



WESTMINSTER

Turf To Native Grass Transformation Program Packet

This document provides all the useful and required information for participation in the City's Turf to Native Grass Transformation Program. Staff will be closely involved with the selected projects providing technical assistance, structure, guidance, and provide a rebate after project completion.



STEP 01: ENGAGE

Discuss with your HOA if your community is a good fit for the Program. If so, please submit a letter of interest!



STEP 02: MEET

Staff will schedule a virtual meeting to discuss the program specifics and the HOA's project location. A follow-up site visit might be necessary.



STEP 03: GATHER

HOA will collect bids from preferably QWEL-certified landscape contractors to perform work, select a bid, and provide it to the City.



STEP 04: COMMIT

Sign and turn in the Turf to Native Grass Transformation Commitment Form, along the required filled out information found within the Turf to Native Grass Transformation Packet provided by the City to secure your rebate allocation.



STEP 05: ODP

Apply for an administrative ODP to track the change to the originally approved landscape plans. City staff will provide technical assistance with no fees required.



STEP 06: START

Begin your turf conversion project and schedule the following meetings,

- Project planning and roles and responsibilities meeting
- Mid-summer establishment inspection
- Project establishment and final approval Inspection



STEP 07: REBATE

Collect your rebate approximately 6 to 8 weeks after the post installation inspection. ODP amendment must be completed.

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Turf to Native Grass Transformation Program Requirements

The City of Westminster is administering a native grass transformation program for HOAs within the City of Westminster's boundaries. These projects are one of the most cost effective, ecologically supportive, water efficient, and low maintenance options available to HOAs with large landscaped common spaces using high amounts of water. Transformation projects frequently result in water savings up to 80% over conventionally irrigated Kentucky bluegrass. Native grass transformations can also revitalize older struggling landscapes to improve neighborhoods and allow appropriate allocation of water and maintenance resources towards higher priority areas.

Participation Process

- Review the step-by-step process guide and respond with a Letter of Interest with a request to participate. We will contact you to schedule a virtual consultation and possible follow-up site visit.
- To participate in the program within the year, the **Letter of Interest is due March 1st**.
- If the HOA would like to proceed, provide a complete the Turf to Native Landscape Transformation Program Commitment Form and packet with the required information.

Eligibility Criteria

Participant requirements:

- Funding is available to project partners who are located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Westminster and have active irrigation accounts.
- All utility account(s) must be current and non-delinquent (i.e., no past due balances) prior to issuance of any rebates.
- Participants whose properties have already completed a detailed irrigation audit and have documentation of recommendations implemented to date will be prioritized.
- Gated communities will not receive funds, and should neighborhoods become gated in the future all municipal funds associated with landscape transformation must be refunded to the City of Westminster.
- There shall be no existing, unresolved Official Development Plan (ODP) violations in areas that are the HOA's responsibility.
- Program participants must apply for an ODP amendment as part of their project and follow the designs, notes, and details provided within the approved ODP. City Staff will assist with the ODP process.

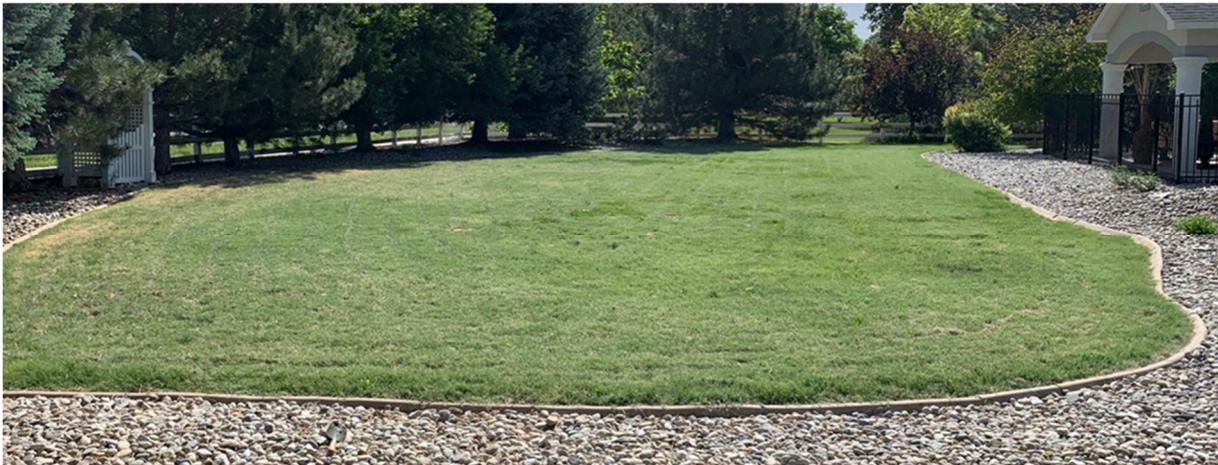
Project Requirements:

- Turf transformation rebates are for retrofit applications a minimum of 3,000 sf and cannot apply to new construction.
- Projects must replace high-water-use turfgrass, some examples include Kentucky bluegrass, including blends and hybrids, Tall or Fine Fescues, or Texas Hybrid grasses or cool season Fescue blends with water-wise landscaping.

- An approved grass species or seed mix must be used in the project. Please reference the Grass Selection Guide (see next pages) to determine the best approach for your area.
- Projects that transform areas in full sun, with low human traffic/use, contain few shade trees, and are watered via separate irrigation zones are the best candidates and will be prioritized.
- The use of [QWEL](https://www.qwel.net/hire-a-qwel-pro) certified landscape contractors is preferred, or certification equivalent for the project. QWEL certified landscapers may be found at <https://www.qwel.net/hire-a-qwel-pro>.
- Applicant must complete and return the Landscape Transformation Packet to the City.
- Participants must include a separate irrigation line to existing trees depending on the species.
- The converted area must receive a post-inspection from the City of Westminster staff to receive a full rebate.
- Spring seed application is required, winter seeding applications will not be accepted.
- Site must show successful seed germination with ground plane coverage of 50% or more of the desired grass species or mix, and 10% or less of unapproved species including weeds.
- Qualifying projects must be completed and inspected between May 1st – October 31st of the year the project was started. A follow-up inspection will occur at the beginning of the second growing season.

Qualifying Grass Selection Guide

1) Buffalograss



- Buffalograss is a perennial, warm season grass species. It is sod-forming, spreading by stolons (aboveground stems) which root where they touch the ground, forming new plants.
- Success and satisfaction with buffalograss is dependent on the use of proper establishment and management practices. This grass can be considered low maintenance once established. The production of a buffalograss lawn from

seed can be a labor intensive and requires close attention and care within the first two growing seasons (18 months).

- Once established, buffalograss can survive without irrigation. However, non-irrigated buffalograss becomes dormant during most summers, and is prone to weed invasion while dormant.

Recommended for:

- Sunny tree lawns or parking strips (areas between sidewalk and curb)
- Low use turf areas with minimal irrigation
- Borders along natural or peripheral areas



Warm Season Native Turf or Prairie Approved Grass Species				
Common Name	Species	Elevation	Height	Soil
Buffalograss	Buchloe dactyloides	<6,500'	4-6"	Clay loam to clay

Conditions: Buffalograss is best adapted to medium to heavy clay soils and grows best in full sun locations and should not be used in full shade locations. Soil does not have to be improved before seeding.

Seeding: For best results, this grass must be seeded in summer between mid-May and early August.

Maintenance Watering: Once established, these will grow well with once-a-week watering. Applying one-half inch each watering day will keep these tough, deep rooting grasses green all summer.

Mowing: Because buffalo grass is short, it doesn't need to be mowed often. It's more tolerant of mowing than most native grasses (which allows it to achieve a lawn-like appearance), but can be mowed six times per year or less—which presents the opportunity for significant maintenance savings.

Fertilizer: Fertilize every few years and use a slow-release product, such as Biosol® or equivalent. Fast-release chemical fertilizers should be avoided as they can thin or weaken the turf and may promote weed invasion.

Weed Control: Early spring weed control of broadleaf species or residual cool season grasses *is essential*. Careful application of broadleaf or broad-spectrum herbicides may be safe during the late dormancy period in March. However, once the grass has started to turn green, stay away from any "Weed and Feed" or any broad-spectrum herbicide since it may damage these grass species. Always follow herbicide label directions.

For more detailed information on Buffalograss visit the [CSU Extension website on Buffalograss](#).

