

City of Los Angeles

Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa

RESIDENTIAL PARKWAY LANDSCAPING GUIDELINE



RESIDENTIAL PARKWAY LANDSCAPING GUIDELINE



This document is intended to provide constituents with guidelines regarding the installation of landscape improvements within the part of the street right-of-way commonly referred to as a parkway. For the purposes of this document, the term "parkway" is defined as the area of the street between the back of curb and the sidewalk that is typically planted or landscaped. These guidelines primarily apply to parkway areas found on streets servicing single family homes and/or low density multi-family residential housing.

I. Standard Parkway Planting Material(s)

No Permit Required: The accepted standard parkway planting material (other than street trees) is turf (grass) and/or drought tolerant, turf-substitute groundcover plants that provide the same desirable characteristics as turf. Because they are an accepted standard, no permit is required when turf or drought tolerant turf-substitutes are used to plant a parkway. Turf and drought tolerant turf-substitutes provide an obstruction free pedestrian passage between the street and sidewalk, a commonly accepted walking surface, tolerates foot traffic, and maintains an open line of sight between the street and abutting property, hence their acceptance as the standard parkway planting materials. When turf is used, a drought tolerant species should be selected to minimize water usage. A brief representative list of drought tolerant turf species and turf-substitute groundcovers is attached to this document. This list of acceptable standard parkway plant materials is not finite and subject to future revision as appropriate.

II. Non-Standard Parkway Landscape Improvements

"A", "B" and/or Revocable Permit Required:

Permits are required for all other non-standard plant materials or landscape improvements besides turf and drought tolerant turf substitutes. Such materials may be installed within the parkway as long as the resident, tenant, or property owner of the abutting property obtains an appropriate permit issued by the Department of Public Works. Permits for non-standard parkway landscape improvements may be obtained by visiting the Department of Public Works-Bureau of Engineering permit counters at the following locations:

- 1) **Central District Office** - 201 N. Figueroa St., 3rd Floor, LA 90012, Phone (213) 482-7030
- 2) **Harbor District Office** - 638 S. Beacon St. Suite 402, San Pedro 90731, Phone (310) 732-4677
- 3) **Valley District Office** - 6262 Van Nuys Blvd, Rm 251, Van Nuys 91401, Phone (818) 374-5090
- 4) **West LA District Office** - 1828 Sawtelle Blvd., 3rd Fl., West LA 90025, Phone (310) 575-8384

The minimum cost of an A-Permit will be approximately \$400.00, and an A-Permit would likely be issued for the simple installation of non-standard planting materials. Additional fees assigned to higher level permits such as a B-Permit may be required depending on the complexity of the proposed improvements and size of the proposed construction or installation. Department permit counter staff can preview all non-standard parkway landscape improvement proposals and determine the appropriate permit(s) and fee(s) that might be required. Residents can then make an informed decision whether to proceed with a non-standard installation or not.

Many non-standard or alternative parkway landscape improvements such as decorative paving, non-vegetative ground-cover, continuously pressurized irrigation lines/systems, or storm-water capture systems will also require a Revocable Permit (R-Permit) in addition to either an A or B-Permit. Additional requirements of the R-Permit include a waiver of damages (recorded with the County of Los Angeles), proof of liability insurance (provided annually to the City Administrative Officer) and approval of all colors and materials proposed to be installed. The minimum cost of the R-Permit is approximately \$540.00, however, additional fees may be required depending on the complexity of the design and size of the proposed installation.

As a part of the permit process, drawings, sketches, plans, or other satisfactory written material that indicates the types of parkway landscape materials to be used, their quantities, and describes how and where they will be applied will be required. While being desirable from a permitting perspective, the submittal of professionally prepared drawings or plans is not mandatory for all residential parkway installations. Permit counter staff will determine whether or not professionally prepared drawings, plans, or engineering/design documents might be required on a case by case basis.

III. Alternative Non-standard Parkway Landscape Improvements

A. Non Standard Plant Materials: If the proposed parkway landscape improvements consist of strictly non-standard parkway plant materials or a combination of standard and non-standard parkway plant materials, only an A-Permit will be required to allow their installation. Non-standard parkway planting materials installed in combination with any other alternative parkway improvement will require the issuance of a Revocable Permit in

(Dymondia margaretae)



combination with either an A or B-Permit.

