



Planning & Community Development Department

Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

City Council
April 23, 2018





Overview

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- > What is Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO)?
- > What does MWELO do?
- > What does MWELO not do?
- > Significant Revisions in 2015 to the State MWELO
- > Compliance Options





What does MWELO do and not do?

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What it does:

- MWELO sets the minimum standard for water conservation in the state. Local agencies can adopt more stringent requirements via a local ordinance.
- It establishes the legal criteria and Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) to standardize the calculation for water efficiency in landscaping.
- MWELO goes beyond water conservation to address water resource issues acknowledging California's climate.

What it doesn't do:

- MWELO does not ban the use of any plant or any plant type in the landscape
- Turf grass usage is curbed (but not eliminated) due to its water usage
- Does not require landscapes to be retrofitted unless a construction permit is required for new construction or remodeling





Significant Revisions 2015 (Applicability)

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- **New development projects** that include landscape areas of 500 sf or more are subject to the Ordinance (previously at 2,500 sf for residential and 5,000 for commercial). excludes additions to existing buildings.
 - Projects with landscape areas of 500 to 2,500 sf may comply with a simplified landscape plan submittal through the new Prescriptive Compliance Option.
- The size threshold for **existing landscapes** that are being rehabilitated has not changed (2,500 sf).
- Exempt projects:
 - Remodels and additions where the landscape area is less than 2,500 sf
 - Any revisions to landscape areas less than 500 sf
 - Projects that do not require a building permit, plan check or design review
 - Registered historic sites
 - Ecological restoration projects
 - Public botanic gardens & arboretums



Significant Revisions (Other)

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- Prescriptive Compliance Option now available (for landscape areas of 500 to 2,499 sf)
- More efficient irrigation systems
- Incentives for gray water use
- Improvements in onsite storm water capture
- Limiting the portion of landscapes that can be planted with high water use plants
- New requirements for technical reports and annual agency reporting
- Dedicated water meters required for residential landscapes over 5,000 sf and non-residential landscapes over 10,000 sf.





Proposed Code Revisions

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- **Title 13 (Utilities & Sewers)**

- > Chapter 13.22, Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
- > Last updated in 2010
- > Water efficiency and irrigation standards are not consistent with 2015 MWELo
- > Prescriptive Compliance Option and new irrigation efficiency standards are not included
- > Repeal Chapter 13.22, Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

- **Title 17 (Zoning Code)**

- > Chapter 17.44 (Landscaping)
- > Portions of the ordinance have not been updated since 2006
- > Water efficiency and irrigation standards are less efficient than Chapter 13.22
- > Does not include the Prescriptive Compliance option or full Performance Compliance submittal requirements
- > Recommend to include all 2015 MWELo regulations in this chapter

The proposed revisions will:

1. Ensure consistency in applicability of MWELo regulations
2. Ensure compliance with any future changes to MWELo



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Compliance Options

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Prescriptive Compliance Option: Projects with landscape areas of 500 to 2,499 sf may comply with a simplified landscape plan submittal through the Prescriptive Compliance Option. Submittal includes:

1. Project Information Sheet
2. Compliance with plant and irrigation specifications
3. Certification of Completion package submittal

Performance Compliance Option: Projects with landscape areas of 2,500+ sf will need to achieve performance compliance. Plans must be designed by a registered landscape architect or licensed contractor. Submittal of a Landscape Documentation Package is required, which shall include:

1. Project Information Sheet
2. Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet
3. Soil Management Report
4. Landscape Design Plan
5. Irrigation Design Plan
6. Grading Design Plan
7. Certificate of Completion



Recommendation

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1. Acknowledge that the proposed Municipal Code Amendment and Zoning Code Amendment are not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Sections 15307, Class 7, for Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources and 15308, Class 8, for Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment. The proposed Zoning Code Amendment is also exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, the general rule, in that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment;
2. Adopt the Findings of Consistency with the General Plan in Attachment A;
3. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance within 60 days repealing Chapter 13.22 (Water Efficient Landscape) as contained in this report; and
4. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance within 60 days amending Title 17 (Zoning) of the Pasadena Municipal Code as presented in this report.



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End of Presentation

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