

FAQ | NYC Green Infrastructure

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is implementing the Green Infrastructure (GI) Program in priority combined sewer areas. GI practices include Right-of-way Bioswales, Stormwater Greenstreets and stormwater management practices on public property. GI practices collect and manage stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as streets and sidewalks. DEP is building green infrastructure in compliance with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requirements to reduce combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharges into New York City's waterbodies. For more information, see the FAQ list below or visit nyc.gov/dep.

What is a Right-of-way Bioswale?

The *right-of-way* (or ROW) is the area between the two property lines along the street that includes the sidewalks and paved roadway. The word *bioswale* is generally used to describe planted areas that collect rainwater. DEP uses the term *ROW Bioswale* to describe planted areas in the sidewalk that are designed to collect and manage stormwater that runs off the streets and sidewalks when it rains.

What is a Stormwater Greenstreet?

Stormwater Greenstreets, like ROW Bioswales, are planted areas designed to collect and manage stormwater that runs off the streets and sidewalks. However Stormwater Greenstreets are typically constructed in the roadway, are usually larger than ROW Bioswales, and have varying lengths, widths and soil depths based on the characteristics of the existing roadway.

Why is the City building ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets in this area?

ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets are both types of *green infrastructure*. Green infrastructure collects stormwater runoff from rooftops, streets, and sidewalks before it goes into the combined sewer system and contributes to Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) pollution in surrounding waterbodies. Green infrastructure is a more cost-effective way to manage stormwater in New York City and will save New Yorkers billions of dollars over the next 20 years.

Will all ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets have trees?

All ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets have plants and flowers, and the City plants trees wherever feasible.

Will the tree roots crack the sidewalk?

Sometimes, older tree roots break sidewalks because the tree pit is not large enough for the tree roots. The City's standard ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets are at least 10 feet long, which gives the tree roots more space. As the tree grows, the tree roots are less likely to break up the sidewalk.



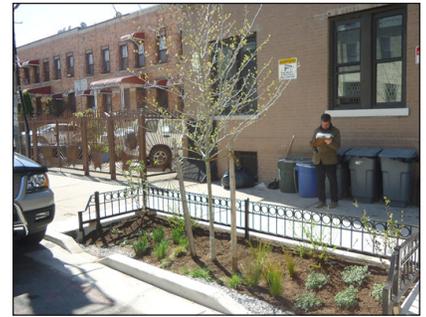
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Will the tree roots interfere with utility service lines?

During design and construction, DEP coordinates with utility companies to ensure that green infrastructure installations will not directly interfere with existing underground and above-ground utility service lines.

Will the green infrastructure prevent people from walking on the sidewalk, or block driveways and building entrances?

The Department of Transportation (DOT) visits each potential location to ensure that ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets comply with the City's standard pedestrian and vehicle clearance requirements.



Will the green infrastructure attract mosquitoes?

Mosquitos require a minimum of 72 hours in standing water for larvae development. ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets are designed to drain in less than 48 hours.

Will the sidewalk be affected by green infrastructure construction?

During construction, DEP replaces the sidewalk flags directly around the ROW Bioswale or Stormwater Greenstreets.

Will the green infrastructure have a fence around it?

Each ROW Bioswale and some Stormwater Greenstreets have tree guards that deter foot traffic. Frequent walking on the soil reduces its ability to absorb rainwater, and should be avoided.

Who removes litter and maintains the plants?

The City is responsible for green infrastructure maintenance. DEP funds specialized NYC Parks maintenance crews who visit each location regularly to ensure it is clear of litter. Other maintenance activities include tree pruning, removal and replacement of dead plants, clearing the curb inlets and outlets, and keeping the soil aerated and free of weeds.

Can the green infrastructure be moved to another location?

DEP sites green infrastructure based on a number of factors. In addition to meeting DOT requirements, the green infrastructure must be precisely located to collect stormwater runoff from the street. It also must be installed in an area where the underlying soil can absorb water. To meet New York State requirements, DEP is building the maximum number of ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets that can fit in the public right-of-way. Once sited, the green infrastructure cannot be relocated.

Will street parking be affected by green infrastructure?

ROW Bioswales are designed to have no impact on street parking. When Stormwater Greenstreets are proposed, DEP works with the DOT Borough Commissioners to minimize parking impacts.

Can I request a ROW Bioswale or Stormwater Greenstreet?

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Will green infrastructure prevent street flooding?

ROW Bioswales and Stormwater Greenstreets are not designed to prevent street flooding. Green infrastructure will improve street drainage, which may reduce large puddles and standing water in some rainstorms.

Can green infrastructure be built on private property?

DEP offers a Green Infrastructure Grant Program for private property owners in the combined sewer areas of New York City. For more information on this program, visit nyc.gov/dep.