

Lorson Ranch Metropolitan District Xeriscape & Water-Wise Landscape Guidelines

Effective Date:

Applies To: Unless otherwise noted, all homeowner-maintained lots and streetscapes within The Lorson Ranch Metropolitan District boundaries.

1) Purpose & Authority

- Promote attractive, drought-tolerant landscapes that conserve water and protect community aesthetics.
 - Reduce irrigation demand, runoff, and maintenance costs.
 - Ensure consistency with community guidelines and Widefield Water's current watering rules/restrictions.
 - These guidelines are enforceable under District rules and regulations and any recorded covenants applicable to the community.
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2) Definitions

- **Xeriscape / Water-Wise Landscape:** A planted landscape using drought-tolerant species, hydrozoning, improved soils, efficient irrigation, and mulch; **not** bare rock/gravel/scape without living plant material.
 - **Hydrozone:** Grouping plants with similar water needs served by a dedicated irrigation valve/zone.
 - **Turf (Lawn):** Live grass species; synthetic turf is addressed separately.
 - **Design Review (DR):** District approval required before installation for areas visible from public streets or affecting drainage/utilities.
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3) When Approval Is Required

Obtain **Design Review approval** before:

- Removing or replacing front-yard landscape, or any area visible from the street.
- Installing or modifying irrigation systems or hardscape that alters drainage, grades, or easements.
- Converting turf to xeriscape.

Submittal lead time: Allow up to 10 business days for review.

4) Submittal Requirements (Checklist)

Include the following in one PDF packet:

1. **Site Plan** (scale) showing property lines, easements, driveways, walks, existing/proposed grades, and drainage arrows.
 2. **Planting Plan** with plant symbols, spacing, quantities, and **botanical/common names**.
 3. **Materials & Details:** mulch types/depths, edging details, rock size, path/hardscape specs, weed-barrier location/spec.
 4. **Color Photos** of existing conditions (street view and closer shots).
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5) Design Standards

5.1 Plant Selection & Density

- Use **native or regionally adapted** plants. Favor pollinator-friendly species and diverse structure (groundcover, shrub, ornamental grass, tree).
- **Prohibited:** Plants listed on the **Colorado Noxious Weeds Lists (A, B, or C)**; invasive species; any species banned by the municipality.
- **Minimum live plant cover** (excluding mulch and hardscape) at full maturity:
 - Front yard & parkway/ROW: **≥ 50%** of the landscape area within **2 growing seasons**.
 - Side/back yard visible from street: **≥ 30%** within 2 seasons.
- **Bed containment required:** Flowers and other plantings **must be confined to properly edged beds**. Plantings **scattered through turf or unedged areas are not permitted**.
- Provide year-round interest (mix of evergreen, deciduous, and ornamental grasses where appropriate).

5.2 Turf (if used)

- Limit high-water turf to **the greater of 25% of front-yard landscape OR 500 sq ft**. Water-wise turf blends are strongly encouraged.
- No turf in parkway/ROW strips **< 6 ft** wide unless irrigated by subsurface drip and designed to avoid overspray.
- Artificial turf: front yards require DR approval; must be high-quality, permeable, UV-stable, with organic/rock perimeter beds and edging.

5.3 Mulch & Weed Control

- **Organic mulch** (shredded/walk-on bark): **3 in** uniform depth in planting beds.
- **Rock mulch** (angular $\frac{3}{4}$ –1½ in): **2–3 in** depth with **woven, breathable** weed-barrier **only** under rock areas.
- Rubber mulch and brightly colored novelty rock are **not permitted**.

5.4 Edging & Bed Definition

- Provide continuous edging (steel, concrete mow curb, brick/paver, or commercial bender board) between **rock and organic mulch**, and between **beds and turf**.
- Edging must be installed flush and securely anchored to prevent migration of materials.

5.5 Hardscape & Non-Plant Areas

- Non-plant hardscape (patios, paths, DG/gravel courts) limited to **≤ 40%** of the front-yard landscape area unless otherwise approved.
- Encourage **permeable** materials (permeable pavers, stabilized DG) where feasible.
- All hardscape must not alter established drainage patterns.

