

Green Infrastructure Committee Roundtable Final Report

Green Village and Clean Hudson



NYACK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

**CONSENSUS OF THE NYACK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ROUNDTABLE
VILLAGE OF NYACK, NY**

June 24, 2013

Introduction

This report recommends a set of actions to protect the water quality of our local streams and the Hudson River, increase groundwater recharge, and contribute to reducing flooding by using green infrastructure (GI) for stormwater management in Nyack. The report was prepared over the course of more than a year, through meetings of the Nyack Green Infrastructure Committee starting in 2011 and then

through the GI Roundtable process initiated in September 2012.

The Roundtable process entailed a review of existing codes, policies and practices, and an assessment of the Nyack landscape. The purpose was to identify ways to support the protection of Nyack's existing natural resources and promote widespread expansion of GI in the village in the future.

Green Infrastructure is now a priority for stormwater management in New York State. The New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual requires its use for improving stormwater quality and reducing its quantity. The recommendations in this report aim to strengthen Nyack's capacity to comply with the state requirements and exceed them where necessary through a combination of incentives, education and regulation.

Our recommendations aim to provide flexibility, support, and guidance for developers, land use boards, the Building Department, Department of Public Works, and local citizens in shaping sustainable development of the village. We recommend actions that will improve the village landscape by clarifying design opportunities and Code requirements, amending the Code in ways that small, urbanized communities like ours have done, energetically pursuing incentive opportunities, and establishing programs for public outreach and pilot projects. Implementation of these actions will take time, money, and the ongoing commitment of Village staff, government and volunteers, starting with establishing a process and timetable for review of the recommendations by the Village Board. The Roundtable has suggested tasks that can be carried out by the Village Planner, an expanded Green Infrastructure Committee, a new Tree Commission structured and empowered to get things accomplished, and through actions of the Village Board to require phased changes to the Code in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND

Green Infrastructure Green infrastructure is a term used to describe both a planning approach and a set of best management practices for stormwater management that infiltrate, evapotranspire, or reuse stormwater. Instead of conventional, engineered collection, conveyance and storage structures, GI techniques use soils and vegetation to manage stormwater. Common green infrastructure approaches include green roofs, trees, rain gardens, bioretention areas, vegetated swales, pocket wetlands, infiltration planters, vegetated median strips, reforestation, and protection and enhancement of riparian buffers and floodplains.

The New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual (Design Manual) requires the use of green infrastructure for new development and promotes its use on redevelopment projects. Recognizing the 7 important benefits of green infrastructure in protecting water quality and as a component of comprehensive flood management plans, communities across the region and the country are now updating their codes and in many cases have adopted laws that exceed the

State requirements.

GI practices filter pollution and reduce the quantity of runoff, increasing groundwater recharge and reducing impacts on local streets and sewer systems when it rains. Beyond this, with proper design and maintenance GI practices can beautify property, reduce temperatures, lower energy costs, and provide wildlife habitat. Effective planning for stormwater will make the most of green infrastructure to help manage flooding and improve water quality while also advancing community goals for sustainable design and beautification throughout the village and revitalization of the waterfront.