



Municipal Action Team

For Green Infrastructure

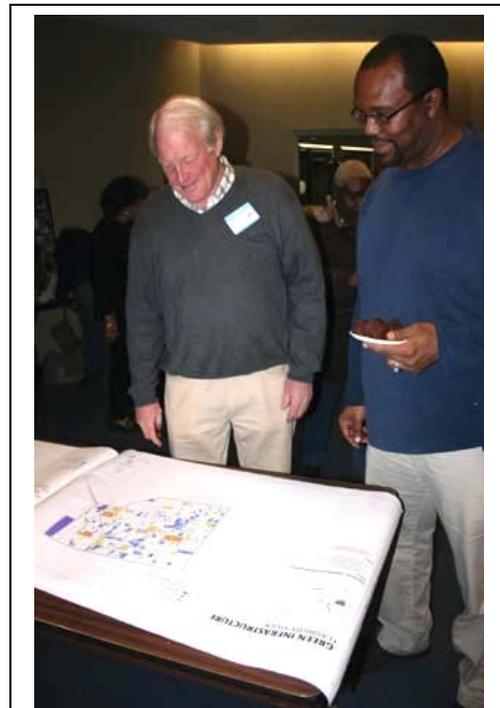
Background

In cities that have combined sewers, overflows are common during rain storms, dumping untreated human and toxic waste into local waterways. Additionally during storm events, these systems often backup into building basements and flood roadways, degrading the quality of life of the residents that live in these communities. One way to help reduce the impacts associated with these combined sewer overflows (CSOs) is through the use of green infrastructure. For green infrastructure to be successful, community engagement is required. Municipal Action Teams foster this community engagement and serve as an advocate for green infrastructure in their city. The CSO permits now require utility authorities to engage the community. The Municipal Action Team can help the utility authority satisfy this requirement while encouraging communities to implement green infrastructure practices that will keep rain water from entering the combined sewer system.

A municipal action team can be established to bring together local governments, utility authorities, residents, and community organizations. Together these groups work to set an agenda for a community-based green infrastructure initiative. The goal of this action team is to foster collaboration and collective action that helps the municipality speak with a common voice to achieve a common goal. Members of the municipal action team work together to:

- Define the need and opportunities for green infrastructure
- Educate residents and community leaders
- Address permit and long term control plan requirements
- Leverage funding to design and implement demonstration projects

With a variety of organizations, a range of funding opportunities can be pursued by multiple team members to increase the community's sense of ownership and move a municipality collectively toward



Municipal Action Team at work in Camden!

Interested in creating a Municipal Action Team?

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adopting a green infrastructure program. Together, this work will help communities meet the intent of the new individual CSO permits, protect water quality, and improve residents' quality of life.

Tips for Engaging and Involving Community Members

1. **Create** a municipal action team comprised of stakeholders and experts that will facilitate communication and decision making for green infrastructure.
2. **Identify** the community's needs and use data to make a case for green infrastructure.
3. **Strategize** through coalition building to create a sustainable initiative.
4. **Develop** a common agenda encompassing the interests of all municipal action team members supporting goals/strategies of the team.
5. **Communicate** with the community through as many means as possible (social media, flyers, face-to-face meetings and workshops).
6. **Build** relationships with local government officials who will advocate for green infrastructure.
7. **Educate** community members through mutually reinforcing activities.
8. **Involve** the community from the beginning of any planning process to build public acceptance and advocacy.
9. **Implement** demonstration projects using community input and volunteers.
10. **Analyze** shared metrics to track progress identifying gaps, lessons learned and improvements needed.

Municipal Action Team: Technical Assistance

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program and its partners can provide technical assistance to the municipal action team through funding from the SURDNA Foundation. To take the first step, contact RCE Water Resources Program to meet with local constituents that are interested in participating in a municipal action team. Municipal action teams can consist of representatives from municipal green teams, environmental commissions, environmental nonprofit groups, community development organizations, faith-based organizations, local government officials, utility authorizes, just to name a few.



Working together to design green infrastructure!

The RCE Water Resources Program and its partners will work with the municipal action team to: identify opportunities for green infrastructure practices, prioritize projects, identify funding sources, select design/engineering technical support and manage/review green infrastructure design plans. This level and caliber of assistance will build their capacity to continue to seek funding for green infrastructure without the need for further RCE Water Resources support and assistance.

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