

City Council Agenda Item Memo

From: Charles Richter, City Engineer

Council Meeting: April 16, 2024

Subject: 2024 Rain Barrel and Native Plant Pilot Program Presentation

Presenter: Charles Richter, City Engineer

Summary:

The City of Brookings desires to reduce water runoff and improve water quality throughout the community. Public Works will introduce the City Council and the public to a new rain barrel and native plant pilot program.

Background:

According to a survey performed during the Stormwater Master Plan update, residents identified improving water quality and reducing flooding as priorities. Flood reduction projects and improved water quality requirements were identified in the plan on a larger scale. Research of other midwest communities identified measures used for single-family homes to help address stormwater runoff and water quality in established neighborhoods.

Rain barrels and native plantings can reduce runoff and improve water quality on a local level. Rain barrels collect water from roofs, typically running off the drain and into waterways. That cycle can be broken by reusing the water on the property for gardens or flower beds. The use of rain barrels can also reduce the demand for our limited potable water supplies, which are expensive to distribute and produce.

Native plants offer an alternative to grass and non-native plantings, which contribute to water quality issues and can tax potable water demand during periods of drought. Native plants offer an excellent way to improve water quality on a local level by filtering water from pollutants. Native plants are also drought-resistant and require little water and fertilizer once established.

To incentivize the usage of rain barrels and the installation of native plantings, the City is offering a one-year pilot program to gauge resident interest. This program will be the first of its kind in the state.

Item Details:

For the rain barrel pilot program, the City is partnering with Rainbarrel.ca. Program highlights include:

- First 100 online orders, using the coupon code BROOKINGS, will receive a \$30 credit towards the purchase price of a rain barrel through a dedicated Rainbarrel website. The list price of a rain barrel ranges between \$55 for a single barrel to \$200 for a double barrel with rain gutter diverter. (Limit one credit per residential property.)
- Rain barrels are repurposed food grade barrels which may be used for vegetable gardens.
- The dedicated website and ordering will be available starting on Monday, April 22, 2024 and running through Friday, May 24, 2024.
- Purchased rain barrels will be available for pick-up on Friday, June 7, 2024.

For the native plant pilot program, program highlights include:

- Fourty (40) vouchers will be issued for the purchase of eligible native plants from a local nursery.
- Each voucher will provide reimbursement of up to 50% on eligible native plant purchases between \$125 and \$250. Minumum purchase must be at least \$125.
- A list of eligible native plants will be posted on the City's website prior to the start of the program.
- Vouchers will be available to City residents starting on Monday, April 22, 2024 and continuing until all vouchers are issued. (Note: Brookings City residents will be required to register for a voucher from the Public Works - Engineering Division prior to purchase and return the voucher with an itemized receipt for reimbursement.)
- Vouchers are limited to one voucher per residential property.

Legal Consideration:

None.

Strategic Plan Consideration:

Sustainability – The rain barrel and native plant pilot program promotes green measures that will make an impact on water quality and will reduce runoff for existing single-family homes. These green initiatives were identified in the Stormwater Master Plan update.

Financial Consideration:

Sufficient appropriations of \$8,000 is included in the amended 2024 Fiscal Year budget in Org. 282 – Storm Drainage.

Options and Recommendation:

This is an informational item and does not require any action from the City Council.

Supporting Documentation:

Presentation