

Thornton Development Code

Summary of Key Changes – Effective Date: September 1, 2025

To access the full Development Code, visit goCOT.net/DevelopmentCode.

For questions, please contact the planner of the day at 303-538-7295 or by email at pod.info@ThorntonCO.gov



ARTICLES I & II

GENERAL PROVISIONS & DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES

Article I outlines the overall purpose and intent of the Code. New provisions in the 2025 Code:

- Comprehensive Plan alignment (Section 18-3)
- Development types defined (Section 18-11)

Article II establishes the review and decision-making processes required to develop land, including the types of development applications required, the decision-making body, and the public noticing requirements.

ARTICLE III

ZONING DISTRICTS

Zoning districts are established in Article III, including the different dimensional standards for each zoning district. This Article also includes methods for calculating dimensions standards and encroachments.

Major changes in Article III include:

- New zone districts, including RL (Section 18-76) and PD-O (Section 18-132)
- Creation of Legacy Districts (Division 7)
- Dimensional standards updated to meet demand

ARTICLE IV

USE STANDARDS

Article IV establishes the allowed principal, accessory, and temporary uses in each zoning district and whether they are permitted, special, or limited uses. It also identifies supplemental standards for uses.

Major changes in Article IV include:

- New uses have been added to the Code
- Expanded housing options have been provided
- Supporting commercial and residential uses have been added to certain zoning districts

ARTICLE V

OIL AND GAS STANDARDS

Article V establishes the regulations for the exploration and production of oil and gas resources. The city did not amend the oil and gas regulations as part of the 2025 Development Code Update. Only section references were updated to match the new Development Code section numbering.

ARTICLE VI

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Article VI establishes standards for fences and screen walls, retaining walls, screening, outdoor lighting, visual obstructions, use of a vehicle as a building, and moving buildings.

Major changes in Article VI include:

- Fence standards and practices revised
- Retaining wall terracing requirements added
- Trash enclosure gate now required
- Maximum light levels to minimize light pollution

ARTICLE VII

BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN STANDARDS

Article VII establishes building and site design standards for all development. This includes standards for building façades, windows, garages, roofs, entryways, and site design configurations.

Major changes in Article VII include:

- Establishment of façade types for residential, nonresidential, and mixed-use development
- Standards for materials, orientation, and entryways
- Standards for green courts and motor courts

ARTICLE VIII

LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

Article VIII establishes standards for landscape and buffer plant materials, tree preservation and mitigation, and other water conserving landscape elements.

Major changes in Article VIII include:

- Tree preservation standards codified
- Distinct landscape buffers such as street buffers or common area landscaping described
- Hydrozone standards added for water conservation

ARTICLE IX

ACCESS AND MOBILITY STANDARDS

Article IX establishes standards for streets, sidewalks, trails, transit improvements, parking, loading, and driveways. It also establishes standards for on-site improvements, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Major changes in Article IX include:

- Modest parking reductions for residential uses
- Roundabouts required at certain intersections
- Detached sidewalks required for all development
- Bicycle parking established for certain uses

ARTICLE X

SUBDIVISION STANDARDS

Article X establishes standards for the creation of subdivisions including lot, tract, site, and building area requirements. It also addresses public land dedication and easement requirements.

Major changes in Article X include:

- Subdivision quality enhancement standards pick list removed, some kept as requirements
- Revised subdivisions standards to be consistent with other sections of the City Code

ARTICLE XI

SIGN STANDARDS

Article XI establishes the regulations for signage in the city. Changes were made in 2017 to meet content neutrality laws but no amendments occurred in the 2025 Development Code Update.

Major changes in Article XI include:

- Diagrams and formatting updated

ARTICLES XII & XIII

NONCONFORMITIES & INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITIONS STANDARDS

Article XII establishes standards for existing development developed before the adoption of the 2025 Development Code, that does not comply with Code; referred to as "nonconforming."

Article XIII establishes the rules of interpretation and the definitions for the Development Code. Many new definitions have been added in addition to maintaining many existing definitions.