



**TO:** T.C. Broadnax  
City Manager

**FROM:** Michael P. Slevin III, P.E.  
Environmental Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Council Action Memo – Request for Ordinance – August 20, 2013  
Amendments to TMC Chapter 12.08 for a Low Impact Development Incentive  
Pilot Program

**DATE:** July 29, 2013

The Environmental Services Department is requesting the City Council to amend Chapter 12.08 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) to implement a pilot program to provide incentives to eligible customers who construct and/or maintain low impact development (LID) rain gardens and bio-retention facilities.

#### **Background**

The City's Phase 1 Municipal Stormwater permit requires that the City encourage LID practices through public education and implementation of a structural stormwater controls program to prevent or reduce impacts to waters of the state caused by discharges from the municipal stormwater system. The structural stormwater controls program shall "consider impacts caused by stormwater discharges from areas of existing development...." In addition, code changes to make LID the preferred and commonly-used approach for site development are required by the permit to be in place no later than July 1, 2015.

To encourage LID retrofits in existing developed areas and to prepare for future required code changes, the City is proposing a pilot program to provide incentives (rebates and rate breaks). This pilot program will include rebates to residential customers that live in eligible watersheds who install residential rain gardens and will include rate breaks to residential and commercial customers who "adopt" a City-owned rain garden for maintenance activities.

#### **Funding**

Funds are budgeted in the ES Surface Water Fund 4301.

#### **Reason for Project**

This pilot program supports the City's Municipal Stormwater permit goals by providing public education about the benefits of LID practices and by incentivizing existing development to reduce flows to the municipal stormwater system. This pilot program will lay the groundwork for numerous benefits to the ratepayers. Ultimately, the City envisions these programs making improvements in the following areas:

- Eliminating the need for or reducing the size of capital projects to address downstream capacity issues.
- Reducing the size of future downstream water quality treatment systems due to lower flows entering the treatment device.
- Reducing the maintenance costs of future and existing downstream water quality treatment systems.
- Helping to make LID the preferred method of stormwater management by involving citizens in the installation and/or maintenance of facilities. This will increase the general

public's awareness of surface water issues and will help the public better understand the role of LID technologies in surface water management.

At the end of the pilot program, the City will evaluate the effectiveness of these pilot programs to determine what incentives, if any, should be included in future Chapter 12.08 TMC updates.

**Outreach/Public Involvement**

Targeted outreach for the proposed pilot residential rain garden program occurred as part of the Wapato Healthy Homes Healthy Neighborhoods program. As a result of this outreach, approximately 40 homeowners have expressed an interest in participating in the pilot. This pilot program is being conducted in close partnership with the Pierce Conservation District.

This pilot program will also provide participants with hands-on education that highlights the importance of surface water management and will provide them with insight into the role the general public can play in developing sustainable solutions.