

Zoning Regulation Bylaw Improvement Project – Phase 2

Alteration to Topography in
Low-Density Residential Zones:
Consultation and Next Steps

Four Key Topic Areas

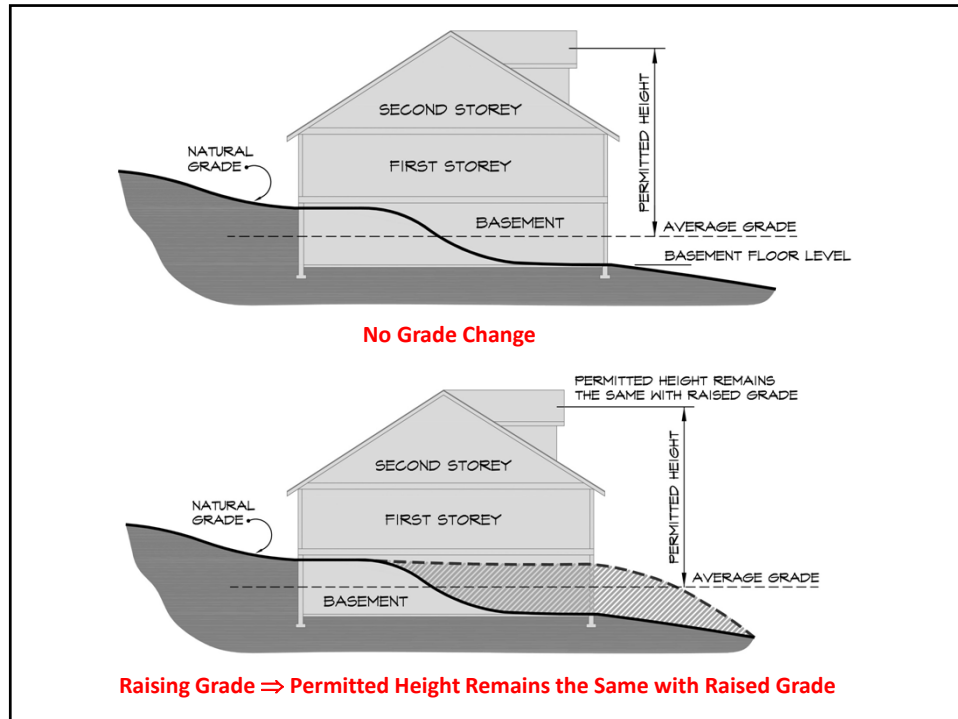
- Grade calculation in low-density residential areas
- Regulation of retaining walls
- Regulation of hard-surface landscape features or Raised-Building Features
- Regulation of soft-surface landscaping

Public Consultation

- The consultation process included the following:
 - Posting of relevant material on the City's website
 - Invitations to Community Associations and the development community to review the material and provide comments
 - An advertised public Open House and a Focus Group Session

Grade Calculation in Low-Density Residential Areas

- **Does the current method of calculating grade in relation to building height contribute to increased building height of sloped sites?**
 - No, it does not allow the building height to be increased by manipulating the existing grade of a property and is consistent with best practices in other municipalities.



Grade Calculation in Low-Density Residential Areas

- **Are there any changes or clarifications that could be introduced to improve the current regulations?**
 - The current method of calculating grade should be retained, and add definitions for “natural grade” and “finished grade.”

Regulation of Retaining Walls

- **Should retaining walls be regulated?**
 - There are challenges associated with regulating retaining walls. Challenges include the following:
 1. retaining walls for landscaping purposes are not shown on building plans and do not require a building permit
 2. landscaping is completed at the end of a project
 3. city has received relatively few complaints
 4. additional staff time and resources required to administer and enforce zoning bylaw regulations.
 - Many of the issues related to retaining walls would be addressed by proposed measures for hard-surfaced landscape features.
- **The recommendation is to not establish regulations for retaining walls.**