5.6 Irrigation & Water Efficiency

- **Drip irrigation** (point-source or inline) for all planting beds; **no spray** heads in narrow strips < 6 ft.
- **Smart controller** with seasonal adjustment, rain/freeze shutoff, and flow sensing where feasible.
- Design to eliminate overspray onto streets, sidewalks, and fences.

5.7 Soil Preparation & Grading

- Before planting, incorporate **compost (2–3 in)** and loosen soil to **6–8 in** depth in planting beds unless using native-soil strategy for low-water natives that prefer lean soils.
- Maintain **positive drainage**: minimum **2%** slope away from structures for the first 5 ft; do not block swales or drainage easements.
- Rain gardens, swales, and passive water harvesting are encouraged where compatible with soils and codes.

5.10 Visibility, Utilities & Safety

- Respect sight triangles at driveways/intersections.
- Maintain clearances to hydrants, meters, pedestals, and transformer boxes; no plantings that obstruct access.

6) Installation Standards

- Install to professional trade standards; protect existing trees/roots.
 - Flush and test irrigation; set controller with seasonal program and rain/freeze shutoff enabled.
 - Repair disturbed turf/edges and clean hardscape of residues; no material stockpiles in streets or gutters.
 - Final photos and as-built irrigation schedule shall be submitted within **14 days** of completion if requested.
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7) Watering Rules & Establishment Period

- Owners must comply with the **current watering restrictions** of their municipality/water provider (e.g., assigned days/hours, no midday watering, no runoff).
 - **Establishment period (12–18 months):** Deep, infrequent watering to encourage roots; may require a temporary variance from the water provider. Owner is responsible for obtaining any variances.
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8) Maintenance Requirements

- Keep landscapes **weed-free** and healthy; remove volunteer trees/weeds promptly (including species listed by Colorado as noxious weeds).
 - Replace dead/dying plants to maintain design intent and minimum live-cover standards **within 60 days** during the growing season or by **June 15** of the next season.
 - Keep mulch depths as specified; replenish as needed.
 - Maintain edges, keep rock out of sidewalks/streets, and prevent drip emitter clogging/leaks.
 - Winterize irrigation and test/repair in spring; maintain backflow testing compliance.
 - Keep turf (if any) mowed to recommended heights and edged cleanly along walks/drives.
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9) Prohibited Conditions

- Bare gravelscapes/rock-only yards (without required live plants).
- Spray irrigation overspray/runoff onto pavement or adjacent properties.
- Plastic sheeting under mulch; rubber mulch.
- Plantings scattered randomly through turf; **all flowers must be in properly edged beds.**
- Obstructions to drainage swales, inlets, or utility access.
- Decorative neon-colored stone or glass mulch visible from the street.

11) Compliance & Enforcement

1. **Inspection:** The District may inspect for compliance after installation and periodically thereafter.
2. **Notice to Cure:** Written notice describing deficiencies with **14 days** to correct.
3. **Non-Compliance:** If not corrected, the District may:
 - Issue fines per the adopted fee schedule; and/or
4. **Appeals:** Owners may submit a written appeal within **10 days** of notice.

12) Exceptions & Variances

- The District may grant limited variances for unique site conditions (steep slopes, shade, utilities) if the overall water-wise and aesthetic objectives are met.
- Variances do **not** waive compliance with municipal code, fire code, drainage, or water-provider rules.

14) Quick Reference Specs (Summary)

- **Live plant cover at maturity:** Front/ROW $\geq 50\%$ (2 seasons).
- **Mulch:** Organic 3", Rock 2–3"; **no plastic sheeting.**
- **Weed barrier:** Breathable woven fabric **only under rock**; none under organic mulch.
- **Irrigation:** Drip for beds; smart controller; backflow tested annually.
- **Edging:** Required between turf/rock/bed transitions.
- **Turf limit (front):** $\leq 25\%$ or ≤ 500 sq ft (whichever is greater).
- **Parkway/ROW:** No rock-only; $\geq 50\%$ live plants; drip irrigation.
- **Fire-wise 0–5 ft:** Non-combustible surfaces/plants.

