



WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE FAQs

The following information about the new Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance is intended to help applicants understand and comply with the new requirements. For a complete list of the requirements, please refer to the ordinance. Copies are available at the Community Development and Sustainability Department located in the city offices at 23 Russell Boulevard or at the department website at: <http://cityofdavis.org/cdd>; or contact a planner at: (530) 757-5610

What is the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance?

On November 30, 2010, the City Council of the City of Davis adopted the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2369). The ordinance updated the city's standards for landscape water use in compliance with state requirements. The new ordinance is effective as of December 30, 2010 for applicable projects submitted after this date.

The new standards require more efficient use of water in landscaping as part of the City's water conservation efforts. They do so by addressing all the facets of a landscape project and establishing minimum standards with the goal of improving the design, construction and maintenance of landscapes.

Is my project subject to the ordinance?

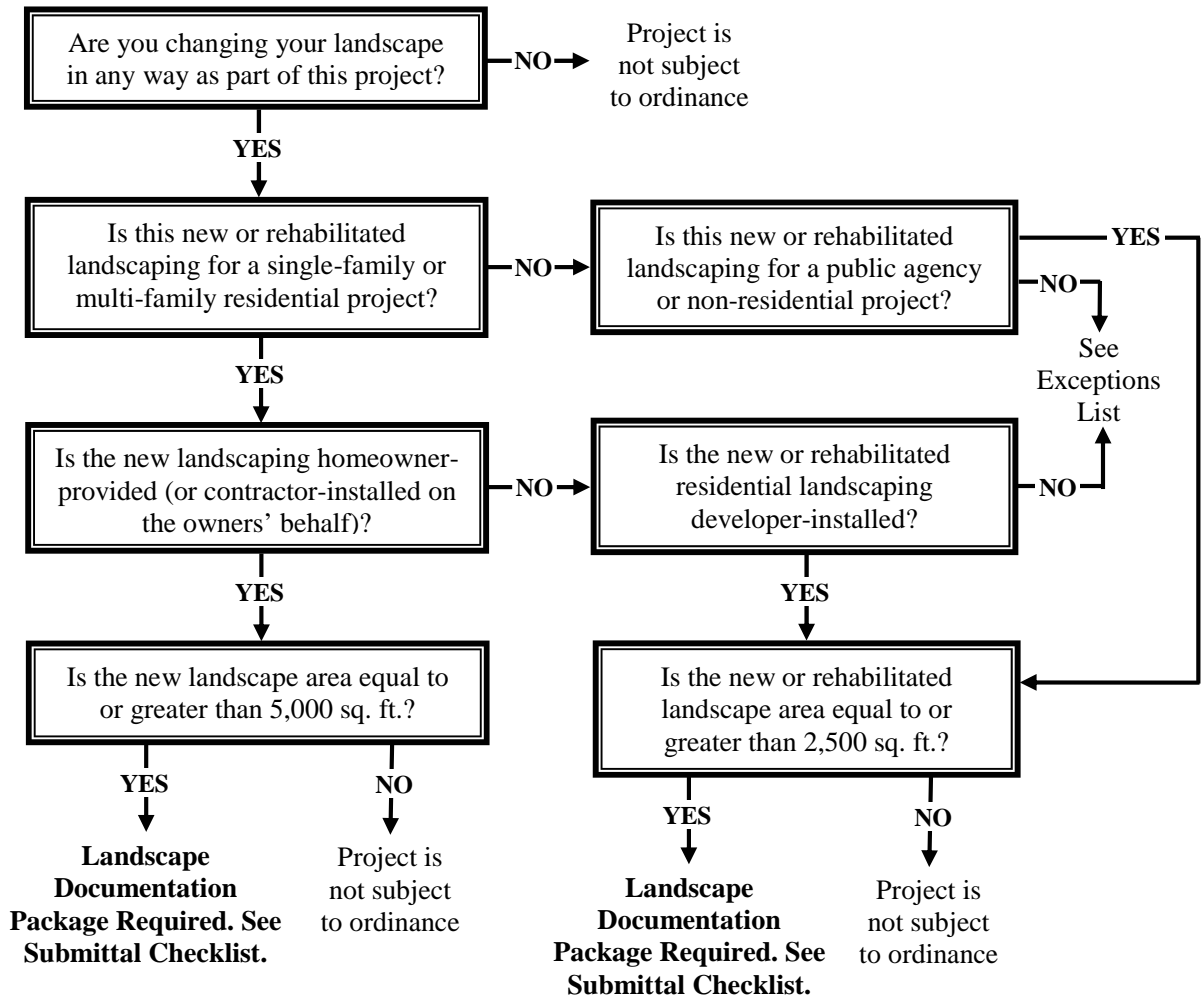
The ordinance targets larger landscape projects which have the potential to achieve the greatest water savings and which generally already need to provide much of the information and plans required by the ordinance. Existing landscapes, most individual residential landscape projects, and other special types of landscapes are exempt from the requirements of this ordinance.

