

## Staff Report

**LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE POINTS SYSTEM UPDATE**

October 25, 2016

**BACKGROUND:**

At the August 16<sup>th</sup> City Council Workshop, staff provided a comprehensive overview of a draft 50-point scoring system and a presentation on the intent of its categories and individual points. ([Background Information- Planning Division What's New](#)) At the conclusion of the meeting, staff was directed to meet with the landscape workgroup to further refine the scoring system and consult with the workgroup on flexibility of the system and clarifying or simplifying its requirements. This report provides the feedback requested by Council from the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. With the two new points based system options included in this report, staff believes that the concept of a points based has been completely explored. **City Council is now asked to provide direction to staff to proceed with a points based ordinance or to complete alternative text amendments that revise planting requirements and add staff discretion for unique circumstances.**

**The landscape points system proposal from August would eliminate the traditional prescriptive requirements and replace it with a scoring system based upon combinations of key design points that achieve the intent and purpose of desired landscaping.** The intent is to give developers more options in their design of a site while directing those options to a set of criteria that the Council has deemed as important to help address environmental effects of development, appropriate transitions and screening, increased diversity and visual interest, more flexibility for property owner planting options, and reduced maintenance issues for property owners. In general, staff believes that with individual scoring categories and a requirement for an overall point total, this proposal provides the most comprehensive approach to evaluating landscaping within a wide range of options. The August system also divided sites in large or small (< 0.5 acres) with different point total requirements. The initial categories that are part of the August draft include:

- Soil Conditions
- Environmental Design
- Front Yard and Parking Screening
- Planting Design
- Groundcover
- Amenities/Bonus

Staff estimated that current landscape requirements yield between 16 and 36 points assuming soil condition points. Staff believes that with minimal changes to development practices most sites can exceed 30 points, but this does yield significantly different landscaping on sites compared to current requirements. When reviewing developer sites for Walnut Ridge Mixed Use, Bell warehouse, and Mortenson Heights/Crane Apartments scores were between 42 and 52 points with adjustments to their approved plans to incorporate additional landscape materials.

Staff met with the workgroup on September 27<sup>th</sup> and discussed options for modifying the total points required for project approval as well as changes to the requirements for individual categories. The workgroup meeting included discussion about why have landscaping requirements, the relative costs of the points based system, and what the minimum requirements could be to create even more flexibility. **Feedback from the stakeholder group indicated a desire for a simplified scoring system that consisted of a lower overall required point total and either simplified categories or a lesser number of categories. Specifically, the group believed that achieving the proposed 50 point total would be problematic under the current proposal with the categories and presents a large increase in costs depending on the circumstance. Additionally, there were comments to try and have an achievable total point requirement when the ordinance is adopted initially and then review its performance after a year to evaluate changes in scoring and if the points need to be increased. There was some discussion about having no categories and just a broad suite of points. Staff also questioned at what point the system framework is too involved or lacked predictability for the benefit of creating flexibility.**

**From staff's review of the comments at the August 16<sup>th</sup> City Council workshop and from the September workgroup meeting, staff has prepared two additional scoring system options.** Both proposals offer a different variation to the August draft and rely on categories and total points, but emphasize a different approach to prioritizing points. Each option is a viable option to achieve stakeholder and Council goals, depending on the priorities of the City Council. These options have not been reviewed in detail by the workgroup and may not have meet all of their interests fully due to staff's effort to balance other goals of the update to enhance landscaping and address parking lot sustainability.

#### **Option #1 August Scoring System 50-Point Proposal (Attachment A)**

Staff has not significantly adjusted the system from August in an effort to keep it as benchmark for comparison. The August scoring system requires 50 points total with a minimum categorical scores totaling 44 points for large sites. Small sites are required to achieve 33 points. There are five categories and one optional category with a total of approximately 130 points to choose from among all criteria listed. The 50-point version with categories was designed to have some predictability that each landscaping issue would be addressed and that landscape design would be augmented overall. Developers and staff have found in review of this option that it stretches developers to achieve each category and point totals compared to current practices. One of the primary concerns related to costs are a function of the Planting Design category and its

requirements for mandatory planting of vegetation besides groundcover. The application of this category could be narrowed to mandatory open spaces or some degree of reduction in planting ratios address costs.

