

Water Wise Landscape Draft Ordinance Discussion

Town Council

Dec. 2, 2025

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Agenda

- What this update means for Erie
- How we got here
- Why now
- Changes from existing code in new draft
- Alignment with SB 24-005
- Next steps

What this update means for Erie

- This code updates Chapter 10-6-4 (Landscape, Screening and Fencing) of Erie's Unified Development Code
- The code will apply to new development and large redevelopment projects
 - It will not apply to any existing development unless redevelopment triggers are reached
- The updated code will result in a multitude of water benefits:
 - savings, efficiency gains and increased resiliency for Erie

How we got here

- The Sustainability team applied for the [Water Now Alliance Project Accelerator](#) in early 2024. This program provides communities with 250 hours of pro bono support over a 6-12 month period, including:
 - Technical review of existing codes, neighboring municipal codes, best management practices, success metrics, savings estimates and drafting of the new code
 - Around 240 of these hours have been used to date
- Internally, we had extensive staff collaboration across Sustainability, Planning, Parks, Public Works, and beyond
- Collaboration involved numerous draft iterations and extensive conversations to make a code that meets Erie's needs

Why now

- Update Erie's landscape code to comply with State law (SB 24-005) and support conservation efforts/goals
- Persistent drought conditions and future growth necessitate forward thinking land and water use planning
- Recent community survey results called out water conservation as a top priority for many residents



Changes from existing code in new draft

- Restricts the use of cool-season turfgrass (except for active recreation areas)
- Reduces to 70% live plant material coverage for front yards (decrease from 75%) for single family residential lots
- Updates alternative turf-grass varieties limited to $\leq 50\%$ of total yard area for single family residential lots.
- Adds hydrozoning, soil amending, efficient irrigation mandates

Alignment with SB 24-005

- This code will comply with SB 24-005 requirements for non-functional turf and invasive species
 - Goes **further** by including single-family yards and requires specific plant coverage and irrigation standards
- The new code will position Erie as a regional leader in water-efficient community design
- **Important Note:** SB 24-005 becomes effective January 1st 2026. It is enforced at the municipal level

Next steps

- Receive Council input and direction at Dec. 2 study session
- Outreach with developers, builders, and public
 - Outreach materials including code explainer, FAQ's, and website to go live after this study session
- Adoption in Spring 2026

Winter 2025

- Introduction to Council at Dec. 2 study session
- Outreach to interested external parties



Early 2026

- Compilation of proposed edits and other feedback.
- Editing of code as needed
- Building of resources (plant lists, checklists, etc.)



End of Q1 2026

- Code adoption
- Staff training as necessary
- Effective date

Questions & Discussion