City of Santa Barbara

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Adopted June 27, 1989

## I. Introduction

It is the policy of the City of Santa Barbara to promote the efficient use of water. These standards are intended to promote such efficiency while allowing the maximum possible flexibility in designing attractive and cost effective landscapes. The standards were adopted by the Council of the City of Santa Barbara on June 27, 1989 as Resolution No. 89-077. The effective date of the standards is July 27, 1989.

## II. Definitions

A. Landscaped Area: All areas that are proposed to be planted or to be covered with permeable material as a part of a development proposal.

B. Drought Tolerant Plants: Those plants that are likely, after becoming established, to remain healthy in the proposed location on irrigation limited to twelve inches of water per square foot per year.

C. Design Review Board: The Architectural Board of Review or Landmarks Committee or any joint meeting of these two boards.

## III. Applicability

Compliance with these standards is mandatory for all landscaping proposed as a part of projects that are subject to review by the Architectural Board of Review or Landmarks Committee. (SBMC Section 22.80.020)

## IV. Exceptions

Exceptions to these standards may be granted only by the design review board having

**jurisdiction and only after making a finding that the exception will promote equivalent or greater water conservation. Requests for exceptions shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the City at the time of making application for review by the design review board.**

**V. <u>Compliance Requirements</u>**

**A. All lawns shall utilize turf species listed as low water use varieties on the most recent list of low water use species published by the University of California Cooperative Extension.**

**B. Turf shall not be used on slopes of 20% or greater.**

**C. Except where additional lawn area is specifically determined by the design review board to be intended for passive or active recreational use, the following restrictions shall apply:**

**1. Commercial projects shall be designed without the use of turf.**

**2. In projects other than commercial projects, including residential and institutional type projects, no more than 20% of the landscaped area shall be planted in lawn and/or non-drought tolerant plants.**

**D. All planted areas, except those with lawns, groundcover, or other low lying shrubs, shall include mulch material to an average thickness of at least two inches throughout, except in the immediate vicinity of plant stems.**

**E. Irrigation systems shall be designed such that there are separate valves serving each of the following areas:**

**1. Lawn areas;**

**2. Areas planted with non-drought tolerant plants; and**

**3. Areas planted with drought tolerant plants.**

**F. Irrigation systems shall be designed to prevent overspray and run-off. Areas of sprinkler coverage shall be shown on the irrigation plan.**

**G. A written list of irrigation stations, and the precipitation rates of those stations in inches per hour, shall be included on the irrigation plan.**

H. **Drip, trickle, or other low volume irrigation shall be provided on at least 25% of the landscaped area.**

## VI. Recommended Additional Measures

**The following components are recommended for inclusion at the option of the designer, except when in conflict with other code requirements:**

A. **Provide tensiometers in conjunction with automatic irrigation controllers, where appropriate, installed in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.**

B. **Where appropriate as an alternative to automatic irrigation control, use metering valves designed to apply a specified amount of water.**

C. **Where feasible, provide permeable paving instead of asphalt or concrete on patios, walkways, and parking areas.**

D. **Avoid use of turf and spray-type irrigation systems in areas that have a relatively high perimeter-to-area ratio, such as parkways, medians, and narrow beds.**

E. **In cases where structural or horticultural requirements do not conflict, provide infiltration trench, drywell, cistern, or other means to prevent raingutter and pavement run-off from leaving the site.**

F. **Provide soils amendments as appropriate to improve moisture holding properties of the soil.**

G. **Provide check valves at the low end of irrigation lines to prevent unwanted draining of irrigation lines.**

## VII. Submittals

A. **Applicants subject to mandatory compliance shall provide all relevant information on the landscape plans, including common and botanical names for plant and turf species, calculations of allowable areas of lawn area and**

**non-drought tolerant plants, required areas of drip/trickle irrigation, and specific requests for any exception to the requirements of these standards. Requests for exception must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that the finding of equivalent or greater water conservation can be made.**

**B. A landscape architect, licensed under the laws of the State of California, shall state on the plans that the landscape design complies with the mandatory elements of these standards.**

**EXCEPTION: On projects that are limited to one single family residence and on projects consisting solely of landscaping and not more than 5,000 square feet thereof, the owner of the property and a landscape contractor licensed under the laws of the State of California shall also be authorized to state that the plans are in compliance with these standards.**

**A City-approved format shall be used for all statements of compliance.**

## VIII. Determination of Conforming Installation

**A landscape architect, licensed under the laws of the State of California and listed with the Building Official as an eligible special inspector, shall inspect the completed installation prior to final building permit approval and shall determine in writing that the installation substantially conforms to the approved plans.**

**EXCEPTION: On projects that are limited to one single family residence and on projects consisting solely of landscaping and not more than 5,000 square feet thereof, the owner of the property and a landscape contractor licensed under the laws of the State of California shall also be authorized to perform such inspection and conformance determination.**

**A City-approved format shall be used for all conformance determinations.**

## IX. Compliance Verification

**Verification of compliance with these standards, as applicable, shall be by the Community Development Department and the design review board in accordance with the following requirements:**

**A. No development application shall be scheduled for final review by the design review board unless the plans contain all required information and a statement of compliance in accordance with Section VII above.**

**B.** **The design review board shall be authorized to interpret, but not to waive, the requirements of these standards. Any appeal of a decision of the design review board regarding these standards shall be by the process established for appeal of other decisions of the board.**

**C.** **No building permit shall be issued unless the statement of compliance required by Section VII above has been included on the final landscape plans submitted for plan check.**

**D.** **No building permit shall be given final approval prior to receipt by the Building Official of a written determination of conformance as required by Section VIII above.**

**[D:BFLANDSCP.STD]**