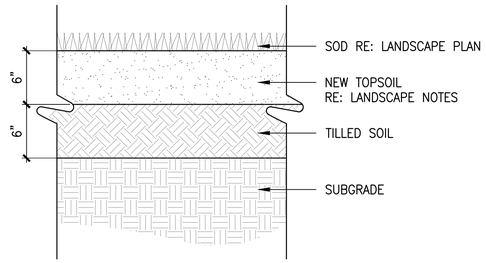
D TRIANGULAR SHRUB SPACING

SCALE: NTS DT-PLNT-SHRB-SPAC



E PERENNIAL PLANTING

SCALE: NTS DT-Perennial.dwg



F SOD PLANTING

SCALE: 1 1/2" = 1'-0" DT-PLNT-SOD

FRANKLIN PLACE

TJB Partners, Inc.
2120 S. College Ave. Unit 5
Fort Collins, CO 80525

russell+mills

REV.	COMMENT	DATE

FINAL
SITE PLAN

Date: 08.28.2023
Drawn By: SL
Checked By: PM

Sheet Name

LANDSCAPE DETAILS

Sheet

60

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM	SUBMITTED BY	PRESENTED BY
2024 Draft Work Plan	Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst	Brad Davison

ACTION REQUESTED

Management & Staff asks that the Tree Board discuss the 2024 Work Plan and take action. Actions that may be taken: • Move to approve the 2024 Work Plan • Take no action	**Action Requested**

BRIEF SUMMARY

Management and Staff are presenting the 2024 Work Plan that includes urban benefits of planting trees, Best Management practices for pruning, trees that were removed, and upcoming tree planting projects. The plan shows locations of plantings and staff recommendations for the plantings. Staff will use this plan as a template for planting projects throughout the spring and summer.

PUBLIC SUPPORT/CONCERN

None at this time.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Management and Staff recommend that the Tree Board take action and Approve the Tree Board 2024 Work Plan with any changes and recommendations discussed.

MATERIALS SUBMITTED

The following materials were submitted and included in this packet:
1. 2024 Tree Board Work Plan

TREE BOARD
2024 WORK PLAN

The Town of Severance strives to promote the overall health and maintenance of trees in our town. Trees are public infrastructure that appreciates as they grow; therefore, it is essential to protect and maintain what we have. Our urban forest provides endless benefits by sequestering and storing carbon, reducing stormwater runoff, energy costs, and heat island effect through shading and producing oxygen. The Town of Severance was awarded Tree City USA status in 2018 and is now in its fourth year as a Tree City USA. The Tree City USA Award Program was created to recognize those communities that effectively manage their public tree resources and strive to heighten the public's awareness of the many benefits that trees provide. Commitment to obtaining the Tree City USA has provided the Town of Severance with a framework for sustained improvement regarding the town's tree care practices.

We want to thank the Town Tree Board for their guidance and helping us achieve our goals as a town and for giving their time to help our community. The sharing of ideas and concepts that coincide with the Tree Board's participation will help ensure that Severance remains at the forefront of the community for years to come.

Sincerely,

Town Management and Staff

Tree Pruning Best Management Practice

Pruning Schedule -The maintenance pruning schedule shall be dictated by tree species, age, function, and placement.

- Trees less than 7 years old should receive structural pruning on an annual or biennial basis.
- Trees 7-20 years old should receive structural pruning every two to five years.
- Trees 20 years old and older receive maintenance pruning every five to seven years to clean dead, diseased, dying, and defective branches from the crown.
- Trees adjacent to roadways, walkways, and signs are annually inspected for safety and clearance issues and maintenance pruned as necessary.

Pruning Practices - To encourage the development of a strong, healthy tree, the following guidelines shall be followed when pruning.

General Pruning shall not be conducted without a clear objective or outcome.

- Prune first for safety, next for health, and finally for aesthetics.
- When removing branches, the pruning cut shall not damage the branch bark ridge and branch collar.
- Heading cuts should not be used except in storm response and crown restoration procedures.
- Cleaning thinning shall be performed to remove dead, diseased, dying, and defective branches, which reduces hazards, promotes, health, and improves appearance.
- Assess how a tree will be pruned from the top down. Ideally, lateral branches should be evenly spaced on the main stem of young trees.
- Remove any branches that rub or cross another branch. Make sure that lateral branches are no more than one-half to three-quarters of the diameter of the main stem to discourage the development of co-dominant stems.
- Do not remove more than one-quarter of the living crown of a tree at one time. If it is necessary to remove more, do it over successive years.
- Remove basal sprouts and vigorous epicormic sprouts.
- Make the pruning cut at a lateral branch that is at least one-third the diameter of the stem to be removed. If it is necessary to remove more than half of the foliage from a branch, remove the entire branch.

