

City of Crete Managed Landscape Policy

Ordinance Amendment and Policy Framework

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Amendment to Section 6-211 Public Nuisances; Weeds, Grasses, And Worthless Vegetation

Add new subsection (4):

(4) Managed Landscape Program Exception

(a) Properties with vegetation over twelve (12) inches in height that occupies twenty-five percent (25%) or more of permeable land on the lot OR one thousand (1,000) square feet or more (Qualifying Vegetation), shall comply with the provisions of the Managed Landscape Policy as established by the City.

(b) This subsection does not apply to vegetable or edible gardens, defined as areas specifically dedicated to growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, or other plants intended for human consumption.

(c) All vegetation within the public right-of-way, utility easements and vision clearance zones as defined in Section 11-808 shall be maintained at twelve (12) inches or less in height.

MANAGED LANDSCAPE POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes standards for managed landscapes that contain vegetation over twelve (12) inches in height, promoting environmental and municipal benefits while maintaining public safety and neighborhood aesthetics.

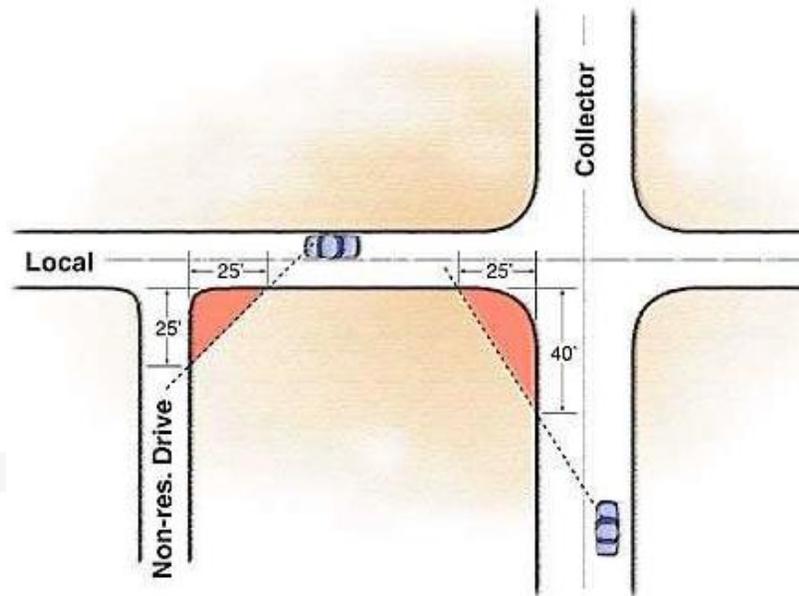
Scope

This policy applies to all properties meeting the size thresholds defined in Ordinance Section 6-211(4)(a). Managed landscapes do not differentiate between native or non-native plants.

Height and Location Restrictions

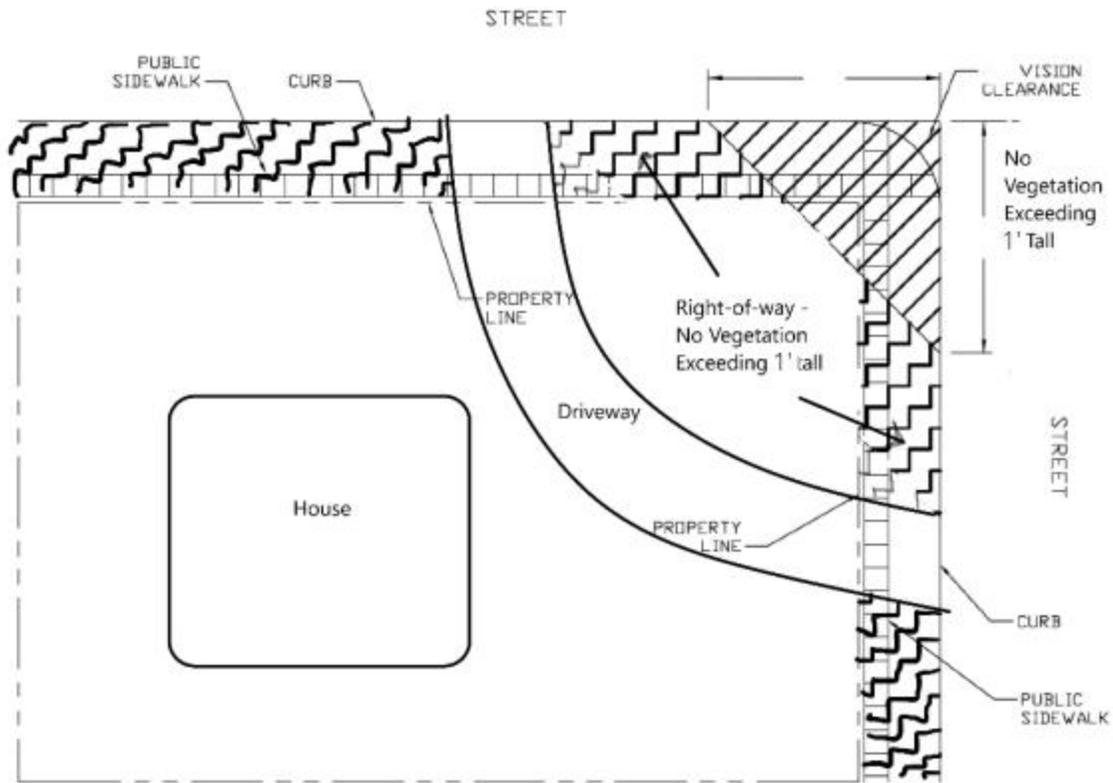
Vision Clearance Zones (per Section 11-808):

