



Section 5
Property Improvement Guidelines


Construction of the channel walls in the Los Angeles River at
Laurel Canyon.

Year 1949

Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library

Section: 5.0 PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

Prior to obtaining a building permit from the Department of Building and Safety, all Projects shall be referred to City Planning for sign off from the LA-RIO clearance item. In order to obtain a sign off, the applicant shall provide a completed copy of this Section (5) signed by the owner and architect of record, as well as supporting documentation (drawings and specifications) that demonstrate the project has complied with the Property Improvement Guidelines described below.

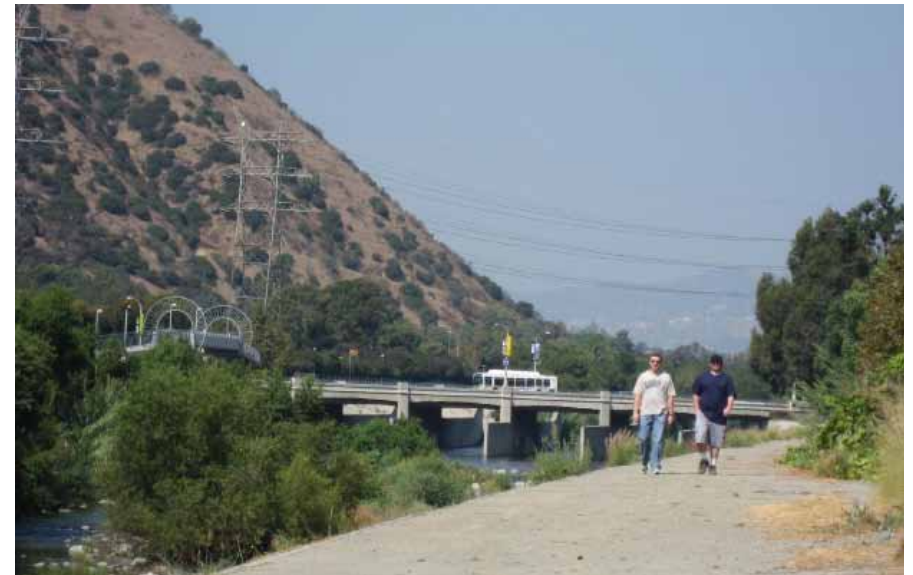
Information below the symbol “  ” are Guidelines established by the Director and may be revised as necessary. These Guidelines provide general information on pursuing specific points, and also provide guidance on calculations, plans and information an applicant would submit for LA-RIO clearance.

It may be possible to earn points from several categories by using one strategy. This practice is accepted and encouraged by the Department of City Planning. Some points may require additional permitting and approval from City departments. These point options do not substitute for SUSMP or Landscape Ordinance requirements that a project may be subject to. However, the same strategies that satisfy the LA-RIO may also apply towards the requirements of SUSMP or the Landscape Ordinance. To find out if a project is subject to SUSMP, please visit www.lastormwater.org.

Single family home projects must achieve a minimum of 10 points and are required to obtain points from the Watershed category only. All other projects are required to achieve a combined total of 20 points from the Watershed, Urban Design and Mobility categories.

Project: The erection, construction, addition to, or exterior structural alteration of any building, located within the LA-RIO. A project does not include construction that consists solely of (1) interior remodeling, interior rehabilitation or repair work; (2) alterations of, including structural repairs, or additions to, any existing building in which the aggregate value of the work, in any one 24-month period, is less than 50 percent (50%) of the building’s replacement cost before the alterations or additions as determined by the Department of Building and Safety (DBS).

Construction costs are based on a valuation table available on the DBS website (www.ladbs.org). The table lists the cost of construction per square foot.



LA River, near Griffith Park

Section: 5.1 WATERSHED

Section: 5.1.1 Watershed: Stormwater Management

Intent: Reduce the velocities, quantities, and pollutant loads of stormwater runoff entering the stormdrain system.

Increase opportunities for stormwater runoff to infiltrate into the groundsoils.

Treat 100% of the 85th percentile storm and have detention capacity to retain a rainfall intensity of 0.5 inches/hour.

Design and install a green roof that treats 100% of the 85th percentile storm.

