Green Infrastructure Leadership Exchange Framework of Practice

Build Buy-in

Introduction

The potential inherent in green infrastructure can only be achieved with buy-in from key decision-makers and impacted communities. Building buy-in is a central tenet to moving green infrastructure policies, programs and projects forward. We have learned a lot in the last two decades about how to effectively build buy-in at every level and with every audience. In fact, the 2022 *State of Public Sector Green Stormwater Infrastructure* report identifies key barriers that make building buy-in a challenge, including lack of leadership support, lack of public support, and siloes and limited collaboration. At the same time, it illuminates actionable steps, such as identifying supportive elected officials and strong senior champions, encouraging cross-pollination among teams, investing in demonstration projects, engaging with the public and sharing compelling research. This chapter distills those lessons and will help us apply those learnings to our work.

Exploring this section will answer the following questions:

1. How can we gain buy-in across all levels of leadership for our green infrastructure strategy?
2. How can we build public support for our green infrastructure strategy?
3. How can we build public support for a stormwater fee to fund green infrastructure?
4. How can we educate and train our team to successfully deliver green infrastructure?
5. How can we influence regulation to encourage green infrastructure?

Start where you are

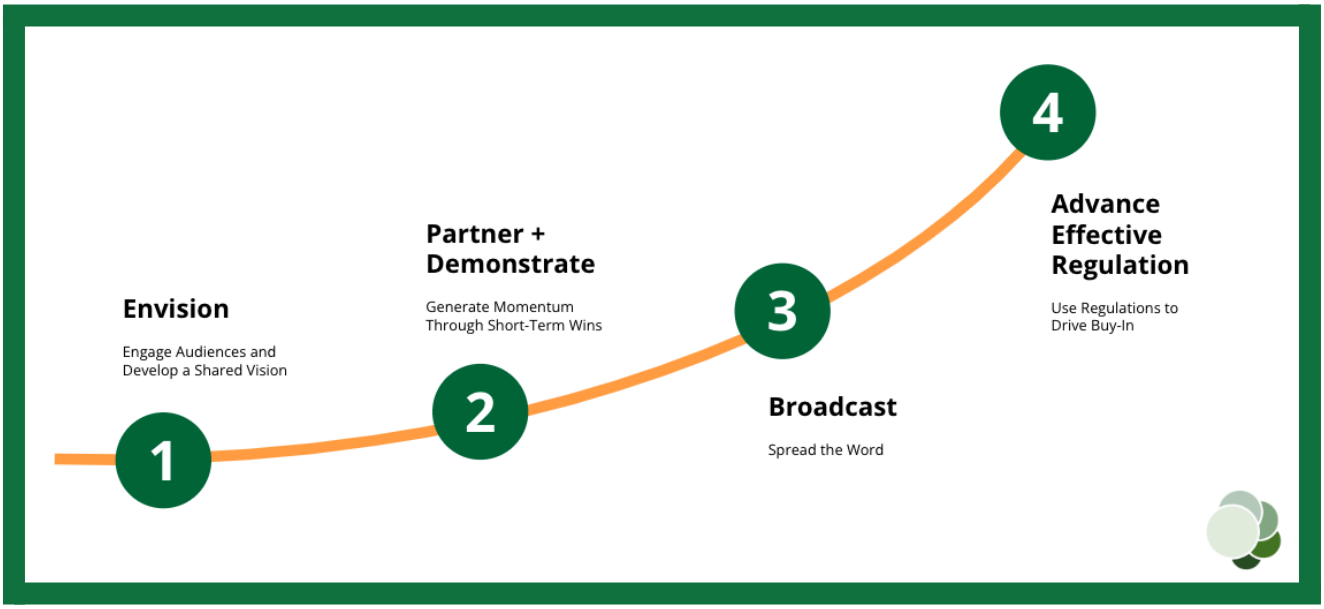
The green infrastructure field comprises individuals at various experience levels, so we encourage you to start where you are. Whether you are a seasoned professional or a newcomer and whether your organization has a mature or nascent green infrastructure program, you will find useful tools here. The strength of the Exchange lies in the diversity of our experiences and the knowledge we share with one another.

Find the most relevant information for your learning journey within this document:

TOOL 1: JOURNEY + GUIDING PRINCIPLES □ Understand the big picture of building buy-in	**TOOL 2: BEST PRACTICES** □ Explore specific steps to building buy-in	**TOOL 3: CASE STUDIES** □ Learn how peers are building buy-in	**TOOL 4: RESOURCES** □ Access the Exchange's recommended trainings / resources on this topic

Tool 1: The Journey + Guiding Principles

Journey Toward Building Buy-in



We have distilled lessons learned from our members into a **representative successful journey** toward building buy-in. This journey highlights the **principles** of building buy-in. Learn about each **principle** by clicking on it. These links will take you to the relevant principles in more detail below.