### **Option #2 Reduced Point Requirements with Greater Optional Points Attachment B)**

The required category point total has been altered to focus on the most important points with and to lessen the required score required to satisfy each criterion. The minimum category totals are 25 and the total has been lowered to 42 points. With lowered point total requirements, this is believed to present the developers a wider range of options that can be combined together on a site to provide sufficient landscaping designs and potentially alleviate concerns about project costs due to the wider array of choices, even though the points are essentially the same. With the increased flexibility, the small site and large site total point differentiation has been removed, but small sites do not have to meet category minimums. This approach includes the same prerequisites as the August version.

### **Option #3 Simplified Categories and Focused Requirements (Attachment C)**

This option adjusts the total available points and categories to simplify the process and focus on priorities. The system is designed for all sites to achieve 30 points total with a minimum score of 26 points in categories. The categories have been adjusted to address Environmental Design, Front Yard and Parking Screening, and Planting Design. Each set of criteria offers numerous options with 8-10 point totals required per category. Importantly, minimum soil condition requirements (e.g. remove debris, 3% organic matter) would become prerequisites and other desirable soil condition remain as choices for points. Most non-planting related points have been removed, i.e. provide bike parking. Staff sees this narrowed down approach with the three remaining criteria as vital to achieving the overall goals of the landscape ordinance update. It also builds in more flexibility to develop a site in the manner of how planter areas can be configured and more options of what can be planted.

### **Option #4 Modify Existing Standards**

At the outset of this update process there was mutual interest in amending landscaped standards. **If the points system is not deemed to be workable or desirable, there is still an interest to have changes to the ordinance because there is a common belief among the staff and development community that the status quo is undesirable.** Staff believes a more balanced and traditional standards based requirement can address most of the key issues discussed as part of the update process. Revision to the Zoning Ordinance could revise the current "L" planting requirements, parking lot standards, and open spaces to create some flexibility in planting requirements and to allow staff additional discretion to make adjustments for unique circumstances. However, no specific changes are proposed at this time as staff has been focused on the points based options. Staff would only initiate work on this option at the direction of the City Council.

## **STAFF COMMENTS:**

If City Council indicates a preference for one of the three approaches to a landscaping point system, staff will then draft an ordinance for adopting new standards. If City Council decides that its goals are not met with one of the scoring system options, staff recommends that City Council direct staff to prepare a revision to the Zoning Ordinance that includes stated requirements for landscaping and to allow staff additional discretion to make adjustments for unique circumstances.

For whichever option is selected, there is a substantial amount of work related to amending the Zoning Ordinance. As mentioned previously, staff will also review the site inspection requirements and how non-conforming sites will be reviewed. Staff will meet with the workgroup again with the draft ordinance as amendments work through the public hearing process with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. With direction tonight, Staff would target a Planning and Zoning Commission review of draft ordinance in December and City Council review in January.

# Attachment A- Option Proposal #1

## City of Ames: Landscape Ordinance - Ranking System (Draft Proposal)

44 minimum category points, **50 points overall**  
(Small Sites 33 points required)

1. **Pre Design Site Assessment:** (Pre-Requisite)
  - Storm Water Analysis of pre-developed site.
    - o Discharge points
    - o Swale locations
    - o Existing wetlands
    - o Calculate pre-development runoff
  - Document existing topsoil depths
  - Documentation of existing 'trees of significance'
  
