



# Land Development Code Update

## Landscaping and Screening

Arapahoe County Public Works and Development is seeking feedback from developers, landscape design professions, local plant nurseries and various other agencies to improve and make the landscape regulations more user-friendly. The current regulations in Sections **2-5.2 Centennial Airport Environs Planning Area (CAEPA)** and 4-1.3 Landscaping and Screening in the Arapahoe County Land Development Code are outdated and difficult to understand. They were developed in 1999 and updated in 2003 to encourage the use of xeric plant species in landscape design. This current update the County is undertaking aims to better accommodate for increased drought conditions, higher water demands, limited access to central water systems in the eastern part of the County, and rising water costs. This update may also include tree preservation requirements, and new landscape techniques and use of stormwater.

Please review the [current landscaping regulations here](#). We'd like to know more from you to help shape the discussion. Please take ten minutes to complete the below questions.

1. Please indicate what industry/profession you represent
  - a. Landscape Designer/Installer
  - b. Architect/Engineer
  - c. Developer/Home Builder
  - d. Local Nursery representative
  - e. Water District representative
  - f. County Resident
  - g. Other (write in)
  
2. Please provide your email address if you would like to be included in future communications about the proposed landscape regulations.
  
3. Do you believe the County's landscape regulations should be updated and amended?  
(1=leave code as is, 2=minor modifications required, 3=neutral, 4=needs major modifications, 5=entire code needs an update)  
Optional text box: If you would like, please elaborate on your response
  
4. How important is it for the County to address the following elements in the landscape regulations? (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=neutral, 4=moderately important, 5=very important)
  - a. Planting requirements (number of plants required)
  - b. Plant substitutions (substitution of ornamental grasses for shrubs and substitution of shrubs for trees)
  - c. Recommended plant list
  - d. Open space requirements (minimum required landscape area as percentage of a site)
  - e. What areas on-site need to be landscaped
  - f. What portion of the detention pond can be counted towards the minimum open space requirement
  - g. Use of artificial turf
  - h. Water conservation
  - i. Landscape credit for green roofs

- j. Tree preservation
- k. Ease of use/clarity of regulations
- l. Use of stormwater run-off for watering landscape on-site

Optional text box: Is there another element Arapahoe County should consider in a code revision?

5. The County's current regulation of one tree and 10 shrubs per 1,000 square feet of landscape area in commercial, industrial and business is required. Is this requirement adequate?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
6. If no, what needs to be amended?
  - a. Number of trees and shrubs per 1,000 square feet
  - b. Number of trees and shrubs and square footage
  - c. Square footage
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. The County's current parking lot landscape regulations require 10 square feet of landscape islands per parking stall. Is this requirement adequate?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
8. If no, is the square footage of landscape islands per parking stall
  - a. Too much
  - b. Not enough
  
9. Parking lot landscape islands less than 6' x 36' are to include a minimum of have one tree and three shrubs. Is this requirement adequate?
  - a. Trees-need to add more
  - b. Trees-just right
  - c. Trees-reduce number
  - d. Trees-too many
  - e. Shrubs-not enough
  - f. Shrubs-need to add more
  - g. Shrubs-just right
  - h. Shrubs-reduce number
  - i. Shrubs-not enough
  
10. Would it be helpful to have pre-determined charts to use/fill out for plant schedule, plant number compliance and site data?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
11. Does the County need landscaping requirements for the road right-in-way?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
12. The landscape regulations currently exempt individual single-family detached or attached (duplex/townhome) lots from the regulations.
  - a. Should the County consider establishing landscape standards/requirements for those types of housing?  
(1=strongly agree, 2=slightly agree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly disagree, 5=strongly disagree)
  
  - b. Require minimum number of trees/shrubs in front yards.

(1=strongly agree, 2=slightly agree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly disagree, 5=strongly disagree)

c. Set a limit on irrigated turf areas

(1=strongly agree, 2=slightly agree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly disagree, 5=strongly disagree)

13. What methods of water conservation should be used in the County?

(select all that apply)

- a. Xeric/low water plants
- b. Reduction of turf grass
- c. Reuse of water – parking lot stormwater, recycled water
- d. Limit spray irrigation
- e. Require more drip irrigation/specific emitters
- f. Permeable pavers
- g. Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. What plant palette is appropriate for Arapahoe County?