- Principle 1: Envision: Engage audiences and develop a shared vision
- Principle 2: Partner + Demonstrate: Generate momentum through short-term wins
- Principle 3: Broadcast: Spread the word
- Principle 4: Advance Effective Regulation: Use regulations to drive buy-in

Tool 2: Best Practices

Each step in the journey involves deploying multiple best practices. Learn about each **best practice** by clicking on it.

1. **Principle 1: Envision**
    a. Understand the audience
    b. Equip audiences to engage
    c. Engage early and be consistent
    d. Co-create a strategic vision that integrates audience interests
2. **Principle 2: Partner + Demonstrate**
    a. Find, foster and elevate champions
    b. Implement demonstration projects
    c. Celebrate the short-term wins
    d. Organize site visits
3. **Principle 3: Broadcast**
    a. Activate community and public relations
    b. Build diverse coalitions that help broaden your reach
    c. Leverage key moments to channel public interest
4. **Principle 4: Advance Effective Regulation**
    a. Identify barriers and opportunities in regulation
    b. Activate coalitions to build a supportive regulatory environment
    c. Organize for effective advocacy
    d. Collaborate with regulators to ensure implementation

Principle 1: Envision

Understand, equip and engage key audiences and co-create a strategic vision.

1. **Understand the audience.** Understand the audiences to tailor buy-in strategies based on their needs, core interests and values. Key audiences include leaders, staff and the public.
    a. How Toronto Water in Toronto, ON Implemented Cost-Effective Solutions with the Boner Creek Stormwater Alternatives Study
2. **Equip audiences to engage.** In response to the needs of the audience, lay the groundwork for effective engagement. This may require activities like: 1) socializing the benefits and efficacy of green infrastructure; 2) organizing training and education to increase the audience's comfort with green infrastructure; and 3) sharing case-making research with leaders (like department heads and elected officials).

3. **Engage early and be consistent.** Bring audiences in early to help understand, address and adapt to their concerns. Engage throughout to build trust and bring audiences along in the process. Plan to circle back at the end of the program/project to reinforce buy-in.
4. **Co-create a strategic vision that integrates audience interests.** Co-create a vision with leaders, staff and the public, aligning green infrastructure goals with the specific interests and priorities of key audiences. When the audiences see their priorities and interests integrated into the vision, they will be more supportive.
    a. How City of Portland, OR Empowered Communities with the Clean Energy Fund and a Multif-Faceted Approach to Green Initiatives

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Principle 2: Partner + Demonstrate

Generate momentum through short-term wins.

1. **Find, foster and elevate champions.** Identify internal and external champions who can advocate for green infrastructure and influence others. Connect them with the resources and support they need to succeed. Identify property owners that are likely to be strong allies for a green infrastructure program, especially neighborhood anchors like schools, park districts and faith communities, and prioritize them for demonstration projects.
    a. How Water Wise Gulf South in New Orleans, LA Elevated Community Knowledge by Empowering Residents to Become Neighborhood Champions
2. **Implement demonstration projects.** Involve community members in developing highly visible demonstration projects that show the efficacy and benefits of green infrastructure. Securing philanthropic, state and federal grant funding can help the development of demonstration projects and make it easier for local decision makers to say yes. Measure and monitor the outcomes whenever possible to help make a data-backed case for green infrastructure.
    a. How Kitsap Public Utility District in Kitsap County, WA Demonstrated Community Integration and Green Infrastructure Success with a Stormwater Park.
3. **Celebrate the short-term wins.** Create opportunities for community members and elected and appointed officials to come together and celebrate demonstration projects through groundbreaking ceremonies and ribbon cuttings. This increases awareness, pride and public support for green infrastructure in neighborhoods.
4. **Organize site visits.** Organize visits to existing green infrastructure sites to provide tangible evidence of success and inspire confidence. Spotlight green infrastructure that is well-maintained and successful in managing both stormwater and providing co-benefits that uplift neighborhoods.

Principle 3: Broadcast

Determine when you have enough wins to start broadcasting and spreading the word.