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Treat 100% of the 85th percentile storm and have detention capacity to retain a rainfall intensity of 0.5 inches/hour.	3	3	
Design and install a green roof that treats 100% of the 85th percentile storm.	3	3	



GENERAL INFORMATION

In order to maintain flood protection and assess the optimum best management practices for a particular site and soil conditions, applicants should meet with the Bureau of Sanitation for guidance as early as possible. Projects subject to SUSMP can be assisted at the Bureau of Sanitation, Watershed Protection Division's Public Counter, located on the 3rd floor of 201 N. Figueroa (213-482-7066). If the project is not subject to SUSMP, applicants may visit the 10th floor of 1249 S. Broadway (213-485-3996) for guidance. Both offices require appointments. A variety of BMPs can be used to achieve these points, including french drains, cisterns and swales.

Note that water that is infiltrated on-site is assumed to be 100% treated for the purposes of this credit.

CALCULATIONS

Calculate the required volume of stormwater to be treated (Stormwater Runoff Quantity Volume (ft³) = WQV)

Determine the size of the infiltration area using the equations from the City of Los Angeles SUSMP Infiltration Requirements & Guidelines (www.lastormwater.org/Siteorg/download/pdfs/tech_docs/SUSMP_Infiltration_Req.pdf)

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan

Landscape and/or Roof Plan that includes identification of the various BMPs

Calculations

Describe how the soils and/or equipment have the capacity to infiltrate water at a rate and quantity sufficient to absorb at least 100% of the 85th percentile storm

Single Family	Other
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Annotation

Section: 5.1.2 Watershed: Stream Enhancement

Intent: Increase the percentage of native and drought tolerant plant species located within the vicinity of the Los Angeles River. Increase the availability of native and locally adaptive habitats to support the migration of local species.

Daylight the portion of a stream that flows through the property.

5	5
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Remove the concrete from sides and/or bottom of a stream that flows through the property.

5	5
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Please consult with the Bureau of Sanitation’s Watershed Division for guidance with these point options. These options are only feasible if flood protection is maintained. Additional permits may be required.

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan and/or Landscape Plan that illustrates the location and improvements of the stream
Demolition Plan

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Select and install plants identified as California Friendly by the Metropolitan Water District's Be Water Wise program for at least half of the plant palette.	1	1	
Select and install a percentage of indigenous plants per the County's Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP) Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes.	1 per 25%	1 per 25%	
Contract with a licensed landscape architect , a landscape or garden designer to design and install a landscape of native plants arranged into naturalized patterns.	2	2	
Remove all existing exotic weedy plants such as identified by the California Invasive Plant Council (CAL-IPC).	2	2	
Complete a class related to native plant gardening at a local nursery or college.	2	1	



GENERAL INFORMATION

Assess soils, topography, hydrology and microclimate in order to develop the planting patterns for each site. For plants identified as California Friendly by the Metropolitan Water District's Be Water Wise program, visit: www.bewaterwise.com

The County's Los Angeles River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes can be found at <http://ladpw.org/wmd/watershed/LA/>

LAR_Planting_guidelines_webversion.pdf. Consult pages 28-29 for a list of indegnous native plants.

Visit www.cal-ipc.org for additional information on invasive plant species and management techniques.

CALCULATIONS

Provide square footage of total planting area

Provide square footage of the percentage of planting area designated for California Friendly and/or native plant species

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan

Landscape Plan which denotes location of each species and includes calculations

Demolition Plan which illustrates location and type of invasive species to be removed

Describe the scope of work and identify the landscape professional with whom a contract has been made

Provide evidence in the way of a letter, invoice, or certificate, that the applicant has completed a class on native plant gardening at a local nursery or college

Plant species planting list

Calculations

Section: 5.1.4 Watershed: Water Conservation

Intent: Reduce the use of potable water for irrigation purposes.

Install a high-efficiency "smart" irrigation system.

Utilize graywater or recycled stormwater for at least 50% of irrigation needs.

Utilize graywater or recycled stormwater for 100% of irrigation needs.

Single Family	Other	Annotation
2	1	
2	2	
3	3	



CALCULATIONS

Determine the annual demand for on-site irrigated water

Determine the annual demand for 50% of irrigated water

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan

Landscape Plan

Calculations

Describe type of irrigation system(s), and the quantity of water supplied by the system annually

Describe methodology for collecting and/or harvesting graywater and/or recycled stormwater

Section: 5.1.5 Watershed: Hardscape

Intent: Reduce overall ambient temperature. Increase the percentage of pervious materials. Increase the use of locally available materials.