2. **Project Design:**
  - Developer agrees to submit written and photographic verification that they completed the tasks agrees upon prior to construction. (Pre-requisite)
  - It is understood that designers will use best planting and design practices. Plant spacing to allow for growth, mulch additional areas as necessary to minimize maintenance, eliminate the use of nuisance and invasive species, etc.
  - Developer agrees that all plant sizes must adhere to the following size restrictions. (Pre-requisite)
    - o Overstory Trees – Min. 2" Caliper, Max. 3.5" Caliper
    - o Understory Trees – Minimum 1.5" Caliper, Max. 2.5" Caliper
    - o Evergreen Trees – Min. 6' Height
    - o Shrubs – Minimum three (3) Gallon
    - o Ornamental Grasses – Minimum one (1) Gallon
    - o Prairie Plantings – Must use at least three (3), but no more than five (5) varieties of native short grass prairie species. Must reach a minimum 3 feet in height. Can be combined with similar height native wildflowers, but is limited to 10 species per development. 'Small sites' only required to provide 2 types of prairie plantings
    - o Pollinator Species Planting – Must use the US Governments' required species mix for the Conservation Reserve Program - (CP42)
    - o Commercial uses abutting a residential or industrial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet
    - o Industrial uses abutting a residential or commercial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet
    - o Apartment Building foundation plantings required utilizing a tree with shrub and/or grass mixture
    - o Identify which landscape ordinance criteria are being used on site plan and total generated points
    - o Parking Lots adjacent to residential zones require minimum 5 foot landscape screening area
    - o Minimum Landscaping/Open Space requirement by percentage of lot area in commercial and industrial zones. FS-RM, V-R, RM, RH require 5% of lot area as usable open in addition to required landscape and yard areas.  
\*(Note that Open Space and Landscaped area terminology may include storm water treatment facilities, Usable Open Space would likely not allow for storm water facilities to meet its definition)
    - o 'Large Site' is defined as being at or over 25,000 square feet. 'Small site' is defined as being under 25,000 square feet
    - o Rock mulch is prohibited in required landscape areas
    - o Reconstruction of existing sites must include a functional equivalent replacement of existing landscaping with regard to diversity, totals, etc.
  
  - **Soil Management Plan** (minimum score - 8 points all size sites) (Self Certification of soil prep by contractor required)
    - o Stockpile topsoil on site 1
    - o Verify removal all construction debris 1
    - o Verify removal of excess gravel in planting areas 1
    - o Protect Drip Line of all existing trees of significance (Must retain at least 50% of Significant Trees) 1
    - o Rip sub-surface to 8" depth, prior to re-spread of topsoil 2
    - o Restore topsoil to recorded pre-development depth 4
    - o Replace the topsoil to a minimum 6" depth (submittal of soils test required) 2
    - o Till the soil to a minimum 8" Depth 3
    - o Soil must have minimum organic makeup in the top 8"
      - 3% organic makeup in the top 8" 1
      - 5% organic makeup in the top 8" 3
  
  - **Environmental Design** (minimum score - 8 points)(Small sites- minimum score 6 points)
    - o Provide no more than 10% additional parking than necessary beyond base requirements (*Shopping Centers not to exceed 5 per 1000*) 1