1. **Activate community and public relations.** Develop creative marketing strategies to effectively communicate project benefits and address community concerns. Partner with public relations, community relations or communications departments to assist with storytelling, making the topic accessible by using plain language, and with approachable messaging that resonates.
    a. How Water Hub Developed Messaging Building Blocks to Aid Practitioners in Making the Case for Nature-Based Solutions
2. **Build diverse coalitions that help broaden your reach.** Seek innovative collaborations with diverse organizations to expand support and resources. Focus on the shared vision to identify overlapping priorities among audiences, and think outside the box on how to find new project allies and champions. Ensure equitable participation by compensating community organizations and employing local community members who are well-connected and trusted. Demonstrate value in a way that is specific to the audiences.
    a. How New Haven, CT Cultivated Green Skills with the Youth and a Re-entry Program for Green Infrastructure
3. **Leverage key moments to channel public interest.** Following events that focus the public's attention on the need for stormwater management, seize the opportunity to educate the public about the benefits of green infrastructure and the opportunities to scale this multi-benefit solution.

Principle 4: Advance Effective Regulation

1. **Identify barriers and opportunities in regulation.** Understand the existing regulatory landscape and the barriers to codifying necessary policies, such as funding mechanisms or program requirements. Analyze how current regulations align with your program goals, and identify gaps or opportunities to strengthen regulation.
2. **Activate coalitions to build a supportive regulatory environment.** Collaborate with diverse stakeholders to form coalitions that can advocate for regulatory change. Coalitions can create a more powerful and persuasive voice than one single entity. Diversity within coalitions enhances collective influence, which makes it easier to advocate for regulatory change that aligns with shared goals. Sharing resources, knowledge and expertise allows coalition members to amplify their collective impact. Coalition models help maintain momentum and effectively address barriers to regulatory change.
    a. How Los Angeles, CA Voters Supported a Dedicated Funding Source for Stormwater Projects
3. **Organize for effective advocacy.** Establish clear roles, communication strategies and actions to ensure all members are coordinated and engaged. Acknowledge and value all forms of power — different groups bring different things to the table and can move strategies forward in unique ways.

Work together to push lawmakers toward policies that advance shared goals, using collective influence to address challenges and build momentum for supportive legislation.

4. **Collaborate with regulators to ensure implementation.** Once regulations are in place, work closely with regulators and coalition partners to ensure the policies are implemented effectively and equitably. Continue to strengthen support by aligning regulatory actions with long-term program objectives, ensuring that regulations remain relevant and beneficial over time.

Tool 3: Case Studies

Exchange members across the US and Canada are successfully building buy-in. See the best practices brought to life through their **case studies**.

1. How Toronto Water in Toronto, ON Implemented Cost-Effective Solutions with the Boner Creek Stormwater Alternatives Study
2. How City of Portland, OR Empowered Communities with the Clean Energy Fund and a Multifaceted Approach to Green Initiatives
3. How Water Wise Gulf South in New Orleans, LA Elevated Community Knowledge by Empowering Residents to Become Neighborhood Champions
4. How Kitsap Public Utility District in Kitsap County, WA Demonstrated Community Integration and Green Infrastructure Success with a Stormwater Park
5. How Water Hub Developed Messaging Building Blocks to Aid Practitioners in Making the Case for Nature-Based Solutions
6. How New Haven, CT Cultivated Green Skills with Youth and a Re-entry Program for Green Infrastructure
7. How Los Angeles, CA Voters Supported a Dedicated Funding Source for Stormwater Projects

