

Proposal for a Rainscapes Rebate and Technical Assistance Program

July 2, 2014

Rationale:

The Montgomery County RainScapes Rewards program provides County property owners with technical assistance and financial incentives to implement landscape projects that reduce stormwater runoff volume and improve water quality on properties within the County. It was developed and is administered by Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to respond to State and County requirements to reduce pollution and degradation of local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Town of Chevy Chase is a RainScapes targeted Neighborhood (the Neighborhood) because of its stormwater contribution to the degraded Coquelin Run and Rock Creek watersheds. In the Spring of 2014, DEP started a program that performs individual site evaluation and design workshops on eligible landscape techniques for Town residents who want to participate. Projects completed in conformity with RainScapes requirements are eligible for DEP rebates.

Even with the technical assistance provided by the County, many residents are finding the process of using the site assessment and getting to the next steps of design, plant selection, and installation to be complex, cumbersome, overwhelming, and cost-prohibitive. In order to help as many Town residents as possible realize their projects, the Climate and Environment Committee proposes a three-part program that will build upon and supplement the County's efforts and help our residents solve stormwater problems site by site, in numbers that have measurable results on a neighborhood scale. The first part will provide technical assistance to the homeowner, the second will provide a 1:1 matching rebate, and the third part will provide additional compensation for the most expensive project type – removing pavement and replacing it with a permeable substitute.

Program Explanation:

1. Part 1 - Landscape Technical Assistance
 - a. The technical assistance provider (Town's Provider) will be a certified landscape professional, contracted by the Town, who has completed RainScapes training and successfully installed a number of RainScapes approved projects.
 - b. The Town will offer up to 8 hours of additional technical assistance to the homeowner. This assistance will commence after the homeowner has completed the three-part process that DEP conducts for the Neighborhood and is intended to help the homeowner finalize a project design, submit a RainScapes Rewards project application to DEP, and hire an installation contractor. The homeowner must participate in the following DEP process to be eligible for the technical assistance from the Town:
 - i. Sign up for and participate in a RainScapes Site Assessment
 - ii. Obtain the Site Assessment report from DEP RainScapes staff
 - iii. Attend a follow-up Site Assessment and Design workshop

- c. Technical assistance provided by the Town's Provider will consist of additional design consultation, assistance with plant selection, assistance with submitting the RainScapes Rewards Rebate application to the County, interviews of any contractors, and oversight of the installation process.
 - d. The Town's Provider will be compensated at \$100/hour for up to 8 hours of consulting time and up to 2 hours of travel time, totaling up to \$1000 available to each eligible household.
2. Part 2 – Matching Rebate
- a. This part of the program will operate similarly to the home energy efficiency improvement rebates offered by the Town from 2009-2012.
 - b. All projects must adhere to the County RainScapes Rewards rebate program review and approval process, including application submission and preliminary inspection, application approval by DEP prior to installation, final inspection, and rebate documentation and approval. After completion of the installation, the homeowner will arrange for the final inspection by DEP RainScapes staff and submit all required documentation to DEP, including a signed Property Owner Agreement and receipts. DEP will rebate the Owner after determining that the project meets the applicable criteria.
 - c. The homeowner will then submit the paid rebate from DEP to the Town for the matching rebate. The Town match will at no point exceed the total cost of the project, based on documentation and receipts submitted to DEP as part of the rebate process.
 - d. Most rebates from DEP are between \$1200-\$2500 per household, depending on the project type, and number of projects. They usually cover about 1/3-1/2 of the project cost for contractor-installed projects, depending on the type of project.
3. Part 3 – Town Pavement Replacement Rebate
- a. RainScapes surveyed the Town and identified a high number of downspouts that are “directly connected”, meaning the downspouts drain directly to the street, frequently across the driveway. The Pavement Replacement Rebate funds would provide an additional incentive above the County's existing permeable paver rebate, to cover the additional expense of removing the existing paving and replacing it with a surface that allows water infiltration.
 - b. For removal and replacement, a 500 square foot driveway costs approximately \$11,000 (based on average costs to date of projects installed through the County RainScapes Rebate program). The County rebate covers approximately 25% of the average cost (depending on project scope, size, and type).
 - c. In some instances, because of tree roots or utility lines, other ways of infiltrating water from a diverted downspout are not feasible and a pavement replacement is the best option.
 - d. An additional \$1000 rebate from the Town is proposed for this type of project. The Town's Pavement Replacement Rebate would follow the same process outlined above and all projects will adhere to the County's review and approval process.

Budget:

This budget assumes a 3-year program with approximately 30 participants each year. For budget purposes, we have averaged the rebates for Part 2 at \$2000.

Annual Cost

Part 1 – Landscape Technical Assistance	
30 households at \$1000	\$30,000
Part 2 – Matching Rebate	
30 households at \$2000	\$60,000
Part 3 –Pavement Replacement Rebate	
10 households at \$1000	<u>\$10,000</u>
 Total Annual Cost	 \$100,000

End