

# COMMUNITY SCOPING WORKSHEET

Investigating concerns about or objections to green infrastructure can help you understand why a community may be hesitant to implement green infrastructure. A dialogue about these issues can give you critical information regarding the community's experience with green infrastructure.

## Community Planning

1. Has a comprehensive plan been adopted for the community?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how are the community's natural resources addressed in the comprehensive plan? \_\_\_\_\_

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If yes, is there specific attention to the community's water resources in the comprehensive plan?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, is green infrastructure implementation listed as a key element for implementation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Has your community taken part in the development of a watershed restoration or other similar plan?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does the community's hazard mitigation plan identify green infrastructure as a mitigation activity?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## Natural Assets

1. What are the natural resources of your community?

- ☐ Rivers  
☐ Streams  
☐ Lakes  
☐ Public or private property with water frontage  
☐ Other important natural areas

2. Are those natural resources incorporated into the community's culture, such as for events?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Are there impaired resources, vacant lots or sites (e.g., degraded wetlands/shorelines, contaminated sites, flood-prone areas) that would be good targets for remediation or restoration?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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If yes, would green infrastructure be suitable for these sites (e.g., stormwater infiltration may NOT be feasible on a brownfield redevelopment)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If yes, these can often be good sites to demonstrate new ideas and practices.*

4. Is there public access to local rivers, lakes and natural areas?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, where and what type? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Hazards

1. Is your community challenged with any of the following flooding issues?

☐ Basement backups  
☐ Wet basements  
☐ Street flooding  
☐ Stream or river overflow  
☐ Ponding in yards and green spaces  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have stormwater outfalls, culverts and bridges been surveyed for potential pollution issues?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does your community experience beach or swimming area closures after storms due to high bacteria levels?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are the sources (or potential sources) of bacteria documented or understood?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. If streams or rivers are within your community's boundaries, are they on the state's 303(d) list of impaired and threatened waters<sup>7</sup>?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Does your community have issues with bluff or ravine erosion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## Community Identity and Character

1. Is being “green” attractive to new people moving into your community?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Does your community have any environmental, sustainability or nature-based designations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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3. Is your community a sister city to a city with water issues?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, name of the city and list its water issues: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Have other environmental initiatives been started in your community?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what is their focus? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Do residents of your community like a homogeneous appearance to their neighborhoods or are individual residents’ preferences tolerated or even celebrated?

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6. Is turf grass the favored lawn cover or is there a more diverse approach to residential landscaping that can include native plantings, prairies and rain gardens?

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## Stormwater Regulations

1. Does the community have a stormwater utility?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are the rates dependent on equivalent residential units (ERUs)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, does the stormwater utility incentivize green infrastructure through the reduction of ERUs and the corresponding tax rate?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Is the stormwater ordinance up-to-date in accordance with state law?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does the stormwater ordinance include green infrastructure practices as approved methods to address stormwater runoff in new development and redevelopment projects?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. What amount of development (e.g., half an acre of new or redeveloped impervious surface, any site plan, an acre or more of new development) triggers the requirement for a developer to submit a stormwater management plan?

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When a stormwater development plan is required, are reviewers knowledgeable about green infrastructure?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Is green infrastructure encouraged in the review process?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Is your municipality required to have coverage under a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Does your community have total maximum daily load (TMDL) allocation requirements that it must meet?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## Current Green Infrastructure Usage

1. Have residents installed rain gardens or rain barrels?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Have any neighborhood associations or other organizations initiated green infrastructure projects such as rain gardens or stormwater tree programs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are there community gardens?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what's the water supply for irrigation?

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4. Are there formal or informal efforts to ensure maintenance of subdivision ponds or other private green infrastructure features?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Has your community implemented a downspout or foundation drain disconnection program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, is this encouraged by the local government, or simply allowed?

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If yes, who would respond to questions or provide technical information on drain disconnection?

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6. Does your community have an issue with inflow and infiltration?

☐ Yes ☐ No



Menomonee Valley Redevelopment and Community Park, native plantings, Milwaukee

## Understanding Your Community

Learning about concerns or objections to green infrastructure can help you understand why a community may be hesitant to risk failure or not be in favor of codes that promote green infrastructure. A dialogue about these issues can provide valuable insight into the cause of the failure and give you critical information regarding the community's experience with green infrastructure.

7. Are there restrictions on the application and use of lawn fertilizers and/or pesticides?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Are streams and rivers protected by regulated buffers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how large a setback is required?

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If yes, what type of vegetation is required/allowed?

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9. Is there awareness of coal tar sealant pollution?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Have any developers who have worked in your community used green infrastructure?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, with what success?

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11. Do you have subdivisions/neighborhoods that incorporate conservation, low-impact development, sustainability features or green infrastructure practices?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Which of the following green infrastructure practices have been implemented in your community?

- ☐ Bioretention areas, such as plantings in parking lot islands
- ☐ Green roofs
- ☐ Downspout disconnections into rain barrels, planter boxes and permeable areas
- ☐ Rain gardens
- ☐ Streets and alleys with permeable surfacing
- ☐ Bioswales
- ☐ Native plantings
- ☐ Wetland and floodplain preservation and restoration
- ☐ Conservation and protection of open lands, natural areas and green spaces
- ☐ Permeable and porous pavements and paved surfaces
- ☐ Urban tree canopy protection and restoration

Which installations have been described as successful?

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Which have been described as failed? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Was there community support for the projects?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, was significant outreach needed to secure community buy-in for any of the projects?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Was the community opposed to the project at the beginning or at any points in the process?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how was the opposition addressed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**13.** Is there a green infrastructure initiative or project that the community incorporated into its identity?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Knowing your community's identity is critical to ensure that changes to local regulations will incorporate and build upon the preferences and priorities of the community.**

**14.** Is there a government entity spearheading the acceptance and/or adoption of green infrastructure (e.g., a sewerage district, mayor's office, etc.)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Community Acceptance

- 1.** What community groups or associations would be natural allies for green infrastructure?  
These could include a park friends group, a garden club, a Wild Ones chapter, a conservation committee, a school that has the environment or sustainability as an organizing theme, river or bay keepers, a Rotary Club, bicycling advocacy group or village beautification committee.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are there neighborhood associations with a strong environmental ethic and commitment to sustainability?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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3. Which companies or businesses (e.g., garden centers or landscaping contractors) within your community have a strong environmental ethic and commitment to sustainability?

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4. Are there individuals who are advocates for green infrastructure and green practices in your community?

☐ Yes ☐ No

List individuals and what types of practices they support:\_\_\_\_\_

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5. Are there individuals who are opposed to green infrastructure and other environmental initiatives?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what is the basis of their concern or objection?

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6. Do you have code and ordinance changes reviewed by an attorney?

☐ Yes, always

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

If yes, is this an impediment to making change?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. What is your community's attitude or approach towards changing regulations?

☐ Positive, willing/able to take on

☐ Neutral, not proactive, but few objections when routine change is made

☐ Challenging, changes likely to receive intense scrutiny or to lead to objections.

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