



What you can do as a Developer

U.S. EPA | STORMWATER OUTREACH AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



Credit: South Burlington Stormwater Utility

INTRO:

Development has sprawled across New England over the past few decades, consuming farms and forests two times as fast as the population is growing. Past development practices have created more roads, driveways and roofs so that water that used to seep into the ground now runs across pavement, picking up chemicals and pollutants. This stormwater then flows into nearby waterways, both polluting them and scouring their banks. Local zoning often unintentionally encourages sprawl, but this is beginning to change. Some developers are leading the way with better – and often cheaper – ways to develop. Here are some of their practices:

USE INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES:

Select your site wisely — Developing in an already-developed area can lower infrastructure costs because sewer, water, utilities and roads may be available.

Choose the areas of your site to develop carefully — You can avoid putting the development where it will have an effect on important natural resources. In addition, you can cluster buildings and leave at least half of the property undeveloped so that it can handle rainwater through natural resources. This will reduce costs and add to open space.

Use Low Impact Development (LID) practices — Roads, parking lots and other non-porous areas are the largest contributors to stormwater runoff. Generally the less porous the area, the worse the condition of nearby waterways. Low Impact Development allows developed land to handle rain more like how it was handled before the site was developed. The goal is to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology by infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating and detaining stormwater runoff.

Address barriers early — Developers interested in LID are often concerned about cost, cold weather, drinking water and public safety. Many of these concerns need not represent barriers:

STORMWATER is a leading cause of poor water quality. Rain or melted snow runs down driveways, sidewalks and streets carrying oil, dirt and other pollutants into nearby waterways. Polluted runoff, which can cause erosion and flooding, runs into waterways and degrades plants, fish, shellfish and other wildlife. In water used for recreation, the runoff can lead to illness, and people who eat contaminated fish can also become sick. Untreated stormwater can also contaminate drinking water sources.

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