the green infrastructure leadership exchange

Annual Report 2020
WHAT IS THE GI LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE?

Who We Are
We’re a practitioner network that supports communities seeking to adopt and grow green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) programs by accelerating peer learning, innovation and implementation.

Mission
The Exchange is building a practical playbook for implementing green stormwater infrastructure that any city can adopt. We seek to use this playbook to accelerate implementation of GSI affordably and equitably throughout North America.

WHAT WE OFFER OUR MEMBERS
This word cloud generated by members during our recent Annual Meeting reflects the words that came to mind when they were asked what the Exchange brings to their work.

OUR MEMBERSHIP IN 2019
Geographical Distribution

9 new cities joined the Exchange in 2019!

Interested in becoming a member?
Member organizations include utilities, municipalities and counties committed to implementing green infrastructure at scale and sharing their knowledge with peers. Please contact Kasey Armstrong, Member Engagement Manager, at kasey@giexchange.org to learn more.
2019-20 GRANT PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS (ROUND 3)

1 $65,250

Awarded to: Members from our Details & Specifications Workgroup that include the City of Gresham, OR, Seattle, WA, Portland, OR, Omaha, NE, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, Vancouver and Toronto.

Goal: To develop a comprehensive compilation of Green Infrastructure Details, Specifications and Policies that can be used as a reference throughout the country.

2 $37,750

Awarded to: Members from our Equity Workgroup, including the City of Tucson, AZ, Philadelphia, PA, Grand Rapids, MI, Seattle, WA and Vancouver.

Goal: To develop a shared point of view for the network around the place of equity in the GSI field and to develop an inventory of resources, tools and guidelines for the equitable implementation of GSI in practice.

2019 ANNUAL SURVEY

Key Highlights

- 96.8% gained valuable knowledge from connections made through the Exchange
- 90.5% indicated learning with network peers has resulted in changes to their own programs
- 92% indicated they receive high value from the Annual Meeting
- 2/3 indicated they receive high value from the Workgroups

Member Feedback

- "I need to stay current on what other jurisdictions are doing with GSI best practices and performance monitoring. The network has significantly expanded my reach."
- "All interactions, lessons learned and reports coming out of these (GI Leadership Exchange) grants have tremendously helped us in shaping GI policies and design practices."
- "The network has created so many opportunities for information sharing between peers. I’ve been able to get so many documents, templates, and just great advice from peers on a number of problems."

2020 ANNUAL MEETING EVALUATION

The 2020 Exchange Annual Meeting, a key program of the Exchange, was held virtually in early May and over 100 members and partners attended. The Meeting was rated highly despite the need to shift this normally in-person event to a week-long all-virtual convening.

- 68% strongly agree they gained new ideas to apply to projects or programs
- 77% strongly agree they gained awareness of new resources that will be useful to their work
- 81% strongly agree that they had opportunities to participate in network decision making
- 90% strongly agree the meeting was well worth their time
2019-20 WORKGROUPS

Peer-Learning in Search of Solutions

**Details & Specifications:** Focused on distilling and synthesizing best practices around soils, orifice/flow control, public/private GSI, sequence of construction, proprietary devices, and regional considerations. Continued developing a new library for Design Standards and Specifications begun in the prior year.

*Co-Chairs: Shanti Colwell, Seattle Public Utilities, Torrey Lindbo, City of Gresham and Henry Stevens, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services*

**Workforce Development:** Building on the Workforce Development Program Scan that was completed in early 2019, explored specific inquiry into contract language, training local contractors, working with unions, partnerships, funding and resources, and program development and performance.

*Co-Chairs: Mark Cameron, City of Baltimore and Amanda Medori Hallauer, City of Atlanta*

**Maintenance:** Building on the work from previous years on the same topic, began an exploration of tools for assessing life cycle costs, focusing on preventative maintenance and standards development.

*Co-Chairs: Walter Caldwell, Washington D.C. and Harry Sheehan, Washtenaw County*

**Trees & GSI:** Explored trees in bioretention, working with urban forestry, trees in proprietary BMPs, and stormwater tree trenches.

*Co-Chairs: Robb Lukes, City of Vancouver and Thomas Eddy, City of San Jose*

**Performance-Based Contracts:** Explored what works and what doesn’t with performance-based contracts, learning from the experience in the group and other subject matter experts, while working to compile contract templates and create a summary table of different types of contracts and their appropriate uses.

*Chair: Dave LaClergue, City of Seattle*

**Training:** Gathered and collated existing trainings while also identifying gaps in training related to GSI, with particular emphasis on training for design, implementation, and leadership and change management.

*Co-Chairs: Brian Wethington, City and County of Denver and John Burke, Fairfax County, VA*

**Equity:** Worked to compile and disseminate knowledge about the intersections of equity and GSI, through the lenses of planning/prioritization, placement, and typology, community engagement and capacity building with local partners, equity and workforce development.

*Co-Chairs: Melina Scholefield, City of Vancouver and Carrie Rivette, City of Grand Rapids*

**Asset Management:** inventoried and explored the approaches to and systems of asset management among group members, with a focus on how to get started, approaches to categorizing GSI and inventorying key asset language and definitions, level of service, and tools and systems.

*Co-Chairs: Kristina Hausmanis, City of Toronto and Pam Boyle Rodriguez, City of Palo Alto*
NEW WORKGROUPS VOTED IN FOR 2020-21

Our 7 new Workgroups for the next 12 months are below:

- Maintenance
- Climate Change & GSI
- Details and Specifications
- Equity: Distribution of Assets & Benefits
- GIS Evaluation/Prioritization and Site Selection
- Design Innovations
- Funding & Financing: Loans, Grants, Stormwater Fees & New Funding Approaches

RESOURCES DEVELOPED FOR MEMBERS AND THE FIELD

The Exchange has developed a number of unique resources to help communities advance GSI. Some of these include:

- Report on GSI & Schoolyards: Barriers & Solutions
- Workforce Development: Program Case Studies and Funding Scan
- GSI & Public Health: A National Guide
- Green Infrastructure Co-benefits Valuation Tool
- Recommendations for GSI Modeling and Monitoring (two guides)
- Funding and Financing Resource Guide
- Netherlands Study Tour video, case studies, and presentation of lessons learned

EXCHANGE FINANCIALS

$650K Annual Budget

Expense Categories

- General Operating (15.5%)
- Innovation (32.1%)
- Network Development (13.8%)
- Peer Learning (25.9%)
- Communications (12.7%)

A LOOK AHEAD

Going into our fifth year, the Exchange is developing longer term goals that will inform our work and strategic direction. The Exchange will continue to develop and implement the network’s Communications Plan; refine the Annual Meeting, the Collaborative Grant and Workgroups to better serve our members’ needs; expand our partner cultivation efforts; and work to further develop and disseminate the GSI playbook. We remain fervently committed to the pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a key priority in our resource allocation and our members’ work.