



**NEWS RELEASE
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Water conservation ordinance passes final reading unanimously

Prohibits aesthetic turf in new development

(Aurora, Colorado) – At its Sept. 12 meeting, the Aurora City Council unanimously approved on first reading an ordinance sponsored by Mayor Mike Coffman that will restrict the use of turf in new developments and golf courses. This ordinance is forward-looking, impacting new development and redevelopment by prohibiting aesthetic cool-weather turf. Parks would be permitted to use turf in sports fields, informal play areas and social areas.

Mayor Coffman noted that continual drought in the arid west and the impacts of climate change weighed heavily in his decision to sponsor this ordinance. “Colorado is in a crisis,” he said. “We need to take action to ensure that Aurora can continue to grow responsibly.”

The ordinance will allow cool weather turf for new development only in active or programmed recreation areas, such as sport fields and organized social/cultural gatherings. It would prohibit turf in common areas, medians, curbside landscape (“tree lawns”) and in most residential front yards, while restricting it in backyards to allow for 45% coverage or 500 sq. ft., whichever is smaller. The ordinance permits turf in the front yard in alley-loaded developments that do not include substantial backyards. It also creates a path for transition zones to allow developments with site plans that are currently approved to better blend in appearance with the new areas that will be covered by the ordinance.

Finally, the ordinance prohibits the use of cool-weather turf for development of new golf courses and it restricts ornamental water features, such as exterior decorative fountains, waterfalls, basins and ponds. Warm weather turfs that use less than 15 inches of supplemental irrigation, such as buffalo grass, will still be permitted.

Lindsay Rogers, Water Policy Analyst for Western Resource Advocates, a Boulder nonprofit conservation organization, provided support for the ordinance. “Aurora has long been a trailblazer and early adopter of water conservation and reuse programs and through this ordinance, Aurora is taking a critical step to ensuring water supply resiliency now and into the future,” she said during the City Council meeting.

The ordinance will go into effect beginning Sept. 30, 2022. Development with complete site plans submitted prior to that date will not be impacted.

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