- Minimize hard surface parking lot area (In addition to the required Storm Water Management Plan)
    - Maximize green space (over 25% of the site) Outside of Floodway 2
    - Parking Islands at the end of all parking rows 1
    - No more than 10 continuous parking stalls in any row (7 X16 islands.) 2
  - Install Bio-retention to manage water quality and quantity 3  
(*In areas where Bio-retention are proposed, landscape area requirements will be waved.*)
  - Reduce and/or eliminate the use of storm water intakes and piping. 2  
(*Encourage designers to use overland flow*) (*Narrative required*)
    - Elimination of piping 2
  - Design and construct a Green Roof 1
  - Heat Island Effect
    - Islands not designated as bio-swales: plant a minimum of 1 Overstory tree in each. 3
    - Parking Lot Shading
      - 35% within 15 years 2
      - 50% within 15 years 4
- **Front Yard Landscaping & Parking Lot Screening** (minimum score - 10 points) (Small sites- 8 points)
- Diversity of genus (No more than 25% of any genus of plant) 2
  - Leave a 3'-0" zone of planter area with no plantings directly in front of all parking stalls 1
  - Provide 1 Overstory tree for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback (*See note A*) 1
  - Provide 2 Understory trees for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback (*See note A*) 1
  - 6 shrubs per 50 LF of drive isle outside of parking lot areas. 1
  - Provide 9 shrubs, for every 100 LF of front setback street frontage 2
  - Provide 20 ornamental grasses for every 50LF of frontage in front setback (*See note A*) 1
  - Use of clustered thoughtful plantings (*layering of colors and textures with variety of plants*) 4
  - Provide grasses or shrubs with Bio-Swale in required landscape areas between parking and ROW 3
  - Provide minimum 10 foot screening area adjacent to residential uses utilizing the criteria listed above. 2
  - Parking separation from lot line with minimum 10 ft. wide planting area (*excluding alleys*) 2
  - Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street 2  
(*Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 75% of parking lot frontage.*)  
OR
  - Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street 3  
(*Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 95% of parking lot frontage.*)
- **Planting Design** (minimum score - 8 points)(Small sites- 4 points)
- Diversity of genus (No more than 25% of any genus of plant in all categories of plantings) 2
  - Provide .2 Overstory tree for every 1000SF of Open Space 1
  - Provide .4 Understory trees for every 1000SF of Open Space 1
  - Provide 6 shrubs for every 1000SF of Open Space 1
  - Provide 10 ornamental grasses for every 1000SF of Open Space 1
  - Provide 10 grasses or 3 shrubs per 50 LF of building foundation 1
  - Undulating large open space 1
  - Provide added visual interest to the open spaces with the creation of berms and hills. (*large sites*) 2  
(*Must be a significant impact on the site to be considered.*) *Additional submittals will be required.*
  - Incorporate existing significant vegetation (Trees must be at least 12 inches in diameter)
    - 50% of existing vegetation 2
    - Planning may authorize for high value wetland, riparian and native areas 2
  - Use of clustered thoughtful plantings that include ornamental grasses, shrubs and over story trees 2
  - Designer Choice: Thoughtful planting plan that generally meets the intent of the items listed 8  
above, but goes beyond the basic requirements. It would include signature green spaces, outdoor gardens, rain gardens, seating areas, etc. Note- All items listed above need to be incorporated in some capacity to achieve this (*See Note D*) (*Developments with more than Four (4) Acres of open space will want to use this method as it will likely decrease the number of required plantings*)
    - 15% of open area must contain either an outdoor garden or rain garden
    - At least 2 seating areas required in front or side yards
    - Must provide a summary of vegetation and its significance to the planting plan
    - Must contain at least 2 signature green spaces
    - Must be designed and certified by a professional landscape architect

- **Groundcover** (minimum score - 10 points)(Small sites- 7 points)
  - o No turf/lawn in areas less than 5-0' in width. 1
  - o Eco-lawn mixture 1
  - o Use of hardwood Mulch beneath all trees, shrubs and decorative grasses 2
  - o Clustering of shrubs and grasses so that maintenance can operate around them easily 2
  - o 6' diameter mulch bed around all Overstory Trees, 4' on Understory 1
  - o Turf Grass / Lawn to cover less than 50% of the Open Space provided 2
  - OR
  - o Turf Grass / Lawn to cover less than 25% of the Open Space provided 3
  - o Combination of Shortgrass Prairie grasses and ornamental grasses to cover 60% or more of the open space provided 4
  - OR
  - o Use of Shortgrass Prairie grasses to cover 25% of the open space provided 1
  - o Addition of plantings to attract pollinator species in select areas 2
  
- **Site Amenities "Bonus Category"** (*no required minimum score*)
  - o Provide a public hardscape plaza (minimum of 200SF) 2
  - o Provide public seating opportunities (Bench or Cut Stone) (1 point for every 3 benches) (2 pt Max) 2
  - o Irrigation installed in required landscape areas 2
  - o Use of an alternate paving material for 80% of the designated plaza space (DG pavers, stamped concrete, etc.) 2
  - o Incorporation of publically visible Art Piece (must be approved by City Staff) 2
  - o Addition of Publicly accessible bike parking (5% of required parking or minimum 5 spots) 2
  - o Use of Decorative pedestrian scale lighting (Must be in addition to standard parking lot lighting) 2
  - o Recreational or private amenity 2
  - o Perennial flower beds 1
  - o Edible Landscaping 1

## Attachment B- Option Proposal #2

City of Ames: Landscape Ordinance - Ranking System (Draft Proposal)

