

Planter Strip Policy

An encroachment permit and a simple site plan in compliance with the requirements below will be required from homeowners wishing to modify the landscape planter strip (LPS) between sidewalk and curb and gutter. Deviations from the requirements below (such as alternative plantings) will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Community Development staff (Planning and Engineering) prior to issuance of the encroachment permit. It is anticipated that most encroachment permits would fall under the minimum permit of a deposit equal to the job value within the LPS, and a fee corresponding to the value of the work (currently \$103.20 for job values less than or equal to \$650), but the deposit and subsequent fee may be higher based on the extent of the alterations, existing right-of-way (R/W) improvements that might be damaged, etc.

Parameters/Requirements:

General Requirements:

- Modifications to the LPS shall not block existing drainage patterns or sight visibility lines.
- City improvements shall not be damaged by modifications to the LPS.
- Alteration of the LPS shall not generate trip hazards.
- The LPS shall not be used as a driveway.
- No gravel less than ½" diameter; no pebbles, boulders, or decomposed granite (DG) shall be placed in the LPS.
- No decorative landscape art i.e. fountains, statues, etc. shall be placed in the LPS.
- Artificial turf, if used, must be permeable.
- No raised planter beds will be allowed.
- Alterations to the LPS must comply with the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) (Chapter 13.10 of the City of West Sacramento Municipal Code) and the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements to the extent that the alteration work triggers those requirements.
- Hardscape must be well-maintained and free from trip hazards and other unsafe conditions.
- Plant materials must be maintained in a healthy, neat, and attractive appearance per general landscaping industry standards.
- Irrigation maintained by the property owner/applicant must be well-maintained per general landscaping industry standards. City-maintained irrigation within the LPS must not be damaged or altered.

Note: Placement of hardscape in the LPS does not constitute ownership of a private parking space in the public right-of-way.

Hardscape must comply with the following:

- General hardscape requirements:
 - Hardscape shall be a minimum distance of 5' from tree trunks. (Allows space for City maintenance of the street trees.)
 - Hardscape shall not be allowed over sewer or water services. (Allows space for City maintenance of the sewer and water services.)
 - Horizontal and vertical gaps between hardscape and sidewalk and curb shall be ¼" maximum. (Ensures no trip hazards due to elevation differences.)
 - Hardscape shall not be used as a means to drive over the LPS.
- Impervious hardscape:
 - Impervious hardscape includes cobbles or concrete, and other impervious surfaces as approved by staff.

- Each lot shall have no more than one impervious hardscape area 3' wide as measured parallel to the street. Exceptions may be made for corner lots or lots with frontage >100'. (Most single family lots are designed to drain towards the LPS. Impervious hardscape does not allow for drainage to penetrate. Additionally, breaking up the hardscape area can discourage use of the LPS as a driveway.)
 - There must be a minimum 3' wide landscape area on either side of the hardscape. (These areas will allow drainage to penetrate, and again, this requirements can discourage illegal driveway widening and use of the LPS as a driveway.)
- Pervious Hardscape:
 - Pervious hardscape includes stepping stones, pavers, pervious concrete, turf blocks, and other pervious surfaces as approved by staff. UngROUTED cobbles will not be allowed.
 - Pervious hardscape coverage shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, the entire LPS shall not be covered with hardscape, nor shall the purpose of the hardscape be for driving over the LPS.

Plant Materials and Irrigation must comply with the following:

- Non-invasive species shall be used.
- Shrubs, if used, shall be dwarf variety.
- Plant materials shall not be thorny.
- A Plant List of suggested plants is attached; plants not on the attached Plant List will be considered on a case-by-case basis during site plan review
- Water requirements for proposed plant materials must be lower than current turf requirements and compatible with site conditions, i.e. soil type drainage, etc.
- Bark/mulch, if used, must be "walk-on" nuggets or cocoa mat.
- Loose cocoa mulch (from cocoa husks), and recycled, synthetic mulch is not allowed.
- Tree removal in the LPS will not be permitted. (Trees in the LPS are City-maintained.)
- Installation of trees in the LPS will not be permitted.
- Plants shall be kept a minimum of 2' away from existing trees.
- Plant materials shall be maintained at a maximum height of 2' within the boundaries of the LPS area, i.e. plants may not stick out into or block the sidewalk or roadway area.
- Irrigation maintained by the property owner/applicant shall be retrofitted as necessary to meet the needs of the new design, such as bubblers/emitters; multi-stream, multi-trajectory low flow heads; or other point source irrigation. Subsurface drip systems will not be allowed in the LPS. (Drip systems are specifically prohibited in City R/W per the City's WELO.)
- The City owns and maintains irrigation within the LPS in a few areas. City-owned irrigation shall not be modified by the property owner/applicant.

The initial Plant List has been selected from the list of water-saving plants on the Regional Water Authority (RWA) website. The RWA is a joint powers authority of over 20 water providers in the greater Sacramento region, whose members work together to conserve the area's precious water resources. As a member, the City and its residents have access to a wealth of information compiled by the organization, including a searchable list of water-saving plants chosen for the Sacramento climate, which can be accessed here: <http://www.rwa.watersavingplants.com/plants.php>.

The attached plant list complies with our recommendations above, and were chosen from the searchable categories of Ornamental Grasses, Lawn Substitutes, Drought Tolerant and California Native Plants.

Another suggested source for plant material is:

UC Davis Arboretum All-Stars: http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx

This list is primarily California Natives which may or may not be widely available at local home and garden sources such as Home Depot or Lowe's. However, the website lists several nurseries which carry the plants listed.