



# GREAT URBAN PARKS CAMPAIGN: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

CONVENING SUMMARY REPORT  
MARCH 10 - 11, 2016 | ATLANTA, GA



**National Recreation  
and Park Association**

*sponsored by* THE **JPB** FOUNDATION



**American Planning Association**  
Making Great Communities Happen

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# THE GREAT URBAN PARKS CAMPAIGN

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The *Great Urban Parks Campaign: Green Infrastructure in Underserved Communities* is a joint project between the National Recreation and Parks Association and the American Planning Association. Its purpose is to inspire and equip communities to improve social and environmental equity in underserved communities through integrating green infrastructure planning with local park development and improvement projects.

One objective of this project is to inform and educate planners and park professionals on best practices to achieve maximum community benefits through the strategic planning and placement of green infrastructure. A second is to implement pilot projects to showcase models for how green infrastructure can be leveraged to improve multiple outcomes in underserved communities.

The Great Urban Parks Campaign project began with a convening of thought leaders in Atlanta, Georgia. Experts met for two days to discuss strategies and best practices to achieve maximum community benefits through green infrastructure in parks. This paper summarized the results of the two-day meeting.

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# CONVENING OVERVIEW

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On March 10 - 11, thought leaders from around the country gathered in Atlanta, Georgia to explore solutions to stormwater management through the use of green infrastructure that also benefits community members. The event brought together experts and thought leaders to find and share best practices for using green infrastructure parks in underserved communities.

The convening kicked off the ***Great Urban Parks Campaign: Green Infrastructure in Underserved Communities***. This campaign aims to increase and improve the use of green infrastructure in local parks — particularly those located in underserved communities — to improve stormwater management while creating places for people to recreate and connect with nature. Many parks are ideally suited for green infrastructure as they are often located in communities near floodplains or in other areas that can measurably contribute to stormwater management.

The focus on underserved communities is two-fold. First, green infrastructure improves a community’s environmental quality. Low-income communities and communities of color are too often the victims of flooding and combined sewer overflows due to aging “gray infrastructure”. Second, these same communities also frequently lack quality green space and safe places to recreate and connect with nature. Green infrastructure projects in parks like rain gardens, constructed wetlands, daylighted streams, and pervious pavement can increase access to nature. This allows community members a place to gather together and foster a deeper appreciation of the local environment while managing stormwater on site.

## Day One: Setting the Stage

Day one’s discussions centered around the following questions:

- What are the secrets to making green infrastructure successful?
- How do you maximize social and environmental benefits of green infrastructure in parks in underserved communities?
- What are the roles of parks leaders and city leaders in the community engagement process?
- What funding sources have been utilized?
- What does success look like?

Jad Daley from the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) discussed the four objectives of TPL’s Climate-Smart Cities™ program: connect, cool, absorb,



Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Amy Phuong welcomes the attendees on March 10.

and protect. Claire Robinson from Amigos de los Rios and Na'Taki Osborne Jelks from the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance discussed the need to get community members at the table from day one in order to determine their needs. Opening up the process can be messy and unpredictable, but the process is just as important as the results. The Lindsey Street Park project in Atlanta started with a community member wanting to see a park in the community. Park Pride often works on improving existing parks, but this was a new one. There are lots of vacant and abandoned properties in the area, sometimes due to persistent flooding/houses built in floodplain areas. This provided a need and an opportunity to integrate green infrastructure into the design.

Several comments were repeated throughout the discussion on the secrets to making green infrastructure projects successful and maximizing social and environmental benefits:

- Involve community members from the start. Persistent community engagement pays off.
- “What’s in it for me?” matters immensely to the stakeholders.
- Don’t force people to use the word green infrastructure.
- Educating community members on green infrastructure benefits can lead the community to advocate for green infrastructure.
- Seek job training and placement opportunities for community members.
- Patience is a key ingredient. It takes time to build relationships and strong projects.
- You need a permanent commitment// there’s a need to identify ways to institutionalize collaboration so that it doesn’t go away when staff or community members leave or the project is implemented.