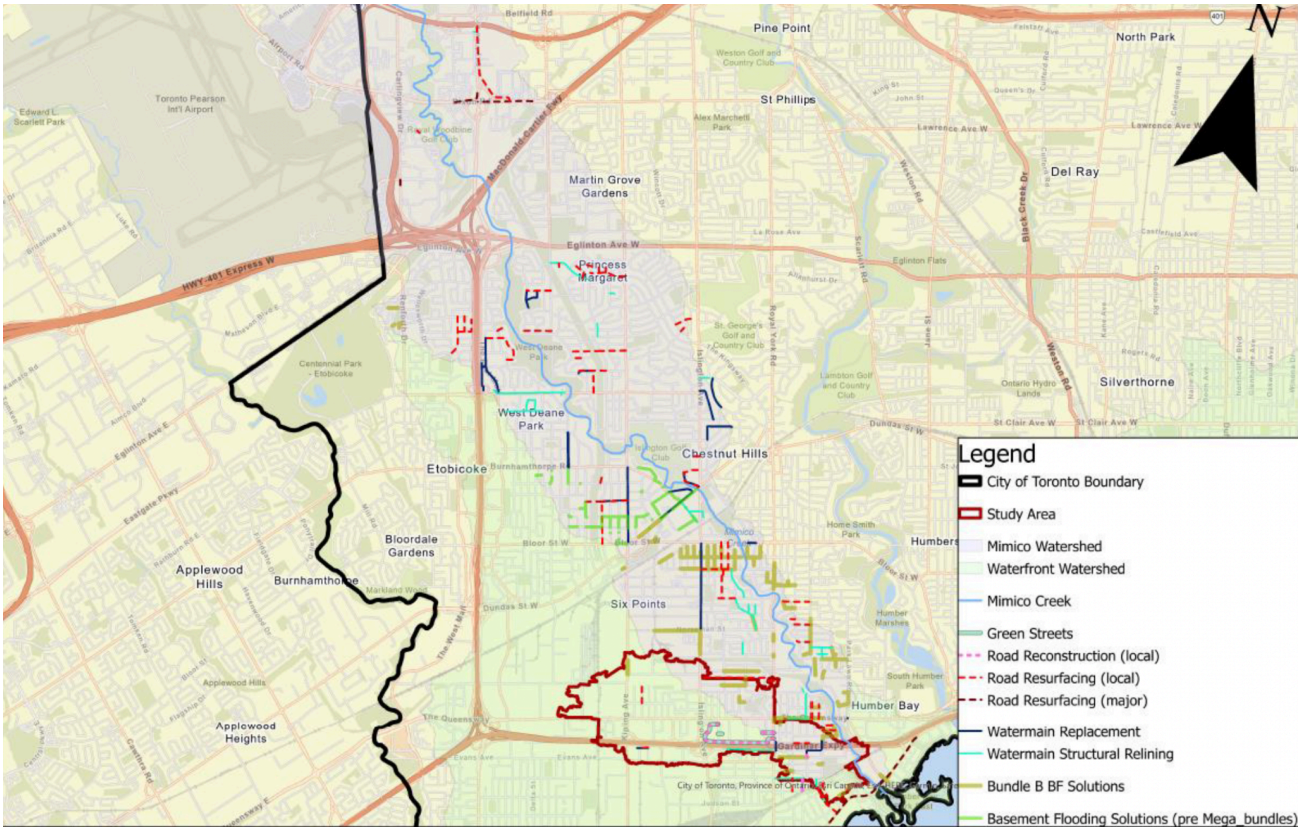
Tool 4: Resources

- Visit the GI Library
- Explore sources from the literature review on building buy-in.
    - Building Buy-in for Sustainability Projects, Project Management Institute
    - Community Buy-in for Stormwater Funding: An EPA Roundtable Series, US EPA
    - Gaining Community Buy-In for Infrastructure Projects, James Rubin, Bipartisan Policy Center
    - Getting Community Buy-in for Stormwater Funding a Four-Session Participatory Workshop Facilitator Manual, US EPA
    - Green Values Strategy Guide: Linking Green Infrastructure Benefits to Community Priorities, Center for Neighborhood Technology
    - How To Foster Local Ownership for Improved Development Results: Collaborate, Learn, Adapt, Kristin Lindell, US AID
    - How to Motivate People Toward Sustainability, Maya Fischhoff, Network for Business
    - Secure Internal Buy-In, American Cities Climate Challenge

How Toronto Water in Toronto, ON Assessed Cost-Effective Solutions with the Bonar Creek Stormwater Alternatives Study

Region	Canada	**Principle**	Envision
City	Toronto, ON	**Best Practice**	Understand the audience
Population	2.9 Million		
Partners			

> ***"There is value in conducting similar studies and deploying these modeling techniques to save costs, invite collaboration between departments and improve planning."***
>
> ***–Matt Wilson, Senior Engineer***



The greater Mimico Creek Watershed and the focused 400 HA study area. Draft Figure for Discussion Purposes. All planned infrastructure locations and scopes are subject to change.

Project Description

The Bonar Creek Stormwater Alternatives Study was initiated to address the increasing costs associated with developing a stormwater management pond in the Mimico Creek sub-watershed. What began as a $10

million project ballooned to over $70 million during the planning period, which brought the project to a standstill. Toronto Water needed to find a way to manage 400 hectares of watershed. The Division implemented strategic modeling that showed the business cases for seven different options. Their analysis incorporated the estimated lifecycle costs of the projects over 50 years. They also considered the cost-savings of implementing green infrastructure and assessed co-benefits including mitigating heat and other opportunities for the pond lands. The implementation was projected to be over a 20-year period. The models indicated that a moderate green infrastructure plan could be delivered at a cost of tens of millions of dollars less than the original plan, and the Division chose that as the preferred option.

