

Town of Howey-in-the-Hills Water Conservation Plan

Irrigation Standards

In June 2020, the Town’s Land Development Code (LDC) was updated to include design standards consistent with the Florida Water StarSM program that require certification of irrigation system design and installation. The proposed changes were reviewed by Deirdre Irwin/SJRWMD before being incorporated into the LCDs. Applicable sections of the LCD are provided below.

7.04.00 LANDSCAPING

7.04.01 Florida Water Star Program/Florida Friendly Landscaping

- A. All required landscaping and irrigation shall be installed and maintained to be consistent with the water-efficient landscaping requirements established herein. Landowners are additionally encouraged to follow Waterwise Florida Landscapes, Florida Water Star Program, and Florida Irrigation Society Standards.
- B. Landscape plants shall be selected based on appropriateness to the site considering conditions such as soil type, moisture, and sunlight using the principal of “right plant – right place,” as described by the Florida Friendly Landscaping program. The plants shall be grouped and irrigated by hydrozone in accordance with their respective water needs. A list of appropriate plants and plant resources is contained in The Plant List for Lake County.
- C. Synthetic Lawns and Plants: Synthetic or artificial turf, trees and plants shall be prohibited from use in lieu of required live plantings.
- D. Limit irrigated lawn areas. Irrigation is not mandated by the Town. The use, type and location of irrigated lawn area in the landscape shall be selected in a planned manner and used as a fill-in material. Since most lawn varieties used in landscape require supplemental watering more frequently than other types of landscape plants, turf shall be placed so that it can be irrigated separately. The installation of turf grass shall be subject to the following:

- 1. Irrigated turf grasses may be installed on a maximum of sixty (60) percent of the pervious (landscape) area of any lot or parcel as follows:

TURF GRASS TABLE	
Site Size	Irrigated Turf Area
< 5 Acres	60% of the pervious landscaped areas
5 to 10 Acres	60% of the pervious landscaped area, not to exceed 5 acres, whichever is less.
>10 acres	60% of the pervious landscaped area, not to exceed 10 acres, whichever is less

- 2. Exemptions:
 - (a) Unirrigated turf having an excellent drought tolerance rating, such as Bahia grass, may be used on the entire site and is not subject to this limitation.
 - (b) Agricultural uses, commercial golf courses greens and fairways, cemeteries, and public or private active recreation fields such as ball fields are exempt from this limitation.

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- (c) *Existing Development: Property owners shall be encouraged to replace lawns and plants with Florida-Friendly Landscaping and drought tolerant turf for development existing as of June 14, 2021.*
- (d) *The percentage of micro irrigation and/or non-irrigated areas shall be no less than 40 percent of the total irrigable area.*

7.06.02 Irrigation Design Standards

- A. *All irrigation systems shall be designed in accordance with one of the following standards:*
 - 1. *Florida Water Star Program; or.*
 - 2. *Adhere to the following standards:*
 - a. *Sprinkler irrigation area shall not exceed 60% of the irrigated area. Other irrigation shall consist of low volume irrigation or micro-irrigation systems. This standard is applicable on residential and commercial lots over 1/8th acre. This requirement applies to common areas and open space in developments.*
 - b. *Sprinkler irrigation shall not be installed in narrow areas that are four (4) feet or less in width unless correctly installed micro-irrigation is used.*
 - c. *Sprinkler irrigation shall not be used for trees, shrubs, and groundcover beds. Permanent low volume or micro-irrigation systems may be used in these areas, but the Town encourages the use of temporary establishment irrigations systems which may be removed after the vegetation is established.*
 - d. *Irrigation zones shall be divided according to vegetated groupings (i.e., turfgrass, shrubs, trees, etc.) and the water requirements of the plants.*
 - e. *Sprinkler head types, such as spray heads and rotors, shall not be mixed in the same zone.*
 - f. *Distribution equipment in a given zone shall have matched precipitation rates.*
 - g. *Rotors and spray heads in turfgrass areas shall be spaced to provide head-to-head coverage.*
 - h. *A minimum separation of four inches is required between distribution equipment and the pavement.*
 - i. *A minimum separation of 24 inches is required between distribution equipment and buildings and other vertical structures.*
 - j. *A rain shut-off device shall be required on all irrigation systems to avoid irrigation during periods of sufficient rainfall. The rain sensor device shall consist of an automatic sensing device or switch that will override the irrigation cycle when adequate rainfall has occurred. It shall be placed where it is exposed to unobstructed natural rainfall and in compliance with Section 373.62, Florida Statutes, as amended.*
 - k. *Irrigation systems equipped with an automatic control system shall, at a minimum, provide the following capabilities:*
 - (1) *Ability to be programmed in minutes, by day of week, season, and time of day or by inches of water, by day of week, and time of day.*
 - (2) *Ability to accommodate multiple start times and programs.*
 - (3) *Automatic shutoff after adequate rainfall*
 - (4) *Ability to maintain time during power outages for a minimum of three days, and*

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- (5) *Operational flexibility to meet the applicable water management district's year-round water conservation requirements and water shortage order restrictions.*
- l. Check valves or similar devices which are capable of holding a minimum of a five-foot head shall be used in low-lying areas to prevent head drainage unless using valve-in-head sprinklers.*
 - m. Irrigation system equipment shall be installed in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.*
 - n. Sprinkler heads shall not spray onto walkways, buildings, roadways, and driveways.*
 - o. Pipes shall have a flow velocity of five-feet per second or less.*
 - p. Pipelines shall be designed to provide the system with the appropriate pressure required for maximum irrigation uniformity.*
 - q. All irrigation system underground piping shall have minimum soil cover of six inches.*

7.06.03 Irrigation Design and Installation Affidavits

- A. An irrigation plan and Irrigation Design Affidavit demonstrating how the irrigation system will comply with the standards of the Section, signed and sealed by a landscape architect licensed to practice in the State of Florida shall be included with the development application for all planned development.*
- B. An irrigation plan and Irrigation Design Affidavit demonstrating how the irrigation system will comply with the standards of this Section, signed by a landscape architect licensed to practice in the State of Florida, builder, owner, or experienced irrigation professional shall included with all building permits where a permanent irrigation system shall be installed on the property.*
- C. Within thirty (30) days of any irrigation system installed pursuant to this Section, the permittee or property owner shall submit to the Town a written self-certification from a Florida Water Star inspector, accredited professional, licensed irrigation contractor, or licensed landscape professional that the irrigations system on property meets the requirements of this Section. The owner, acting as owner-builder, may certify the irrigation system for a building permit as meeting the requirements herein.*
 - 1. All properties subject to this irrigation certification may be inspected to ensure compliance with the requirements of this Section.*
 - 2. Contractors and/or property owners shall be accountable for proper installation and compliance through self-certification.*
 - 3. The Town may conduct random inspection to ensure compliance with the code.*
 - 4. No Certificate of Occupancy for any development or building permit subject to the requirements of this Section shall be issued until the applicant has installed irrigation in compliance with e requirements of this Section.*