Use hardscape materials (impervious or pervious) on no more than 50% of the site area exclusive of building footprint. The balance of the area shall be planted with native and/or drought tolerant species.

Use permeable hardscaped material instead of impervious materials for at least 75% of all hardscape areas.

Select and install at least 50% of hardscape materials as defined and recommended by the LARMP Landscaping Guidelines



GENERAL INFORMATION

The LARMP Landscaping guidelines are available at http://ladpworg/wmd/watershed/LA/LAR_Planting_guidelines_webversion.pdf on pages 40-41 of Part II-LAR Planting Guidelines. River rock and decomposed granite are especially recommended.

CALCULATIONS

Determine the square footage of the site exclusive of the building footprint
 Determine the square footage of either 50-75% of the overall square footage as defined above

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
	2	2	
	2	2	
	1	1	

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan
 Landscape Plan that identifies the location and extent of each of the hardscape materials
 Calculations
 Provide a specification list that includes product/material information about each of the hardscape materials if pervious and/or selected from the LARMP Landscaping Guidelines

Section: 5.1.6 Watershed: Landscape/Hardscape Maintenance

Intent: Encourage maintenance practices that reduce the use of chemicals, nuisance plants, and potable water.

Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program that follows the Landscaping Maintenance Guidelines as defined in the LARMP.

Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program for parking lots and structures that establishes ongoing procedures to maintain the surfaces free of chemical residues and debris.

Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program that uses best management practices to provide sustainable organic horticulture, making chemical fertilizers and pesticides unnecessary.

Install landscaping that does not require irrigation once established.

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program that follows the Landscaping Maintenance Guidelines as defined in the LARMP.	1	1	
Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program for parking lots and structures that establishes ongoing procedures to maintain the surfaces free of chemical residues and debris.	1	1	
Prepare and implement a maintenance manual and/or program that uses best management practices to provide sustainable organic horticulture, making chemical fertilizers and pesticides unnecessary.	2	2	
Install landscaping that does not require irrigation once established.	2	2	



GENERAL INFORMATION

The guidelines are available at http://ladpworg/wmd/watershed/LA/LAR_Planting_guidelines_webversion.pdf on page 48 of Part II-LAR Planting Guidelines. This includes information about supplemental irrigation, extended maintenance, pruning, weeding and supplemental mulch.

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

- Site Plan
- Landscaping Plan
- Describe the maintenance manual and/or program
- Describe temporary irrigation program
- Identify the person(s) or organization that will be responsible for maintenance
- Plant Species List

Section: 5.1.7 Watershed: Open Space

Intent: Increase availability of publicly accessible area adjacent to the River Greenway.

Provide a permanent rear and/or or side-yard easement adjacent to the River Greenway through a recorded covenant. The easement area shall be used to maximize open space for native landscaping, create active plazas or courtyards and/or provide additional pedestrian amenities visible and accessible from the River. One-half point will be accrued for every 1% of easement relative to the overall lot square footage.

Single Family	Other	Annotation
0.5 per 1%	0.5 per 1%	



CALCULATIONS

Determine overall lot square footage (including building footprint)

Determine square footage of easement area

Determine percentage of overall square footage that easement represents

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan with easement area identified and quantified

Calculations

Recorded covenant that provides for the maintenance of and public access to the easement area in perpetuity

Section: 5.2 URBAN DESIGN

Section: 5.2.1 Urban Design: Vehicle Parking

Intent: Reduce visibility and prominence of vehicles in and around the River Greenway area.

Screen surface parking that is visible from the Greenway and/or street with a landscaped barrier and/or green screen.

Site parking such that no parking is located between the building(s) and the street.

Site parking such that no parking is located between the building(s) and the River Greenway.

Screen ground floor parking behind active uses/services that are accessible from the street and/or Greenway.

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
	NA	1	
	NA	2	
	NA	2	
	NA	2	



SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan that illustrates the location of parking and the “screening”

Describe screening material or uses

Illustrate dimensions of screen or uses

Section: 5.2.2 Urban Design: Transparency

Intent: Promote visibility between occupants of Greenway/street adjacent uses and the River Greenway and/or streets to increase safety, and comfort, of area.

Design any fence or screen in the setback area(s) adjacent to the Greenway to be no greater than 42 inches in height.

