

# UDO-CC32

## Request

- Petitioner: Planning and Development Services Staff
- Request: Modify Chapter 8 of the Unified Development Ordinances (UDO) to remove section 8.4.6.B, “Graded Slopes, Mechanically Stabilized Slopes and Fills”.

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## Background

- Planning and Development Services staff received a request from the Assistant City Manager for Public Works to review the current approval process for mechanically stabilized slopes (retaining walls).
- Current regulations allow walls or wall sections of up to ten feet in height to be approved by erosion control staff.
- Walls exceeding ten feet in height are subject to an alternative compliance process.

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## Analysis

- Although the requirements for mechanically stabilized slopes are contained in the UDO, Planning staff is not responsible for their review or approval.
  - In Winston-Salem, retaining walls are reviewed by Engineering and Erosion Control staff.
  - In unincorporated Forsyth County, North Carolina Department of Transportation staff review retaining walls that are adjacent to state rights-of-way; Erosion Control staff review retaining walls outside of state rights-of-way.
- Most of Winston-Salem's peer communities do not include height limits or other technical details related to retaining walls and stabilized slopes in their development ordinances.

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## Analysis

- Staff believes our standards for retaining walls should not include specific height limits but should instead allow project engineers flexibility based on project specifics.
- Public Works staff will be developing new *Infrastructure Development Standards* (IDS) regulations for retaining walls based on this direction.

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## Summary

- Based on discussions with Public Works for this proposal, mechanically stabilized slopes would be moved from the UDO to the IDS which contain the technical specifications for similar infrastructure.
- Staff believes that the proposed changes provide a more streamlined process in which design elements will be reviewed by an interdepartmental team of public works staff with engineering and technical expertise.

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## Recommendation

- The City / County Planning Board held a public hearing on January 8<sup>th</sup> ; There were no speakers and following the public hearing, the Board unanimously recommended approval of the request.
- The General Government Committee unanimously recommended approval at their February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.



Vernon Farms Subdivision



Salem Parkway



Miller Street