Non-standard plant materials installed within parkway areas must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Plant materials must be drought tol-

erant or drought resistant

- 2) Plant materials must be lower than 36" in height at full maturity
- 3) Plant materials should aesthetically match the context and character of the neighborhood and surrounding properties
- 4) Plant materials must not be noxious or invasive
- 5) Plant materials should not have exposed, rigid spines or thorns. Exceptions to this requirement may be made by City staff



on a case by case basis.

- 6) Plant materials must not form a continuous hedge or screen at full maturity
- 7) Plant materials installed within the 45' visibility triangle at street intersections should not exceed 24" in height at full maturity. (see Muni. Code -Chapter 6, Article 2, Sec. 62.200)
- 8) Plant materials installed within five feet (5') of a driveway or walkway should similarly not exceed 24" in height at full maturity (for visibility purposes).
- 9) Low growing, groundcover types of plant materials are highly recommended and encouraged when non-standard plantings are installed in parkway areas; shrubs and other plant materials that form solid, raised masses are discouraged and not recommended for use in parkways.

B. Non-Vegetative Groundcover or Paving materials: Non-vegetative groundcovers or paving materials may be installed in the parkway with the issuance of an A or B-Permit and a Revocable Permit issued by the Department of Public Works. Non-vegetative groundcover materials include items such as mulch, bark chips, decomposed granite, artificial turf, pavers, or cement concrete (both standard and/or colored and stamped concrete). Alternative (non-vegetative) groundcover materials installed within parkway areas must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Alternative, paving materials must comply with all of the requirements and criteria as shown in the Department of Public Works, Standard Plan S-601-(latest edition)
- 2) Alternative paving materials must be placed so that the finished surface is in plane with the abutting sidewalk and curb surfaces
- 3) Alternative groundcovers such as mulch, bark, or decomposed granite that are typically loosely placed, shall not be used in parkway areas with a slope greater than 6% in any direction (3/8" of fall per each foot horizontally) .
- 4) Alternative groundcover materials consisting of loosely placed gravel, crushed rock, decorative rock or stone shall not be used or

permitted for installation in parkway areas, unless used as a component of a storm water capture system.

5) Cobblestone paving or any other alternative groundcover material that does not provide a uniform, reasonably walk-able surface is discouraged and will normally not be permitted for installation in parkway areas. When and if permitted, cobblestone or similar paving materials must be set within a cement concrete matrix in a manner that will permanently affix the materials to the parkway area.

C. Convenience Strip: Whenever non-standard plant material or non-vegetative groundcover is installed within the parkway area, a minimum 18" wide alighting convenience strip shall be required adjacent and parallel to the back of curb along the entire length of the improved parkway to allow ingress and egress for occupants of vehicles parked along the curb. The convenience strip can be either paved, planted with low growing drought tolerant turf substitutes, or drought tolerant turf. In all cases, the convenience strip shall form a commonly accepted walking surface and its finished surface and/or grade shall be flush with the top of curb.

Convenience strips will typically require the issuance of both a construction permit (A or B) and a Revocable Permit.



(Parkway with a convenience strip)

D. House Walk: If the uninterrupted length of the improved parkway is in excess of fifty feet (50') in length excluding driveways, a "house walk" or paved walkway across the improved parkway from the street to the sidewalk may be required. The recommended minimum width of a house walk is 48". Additional house walks may be recommended or required depending upon the overall uninterrupted length of the improved parkway. House walks across landscaped parkways will typically require the issuance of both a construction permit (A or B) and a Revocable Permit.

E. Parkway Irrigation Systems: A permit is not normally required for irrigation systems installed in residential parkway areas provided there are no continuously pressurized (main) lines or valves of any sort installed within the public right-of-way. Conversely, a permit will be required when/if irrigation valves or continuously pressurized irrigation lines are installed within the public right-of-way. When and where irrigation systems are employed, the City encourages the use of sub-surface drip irrigation or other low-flow water distribution system to minimize wasteful over-spray and over-watering. When and where spray head systems are used within the parkway, all spray heads shall be of the pop-up type, fully retractable to be flush with the adjacent surface when not in use, and placed no closer than 24" to any hard-paved, adjacent surface.