2) Blue Grama



- Blue grama is a drought tolerant, perennial, warm season species and can be used as a turf grass, ornamental clump grass, or ground cover for erosion control on steep banks.
- Once established, blue grama can survive without irrigation. However, non-irrigated blue grama becomes dormant during most summers, and is prone to weed invasion while dormant.

Recommended for:

- Full sun areas
- Low use turf areas with minimal irrigation
- Borders along natural or peripheral areas



Warm Season Native Turf or Prairie Approved Grass Species				
Common Name	Species	Elevation	Height	Soil
Blue grama	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	<7,500'	6-24"	Sand to clay

Conditions: Blue grama is best adapted to sandy and medium clay soils and grows best in full sun locations and should not be used in full shade locations. Soil does not have to be improved before seeding.

Seeding: For best results, this grass must be seeded in summer between mid-May and early August.

Maintenance Watering: Once established, these will grow well with once-a-week watering. Applying one-half inch each watering day will keep these tough, deep rooting grasses green all summer. The drier it is, the less likely it will be to form a solid mat by rhizomes; it will stay in separate clumps. For this reason, it is often mixed with Buffalograss and/or wildflowers for a solid cover. The taller you let it grow, the less water it will need, because its roots will be shaded.

Mowing: Mow this grass once a month for a more uniform lawn, or once a year (in March) for a natural prairie appearance with beautiful seed heads.

Fertilizer: Fertilize every few years and use a slow-release product, such as Biosol® or equivalent. Fast-release chemical fertilizers should be avoided as they can thin or weaken the turf and may promote weed invasion.

Weed Control: Early spring weed control of broadleaf species or residual cool season grasses *is essential*. Careful application of broadleaf or broad-spectrum herbicides may be safe during the late dormancy period in March. However, once the grass has started to turn green, stay away from any “Weed and Feed” or any broad-spectrum herbicide since it may damage these grass species. Always follow herbicide label directions.

For more information on Blue grama grass visit the [Water Wise Plants website](#) provided by Colorado Springs Utilities.

3) Buffalograss and Blue Grama Grass



- These native grasses develop a fine textured light green drought tolerant turf that can save up to 80% of the water applied. When combined, they create a dense very well adapted lawn that can be left unmowed for a more natural look or mowed monthly for a more traditional look.
- These warm season grasses green up around mid-May and start to go dormant in late-September. They can tolerate low to moderate foot traffic; however excessive winter use may create thinning or increase weed invasion.

Recommended for:

- Sunny tree lawns or parking strips (areas between sidewalk and curb)
- Low use turf areas with minimal irrigation
- Borders along natural or peripheral areas

Warm Season Native Turf or Prairie Approved Grass Species				
Common Name	Species	Elevation	Height	Soil
Blue grama	Bouteloua gracilis	<7,500'	6-24"	Sand to clay
Buffalograss	Buchloe dactyloides	<6,500'	4-6"	Clay loam to clay

Conditions: Both species are adaptable to different soils, but buffalograss is best adapted to medium to heavy clay soils, while blue grama grass is more adaptable overall, including sandy soils. Both species grow best in full sun locations and should not be used in full shade locations. Soil does not have to be improved before seeding.

Seeding: For best results, these grasses must be seeded in summer between mid-May and early August.

Maintenance Watering: Once established, these will grow well with once-a-week watering. Applying one-half inch each watering day will keep these tough, deep rooting grasses green all summer.

Mowing: Mow this grass once a month for a more uniform lawn or once a year (in March) for a natural prairie appearance.

Fertilizer: Fertilize every few years and use a slow-release product, such as Biosol® or equivalent. Fast-release chemical fertilizers should be avoided as they can thin or weaken the turf and may promote weed invasion.

Weed Control: Early spring weed control of broadleaf species or residual cool season grasses *is essential*. Careful application of broadleaf or broad-spectrum herbicides may be safe during the late dormancy period in March. However, once the grass has started to turn green, stay away from any “Weed and Feed” or any broad-spectrum herbicide since it may damage these grass species. Always follow herbicide label directions.

For more information on grass selection, please visit <https://coloradonativegrass.org/>.

City of Westminster Indemnification Clause

City of Westminster – Turf to Native Grass Transformation Program

As a condition of participating in the City of Westminster’s (the “City”) Turf to Native program (the “Program”) and using the City-recommended seed specie(s), the undersigned property owner(s) or homeowners association, referred to hereinafter as the “Participant”, hereby acknowledges and agrees to the following:

1. Assumption of Risk

The Participant assumes all risk associated with the installation, maintenance, and performance of any plant material or landscape elements selected from or based on the City’s recommend seed specie(s).