15) Owner Acknowledgment

By submitting a plan and/or installing landscape improvements, the Owner acknowledges responsibility for ongoing maintenance, compliance with these Guidelines, and adherence to all applicable laws and water restrictions.

Owner Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Exhibits

- Exhibit A: CSU Water Wise Plant List
- Exhibit B: Sample Xeriscape Plan & Details
- Exhibit C: Irrigation Scheduling Starter Guide

Exhibit A: CSU Water Wise Plant List

WATER-WISE PLANTS FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

Hundreds of water-wise plants thrive in the Pikes Peak region. Some of the best performing plants include:

TREES

- Bristlecone pine
- Bur oak
- Crabapple*
- Goldenrain tree
- Hackberry
- Hawthorn
- Kentucky coffeetree
- Pinyon pine
- Ponderosa pine
- Tatarian maple
- Thornless honeylocust
- Upright juniper
- Vanderwolf pine
- Western catalpa



Fernbush

SHRUBS

- Apache plume
- Barberry
- Blue mist spirea
- Bluestem jointfir
- Cotoneaster
- Currant
- Dwarf blue rabbitbrush
- Dwarf Korean lilac
- Fernbush
- Leadplant
- Mountain mahogany
- Mugo pine
- New Mexican privet
- Ninebark
- Siberian peashrub
- Serviceberry
- Spireas*
- Spreading juniper
- Three-leaf sumac
- Viburnum



Desert four o'clock

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

- 'Blond Ambition' blue grama
- Big bluestem
- Giant sacaton
- Indian grass
- Karl Foerster feather reed*
- Little bluestem
- Mexican feather grass
- Switchgrass
- 'Undaunted' ruby muhly



Fine fescue

*Can require moderate water

PERENNIAL FLOWERS

- Basket-of-gold
- Blanket flower
- Blue salvia
- Buckwheat
- Candytuft
- Catmint
- Colorado bluestar
- Colorado four o'clock
- Englemann daisy
- Evening primrose
- Fall blooming asters
- False indigo
- Hyssop
- Iris
- English lavender
- Moonshine yarrow
- Pasque flower
- Penstemons
- Peony
- Red valerian
- Santa Fe phlox
- Yellow columbine

GROUNDCOVERS

- Canada germander
- Creeping veronica
- Iceplant
- Kinnikinnick
- Partridge feather
- Plumbago
- Prairie zinnia
- Sedum
- Vinca minor
- Winecups

Visit waterwiseplants.org to learn more and get expert advice for your yard.

SPREADING SHRUBS

- Autumn Amber sumac
- Gro-lo sumac
- Panchito manzanita
- 'Pawnee Buttes' sand cherry
- Spreading junipers