25 minimum points, 42 points overall required  
(Small site 42 points required- No categories required)

3. **Pre Design Site Assessment:** (Pre-Requisite)
  - Storm Water Analysis of pre-developed site.
    - o Discharge points
    - o Swale locations
    - o Existing wetlands
    - o Calculate pre-development runoff
  - Document existing topsoil depths
  - Documentation of existing 'trees of significance'
  
4. **Project Design:**
  - Developer agrees to submit written and photographic verification that they completed the tasks agrees upon prior to construction. (Pre-requisite)
  - It is understood that designers will use best planting and design practices. Plant spacing to allow for growth, mulch additional areas as necessary to minimize maintenance, eliminate the use of nuisance and invasive species, etc.
  - Developer agrees that all plant sizes must adhere to the following size restrictions. (Pre-requisite)
  - Developer agrees that staff may refuse certain designs regardless of score total.
  - Developer agrees to a 10% additional point penalty for failing to achieve category minimums thereby increasing overall points required.
    - o Overstory Trees – Min. 2" Caliper, Max. 3.5" Caliper
    - o Understory Trees – Minimum 1.5" Caliper, Max. 2.5" Caliper
    - o Evergreen Trees – Min. 6' Height
    - o Shrubs – Minimum three (3) Gallon
    - o Ornamental Grasses – Minimum one (1) Gallon
    - o Prairie Plantings – Must use at least three (3), but no more than five (5) varieties of native short grass prairie species. Must reach a minimum 3 feet in height. Can be combined with similar height native wildflowers, but is limited to 10 species per development. 'Small sites' only required to provide 2 types of prairie plantings
    - o Pollinator Species Planting – Must use the US Governments' required species mix for the Conservation Reserve Program - (CP42)
    - o Till the soil to a minimum 8" Depth
    - o Commercial uses abutting a residential or industrial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet
    - o Industrial uses abutting a residential or commercial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet
    - o Apartment Building foundation plantings required utilizing a tree with shrub and/or grass mixture
    - o Identify which landscape ordinance criteria are being used on site plan and total generated points
    - o Parking Lots adjacent to residential zones require minimum 5 foot landscape screening area
    - o Minimum Landscaping/Open Space requirement by percentage of lot area in commercial and industrial zones. FS-RM, V-R, RM, RH require 5% of lot area as usable open in addition to required landscape and yard areas.  
\*(Note that Open Space and Landscaped area terminology may include storm water treatment facilities, Usable Open Space would likely not allow for storm water facilities to meet its definition)
    - o 'Large Site' is defined as being at or over 25,000 square feet. 'Small site' is defined as being under 25,000 square feet
    - o Rock mulch is prohibited in required landscape areas
    - o Reconstruction of existing sites must include a functional equivalent replacement of existing landscaping with regard to diversity, totals, etc.
  
  - **Soil Management Plan** (minimum score - 5 points) (Self Certification of soil prep by contractor required)
    - o Verify removal all construction debris 1
    - o Verify removal of excess gravel in planting areas 1
    - o Rip sub-surface to 8" depth, prior to re-spread of topsoil 2
    - o Replace the topsoil to a minimum 6" depth (submittal of soils test required) 2
    - o Soil must have minimum organic makeup in the top 8"
      - 3% organic makeup in the top 8" 1
      - 5% organic makeup in the top 8" 3

