

## **CITY OF LITTLETON, COLORADO**

## ORDINANCE NO. 03

## Series, 2025

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LITTLETON,  
COLORADO, APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 10,  
UNIFIED LAND USE CODE REGARDING THE  
PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE CITY'S  
TREE CANOPY AND THE TREE CANOPY LOSS RATE

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Littleton, Colorado passed Ordinance 24-2021 in October of 2021 which enacted Littleton City Code Title 10, the “Unified Land Use Code” (ULUC); and

**WHEREAS**, Section 10-9-3.2.A.4. of the ULUC authorizes the director of community development to initiate a code text amendment; and

**WHEREAS**, since October 2021, staff, property owners, business owners, and applicants must comply with the ULUC with site-specific applications; and

**WHEREAS**, in March of 2025, City Council discussed various updates to Littleton's tree preservation policies, aiming to enhance the protection of Littleton's urban forest. Specifically, City Council emphasized the importance of maintaining a tree canopy in Littleton, and discussed an adjustment in the fee structure for tree removal; and

**WHEREAS**, staff conducted a study session with the planning commission regarding the proposed code text amendments regarding the fee structure for tree removal on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 22, 2025, the planning commission held a public hearing to consider PC Resolution No. 10-2025, a recommendation on the adoption of the proposed code text amendment to the fee structure for tree removal within the ULUC; and

**WHEREAS**, that in order to improve and maintain the public health, safety, and welfare it is necessary to adopt certain standards and requirements for trees within our City; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY  
OF LITTLETON, COLORADO, THAT:**

**Section 1:** Littleton City Code, Section 10-1-3.6.A, is hereby amended, by adding capitalized material and striking through deleted material, as follows. In this section, ellipses indicate material not reproduced as the Littleton City Council intends to leave that material in effect, as it now reads.

**Subsec. 10-1-3.6.A Purpose, Applicability, and Design**

**A. Purpose.** Greenscaping in the form of site landscaping, screening of parking and vehicular use and storage areas, and buffering within and between developments contributes to the character and appearance of developments. **TREES ARE AN ASSET THAT SHOULD BE PROPERLY PROTECTED AND MAINTAINED.** The greenscape requirements in this Section serve to address the following:

**1. ENVIRONMENT. PRESERVATION OF MATURE TREES AND PROMOTION OF NEW TREES IS A PRIORITY FOR THE COMMUNITY. MATURE TREES PROVIDE INNUMERABLE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING IMPROVEMENT TO AIR QUALITY AND SEQUESTRATION OF CARBON, REDUCTION OF NOISE POLLUTION, REDUCTION TO HEAT ISLANDS, AND PROVIDING IMPROVEMENT TO MENTAL WELLNESS;**

**1.2. Appearance.** Improve the general appearance and aesthetic appeal of the city by creating tree-lined streets with deciduous canopies, preserving urban tree cover, and softening the impacts of development with landscaping;

**2.3. Character.** Establish an aesthetic that emphasizes the value and beauty of the natural landscape and the visual enhancement of streetscapes, parking lots, service areas, building foundations and façades, and utility improvements;

**3.4. Buffering.** Provide for landscaping and screening between zoning districts to buffer adjacent land uses and their associated impacts;

**4.5. Green Function.** Enhance the various place types with provisions for pervious surfaces and planting areas for trees, shrubs, and grasses;

**5.6. Conservation.** Conserve energy and water resources by encouraging the use of shade and xeriscaping;

**6.7. Biodiversity.** Provide a diversity of species and native plant communities to ensure natural sustainability, minimize the spread of disease and insect infestations, and limit the use of species that cause negative impacts to native plant communities; and

**7.8. Water Quality.** Protect the quality of surface water and groundwater, reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff, prevent stream channel erosion, preserve trees and other natural vegetation, and encourage groundwater recharge.

