

# Clarifications on Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force Recommendations 4b and 4c

March 25, 2021

## **4b: Cooling in Open Space**

### *Initial Recommendation*

Amend Open Space standards (Section 5.22) to include prescriptive requirements (e.g., minimum vegetation, high-SRI paving) or minimum Cool Factor Score. Broaden Open Space requirements to non-residential zoning districts and/or use types.

### *Current Zoning*

The current base zoning standards require private open space on every lot used for residential purposes except those in the Cambridge Center MXD District; this includes residential uses in non-residential zoning districts. The amount of open space is set for each zoning district in Section 5.31 and ranges from 0% to 50% of the lot area. There are currently dimensional standards for what can be counted as open space as well as a requirement that not less than one half of the required private open space be provided at or near ground level. In Residence A-1, A-2, B, C, and C-1 districts (arguably the most restrictive zoning districts in the city), at least 50% percent of the required Private Open Space must meet the definition of Permeable Open Space (this includes vegetation; rocks, pebbles, wood chips and similar landscaping materials; or unit pavers).

## **4c: Cooling in Parking Lots**

### *Initial Recommendation*

Amend parking lot landscaping standards (Section 6.48.1) to increase minimum landscaping and tree planting, require SRI paving, and/or require minimum Cool Factor Score.

### *Current Zoning*

On grade, open parking facilities with five or more parking spaces must landscape at least 5% of the interior area. Landscaping includes vegetative and non-vegetative materials, such as rocks, pebbles, or wood chips. This landscaping must meet certain dimensional requirements and must include at least one tree for the first five spaces and at least one tree for every 10 parking spaces. The zoning requires parking lots with 25 or more spaces to include a planted landscape buffer between every fifteen contiguous parking spaces. In addition, off-street parking facilities with five or more spaces must be screened from abutting streets and lots with either a vegetative buffer or a wall, barrier, or fence.

When is open space (OS)/ landscaping required?	What is required now?	What could be required?	What triggers compliance?
Residential uses in lower-density zoning districts (i.e., A-1, A-2, B, C, C-1, O-1, BA-1, BA-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30-50% total OS (by zoning district) including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15-25% Private OS (min. 15' dimension, some can be decks)</li> <li>○ 15-25% Permeable OS</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Minimum setbacks are generally required</li> <li>• Tree requirements for townhouse development (11.10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a target based on total OS requirement for each zoning district (i.e. 30-50%)</li> <li>• <i>Alternative: Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a fixed target (e.g., 20%) for all zoning districts</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative: Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a target based on Permeable OS requirement for each zoning district (i.e. 15-20%)</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative: If existing condition is less than 20%, compensate for any reduction caused by the proposed action</i></li> </ul>	<p>Meeting one condition or multiple conditions (e.g., two out of three):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New construction of a building (any size)</li> <li>• Increase of at least 10% in the footprint of an existing building</li> <li>• Increase in impervious surface by at least 150 square feet (equivalent of a parking space)</li> <li>• Removal of any significant trees</li> </ul>
Residential uses in higher-density zoning districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10-15% Private OS (min. 15' dimension, some can be decks, sometimes waivable)</li> <li>• Minimum setbacks are not always required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a fixed target (e.g., 20%) for all zoning districts</li> <li>• <i>Alternative: Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a target based on total OS requirement for each zoning district (i.e. 10-15%)</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative: If existing condition is less than 20%, compensate for any reduction caused by the proposed action</i></li> </ul>	<p>Meeting one condition or multiple conditions (e.g., two out of three):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New construction of a building (any size)</li> <li>• Increase of at least 10% in the footprint of an existing building</li> <li>• Increase in impervious surface by at least 150 square feet (equivalent of a parking space)</li> <li>• Removal of any significant trees</li> </ul>

When is open space (OS)/ landscaping required?	What is required now?	What could be required?	What triggers compliance?
Smaller-scale non-residential uses (e.g., retail, office) in all zoning districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No OS requirement</li> <li>• Minimum setbacks are not always required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a fixed target (e.g., 20%) for all zoning districts</li> <li>• <i>Alternative: If existing condition is less than 20%, compensate for any reduction caused by the proposed action</i></li> </ul>	<p>Meeting one condition or multiple conditions (e.g., two out of three):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New construction of a building (any size)</li> <li>• Increase of at least 10% in the footprint of an existing building</li> <li>• Increase in impervious surface by at least 150 square feet (equivalent of a parking space)</li> <li>• Removal of any significant trees</li> </ul>
Surface parking lots with five spaces or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior must be 5% landscaped with one tree per 10 parking spaces (min. 3" caliper)</li> <li>• Landscape buffers required for parking lots with 25 or more spaces</li> <li>• Minimum setbacks may be required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minimum Cool Factor with a fixed target (e.g., 20%) for all zoning districts</li> <li>• <i>Alternative: If existing condition is less than 20%, compensate for any reduction caused by the proposed action</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative: Update tree standards per Cool Factor guidance on species, canopy spread, and soil volume</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternative: Increase current prescriptive standards</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation, enlargement, or reconstruction of a surface parking lot with five or more parking spaces</li> </ul>