

City of Northampton
MASSACHUSETTS

In City Council, January 21, 2016

Upon the recommendation of the Office of Planning and Sustainability and the Department of Public Works

Ordered, that

WHEREAS, Green Infrastructure keeps rain close to where it falls, using structures to improve on-site infiltration, such as rain gardens, green roofs and permeable pavements, to promote cleaner, slower, and smaller storm flows to nearby rivers and streams;

WHEREAS, Green Streets are a subset of Green Infrastructure in which the street handles significant amounts of stormwater on site through use of vegetated and/or soil-infiltration facilities. Green Streets can include landscaped street-side planters or swales or tree box filters or porous pavement that capture stormwater runoff and allow it to soak into the ground as soil and vegetation filter pollutants.

WHEREAS, The city's Green Streets and Infrastructure policy demonstrates the City's commitment to building comparable infrastructure required for private developments and complements the City's complete streets ordinance. The City recognizes:

1. Stormwater runoff from streets, roads, parking lots, and other impervious urban surfaces is a significant source of water pollution to our rivers, streams and water bodies
2. Green Streets can provide cost-effective infrastructure solutions to reduce and manage stormwater runoff and flooding from more intense storm and flooding events and can reduce localized flooding from surcharging, providing some adaptation to climate change.
3. Green Streets can improve water quality by filtering stormwater, removing contaminants, including total suspended solids (TSS), organic pollutants /oils, and heavy metals, and cooling the stormwater before it encounters groundwater or surface water bodies, which benefits watershed health.
4. Green Streets foster unique and attractive streetscapes that protect and enhance neighborhood livability, integrate the built and natural environments, enhance the pedestrian environment, and introduce park-like elements into neighborhoods.
5. Green Streets encourage the planting of landscapes and trees which contribute environmental benefits such as reduced summer air temperatures, reductions in global warming through carbon sequestration and air pollution screening.

6. Green infrastructure can reduce the long-term costs of gray infrastructure maintenance, and complement gray infrastructure with hybrid systems of gray, piped infrastructure combined with green, vegetated infrastructure.
7. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) stormwater permits will require that the city control the amount and quality of stormwater discharged from the MS4s to rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.
8. Recharge of groundwater sources is a key mitigation activity under the soon to be amended Massachusetts Water Management Act regulations 310 CMR 36.00.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,

The City of Northampton policy is to promote the use of green street facilities and green infrastructure in public and private development through regulation, capital investment, and management mechanisms as a cost-effective and sustainable practice for stormwater management in current and future projects when technically and economically feasible. This includes road development and reconstruction, bicycle and pedestrian projects, stormwater projects, and other development and redevelopment. It is city policy to:

1. Incorporate and maintain green street facilities and green infrastructure into all City-funded development, redevelopment, and enhancement projects, to the extent technically and economically feasible, and utilizing the best technology available at the time to meet water quality goals with the lowest lifecycle costs; and
2. Ensure that regulations require and incentivize all development to incorporate some green streets and green infrastructure features; and
3. Ensure coordination and communication between City departments, in particular Public Works and Planning and Sustainability, to ensure implementation of this policy, as well as fully addressing competing priorities.