

**OFFICIAL ZONING CODE INTERPRETATION (No. 9)**  
**Landscaping Standards**

ZONING CODE PROVISION INTERPRETED:  
Section 20-34.030(C), **Water Efficient Landscape Criteria**

Issue: Since Landscaping Standards, Ordinance No. 3677, was adopted in 2007, regulations have changes in terms of water use for landscaping. The City's Water Efficient Landscape Policy (WELP) was replaced with the State-mandated Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO), effective January 2009. In response to recent State-mandated modifications to irrigation requirements, the City's WELO is being updated. To align the Zoning Code with the WELO, a Zoning Interpretation is necessary to define the intent of the Landscaping Standards ordinance.

The section currently reads: Landscape and irrigation plans shall comply with the requirements and guidelines of the Sonoma County Water Agency for water efficient landscape and the City's Water Efficient Landscape Policy and the Single Family Residential Landscape Policy.

Because the Zoning Code is referring to an obsolete document (the WELP), and the intent of the Landscaping Standards Ordinance includes compliance with City-mandated irrigation requirement, it is determined that the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance will apply to all land uses as follows:

- A. New projects. New nonresidential projects, multi-family residential projects, and single-family residential projects shall provide landscaping in compliance with the requirements of this Chapter.
- B. Existing development. The approval of any permit for physical alterations and/or changes in use within an existing development may include conditions of approval requiring compliance with specific landscaping and irrigation requirements of this Chapter. When landscaping is required, the landscape and irrigation improvements shall be installed prior to final building inspection.
- C. Alternatives to requirements. Modifications to the standards of this Section may be approved by the appropriate authority to accommodate alternatives to required landscape materials or methods, where it is first determined that the proposed alternative will be equally effective in achieving the intent of this Section.

This determination is consistent with the General Plan.

Date: August 27, 2015

  
Jessica Jones  
Zoning Administrator