

TITLE: Expert Learnings on Green Infrastructure

DATE: October 16, 2019

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What challenges for GI in your community?

Challenges:

- Development
- Maintenance
 - Workforce development trainings
 - Groundworks
 - Doing maintenance
 - Build planter boxes - winter?
 - Permeable paths
- Ballot measure for parks!
- Tool share networks
- Developers!
 - Require GI
 - Make case to developers
 - Maps make goals clear
 - Money to money → counteract the dynamic
 - Create city farms

Key Challenges:

(what funding/program barriers are hindering maintenance?)

Workforce:

- Seasonality issues for workforce development
- How do we fund position that aren't seasonal?
- Training /skills set lack in GI contracting
- Lack of affordable, well-trained contractors to perform maintenance

Funds:

- Finance/policy for O & M
- Lack of targeted funding and lack of good maintenance training
- No funding for long term maintenance

Program regional decentralization:

- Development of holistic program (local government, city, and school)

- Lack of accountability and oversight at and above city agencies
- Decentralization of GI installment and maintenance
- How do we connect with the right folks in communities to implement the maintenance
- Outsourcing of maintenance and contracts that disincentivize thoughtful and complete GI maintenance
- Programs are lacking for smaller communities & few regional solutions

Capacity:

- Finding organizations that can manage maintenance work - across projects
- Maintenance is the sole responsibility of the landowner when on private property

Sector challenges:

- Fear of controlling job training programs with schools

Contracts:

- Tracking projects to know maintenance needs - ownership of GI asset

Responsibility:

- Future problem that politicians and decision makers do not “own”

Durability of contracts:

- NGO responsible want out of business
- It's not grass cutting, (and that's what we do)
- Very long property easements that make it difficult for low income communities to commit

OPPORTUNITIES: How might we structure funding or program design solutions?

Centralization:

- Fresh coast Resource Center (skills/resources gap assessment)
- Consistent inspection with all contractors in WFG program
- Accountable public agency with money
- Training and equipment shared
- Program stays involved through establishment
- Launch NOLA (landscapes)
- HSC - share out maintenance survey results
- Training a well qualified / knowledgeable workforce

Funding:

- Build costs into upfront costs of project
- Bonds
- Punitive structures don't work
- Pooled funds - various beneficiaries

Workforce

- Mitigate seasonality - union protection (how to deal with outsourcing?), seasonal matching (ex: snow plowing, housing, and invasive species removal)
- How to fund maintenance?
- Understanding cost vs benefit of type of use and how to use them
- Market for those who have been through workforce development program
- Knowing all the types of options and how to advocate for them
- Maintenance!

- O & M issue: can't do more projects if you can't take care of the ones you have
- Dense cities have a dearth of space
- Research is missing - monitoring and evaluation → going beyond models and understanding what is happening in reality
- Construction costs → high in some cities
- Winter maintenance: youth did permeable paving, homeless only people out there consistently and wanted to learn more
- Money follows money

- Financing GI maintenance
- Sometimes public space is too developed and "hard" to fit in GI
- Dense development
- Monitoring and evaluation GI

What challenges do we face in green infrastructure initiatives?

- City push back on GI transparency
- Connectivity (mapping a network of green spaces, not just isolated lots of green spaces)
- Money follows money
- Contamination, caps in how deep in the ground you can permeate
- Encouraging developers to incorporate GI
- Maintenance - city is relying on residences for upkeep but these residences also have 9-5s and can't commit the time
- Equity issues
- Bringing things up to scale

Racial equity challenges + GI

- Money following other money in New Orleans, GI becomes concentrated in affluent white communities GI/natural assets in black communities are neglected
- GI and gentrification/displacement connect in Seattle