F. Parkway Storm-water Capture Systems: While still in its initial stages of implementing standards and guidelines specific to these systems, the City encourages constituents to consider utilizing parkway areas to capture storm water run-off when and where possible and appropriate. Storm-water capture systems typically treat/clean storm water biologically prior to its continuance into the storm drain systems. They also may help storm water infiltrate into the sub-grade, thereby reducing or minimizing storm-water run-off. These types of parkway improvements will require permits issued by the Department of Public Works, and each installation will be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis. Parkway areas will generally be used/reserved to capture and/or treat storm water run-off from the street right-of-way as opposed to storm-water run-off generated from an abut-

generated from an abutting property. Certain types of drought tolerant or native plant materials may not be appropriate for storm-water capture systems, especially in areas intentionally subjected to periodic flooding. In such cases, requirements for drought tolerant or drought resistant plant materials may be relaxed to help constituents maximize the effectiveness of any storm-water capture system.

IV. Maintenance of Parkway Installations:

All parkway installations shall be maintained in good repair and on grade by the owner and shall be subject to Chapter 6, Section 62.104 of the Municipal Code.

A. Parkway plant materials shall be kept in a neat, trimmed manner adjacent to paved surfaces at all times and shall not obstruct or infringe upon sidewalk areas, driveways, walkways, or curb areas. Parkway plant materials shall be replaced or replenished as required, and the planted parkways shall be kept free of unwanted weeds and debris.

B. Parkway alternative ground cover materials and non-standard pavers shall be maintained in good repair and on grade flush with the adjacent sidewalk and/or curb to minimize slipping and tripping hazards. Materials such as mulch or decomposed granite shall be maintained so that materials are kept off of the adjacent street, sidewalks, walkways, and driveways. Mulch, decomposed granite, or other permitted alternative ground cover materials shall be replenished as required to maintain a finished grade that is in plane with the adjacent curb or sidewalk.

C. Parkway irrigation systems including spray heads, drip lines, risers, and lateral lines shall be maintained in good repair and be kept free of leaks or other anomalies that prevent the system from operating at peak efficiency.

D. Parkway storm-water capture systems shall be maintained to ensure the systems work properly and effectively. This includes the removal of trash and debris that might collect within the system, as well as the periodic replacement or refurbishment of soils, filter media, moisture barriers, pipes, plant materials and other elements that collectively make-up the storm-water capture system.

V. Enforcement: When parkway areas are found to be out of compliance with the various codes and ordinances affecting parkway development and the parkway improvements are not properly permitted, the City will employ a progressive enforcement process to ensure the improvements are either properly permitted or returned to a condition that complies with said codes and ordinances. The enforcement process initially begins with verbal and/or written notifications to the abutting property owner or occupant in an attempt to voluntarily achieve proper compliance. Further enforcement activities may include citations, fines, public hearings before the Board of Public Works, and eventually mechanical liens against the title of the property. In cases where the parkway improvements are deemed a nuisance or safety hazard to the public, the City reserves the right to remove the offending improvements and restore the parkway area using City forces. The abutting property owner shall be responsible for the reimbursement of all costs incurred by the City to properly restore parkway areas fronting his/her property.



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Drought Tolerant Turf Species

Scientific name	Common name	Reference photo	Water needs:	Height x spread	Notes
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> 'Hachita'	Hachita Blue Grama		L/VL	4"	More vigorous than other <i>Bouteloua</i> species. Good in sandy or clay soil. Sold as plugs. Mow once a month to maintain uniform, consistent height.
<i>Buchloe dactyloides</i> 'UC Verde'	UC Verde Buffalograss		L/VL	3" mowed height	Warm season grass. Best along the coast or L.A. basin where it stays green all year; goes dormant inland for as long as October to March. Sold as plugs. Not good in sandy soil. Mow every 2 to 3 weeks to maintain uniform, consistent height.
<i>Carex pansa</i>	California Meadow Sedge		M/M	3"-4" mowed height	Cool season sedge, can go dormant in summer without regular summer water. Sold as plugs. Mow to maintain uniform, consistent height.
<i>Carex praegracilis</i>	Dune Sedge		M/M	3"-4" mowed height	Cool season sedge, can go dormant in summer without regular summer water. Sold as plugs. Mow to maintain uniform, consistent height.
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> 'GN-1'	Hybrid Bermuda		L/M	1/4" – 3/4"	Warm season grass; goes dormant during winter months. Tolerates high foot traffic. Drought tolerant; full sun. Grow from stolons, plugs, or sod. 'GN-1' requires less maintenance than 'Santa Ana' or 'Tifway' grasses.
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> 'Santa Ana'	Hybrid Bermuda		L/M	1/4" – 3/4"	Same as above (see 'GN-1' notes). More smog resistant, and shorter dormant period; holds color longer

