



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 25-230

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: November 17, 2025

SUBJECT: Synthetic Turf Standards for Residential Properties

The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an overview of the current requirements governing synthetic turf installations on single-family residential properties within the City of Fort Lauderdale, and to summarize the City's approach to ensuring compliance with Florida Statutes.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

In 2025, the State of Florida, through Chapter 2025-140, Laws of Florida, established a new Florida Statute, Section 125.572, which defines synthetic turf as a manufactured product that resembles natural grass and is used for landscaping and recreational areas. The statute directs the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to establish minimum standards for the installation of synthetic turf on single-family residential properties of one (1)-acre or less. These standards must account for material type, color, permeability, stormwater management, potable water conservation, water quality, proximity to trees and other vegetation, and other factors affecting the environmental conditions of adjacent properties.

Once FDEP adopts Rule 62-308.100, there will be statewide minimum standards for the installation of synthetic turf on single-family residential properties that are one (1)-acre or less in size in accordance with the State law and local governments will be preempted from enforcing ordinances that prevent installations compliant with the FDEP rule. Ahead of FDEP issuing its final rule on synthetic turf, Broward County has incorporated this statutory framework into its local ordinance, allowing property owners to install synthetic turf on eligible residential lots in accordance with these guidelines.

City of Fort Lauderdale Policy and Actions

Historically, the City has not had a permit type dedicated to the installation of groundcover, whether natural or synthetic. In some instances, groundcover materials such as synthetic turf, have been reviewed under other building permit types to evaluate stormwater drainage impact and ensure compliance with the City's adopted level of service. In accordance with Florida Statute 125.572 and in anticipation of the

forthcoming FDEP rule, the City will need to revise policies and regulations to require a landscaping permit for all synthetic turf installations.

Section 125.572, Florida Statutes applies exclusively to the installation of synthetic turf on private single-family residential properties of less than one (1) acre and until FDEP issues its rule, it is unclear how public spaces such as swales and rights-of-way adjacent to these properties may be included. It is important to note that under the Fort Lauderdale Unified Land Development Regulations (ULDR), Section 47-20.13, swale areas within public right-of-way are designated as stormwater infrastructure and must be maintained with sod or other living groundcover to ensure proper drainage.

While the ULDR does not specifically mention synthetic turf, the installation of non-living ground cover in swale areas may interfere with drainage and would therefore be inconsistent with local standards. As such, improvements within the right-of-way swale areas are only permitted for driveways aprons or on-street parking using approved materials. Property owners and contractors must continue to comply with these local regulations unless and until future amendments are adopted.

Public Awareness

Neighbors and contractors will be informed of policy updates and permitting requirements through the City's website and publications posted at the Development Services Department (DSD) office, located at 700 NW 19 Avenue. The Office of Strategic Communications will also provide public outreach that will highlight the new landscaping permit process for synthetic turf installations on private property and provide clear guidance on compliance with both local requirements and the forthcoming FDEP rule.

Implementation Timeline

City staff is actively monitoring the progress of Rule 62-308.100, which will establish the minimum standards for the installation of synthetic turf as directed by Section 125.572 (2025), Florida Statutes. FDEP has not announced a specific schedule for the rule's adoption. Once the rule is finalized, the City will promptly adjust its permitting procedures and policies to ensure full alignment with the adopted regulations.

Questions regarding synthetic turf permitting or installation standards may be directed to Orlando Arrom, Land Development Manager, at 954-828-5285 or via email at OArrom@fortlauderdale.gov.

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
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