

ORDINANCE NO. 827

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COMMERCE, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING TITLE 19 (ZONING) OF THE COMMERCE MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH ARTIFICIAL TURF REGULATIONS FOR ALL ZONES CITYWIDE AND IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

WHEREAS, the City of Commerce (“City”) is a general law city, incorporated under the laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment (“ZTA”) is to establish regulations which allow artificial turf on private properties and the public right-of-way Citywide (“Ordinance”); and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill (SB) 676, signed into law in 2023, grants cities the authority to ban or limit the use of artificial turf due to growing health concerns about chemicals found in the materials used in artificial turf; and

WHEREAS, the City initiated the proposed Ordinance pursuant to Commerce Municipal Code (“CMC”) § 19.39.280; and

WHEREAS, this Ordinance was reviewed by the Director of Community Development, in part, for consistency with the General Plan, and conformity with the CMC; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to and in accordance with provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., (herein referenced to as “CEQA”)), the State of California Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (14 Cal. Code of Regs. §§ 15000, et seq., (herein referred to as the “CEQA Guidelines”)), the City is the “lead agency” for the preparation and consideration of environmental documents for “projects”, as the term is defined in Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, it was determined that the proposed Ordinance ensures the City has the necessary regulations to protect the public, health, and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on August 20, 2025, and voted 3-0-2 to recommend that the City Council approve a ZTA regarding artificial turf regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, after due inspection, investigation, and study made by itself and on its behalf, and after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered at said hearing with respect to the proposed Project, does find that all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF COMMERCE

DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council hereby finds that the adoption of this Ordinance is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000, et seq., “CEQA”) and the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 Cal. Code of Regs. §§ 15000, et seq., the “CEQA Guidelines”). The City reviewed the environmental impacts of the proposed Ordinance. No additional environmental review is required for this Ordinance pursuant to EQA Guidelines § 15060(c)(2), § 15378(b)(5) § 15301 § 15303 and § 15061(b)(3). The proposed Ordinance is exempt from CEQA because it is a ZTA which regulates artificial turf Citywide, which will not have a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and does not qualify as a “project” under CEQA because it will not make physical changes to the environment. The proposed Ordinance is also exempt from CEQA under the common-sense exemption that it will not affect the environment. All future artificial turf proposals will require their own environmental review as outlined by CEQA guidelines.

Section 2. The City Council hereby makes the following findings of fact:

- A. **That the proposed zoning ordinance text amendment is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the general plan.** *The proposed ZTA is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Commerce General Plan, as it would promote the conservation of important natural resources as a means to provide a more livable and sustainable community. The ZTA to allow artificial turf Citywide will promote water conservation by allowing a water efficient material as an alternative to live plant material with landscaped areas. The ZTA will further reduce water consumption, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions, thereby supporting the needs of City residents.*
- B. **That the proposed zoning ordinance text amendment will not adversely affect surrounding properties.** *The proposed ZTA will not adversely affect surrounding properties because the ordinance in itself will not result in any physical changes. Any projects that utilize the proposed regulations will be properly analyzed for potential impacts and consistency with the adopted regulations governing artificial turf installations in the City.*
- C. **That the proposed zoning ordinance text amendment promotes public health, safety, and general welfare and serves the goals and purposes of this Title 19.** *The proposed ZTA will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare and serve the goals and purposes of Title 19 (Zoning) by regulating the use of artificial turf in the City to ensure that it is utilized in a manner that is safe and aesthetically compatible with the built environment. This ZTA will help reduce water consumption, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions, ultimately benefiting the residents of the City.*

Section 3. Title 19 (Zoning), and more specifically, Section 19.45.130 (“L” Definitions.) of the CMC is hereby amended to replace the definition of “Landscaping” as follows:

"Landscaping" means areas devoted to, or developed and maintained predominantly with, native or exotic plant materials, including lawn, ground cover, trees, shrubs, and other plant materials. Landscaping may also include small amounts of accessory decorative outdoor landscape elements (i.e., hardscape) such as pools, fountains, and paved or decorated surfaces, all of which are suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained to enhance a site. In addition, the combination or design may include other materials as specified in Chapter 19.23.

