

City of Palo Alto Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance



Wholly H2O
February 1, 2010

Water Conservation in Landscaping Act (AB 1881)

- **2006 Department of Water Resources (DWR) – Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance**
- All local agencies must adopt a water efficient landscape ordinance by **January 1, 2010** or be under the DWR requirements.
 - State Model Ordinance (final version received in September 2009)
 - Local Ordinance must be at least as effective as model
 - Water agencies must report on their progress to the DWR by January 31, 2010

Purpose of the Ordinance

- To **establish a structure** for designing, installing, maintaining and managing water efficient landscapes in new and rehabilitated projects.
- **Reduce water use** to the lowest practical amount and set an upper limit that shall not be exceeded.
- To **establish provisions** for water management practices and water waste prevention for **established landscapes**.
- **Promote the values and benefits of landscapes** while recognizing the need to use water and other resources efficiently.

City of Palo Alto Ordinance Development

- Currently developing a draft Ordinance
 - Based on coordination with regional groups
- Reviewing draft Ordinance with multiple City departments
- Revising to meet needs of Palo Alto's community
- Updated CPA Ordinance “at least as effective” as DWR model, as required by law
- Capture greater water savings by extending to more projects
 - Residential, as required by law;
 - Some requirements for all residential and non-residential landscapes;
 - Plus opportunity to provide education and BMPs

Updated Ordinance

Helps to achieve City's 20% by 2020 target

- In line with City's sustainability and water conservation efforts,
 - Compliments other ordinances such as
 - Storm Water,
 - Water Waste Reduction,
 - Recycled Water,
 - Energy Efficiency Plan,
 - Zero Waste,
 - Green Building,
 - Integrated Pest Management,
 - Climate Protection Plan, and
 - The City's pledge to support Bay Friendly landscaping.

City of Palo Alto Updated Ordinance

- Permitting process through the City's Green Building Program
- Varied requirements/documentation for projects based on landscape area
- Retains current City standards for non-residential projects
 - Projects with >1,500 sf irrigated landscape: landscape/irrigation design plans, water budget and 15% turf grass limitation
- New standards for residential projects

Landscape Project Application

- **Water Efficient Design Checklist**
 - Water Budget Calculation – OR –
 - Turf Grass Limitation
- **Landscape & Irrigation Design Plans**
 - ET Controllers
 - Dedicated Meters
 - Post-Installation Audit
 - Maintenance Schedule

Water Efficient Design Checklist

(applicant prepared)

- All New Construction
 - Landscape area of any size
- Any project permitted through Green Building Program
 - Landscape area of any size

Landscape and Irrigation Design Plans

(professionally prepared)

- Residential New Construction
 - Landscape area > 2,500 sf
- Non-residential New Construction
 - Landscape area > 1,500 sf
- Any project permitted through Green Building Program
 - Landscape area > 2,500 sf

Additional Notes

- **Exemptions**
 - Restoration projects
 - Edible gardens
 - Botanical collections
 - Agricultural land use
 - Historical sites
 - Unique circumstances
- **Special Landscape Areas**
 - Golf courses
 - Recreational fields
 - Areas irrigated with recycled water or other non-potable sources (e.g., gray water)
- Non-residential projects require turf limit and water budget
 - Dedicated meters required for new projects
- Recreational sports, playing fields, parks exempt from turf limit
- Existing large landscapes complete water audit

Ordinance Enforcement

- Able to condition approval of building permit or certificate of occupancy upon compliance with Ordinance,
- Already conduct on-site surveys for compliance through the Green Building Program,
- Can impose fines and penalties for non-compliance through Administrative Penalty Schedule,
- Can record violations of over-watering, and
- May monitor water use to ensure compliance.

Educational Resources and Outreach

City of Palo Outreach:

- Press Releases
- Bill inserts
- Website information
- Email blasts, informational pieces
- Provide materials to other interested stakeholders
 - Environmental groups/NGOs, landscape professionals
 - Workshops with BAWSCA and SCVWD
 - Educational materials for best management practices at Development Center
- Water efficient landscape literature

Questions or Comments?

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