



Capitol Region Watershed District

595 Aldine Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104
(651) 644-8888 • capitolregionwd.org

Curb Cut Boulevard Rain Gardens Overview

Capitol Region Watershed District is a highly developed area with many impervious surfaces, including streets. Streets carry stormwater that collects pollutants and sediment, most of which makes its way to the Mississippi River. Curb cut boulevard rain gardens are an effective way to capture this water and prevent pollution from reaching our lakes and the Mississippi River.

In a curb cut boulevard rain garden, a break in the curb diverts stormwater from the street into a garden filled with native plants. During a rainstorm, water pools in the bottom of the garden where it is absorbed by the deep-rooted plants. The water soaks into the ground where it is cleaned of pollutants and nutrients. Each one of these curb-cut rain gardens can soak up street runoff and help reduce local flooding and improve water quality.

Qualifying Applicants

Any resident, non-profit, school, business, and public agency within CRWD's boundaries is eligible to apply.

Site Selection

Though there are exceptions, most potential curb cut boulevard rain garden sites must meet these initial requirements to be considered:

- Minimum 10 ft width
- Minimum 20 ft length
- Tree canopy does not extend over site area
- Curb and gutter present

In addition, each site will be individually evaluated by CRWD. This evaluation will consider slopes, drainage area, and may require a utility locate to determine if there are conflicts that may impact design or installation.

Timeline / Waitlist

Curb cut boulevard rain garden projects are added to a waitlist until there are enough sites to facilitate a coordinated construction effort. This process allows grantees to save construction costs and contractor coordination, City staff to review projects efficiently, and CRWD to oversee construction more effectively. Grantees may be on a waitlist for a few months to a year or longer, depending on program interest.

Installation

Once the sites are confirmed, construction can begin.

1. All utilities on site are located and marked.
2. The site is prepared by removing the sod.
3. The basin is excavated and shaped.
4. Amended soils are added to improve drainage and the basin slopes are graded.
5. A pretreatment sump and other functional design features are installed.
6. Mulch and native plants are added.
7. The curb is cut to allow water into the garden. Curb-cuts can be retrofitted from an existing curb, or newly poured.

The gardens are then ready to take on stormwater and protect water quality in nearby lakes and rivers.

Deadline

Applications are accepted year-round. Projects will be added to a waitlist and bundled into a coordinated construction effort based on application submittal date.

How to get started

Curb cut boulevard rain garden projects are managed through CRWD's Clean Water Project Grant Program. Visit the [Clean Water Project Grant Program](#) webpage to learn more about the program and submit an Initial Inquiry Interest Form to apply for a curb cut boulevard rain garden.

Project Maintenance

Maintenance is important in keeping a clean water project functioning as designed. Grantees agree to maintain their clean water project(s) for the life of the project, often 10 years. CRWD will provide a maintenance plan and will be available to answer questions about the health of the project. Eligible new Clean Water Projects will automatically be enrolled in the Maintenance Grant program. No action is needed from the grantee. See [Clean Water Project Maintenance Grant](#) page for more information.

More Information

View the Curb Cut Boulevard Rain Gardens Guidelines and Policies for more information on program qualifications, cost-share requirements, grantee responsibilities, an estimated project timeline, and maintenance requirements.

Questions? Contact

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Resources

Visit the [Project Maintenance and Resources](#) page to assist you in constructing and caring for your clean water project.

[CRWD's Clean Water Projects Maintenance Tips Newsletter](#) offers seasonal tips for maintenance, workshops, and other project sources.



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Clean Water Projects Grant Guidelines and Policies For Curb Cut Boulevard Rain Gardens

1. OVERVIEW

Our mission is to protect, manage and improve the water resources in Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD). We cannot do this alone! The Clean Water Projects Grant provides an opportunity to engage and empower our community by implementing clean water projects that protect the health of the Mississippi River, local lakes, shorelines, and other waterways. The grant provides financial and technical assistance to public and private landowners in the District.

One type of project available to residents through the Clean Water Project Grant program is a curb cut boulevard rain garden. Curb cut boulevard rain gardens are constructed in City right-of-way and capture water from the adjacent street through a curb cut inlet. The design and construction processes for these gardens are different from other clean water projects. Unlike other Clean Water Project Grant projects, curb cut boulevard rain gardens are constructed in bundles of several projects, with construction contracted and managed directly by CRWD.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 Applicants

Eligible applicants include residents, non-profits, schools, businesses, and public agencies located within Capitol Region Watershed District.

2.2 Clean Water Projects

Project eligibility will be determined by CRWD staff. Projects not eligible for funding include projects requiring a CRWD permit, projects required to become compliant with local or state ordinances or to resolve legal matters of any kind, and projects that do not meet the minimum grant award.

3. GRANT AWARD

Grant amounts are based primarily on water quality and educational benefits. The estimated cost of construction may not be fully covered by CRWD. Curb cut boulevard rain garden projects are bundled in a single construction contract managed by CRWD, which must be approved by CRWD's Board of Managers. Since CRWD is paying the contractor directly, the grantee is responsible for reimbursing CRWD for the difference between the construction cost and their grant award.

3.1 Cost–Share

CRWD’s grant awards are subject to cost-share requirements. CRWD can fund a percentage of eligible project costs, up to the amount of the grant award. Expenses exceeding the grant award amount are the responsibility of the grantee. If applicable, CRWD will invoice for the grantee’s cost-share amount upon project completion. Cost-share amounts are listed below:

- Residential, public agencies and non-profits: CRWD can fund 95% of eligible project costs, up to the grant award amount.
- Business and other for-profit organizations: CRWD can fund 75% of eligible project costs, up to the grant award amount.