Suggestions and examples were also shared on the roles of parks leaders and city leaders in the community engagement process:

- Flashes of great leadership make a huge impact.
- You need a champion on board prior to starting the project. Oftentimes that leader doesn’t know how to implement the project so you need to also have another kind of leader who can take you through the long process.
- Leadership doesn’t always need to be come the city. Often it may come from an outside group or a nonprofit organization.
- Technically-minded people need to know that things start with the community and must reflect the community’s needs.
- Engaging the business community can be important. Elected officials also listen to the business community.



Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation staff provide a tour of the City’s parks.

The morning ended with a discussion on funding and what success looks like. Attendees identified a variety of funding sources that had been utilized to implement projects. There was agreement that a reliable ongoing source of funding is necessary. Water utilities under a combined sewer overflow federal consent decree looking to broaden beyond gray infrastructure or communities with National Pollutant Discharge Eliminating System can be a source of funding. Private funders (U-Haul, PNC) have been used in Atlanta and other places to implement community park projects. In many places, taxes and transportation funds have also been used.

Several comments were repeated on the topic of funding:

- Great ideas attract money to them. If you broadcast a compelling idea, funders appear.
- Reliable, ongoing sources of funding, be it fee, rate, or tax-based, are important to encourage.
- Consider operations and maintenance costs from the start. Creative partnerships could be constructed among city agencies.
- Consider what role park foundations might play in coordinating and coupling funding sources.
- There's a need to get cities to think of parks as driving private investments with development, such as in the case of Old Fourth Ward Park.
- Old Forth Ward Park is also an example of cost savings, where the City of Atlanta saved millions by implementing the project. Monetizing the benefits of green infrastructure is important.

In the afternoon, the City of Atlanta's Department of Parks and Recreation provided a tour of existing and upcoming green infrastructure projects in Atlanta parks in underserved communities. The group visited Lindsay Street Park, Arthur Langford Park, Old Forth Ward Park, and the soon-to-be-constructed Proctor Creek Park project.



*Left:* Attendees visit Lindsey Street Park in Atlanta's English Avenue and Vine City neighborhoods. *Middle:* Attendees visited the site of the future Proctor Creek Park, where the Emerald Corridor Foundation Executive Director Debra A. Edelson spoke about the future plans. *Right:* A neighborhood leader explains the Arthur Lanford Park project and how community members were engaged before, during, and after.

## Day One: Model Project Presentations

Day One ended with presentations from three cities on how green infrastructure has been integrated in parks within their own communities. Presenters from Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee highlighted how green infrastructure was being utilized in underserved communities to maximize social and environmental benefits.

Presenters also discussed how their projects were being funded, the impact of community leaders and community support on project success, and innovative partnerships between Water and Parks Departments and others to get projects implemented and maintained over time.

## Day Two: Breakout Sessions

The focus of Day Two was to tap into the collective brain trust to get boots-on-the-ground recommendations for integrating green infrastructure into parks projects. Participants were first provided a series of questions regarding the following five categories:

- Funding and financing
- Partnerships
- Planning
- Social equity and community engagement
- Design, operations and maintenance

Three rounds of breakout discussions were held with regard to how best to support and advance green infrastructure in parks in underserved communities. Participants were asked to self-select from three of the five categories and provide input. At the end, groups were asked to prioritize from the list of comments received to come up with recommendations for park and planning department staff.



Nicole Hostettler from the Philadelphia Water Department and Stephanie Craighead from the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation discuss how Philadelphia's two departments have been working together to implement projects.

# BREAKOUT SESSION: SOCIAL EQUITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - SOCIAL EQUITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 1. Lived Experience + Data.** Data is important for understanding a community's needs, but it doesn't tell the whole story. Combine robust data analysis with a conversation with community members to better understand their needs and desires as related to social and environmental impacts of projects.
- 2. Listen + Engage.** Listen, listen, listen to the community. Do due diligence on particular site and community to understand background issues ahead of time. Engage the community early and often.
- 3. Adequate allocated resources for community engagement and equity.** Starting with community engagement - not an afterthought - is critical for true buy-in. Make a distinct effort to engage the community early on and then engage community through operational staff on daily basis.

