

## **NATIVE LANDSCAPING: TALLGRASS MAKES A COMEBACK IN THE SUBURBS**

**NIKKI GUILLOT\*, CITY OF LENEXA, 12350 W 87<sup>th</sup> PARKWAY, LENEXA, KANSAS 66215**

**LAURA TURNBULL, ASLA, CITY OF LENEXA, 12350 W 87<sup>th</sup> PARKWAY, LENEXA, KANSAS 66215**

**TED SEMADENI, CITY OF LENEXA, 12350 W 87<sup>th</sup> PARKWAY, LENEXA, KANSAS 66215**

*Abstract:* This project highlights the use of plants native to the tallgrass prairie in traditional, formal landscape beds. The proposed plan consisted of a new back-up generator for the Lenexa City Hall, complete with a chain link fence screen & accompanying perimeter plantings. The original landscape plan included Giant Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*), Chinese Fountaingrass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*), Walkers Low Catmint (*Nepeta faassenii*) with an unspecified Rose variety. City staff seized an opportunity to implement a native planting plan in keeping with natives used at the entrances to City Hall & the Police Department. A revised landscaping plan was drafted using Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), Common Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), and Blue eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium campestre*). A rain garden was also created to mitigate a roof drain runoff problem that was affecting turf growth. The native plantings, including both the perimeter plantings and the 1,100 square foot rain garden, saved over 5% in installation costs when compared to the traditional plan. Maintenance costs for the native plants are projected to save 15% or more, largely due to decreased irrigation & herbicide use. The application of native plants in this project exemplifies the potential for native substitutions in the confines of a suburban setting. The rain garden has been registered with the Kansas City 10,000 Rain Gardens initiative & is used for education & outreach initiatives with citizens, staff, and the development community.