**B. Applicability ...**

**C. DESIGN**

**1. Objectives.** In the review and approval of landscape plans, the Director may impose additional requirements to fulfill the following sustainable design objectives:

- a.** Integration of drainage and pedestrian circulation systems into the landscaping design.
- b.** Use of ground covers or other types of landscape materials that stabilize soils and minimize erosion.
- c.** Protection during construction and preservation of existing native vegetation.
- d.** Use of landscape materials that achieve variety with respect to seasonal changes, species of living material selected, textures, colors, and size at maturity.

89        e. Placing newly installed plants at intervals to ensure their health at maturity.  
90        e.f. PLANTING OF NEW TREES SHALL BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
91        INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE STANDARDS.

92        f.g. Maximize shading of streets and parking areas.

93        g.h. Provision for native and drought-tolerant plant species.

94        h.i. Planting trees and shrubs in locations that will reduce energy consumption by shading  
95        buildings and reducing the heat island effects of paved surfaces.

96        i.j. Protection of existing specimen trees and native vegetation to preserve intact natural  
97        ecosystems.

98        j.k. Designing the landscape to complement building elevations and architecture through  
99        use of color, texture, density, and form on both vertical and horizontal  
100       planes. Landscaping should be in proportionate scale with adjacent buildings and be  
101       of a size at maturity to accomplish intended goals. Ornamental, shrub, and ground  
102       cover plantings should be designed to complement a building's architectural  
103       character.

104       k.l. Landscape design should incorporate natural drainage features and the use of  
105       pervious surfaces and areas that capture and minimize runoff.

106       l.m. Inclusion of pedestrian amenities such as, but not limited to, shade, benches, kiosks,  
107       public art, shades, fountains, and other elements into the landscape design.

108       2. *Water Wise Landscaping (Xeriscape).* ....

109       3. *Qualifications.*

110       a. ....

111       b. A professional shall certify that they are qualified to prepare the type of plan(s) that  
112       they submit by verifying licensure or certification at the time of application  
113       and providing professional qualifications, which may include:

- 114       1. Licensed Landscape Architect;
- 115       2. Licensed Architect;
- 116       3. Licensed Professional Engineer; or
- 117       4. Certified Irrigation Designer (CID);

118       5. INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE (ISA) CERTIFIED  
119       ARBORIST.

120       **Section 2:** Littleton City Code, Section 10-1-3.6.B, is hereby amended, by adding  
121       capitalized material and striking through deleted material, as follows. In this section, ellipses  
122       indicate material not reproduced as the Littleton City Council intends to leave that material in  
123       effect, as it now reads.

124       **Subsec. 10-1-3.6.B Planting Requirements**

125       **A. Plant Materials Standards.**

129 1. *Plant Types.* ...

130 2. *Plant Variety.* All plants shall be of a type and species that are selected for the  
131 climate, location, and soils on the site, as promulgated by the Colorado State  
132 University Extension FRONT RANGE TREE RECOMMENDATION LIST. All  
133 plant material shall be commercially produced and meet the minimum standards  
134 recognized by landscape professionals. In order to reduce the threat and impact of  
135 plant disease, a variety of plant types and species shall be utilized on each site. ~~In~~  
136 ~~general, a minimum of one third of the plant material on any lot should be~~  
137 ~~evergreen. ALL NEW PLANTINGS SHALL FOLLOW THE CITY'S 5-10-20~~  
138 ~~RULE OF DIVERSITY STANDARDS, AS OUTLINED IN THE URBAN~~  
139 ~~FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN, WHERE~~ no more than 5% of the same  
140 species, no more than 10% of the same genus, and no more than 20% of the same  
141 family.

142 3. *Living Materials.* ...

143 4. *Nonliving Materials.* ...

144 5. *Artificial Turf.* ...

