



Community & Economic Development Department  
3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522 | Phone: (951) 826-5371 |

Planning Division  
RiversideCA.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2018  
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 5

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	P18-0608 (Design Guidelines Amendment)
Request	To consider an amendment to the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines, to incorporate Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation Design Guidelines, to assist with implementing the City’s Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation Ordinance, Chapter 19.570 of the Zoning Code.
Applicant	City of Riverside Community & Economic Development Department 3900 Main Street, 6th Floor Riverside, CA 92522 (951) 826-2372
Project Location	Citywide
Ward	All Wards
Neighborhood	All Neighborhoods
Staff Planner	Doug Darnell, AICP, Senior Planner 951-826-5219 <a href="mailto:ddarnell@riversideca.gov">ddarnell@riversideca.gov</a>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff Recommends that the City Planning Commission:

1. **RECOMMEND that the City Council DETERMINE** that Planning Case P18-0608 (Design Guidelines Amendment) is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because it can be seen with certainty that the proposal does not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment (General Rule). An exemption from CEQA is supported by CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 (Protection of Natural Resources), 15308 (Protection of the Environment), and 15061(B)(3); and
2. **RECOMMEND City Council APPROVE** Planning Case Number P18-0608 (Design Guidelines Amendment), based on the findings outlined in the Staff report.

BACKGROUND

In November, 2007 the City approved Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines (Design Guidelines) (Resolution No. 21544) as a program component of General Plan 2025. The Design Guidelines were approved separately and independent of the General Plan 2025. The Design Guidelines are an implementation tool, used by Staff to evaluate development projects subject to Design Review.

The Design Guidelines reinforce the physical image of the City and promote well-designed development that enhances neighborhoods, creates identity, and improves quality of life.

On April 1, 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-29-15 (EO B-29-15), which mandated water conservation efforts. These efforts included a July 2015 update to the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo). Local agencies (cities and counties) were required, by State law, to adopt the State's MWELo, or adopt a City specific Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELo), provided it is at least as effective in conserving water as the MWELo.

On December 1, 2015, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 7310, which updated Chapter 19.570 – Water Efficient Landscaping and Irrigation, to comply with the State's stricter water efficiency standards.

In early 2016, the Community & Economic Development Department, in partnership with the Riverside Public Utilities (RPU), retained the services of Architerra Design Group to develop tools that set clear design expectations, integrate best practices in landscape design, and make the adopted WELo customer friendly.

## PROPOSAL

Working with three water agencies serving the City (RPU, Western Municipal and Eastern Municipal), Architerra completed the following to help implement the Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation Ordinance (WELo):

- 1) Updated design guidelines (WELo Guidelines) to reflect the new water efficiency requirements;
- 2) Revised the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines (Design Guidelines) to include references to water efficiency, and other minor revisions to provide clarity or implement best practices;
- 3) Updated the checklist used during landscape plan review; and
- 4) Provided example plans to illustrate contents for landscape plans.

The proposed WELo Guidelines supplement the City's WELo standards, which are contained in Chapter 19.570 of the Zoning Code (Title 19 of the Riverside Municipal Code). The WELo Guidelines provide a framework for the public and illustrate how the WELo standards are interpreted and applied. The WELo Guidelines provide narrative, and include illustrative and photographic examples of best practices in water efficient landscape design. They serve as a guide to help developers and design professionals create well designed landscapes that successfully reduce water usage, increase water efficiency, and promote conservation.

The WELo Guidelines are proposed as a new Appendix (Appendix C) of the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines. In addition to addressing the requirements of the WELo, the Guidelines include a climate appropriate landscape pallet of trees, shrubs, and groundcover. The following components/sections are included in the WELo Guidelines:

- Application of Guidelines;
- Planting Design;
- Irrigation Design;
- Landscape Irrigation Maintenance;
- Certificate of Compliance;
- Stormwater Management;
- Definitions of Landscape Terms;
- Examples and Worksheets for Calculation of Hydrozones; and

- Climate Appropriate Plants for Riverside (includes a plant list/palette for trees, shrubs ground cover, vines, and moderate water use turf varieties).

The proposal is an amendment to the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines, which were approved by the City Council. The Planning Commission is required to make a recommendation on the WELO Guidelines prior to City Council review and approval of both the proposed WELO Guidelines and revisions to the existing Design Guidelines (Exhibits 1 and 2).

The Planning Commission is not required to review or approve the other tools developed by Architerra. These are included for the Planning Commission’s reference and include:

- An updated City Administrative Landscape Plan Review Checklist (Exhibit 3).
- Residential Landscape Guide (Exhibit 4). The Residential Landscape Guide includes typical residential landscape plan concepts (i.e. single-family residential lot landscaping examples) for three scenarios: 1) Inefficient Landscaping; 2) Better (more water efficient); and 3) Best (high water efficiency).
- Commercial Landscape and Irrigation Guide (Exhibit 4). The Commercial Landscape Guide includes typical commercial landscape, and irrigation plan concepts for two scenarios: 1) Inefficient Landscaping; and 2) Water Conserving Landscaping.

These three documents were created as a “One-Stop Shop” resource and will be provided to the public as a counter handout or from the City’s web pages.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed WELO Guidelines support, and compliment the WELO provisions of the Zoning Code. They do not add any requirements beyond those contained within the Zoning Code, and provide guidance on implementing the Code requirements. The WELO Guidelines facilitate compliance with state landscape, and irrigation requirements for new development in the City, and will promote in substantial water savings.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This proposal is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it can be seen with certainty that the code amendment does not have the potential to cause a significant effect on the environment (General Rule). Furthermore, an exemption from CEQA is supported by CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 (Protection of Natural Resources), 15308 (Protection of the Environment), and 15061(B) (3).

## PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

This item is proposed in conjunction with a proposed Zoning Code Amendment (Planning Case P18-0606 – WELO), and therefore was noticed as part of the public notice required for the Zoning Code Amendment pursuant to Section 19.670.040 (Notice of Hearing for Legislative Actions) of the Zoning Code, and California Government Code Section 65090 and 65091. A one-eighth page public notice advertisement was placed in the local newspaper of general circulation within the City (The Press Enterprise) twelve (12) days prior to this hearing. Staff have received no responses regarding this proposal.

## APPEAL INFORMATION

Actions by the City Planning Commission, including any environmental finding, may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Planning Department Public Information Section, 3rd Floor, City Hall.

## EXHIBITS LIST

1. Proposed Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation Design Guidelines
2. Proposed Landscape Related Amendments to Existing Citywide Design Guidelines:
  - a. Residential Design Guidelines
  - b. Commercial & Mixed Use Design Guidelines
  - c. Industrial Design Guidelines
  - d. Public Facilities Design Guidelines
3. Updated Water Efficient Landscape Plan Review Checklist
- 4a. Single-Family Residential Landscape Guide
- 4b. Single-Family Residential Landscape Checklist
- 4c. Single-Family Residential Landscape Plans – Working Drawing Example
- 5a. Commercial Landscape Guide
- 5b. Commercial Landscape Checklist
- 5c. Commercial Landscape Plans – Working Drawing Example

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Approved by: Mary Kopaskie-Brown, City Planner