

Module 1, Session 2 Instructor Questions & Answers

Katherine England, Director of Green Infrastructure, City of Boston, MA

Lindsey Machamer, City of Austin

Q: What is the funding source for the maintenance contracts?

Response: City Operating. Nothing fancy.

Heidi, Pierce County

Q: Kate- did you use biochar for the trees?

Response: We have not used biochar for trees, we're largely using planting soil and biosoil around plantings and then sand-based structural soil/clean-washed stone for the remainder of the trenches.

Brett KenCairn-City of Boulder

Great work Kate. The Stockholm structured soils strategies do incorporate biochar in strategies similar. Here's a link for those interested:

<https://stockholmtreepits.co.uk/assets/downloads/tree-pits-with-structural-soils-practice-note-V1-4.pdf>

Ryan

Q: Interested to learn more about what, if anything, was required to enable GI contracts across departments?

Response: Interestingly, it was mostly a budget issue (using funds from one department to fund the maintenance on others). I had a few conversations with our Office of Budget Management and made the case that the City's Operating Budget is technically one large fund anyway and after some time, they agreed it was easier than dividing GI maintenance funding up across approx. 10 departments.

I thought there would be concerns about one department doing maintenance for another (e.g. quality of work, what happens if something is damaged, etc.), but many departments were doing no maintenance at all, so any maintenance was welcome. We haven't had a contractor damage anything yet (fingers crossed we never do), but I think doing the RFP and having more ability to select a really great contractor has helped everyone feel more comfortable, and Parterre is very capable/competent.

Shauna, Tacoma, WA

Q: Could you share the RFP document you used for the maintenance contracts?

Response: I'll share all of the maintenance RFPs we've done with Ellena so she can share them with the group. We have two versions of the Landscape Maintenance contract (made some revisions after our first contract concluded) and two versions of the Porous Paving Maintenance contract (one is a Writing Quote Contract solicitation - which is smaller scope, and the other is a full RFP)

Jen Jenkins, Chicago

Q: In your GI Working Group have you thought about inviting community members or community orgs to participate?

Response: We actually do invite community orgs to join us! I should have talked more about this, but both our Details & Specifications Group and Coordination & Maintenance groups have done sessions/field trips with local environmental orgs, Parks arborists, etc. We haven't invited them to the larger Bi-Monthly Meeting yet, but that's a great idea. I'm sure they'd be just as interested in the OGI updates as our City staff!

Chauncie Bigler, Denver

Q: Are the working groups managed in-house? How much administrative capacity is needed for the existing groups?

Response forthcoming

Ryan Wilson

Q: Chicago has a few of these type of critical partners to the City (Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, for example).

Response: I really recommend trying to make strong connections with these quasi's/non-city entities. It's been so valuable to have support from BHA in Boston. They provide so many services to so many of our residents and have strong relationships with our community groups.

Mead Mier, Tucson

Q: Great that the Boston GI policy for right of ways includes resources like maintenance. Can anyone answer what the teeth of the policy might be? From what I can find online it looks like it is primarily a policy to encourage GI as an alternative infrastructure design. I may have missed hearing her cover that. New Environmental Standards for City Infrastructure Announced:

<https://content.boston.gov/news/new-environmental-standards-city-infrastructure-announced>

Response: The initial version of the GI ROW Policy (October 2022) only applied to City projects (read: City requirement for City projects). During the first year of the Policy's life, I heard from our permit review departments (Boston Planning, Public Improvement Commission, etc.) that they needed a policy/regulation to enforce when reviewing projects from private entities, utilities, etc. The revision that I mentioned will be complete in October. The revisions expand the policy to apply to all projects in the ROW, regardless of who the proponent is, and the enforcement is withholding permits if projects do not include GI. The revisions also include more guidance about the type of GI we're looking for and have a series of resources (Guidelines, ROW GI Standard Details, Specifications, Plant Palette, etc.). These resources will be posted on the City's website and are expected to be used by all proponents (public and private) - exceptions can be approved by OGI, but the City will not accept care/control of nonstandard GI

Adriana Zuniga

Q: Super interesting! What engagement methods do you use to engage residents (and have them plant vegetation)? Do residents give input to the design of GI?

Response: The short answer is, it depends. Some of our engagement is done through existing community groups and their constituents (e.g. our watershed groups, neighborhood groups,

environmental groups, etc.). When we receive an ask to install GI, for example, at the West Street Urban Wild, we go through a design process with the participants (e.g. finding a suitable site, sharing Google surveys to select plant species for the bioswale. etc.) We make an effort to attend community meetings and events (even when we're not already doing a project or proposing a project) so the residents see us supporting their work and things they care about. The relationships we've forged are really important to build trust. We also have a really active social media presence, an e-newsletter and several web pages with lots of ways for residents to engage, ask questions, make requests, etc.