145 5. *Prohibited.* Use of any plant species ~~WHICH HAS BEEN DECLARED A "NOXIOUS~~  
146 ~~WEED" OR INVASIVE SPECIES BY THE LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD UNDER~~  
147 ~~TITLE 4, CHAPTER 4, OR THE STATE~~ listed by the Colorado Department of  
148 Agriculture as a "Noxious Weed Species," according to the ~~of~~ Colorado Noxious Weed  
149 Act, C.R.S. §§ 35-5.5-101 through 35-5.5-119 ~~ET SEQ., AS AMENDED~~, is  
150 prohibited. ~~Specifically prohibited species include:~~

151 ii. ~~Chinese and Siberian elms;~~

152 iii. ~~Cotton bearing cottonwoods (female *Populus* species);~~

153 iv. ~~Russian olive; and~~

154 v.i. ~~Box elder.~~

155 6. *Sizes.* ...

156 B. [RESERVED.]

157 C. **Plant Locations and Timing.**

158 1. *Public Right-of-Way.* ...

159 2. *Sight Triangle.* ...

160 3. *Easements.* ...

161 4. *Spacing.* ...

162 5. *Timing of Landscape Installation.* Landscaping that is required by this Code shall be  
163 installed between March 15 and October 15. If compliance with this timeframe is  
164 impractical due to the time of year that work is completed, an applicant may provide a  
165 financial performance guarantee in the form of a cash bond, ~~irrevocable~~ letter of credit,  
166 certified check, or similar instrument acceptable to the ~~CITY ATTORNEY~~ ~~Public~~  
167 ~~Works Director or the Public Works Director's designee~~, in an amount equal to 125  
168 percent of the estimated cost of purchase and installation of required landscaping.

169 D. **Plant Substitutions.**

171        **1. Approval.** Requested substitutions of plant material shall be submitted on a landscape plan  
172        and shall be in accordance with the recommended plant lists promulgated by the Colorado  
173        State University Extension's **FRONT RANGE RECOMMENDATION LIST** and  
174        approved by the Director.

175        **2. Substitution Ratios ...**

177        **Section 3:** Littleton City Code, Section 10-1-3.6.C, is hereby amended, by adding  
178        capitalized material and striking through deleted material, as follows. In this section, ellipses  
179        indicate material not reproduced as the Littleton City Council intends to leave that material in  
180        effect, as it now reads.

182        **Subsec. 10-1-3.6.C Protection and Preservation**

183        A. Purpose ...

184        B. ...

186        E. Tree Protection.

187        1. *Distance from Utilities.* ...

189        7. *Mitigation Standards.* Damage or removal of trees within a tree protection zone, or  
190        removal of trees required to be retained by this Subsection, shall require equivalent  
191        replacement on the lot or development site.

192        a. *Removal or Damage in Violation.* ...

193        b. *Restoration Plan.* ...

194        c. *Replacement Requirements.* ...

195        d. *In-Lieu Fee Alternative: PAYMENT IN LIEU OF MITIGATION.*

196        1. WHERE EXISTING CONDITIONS MAKE IT IMPRACTICAL TO  
197        COMPLY WITH THE MITIGATION STANDARDS HEREIN, THE  
198        APPLICANT SHALL PAY A FEE-IN-LIEU IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
199        THE FOLLOWING:

200        1. THE CANOPY LOSS FEE RATE SHALL BE \$250 PER INCH  
201        PER REPLACEMENT TREE.

202        2. THE CANOPY LOSS FEE FORMULA SHALL BE CANOPY  
203        LOSS FEE (\$)= [(DIAMETER PER STANDARD HEIGHT  
204        REMOVED) - (DIAMETER PER STANDARD HEIGHT  
205        REPLACED)] X (CANOPY LOSS FEE RATE).

206        2. IN-LIEU FEES SHALL BE DEPOSITED INTO THE TREE EQUITY  
207        FUND TO BE USED TO INCREASE THE TREE CANOPY WITHIN  
208        THE CITY OF LITTLETON.

209        3. REDUCTIONS IN CANOPY LOSS FEE RATE:

210        1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS SHALL  
211        QUALIFY FOR A REDUCTION TO AN AMOUNT OF \$75.00  
212        TOTAL PER REPLACEMENT TREE.