Best Practices in Action

The success of the Bonar Creek Stormwater Alternatives Study can be attributed to Toronto Water's openness to assessing alternative approaches and their cost-benefit analysis. By comparing plans for developing end-of-pipe and green infrastructure projects and elevating the non-quantifiable metrics of green infrastructure benefits, they were able to make a compelling business case for the city. The project required sophisticated modeling to show the advantages and disadvantages of the various proposals. The modeling measured additional benefits such as urban heat mitigation, educational opportunities, aesthetic improvements and triple-bottom-line analysis.

Key Learnings

- **Understand the audience:** Getting a sense of the priorities of the decision-makers will save time and money, and keep efforts focused on ensuring forward momentum.
- **Cost-benefit analyses**: Integrating cost-benefit analysis into planning is essential for gaining buy-in and aligning goals between departments.
- **Know what the audience wants**: Focusing on the financial and political impacts and technical details proved effective in securing project approval.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Equip audiences to engage

How City of Portland, OR Empowered Communities with the Clean Energy Fund and a Multifaceted Approach to Green Initiatives

Region	Pacific Northwest	**Principle**	Envision
City	Portland, OR	**Best Practice**	Co-create a strategic vision that integrates audience interests
Population	635,000		
Partners			

> ***"Leaders met for years before getting anywhere close to developing a public campaign. We had to build trust across green groups and frontline groups. Once that trust was built, we were then able to leap forward with a very aggressive timeline and take very big risks together."***
>
> ***–Laura Stevens, PCEF Field Volunteer Organizer***



The Portland Clean Energy Benefits Fund focuses investments in climate action by giving priority to people that have been historically under-resourced by sustainability, climate action, and clean energy programs.

Project Description

The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) was established to address climate change — with a social justice lens — ensuring Portland's most vulnerable communities are primary beneficiaries. This fund was created through a 2018 ballot measure and is financed by a 1% surcharge on the annual gross revenue of businesses netting $1 billion. The fund is dedicated to supporting renewable energy, energy

efficiency, green infrastructure, job training and regenerative agriculture projects. Since its inception in 2018, the PCEF has granted more than $875 million in clean energy funds. The fund places a priority on low-income and communities of color, ensuring that everyone has fair access to climate solutions.

Best Practices in Action

Portland spent years establishing deep ties and building trust among organizations representing members of racially and ethnically diverse communities. To ensure a broad community reach, the PCEF strategically reached out to neighborhoods that typically have low voter turnout. They brought in language-specific canvassers to ensure accessibility. The leadership team was composed of people from the communities disproportionately affected by climate change. The team focused on solutions tailored to mitigate disasters in the neighborhoods where these voters live and work. As a result, the PCEF made over 60,000 contacts during their initial outreach. The implementation of projects has created over 10,000 hours of labor for the local workforce.

Key Learnings

- **Build trust:** Organizers recognized that it would take time and patience to build trust with historically marginalized communities. Organizers had to overcome the community's reticence to work with primarily white-led organizations that have historically held positions of power.
- **Meet the community where they are:** The PCEF took extra care to communicate with members of ethnically diverse communities in their language to ensure they were listened to and understood.
- **Internal communication is key:** The PCEF learned that building bridges internally is key. Everyone working together has to feel empowered to share their voice and expertise.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Build diverse coalitions that help you broaden your reach

How Water Wise Gulf South in New Orleans, LA Elevated Community Knowledge by Empowering Residents to Become Neighborhood Champions

Region	Southeast	**Principle**	Partner + Demonstrate
City	New Orleans, LA	**Best Practice**	Find, foster and elevate champions
Population	370,000		
Partners			

> ***"When they marry the expertise of their community with newly learned information about green infrastructure, they become a champion for advancing green infrastructure in their neighborhoods in a way that truly serves their communities."***
> ***–Water Wise Gulf South***



Water Wise Neighborhood Champions attend green infrastructure tours to help them learn about design and plant selection, and to visualize projects that they want to see implemented in their own neighborhoods.

Project Description

Water Wise Gulf South includes formalized partnerships with local community-based organizations. Together, they train residents in neighborhoods experiencing chronic flooding challenges to become Water Wise Neighborhood Champions., Neighborhood Champions help implement green infrastructure projects and advocate for the implementation of community-driven infrastructure projects. Between 2016–2024, 175 community members have become Water Wise Neighborhood Champions, and they have envisioned over 120 green infrastructure projects in their communities.

Best Practices in Action

The Water Wise Gulf South model is founded on the premise that residents have a rich knowledge of their own communities. Therefore, residents need to be in the driver's seat when advancing green infrastructure in their communities. By formalizing partnerships with community-based organizations and training residents as Water Wise Neighborhood Champions, the project ensures that those who know the community best are leading the efforts. These champions are empowered to envision and advocate for green infrastructure solutions tailored to their neighborhoods' specific needs, fostering a sense of ownership and trust. This grassroots approach not only amplifies local voices but also builds sustained community support for long-term change.