- **Environmental Design** (minimum score - 5 points)
  - o Provide no more than 10% additional parking than necessary beyond base requirements (*Shopping Centers not to exceed 5 per 1000*) 1
  - o Minimize hard surface parking lot area (In addition to the required Storm Water Management Plan)
    - Maximize green space (over 25% of the site) Outside of Floodway 2
    - Parking Islands at the end of all parking rows 1
    - No more than 10 continuous parking stalls in any row (7 X16 islands.) 2
    - Install Bio-retention to manage water quality and quantity 3  
(*In areas where Bio-retention are proposed, landscape requirements will be waved.*)
    - Reduce and/or eliminate the use of storm water intakes and piping. 2  
(*Encourage designers to use overland flow*) (*Narrative required*)
      - Elimination of piping 2
  - o Heat Island Effect
    - Islands not designated as bio-swales: plant a minimum of 1 Overstory tree in each. 2
    - Parking Lot Shading
      - 35% within 15 years 2
      - 50% within 15 years 4
- **Front Yard Landscaping & Parking Lot Screening** (minimum score - 5 points)
  - o Diversity of genus (No more than 25% of any genus of plant) 2
  - o Provide minimum 10 foot screening area adjacent to residential uses. 2
  - o Use of clustered thoughtful plantings (*layering of colors and textures with variety of plants*) 3
  - o Provide grasses or shrubs with Bio-Swale in required landscape areas between building and ROW 3
  - o Parking separation from lot line with minimum 10 ft. wide planting area (*excluding alleys*) 2
- **Planting Design** (minimum score - 5 points)
  - o Provide .2 Overstory tree for every 1000SF of Open Space 1
  - o Diversity of genus (No more than 25% of any genus of plant in all categories of plantings) 2
  - o Provide 10 grasses or 3 shrubs per 50 LF of building foundation 1
  - o Use of clustered thoughtful plantings that include ornamental grasses, shrubs and over story trees 2
  - o Designer Choice: Thoughtful planting plan that generally meets the intent of the items listed 8  
above, but goes beyond the basic requirements. It would include signature green spaces, outdoor gardens, rain gardens, seating areas, etc. Note- All items listed above need to be incorporated in some capacity to achieve this (*See Note D*) (*Developments with more than Four (4) Acres of open space will want to use this method as it will likely decrease the number of required plantings*)
    - 15% of open area must contain either an outdoor garden or rain garden
    - At least 2 seating areas required in front or side yards
    - Must provide a summary of vegetation and its significance to the planting plan
    - Must contain at least 2 signature green spaces
    - Must be designed and certified by a professional landscape architect
- **Groundcover** (minimum score - 5 points)
  - o No turf/lawn in areas less than 5-0' in width. 1
  - o Turf Grass / Lawn to cover less than 50% of the Open Space provided 2  
OR
  - o Turf Grass / Lawn to cover less than 25% of the Open Space provided 3
  - o Combination of Shortgrass Prairie grasses and ornamental grasses to cover 60% or more of the open space provided 4  
OR
  - o Use of Shortgrass Prairie grasses to cover 25% of the open space provided 1  
OR
  - o Ornamental grasses to cover 25% of the open space provided 1

Additional Criteria for Landscape Options

○ Irrigation installed in required landscape areas	2
○ Design and construct a Green Roof	1
○ Provide 1 Overstory tree for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback <i>(See note A)</i>	1
○ Provide 2 Understory trees for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback <i>(See note A)</i>	1
○ 9 shrubs per 50 LF of drive isle outside of parking lot areas.	
○ Provide 9 shrubs, for every 100 LF of front setback street frontage <i>(See note A)</i>	2
○ Parking separation from lot line with minimum 10 ft. wide planting area <i>(excluding alleys)</i>	2
○ Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street <i>(Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 75% of parking lot frontage.)</i>	2
OR	
○ Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street <i>(Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 95% of parking lot frontage.)</i>	3
○ Provide .2 Overstory tree for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○ Provide .4 Understory trees for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○ Provide 6 shrubs for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○ Provide 10 ornamental grasses for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○ Edible Landscaping	1
○ Undulating large open space	1
○ Provide added visual interest to the open spaces with the creation of berms and hills. <i>(large sites)</i> <i>(Must be a significant impact on the site to be considered.) Additional submittals will be required.</i>	2
○ Incorporate existing significant vegetation (Trees must be at least 12 inches in diameter)	
▪ 50% of existing vegetation	2
○ Planning may authorize for high value wetland, riparian and native areas	2
○ Eco-lawn mixture	1
○ Perennial flower beds	1
○ Use of hardwood Mulch beneath all trees, shrubs and decorative grasses	2
○ Clustering of shrubs and grasses so that maintenance can operate around them easily	2
○ 6' diameter mulch bed around all Overstory Trees, 4' on Understory	1
○ Addition of plantings to attract pollinator species in select areas	2
○ Stockpile topsoil on site	1
○ Protect Drip Line of all existing trees of significance	1
○ Restore topsoil to recorded pre-development depth	4
○ Leave a 3'-0" zone of planter area with no plantings directly in front of all parking stalls	1
○ Till the soil to a minimum 8" Depth	3
▪ Minimize hard surface parking lot area (In addition to the required Storm Water Management Plan)	
• Maximize green space (over 25% of the site) Outside of Floodway	2
• Parking Islands at the end of all parking rows	1

