

APPENDIX F

**GUIDANCE FOR IDENTIFYING GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE POTENTIAL IN MUNICIPAL
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS**

BASMAA Development Committee
Guidance for Identifying Green Infrastructure Potential
in Municipal Capital Improvement Program Projects
May 6, 2016

Background

In the recently reissued Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (“MRP 2.0”), Provision C.3.j. requires Permittees to develop and implement Green Infrastructure Plans to reduce the adverse water quality impacts of urbanization on receiving waters over the long term. Provisions C.11 and C.12 require the Permittees to reduce discharges of Mercury and PCBs, and portion of these load reductions must be achieved by implementing Green Infrastructure. Specifically, Permittees collectively must implement Green Infrastructure to reduce mercury loading by 48 grams/year and PCB loading by 120 grams/year by 2020, and plan for substantially larger reductions in the following decades. Green Infrastructure on both public and private land will help to meet these load reduction requirements, improve water quality, and provide multiple other benefits as well. Implementation on private land is achieved by implementing stormwater requirements for new development and redevelopment (Provision C.3.a. through Provision C.3.i.). These requirements were carried forward, largely unchanged, from MRP 1.0.

MRP 2.0 defines Green Infrastructure as:

Infrastructure that uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments. At the scale of a city or county, green infrastructure refers to the patchwork of natural areas that provides habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. At the scale of a neighborhood or site, green infrastructure refers to stormwater management systems that mimic nature by soaking up and storing water.

In practical terms, most green infrastructure will take the form of diverting runoff from existing streets, roofs, and parking lots to one of two stormwater management strategies:

1. Dispersal to vegetated areas, where sufficient landscaped area is available and slopes are not too steep.
2. LID (bioretention and infiltration) facilities, built according to criteria similar to those currently required for regulated private development and redevelopment projects under Provision C.3.

In some cases, the use of tree-box-type biofilters may be appropriate¹. In other cases, where conditions are appropriate, existing impervious pavements may be removed and replaced with pervious pavements.

In MRP 2.0, Provision C.3.j. includes requirements for Green Infrastructure planning and implementation. Provision C.3.j. has two main elements to be implemented by municipalities:

1. Preparation of a Green Infrastructure Plan for the inclusion of LID drainage design into storm drain infrastructure on public and private land, including streets, roads, storm drains, etc.
2. Early implementation of green infrastructure projects (“no missed opportunities”),

This guidance addresses the second of these requirements. The intent of the “no missed opportunities” requirement is to ensure that no major infrastructure project is built without assessing the opportunity for incorporation of green infrastructure features.

Provision C.3.j.ii. requires that each Permittee prepare and maintain a list of green infrastructure projects, public and private, that are already planned for implementation during the permit term (not including C.3-regulated projects), and infrastructure projects planned for

¹ Standard proprietary tree-box-type biofilters are considered to be non-LID treatment and will only be allowed under certain circumstances. Guidance on use and sizing of these facilities will be provided in a separate document.

implementation during the permit term that have potential for green infrastructure measures. The list must be submitted with each Annual Report, including:

“... a summary of how each public infrastructure project with green infrastructure potential will include green infrastructure measures to the maximum extent practical during the permit term. For any public infrastructure project where implementation of green infrastructure measures is not practicable, submit a brief description for the project and the reasons green infrastructure measures were impracticable to implement”.

This requirement has no specified start date; “during the permit term” means beginning January 1, 2016 and before December 31, 2020. The first Annual Report submittal date will be September 30, 2016.

Note that this guidance primarily addresses the review of proposed or planned public projects for green infrastructure opportunities. The Permittee may also be aware of proposed or planned private projects, not subject to LID treatment requirements, that may have the opportunity to incorporate green infrastructure. These should be addressed in the same way as planned public projects, as described below.

Procedure for Review of Planned Public Projects and Annual Reporting

The municipality’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project list provides a good starting point for review of proposed public infrastructure projects. Review of other lists of public infrastructure projects, such as those proposed within separately funded special districts (e.g., lighting and landscape districts, maintenance districts, and community facilities districts), may also be appropriate. This section describes a two-part procedure for conducting the review.