Key Learnings

- **Community-led solutions:** Empowering residents to lead green infrastructure efforts ensures that projects are deeply rooted in local knowledge, making them more effective and relevant to the community's needs.
- **Building local capacity:** Training residents as Neighborhood Champions not only enhances their skills but also fosters long-term community engagement and stewardship of green infrastructure projects.
- **Sustained impact through partnerships:** Formalized partnerships with local organizations ensure ongoing support, amplifying the reach and sustainability of community-driven initiatives.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Implement demonstration projects
- Build diverse coalitions that help broaden your reach
- Organize site visits

How Kitsap Public Utility District in Kitsap County, WA Demonstrated Community Integration and Green Infrastructure Success with a Stormwater Park

Region	Pacific Northwest	**Principle**	Partner + Demonstrate
City	Kitsap County, WA	**Best Practice**	Implement demonstration projects
Population	277,000		
Partners			

> ***"Stormwater management is not just a problem to be solved, it is an opportunity to create more resilient, sustainable and beautiful communities."***
>
> ***–Michelle Perdue, Senior Stormwater Manager***



Construction of the spiral rain garden that is designed to treat low flows from groundwater and small storms to assist the larger treatment cells.

Project Description

The Manchester Stormwater Park, located in the small waterfront community of Manchester in Kitsap County, WA, addresses significant stormwater challenges by treating runoff from roads, parking lots and residential and commercial properties. This facility, which was constructed in 2015, was the first stormwater treatment structure in Kitsap County. Built on a vacant lot that was once a gas station, the park features treatment cells, a spiral rain garden and bioretention systems that filter stormwater before it is discharged into Puget Sound. The park is projected to treat 100 million gallons of stormwater per year. This innovative project not only improves water quality but also provides stormwater education to the community via interpretive signage and a vital community gathering space. The park is used year-round for farmers' markets, education and community celebrations.

Best Practices in Action

By transforming a vacant lot into a functional stormwater treatment facility and community space, the project effectively showcases the multiple benefits of green infrastructure. The University of Washington's Green Futures Lab provides water quality monitoring, and results show that the park is effective in treating pollutants and excels at treating bacteria and metals in the runoff.

Meaningful engagement with the public throughout the design process ensured that the park met the community's needs, reinforcing support and providing a model for future projects in the County. In fact, the success of Manchester Stormwater Park has led the County to develop others, including Whispering Firs Stormwater Park, constructed in 2019.

Key Learnings

- **Champion leadership:** Having a dedicated project champion helps mitigate the complexities of innovative projects.
- **Early public engagement:** Engaging the community early in the process is crucial for shaping the project and gaining support.
- **Allow public ideation:** Manchester Park is made up of 17 different features, which were built from ideas the public contributed during the design process.
- **A sense of place builds stewardship:** By giving the community a sense of place, they have taken ownership of the park and act as stewards, ensuring it remains clean and safe.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Co-create a strategic vision that integrates audience interests
- Find, foster and elevate champions
- Celebrate the short-term wins
- Activate community and public relations

How Water Hub Developed Messaging Building Blocks to Aid Practitioners in Making the Case for Nature-Based Solutions

Region	National	**Principle**	Broadcast
City	N/A	**Best Practice**	Activate community and public relations
Population	N/A		
Partners			



Project Description

Water Hub — recognizing the need to effectively communicate the benefits of nature-based solutions — developed a set of messaging building blocks to help practitioners make a compelling case for green infrastructure. These messaging strategies focus on connecting with audiences' core values, addressing current environmental challenges and offering actionable solutions that resonate on a personal level. By emphasizing how green projects like rain gardens address community concerns, Water Hub's messaging supports practitioners in advocating for investments in nature-based solutions.

Best Practices in Action

Water Hub's messaging strategy exemplifies the best practice of activating community and public relations to build buy-in for green infrastructure. By crafting messages that align with community values and address real-world problems, Water Hub empowers practitioners to effectively engage with the public, fostering trust and encouraging active participation in green infrastructure projects. This approach helps communications inform and motivate communities to support and advocate for nature-based solutions.

Key Learnings

- **Tailored messaging:** Crafting messages that resonate with community values and concerns is crucial for gaining public support.
- **Practical communication:** Using simple, vivid language to describe green infrastructure projects makes the benefits of these initiatives more relatable and compelling to a broader audience.
- **Engagement through values:** By aligning messaging with deeply held community values, practitioners can build stronger connections and drive sustained public interest in green infrastructure.