Section 4. Title 19 (Zoning), and more specifically, Section 19.23.050 (General provisions) of the CMC is hereby amended to add the following section alphabetically:

"H. Artificial turf is allowed pursuant to Section 19.23.150"

Section 5. Title 19 (Zoning), and more specifically, Section 19.23.090 (Ground cover.) of the CMC is hereby amended as follows:

"Ground cover may be provided in the form of turf, shrubs, vines, or similar live plant materials. Such material shall be planted in a manner to provide one hundred percent coverage within two years of initial planting. Any such material provided shall be maintained in a neat and healthy condition. Artificial turf is allowed pursuant to Section 19.23.150"

Section 6. Section 19.23.150 (Artificial turf.) is hereby added to Chapter 19.23 (Landscaping Standards) of the CMC as follows:

"19.23.150 Artificial Turf.

A. Applicability. The standards of this section apply to artificial turf installations in all zone districts and land uses and landscaped parkways.

B. Definitions.

1. "Artificial turf" means an artificially derived product that simulates the appearance of live grass.
2. "Landscaped parkway" means the area of a public right-of-way, typically between the curb and the sidewalk, that is designed to be landscaped.

C. General provisions.

1. Artificial turf is allowed in lieu of live plant materials within required setbacks and in other landscaping areas on properties in all zone districts, subject to the provisions of this section. Artificial turf plans shall be reviewed by the community development director or designee.
2. Artificial turf is allowed in lieu of live plant materials in landscaped parkways, subject to the provisions of this section and review and approval by the director of public works or designee.
3. Artificial turf must be installed with live, natural plant and tree materials to enhance the overall landscape design.
4. A minimum of 30% of the required setback areas visible from the street must be designed with live natural plant and tree materials.

5. All plants and trees incorporated into the landscape design must be suitable for the City of Commerce climate zone to ensure healthy, long-lasting growth.

D. Prohibitions.

1. Artificial turf may not be installed within a five-foot diameter of the trunk of any tree, including trees in the public right-of-way or on adjacent properties.
2. Artificial turf cannot be used in lieu of paved surfaces in driveways and parking areas as required pursuant to this code.
3. The use of indoor/outdoor plastic or nylon carpeting as a replacement for natural or artificial turf is prohibited.
4. The use of artificial shrubs, flowers, trees, and vines instead of natural plantings is prohibited.
5. Any materials containing toxic substances (such as shredded recycled tires) are strictly prohibited for use in the installation of artificial turf in all residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

E. Material standards. Artificial turf must meet the following material quality requirements.

1. Warranty: Artificial turf must have a minimum eight-year no-fade warranty as issued by the manufacturer.
2. Pile Height: Artificial turf installed in the front yard and portions of the street side yard visible from the public right of way must have a minimum pile height of one and one-half inches, with parallel long slit blades.
3. Two Colors: In the front yard and portions of the street side yard visible from the public right of way, the artificial turf blades (not including the thatch layer) must contain at least two natural green colors.
4. Thatch Layer: In the front yard and portions of the street side yard visible from the public right of way, the artificial turf must contain a beige or tan thatch layer.
5. Percolation: Artificial turf must be affixed to a permeable triple-layer backing that allows water to percolate through the artificial grass at a drain rate of at least 30 inches per hour. This ensures adequate drainage is installed underneath the artificial turf to prevent runoff, pooling, and flooding.
6. Heavy Metals: The artificial turf must comply with all federal and state standards related to lead and heavy metal content.
7. Fill Material: The fill material must be an organic fill such as, silica sand or zeolite material, that is brushed in to keep the blades upright and achieve a natural grass look. Any replacement fill must be the same. The use of rubber crumb infill is prohibited.
8. Strength & Durability: The artificial turf must be constructed to maximize dimensional stability, resist damage during normal use, and minimize ultraviolet degradation with a tear grab strength of at least 200 pounds. It must be resistant to staining, weather, insects, rot, mildew, and fungus, and must be non-allergenic and non-toxic, and able to pass the pill burn test for flammability.

F. Installation standards. Artificial turf must be installed pursuant to the manufacturer's requirements by a licensed professional with experience in the

installation of artificial turf and the following requirements.