## Social Equity and Community Engagement - Responses to Facilitator Questions

**Q:** Many cities are putting an equity lens on the provision of infrastructure and services. Are there examples of policies to ensure equity in the siting of green infrastructure in parks (or other projects with lessons learned applicable to this work)?

- A:**
- Access is one measure of equity – use score card like Park Score to assess
  - Environmental damage more prevalent in communities of color, thus these communities should be priority remediation sites
  - Policies should be created requiring green infrastructure in the design of all parks
  - In order to address equity, you must measure level of service – must have metrics
  - Put equity up front in any policy addressing green infrastructure
  - Use data to remove bias of where green infrastructure should be sited (urban heat islands, access, income) – apply a social vulnerability lens
  - Look at a park system approach rather than park-by-park approach
  - In order to achieve diverse engagement, you must address equity questions
  - Should move beyond proximity data to usage data
  - Historic 4th Ward Park no longer appears to address equity
  - Acknowledge what happened in the past and make this part of conversation – envision what future might look like under various scenarios
  - Use transition areas that requires mixed residential
  - Develop score card that identifies and tracks equity
  - Use data and tell the story
  - Weave equity throughout all that an agency does – do not treat it as an afterthought
  - EPA has a environmental justice screening tool / also see EPA Environmental Justice 2020 Strategy



- Policies that ensure local jobs for both construction and maintenance of green infrastructure
- Many communities / utilities have a process where a community's underserved status is taken into account for siting projects
- For Space to Grow program, low income, park deficit community areas are prioritized during our school selection process. We know that the benefits of a green schoolyard in these communities has more impact than in better served/affluent neighborhoods

Q: What are some examples or lessons learned from efforts to engage the community that were not successful or had unintended consequences? How can we ensure that underserved populations are meaningfully engaged in the process?

- A:
- Identify key leaders (leaders might be a surprise to you)
  - Meet people where they are
  - Meet with groups separately so that they feel free to speak openly and no one voice is too loud
  - Do due diligence on particular site and community to understand background issues ahead of time
  - Not doing enough planning to plan results in failure
  - Write policy that requires community engagement in planning process (e.g., Raleigh NC)
  - Some known community leaders will not identify other community leaders important for the process succeed
  - Don't be naive, use a large pool of input before narrowing down
  - Use statistics and real data to inform residents of needs and concerns
  - Involve community orgs in design phase – use data to inform – must act on data
  - See APA publication “A Ladder Of Citizen Participation”

Q: What are some novel community engagement strategies used to engage communities around green infrastructure? How would you recommend dealing with community opposition to construction of a green infrastructure project?

- A:
- Concerns are that projects are near/behind people's homes and these put strangers closed to dwellings
  - Need to address each concern distinctly
  - Don't dumb down community concerns
  - Explain benefits and perceived and real drawbacks in a way that community understands so that they can make informed decisions
  - Use visuals and key messaging to frame the conversation
  - Inform at festivals and through community orgs (faith based, HOA, neighborhood council)
  - Don't let timing of a grant or other factor pressure park design without community input
  - Go to community very early in process – make distinct effort to engage community early on – engage community before new project comes up
  - Engage community through operational staff on daily basis (comment box, conversations)
  - For the Space to Grow program, starting with community engagement - not an afterthought - is critical



for true buy-in. Ours begins with an application process, then once selected, schools and community members are recruited to participate for planning, use, and maintenance. We do this with internal and external networks and structures. Once a schoolyard is built we have community workshops for schoolyard green infrastructure use in teaching and installing practices at home.

- Engage community early and often to keep them aware of what is going on and give them a voice
- Finding the key community voice is critical. For Green Alleys LA it was the mothers.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation has a tool for community engagement
- Seattle/King County has an equity and community engagement tool that should be reviewed
- Educate youth in the neighborhood to engage their interests and produce future advocates
- Green infrastructure + parks equals community safety

Q: In your experience, what are the best benefits of green infrastructure to communicate to the community?

- A:
- Water quality, recreation, aesthetic benefits, conversion of blighted properties
  - Make sure you have answers for common concerns (basement backups, child safety, mosquitoes)
  - Health, property values, and safety

Q: What other key considerations or questions should be addressed around this topic?