3.2 Focus Area Cost–Share

To increase grant projects in the District, cost-share amounts in Saint Anthony Hill, Trout Brook, and Phalen creek subwatersheds have been adjusted. Those subwatersheds are a focus area because they have fewer grant projects than other portions of the District and they overlap with communities of historically underrepresented groups, including people of color, immigrants, younger generations, and those living in poverty. Check the [Focus Area Map](#) to see if you qualify.

- Residential: CRWD can fund 100% of eligible project costs, up to the grant award amount.
- Public agencies and non-profits: CRWD can fund 95% of eligible project costs, up to the grant award amount.
- Businesses and other for-profit organizations: CRWD can fund 90% of eligible project costs, up to the grant award amount.

4. PROCESS

CRWD serves as the primary project coordinator on behalf of grantees and partners with Ramsey County Soil & Water Conservation Division (RCSWCD) to offer technical services including design. Throughout the grant process, grant recipients will work with both CRWD and a Ramsey County Conservation Design Specialist. See contact information indicated in section 14.

Curb cut boulevard rain garden projects are added to a waitlist until there are enough sites to facilitate a coordinated construction effort. This process results in lower costs and easier coordination between CRWD and City staff reviewing projects. CRWD manages construction and a contractor on behalf of grantees to make the process as efficient as possible.

Key process steps and typical timeline:

Notification to Waitlisters	Designs	Design Review and Approval	Agreements and Contracting	Construction Start
End of Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Spring

4.1 Initial Inquiry

1. Fill out a [Clean Water Projects Grant Inquiry Form](#) to schedule a site visit.

2. After the site visit, CRWD will send you a Clean Water Proposal (CWP) and program application that describes the general size and location of the project identified at the site visit. The CWP also includes an estimated project cost and estimated grant award.

4.2 Application and Waitlist

1. Complete and submit a grant application.
2. CRWD staff review potential curb cut boulevard rain garden sites to ensure the project is viable and doesn't conflict with City rules or any utilities.
3. Your site will be added to a waitlist until there are enough other grantees to bundle into one project. This is done in order to coordinate City review and contracting, and results in cost savings to grantees. This can take a few months up to a year. Grantees will be notified when their site is selected to go to the design phase or if is ineligible for any reason.

4.3 Design

1. Once CRWD has enough projects to bundle, The Ramsey County Conservation Design Specialist will develop the construction plan sets. This process typically takes 4-6 weeks to complete.
2. The construction plan set will be shared for your review.

4.4 Project Approval

1. CRWD will send design plans to the City for review. This process can take up to three months. CRWD will notify grantees if/when their projects are approved by the City.
2. Once projects are approved, CRWD will coordinate the hiring of a contractor who will construct the bundled curb cut boulevard rain gardens. CRWD will also receive approval for this project from its Board of Managers.

4.5 Grant Agreement

1. CRWD will send you the grant agreement with instructions on how to sign. This agreement will include the final grant award and cost-share requirement based on contractor costs.

4.6 Construction

1. CRWD will schedule a pre-construction meeting with the contractor to review plans before beginning work.
2. CRWD and RWSCWD will oversee construction and keep grantee updated on important project milestones.
3. Contractor must pass a final inspection before project is complete.

4.7 Grant Reimbursement/Payment

1. CRWD will pay the contractor directly for their work once project is complete.
2. CRWD will notify the grantee of project completion and will send an invoice for the grantee's cost-share amount (project cost minus grant award).
3. Grantee payment to CRWD by check is required within 60 days of receiving invoice.

5. APPLICATION TIMELINE

Applications for the Clean Water Projects Grant are accepted year-round. An application must be submitted to CRWD for review and approval.

6. APPROVAL

It is CRWD's responsibility to ensure program funds are used efficiently. Staff at CRWD will examine application and reimbursement materials to ensure cost-effective methods and materials were used to implement projects. CRWD holds the right to withhold funds or terminate agreements that do not meet design specifications, grant agreement requirements, or follow program policies and guidelines.

7. AGREEMENT

The grant agreement will be executed by CRWD upon approval by the District Administrator. Exhibits to the agreement include the approved construction plan set, and maintenance requirements. Any amendment to the grant agreement terms shall be approved by the CRWD Administrator and must be signed by both parties upon mutual agreement.

8. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

Grantee operation and maintenance (O&M) is required for all grant awarded clean water projects. The maintenance plan is incorporated into the grant agreement as EXHIBIT B and is the sole responsibility of the grantee. All clean water projects have a minimum 10-year O&M requirement unless otherwise stated in the grant agreement, and BMP(s) must be installed for the entire life span of the O&M requirement(s).

Curb cut boulevard rain gardens are eligible for the Maintenance Grant program and are enrolled at the time of grant agreement execution. Participation is encouraged but not required. Current Maintenance Grant Guidelines and Policies are located on the [Clean Water Project Maintenance Grants webpage](#).

CRWD inspects clean water projects and provides feedback to grantees. Grantees will allow CRWD staff access to the property to conduct project inspections. Grantees will be notified in advance of an upcoming inspection.

If a grantee relocates, they must inform CRWD of the relocation.

9. PERMITTING AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The contractor will secure all necessary permits applicable to the work.

Once construction is complete, It is the grantee's responsibility to ensure they adhere to their municipality's local ordinances, including boulevard plant height requirements.

10. CONFORMANCE TO POLICIES

CRWD reserves the right to refuse disbursement of funds for the project if it is not completed in accordance with these policies or the terms of the executed Grant Agreement.

11. SIGNAGE

CRWD will be permitted to place reasonable signage on the project property informing the public about the BMP(s) and the CRWD Clean Water Projects Grant Program.

12. CONTACTS

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD)

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