



PLANNING SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT

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# WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE Checklist for Compliance

## 1. Applicability to New Projects

- a. New and rehabilitated landscapes for (1) public agency projects, (2) private development projects, and (3) developer-installed single-family and multi-family projects with a total landscape area over 2,500 square feet that require a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review.
- b. New landscapes which are homeowner-provided and/or homeowner-hired in single-family and multi-family projects with a landscape area over 5,000 square feet that require a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review.
- c. Special requirements for new and rehabilitated cemeteries.

## 2. City Requirements

- a. City shall provide the applicant with the ordinance and the procedures for permits, plan checks or design review.
- b. City shall review and approve or deny applicant's Landscape Documentation Package. Upon approval, City shall forward a copy to the local water purveyor.

## 3. Applicant Requirements

- a. Submit a Landscape Documentation Package (LDP) to City that includes the following six elements:
  - i. Project information
    - 1) Date
    - 2) Project applicant
    - 3) Project address and including parcel number
    - 4) Total landscape area in square feet
    - 5) Project type (New, rehabilitated, public, private, cemetery or homeowner-installed)
    - 6) Water supply type and name of local water purveyor
    - 7) Checklist of all documents in the LPD
    - 8) Contact information for applicant and property owner
    - 9) Applicant signature and date with the following statement:  
"I agree to comply with the requirements of the water efficient landscape ordinance and submit a complete Landscape Documentation Package."



- ii. Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet that includes the following:
  - 1) Hydro-zone information table
  - 2) Water budget calculations including:
    - a. Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) including water features; and
    - b. Estimated Total Water Use (ETWU).
- iii. Soil Management Report;
- iv. Landscape Design Plan;
- v. Irrigation Design Plan; and
- vi. Grading Design Plan.

#### **4. Soil Management Report (SMR)**

- a. Applicants shall prepare an SMR that includes soil samples submitted to a laboratory for analysis and recommendations to reduce runoff and encourage healthy plant growth.
- b. Samples shall be collected after rough grading and report shall including soil texture, infiltration rate and amendment recommendations.
- c. If significant mass grading is not planned, the soil analysis report shall be submitted as part of the LDP.
- d. If significant mass grading is planned, the soil analysis report shall be submitted as part of the Certificate of Completion.
- e. The applicant shall verify implementation of the soil analysis recommendations as part of the Certificate of Completion.

#### **5. Landscape Design Plan (LDP)**

- a. Any plant may be selected provided that the ETWU of the landscape area does not exceed the MAWA.
- b. Plants shall be grouped in hydrozones based on similar water needs, micro climates and tolerance of geologic and local conditions.
- c. Turf shall not be specified on slopes greater than 25%.
- d. Water features shall be re-circulating.
- e. Mulch with a minimum depth of 2" shall be used on all exposed soil surface areas.
- f. Stabilizing mulching products shall be used on all slopes.
- g. Soils amendments shall be incorporated as recommended by the soil analysis report.
- h. The LDP shall:
  - i. Delineate and label each hydrozone
  - ii. Identify each hydrozone as low, moderate, high water, or mixed water use
  - iii. Identify recreational areas
  - iv. Identify areas dedicated to edible plants
  - v. Identify areas irrigated with recycled water
  - vi. Identify type of mulch and application depth
  - vii. Identify soil amendments, type and quantity
  - viii. Identify type and surface area of water features
  - ix. Identify hardscapes (pervious and non-pervious)

- x. Identify location and installation details of any applicable stormwater best management practices
- xi. Identify any applicable rain harvesting or catchment technologies
- xii. Contain the following statement: "I have complied with the criteria of the ordinance and applied them for the efficient use of water in the landscape design plan."
- xiii. Bear the signature of a licensed landscape architect, licensed landscape contractor or any person authorized to design a landscape.