Design facades visible from the Greenway and/or street such that a percentage of surface area incorporates transparent features. Points can be obtained by meeting the requisite amount of transparency for each building type and/or use noted below.

Ground level retail: at least 50%

Multi-family residential, industrial, commercial and public facility uses: at least 25%

Upper floors: at least 20%

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Design any fence or screen in the setback area(s) adjacent to the Greenway to be no greater than 42 inches in height.	NA	1	
Design facades visible from the Greenway and/or street such that a percentage of surface area incorporates transparent features. Points can be obtained by meeting the requisite amount of transparency for each building type and/or use noted below.			
Ground level retail: at least 50%	NA	2	
Multi-family residential, industrial, commercial and public facility uses: at least 25%	NA	2	
Upper floors: at least 20%	NA	1	



CALCULATIONS

- Determine ground floor square footage of Greenway and/or street adjacent facades
- Determine square footage of upper floors of Greenway and/or street adjacent facades
- Determine the needed square footage of the transparent area of both the ground level and upper floor levels
- Determine the resulting percentage of transparency area at both the ground level and upper floor levels

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

- Site Plan that illustrates Greenway and/or street adjacent facades
- Landscaping Plan that illustrates the location of any fences or screens adjacent to the Greenway
- Elevations of each Greenway and/or street adjacent façade that illustrate the required transparent percentage
- Calculations

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Section: 5.2.3 Urban Design: Site Lighting Intent: Reduce nighttime light pollution, conserve energy and improve nighttime safety and visibility.			
Include permanent attachments to site lighting so that any off-site glare is prevented.	NA	1	
Provide site lighting that distributes light evenly and avoids harsh shadows and glare.	NA	1	
Provide site lighting that is integrated into the architecture.	NA	1	
Install all exterior lighting fixtures such that no upward light pollution occurs.	NA	1	



SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan and/or Exterior Lighting Plan that illustrates the locations of all exterior light fixtures

Identify name/manufacture of each light exterior light fixture referenced on the Plan

Provide cut sheets of each fixture that illustrates light distribution, extent of light shielding, and fixture lamp type

Section: 5.2.4 Urban Design: Visual Clutter

Intent: Reduce visual pollution in and around River Greenway.

Design trash/recycling enclosures so that dumpsters and trash bins are not visible to the general public from either the Greenway or the street.

Screen from public view all exterior rooftop and ground-level mechanical equipment, which includes HVAC equipment, exhaust fans, wireless telecommunication facility equipment cabinet enclosures and antennas, and satellite dishes.

Limit building or site signage to address identification, business and operational identification, and the name of the building.

Design security features that deter criminal activity but maintain a positive image for the community. Design security grills so that they are recessed completely into pockets that conceal the grill when they are retracted. Design the pockets so that they are integrated into the design of the building.

Underground the utility lines leading to the project site. One point will be accrued for every 100 feet of lines that are undergrounded.

Single Family	Other	Annotation
NA	1	
NA	1	
NA	1	
NA	1	
NA	1 per 100'	



CALCULATIONS

- Determine distance of underground utility lines
- Divide distance by 100'

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

- Site Plan that identifies the dimensions and location of services areas, mechanical equipment, signage, security features, and/or utility lines
- Calculations
- Exterior Elevation(s) that illustrates the location, dimensions, and design of service enclosures, mechanical equipment, building or site signage, and/or security features

Section: 5.3 MOBILITY

Section: 5.3.1 Mobility: Connectivity

Intent: Enable the River to become another “front-door.” Facilitate pedestrian access from the street and/or Greenway to the building.

Provide an entrance for employees, visitors, customers and/or clients that fronts on and is visible from the street and is open and easily accessible during business hours.

Single
Family

Other

Annotation

NA

1

Provide an entrance for employees, visitors, customers and/or clients that fronts on and is visible from the River Greenway and is open and easily accessible during business hours.

NA

1



SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan that illustrates the entrances of buildings and/or facilities where applicable

Describe availability (hours/days) of entranceway to employees, visitors, customers, and/or clients

Section: 5.3.2 Mobility: Pedestrian

Intent: Increase pedestrian access to and from the buildings and neighborhoods adjoining the River Greenway.

Design, build, and provide for the on-going maintenance of a permanent pedestrian easement (paseo) to the Greenway that is publicly accessible during daylight hours and is open to the sky.