How New Haven, CT Cultivated Green Skills with a Youth and Re-entry Program for Green Infrastructure

Region	Northeast	**Principle**	Broadcast
City	New Haven, CT	**Best Practice**	Build diverse coalitions that help broaden your reach
Population	140,000		
Partners	Yale School of the Environment, New Haven Department of Parks & Trees, Emerge CT, Common Ground High School, The Sound School		



An Urban Resources Initiative crew during a tree planting.

Project Description

The GreenSkills program, initiated by the Yale Institute of the Environment's Urban Resources Initiative (URI) in 2007, addresses urban, environmental and social needs by providing green jobs to high school students and formerly incarcerated adults in New Haven, CT. Partnering with the New Haven Department of Parks & Trees, the program offers free tree planting services to residents, fostering environmental stewardship and improving the city's tree canopy. To date, GreenSkills crews have planted over 7,000 trees across New Haven, connecting participants to their community and environment while equipping them with valuable skills.

Best Practices in Action

GreenSkills exemplifies the best practice of building diverse coalitions by partnering with local organizations, schools and government departments to involve underrepresented groups in green infrastructure. The program collaborates with Emerge CT, Common Ground High School and The Sound School to recruit

participants, ensuring a wide reach across various New Haven communities. This coalition approach broadens the program's impact, strengthens community ties and fosters inclusive environmental stewardship. The collaborative model also increases community buy-in because more members of their community are receiving benefits from the program. It is not just about receiving a tree, it is also meaningful to community members that their family members are receiving job training, for example.

Key Learnings

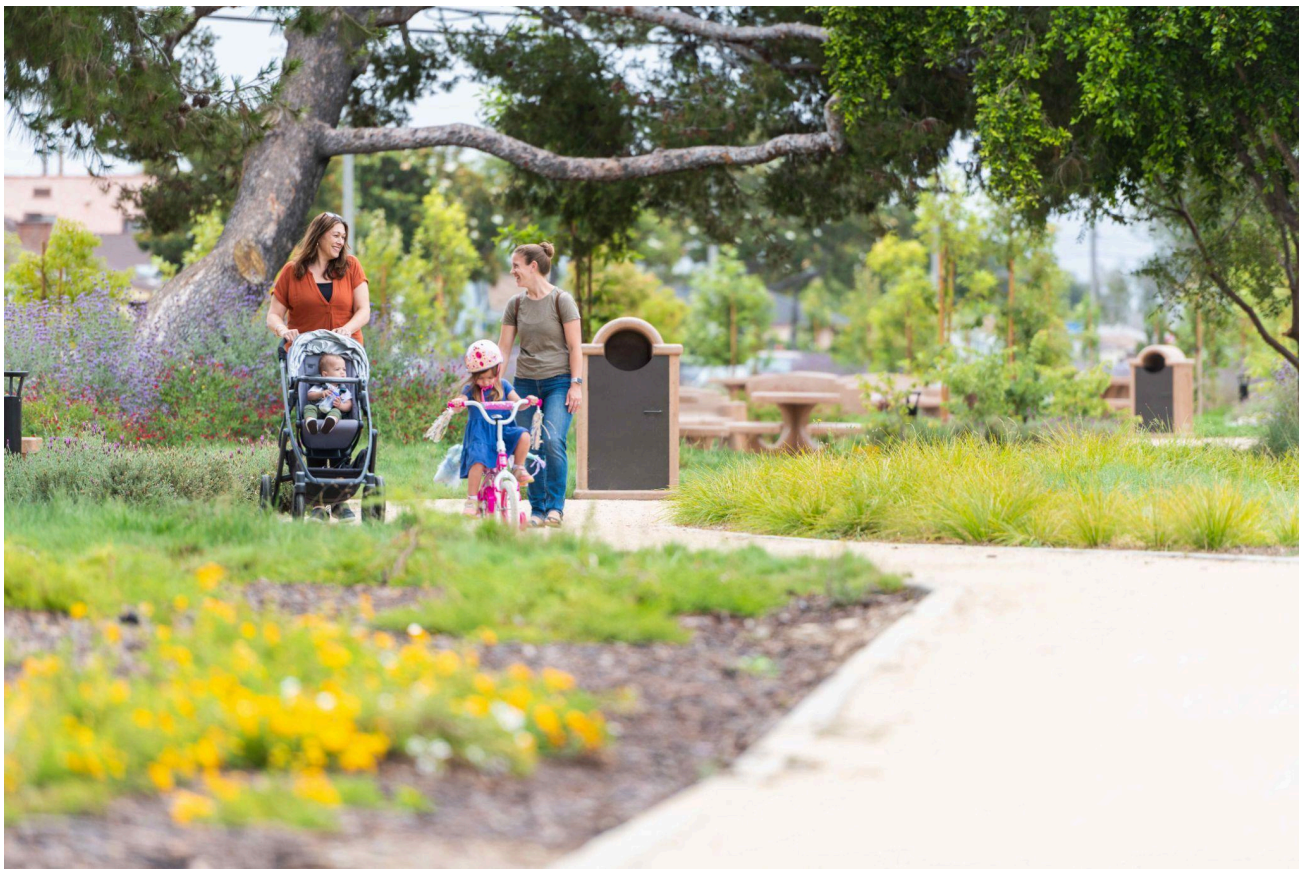
- **Inclusive partnerships:** Collaborating with diverse organizations broadens participation and enhances program reach.
- **Community engagement:** Offering tangible benefits, like free tree planting, encourages widespread community involvement and support.
- **Workforce development has long-term impacts:** Providing green jobs to marginalized groups helps build skills and fosters long-term connections to the community.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Activate community and public relations

