

The Elements of Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the network of open spaces that sustains natural systems, enhances economic vitality, connects people to the natural world, and increases individual and community wellbeing.

Although each example of place and function is listed only once, some fit into more than one element. Please use these lists as a guide to stimulate your thinking and add your own ideas. Also, note that some examples will be more visible at different scales, e.g., small parcels may appear only on neighborhood maps.

Element	Examples of places	Examples of functions provided
O Human Health	Parks; Trails; Game courts and athletic fields; School yards; Urban forests; Scenic vistas; Flower beds; Healing gardens	Encourage exercise and active lifestyles; Provide outdoor space for activities for all ages; Create appealing visual landscapes; Offer places of solitude & respite
O Ecology	Conservation corridors; Natural areas; Rain gardens; Vegetative buffers (bioswales); Detention ponds; Tree canopies	Protect water, air, and soil; Manage stormwater; Provide habitat for wildlife; Protect or restore native communities; Reduce urban heat islands; Reclaim brownfields
O Economy	Streetscapes; Bike lanes; Plazas; Public parks; Conservation subdivisions; Co-housing communities; Corporate parks; Community gardens	Attract and retain residents, businesses, and employees; Connect businesses and residents/pedestrians; Increase residential and business property tax base; Increase retail sales; Offer alternative transportation
O Culture & Society	Performance spaces; Historic sites; Public art; Cemeteries; Skateboard parks; Outdoor markets; Community gardens; Beaches; Festival grounds	Interpret and share environmental and cultural identities; Foster community identity and pride; Provide low cost nutritious food; Encourage community events; Target programming to include youth, seniors, and families
O Education	Interpretive sites; Zoos; Museums; Botanical gardens; Nature centers	Foster formal and informal education; Provide spaces for experiential education; Use nature as a classroom; Involve citizens in resource stewardship

Where to look for Green Infrastructure opportunities:

- Large tracts of unbuilt land, e.g., state-owned, hospitals, seminaries, utility companies
- Large tracts of contaminated land (blighted industrial corridors, RR corridors)
- Vacant, tax delinquent properties
- River, stream, or creek corridors; steep slopes; floodplains; wetlands; habitat corridors
- DOT construction remnants
- Land for sale with dilapidated housing, commercial or industrial structures
- Streetscapes of key pedestrian/bicycle connections (around and through university campuses, commercial corridors, etc.)

This Green Infrastructure mapping worksheet was prepared as a guide for hands-on mapping activities at the Community Open Space Partnership regional forums,

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