Parks and Town Grounds Maintenance

The Parks Program is ultimately responsible for determining the maintenance needs of trees, shrubs, and flowers within the parks system. Inspections will be done on a periodic basis to establish maintenance needs for the Program's annual work plan. Work will be scheduled as staffing and budgetary constraints permit. Maintenance needs will be determined according to the existing health and projected viability of each plant and routine park inspections are performed every week or as needed to check for damage or other problems. Work is performed as required to correct these situations. Any damage resulting from vandalism is reported to the Police Department for investigating and photographs are taken if appropriate.

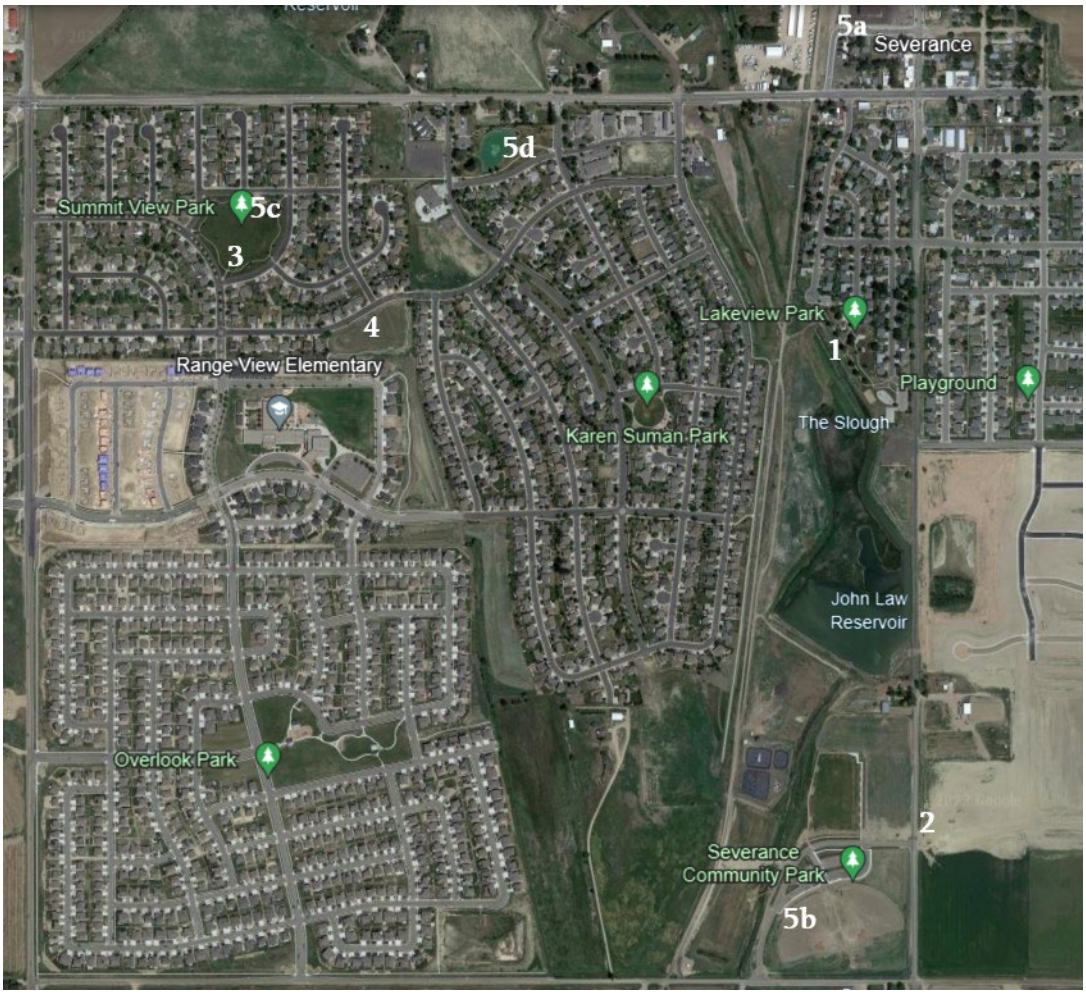
The Town Arborist performs these routine maintenance tasks and may request support and assistance from additional park staff:

- Pruning/Removal - small trees, shrubs, hedges
- Watering - supplemental as needed by stressed or non-established plants
- Planting - as need is determined
- Herbicide Application - to maintain a vegetation-free zone around plants
- Mulching - to protect new plants and in shrub beds
- Staking/Wrapping - to protect young or recently transplanted trees

*Major trimming/removal and insect/disease control is contracted to private firms. Contracts are administered by the Public Works Director.

