

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-15

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TEMECULA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE TEMECULA MUNICIPAL CODE MAKING TECHNICAL REVISIONS AND UPDATES TO THE WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE DESIGN ORDINANCE TO MAKE CONSISTENT WITH THE CITYWIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES AND MAKE A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) GUIDELINES SECTION 15061 (B)(3)

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TEMECULA DOES HEREBY ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Procedural Findings. The City Council of the City of Temecula does hereby find, determine, and declare that:

A. City staff identified the need to make minor revisions and clarifications to portions of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code.

B. As required by State law, the Planning Commission considered the proposed amendments to Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code (“Code Amendments”) on October 1, 2025, at a duly noticed public hearing as prescribed by law, at which time the City staff and interested persons had an opportunity to and did testify either in support of or opposition to this matter.

C. At the conclusion of the Planning Commission hearing and after due consideration of the testimony, the Planning Commission adopted PC Resolution No. 2025-33, recommending that the City Council approve the Code Amendments.

D. The City Council, at a regular meeting, considered the Ordinance on October 28, 2025, at a duly noticed public hearing, as prescribed by law, at which time the City Staff and interested persons had an opportunity to and did testify either in support or opposition to this matter.

E. Following the public hearing, the City Council considered the entire record of information received at the public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

Section 2. General Plan Consistency Findings. The City Council, in approving the proposed Ordinance, hereby makes the following additional findings as required by Section 17.01.040 (“Relationship to General Plan”) of the Temecula Municipal Code:

A. The proposed uses are allowed in the land use designation in which the use is located, as shown on the land use map, or is described in the text of the general plan.

B. The proposed Code Amendments are minor revisions, updates, and clarifications to existing standards and practices that are provided in the Citywide Design Guidelines (adopted August 9, 2005, by City Council Resolution No. 05-086). There are no proposed changes to land use as Chapter 17.32 is intended to promote high quality landscape design and there are no proposed changes to land use.

C. The proposed uses are in conformance with the goals, policies, programs, and guidelines of the elements of the general plan.

D. The proposed changes to Title 17 conform with the goals, policies, programs, and guidelines of the elements of the General Plan. The proposed changes make minor revisions to the landscape design requirements, which is consistent with Goal 2 of the Community Design Element of the Temecula General Plan, which is to "Design excellence in site planning, architecture, landscape architecture and signs." The proposed amendments add to the landscape requirements for residential and nonresidential landscape standards which furthers Policy 2.1 of the Community Design Element of the Temecula General Plan which states, "Establish and consistently apply design standards and guidelines for both residential and non-residential development." The remaining proposed amendments to the Temecula Municipal Code are minor clarifications and adding definitions that do not result in an inconsistency between the Temecula Municipal Code and the adopted General Plan.

E. The proposed uses are to be established and maintained in a manner which is consistent with the general plan and all applicable provisions contained therein.

F. The proposed amendments to Title 17 of the Temecula Municipal Code do not propose any land use that is inconsistent with the Temecula General Plan. The Code Amendments are for updates to landscape design and do not create or allow new land uses.

Section 3. Environmental Findings. The City Council hereby finds that this Ordinance is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the Code Amendments would have a significant impact on the environment as the Amendments are administrative and do not result in any physical land use changes. The Community Development Director is hereby directed to file a Notice of Exemption in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

Section 4. Section 17.32.020 (Definitions) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to add the following new definitions to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.020 remaining unchanged:

"Artificial turf" and/or "synthetic turf" means a non-organic surface of synthetic fibers made to look like natural organic turf grass.

"Bioretention area" means a landscaped depression designed to collect and filter stormwater runoff before it infiltrates into the ground or is discharged via underdrains.

“Impervious surface” means any surface that prevents or significantly reduces the natural soaking of water into the ground.”

“Lawn” and/or “turf” means a groundcover of cool or warm-season grass that is mowed.”

“Lawn substitute” means any organic grass or low growing groundcover that may or may not require mowing to retain a low-profile walkable surface. Lawn substitutes are limited to Dycondra Occidentalis (Western Ponyfoot), Dycondra Argentea (Silver Ponyfoot), Dymondia Margaretea (Silver Carpet), and Ophiopogon Japonicus ‘Nana’ (Dwarf Mondo Grass).

“Mulch stabilizer” means a product or material that acts as a binding agent for various types of mulch, including wood chips and bark. It is designed to lock mulch in place to minimize the need for re-spreading and to prevent soil erosion.