WATER-WISE GRASSES FOR LAWNS

- Blue grama
- Buffalograss
- Fine fescue*

XERIC PLANTS

- Havard's agave
- Prickly pear cactus
- Yucca

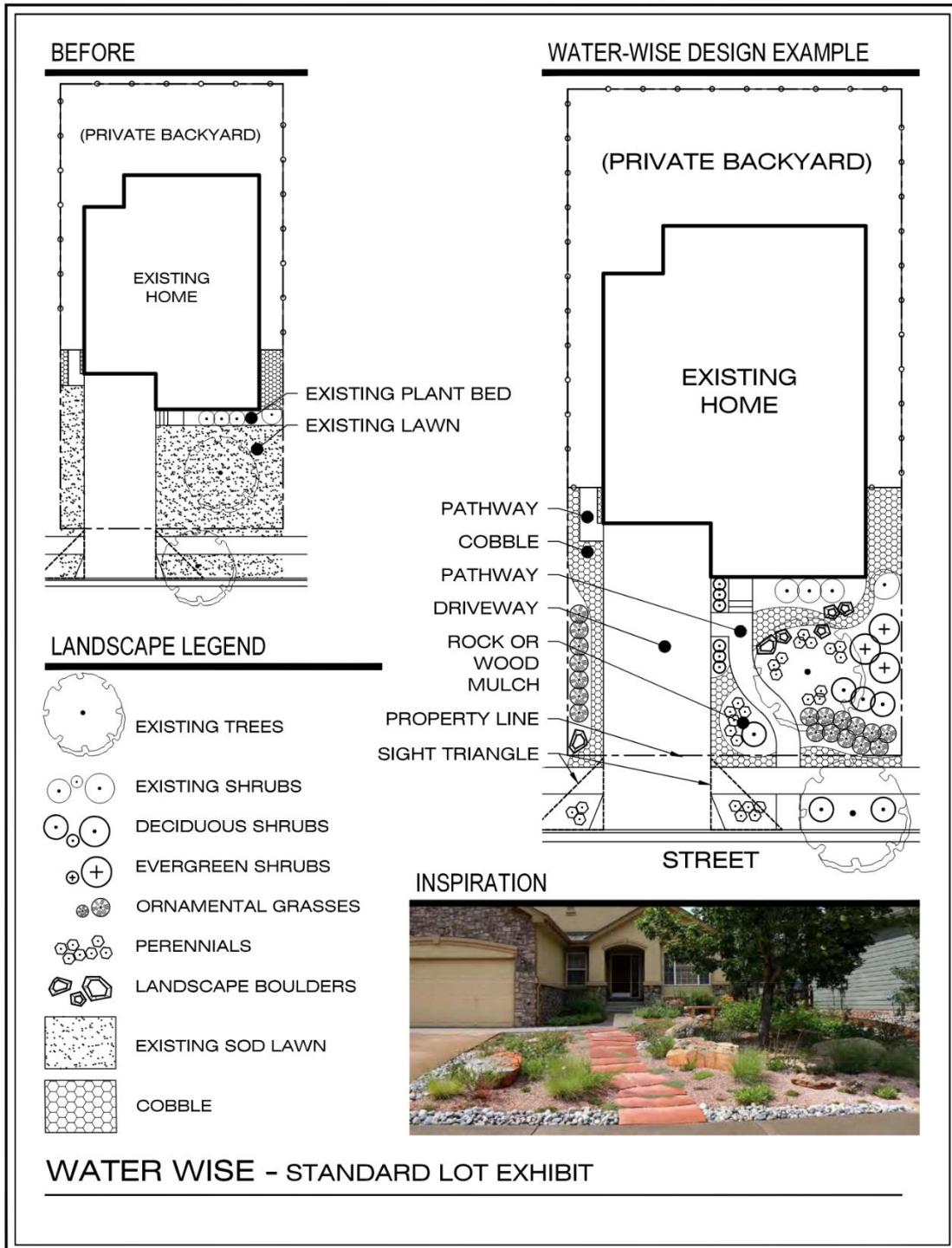
PLANTING TIPS

- Water regularly during establishment, reduce as plants mature.
- Use mulch to prevent weeds.
- Drip irrigation delivers water right to the plant's roots and reduces waste.
- Space trees and shrubs according to their size at maturity.
- Call 811 at least three days before you plant trees to have utility lines marked for free.