Part 1 – Initial Screening

The first step in reviewing a CIP or other public project list is to screen out certain types of projects from further consideration. For example, some projects (e.g., interior remodels, traffic signal replacement) can be readily identified as having no green infrastructure potential. Other projects may appear on the list with only a title, and it may be too early to identify whether green infrastructure could be included. Still others have already progressed past the point where the design can reasonably be changed (this will vary from project to project, depending on available budget and schedule).

Some “projects” listed in a CIP may provide budget for multiple maintenance or minor construction projects throughout the jurisdiction or a portion of the jurisdiction, such as a tree planting program, curb and sidewalk repair/upgrade, or ADA curb/ramp compliance. It is recommended that these types of projects not be included in the review process described herein. The priority for incorporating green infrastructure into these types of projects needs to be assessed as part of the Permittees’ development of Green Infrastructure Plans, and standard details and specifications need to be developed and adopted. During this permit term, Permittees will evaluate select projects, project types, and/or groups of projects as case studies and develop an approach as part of Green Infrastructure planning.

The projects removed through the initial screening process do not need to be reported to the Water Board in the Permittee’s Annual Report. However, the process should be documented and records kept as to the reason the project was removed from further consideration. Note that projects that were determined to be too early to assess will need to be reassessed during the next fiscal year’s review.

The following categories of projects may be screened out of the review process in a given fiscal year:

1. **Projects with No Potential** - The project is identified in initial screening as having no green infrastructure potential based on the type of project. For example, the project does not include any exterior work. Attachment 1 provides a suggested list of such projects that Permittees may use as a model for their own internal process.

2. **Projects Too Early to Assess** – There is not yet enough information to assess the project for green infrastructure potential, or the project is not scheduled to begin design within the permit term (January 2016 – December 2020). If the project is scheduled to begin within the permit term, an assessment will be conducted if and when the project moves forward to conceptual design.
3. **Projects Too Late to Change** – The project is under construction or has moved to a stage of design in which changes cannot be made. The stage of design at which it is too late to incorporate green infrastructure measures varies with each project, so a “percent-complete” threshold has not been defined. Some projects may have funding tied to a particular conceptual design and changes cannot be made even early in the design process, while others may have adequate budget and time within the construction schedule to make changes late in the design process. Agencies will need to make judgments on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Projects Consisting of Maintenance or Minor Construction Work Orders** – The “project” includes budgets for multiple maintenance or minor construction work orders throughout the jurisdiction or a portion of the jurisdiction. These types of projects will not be individually reviewed for green infrastructure opportunity but will be considered as part of a municipality’s Green Infrastructure Plan.

Part 2 – Assessment of Green Infrastructure Potential

After the initial screening, the remaining projects either already include green infrastructure or will need to go through an assessment process to determine whether or not there is potential to incorporate green infrastructure. A recommended process for conducting the assessment is provided later in this guidance. As a result of the assessment, the project will fall into one of the following categories with associated annual reporting requirements. Attachment 2 provides the relevant pages of the FY 15-16 Annual Report template for reference.

- **Project is a C.3-regulated project and will include LID treatment.**
Reporting: Follow current C.3 guidance and report the project in Table C.3.b.iv.(2) of the Annual Report for the fiscal year in which the project is approved.
- **Project already includes green infrastructure and is funded.**
Reporting: List the project in “Table B-Planned Green Infrastructure Projects” in the Annual Report, indicate the planning or implementation status, and describe the green infrastructure measures to be included.
- **Project may have green infrastructure potential** pending further assessment of feasibility, incremental cost, and availability of funding.
Reporting: If the feasibility assessment is not complete and/or funding has not been identified, list the project in “Table A-Public Projects Reviewed for Green Infrastructure” in the Annual Report. In the “GI Included?” column, state either “TBD” (to be determined) if the assessment is not complete, or “Yes” if it has been determined that green infrastructure is feasible. In the rightmost column, describe the green infrastructure measures considered and/or proposed, and note the funding and other contingencies for inclusion of green infrastructure in the project. Once funding for the project has been identified, the project should be moved to “Table B-Planned Green Infrastructure Projects” in future Annual Reports.
- **Project does not have green infrastructure potential.** A project-specific assessment has been completed, and Green Infrastructure is impracticable.
Reporting: In the Annual Report, list the project in “Table A-Public Projects Reviewed for Green Infrastructure”. In the “GI Included?” column, state “No.” Briefly state the reasons for the determination in the rightmost column. Prepare more detailed documentation of the reasons for the determination and keep it in the project files.