## **6. Irrigation Design Plan (IDP)**

- a. Automatic irrigation controllers are required for irrigation scheduling in all irrigation systems.
- b. Irrigation systems shall be designed to ensure that the dynamic pressure at each emission device is within the manufacturer's recommended pressure range
- c. Sensors that suspend or alter irrigation during unfavorable weather conditions are required as appropriate.
- d. Manual shut-off valves are required as close as possible to the point of connection of the water supply to minimize water loss.
- e. Backflow prevention devices are required.
- f. The irrigation system shall be designed to prevent runoff.
- g. Relevant information from the Soil Management Report shall be utilized in designing the IDP.
- h. The irrigation system must meet the irrigation efficiency criteria contained in the Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet.
- i. In mulched planting areas, the use of low volume irrigation is required.
- j. Sprinkler heads and other emission devices shall have matched precipitation rates.
- k. Swing joints or other riser-protection components are required on all risers subject to damage.
- l. Check valves and anti-drain valves are required for all irrigation systems.
- m. Narrow or irregularly shaped areas, less than eight feet in width, shall be irrigated with subsurface irrigation or a low volume irrigation system.
- n. Overhead irrigation shall not be permitted within 24 inches of any non-permeable surface, with some exceptions.
- o. Slopes greater than 25% shall not be irrigated with an irrigation system with a precipitation rate exceeding 0.75 inches per hour, with some exceptions.
- p. Separate valve(s) are required to irrigate each hydrozone. Trees are considered a separate hydrozone.
- q. Individual hydrozones may not mix high and low water use plants.
- r. On the LDP and IDP, hydrozones areas shall be designated.
- s. City of Chico Landscape Standard Details shall be used.
- t. The IDP shall include:
  - i. The location and size of separate water meters
  - ii. The location, type and size of all components of the irrigation system
  - iii. The static water pressure at the point of connection
  - iv. Flow rate, application rate, and design operating pressure for each station
  - v. Recycled water irrigation systems

- vi. The following statement: "I have complied with the criteria of the ordinance and applied them accordingly for the efficient use of water in the irrigation design plan."
- vii. The signature of a licensed landscape architect, licensed landscape contractor, or any person authorized to design a landscape.

**7. Grading Design Plan (GDP)**

- a. The GDP shall include:
  - i. Height of graded slopes;
  - ii. Drainage patterns;
  - iii. Pad elevations;
  - iv. Finished grade; and
  - v. Stormwater retention improvements, if applicable.
  - vi. The signed statement: "I have complied with the criteria of the ordinance and applied them accordingly for the efficient use of water in the grading design plan" signed by a licensed professional.

**8. Certificate of Completion (COC)**

- a. The COC shall contain the following six elements:
  - i. Project information sheet;
    - 1) Date
    - 2) Project name
    - 3) Applicant name, telephone and mailing address
    - 4) Property owner name, telephone and mailing address
  - ii. Certification by the signer of the LDP, IDP or the licensed landscape contractor that the project has been installed per the LDP;
  - iii. Irrigation scheduling parameters used to set the controller;
  - iv. Landscape and irrigation maintenance schedule;
  - v. Irrigation audit report; and
  - vi. Soil analysis report if not submitted with the LDP and verification of implementation of recommendations.
- b. The City shall approve or deny the COC. If denied, the City shall provide information regarding reapplication, appeal or other assistance.

**9. Miscellaneous Requirements**

- a. Irrigation Scheduling
  - i. Scheduling shall be regulated by automatic controllers
  - ii. Overhead irrigation shall be limited to 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. unless weather prevents
  - iii. Applied water must meet the ETWU
  - iv. Parameters used to set the automatic controller shall be developed and submitted for the plant establishment period, the established landscape and temporarily irrigated areas.

- b. Maintenance Schedule
  - i. Maintenance Schedules shall include the following:
    - 1) Routine inspection
    - 2) Adjustment and repair
    - 3) Aerating and dethatching turf areas
    - 4) Replenishing mulch
    - 5) Fertilizing
    - 6) Pruning
    - 7) Weeding and removal of obstructions to emission devices.
- c. Landscape Irrigation Audits
  - i. All audits shall be conducted by a certified landscape irrigation auditor.
- d. Irrigation Efficiency
  - i. Average irrigation efficiency is assumed to be 0.71.
- e. Recycled Water
  - i. Irrigation systems and decorative water features shall use recycled water unless the local purveyor has provided a written exemption stating that recycled water meeting all codes and standards will not be available for the foreseeable future.