Section 10
Design Criteria
Landscape/Irrigation

10.1 Landscape Water Conservation

As much as 80 percent of water use in the Coachella Valley occurs outdoors. CVWD considers it imperative that landscape irrigation be efficient. Accordingly, all new development projects within the CVWD service area must comply with CVWD Ordinance No. 1302.1 and submit landscape irrigation drawings for review and approval.

The requirements of Ordinance No. 1302.1 have proven to provide beautiful landscapes, excellent design flexibility, and landscapes that use relatively little water. The ordinance provides detailed requirements for landscape design, allowing flexibility and imagination, while reducing water use and avoiding runoff to the streets. It also addresses the design of the irrigation system with specifications for efficiency, including spray, rotor and drip irrigation systems.

To provide maximum design flexibility while reducing water use, the criteria rely on water use calculations. The calculations are based on plant water use classifications and irrigation system efficiencies. The estimated water use of the proposed landscape must be less than or equal to the maximum water allowance calculated for a “model” landscape of the same size.

All design criteria can be found in Ordinance No. 1302.1 Landscape and Irrigation System Design Criteria (see Appendix M). The Water Management Division is part of the Service Department. Water Management staff are available to assist in meeting the requirements of the Ordinance and preparing the drawing submittal.

10.2 Applicability

The provisions of Ordinance No. 1302.1 shall apply to all of the following landscape projects:

- New construction and rehabilitated landscapes for public agency projects and private development projects requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review;
- New construction and rehabilitated landscapes which are developer-installed in single-family and multi-family projects requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review; and
- New construction and rehabilitated landscapes which are homeowner-provided and/or homeowner-hired in single family and multi-family residential projects with a total project landscape area equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review.
These criteria do not apply to:

- Registered local, state or federal historical sites;
- Ecological restoration projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system;
- Mined-land reclamation projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system; or
- Plant collections, as part of botanical gardens and arboretums open to the public.

10.3 Landscape/Irrigation Submittal Package

Appendix A of Ordinance 1302.1 provides the format for the Landscape Document Package Checklist which includes the following key items:

1. Maximum Applied Water Allowance
2. Estimated Total Water Use by Hydrozone
3. ETWU < MAWA
4. Landscape Design Plan
5. Irrigation Design Plan
6. Grading Design Plan
7. Soil Management Report
8. General Project Information

Landscape/irrigation drawing requirements are included in Section 2-Drawing Format and Requirements. The Landscape and Irrigation Pre-Submittal Checklist is located in Appendix E.

Two copies of the landscape/irrigation submittal package shall be forwarded to the Water Management Division. See the Fees section for the most current landscape/irrigation plan check fees. The package will normally be returned to the applicant with comments if applicable within ten (10) days of receipt. After noted corrections have been made to the drawings, the applicant shall submit the original landscape and irrigation plans for final approval. A copy of the approved landscape package along with the approved plans will be released after the developer/applicant has provided all the post plan check documents (see Figure 1).

CVWD Water Management staff will inspect the landscaped area(s) for conformance with the approved landscape/irrigation package.

10.4 CVWD Easements

CVWD requires easements to ensure the ability to properly operate and maintain its facilities. Please see Section 2-Drawing Format and Requirements and Section 3-Right-of-Way for more details on easement width requirements and the detailed process for securing and dedicating easements to CVWD.