

WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING

BACKGROUND

The proposal is to replace and expand the existing regulations found in the City's Development Codes (Zoning Ordinance and Site Development Ordinance) relating to landscaping and water conservation. The approaches include:

- Specifying a minimum percentage of landscape materials that must be drought-tolerant and require that hydrozones¹ be established in landscaping plans so that plants that have similar water needs are grouped together;
- Adding more specific standards regarding irrigation system design and efficiency, including an inspection of the irrigation system to ensure it waters efficiently prior to allowing occupancy in new development.

PURPOSES

- Promote the values and benefits of landscapes while recognizing the need to use water resources as efficiently as possible and reducing water use to the lowest practical amount;
- Establish procedures and standards for the design, installation, and maintenance of water-efficient landscapes and landscape irrigation systems throughout Salt Lake City;
- Recognize the need for tailored requirements for special landscapes such as those associated with historic sites and public facilities such as parks.
- Implement the 2009 Water Conservation Master Plan;
- Contribute to the attainment of other city sustainability goals such as energy conservation.



¹ A portion of the landscaped area having plants with similar water needs. A hydrozone may be irrigated or non-irrigated.

APPLICABILITY

New Development

All new development as specified below requiring approval by the city would need to comply with the provisions of this ordinance.

Residential

- Large subdivisions with 10 or more lots²;
- Multi-family residential³;
- Planned unit developments that include residential units;
- Single-family and twin-family homes on lots greater than ½ acre.

Non-Residential

- Industrial
- Commercial
- Institutional (including public facilities)

Existing Development

The new regulations would be required for existing development that is expanding to a point that it is required to meet current codes.

Exemptions

- New single-family and twin-family homes on lots ½ acre or less unless part of a subdivision with 10 or more lots;
- Treasured landscapes⁴;
- Plant collections as part of botanical gardens and arboretums open to the public;
- Community gardens and edible plant gardens;
- Active recreational areas in schools, parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and golf courses;
- Cemeteries;
- Ecological restoration projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system.



² Common and public areas only, not individual single-family lots unless greater than ½ acre.

³ Three units or more.

⁴ Landscapes associated with designated historic structures and sites, public gardens, and other notable sites and institutions as determined by the city.

