

EXECUTIVE OFFICE



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

EDWARD YEN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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August 11, 2026

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**BOARD POLICY ON WATER CONSERVATION AND
SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING
(All Districts) (3 Votes)**

SUBJECT

Recommendation to approve revisions to Board Policy 3.047, retitled the Board Policy on Water Conservation and Sustainable Landscaping, to continue and expand Countywide requirements related to water conservation, sustainable landscape management, biodiversity, and the use of California native plants at County of Los Angeles (County) facilities. The proposed policy updates reflect current State requirements, Board direction, and County sustainability priorities, and extend the policy sunset date to August 30, 2030.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Approve the attached revised Board Policy 3.047, Board Policy on Water Conservation and Sustainable Landscaping; and
2. Extend the policy sunset date from August 30, 2026, to August 30, 2030.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On August 30, 2022, the Board adopted Board Policy 3.047, Water Conservation Policy, to establish Countywide requirements for reducing water demand and promoting efficient water use at County facilities. The policy is scheduled to sunset on August 30, 2026.

Since the policy's adoption, the Board has provided additional direction to strengthen the County's leadership on biodiversity and sustainable landscape management. On November 18, 2025, the Board directed the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO), in consultation with relevant County departments, to update the policy to incorporate biodiversity considerations and sustainable landscaping practices.

In response, the CSO coordinated with County departments through listening sessions, individual meetings, and review of draft policy language. Departments consulted included Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Internal Services, Beaches and Harbors, Public Health, and other departments responsible for managing County facilities and landscapes. The proposed policy reflects feedback received through that collaborative process.

The proposed policy retains the existing water conservation requirements, with updates to improve consistency with current State requirements and best practices. New provisions are added to support biodiversity and sustainable landscaping, including requirements related to California native plants, contractor and staff capacity for managing native landscapes, artificial turf inventory and reporting, invasive species prevention, integrated pest management, tree selection, and other sustainable landscape management practices.

The most significant addition is a requirement that at least 70 percent of the planted area within new landscaped areas and major landscape renovation projects be comprised of California native plants. The policy does not require departments to replace existing landscaping and includes exemptions for recreational use areas and functional turf. Native plants generally require less water, fewer soil amendments, reduced reliance on pesticides, and less intensive maintenance once established, while supporting local biodiversity and climate resilience.

To support successful implementation, the policy includes provisions related to contractor qualifications and staff training. Landscape contractors will be required to demonstrate experience or training in native landscape installation and maintenance, and departments will be required to ensure that staff responsible for landscape management have the knowledge and skills needed to successfully establish and maintain native landscapes.

The policy's artificial turf provisions remain largely consistent with the current policy. Artificial turf will continue to be allowed for athletic fields. Departments that maintain artificial turf will be required to inventory existing installations and report annually on their location, use, condition, and any planned replacement or conversion activities to improve transparency and support informed decision-making.

Additional updates address invasive species management, tree selection consistent with the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP), integrated pest management, nonfunctional turf, and other sustainable landscaping practices that support the goals of the OurCounty Sustainability Plan.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended action supports North Star 2, Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities, by advancing water conservation, biodiversity, climate resilience, sustainable landscape management, and implementation of the OurCounty Plan. The recommended action further advances North Star 3, Realize Tomorrow's Government Today, through implementation of Countywide policies and practices that strengthen sustainability efforts and improve management of County facilities and assets.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

There is no immediate direct impact to the County General Fund associated with approval of the revised policy. Because many of the policy's requirements apply to new landscaped areas, major landscape renovations, future contracts, and planned facility improvements, implementation will occur incrementally over time as opportunities arise.

Future implementation costs would be evaluated by departments and may be incorporated into future budget requests through the County's annual budget process.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposed action updates an existing Board policy governing water conservation and sustainable landscaping practices at County facilities. The policy establishes administrative requirements and guidance for County departments and does not authorize or approve any specific construction project or physical activity.