Jon Harmon - Cincinnati Parks - DNR

Q: When you mention that you fund projects across departments, does that mean that you have a GI-specific funding line item, and if so, what revenue streams do you use to cover this portion of project budgets? Thanks!

Response forthcoming

Lindsey Machamer, City of Austin

Q: What is the funding source for the maintenance contracts?

Response forthcoming

Raul Berrellez

Q: Thank you for your presentation Kate I was curious what framework that you follow when you use to engage across different departments.

Response: What do you mean by "framework"? We have a few approaches to engaging with other departments (e.g. the GI Working Group, regular monthly meetings with specific departments, etc.). We don't have a specific "playbook" for our interactions, it's really relationship-based if I'm being honest. Find/make a friend, engage with them in a meaningful way, support them when they need it, etc.

Amber M. & Shannon G. (ACHD) Boise, Idaho

Q: When you say tree trenches are you referring to tree cells?

Response: "Tree trenches" in Boston are longer linear subsurface infiltration areas, typically with clean-washed stone/sand-based structural soil. We don't have any publicly owned GI trenches with tree cells, but we have a few private examples. We're looking to do some tree cell installations in the next year! We also do bioswales, which are largely vegetated surface features with some subsurface layers (e.g. a stone infiltration layer). When we talk about "tree trenches" in Boston, the tree is often the only surface component (sometimes a porous paving material) and the majority of the stormwater capture/treatment is happening underground. Bioswales/bioretenion largely capture at the surface, allowing water to pond and slowly absorb into the ground.

Jessica Engel, RainScapes Program Manager, King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Heidi Siegelbaum, Pierce County

Social Marketing materials to check

out-<https://pspwa.box.com/s/1xqcgzjx0735pbmk4tq265aff18xhuvw>

Andrew Williams-Clark

Q: Are either of you looking at the impacts of your GSI maintenance contracts on the LA/LM and Pavement Maintenance markets overall in your regions? Right now, it's very niche (high priced) where we are, so I'm wondering if you all can help with casemaking for others.

Response: I am not, but that is an interesting perspective. Happy to discuss this further.

Irene Ogata, Tucson Water

Q: Jessica: was the social marketing piece outsourced? Was there an rfp?

Response: Yes, it was outsourced using an existing engagement contract we had so I don't have an RFP but happy to chat with you more about how we did it.

Bonnie Strange, City of Albuquerque Urban Forestry

Q: Can private developers benefit from this program?

Response forthcoming

Raul Berrellez

Q: Jessica, I'm Raul from Tucson Arizona, Our city does that has not established a GI training program maintenance and installation for vulnerable communities. Are there any lessons learned that you can share lessons learned about kickstarting a program like this? or a link to their website?

Response: Raul, I don't have printed materials or a webpage but I am happy to have a call with you. Email: Jessica.engel@kingcounty.gov

We do have a green jobs strategy with some great resources. It is not specific to RainScapes, but the work is overlapping a bit:

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/services/environment/climate/actions-strategies/initiatives-programs/green-jobs-strategy>

Roseann Barnhill, Director of Ecology and Green Infrastructure, Dirt Corps

Heidi Siegelbaum, Pierce County

Q: Roseann, do you work with the Tree Equity Collaborative at all?

Response: They are centered at DNR but have many other partners.

Irene Ogata, Tucson Water

Q: Roseanne, does this business model have a business profit level built in? or it is mostly a balanced budget (similar to NGO)

Response: Yes, we operate as a for profit business, but with a Social Purpose mission. We want to demonstrate that small GSI businesses can be profitable.

Shauna Hansen, Tacoma, WA

Q: Roseanne, has Dirt Corps crews been building private property projects along the same alignment beside bigger City or county-driven capital projects?

Response: Yes, do we have residential, commercial, industrial and ROW depave projects. A typical project may have 3-4 partners including City, community and property owners. Residential is a good opportunity for learning, and property owners, as Jessica mentioned are very supportive.

Heather Bearnese-Loza, Boulder

Q: Roseann, I would love to know more about where the folks from your program are being hired after trainings. I know you all mentioned King Co, but I am curious what other spaces are hiring. For example, are some of them going on to consulting firms?

Response: Placement is high. we haven't had much capacity to track everyone over the years. Most folks just need an opportunity to try to work, and also the resume piece from an established business or org.

Folks go to King County in Water Quality, Noxious weeds, Water and Land, and Parks, same for the City of Seattle and neighboring city departments. Conservation districts, and several work for other contractors and NGOs. A few have returned to school and become educators, engineers, biologists, etc.

Sheila Jones Robbins, IL

Q: Roseann, what is your contact info, please?

Response: Email: roseann@thedirtcorps.com