



LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION

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INFORMATION
BULLETIN

21

June 2016

The following regulations apply to all new and renovated landscape areas which require submittal of a building, planning, or landscape permit application and appropriate fees, however, new plantings and additions to existing irrigation systems are considered to be maintenance with no permit requirements provided the existing landscape and irrigation system is not substantially renovated. **Please reference Sections 17.24.050 and 18.08.130 and Chapter 18.44 of the Municipal Code for further clarification and exceptions associated with the requirements herein.**

Applications shall include a landscape documentation package that contains the following elements:

1. Planting and irrigation plans that describe the landscaping (size, type, water use classification [WUCOLS], and location) and irrigation (type and location) for the project. The plans shall include the following notes and schematics:
 - a. Installations shall be per San Diego Regional Standard Drawings (appropriate drawings shall be added to plans).
 - b. A pre-inspection prior to installation is required to inspect: 1) the irrigation, root barrier, ground cover, and planting excavations, 2) the compost and soil materials prior to blending, and 3) the irrigation, root barrier, ground cover, and planting materials. Contact the project planner for an inspection.
 - c. A final inspection is required after installation to inspect: 1) irrigation locations, types and flows, 2) planting locations, types and sizes, 3) ground cover depth, and 4) root barrier and tree staking installations. Contact the project planner for an inspection.
 - d. Holes for plantings shall be excavated slightly shallower and a minimum of two times the width of the root ball or container. The root ball shall be set so that the top of the root ball will sit slightly higher than the final grade.
 - e. Compost shall be uniformly blended with excavated soil at a ratio of one part compost (one-third) per two parts soil (two-thirds). The compost-soil blend shall be backfilled around the root ball within the planting hole.
 - f. Turf and shallow planting areas shall include compost at a minimum depth of one inch and the area shall be tilled to a minimum five inches in depth.
 - g. Plantings shall be thoroughly watered during and after plantings.
 - h. Nonvegetated natural ground cover shall be a minimum of three inches deep and shall be one inch below surrounding paved surfaces.
 - i. New impervious surfaces shall direct storm water drainage to landscape areas.
 - j. Storm water shall not be diverted to flow onto adjacent property, nonirrigated areas, structures, walkways, roadways, or other paved areas, whether due to runoff, low head drainage, overspray, or other similar condition unless approved by the Engineering Division.
 - k. Water use shall conform to the Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA).
 - l. Best Management Practices shall be implemented at all times.

- m. Each person issued a landscape approval shall submit a signed certificate of completion, under penalty of perjury, on a form provided by the city.
2. Minimum plantings per landscape area are required as follows:
 - a. An area shall be devoted to landscaping which amounts to a minimum of fifteen percent of total lot area in residential developments, and ten percent of the total lot area in nonresidential developments.
 - b. Landscape areas may consist of very low and low water use plant materials per WUCOLS.
 - c. Landscape areas consisting of moderate and high water use plant materials per WUCOLS shall not exceed a ratio of 1 part planting area (one-third) per 2 parts of no water use natural nonvegetated ground cover (two-thirds). Alternative landscapes not in compliance with this regulation are allowed provided they comply fully with the State MWEL0.
 - d. A minimum of 25 percent of the landscape area shall consist of vegetated plant materials.
 - e. A minimum of one 15 gallon tree shall be provided per 1,000 sq. ft. of landscape area (existing trees included).
 - f. A minimum of 100 sq. ft. of edible planting area or one 15 gallon fruit or nut tree shall be planted for each dwelling unit, but for no more than five dwelling units on a single lot.
 - g. For all off-street parking areas of five or more spaces, an area equivalent to a minimum of ten percent of the area provided for parking shall be landscaped. Such landscaping shall be considered as a portion of the landscaping required for the entire lot. As part of this landscaping, one tree for every six parking spaces, or fraction thereof, shall be provided and located so as to visually disrupt long rows of parked automobiles. These trees shall be at least fifteen gallons in size, may be clustered and shall be provided with a means of irrigation and properly maintained.
3. Slopes greater than twenty-five percent shall be irrigated with an irrigation system with a precipitation rate of 0.75 inches per hour or less to prevent runoff and erosion. An applicant may employ an alternative design if the plan demonstrates that no runoff or erosion will occur.
4. All wiring and piping under a paved area that a vehicle may use, such as a parking area, driveway or roadway, shall be installed inside a PVC conduit.
5. Irrigation piping and irrigation devices within twenty-four inches of a vehicle or pedestrian use area and that deliver water, such as sprinkler heads, shall be installed below grade. The director may allow on-grade piping where landform constraints make below grade piping infeasible.
6. Low volume or subsurface irrigation shall be used to irrigate any vegetation within twenty-four inches of an impermeable surface unless the adjacent impermeable surfaces are designed and constructed to cause water to drain entirely into a landscaped area.
7. A manual shutoff valve shall be installed as close as possible to the water supply. Additional manual shutoff valves shall be installed between each zone of the irrigation system and the water supply.
8. New irrigations systems shall include an automatic irrigation controller and consist of drip or microspray systems.
9. High-efficiency, matched-precipitation rate sprinkler nozzles shall be required at all homes (residential landscapes), common areas, parks, and commercial/industrial landscapes.
10. Dedicated meters for outdoor water use shall be required as follows:
 - a. In single-family residences with one or more acre(s) of irrigated landscape,
 - b. In all parks and common areas,

- c. In commercial, industrial, government, and multi-family sites with 5,000 square feet or more of irrigated landscape;
- 11. Enroll all new irrigation meters (except those at single-family residences) in the Helix Water Budget Program and provide documentation of irrigated landscape area at the time of meter purchase.
- 12. Pervious and porous surfaces that minimize runoff shall be encouraged.
- 13. New roofs shall be encouraged to direct storm water to landscape areas or to water capture and reuse containers.
- 14. Except in RL and RL/M districts, all planting areas shall be bounded by a curb having a minimum height of six inches.
- 15. If grading is proposed, the following shall be included:
 - a. A grading plan that complies with Sections 18.08.130 and 18.08.070.
 - b. All slopes shall include an irrigation system which shall be used by the permittee to promote the growth of plants to protect the slopes against erosion. The plan shall show the finished configuration and elevations of each landscaped area including the height of graded slopes, the drainage pattern, pad elevations, finish grade and any stormwater retention improvements.
 - c. The landscape documentation package shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect.
 - d. Provide a soil management report that provides the analysis of the soil within each landscaped area of the project and makes recommendations regarding soil additives.

After approval of a landscape and irrigation plan, the owner is required to:

- 1. Maintain and operate the landscaping and irrigation system on the property.
- 2. Replace broken or malfunctioning irrigation system components with components of the same materials and specifications, their equivalent or better.
- 3. Ensure that when vegetation is replaced, replacement plantings are consistent with regulations in this Chapter.

Please coordinate with the Planning Division regarding questions.