10/27 Item 45 - Water Quality
CM Vela Amendment 3 - V1
Delay Green Stormwater Infrastructure Requirement Under .5 Acres

Line 754, 25-8-213 Section D

(D) Notwithstanding Subsection (C), all or part of the required water quality treatment may be provided using other water quality controls for:

(1) areas with land uses or activities that may generate highly contaminated runoff, as described in the Environmental Criteria Manual;
(2) a project that provides water quality treatment for currently untreated, developed off-site areas of at least ten acres in size; or
(3) sites with impervious cover of greater than 90 percent gross site area.

is amended to add the following:

(4) sites smaller than .5 acres

Additional Staff Direction

Staff is directed to work with stakeholders to do testing and evaluate the additional construction and maintenance costs for green stormwater infrastructure vs conventional stormwater infrastructure for sites under .5 acres.

Staff is encouraged to evaluate costs for different scales of housing types that may be under .5 acre, such as single family homes, fourplexes, townhouses, or small multifamily complexes.

At the conclusion of the process, staff may come back to council with an amendment striking this exception if the cost per acre for smaller sites is not substantially larger than for larger sites. Staff may also propose a substitute exemption if appropriate.

Reasoning

This amendment is not meant to prevent Green Stormwater Infrastructure from being required under .5 acres, but to give staff and council more time to evaluate and understand what the cost is for smaller sites before imposing the requirement.

In the affordability impact statement, staff provided a cost estimate of $89,000/acre to $238,000/acre for Green Stormwater Infrastructure. In addition, staff estimated a 30% median increase in cost when building biofiltration ponds relative to sedimentation ponds. That additional cost is very likely to have a substantially greater impact on smaller sites than larger sites.

On small sites under .5 acres, the cost per acre may be much higher than on larger sites. Many costs, such as the costs to hire an engineer, landscape architect, maintenance professional, etc are relatively flat between smaller and larger sites. The cost per gallon for a 1,000 gallon water quality feature is likely to be substantially more than the cost per gallon for a 10,000 gallon water quality feature.