

Public Meeting: Green Infrastructure - Monday, June 28, 2010

GENERAL IDEAS:

Stormwater Knowledge:

- The City should begin modeling the co-benefits of green infrastructure (air quality, green space, water quality, noise reduction, property values, etc.).
- DEP should make water quality data publicly available, with Maryland's BaySTAT program cited as a potential model.
- DEP and the City should look to other cities for guidance and best practices in stormwater policy:
 - o The City of Toronto development code now mandates that stormwater retention features be incorporated into new construction projects.
 - o The City of Baltimore also has an active stormwater retention program that emphasizes biologically active retention basins.
 - o In Minneapolis, the Marq2 project employs integrated tree pits and permeable paving to capture and process stormwater runoff from 5.5 acres along Marquette and Second Avenues.
 - o The City of Chicago employs the Green Alley program, a set of alleys built with permeable pavement, catch basins, and other green infrastructure, to facilitate stormwater drainage.
- DEP's analysis of land uses in the watershed should be extended beyond zoning categories in order to fully capture potential opportunities.
- DEP should investigate heat island mitigation as a co-benefit of green infrastructure implementation, especially in light of climate change.

Design Ideas:

- Non-profit groups would like help from DEP in facilitating the installation of funded green infrastructure projects by assisting inter-agency coordination for design and project approvals.
- DCP should modify street tree planting zoning amendment to require bioinfiltration in sidewalks.
- The City should incorporate more green areas in right of way (ROW).
- The City should identify street geometries that are appropriate for green infrastructure (i.e., medians where streets do not crown in center).
- Vegetation selected for stormwater retention areas should be resistant to saltwater in areas that are vulnerable to flooding during coastal storms (for example, in the Newtown Creek combine sewer watershed area).
- Tree pits should incorporate highly porous, bioactive soils for trees to grow and thrive.
- The City and DEP should create a disincentive for paving over one's yard to build a parking lot.
- The City and DEP should design bike lanes separated by planted areas.
- The City and DEP should target industrial buildings with large rooftops and provide them with incentives for rooftop detention, such as tax credits.
- The City and DEP should prepare for the increased number of garbage disposals in new developments. Co-op buildings are also putting in pumps, which inevitably puts more water back in to the system.

Funding:

- The City could create more incentives for private homeowners to invest in green infrastructure on bill financing similar to what has been used to promote solar power in places like Berkeley, CA.
- The City could amend the green roof tax incentive to remove requirements for existing residential buildings to obtain building permit and asbestos abatement (the costs of applying for the permits negate the costs of the tax abatement).

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- The City and DEP should consider pursuing partnerships along with outreach to Business Improvement Districts, with close attention paid to toward developing competencies required to adequately maintain green infrastructure interventions.
- The City and DEP should charge parking lots stormwater fees.
- The City and DEP should help small developments more easily acquire building permits which would encourage more use of the green roof tax abatement.

Community Outreach & Education:

- DEP should showcase current installations and Minds in the Gutter exhibit and target education toward specific watersheds.
- The City should develop PSAs similar to anti-idling campaign (e.g., when it rains, do not use dishwashers, washing machines, etc.).
- The City should educate developers of potential impacts of new buildings on system and adjacent properties (i.e., waste disposals, basement pumps, etc. may cause SBUs).
- The City should encourage workforce development by contracting with local groups trained in installing and maintaining green infrastructure.
- The City and DEP should continue to involve stakeholder groups.
- DEP should develop enhanced outreach and collaboration with the Departments of Transportation, Parks & Recreation and Design & Construction in order to fully leverage sustainable stormwater management opportunities.

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WATERSHED SPECIFIC IDEAS:

- **Bronx River**
 - o Pelham parkway reconstruction
 - o Large commercial buildings
 - o Shoelace Park
 - o MTA and Amtrak Rail yards
 - o Highways
 - o MTA bus garage
 - o Car wash facilities near the Harlem River
 - o Van Cortland Park

- **Flushing Bay**
 - o Port Authority facilities

- **Hutchinson River**
 - o The City should install boat launches on the Hutchinson River as a means toward improving public access and awareness of water quality issues
 - o The City should investigate:
 - A local metals reprocessing plant as a possible source of contamination.
 - Persistent flooding on a parcel adjacent to a local bowling facility.
 - o The City should investigate opportunities to implement water recycling for non-potable uses in high-density housing developments

- **Newtown Creek**
 - o The Bushwick neighborhood contains a large percentage of impervious surface area, and thus presents significant opportunity for pervious ground-cover pilot projects.

- **Gowanus Canal**

In general, stakeholders suggested that:

- o Undulating topography and varying elevations in area may cause flooding or sewer back-ups (SBUs) and adversely impact adjacent properties.
- o High groundwater tables should also be considered when siting green infrastructure due to current flooding in the area.

Specifically, stakeholders believe there are opportunities for green infrastructure in these parts of their communities:

- o Bike lanes
- o MillionTrees should target streets leading to the Gowanus Canal since the area is barren of trees compared to other areas of Brooklyn (4th St., 6th Ave., 1st St., 2nd St.)
- o Multi-family mixed residential housing along 3rd Ave. and Wyckoff