

ITEM #:	<u>25</u>
DATE:	<u>03-25-25</u>
DEPT:	<u>P&H</u>

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: MAJOR SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALTERNATIVE LANDSCAPING PLAN
FOR 329 SE 5TH STREET**

BACKGROUND:

Furniture Mart USA, Inc. owns property located at 329 SE 5th Street and is requesting approval of an Alternative Landscaping Plan with a Major Site Development Plan for a proposed new 95,472 square foot retail furniture store. The total site area is 4.68 acres (See Attachment A- Location Map). *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.* The site is zoned Highway-oriented Commercial (HOC) and located partially within the 100-year Floodway Fringe. **City Council's scope of review is limited to the landscape plan elements of the project.**

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 design emphasizes their storefront and provides a great degree of diversity and visual interest with its proposed plantings and layout and meets the intent of the landscaping ordinance.**

The proposed Plan exceeds total planting requirements but proposes a different configuration in relation to the front parking lot and rear loading areas (Attachment B- Landscape Plan). The proposed plan has been designed to distribute front yard shrub and grass plantings required along the SE 5th Street front yard into the west side yard of the site throughout the parking lot and along the drive aisle located along the west side of the site. Parking lot trees are also placed to the west side of the parking lot rather than distributed across the parking lot and in front of the store building. The owner views this west driveway frontage as their true front even though it is not a public street defined as front yard in the Zoning Ordinance.

The Plan also includes modified greenspace area near the loading dock east of the building and to allow tree planting distribution of parking lot trees west of the building to be pulled away from the west façade of the building along the eastern row of parking and spread further out along the southwest portion of the site near SE 5th Street and along the drive aisle along the western property line. **The Developer is proposing the alternative plan they believe meets and exceeds the base Landscape Standards to allow for a building and parking lot configuration that fits on the site more appropriately by adding visual interest and softening to the site in their most publicly visible areas for parking and loading.**

Shrubs, grasses and trees are still proposed in the front yard along SE 5th Street south of the building along the foundation in clusters. Typically, front yard landscaping must be distributed within the area between the building and the street. The drive aisle leading north from SE 5th Street along the west

property line is not a front yard. However, the west side of the building will accommodate the parking for the entire site and be a public entrance for customers entering the store.

The minimum front yard standards require 61 grasses and 41 shrubs. The proposal calls for 179 grasses and 88 shrubs spread out within the west side yard parking lot area, along the building foundation on both the SE 5th Street and west side yard foundation and a small number immediately east of the loading area. The required nine front yard overstory trees and the required 25 parking lot overstory trees are provided on site with the east row of parking stalls closest to the building having no overstory trees placed within it.

The distribution of shrubs and grasses outside of the area between the building and the street into the west side yard throughout the parking lot area meets the base landscaping quantity requirements of the front yard landscaping standards and adds additional shrubs and grasses throughout, exceeding the minimum planting requirements of shrubs and grasses on a commercial site. The majority of the additional shrubs and grasses are being provided along the building foundation and further north within and abutting the parking lot.

The adjustment of the parking lot overstory trees that would be within the easternmost row of parking stalls closest to the building can be seen to add tree canopy coverage in other areas of the parking lot and abutting the parking lot in a manner that still meets the intent of the ordinance and provides additional shading in many other areas of the parking lot. Additionally, the adjustment of front yard trees and shrubs and grasses east of the loading area outside of the area between the loading area and the street with an eight-foot greenspace separation between the loading area and the street can be seen to meet the purpose of providing greenspace separation between the street and loading and maneuvering area while keeping the front yard landscaping material close to the east side of the loading area in front of the building.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION:

At the March 5 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting the Commission reviewed the proposed plan. One commission member said the proposal is clear and that layout makes sense. Another stated that they thought the plan made sense and asked about stormwater management. The developer's engineer responded to the stormwater design question. One resident did speak and stated they would like to see a sidewalk from SE 5th Street to Target. Staff responded that a sidewalk along the west property line leading to Target is not required but that space exists for one to be installed in the future.

The Planning & Zoning Commission voted 5-0 to recommend City Council approve the Alternative Landscape Plan for 329 SE 5th Street.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Major Site Development Plan Alternative Landscape plan for 329 SE 5th Street.
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 inclusion of additional shrubs and ornamental grasses as well as the allocation of parking lot trees provides a design that allows for adequate shading and additional visual interest and visual softening of the front yard area and the west side of the building where the main entrance and parking lot are located.

Staff is finalizing review of the remaining Site Development Plan items beyond the Landscaping Standards. **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 #1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[329 SE 5th Street Location Map.pdf](#)

[Furniture Mart Landscape Plan.pdf](#)

[Furniture Mart Site Plan.pdf](#)