

SOIL QUALITY RESTORATION



Handbook For Developing a Successful
"Batch and Build" Program



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE



In recent years, many communities across Iowa have developed programs for homeowners to apply for funding to install stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on their property. These programs have seen varying levels of success, often correlated to successful community outreach and contractor availability. In recent years, a new "Batch and Build" model has been utilized to increase adoption of soil quality restorations (SQR) by homeowners. The purpose of this guide is to share lessons learned from previous Batch and Builds, in hopes to assist new communities in developing successful and sustainable programs. Putting it simply, if you want to create a program that get hundreds of homeowners installing practices, this guide provides a proven method.

Traditional Program Model- The traditional residential stormwater reimbursement program can be arduous for a homeowner who is required to:

1. Get a contractor quote
2. Submit application for program approval
3. Hire and pay contractor to complete work
4. Receive reimbursement from program

This model is effective for a wide range of practices and allows homeowners to work with a contractor of their choosing. However, it puts most project responsibilities on the homeowner.

Batch and Build Program Model- This model focuses on simplifying the process for homeowners, grouping projects for installation, and utilizing a government entity as the fiscal agent who hires the contractor and oversees installations. The model has been proven effective for SQR, with direct benefits for cost savings and program participation.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



Implementing a "Batch and Build" program requires a lot of upfront staff commitment and planning, but preparing early makes the process run smoothly once the Contractor gets started.

The Process:

1. The City secures funding for the program and sets a goal for the number of applicants, based on what the rebate amount will be (past programs have used the 50/50 model, with the homeowner paying half of the SQR up to a certain amount).
2. The City promotes the program with outreach materials leading up to the application deadline.
3. The City hires a contractor. Depending on the size of the project, you will likely be required to go through the competitive bidding process, per state requirements. Bidding the project per square foot allows for flexibility.
4. As applications are submitted, City employees measure the square footage of each property to come up with a cost estimate per applicant. The City notifies the applicant, who is given 30-45 days to confirm whether or not they plan to participate and to pay for their portion of the project.
5. The Contractor will begin SQR application on the properties that have committed and paid and will coordinate with the City on planning an efficient route through the city. Based upon funding, a waiting list may be created in order to have enough applicants to reach your square footage/yard number goal.
6. Once an SQR is complete on a property, the Contractor will notify the City and a City employee will give a final walk-through of the property to ensure that it meets specifications. An informational sign will be placed on the property to signify that it is complete.
7. As some applicants choose not to proceed, the City will notify those who are on the waiting list to provide an opportunity to participate. The City will coordinate logistics of the second round with the Contractor.
8. As all properties are certified complete, the City pays the Contractor.

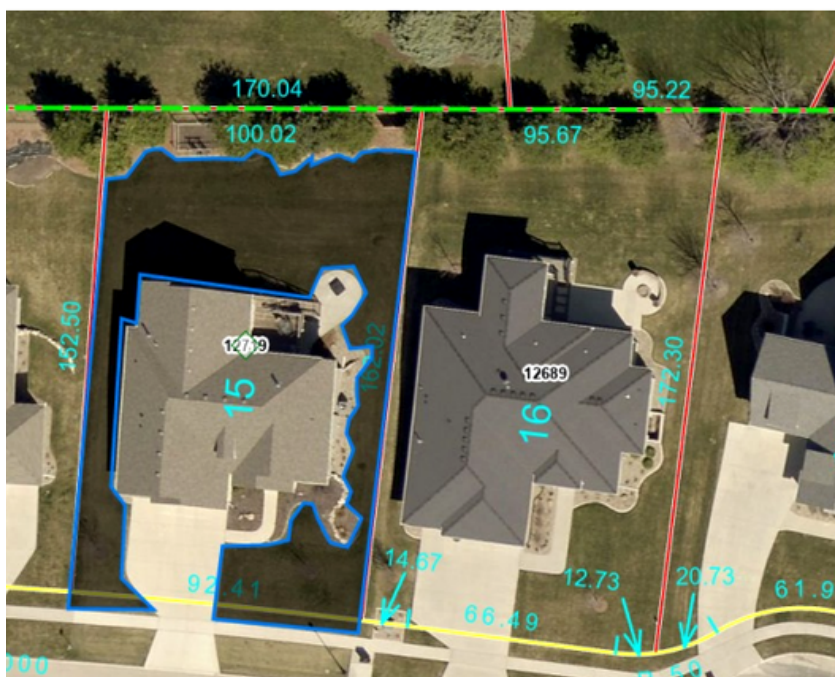




SQR STEPS: STAFF TIME

1 Measure the square footage of the property.

This can be done using an online service such as Google Earth or a County Assessor's website, or with your city's internal software. Use the measurement tool to trace around the area of the yard that is turf (the area planned for SQR treatment) in square feet. Avoid any hard surfaces or landscaping. You may want to include right-of-ways in your estimate to ensure a uniform-looking yard. Once trained, aerial measurements and map creation should take around 5 minutes per property.



