

# UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY

## Potential Constraints for Green Street and Parking Lot Projects.

There are many constraints, both perceived and real, in implementing green street and parking lot projects. In an effort to fully understand the constraints specific to San Mateo County, a survey was developed and distributed to municipal public works staff in February 2008. This survey asked for direct input on potential constraints in four areas:

- Policy and Communication Constraints
- Site Characteristic Constraints
- Design-Related Constraints
- Construction/Long-Term Maintenance Constraints

The results of this survey is found in Appendix B of this guidebook. In addition, many of the “design-related” constraints are addressed in specific chapters of this guidebook.

## Soil Conditions and Hydrology

Soil conditions and hydrology vary considerably in San Mateo County. In some cases, infiltration may be difficult due to steep hillsides or non-permeable soils (see Appendix C). However, there are ways to incorporate landscape-based stormwater facilities on streets and parking lots in steep conditions and poor infiltration soils. Chapter 5 discusses various methods for designing stormwater facilities in these difficult conditions.

## Existing Impervious Area

Most of the impervious area in San Mateo County is concentrated in areas with flat topography (see Appendix C). An exception to this is with certain residential development areas that have occurred in moderately steep hillside conditions. Unfortunately, the areas of dense urban development also correspond with soil conditions that are typically unfavorable for infiltration. This represents a special challenge

if a development project is subject to C.3 stormwater management requirements.

## Current Stormwater Management Requirements

Current development or redevelopment projects that result in the addition or replacement of 10,000 square feet or more of impervious surface are subject to the C.3 requirements and are required to mitigate for water quality. In addition, all projects that create or replace one acre or more of impervious surface may be subject to flow and volume reduction requirements (see the C.3 Technical Guidance). Furthermore, there is a tremendous opportunity to significantly improve watershed health in the County by retrofitting existing streets and parking lots that are not slated for redevelopment and are not subject to C.3 stormwater requirements. There are many instances where stormwater facilities can be retrofitted in urban conditions that don't increase impervious area at all, but do increase landscape areas. In these conditions, the overall stormwater management goals are more flexible than what would be needed to comply with C.3 stormwater requirements for new and redevelopment projects.



**Figure I-24:** This green street retrofit project in Portland, Oregon was built not out of a requirement, rather it was built simply because it could be done.