- A:
- Equity and community engagement should be embedded in each section / threaded into all conversations
  - Need to address each concern distinctly
  - Relate green infrastructure benefits directly to positive community concerns
  - Reach out; reach out; reach out; listen; listen; listen



# BREAKOUT SESSION: PLANNING

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - PLANNING, DESIGN, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE\*

- 1. Identify key staff.** Identify key staff in maintenance, operations, and landscape architecture. Provide training and education.
- 2. Develop standards.** Develop green infrastructure design standards for parks.
- 3. Establish a policy.** Create a green infrastructure policy requiring the integration of green infrastructure into park design. Not all parks & recreation departments construct their own projects, so the policy needs to be in the construction arm (might be capital improvements, might be engineering).
- 4. Identify a demonstration project.** Start by having the city/county/local government implement a demonstration project in their jurisdiction. Have one good example of green infrastructure that can be your showcase (even if it's in another city).

*\*Note: The Planning and Design, Operations, and Maintenance breakout groups listed recommendations together*

## Planning - Responses to Facilitator Questions

Q: How can comprehensive and other community planning processes advance green infrastructure in parks?  
How can green infrastructure in parks connect to larger city green infrastructure/open space systems?

- A:
- Need to talk to neighboring jurisdictions enough to make sure we're working on common goals
  - Park and recreation green infrastructure plans are being done a lot (functional plans); comprehensive planning, regional green infrastructure initiatives (MPOs, RPCs that have traditionally focused on transportation but are now starting to look at environmental issues and connections of green infrastructure to transportation, regional trails/greenway corridors)
  - Functional master plans get into how parks can serve populations, tie into larger state initiatives
  - County-wide trails master plan can identify missing connectivity links, how to handle with more land acquisition or partnerships with Roads Dept so trail connectivity can be provided as roads are redone
  - Regional planning authority can provide recommendations which can be adopted locally
  - Provide overlay structure for all mosaic pieces
  - Ensure that the park functional master plan is closely coordinated with other functional master plans (e.g. transportation, schools)
  - Look for "greening", open space preservation
  - Expand/enhance smaller neighborhood parks, integrated design

Q: Who isn't at the green infrastructure planning table that should be?

- A:
- Planning, Parks, Public Works
  - Get the people who will be doing the maintenance involved in the planning process
  - Get other departments together (watershed, transportation, health) to get green infrastructure into



their systematic processes

- Public health professionals
- Community members, Board of Education, development community
- Private sector, business community, job creation group
- Finance, city planning dept., redevelopment authority, health department
- Who's leading green infrastructure? What is the timeline for decision-making for getting green infrastructure implemented - it's different in every city. Identify the questions that need to be asked (since every city is different) and then determine who should be the partners
- Identify drivers, leaders, maintainers, partners in maintenance

Q: My community just adopted a new comprehensive plan and it doesn't include much on green infrastructure. What should I do? How can green infrastructure approaches be incorporated into park Master Plans or City or County General Plans?

- A:
- New ideas don't need to be in the comp plan as long as they're part of the implementation
  - Monthly neighborhood meetings keep the conversation going and can generate new ideas (adding green infrastructure to solve other issues)
  - Neighborhood planning is a good scale because the community intensely cares versus city-wide comprehensive planning
  - Look at surrounding urban fabric and look at opportunities for green streets/connectors; Oklahoma City plan proposed a new street classification for green connectors to lead people into parks
  - Can connect parks with other parks or just the surrounding neighborhood
  - Atlanta has a Green infrastructure Task Force comprised of different departments that is adopting an action plan to put the green infrastructure lens on every infrastructure project in the city

Q: What types of external planning drivers are there (e.g. urban renewal, water and sewer)? How can these efforts be integrated with Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency Plans?

- A:
- Often sewer utilities struggle with "infiltration and inflow"; may be a way to approach the utility and offer to rehab the pipes below the park in exchange for funding
  - Need for green space
  - Soil quality

Q: What other key considerations or questions should be addressed around this topic?