Goal: Get an accurate measurement of all turf grass areas where SQR will be applied.



2

Field verify measurements.

Aerial-based measurements are not completely accurate. To improve accuracy, it is recommended to make a field visit to each property. It is beneficial to print off a color copy of each aerial measurement to take with you and mark up. You should also have a tape measure to estimate the area that you plan to add/remove. Any additions/subtractions not measured on site should be drawn up as closely as possible and re-measured using the aerial map. You will record each property's square footage total to the master spreadsheet (sample in appendix) to calculate a quote for the applicant based on the cost per square foot. Field visits generally take 10-15 minutes per property.



3

SQR Implementation Begins

The Contractor will begin aerating and composting properties (and possibly overseeding, depending on what your program offers). The Contractor will be using Method 8 for SQR, as specified in Chapter 5, Section 6 of the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual. Any overseeding will be done using Type 1 seeding material (permanent lawn mixture), in compliance with Division 9, Section 9010 of the Iowa SUDAS Specifications Manual (see Appendix for more details). Seeding dates should be considered if it is included in the program. Spring applications typically run from March 1-June 30. Fall applications typically run from Sept. 1-Nov. 30.

As each property is completed, or by the end of each day, the Contractor should update the master spreadsheet so that City employees know where they are in the process and can start certifying yards as completed. We recommend that the City set a contractual goal for the Contractor to complete 25,000 sq. ft/day (125,000 sq. ft per week), weather dependent, starting in September to ensure that project will be completed before the first frost. We also recommend that the City and Contractor meet weekly to discuss projects and catch any issues in a timely manner.

4

Certify the completion of each property.

A City employee will visit each yard within 24 hours of the SQR treatment being completed to ensure the following:

- Aeration plugs are at least 4 inches in length around entire property
- Compost is applied evenly around entire property at a depth of 1/2-3/4 inches, with most grass still poking through the compost (photos below)

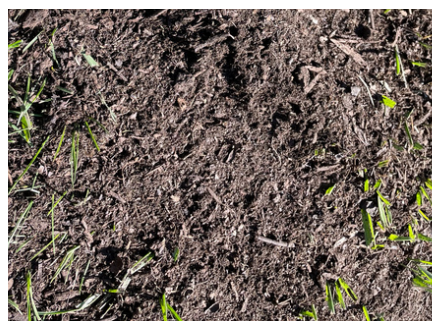
Checking within 24 hours allows the Contractor to come back and fix any issues the following day.

Any areas that have heavy application of compost with no grass showing should be raked until grass shows through. The exception to this rule is on areas where there is no grass present. Although some woody debris is expected in the compost, large pieces along with any trash should be removed from the site.

Once everything looks good, the employee can place an informational sign in the yard (example in Appendix) and mark the treatment as complete on the master project spreadsheet.



3 inch plugs



Too much compost



Correct amount of compost

Communications/Outreach Strategies

Planning an effective outreach strategy and materials early in the process will be key to receiving applications throughout the project and increasing the number of successfully treated properties.

Take into consideration all of the ways that your community shares information with your residents. Some examples of outreach materials could include:

- Flyers, brochures, or posters displayed in highly visible areas of public buildings
- Targeted mailers (postcards or flyers)
- Developing a website to host the application form and FAQs
- Newsletter ads
- Mass Email
- Social Media
- Program "Business Cards" for Contractor to hand out

A highly successful outreach tool that has been used in past projects is informational signage displayed at each property that gets treated with SQR. It helps explain the process to neighbors and passers-by and can result in more applications being submitted.

With all of these methods, it is highly encouraged to add a QR code or link on each piece in order to direct applicants to the website and/or application page. Examples of outreach materials are included in the Appendix.

Webinar/Public Meeting for Potential Applicants

Hosting a webinar or public meeting to explain the process to a large group of people can be effective at getting lots of initial applicants, as well as answering questions in a large group setting. You can share the FAQ sheet (located in the Appendix). Recording the meeting and sharing on your website is also suggested to reach the maximum number of people and to avoid several repetitive phone calls/emails.

