



## STAFF REPORT

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council

**Through:** David L. Corliss, Town Manager

**From:** Mark Marlowe, Director of Castle Rock Water  
Lauren Moore, Water Resources Manager  
Rick Schultz, Water Efficiency Supervisor

**Title:** **An Ordinance Amending Title 15.48 of the Castle Rock Municipal Code Adopting by Reference as Primary Code the Town of Castle Rock, Colorado 2026 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual** *[Entire Castle Rock Service Area]*

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### 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 2026 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual. 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 adapted, functional, and appealing to the senses as it reflects the ColoradoScape design.

A summary of changes is outlined below and provided in **Attachment B**. Most changes are non-substantive and were made to improve readability and clarify existing intent. 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 water-efficient landscapes are being installed for new development. Homes installed under the ordinance are meeting the water efficiency goals that were established for the original ordinance.

The most significant changes to the manual are:

- Added a requirement to maintain Distribution Uniformity of 75% after installation for non-residential properties. This expands an existing requirement to ensure irrigation efficiency applies to ongoing maintenance.

- Added a requirement to receive as-built drawings prior to final inspection and close-out of permit. Requiring as-built drawings earlier in the process will help facilitate receipt of the drawings and improve inspection accuracy.
- Modified existing flow sensor specification requires ultra-sonic sensors. Mechanical flow sensors do not read accurately at low flows that are typically present in irrigation systems for ColoradoScape designs.
- Changed minimum requirement of 2 large canopy deciduous shade trees to 2 trees (any size and type) provided 50% of the trees are large canopy deciduous shade trees. This change allows for flexibility in tree type and size based on planting area and will result in a reduction of technical criteria variances.
- Added new specifications for residential walking paths to ensure safety and functionality specifically including minimum width of 24 inches and the requirement for impervious materials to prevent wash-out and erosion when slopes and drainage swales are present.
- Added a new Appendix C to detail the requirements for maintenance of a water efficient irrigation system. These requirements align with the existing Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper recommendations. This includes a checklist to assist those who oversee maintenance of irrigation systems to ensure best practices are implemented to maintain a water efficient system.
- Added definitions for Functional and Non-Functional Turf and Artificial Turf to be consistent with Senate Bill 24-005 and House Bill 25-1113.

### **Notification and Outreach Efforts**

CRW staff discussed proposed changes during the EDC Water Subcommittee meetings on April 18, 2025, November 21, 2025, and February 20, 2026, and the Castle Rock Contractor Luncheons on September 17, 2025, and October 15, 2025.

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

The No Turf Ordinance, key big picture component of the Manual, 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.

Changes to the Manual have historically been presented to CRW Commission for recommendation to Council. The changes then are approved by Council through Ordinance.

Castle Rock Water staff presented this item to the Castle Rock Water Commission at their meeting held on February 25, 2026, and the Castle Rock Water Commission voted unanimously 5 to 0 to recommend Town Council approval of the Resolution as presented.

### **Discussion**

The last revision of the Manual went into effect on February 6, 2025. 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 developments, renovations, and ongoing maintenance activities must follow the criteria in these standards.

Town Staff including CRW, Planning, Plan Review, Zoning, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Fire all reviewed, provided input, and updated the Manual.

### **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 reflecting the ColoradoScape principles. The minimum standards outline specific requirements regarding vegetation quantity and hardscape material. CRW is updating this Manual 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 2026 Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual.

### **Proposed Motion**

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

### **Alternative Motions**

*“I move to approve the Ordinance 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 2026