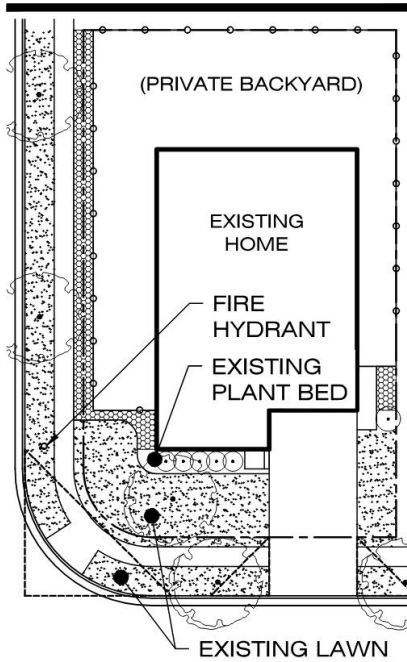


Colorado Springs Utilities
It's how we're all connected

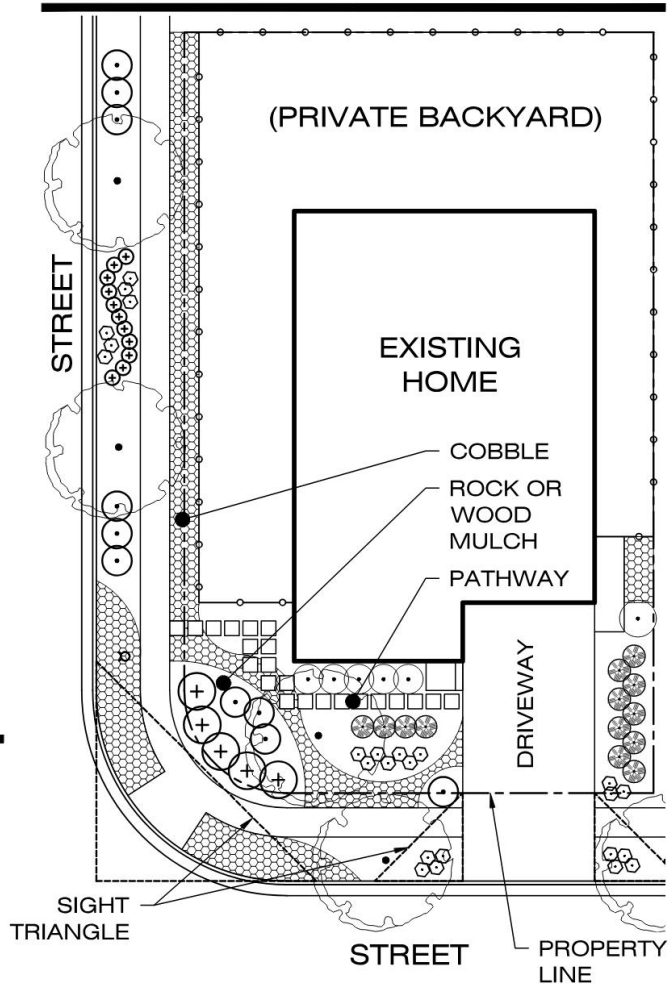
Exhibit B: Sample Xeriscape Plan & Details



BEFORE



WATER-WISE DESIGN EXAMPLE



LANDSCAPE LEGEND

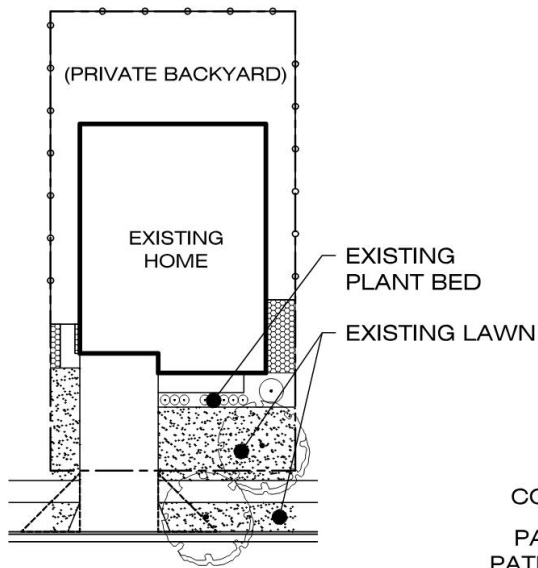
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-  EXISTING SHRUBS
-  DECIDUOUS SHRUBS
-  EVERGREEN SHRUBS
-  ORNAMENTAL GRASSES
-  PERENNIALS
-  LANDSCAPE BOULDERS
-  EXISTING SOD LAWN
-  COBBLE

