

Water Shortage Plans for Newly Established or Planned Landscapes

New Landscape installations shall be defined as those trees, planting beds, and turf plantings that are substantially complete and were installed within the last 12 months. These landscapes will be exempt from irrigation restrictions for during their establishment period as defined below. This ensures that the City's landscape asset investment is properly managed and maintained for long-term health.

The Office of Sustainability and Environment publication: [The Landscape Guidelines for City Departments](#) provides a basis for organizing and analyzing new landscapes for irrigation management in a critical water shortage. The guidelines below refer to two categories of project:

- ❑ Newly installed landscapes and;
- ❑ Proposed, funded capital improvement and other landscape projects

New Landscapes

SPR's best management practices identify the critical need for regular irrigation of new landscapes, be they trees, shrubs, perennials or turf. The Landscape Guidelines support this position indicating that new landscapes need to be adequately irrigated to fully ensure asset survival and establishment. It is well documented that the future health of plants is directly tied to post-construction cultural care, especially regular irrigation. Therefore:

- ❑ New landscapes are exempt from irrigation restrictions and shall be watered as needed for establishment
- ❑ The establishment period for new landscapes is generally considered to be three years
- ❑ New planting areas shall be mulched to retain moisture
- ❑ Weed control shall be consistently employed to maximize the use of available water by the desired landscape plants

Proposed Landscapes

Proposed landscapes shall be defined as those that are scheduled to be installed during the remainder of the current year. These projects include CIP, CRF, CDBG, NMF, in-house (M&O), volunteer and projects from other fund sources. In order to conserve water the Department shall determine whether these projects can/should be postponed. Criteria for postponement consideration shall include:

- ❑ Contractual concerns - will delaying the project result in problems with in-place contracts (such as the sequencing of work)?
- ❑ Budget concerns - will delaying the project increase costs to the project?
- ❑ Timing - have the plant materials already been purchased and are ready for installation? (If the answer is yes, it is recommended that these projects be installed as planned to avoid the possibility of stressing the plants and lowering the chances for healthy plant establishment.)

- Community/partnership commitments - does the project have multiple partners?
Might postponement cause one or more partners to have to drop out?

A "no" answer to the above questions should result in serious consideration of project postponement. "Yes" answers are an indication that the project might need to proceed as planned. In addition, consideration should be given to partial project implementation;

- Can the new landscape site be prepared now with planting delayed until fall/winter?
- Can the major trees/shrubs be planted now (for hand watering) with ground covers and turf plantings delayed until fall/winter?

Landscape/project managers should assess all of the new and planned landscape installations to determine the irrigation management required for each, and plan according to the above guidelines.