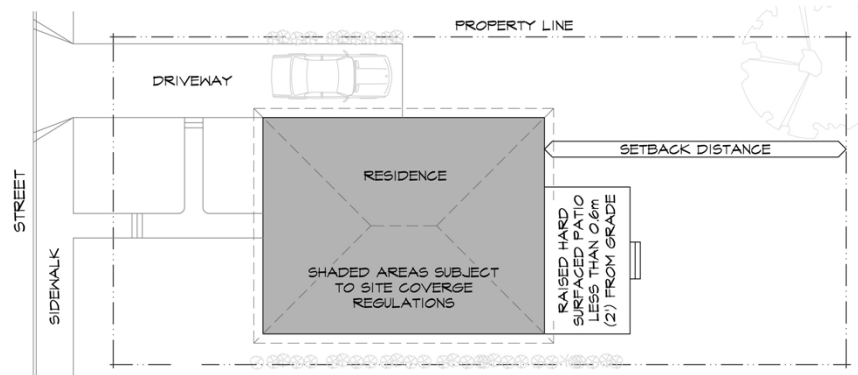
Regulations of Hard-Surfaced Landscape or Raised-Building Features



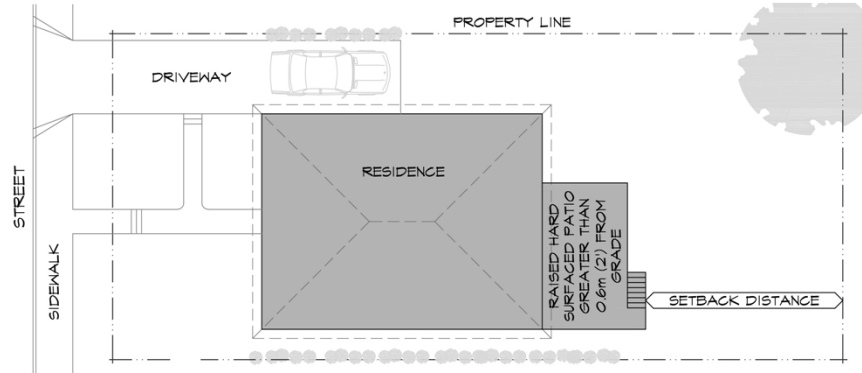
Regulations of Hard-Surfaced Landscape or Raised-Building Features

- **Should these types of features be regulated?**
 - Yes, there should be some form of regulation.
- **What regulations would be appropriate?**
 - Any raised-building feature, attached or detached from a building, above 0.6m (2ft) in height and regardless of material, are subject to building site coverage and setback regulations.

Raised-Building Structures Less than 0.6m



Raised-Building Structures Greater than 0.6m



Regulation of Soft-Surfaced Landscaping

Question: From the pictures below, you can see that introducing a requirement to maintain a minimum of 50% of a lot's open space with natural or planted vegetation poses some regulatory challenges. Please tell us whether you think the following examples would meet the proposed standard.



Yes: 3 No: 2



Yes: 4 No: 2



Yes: 2 No: 2 Not Sure: 1



Yes: 2 No: 3



Yes: 5 No: 0



Yes: 3 No: 2

Regulation of Soft-Surfaced Landscaping

- **Should soft-surfaced landscaping be regulated?**
 - Regulating soft-surfaced landscaping would require a new process, with significantly more resources, would be difficult to administer and may lead to community expectations that can't be met.
 - The majority of respondents to the survey did not agree with the idea of regulating landscaping on private property.
 - The main concern was to do with a lot's permeability. The new measures introduced through the City's *Storm Water Management Bylaw* encourage residents of low-density housing forms to increase the degree of permeability of their properties.
- **The recommendation is not to regulate soft-surface landscaping.**

Recommendations

1. Add definitions of **“finished grade”** and **“natural grade”**.
2. Amend the definitions of **“site coverage”** and **“setbacks”** and the applicable **low density residential zones** to include a requirement that **raised-building features** greater than 0.6m (2ft) in height are subject to site coverage and setback regulations.