INSPIRATION

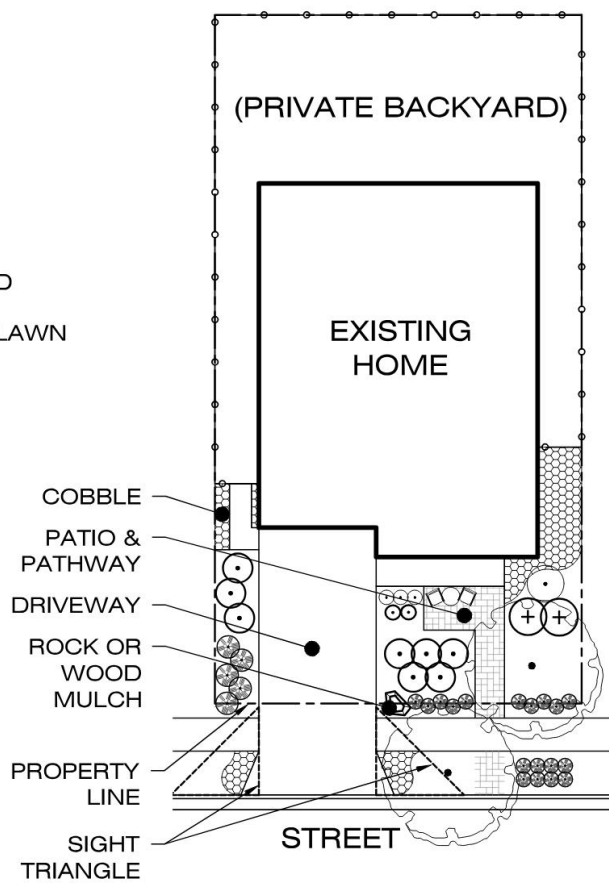


WATER WISE - STANDARD CORNER LOT EXHIBIT

BEFORE



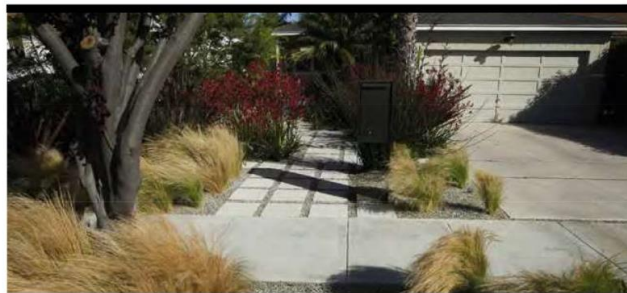
WATER-WISE DESIGN EXAMPLE



LANDSCAPE LEGEND

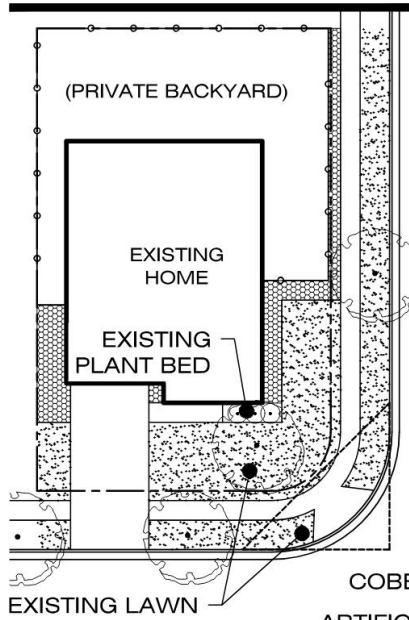
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INSPIRATION