“Permeable surface” means a surface that allows water to pass through and infiltrate into the ground instead of pooling or running off.

“Reference evapotranspiration (ET_o)” means a standard measurement of environmental parameters which affect the water use of plants. ET_o is expressed in inches per day, month, or year and is an estimate of the evapotranspiration of a large field of four- to seven-inch tall, cool season turf that is well watered. Reference evapotranspiration is used as the basis of determining the maximum allowable water allowance so that regional differences in climate can be accommodated. The annual ET_o for Temecula is 56.7. is provided in the Reference Evapotranspiration (ET_o) Table of Appendix C of the California Department of Water Resources’ Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance, as may be amended from time to time.

“Shall” or “will”, for the purpose of this chapter, means that it is mandatory and must be included in the project’s design.

“Should”, for the purpose of this chapter, is intended to be applied as stated. However, an alternative measure may be included if it meets or exceeds the intent of the guideline(s).

Section 5. Subsection K (Plant Material) of Section 17.32.060 (Landscape Design Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.060 remaining unchanged:

“K. Plant Material.

1. Plants identified on the landscape plan shall be selected from the approved plant list (Appendix C) in Section 17.32.200-or as specified on a Specific Plan Plant List if applicable.
2. Existing mature landscaping that is in good healthful condition shall be retained by incorporating such landscaping into the landscape plan. When mature landscaping is invasive or non-native it shall be removed at the discretion of the Director of

Community Development.

3. The protection, preservation and enhancement of native species and natural areas are required in accordance with Chapter 8.48 (Protected Tree Ordinance) of this Code.
4. Landscape design shall provide for the grouping of plants in regard to their water, soil, sun and shade requirements and in relationship to the buildings, so as to facilitate appropriate and efficient water applications. ~~Plants with different water needs shall be irrigated separately.~~
5. Plant material with different watering needs shall not be placed on the same irrigation valve.
6. Turf shall be limited to only those areas designated for active recreational use.
7. Turf shall not be planted in areas that are less than ten (10) feet in width in any direction.
8. Turf is not permitted on bermed areas or on slopes greater than twenty-five (25) percent due to the problem of water runoff.
9. High water use plants, characterized by a plant factor of 0.7 to 1.0 are prohibited in street medians.
10. Artificial/synthetic turf is not a permitted substitute for plant material in commercial, industrial, or mixed-use zones and/or multifamily projects. Green artificial turf may be permitted in commercial, industrial, and/or mixed-use zones or multifamily projects when utilized for bona fide recreational facilities such as a sports field; and may also be permitted in the inner courtyards of senior care facilities when used in place of a landscape area to provide a stable surface for mobility devices. Green artificial/synthetic turf is a permitted non-plant material for single-family homes when used in place of a lawn or other landscaped area of the home.”

Section 6. Subsection N (Soil Preparation, Mulch and Amendments) of Section 17.32.060 (Landscape Design Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.060 remaining unchanged:

“N. Soil Preparation, Mulch and Amendments.

1. Prior to the planting of any materials, compacted soils shall be transformed to a friable condition. On engineered slopes, only amended planting holes need to meet this requirement.
2. Soil amendments shall be incorporated according to recommendations of the soil report and what is appropriate for the plants selected.
3. For landscape installations, compost at a rate of a minimum of four cubic yards per one thousand (1,000) square feet of permeable areas shall be incorporated to a depth

of six inches into the soil. Soils with greater than six percent organic matter in the top six inches of soil are exempt from adding compost and tilling.

4. A minimum three-inch layer of organic mulching shall be installed and maintained over all non- turf areas. In areas with groundcover planted from flats, the mulch depth shall be no less than one and one-half inches. The mulching should be in the form of shredded bark, bark chips of varying sizes, or other similar materials. The size and type of mulch used should allow for moisture to pass through the surface, thus providing permeability and reduced erosion, particularly on slopes. Nonporous material shall not be placed under mulch. No rubber or synthetic mulch is allowed.
5. ~~Stabilizing mulching~~ Mulch stabilizer products shall be used on slopes- when a binding agent is deemed necessary to hold the organic mulch in place. A stabilizing mulch product such as hydraulic mulch, jute mesh, and erosion control blankets shall be used only as a temporary erosion control.
6. Organic mulch materials made from recycled or post-consumer shall take precedence over inorganic materials or virgin forest products unless the recycled post-consumer product is not locally available. Organic mulches are not required where prohibited by fuel modification plans as determined by the city's fire department.

