

## CHAPTER 157: WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION

---

### Section

- 157.01 Purpose and intent
- 157.02 Applicability
- 157.03 Water conservation definition
- 157.04 Process
- 157.05 Development standards

#### **§ 157.01 PURPOSE AND INTENT.**

The purpose and intent of this chapter is to establish landscaping regulations that are intended to:

- (A) Enhance the aesthetic appearance of development in all areas of the city by providing development standards relating to quality, quantity and functional aspects of landscaping and landscape screening.
- (B) Increase compatibility between residential and abutting commercial and industrial uses.
- (C) Reduce the heat and glare generated by development.
- (D) Establish a water conservation plan to reduce water consumption in the landscape environment using conservation principles important to the State of California and the City of Riverbank.
- (E) Protect public health, safety, and welfare by minimizing the impact of all forms of physical and visual pollution, controlling soil erosion, screening incompatible land uses, preserving the integrity of neighborhoods, and enhancing pedestrian and vehicular traffic and safety.
- (F) Comply with the California Department of Water Resources Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance as contained in Title 23, Division 2, Chapter 2.7 of the California Code of Regulations and the California Green Building Standards of 2016 and/or these standards as amended from time to time.

(Ord. 2014-005, passed 6-10-14; Am .Ord. 2017-002, passed 1-10-17)

#### **§ 157.02 APPLICABILITY.**

All new development in the city shall comply with the provisions of this chapter and the requirements of the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance referenced above, which is incorporated herein by this reference. All required landscaping shall be installed by the developer and approved by the Development Services Department prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any building, unless other arrangements are agreed to by the Community Development Director.

(A) *Exceptions.* The following shall be exempt from the provisions of this section:

- (1) Yards and landscape areas for single family homes when not installed by the builder or developer prior to or as a condition of home sales.
- (2) Interior remodels, tenant improvements and demolitions.
- (3) Changes of use to any existing building.
- (4) Replacement or repair of existing plant material or irrigation systems in conjunction with routine maintenance of existing projects.
- (5) Modifications or additions to existing structures which do not result in an increase of more than 10% of the floor area, or 1,000 square feet, whichever is greater.

(B) *Statutory authority in case of conflicting provisions.* Nothing in this section shall be deemed to affect, annul or abrogate any other laws or ordinances pertaining or applicable to the properties and areas affected by this chapter.

(Ord. 2014-005, passed 6-10-14)

#### **§ 157.03 WATER CONSERVATION DEFINITION.**

For the purpose of this chapter, the following definition shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

**WATER CONSERVATION.** This definition shall mean a combination of landscape features and techniques that in the aggregate reduce the demand for and consumption of water, including but not limited to appropriate low water using plants, nonliving groundcover, a low percentage of turf coverage, permeable paving and water conserving irrigation techniques and systems, and other water saving techniques and measures approved by the Community Development Services Department.

(Ord. 2014-005, passed 6-10-14)

**§ 157.04 PROCESS.**

The Community Development Director shall establish a format for landscape plans and any other procedural guidelines for submittal as deemed necessary.

(A) *Plans required.* Plans for the development of required landscaping shall be submitted to the Development Services Department for review and approval prior to the issuance of any building permit or as may be required for a site plan permit. Said plans shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect, landscape contractor, architect or certified irrigation designer.

(B) *Plan review and approval.* The Community Development Services Department shall review each project and proposed landscape plan for compliance with the landscape and water conservation requirements.

(C) *Alternative means of compliance.* The Community Development Director may allow alternative means of complying with the requirements in this section provided the alternative achieves results comparable to those achieved through strict application of the provisions of this section.

(Ord. 2014-005, passed 6-10-14)

**§ 157.05 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.**

(A) *Required.* In the following designated districts, not less than the stipulated percent of gross site area shall be landscaped in accordance with this section:

<b>Landscape Area Requirements</b>	
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Required Landscaping (Gross % of site)</b>
R-1/PD	30
R-2	30 (a)
R-3	30 (a)
C-1/PD	10 (c)
C-2	10 (c)
C-M	7.5 (c)
M-1/PD	7.5 (b)(o)
M-2	7.5 (b) 5 (c)
CX-1	10 (c)

(1) In multiple-family developments of 12 or more dwelling units, 10% of the total building site shall be set aside and landscaped for the purposes of common recreational open space. Such 10% may be included in the general landscaping requirements.

(2) This requirement may be waived by the Community Development Director for remodeling, alterations, or renovations to existing buildings and developments on parcels or building sites where an existing building occupies a substantial portion of the site and there exists limited space to landscape because of the front yard or corner street side yard setback areas.

