



Community Development Code Improvements Proposal

Submitted October, 2021 by

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board

OVERVIEW

The 2021 City Council Goals and Initiatives document requested, in Goal 3.4, “...that the Sustainability Advisory Board recommend improvements to the Community Development Code.” This proposal addresses that goal with three specific recommendations:

1. Community Electrification
2. Resilient landscaping
3. Tree preservation

Implementing these three recommendations will put the city on a path of dealing with environmental issues that will have a positive impact on climate change, habitat preservation and environmental sustainability. Each topic is discussed in further detail below.

PROPOSED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CODE IMPROVEMENTS

The Community Development Code (CDC) revisions in this proposal provide an excellent avenue for the City to apply environmentally sound guidelines for development in West Linn. The proposed changes might involve both CDCs and city policies. While some of this may involve up-front time, this work will also lead to money savings for the city and citizens, and a cleaner, healthier and sustainable environment.

Community Electrification: Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and solar make-ready conduit stubs should be required at all government, commercial and multifamily buildings. EV charging ports and solar collection systems and/or infrastructure should be required on new single-family homes.

Resilient landscaping: Drought-tolerant and native landscaping on city, school district, commercial, and residential properties would reduce demand for water. Adjust the water utility rate tiers for actual usage. Require or encourage city, commercial and private property plantings that don’t need fertilizer or pesticides once established.

Tree preservation: Parcels of land zoned for development should be inventoried for tree and plant growth. Clear cutting lots should be eliminated. A percentage of the property should be set aside to preserve existing trees on public and private developments. For example, other cities require that a minimum of 20% of property and trees be preserved. This may require that some proposed lots be smaller, but it is a critical piece of preserving carbon-sequestering trees, reducing rain water runoff and preserving valuable wildlife habitat.

RECOMMENDATION

The West Linn SAB recommends that the City Council assign staff to determine the specific CDCs that will be affected by the proposed changes listed here, and begin the process of implementing the necessary changes to accomplish these goals.