## Attachment C- Option Proposal #3

City of Ames: Landscape Ordinance - Ranking System (Draft Proposal)

26 minimum points. **30 Points overall required,  
no small site difference**

5. **Pre Design Site Assessment:** (Pre-Requisite)
  - Storm Water Analysis of pre-developed site.
    - o Discharge points
    - o Swale locations
    - o Existing wetlands
    - o Calculate pre-development runoff
  - Document existing topsoil depths
  - Documentation of existing 'trees of significance'
  
6. **Project Design:** (Pre-Requisite)
  - Developer agrees to submit written and photographic verification that they completed the tasks agrees upon prior to construction. (Pre-requisite)
  - It is understood that designers will use best planting and design practices. Plant spacing to allow for growth, mulch additional areas as necessary to minimize maintenance, eliminate the use of nuisance and invasive species, etc.
  - Developer agrees that all plant sizes must adhere to the following size restrictions. (Pre-requisite)
  - Developer agrees that staff may refuse certain designs regardless of score total.
    - o Overstory Trees – Min. 2" Caliper, Max. 3.5" Caliper
    - o Understory Trees – Minimum 1.5" Caliper, Max. 2.5" Caliper
    - o Evergreen Trees – Min. 6' Height
    - o Shrubs – Minimum three (3) Gallon
    - o Ornamental Grasses – Minimum one (1) Gallon
    - o Prairie Plantings – Must use at least three (3), but no more than five (5) varieties of native short grass prairie species. Must reach a minimum 3 feet in height. Can be combined with similar height native wildflowers, but is limited to 10 species per development. 'Small sites' only required to provide 2 types of prairie plantings
    - o Pollinator Species Planting – Must use the US Governments' required species mix for the Conservation Reserve Program - (CP42)
    - o Commercial uses abutting a residential or industrial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet.
    - o Industrial uses abutting a residential or commercial use must provide a combination of grasses, high shrubs and trees to screen. Evergreen trees required when abutting residential. Fencing can be no higher than 8 feet
    - o Apartment Building foundation plantings required utilizing a tree with shrub and/or grass mixture
    - o Identify which landscape ordinance criteria are being used on site plan and total generated points
    - o Parking Lots adjacent to residential zones require minimum 5 foot landscape screening area
    - o Verify removal all construction debris
    - o Verify removal of excess gravel in planting areas
    - o Minimum Landscaping/Open Space requirement by percentage of lot area in commercial and industrial zones. FS-RM, V-R, RM, RH require 5% of lot area as usable open in addition to required landscape and yard areas.  
\*(Note that Open Space and Landscaped area terminology may include storm water treatment facilities, Usable Open Space would likely not allow for storm water facilities to meet its definition)
    - o Rock mulch is prohibited in required landscape areas
    - o Reconstruction of existing sites must include a functional equivalent replacement of existing landscaping with regard to diversity, totals, etc.
    - o Minimum 3% organic makeup in soils.
  - **Environmental Design** (minimum score - 8 points)
    - o Provide no more than 10% additional parking than necessary beyond base requirements (*Shopping Centers not to exceed 5 per 1000*) 1
    - o Soil- 8% organic makeup in the top 8" 3
    - o Protect Drip Line of all existing trees of significance 1
    - o Rip sub-surface to 8" depth, prior to re-spread of topsoil 2
    - o Replace Top soil to minimum 6" depth 2
    - o Maximize green space (over 25% of the site) Outside of Floodway 2

