

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC OUTREACH

INTRODUCTION

Using low-impact development (LID) approaches for new development can help to achieve storm water pollution reduction goals. Through LID approaches, storm water runoff can be controlled while development objectives are achieved.

Preserving natural vegetation provides benefits in all areas, particularly along stream corridors. Protection of natural vegetation provides multiple benefits:

- Processes higher quantities of storm water runoff than newly seeded areas
- Does not require time to establish
- Has a higher filtering capacity than newly planted vegetation because aboveground and root structures are typically denser
- Reduces storm water runoff by intercepting rain fall, promoting infiltration, and lowering the water table through transpiration
- Provides buffers and screens against noise and visual disturbance
- Provides a fully developed habitat for wildlife
- Usually requires less maintenance (e.g. fertilizer, irrigation, mowing) than planting new vegetation
- Enhances aesthetics

An important component of a municipal LID program is public outreach. There are three basic elements:

- \$ Encourage developers to adopt such approaches
- \$ Develop and implement a program to ensure that design standards are met and
- \$ Ensure homeowners are adequately informed of their responsibilities.

The latter should be the responsibility of the developer and homebuilder. This outreach takes the form of the developer's communicating maintenance instructions and pollution prevention measures to the property owners. The public outreach program informs property owners of their responsibilities to the environment.

When successfully implemented, LID education and awareness programs accomplish the following:

- \$ Establish a marketing tool that allows developers to attract environmentally conscious buyers
- \$ Create more landscaped areas, enhancing the aesthetics of developed areas
- \$ Educate property owners on effective pollution prevention measures
- \$ Promote the proper maintenance of best management practices
- \$ Inform commercial property owners of potential cost savings from using LID approaches

APPLICATBILITY

Outreach for Residential Properties

LID public outreach programs accomplish the above goals by providing residential property owners with essential information to maintain a property in an environmentally friendly manner. For example, one of the critical aspects of these programs is teaching property owners to maintain previously installed pollution prevention and best management practices properly. The developer or local public agency should communicate to current or potential property owners the benefits of LID, as well as their individual maintenance responsibilities as property owners, including:

- \$ Maintaining vegetative buffers,
- \$ Removing trash and debris from outflow points,
- \$ Using fertilizers and pesticides properly,

- \$ Sweeping paved areas,
- \$ Practicing water conservation, and
- \$ Using mowing practices that promote runoff infiltration.

Outreach for Commercial Properties

Municipalities should consider three objectives when developing an outreach program for commercial properties:

- \$ Educate developers and provide incentives to incorporate LID practices into their designs
- \$ Educate existing commercial property owners and provide incentives to retrofit their properties with LID practices, especially for areas adjacent to sensitive waterbodies
- \$ Provide guidance and other assistance to property owners who have already incorporated LID practices

IMPLEMENTATION

Public outreach programs should be tailored to a specific site and audience. There are two key steps:

1. Identify program objectives. For example, is the goal of the program to educate potential property owners about the maintenance requirements of best management practices, or simply to inform commercial property owners of the potential cost savings of LID? These goals should be considered when selecting outreach materials for distribution.
2. Identify the target audience. For residential, commercial, or industrial LID properties, the developer might need to communicate with diverse audiences, including potential buyers, new property owners, builders, construction site managers, homeowner associations, and current property owners. The message to each respective audience differs slightly. For example, developers often promote the environmental benefits of LID to potential buyers by emphasizing measures such as reforestation or landscaping practices conducted at a site. Potential buyers must also be informed of their responsibility to maintain measures that have already been implemented. When dealing with builders and site construction managers, the developer must inform all parties of appropriate phasing and construction practices necessary to properly implement management practices. Developers must also provide new property owners with a set of conditions to be met with the acquisition of the land. After the property is transferred to a new owner, the developer should assign someone to train the new property owners and monitor maintenance activities.