



Xeriscape LDC Amendments

07/15/2024

Purpose and Intent

- Highlight the benefits of xeriscaping and discuss newly-introduced state laws around water-wise landscaping.
- Discuss proposed changes to the Land Development Code.

Prior Xeriscaping Efforts

- On July 10, 2023, staff debriefed Council on the Growing Water Smart Workshop and associated Water Smart Action Plan and held a preliminary xeriscaping discussion with Council.
- Council approved a motion seeking to pause review and approval of all landscaping permits that pertain to xeriscaping for a period of 90-days until regulations could be established.
- This item was discussed with City Council during a Study Session on April 8, 2024.

Xeriscaping: Benefits

- There is an average annual savings of 12.5 gallons of water per square-foot of converted turf.
- A 500-square foot turf conversion will save around 6,000 gallons of water per year.
- An average-sized front yard turf conversion will save between \$70-\$100 in maintenance costs on an annual basis.
- Xeriscaping can increase property value by as much as 15%.

Xeriscaping: State of Colorado

- The State of Colorado has recently adopted two xeric-centric laws within the past year:
- SB23-178: Requires HOAs to loosen guidelines on drought tolerant plants, vegetable gardens, and the use of non-vegetative turf grass backyards.
- SB24-005: Beginning in 2026, this bill will prohibit local governments from allowing the installation, planting, or placement of nonfunctional turf, artificial turf, or invasive plant species in non-residential areas.



Xeriscaping: Proposed Amendments

- Tree lawns, detention areas, and other low-use landscaping areas may contain xeric plant materials.
- Parking lot islands, medians, and perimeters must contain xeric plant materials.
- Plants must be appropriate to the C3 climate and are required to be selected from the Approved Plant List.
- Plants with similar water requirements must be grouped together.



Xeriscaping: Proposed Amendments

- Temporary irrigation would be allowed for xeric designs.
- Trees must have dedicated irrigation.
- If overhead sprays are used, high-efficiency nozzles are required. Hand watering and semi-automatic irrigation would be allowed.
- Trees within a tree lawn must be a species approved by the City and must have a root barrier installed along all concrete sidewalks, curbs, and portions of driveways that are within public ROW.

Approved Plant List

- The City's Approved Plant List for xeriscaping includes 19 trees, 23 shrubs, six vines, and eight types of grasses.
- All plants on the list are suitable for Colorado's semi-arid climate.
- Many plants on the list are fire-resistant.
- Staff will review the list on a regular basis with external resources, such as the Botanic Gardens and SACWSD, to ensure it is up to date.



Discussion