If scheduling allows, hosting a second meeting for applicants to go into details about what to expect when their yard gets treated is also recommended.

SAMPLE TIMELINE

● **March-Planning Mtg.**

- City secures central source of compost
- Contractor Input Meetings (If needed)
- Outreach materials development and plan

● **April- Outreach**

- Designate 1 City employee as a communications liaison: Who will be the link between the public and program planners/Contractor?
- Community outreach
 - o Flyers, social media, emails, etc.
 - o Website
 - o Webinar and FAQ sheet for public
 - o Signage in yards

● **May 1 – Program open for applications for 3 weeks or until capacity is met (start waiting list)**

- Measure yards via aerial images
- Field inspections to verify measurements
- Create bid documents
- Bid process begins
- Public meeting to explain process and answer initial questions

● **June- Bid awarded by June 30**

● **July - Property Owners Notified**

- Homeowner provided cost and size information
- 30 to 45 days to pay
- Continue measuring/verifying yards as applications drop and waiting list moves up

● **August- Develop implementation schedule and Contractor route**

- Webinar or public meeting for applicants who have committed, explaining Contractor schedule and homeowner expectations

● **September 1- Email notification process for homeowners (7 days and 2 days before Contractor scheduled to visit)**

- SQR process begins (but can possibly start earlier)
- Use signage!

● **October/November- Determine if you will be seeding beyond fall seeding dates and if you need to complete any SQRs in spring.**

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

City

The City is expected to designate a point of contact that will be responsible for communicating important information to the public and applicants, as well as coordinating with the Contractor and other City employees to address applicant questions or concerns. An efficient method used on past projects is to set up an email address specifically for the project from which messages can be communicated and that homeowners can use to contact the City.

The City will be responsible for the creation and distribution of all outreach materials (with possible assistance from Polk County) and ensuring that the public is provided with accurate and timely information.

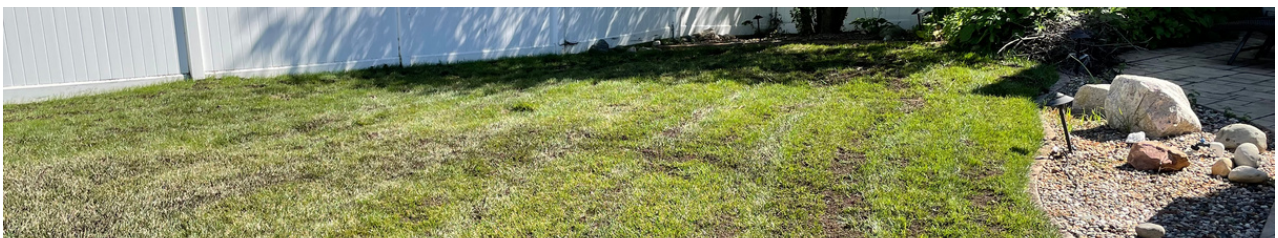
It is important to communicate to participants about the goal of SQR:

- It is not designed to kill weeds; it is designed to enhance existing soil.
- They should be prepared for their yard to be sticky/unusable for a few days after treatment, and the compost and/or aeration plugs will be visible for 10-14 days after treatment, depending on weather conditions.
- They should also expect the Contractor's schedule to change slightly as the project gets underway.
- They should follow the Contractor's guidance on watering after SQR implementation and rake up any areas of the yard that may have a heavier compost application in order to allow grass to poke through.

A sample homeowner FAQ sheet has been included in the Appendix.

The City is responsible for coordinating compost availability for the project and for hiring the Contractor. The compost must meet Seal of Testing Assurance Program (STA) requirements for the US Composting Council. You can find a list of qualifying compost facilities at compostingcouncil.org.

The City will keep up to date with application statuses, measurements of yards, and cost per applicant. The City will provide a quote to each applicant and process payments. The City is also responsible for taking aerial measurements of each property, field verifying the measurements, and certifying each completed property. It is recommended that a shareable online spreadsheet be used to track this data, as it allows all City staff members and the Contractor to see the progress in real time and promptly address any issues.



Contractor

It is expected that the Contractor will work with the City to develop an implementation schedule, focusing on completing treatments in groupings based upon geographical location. The Contractor will also help plan and participate in a pre-project webinar/public meeting with participating homeowners, provide a pre-project checklist and notification to homeowners 7-14 days prior to application, and provide timely communication with homeowners immediately before and following applications to address any issues that arise. Issues may include damaged property, raking of over applied compost, and answering follow up questions.