2024 Projects

As directed by the Town of Severance Tree Board, the Parks Program will focus on completing the following planting projects for 2024.



1) Lakeview Park: Two (2) trees.
2) CR 23 New Trail: Six (6) trees.
3) Summit View Park: Two (2) Trees.
4) Summit View Detention: Four (4) trees.
5) Tree Replacements:
(a) Public Works (1)
(b) Community Park (13)
(c) Summit View Park (3)
(d) Blue Spruce (3)

Lakeview Park

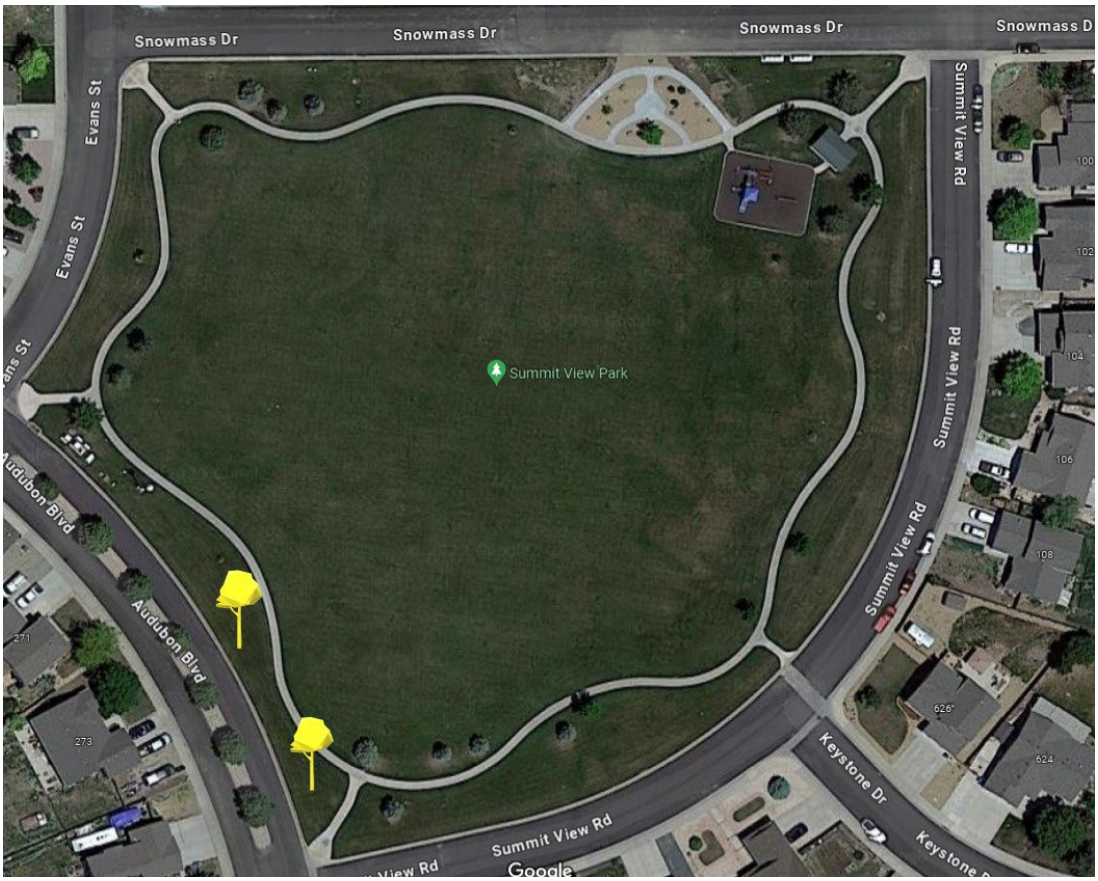
2 Shade Trees planted to add to canopy at park and provide ground cover for areas where turf burns during peak summer heat.

County Road 23

(Along New sidewalk section)

6 Trees to be planted along the East side of CR 23 along the connecting sidewalk to Tailholt. Trees near power lines will be Ornamental trees. Others as space allows will be Shade/Evergreen. This will add beauty, shade and canopy coverage to an otherwise empty view.