- A:
- Need to hear more about the link to comprehensive plans/park master plans - any examples yet?
  - Advocacy, demonstration projects that you can point to as a success (Historic Fourth Ward Park) are important to educate people and show how it works and ties into other things. If communities don't understand how this fits in, it can all be for nothing. Don't want people to use a green infrastructure area as a local dump
  - Brownfields
  - Connectivity among green spaces is key



# BREAKOUT SESSION: DESIGN, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

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*\*Note: See p. 11 for key recommendations. The Planning and Design, Operations, and Maintenance breakout groups grouped key recommendations together.*

## Design, Operations and Maintenance - Responses to Facilitator Questions

Q: How critical is it to have interdisciplinary design teams participate in the design, operations and maintenance process? Who should be on these interdisciplinary teams?

- A:
- Start out with the final goals and objectives and build your team from there
  - When setting up a program it is important to have at the table / anticipate the programs that are needed. Who are the potential partners? Don't let the engineer drive the bus. Need to have people at the table early
  - For our relationships, depends on the level where you are going to go
  - You can waste a lot of money on the design of something when parks and rec was not on board
  - Besides the partners, the resources necessary may have the ability to bring people on board
  - Make sure you have the parks people. Parks may be an integral player in this plan. Need to ensure that the park planner is working with the planning department.
  - Need to answer some key questions to determine who sits on the team:
    - Identify your drivers
    - Identify who is leading the activity
    - Identify who is maintaining it
    - Also identify who your partners in maintenance are (friends groups, scouts troops, universities with community service requirements) to help sustain your maintenance

Q: What are the opportunities/models for workforce development? What special training and skills do park personnel need to manage/maintain green infrastructure?

- A:
- There's a disconnect between design, procurement, and operations/maintenance
  - Building/maintaining capacity; with the maintenance considerations, it's important to make sure everyone's on board for maintenance requirements
  - Philadelphia integrated maintenance in the design of plans
  - Philadelphia also has a maintenance manual. Parks uses PowerCorpsPHL (like AmeriCorps) for generic maintenance; also has adoption grants and friends-of groups that help with maintenance, while the city or city contractors do the serious operations and maintenance work
  - There is some distinction between maintenance and operations; some things are ongoing and required for the bmp to work; other things can be done by volunteers, friends groups etc.
  - It is important to check the work of contractors early on; this is true with maintenance, too, to make sure that maintenance crews are following the correct procedures.

- Not all maintenance is the same, so it is important to check; the Milwaukee County Grounds project requires the vegetation to be burned every once in a while
- Philadelphia Horticultural Society provides volunteer staff training
- For work force development, there's an opportunity for a national partnership with the Corps Network, members exemplified by Greening Youth Foundation (Atlanta) and PhillyPowerCorps
- Establish local hiring agreements to direct jobs benefits
- Civic justice corps, restorative justice work opportunities for justice-involved youth/young adults
- For workforce development, how do we align work/skills development with actual job needs? Can these be connected to local community colleges/apprentice programs?
- Can equity metrics be included in RFA/RFPs for design/work contracts?
- Training is necessary but it is not complex - rather it educates personnel that green infrastructure is different and how it works so that maintenance staff doesn't mow over native plantings, etc.
- Many areas have green infrastructure training at community colleges or in-house.
- WEF and DC Water are developing a green infrastructure certification program due on January 2017

Q: What are major considerations if you contract out design of green infrastructure projects vs. in-house design with agency or city staff?

- A:
- Need good ones. Milwaukee and DC Water are working on certification programs
  - Philadelphia landscape manual and other manuals provide standards, etc. that contractors need to follow; design criteria are important
  - Knowing who pays for what is very important
  - In Atlanta – when a project is built, capital includes first two years of maintenance
  - The Philadelphia Parks Dept. has an internal design team but also contracts some design work out, depending on how complicated the project it is and the scope of the project. If too complicated, Parks gets an outside consultant. Have to have staff that can challenge outside consultant recommendations. If the Parks Dept. has a question related to a consultant's capabilities, it asks the Philadelphia Water Dept. Ask other departments about design firm capabilities.

Q: What are some ways to design green infrastructure projects as multi-functional landscapes?

- A:
- See this as green infrastructure playing a traffic calming + a stormwater management role
  - Milwaukee – detention basin is usually a ball field; the same site serves multiple purposes. When Milwaukee gets that big rain, the ball field is a detention basin. You don't play ball in the rain anyway so it works out.