(select all that apply)

- a. Xeric/low water plants
- b. Indigenous plant species
- c. Introduced plant species
- d. High water use plants for certain areas (rain gardens, annual beds, entries to neighborhoods, etc.)
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

15. The rural areas of the County are often served by well water. Should the County consider different landscape standards for rural areas?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. If yes to question 12, please rank the following?

(1=strongly support, 2=slightly support, 3=neutral, 4=slightly oppose, 5=strongly oppose)

- a. Require less landscape area on rural development sites
- b. Require fewer trees/shrubs compared to urban areas
- c. Provide a different plant palette for rural areas
- d. Reduce the amount of turf allowed
- e. Allow more native seed areas

17. The County is considering allowing the use of artificial turf. Where would artificial turf be appropriate? (select that all apply)

- a. On individual residential lots (single-family detached, duplexes, and townhomes)
- b. Sports fields
- c. Other high traffic areas (playgrounds, dog park/runs, etc.)
- d. Anywhere natural turf would be allowed
- e. Prefer not to see artificial turf
- f. Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. Should there be incentives for developers and homeowners for reducing water demand? (select all that should be applied)

- a. Converting turf to water-wise plants (xeric and natives)
- b. Using rotary/high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles
- c. Using smart irrigation controllers
- d. Installing xeric and native landscapes
- e. Installation of rain barrels
- f. Using rain sensor devices with irrigation systems

19. Please make any additional comments about updates to/challenges of the current landscape code.

## Landscape Code Amendment Survey Summary – March 2021

109 sent out by email

48 responded, 44%

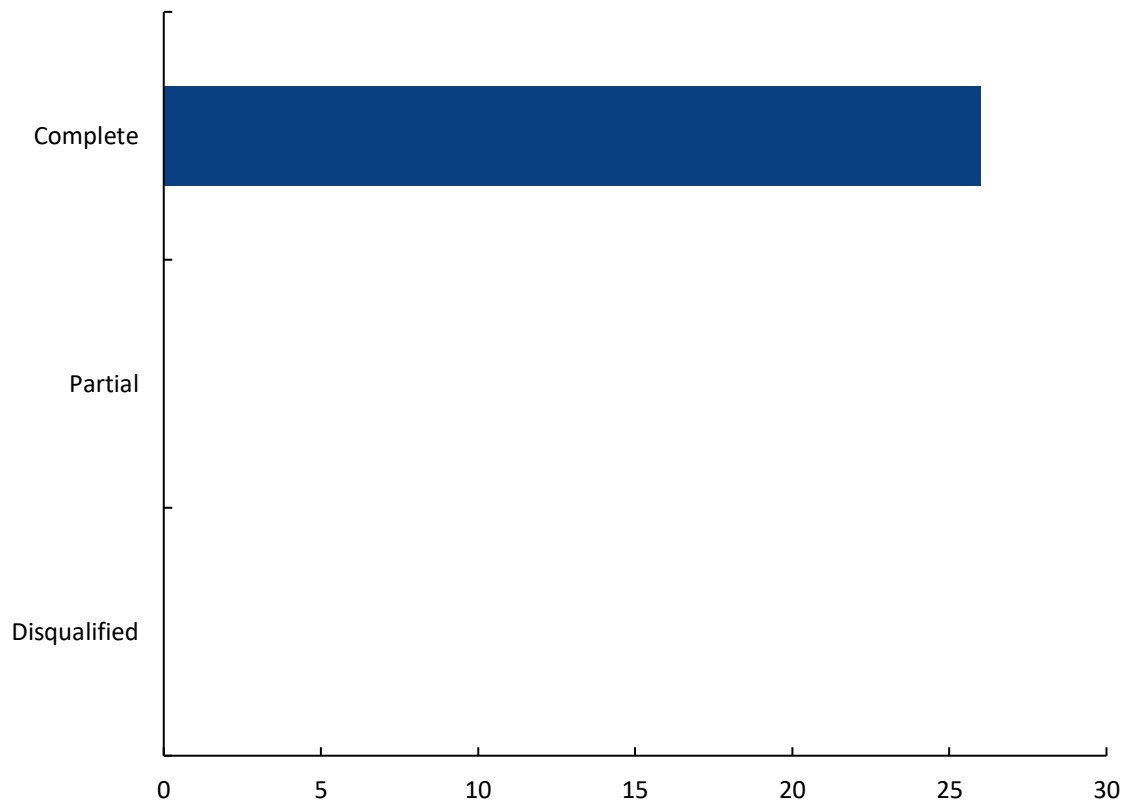
### Topics that received highest percentage