- All vegetation within intersection vision triangles must be maintained at 12 inches or less in height
- Triangle dimensions:
 - 20 feet from intersection along alley rights-of-way
 - 25 feet from intersection along local streets or non-residential drives
 - 40 feet from intersection along collector streets
 - 55 feet from intersection along arterial roadways or highways



Public Right-of-Way/Utility Easements:

- All vegetation within public right-of-way and utility easements must be maintained at 12 inches or less in height



Enforcement Variations:

- Variations lowering height restrictions may be ordered for vehicular or pedestrian safety
- Resident requests for variations that would increase height allowances within public right-of-way or vision clearance zones will be denied
- Variations ordered for safety may be appealed through the normal appeals process

Fire Safety Provisions

Emergency Authority:

- The Fire Chief, the Fire Chief’s designee, or Assistant Fire Chief may order managed landscapes to mitigate flammable vegetation during periods of high fire risk or immediate need.
- Mitigation orders may be issued to all program participants without site visit

Seasonal Maintenance:

- Dried vegetation may be left standing over winter but must be removed by May 15 prior to the next growing season
- Open burning for vegetation removal is prohibited per Section 7-301 of the City ordinance

Maintenance Standards

Weed Control:

- Weeds may not consume more than 15% of the square footage qualifying under the managed landscape program
- Weeds are defined as per Section 6-211(2)(a) of the City ordinance

General Maintenance:

- Landscapes must appear purposeful and well-managed
- Allowing existing non-ornamental turfgrass or weeds to grow above 12" does not constitute a managed landscape
- Regular maintenance required to prevent appearance of abandonment or neglect

Reporting Requirements

Mandatory Reporting to Parks and Recreation: New program participants must report in the month that qualified vegetation is expected to reach 12". Existing program participants participating longer than one calendar year must submit annual reports for the prior growing season by March 31st. Properties, including those owned by corporate entities, that have been previously terminated from the program intending to participate again must report as a new program participant with updated maintenance practices/site plan(s) that address the cause(s) of prior termination.

Reporting Categories:

Residential Properties: Submit detailed annual reports including site plans as specified in main policy.

Corporate Entities (2,000+ sq ft): As a new program participant, submit all required information except site plan(s) and maintenance practices.

Reports must include:

- Property address and owner information
- Site plan
- Square footage of qualifying vegetation
- Plant inventory (not including individual plant count)
- Habitat certifications held or pending
- Maintenance practices
- Option to certify no changes on all of above (existing participants only)

Administrative Support:

- Parks and Recreation will maintain and provide a directory of reporting properties to Code Enforcement to aid in enforcement

Enforcement and Compliance

Complaint Process:

- Code enforcement complaints of two (2) or more in a calendar year may result in a review of the plantings covered by the program
- Review will assess compliance with all policy standards, as well as accuracy of participant's plant inventory and site plan

Non-Compliance Actions:

- Failure to meet policy standards may result in either:
 - An order to cut vegetation to 12 inches or less
 - Termination from the program

- Upon termination, property must comply with standard ordinance requirements and reduce vegetation exceeding 12” to lot coverage less than 25 percent of permeable lot space AND less than 1000 sqft.

Appeals Process

- Property owners may appeal enforcement decisions through existing City appeal procedures as established in municipal code.

Reinstatement

- Terminated properties may report as a new participant on the following conditions
 - (1) Completing order(s) to bring property into compliance with standard ordinance requirements
 - (2) Enhanced maintenance practices addressing the causes of prior termination

Implementation

Effective Date: This policy shall take effect [DATE] following City Council approval.

Transition Period: Existing properties meeting thresholds requiring reporting shall be exempt until the next applicable annual reporting cycle.

Administration:

- Primary administration: Parks and Recreation Department
- Enforcement support: Code Enforcement
- Fire safety oversight: Fire Department

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Annual Reporting Form

Property owners submit annual reports including:

- Property address and owner information
- Site plan

- Square footage of qualifying vegetation
- Plant inventory (not including individual plant count)
- Habitat certifications held or pending
- Maintenance practices

Inspection Protocol

Code enforcement officers will:

- Reference directory of participating properties
- Conduct complaint-based inspections using policy standards
- Document compliance issues and coordinate with Parks and Recreation
- Issue violation notices consistent with existing ordinance procedures

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