



## **Proposal for the Village of Oak Park: RainReady Oak Park 2019 January 10, 2019**

The Village of Oak Park has requested this proposal from the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) to provide additional services for the Village's RainReady Oak Park program. The RainReady program is designed to

- complement the Village's existing Sewer Backup Prevention Grant program;
- reduce burden on the sewer system through increased onsite stormwater retention;
- reduce site drainage problems at homes; and
- provide public health and environmental benefits from green infrastructure.

### **Project Understanding**

Since 2017, CNT has partnered with the Village of Oak Park to offer RainReady Oak Park, a green infrastructure cost share program for homeowners. The program is extremely popular with residents. Nearly 200 applications have been received, and more than one hundred applicants have been waitlisted for a RainReady grant. The Village has identified additional funds to offer the program to applicants who have not yet had an opportunity to participate. CNT is enthusiastic about this opportunity to continue to provide RainReady services to homeowners in Oak Park.

### **Project Approach**

CNT proposes the following approach for the program.

- CNT will update the RainReady program manual, web page, and supporting program documents. CNT will provide outreach and education services to support the program.
- The 2019 program year will provide grants to up to 30 homes. CNT will evaluate and prioritize applications for program suitability and other factors identified in consultation with the Village.
- CNT's RainReady team, consisting of a home inspector and a landscape designer, will conduct field assessments of the exterior and yard of participating homes. Each participant will receive a home assessment report that provides information about flood risks observed at the home, and a customized landscape design with plant list. If a homeowner has previously obtained landscape design services, CNT will instead review the prepared design for grant eligibility. The Village will review and approve the reports and landscape designs, prior to delivery to the participant.
- Participants will select and contract directly with the landscape installer of their choice. The participant and their contractor will be responsible for obtaining any necessary permits from the Village. Upon completion of the eligible landscaping, the Village will reimburse participants for fifty percent (50%) of eligible landscaping costs, up to a maximum grant amount of \$1,300 per home.
- CNT will survey program participants and deliver a program evaluation summary to the Village.

## **Project Tasks**

### Task 1 Project Management and Program Design

CNT will update the RainReady program manual, incorporating recommendations from previous program years, including guidelines for:

- eligible green infrastructure measures;
- program participation requirements;
- applicant selection protocol;
- program schedule and milestones;
- grant agreement and reimbursement documents; and
- program evaluation.

CNT will participate in two meetings with Village staff, with additional coordinating calls as needed.

### Task 2. Program Outreach and Community Education

CNT and the Village will engage residents through a variety of channels, to create awareness about the program, and promote the benefits of green infrastructure.

1. CNT will provide a staffed table at Oak Park Earth Fest 2019, the annual environmental fair presented by the Village. CNT staff will introduce the program to attendees, explain the benefits of green infrastructure, discuss rain garden maintenance, and solicit program applications for RainReady Oak Park at the booth. CNT will also promote the program through its online newsletters and social media.
2. CNT will update the program documents, incorporating new program requirements and procedures. The Village will prepare any needed updates to the Grant Agreement and Grant Reimbursement forms. CNT will update:
  - Program application (online and paper format)
  - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
  - Program web page at the CNT website

### Task 3. Application Management, Participant Selection and Enrollment

1. CNT will coordinate with the Village to select participants for the 2019 program. **CNT proposes a slightly updated selection workflow process, to streamline the enrollment process.**
  - Applicants who were waitlisted previous program years will be prioritized for program participation in 2019. CNT will contact the waitlisted applicants to confirm their continued interest in the program, communicate program requirements, and provide grant documents for review.
  - CNT will evaluate the applications of waitlisted applicants, and create a shortlist of applicants for the 2019 program for further evaluation. CNT will invite shortlisted applicants to submit a signed grant agreement to confirm continued interest in the

program. In previous program years, the grant agreement was collected after applicants had been invited to participate in the program; some invited applicants delayed submitting the documents or ultimately declined to participate. This change is expected to reduce the grant agreement collection time period.