The proposed action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it involves administrative activities that will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Adoption of the revised policy will provide updated Countywide direction regarding water conservation, sustainable landscaping, biodiversity, and native plant use at County facilities. The policy will guide future landscaping, maintenance, and facility

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management decisions while supporting implementation of Board direction and the OurCounty Plan.

CONCLUSION

Please return one adopted copy of this letter to the Chief Sustainability Office.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward Yen".

EDWARD YEN
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

EY:RK:CL:jg

Enclosure



Los Angeles County BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY MANUAL

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
3.047	Board Policy on Water Conservation and Sustainable Landscaping	08/30/2026

PURPOSE

To establish a water conservation and sustainable landscaping policy for County departments to ensure efficient water use while promoting biodiversity and long-term ecological stewardship through the integration of California native plants into County-managed landscaping. This is in alignment with the County's adopted sustainability goals. This policy establishes standards for water use and landscaping practices in managed landscapes associated with County facilities, with a focus on reducing water demand and supporting biodiversity through native and climate-appropriate planting.

County departments shall also implement this policy in a manner that supports compliance with the Los Angeles Region Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. Landscape design, irrigation practices, maintenance activities, and plant selection shall be conducted to prevent non-stormwater discharges, minimize pollutant generation, and support stormwater infiltration, capture, and treatment, consistent with MS4 Permit requirements.

REFERENCE

March 1, 2022, [Board Order No. 60-B](#)

August 30, 2022, Board Order Nos. [19](#) and [29](#)

November 18, 2025, Board Order No. 17 - Board Motion by Supervisors Lindsey P. Horvath and Hilda L. Solis

DEFINITIONS

"Functional turf" means a ground cover surface of turf located in a recreational use area, community space, or cemetery. Turf enclosed by fencing or other barriers to permanently preclude human access for recreation or assembly is not functional turf.

"Hydrozoning" means the landscaping practice of clustering plants with similar water use requirements into specific zones that can be irrigated accordingly in order to conserve irrigation water and promote plant health.

“Landscaped area” means a managed, planted outdoor area associated with a County facility that is designed, installed, or maintained for aesthetic, access, circulation, or functional purposes. Landscaped areas may include lawns, planting beds, medians, courtyards, parkways, facility grounds, and similar managed planted areas. Landscaped areas do not include unplanted areas, spaces between airport runways, or lands that are primarily managed as natural open space, habitat, conservation areas, or ecosystem restoration projects.

“Local Tribal Governments” means sovereign tribal bodies with ancestral lands that intersect with the County’s present-day boundaries, primarily representing five tribal affiliations – Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash. *(Please note that these tribal affiliations are listed in reverse alphabetical order in alignment with the Countywide Land Acknowledgment and no additional significance is indicated.)*

“Low Impact Development (LID)” means design practices that manage stormwater through infiltration, evapotranspiration, bioretention, and onsite use, consistent with the MS4 Permit.

“MS4 Permit” means a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for municipalities, counties, and public entities that operate municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) to manage stormwater runoff.

“Native plant” means any plant species indigenous to the Los Angeles area existing before European settlement, as identified in James Hendrickson’s The Jepson Manual, or its successor standard reference.

“New landscaped area” means a discrete and contiguous landscaped area that will be newly constructed, fully renovated, or substantially replanted in a manner that materially alters the composition, layout, or irrigation design of the area. Routine maintenance activities such as replacement of individual plants, minor infill planting, repair of irrigation components, or similar incidental work do not constitute new landscaped areas.

“Nonfunctional turf” means any turf that is not functional turf, and includes turf located within street rights-of-way and parking lots.

“Recreational use area” means an area designated by a property owner or a governmental agency to accommodate human foot traffic for recreation, including, but not limited to, sports fields, golf courses, playgrounds, picnic grounds, arboretums, historical landscapes, or pet exercise areas. This recreation may be either formal or informal, and either active or passive.

“Stormwater Capture Feature” means landscaped or constructed element such as bioswales, infiltration basins, amended soils, micro-basins, or permeable surfaces designed to retain, detain, infiltrate, or treat stormwater.