Applicable projects include:

1. Non-Residential Projects and Public Agency Projects with a landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet.
2. Residential Projects With Developer-Installed Landscaping with a landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet.
3. Residential Projects With Homeowner-Provided Landscaping with a total project landscape area equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet.

The flowchart provided below indicates which projects are subject to the ordinance. It should be noted that the ordinance may be updated from time to time and the requirements and applicability may change. Please also see the ordinance for specific definitions. In addition, a project may be subject to other city standards or conditions of project approval that address landscape design and water conservation.

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance - Project Applicability Flowchart



What are the ordinance requirements?

The ordinance requires detailed information about the landscape design with certifications from qualified professionals to ensure that the landscaping is appropriately designed and installed and meets the necessary standards. It requires calculation of a landscape water budget which the project landscaping may not exceed.

The ordinance also encourages innovative features and alternative designs to maximize the benefits of good landscape design for the project site. It includes use of recycled water and rain-harvesting technologies and integration of best management practices for stormwater runoff.

Initial Submittal Requirements

For projects with a landscape component subject to this ordinance, a complete Landscape Documentation Package must be submitted and includes:

- Landscape Documentation Package Submittal Form (city-provided form).
- Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet with water budget calculations (city-provided form).
- Soil Report.

- Landscape Plan.
- Irrigation Plan.
- Grading Plan.

General Criteria

On the landscape, irrigation, and grading plans to be submitted, the ordinance lists specific information to include, detailed criteria to follow, and water-conserving technologies to use. A sample of the criteria includes:

- Grouping plants with similar water needs together by hydrozone.
- Analysis of the project site soil and implementation of soil report recommendations.
- Plant selection based on suitability to the local conditions.
- No turf on slopes over 25% (4:1) next to impermeable hardscape.
- No overhead irrigation within 24” of non-permeable surfaces.
- Subsurface or low volume irrigation system for narrow or irregularly-shaped areas less than eight (8) feet in width.
- Use of recirculated/recycled water in water features.
- Use of automatic irrigation controllers with moisture sensor devices.
- Grading to minimize erosion and runoff and maximize infiltration.
- Scheduling of overhead irrigation only between the hours of 8:00 pm and 10:00 am.
- Development of different irrigation schedules for the initial plant establishment period versus for established landscapes.
- Signed certifications from qualified professionals verifying compliance.

Prior to Final

Before a project can be finalized, additional requirements need to be provided and include:

- A Certificate of Completion (city-provided form).
- Development of Irrigation and Maintenance Schedules.
- Irrigation Audit by a certified auditor.

The Landscape Package Submittal Checklist and other required forms are available at the Community Development and Sustainability Department office. They are also available at the department website at: <http://cityofdavis.org/cdd/planningforms.cfm>.

What is the review process?

Prior to construction or issuance of any permits, submit a complete Landscape Documentation Package to the Community Development and Sustainability Department for review. If the materials are complete and conform to the ordinance requirements, the city will approve the landscape package as part of the related building and planning permits. Please note that additional documentation consistent with the ordinance is required prior to final.

For any additional questions, contact the Department of Community Development and Sustainability at (530) 757-5610 or email: pbweb@cityofdavis.org.