The Contractor shall also be responsible for all compost hauling, scheduling, and storage associated with project implementation. If compost is delivered to homes prior to application, the Contractor shall be responsible for traffic control measures and all cleanup.

The Contractor should acknowledge that they will provide a project point of contact who shall serve as the project lead. This lead will be the point of contact for the City and Participants. The Contractor should not save resident information for future solicitation of services.

We recommend that the City set a contractual goal for the Contractor to complete 25,000 sq. ft/day (125,000 sq. ft per week), weather dependent, starting in September to ensure that project will be completed before the first frost.

Applicants

Approved applicants are expected to attend the public webinar/meeting to learn how to prepare their yard for the Contractor. This includes the following tasks:

- Marking known shallow utilities
- Picking up pet waste
- Mowing the turf down to 2 inches
- Refraining from using "weed and feed" or herbicide 3 weeks before treatment
- Watering immediately after SQR is applied and according to Contractor instructions for the first two weeks
- Raking any heavy compost that they see

Participants are also responsible for addressing issues and concerns right away so that City staff and/or the Contractor can observe and address the situation. Delaying these concerns will make it more difficult to mitigate later on.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS



It is advisable to designate one staff member and an email address for all communications for this project.

Setting up an email address specifically for this project makes it easier to keep track of applications and homeowner questions/concerns. Facilitating all responses from the City and/or the Contractor through a central point of contact reduces confusion on the homeowner's end and keeps the message consistent between all parties.



Ensuring compost availability before the project begins is a must.

Contact a designated compost facility well in advance of launching the program to ensure that enough compost will be available. The City and/or Contractor should also secure a central location for compost dropoff/storage during the weeks that SQR treatments occur.



Make sure that the City allocates enough staff time for measuring, field verifying, and certifying completion of each property.

This is the most time-consuming portion of the project. Devoting 1-2 staff who shall be responsible for continuously measuring and visiting the properties will ensure the process keeps moving forward. Expect each staff person to devote at least 40-80 hours of time during this phase.



Creating a shareable/editable online master spreadsheet is extremely helpful in order to keep up with the status of each property.

Using something like Google Sheets and sharing it with everyone involved in the process allows staff to edit in real time, making it easier to track applications, payments, the Contractor's schedule, and completion of each property (example in Appendix).



Require the Contractor to submit a communication plan along with their bid.

You should know how the Contractor plans to communicate with the City on a daily basis, as well as how they will make themselves available to residents with questions and concerns and resolving issues. Including this step will ensure a more "customer-focused" approach to the program and receive positive feedback from the public.



Seeding application and timing are main concerns with homeowners.

Including overseeding as part of the SQR implementation is not required. However, it can provide more immediate results for the homeowner. Before you bid out the project, you should determine if your city plans to include overseeding on all properties or if you will instead notify homeowners that this is an optional add-on that will need to be 100% paid for by the homeowner (not part of your City's cost-share program).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS, CONT.



Homeowner Expectations should be addressed early in the process.

In order to reduce the number of questions/concerns from homeowners later in the process, it is important to be as clear and straightforward as possible regarding the SQR process, the results they will see, and the ultimate outcome of the project.

You should emphasize the following in any email communication and in all public meetings/webinars:

- Although the Contractor is striving to aerate the lawn to at least 4 inches, soil conditions may not allow for it (ex., if there are drought conditions that harden the soil).
- Compost may have large pieces of woody debris or small bits of trash. While this is rare, the homeowner is encouraged to keep an eye out and collect and dispose of these.
- The Contractor and the City have worked together to group properties in an efficient route through town. While they may have a general idea of when the Contractor will be coming to a property, the original dates may change a bit as issues arise.
- Encourage the applicants to take before/after photos of their yard, especially if there are any areas of concern or special requests that need to be addressed. This will be helpful for the Contractor to know which area(s) of the properties need extra attention.
- If rain is not in the forecast after SQR implementation, the homeowner will need to water the lawn according to the Contractor's instructions.



The City should have a contingency budget item for damages/issues/reimbursements that may come up (such as damaged utilities or property) or if the Contractor is not meeting the weekly goals.

Although these issues are rare, it is important to address them quickly and respectfully in order to ensure that the affected resident doesn't discourage neighbors about participating in this program or in future programs. It also ensures that the project is completed within the contract timeline.



The City should expect a surge in interest/applications once the Contractor begins.

