



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Long Beach, CA 90802

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April 1, 2010

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the City Council amend Zoning Regulations governing public and private landscaping to comply with State-adopted Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance amendments. (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach  
Department of Development Services, 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(Application No. 1003-12)

## DISCUSSION

Since 1993 the State of California has mandated that local jurisdictions comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Ordinance), a Department of Water Resources-authored document promoting the conservation and efficient use of water in public and private landscape projects. The first major update of the Ordinance was completed in 2009, at which time local jurisdictions were directed to either adopt the amended Ordinance in its entirety or adopt local water-efficient landscape standards that meet or exceed the effectiveness of those passed by the State (Exhibit A – Model Landscape Ordinance).

Amendments proposed to Section 21.42 (Landscaping Standards) of the Long Beach Municipal Code mirror many of those adopted by the State (Exhibit B – Section 21.42 Amendments). The crux of the amendments – a mandate on the use of drought-tolerant plants, the installation of efficient irrigation systems, and maintenance requirements for landscape areas – remains intact. Specific standards in the amended Ordinance, however, have been adjusted (without compromising their effectiveness) to allow for increased flexibility and innovation in the planning and design of future landscape projects and compatibility with various conservation-related initiatives the City has undertaken.

As proposed in the subject amendments, applicable landscape projects will be given a water budget based on the area of landscaping (square feet) and Long Beach's evapotranspiration rate of 17 (gallons of water per year per square foot of landscape area). With this water allowance, projects shall either provide 90% of total plantings in the "Very Low" to "Low" water use categories (based on WUCOLS, a statewide categorization of landscape species based on their water use)

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or demonstrate the landscaping component has an estimated total water usage quotient that is below the project's specific water budget (Exhibit C – Calculations).

The proposed amendments would cover all City zoning districts and rights-of-way, though landscaping components of certain project types would be exempt from the water budget standards. These include projects on registered local, state, or federal historical sites; those not connected to the public water system; ecological restoration projects that do not require permanent irrigation; and public-accessible botanical gardens or arboretums. Special landscape areas (sports fields, golf courses, and playgrounds) and plant-heavy land uses (orchards, community gardens, and nurseries) would be permitted to exceed their water budget allowance, provided draught-tolerant plantings are incorporated in other landscaped areas.

A landscape ordinance that is both State-compliant and comprehensive in scope would not only advance the City's sustainability goals but also provide consistent, attractive groundcover on properties and parkways. Key objectives of the City's Sustainable City Action Plan, such as the goal of reducing per capita use of potable water by 20% over the next 10 years, as well as those of the future low impact development ordinance and related policies, are furthered through the proposed amendments.

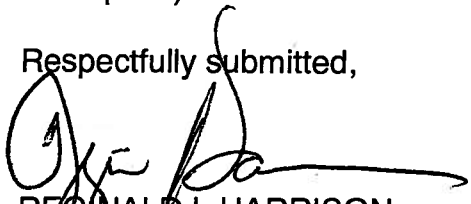
### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

In accordance with Section 21.21.032 of the Long Beach Municipal Code (Noticing Requirements for Hearings), a notice of zoning ordinance amendment was published in the Friday, March 19, 2010 edition of the Long Beach Press Telegram.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, a Categorical Exemption (CE 10-027) was issued for the proposed project (Exhibit D – Categorical Exemption).

Respectfully submitted,



REGINALD I. HARRISON  
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

RH:DB:MH

P:\Planning\PC Staff Reports (Pending)\2010-4-1\Landscape Ordinance

Attachments	Exhibit A – Model Landscape Ordinance
	Exhibit B – Section 21.42 Amendments
	Exhibit C – Calculations
	Exhibit D – Categorical Exemption