- Question 1: 40.4% - Landscape Designer/Installer
- Question 2: 51.1% - I'm neutral/unsure of amending the landscape code
- Question 3: 64.4% - want water conservation  
58.7% - want tree preservation  
73.3% - want code that Ease of use/clarity of regulations
- Question 4: Most repeated topic - 4 regarding plants to be or not to be used
- Question 5: 56.1% About right (1T and 10 shrubs per 1,000 SF)
- Question 6: All over the board with topics
- Question 7: 42.1% About right – 10SF of landscaping per parking stall
- Question 8: 54.1% 9-foot width of landscape islands
- Question 9: 67.5% Just right (1T and 3 shrubs for parking islands less than 6x36)  
39.5% Need to add more/39.5% Just right
- Question 10: 90.5% - Provide charts, templates for plant schedules, etc.
- Question 11: 65.1% - Need landscape requirements for ROW
- Question 12: 27.9% - agree; 23.3% strongly disagreed - provide standards for SFD/SFA lots  
25% - agree; 22.7% strongly disagree – require min number of trees/shrub in front yard  
36.4% - strongly agree; 27.3% - agree – limit irrigated turf grass
- Question 13: 87% - xeric/low water plants – methods to use to conserve water in the County  
76.1% - reduction of turf grass  
73.9% - reuse of water  
50% - permeable pavers
- Question 14: 88.1% - xeric/low water plants – plant palette to be used in the County  
88.1% - Indigenous plant species
- Question 15: 75.6% - use unique/different landscape standards for rural areas
- Question 16: 39.4% - require less landscape area on rural development sites  
42.4% - require fewer trees/shrubs compared to urban areas  
42.4% - require different plant palette  
39.4% - reduce amount of turf  
66.7% - allow more native seed areas
- Question 17: 74.4% - sports field – use of artificial turf  
53.5% - other high traffic area (playgrounds)
- Question 18: 70% - converting turf to water-wise plants - County incentives  
65% - using rotary/high efficiency sprinkler nozzles  
77.5% - using smart controllers  
85% - Installing xeric and native landscapes  
80% - using rain sensor devices
- Question 19: Variety of comments, no one theme

