

MEMO



To: Planning Commission
From: Jason Bond, Assistant City Manager
Date: January 5, 2024
RE: **Water Efficiency Standards**

Santaquin City values the water resource that it has and continuously explores opportunities to be a good steward of this invaluable resource. To further promote the efficient use and conservation of water in Santaquin City, it is proposed to add language to the Landscaping Standards (10.52) found in Santaquin City Code that will help with the efficient use of water. The proposed language is consistent with language that the Central Utah Water Conservancy District and the State of Utah have been working on to promote the more efficient use of water, both regionally and statewide.

An amendment to the code is a legislative action and requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and provide a recommendation to the City Council. At this time, we ask the Planning Commission to review the attached language and hold a public hearing. With any feedback provided, staff will work on effectively integrating this language into Santaquin City Code, in the form of a draft ordinance, so that it is clear and in harmony with the current landscaping standards. This draft will eventually be brought back to the Planning Commission at a future meeting for your review.

Recommended Action: Hold a public hearing to receive feedback and also provide feedback to staff so that a draft ordinance can be prepared that integrates water efficiency related language.

Santaquin City
Water Efficiency Standards

1. Purpose

The purpose of these Water Efficiency Standards is to conserve the public's water resources by establishing water conservation standards for outdoor landscaping.

2. Applicability

- A. The following standards shall at a minimum be required for all new developer/contractor installed commercial, institutional, and industrial construction, as applicable and for the front and side yards of all new residential construction. These standards shall apply to existing ordinances related to city required landscaping.
 - i. If the backyard is required to be landscaped for certificate of occupancy, the standards shall apply to the backyard as well.
- B. These outdoor standards are not intended to conflict with other landscaping requirements as defined by Utah law, including stormwater retention requirements and low-impact development guidelines. Notwithstanding these outdoor standards, whenever any requirement may conflict with Utah law, the Utah law shall govern.

3. Outdoor Landscaping Standards

All new landscaping for public agency projects, private development projects, developer-installed landscaping in multi-family and single-family residential projects within the front and side yards shall comply with the Landscaping Requirements below:

Definitions

- A. Activity Zones: Portions of the landscape designed for recreation or function, such as storage areas, fire pits, vegetable gardens, and playgrounds.
- B. Active Recreation Areas: Areas of the landscape dedicated to active play where lawn may be used as the playing surface (ex. sports fields).
- C. Central Open Shape: An unobstructed area that functions as the focal point of a landscape and is designed in a geometric shape.

- D. Gathering Areas: Portions of the landscape dedicated to congregating, such as patios, gazebos, decks, and other seating areas.
- E. Hardscape: Durable landscape materials, such as concrete, wood, pavers, stone, or compacted inorganic mulch.
- F. Lawn: Ground that is covered with grass or turf that is regularly mowed.
- G. Mulch: Any material such as rock, bark, compost, wood chips or other materials left loose and applied to the soil.
- H. Park Strip: A typically narrow landscaped area located between the back-of-curb and sidewalk.
- I. Paths: Designed routes between landscape areas and features.
- J. Planting Bed: Areas of the landscape that consist of plants, such as trees, ornamental grasses, shrubs, perennials, and other regionally appropriate plants.
- K. Total Landscaped Area: Improved areas of the property that incorporate all the completed features of the landscape. The landscape area does not include footprints of buildings or structures, sidewalks, driveways, and other non-irrigated areas intentionally left undeveloped.

4. Landscaping Requirements

- A. Lawn shall not be less than 8 feet wide at its narrowest point.
- B. Lawn shall not exceed 35% of the Total Landscaped Area.
 - i. Small residential lots, which have no back yards, which the Total Landscaped Area is less than 250 square feet, and which the front yard dimensions cannot accommodate the minimum 8 feet wide lawn area requirement, are exempt from the 8 feet minimum width lawn area requirement and maximum of 35% lawn requirement.
- C. Lawn shall not be installed in Park Strips, Paths, or on slopes greater than 25% or 4:1 grade.
- D. In commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family development common area landscapes, lawn areas shall not exceed 20% of the Total Landscaped Area, outside of Active Recreation Areas.

5. Landscaping Recommendations

- A. All irrigation should be appropriate for the designated plant material to achieve the highest water efficiency. Drip irrigation should be used except in lawn areas. Drip irrigation systems should be equipped with a pressure regulator, filter, flush-end assembly, and any other appropriate components.
- B. Each irrigation valve should irrigate landscaping with similar site, slope and soil conditions, and plant materials with similar watering needs. Lawn and planting beds should be irrigated on separate irrigation valves. In addition, drip emitters and sprinklers should be placed on separate irrigation valves.
- C. Landscaped areas should be provided with a WaterSense labeled smart irrigation controller which automatically adjusts the frequency and/or duration of irrigation events in response to changing weather conditions. All controllers should be equipped with automatic rain delay or rain shut-off capabilities.
- D. At least 3-4 inches of mulch, permeable to air and water, should be used in planting beds to control weeds and improve the appearance of the landscaping.
- E. At maturity, landscapes are recommended to have enough plant material (perennials and shrubs) to create at least 50% living plant cover at maturity at the ground plane, not including tree canopies.

6. Landscaping Design Considerations

- A. If size permits, the landscaped areas of the front yard and back yard should include a designed Central Open Shape created by using Lawn, Hardscape, groundcover, or gravel.
- B. Gathering Areas should be constructed of Hardscape and placed outside of the Central Open Shape. In a landscape without lawn, Gathering Areas may function as the Central Open Shape.
- C. Activity Zones should be located outside of the Central Open Shape and should be surfaced with materials other than lawn.
- D. Paths should be made with materials that do not include Lawn, such as Hardscape, Mulch, or other ground surface material.