



## Building Local Partnerships

Implementing projects that incorporate green infrastructure elements often requires collaborative partnerships - between allied design professions, such as civil engineers and landscape architects, and among various city agencies with development review responsibilities but also, increasingly, with local extension services, garden clubs and professional associations. Here are some tips to help create working partnerships that can facilitate and support project development.

### Reach out to local professional associations

Whether you are a city staffer with a desire to promote alternative approaches to stormwater management, a land developer committed to sustainable design, or a design professional who wants to see these techniques better integrated into standard practice, a good place to start is with outreach to local professional associations to identify like-minded design partners.

Three organizations that may be helpful resources are state chapters of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the US Green Building Council (USGBC). Most state chapters have websites and listservs (electronic mailing list) that facilitate networking with members who have successfully introduced green infrastructure elements and can provide expertise and resources.

Another approach to identifying compatible local professionals is to contact your local city planning and development department to determine which local firms have a successful track record of implementing green infrastructure features. Some communities have begun to keep track of which local engineers and landscape architects have a successful track record of incorporating BMPs into their projects and moving them successfully through the development review process.

### Build a coalition of city agency staff

If you are a city staff member who wants to see more green infrastructure practices in place, try building a coalition of like minded staff from the many agencies whose responsibilities relate to stormwater and stormwater management. These can include public works, parks, environmental health, planning, and wastewater divisions. Use this partnership to introduce new ideas, facilitate communication and provide new opportunities for learning. Introduce informal “brown bag” seminars and discussions to allow for mutual education about alternative stormwater techniques, for example, or put together a more formal working group that provides guidance on implementation of sustainable water quality practices through the development review process. An important principle is to keep such a group together through the implementation of project plans and guidelines development. A good example of this type of collaboration is described in the [Denver Case Study](#).

An especially important constituent and partner is the Mayor’s Office. Outreach to this office (involving Mayoral staffers in project planning, for example) can be an invaluable tactic to raise visibility and awareness, as well as to secure resources and support for your projects. Many cities, such as [Chicago, Illinois](#), are promoting their “green agendas” and sustainable stormwater management could be an important and featured element of such a program.

## **Network with continuing education or extension organizations**

These groups can be important resources in raising awareness, building technical capacity to implement projects, and connecting like-minded practitioners with each other. Some universities' continuing education programs operate programs specifically designed to increase awareness of sustainable stormwater options (such as NEMO (Non-Point Source Education for Municipal Officials)) and can offer a significant knowledge base. The Stormwater Permit Coordinating Committee (SWPCC) in the [Truckee Meadows region of Nevada](#), for example, partnered with the Nevada Cooperative Extension Service to help promote their Regional Stormwater Quality Management Program.

## **Network with local garden clubs**

Local garden clubs can also offer significant resources. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in [Philadelphia](#), for example, is leading several initiatives to rehabilitate neglected areas in Philadelphia using sustainable stormwater elements to provide recreational spaces and help Philadelphia achieve stormwater management goals. Such groups can offer technical assistance about the design of green infrastructure elements and can also offer "hands on" construction assistance, especially with pilot projects or those constructed in public parks or natural areas.

## **Local schools can be a resource**

Schools can also be useful partners. Many universities offer programs in landscape architecture or horticulture, and might provide assistance in BMP design, construction, implementation or monitoring. They may also have data on stormwater management practices collected through research or as part of class activities. In addition, many secondary schools feature community service programs and might provide assistance with project construction and installation.

## **You may also be interested in:**

[Bring Your Ideas to the Community  
What Makes a Project Successful?  
Drivers and Motivating Factors](#)

## **Case studies cited above:**

- [Chicago, IL](#)
- [Denver, CO](#)
- [Philadelphia, PA](#)
- [Truckee Meadows, NV](#)