# Report for 2024 Landscape Code Amendment

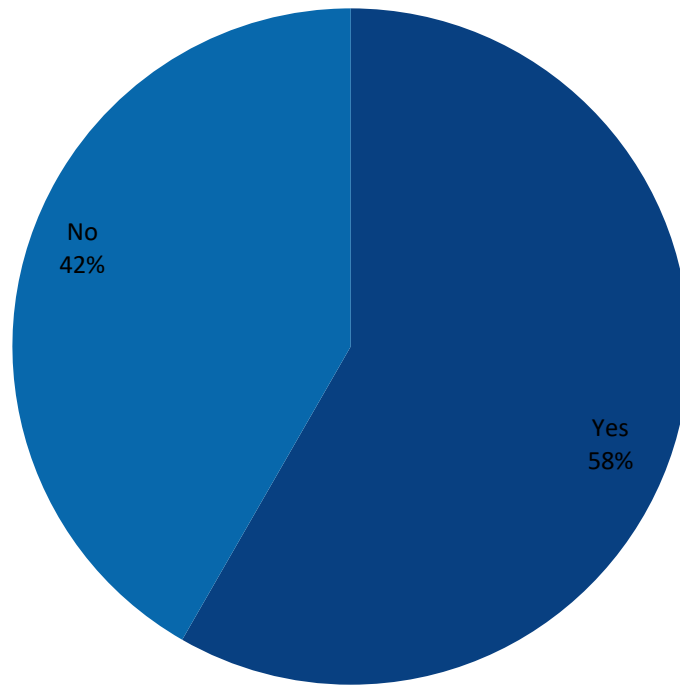
2024 Landscape Code Amendment

## Response Statistics



	Count	Percent
Complete	26	100
Partial	0	0
Disqualified	0	0
Totals	26	

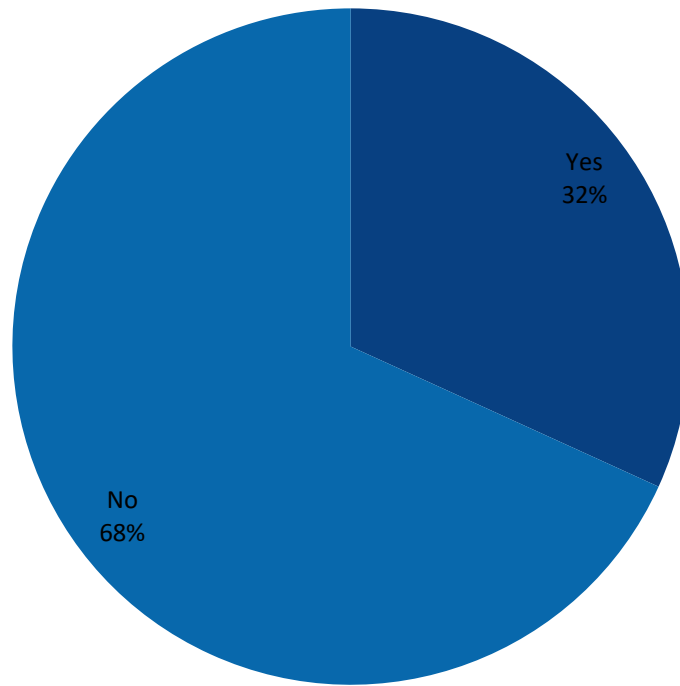
1.Are you a resident of unincorporated Arapahoe County?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	58.3%	14
No	41.7%	10
	Totals	24

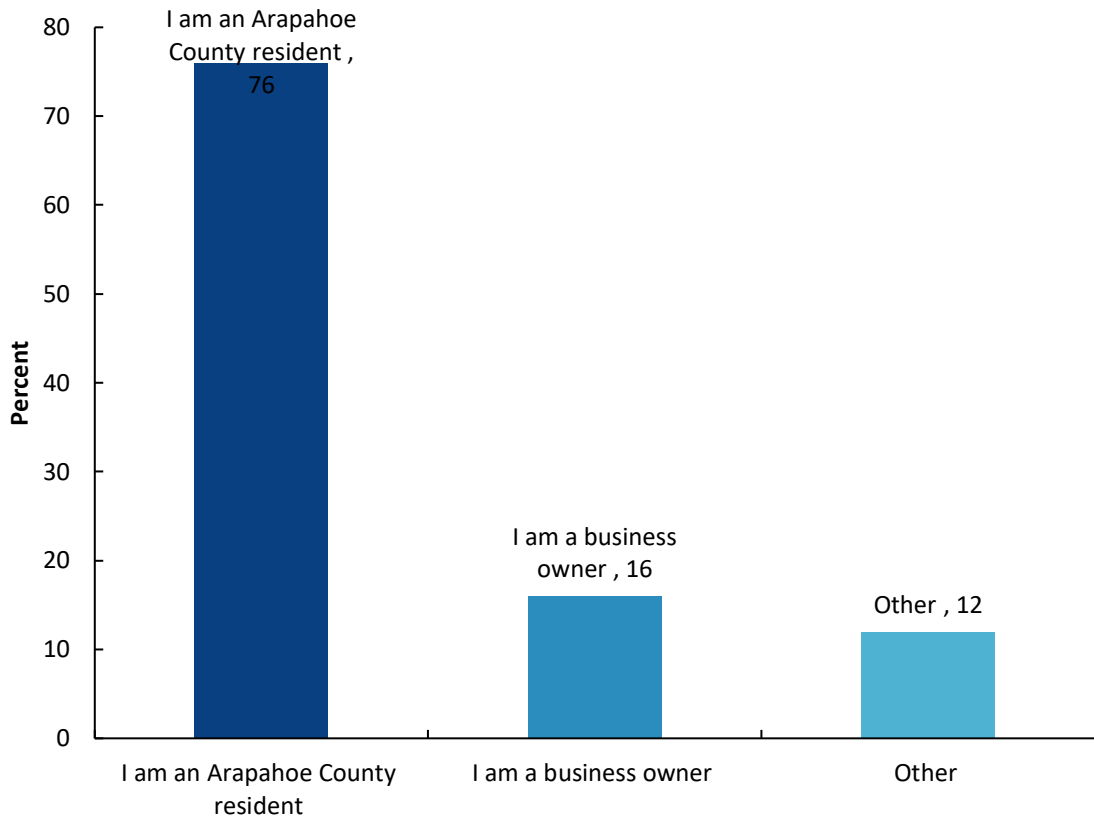


2.If "Yes," do you live east of Gun Club Road?



