City of Santa Barbara

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Adopted August 12, 2008

I. Introduction

It is the policy of the City of Santa Barbara to promote water conservation. Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 22.80 requires the adoption of the Landscape Design Standards for Water Conservation ("Landscape Design Standards.") These Landscape Design Standards are intended to promote water conservation while allowing the maximum possible flexibility in designing attractive and cost effective water-wise landscapes. The Landscape Design Standards were adopted by the Council of the City of Santa Barbara on June 27, 1989 as Resolution No. 89-077, and were updated on August 12, 2008 as Resolution No. 08-083.

II. Definitions

A. Landscaped Area: All areas where new or altered landscaping is proposed as a part of a development proposal.

B. Water Wise Plants: Those plants that are evaluated as needing "low" (10-30% ETo) or "very low"(<10% ETo) amounts of irrigation water as defined and listed by Water Use Classifications of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) at http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/wucols00.pdf or other sources of water-wise plant water use classifications as verified by a licensed landscape architect.

C. Turf: A groundcover surface of mowed grass, with an irrigation water need of >30% ETo.

D. Weather Based Irrigation Controller: An irrigation controller that automatically adjusts the irrigation schedule based on changes in the weather.

E. Design Review Body: The Architectural Board of Review, Single Family Design Board or the Historic Landmarks Commission.

F. Public Works Director: The Director of the Public Works Department or his or her designee.

G. Landscape Plan: Design plans with a planting plan, an irrigation plan, or both.

III. Applicability

Compliance with these landscape design standards is mandatory for all new or altered landscaping proposed as a part of projects that are subject to review by any design review body. (SBMC Section 22.80.020)

IV. Compliance Requirements

Applicants proposing new or altered landscaping shall comply with each of the following requirements in the design, installation, and maintenance of the landscaped area, unless an exception is granted pursuant to Section V.

A. Landscape Plan:

Applicants shall submit a landscape plan depicting the landscaped area and all existing landscaping to remain on the lot as determined by the Community Development Department.

B. Turf and Water Wise Plants:

1. The landscaped area of projects proposing exclusively commercial uses shall be designed without the use of turf and with 100% water wise plants.

2. The landscaped area of single family residential, multi-family residential, mixed-use, and institutional type projects shall be designed with no more than 20% of the landscaped area planted in turf or plants that are not water-wise plants.

3. Turf is not permitted in parkways, medians or other areas within the landscaped area with any dimension of less than eight feet. Turf shall not be used on slopes of 20% or greater within the landscaped area.

4. Notwithstanding requirements 1 and 2 above, additional turf areas may be recommended by the design review body to the Public Works Director for approval for areas designed and used for outdoor sporting and recreational activities.

C. Mulch:

The landscaped area, except those portions of the landscaped area planted with turf, groundcover, succulents or other low lying shrubs, shall be covered with mulch material to an average thickness of at least three inches throughout, except in the immediate vicinity of woody trunks. Additional mulch material shall be added from time to time as necessary in order to maintain the required depth of mulch.

D. Irrigation: All new or altered irrigation systems proposed as part of a development proposal shall incorporate the following requirements in their design, installation, and maintenance:

1. Irrigation systems shall be designed and installed to avoid overspray and runoff. Valves shall be separated for individual hydrozones based on plant water needs and sun/shade requirements.

2. In the event that an automatic irrigation system is included in the landscape plan, a weather based irrigation controller with a rain shutoff sensor shall be required for the entire irrigation system.

3. Areas less than eight feet wide shall be irrigated only with bubblers, rotating nozzles on pop-up bodies, sub-surface, or drip irrigation.

4. Drip irrigation shall be provided on at least 25% of the landscaped area.

5. All sprinklers shall have matched precipitation rates within each valve and circuit. All irrigation systems shall be designed to include optimum distribution uniformity, head-to-head spacing and setbacks from walkways and pavement.

6. All irrigation systems shall provide check valves at the low end of irrigation lines to prevent unwanted draining of irrigation lines.

7. Pressure regulators are required on the irrigation system, unless the Public Works Director determines a pressure regulator is not necessary.

E. Grading:

The grading of the landscaped area shall be designed, conducted, and maintained in order to achieve the following goals:

1. The grading shall encourage water retention and infiltration by preserving open space and creating depressed areas/swales.

2. The grading shall mimic natural, pre-development hydrologic flow paths.

3. The grading shall maintain and/or increase the width of flow paths in order to decrease flow rates.

V. Exceptions

Exceptions to these landscape design standards may be granted by the Public Works Director upon a finding that the exception will promote equivalent or greater water conservation than is provided for in the landscape design standards. Requests for exceptions shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the Public Works Director at the time the application is submitted to the design review body. The design review body may

make a recommendation to the Public Works Director for consideration of an exception based on plant selection.

VI. Submittals

A. Applicants shall provide all relevant information on the landscape plan, including botanical names for plant and turf species, percentage calculations of allowable areas of turf, medium or high water use plants, and water-wise plants, and specific requests for any exception to the requirements of these Landscape Design Standards. Requests for exceptions must be accompanied by documentation demonstrating that the finding of equivalent or greater water conservation can be made. Areas of existing landscaping to remain unaltered shall be indicated on the landscape plan.

B. The landscape plan shall be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Business and Professions Code relating to the practice of landscape architecture (Business and Professions Code § 5641 et seq.).

C. The landscape plan shall include a "Statement of Compliance" in a form approved by the City certifying that the landscape design complies with the mandatory elements of these Landscape Design Standards. The Statement of Compliance shall be signed by the person who prepared the plans.

VII. Determination of Conforming Installation

The person who prepared the landscape plan shall inspect the installation of the plantings and any irrigation system included in the plan and shall certify in writing that the installation substantially conforms to the approved Landscape Plan.

VIII. Compliance Verification

Verification of compliance with the Landscape Design Standards, as applicable, shall be made by the Community Development Department and the design review body in accordance with the following requirements:

A. No development application shall be scheduled for final review by the design review body unless the landscape plan contains all required information and a statement of compliance in accordance with Section VI above.

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

C. No building permit shall be given a final inspection or issued a certificate of occupancy until the Building Official receives a written determination of conformance as required by Section VII above.