(3) In commercial and industrial districts, where a lot larger than 10,000 square feet is to be developed in phases, the Community Development Director may determine that only the developed portion of the site need be landscaped. Provision shall be made, however, to insure that the landscape requirement can still be met upon full development of the site. This exception shall not apply to any setback along a public street which shall be landscaped upon the initial development of the site. Open areas (areas not landscaped) shall be continuously maintained free of weeds, litter and debris, and shall not become a source of nuisance to adjoining property.

(B) *Determination of landscaped areas.* In determining landscaped areas, setbacks, when landscaped, private patios and all other areas not occupied by buildings, parking lots, vehicle storage areas, and driveways shall be included. Areas occupied by clubhouses, recreation buildings, pools, saunas, inter walkways, and similar amenities may be included as landscaped areas. In industrial zoning districts, areas planted along a public right-of-way shall qualify as one and one-half (1.5) times the area toward the overall required landscaping area.

(C) *Landscape materials and placement.* All landscape areas shall demonstrate a recognizable pattern or theme for the overall development. To accomplish this, new landscaping and landscape areas shall conform to the following:

(1) Plant materials shall be selected for maintenance efficiency, drought tolerance and adaptability and relationship to Riverbank's environment and climate. Trees and shrubs in reasonable numbers shall be used in the landscape design; ground cover alone shall not be acceptable. No one species of plant shall exceed 20% of the plant material. Landscaped areas shall incorporate a minimum of two of the following plantings: (1) grasses and ground covers, (2) shrubs, and (3) trees.

(2) In all commercial (C) and industrial (M) districts, plant materials shall be sized and spaced to achieve immediate

effect and shall normally not be less than 24-inch box for parking lot shade trees, 15 gallon container for trees, five gallon container for shrubs, and a one gallon container for mass planting. Non-turf areas, such as shrub beds, shall be top dressed with a bark chip mulch or approved alternative.

(3) Turf shall be limited to 25% of the total landscaped area in all commercial (C) and industrial (M) districts. In residential districts turf shall not exceed 50% of the total landscaped area.

(D) *Landscape irrigation.* Provisions shall be made for a permanent "in place" irrigation system to all landscaped areas required herein, including street tree wells. All new irrigation systems shall use Xeriscaping principles including such techniques and materials as low precipitation sprinkler heads, bubblers, drip irrigation systems, timing devices and moisture sensors. All irrigation systems must be designed to comply with the "State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance" and shall minimize overspray onto impervious surfaces, such as building, sidewalks, parking areas, and the like, through the use of such techniques as low-trajectory spray nozzles or underground low volume applicators. All irrigation system controllers shall be set in compliance with the day and hour watering requirements of the city and shall be designed to minimize water use by installing automatic systems such as multi-start controllers and soil moisture sensors.

(E) *Site preparation and installation.*

(1) Prior to the planting of any materials, the compacted soils surrounding a building site will be returned to a friable condition. Friable condition shall mean returning the soil to an easily crumbled or loosely compacted condition down to a minimum depth per planting material requirements, whereby the root structure of newly planted material will be allowed to spread unimpeded. The soil must be returned to a friable condition to a minimum depth as required for the planting material.

(2) Trees should be adequate in trunk diameter to support the top area of the tree. Trees, shrubs, and vines should have body and fullness that is typical of the species.

(3) All ground cover should be healthy, densely foliated, and well rooted cuttings, or one-gallon container plants.

(4) The spacing of trees and shrubs should be appropriate to the species used. The plant materials should be spaced so that they do not interfere with the adequate lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes. Proper spacing should also insure unobstructed access for vehicles and pedestrians in addition to providing clear vision of the intersections from approaching vehicles. Plant material should conform to the following spacing standards:

(a) A minimum of 25 feet from the property corner at a street intersection to the center of the first tree or large shrub.

(b) A minimum of 15 feet between center of trees and large shrubs to light standards.

(c) A minimum of 15 feet between center of trees or large shrubs and fire hydrants.

(d) A minimum of 15 feet from the intersection of a driveway with a street right-of-way to the center of any tree having a diameter larger than 18 inches at maturity or large shrub.

(F) *Maintenance.* Required planting areas shall be permanently maintained. As used in this section, "maintained" includes: watering, weeding, pruning, insect control, and replacement of plant materials and irrigation equipment as needed to preserve the health and appearance of plant materials.

