

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALTERNATIVE LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR 1910 ISAAC NEWTON DRIVE

BACKGROUND:

KWIK TRIP, INC is the owner of property at 1910 Isaac Newton Drive and requests approval of an Alternative Landscape Plan for the property. The property is located in the Highway Oriented Commercial (HOC) and the Southeast Gateway Overlay (O-GSE) zone (Attachment A). This is a newly platted lot and will be developed with a convenience store, gas station, semi-truck fueling, and parking. A Minor Site Development Plan cannot be approved administratively for this site until an alternative landscape plan is approved due to the proposed modifications.

The proposed site is 3.7 acres with approximately 2.5 acres of paving and an 11,017 square-foot building. All commercial development within the City is subject to landscape standards of Article IV of the Zoning Ordinance related to front yard landscaping and parking lot landscaping. Additionally, the Southeast Gateway Overlay does include required prairie and native Iowa plantings to be used on sites within the overlay. The landscaping standards applicable to this site address a combination of front yard and parking lot plantings that include mix of shrubs, ornamental grasses, and trees. The overall size of the site, the amount of paving and the fact that the site encompasses street frontage on three sides is atypical. The developer is seeking approval of an alternative plan in order to move forward with site plan approval.

Alternative Landscape Design approvals are allowed under Sec. 29.403.3(J) when prepared by a licensed Landscape Architect, as part of a Major Site Development Plan. The proposed plan must be found to address the purposes of the ordinance for landscaping and provide for a unique or high-quality landscape environment. The intent is to allow flexibility in creating desirable landscape treatments in response to either design constraints or to allow for specific desirable features that are not accounted for in the base landscape standards. The applicant believes the proposed plan provides a great degree of diversity and visual interest with its proposed plantings and layout and meets the intent of the landscaping ordinance (Attachment B).

The proposed plan complies with front yard planting requirements with a minimum of 1 overstory tree per 50 linear feet of frontage (before allowed tree substitutions), shrub and grass plantings, and use of prairie and native plants. The Overlay requires the use of limited set of plants to support a native or prairie theme and to use decorative groups of plants within front yards. Front yard tree plantings include 18 overstory and 13

ornamentals. Notably for this site that the required number of front yard trees cannot count towards the required parking lot trees. The total number of trees must be provided as calculated for each requirement.

Parking lots tree planting requirements are based upon the amount of paved parking and maneuvering area. This site is unique from most other gas station and convenience store sites in that there is additional area to allow for semi-truck parking, fueling, and maneuvering. One Parking Lot tree is to be provided per 200 square feet of paving based on ten percent of the paved area (Section 29.403(10(E))). The intent of this standard is to generate tree cover for parking areas without specifying precise parking lot island and planter requirements based upon parking stall counts alone.

This site would require 50 overstory trees to satisfy the parking lots standard alone. Based on Code requirements, parking lot trees are to be overstory in size, distributed in and around the parking lot area, and planted within ten feet of paving. The proposed landscaping plan shows a total of 62 trees not counting the required front yard trees. Of these trees provided only 22 can be officially counted towards the parking lot requirements due to their location and size requirements. **The developer believes the that the total number of trees provided and the design with large planting areas that generally exceed minimum requirements create an attractive design for the site, although they do not strictly match the parking lot overstory tree requirement.**

On other commercial lots with different uses you typically see a parking lot layout with islands large enough to provide space for parking lot trees. This allows for trees to be planted along the outer edge of the site and within the parking lot, meeting the purpose of parking lot trees. However, this layout, with trees planted mainly on the outer edge of the site, is a result of where large trees can be planted in relation to semi-truck maneuvering areas and other automobiles circulating through the site for gas and use of the car wash.

