

**CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Subject: Prohibition on the future
installation, repair, or replacement
of artificial turf in all zoning
districts.

Policy/Procedure No: 2025-02

Effective Date: 03/04/2025

Authority: Resolution No. 2025-027

Purpose:

To prohibit the future installation, repair, or replacement of artificial turf in all zoning districts.

Policy/Procedure:

As fully set forth in the policy document, attached.

Responsible Party:

City Administrator

Department of Origin:

Public Works & Community Planning and Building

Revision Dates:

Rescinded Date:

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

POLICY PROHIBITING THE FUTURE INSTALLATION, REPAIR, OR REPLACEMENT OF ARTIFICIAL TURF IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to prohibit the future installation, repair, or replacement of artificial turf citywide. For the purpose of this policy, artificial turf is defined as a man-made product of synthetic materials intended to simulate the appearance of natural turf, grass, sod, or lawn.

Policy:

The City recognizes that California struggles with recurrent drought conditions that necessitate water conservation measures. As such, the City encourages drought-resistant living plant material landscaping options. Senate Bill (SB) 676, signed by Governor Newsom on October 8, 2023, amended Section 53087.7 of the Government Code and returned power to cities and counties to ban or regulate artificial turf. The prior regulations, adopted as drought emergency measures in 2016, were intended to encourage a transition to landscaping alternatives that used less water, including artificial turf. Since that time, however, emerging research points to public health and environmental problems associated with these installations, such as exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and other chemical compounds, water and soil pollution, stormwater runoff from insufficient ground percolation, and a lack of recyclability.

In addition to these potential environmental impacts, the City municipal code ([CMC 17.34.060.B.1](#)) states: *Plant material located in areas visible from the street or other public places shall be arranged in a relaxed, informal pattern consistent with the character of the Carmel forest. Formal, unnatural arrangements shall be avoided except for focal points.* Carmel's [Residential Design Guidelines](#) encourage natural settings, natural forest character, and natural materials. While there is a range of turf product quality available on the market, even the most naturalistic-looking products appear synthetic.

Additionally, the Final Design Guidelines, "Introduction to Landscape Design" narrative states: *Overall, the landscape should have an informal character, emphasizing foliage over flowers. Front yards should be informal gardens, rather than the traditional grass lawns seen in many other communities. These design traditions should be continued.* Final Design Guideline 10.2 states: *Landscape plans that use native plants and other varieties accustomed to growing along the Central Coast are encouraged.* Final Design Guideline 10.3 states: *Planting in areas visible from the street or other public places should continue the forest character. Locate plants in relaxed, informal arrangements that are consistent with the urban forest character. Avoid formal, unnatural arrangements of plants and paving except in areas out of public view. Reserve the use of bedding plants and exotic flowering plants to small accents at walkways, entries or near special site features. Lawns visible from the street are inappropriate to the forest setting and should be avoided.* Due to its synthetic nature and existing language in the municipal code and design guidelines regarding natural landscaping and inappropriateness of lawns, the use of artificial turf conflicts with the City's forest character.

As such, in accordance with SB 676, the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea prohibits the installation, repair, or replacement of artificial turf in all zoning districts. The prohibition is intended to manage the associated potential impacts to the community, which include but are not limited to: public health, stormwater management, pollutant discharge, soil health, waste/landfill, and neighborhood character impacts. Therefore, it is the policy of the City that all future installation, repair, or replacement of artificial turf is prohibited in all zoning districts.