- CNT will speak with applicants who submit a signed grant agreement, to confirm understanding of program terms and available offerings. CNT will interview the applicant and gather other available map data, to determine whether a green infrastructure solution is likely to be helpful and desirable to the homeowner, and can be completed within the program year. These data collection tasks were previously conducted after participants had enrolled in the program. CNT anticipates that by conducting the pre-assessment earlier, during the applicant selection phase, selected participants will have an improved understanding of the program offerings and be more likely to achieve the program requirements.
  - CNT will accept and process new program applications received through the online form, and in paper forms delivered to Village Hall. Applications received for the 2019 program will be processed and waitlisted until the 2018 waitlist has been cleared.
2. CNT will submit a list of recommended applicants to the Village for review and approval. CNT will provide the list on a rolling basis, until the maximum number of participants (30) have been enrolled. The Village will perform any required a scofflaw and code violation review on a rolling basis, and notify CNT if any individuals do not meet the test.
  3. Recommended applicants who meet scofflaw and code requirements will be invited to enroll in the program by submitting the program deposit to the Village. The Village will notify CNT when the deposit has been received. If an invited participant declines to submit the program deposit, CNT will recommend additional applicants for scofflaw and code review, until all 30 participants have been enrolled.
  4. Pending appropriate and available Village funding, CNT will contact previous program participants who have not yet completed landscaping, to determine their interest in installing green infrastructure during the current program year. Previous participants will be asked to submit proof of a preferred contractor bid which conforms to the pre-approved RainReady scope of work. Proof of preferred bid will be required in lieu of a new signed grant agreement and program deposit.

#### Task 4. RainReady Home Assessments and Construction Support

CNT's RainReady team will perform a home assessment and prepare a report with green infrastructure design, for up to 30 homes. If a participant has already obtained a landscape design, CNT will instead review the prepared design for grant eligibility. If an enrolled participant voluntarily withdraws from the program, CNT will apply unused project budget towards selecting, enrolling, and assessing a replacement participant.

RainReady will provide green infrastructure and flood risk education to homeowners throughout the home assessment process. Each home assessment will include the following services.

- Field assessment of the exterior of the home to identify potential flooding risks and green infrastructure opportunities.

- Preparation of a home assessment report and suggested green infrastructure landscape design. The green infrastructure landscape design will include a description of the proposed solution, planting list, and a custom landscape drawing. The report and design will be submitted to the Village for review and approval prior to delivery to the participant.
- The approved report and landscaping design will be forwarded to the participant. The participant will be offered an opportunity to review the report with the RainReady home assessor. If the participant requests any changes to the landscape design, the requested changes will be forwarded to the Village for review and determination.

The participant will be responsible for identifying and selecting a contractor to perform the work and submitting grant reimbursement forms to the Village. Upon notification from the Village that the grant reimbursement forms have been received, CNT will perform a field visit to photograph the green infrastructure installation.

The participant will be responsible for all contractor and Village fees. The participant’s contractor will be responsible for any required permitting or additional design services required by the homeowner. The Village will be responsible for issuing any necessary permits, processing grant reimbursement requests, and monitoring any permit close out requirements.

Task 5. Program Evaluation

CNT will evaluate the program and document the findings, using qualitative and quantitative data. CNT will evaluate program design and process, such as outreach outcomes, and participants’ experience with the program. CNT will provide an evaluation summary, including the metrics listed below, and a map depicting location of participants.

CNT will also offer participants the opportunity to participate in a citizen scientist initiative, through our Rain Survey program. After rain events, the evaluation participants will be surveyed concerning the performance of their new green infrastructure.

Key Objective	Metric
Reduce lot-level site drainage problems	Participant Experience survey results. Rain Survey results (limited to opt-in surveys completed by participants during the program year).
Complement the Village’s stormwater and environmental initiatives	Types of green infrastructure installed. Aggregated size of green infrastructure installations. Private investment leveraged.
Raise awareness of nature-based solutions for reducing flood risk.	Number of outreach event attendees. Participant Experience survey results.

### Estimated Project Schedule

February – March 2019	Program Manual Update Program Forms & Website Update
March – April 2019	Program Outreach & Community Education Applicant Management Participant Selection & Enrollment
April – October 2019	Home Assessments & Landscape Designs Landscape Construction
November – December 2019	(Village) Grant Reimbursement (CNT) Program Evaluation

Notes and Assumptions: The program schedule is dependent on factors such as Village notice to proceed, weather conditions, and homeowner and contractor availability.

### Project Budget

<b>Task</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Task 1: Project Management and Program Design	\$1,700
Task 2: Program Outreach and Community Education	\$1,400
Task 3: Applicant Management, Participant Selection & Enrollment	\$9,000
Task 4: RainReady Home Assessments and Construction Support	\$31,000
Task 5: Program Evaluation	\$2,900
<b><i>Program Total</i></b>	<b>\$46,000</b>

Notes and Assumptions:

- The Village will reimburse each program participant a maximum of \$1,300 for eligible construction; actual grant costs may be less depending on cost of the installations.