As proposed the site plan complies with all other landscaping requirements. The mandatory front yard landscaping is required along street frontages. Front yards require a combination of large trees with shrubs and grasses. The developer is using the allowed substitutions in order to meet the number of front yard trees and grasses required in the front yard. These allowed substitutions are 2 ornamental trees in place of 1 overstory trees and 60 square feet of perennial beds in place of 6 required grasses. The substitutions and other plantings meet the front yard landscaping requirements.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

At the December 16th Planning & Zoning Commission meeting the Planning & Zoning Commission voted 7-0 to recommend that the City Council approve the Major Site Plan Alternative Landscape Plan at 1910 Isaac Newton Drive. The Commission did question if other substitutions or locations for overstory trees were possible. Staff explained that all allowed substitutions that were allowed by Code had been made. The applicant stated

that some areas, specifically the northeast corner of the site, were left open for site visibility.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Major Site Development Plan Alternative Landscape plan for 1910 Isaac Newton Drive.
2. Deny the Major Site Development Plan Alternative Landscape plan and require conformance to base landscape standards.
3. Defer action on this item and request more information from staff.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION

Alternative Landscape Design Approvals are allowed under Sec. 29.403.3(J) when prepared by a licensed Landscape Architect, as part of a Major Site Development Plan. The proposed plan must be found to address the purposes of the ordinance and provide for a unique or high-quality landscape environment. The proposed plan is seen as adequate for creating some visual interest meets the intent of the Landscaping.

This site is unique in that it has approximately 2.5 Acres of paving and three street frontages. Staff has worked with the developer to work through other ideas and options. It has become evident that it is not physically possible to provide the number of required overstory parking lot trees and meet the goals of the developer for use of the site.

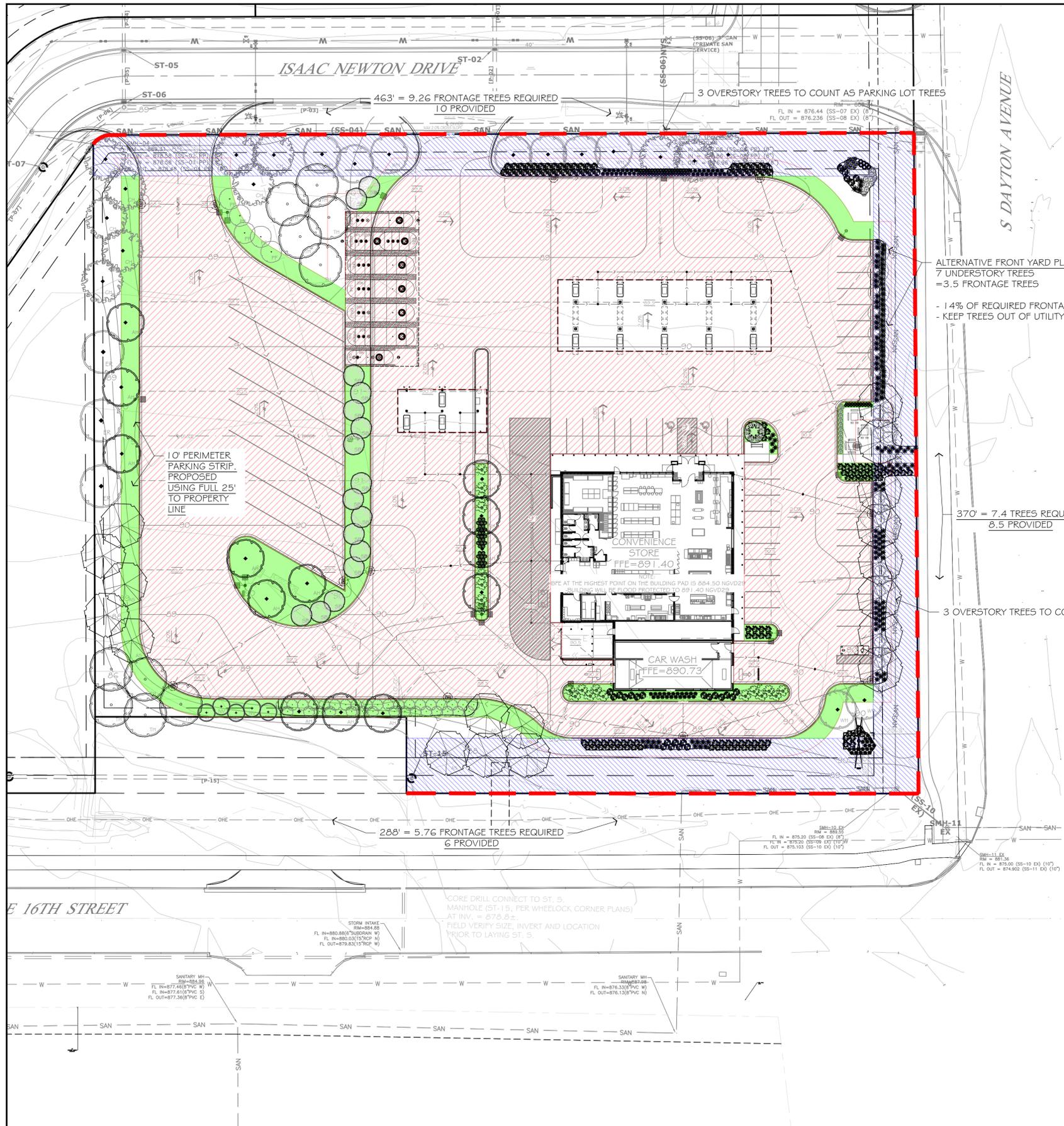
Staff finds that the proposed alternative landscape plan can be seen as meeting the standards of the alternative landscape design standards in Section 29.403(3)(J.) Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1 thereby approving the Major Site Development Plan Alternative Landscape plan for 1910 Isaac Newton Drive.