Process for Assessing Green Infrastructure Potential of a Public Infrastructure Project

Initial Assessment of Green Infrastructure Potential

Consider opportunities that may be associated with:

- Alterations to roof drainage from existing buildings
- New or replaced pavement or drainage structures (including gutters, inlets, or pipes)
- Concrete work
- Landscaping, including tree planting
- Streetscape improvements and intersection improvements (other than signals)

Step 1: Information Collection/Reconnaissance

For projects that include alterations to building drainage, identify the locations of roof leaders and downspouts, and where they discharge or where they are connected to storm drains.

For street and landscape projects:

- Evaluate potential opportunities to substitute pervious pavements for impervious pavements.
- Identify and locate drainage structures, including storm drain inlets or catch basins.
- Identify and locate drainage pathways, including curb and gutter.

Identify landscaped areas and paved areas that are adjacent to, or down gradient from, roofs or pavement. These are potential facility locations. *If there are any such locations, continue to the next step.* Note that the project area boundaries may be, but are not required to be, expanded to include potential green infrastructure facilities.

Step 2: Preliminary Sizing and Drainage Analysis

Beginning with the potential LID facility locations that seem most feasible, identify possible pathways to direct drainage from roofs and/or pavement to potential LID facility locations—by sheet flow, valley gutters, trench drains, or (where gradients are steeper) via pipes, based on existing grades and drainage patterns. Where existing grades constrain natural drainage to potential facilities, the use of pumps may be considered (as a less preferable option).

Delineate (roughly) the drainage area tributary to each potential LID facility location. Typically, this requires site reconnaissance, which may or may not include the use of a level to measure relative elevations.

Use the following preliminary sizing factor (facility area/tributary area) for the potential facility location and determine which of the following could be constructed within the existing right-of-way or adjacent vacant land. Note that these sizing factors are guidelines (not strict rules, but targets):

- Sizing factor ≥ 0.5 for dispersal to landscape or pervious pavement² (i.e., a maximum 2:1 ratio of impervious area to pervious area)
- Sizing factor ≥ 0.04 for bioretention
- Sizing factor ≥ 0.004 (or less) for tree-box-type biofilters

For bioretention facilities requiring underdrains and tree-box-type biofilters, note if there are potential connections from the underdrain to the storm drain system (typically 2.0 feet below soil surface for bioretention facilities, and 3.5 feet below surface for tree-box-type biofilters).

² Note that pervious pavement systems are typically designed to infiltrate only the rain falling on the pervious pavement itself, with the allowance for small quantities of runoff from adjacent impervious areas. If significant runoff from adjacent areas is anticipated, preliminary sizing considerations should include evaluation of the depth of drain rock layer needed based on permeability of site soils.

If, in this step, you have confirmed there may be feasible potential facility locations, *continue to the next step.*

Step 3: Barriers and Conflicts

Note that barriers and conflicts do not necessarily mean implementation is infeasible; however, they need to be identified and taken into account in future decision-making, as they may affect cost or public acceptance of the project.

Note issues such as:

- Confirmed or potential conflicts with subsurface utilities
- Known or unknown issues with property ownership, or need for acquisition or easements
- Availability of water supply for irrigation, or lack thereof
- Extent to which green infrastructure is an “add on” vs. integrated with the rest of the project

Step 4: Project Budget and Schedule

Consider sources of funding that may be available for green infrastructure. It is recognized that lack of budget may be a serious constraint for the addition of green infrastructure in public projects. For example, acquisition of additional right-of-way or easements for roadway projects is not always possible. Short and long term maintenance costs also need to be considered, and jurisdictions may not have a funding source for landscape maintenance, especially along roadways. The objective of this process is to identify opportunities for green infrastructure, so that if and when funding becomes available, implementation may be possible.

