



Zoning Code Text Amendment – Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

Community & Economic Development Department

City Council
November 17, 2015

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BACKGROUND

- **Sept., 2006:** AB 1881 – *Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006* required:
 - Update of the State Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO), and
 - Cities to adopt the State Model WELO by 2010, or a WELO as effective in conserving water as the State WELO
- **Nov., 2009:** City adopted the current WELO to comply with AB 1881 (regionally developed & WRCOG endorsed)



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BACKGROUND

- **April 1, 2015:** Governor issues Executive Order EO B-29-15 (EO B-29-15). Includes water conservation mandates to address severe statewide drought conditions.
 - Required Department of Water Resources (DWR) to update the State's 2006 Model WELO.
 - Amended State Model WELO approved July 15, 2015.
 - By December 1, 2015, local agencies are required to adopt a WELO that is at least as effective as the State's Model WELO.



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BACKGROUND

- The State's Ordinance becomes effective by default if local agencies do not take action on a new water efficient landscape ordinance by Dec. 1, 2015.
- Advantages of adopting our own WELO vs. State WELO BY default are:
 - City avoids having a codified WELO that is inconsistent with State WELO.
 - Convenience of having latest State requirements in the Zoning Code. More easily accessed by the public and staff than State Model Ordinance.
 - The proposed WELO retains Riverside-specific provisions of the current WELO.



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Current Proposal: Adopt an Ordinance to amend Zoning Code Chapter 19.570 – Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation to be consistent with the latest State Model WELO.

Future WELO Revisions:

- Direct City staff (C&ED & RPU) to work together on a future WELO revision that:
 - Involves stakeholder input
 - Ties in with RPU's efforts (e.g., "Less Water More Color" campaign)
 - Tailored to the City
 - Includes Design Guidelines



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION Key Revisions

- New WELO provisions shall apply to the following:
 - New development with landscape areas of 500 square feet or more for Residential, Commercial, Industrial & Institutional projects that require a permit, plan check or design review.

(Current Code: landscape area thresholds are 2,500 to 5,000 square feet)



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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Key Revisions

Other changes per the State WELO include:

- Requires more efficient irrigation systems;
- Incentives for graywater use;
- Improvements in on-site storm water capture;
- Limits the portion of landscape that can be planted with high water use plants;
- Establishes City reporting requirements; and
- A prescriptive checklist option for landscapes under 2,500 square feet.



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Planning Commission

October 22, 2015; Planning Commission reviewed the proposed amendment to the Zoning Code and took the following action:

- Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed WELO;
- Directed staff to continue to coordinate with RPU and other local agencies to refine the amendment to meet local needs.



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Conclusion

- The proposed amendment satisfies the immediate need to update the City's existing WELO as mandated by the State. It is consistent with and will be at least as effective in conserving water as the State Model Ordinance.

Public Notice/Public Comment

- One-eighth page public notice published in the *Press Enterprise* twelve (12) days prior to this hearing



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RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council:

1. Determine that the proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment (Planning Case P15-0824) is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act per Sections 15307, 15308, and 15061(B)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.
2. Approve of Planning Case Number P15-0824 (Zoning Code Text Amendment) based on the findings outlined in the staff report.
3. Introduce and subsequently adopt the proposed Ordinance amending Title 19 of the Riverside Municipal Code.



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