Attachment A-Location Map



**1910 Isaac Newton Drive
Alternative Landscape Plan**

Attachment B- Landscape Plan



LANDSCAPE REQUIREMENTS:

- ONE OVERSTORY TREE PER 50' OF YARD FRONTAGE
1,296 LINEAR FT OF FRONTAGE = 24 OVERSTORY TREES REQUIRED
24.5 PROVIDED
- EIGHT SHRUBS AND TWELVE ORNAMENTAL GRASSES/PERENNIALS PER 1,000 SF OF YARD FRONTAGE
27,315 SF OF FRONTAGE
219 SHRUBS REQUIRED, 328 GRASSES REQUIRED
236 SHRUBS PROVIDED, 366 GRASSES/PERENNIALS PROVIDED
- 10% PARKING LOT GREEN AREA, ONE OVER-STORY TREE PER 200 SF REQUIRED GREEN AREA
100,441 PARKING LOT AREA = 1,004 SF GREEN REQUIRED --> 50 TREES REQUIRED
26 PROVIDED
- 2,346 SF OF PERENNIAL BED PROVIDED = 234 GRASSES SUBSTITUTED
- PLANTING SOIL SHALL BE TOP SOIL FROM SITE, PENDING CITY APPROVAL

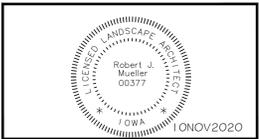
	REQUIRED (IF APPLICABLE)	PROVIDED
 STREET FRONTAGE		1,926 LINEAR FT
 FRONT YARD AREA	19,260 SF MINIMUM	29,058 SF
 PARKING LOT AREA		92,223 SF
 PARKING LOT GREEN AREA	9,222 SF	10,275 SF

**Kwik
TRIP**

**Kwik
STAR**

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LANDSCAPE AREAS
CONVENIENCE STORE 1158
LOT FIVE, WHEELLOCK CORNER SUBDIVISION, AMES, STORY CO.
SE 16TH ST. AND DAYTON AVE
(ISAAC NEWTON DRIVE)
AMES, IOWA

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
-	21 SEP 20	SUBMITTAL
-	10 NOV 20	COMMENTS

DRAWN BY _____
SCALE _____ GRAPHIC
PROJ. NO. 20-1158
DATE 27AUG2020
SHEET _____