Q: What other key considerations or questions should be addressed around this topic?

- A:
- How to deal with longevity of projects on private property; Milwaukee requires a conservation easement on private land
  - In Philadelphia, if a park project triggers regulations, parks is responsible for the design, installation, and maintenance. If it doesn't, the departments work it out. They've drafted a MOU between parks and swm to enable a more cooperative arrangement. Parks doesn't have subsurface clean-out systems, but they do have friends groups that keep eye on sites all the time. Sharing resources enables both take advantage of the others' strengths
  - Question as to whether NRPA can play a role in identifying consultants
  - Document the successes and the failures (and how failures were overcome). A lot of good information comes out of this.
  - Start small; have your first few projects be smaller projects so you can learn from them
  - Who pays for what



# BREAKOUT SESSION: PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - PARTNERSHIPS

- 1. Identify who should be in the discussion.** Some partners are likely to be the same every time; others are project-specific and vary across scales. Consider including non-traditional partners.
- 2. Define expectations.** Define expectations at the start, both individually and for the project overall. This will help identify areas of overlap and also highlight where goals diverge.
- 3. Clarify the language.** Clarify the language being used to define green infrastructure, equity, and other words/phrases. This will help reduce miscommunication and ensure everyone is on the same page.
- 4. Ensure roles are defined.** Ensure roles are clear and leverage one another's strengths. Don't forget about health, business, schools, youth corps, and other non-traditional players that may be right for your community.
- 5. Solidify partnerships.** Solidify partnerships by establishing MOUs or intergovernmental agreements.
- 6. Establish a regular meeting schedule.** Set up a regular face-to-face meeting schedule to allow the team to check in on progress and discuss project needs/progress, concerns, and new opportunities.

## Partnerships - Responses to Facilitator Questions

Q: What are examples of innovative partnerships to create and maintain green infrastructure in parks?

- A:
- Community, non-profits, business, water, colleges/universities/schools, developers, sustainability office
  - Partners are dependent upon where the process starts
  - Philadelphia Green Team is an example of an innovative partnership
  - Canal Park and Green Rivers Archway: Don't only approach businesses for funding but consider them to be a partner
  - City of Chicago's "Space to Grow, Green Schoolyard Project"
  - Baltimore Parks and People
  - Howard County, MD Summer Youth Program (funded by USFS)
  - PowerCorp, Ready Willing and Able, Tree Keeper, Sustainability Offices, Boys and Girls Scouts

Q: What is the role of the nonprofit/private sector in working on green infrastructure projects in public parks? What are some successful examples of partnerships with nonprofits/private sector?

- A:
- This role is important. Sometimes they can help facilitate getting projects through outside of the government realm
  - Provides added flexibility
  - Can also use volunteer groups and friends-of groups to be eyes and ears and oversee simple maintenance tasks

Q: What are some effective ways to engage a water utility to promote the use of green infrastructure in parks? E.g., how do we get parks to speak/understand the language of water?

- A: • Make sure that you speak the language of whom you are trying to engage
- Capitol Improvement Projects -> relationship building
  - Understand utilities' need for measurable and quantifiable outcomes for regulators and consistency over time
- Q: Can green infrastructure projects in parks be potential candidates for stream, wetland, or forest mitigation banking? Do you know of examples of new partnerships created to support green infrastructure projects in parks?
- A: • Yes but takes work and partners
- Yes - Green Emerald Corridor
- Q: What other key considerations or questions should be addressed around this topic?
- A: • Message to park leaders: if this is happening in your own community, get in the game; if it is not, be the leader
- Be flexible; be aware that the green infrastructure agenda might be in line with others
  - How do we make sure that a new set of kids are being exposed to nature through green infrastructure projects?
  - Is any of this being connected to environmental education mandates?
  - Planners need to insert themselves in the green infrastructure dialogue if it is happening in their community. If not, be a leader.