Summit View

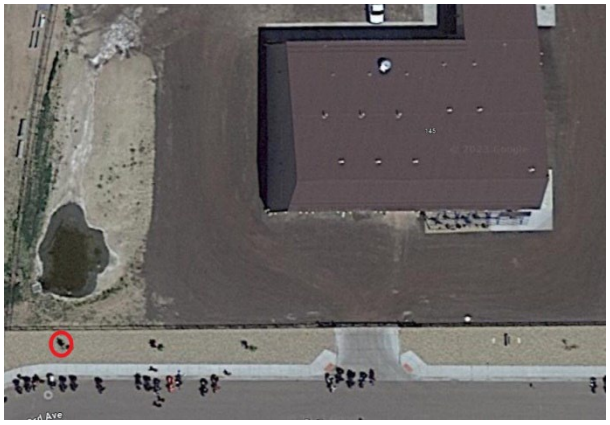


2 Shade Trees added to SW corner of Summit View Park. This will add to the growing canopy at Summit View Park. While maintaining the layout and site lines at the park.

Summit View Detention

4 Evergreen Trees Planted along the North Sidewalk. This will add landscaping to the drainage pond that is otherwise bare. This will increase the canopy in the area and bring more appeal to the green space.

Tree Replacement 2024



Public Works 1 Tree

Community Park 10 Trees

Summit View 3 Trees

Blue Spruce 3 Trees

Carry Over Projects from 2023

1. Public Works Building: Five (5) Trees W. side of retention pond
2. 2nd Ave (North of Public Works Building): Along the Fence line between the sidewalk. After PD building and new fence line installed.*
3. Water Tank Location:– TBD: New water tower going in, new landscape.*
4. Blue Spruce: 4 Trees.

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEM	SUBMITTED BY	PRESENTED BY
Native Grass Ordinance Review	Brayden Pedersen, Management Analyst	Nicholas Wharton, Town Manager

ACTION REQUESTED

Town Staff asks that the Severance Tree Board review, discuss, and forward a recommendation to the Severance Town Council regarding Ord. No. 2022-24 §1. Actions that may be taken:

1. Forward a recommendation to update Ord. No. 2022-24 §1 with conditions.
2. Take no action.

Action Requested

BRIEF SUMMARY

Request for the Town of Severance to grant the Tailholt Metropolitan District (the District) permission to allow native grasses to exceed the ordinance (Ord. No. 2022-24 §1) which limits growth to no more than 9".

PUBLIC SUPPORT/CONCERN

None at this time.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Town staff asks that the Severance Tree Board review, discuss, and forward a recommendation to the Severance Town Council for Ord. No. 2022-24 §1

MATERIALS SUBMITTED

The following materials were submitted and included in this packet:

1. THMD Letter to Nick on Native Grass 9-25-23 (1)
2. Native Grasses for CO Landscapes
3. native-grass-areas-for-hoas
4. THMD - MB Native Turf Letter 9.13.23

September 25, 2023

Nicholas J. Wharton
Town Manager
Town of Severance

RE: Town of Severance Ordinance Sec. 7-1-210
Mowing natives' grasses at 9 inches or less.

Hello Mr. Nicholas,

I am sending in this letter to discuss the new Town of Severance Ordinance Sec. 7-1-210. I received an email from Code Enforcement about this new ordinance on June 22, 2023, about natural grasses not to be over nine (9) inches in height. I want to discuss that cutting or mowing new native grasses at nine (9) inches or less will stop all new growth of native areas, and possibly kill all the native grasses as it would be fully exposed to the sun and all other weather elements.

This town ordinance goes against the approved landscape plans for the Tailholt subdivision and the seed mix this area was planted in, which is following the approved landscape plans.

Besides the areas being planted with grasses that naturally grow longer than nine inches, these areas might have to be re-seeded now due to the growing heights of the approved seed mix, plus irrigation will more than likely must be added for such short growing grasses.

At this time the District is paying for 1 mowing a year or sometimes two mowing. These areas that are mowed to less than 9 inches, will more than likely will have to be mow every 3 weeks if they survive the low cuttings and do not burn out.

Also mowing native grasses short goes against established growing procedures for native grasses. I hope some of the items I address below will have the town counsel reconsider ordinance Sec. 7-1-210 or come up with a 5-year permit plan to allow new projects or areas in need of mitigation to get these areas fully established, with grasses over 9 inches in length.

To give a very light history of my back ground, I have worked in Land Development over seeing Federal projects, State projects, Military projects, Division of Wild Life projects, Forestry Department, local municipalities, and working for private developer's putting in residential developments, such as Filing 1 and Filing 2 in Tailholt, to name a few.

Native grasses are put in for several reason, but require a lot of patience! The main reason is to save on cost of fully landscaping acres upon acres of open space, and cost of water taps. Then the overall cost in long term maintenance and irrigation, then using lots of water some towns, or cities do not have.