2. Indemnification

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Participant shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the City, and its officers, employees, agents, and contractors, from and against any and all claims, demands, damages, losses, liabilities, costs, and expenses (including reasonable attorney fees) arising out of or resulting from:

- Damage to private property resulting from the use, installation, or maintenance of plant material required or recommended for the Program;
- The failure, decline, or unsuitability of plant material included in the City’s recommended seed specie(s); and
- Any injury or harm to persons or property caused by the installation, presence, or condition of the native seed areas.

3. No Warranty or Guarantee

The City did not develop the Program as a commercial product. Consequently, the City makes no warranty, expressed or implied, as to the survivability, suitability, or performance of any plant material or design elements included in the native seed areas. The use of recommended seed does not constitute a City endorsement or guarantee of outcomes. The City explicitly disclaims any representations and warranties, including, without limitation, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. The City assumes no liability for any decisions made or actions taken through participation in the Program, regardless of how caused. Participation in the Program indicates the Participant’s unconditional acceptance of all risks associated with the work undertaken by the Participant pursuant to the Program.

4. Responsibility for Maintenance

It is the sole responsibility of the Participant to ensure the proper installation, care, and ongoing maintenance of the native seed areas in accordance with applicable City standards. The City shall not be liable for any costs associated with the replacement or repair of plant material or landscape features.

Description

To help ensure a successful project, review the charts below and identify who is responsible for each task. Keep in mind that the Site Management Contractor and Installation Contractor could be the same company.

PROJECT PLANNING	<i>Project Committee</i>	<i>Installation Contractor</i>	<i>Site Management Contractor</i>	<i>City of Westminster</i>
<i>Project Planning Checklist (Project Decisions)</i>				
<i>Pre-Construction Irrigation System Assessment & Water Use Analysis</i>				
<i>Statement of Work Development (Request for Quote)</i>				
<i>Letter of Interest Submittal</i>				
<i>Communications (Signage, Updates, etc.)</i>	X			X
<i>Finalize Schedule</i>				
<i>Create Weed Management Plan</i>				

INSTALLATION AND ESTABLISHMENT	<i>Project Committee</i>	<i>Installation Contractor</i>	<i>Site Management Contractor</i>	<i>City of Westminster</i>
<i>Existing Vegetation Removal</i>				
<i>Purchase Seed</i>				
<i>Seed Installation</i>				
<i>Soil Moisture Checks During Establishment</i>				
<i>Germination/Establishment Checks</i>				
<i>Weed Management</i>				
<i>Fertilizer Applications</i>				

LONG TERM MAINTENANCE	<i>Project Committee</i>	<i>Installation Contractor</i>	<i>Site Management Contractor</i>	<i>City of Westminster</i>
<i>Updated Site Management Contract</i>				
<i>Correct Mowing Height and Frequency</i>				
<i>Weed Management Plan</i>				
<i>Irrigation Scheduling Adjustments After Establishment</i>				
<i>Fertilizer Applications</i>				

IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT DURING INSTALLATION & ESTABLISHMENT	<i>Project Committee</i>	<i>Installation Contractor</i>	<i>Site Management Contractor</i>	<i>City of Westminster</i>
<i>Verify Boundary of Irrigation Zones</i>				
<i>Measure Precipitation Rate with Catch-can Test</i>				
<i>Make Necessary Irrigation Efficiency Upgrades</i>				
<i>Repair Leaks/ Make Adjustments</i>				
<i>Site Irrigation Management</i>				
<i>Schedule Irrigation for Establishment</i>				

PROJECT APPROVAL/REBATE	<i>Project Committee</i>	<i>Installation Contractor</i>	<i>Site Management Contractor</i>	<i>City of Westminster</i>
<i>Mid-Summer Establishment Check (6 Weeks After Planting)</i>				X
<i>Establishment Check (Month of September)</i>				X
<i>Final Approval</i>				X

Sample Long Term Maintenance Plan for Native Grass

Customize this form to record how the native grass should be maintained long-term. The pre-set information are suggestions based on Colorado's Front Range. Modify the information based on the region, site conditions, and project goals as needed.