VL-Very Low L- Low
M-Moderate



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Drought Tolerant Turf Species -2

Scientific name	Common name	Reference photo	Water needs:	Height x spread	Notes
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> 'Tifdwarf'	Hybrid Bermuda		L/M	1/4" – 3/4"	Same as above (see 'GN-1' notes). Slower to establish and spread than other Bermuda hybrids
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> 'Tifgreen'	Hybrid Bermuda		L/M	1/4" – 3/4"	Same as above (see 'GN-1' notes). Good tolerance to saline soils
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> 'Tifway 419'	Hybrid Bermuda		L/M	1/4" – 3/4"	Same as above (see 'GN-1' notes). Good tolerance to saline soils. Shorter dormant period; holds color longer
<i>Paspalum vaginatum</i> 'Sea Spray'	Sea Spray Paspalum		L-M/M	1/4" – 1 1/2" mowed height	Warm season grass. Prefers soils that have moderate to high salinity; great near the coast and perfect for reclaimed or grey water. Available from seed. Irrigate every 1 to 2 weeks with 1" water. Mow to maintain uniform height.



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Drought Tolerant Turf Substitute

Scientific name	Common name	reference photo	Water needs:	Height x spread	Notes
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Common Yarrow		M/L	Flowers to 3', leaves 3"	Mow every 2-6 weeks to maintain uniform height similar to lawn. There are many cultivars.
<i>Achillea tomentosa</i>	Woolly Yarrow		M/L	2" x 1 ½'	Grey, green woolly leaves. Yellow flat-topped flower heads to 6" – 10" tall. Must be mowed to remove flower stalks and maintain uniform height similar to lawn.
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	Chamomile		M/M	3"- 12"	The plant of herbal tea fame. Mow or shear to maintain uniform height similar to lawn. Plant 1' apart for good coverage.
<i>Duchesnea indica</i> (<i>Fragaria indica</i>)	Indian Mock Strawberry		M/M	3"- 4" X 12"	Can take more sun near the coast; must have partial shade in warm inland valleys. Bright yellow flowers and red, tasteless fruit. Needs regular moisture and well-drained soils. Mow in early spring to maintain uniform height.
<i>Dymondia margaretae</i>	Dymondia		M/L	1"- 3" X 1'-2'	Spreading perennial. Green leaves edged in silver, yellow flowers in summer. Slow growing. Needs well-drained soils and does better near the coast; okay for inland areas.

VL-Very Low

L- Low

M-Moderate



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Drought Tolerant Turf Substitute - 2

Scientific name	Common name	Reference photo	Water needs:	Height x spread	Notes
<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	Beach Strawberry		M/M	3"-8"	Produces small edible strawberries. Mow or cut back in late winter just before new growth to maintain uniform height. Best near coast. Not recommended for inland/valley areas
<i>Herniaria glabra</i>	Green Carpet, Rupture Wort		M/M	1"-3"	Spreads by rooting stems. Plant 1' apart for good coverage. Needs well-drained soil. Will take light traffic areas.
<i>Lotus corniculatus 'Plenus'</i>	Bird's Foot Trefoil		M/M	4" x 12"	Carpet of dark green three-leaved leaves. Yellow flowers in summer and fall. Can be mowed. Especially good in clay soil.
<i>Phyla nodiflora</i> (<i>Lippia repens</i> , <i>Lippia nodiflora</i>)	Lippia		M/L	2"	Ground-hugging perennial. Small pink flowers from spring to fall attract bees. Mow periodically to maintain uniform height and to remove flowers if bees are an issue.
<i>Thymus praecox arcticus</i>	Creeping Thyme		M/M	2"- 4" X 18"- 24"	Spreading perennial herb. Pink flowers. Scented leaves.

VL-Very Low

L- Low

M-Moderate



For more information:

City of Los Angeles/ Dept. Public Works
Bureau of Street Services/ Engineering Division

1-800-996-CITY(2489) or 311

TDD: (213) 473-6600

http://bss.lacity.org/Engineering_Division

1149 S. Broadway #400, Los Angeles, CA 90015



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TreePeople



North East Trees



City of Los Angeles - Green Streets Committee



L.A. DWP