

Sec. 94-451 Artificial Turf

- (a) The use and location of artificial turf shall be limited to the following:
- (1) The construction of non-city-owned athletic fields and playgrounds associated with a non-city-owned community center, park, school, or university;
  - (2) As part of the construction of any nonresidential development; or
  - (3) On roof top terraces.
- (b) Artificial turf proposed under the provision of subsection (a)(1) above shall only be installed upon approval of a class A special use permit, pursuant to the procedures and standards set forth in this chapter.
- (c) In all areas of installation, artificial turf shall be treated as impervious surface area. The quantity of artificial turf to be incorporated into a project shall be limited by the maximum percentage of impervious surface for the subject property within the applicable zoning district.
- (d) With the exception of those circumstances in which artificial turf is installed pursuant to subsection **(a)(1) above, artificial turf shall not be:**
- (1) A part of any landscape buffers required by this article;
  - (2) Visible from the public thoroughfare;**
  - (3) Installed within permanent drainage features (e.g., ponds, swales);
  - (4) Installed in any residential zoning district.**
- (e) *Minimum material standards.* All artificial turf shall comply with the following minimum standards:
- (1) Artificial turf shall consist of green lifelike individual blades of grass that emulate natural turf in look and color and shall have a minimum pile height of 1.5 inches and shall have a minimum tufted weight of 56 ounces per square yard.
  - (2) Where artificial turf is utilized for institutional recreational uses (e.g., playgrounds, athletic fields), the artificial turf product installed shall be designed for the intended use and meet the appropriate additional standards.
  - (3) Artificial turf installations shall have a minimum permeability of 30 inches per hour per square yard.
  - (4) All artificial turf shall have a minimum eight year manufacturer's warranty that protects against color fading and a decrease in pile height.
  - (5) Artificial turf shall be lead free.
  - (6) All materials must include test documentation which declares that the artificial turf yarn and backing materials are disposable under normal conditions, at any US landfill station (Total Content Leach Protocol (TCLP) test).
  - (7) The use of indoor or outdoor plastic or nylon carpeting as a replacement for artificial turf or natural turf shall be prohibited.
- (f) *Installation, maintenance and repair.*
- (1) All artificial turf shall, at a minimum, be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications.
  - (2) All artificial turf installations shall be anchored to ensure that the turf will withstand the effects of wind.
  - (3) All seams shall be nailed and glued, not sewn, and edges shall be trimmed to fit against all regular and irregular edges to resemble a natural look.
  - (4) If artificial turf is planned to be installed immediately adjacent to a seawall, the artificial turf shall be pinned or staked behind the seawall. No artificial turf or installation mechanism shall be attached directly to or placed on a seawall or seawall cap.
  - (5) Proper drainage shall be provided for all artificial turf installations to prevent excess runoff or pooling of water.
  - (6) Artificial turf shall be visually level, with the grain pointing in a single direction.

(7) An appropriate solid barrier device (e.g., concrete mow strip, bender board) is required to separate artificial turf from soil and live vegetation.

(8) Precautions for installation around existing trees shall be monitored and may be restricted to ensure tree roots are not damaged with the installation of the base material and that the overall health of the tree will not be compromised

(9) All artificial turf shall be maintained in a green fadeless condition and shall be maintained free of dirt, mud, stains, weeds, debris, tears, holes, and impressions. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to cleaning, brushing, debris removal; repairing of depressions and ruts to maintain a visually-level surface; elimination of any odors, flat or matted areas, weeds, and evasive roots; and all edges of the artificial turf shall not be loose and must be maintained with appropriate edging or stakes.

(10) All artificial turf must be replaced if it falls into disrepair with fading or holes or loose areas. Replacement and/or repairs shall be done with like for like materials from the same manufacturer and done so in a manner that results in a repair that blends in with the existing artificial turf.

**(g) An owner or applicant shall obtain a duly-authorized building permit from the city's development services department prior to the installation of any artificial turf.**

(Ord. No. 4420-12, § 2, 6-11-2012)

Staff options for recommendation:

1. Whether to remove the total restriction on residential zoning to allow for artificial turf. In single family/duplex settings this would allow it to be used in the rear and side yards as long as it would not be visible from the public thoroughfare. Front yard requires landscaped area. Whether artificial turf could be used for impervious area if not visible. (See attachment for summary of single family landscape requirements).
2. Whether or not to allow it to be installed anywhere in multifamily residential zoning districts, subject to the restrictions on visibility from the public thoroughfare. This would be any residential zoning allowing more than three units per acre.
3. If allowed in residential, consider adding a different set of standards for artificial turf for residential use, as the installation, materials and pervious classification are different from sports/commercial turf. Commercial standards need to be updated in the next code revision including material data sheet and requiring certification by landscape architect to meet technical requirements.
4. Whether to require documentation on the product including any requirement for a minimum percentage using recycled materials, and what minimum percentage is recyclable material.

Attachment 1:

**Residential landscape requirements City of West Palm Beach**

Section 94-442(c)(2)a. Single family dwelling units

Gross lot square footage Minus

Building footprint square footage Equals

**Open space square footage (ALL non-building area)**

One tree required for each 1,000 sq ft of open space or portion thereof

One shrub required for each 500 sq ft of open space or portion thereof

Section 94-442 (d) Substitution of palm trees.

Palm trees may be substituted for not more than 35 percent of the shade or flowering trees required by this article. However, when palm trees are substituted for shade trees, three palm trees shall be provided for each required shade tree. This 3:1 substitution shall not be required for Royal Palm trees (*Roystonea* spp.), Senegal Date Palm (*Phoenix reclinata*), Medjool Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*), Bismarck Palm (*Bismarckia nobilis*), and Silver Date Palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*).

Section 94-442 (g) Florida friendly landscape requirements

Landscape plan must satisfy a minimum total of 15 points from the design options chart.

Section 94-445 (4) Required plant material specifications.

Shade and flowering trees minimum 12 feet in height and 5 foot clear trunk.

Palm species minimum eight feet clear wood.

Shrubs minimum of 3 gallon, groundcover may be smaller.

Also.....

**Section 94-482 Parking requirements for less than three residential dwelling units.(a)..  
Required parking may be located in the front yard; however, the lesser of 1,000 square feet or 75 percent of the front yard area shall be landscaped with living plant material (such as grass, ground cover, shrubs, hedges, vines or trees).**