

# GREEN GRANTS

City of Chattanooga  
Water Quality Program



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# Introduction

The City of Chattanooga, through the Water Quality Program (WQP), has created the Green Grants program for property owners who seek to improve water quality and/or go beyond their required Stay-on-Volume (SOV) requirement for a redevelopment or retrofit project. The grant will provide businesses, institutions and other non-single family residential customers funding for the design and construction of Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure (GI) stormwater projects on private properties. Examples of LID/GI include, but are not limited to: bioretention, pervious pavement, tree boxes, green roofs, naturalized basins, and capture and reuse systems. The City will also consider other Low Impact Development (LID) initiatives such as removing/reducing impervious surface.

## Objectives

- Improve the water quality of Chattanooga's local waterways by focusing efforts on existing sites that currently have little to no water quality/quantity controls
- Foster community stewardship and enthusiasm for green infrastructure practices
- Catalyze private interest and spur property owners to invest in green infrastructure retrofits
- Demonstrate the potential cost effectiveness of green infrastructure over conventional methods
- Raise awareness for the additional environmental benefits of GI (e.g., better air quality and habitat improvement for wildlife)
- Increase education about the secondary community benefits of GI (e.g., job growth, increased property values, health benefits, and enlarged recreational space)
- Encourage greater use of sustainable development measures for enhancing the environment and livability within Chattanooga.

## Guidelines

Applications will be accepted from September 1 through March 31 of each fiscal year. Projects will be evaluated based on a variety of criteria detailed in the Program Process Evaluation section. A selection committee comprised of City staff will evaluate applications. Applicants will be notified no later than three months after submission deadline if they will be awarded any grant funding. The maximum amount of funding is \$100,000 with a minimum of \$1,000. No more than 20% of the allocated grant is eligible to fund the conceptual design and engineering for the project. This is a reimbursement grant. The money will be awarded after the project As-built is approved by the City. Funding will be awarded as follows:

- The City will provide up to \$1/square foot for converting impervious surface to a protected and preserved vegetated state.
- The City will provide up to \$15/ft<sup>3</sup> for the installation of SOV beyond a project's required SOV (from redevelopment requirements).

The City may choose to award a project with more or less funding than the above stated guidelines indicate; the grant award amount will be specified in the Agreement between the City (Grantor) and the Grantee.

The successful construction and ongoing maintenance of GI can also provide the property owner/user with annual Water Quality Fee Discounts (WQFD) and/or SOV Credit Coupons. Receiving a Green Grant does not automatically entitle the owner to these additional incentives. Please see the City of

Chattanooga's Credits and Incentives Manual for additional information.

## Eligibility

- Any retrofit or redevelopment project on any privately owned commercial, industrial, institutional, or multi-family residential property is eligible to apply for a Green Grant.
- New development sites are not eligible.
- Properties must be located within the City of Chattanooga limits.
- There are no watershed restrictions, but properties directly addressing a related TMDL will be scored higher.
- Properties within the Combined Sewer System (i.e., downtown areas) are **not** eligible as they cannot be counted toward addressing the City's TMDLs.
- Government and government-required projects are **not** eligible to participate in the program.

## Requirements

- Redevelopment projects have a baseline SOV of 0.5-0.9" as detailed in Sec. 31-313.5.D.i of City Code. Only the SOV obtained over the baseline is eligible for grant funding.
- Retrofit projects have no SOV baseline requirement. However, a retrofit project able to manage a minimum SOV of 0.5" from the contributing drainage area will be scored higher.
- Projects without SOV installation must show the water quality enhancements being proposed and the environmental benefits of said project.
- The applicant is responsible for securing all required permits.
- All funded projects with structural stormwater controls will be required to record an Inspection and Maintenance Agreement (IMA) with the Hamilton County Register of Deeds. The IMA shall include a detailed long-term inspection and maintenance plan along with a site map and property description.

## Evaluation

Projects will be evaluated based on the information provided in the Green Grants Application (see Appendix A). The WQP review committee will evaluate proposals and assign grants using the Green Grants Evaluation Scorecard (see Appendix B). Additional information may be requested by the review committee during the evaluation period.

Projects that directly address a watershed's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (<https://www.tn.gov/environment/article/wr-ws-tennessees-total-maximum-daily-load-tmdl-program>) and/or Threatened and Endangered Species (<https://www.tn.gov/twra/topic/species-list>) will be scored higher. For example, a project in the South Chickamauga Creek Watershed can highlight how it will aid in the protection of habitat for the state threatened Chickamauga Crayfish and federally listed Snail Darter and/or address the watershed's TMDL for siltation. The TMDL defines the allowable suspended sediment level in the creek and assigns a percentage decrease of sediment for the City to achieve. Increased infiltration from GI can naturally feed streams during base flow conditions through the recharged groundwater which decreases in-stream erosion during storm events and protects in-stream habitat.