# BREAKOUT SESSION: FUNDING AND FINANCING

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS - FUNDING AND FINANCING

- 1. Know your partners.** Know your local and regional water quality regulatory agencies and funding infrastructure. Be familiar with their regulatory drivers/incentives, metrics, and goals. Identify common goals and where missions align.
- 2. Understand life cycle funding needs.** Take a life cycle funding approach when determining funding needs. Develop a matrix of different funding sources for different phases, including post-construction maintenance needs.
- 3. Consider a variety of funding sources.** Evaluate the use of local taxes, fees, bonds, foundation money, corporate funding, and other funding opportunities. LOCAL dollars will leverage additional dollars. Be creative and see out non-traditional partners.
- 4. Relay information on the value of ecosystem services and co-benefits.** Storytelling matters. Make the case to bring in funding by gathering and providing information on metrics/data and monetary value of ecosystem services or co-benefits that green infrastructure provides.

## Funding and Financing - Responses to Facilitator Questions

Q: What are the key regulatory drivers (federal, state, and local) that a park agency should be aware of when seeking funding sources?

A: CORPs, Clean Water Act, Consent Decree, City Sustainability Goals (e.g. Philly Green Plan), Requirements to invest in disadvantaged communities, Funder goals e.g. Annie E. Casey equity funding guidelines and prioritizations (e.g. % people of color, low income), Cap and trade

Q: What funding sources (federal/state/local government, water utilities, grants, private funds, other) are available to park agencies for green infrastructure, and how do they position themselves to access these?

A: *Federal funding sources:*

- Community Reinvestment Act
- CDC Community Health Assessments & Health Improvement Plans (asthma rates, heat island)
- EPA Clean Water State Revolving Funds
- EPA Section 319 Grant Program
- FEMA National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System
- FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program
- FHWA Recreational Trails Program
- FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program
- NPS Land and Water Conservation Fund
- US Army Corps of Engineers (e.g. restoration)
- US DOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

- USDA USFS National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC)
- USFWS Endangered Species Act
- Nutrient trading programs
- Workforce development for installation and maintenance (e.g., possible DOL grant dollars)

*Regional/State funding sources:*

- Cap and Trade (CA) Greenhouse Gas Fund
- Federal Reserve of San Francisco
- General funds
- Impact fees
- Nutrient trading program
- State Departments of Natural Resources, Fish, Wildlife, Game etc
- State Resource extraction dollars (e.g. fracking)
- State trails programs
- Parkland dedication ordinance/fees (regional/watershed approach)
- Property tax
- Stormwater credit trading program (DC, Los Angeles)
- Workforce development

*Local funding sources:*

- Bonds
- Business Improvement Districts (local)
- Dedicated/ad valorem taxes
- Enterprise funds
- General funds
- Impact fees
- Mitigation banking/In lieu fee programs (e.g. Prince William County, VA)
- Property tax
- Real estate transfer taxes/fees
- Stormwater taxes
- Tax Increment Financing Districts (local)
- Value capital models
- Water utility rates
- Workforce development for installation and maintenance (e.g. greening youth)

*Private/non-profit sources:*

- The Conservation Fund
- Kaiser, BCBS and other Healthcare provider aligned Foundations (private-non-profit)
- Social impact bonds/pay for success

Q: What public private partnership financing models currently exist in funding green infrastructure projects? What policies need to be in place for these projects to succeed?

- A:
- Community Foundations (be creative and emphasize social impacts, know their missions)
  - Trust for Public Lands
  - Urban Roots
  - Prince George's County, MD public/private partnership
  - Off-site mitigation
  - DC Credit trading market
  - Regional detention-selling capacity rights/expanding
  - Bond rating agencies (preferential treatment of GI, reduced interest rates)
  - EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office model
  - Milwaukee example
  - Need co-sharing of costs; streamline procurement

Q: Are there new or emerging funding models in existence at the municipal level via dedicated stormwater fees, resilience bonds, or stormwater credit trading program that would help a park agency fund green infrastructure projects?

- A:
- Park agencies often have to align with water utilities (if regulated entity) to provide for stormwater compliance. Can also provide flood relief services.
  - Stormwater credit trading (Washington, DC and Los Angeles (in lieu of fees)
  - Resilience and green bonds (DC Water)
  - Opportunity for stronger cross-links to resiliency-related funding as that field grows (e.g., HUD Rebuild by Design)

Q: What are the most important considerations in financing green infrastructure projects through grants, public/private partnerships, agency or municipal capital budget process, or a combination of multiple funding sources?