Design the paseo to include amenities such as: outdoor dining and seating areas; tables for board and card games; sun and shade; landscaping; sculptures and fountains.

Create convenient access between the River Greenway and the property that is available for public and/or private use, where a property line is coterminous with the River Greenway.

Provide access to the River Greenway for pedestrians and bicyclists.

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Design, build, and provide for the on-going maintenance of a permanent pedestrian easement (paseo) to the Greenway that is publicly accessible during daylight hours and is open to the sky.	NA	3	
Design the paseo to include amenities such as: outdoor dining and seating areas; tables for board and card games; sun and shade; landscaping; sculptures and fountains.	NA	1	
Create convenient access between the River Greenway and the property that is available for public and/or private use, where a property line is coterminous with the River Greenway.	NA	2	
Provide access to the River Greenway for pedestrians and bicyclists.	NA	2	



GENERAL INFORMATION

The easement should be a minimum 7' in width and provide visible connections between the street and the River Greenway.

When creating access to the River Greenway, local concerns such as maintenance and safety must be addressed.

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site Plan that illustrates ADA accessible path of travel for building occupants to access the River Greenway as either a pedestrian and/or bicyclist

Site Plan that illustrates the location and dimensions of pedestrian easement or paseo
Describe availability (hours/days) of entranceway to employees, visitors, customers etc

Describe design, amenities, and access of paseo or pedestrian easement

Recorded covenant that provides for the maintenance and public accessibility of easement area in perpetuity

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
<p>Section: 5.3.3 Mobility: Transit Intent: Encourage public transportation as a form of travel to, from and around the River and adjoining neighborhood.</p>			
<p>Provide transit passes for residents and/or employees for the first year of the building's operation.</p>	NA	3	
<p>Allocate a location, accessible and visible to the users of the building, for the posting of local transit and bicycling information (times, routes, rates) and nearby points of interest. The information provided shall be maintained current and up to date.</p>	NA	1	



SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

- Agreement/contract with transit provider or a copy of the invoice indicating purchase of passes.
- Site and/or ground floor building plan that illustrates location of transit and bicycle information
- Provide list of information that shall be included, and routinely updated, about local transit and bicycle services

Section: 5.3.4 Mobility: Bicycle

Intent: Promote and support bicycling and other forms of two-wheeled transportation through improved amenities

Provide facilities for securing bicycles for 5% of the regular building occupants. For each additional 5% accommodated, one point is awarded, for a maximum of 3 total points.

Provide designated stalls for scooters, mopeds and motorcycles.

Provide on-site locker facilities.

Provide on-site changing/shower facilities for employees.

	Single Family	Other	Annotation
Provide facilities for securing bicycles for 5% of the regular building occupants. For each additional 5% accommodated, one point is awarded, for a maximum of 3 total points.	NA	1	
Provide designated stalls for scooters, mopeds and motorcycles.	NA	1	
Provide on-site locker facilities.	NA	1	
Provide on-site changing/shower facilities for employees.	NA	2	



CALCULATIONS

Determine the number of full-time building occupants (residents, staff, faculty etc.). Multiply number by 8.

Determine the number of part-time building occupants. Multiply number by 2.

Sum total of above calculations.

Divide total by 8 to determine total occupant number.

Determine needed percentage to satisfy requirement.

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Site and/or building floor plan that illustrates the location(s) of locker facilities and/or changing/shower facilities

Site and/or parking plan that illustrates location and quantity of bicycle, scooter, moped and / or motorcycle parking spaces

Calculations

Single
Family

Other

Annotation

Section: 5.3.5 Mobility: Vehicular

Intent: Accommodate means of transportation other than conventional, single occupancy automobiles

Allocate at least 2% of parking spaces on-site for a third party shared car program.

NA

1

Allocate at least 5% of parking spaces as designated electrical charging outlets for electric-run autos, bicycles, scooters and/or motorcycles.

NA

3



CALCULATIONS

Determine total number of parking spaces

Determine 2% of total parking spaces

Determine 2% of total parking spaces

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTATION

Parking Plan that illustrates number and location of stalls designated for bicycles and/or, scooters, moped, and motorcycles and/or a third party shared car program

Parking Plan that illustrates location and quantity of electrical charging outlets for electric vehicles

Calculations