# Process

1. Applicant prepares the application with all supporting documents and submits to the City Of Chattanooga WQP at ChattanoogaWQ@chattanooga.gov. Included with the application must be the following:
  - a. Conceptual Site Plan – shall include:
    - i. Location map
    - ii. Location of GI and/or areas for preservation/restoration
    - iii. Direction of flow
    - iv. Labeled features
    - v. Important features of the property (e.g., limiting conditions)
    - vi. Existing heritage trees
    - vii. All stormwater infrastructure
  - b. Maintenance schedule for proposed stormwater control measure/s
  - c. Proposed Budget (including design cost)
2. WQP staff will review application and request additional information as necessary.
3. WQP staff will perform a site inspection.
4. If selected, the WQP will make an offer of *estimated* financial contribution for the project.
  - a. Final contributions are determined based on actual SOV managed, square footage of impervious area removed, and/or environmental enhancements achieved.
5. Applicant must follow the steps for the Land Development Office’s (LDO) 3-phase project development process outlined in chapter 4 of the RMG. Each phase – concept, preliminary, and final – require City review and approval.
6. Applicant obtains all necessary permits for the project.
7. All aspects of the project are completed including any educational components.
  - a. Project must be completed within 12 months of the City Land Disturbing Permit (LDP) issue date.
8. AsBUILTs are submitted for LDO approval.
  - a. Upon AsBuilt approval and closure of the LDP, confirmation of reimbursement eligibility will be made. Projects must meet the requirements set forth in the Agreement.
9. Project invoices are submitted to the WQP for project budget verification and reimbursement.
10. Applicant can choose to apply for WQFDs or Credit Coupons.

# Resources

Resource Rain: Rainwater Management Guide

<http://www.chattanooga.gov/resourcerain>

US Environmental Protection Agency: Green Infrastructure Defined

<http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/index.cfm>

City of Chattanooga Credits and Incentives Manual

[http://www.chattanooga.gov/images/citymedia/publicworks/CIM\\_Final\\_3-3-15\\_forms\\_added.pdf](http://www.chattanooga.gov/images/citymedia/publicworks/CIM_Final_3-3-15_forms_added.pdf)

# Appendix A

Application Form



# City Of Chattanooga

## Public Works - Water Quality Program

### GREEN GRANTS APPLICATION

Grant applications must be submitted electronically to [ChattanoogaWQ@chattanooga.gov](mailto:ChattanoogaWQ@chattanooga.gov) with the subject line "Green Grants Application". The email must be less than 10 MB (megabytes).

<b>Applicant Name:</b>		
<b>E-mail:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip</b>
<b>Property Owner Name (if different than applicant):</b>		
<b>Property Owner E-mail:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	
<b>Site Address:</b>	<b>Parcel #</b>	
<b>Watershed:</b>		
<b>Total Grant Request: \$</b>	<b>Percent of Total Budget:</b>	

- **Which of the following describes your project?**
  - RETROFIT
  - SOV
  - REDEVELOPMENT
  - Non-SOV
  
- **Which of the following best describes your site/organization?**
  - NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OR ASSOCIATION
  - COMMUNITY GROUP
  - INDIVIDUAL
  - COMMERCIAL BUSINESS
  - INDUSTRIAL
  - INSTITUTIONAL
  
- **Additional required information:**
  - CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
  - LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE
  - PROPOSED BUDGET (including engineering & design costs)

Property Owner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

Answer the following questions using additional pages (**3 page max**). Property Owner and Applicant (if not the owner) must sign the Project Narrative sheet as recognition of the agreed upon plan.

1. Briefly explain the project's pre-development conditions and current land usage.
2. Explain the project's planned post-development conditions and land usage. This narrative should be clearly illustrated on the conceptual site plan.
3. Describe the project objectives in light of improving the environment and local community. How will these objectives be met?
4. Outline the scope of work, being sure to include a project timeline. Note any in-kind contributions and planned monitoring efforts.
5. Does the project include partners? If so, describe the role of each.
6. Explain how the project will include community participation and education and indicate by what means (e.g., community events, press releases, project signage, presentations, etc.).
7. How will this build support for local water quality efforts?
8. Define project success and how it will be measured for both the immediate benefits and long-term goals.
9. Why is this project important to do now?
10. Explain how the project will utilize new and innovative technologies or methods?

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# **Appendix B**

## Green Grants Scorecard

## Green Grants Evaluation Scorecard

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Score based on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 “not meeting objectives” and 5 “meeting all objectives”. Use the space provided to comment on how you decided on each score.