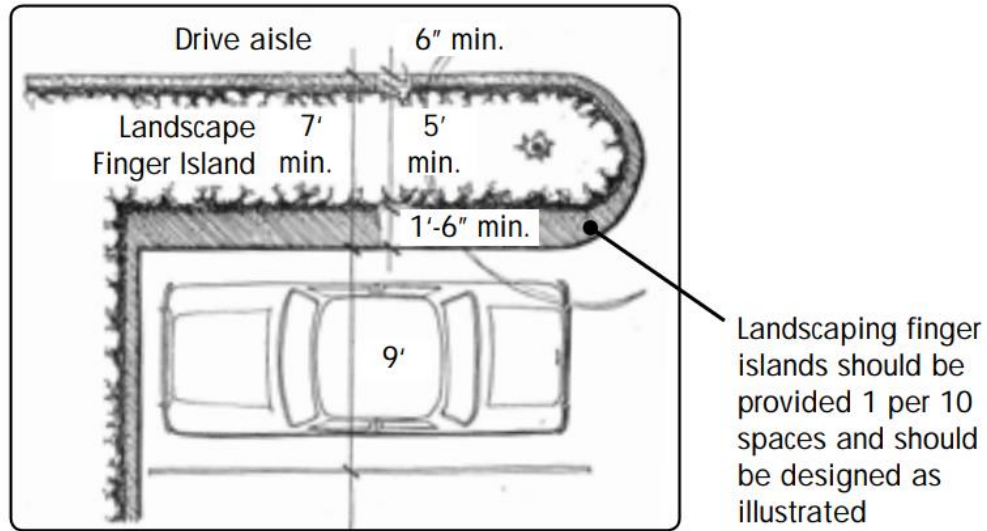
Inorganic mulch groundcover, such as gravel or crushed rock, should be used only as an accent material. No more than fifteen (15) percent of the total landscape area should consist of such inorganic mulch groundcover, and, if used, the materials should be used in combination with live plants.”

Section 7. Subsection Q (Parking Areas) of Section 17.32.060 (Landscape Design Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.060 remaining unchanged:

“Q. Parking Areas.

1. A minimum of a 7-foot-wide landscape planter shall be provided at the end of each parking aisle.
2. One landscape finger island shall be provided for every ten (10) spaces. Landscape islands shall be a minimum of 5-feet in width to allow for tree growth and to avoid trunks from being hit.
3. The landscape planter shall contain a 12-inch strip of concrete inside the 6-inch curb of the planter, to create an 18-inch concrete strip for a person to step on when getting into or out of a vehicle. The concrete strip shall be attached to the 6-inch curb. This step-out area shall not reduce the minimum inside dimension of the 5-foot wide landscape planter.
4. Raised planters, with a minimum interior dimension of 5 feet, should be used to separate double-loaded parking areas.
5. Finger islands adjacent to parking stalls on both sides shall have a minimum outside width of 8 feet to accommodate step-outs while meeting the 5-foot minimum inside

planting area width requirement.



6. Canopy trees shall be used in parking areas to reduce the impact of large expanses of paving, to provide shade, and to reduce glare and heat build-up. These trees shall have a thirty (30) foot to forty (40) foot canopy potential and be sized at a minimum twenty-four (24) inch box at time of installation.



7. Provide root barriers when trees are planted five feet or closer to any hardscape element (including curbs, sidewalks, or any other paving (whether concrete or asphalt) or building.”

Section 8. Subsection Z of Section 17.32.090 (Irrigation System Design Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.090 remaining unchanged:

“Z. Overhead spray systems shall not be used in landscape areas narrower than ten feet in width,~~with the exception of an engineered bioretention area approved by the~~
Director of Public Works.”

Section 9. Paragraph 5 of Subsection A (Single Family Residential Requirements) of Section 17.32.110 (Residential Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.110 remaining unchanged:

“5. Trees and shrubs shall be planted in a manner that at maturity they do not interfere with utility lines, sight lines for traffic safety, encroach on adjacent property, or create barriers to the solar access rights of adjoining property owners. Trees and shrubs shall be placed: (a) a minimum of five feet away from any water meter, gas meter, or sewer laterals; (b) a minimum of ten feet away from utility poles; and (c) a minimum of eight feet away from fire hydrants and fire department sprinkler and standpipe connections.”

