



**Date:** June 6, 2023

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Tom Swenson, Assistant Director Parks and Natural Resources  
Jessica Wilson, Water Resources Manager

**Subject:** Ordinance 2023-07: Amending Chapter 30 of the Edina City Code Concerning Vegetation, Article III. Landscaping

## Information / Background:

The 2021 Climate Action Plan identifies implementation item GS 2-2, “remove and ease lawn/grass requirements in ordinances.” Additionally, the Energy and Environment Commission has recommended, and City Council has adopted No Mow May resolutions in 2022 and 2023. The Energy and Environment Commission reviewed the proposed changes at their April meeting and were supportive. Staff is proposing to revise the landscaping ordinance to sync with the goals of these two initiatives.

The changes include;

- Revising the purpose of the section to acknowledge the value of replacing lawns with native grasses and wildflowers consistent with a naturally occurring Midwestern American landscape such as combating climate change, providing shelter and food for songbirds and other small mammals, and compared to the typical lawn, native grasses improve water quality, reduce air pollution, provide habitat restoration and protection, and increase carbon sequestration.
- Adding and modifying definitions for *garden*, *native plants*, and *planned landscape area*.
- Increasing buffer distances around waterbodies from 20 feet to 30 feet.
- Increasing the allowable height of turf grass and weeds before enforcement from 10 inches to 12 inches.
- Decreasing the front yard setback for planned landscape areas and natural areas from 20 feet to five feet and adding a mitigation option to allow for the front, side, or rear yard setback to be reduced to zero feet.
- Eliminating the enforcement of tall turf grasses and weeds for the month of May plus a grace period of two weeks for residential properties.
- Repealing the requirement to cut planned landscape areas and natural areas once per summer.
- The changes would become effective immediately upon approval and second reading.

The staff recommendation is to approve ordinance 2023-07 amending Chapter 30 of the Edina City Code concerning Vegetation, Article III. Landscaping and grant second reading.