

## Hampton considering garden grant



Photo courtesy of The Sage Group A flowerbed sits near a road in Lynchburg... (Courtesy of The Sage Group )  
March 14, 2013 | By Robert Brauchle, rbrauchle@dailypress.com | 757-247-2827

HAMPTON— — Flowers could be a part of the answer the city is looking for to help slow the flow of pollutants into the Chesapeake Bay.

Those flowers, and other vegetation, will be planted in roadside gardens to filter storm water that would have otherwise run directly into the sewers and eventually the bay. In the near future, City Council is expected to approve a grant to jump start the program.

Localities along the Chesapeake Bay must follow a mandate to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the bay by 2017. The Environmental Protection Agency is specifically focusing on nitrogen, phosphorous and sediments.

Gardens used to filter nutrients and slow rainwater from entering municipal sewer systems are among the myriad ways localities hope to reduce their so-called total maximum daily loads.

The Sage Group, a multi-national corporation with offices in McLean, would administer the program using a \$150,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

If it's approved, local companies would be solicited to sponsor gardens located in the roadside right of way. Each garden would include a pre-approved sign with the sponsoring company's name, Sage representative Proctor Harvey said.

"The program enhances the appearance of key interchanges within the community using private sector dollars," said Harvey, during a Feb. 27 meeting with the City Council. "It significantly beautifies the community while addressing storm water needs."

Sponsorships would be large enough to maintain the gardens for five years, Harvey said. After that period, the city could then either ask for a second donation from that company or look for another sponsor.

"The council retains the ability to accept that entity as a sponsor," City Manager Mary Bunting said. "There may be some companies that we wouldn't want advertising, in all candor."

Harvey said he has overseen the program in Lynchburg, which has collected \$2 million from 92 corporate sponsors.

"It's been extremely successful," he said. "The good part is that it aligns with the storm water program. It's not the answer to everything, but it beautifies the roadways and it brings in private dollars to meet your goals."