Note any constraints on the project schedule, such as a regulatory mandate to complete the project by a specific date, grant requirements, etc., that could complicate aligning a separate funding stream for the green infrastructure element. Consider whether cost savings could be achieved by integrating the project with other planned projects, such as pedestrian or bicycle safety improvement projects, street beautification, etc., if the schedule allows.

Step 5: Assessment—Does the Project Have Green Infrastructure Potential?

Consider the ancillary benefits of green infrastructure, including opportunities for improving the quality of public spaces, providing parks and play areas, providing habitat, urban forestry, mitigating heat island effects, aesthetics, and other valuable enhancements to quality of life.

Based on the information above, would it make sense to include green infrastructure into this project—*if funding were available for the potential incremental costs of including green infrastructure in the project?* Identify any additional conditions that would have to be met for green infrastructure elements to be constructed consequent with the project.

Attachment 1

Examples of Projects with No Potential for Green Infrastructure

- Projects with no exterior work (e.g., interior remodels)
- Projects involving exterior building upgrades or equipment (e.g., HVAC, solar panels, window replacement, roof repairs and maintenance)
- Projects related to development and/or continued funding of municipal programs or related organizations
- Projects related to technical studies, mapping, aerial photography, surveying, database development/upgrades, monitoring, training, or update of standard specs and details
- Construction of new streetlights, traffic signals or communication facilities
- Minor bridge and culvert repairs/replacement
- Non-stormwater utility projects (e.g., sewer or water main repairs/replacement, utility undergrounding, treatment plant upgrades)
- Equipment purchase or maintenance (including vehicles, street or park furniture, equipment for sports fields and golf courses, etc.)
- Irrigation system installation, upgrades or repairs

Attachment 2

**Excerpts from the C.3 Section of the FY 15-16 Annual Report Template:
Tables for Reporting C.3-Regulated Projects and Green Infrastructure Projects**

C.3.j.ii.(2) ▶ Table A - Public Projects Reviewed for Green Infrastructure

Project Name and Location ⁴³	Project Description	Status ⁴⁴	GI Included? ⁴⁵	Description of GI Measures Considered and/or Proposed or Why GI is Impracticable to Implement ⁴⁶
EXAMPLE: Storm drain retrofit, Stockton and Taylor	Installation of new storm drain to accommodate the 10-yr storm event	Beginning planning and design phase	TBD	Bioretention cells (i.e., linear bulb-outs) will be considered when street modification designs are incorporated

C.3.j.ii.(2) ▶ Table B - Planned Green Infrastructure Projects

Project Name and Location ⁴⁷	Project Description	Planning or Implementation Status	Green Infrastructure Measures Included
EXAMPLE: Martha Gardens Green Alleys Project	Retrofit of degraded pavement in urban alleyways lacking good drainage	Construction completed October 17, 2015	The project drains replaced concrete pavement and existing adjacent structures to a center strip of pervious pavement and underlying infiltration trench.

⁴³ List each public project that is going through your agency's process for identifying projects with green infrastructure potential.
⁴⁴ Indicate status of project, such as: beginning design, under design (or X% design), projected completion date, completed final design date, etc.
⁴⁵ Enter "Yes" if project will include GI measures. "No" if GI measures are impracticable to implement, or "TBD" if this has not yet been determined.
⁴⁶ Provide a summary of how each public infrastructure project with green infrastructure potential will include green infrastructure measures to the maximum extent practicable during the permit term. If review of the project indicates that implementation of green infrastructure measures is not practicable, provide the reasons why green infrastructure measures are impracticable to implement.
⁴⁷ List each planned (and expected to be funded) public and private green infrastructure project that is not also a Regulated Project as defined in Provision C.3.b.ii. Note that funding for green infrastructure components may be anticipated but is not guaranteed to be available or sufficient.