



City of Winston-Salem City Council  
**Council Agenda Item Summary**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Request for a Public Hearing on UDO-CC32, a text amendment proposed by Planning and Development Services staff to modify Chapter 8 of the <i>Unified Development Ordinances (UDO)</i> to remove Section 8.4.6.B, “Graded Slopes, Mechanically Stabilized Slopes and Fills”</b>
City Council Committee	General Government Committee
Staff Lead (Presenter)	Chris Murphy, AICP/CZO, Director of Planning and Development Services
Department Head	Chris Murphy, AICP/CZO, Director of Planning and Development Services
City Manager/ACM	Aaron King, ACM

**Agenda Item Summary**

Recommended Council Action      Planning Board Recommends Approval  
 Suggested Motion Options        I recommend approval of this UDO amendment.

Strategic Focus Area                Livable Community  
 Strategic Plan Objective            LC3: Ensuring the City is a Community of Choice for Quality of Life  
 Anticipated Fiscal Impact         No Material Fiscal Impact

**Summary of Information**

Planning and Development Services was asked to review the current approval process for mechanically stabilized slopes (retaining walls). The UDO currently allows walls or wall sections of less than ten or fifteen feet in height (depending upon the purpose of the wall) to be approved by erosion control staff; alternative compliance processes exist for proposing walls which exceed this height limit. Most of Winston-Salem’s peer communities, however, do not include height limits or other technical details related to retaining walls and stabilized slopes in their development ordinances. Instead, the relevant staff in these communities evaluate each retaining wall based on the merits of the proposed design, as certified by a licensed engineer. This approach promotes greater design flexibility, allowing engineers to best address the unique conditions of each project and site.

Based on discussions with pertinent city staff, staff believes the requirements for mechanically stabilized slopes should be moved from the UDO to the Infrastructure Development Standards (IDS), which contain the technical specifications for streets, sidewalks, utilities, and similar infrastructure. Furthermore, staff believes our standards



**Vision:** To be a premier city in the region providing world-class amenities while retaining a sense of charm and hospitality  
**Mission:** To provide impactful services that enhance the quality of life for current and future generations  
**Values:** Teamwork \* Responsibility \* Respect \* Integrity \* Customer Service

for retaining walls should not include specific height limits but should instead allow project engineers the flexibility to propose wall designs which can best respond to unique conditions on site. City staff will be developing new IDS standards for retaining walls based on this direction.

**Analysis of Fiscal Impact**

This amendment will have no fiscal impact on the City.

**Attachments**

- UDO-CC32 Staff Report
- UDO-CC32 Ordinance
- UDO-CC32 Statements of Consistency

Committee Action	GGC 2/9/2026 Approved
For:	Against:
Remarks: Unanimous	