

Landscape Transformation Guidelines

for Commercial Turf Removal Applicants

The Landscape Transformation Program is designed to promote water efficient and sustainable landscapes. The Program aims to combine elements of turf removal, irrigation conversion, and water retention or filtration to support reuse or soil absorption of rainwater.

The Landscape Transformation Program takes a multi-pronged approach to maximize water utilization and conservation. Removing turf grass is one of the most water conscious adjustments a business or institution can make to reduce their water usage and associated costs. Converting irrigation systems to drip or installing high efficiency sprinkler fittings ensures that water used is only exactly what is needed. Finally, the addition of a sustainable approach in the new landscape plan acts to reduce or prevent wasteful runoff through the use of a rainwater capture or filtration system.

Program Requirements

- Project must have a minimum of 250 square feet of turf to be removed; or if the entire turf area is less than 250 square feet, all turf must be removed.
- A maximum of 10,000 square feet of turf are eligible per meter; projects larger than 10,000 square feet must receive approval from the Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD) Board of Directors to receive funding.
- Applicants must provide a landscape design plan showing intended transformation and 4 to 6 pictures of the turf area at the time of application. Photos of project area must reflect the current turf grass area at the time of applying. Google Earth/satellite images will not be accepted in place of photos. Photos must be taken at appropriate angles, with visible points of reference, and at a sufficient distance to allow for review
- Completed project area must be covered by at least five (5) plants per 100 square feet
 - (ex. 1,000 sq ft of project area must have 50 plants planted in the ground).
- The converted area must be designed to capture rainfall through infiltration or on-site storage for reuse (see Design Requirements below for more details). Selected method should allow infiltration or capture of rainfall/runoff and not channel to impervious surfaces and must meet all local and regional requirements.
- Artificial turf is permitted to be installed under the MNWD program. Artificial turf must be certified lead-free and manufactured in the USA.
- Landscape designs must have an average plant factor of 0.3 or less and may include moderate, low, or very low water use plants as specified by the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) list available at <http://ucanr.edu/sites/WUCOLS/>.
- Applicant must consent to an on-site pre-inspection to confirm project measurement and verify the presence of turf grass. Additionally, applicant must consent to an on-site post-inspection to confirm the removal and replacement of turf and to perform and final measurement.

Design Requirements

The Landscape Transformation Program requires the inclusion of a rainwater capture or filtration system integrated into the landscape project. This sustainable approach integrated into the overall landscape design serves to reduce rainwater runoff onto sidewalks and streets and capture rainwater for reuse. The following are details of some eligible methods to meet this participation requirement.

Design Feature	Description
Dry River Beds	A dry river bed or dry stream is an area designed to slow heavy flows from rainfall and correct erosion problems. It is made up of a shallow swale lined with stone substantial enough to withstand a serious downpour. Large chunks of stone are used to slow the speed of storm water and to prevent erosion. In a garden, the careful placement of water-worn stone, or river slicks, along a swale is aesthetically pleasing and also provides an ideal place for plants. The swale is fed by an underground pipe that is fed by a catchment.
Rain Barrels or Cisterns	Rain barrels and cisterns are storage tanks that capture runoff water from a catchment area such as a rooftop. Cisterns are essentially large-scale rain barrels. To qualify, rain barrels and cisterns must be connected to properly installed rain gutters and downspouts that run throughout the entire perimeter of the roof for adequate water collection and also existing downspouts. Rain barrels and cisterns must be properly installed and meet all local and regional requirements. Existing rain barrels and cisterns qualify provided they have been properly installed.
Rain Garden	A rain garden is a planted depression or a hole that allows rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas, like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas, the opportunity to be absorbed. This reduces rain runoff by allowing storm water to soak into the ground (as opposed to flowing into storm drains and surface waters which causes erosion, water pollution, flooding, and diminished groundwater).
Grades	Grades are surface grading of an area so that water collects and flows to a lower elevation away from the site. Regardless of surface characteristics, when it comes to surface drainage, slope is the most important issue to consider. For efficient drainage, paved surfaces should have a minimum 1% slope. Turf or landscaped areas should have a minimum slope of 2%.
Berms	Berms are mounds of earth with sloping sides that are located between areas of approximately the same elevation. Berms are constructed to direct or redirect drainage in order to keep water from flowing off the property.
Swales	Swales are shallow ditches that have gently sloping sides. A swale relies on gravity to move water and is designed to direct the water where you want it to go, such as flower or vegetable gardens, to limit runoff and to trap silt and pollutants in surface runoff.
Rock Gardens	A rock garden is a garden laid out among rocks or decorated with rocks and adapted for growth of particular kinds of plants. It is a garden in which plants grow between rocks.

Other design requirements include:

- Three inches of mulch must surround all plants. Mulch/rock/decomposed granite must cover any bare spaces within project area (No bare soil allowed). The use of organic materials is recommended.
- Irrigation modification or conversion is required for ALL projects. Over-head spray irrigation must be converted to Drip, micro-spray, bubblers, low precipitation spray heads, or rotating nozzles, whichever is applicable; or cap sprinkler heads or remove irrigation equipment.
- No plants that appear to be turf are allowed.
- Areas which have already been converted are not eligible.
- Turf removal participants are responsible for complying with all applicable laws, codes, policies, covenants, conditions and restrictions.