



# GREEN STREETS | GREEN JOBS | GREEN TOWNS INITIATIVE

The Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns Partnership (G3) aims to stimulate the green jobs market and enable families to work where they live and play. Small to mid-sized communities can boost their local economies and protect water resources through the use of watershed planning, design and construction of stormwater best management practices.



## ROCK CREEK CONSERVANCY

Green Paper: Community Engagement, Maintenance, and Workforce Development

Local government agencies sometimes encounter opposition to green streets projects. Given the significant investment that local agencies have and continue to make in green infrastructure (GI), understanding cost-effective methods to maintain them, from gaining community buy-in early to having a labor force dedicated to executing the maintenance, is critical. The white paper provided recommendations for local agencies involved in green streets efforts in the Rock Creek watershed to improve community engagement. It identified best practices for agencies to successfully implement and maintain green infrastructure, including the workforce development programs designed to support this infrastructure, taking into consideration the local context.

engaging alumni of workforce development programs in green streets' maintenance were also explored. Agency staff report that there are few contractors with the specialized expertise required to perform some of these services, despite the efforts of workforce development programs.

Green Streets programs that were selected for comparison included Philadelphia, Portland, Seattle, and more. Interviews and document review of those programs examined budget allocation for maintenance and community outreach, strategies for community engagement, long-term performance of the green infrastructure features, and community sentiment. Interviews centered on both the content and philosophy of the programs, as well as success in securing employment by alumni and how programs work with local businesses or agencies to identify and create opportunities for trained employees. Non-GI organizations were consulted as well.

Another element of the paper focused on green infrastructure workforce development programs, specifically to connect GI workforce development programs with maintenance needs, as well as more outreach opportunities to strengthen community engagement. Opportunities for and challenges to

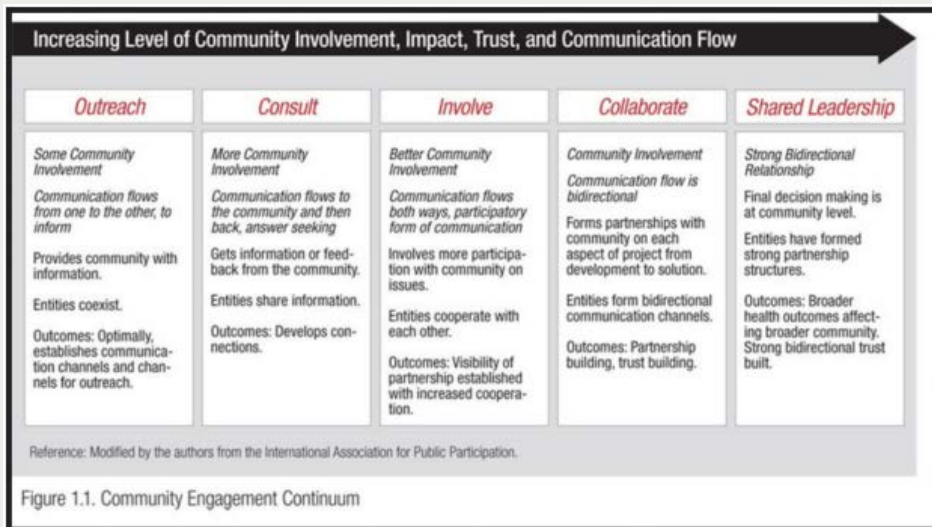
1 green paper created

25 people with increased self efficacy



## QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

- Do programs provide sufficient upfront budget for public outreach to effectively engage community members (not just meet statutory public comment requirements)?
- Does maintenance impact public perception of green infrastructure (GI)/acceptance of new projects? Does this depend on who bears responsibility for maintenance (local government vs. residents)?
- Does community buy-in impact maintenance and associated runoff reductions from GI (i.e., downspouts reconnected by disgruntled residents; residents not sweeping alleys or cleaning out bioswales)? How does this impact the return on investment of installation?
- Do current training programs sufficiently prepare local residents for GI and maintenance needs? Could these individuals support outreach?



## SUSTAINABILITY & GROWTH

The completed results were shared with local agencies through a small convening. This allowed for discussion and consideration of the implication of recommendations. Broader dissemination occurred through Conservancy web and social media channels, which reached more than 10,000 followers at the time of publishing.

Rock Creek Conservancy is committed to serving as a thought leader in the Rock Creek watershed on issues of stormwater management. As a non-profit that represents the Creek, the organization serves to convene agencies with responsibility for stormwater management. Past the term of the grant, the Conservancy continues to share the white paper on their website to inform future decision-making. DOEE has already used preliminary finding in its work to shift GI maintenance policy, and Montgomery County at the time of project completion, implemented some of the recommendations as it restarted its capital stormwater management projects (ie. Glenmont Forest). The paper was also shared at the 2021 National Conference on Ecological Restoration (postponed from 2020).

Year Awarded: 2019  
Award Amount: \$18,295  
Match Amount: \$1,962

Click below to read full paper



# GREEN STREETS, BLUE PAPER

## Recommendations for Green Infrastructure Community Engagement



May 2020

Project Partners: Chesapeake Bay Trust, DC Water, DC Department of Transportation, DC Department of Energy and Environment, EcoLatinos, Kearns and Williams, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, OpinionWorks, Rock Creek Conservancy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, University of the District of Columbia