1. Does this project meet the requirements of the program and has the applicant submitted all the required documentation? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Are the objectives clear from the project narrative? Are they achievable? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Does the conceptual site plan thoroughly illustrate the project narrative? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Does it offer public accessibility or have high visibility? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Does the project have SOV and/or does it have additional WQ benefits? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Has the applicant secured community support and/or additional partners? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Are there outreach and education components and are they practical? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Is the timeline acceptable? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Is the project cost-effective? Does the proposed budget make sense? Score: \_\_\_\_\_
  
10. Is the maintenance plan comprehensive and reasonable? Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **Appendix C**

## Frequently Asked Questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are non-profits eligible?
  - a. Yes
2. Can a non-profit apply for a Green Grant on government owned property (e.g., public park)?
  - a. No. Governmental projects are not eligible no matter who applies.
3. Can entities holding a long-term lease on a City property apply for a Green Grant?
  - a. Such situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The applicant is encouraged to contact the City directly prior to applying.
4. Are private schools eligible?
  - a. Yes
5. Are mixed-used development projects eligible?
  - a. Yes.
6. Are single family residential (SFR) developments eligible?
  - a. No. The long term operation and maintenance of stormwater control structures is a difficult responsibility to place on single family residential customers. In addition, residential property owners are billed a flat rate for the water quality fee (\$126.49/yr) and do not have their impervious area measured; therefore, they are currently not eligible to receive Water Quality Fee Discounts or Credit Coupons. In addition, SFR properties are not required to comply with the City's SOV requirements unless they are part of a larger common plan of development in which the entire site (i.e., subdivision) would be required to comply with the standards. This is typically done on community lots owned by an entity.
7. Are condominiums/multi-family residential developments eligible?
  - a. Yes. Apartment and condo units are built with the same requirements for water quality and water quantity as are other non-residential sites (e.g., commercial, industrial, etc.).
8. Can an applicant apply for a Green Grant on a substantial renovation project that involves more than just stormwater?
  - a. Yes. However, only the stormwater component of the project may be awarded a grant and therefore, cost estimates must be itemized in the application.
9. What is the difference between a 'redevelopment' and a 'retrofit' project?
  - a. The following definitions are from City Code Section 31-302.
    - i. "Redevelopment" means the alteration of developed land that results in land disturbance. The term is not intended to include such activities as exterior remodeling, which would not be expected to cause adverse stormwater quality impacts.
    - ii. "Retrofit" is the voluntary expansion, modification, or other upgrading of existing stormwater management strategies to increase groundwater recharge, promote stormwater reuse, promote runoff reduction, and/or

improve water quality.

10. What are concept design drawings?
  - a. A concept drawing shows the *vision* of the project. It outlines the proposed stormwater project and the areas of the property it will manage. It does not need to be a complete engineered design drawing, but likely needs to be prepared with the assistance of a design professional.
11. Who will make the award decisions?
  - a. The City Water Quality Program retains the sole discretion to evaluate applications, make recommendations, and award grants.
12. What happens if a property that has received a Green Grant is redeveloped in the future?
  - a. The volume for which the grant was awarded must be replaced on site.
13. How can the application be submitted?
  - a. Applications are to be submitted electronically via email ([ChattanoogaWQ@Chattanooga.gov](mailto:ChattanoogaWQ@Chattanooga.gov)) or on a USB drive delivered/mailed to:  
1250 Market Street, Suite 2100  
Chattanooga, TN 37402
14. What are the minimum and maximum grant award amounts?
  - a. The maximum is \$100,000. The minimum is \$1,000.
15. Will grants be released during design and/or construction?
  - a. Funds will be disbursed after the AsBuilt has been approved by the Land Development Office, invoices and receipts have been submitted and approved, and the project is shown to have met the requirements set forth in the signed Agreement. Any early disbursements of funds must be explicitly stated in the Agreement. Any funds disbursed to projects that are not completed or are unsuccessful in meeting their stated goals are subject to repayment.
16. Can projects receive credit for treating stormwater from publicly owned streets?
  - a. Yes.
17. Can projects within the Combined Sewer System (CSS) be awarded a Green Grant?
  - a. No. The CSS does not have a TMDL associated with the City's water quality MS4 permit. Therefore, funding for projects in the CSS will not qualify for a Green Grant. Sites within the CSS can still overdesign or retrofit their property with SOV to obtain a water quality fee discount, but neither credit coupons nor Green Grant funding will be made available.
18. What is the relationship between Green Grants and the Credits & Incentives Manual?
  - a. Sites that are awarded a Green Grant may apply for both fee discounts and coupons once the AsBuilt is approved by the City. For more information please see the City's Credit and Incentive Manual.