(G) *Parking lot landscaping.* Parking lots and parking structures shall have interior and perimeter landscaping areas as prescribed by the following:

(1) Parking lots or parking structures adjoining street property lines or public streets shall have a perimeter landscape buffer with a minimum width as follows:

(a) If abutting an expressway: 20 feet.

(b) If abutting an arterial: 15 feet.

(c) If abutting a collector: 15 feet.

(d) If abutting a local collector: 10 feet.

(e) If abutting a local street: five feet.

(2) Vehicle overhang may encroach a maximum of two feet into landscape areas which are a minimum of ten feet wide.

(3) An average three foot high (minimum two and one-half foot and maximum three and one-half foot) continuous screen shall be installed between all parking areas and public streets. A screen shall consist of one or any combination of the following:

(a) *Walls.* A wall shall consist of concrete, concrete block, stone, brick, tile or similar type of solid masonry material.

(b) *Berms.* A berm shall be constructed of earthen materials and it shall be landscaped.

(c) *Solid fences.* A solid fence shall be constructed of wood, or other materials.

(d) *Plant materials.* Vegetation, consisting of trees or shrubs.

(4) Interior landscaped areas shall be a minimum of five feet in width, exclusive of curbs.

(5) The end of each row of parking stalls shall be separated from aisle ways by a landscaped planter or sidewalk.

(6) In all parking lots with a capacity of five parking spaces or more, a minimum of one shade tree for every five spaces shall be provided in landscape islands within the parking lot. Tree spacing shall be such that every designated parking space is within 30 feet of the trunk of a tree.

(7) All planting areas within or abutting a parking lot shall be protected with raised concrete curbs.

(H) *Landscaping in rights-of-way.* All land area within the public right-of-way adjoining all sides of any parcel or building site that is not otherwise covered with a building, structure, paving, or similar impervious surface shall be landscaped and maintained in conjunction with the landscaping installed on the adjoining property as regulated in this chapter. Landscaping within the right-of-way shall not be used when determining the required percentage of landscaping area as required in this chapter.

(1) *Design.* The design of the landscaping of the public right-of-way shall be included in the landscape plan and shall meet the requirements set forth in this chapter. Adequate space shall be provided in the landscape area to allow free, unrestricted growth and development of the landscaping and street trees.

(2) *Street trees.* Street trees shall be planted in accordance with the Theme Street List, as it may be amended from time to time, or as otherwise set forth in the Chapter 96: Trees relating to street trees and in accordance with the street tree planting standards as established by the City Engineer.

(I) *Driveway and corner visibility.* All landscaping material shall be maintained in accordance with the provisions of § 96.12.

(J) *Landscaping along walls.* All solid walls over three feet in height that are adjacent to public streets or right-of-ways shall comply with one of the following:

(1) Be fully landscaped with vines and/or other plant materials to prevent the placement of graffiti. All landscaping shall include the installation of a permanent irrigation system.

(2) If not landscaped, shall be constructed of split-face concrete, brick or some other type of material that will discourage the placement of graffiti.

(K) *Landscape screening of Residential (R) properties.* Where a commercial or industrial site adjoins a Residential (R) District, screening which is at least 75% opaque shall be provided. Where fences are required, such fencing shall be landscaped as appropriate.

(L) *Model homes.* To promote landscape water conservation through education, all single family residential developments with more than two model homes to be constructed by a developer, shall provide for landscaping the models entirely with water saving landscaping and irrigation in accordance with the following requirements:

(1) *Plant materials.* Each "water saving" model home to be landscaped shall contain exclusively low water use plant materials as identified on a suggested planting list available from the Community Development Department or approved by the Community Development Director.

(2) *Irrigation system.* Each "water saving" model home shall contain exclusively an irrigation system that provides a high efficiency in water application according to site conditions. (Drip or trickle may not be used in turf areas).

(3) *Signs.* Each development with "water saving" model homes shall provide the following information to potential buyers:

(a) *Front yard sign.* A four square foot sign shall be located in the front yard of each "water saving" model such that it is clearly visible to buyers. The sign shall indicate that the model features a water saving landscape and irrigation design.

(b) *Interior display.* A drawing, or combination of drawings, shall be displayed inside each "water saving" model or the sales office which provides a schematic of the landscape. These drawings shall include a key identifying the common name of the plants used in the "water saving" model yards. A brochure with the same information may be distributed with the sales information to potential buyers to satisfy this requirement.

(4) *Literature.* Additional literature describing water conserving landscaping and irrigation shall also be made available to the potential buyer and displayed.

(Ord. 2014-005, passed 6-10-14)