



**CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA  
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM**

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Report: Standards for Landscaping in Parkways

1. Introduction of Ordinance amending Title 12 of the Glendale Municipal Code, 1995, by amending portions of chapters 12.04 and 12.48 and adding sections 12.48.130 and 12.48.140 to update standards for landscaping in parkways

**COUNCIL ACTION**

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**Item Type:** Ordinance

**Approved for** October 27, 2020 **calendar**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Submitted by:**

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**Reviewed by:**

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Michele Flynn, Director of Finance  
Michael J. Garcia, City Attorney

**Approved by:**

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., Interim City Manager

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends that the City Council introduce the ordinance amending Title 12 for parkway landscaping standards.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

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On July 7, 2020, the City reviewed possible changes to the parkway landscaping standards in Title 12 of the Glendale Municipal Code (GMC). Included in this discussion was an expressed desire to ease the parkway standards to provide property owners with increased flexibility to modify these areas.

The Council directed staff to return with an ordinance to reduce or eliminate some of the parkway standard restrictions. Specifically, to allow loose material, allow prickly plants such as cactus, reduce the live plant material requirement to 30 percent, and to apply the standards only to parkways adjacent to sidewalk. In conjunction with the easing of these restrictions, the Council expressed interest in reinforcing the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to maintain these areas in a safe and non-dangerous condition.

In December 2015, the City Council adopted these new standards for parkway areas in the City of Glendale (GMC Chapter 12.48). On June 18, 2019, the City Council received the status of the parkway landscaping ordinance including enforcement statistics and opted to make no changes at that time.

The parkway standards in the GMC currently prohibit the following materials from parkway areas:

- A. More than 50 percent non-living material;
- B. Any non-living materials more than six inches in height;
- C. Plant material that contains needles, spines, stickers, thorns or poisonous to touch plants;
- D. Plant material with fruit, vegetables and other edibles that may attract rodents;
- E. Gravel, small loose rock, bark, mulch or any other loose material that can be kicked and displaced into the street or sidewalk and/or pose a safety and/or slip hazard when walked over with the exception of mulch placed under a street tree's drip line for the purpose of promoting and/or ensuring the health and safety of the tree;
- F. Artificial turf;
- G. Ivy or other dense ground covers that harbor or attract rodents and other pests and obscures the ground surface making it difficult to walk over;

- H. Landscaping that creates a traffic hazard, by obstructing vision, by obstructing traffic signs or signals, or otherwise endangers the life, limb, health, property or welfare of the public;
- I. Landscaping or objects that preclude the passage of pedestrians along the sidewalk or from parking spaces or ramps to the sidewalk; and
- J. Any objects or plant materials that blocks access to a fire hydrant or impairs the immediate or future health or condition of a City street tree.

The GMC also requires an eighteen-inch-wide step out strip along the length of the curb that must be a uniform firm walkable surface.

The proposed parkway landscaping ordinance offers the following changes:

- Defines the parkway as the public right-of-way between the sidewalk and curb exempting right-of-way areas where sidewalk is not present.
- Increases the height limit for non-living material from 6 inches to 18 inches.
- Allows loose non-living material such as stones, loose rock, wood chips and gravel.
- Changes the standards for the 18-inch stepout strip from a “uniform, firm walking surface” to “reasonably walkable surface” to allow loose material in this area.
- Requires live plant material to compose no less than 30 percent of the parkway area which is reduced from the current 50 percent requirement.
- Eliminates the prohibition on plants that contain needles, spines, stickers or thorns.
- Reduces the permit requirement to allow non-living material under six inches in height such as gravel and wood chips without a permit.
- Adds a requirement that the adjacent property owner maintain the parkway in a safe and non-dangerous condition and will be liable for damages and injury caused by their failure to meet this requirement.

Since January 1, 2018, the Community Development Department reported 245 total cases related to properties in violation of GMC chapter 12.48 pertaining to Parkway Landscaping. All of the cases were initiated in response to complaints from the public. The recommended changes are expected to greatly reduce Code Enforcement cases related to this chapter.

**Recommendations**

Based on City Council direction, feedback received from the public, and five years of enforcement of the parkway standards, staff recommends that the City Council introduce the ordinance as proposed. The proposed ordinance provides additional flexibility to property owners wanting to alter parkway areas, maintains the City's ongoing commitment to sustainability and continues to give emphasis to public safety.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

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There is no fiscal impact associated with the introduction of this ordinance.

**ALTERNATIVES**

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The City Council has the following alternatives to consider:

Alternative 1: Introduce the ordinance as proposed

Alternative 2: Introduce a modified version of the ordinance

Alternative 3: The City Council may also consider any other alternatives not proposed by staff

**CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE**

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None.

**EXHIBITS**

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None.