How Los Angeles, CA Voters Supported a Dedicated Funding Source for Stormwater Projects

Region	West Coast	**Principle**	Advance Effective Regulation
City	Los Angeles, CA	**Best Practice**	Activate coalitions to build a supportive regulatory environment
Population	3.8 million		
Partners	LA Waterkeeper, Heal the Bay and The Nature Conservancy		



Residents walking along East LA Median Project, one of the green infrastructure projects funded by Measure W.

Project Description

From 2012 to 2016, Southern California faced severe drought conditions, prompting residents to adopt significant water conservation measures. Los Angeles County has long grappled with water pollution and supply challenges, but efforts to improve water quality often stalled. After an earlier unsuccessful attempt to place this issue on the ballot, the local community organization LA Waterkeeper took action by filing

numerous lawsuits against major polluters for violating stormwater compliance regulations. This issue eventually reached the United States Supreme Court, capturing the attention of City and County officials. As a result, advisory groups were established to advocate for the passage of Measure W—a ballot initiative that imposed a parcel tax on non-permeable surfaces. Measure W passed overwhelmingly, receiving 70% of the vote and generating $300 million annually to fund the Safe Clean Water Program.

Best Practices in Action

Los Angeles County had a coalition of motivated groups eager to effect change. After confronting the reality of limited water resources, residents and government officials came together to secure their future water supply. In 2016, they established various coalitions and advisory boards. The County's formal advisory board was sizable, comprising representatives from diverse sectors, including the business community, various cities (both Los Angeles and smaller municipalities), the regulatory regional board overseeing MS4 permits, environmental justice organizations, and agencies involved in stormwater, water supply and groundwater management.

Shortly after the formation of the County's advisory board, Our Water LA was established. This group included members from peer and environmental organizations such as LA Waterkeeper, Heal the Bay and The Nature Conservancy. They secured funding from a philanthropic organization, allowing them to hire staff and fundraise strategically, empowering them to advance the ballot measure. Additionally, newly elected officials with experience in the water sector served as champions, helping to organize and move legislation forward.

Measure W's Steps to Success:

1. The County was held accountable with legislation spearheaded by a local nonprofit (LA Waterkeeper).
2. The residents, fearing an extended drought, listed water management as a top election priority in polling.
3. The County organized an advisory board comprised of officials from across many critical sectors to address water management.
4. The community's peer organizations formed a coalition to work alongside the County's advisory board.
5. Elected officials worked alongside both coalition and advisory boards to champion the measure through to success.

Key Learnings

- **Coalitions drive comprehensive representation:** Building a coalition of diverse stakeholders ensures that multiple perspectives are included in the legislative process. Measure W succeeded

because environmental advocates, justice leaders, community representatives and elected officials worked together, enabling the campaign to address varied community needs and win widespread support.

- **Strategic partnerships:** The coalition and advisory board's ability to unite around a shared solution and goal created long-term, dedicated funding for stormwater management projects. This collaborative approach ensured continuous investment in infrastructure that benefits both the environment and disadvantaged communities.
- **Tailored approaches boost community buy-in:** By segmenting LA County into nine watershed areas, the coalition was able to customize projects to the specific needs of each community. This localized strategy fostered a sense of ownership among voters, helping secure their approval for the new tax and its goals.

Other Related Principles and Best Practices

- Co-create a strategic vision that integrates audience interests
- Activate community and public relations
- Build diverse coalitions that help broaden your reach