Section 10. Subsection H of Section 17.32.120 (Commercial/Office/Industrial/Public Institutional Requirements) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.020 remaining unchanged:

“H. Trees and shrubs shall be planted so that they do not interfere with utilities, light standards, sight lines for traffic safety, encroach on adjacent property, or obstruct to the solar access rights of adjoining property owners. Trees and shrubs shall be placed: (a) a minimum of five feet away from water meter, gas meter, or sewer laterals; (b) a minimum of ten feet away from utility poles; and (c) a minimum of eight feet away from fire hydrants and fire department sprinkler and standpipe connections.”

Section 11. Section 17.32.170 (Maintenance and Enforcement) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to add new subsections H, I, J, and K to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.170 remaining unchanged:

“H. All modifications to original landscape plan approvals shall require a

Modification Application through the Planning Department, pursuant to Section 17.05.030.

I. Trees removed due to maintenance issues/death must be replaced in accordance with the approved landscape plans. If replacement is not possible due to size, species availability, site constraints, or other practical limitations, an alternative tree species or planting configuration may be proposed, subject to review and approval by the Director of Community Development.

J. Protected trees must comply with Chapter 8.48 of the Temecula Municipal Code.

K. Groundcovers shall be used in addition to, not in place of, the approved landscaping and must be maintained accordingly. As groundcovers reach the end of their lifespan, groundcover replacements must meet the originally approved groundcover installation's specifications including plant size, spacing, and watering requirements."

Section 12 Subsection 4 of Section B of Appendix B (Prescriptive Compliance Option) of Section 17.32.200 (Appendices) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.200 remaining unchanged:

"4. Turf shall comply with all of the following:

- a. Turf shall not exceed twenty five (25) percent of the landscape area in residential areas, and there shall be no turf in non-residential areas.
- b. Turf shall not be planted on sloped areas which exceed a slope of 1 foot vertical elevation change for every 4 feet of horizontal length.
- c. ~~Turf is prohibited in parkways less than 10 feet wide, unless the parkway is adjacent to a parking strip and used to enter and exit vehicles. Any turf in parkways must be irrigated by sub-surface irrigation or by other technology that creates no overspray or runoff."~~

Section 13. Subsection 5 of Section B of Appendix B (Prescriptive Compliance Option) of Section 17.32.200 (Appendices) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to add a new paragraph "g" to read as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.200 remaining unchanged:

"g. Overhead irrigation is only allowed in landscape areas less than ten (10) feet wide if it is an engineered bioretention area approved by the Director of Public Works.

Section 14. Appendix C (Plant List) of Section 17.32.200 (Appendices) of Chapter 17.32 (Water Efficient Landscape Design) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Temecula Municipal Code is hereby amended to delete “~~Nerium oleander~~” and “~~Dasyllirion spp.~~” and add Note 1 at the end of Appendix C as follows (with additions appearing in underlined text and deletions appearing in strikethrough text), with all other provisions of Section 17.32.200 remaining unchanged:

Botanical Name	Common Name	Type	Kc	Kc	Height Feet	Spread Feet	Riv. Co. Native	Comments
Nerium oleander	oleander	S	0.2	L	10	10		
Dasyllirion spp.	desert spoon	S	0.2	L	3	3		

“Notes:

1. In areas designated as Very High Fire Severity Zones and High Fire Severity Zones, the list of allowed plants shall be the most current version Calflora’s Fire Safe Plant List, as may be amended from time to time.”

Section 15. Severability. If any section or provision of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, or contravened by reason of any preemptive legislation, the remaining sections and/or provisions of this Ordinance shall remain valid. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this Ordinance, and each section or provision thereof, regardless of the fact that any one or more section(s) or provision(s) may be declared invalid or unconstitutional or contravened via legislation.

Section 16. Certification. The Mayor shall sign and the City Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this Ordinance and shall cause the same or a summary thereof to be published and posted in the manner required by law.

Section 17 Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after passage.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Temecula
this 18th day of November, 2025.

Brenden Kalfus, Mayor

ATTEST:

Randi Johl, City Clerk

[SEAL]

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE) ss
CITY OF TEMECULA)

I, Randi Johl, City Clerk of the City of Temecula, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance No. 2025-15 was duly introduced and placed upon its first reading at a meeting of the City Council of the City of Temecula on the 28th day of October, 2025, and that thereafter, said Ordinance was duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Temecula at a meeting thereof held on the 18th day of November, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

NOES: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSTAIN: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ABSENT: COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Randi Johl, City Clerk