

Introduction of Updated Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

City Council Meeting
December 1, 2009



Current Outdoor Efficiency Programs

- Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance for new development – adopted in 1992
- Civic Bay Friendly Landscaping Ordinance
- Environmentally Friendly Landscaping Guidelines for new private development
- Landscape water use surveys
- Free landscaping workshops
- Educational materials



Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

- AB 1881 requires adoption of the updated State model landscape ordinance, or equivalent, by December 31, 2009
- Updated model incorporates current knowledge about plant materials, irrigation technologies, climate conditions and other factors
- Alternatives considered:
 - State model
 - Bay Friendly version of the State model, developed by StopWaste.org
 - BAWSCA model



Bay Friendly Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance – (Recommended Option)

- Staff evaluated options and recommends Bay Friendly version, augmented with City-specific requirements:
 - Complements existing City ordinances and guidelines
 - Addresses a wider range of sustainability issues beyond water conservation, such as waste minimization and fertilizing practices
 - Holistic and sustainable approach
 - Fulfills requirements of AB 1881 and is consistent with Council's sustainability goals



Major Provisions in Current Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

- Applies to projects with 2,500 sf or more of new or renovated landscaped area
- Exempts homeowner-installed landscaping on single-family lots
- Limits turf to 50% in front yard
- Requires two inches of wood chip or bark mulch
- Requires landscape water budget, water use schedule and irrigation schedule



Major Changes in Proposed Ordinance

- Applies to all projects that require Planning Division approval
- Plants with similar watering needs to be grouped
- 75% of non-turf plants to be California natives, Mediterranean or other climate adapted species
- Greater irrigation efficiency
- Three inches of organic compost required for soil amendment
- Three inches of recycled chipped wood to be used for mulch
- Irrigation audit and water use analysis required for certain landscapes



Impacts on Customers

- Projects subject to the ordinance may incur some additional cost
 - Soil management plan
 - Efficient irrigation system
 - Development of landscape and irrigation maintenance schedule
 - Water use analysis, survey and audits
- Savings achieved through reduced water use may equal or be greater than implementation costs, but are not yet quantified



Next Steps

- Bay Friendly Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance would be effective thirty days after adoption
- Staff will work with landscape professionals and development project applicants to make them aware of the requirements and benefits of new ordinance
- Staff will also provide informational materials and provide technical assistance

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