Landscape Standards

Effective December 1, 2015, the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) went into effect and further clarifies Gilroy's current landscape requirements pursuant to the Gilroy City Code Chapter 30 Article XXXVIII.

The current State ordinance can be found here: 2015 Updated MWELO. Applicability of the MWELO includes:

- New construction projects with an aggregate landscape area of 500 square feet or larger that requires a building or landscape permit, plan check, or design review; or
- Rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area of 2,500 square feet or larger that requires a building or landscape permit, plan check, or design review; or
- Existing landscapes (limited to MWELO Chapter 2.7 §493, 493.1, 493.2); and
- New and rehabilitated cemeteries (limited to MWELO Chapter 2.7 §492.4, 492.11, 492.12); and
- Existing cemeteries (limited to MWELO Chapter 2.7 §493, 493.1, 493.2).
- Registered local, state or federal historical sites are exempt from the MWELO.

Submittal Requirements

All projects that require a building or grading permit, plan check or design review must comply with MWELO. The City of Gilroy currently relies on licensed consulting professionals to review and process all landscape documentation submittals. An electronic copy of all Landscape Documentation Package materials shall be provided at submittal, on USB drive or labeled CD.

Elements of the required Landscape Documentation Package to the city include:

1. Project Information (included in Building Permit Application or Uniform Application for design review or planning projects)
    - A separate summary of hydrozones must also be completed: Hydrozone Summary Sheet
2. Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet:
    - A detailed worksheet – Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet – using resources described below to complete.
    - Water budget calculators for residential and non-residential landscape projects are located on the State WELO webpage.
    - Evapotranspiration Adjustment Factor (ETAF) shall not exceed 0.55 for residential areas and shall not exceed 0.45 for non-residential areas.
    - ETAF for Special Landscape Areas (i.e. areas dedicated solely to edible plants, common use recreational areas, areas irrigated with recycled water, or water features using recycled water) shall not exceed 1.0.
    - Calculation of Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) and Estimated Total Water Use shall use values for the project's geographic area from Appendix A of the MWELO: Reference ETo Tables.

- Average irrigation efficiency is 0.75 for overhead spray devices and 0.81 for drip system devices.
- Plant factors for Water Budget Calculations shall be from the current Water Use Classification of Landscape Species: WUCOLS IV.

3. Soil Management Report
   - A soil analysis report must include soil texture, infiltration rate, pH, total soluble salts, sodium, percent organic matter, and recommendations.
   - Soil sampling shall be per laboratory protocols, including adequate sampling depth for the intended plants. Projects with multiple landscape installations (e.g. production homes) shall be at a rate of 1 in 7 lots.
4. Landscape Design Plan
   - Such plans must include the required statement and be signed by a licensed landscape architect, licensed landscape contractor, or any other person authorized to design a landscape, per MWELO.
   - Landscaping shall be designed for efficient use of water for the proposed project, and shall adhere to MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.6) with regard to plant material, water features, soil preparation/mulch/amendments.
   - At minimum, the landscape design plan shall identify:
     - Delineate and label each hydrozone;
     - Each hydrozone as low, moderate, high, or mixed water use;
     - All recreational areas;
     - Areas permanently and solely dedicated to edible plants;
     - Areas irrigated with recycled water;
     - Type of mulch and application depth;
     - Soil amendments, type, and quantity;
     - Type and surface area of water features;
     - All hardscapes (pervious and non-pervious);
     - Location, installation details, and 24-hour retention or infiltration capacity of stormwater areas;
     - Any associated rain harvesting or catchment technologies; and
     - Applicable greywater discharge piping, system components and areas of distribution
5. Irrigation Design Plan
   - Such plans must include the required statement and be signed by a licensed landscape architect, certified irrigation designer, licensed landscape contractor, or any other person authorized to design an irrigation system, per MWELO.
   - Irrigation system shall be planned and designed for proper installation, management, and maintenance, and shall adhere to MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.7) with regard to design of the system and hydrozone.
   - At minimum, the irrigation design plan shall contain:
     - Location and size of separate water meters;
     - Location, type and size of all components of the irrigation system;
     - Static water pressure at the point of connection to the public water supply;
     - Flow rate (gallons per minute), application rate (inches per hour), and design operating pressure (pressure per square inch) for each station;

        - Recycled water irrigation systems as specified in MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.14).
6. Grading Design Plan
    - Such plans must include the required statement and be signed by a licensed civil engineer or other licensed professional as authorized by law, per MWELO.

Compliance Verification

As part of the City's sign-off process for landscape projects (e.g. grading permit or building permit), installation of the approved landscaping must be verified with an onsite inspection. Upon completion of the landscape project, the project applicant shall submit the following required items to the City of Gilroy:

A. Certificate of Completion stating the project has been installed per the approved Landscape Documentation Package, acknowledged by the signer of the landscape design plan, signer of the irrigation design plan, or the licensed landscape contractor;
B. If applicable, "as-built" drawings to document any significant changes made in the field during construction;
C. Diagram of the irrigation plan showing hydrozones shall be kept with the irrigation controller for subsequent management purposes;
D. Irrigation scheduling parameters used to set the controller as specified in MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.10);
E. Landscape and irrigation maintenance schedule as specified in MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.11);
F. Irrigation audit report as specified in MWELO (Chapter 2.7 §492.12);
G. Soil analysis report (only if not submitted previously for design review).