213        4.2. NO PAYMENT IN LIEU OF MITIGATION SHALL BE  
214        REQUIRED FOR PROPERTY OWNERS THAT RECEIVE

215 VERIFIED, ESTABLISHED FORMS OF FINANCIAL  
216 ASSISTANCE FROM LOCAL, STATE, OR FEDERAL  
217 ENTITIES.

218 1. ~~Where existing conditions make it impractical to comply with the~~  
219 ~~replacement standards, the applicant may, at the discretion of the Director,~~  
220 ~~payinlieu of meeting the requirement for replacement of damaged or~~  
221 ~~removed trees, in whole or in part. The in-lieu fee shall be \$500 per~~  
222 ~~replacement tree.~~

223 2. ~~If tree replacement is required to mitigate damaged or removed trees in~~  
224 ~~areas where water and electricity are not available and no development is~~  
225 ~~under construction, the in-lieu fee shall be \$500 per replacement tree.~~

226 3. ~~In-lieu fees shall be deposited in a tree reserve account for the purchase and~~  
227 ~~installation of trees and tree related irrigation systems in city parks, rights-~~  
228 ~~of way, and other public open spaces in reasonable proximity to the~~  
229 ~~applicant's project.~~

230 8. *Tree Preservation Credit ...*

231  
232 **Section 4:** Littleton City Code, Section 10-1-3.6.E, is hereby amended, by adding  
233 capitalized material and striking through deleted material, as follows. In this section, ellipses  
234 indicate material not reproduced as the Littleton City Council intends to leave that material in  
235 effect, as it now reads.

236  
237 **Subsec. 10-1-3.6.E Tree Canopy Coverage Requirements**

238 A. **Applicability.** ...

239 B. **Minimum Standards.** The tree canopy coverage requirements for the applicable districts are set out in  
240 Table 10-1-3.6.E, *Canopy Coverage Requirements*.

241  
242 **Table 10-1-3.6.E**  
243 **Canopy Coverage Requirements**

Zoning District	Minimum Tree Canopy Coverage
MFR, Multi-Family Residential	<del>20</del> 30%
NC, Neighborhood Commercial	<del>15</del> 20%
CM, Corridor Mixed	<del>15</del> 20%
BC, Business Commercial	<del>10</del> 20%

244 Table Notes:

245 1. The minimum canopy coverage requirements are based on gross lot area.

246 **Section 5: Severability.** If any part, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of  
247 this ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of  
248 the remaining sections of this ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have  
249 passed this ordinance, including each part, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase hereof,  
250 irrespective of the fact that one or more parts, sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases  
may be declared invalid.

251           **Section 6:** Repealer. All ordinances or resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict with  
252 this ordinance are hereby repealed, provided that this repealer shall not repeal the repealer clauses  
253 of such ordinance nor revive any ordinance thereby.

254

255

256           INTRODUCED AS A BILL at a regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council  
257 of the City of Littleton on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026, passed on first reading by a vote of \_\_\_\_  
258 FOR and \_\_\_\_ AGAINST; and ordered published by posting at Littleton Center, Bemis Library,  
259 the Municipal Courthouse and on the City of Littleton Website.

260           PUBLIC HEARING on the Ordinance to take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of February,  
261 2026, in the Council Chamber, Littleton Center, 2255 West Berry Avenue, Littleton, Colorado, at  
262 the hour of 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as it may be heard.

263           PASSED on second and final reading, following public hearing, by a vote of \_\_\_\_  
264 FOR and \_\_\_\_ AGAINST on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of February, 2026 and ordered published by posting at  
265 Littleton Center, Bemis Library, the Municipal Courthouse and on the City of Littleton Website.

266           ATTEST:

267 \_\_\_\_\_  
268 Colleen L. Norton  
269 CITY CLERK  
270

267 \_\_\_\_\_  
268 Kyle Schlachter  
269 MAYOR

271 APPROVED AS TO FORM:

272 \_\_\_\_\_  
273 Reid Betzing  
274 CITY ATTORNEY  
275