As informational signage is displayed and neighbors talk to each other, more people will get excited about the program. Make sure that you encourage everyone to apply, or to reach out to be put on the waiting list. This will help you have enough properties to meet your goal by the end of the project. The City can provide the Contractor with program "business cards" to hand out to interested residents with a QR code that links to the application.



If implementing a fall program, the City should have a contingency plan in place for doing remaining SQR treatments in the spring if not all are completed by the first half of October.

Especially if overseeding is planned, you should not risk doing SQR during a time in which grass will not grow. It will cause applicants to think negatively about the project and may result in reimbursement requests.

APPENDIX

- ✓ Sample Master Sheets
- ✓ ISWMM and SUDAS Specs
- ✓ Sample Application Form
- ✓ Sample Emails
- ✓ Sample Outreach Tools
- ✓ FAQs- Public Meeting

Sample Master Spreadsheet- Application Statuses

application date	pd	signed	emailed offer	Email Address	Name of Property Owner	Phone number	Property Address, City, State, ZIP	Final SQR estimate (sq. ft.)	OFFER #	TOTAL COST	city's offer	h/o share
5/16/2022 8:20:24	7/23/2022	7/26/2022	7/22/2022					14,007	22-004	\$2,941.47	\$1,000.00	\$1,941.47
5/16/2022 8:58:20	7/24/2022	7/25/2022	7/22/2022					4,748	22-014	\$997.08	\$498.54	\$498.54
5/16/2022 9:38:32	7/25/2022	7/28/2022	7/22/2022					4,405	22-023	\$925.05	\$462.53	\$462.53
5/16/2022 10:07:15	7/25/2022	7/26/2022	7/25/2022					5,389	22-033	\$1,131.69	\$565.85	\$565.85
5/16/2022 19:54:04	7/25/2022	7/26/2022	7/25/2022					9,980	22-055	\$2,095.80	\$1,000.00	\$1,095.80
5/16/2022 16:59:16	7/26/2022	7/28/2022	7/25/2022					5,860	22-050	\$1,230.60	\$615.30	\$615.30
5/31/2022 14:15:40	7/26/2022	8/9/2022	7/26/2022					14,015	22-093	\$2,943.15	\$1,000.00	\$1,943.15

Sample Master Spreadsheet- Tracking SQR Implementation

service order	build year	cable drop	OFFER #	Name of Property Owner	Property Address, City, State, ZIP	pd in full	area sq.ft.	yardage, cu yd	date completed	date certified	notes	sign picked up
1	2012	no	22-104			8/6/2022	20,252	31.39	8/24/2022	8/25/2022		9/9/2022
2	2017	no	22-087			7/29/2022	8,293	12.85	8/24/2022	8/25/2022		16-Sep
3	2008	yes, center of house to northeasterly lot line to corner	22-058			7/27/2022	16,087	24.93	8/24/2022	8/25/2022		16-Sep
4	2002	no	22-044			8/10/2022	10,730	16.63	8/25/2022	8/25/2022		16-Sep
5	1999	no	22-032			8/9/2022	5,166	8.01	8/25/2022	8/26/2022		16-Sep
6	1999	yes SE corner near sidewalk	22-079			8/11/2022	5,437	8.43	8/30/2022	8/26/2022	front only	16-Sep
7	2009	yes, center of house to ped in neighbor's front yard	22-123			8/18/2022	4,287	6.64	8/25/2022	8/26/2022	deep, raked	16-Sep

ISWMM and SUDAS Specs

Method 8 of the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual-Enhance Soils under Existing Vegetation.

Purpose: Use to improve soil quality to support existing vegetation and reduce runoff from open space areas. . Procedure:

- Mow existing vegetation to a height of approximately 2 inches.
- A deep tine aerator that can pull at least a 4" plug will be required for applications.
- Apply ½ – ¾ inch compost blanket over the mowed area, dependent upon site characteristics.
- Apply seed as specified or incorporate seed into the compost blanket if using a pneumatic blower. Yards shall be over seeded following compost application at a rate of 3 pounds per 1,000 square feet.
- Water twice daily (morning and evening) until vegetation is established.

Use visual observation and collect delivery tickets or tags to determine that the appropriate volume of compost is applied to the SQR area. Compare delivery tickets to match delivery location, total quantity of material, product description and source of material with SMP. Any deviation from specified materials will require laboratory test results to verify that the delivered materials are equivalent to those specified. Collect tickets or other information as needed to verify that the appropriate seed and application rates was used.

