

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: May 7, 2012

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Bay Friendly Landscaping requirements for new construction and rehabilitation of public and private landscapes of 2,500 square feet of irrigated area or greater that require a permit, pursuant to a condition of funding by the Alameda County Waste Management Authority (Stopwaste.org)

REPORT BY: Anne Hersch, AICP, City Planner

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt Resolution No.2012-31 approving Bay Friendly Basics.

BACKGROUND

The City of Albany receives annual recycling mitigation funding through StopWaste and has received this source of funding since the mid 1990s. This is the last year that the City will receive recycling mitigation funding through Waste Management. In order for the City to receive this funding, it must adopt the newly updated Bay Friendly Basics Policy Update by June 30, 2012. Once completed and adopted, the City will receive \$23,724 of recycling mitigation funds for fiscal year 2012-2013.

ANALYSIS

The Recycling Board and the Waste Management Authority Board decided to include the following funding and condition in the FY 11/12 budget for the final year of pass through Waste Import Mitigation funding.

- All Cities and Alameda County will require that all new construction and rehabilitation of public and private landscapes of 2,500 square feet of irrigated area or greater that require a permit, plan check or design review (this is the threshold contained in the California Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance) shall adhere to the modified "Bay Friendly Basics."

A Bay-Friendly-Rated Landscape must meet the required "Basic" practices as well as score a specified number of points from a more extensive scorecard. The new policy would extend only the Bay Friendly Basic practices to all projects over the threshold. Consistent adherence to these measures for major landscape projects will help to achieve the goal of

resource conservation. There are nine components contained in the new provisions and are detailed below.

1. **Mulch:** All soil on site is protected with a minimum of 3 inches of mulch after construction.
2. **Amend the Soil with Compost Before Planting:** Compost is specified as the soil amendment, at the rates indicated by a soils analysis to bring the soil organic matter content to a minimum of 3.5% by dry weight or 1 inch of compost. If the imported or site soil meets the organic content of 3.5% or more, then the requirement is waived.
3. **Reduce and Recycle Landscape Construction Waste:** Divert 50% of landscape construction and demolition waste by weight. Verify the local jurisdiction's minimum requirement and reporting procedures for C&D debris recycling. An existing or new city/county ordinance on diversion of C&D debris supersedes this requirement.
4. **Choose and Locate Plants to Grow to Natural Size:** Species will be selected and plants spaced to allow them to grow to their natural size and shape. Pruning for structural integrity and health of plant is permitted. In addition, plants located in a row or adjacent to buildings, sidewalks, or in narrow strips/medians will be spaced at the maximum plant spread according to a published reference plant book, and still fit into their planting area without significant overhang against buildings, or over walkways, streets or onto adjacent plants.
5. **Do Not Plant Invasive Plant Species:** None of the plant species listed by CAL-IPC as invasive in the San Francisco Bay Area should be included in the planting plan.
6. **Grow Drought Tolerant California Native, Mediterranean or Climate Adapted Plants:** A minimum of 75% of the total number of plants in the non-turf areas must be species that require no or little summer watering once established. Species should be adapted to the climate in which they will be planted, as referenced by a third party source. If plants are given a range of water needs from "occasional to moderate" for example, the landscape designer must determine if the plant will require either occasional or moderate watering based on site, soil, and climate conditions and categorize the plant appropriately.
7. **Minimize the Lawn:** A maximum of 25% of total irrigated area is specified as turf, with sports or multiple use fields exempted.
8. **Specify Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers (Automatic, Self-adjusting) that includes a Moisture and/or Rain Sensor Shutoff:** Weather-based irrigation controllers, soil moisture based controllers or other self-adjusting irrigation controllers, shall be required for all irrigation systems.

9. **Sprinkler & Spray Heads are Not Specified for Areas Less Than 8 Feet Wide:** Sprinkler and spray heads are not specified in areas less than or equal to eight feet wide to prevent overspray and runoff. Acceptable alternatives include drip, subsurface drip, bubblers or no irrigation. Bubblers shall not exceed 1.5 gallons per minute per bubbler.

Once approved by the City Council, the practices would be effective immediately. This would apply to landscape projects (public and private) which are 2,500 sq. ft. or greater in area that requires City review (permit, plan check, Design Review). This threshold and review practice is consistent with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance contained in Section 12-7 of the Albany Municipal Code which was adopted in 2010. As an example, a 2,500 sq. ft. landscape project would subject to the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The applicant would have to further comply with the new Bay Friendly policies outlined above as part of the project submittal. Pending projects which would be subject to these provisions include the Safeway remodel on Solano Ave. and the new auto dealership proposed at 1035 Eastshore Freeway (next to Toyota of Berkeley Service Center).

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Staff has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA per Section 15060 (c) (2), of the CEQA Guidelines, which provides that the activity will not have foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The new Bay Friendly Basics landscape requirements promote sustainable landscaping practices. The proposed policy supports the following measures and objectives contained in the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP): Green Infrastructure objective GI 1.1, Water Conservation in Existing Buildings and Landscapes objectives WC 1.1, WC 1.2, and Water Conservation in New Construction objectives WC 2.1, and WC 2.2.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is difficult to quantify costs associated with meeting the new requirements, or the potential cost savings from reduced water use. There are few public or private properties in Albany of the size to trigger the full extent of these requirements. For landscaped areas of a smaller size, the city or developer may already incorporate these practices into the landscaping plans.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2012-31
2. Section 20.68 of the Albany Municipal Code
3. StopWaste Letter