After talking and working with several landscape companies, and horticulturist and my job site experience over the last two decades, I wanted to give you a little info on native grasses, that I have experienced. I might miss a step in what is written below, but over all these are the steps to get native grasses established. Plus, with CSU in the area, I am sure the Town of Severance can get expert opinions.

A list general list, comments and/or statements listed below on getting native grasses to grow.

- If native grass is approved for an area, the area will require minimal preparation.
- Prep the area by getting the area to grade.
- Then add minimal amounts of top soil and mix in, to get ready for seed.
- Native grass is seeded by a seeding machine put in normally in 6-inch rows and every row and seed is 6 inches apart.
- Using approved seed mix. Most seed mixes have a quick growing oak or rye grass.

- The oak or rye grass, will grow tall, fast and is put in to the seed mix to help with erosion control or to stabilized the ground and most of all to shade the new growing natives' grasses that were planted.
- Sometimes temporary irrigation is put in to help get areas established a little faster.
- Temporary irrigation if used is put in at ground level or maybe put in 8 to 12 inches above grade to water for a short time, and then grasses grow long blocking the irrigation spray over time.
- **Plus, the goal of putting in native grasses is not to water native areas after being fully established and not to mow; saving money on water and long-term maintenance.**
- Irrigation is not recommended due to it promotes weed growth.
- To be honest temporary irrigation is put in due to inpatients of the municipalities, the developer, the builder, or the new residents. Most the time; all the above.
- Once the native grass in planted, you wait for good weather and for the native areas to grow.
- Normally letting the native area's grow out to 20-24" (Sometimes higher).
- Letting the grasses grow taller as noted above and which is a big part of the seed mix design, again to stabilize the ground and to shade the new growth of native grasses.
- Unfortunately, sometimes the weeds look more prominent in the native area, but they do help with shading and stabilizing the ground.
- The weeds will be handled later, after the native grasses start to be established. If you spray weed abatement products on newly seeded areas or new native grasses that are growing it will die.
- The reason for letting native grass areas grow out is for the longer grasses to shade the new native grasses, then the new native grasses grow longer in the shade and get to a height an maturity to start to create seed.
- You will see seed on longer native grasses, just like you do in your own yards if you let the grass grow longer.
- The natural thing to do is let the native grass seed out. Seed out is dry out while attached to the grass and then drop, spread the seed on the grow below.
- The taller grasses then shade the new seeds that have dropped, promoting new growth from the new seeds that were created from growing out the native grasses.
- This is then starting the cycle of growing native grasses to seed out, then drop the seed, shade the seed, then seed starts to grow, and then preferably do not mow until September or October, then repeat for 5 to 7 years. **<u>This is why higher native grasses are needed.</u>**
- Over all the steps above are needed in growing and establishing a native grass over 5 to 7 years.

I hope the town council will investigate what I brought up and talk to experts if needed or even Goggle native grasses and they will see most of the items I have brought up.

Thanks for your time, also include in this letter are a few items I found on native grasses, along with a link on the e-mail I sent you. If you have any questions, Please let me know,

Sincerely,

Guy D. Johnosn

Tailholt District Manager

PLEASE DO NOT MOW NATIVE AREAS

- Mowing weakens the native grasses, causes them to go dormant and creates weed infestations.
- Tall grasses help shade the ground and adjacent grass plants, reducing evaporation of the moisture in the soil. They also encourage animal biodiversity and native wildlife habitats in open areas.
- It is recommended all mowing operations be eliminated year-round, even in the fall. If you must mow, late fall (October/November) only.

MANAGE WEEDS IN NATIVE GRASS STANDS AND OVERSEED BARE AREAS

- Weed management should start as early as possible in the season as possible and continue throughout the growing season as needed. This helps prevent the weeds from spreading and getting too established.
- Restoring native grasses in areas where they are thin or absent helps to crowd out weeds and prevents erosion. Reclamation and reseeding must be part of a weed control plan from the start.
- Over seeding is usually best done in the fall, to take advantage of winter snows and spring rains, which encourage grass seed germination.

MASTER GARDENER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

CMG GardenNotes #581

Native Grasses for Use in Colorado Landscapes

Why use native grasses?

- Bunchgrasses can be used ornamentally as specimens or in groups.
- Sod forming grasses can make great low maintenance turf and offer savings in mowing, fertilizing, and irrigation.
- Grasses provide excellent forage and cover for birds and beneficial insects.

Seasons: Cool season grasses green up earlier in the spring and can go dormant and turn brown in the heat. Warm season grasses stay dormant longer in the spring and grow during the warmer season.