○	Parking Islands at the end of all parking rows	1
○	No more than 10 continuous parking stalls in any row (7 X16 islands.)	2
○	Install Bio-retention to manage water quality and quantity	3
	<i>(In areas where Bio-retention are proposed, landscape requirements will be waved.)</i>	
	Reduce and/or eliminate the use of storm water intakes and piping.	
	<i>(Encourage designers to use overland flow) (Narrative required)</i>	
○	Elimination of piping	2
○	Design and construct a Green Roof	1
○	Heat Island Effect	
▪	Islands not designated as bio-swales: plant a minimum of 1 Overstory tree in each.	2
▪	Parking Lot Shading	
	35% within 15 years	2
	50% within 15 years	4
-	<b>Front Yard Landscaping &amp; Parking Lot Screening</b> (minimum score - 8 points)	
○	Diversity of genus (No more than 25% of any genus of plant based on number of total plants)	2
○	Leave a 3'-0" zone of planter area with no plantings directly in front of all parking stalls	1
○	Provide 1 Overstory tree for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback <i>(See note A)</i>	1
○	Provide 2 Understory trees for every 50LF of street frontage in front setback <i>(See note A)</i>	1
○	6 shrubs per 50 LF of drive isle outside of parking lot areas.	1
○	Provide 9 shrubs, for every 100 LF of front setback street frontage <i>(See note A)</i>	2
○	Provide 20 ornamental grasses for every 50LF of frontage in front setback <i>(See note A)</i>	1
○	Use of clustered thoughtful plantings <i>(layering of colors and textures with variety of plants)</i>	4
○	Provide grasses or shrubs with Bio-Swale in required landscape areas between parking and ROW	3
○	Provide minimum 10 foot screening area adjacent to residential uses.	2
○	Parking separation from lot line with minimum 10 ft. wide planting area <i>(excluding alleys)</i>	2
○	Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street <i>(Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 75% of parking lot frontage.)</i>	2
	OR	
○	Provide landscape berming between the parking area and the street <i>(Must be a minimum of 30" high and cover 95% of parking lot frontage.)</i>	3
-	<b>Planting Design</b> (minimum score - 10 points)	
○	Plant Variety- No more than 50% of one plant type. Minimum 5 types of plants.	2
○	Provide .2 Overstory tree for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○	Provide .4 Understory trees for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○	Provide 5 shrubs for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○	Provide 8 ornamental grasses for every 1000SF of Open Space	1
○	No turf/lawn in areas less than 5-0' in width.	1
○	Turf Grass / Lawn to cover less than 50% of the Open Space provided	2
○	Combination of Shortgrass Prairie grasses and ornamental grasses to cover 60% or more of the open space provided	2
○	Use of Shortgrass Prairie grasses to cover 25% of the open space provided	1
○	Addition of plantings to attract pollinator species in select areas	1
○	Provide 3 shrubs or 10 grasses per 50 LF of building foundation (Must be designed and planted in a manner that shows a connection to an adjacent building)	1
○	Undulating large open space	1
○	Provide added visual interest to the open spaces with the creation of berms and hills. <i>(large sites) (Must be a significant impact on the site to be considered.) Additional submittals will be required.</i>	2
○	Incorporate existing significant vegetation (Trees must be at least 12 inches in diameter)	
▪	50% of existing vegetation	2
▪	Planning may authorize for high value wetland, riparian and native areas	2
○	Use of clustered thoughtful plantings that include ornamental grasses, shrubs and over story trees <i>(Plantings must be out of the front yard or in addition to the front yard)</i>	2
○	Designer Choice: Thoughtful planting plan that generally meets the intent of the items listed above, but goes beyond the basic requirements. It would include signature green spaces, outdoor	8

gardens, rain gardens, seating areas, etc. Note- All items listed above need to be incorporated in some capacity to achieve this (*See Note D*) (*Developments with more than Four (4) Acres of open space will want to use this method as it will likely decrease the number of required plantings*)

- 15% of open area must contain either an outdoor garden or rain garden
- At least 2 seating areas required in front or side yards
- Must provide a summary of vegetation and its significance to the planting plan
- Must contain at least 2 signature green spaces
- Must be designed and certified by a professional landscape architect