



Green Infrastructure in Ontario: Gaps and Challenges

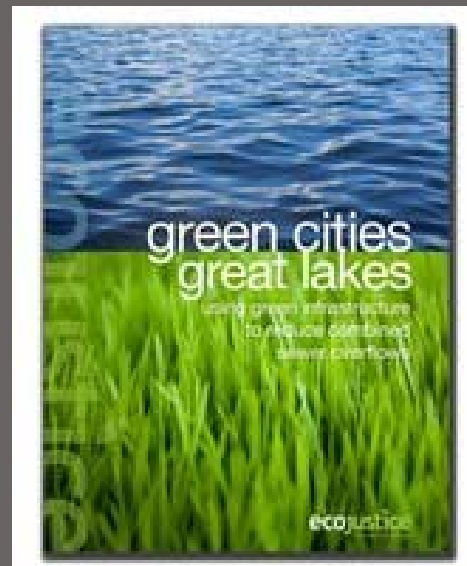
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Latornell Conservation Symposium

November 18, 2011

About Ecojustice

- Ecojustice is a registered charity that uses the law to protect and restore the environment in Canada.
- 20 lawyers and scientists across Canada
- Scientists at Ecojustice conduct investigative research, write reports and provide scientific-based advice on environmental policy and legal issues



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Overview

- Highlights of policy barriers and gaps in Ontario
- Recommendations to close these gaps
- Examples from U.S.
- Progress in Ontario

Barriers and Challenges

- Mainstream adoption and implementation faces obstacles
- Lack of government support – policies and regulations prevent widespread adoption
- Benefits not recognized in policies and investment decisions
- Common misperception: costly to retrofit into densely developed urban areas
- Until identified as simply part of doing business, perception of higher costs will be deterrent

Lack of Clear Mandate

- Non-integrated approach
- Many players in field at all levels of government
- No provincial body for “all things green”
- Lack of coordination and different approaches among Ministries with responsibility for green infrastructure
- Need provincial umbrella guidelines, better linkages among Ministries



Provincial Policy Statement

- Guides land-use planning and community development
- Contains policy direction to be considered re: resource management and infrastructure development
- Importance of green infrastructure not reflected in PPS
- Fits well into framework, should be addressed



Infrastructure Investment Programs

- **Green Infrastructure Fund** - \$1 billion over 5 years
- Targets projects that will improve quality of environment (i.e. wastewater infrastructure) and lead to more sustainable economy
- Funds allocated for large-scale grey infrastructure projects
- Opening up green infrastructure projects to economic stimulus funding would help accelerate implementation
- Regulatory definition of infrastructure should include green infrastructure so infrastructure funding allocated to green infrastructure projects

Insufficient Funding

- Federal stimulus spending favours grey infrastructure
- No provincial green infrastructure fund and no commitment for allocation of a dedicated % of funding for green infrastructure
- Municipalities face lack of funding and capacity to invest in and maintain green infrastructure
- Dedicated % of federal and provincial funding should be earmarked for green infrastructure initiatives

State of Illinois: Green Infrastructure Grant Program

- Grants for green infrastructure to control stormwater runoff
- Illinois EPA - \$5 million for local govt, non-profits, businesses
- Outpouring of interest:
 - > 150 applicants, requesting \$50 million
 - 14 awarded grants



Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual

- Manual outdated
- Doesn't address green infrastructure as part of comprehensive approach to stormwater management
- Info on source control, but stormwater volume control not adequately addressed
- In sense of broader definition (urban forests, natural features, etc) green infrastructure not addressed



Improving Stormwater Management

- Manual needs updating to include BMPs for stormwater mgt, including green infrastructure for source control
- MOE has reviewed in light of climate change, but not yet revising to deal with water quality concerns
- MOE needs to provide clear guidance on:
 - intentions to revise manual
 - how green infrastructure will be addressed and integrated to complement conventional stormwater management practices
 - intended outcomes

Stormwater Utility Fees

- Ont doesn't require user-pay fees
- Charge on property owners based on impervious surface area
- Those who contribute more to stormwater runoff pay more, those who adopt source control measures save \$\$\$
- Popular because of ability to provide incentives (i.e. fee discounts for onsite stormwater management)
- Can be dedicated to stormwater management program (stated preference for green infrastructure)



Stormwater Fees in Ontario

- Many US jurisdictions have stormwater fees
- Relatively new in Canada, some municipalities adopting structure (Kitchener & Waterloo)
- Full cost pricing for stormwater infrastructure recognized as needed reform
- Securing dedicated and adequate source of funding for stormwater management critical to improve management practices
- Focus on enabling legislation to create stormwater fees

Green Infrastructure for Clean Water Act

- 2009 - U.S. legislation introduced - provides minimum standard for stormwater mgt
- Promotes use of green infrastructure - encourages EPA to integrate it in permitting and other regulatory programs
- Grants to states and others for green infrastructure projects that address stormwater management and other water issues
- Authorizes \$100M/yr for planning and development and \$200 M/yr for implementation

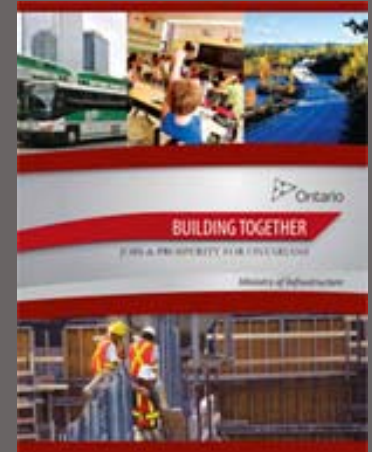
NYC Green Infrastructure Plan

- GI component: \$1.5 billion over 20 yrs (vs \$3.9 billion for additional grey investment)
 - savings: \$2.4 billion
- Goal: capture first inch of rainfall on 10% of impervious surfaces in CSO areas
- Result: reduce CSOs by 1.5 bgy (40%)
- 2011 - DEP allocating \$3M in grants for community-based projects



What's happening in Ontario?

- Lake Simcoe Protection Plan
- Building Together: Infrastructure Plan for Ontario
 - recognizes green infrastructure; suggests conservation and efficiency become preconditions for infrastructure funding
 - work with municipalities to encourage best use of existing infrastructure before building new capacity, including green infrastructure



LID Stormwater Management Guide

- Joint initiative of TRCA and CVC
- Env health of many watersheds still declining with increased urbanization despite adoption of conventional stormwater mgt practices (provincial and CA)
- Need to shift away from conventional approaches and towards LID to protect watershed health and improve resiliency to climate change impacts
- Guide developed to provide up-to-date info and direction on LID stormwater mgt practices

Water Opportunities Act, 2010

- Opportunity to establish green infrastructure on provincial basis - explicitly promotes innovative approaches to stormwater management
- Recognizes need for integrated long-term planning of water and stormwater, including financial planning
- Government infrastructure grants should be contingent on water conservation and green infrastructure plans
- **Municipal Water Sustainability Plans** to be drafted once supporting regs developed – possibility for new and innovative green infrastructure approaches to stormwater

Final thoughts

- Mainstream use of green infrastructure shouldn't be idealized wish, but necessary next step to create healthy communities
- Logical progression in a policy era of intensification and urban redevelopment for areas where most Ontarians live
- Place discussion less on whether can include green infrastructure in development, but how best to implement such approaches



Stay tuned for the upcoming report!

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