1. Site Preparation: The installation must include the removal of all existing plant material and a three-inch compacted aggregate base that provides adequate drainage and ensures stability.
2. Drainage: The area must be sloped and graded to prevent excessive pooling, runoff, or flooding onto an adjacent property. Artificial turf areas must be sufficiently drained to allow for live planting areas to provide complete infiltration of runoff.
3. Anchoring: Artificial turf must be permanently anchored over the entire coverage area with nails and glue, and all seams must be nailed, sewn, and glued to conceal the edges, with the grain pointing in a single direction.
4. Existing Irrigation: All existing irrigation infrastructure in the covered area, including piping and sprinkler heads that are no longer used, must be capped or removed, and must not be visible.
5. Separation from Landscaping: Artificial turf must be separated from live planting areas by a barrier, such as a mow strip or bender board, to prevent the mixing of natural plant materials and artificial turf.
6. Protect Trees: All efforts must be made to protect existing trees and tree roots from damage during installation.

G. Maintenance:

1. Artificial turf must be maintained in an attractive and clean, unfaded condition, free of weeds, stains, debris, tears, holes, depressions, ruts, odors, and looseness at edges and seams.
2. Damaged or worn areas in the artificial turf surface must be repaired or removed and replaced in a manner that results in a consistent appearance with the existing artificial turf.
3. The artificial turf surface must be replaced once it can no longer be maintained as required.

H. Approval process for artificial turf on private properties.

1. Artificial turf plan required. Prior to installation of artificial turf on private properties, a detailed artificial turf plan must be submitted to the community development department.
2. Review for artificial turf on residential properties. The artificial turf plan to be reviewed and approved by the community development director or designee subject to the requirements of this section.
3. Review for artificial turf on non-residential properties. First review of the artificial turf plan is to be conducted by the community development director or designee and final approval by the planning commission (as a consent item on the planning commission agenda) subject to the requirements of this section.
4. The artificial turf plan must include:
 - a. Project Name.
 - b. Project Number.

- c. Project Location (Street address, parcel or lot number(s).
 - d. Zoning Classification of the Project Location.
 - e. Applicant's contact information.
 - f. Artificial turf material, height, backing, and warranty information.
 - g. A landscape plan showing the area of artificial turf, area of living plant material, adjacent hardscape, and separation material.
 - h. Artificial Turf Area (in square feet).
 - i. A dimensioned cross-section of proposed materials and installation details, including subgrade, drainage, base or leveling layer, and infill.
 - j. Edge material and detail for the treatment of seams.
 - k. Material description and specifications, including manufacturer, installer (with contact information), and warranty information.
 - l. Artificial Turf Ordinance in preparing the design and installation plans.
 - m. Any other information deemed necessary.
5. Certification of completion. Following installation, the installer shall certify that the installation complies with the approved landscape plan and the requirements of this Section.
- I. Approval process for artificial turf on landscaped parkways in the public right-of-way.
1. Approval required. Prior to installation of artificial turf within landscaped parkways in the public right- of-way, approval must be obtained in a form or method required by the public works director.
 2. Certification of completion. Following installation, the installer shall certify that the installation complies with the approval and the requirements of this Section.
 3. *Release of liability. A property owner installing artificial turf within a landscaped parkway must sign a form approved by the City: 1) releasing public utilities, the City and their contractors from any damage they may cause to artificial turf while conducting repairs or construction in the public right-of-way; and 2) indemnifying and holding the City harmless from and against any claim, action, damages, costs (including, without limitation, attorney's fees), injuries, or liability, arising from the City's approval of artificial turf in the public right-of-way except for such loss or damage arising from the City's sole negligence or willful misconduct. Should the City be named in any suit, or should any claim be brought against it by suit or otherwise, whether the same be groundless or not, arising out of the City approval of artificial turf in the public right-of-way, the Permittee agrees to defend the City (at the City's request and with counsel satisfactory to the City) and will indemnify the City for any judgment rendered against it or any sums paid out in settlement or otherwise. For purposes of this section "the City" includes the City of Commerce's elected officials, appointed officials, officers, and employees."*

Section 7. If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Chapter is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Chapter. The City Council declares that it would have adopted this Chapter, and

each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, phrases, or portions be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

Section 8. Based upon the above findings, the City Council hereby take the following actions: 1) adopt a Categorical Exemption under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000, et seq. "CEQA") and the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 Cal. Code of Regs. §§ 15000, et seq., the "CEQA Guidelines") (CEQA Guidelines § 15060(c)(2), § 15378(b)(5), § 15301, § 15303 and § 15061(b)(3)); and 2) adopt this Ordinance approving ZTA No. 25-01.

Section 9. This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after its adoption.

[Signatures on the following page]

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 28th day of October 2025.

Ivan Altamirano, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melanie Park
Deputy City Clerk