Grasses prefer full sun unless stated otherwise in the notes section.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Season	Height	Planting Elevation	Notes
Achnatherum hymenoides (Oryzopsis hymenoides)	Indian rice grass	Cool	12-24”	To 9,000’	Delicate, lacy bunchgrass with attractive showy panicles. Very low water use. Short lived. Edible seeds. Most well-drained soils.
Andropogon gerardii	Big bluestem	Warm	48-72”	To 7,500’	Robust bunchgrass with upright growth. Turns red burgundy in the fall with color retention well into winter. Tolerates most soils (especially clay) and water regimes.
Andropogon saccharoides	Silver beard grass	Warm	24-48”	To 7,500’	Bunchgrass with fine textured leaves and large seed heads which catch the light and persist through the winter. Orange fall color. Grows in all soils, including clay. Low water use.
Bouteloua curtipendula	Sideoats grama	Warm	24-36”	To 9,000’	Bunchgrass with small pennant-like seeds on one side of stem. Very low water use. Most well-drained soils.
Bouteloua gracilis	Blue grama, eyelash grass	Warm	6-20”	To 9,500’	Bunchgrass with large, curved flowering spikes that resemble eyelashes. Excellent lawn alternative can be left unmown. Withstands moderate traffic and light shade. Low water use.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Season	Height	Planting Elevation	Notes
Buchloe dactyloides	Buffalo grass	Warm	2-8”	To 6,500’	Sod-forming grass, moderate to low water use. Excellent lawn alternative. Long-lived with a vigorous root system. Prefers clay soils.
Eragrostis trichodes	Sand lovegrass	Warm	24-48”	To 6,500’	Bunchgrass with a lacy, airy inflorescence. Does especially well on sandy soils but tolerates most. Low water use.
Festuca arizonica	Arizona fescue	Cool	10-24”	To 10,000’ or higher	Graceful clumping bunchgrass with fine-textured blue-green leaves. Low water use. Tolerates light shade but not traffic.
Koeleria macrantha	June grass	Cool	12-24”	To 11,000’	Bunchgrass with attractive open panicles of flowers. Great mixed with low-growing perennials. Low water use but will tolerate wetter sites. Most soils and light shade.
Pascopyrum smithii (Agropyron smithii)	Western wheatgrass	Cool	12-40”	To 10,500’	Sod-forming grass with upright blue leaves and spikes. Most soils. Because it is strongly rhizomatous, it should be used only where there is adequate growing space.
Panicum virgatum	Switchgrass	Warm	36-48”	To 7,000’ (maybe higher)	Slow sod-former with upright growth, vase shaped. Many delicate panicles, high above the foliage in some strains, turn reddish bronze in the autumn. Often used at the back of the perennial border or as a tall screen.
Schizachyrium scoparium (Andropogon scoparius)	Little bluestem	Warm	12-48”	To 7,500’ or higher	Upright growing bunchgrass with green to blue-green leaves and fluffy seed heads that catch the light, persisting through winter. Fall color is a red to bronze, which fades slowly in winter. Sun. Good for clay soils but tolerates most. Low to moderate water use.
Sporobolus airoides	Alkali sacaton	Warm	36-60”	To 7,500’	Striking robust grass with fine textured bluish leaves and a showy, airy, open inflorescence. Low water use tolerates most soils. Easy to establish.
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian grass	Warm	36-60”	To 6,500’	One of the most ornamental of the native grasses. Upright growth with large tawny seed heads and golden-orange fall color. Moderate water use. Needs space to grow.

Authors: Irene Shonle, PhD, CSU Extension. Reviewed May 2018 and February 2023 by Irene Shonle, PhD, CSU Extension.

Reviewed February 2023

581-3

Reduced Maintenance Grass Areas for HOAs

Dr. Tony Koski
Professor and Extension Turf Specialist
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1173
tony.koski@colostate.edu

In an effort to reduce management inputs (water, mowing, fertilization, pest management) and labor, HOAs often consider the replacement of mowed, irrigated turf (bluegrass, fescues) with grass species (usually referred to as "native grasses") that should require fewer inputs (less/no water, infrequent mowing, no fertilizer, few pesticides). These areas are often referred to as "native grass" areas because their unmowed (or less frequently mowed) appearance sometimes looks like that of an unmanaged, native prairie.

The impact and management of these low maintenance/"native" areas can be a point of contention within HOA communities – especially for those who live adjacent to them and are most affected by their appearance and other potential impacts.