POLICY

The County of Los Angeles shall prohibit wasteful water use at all County facilities, and ensure that landscape design, installation, and maintenance practices support water conservation and biodiversity. This policy applies to landscaped areas associated with County facilities and does not apply to natural open space, habitat conservation areas, or ecological restoration sites. This policy applies to owned County facilities as well as leased facilities and easements where the County has decision-making authority.

All County departments will adhere to the following requirements regarding water use at County facilities. For the purposes of requirements that apply to new or replacement activities and projects, a project that has not yet started the design development phase at adoption of this policy is mandated to incorporate the following requirements:

1. No County Department shall use a water hose to wash any paved surfaces, including, but not limited to, sidewalks, walkways, driveways and parking areas, except as necessary to alleviate safety or sanitation hazards. This section shall not apply to water-conserving spray cleaning devices. The use of water-pressure devices for the purpose of graffiti removal or sanitation hazards is exempt from this prohibition. A simple spray nozzle does not qualify as a water-conserving spray cleaning device.
2. No County Department shall use water to clean, fill, or maintain levels in decorative fountains, ponds, lakes or similar structures which are used solely for aesthetic purposes, unless such water is part of a recirculating system. Water features such as lakes, ponds, and splash pads that provide recreational, cooling, -or habitat benefits are exempt from this prohibition.
3. No County Department shall permit water to leak from any pipe or fixture within the Department's facilities or anywhere on its premises. Any such leaks shall be addressed as soon as feasible, and no later than 48 hours after discovery. All County Departments shall also correct any irrigation overspray or runoff as soon as feasible, but no later than within 72 hours of discovery or notification, consistent with MS4 illicit discharge response times.
4. No County Department shall wash a vehicle with a hose if the hose does not have a self-closing water shut-off or similar device attached to it, or otherwise allow a hose to run continuously while washing a vehicle.
5. New or replacement cooling systems at County facilities are required to meet current Title 24 building codes as they relate to water cooled condenser efficiency. County departments will prioritize updating water based cooling tower systems and treatment to maximize water and energy conservation.
6. Pool covers must be used on outdoor County pool facilities when not in use, except during times when the use of a pool cover may create a safety hazard, such as days with high winds or other hazardous conditions. Pool covers that are lost due to theft or vandalism should be prioritized for replacement based on funding availability.
7. No County Department shall use water in a manner that causes or allows excess or continuous water flow or runoff onto an adjoining sidewalk, driveway, street, gutter, ditch, or the storm drain system, consistent with MS4 Permit prohibitions on non-stormwater discharge.
8. Incorporate rainwater harvesting and explore potential onsite reuse of water to maximize potable water savings where feasible and appropriate.
9. Irrigation of landscaped or other vegetated areas shall be conducted in a manner that maximizes water efficiency and supports plant health. Departments shall use irrigation schedules and methods that are appropriate to site conditions, plant types, soil characteristics, and local climate conditions, including variation in

temperature and evapotranspiration rates across the County. The following policies will apply to irrigation systems used at all County facilities:

- a. No County Department shall irrigate their premises during periods of rainfall and/or within 48 hours after a measurable rain event of at least one fourth (1/4) of one (1) inch of rain.
- b. No County Department shall water or irrigate landscaping or other vegetated areas between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. During these hours, golf course greens and tees, sports fields, and parks may be irrigated in order to accommodate event schedules. Supervised testing or repairing of irrigation systems is allowed any time. Exceptions to these time limitations include:
 - i. Watering during high heat days for the purpose of preventing loss of vegetation; and
 - ii. Instances when watering must be done manually during normal staff hours, for instance, as a result of automated irrigation systems being out of service.
- c. County facilities shall not water non-functional turf grass. Turf block installed to comply with low impact development (LID) standards or emergency vehicle access needs may be granted an exemption. Exemptions must be approved by the subject department in consultation with the Chief Sustainability Officer.
- d. All new static spray irrigation equipment must be WaterSense certified or equivalent. Operation of existing static spray irrigation systems, as well as other new overhead irrigation systems such as those using rotary heads, must comply with other requirements in this Policy.
- e. All irrigation systems must have smart controllers including rain sensors that shut off the systems.
- f. New or replacement irrigation systems must allow for hydrozoning and separate watering of trees.
- g. All irrigation system designs for new or renovated landscaped areas shall support infiltration and minimize runoff by directing flows to vegetated or LID-compatible areas.
- h. All irrigation of landscaped or other vegetated areas using static spray head sprinklers and bubblers shall be limited to no more than ten (10) minutes per watering day per station. All irrigation of landscaped or other vegetated areas using standard rotors and multi-stream rotary heads shall be limited to no more than fifteen (15) minutes per cycle and up to two (2) cycles per watering day per station. The Department or designee may modify irrigation durations, frequencies, and schedules based on site-specific conditions, operational needs, weather patterns, system performance, and plant requirements. However, all watering schedules should be limited to the minimum necessary to maintain plant health. Exempt from these irrigation restrictions are:
 - i. Irrigation systems using very low-flow drip-type irrigation when no emitter produces more than four (4) gallons of water per hour and micro-sprinklers using less than fourteen (14) gallons per hour;
 - ii. Establishment watering for newly planted landscaping (typically up to

one year);

- iii. Trees, which may require deep watering at longer intervals to support root development and long-term health; and
- iv. Periods of extreme heat, drought stress, or other conditions where additional irrigation is necessary to prevent loss of vegetation or to protect public safety.

The following policies support the use of native plants at County facilities and associated contracting and staff training requirements. These policies will apply to new landscaped areas and associated contracts and staff at County facilities, with the exception of recreational use areas and functional turf areas.

1. At least 70% of the planted area at all new landscaped areas must be made up of native plants, and using 100% native plants is encouraged. Any plants that are not native plants must be climate appropriate.
2. Native plant landscapes shall be maintained with California native plant best management practices.
 - a. The requirement that at least 70% of the planted landscape area be native should be measured by the proportion of the total vegetated landscaped area covered by native plants at anticipated mature size, excluding tree canopy coverage areas.
 - b. Where meeting the 70% native plant requirement is infeasible, departments may request an exemption and use alternative climate-appropriate species, provided that the rationale is documented. Exemptions must be approved by the subject department and the Chief Sustainability Officer.
3. Contracts must meet the following requirements when California native landscapes are installed at County facilities.
 - a. New, renewed, or amended landscape design, management, and maintenance contracts shall include requirements that contractors have a demonstrated ability to install, establish, and maintain California native plant landscapes. This can include demonstrating staff completion of regionally recognized training in California native plant landscaping practices or documented experience maintaining successful California native landscapes.
 - b. New, renewed, or amended landscaping and landscape management contracts shall include requirements that contractors procure plants, including native plants, from nurseries that are local to LA County whenever feasible.
4. Within 2 years of the adoption of this policy, County departments must ensure that facilities management staff who work directly with landscape management, including through landscape management, installation, establishment, and maintenance, have the ability to maintain California native plant landscapes. This can be through staff training or through documented experience maintaining

successful California native landscapes.

The following policies will apply to the use of artificial turf at County facilities:

1. County facilities may not use artificial turf on outdoor areas except as provided in this section.
2. Departments that maintain any facilities that include artificial turf, including but not limited to sports fields, shall inventory all artificial turf installations within one year of adoption of this policy and maintain updated records thereafter. For each artificial turf installation in its inventory, each Department shall also document and evaluate how the installation aligns with the considerations in this policy, below, as well as any other relevant considerations. If the evaluation does not demonstrate that artificial turf is the best alternative in each case, Departments shall develop and maintain a plan to phase out such artificial turf at the end of its useful life or sooner where feasible. Departments shall report their artificial turf inventory and any associated phase-out plans annually to the Chief Sustainability Officer, or affirm if there have been no changes. In-kind replacement of artificial turf that does not meet the considerations of this policy is prohibited and shall not occur unless an exemption is approved by the Chief Sustainability Officer as described below.
3. Departments may request an exemption to use artificial turf. Exemptions must be approved by the Chief Sustainability Officer. Artificial turf used for sports fields is allowable and is not subject to case-by-case exemption under this subsection, but shall be included in the annual inventory and reporting requirements described above. To request an exemption, at a minimum, departments shall evaluate:
 - a. Lifecycle cost of artificial versus natural turf
 - b. Material selection to avoid release of materials and chemicals that may impact environmental and human health.
 - c. Strategies to reduce surface and radiative heat
 - d. Design to mitigate adverse impacts to stormwater designs, systems, or the ability to conduct proper stormwater management, and
 - e. Plans for end-of-life disposal

The following policies will apply to landscaped areas at County facilities:

1. Tree species should be selected in alignment with the Los Angeles County Recommended Tree Species list from the Community Forest Management Plan. Where appropriate and feasible, preference shall be given to locally native tree species. No trees should be planted that are on the “Do Not Plant” list from the Community Forest Management Plan.
2. Plants that are rated as “high,” “moderate,” or “watch” for Los Angeles County or similar climates by the California Invasive Pest Council (Cal-IPC) shall not be planted in County facilities.
3. County facilities may not install new nonfunctional turf.

4. Landscape design shall support County goals related to urban heat island reduction, climate resilience, and stormwater management, consistent with applicable County plans and standards, and shall be consistent with the MS4 Permit requirements for stormwater infiltration, volume reduction, and hydromodification management. County departments shall not reduce landscaped areas or convert vegetated areas to hardscape or other non-vegetated surfaces for the purpose of avoiding or minimizing compliance with water conservation and biodiversity provisions in this policy. Departments shall:
 - a. Avoid net loss of vegetated landscaped area in new or renovated landscaped areas where feasible.
 - b. Maintain or increase tree canopy coverage where feasible.
 - c. Use permeable and vegetated surfaces, including but not limited to planted areas, bioswales, and other green infrastructure, in place of impervious hardscape where feasible.
 - d. Evaluate feasibility for all new landscaped areas to incorporate stormwater capture features, including bioswales, rain gardens, soil-amended infiltration zones, and micro-basins.
 - e. Identify opportunities for integrating LID or stormwater capture components consistent with watershed management strategies.
 - f. Design grading to promote sheet flow into vegetated areas and avoid concentration of flows toward impervious surfaces or storm drain inlets.
5. No County department shall apply herbicides or pesticides except in accordance with the County's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program requirements as set forth at <https://ipm.lacounty.gov/> and in a manner that prevents pollutant discharges to the storm drain system, consistent with MS4 Permit requirements. IPM requires that pest prevention, pest and symptom identification, and regular pest surveys take place before management methods are applied, and that management methods adhere to action thresholds and guidelines. Sound management methods include integrated biological, chemical, cultural, and physical/mechanical management tools.
6. No County departments shall apply pesticides prior to forecasted rain events or when irrigation runoff is possible, consistent with MS4 Permit requirements for pollutant source control.
7. First and second generation anticoagulant rodenticides shall not be used at any County facilities.
8. County department shall consider opportunities for collaboration with Local Tribal Governments and other Indigenous partners.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Chief Sustainability Office (Board of Supervisors, Executive Office)
Agriculture Commissioner/Weights and Measures
Animal Care and Control
Beaches & Harbors
Chief Executive Office
Children and Family Services
Consumer Affairs
Economic Opportunity
Fire
Health Services
Internal Services
Mental Health
Military & Veterans Affairs
Parks & Recreation
Public Health
Public Library
Public Social Services
Public Works
Regional Planning
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Sheriff
Treasurer and Tax Collector

DATE ISSUED/SUNSET DATE

Issue Date: August 30, 2022
Issue Date: August 30, 2026

Sunset Date: August 30, 2026
Sunset Date: August 30, 2030