

Rain Gardens

Nov 20, 2023

Dear Grand Ave Residents,

The Grand Ave Reconstruction Project installed some of the first rain gardens, also known as swales, along a street in the City of Minneapolis. After observing these features for a couple of seasons, we have learned a lot and made adjustments during construction.

We want to be clear about the work that is taking place on the Grand corridor this fall and why the work cannot wait. There are specific elements that are structural in nature that need to be corrected before the winter. These include the depth and slope of the gardens and the exposed sidewalk, conduit, and curb sections created by erosion within the gardens. While doing this work, there will also be general debris and excess chip seal material cleanup.

In the past weeks, the contractor has cut weeds along the corridor in the rain garden features and worked to repair the structural elements. Erosion control blankets have been placed where the regrading was done to protect the areas through the winter. The inlets to the rain gardens have been cleaned as well.

The rain gardens in your boulevards help protect the water bodies in the city by reducing stormwater runoff and improving water quality. They are designed to collect stormwater runoff from the street, sidewalk, and yards and allow it to soak into the ground. Native prairie grasses and wildflowers will make your boulevard look beautiful, attracting birds, bees, and butterflies! In many ways, the rain gardens are working as intended, by filtering out sediment and reducing the volume of rain going into the storm drains.

Public Works will return to Grand Ave in the spring to complete the work and is developing a plan to reseed or replant the areas. Details about the next steps regarding the vegetation will be discussed with you as the plan is refined. We are also working on informational handouts to clarify the responsibilities for rain gardens in the boulevard space.

In the meantime, here are things you can do to help maintain and improve the aesthetics and function of your rain gardens:

- Pick up trash in the sediment traps, curb openings and rain gardens.
- If you see small amounts of sediment and dirt in the sediment trap or curb opening to your rain garden, this can be removed and disposed of properly in your trash.
- If you notice ponding in your rain garden lasting more than 48 hours, contact 311.
- Water the rain garden if the soil is dry.
- Weed and prune vegetation.

Thank you so much for your cooperation and patience as we work to make Grand Ave better! If you have any questions please see our website at

<https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/public-works/surface-water-sewers/programs-policy/green-infrastructure/>