

FAIRFAX COUNTY NATURAL LANDSCAPING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Natural landscaping is not a new concept, but it is a new initiative for public facilities and commercial properties. In order for the county to initiate the use of natural landscaping, educate staff and get their buy-in, and have natural landscaping become common practice; incremental steps, a firm policy foundation, staff support, and funding are necessary.

The Natural Landscaping Committee recommends the following:

- Adopt Policy Plan amendment (Public Facilities, Countywide Objectives and Policies, Objective 6, Policies a.-e.) to require use of natural landscaping practices in public facilities design, construction and maintenance.
- Senior agency and school staff, the ECC and the County Executive provide support and promote policies and standards for natural landscaping to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors, School Board and Park Authority Board and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and Public Facilities Manual. These policies and standards should require the use of natural landscaping for public facilities and promote its use by residents, businesses and organizations.
- Undertake three to four pilot projects under the oversight of the Natural Landscaping Committee in consultation with professional staff within agencies to demonstrate natural landscaping techniques and principles to staff and the public.
- Form a standing group or team of knowledgeable staff that has expertise in natural landscaping and related practices and can provide consultation and education to county staff. The standing natural landscaping group or team will be involved in reviewing the program implementation for county projects to provide input and ensure incorporation of natural landscaping practices.
- Agencies identify staff members to become in-house specialists to provide consultation and education at the agency level. Designated agency level specialists would be consulted regularly for project planning, implementation, maintenance, and monitoring.
- Make the incorporation and application of natural landscaping methods and principles part of the county corporate culture, and include natural landscaping implementation in the performance criteria of key implementation staff at the agency and site level for use in annual evaluations.
- Include natural landscaping principles as an integral part of design for new facilities and major renovations.
- Provide funding annually to support evaluation, planning and retrofitting of existing facilities using natural landscaping practices. Make this funding available to agencies on a competitive basis with oversight from the natural landscaping standing work group/team/committee.
- Agencies evaluate all sites using the natural landscaping site evaluation checklist included in the "Fairfax County Natural Landscaping Manual" and generate a list of areas for improvement that will be used as the foundation for future project planning. This process can be compared to an energy audit for a structure.
- Agencies select a limited number of pilot projects for first few years implementation. By limiting the number of projects, agency and county staff can focus their efforts to ensure

Fairfax County Natural Landscaping Implementation Plan

project success and quality. This will provide the maximum benefit for the site, and allow staff to focus on the proper application of principles and it will build their confidence.

- Agencies implement natural landscaping renovations on the broadest possible scale following pilot project completion in the first few years of implementation.
- Agency staff at the site level constantly looks for ways to improve site performance from a natural landscaping perspective by implementing low cost and simple measures.
- Agencies monitor sites and facilities to ensure proper construction and installation of natural landscaping practices and to measure performance over time. Maintain quantitative data based on monitoring program at the Agency level to be reported annually.