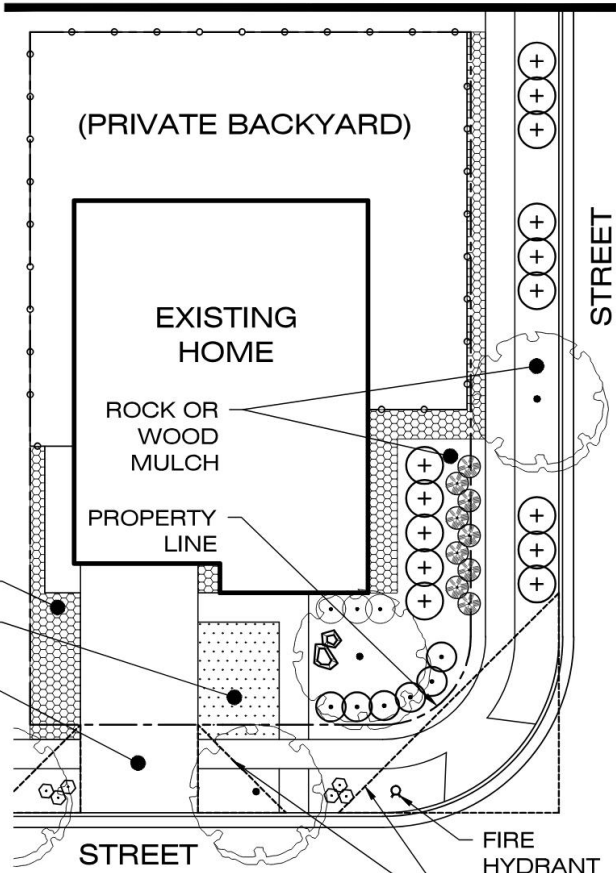


WATER WISE - COMPACT LOT EXHIBIT

BEFORE



WATER-WISE DESIGN EXAMPLE



LANDSCAPE LEGEND

- EXISTING TREES
- EXISTING SHRUBS
- DECIDUOUS SHRUBS
- EVERGREEN SHRUBS
- ORNAMENTAL GRASSES
- PERENNIALS
- LANDSCAPE BOULDERS
- EXISTING SOD LAWN
- COBBLE

INSPIRATION



WATER WISE - COMPACT CORNER LOT EXHIBIT

Exhibit C: Irrigation Scheduling Starter Guide

Lorson Ranch Metropolitan District – Xeriscape & Water-Wise Landscaping

Purpose

This guide provides general recommendations for setting irrigation controllers in Colorado Springs' semi-arid climate.

General Principles

- **Water Deeply, Not Frequently:** Encourage roots to grow downward by soaking soil thoroughly.
 - **Group by Hydrozones:** Plants with similar water needs should be irrigated on the same valve.
 - **Morning Watering Preferred:** Run systems between **6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.** to reduce evaporation.
 - **Cycle and Soak:** For clay soils, split watering into 2–3 shorter cycles with 30–60 minutes between runs to reduce runoff.
 - **Adjust Monthly:** Irrigation needs change with temperature, rainfall, and day length.
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Suggested Seasonal Schedule (Colorado Springs)

Turfgrass (Water-Wise Blend, 4–6" root depth):

- April–May: 2 days/week, 30 minutes per zone (rotor/rotator nozzles).
- June–August: 3 days/week, 35–45 minutes per zone.
- September: 2 days/week, 25 minutes per zone.
- October: 1 day/week, as needed.

Xeric Shrubs, Perennials, and Grasses (Drip Irrigation):

- April–May: 1 day/week, 30–45 minutes on drip.
- June–August: 1–2 days/week, 45–60 minutes on drip.
- September: 1 day/week, 30–45 minutes on drip.
- October: 1 day every 10–14 days if dry.

Trees (Deep Root Watering):

- New Trees (1–3 years): 1–2 times per week, slow deep soak (10–15 gallons per inch of trunk diameter).
 - Established Trees: 1–2 times per month in summer if no rainfall. Water at dripline, not against trunk.
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Additional Tips

- **Rain Shutoff:** Always turn off system after rainfall $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ inch.
 - **Check for Overspray:** Adjust sprinklers to avoid watering streets or sidewalks.
 - **Winter Watering:** From November–March, water trees and shrubs once per month during dry periods (above 40°F).
 - **System Maintenance:** Inspect emitters and sprinkler heads monthly; flush drip lines each spring.
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Compliance Reminder

These guidelines are **advisory**. Homeowners must follow:

- District Xeriscape Guidelines
- Widefield Sanitation and Water Districts' watering restrictions
- Any seasonal drought/emergency rules