



City of San Marcos

City Council Meeting

January 19, 2021



Presentation on Sustainability Strategic Initiative: proposed ordinance changes

Presentation from City staff regarding proposed ordinance amendments to City Code section 14.126, Landscape Irrigation Systems, and LDC Chapter 7, Article 2, Division 4, Landscape Installation and Maintenance.



Background

- SM experiencing rapid growth and needs to conserve water resources.
- Large portion of water resources used to irrigate new lawns.
- Standard landscaping is mostly lawn w/ bed by entrance and 2-3 trees; most new landscaping come standard with automatic irrigation system.
- Turf limits common in CA and NV; and used in some parts of TX (El Paso, Georgetown, Austin Home Builders Association).
- Separate metering of irrigation increases customer awareness, and when used with Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) provides valuable tool for conservation.



Proposed 14.126 amendments

Current Code	Proposed Amendment
Requires new commercial and multi-family irrigation systems to have a separate, dedicated irrigation meter.	Expands requirement for separate, dedicated irrigation meter to new single-family irrigation systems.
No impact fees for single-family residential irrigation systems.	No change, still no impact fees for single-family residential irrigation systems.



Proposed LDC amendments

Current Code	Proposed Amendment
Recommends turf areas in non-residential developments be limited to a maximum of 25% of the landscaped area.	Limits turf areas to 50% in single-family residential development and 25% in other new developments.
Encourages use of drought-tolerant turf grass species.	Requires use of drought-tolerant turf grass species.
Recommends min. soil depth of 6 inches.	Requires min. soil depth of 6 inches.
	Provide clarification of ground cover, landscape irrigation requirements, maintenance and definitions.









Progress and Next Steps

- August 3, 2020 - Proposed amendments presented to COSM Planning department for comments and input.
- August 6 and September 30, 2020 - Proposed amendments presented to Council Sustainability Committee.
- August 28 - September 16, 2020 - Proposed amendments provided to Austin Home Builders Association for comment; received thumbs-up.
- November 4, 2020 – City Council referred item to P&Z.
- December 8, 2020 - Proposed amendments presented to P&Z.
- January 19, 2021 - Proposed amendments presented to Council for approval.