The following area was planted in native or water wise grass, [insert type of grass] in [insert installation year]. The purpose of this project was to save water, maintenance costs, and use Colorado-friendly vegetation. [Add other project objectives, if needed.]

Description of area and location: [insert description]

Description of desired look: [insert description]

To achieve the project objectives the maintenance guidelines should be followed.

Mowing Schedule [Choose one row and delete the rest]

Mowing Schedule	Notes
Minimal mowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mow once between February 1 and March 31 (dormant grass only) at a 2-inch height to remove dead grass blades. Will make the stand look healthier and greener in the summer.
Infrequent mowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mow once between February 1 and March 31 (dormant grass only) at a 2-inch height to remove dead grass blades. Will make the stand look healthier and greener in the summer. Mow once around June 1 and again around August 1. Mow no shorter than four to six inches tall. Grass may produce seedheads in fall, which can be left standing through the winter.
Regular mowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mow once between February 1 and March 31 (dormant grass only) at a 2-inch height to remove dead grass blades. Will make the stand look healthier and greener in the summer. From May 1 to September 30, mow once every 30 days. Mow no shorter than four to six inches tall. Grass should not have seedheads but can be left a little taller, up to eight inches tall, going into winter to prevent soil erosion.

Watering Schedule

Time of Year	Watering Frequency	Watering Depth
Active Growing Season <i>May 15 through October 15</i>	<p>[Choose one]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Once per week <input type="checkbox"/> Once every two weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Water only during dry periods longer than two weeks. <p>It is [choose acceptable or not acceptable] for the grass to turn brown during extended hot, dry periods.</p>	Water 0.5 to 0.75 inches per watering day. Determine how long to run the irrigation system based on the precipitation rate.
Dormant Season <i>October 16 through May 14</i>	No watering; do not winter water	Not applicable

Weed Control Schedule [Choose relevant rows and delete the rest.]

- Use an integrated weed management strategy. Ensure the maintenance practices support healthy growth of the desired species.
- If no overseeding is required, apply pre-emergent herbicide in areas where many annual weeds were present the previous year. Use only herbicides labelled as safe for [insert type of grass].
- Areas with annual weeds greater than [20%] cover should be sprayed with an appropriate herbicide labeled as safe for [insert type of grass].
- If perennial broadleaf or grassy weeds persist in the area, consult with a weed management expert to determine the best treatment and course of action.

Fertilization Schedule [modify as needed]

Fertilize the area with a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer once per year between June 1-30.

Core Aeration [Choose One]

[Buffalograss-only] Core aerate once per year from April 1 to May 31. Do not power rake or dethatch buffalograss. Bermudagrass can be dethatched if it gets too “puffy,” or the thatch layer is greater than 0.5 inches.

[All other grasses or grass mixes.] Do not core aerate, power rake, or dethatch.

Addressing Issues with Corrective Action

If the grass area shows signs of disease, decline, severe weed invasion, or poor health, consult with a Colorado State University Extension professional, native grass expert, or NRCS Range Management professional to identify a course of corrective action.

Drought Management

During periods of extended drought when water conservation is a priority and watering restrictions are enacted, this area should not be watered, fertilized, sprayed with herbicide, or aerated. Resume normal watering and maintenance practices when watering restrictions are lifted.

Program Checklist

- Commitment Form
 - Fill out and provide to City Staff
 - As part of the commitment to participate in the program, apply for official development plan amendment
 - Review City Indemnification Clause
- Roles and Responsibilities Matrix
 - Fill out and provide the included Roles and Responsibilities Matrix. This matrix should be filled out with all members of the project team in attendance to fully understand the scope of the project.
- Expected timelines and schedule should include
 - Provide a schedule that identifies project milestones and anticipated completion date.
 - Grass removal method (herbicide or cut out)
 - Seed installation and application method
 - Irrigation schedule
 - Weed treatment schedule
- Budget
 - Provide an itemized project budget showing a cost breakdown of materials and labor, including any available estimates from contractor(s). Detail the total amount requested from the City of Westminster and the applicant's total cash-match funding in the budget.
- Long Term Maintenance Agreement
 - Provide a five-year plan for irrigation, tree and plant maintenance for the project. See the sample land term maintenance plan provided within this packet.
- Vendor Setup
 - Provide W-9 (2024 form)
 - Provide address to for city to send the rebate funds