

# Environmental Forum of Marin - Master Class 39

## Student Project Proposal: Model Parking Lot Landscape Ordinance

Bob Brown and Alicia Yballa

### Purpose

To prepare a parking lot landscape ordinance for adoption by the City of San Rafael, updating the City's development regulations to incorporate principles of sustainable design.

### Goals

1. Develop regulations for the installation and rehabilitation of parking lots to:
  - increase tree cover,
  - reduce thermal gain,
  - maximize tree growth and carbon sequestration through adequately sized and improved planting areas,
  - improve aesthetics,
  - slow, filter and absorb rainwater,
  - consider high albedo pavement, and
  - develop design criteria for photovoltaic carports.
2. Assist City staff in moving ordinance forward for adoption.

### Background

Program EN-3 of the San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan states, "Update zoning regulations for parking lot landscape to increase shading and reduce thermal gain." City staff have not had sufficient resources to undertake this work.

### Opportunities/Challenges/Benefits

Asphalt parking lots comprise as much as 30% of the built environment and contribute to thermal gain in community, leading to increased need for air conditioning in buildings and resulting energy use. Improving the appearance and function of parking lots can have a dramatic effect on community aesthetics and environmental sustainability.

### Scope

- Task 1: Meet with City staff to review existing regulations, City needs and process for ordinance adoption.
- Task 2: Review state-of-the-art municipal regulations for parking lot landscaping and surfacing.
- Task 3: Host meeting with local stakeholders (landscape architects, major commercial building owners) for input on opportunities/constraints.
- Task 4: Develop and share concepts for inclusion in draft ordinance with City staff and stakeholders group.
- Task 5: Prepare draft ordinance and draft PowerPoint presentation.
- Task 6: Provide draft ordinance and PowerPoint to City staff.

To occur after March, 2011:

Task 7: Attend and assist with presentations to the San Rafael Design Review Board, Planning Commission and City Council.

**Size of team/Skills needed**

A small team is ideal, with skills in community planning, landscape architecture and infrastructure engineering.

**External Partners/Sponsors**

The City of San Rafael Community Development Department will be an external partner/customer. We will also utilize input from local landscape architects and commercial property owners.