Seeding Specifications- Division 2, Section 9010 of the Iowa SUDAS Specifications Manual

Section 9010 - Seeding

2.02 SEED MIXTURES AND SEEDING DATES

See the contract documents for the specified seed mixture. If a mixture is not specified, use the following. The Contractor may submit a modification of the mixture for the Engineer's consideration.

- A. Type 1 (Permanent Lawn Mixture):** Used for residential and commercial turf site, fertilized, and typically mowed. Use between March 1 and May 31 and between August 10 and September 30.

Table 9010.06: Type 1 Seed Mixture¹

Common Name	Application Rate lb/acre
Creeping red fescue	25
Turf-type perennial ryegrass ²	20
Turf-type perennial ryegrass ²	20
Kentucky bluegrass cultivar ³	65
Kentucky bluegrass cultivar ³	65
Kentucky bluegrass cultivar ³	65

¹ A commercial mixture may be used if it contains a high percentage of similar bluegrasses; it may or may not contain creeping red fescue.

² Choose two different cultivars of turf-type perennial ryegrass, at 20 lbs/acre each.

³ Choose three different cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass, at 65 lbs/acre each.

ISWMM and SUDAS Specs

Compost Specifications- Division 9, Section 9010 of the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual

1. Derived from a well-decomposed source of organic matter.
2. Produced using an aerobic composting process, meeting Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 503 for time, temperature, and heavy metal concentrations.
3. No visible admixture of refuse or other physical contaminants, nor any material toxic to plant growth.
4. Certified by the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) program.
5. Conforms to chemical, physical, and biological parameters of AASHTO R 52, with the following additional requirements:
 - a. Follow U.S. Composting Council's TMECC guidelines for all testing.
 - b. Organic Matter Content: 30% minimum.
 - c. pH: between 6.0 and 8.0.
 - d. Maturity (growth screening): Minimum 90% emergence for all compost to be vegetated.
 - e. Particle Size:

Sieve Size	Percent Passing*
2"	100
1"	90-100
3/4"	65-100
3/8"	0-75

*6 inch maximum particle length.

Sample Application Form

SQR Application

Applications accepted starting May 16. Once your application is received, City staff will measure your yard, determine how many square feet will be improved, and then calculate your cost and the City's cost for the SQR treatment. You will secure your spot in the program ONLY when payment for your share of the treatment has been received. Questions? Call (515) 223-6231 or send email to waterresources@cityofclive.com



* Required

Email *

Your email

Name of Property Owner *

Your answer

Phone number (separate multiple numbers with a semicolon) *

Your answer

Property Address, City, State, ZIP *

Your answer

Check to acknowledge: *

- ☐ Application accepted until June 3 at waterresources@cityofclive.com.
- ☐ The City will match 50% of the projected cost up to a maximum of \$1000 per address.
- ☐ Funding is available on a first come, first serve basis for up to 100 properties.
- ☐ Only owners of existing residential properties inside corporate limits are eligible.
- ☐ The entire yard of the property will be treated.
- ☐ The City may access the property to evaluate before, during, and after treatment.
- ☐ Projects approved for funding carry no implied warranty by the City of Clive.
- ☐ Applications must be approved by the City and the homeowner's share must be paid in full before 4:30 on August 26, 2022.
- ☐ The City will email an invoice with total project cost and homeowner portion to approved applicants.
- ☐ Soil Quality Restoration will occur as weather allows beginning Aug. 29, 2022.
- ☐ Implementation of all approved properties will be the sole responsibility of the City's Contractor.
- ☐ The City and its contractor are not liable for personal injury or property damage resulting from SQR work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: The undersigned certifies all information on this application is true and accurate.

*

Your answer

Submit

Clear form

Sample Emails

Dear Applicant,

I have attached your offer to this message. There is no obligation in this Offer stage. Please find and REVIEW THE ATTACHMENTS FOR ACCURACY: the fillable Agreement with Exhibits A and B, and the Offer, which shows the City's portion of the cost-share (one-half of the total cost, up to \$_____).

If the attachments are satisfactory and you wish to have the treatment applied to your yard, you will move into the Acceptance stage. We have TWO options for you to show Acceptance, preferable by [Date/Time](#).

1. Send printed and signed Agreement by USPS or over the counter: with check for payment to [Address](#).
2. Send document by email to [Email Address](#) and use the payment link below (electronic funds transfer/check or debit/credit card): SQR payment link

Once payment is received between now and [Due Date](#), you will be considered a Participant. Work is expected to occur [7 day Date Range](#) as weather conditions allow.