Concerns often voiced about native/low-maintenance grass stands

It looks unkept and messy – and it always turns brown

People who favor the look of more intensively managed, mowed and irrigated lawns will generally be of this opinion. Others view these areas as natural and attractive. When conversion from managed lawns to native, unmowed grass is being considered, it is essential that it be a community-based decision, that communication be constant and open, and that the process be honest (about aesthetics, cost, process, timelines, maintenance) so that unpleasant surprises about the outcome and final product be minimized. The reasons for having existing native areas in a community (to minimize maintenance costs, reduce/eliminate irrigation, to encourage wildlife, etc.) should be conveyed to newcomers to the community. Well-meaning (but misguided) attempts to make native grass stands look more attractive and "lawn-like" (mowing, irrigating, fertilizing) often promote weed growth and will markedly decrease visual aesthetics – because the grasses used to develop native areas are not adapted to mowing and grow best with little/no irrigation and no fertilizer.

Native grass areas are weedy and ugly

The presence of unmanaged weeds in low-maintenance grass stands can detract from their visual beauty and result in legitimate complaints from those living in closest proximity. Having an effective, ongoing weed management plan in place is essential when planning and managing these natural areas. It often takes 3-4 years from planting for native/natural grass areas to become established and more attractive. During that establishment period, weeds are guaranteed to be a problem – so consistent weed management is essential. Once established AND properly maintained (NO mowing, NO water, NO fertilizer), weeds will become much less problematic. That said, spot treatment with herbicides (or manual removal) will always be a part of an ongoing native grass stand management program.

Native areas turn brown during dry weather, becoming a fire hazard

Native grass areas rarely remain green for an entire growing season in Colorado. Cool-season grasses (wheatgrass, bromegrass, wildrye, junegrass) will become dormant during most summers unless they receive supplemental irrigation. This is a normal process for cool-season species. During unusually dry summers, warm-season grasses (bluestems, blue grama, buffalograss) may also become dormant – and warm-season species are always dormant during the coldest periods of the year (October-May). It is true that dormant grass stands can burn easily, so maintaining defensible space near dwellings is an important consideration. Well-designed native areas will be far enough distant from dwellings and buildings that preventive mowing for fire concerns should be minimal.

Tall grass attracts unwanted wildlife (snakes, rodents, predators)

One reason that native grass areas are planted is to encourage wildlife in urban areas. The taller grasses can provide shelter, nesting sites and food for birds, small animals, pollinators, butterflies and other desirable wildlife (including snakes). Occasional problems with nuisance wildlife can usually be successfully managed with the guidance and assistance of animal control and/or wildlife agencies. The most common nuisance animal problem associated with tall grass areas is the vole, which can cause problems for turf and ornamentals in managed landscapes. Vole populations are cyclical, so many years may go by without them causing landscape damage. Rabbit populations are not necessarily encouraged by the presence of tall grass areas; they thrive in well-managed landscapes far from any native grass areas.

The tall native grass will cause more insect problems (mosquitoes, flies, ticks, spiders)

If managed properly, native grass areas won't increase populations of problem insects. In fact, increased numbers of predatory insects will more than balance out any increased numbers of mosquitoes and flies. When grasshopper numbers are high, they will be attracted to the taller grass and away from ornamental landscape areas because the taller grass helps protect the grasshoppers from predators. Mowing tall grass during summers when grasshopper numbers are high will cause them to move into nearby vegetable and flower gardens.

The native grasses are weedy and will invade lawns and gardens

Some non-native grass species planted to emulate native areas (smooth bromegrass, for example) can escape into adjacent lawns and gardens, but these invasions are generally minor and relatively easy to manage. Some native species, like buffalograss, blue grama and little bluestem can seed into adjacent lawns or invade them by their creeping growth habit. These invasions generally go unnoticed by most people and are relatively minor.

Some common misconceptions about managing native grass areas

- **Mowing is good for native grass areas**

Mowing – especially mowing at lawn height – can be very damaging and often results in weed invasion into the close-cut native areas. It is more difficult for weeds to survive in native areas if they are NOT mowed with any regularity. Mowing can actually result in more rapid dormancy and browning than if the grass is left unmowed.

- **It is OK to water native areas to keep them green in the summer**

Temporary irrigation of newly seeded native areas can help with establishment, but water should be discontinued once the grass is established (usually by the end of the second growing season). Continued irrigation will cause excessive growth, encourage weeds, and can create ideal conditions for some insects (mosquitoes) to flourish. These grasses do best when NOT irrigated or fertilized.

- **It is easy to switch from tall grass to lawn, simply by mowing it down and watering it**
  Most of the grass species used to establish low-maintenance grass areas will NOT tolerate lawn height mowing and will thin out dramatically when mowed – resulting in a very unattractive "lawn". Conversion back to lawn will require that the native grass be killed and lawn type grasses be planted. Native grasses and non-natives planted to establish low-maintenance "native" areas perform best if unmowed – or mowed once yearly.