- A:
- Talk to your water utility, wastewater, stormwater, or watershed agency. (Philly model)
  - Think outside the box. Leverage.
  - A good plan! Tells your story, demonstrates community and agency consensus, with phasing, pieces that appeal to multiple funders.
  - Parks have to talk watershed/water utility. Use metrics.
  - Political leadership in creating and driving a vision.
  - Metrics/monitoring/demonstrating success is important
  - Use housing/community development model (creative)
  - How you promote front end of planning to get priority in capital improvement plans

Q: How can agencies or public land owners build in long-term maintenance funding with community organizations or non-profit corporations?

A: • Partnerships

- Build into original project budget (must package it with other items)
- Must create green infrastructure expertise within partner groups

Q: What other key considerations or questions should be addressed around this topic?

A: • How do you address equity/social justice in the process?

- Many organizations will only change model when attached to funding.
- Points can be added if performance plans have equity goals, or if a certain percentage of minorities are included, or if community members are included as decision makers
- Maintenance funding is not sexy, but there needs to be a plan in place to keep parks operating at high level in perpetuity
- There is a big push to monetize/privatize green infrastructure through social impact investing. Does the market exist? How do parks play a role if on public land?
- Measuring/monitoring benefits is key.
- Long-term planning/goal-setting for green infrastructure that is not administration dependent.
- How do you concentrate green infrastructure projects within a watershed to obtain the most impact?
- Partners with different missions can lead into being able to raise diverse funds as long as program missions are aligned to start.
- Water utilities want to be true partners, not assumed or forced partners/sources of funding. Building a strong relationship with them and checking in regularly is very important if you are creating ongoing, consistent funding streams from them.



# APPENDIX 1. WORK SESSION AGENDA

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THURSDAY, MARCH 10

- 8:15 a.m. Shuttle Pick-up at Georgian Terrace Hotel
- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- Barbara Tulipane, National Recreation and Park Association
  - Amy Phuong, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation
- 9:15 a.m. Introductory Activity
- 9:45 a.m. Great Urban Parks Campaign project and background
- Rich Dolesh, National Recreation and Park Association
  - David Rouse, American Planning Association
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Panel discussion on maximizing social and environmental benefits of green infrastructure in parks in underserved communities
- Barbara Tulipane, National Recreation and Park Association
  - Amy Phuong, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation
  - Na'Taki Osborne Jelks, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance
  - Erik Meyers, The Conservation Fund
  - David Barth, Barth Associates
  - Jad Daley, Trust for Public Land
  - Claire Robinson, Amigos de los Rios
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30 p.m. Tour of Atlanta projects. The tour will focus on the design and implementation of green infrastructure projects in Atlanta parks in underserved communities.
- Barbara Tulipane, National Recreation and Park Association
  - Amy Phuong, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation
  - Walt Ray, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation
  - Daniel Calvert, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation



3:30 p.m. Model projects presentations and panel presenters will offer short presentations on green infrastructure projects in parks in underserved communities that maximize social and environmental benefits, followed by facilitated Q&A and mini-panel.

- Atlanta  
Paul Morris, Atlanta Beltline  
Curt Soper, Trust for Public Land  
Walt Ray, City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation
- Philadelphia  
Stephanie Craighead, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation  
Nicole Hostettler, Philadelphia Water Department
- Milwaukee  
Kevin Shafer, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

5:00 p.m. Closing  
Rebecca Wickline, National Recreation and Park Association

5:15 p.m. Reception at Publik Draft House

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

8:15 a.m. Shuttle Pick-up at Georgian Terrace Hotel

8:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Thursday recap

9:15 a.m. Small group work (break at 10:45 a.m.)  
*Participants will engage in rounds of discussion with regard to how best to support and advance green infrastructure in parks in underserved communities.*

- Funding and financing
- Partnerships
- Planning
- Social equity and community engagement
- Design, operations and maintenance

11:45 a.m. Closing  
Barbara Tulipane, National Recreation and Park Association



## APPENDIX 2. WORK SESSION PARTICIPANTS

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