If the attachments need correcting before you sign, please call Julia as soon as possible.

If the attachments are not satisfactory and you will not be participating, please kindly let us know as soon as possible.

Feel free to contact the City with questions: [Email Address](#) by email, or [Phone Number](#) by phone.

Dear Applicant,

The City has awarded a contract for its Soil Quality Restoration program and is ready to move to the Offer stage. As one of the first 100 applicants, you have a qualifying property.

To assist in your decision, we have the following resources for you to consult.

FAQ – three page document

SQR webpage – has received updates since our first information webinar

Informational webinar on [Date/Time](#). Join with the video conference link:

[Virtual Meeting Link or In Person Details](#)

At this webinar, you will hear from the City, County, and Contractor and have the chance to ask questions about how the SQR work will be done.

There is no obligation in this Offer stage. Please find and REVIEW THE ATTACHMENTS FOR ACCURACY: the Agreement, Exhibits A and B, and the Offer, which shows the City's portion of the cost-share (one-half of the total cost, up to \$_____).

If the attachments are satisfactory and you wish to have the treatment applied to your yard, you will move into the Acceptance stage. We have TWO options for you to show Acceptance by [Date/Time](#).

1. Send printed and signed Agreement by USPS or over the counter: with check for payment to [Address](#).
2. Send document by email to [Email Address](#) and use the payment link below (electronic funds transfer/check or debit/credit card): SQR payment link

Once payment is received between now and [Due Date](#), you will be considered a Participant. Work is expected to start as soon as weather conditions allow, as soon as [Expected Start Date](#).

If the attachments need correcting before you sign, please call [Contact Person](#) as soon as possible.

If the attachments are not satisfactory and you will not be participating, please kindly let us know by [Date](#), so your spot can be passed on to our waiting list members.

Feel free to contact the City with questions: [Email Address](#) by email, or [Phone Number](#) by phone.

Sample Outreach Tools



Informational Sign

Funding now available for SOIL QUALITY RESTORATION

Turn your lawn from this...

to THIS.

see the difference!

The key to a healthy lawn is healthy soil

Often during new home construction, homes are left with high clay content and compacted soils. Soil quality restoration can help fix problems caused by poor soils through the process of deep aeration & topdressing with compost. This environmentally friendly lawn care method is great for your lawn and can even help improve our local water quality!

Benefits of soil quality restoration

- Adds nutrients lawns need without additional fertilizers
- Reduces compaction
- Increases organic matter content
- Enables your lawn to soak up and store more water
- Environmentally friendly lawn care method good for humans, pets, and our local waterways

Introducing a new funding program for SOIL QUALITY RESTORATION for POLK CITY RESIDENTS

Funding available to cover 50% of the cost up to \$1,000

The City of Polk City has received grant funding to support a new program to assist 40 to 50 households improve their lawns with soil quality restoration. The City will be covering 50% of the cost up to \$1000 per property.

How the Program Works

- Step 1:** Submit your application to the City
- Step 2:** Receive notification of application approval & final cost
- Step 3:** Submit payment to City of Polk City
- Step 4:** Polk City will coordinate installation for fall 2021

For more information & application details contact:

Email: support@polkcitiya.gov
 Phone: (515) 984-6233
<https://www.polkcityia.gov/home/news/soil-quality-restoration-program>

Learn more about soil quality restoration by visiting WWW.RAINCAMPAIGN.ORG/SQR

Flyer

Introducing a new funding program for SOIL QUALITY RESTORATION for POLK CITY RESIDENTS!

Soil quality restoration is an environmentally friendly lawn care method that helps to restore damaged or high clay content & compacted soils using deep aeration & topdressing with compost. Improve your lawn and help improve local water quality by using soil quality restoration!

Funding is available to cover 50% of the cost up to \$1,000

[See the reverse side for more information!](#)

Turn your lawn from this...

to this.

See the difference!

Postcard

Clive

Improve Your Lawn With Soil Quality Restoration

Does your lawn have drainage issues? Do you constantly have to water? Is your grass patchy? You may need to restore your lawn's soil health.

Soil quality restoration (SQR) is the process of loosening compacted soil in your yard and adding organic matter. This helps soil soak up rainfall and retain nutrients, all while decreasing the amount of polluted stormwater moving to Walnut Creek and the Clive Greenbelt.

The City of Clive has a cost-share program for residents that can make your SQR project easy and *much less expensive*.

