

HOW TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT YOUR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

A GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOLS



Rain garden in Berkeley Heights, NJ, featuring Joe Pye weed and cone flowers in bloom.

Before You Start:



Green infrastructure is an approach to managing stormwater that enables it to filter into the ground near where it falls, or captures it for later use. Keeping runoff out of the storm sewer system improves water quality and minimizes localized flooding.

Stormwater management is vital for your community. Many municipalities and school districts have done a great job of installing (GI) practices, such as rain gardens, cisterns, porous pavement, and green roofs, as part of their stormwater management efforts.

It is essential to identify the property owner of where the GI practice will be installed and the persons or entity responsible for maintaining it.

Questions to Consider:



- Why is this GI project important for the community and the overall stormwater management effort?
- Is there a list of the types of GI projects and their locations in the municipality? How does this project connect to existing GI?
- Who should be included from the municipal planning team to help maintain the GI practice?
- Who is responsible for maintenance?
- Where can I get technical support?
- What training programs are available?

Resources



- [NJDEP Maintenance Guide](#):
- [Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program's General GI Maintenance Manual](#):
- [New Jersey Future New Jersey Green Infrastructure Municipal Toolkit's Maintenance Resources](#)



Stormwater enters the Berkeley Hts garden at the top.

Municipal Examples:

- The Berkeley Heights high school environmental club members learn about green infrastructure (GI) and volunteer to maintain the school rain garden. A scout troop has committed to maintaining the rain garden at an elementary school.
- The City of Bridgeton maintains its Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects in partnership with the American Littoral Society's Restoration Corps and local student volunteers. This program collaboratively trains young participants, and provides routine GI maintenance and monitoring. Corps members act as mentors, leading volunteer events with students and community members. The city mows around project sites, assists with landowner communication, and provides resources.
- Hillsborough Township's Parks Department and Department of Public Works helped install two rain gardens and are very proud of these gardens. To ensure the rain gardens stay beautiful and function properly, the Parks Department manages regular maintenance.
- The volunteers of the Westfield Green Team GI Sub-Team work with the Westfield Public Works Department in maintaining the new rain garden in Tamaques Park by pulling weeds, picking up litter, and pruning shrubs and trees.

Role of Community:



- Master Gardeners, Boy or Girl Scouts, or other groups could conduct GI maintenance as a community service project.
- Green Teams in the schools and municipality can be involved in fundraising and maintenance projects while also earning Sustainable Jersey points.
- High school students and others can gain volunteer hours for maintaining GI. (Incorporate lessons on stormwater management and GI).
- GI Champions can create relationships with various parties in their communities and engage residents to improve their understanding of stormwater management.

Role of Officials:



- It is essential that the Municipal Council, School Board, and Environmental Commission recognize the importance of maintenance.
- The head of maintenance, grounds or public works should identify maintenance gaps and needs.
- Identify key personnel responsible for the maintenance (custodian, landscaper, Parent-Teacher Association, scouts, volunteers).
- Create a budget, find funds and schedule or procure services for maintenance, whether it is performed internally or externally.

How to Ensure that Municipal Officials and Community Members Work Toward the Same Goals:



- Look for funding opportunities and encourage schools and municipalities to apply.
- Link officials to tools and resources to advance their own learning.
- Create signage for rain gardens and other GI projects to increase awareness.



Newly installed plants in Berkeley Hts, NJ, ready for mulching.

Thank you to the GI Workforce Subcommittee of the Jersey Water Works Green Infrastructure Committee.

Photo Credit: R. Leister