Value	Percent	Count
Yes	31.8%	7
No	68.2%	15
	Totals	22

3.To assist in categorizing responses, please choose all that apply from the list below.



Value	Percent	Count
I am an Arapahoe County resident	76.0%	19
I am a business owner	16.0%	4
Other	12.0%	3

Other	Count
Contractor	1

I am an Arapahoe County employee responsible for landscape planning	1
Oil & Gas	1
Totals	3

#### 4. What do you like about the proposed landscape regulations?

ResponseID	Response
50	In townhome complexes I like the idea of a maximum amount of turf. Where I live, there is really no reason to have any; however, guess the dogs would have to use the rocks! And, no turf in medians! Our HOA needs to do a better job of monitoring the irrigation system to avoid watering the streets and driveways. Another helpful solution would be to stop more development to save on water.
51	We need to view water as a previous and limited resource. We need to regulate everyone's use of water. The days of turning on a tap or faucet and not thinking about how we may be wasting it is over.
52	I'm all for saving water as needed. They let people know what they should do to help. I hope you will tell all home and apartment owners, even if they are not required to follow them, so they will know how to update their own yards when making changes.
55	I support any measures to reduce water use.
56	nothing...you want to stop water use, stop building houses..
57	From what I can see it's a list of allowed plants? Glad to see the large number of natives
58	Inform the community about the importance of

	saving water and money, I'm invited customers to use less water and native plants
60	I am okay with these provided it is only for new developments.
61	Nothing
62	See #6
63	Commercial , Industrial and Residential should not all be classified as the same. Nothing about this seems ok. Big brother at it once again, controlling what kind of landscaping people would like with THEIR property.
64	Why would anyone like everything on their "property" to be regulated by a governing body down to what kinds of plants and rocks are allowed to exist?
66	we need to conserve when possible, but with all the new development going on in Bennett, I believe that we will run out of resource unless people start hardscaping more.
67	Finding drought tolerant plants is a good idea
69	Save the trees, minimize use of grassy areas and with drought tolerant plants
70	Ridiculous
71	Lots of plants to chose from
72	Not a damn thing

74	Nothing
75	Increased focus on water conservation

**5.What do you dislike about the proposed landscape regulations? What specific changes would you propose?**

ResponseID	Response
51	I don't have any changes.
52	Not enough information has been provided to say.
53	While I agree we need to conserve water. I don't think we should plan for more housing and development. We do not have the water resources to support it.
56	STOP BUILDING HOUSES AND CONDOS AND APARTMENTS...they all require water. Stop screwing the people like Biden
57	Thought sod options were a little limited. Would recommend a perrenial rye or Ephraim rye grass for sod. Many options at Arkansas Valley Seed Company.
58	I don't dislike anything just we have to know what modifications are done when people sell their house new owners wants to do anything they want to have their new house as they been dreaming for years
59	I really don't know where we would put any landscaping in our little area.
60	
61	If I want to remove a tree from my property I will. I

	will not ask permission from a politician or environmentalist.
62	see # 6
63	Literally everything about this is communist.
64	<p>You want to regulate everything and your enforcement of these regulations will be taxing, confusing, and unnecessary for your residents. People can't do anything without regulatory bodies sticking their nose where it doesn't belong and taking your "taste" from your constituents and forcing them to adhere to your whims.</p> <p>Arapahoe County is by far the worst building department to work with on the entire front range of Colorado and you just keep sinking your claws deeper into people's pockets and making virtually everything difficult. Now you're asking if I can give you more reason to delay and reject projects.</p> <p>Based on how you approach everything, it will be better for your residents if Arapahoe County were not allowed to make any rules or regulations whatsoever. The best thing that could happen to the residents of Arapahoe County is to be annexed by Aurora or any other building department on the front range.</p>
65	Is there consideration for oil & gas locations that do not fit into the descriptions provided?
66	same as above
67	NEED MORE TREES
70	We don't have a water issue and we're not in a