If you want to increase your soil health and naturally improve your lawn's ability to manage water, we want to hear from you!

SQR is an effective way to get greener, healthier grass that requires less watering and expensive fertilizer.

WALNUT CREEK WATERSHED

You're standing in the Walnut Creek Watershed! The water that moves through this watershed shapes our lives. It sustains beautiful places like the Clive Greenbelt and is one of the sources of Clive's drinking water.

Keeping this water clean is critical to our health and community vitality.

Follow the QR code to learn how you can help protect our water quality and other ways to be a good steward of our watershed.

Email waterresources@cityofclive.com to get information on Clive's SQR cost-share program!

Poster

FAQs- Public Meeting

What will be the cost of the soil quality restoration?

For the City of _____ project, the SQR will be completed at a cost of \$____ per square foot. The program will cover ##% of the cost up to \$____.

What time of the year will a soil quality restoration be completed?

The project is scheduled to begin on Start Date and the Contractor plans to have all yards completed by End Date.

Is soil quality restoration safe for pets and children?

SQR uses natural compost, which does not pose a threat to people and pets.

Where does the compost come from?

Compost is made from organic matter that has been decomposed. Organic matter used in the composting process could include leaves, vegetable scraps, or other plant-based materials.

How long will my lawn be covered in compost?

After the soil quality restoration has been completed, it will take 1 to 2 weeks for the compost to fully settle into the soil profile.

Do I need to do anything before I have an SQR completed at my home?

Before application, we will request that homeowners:

- mow their yard short (but not scalping)
- pick up pet waste
- mark shallow utilities
- refrain from any “weed and feed” or herbicide use 3 weeks prior to SQR application

After aeration and the compost is applied, what maintenance is needed?

Once soil quality application has been completed, landowners should periodically rake areas of compost to make sure the grass is growing through, especially in areas where the compost had a thicker application. If it does not rain in the week following application, watering will be needed. During this time, periodic raking of the compost will help the compost settle into the soil profile and will help the grass grow through the compost. Once the compost has settled into the soil profile, no special maintenance is needed.

How will the SQR be applied to my yard?*

The Contractor plans to complete aeration the day prior to compost application. Compost will arrive in a dump trailer and then be loaded into buggies with a small dingo loader. These buggies will be pushed around the yard by workers and evenly spread compost over existing turf.

Do I need to mark utilities?

It will not be necessary to call Iowa One Call, but we do ask that homeowners mark shallow private utilities such as irrigation systems, invisible dog fences, and cable lines. It is possible that these shallow utilities could be damaged from the aeration. The City of _____ and Contractor are not responsible for damage to unmarked utilities.

*Your chosen Contractor may use different equipment and/or methods that can be specified here.

FAQs- Public Meeting (Cont.)

Does SQR help with crab grass, weeds, grubs or other problems?

No. Soil quality restoration focuses on improving soil health and compaction issues.

Will I get weeds in my yard after SQR?

It is possible that some weed seed can be in the compost, but it is not a common issue. If there is an existing stand of weeds, SQR will not remove or kill those weeds. The goal of the SQR program is to improve soils and allow for improved stormwater infiltration.

How frequently should I have this application completed?

The benefits of soil quality restoration will provide long lasting benefits to a yard. Most homeowners complete SQR as a single application. However, some yards with very poor soils may choose to repeat the process every couple of years.

Does my yard get overseeded with the Soil Quality Restoration? **

Yes, all yards will also receive an overseeding of grass. The seed mix provided by the contractor is a 90% fescue and 10% bluegrass mix. While overseeding is not required for SQR, it is viewed as a great addition to the practice and yard.

How will I be notified when the Contractor will be coming to my house?

All homeowners will receive a 7-day notice via email of when the Contractor plans to complete your project. This notification will also include a reminder of what steps you will need to complete before the SQR is completed.

If I have other needs for my yard or special considerations, could the Contractor assist me?

If your yard has additional needs or special considerations, homeowners are welcome to contact [Contractor](#) to discuss. However, any extra treatment that is not directly part of the SQR project will be an additional cost to the homeowner (not covered under the SQR program).

*Overseeding is not a requirement for completing Soil Quality Restoration. Depending on your city's goals and budget, you may want to offer overseeding as an additional treatment not covered in the program that the homeowner can schedule with the Contractor and pay in full.

QUESTIONS?



REACH OUT TO POLK COUNTY FOR ASSISTANCE



polkcountyiowa.gov



515-286-3705