



STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

Through: David L. Corliss, Town Manager

From: Mark Marlowe, Director of Castle Rock Water
David Van Dellen, Assistant Director
Matt Benak, Water Resources Manager
Rick Schultz, Water Efficiency Supervisor
Courtney Convy, Water Efficiency Specialist

Title: **An Ordinance Amending Title 15.48.010 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code Adopting by Reference as Primary Code the 2025 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual [Entire Castle Rock Service Area]**

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek Town Council approval of an Ordinance (**Attachment A**) amending Title 15.48 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code adopting by reference as a Primary Code the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado 2025 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual – First Reading. The Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual (Manual) is a key document that helps Castle Rock Water (CRW) meet its long-term water efficiency goals. The Manual outlines landscape and irrigation criteria that reduces water waste, improves watering efficiency, and supports landscapes that are native, regionally adaptive, functional, and appealing to the senses as a ColoradoScape design.

The major changes to the Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual focus on updating the minimum criteria for ColoradoScape design requirements to improve functionality, overall value, and appeal in residential applications. A summary of changes is outlined below and provided in **Attachment B**. The Town implemented a ColoradoScape ordinance for new development on January 1, 2023. This ordinance eliminated turf grass in the front yard and limited turf grass in the backyard for new single-family detached homes requiring ColoradoScape instead to ensure that water-efficient landscapes were being installed for new development. Homes installed under the ordinance are meeting the water efficiency goals that were established for the original ordinance. To date, 892 single-family residential homes have been installed under the ColoradoScape ordinance. A recent review of the ColoradoScapes for a large sampling of those homes identified that additional requirements were necessary in the Manual to meet the spirit and intent of the original ordinance from a functional and visual standpoint.

Notification and Outreach Efforts

Castle Rock Water staff discussed proposed changes during the EDC Water Subcommittee on August 16, 2024, and October 11, 2024; the Castle Rock Contractor Luncheon on September 17, 2024 and the Developer Roundtable Meeting held on August 21, 2024.

No significant concerns were expressed during any of this outreach regarding the proposed changes. Changes in cost were identified as an area for CRW to further explore.

History of Past Town Council, Boards & Commissions, or Other Discussions

The No Turf Ordinance was first presented to the CRW Commission on February 23, 2022, and March 23, 2022, as part of a presentation on the 2021 Water Resources Strategic Master Plan. At that time, the CRW Commission was supportive of the concept. It was introduced to Town Council on April 19, 2022, as part of the discussion and approval of the 2021 Water Resources Strategic Master Plan. CRW Commission reviewed the ordinance at the August 31, 2022 meeting and recommended Council approval of the ordinance as introduced by staff. Town Council approved the ordinance on First Reading at the September 20, 2022 meeting by a vote of 7 to 0. Town council approved the ordinance on the Second Reading on October 18, 2022.

Town Council last adopted revisions to the Manual by Ordinance No. 2024-XXX on XXXX which went into effect May 7, 2024.

Castle Rock Water staff presented this item to the Castle Rock Water Commission at their meeting held on October 30, 2024, and the Castle Rock Water Commission voted unanimously 6 to 0 to recommend Town Council approval of the Resolution as presented.

Discussion

The last revision of the Manual went into effect on May 7, 2024. The Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual works in conjunction with the Water Efficiency Master Plan and the Water Use Management Plan to ensure the overall goals are implemented through efficient landscape and irrigation design, installation, and maintenance. These plans outline the need for additional water conservation efforts to meet the long-term water demands of the community and minimize the need to acquire additional renewable water resources to meet peak summer demands.

The Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual outlines residential and non-residential landscape and irrigation efficiency requirements. All new development, renovations, and ongoing maintenance activities must follow the criteria in these standards.

Listed below are the major proposed changes.

- Updating the Defensible Space definition to include a link to the CSU Extension Low Flammability Landscape Plants fact sheet.
- Updating surety percentage to 115% of the remaining work to be completed. This will provide an adequate amount should the project not be completed and the Town is required to finish.

- Redefining irrigable area for purposes of residential ColoradoScape design.
- Adding functionality as a criterion for residential front and backyard access.
- Enhancing plant quantities and varieties required to improve the visual appearance and vegetative cover.
- Expanding non-vegetative landscape materials to include required categories enhancing the visual interest and diversity.
- Providing flexibility and adding diversity of backyard landscaping, larger areas of native or alternative grasses may be considered but must not exceed the established water budget of a 500-square-foot area of Texas Hybrid grass.

Town Staff including, CRW, Development Services, Parks and Recreation, and Fire all worked to review, provide input, and update the Criteria.

Budget Impact

There are no significant anticipated additional costs to the Town from these proposed changes. These updates to the Manual are primarily for clarification purposes so that landscapes are more functional and visually appealing as a ColoradoScape. The minimum standards outline specific requirements regarding vegetation quantity and hardscape material. Although there will be a cost associated with these requirements, these changes are meant to raise the quality of some of the residential landscapes produced within the last few years that did not meet the intent of the required front yard landscaping nor justified the discounted System Development Fees given by CRW to builders that agreed to landscape the backyard. Additionally, by raising the overall quality of the ColoradoScape installed, residents should get additional value from these homes. CRW is updating this Criteria as a way to assist the development community in integrating quality, low-water-use landscaping that will conserve water and reduce future costs of meeting community water needs.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approving an Ordinance to amend Title 15.48 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code adopting by reference as a Primary Code the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado 2025 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual.

Proposed Motion

“I move to approve the Resolution as introduced by title.”

Alternative Motions

“I move to approve the resolution as introduced by title, with the following conditions: (list conditions).”

“I move to continue this item to the Town Council meeting on _____ date to allow additional time to (list information needed).”

Attachments

Attachment A: Ordinance
Exhibit 1: Redline version of Landscape Criteria Manual
Attachment B: Summary of Changes to Landscape and Criteria Manual 2025