- **Mowing native grass areas is not harmful to wildlife living there**
  The nesting of grassland birds (lark buntings, meadowlarks, sparrows) living in natural grass areas is disrupted by mowing between early April and early September. If native areas are to be mowed, it should be done no more than once annually (preferably mid-February to mid-March) to reduce impacts on birds and other beneficial wildlife living there.

Dr. Tony Koski
Professor and Extension Turf Specialist
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1173
tony.koski@colostate.edu

Go to these sites for information on managing all aspects of your landscape:

CSU Extension	extension.colostate.edu
CSU PlantTalk	http://www.ext.colostate.edu/ptlk/
CSU CO-Horts blog	www.csuhort.blogspot.com

Version 1.1 (October 2017)

SURROUNDINGS FOR LIFE.

mill brothers
LANDSCAPE GROUP

Tailholt Metropolitan District
210 Haymaker Lane
Severance, CO 80550

September 13, 2023

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am writing to you in support of your request of the Town of Severance to grant the Tailholt Metropolitan District (the District) permission to allow native grasses to exceed the ordnance which limits growth to no more than 9". While I do not understand the circumstances or research off which this limit is based, I believe that the facts below illustrate that there is a better approach to establishing and maintaining native grasses rather than just mowing. It is my hope that I may shed some light upon the matter as it relates to best practices for the establishment of, and long-term health of the native grass areas within the District.

Firstly, by nature, native grasses naturally grow rather tall. Please review the following link (https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/Gardennotes/581.pdf) for examples of typically planted native grasses, noting their mature heights. Given the typical growing heights of the grasses used in native stands, including the approved seed mix planted at the District, maintaining the grass at 9" or less requires frequent mowing as it is substantially shorter than the grasses' natural mature height. Native grasses rely on reaching their mature height to present adequate leaf material for photosynthetic processes – processes produce the necessary nutrients to sustain healthy grasses. In the manicured lawn, we compensate for the lost nutrients and added mowing stress with fertilizers and irrigation, however this is not an option in native grass stands. Additionally, mowing grass causes stress that non-irrigated native grasses struggle to recover from readily, especially during times of drought or heat – both of which are common in this area.

In addition to mowing-caused stressors as mentioned above, stands of native grasses rely on self-seeding during both establishment and maturity to remain healthy. A denser stand of grass naturally suppresses weeds, leading to reduced need for herbicide application, as well as potential damage to the grass stand from weed competition. After the flush of vegetative

4760 Three Bell Parkway, Timnath, CO, 80547 – Phone (970) 493-3883 – FAX (970) 493-9002
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growth in the spring, grasses turn reproductive by producing seed stalks and subsequently setting seed. Once this seed has had the opportunity to mature on the stalk, it drops to the ground to germinate the following spring, further establishing the grass stand, as well as filling in any winter killed, weed damaged, or otherwise sparse grass. Seed maturity typically occurs in mid to late summer, depending on the grass species as well as other factors (moisture, temperatures, stress, *et. al*.). Mowing native grasses without consideration for seed set and maturation inhibits a healthy stand by interfering with its natural life cycle. This critical life cycle process cannot occur in virtually all native grasses at or below 9" height. To that end, it is recommended that the grass only be mowed during dormancy in the spring and fall.

Lastly, I would be remiss were I not to also request some latitude as it relates to timing of mowing. This spring brought exceptional moisture to Northern Colorado. While this was a positive occurrence overall, the District, and therefore Mill Brothers Landscape Group (MBLG) was pressured to mow the grass to ordnance height regardless of prevailing conditions. I understand the need to respond in accordance with the ordnance promptly. However, the deadlines for compliance placed MBLG in a position of feeling pressured to mow when it would have not only caused damage to the grass and underlying grade, but it would also have presented a significant safety hazard to our employees attempting to mow in wet, muddy conditions. Regardless of the outcomes resulting from this letter, I respectfully request that there be some latitude given for reasonable discretion as it relates to conditions and their impacts upon safe operations.

In summary, we believe that the evidence for allowing native grasses to grow beyond the 9" required by the ordnance is clear as it relates to establishing and maintaining a healthy native grass stand. The District's approved plans include tall native grasses which only thrive when mowed only in spring and fall, and allowed to reach and remain at their mature heights throughout the growing season.

Very respectfully,

Jason M. Obssuth

Jason Obssuth, Division Manager
Mill Brothers Landscape Group