	drought
71	Nothing.
72	Instead of causing more grief for residents, how about fixing the busted up roads and control traffic.
74	Limit new development of new housing, saving water instead of limiting existing home owners how to use their own water.
75	<p>Exempt removal of "nuisance" trees from regulations (B2); Does B4 apply only to new plans? Is only the modified area to meet the specified ratios? (As written this will STOP water conservation projects because it will cost too much and require replacement of too many water-using species before any conservation begins). #5 a how far prior to construction; also don't understand why "in addition" if it meets the requirements. Reference "whether by preservation or replacement" in B4. C6 Ditto #5 - is contradictory to C2 (replacement trees are in addition to minimum number required for site) and is punitive. 4-1.4 1 - enhancement of outdoor recreational opportunities "as applicable to site type"? (outdoor recreational not appropriate universally). 3. Groundcover, d., does this include gorilla-hair? #8 Soil Amendments A - this method of implementing native seed causes more weeds. Hope you'll consider eliminating this requirement - not advised by CSU Extension Horticulturist/Turf Specialist. #9vi h does Netafim qualify? Important for tree irrigation. Parking Area</p>

Landscaping b. Interior Parking Lots PLEASE make #d go away. Trees struggle in landscape islands - they are surrounded by non-permeable surface, suffer from heat-island and salt-stands and the irrigation to those trees is constantly impacted by people walking or driving over the island. Not sustainable.

6. Please provide any additional comments. We appreciate your time and we like to hear your thoughts.

ResponseID	Response
50	I see no reason for any turf between traffic lanes as serves no purpose other than to have to maintain and water it. Just rock it and keep the weeds out.
52	Please let homeowners who are not required to change know about the regulations so they can move in that direction when making changes.
57	Plants in list should be marked by water need like in the Landscaping for Water Conservation in a Semiarid Environment published by the City of Aurora 1980. It's a good guide to group plants with like needs depending on microclimates of lot.
58	As landscape business owner saving water is important but with out sacrifice the right to have a dream property or house that make feel good
61	Less rules are better.
62	We all need to move to a more "zeroscape" landscape design. You need to do everything to help with that: > Help with design idea's > Help with initial cost. Maybe a reward system for changing the landscape design to change the water usage.
63	Arapahoe County is getting worse and worse with the people they employ along with regulations

	<p>they have either adopted or would like to adopt. Sad.</p>
64	<p>It would be best for your residents and contactors for Arapahoe County staff to take some time to reflect what their purpose is. Working with Arapahoe County is no longer a good faith effort to ensure we are doing things safely and to code. You have a combative mentality towards your contractors and residents and do very little to help the people you demand money from to adhere to your dictates. After dealing with your building department for over a decade my advice to your residents is to avoid any and all interactions with the staff of Arapahoe County and to avoid pulling permits at all costs. You provide very little actual benefit to your constituents and you do everything in your power to make things confusing and difficult for contractors and homeowners. It takes months to get anything through your system, and are constantly bringing up frivolous new problems you discover on products that you've seen hundreds of times before. Your staff are the least human people I've worked with in my career and it's frankly impossible to get a response from your management when there are issues with your staff not responding or over stepping their scope. A building department is typically a very beneficial thing for its residents to ensure they aren't being preyed on by contractors---Arapahoe County is the furthest thing from that ideal that I can imagine.</p>
65	<p>The Oil &amp; Gas regulations passed 11/14 only mentions landscaping for the purposes of</p>

	<p>screening. How will the landscaping development provision be implemented for oil &amp; gas. In the city of Aurora, a landscape plan is required, but not implemented until a RBU is within 1,500' and a city water source is within 400'. We would ask that a similar allowance be noted for Arapahoe County landscaping requirements for oil &amp; gas.</p>
67	<p>More trees will provide shade and assist with sound &amp; heat</p>
71	<p>Limit housing!</p>
72	<p>All we need is another frigging law.</p>

7. Please provide your email address if you would like to be included in future communications about the proposed landscape regulations.

ResponseID	Response
50	loripsmith@comcast.net
51	Pakorah@hotmail.com
53	Qesera927@gmail.com
57	Uilani00@aol.com
58	dpinadiaz@gmail.com
65	sfarkas@civiresources.com
75	lvanderheyden@arapahogov.com